

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM:

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE BASICS

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ABSTRACT

This Paper is a short discourse on Entrepreneurship and Curriculum Development. It delineates the procedure for the development of a good Curriculum following the cyclical and continuing process. It highlights the societal needs of the nation in an era-related pattern as a guide to provide appropriate education for the citizens. Elements of entrepreneurship and diversification in existing national curriculum are discussed. The paper attempts to provide the required inputs for entrepreneurial education curriculum. The issues raised in this presentation are considered the basics for successful entrepreneurial education for Nigeria if government has the will power to deal with presentation bottlenecks.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of designing an entrepreneurial education curriculum for Nigerian Education System has been in public domain for some decades now without adequate attention to its proper development. It is a fact that the development of any nation depends largely on the quality of education it provides for its citizens. For such reason, great nations do not toy with their education. A high quality education provides the recipient personal fulfilment, better social skills and more diverse employment opportunities. It reduces the percentage of youths and idle graduates waiting for government employment and is capable of healing the Nigerian nation of the on-going certificate insanity. This level of education is not “universal schooling” which Nigerians have been exposed to lately. It is an enterprise that requires provision of quality inputs for high quality outputs.

THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIETAL NEEDS AND EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

In all generations the societal needs dictate the trend of its education provision. Nigeria’s pre-colonial education was largely based on apprenticeship. Then, education was for survival; there was no idle person for all had to go through some training or the other to meet personal needs. Similarly, before the celebrated curriculum conference of 1969, educational need of Nigeria was mainly and simply, basic literacy to meet the societal needs then. At that time, the job

market demanded for people who could read, write and perform basic financial transactions (the 3Rs), hence knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic was emphasised in all schools as more community grammar schools began to emerge. This system of education was good enough for Missionaries and Colonial governments who needed interpreters, clerks and account clerks to support their various enterprises in Nigeria. In the 70s, available employment opportunities in government agencies began to dwindle. Industries and few corporate organizations which could engage people failed to change the scope of the societal needs.

The 1969 Curriculum Conference held from the 8th to 12th September, was the first national attempt to analyse the educational needs of Nigeria. The need to articulate national guidelines and requirements for the effective administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government emerged. This culminated in the 1977 policy document known as the National Policy on Education. Since then, Federal Government has consistently followed up on the policy reviews. The first edition of 1977 has been successively revised five times to date (1981, 1988, 2004, 2007, and 2014). Each edition acknowledged the fact that the revisions of the policy document were necessitated by the need to address “noticeable gaps in content and provisions” that emerged in the course of implementation. These updates hopefully were all aimed at making the document

give adequate attention to new opportunities and challenges. This procedure is in order if the policy guidelines must be relevant to the societal needs. However, the frequencies of the reviews may be considered too rapid for a good curriculum development. There is no overt evidence either to show that these “noticeable gaps’ were clearly communicated with the grass root implementers .

In every teaching and learning event, similar gaps do exist and generally in the implementation of educational plans. Practitioners of education would often experience gaps between what they intended and what they are able to achieve. It is an accepted procedure of monitoring progress because desired educational goals could fail for various reasons. For instance:

- Intended objectives may not be realized because they were improperly defined or interpreted at inception;
- Practitioners may have applied wrong methods and strategies;
- The learning experiences selected and applied could have been unrelated to the needs and aspirations of the learners;
- The instrument used to screen the inputs could have been faulty;
- It could fail because the teachers used ineffective and inadequate instructional materials.

- They could also fail if the teachers used poor or unrelated techniques of evaluation to measure the achievements of the stated objectives, etc.

There will always be gaps between our educational theory and practice, or between intended objectives and achievements. Thus, the preoccupation of every successive government should be on how to put in place a working structure and mechanism to narrow the gap between what they intend to achieve for the learners and what they actually achieve. This calls for policy consistency, good monitoring structure and accurate documentation.

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION: NEEDS AND STRUCTURE

Entrepreneurial education is a life-long business. It should start from the home and progress through all levels to adulthood. The traditional communities in Nigeria had practiced some level of entrepreneurial education before the advent of Western Education. This should have been enhanced and not a complete abandonment as was experienced. This traditional system of education was basically apprenticeship in structure. The hunting skills, agrarian farming, fishing, mining, fashion designing, carpentry, welding, brick laying etc were simply passed from one generation to another. It was possible for hardworking youths in Nigeria to acquire multiple skills through this means of non-formal education. However, Nigeria like the proverbial dog that looked at its face in the river had unwittingly

dropped the bone it had for a bigger one which turned a mirage. Many graduates from Nigerian public schools today are neither competent in the 3Rs nor in the basic functional skills of their individual communities. Many graduates from higher institutions do not possess skills required by industries. Nigeria Economy is thus stifled. The Nigerian unemployment data in the 2nd quarter of 2016 stood at 13.3% (NBS, 2016). This is recorded as the highest since 2009. The inflation rate within the same period was 16.5% and is said to be the highest in the past 11years. With the massive job lost at the last quarter, these figures should be higher now. As Nigerian population is growing, the resources are dwindling too; hence the societal needs are escalating. With the current global economic recession and the high level of unemployment, the best approach is for Nigeria to reposition its education sector to meet the societal needs. Obanya (2009) had earlier called for “returning to real goals of education which is the cultivation of human talents and creative/imaginative potentials through all round development.” Curriculum development for Nigeria should therefore be influenced by these prevailing conditions, curriculum development being a dynamic process and capable of responding to the changing circumstances.

ELEMENTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DIVERSIFICATION IN THE EXISTING SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Policy Guideline:

Along with the policy reviews, the education system has witnessed frequent changes as well. The 9-5-2-3 system was changed for 6-3-3-4 with a great optimism and conviction of its appropriateness to address the national needs. Government did recognise the interdisciplinary value of entrepreneurship and so tried to weave it through the existing curriculum. It all began with the diversification of courses at secondary school level with the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1982. As at date, 34 courses tagged, "Trade and Entrepreneurship" subjects have been introduced/infused into the Curriculum of secondary school levels. If it were possible to be entrepreneurial by policy articulation only, Nigeria would have been cited the world over as a country operating entrepreneurship education curriculum.

The 6-3-3-4 was the system of education that came with great hope. **Community Comprehensive Colleges began to catch the interest of parents and students.** Attempt to discard it after three and half decades without proper evaluation and recycling appears pre-mature. Three years ago, two entrepreneurial general courses were also introduced into the undergraduate courses offered in Nigerian universities. In addition, there are few higher institutions experimenting on blended entrepreneurial curriculum. This is the appropriate time to carry out a preliminary evaluation of impact so far made.

Be that as it may, the educational needs in Nigeria at this time are more than policy articulation without systematic implementation strategies.

Skill Training Interventions: SIWES

Industrialists and other employers of university graduates were concerned about the quality of graduates churned out from Nigeria universities in Science and Technology related disciplines without adequate exposure to the practical components of their training. In 1973, the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), a tripartite programme involving the students, the Universities and the employers of labour funded by the Federal Government was introduced. This was jointly coordinated by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and National Universities Commission (NUC).

SIWES is therefore an effort to bridge the existing gap between theory and practice in engineering and technology, science, agriculture, media, management and other professional educational programmes. So far, some students on the scheme see the exposure as inadequate because in their opinion, some of the IT establishments lack modern equipment, some of the trainees are not visited throughout their IT periods and the duration is considered too short for impact.

Skill Training Interventions: Student Club ENACTUS

Some higher institutions in Nigeria have equally provided opportunities for students to benefit from both the formal and the other curriculum. Other curriculum or, what is often erroneously termed “extra curriculum” provides learning experiences from peer groups, mass media and parents. Significant among these is a student club working in partnership with business leaders to develop entrepreneurs for the future generations. One of such learning exposure is the ENACTUS club, formerly known as Students In-Free Enterprise (SIFE). This is a global non-profit and a community of students, academics and business leaders collaboratively influencing the youth in Higher Institutions. It is an organisation with a long standing commitment to using entrepreneurial action as catalyst for progress.

ENACTUS consists of:

Entrepreneurial – Igniting business innovations with integrity and passion;

Action – the experience of social impact that sparks social Enterprise;

Us – student, academic and business leaders collaboration to create a better world.

ENACTUS club works in teams to serve their communities by developing projects that utilize class room experiences to solve real life problems for real people. Their projects often concentrate on five major areas:

➤ Market economics

- Success and leadership skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial literacy
- Business ethics

The result of their projects is presented annually at regional, national and international competition fora. There are about 42 of such active teams in Nigerian higher institutions presently, carrying out 61 projects with over 2,000 students providing about 500,437 hours of volunteer services to their respective communities.

42 teams	2,000 Students
61 projects	500,437 Hours volunteered

There is need for a full baseline data on all of these experimental projects and the impact on participating students on graduation.

REQUIREMENT FOR AN ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND COMMON MISCONCEPTION

Entrepreneurship has to do with acquisition of skills in organisations, managing and assuming the risks of a business enterprise. An entrepreneur is one with initiative to create a product or establish a business line for profit. Such a person

is quick to identify business opportunities, seize it, study it and begin a small business of providing service, sales or product for profit with a positive attitude of 'I can make it or I will succeed'. An entrepreneur is therefore a dynamic self-motivated individual who is resourceful and willing to take financial risks. The required qualities pertinent in entrepreneurship may be summarized as follows:-

- Access to information and information handling skills
- Positive attitude to work and confidence in one's self
- Attractive personal values and positive self-image
- Deep knowledge of leadership skills
- Discipline etc.

Entrepreneurship education is hinged greatly on personality trait. It is based on a way of learning that pertains to the 'Affective Domain'. Unfortunately, this is an area where most of our learning objectives in regular school system seldom measure, because most of our learning objectives test cognitive skills instead. The end result is rote learning devoid of clear understanding and initiative.

The requirement of information, positive attitude, marketable social values and knowledge are obtained through reading and persevering search. Unfortunately, our background in basic Literacy is poor and the supporting environment for the development of reading and research skills has not been developed. Entrepreneurial skills are obtained by association and exposure through hands-on-

mentoring. Again, the implementation of the existing curriculum is so rigid, making no room for adequate hands-on-mentoring. Some people have mistakenly considered the inclusion of Business Education (Technical and Vocational) into the secondary school curriculum as entrepreneur education because they address the psychomotor skills. Students in vocational or business education programmes may have wonderful opportunities for job experience and personal means of making some money while in school unlike their peers in other disciplines. Yet, Business/Technical Education should not be confused with entrepreneurial education. It is possible to offer Technical or Vocational education courses in school without the students possessing the qualities of an entrepreneur. At analysis, the profile of an entrepreneur may reflect to a large extent the characteristics often attributed to vocational education. That of being action-oriented individuals, smart and industrious but further investigation may reveal that these character-traits and skills were imbibed from youth and not through exposure to formalized vocational or business education. The implication of this statement is that , not every Nigerian youth will be trained to be an entrepreneur irrespective of the richness of the curriculum.

WHERE ARE WE CURRENTLY ?

Today's labour market is highly competitive, and the world of work very dynamic. The challenges faced by the young graduates in Nigeria are multi-faceted. These include lack of experience in a complex corporate world, and, education that is too theoretical. Education is freedom and development when it is qualitative. So far in Nigeria, we have provided universal compulsory schooling that is not paying great attention to quality. In the last five years, an average of 31% of secondary school graduates is able to make 5 credits in their West Africa School Certificate Examination,(Ezekwesili,2016) .The curriculum gives the students no opportunity for critical thinking. The teaching contents are often knowledge and comprehensive based encouraging rote learning and recall answers at examinations, with no provision for higher-order skills like application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Lectures are largely devoid of skill-based goals and learning at the Affective level. The current education is on itself and industries are operating differently from what the schools are churning out. The curriculum is heavily criticized for lack of quality and relevance, yet these two are essential for national development.

Nigeria lacks adequate and quality teaching force to inject quality into the system. Many teachers are greatly demoralized. Teaching profession in Nigeria has lost its capacity to attract and retain the best candidates because

of the poor working conditions and relatively low salaries. Government policy further cast a bleak image on teaching by assigning low scorers in JAMB to the teaching career.

By implication, the nation has accepted that incapacitated individuals should train the nation's doctors, engineers ,accountants, lawyers etc, by the policy of allowing candidates with 160 points and below into Initial Teacher Training Colleges while 180 and above are admitted into University (Ekpo,2014). By this policy, Nigeria has further weakened its capacity to improve its workforce. This is a big departure to what is happening in other countries ,like Finland where best brains go into teaching.

Unfortunately, when problems are identified in education industry, more parasatals are established to address the problem rather than solve the problem. When there is gap in curriculum implementation, new courses are added into the existing curriculum, thereby overloading the curriculum. What the system needs is not re-positioning and adding up of entrepreneurial courses into existing curriculum. It needs creative teachers to produce creative minds. The entire system needs considerable restructuring involving the teaching force, the curriculum and the resource components. At the secondary school level, for instance, the choice to infuse entrepreneurship education into the curriculum rests with the class teachers who should have a good level of training to teach

entrepreneurial courses. In reality such teachers are not available neither are there appropriate learning environments to birth such curriculum.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

It is possible to change the living conditions of Nigerians through improved economy if the economy is birth by a quality education. In order to achieve this, curriculum experts, relevant government officials, law makers and educationists must work with the same vision and collaboration to set implementing rules and policies for educational reforms.

Such reforms would commence with curriculum development, a cyclical and continuing process and not a curriculum overload or policy pronouncement. In today's knowledge economy, curriculum development plays a vital role in improving the nation's economy and creating wealth. I believe this desire might have been responsible for setting up a forum tagged the round table on Legislative Agenda for Education- early this year by the National Assembly

For almost five decades, (since 1969) the Federal Government has observed "noticeable gaps" in content and provision of the Nigerian educational system and has attempted unsuccessfully to breach the gap. The presentation of the synthesis sub-committee report of the

round table on legislative agenda on Tertiary Education titled, “Fertile Minds and Creative Ideas in confrontation with severe Implementation Bottlenecks” summarises why these noticeable gaps are still visible till date. Obanya et al [2016] noted that recommendations from education conferences and summits kept recurring in the reports reviewed. Their report read, ‘ a good number of them were accepted in principle and implementations declared on them only for there to be no further follow-through action.’”

Ezekwesili (2016) also observed that each time gaps in the education provision are observed, rather than follow through the cyclical procedure of handling curriculum development, new ministry is established to fill the gap. This has resulted in bloated civil service that continually put most Nigerians in “a box”.

DARED TO BE DIFFERENT: Recommended Strategies For Entrepreneurial Education Curriculum.

In 1963, a Comprehensive High School, Aiyetoro in Ogun state was established along the vision of entrepreneurship and it was functional. The College was set up for students to express their individual aptitude and harness their potentials. There is need to follow-through that innovation with data to aid further action. Today, many tertiary institutions are trying to be entrepreneurial but the curriculum has to be systematically developed to support entrepreneurial growth.

- The learning experiences that will evoke entrepreneurial tendencies in Nigerian Youth must be cultivated early from home, nurtured in the elementary school and developed at the higher institutions.
- Emphasis on examination and certification must be played down. Preparation for JSS external examinations and the pressure to pass Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and the placement examination by Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) or Joint University Preliminary Examination Board (JUPEB) has left little room for entrepreneurial ideas and creativity. The use of appropriate instructional strategies in entrepreneurial education curriculum does not go down well with these structured national or international examinations (SSCE, NECO, JAMB, JUPEB).
Entrepreneurial driven instructional strategies are: those that employ;
 - Instructional game and simulation;
 - Group and individualized projects;
 - Role play;
 - Study and field trips;
 - Apprenticeship and close mentoring
 - Case studies
 - As well as the use of business executives and successful entrepreneurs as resource persons. These strategies consume time but develop in the learners higher order skills required for enterprise.

- Learning environment must be enriched to give the learners responsibilities for their learning. Such enabling environment will force the teachers to shift in their roles from being custodians of knowledge to be organizers and facilitators of learning opportunities as well as counsellors. Such environment will promote experimental and collaborative learning among the students. As they are involved in their learning activities; they are making notable discoveries and building confidence that will make them think out of the box.
- The students for entrepreneurial education must therefore:
 - Be candidates with a broad-based orientation. They have to be exposed to strategic ways various companies and entrepreneurs use technology to innovate, communicate and create wealth. Obanya (2008) called for the development of generic skills of knowledge, adaptability, creativity, team spirit, literacy and life-long learning. These kinds of skills can only be gotten from a broad based education. It starts with good basic education, followed with diversified secondary school curriculum strengthened with a broad based entrepreneurial tertiary education.

CONCLUSION

For an effective and functional entrepreneurial education curriculum, the views of stakeholders from the grassroots must be taken into consideration. Notable gaps in curriculum can be attended to systematically. The starting point is to come up with baseline data of realities on ground; then train the calibre of teachers who will adapt the innovation. For a start, teachers with aptitude for enterprise and such innovation should be screened out and train. Teachers are crucial to the success of any system of education. They must be trained and re-trained on concurrent initial teacher training (ITT) model of acquiring both academic and professional knowledge and hands-on field experience. Their training should not be a one-shot event of ITT but back up with systematically planned Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This is an indispensable approach to teacher's adaptation process. Through such training, the teachers will be knowledgeable on how to develop in the students' positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

The teachers should work in partnership with government to create enabling environment for effective and applicable entrepreneurial curriculum. In designing entrepreneurial education curriculum, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the process will guarantee the hope of succeeding. It

must be noted that an introduction of an entrepreneurial curriculum is an innovation and should diffuse gradually. Progressive implementation of the innovation has a higher chance of sustainability. It must be piloted first at zonal levels where it is possible to create resource centres and a network of teachers with good practice. This structure will create platforms for teachers with best practices to act as catalysts, mentoring others. Entrepreneurial education curriculum can be achieved in Nigeria if bottlenecks are slackened and government policies are less flexible to make room for emerging problems.

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