

MANAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION AND CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

There is no doubt that high unemployment rate continues to be the bane of school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria due to lack of skills for self – employment and besides the quality of products of these institutions have further led to unemployability. With more children enrolled in the basic education, inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum at this level is believed to raise the hope for a sustainable future. This paper examines the place of entrepreneurship education in UBA programme, its management challenges and proffers suggestions for effective implementation.

The universal basic education programme is an educational innovation introduced by the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to universalize access to and ensure quality in basic education for every Nigeria child of school going age. The fundamental aim is to get rid of all impediments to educational participation and extend educational provision of good quality to all categories of children. The UBE programme is distinctive in that it has widened the scope of basic education from the traditional primary level to include junior secondary education as well. Like all other educational innovations, the successful implementation of UBE lies predominantly on the extent to which the child aspect is taken into consideration because of the sustainable development of the nation. Sustainable development involves expanding the choices available to individuals such that they are able to develop their full potentials within the framework of the national child development policy (FRN 1999).

Empowerment of the children involved, inculcating and fostering in them the right knowledge, skills and attitudes for the attainment of self – actualization and capacity to participate responsibly in the socio-economic and political life of the nation.

The Universal Basic Education Programme

The UBE programme is a reform measure, which is aimed at addressing inequality in educational opportunity at the basic level both in terms of access and quality, specifically, the programme was introduced by the federal government in order to remove distortions and inconsistencies in the basic education delivery and to reinforce the implementation of the national policy on education. These are in addition to providing greater access to and ensuring quality basic education throughout the country.

The Federal Government was concerned that states and local governments, which had the constitutional responsibility for basic education delivery, were unable to effectively drive, and ensure unhindered access to quality basic education. Consequently, the government resorted to constitutional provision which empowered it to set and maintain standards in education. The Federal Government

enacted the compulsory, free, universal basic education Act, 2004. Meanwhile, it is important to state that the UBE Act drew its powers from Section (3) of the 1999 constitution, which enjoined government to provide free and compulsory basic education as well as item 60 (c) on part 1 of the second schedule of the constitution, which conferred powers on the national assembly to make laws with respect to setting minimum standards of education at all levels.

Above all, the constitution further provides that states and local governments are the owners of basic education institutions and should therefore be the managers of such institutions. However, the power relating to the setting of minimum standards of all aspects of education in the country are rested with the federal government. As the UBE Act stated,

“Without prejudice to the provisions of item 30 of part II of the second schedule and item 2 (9) of the fourth schedule to the 1999 constitution dealing with primary school education, the federal government intervention under this act shall only be an assistance to the states and local governments in Nigeria for the purposes of uniform and qualitative basic education throughout Nigeria”

We can thus conclude by saying that UBE is a nine – year educational intervention programme by the federal government, which is designed to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty with the aim of stimulating and accelerating national development, political consciousness, national integration and development. The guidelines for operating UBE programme recognises the need to build effective bridges and create linkages between governments, civil society organizations, private provider and communities so that the provision of basic education shall be the collective responsibility of all.

Need for Entrepreneurship Education Intervention

Any education is worth its salt when it solves some basic social problems. Knowledge is power and also business is an idea. A lot of ideas die with their owners without accomplishing any goal. Nigeria is among the richest countries in the world naturally yet about 80 percent (Federal Office of Statistics) of its people wallow in poverty, what a contradiction. Even with various poverty alleviation and job creation schemes, the ratio of unemployment continues to be embarrassingly high. Although the demand for white collar jobs is very sticky, more continue to join the market, some without saleable skills. It is envisaged that when the Universal Basic Education (UBE) begins to turn out its products into the labour markets, if there are no adequate provisions of jobs or a corresponding alternative to wage employment, then the UBE will die because parents will become reluctant to send their children to school. Children too will become unwilling to go to school. The society’s cost of education will be high, the benefit will be low. It is therefore; because of this that the writer feels that entrepreneurship education from primary to tertiary level should be incorporated in the school curriculum. It should be part of formal and informal education that parents, teachers, government, community and other stakeholders in the education sector should cooperate in providing. This is because, the already loaded educational curriculum cannot provide for an in depth entrepreneurship education. If the school curriculum provides the framework and foundation, the flesh can be covered by informal educational agencies.

The Nigerian Child

A child could simply be defined as any person below the age of 18 years. Nigerian children have suffered because of the socio – economic, political and cultural problems of the country, in spite of the numerous intentions of government. Education is supposed to assist to raise children that are bright, strong and capable of handling the affairs of the country in future. Society is concerned with the full development and protection of these children.

Newsletter (1998) quoting Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) provides a grim picture of poverty in Nigeria. The findings of (FOS) revealed that Nigerian households were categorised into three, based on poverty assessment profiles i.e. Core poor, Moderate poor and Non – poor groups.

For every ten (10) households, seven and half (7 ½) fall in the first two categories. Poverty is more felt by women and children. The orientation of our education system is toward wage employment. Thus, a Nigerian child usually thinks about wage employment first.

The dignity of labour is not cherished as before and therefore some jobs are not regarded highly. Indeed, many youths think self employment is the second best. These children even when they go to school may not reach a stage where they can possess saleable skills. Although, education is meant to assist them to be more innovative, initiative and creative, most are not, because of the deficiency in our educational system particularly, because it does not emphasise most of those (aforementioned) qualities or make them seem unimportant or some aspects totally neglected. Eighty percent (80%) of Nigerian children do not have access to formal education (NCRIC child rights, 2009, Illiteracy programme 2009 reports).

Components of Basic Education

According to Olukoya (2006) in 1949 at the UNESCO general conference, the necessary components of basic education were identified and include literacy skills, vocational skills, domestic skills, artistic skills, knowledge of hygiene, of simple and practical principle of science, of basic school principles and other application in law, government, economics, social organizations, and knowledge of other cultures. In addition to the aforementioned, development of such personal attributes as initiative, freedom from superstitions and appreciation of alternative points of view and development of spiritual and moral qualities are included. All these components of basic education as listed by UNESCO, if pursued in our current basic educational programme will produce Nigerian children that are equipped for the future development of the nation. Without entrepreneurship education, some deficiencies may be discovered in that desired basic education.

Educational Expansion

For the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE), it is expected that literacy level will be considerably enhanced resulting in improvement in educational standard and more job seekers will continuously enter the labour market. An already inelastic demand for labour has made even graduates to now stay at home seeking jobs for years. Another dimension of improved education is the fact that house helps may not be readily available and therefore working mothers without young children must make alternative arrangement for the young ones. Furthermore, husbands may not wish their wives to leave when alternative arrangements are not very convenient and affordable. Mothers too may have to forgo wage income for self employment to complement family incomes and reduce boredom in the home. These and several others are some of the implications for expanding education.

The two segments of secondary education, JSS and SSS occupy a critical position in the education system because they play a dual role of preparing students for higher education, preparing students for the labour market directly. In either of the two cases, this level of education does not take care of entrepreneurship education as it is supposed to be.

Table 1: Primary school age group (6-11 years) population census figure

	2000			2001			2002		
Age	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
6	1,757,802	1,680,278	3,438,080	1,819,366	1,736,475	3,555,841	1,880,030	1,797,248	3,677,278
7	1,691,664	1,624,867	3,316,531	1,751,683	1,674,496	3,426,179	1,811,206	1,730,448	3,541,654
8	1,628,884	1,574,728	3,203,612	1,687,004	1,619,080	3,306,84	1,745,584	1,668,635	3,414,219
9	1,568,199	1,528,707	3,097,906	1,624,969	1,569,696	3,194,665	1,682,357	1,613,313	3,295,690
10	1,613,250	1,488,221	3,101,471	1,565,502	1,524,728	3,090,230	1,621,064	1,564,680	3,185,744
11	1,461,685	1,454,682	2,916,367	1,509,547	1,484,512	2,994,059	1,561,813	1,520,758	3,082,571
T	9,722,484	19,073,967	9,958,071	9,958,071	9,608,987	19,567,058	10,302,054	9,895,082	20,197,136

	2000			2001			2002		
Age	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
6	1,938,890	1,859,409	3,798,299	1,994,450	1,919,450	3,914,268	2,046,774	1,972,704	4,091,478
7	1,869,528	1,789,644	3,659,172	1,925,689	1,848,759	3,774,457	1,978,553	1,904,292	3,882,845
8	1,803,083	1,724,443	3,527,526	1,859,085	1,782,873	3,641,958	1,912,595	1,838,171	3,750,766
9	1,709,508	1,662,794	3,372,302	1,794,996	1,718,458	3,513,454	1,848,700	1,774,533	3,623,233
10	1,677,723	1,607,567	3,285,290	1,733,452	1,656,973	3,390,425	1,786,946	1,712,494	3,499,400
11	1,617,168	1,559,680	3,176,848	1,673,101	1,601,841	3,274,942	1,727,417	1,651,173	3,378,590
T	10,615,900	10,203,537	20,819,437	10,981,150	10,528,354	21,509,504	11,300,985	10,83,367	22,154,352

Source: National Population Census 1999 analysis (medium variant extrapolation). National population commission publication, 2008.

Figure 2 above depicts the gradual increase in transition rate as the years rolled by. This shows that more and more children participated in schooling especially with the awareness offered by the UBE programme and the continuous effort of the federal government of Nigeria at transforming the education sector to a meaningful adventure to the Nigerian child.

Table 2: Number of pupils completing primary six by gender

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
M	1,340,425	1,378,609	1,331,113	1,345,733	1,680,654	1,456,038	1,543,767
F	1,051,352	1,096,063	1,054,730	1,100,030	1,345,367	1,153,006	1,230,525
M + F	2,391,777	2,483,672	2,385,843	2,454,763	3,026,021	2,609,044	2,774,292

Table 3: Shows the number of pupils who graduate from primary school each year

Primary six percentage completion rate						
1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
74	95	88	84	102	82	85
72	75	71	71	85	68	70
73	85	80	78	94	75	78

Completion rate is expressed as the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in primary one in a given school year who are expected to pass out in primary six. It assess the holding power and internal efficiency of an education system vis a vis retention of pupils/students and magnitude of drop out. Completion rate approaching 100% indicated a high level of retention and low incidence of drop out, this however varies from class to class. This indicator is of particular interest since this level is considered as a form of sustainable literacy.

Table 4: Enrolment in SSS by sex 1999-2005

Year	SSI		SS II		SSIII		Enrolment For SSS		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
1999	320,823	273,681	301,016	251,763	281,689	229,639	903,528	755,083	1,658,611
2000	356,799	298,427	327,419	273,320	313,009	258,080	997,227	829,827	1,827,054
2001	404,585	327,181	365,718	301,205	345,057	277,191	1,115,360	905,577	2,020,937
2002	442,417	355,598	397,831	324,609	360,971	292,108	1,201,219	972,314	2,173,533
2003	589,346	465,406	531,476	421,999	458,343	360,229	1,579,165	1,247,634	2,826,799
2004	572,165	446,340	528,464	411,224	466,382	347,059	1,567,011	1,204,623	2,771,634
2005	571,272	448,392	532,940	419,807	454,826	346,181	1,559,038	1,214,380	2,773,418

Table 5: Summary of enrolment in JSS by sex, 1999-2005

Year	JSS I		JSS II		JSSIII		Enrolment For JSS		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
1999	394,794	313,729	391,694	438,221	356,592	290,944	1,143,080	1,042,894	2,185,974
2000	448,016	356,825	422,184	343,298	394,703	310,265	1,264,903	1,012,388	2,277,291
2001	525,760	413,143	782,085	388,844	423,788	346,548	1,431,633	1,148,535	2,580,168
2002	537,453	414,780	533,745	423,023	675,710	366,026	1,746,909	1,203,828	2,950,737
2003	736,578	551,726	705,785	545,729	641,336	503,490	2,083,699	1,600,945	3,684,644
2004	695,195	534,530	666,480	524,621	610,962	476,140	1,972,637	1,535,291	3,507,928
2005	692,394	623,666	673,405	522,441	618,588	493,669	1,984,387	1,639,776	3,624,163

Sources: Statistics of Education in Nigeria (1999-2005) P. 57

Now, it seems necessary action is taking place, if it will be followed up religiously as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is organizing workshops for the development of vocational and technological trade subjects curricula into junior and senior secondary, this will be part and parcel of entrepreneurship education that will take care of children who are out of school and employed.

Recently, the United Nations Children Fund said that more than ten (10) million Nigerian children of school age were out of school, making them prone to the activities of human traffickers and that some children who are meant to be in school are found to be into prostitution, trafficking and child labour. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship education if planned and managed well can bail the nation out of this satanic evil.

Entrepreneurship Education

Usually education is categorized as either general or vocational. The concept entrepreneurship has been taken by economics and management experts to imply the willingness and ability to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and the ability to establish and manage the business concern successfully based on the identified opportunity. It is believed that successful entrepreneurs, large or small, create jobs, add value to society's well being and lead to greater utilization of both human and material resources and indeed contributes to society's advancement (Akanbi, 2002)

Any education that leads to offering the recipients such as behavioural change will be regarded as entrepreneurship education. An entrepreneurship should possess some personal technical skills, business management skills plus knowledge of lines of business. Furthermore, such individuals should possess some personal characteristics including self confidence, high motivation, a lot of drive and energy and leadership qualities while it is not impossible to become an entrepreneur without formal education, through apprenticeship or trial and error, its provision through formal education can be more certain. It is therefore on this premise that such education when given to our youths under UBE can catch more of them while they are still young.

Objectives and Status of Entrepreneurship Education at Basic Education Level

The objectives of business studies can then be expanded to include the objectives of entrepreneurship education. Such objectives include that students should at the end of the programme be able to:

- Identify characteristics and functions of entrepreneurship, Possess positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, Learn how to seek relevant information about business, Think of self employment as good as those of wage or salary earners, Appreciate the dignity of work, Become less risk averse, more creative, more innovative, Make simple business plans, Manage small/micro businesses, Integrate what has been studied under business studies for entrepreneurship and The course, business studies, should be moved from vocational to become part of the core section of the school curriculum.

What is to be taught: A critical examination of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum could reveal that the envisaged entrepreneurship education is not directly present completely. Although, business studies are offered, it is found under pre-vocational courses that students can offer

any two. This implies that business studies are not a compulsory course for all JSS students. Even if it is made compulsory, the course does not cater for all that one will regard as rudimentary entrepreneurship education. However, business studies syllabus can be enriched to incorporate the missing points and provide for entrepreneurship education and still be a pre-vocational course.

Even at our primary level of education, pupils should be given sufficient practical training that will emphasise qualities of self – reliance, innovativeness and creativeness. From the objectives, apart from the existing contents of business studies, the course should incorporate the following suggested content Characteristics and functions of entrepreneurs, Benefit and problems of self – employment and wage employment, Business as an idea, Identify needs, Management resources, Managing small businesses, Business plans, Business ethics and Benefit of wage employment.

To be an Entrepreneur: Hire right, Network a lot, Borrow wisely, Keep proper account, stay on the right side of the law, do not neglect your health, and Put your family in the picture of your business.

Some Problems and Challenges those Entrepreneurs Must be Aware of

Absence of holidays, Self Assessment, Paying the price/shoulder sacrifice (profit/losses), Market friction, Feasibility study/survey, Assess if your product will be cherished, Commitment and dedication, How to be unique, Quick decision and Exploit your integrity.

Constraints in Entrepreneurship: How to source for capital, Lack of collateral, Lack of initiative, Failure to identify personal qualities, Fear of failure and how to overcome it, Inexperience and lack of knowledge and Size of business to manage.

Who to Teach: Specialist in business subjects should be capable of teaching the course with very simple and appropriate methods. The teacher should be at least being an NCE holder, as stipulated by the National Policy on Education.

How to Teach Entrepreneurship Education and Resources to use

The teacher should use variety of methods including (reading) assorted assignments role playing method, well – prepared lesson for the students. Apart from the teacher, the students should actively participate in this exercise. The teacher should obtain suitable instructional materials like success digest, business times or any business and management column of newspaper, video cassettes, books, etc. The internet should serve as a very useful source of information to encourage the learners depending on the environment. The available materials and the funds provided should be properly utilized while improvisation for other required instructional materials must be borne in mind by the teacher.

When to offer it: Since Universal Basic Education (UBE) is supposed to be a 9- year course programme, it is proposed that it should be formally and gradually introduced in the 7th year (i.e. JSS). This will allow enough time for the students to have a lot of understanding about entrepreneuring. It is expected that by that time they should have start making plans about their future in terms of employment. The introduction of the course at that level will therefore assist them to assist them to start deciding either to go in for self employment or wage employment.

Assessment: Since it has been proposed that it should be integrated into the business studies/vocational curriculum, it is expected that for continuous assessment (C.A) and terminal examination (T.A), that aspect be assessed as other components.

Conclusion

The informal sector (small scale production) is the engine room of developing economics of nations. Most people are found in micro or mini business and no doubt is boosted by elementary entrepreneurship education. Nigeria with its abundant resources is still among the poorest countries in the world. Poverty, either in relative or absolute form is severe for the female population and can only be alleviated and consequently eliminated by joint efforts. Contributing to production by home based and non home based ventures can increase total production and subsequently improve standard of living. It is also believed that if such education is and subsequently improve standard of living. It is also believed that if such education is given, many hidden talents and untapped creativity, innovativeness etc of our youths can be advanced.

It is now clear that the private sector can increasingly play important roles in developing Nigeria. The privatization effort is being intensified and promises to remain on the key instruments for the reform and restructuring of the crisis bedevilling our economy. This also supports the need to nurture our youths to focus more on being self-employed or creators of job. With the reduction in government participation in the economy, labour employed by that sector will reduce at least.

The economy of Nigeria is moving away from the socialist economy towards capitalism. In various economies of the world, privatization is gaining firmer grounds. Indeed, developing countries have discovered that their economies cannot move much without increasing private participation in their production.

Recommendations

Every child (male or female) should be trained in at least one vocation

- At home, parents especially mothers, should teach the children to be busy and creative and possibly earn some income
- During vacations (short/long) parents and guardians can send their children to rudimentary and practical entrepreneur, trainings (i.e. indigenous local vacations). This programme is now getting popular in tertiary institutions both private and public e.g. barbing saloon, National Directorate on Employment (NDE)and poverty alleviation programmes
- Educated females should sell the ideas of entrepreneurship education to others around them
- To enhance better development of the children non governmental organizations can also contribute their quota by organizing workshops and seminars at weekends or during vacations for the children, bringing in inspirational speakers, successful entrepreneurs and management experts.
- Professional associations can also organize short courses in entrepreneuring, during vacation for the immediate environment
- Training of children in some vocations apart from their area of specialization should be encouraged to cultivate the habit of dignity in labour and business ethics
- Every child should learn some skills at home or outside home and should be made to use the skill for some income generation (such vocational skills are around us)

- Enabling environment should be created for small businesses to thrive and flourish. Such environment must contain better infrastructures to sustain the businesses e.g. power supply, constant water supply for such related vocation as the dye, which is taken for granted in some developing countries
- Government should advocate for compulsory student industrial working experience training scheme for all basic education students to enhance practical entrepreneurship education.

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