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# ENHANCING LEARNING AND EARNING THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL FRIENDLY CURRICULAR FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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By

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## **Abstract**

*The crux of this paper enhancing learning and earning through entrepreneurial friendly curricular for sustainable national development, is the infusion of entrepreneurial studies into school curricular to help in producing skilled graduates in three levels of institutions of learning, functional and productive. The paper x-rays the deficiencies in the nation educational program which lacks the capacity to prepare its beneficiaries for job creation and self-reliance. It examined the dynamics of education as a panacea to human problems which has necessitated periodic curricular review in line with societal needs and aspirations at any given period and therefore called for integrating entrepreneurship into school curricular. In doing this, the nation is assured of creating an entrepreneurial class that will take the burden of job creation off the shoulders of the government, through mindset re-engineering, business and entrepreneurial skills development, vocational skills development and venture incubation and mentoring. It further looked at entrepreneurial skill acquisition as the role of curricular in producing functional graduates for sustainable national development and concluded by making some recommendations one of which is making curricular students'-centered, practically- oriented and periodically reviewed.*

Earning means income from paid employment or profit from investment while learning simply put, refers to the acquisition of knowledge skills. However, it is the acquisition of these knowledge and skills that assist the possessor to create employment or job not only for himself but sometimes for others.

Unfortunately, Nigerian education system lack the capacity to produce graduates who are skillful and creative.

This is further buttressed by Arikewufo (2000) who affirmed that the type of education operated in Nigeria in both pre and post colonial Nigeria never accorded the individuals any functional skills for self-reliance. Students generally receive little or no training in skills useful for employment in the country's labour market. In line with this, Maduewesi (2005) observed that students are generally educated in areas like arts and

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sometimes, in the sciences which gave rise to what had been described as “white-collar syndrome”, that is, the attitude of workers who shun works that demand physical energy and prefer to work in comfortable and air conditioned offices funded by government. It is obvious that “clerical mentality” or “white collar job syndrome” cannot last long because the population of school leavers contesting for clerical positions far out-numbers the available opportunities. (Fagbulu, 1983) To solve the problem of unemployment, there is need for more functional and skill focused education. The education curricular as the initiator of such education is the main concern of this discourse.

### **Curriculum**

According to Wheeler (1978), “Curriculum is the planned experiences offered to the learner under the guidance of the school”. In the words of Tyler (1971), curriculum is “all of the learning of students which is planned and directed by the school to attain educational goals”. While in the modern sense, it is seen as the structured facts and principles of intended learning. All of these definitions capture curriculum as a predetermined document properly planned with the intention of using it to achieve some desirable results, hence, it planning is done by experts who are expected to convert the wishes, aspirations, needs, etc of the people into core curriculum and extra curricular activities in the form of learning, experiences and content.

### **Curriculum Dynamics**

The indispensability of education as a panacea to all human problems have always given course to periodic curriculum review in addressing contemporary problems faced by such society. In doing so, Sadiq (2005) implores the curriculum planners to:

*“Make efforts to study the activities the people engage in and design the kind of curriculum that helps them carry out these activities more effectively; be concerned with those things that are useful and relevant to the society including general needs as well as the needs of the learners”.*

The foregoing, according to Tyler (1971) attests to the continuous and dynamic nature of the curriculum as a product of society. From the above assertion, it becomes clear that the most appropriate strategy to make education more functional and reduce societal crises and poverty among others, is the acquisition of skills to enhance human productivity. This, therefore, is the link between curriculum and entrepreneurship.

In going about these reforms, for a more functional education, some critical issues of national development that must be addressed by the educational system are:

- 1) How do we make education more relevant to present national imperatives ?.
- 2) How do we compete as a nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- 3) How do we create an entrepreneurial citizens that will take the burden of job creation off the shoulder of the government?

This last one is most apt to this chapter.

### **What is Entrepreneurship?**

The word “entrepreneurship” is derived from the French “entreprendre”, meaning “to undertake”. The entrepreneur is one who undertakes to organize, manage and assume the risk of a business.

Entrepreneurship therefore, can be defined as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential.

At this point, attempt are made to suggest a number of ways by which the curriculum can be made to produce functional graduates who are more of job creators rather than job seekers. They are:

1. Reloading of the curriculum contents
2. Re-skilling of existing human capital
3. Business and entrepreneurial skills development
4. Mindset re-engineering
5. Vocational skills development
6. Venture incubation and mentoring

### **Reloading of the Curriculum Contents**

The Nigerian educational system must be able to deal effectively with the global demands and challenges through reloading its curriculum contents. Acquisition of core life skills must be emphasized in the school system as a panacea to solving the challenges of everyday living in the present global dispensation.

These core life skills according to Jimoh (2007) include:

1. Decision making
2. Problem solving
3. Creative thinking
4. Critical thinking
5. Effective communication
6. Interpersonal relationships skills
7. Self-awareness
8. Empathy
9. Coping with emotions
10. Coping with stress

The above mentioned themes as part of learning experiences and the content anchored on these should be entrenched in different school subjects/courses curricular.

### **Re-skilling of Existing Human Capital**

For the existing human capital to meet the various global challenges such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) goals, entrepreneurship education, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) goals

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etc, the human capital in the teaching profession must undergo relearning and re-skilling for them to appreciate the new challenges and be able to cope with them for greater productivity on their part.

Therefore, adequate provision by way of finance and infrastructure must be made for the re-skilling of the existing work force to meet the challenges of the modern age. More importantly, adequate remuneration and conducive teaching/learning environment would go a long way in boosting production on the part of teaching staff and would also encourage good hands to join the teaching service. (FGN, 2004)

### **Business and Entrepreneurial Skills Development**

What is essential here as Utomi (2012) observed is refocusing on the teaching of business management and technical entrepreneurial skills such as planning and goal setting, decision making, human relation and business management skills and above all how to identify and seize opportunities where they exist.

### **Mindset Re-Engineering**

The expectation of Nigerian youths in various institutions of learning are picking already made jobs immediately after graduation. This thinking has made schooling synonymous with white collar jobs. This is a serious attitudinal problem and that is where mindset re-engineering should come in. Entrepreneurship education should be at the fore in changing this mindset already attuned towards securing paid jobs. When the focus is on acquiring life skills through vocational and entrepreneurship education, the nation can boost of a generation that are job creators instead of mere job seekers.

### **Vocational Skills Development**

The curricular should emphasize more of doing than theory. Acquisition of basic skills should be at the front burner of the curricular of the three levels of schooling, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary. This can be done through training on how to acquire basic skills. According to Covey (1999) such training should be in the areas of yogurt production, bread baking, vegetable oil production, interior decoration, yam powder production, soap making, welding and fabrication, culvert-rings production, tractor repairs, fish/fingerling production and bee keeping/honey production. At the primary school level, emphasis should be on basket making, weaving, carving, drawing, drama, etc. All these are to be incorporated in the curricular to enhance entrepreneurship development and skills acquisition.

The advantage is two fold. In the first place, the student is taught a skill or set of skills which he can fall back on to start a business. In the second place, he is introduced into the world of work which enables him or her to use his or her hands and tools to produce products.

### **Venture Incubation and Mentoring**

This relates to linking theory with practice. Establishment of entrepreneurship centres in the thinking of Ottih (2012) will ensure that students undergoing entrepreneurship development programmes are periodically exposed to business establishments either in the university demonstration enterprises or outside in private ventures in the form of holiday, IT posting or whole semester students industrial work exercises (SIWES) or attachment.

### **Creating the Entrepreneurial Generation: The Role of Curricular**

Integration of entrepreneurship studies into the curricular at all levels of schooling, (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) will prepare the youths to be responsible and enterprising individuals who will become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. Integrating entrepreneurship into school curricular from Onyeachu (2006) points of view will empower graduates, irrespective of their areas of specialization, with skills that will enable them engage in income-yielding ventures if they are unable to secure paid jobs.

It is a reorientation from the take-a-job mentality to the make-a-job mentality. Entrepreneurship education according to Okalla (2004), if integrated into academic vocational courses will focus on students finding opportunities and ideas that might be new and different or at least, those that serve specific needs that have not been met. Such ideas can be applied to any area of the students' special interest.

It does not require a business management course to explore entrepreneurial opportunities that abound. For instance if entrepreneurship is integrated into every course/subject, an accountant can think of running consultancy services within an environment where he lives. A pharmacist can set up a small pharmaceutical shop and a graduate of education can think of establishing a private school like day care/nursery for a start.

In all, entrepreneurship is simply trying to see a gap and how to fill this gap. Nwokolo (1997) noted that through the teaching of entrepreneurship skills, students would assume more responsibilities in job creation and this will give them on their graduation, a sharper focus on the field. Entrepreneurship education therefore can be viewed as a process of teaching people how to acquire skills through the study of school subjects and how to utilize these skills for self-sustenance and self-reliance.

Onyeachu (2009a) believed that entrepreneurship in education will help Nigerian youths to achieve the well cherished desire which is a transition from school to work to earn a living. This is necessary because the value system where everyone waits on

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government or private companies to employ them after graduation from tertiary institutions no longer meets the yearnings and aspirations of every Nigerian.

Onyeachu (2009b) remarked that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills provide profitable opportunities to those who will develop these virtually important skills. Integrating entrepreneurship education in school curricular in general and in tertiary education in particular is equally a way of putting the educational system on the desired pedestal of efficiency and functionality to meet the challenges of national needs and global competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

When all these expected gains begin to accrue as a result of linking learning and earning through entrepreneurial friendly curricular, sustainable national development become imperative, where development is seen as the radical transformation of political, economic, social and traditional system of any given nation to ensure that, there is positive improvement in the welfare of the citizens, including sustained increase in income per head and national income, better education, better health and housing facilities. On the other hand sustainability generally refers to meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generation.

Therefore, a development path is sustainable if and only if the achievements of life for the general improvement of welfare of citizen now do not compromise the welfare of future generation.

## **Conclusion**

There is much crave in the educational system for a functional education that will re-orientate the youths towards self-employment as a major component of the training programme .Thus, Nigeria should lay emphasis on functional entrepreneurial education to be able to cope with the high shortage of skilled workers in the country and to sensitize the youths to the ideals of being self-reliant ie self-employed. Helping individual to develop their talent remains the inescapable responsibility of education. Entrepreneurial development which emphasizes individual skill development will stem the tide of mass unemployment and poverty as well as reduce to an appreciable level the spate of vices associated with unemployment and idleness. It is hoped that in the near future, and with good entrepreneurial practice in Nigeria, the problem of unemployment will be a history.

## **Recommendations**

If education is to meet the challenges of preparing youths and the adults for self-employment, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. There is need to adequately infuse entrepreneurship education into all the school curricular.
2. There should be proper implementation of educational policies and framework as a viable option for boosting development.

3. Successful business men, women and artisans should be engaged from time to time as resource persons.
4. Finally, curricular should be student- centered, practically oriented, and periodically reviewed.

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