

ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN THE NIGER DELTA

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Abstract

One major characteristics of the Nigerian economy especially in the Niger Delta region is the dominant influence of .government in the investment and creation of employment for the people. For several decades the economy has been heavily driven by public sector with little private sector entrepreneurship initiative, resulting in over dependence on government for employment. This paper focused on the Teaching of entrepreneurial skills in the Niger Delta as it will enhance sustainable development in the region. It discusses the types and roles of entrepreneurship, aims of entrepreneurs and models through which entrepreneurial skills could be acquired. This paper also discussed the employability and entrepreneurship skills, and concluded by recommending solutions to improving entrepreneurship skills to youths in the Niger Delta.

Introduction

Many young Nigerian graduates today in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria are unemployed. Many of these young people are unable to secure admission into tertiary institutions and have no gainful employment roaming around in the cities. The trend according to Akinola (2001) is that these youths without jobs engage in all types of vandalisms and wanton destruction of lives and properties. As soon as there is a little

problem within the social structure these youths turn themselves to hooligans as a result of idleness arising from unemployment.

Unemployment is a very serious problem facing Niger Delta today. Akinola (2001) advised parents to educate their youths on how to start their own business right from the tertiary institutions. This is a way of becoming an entrepreneur.

An entrepreneur is a dreamer or a visionary who translates the dream or the vision into a mission that would use both his mental and physical faculties and other endowments to achieve a discussed goal.

Businesses all over the world begin with a spirit of enterprise or entrepreneurship. Indeed businesses all over the world are mostly started by an individual or a family before they grow up and throwaway the garb of family ownership (Balogun, 2004).

Sustainable development is a term popularized in a 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development called our "Commons Future; Eguegu (2007). It stated that sustainable development simply means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. In recent times, sustainability had become a central theme of environmental science and of human development and resource use. Though various conceptions of sustainable development exist the central idea that resources, that is, anything useful for creating wealth and improving the life of man, should be put to use without necessarily diminishing them. Each time we talk of development, our attention is drawn to improving the status of lives in the society. Thus sustainable development is a way of extending such improvement beyond the foreseeable future without exhausting the resources.

Sustainable Development according to Briggs (2007), can be considered as follows:-

- A socio-ecological process characterized by the fulfilment of human needs while maintaining the quality of life and the natural environment indefinitely. .
- It implies a broad view of human welfare, along term perspective about the consequences of today's activities and a holistic or global cooperation to reach viable and long lasting solutions. .
- It refers to development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs.

DEFINITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CONCEPT

The word entrepreneur was first used by J. B. Say in 1800; Jimngang (2006) in Agu (2006), He describe an entrepreneur as one who shifts economic resources out of an area of lower productivity into an area of high productivity and greater profit. Ever since the term was used and interpreted in different ways today some see an entrepreneur as an investor, a risk bearer or one who organizes and manages a business undertaking to achieve profit. Others sees an entrepreneur as one who creates a business and nurses it to growth and profitability. Barika (2007) defined an entrepreneur as an individual or group of individuals who undertake to initiate, maintain or aggrandize a profit oriented business unit for the production or distribution of economic goods and services.

An entrepreneur is an individual who starts a business independently and usually controls the equity position in the business. He is involved in initiating and undertaking a business venture organizing or re-organizing social and economic mechanisms to practical reality (Barika 2007).

According to Thom-Otuya (2005) entrepreneurs are those who dream and never go back to sleep until their dreams become real. Entrepreneurs are those who start from little or nothing to build something from nowhere. Entrepreneurs are people who have an ending desire to create business, whether they have ideas or not Entrepreneurs are those who give life to ideas and create wealth from nothing. Entrepreneurs are people who can put everything they have in order to get everything they desire. Entrepreneurs arc those that can reproduce themselves and also make others reproduce themselves. Entrepreneurs arc those who employ the best heads even without University Education.

Entrepreneurs are people who have the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities together with the necessary resources to take advantage of them and to initiate appropriate action to ensure success (Adeola, 2006). In the words of Akanbi (2007) an entrepreneur is simply a person who attempts to make money with his/her initiatives by taking risks and ultimately becoming a robust business owner. Zimmerer and Scarbrough (2005) maintained that an entrepreneur is one who creates a new business in the face of risk and uncertainty for the purpose of achieving profit and growth

by identifying significant opportunities and assembling the necessary resources to capitalize on them. Although many people come up with great business ideas most of them never act on their ideas, entrepreneurs do.

Entrepreneurs are individuals who make opportunities and take responsibility for mobilizing the resources necessary to produce new and improved goods and services; entrepreneurs start new business ventures and do all the planning, organizing, leading and controlling necessary to meet organizational goals. Most commonly entrepreneurs assume all the risk and receive all the returns associated with the new business venture (Jones and George 2003). Gomez-mejia and Balkin (2002) say an entrepreneur is an individual who creates an enterprise that becomes a new entry to a market while entrepreneurship is the process of creating new or established markets. Entrepreneurship is creative in that it involves deploying resources and people in a unique way to develop anew organization. Barika (2007) says entrepreneurship is concerned with the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risk created by a dynamic environment and making the best of available opportunities to achieve profit objectives.

Ubulom (2003) quoted Okenna (1994) entrepreneurship is simply the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprises successfully. His associated with different kinds of activities that have to do with the establishment and operation or business enterprise. Such activities may include identification of investment opportunities, deciding what opportunities to exploit for profit, promotion and establishment of business enterprise. Others are pooling of various scarce resources for production and distribution of goods and services, organization and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovation.

TYPES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

1. **Innovative Entrepreneurs:-** These entrepreneurs introduce new ideas, new technology, new goods new methods and are interested in re-organizing the enterprise for goods. This level of entrepreneurship is effective and commensurate with a certain level of economic development common in developed countries.
2. **Imitative Entrepreneurs:-** This group of entrepreneurs are characterized by the readiness to adopt successfully to new innovations. They are not challenged by

- any desire to introduce innovatives, they only imitate techniques and technology innovated by others. This category of entrepreneurship is common in developing and under-developed economies. They are not challenged by any desire to be-innovative, they only imitate techniques and technology innovate by others.
3. **Fabians Entrepreneurs:-** These are characterized by great caution, doubt, skepticism in experimenting any change in their enterprise. The desire to imitate or adopt any innovative is only when failure is eminent. In other words they demonstrate a very conservative approach to changes in technology.
 4. **Drone Entrepreneurs:-** These entrepreneurs are characterized by the refusal to adopt opportunities to make changes even at the cost of poor returns compared to competitors. They may suffer losses but may not be interested to accept changes in their traditional and existing methods

Other types of entrepreneurs include:-

- i. **SOLO OPERATORS:-** They work alone in their organizations. They are very committed and may only employ for persons. Most entrepreneurs start in this manner.
- ii. **ACTIVE PARTNERS:-** This group of entrepreneurs believe in joint venture partnership. They start their small business as a joint venture partnership.
- iii. **INVESTORS:-** These entrepreneurs are skilled, competent and dynamic in introducing new ideas and research projects.
- iv. **CHALLENGERS:-** These are entrepreneurs who are ready to accept challenges posed by new ideas and technology. They enter into an industry because of the challenges such industries present. These challenges could be part of desire to introduce new products, meet competition, reduce price and to hire qualified. personnel to increase efficiency.
- v. **BUYERS:-** These are afraid of risk and this fear reduce their venture levels. Therefore instead of venturing into new enterprises they get interested in buying on going enterprises.
- vi. **LIFE-TIMERS:-** These are entrepreneurs who take a particular business as an integral part of their life.

AIMS OF ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurs seek to achieve the following aims.

1. The social objective, that is to satisfy its customers, employers, suppliers and government.
2. He seeks to achieve service objectives. This is performing useful services for the society by providing and distributing goods and services to the public it serves.
3. The third aspect is to make profit. Profits are needed to create new jobs acquire new facilities and develop new products and services. Production of profits is the reward for taking the risks. He has to make profit if he is to survive and stay in business.
4. To fulfill growth objectives. Does the entrepreneur want to remain small just to survive, maximize profit or challenge the large form (Akinola 2001).

THE ROLES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship plays a major role in our lives. The roles are as identified by Ohaegbulem (2002).

- Production of goods and services that are important to the well-being, comfort and happiness of individuals and the society as a whole.
- Creation of employment.
- The entrepreneurs are usually motivated in the activities not only by the need of their material contributions to the welfare of the communities, but also by their desire to make a profit. The dignity of labour is uplifted.
- Through entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur standard of living and social status are raised as well as helping in national development.
- Entrepreneurship determines the specific wants of the people and what type or kind of goods and services will fulfil those wants most comfortably.
- Entrepreneurship makes uncertainty bearing possible.
- Entrepreneurship helps to develop a pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skills and technical know-how to manage small-medium scale industries.

- Entrepreneurship stimulates rural, economic and industrial development. They contribute to the development of rural and less developed areas.

MODELS THROUGH WHICH ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS COULD BE ACQUIRED

Certain entrepreneurship skill acquisition models are necessary for in and out of school programme. They are discussed as follows by Agumuo (2002),

1. **THE ROLE MODEL:-** According to the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) Entrepreneurship Development Programme (1988), the Role model is an entrepreneurship skill acquisition strategy whereby prospective entrepreneurs model themselves on another, especially on an older, experienced and more successful entrepreneur. Role model involves patterning one's business after a successful type. A role moulder finds time to talk with the role model, seeking clarification in areas of difficulty or where understanding is lacked. This model demands a good rapport between the two. Role model can also be used in the formal school setting. This involves the invitations of successful entrepreneurs as resource persons for seminars and workshops to handle certain areas of interests to students. Again, students could be organized for field trips to visit the business premises of such successful; entrepreneurs.

2. **ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS MODEL: -** The outcome of the East-West centre workshop held in Honolulu (1977) showed that there are 19 traits or personal qualities possessed by every successful entrepreneur. The tracts are organized under five (5) characteristics groups namely:-

| CHARACTERISTICS | TRAITS |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| SELF CONFIDENCE | 1) Confidence |
| | 2) Independence and individuality |
| | 3) Optimum |
| | 4) Leadership Dynamism |
| ORIGINALITY | 5) Innovative and creative |
| | 6) Resourceful |
| | 7) Initiative |
| | 8) Versatile and knowledgeable |

- PEOPLE-ORIENTED 9) Get along with others
 10) Flexible
 11) Responsive to suggestions and criticism
- TASK-RESULT-ORIENTED 12) Need for achievement
 13) Profit oriented
 14) Persistence, perseverance and determination
 15) Hard-work, drive and energy
- FUTURE-ORIENTED 16) Foresight
 17) Perceptive
 18) Risk taking
 19) Like challenges

3. **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION MODEL:-** According to Foster (1988) Augumuo (2002), Thom-Otuya and Okere (2007) non-formal model of entrepreneurship skills acquisition is very useful for reaching out to adult students. He asserted that entrepreneurial education is a necessity for adult students who may be in the workforce but will progress to the point of owning and operating a business of their own in the future small business failure that is increasing rampant should be checked through the non-formal business education adult out-reaches using workshops seminars etc.

4. **FORMAL MANAGERIAL TRAINING MODEL:-** The prospective entrepreneur acquires general business and management skills and applies them to specific entrepreneurship areas of interest. The Nigerian society has become more interested in certificates, diplomas and degrees which are empty lacking the back up skills. It should be noted that no nation develops economically with this kind of mentality.

5. **APPRENTICESHIP MODEL:-** This is the model where by the prospective entrepreneur arranges privately for skill acquisition in entrepreneurship with another successful entrepreneur in the area of business interest. In this model, the apprentice under a special agreement participates in the day to day running of the business with the master. No formal lectures are needed, rather the apprentice understudies the techniques of the master's business, when this type of training is given to the youth, usually the

apprentice stays with the master for an agreed number of years, at the end of which he/she is settle. By settlement means that the master would start a similar business for the apprentice at the end of the apprenticeship tenure. This model has also proved very useful for adults requiring entrepreneurship trainings who have the resources to establish their own business but are only interested in the skills acquisition. Under this arrangement, the apprentice chooses the period of training and pays what ever fees charged by the trainer. In this case, the trainer is not responsible for the up keep of the apprentice within the training but only exposes him/her to the skills and techniques of the business.

6. **DIVERSIFICATION AND EXPANSION MODEL:-** Under this model, an entrepreneur with an already existing business seeks to update or enrich his skills to be able to keep abreast with new production techniques and technologies in vogue in the business. This model enables the entrepreneur to choose which medium of training suits his/her purpose. This model is also useful for an entrepreneur who seeks to diversify his business operations and expand.

This model is not useful today in the face of changing business environments and technologies. A lot of entrepreneurs have been frustrated out of business due to stagnation and unprofitable operations.

EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS

Lankard (1987) and Ubulom (2003) identified seven categories of employability skills. They are present and positive image, positive work attitudes, practice ethical behavior, effective communication, Responsibility, acceptance and cooperation with other skills.

According to Osuala (1995) employability skills are grouped into four categories.

1. **Individual competence:-** Communication skills, comprehension, computation and culture.
2. **Personal Reliability Skills:-** Personal management, ethics and vocational maturity.
3. **Economic adaptability skills:-** Problem solving, learning, employability and career development.

4. **Group and organizational effectiveness skills:-** Interpersonal skills, organizational skills, skills of negotiation, creativity and leadership.

Entrepreneurial skills are simply business skills which an individual acquires for him to function effectively in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or a self employed or a self-reliant. These skills include according to Ubulom (2003),

- Ability to plan, organize and manage small scale business.
- Ability to source for fund for the running of a small-scale business.
- Ability to develop skill of keeping the accounting records of small-scale business
- Developing human and public relations skills
- Developing skills for the maintenance of law relating to the registration and running of small scale business and coordination of both human and material resources.
- Developing skills for effective supervision and coordinating of both human and material resources.
- Developing skills for effective utilization of the profit for the growth and development of the firm
- Ability to apply integrating business skills.
- Ability to develop broad base investment planning and implementation skills

The following are also skills that can be developed through business education.

1. Ability to initiate strict guidelines for tardiness, class cutting and discipline.
2. Ability to express work value through classroom instruction. Promote and require timeliness, effort, responsibility and other values.
3. Ability to encourage self-esteem in students.
4. Ability to use instructional material that illustrate the importance of employability skill development (Ubulom 2003).

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

This paper shall recommend the following:

- Government should formulate and implement policies that will enable youths develop entrepreneurial skills before venturing into business.

- The Federal Government State and Local Government and the Niger Delta Development Commission should fund workshops, seminars, programmes on entrepreneurial skills on how to practice small business management principles.
- Entrepreneurship development programmes should be included in the curriculum of post-primary and higher institutions as enable students acquire skills in entrepreneurship.
- The industrial training programme should be made compulsory for all students in tertiary institutions as to enable them acquire practical experience in reputable companies.
- The local governments in the Niger Delta should establish and run technical schools and craft centres to engage youth who could not continue formal schooling upon graduation they establish their own business (Nyanabo 2007).
- The development of infrastructures like Good roads, power supply, housing, water, airports, seaports and other utilities should be accelerated as enhance skill development and encourage entrepreneurs.
- Creation of an enabling business environment for entrepreneurs will be good especially in the provision of loans, access to credit facilities from financial institutions like the Micro Finance Banks, provision of incentives, free tax and training assistance etc should be provided by the government.
- Establishment of apprenticeship programmes with private sector involvement.
- Involvement of private sector and civil society in developing initiatives for supporting youth entrepreneurship programmes.

According to Enworom (1994) "entrepreneurship is like riding a bicycle. Either you keep moving or you fall down. It reminds us that the people who succeed in any venture are the efficient few. They are the few who have the ambition, courage and the will-power to develop themselves. If you are one of them come aboard the vessel of entrepreneurship.

If entrepreneurial skills are well enhanced youths are self employed through different skills acquired it will stop youth restiveness and the region will continue to experience sustainable development.

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