

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN THE TRAINING OF YOUTHS IN ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

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Abstract

When youths are gainfully engaged and involved in entrepreneurship in a country, the better the country for it. The level of unemployment, youth restiveness, cultism and other vices among the youths can be minimized if not eradicated. The government of a country can involve her youths in entrepreneurial activities through training and educating them in entrepreneurial skills. Training and educating the youths may not be an easy task. This paper has noted that, youths could be trained in two ways; it could take the form of formal or informal training. And the skills to be developed are internal and external. The paper noted that the challenges that may hinder the training and education of youths includes: funding, policy formulation, research among others. Distinctively, the paper established that some of the benefits are: poverty reduction, wealth creation, self employment, crime reduction among others. The paper concluded that adequate funding be made commensurately to gain tremendously from youths training and education. The educational level of the target youths to be considered for effective and efficient training and education of the youths in entrepreneurial skills. It is recommended that, personnel, finance, skills acquisition centres and markets are made available to boost the desired objectives of training the youths in entrepreneurial skills.

The quest to be successful in an entrepreneurship venture is rooted in the training and education of the individual or group of individuals. This is imperative since through training and education the basic rudiments in entrepreneurial skills are brought to the fore and impacted to the would-be entrepreneur. Several attempts have been made

to developing the youths in entrepreneurial skills that would enable them launch themselves into the class of young entrepreneurs. This training and education could be in form of formal and informal.

Although this training and education are not without challenges for according to Izedonmi (2008) this challenges includes the hash economy, dynamics of the kind of industry, problems of honest resources personnel, finance and follow up. Nevertheless, the education of youths to actualize what they had be trained for, becomes enormous challenge since it is one thing to train someone and the other is to implement what has been impacted that leads to a positive prospect in the acquired skills.

It is pertinent that the youths of today are adequately prepared in the skills that will make them excel as entrepreneur in the future, since the relevance of entrepreneurs is no longer in doubt. These skills are important to the youths so that they kick-start their entrepreneurship on a good and focused bearing. These skills that are internal and external require the right policies to be put in place for their actualization which will in turn enable the young entrepreneur to grow into an enviable status.

The challenges to be encountered in training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skills though enormous as they seem to be could be surmounted. This paper has equally enumerated the prospects in training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skills as having a far reaching positive effect as it will reduce over dependence on government for job creation. It leads to reduction in extreme poverty and urban migration including other social vices.

Who is an Entrepreneur and What are the Skills to be Developed?

Although there may not be a universal definition of entrepreneur, nevertheless, this paper will do a purview of the concept by some authorities at different fora. Imianvan (2003) opined that entrepreneur is one who has the ability to find and evaluate opportunities, gather the necessary resources and implement action to take advantage of the opportunity. In the same vein, Glaser (2001) said that,

An entrepreneur is an individual or group of individuals who either undertakes the responsibility of making innovations in the economy, such as introducing new goods, opening new lines of production and opening new market for the product or one who carries out an organisation of a new industry.

Similarly, Ihekoronye (2000) maintained that entrepreneurs come from all works of life and in their various backgrounds, such that the kind of business they create are numerous ranging from crafts, textiles, carpentry, processing industries, and printing. From the above definitions, it could be noted that the elements of internal and external forces come to play. The writers of this paper thus defines an entrepreneur as one who can be aided to utilize the internal potentials deposited in him by nature and the external factors of the environment such as policies that enable him to meet up with present challenges of producing goods and services into ready usage. This is why the youths need training and education in the skills that will enable them succeed as young entrepreneurs.

Therefore for success as youth entrepreneurs the following skills need to be impacted through adequate training and education. For a clearer understanding, this paper has classified them into internal and external skills. The internal skills are inborn or personal and could be nurtured, while the external skills are acquired. Both skills need to be developed through training and educating the youths.

The internal or personal skills include the following:

- a. Innovativeness
- b. Persistence
- c. Failure management
- d. Self confidence
- e. Fund management

While the external skills that could be acquired are:

- a. Goal setting
- b. Monitoring
- c. Marketing
- d. Environment

The internal skills are further explained below:

Innovativeness: This is the ability of the youth to identify a particular line of business that he is proficient in, in the course of training and helped to nurture it for the future. This is important for according to Bird (1992) in Olugbemide (2008) that “entrepreneurs are mercurial that is, prone to insights, deception, ingeniousness and resourceful. They are cunning, opportunistic and unsentimental. Therefore accordingly, they are trained in line with what they are proficient in.

Persistence: Some individuals are quick to give up or discard ideas in most situations that seems to them as not yielding the desired results. But through persistency, the would-be youth entrepreneur when he is discovered as being persistent has to be nurtured so that the skill to be imparted to them is channeled in the right direction for enhanced entrepreneurship.

Failure Management: This is another important internal factor that leads to sustainability in entrepreneurship and should be well tutored when training the youth in entrepreneurial skill. This is necessary since it will enable the trainer to understand the demand of the trainee and thus allow them to understand that when there is an initial failure in an initiative does not mean an end to the initiative, but for a closer observation toward success.

Self Confidence: This is an internal skill that the trainer should bear in mind so as to boost the viability of the youth entrepreneur. This will enable the youth to have confidence in whatever line of business they undertake as they may constantly come in

contact with people and need to build up the confidence of the people to accepting their products.

Fund Management: It is actually a fact that, it is not every person that can manage funds. While some are extravagant about it, others are prudent or conservative about it. The necessary training needs to be given in this regard.

Similarly the external factors are expatiated upon as follows:

Goal setting: This skill has to be developed as it is the key to the persistency of the youth entrepreneur. When goals are clearly defined and laid out, the training and education of the youths in actualizing set goals becomes focal point. This enables the youth to be focused and committed to the attainment of the goals.

Monitoring Skills: Monitoring as used here refers to constant follow up of developed plans. The youth should be trained in this regard, since it will enable them to have a grip of the business before errors sets in.

Marketing Skill: This skill is very important to be developed in the youths through training and education as it is a vital tool in making sure that the youths are prepared in marketing of their line of business as youth entrepreneurs.

The Environment: The same environment cannot be applied to different line of business or products. In the light of the above, they should be trained and educated in assessing the type of environment suitable for a particular line of business or production.

Training and Education in Entrepreneurial Skill

Training of the youths and educating them is imperative if the success of youth entrepreneurs are to contribute to socio-economic development in a given country. There are various forms through which youths could be given training and education in acquiring entrepreneurial skills. The training and education can take the form of formal or informal way.

Formal Training and Education

The formal training and education of the youths in entrepreneurial skill to the writer of this paper should take effect from the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions respectively. Training the youths in a formal setting helps to produce graduates who can use the human and capital resources at their disposal to initiate projects that are profitable, gives self employment and to initiate project that are profitable. According to Aigbongiasede (2008), entrepreneurship education is a vehicle for teaching students to look for a need or a problem and create a solution for it.

Entrepreneurial skills can be developed through seminars, conferences, workshops and skills acquisition centres. Entrepreneurial skills can also be developed through vocational and technical training colleges. Through training and education,

skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding necessary for a successful entrepreneurship take-off are impacted and developed in the youths. In his contribution to youth empowerment, Ekah (2007) noted that

Given the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the peculiarities of the business and socio-economic environment as well as the competitive nature of the co-corporate word, training the youths, bridges the gap, equip and empower them to excel in their chosen endeavours and embraces entrepreneurial initiatives.

Still on the need to train youths and educate them, Aigbongiasede (2008) observed that entrepreneurs all have different ideas and untapped wealth of talents that entrepreneurs have the ability to see what those who were there previously could not see and to do that which had not existed before. How can this be achieved in youth who are not exposed and have their talents developed?

It is in the light of this that vocational technical programmes should be intensified as it provides people with the much needed skills and knowledge in different fields of human endeavour, ranging from business, auto-mechanics, computer appreciation, marketing, arts and crafts among others and the trainers could be hired or employed to give the desired training and education to the teeming youths who can be empowered to harness their potentials in the act of entrepreneurship and developing them in the entrepreneurial skills.

Informal Training and Education

Youth entrepreneurs can also acquire skills in an internal setting. This is necessary so that the gap between the literate and illiterate youth could be bridged in the course of training. This necessity has given rise to the establishment of skills acquisition centres across the states in Nigeria to cater for the needs of youths entrepreneurs in training and educating them under the tutorage of resource personnel.

Adenekan (2009) noted that the contributions of skills acquisition to national economy can be felt directly or indirectly, from sports to economic growth from employment creation to poverty reduction. To this end, stakeholders in the industry has engaged in different skills acquisition training programems and also set up agencies and institutions for this purpose in the area of commercial and industrial training.

The informal training and education of youths in entrepreneurial skills has given way to a more defined apprenticeship system of training in recent times as the trainees are given tutorial in semi-formal ways, the only difference being in their level of literacy, should be put into consideration. In order to adequately prepare the youths towards becoming successful entrepreneurs, their training and education in entrepreneurial skills cannot be over emphasized.

The following are the challenges that could hinder the training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skills.

In order to successfully train the youths in entrepreneurial skills, the following challenges should be addressed:

1. Poor funding
2. Lack of in-depth research into target audience
3. Poor policy implementation and strategy
4. Lack of commitment
5. Lack of qualified personnel

i. **Poor Funding**

The major challenge to be addressed is the pattern of funding the training and education of youth entrepreneurs. Funds should be budgeted and such funds should be channeled to the appropriate use. When funds for skills acquisition centres are not made available or when made available are diverted to other areas or taken possession of by single individual, the aim of the funding will not be realized. When funds are properly channeled to the rightful area, every other aspect of the training and education will be adequately executed.

In aligning with the above, Omoregie (2011) noted that funds earmarked be accessible, that all bottlenecks in accessing these funds to be eradicated so that the desired objects for the training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skills to be positively felt. Monitoring accessibility of the funds could yield great results as it will allow funds to get to the point where it is needed.

ii. **Lack of In-depth Research**

Research should be carried out to adequately know the target audience to direct the entrepreneurial training towards. This challenge is a problem as it does not give accurate figure of the population of youths, proximity to source of material, ethnicity acceptance of line of training. When research is carried out the actual population of youths as a target audience will be known and appropriate measure could then be put in place to achieve success. When researches are carried out, what to do, where, when and whom to do it will be clearly indicated and executed.

iii. **Poor Policy Implementation and Strategy**

The success of any venture depends on its policy statement and strategic planning. This is a challenge to achieving the desired objectives of training the youths in entrepreneurial skill. When policies are not adequately formulated and plans are not strategically laid down it brings set back which will not be ideal for attaining set objectives.

iv. **Lack of Commitment**

The success of training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skill depends on total commitment to the overall aim of the programme. This commitment is a source of challenge to attaining the much needed outcome as the commitment of all concerned, the planners, the executors and the beneficiaries is worthy of not here, and if adequately

committed to set goals, the desired success could be achieved since lack of commitment brings about set back and abandonment of the programme.

v. **Lack of Qualified Resource Personnel**

Resource personnel may lack the pre-requisites to handle the trainees and this can lead to lack of interest on the part of the trainees. This challenge should be carefully addressed as it is the bedrock for the survival of the training and educating the youths in entrepreneurial skills.

Lack of capacity for planning and management, limited funding, inadequate information, monitoring are challenges to youth training and education in entrepreneurial skills and should be adequately addressed if success is to be attained.

Prospects in Training and Educating the Youths in Entrepreneurial Skills

When youths are adequately trained and educated in entrepreneurial skill and empowered, the under listed are the benefits:

- i. The youths are impacted with adequate skills, knowledge and competence that enable them to succeed on their chosen line of entrepreneurship business thereby creating employment.
- ii. It leads to a reduction in extreme poverty level as the individual becomes self sustenance creating wealth through innovations.
- iii. Over dependence on government for employment is reduced as the youths are able to create jobs for themselves and for others.
- iv. It leads to socio-economic development as the benefits impacts on the social and economic sectors through creation of wealth and payment of taxes.
- v. It leads to reduction in youth restiveness as the youths are engaged through job creation.
- vi. The level of cult induced activities will be reduced as the youths will no longer have the time to idle away their life and time, but channel it to innovative purposes.
- vii. It reduces over dependence on foreign goods as varieties of goods are made available by the youth entrepreneurs.
- viii. It breaks monopolistic tendencies as individuals or group of individuals could undertake the production of same products.

Conclusion

Youth entrepreneurial training and education can achieve its success if proper implementation of government policies and programmes are strictly and religiously monitored and implemented. The society should be sensitized to accept and embrace valued culture that emphasizes skill acquisition. More importantly, funding of training and education should be adequately made by government and supporting agencies. The youths should be re-oriented towards valuing what they can do with their hands and brain as this will reduce over dependence on government. In a resume, this paper is of the opinion that, there is still more to be done through deemphasizing a system of a theoretical knowledge at the expense of entrepreneurial training and education. It is the

contention of the writers that, this paper will bring about self employment and equally calls for a change in the mind set among the youths from that of immediate prosperity to that of embracing entrepreneurial training and education that enhances innovativeness and creation of wealth.

Suggestions

Based on the foregoing discussion, the paper ventured to suggest the following ways of getting the youths to be involved in entrepreneurial training and education.

- i. To establish a concise research to gather adequate statistical data on the target audience of youths to be trained.
- ii. The educational level of the youths should be put into consideration so as to know their literacy level for grouping and training purposes.
- iii. Funds earmarked for training of youths in entrepreneurial skills should be monitored so that it gets to the actual source of utilization.
- iv. The youths should be empowered through soft loans for take-off on completion of the training process.
- v. There should be ease in penetrating the market with the aid of government agencies when a young entrepreneur comes up with a new innovation or products.

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