

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AS A TOOL FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

*Stella Chinekezi Nwaigwe*

## **Abstract**

Nigeria has unemployment problem which is at moment predominant, and to render a helping hand in solving this ugly problem, there is the need to re-engineer Entrepreneurship education; hence the need for educators to carve out courses, programs and some major fields of study that will meet the actual target or aim for which the programs are drawn, while making the environment conducive for learning. The aim of this paper is to motivate individuals to become entrepreneurs and employers of others, to equip them with the right skills which will enable them turn opportunities into successful ventures either in a small business, large corporate organization or social enterprise. Secondary data collected from documentary work in journals, newspapers and internet were used. The paper therefore recommends that entrepreneurial education must include process and action-oriented approaches; as well as discovering, evaluating and exploiting business opportunities available to create employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurship means the ability of an individual to turn his ideas and opinion into action. This covers creativity, innovation and risk taking, and the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve aims and objectives. This paper highlights the points which will help existing activities and programmes of entrepreneurship education.

- (a) Developing those personal attributes and generally applicable skills that form the basis of an entrepreneurial mindset and behavior.
- (b) Highlighting students' awareness of self-employment and entrepreneurship as possible career options.
- (c) Work on practical enterprise projects and activities, for instance students running mini companies.
- (d) Providing specific business skills and knowledge of how to start and successfully run a company

The aim of this paper is to motivate individuals to become entrepreneurs and employers, to equip them with the right skills to enable them turn opportunities into successful ventures either in a small business, a large corporate organization or social enterprise.

## **Entrepreneurship**

This is a calculated process of organizing, managing an enterprise and accommodating the risks involved in the enterprise. However, Hisrich and Peters (2002:10) see entrepreneurship as a "process of creating something new and assuming the risks and rewards". This definition highlighted four important aspects of entrepreneurship:

- (i) Creation process – creating something new and of value to the entrepreneurs and customers;
  - (ii) Entrepreneurship requires the duration of the necessary time and effort;
  - (iii) Risk taking is involved – financial, psychological and social; and
  - (iv) The reward needed in form of profit; personal satisfaction, independence, etc.
- Awodun (2005), adopts the same process approach to define entrepreneurship as an act of:
- (i) Recognizing opportunities in your environment;
  - (ii) Organizing resources to take advantage of such opportunities;
  - (iii) Ensuring the provision of new or improved goods and services to customers; and
  - (iv) Obtaining profit in return for the risk taken.

Therefore, Entrepreneurship is “about learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business...developing the winning strategies and executing them well with vigor, persistence and passion needed to win any game” (Inegbenbor, 2006).

Aruwa (2006) also sees entrepreneurship as “the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and run an enterprise successfully”. Entrepreneurship acts as a link between invention, innovation, and introduction of new products and services in the market place and enables the entrepreneurs to act as engines of growth in the economy (Ketchen, 2003; Venkataraman, 1997). Also Aina & Salao (2008) see Entrepreneurship as comprising “any powerful activity that initiates, maintains or develops a profit oriented business interaction with internal situation of the business or with the economic, political and social circumstances surrounding the business. Entrepreneurship simply deals with what the entrepreneur actually does - the utilization of resources in managing an enterprise and assuming the risks and maximizing profits from the business venture.

It is a dynamic process of creating wealth for the well-being of both the entrepreneur and individuals in the society. This in turn gives room adequately for creation of jobs. Entrepreneurs require to possess certain managerial skills in order to excel successfully in their establishment. These skills are the ability to conceptualize and plan effectively; ability to manage other individuals; ability to manage time effectively and learn new techniques in handling business operations and ability to adapt to change and to handle changes in our environments.

For one to be an entrepreneur, he/she must possess the spirit of entrepreneurship and this will enhance the move to establish either a company or a small scale business where people can be employed. It's a rare gift from God, a very inspiring one which ends up in positivity to leadership.

Shepherds and Douglas (1997) state that, “the essence of entrepreneurship is the ability to envision and chart a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional disciplines and from the external environment in the context of the extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture. It manifests itself in creative strategies, innovative tactics, uncanny perception of trend and market mood changes, courageous leadership when the way forward is not obvious and so on. What we teach in our entrepreneurship classes should serve to instill and enhance these abilities.

### **Entrepreneurship Training**

Atiomo (2000) described training as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes for the sole purpose of executing a specific or present job more effectively and efficiently. This shows that the scope and range of knowledge, attitudes and skills is narrow and limited in nature. Entrepreneurs learn in the real world through “adaptive” learning (Gibb, 2008). They are action oriented and learn much from experiment. They are action parked because most of their activities are based on practical example and at times they indulge in trial and error as well as problem solving and discovering. However, it noted that effective entrepreneurs are exceptional learners, who learn from everything they come across. They learn from both difficult and non-difficult issues.

Though, Government in Nigeria has done a lot to introduce a range of policies to encourage educational institutions and private sectors, training providers to develop entrepreneurial education and programmes to enhance the turnout of more entrepreneurs. Such programme does not only aim at developing entrepreneurial behaviours but also create awareness of enterprise and entrepreneurship as a potential way of life and future career.

The problem now becomes how and what types of education and training have the greatest impact? Evidently, if appropriate programmes are drawn into the curriculum, effective awareness created and good teachers employed, people will be motivated to foster entrepreneurial activities. One of the most important thing has been on how to motivate individuals to start their own business and get people employed.

### **Contributions of Entrepreneurs to Economic Growth**

Recently the emphasis of the government in Nigeria is on entrepreneurial development and that was why the National Universities Commission, 1989 approved minimum academic standard for teaching of courses in business schools at the undergraduate level as a compulsory course on "Entrepreneurial Development". This course is meant to create employment opportunities for the graduating students of business management and related disciplines. This will help them to set up ventures which they can manage and if need be, employ others. The government is encouraging small scale business operators or indigenous entrepreneurs who are ready to assist her in economic and national development. Being self-employed reduces unemployment opportunities and gives the citizens a sense of confidence and self belonging.

Anyanwu (2003) in a survey found that the beneficiaries in Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS) recorded significant increase in employment in their enterprises, as a result of SMEEIS funds. Evidently, in Nigeria, small and medium enterprises are known to have contributed immensely to economic development, job creation and sustainable livelihood (NIPC, 2003). According to Onuoha (1994), the small and medium scale enterprises provide the sources of material and labour inputs for bigger activities in the country. They also contribute to increased regional business activities of the West African and other African countries through the export of manufactured goods by Nigeria Entrepreneurs for example, Alhaji Dangote who is at the moment helping the government of Nigeria to bridge the gap of unemployment and economic development.

A total assessment of the role of the entrepreneurs shows that they are making significant contribution to national development and based on the statistics sourced from CBN publications of various years, Aruwa (2006) finds in 2003, small and medium enterprise in Nigeria contribute 90 percent to total industrial establishment; 70 percent to total industrial employment and 10-15 percent to total industrial production. This supports the results of an earlier study by Fadahusi (1992), that SME represents 90 percent of the enterprises in the ACP (African Caribbean and Pacific) countries. This sector also provides 70 percent employment opportunities for the citizens and promote indigenous technology.

Kuratko and Hodgett (2003) noted that small business enterprises employ 53 percent of the private work-force and accounted for 47 percent of sales and 51 percent of private sector gross domestic product GDP. Ogundele and Oni (1995) therefore conclude that the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or the entrepreneurs are the dominant features in the economies of both developed and developing countries, therefore re-engineering the entrepreneurship education will enhance the already existing efforts of entrepreneurs and more people will be encouraged to create awareness and more employment opportunities thereby reducing unemployment.

### **Ways of Enhancing Entrepreneurial Education**

Entrepreneurship programmes should be introduced in schools at all levels. Organizing and developing teaching tools, creating awareness among school management; providing counseling for school and teachers; ensuring continuous training for teachers and facilitating co-operation between school and the local community. Competent teachers should be employed for teaching entrepreneurship. Make the course introduced to be compulsory so that people will not run away from it. Creativity thinking and innovation should be the main pillars of such training. The learning environment should be conducive for the students as to motivate them into action and to retain whatever training they were given and be able to experiment. Teachers also should be part of the training in the field so that the already acquired knowledge will not be obsolete. This professional development can take place in the vocational school as a part of in-service learning. Both entrepreneurs and business people should also contribute to teacher's training.

### **How Can Entrepreneurship be Effectuated in Schools?**

The traditional approaches to Entrepreneurship Education have been conceived in two separate encapsulated arenas: The University and the Training Organization.

The University has provided cognitive planning frameworks and the Training Organization has taught, often informally, skills in applying theory to practice, too often those individuals participating in entrepreneurship education and training programmes have been moving from one arena to another in sequential fashion. To cover a line up, or activities for training, it requires a better articulation and integration of business schools, technology parks and government agencies, as well as good lecturers, seasoned entrepreneurs, consultants and financiers to render a helping hand.

### **Conclusion and/ Recommendations**

To re-engineer Entrepreneurial Education, it must be taught to students in all disciplines in the institutions. A careful investigation will show that many business ideas emerge from non-business disciplines but are always ignored because students are not sufficiently educated in the knowledge and skills required. However, there seems to be agreement on how to develop entrepreneurial education/behaviours but there seems to be no agreement in terms of how to measure the outcome.

Other methods could be employed in entrepreneurship education and training such as, reading magazines that contain write ups in entrepreneurial studies, attend lectures, listen to entrepreneur's testimonies, journal writing and computer stimulations. However, there is the need to engage the learners with practical work as "practice makes perfect". This will arouse their interest. It is confirmed that students who take part in a game where decisions are made, write business plan, or even set up real business ventures. They are better than students who attend traditional classroom lectures. In conclusion, based on the above discussions, re-engineering entrepreneurship education will definitely reduce unemployment and create more opportunities for employment.

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