Thought Ten

The Dynamics and Strategy for Early Entrepreneurship Education

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Introduction

Technological advances are changing the profiles of jobs and skills, and at the same time offering possibilities for accelerated learning. Persistently high levels of unemployment, especially among our youth, have highlighted the failure of our education systems to prepare the youth with the right skills for job market. This has necessitated the various calls for a revisit of the opportunities that education should provide and accountability on the part of the stakeholders.

Our investments in quality education are ordinarily expected to lead to rapid economic growth and development. However what we have witnessed is far from these expectations. Evidence has shown that many children and youth in developing countries leave school without having learned much at all. The drive for education for all, in as much as it is not contestable, need to be revisited to ensure that the output of schooling is learning.

In Kwara State, our pursuit of education for all led us to the adoption of the education strategy, "Every Child Counts". As much as possible, we have brought more children to school, and made more schools available. Our assessment however shows that despite the concern for every child to

have access to education, what is learnt or obtained as the result of the schooling is far from the expected.

The introduction of the concept of "Learning for all" by the education group of the World Bank is challenging us towards ensuring that all children and youth – not just the most privileged or the smartest- can, not only go to school, but also acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to lead healthy, productive lives and secure meaningful employment. In this wise therefore, we believe that the goal and focus of attention of Kwara State's Education Strategy should be revised to become: "Not Just Schooling, But Learning".

We expect that working assiduously to apply the three foundational strategies to: Invest Early, Invest Smartly, and Invest for All, the overcharging goal of "Not Just Schooling, But Learning" would be accomplished, since the driver of development will, ultimately be, what individuals learn, both in and out of school, from pre-school through to the labour market.

"Not Just Schooling, But Learning" – for Knowledge and Skills.

The World Bank Group has supported, through various investments in the efforts of developing nations to provide, education for all. These efforts are not only in financing and technical assistance, but also with ideas. In Kwara State, the immediate past effort through "Every Child Counts" has brought more children in the state to school, with improvements in the provision of facilities and training of the teachers. In terms of measurement of the impact of these efforts, particularly with respect to the ultimate developmental expectations, there is obviously the need to ensure that the schooling provided through the "every child counts" strategy is such that will bring about learning that will equip the child with appropriate knowledge and skills to contribute to the developmental expectations of the state, hence the New Education Strategy for the state should be "Not Just Schooling, But Learning" with the emphasis on the acquisition of the required knowledge and skills.

It is an established fact that growth, development and poverty reduction depend on the knowledge and skills that people acquire, not the number of years they sit in a class. The bane of most developing nations has been on

how to achieve the above, hence the need to shift our focus rightly to skills acquisition. Although a degree certificate may open doors to employment, it is a worker's skills that determine his or her productivity and ability to adapt to new technologies and opportunities that will sustain the job. Moreover, knowledge and skills also contribute to an individual's ability to have a healthy and educated family and engage in civic life. An increase of one standard deviation in student reading and math scores (rough equivalent to improving a country's performance ranking from the median to the top 15 percentage) is associated with a very large increase of 2 percent points in annual GDP per capita growth (WDR, 2011). Even in poor learning environments, most students still acquire some skills from schools.

Why Early Entrepreneurship?

In some countries, recent studies show that a quarter to half of youth who have graduated from primary school cannot read a single sentence. Learning through the acquisition of knowledge and skills, is therefore the ultimate solution for Growth, Development and Poverty Reduction.

The emergence of science of brain development shows that to properly develop a child's growing brain needs nurturing long before formal schooling starts at age 6 or 7. In the primary years, quality teaching is critical for giving students the foundational literacy and numeracy on which lifelong learning depends. Adolescence is another fertile period for learning. Second chances of non-formal learning opportunities are thus essential to ensure that all youth can acquire skills for the labour market. Children and youth cannot develop the skills and values that they need without the foundational education provided by schools. Based on the above, the need to revitalise our educational system to meet the challenges of growth, development and poverty reduction is therefore established.

The trend of introducing entrepreneurship to the Nigerian Educational System that started with the National Universities Commission (NUC)'s recent introduction of entrepreneurship studies as a compulsory subject for all university undergraduates in Nigeria, and the subsequent adaptation by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) of the same policy confirms the efforts to address this problem. In an attempt to catch them early, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council

(NERDC) has also included entrepreneurship studies in its newly developed curriculum for secondary schools towards inculcating requisite skills to empower young secondary school leavers who do not have the resources for acquiring higher education to earn a living.

These are steps in the right direction that are in line with the expected Bottom Line of the World Bank Group`s education strategy to: Invest early, Invest smartly, and Invest for all. Foundational skills acquired early in childhood make possible a life time of learning. To get value for the huge sums invested in education requires smart investments –that is, investments that have proven to contribute to learning. Quality needs to be the focus of education investments, learning for all means ensuring that all students, not just the most privileged or gifted have access to education. Early learning through acquisition of knowledge and skills continuously, within and outside the formal schooling system requires early introduction of the process of skill acquisition, hence our proposal for "early entrepreneurship" to all levels of education in Kwara State.

The Education System

Reforming education system at the country level and build high – quality knowledge base for education reforms at the global level requires our understanding of the term "education system". This typically refers to the public schools, universities and training programs that provide education services. "Education system" includes the full range of learning opportunities available in a country, whether they are provided or financed by the public or private sector (including religious, non-profit, and for profit organisation). It includes formal and nonformal programs, plus the full range of beneficiaries of and stakeholders in these programs- teachers, trainers, administrators, employers, students and their families, and employers. It also includes the rules and, policies, and accountability mechanisms that bind an education system together, as well as the resources and financing mechanism that sustain it. There is no question that provision of adequate levels of schooling inputs- whether these are school buildings, trained teachers, or text books- is crucial to a nation`s educational progress. But improving system also requires ensuring that inputs are used more effectively to accelerate learning.

Reforming the Educational System for Early Entrepreneurship

The reform that our education system requires at this point in time should be such that will complement the efforts of the past, and move the system forward, rather than rubbishing the past to begin again. With 'Every Child Counts' we have brought more children to school, with 'Not just Schooling but Learning' we need to ensure that those children, irrespective of when they drop off the education system must be equipped enough to add value to their lives and the society. To accomplish this objective will require that we resolve to:

- Provide the Inputs for Learning
- Train the Trainers of Learners
- Monitor and Control the System
- Focus on our Objective, and
- Be Results Specific

What Inputs should be provided for Learning?

1. The structure of the new Education curriculum has the following school components at the Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Schools levels:
   - ∅ Early Childhood Education: 3 years (Ages 1-3)
   - ∅ Basic Primary Education: 6 years (Ages 4 – 9)
   - ∅ Upper Basic (Junior Secondary) Education: 3 years (Ages 10 – 12)
   - ∅ Post Basic (Senior Secondary) Education: 3 years (Ages 13 – 15)

The curriculum on Entrepreneurship studies as specified in the new Senior Secondary School curriculum spells out that every student must offer five core subjects, one of which is to learn one trade with Entrepreneurship studies at that level. The curriculum should also be introduced at the Junior Secondary School to cater for those who might be leaving school (about 35-40%) after their Basic Education. The whole idea is to make students who leave school, at whatever point, to be self-employable and self-sustaining.

Why and How do we Train the Trainers

It is obvious that there is no manpower for the introduction of early entrepreneurship to our educational system. To be able to achieve our objective, we therefore need to develop the process to train the trainers.

To do this we need to leverage on the existence of the Kwara State University Centre for Entrepreneurship for the development of an adoptable train the trainers programme. Since this report is coming at the instance of this Centre, the Ministry of Education and Human Development should adopt the Centre's Train the Trainer Package for the immediate take-off, and successful accomplishment of the Early Entrepreneurship Project.

What Implementation Strategy should we adopt?

- The Ministry should immediately transform this Committee on Early Entrepreneurship to an Implementation Committee with the introduction of representatives of the strategic offices of the ministry as additional members.
- The Implementation Committee should within it set up three major sub-committees, namely; (a) Junior Secondary Curriculum Development Committee, (b) Textbook Development Committee, (c) Train the Trainers Committee, and Skills Acquisition Establishment Committee
- The existing Senior Secondary School curriculum should be used to develop the curriculum on Entrepreneurship studies at the Junior Secondary School level for consistency and synchronization.
- Out of the thirty five trade subjects listed in the Senior Secondary School curriculum, the Kwara State Government should choose at least fifteen trades to be offered both in Junior and Senior Secondary schools in the state. Each of the schools is to identify three trades that are peculiar to the needs and convenience of the students and staff.
- The introduction of the Junior Secondary Entrepreneurship Curriculum in the State should be targeted to start from the next academic session (2012/2013).
- At least one Entrepreneurship centre should be established in each of the Local Government Areas in the State. The centres are to be used for training the students in each of the LGAs.
- The Control and Monitoring Body for the Early Entrepreneurship Project should revolve around the Kwara State University Centre for Entrepreneurship.
- In cases where the schools are too far from the centres, Introductory Technology workshops should be used as training

centres by those schools.

- The Train the Trainers Programme for the teachers for trade subjects should be saddled with the KWASU Centre for Entrepreneurship that is at the forefront of the 'Not Just Schooling, But Learning' Education strategy for the Kwara State.
- Apprenticeship during long vacations from JSS 1 - SSS 2 classes should also be considered as avenues for training students in specific trades. During these periods, it is recommended that students are attached to some identified vocational experts in the immediate community in their areas of interests. Such students would be supervised periodically to ensure compliance with stated objectives/directives as is done in SIEWES Programme.

It is important to note the willingness of The World Bank to focus on helping partner countries build national capacity to govern and manage educational systems implement quality and equity standards, measures system performance against national educational goals, and support evidence-based policy making and innovations. While thinking globally, we should also know that we have to act locally. The willingness of the State to take the first step, and act in the aforementioned direction would assist tremendously in mustering and assessing available global support for this entrepreneurial effort. Analytical work, practical evidence, and know-how related to education programmes and policies are critical to improving the performance of education systems around the world, and Kwara State is no exception.

The State Education System: How far?

To answer the above question requires asking further questions in relation to; What is present? (In terms of where we are), What is needed? (In terms of where we are headed), and What is missing? (In terms of what we need to get to our destination, i.e. the gap). In other words, what are the Specific State Requests for support for the "Not Just Schooling, but Learning" Project.

From Strategy to Action

1. Knowledge Generation and Exchange
2. Technical Support
3. Financial Support
4. Strategic Partnership

Knowledge Generation	Technical Support	Financial Support	Strategic Partnership
The State should lean on this Committee on Early Entrepreneurship, with the support of Local and Foreign Consultants, etc	The State could draw Manpower from KWASU Centre for Entrepreneurship , Private Local and Foreign Firms, etc	Financial Resources from Kwara State Government, ETF, World Bank, IDB, ADB, UNESCO, etc	Kwara State Government KWASU Centre for Entrepreneurship, World Bank, IDB, ADB, UNESCO, etc

Confirmed Available Funding Sources for Early Entrepreneurship

1. USD 750 Million to be provided by the World Bank for countries further from education MDG (with emphasis on countries in Sub – Sahara Africa)
2. N20 Billion ETF Special Support Fund for actualising the improvement of learning skills in basic schools
3. State Government Entrepreneurship Priority and Focus could draw further budgetary support, and backing for other local and foreign institutional support that may be available for the 'Not Just Schooling, But Learning' Project.

Monitoring and Sustenance of Early Entrepreneurship

Monitoring of programmes should be carried by a special purpose monitoring agency that will draw resources from KWASU in conjunction with Kwara state Ministry of Education and SUBEB.

The State Government with other Agencies like ETF, World Bank, UNESCO, etc would be responsible for funding and sustaining the project

Conclusion

Nigeria has Great Problems but also Greater Potentials. Potentials however are not enough as we need to transform those potentials to reality. How can we get to do this? With the present set of leadership, it is practically impossible to make this happen. If we must, we should stop thinking we can't which is the mental attitude of Nigerians. We should stop asking, can we? the mental attitude of our British Colonial Masters. We should rather

start developing the positive mental attitude that we can. We need to begin the process of developing young transformational leaders who can since most of us have already past our primes and failed this nation.

My dear young graduates, if you want something to happen positively, you have to make it happen. If you want Nigeria to be great, you have to make it great. We are always finding a willing reason to put things off. We are always talking and complaining about the system when we are supposed to act. We are always planning when we are supposed to implement. We procrastinate when we are supposed to move. We forget that turning an idea into reality takes efforts, and only action will turn concepts and potentials into reality. For us to transform the potentials of Nigeria into real greatness, we all can make it happen, if only we stop talking and starting doing, if only we stop planning and start implementing, if only we stop procrastinating and start changing.

To unleash the great potentials of our nation and arise from our slumber (economic and social difficulties), we need to raise a new generation of transformational leaders that will be entrepreneurially minded, ethically conscious and can innovatively take risks to create values capable of transforming us from a consuming nation to a producing nation. The bedrock of accomplishing the production of these transformational leaders is found in providing functional and quality (excellent) education. Not just schooling, but learning.

Paper extracted from the report of the Early Entrepreneurship Education Committee set up by Kwara State University, Malete and Kwara State Ministry of Education in 2011 under the chairmanship of Dr Muritala Awodun, Director of KWASU Centre for Entrepreneurship with other members namely; Dr Nimat Ameen, Mr Ojo Sunday, Ms Bunmi Famuyiwa and the authors of this paper.