

# **ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BUILDING TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND ACTION SOUGHT.**

**BY**

**OKENWA, BENJAMIN C.N.**

**DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING TECHNOLOGY**

**ENUGU STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL), ENUGU.**

**AND**

**ONAGA, PAUL O.**

**DEPARTMENT OF WOODWORK TECHNOLOGY**

**ENUGU STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL), ENUGU**

## **Abstract**

*Education is an instrument for survival, growth, and development of any society. Presently Nigeria's education system faces challenges arising from industrialized nations of the world that are in the faster lane technologically than Nigeria. Nigeria's economy is in chaos. Industries, companies, government and its agencies at all levels are downsizing their workforce, as her educational institutions are turning out graduates yearly with a slim hope of securing employments. The implication is that poverty, insecurity, and other social vices continue to be on the increase. Nigeria is in desperate search for measures to reduce these turbulent times. The answer lies on redirecting the education system towards job-creation rather than job seeking, employability skills, competency, and performance base for its graduates. This calls for emphasis on entrepreneurship programmes with vocational and technical skills in specific area such as building technology. Entrepreneurship education creates entrepreneurs who will be self-employed, encourage innovations, confident, responsible, perseverance, and ability to manage risks. Entrepreneurship education will help stem the tide of unemployment, youth restiveness and social violence in Nigeria. The paper focused on brief review of major concepts, issues in entrepreneurship and building technology education, youth unemployment, then their challenges and action sought*

## **Introduction**

Education is an instrument of survival, growth, and development of any society. Ibrahim and Bossa (2010) opined that education is the fundamental pillar of any progress and construction of knowledge of economy of any society. Education in Nigeria today faces serious challenge because, the system turned out

graduates that are educated but are not employable because the vacancies are few and most of them lacked the necessary employability skills, aptitudes and work attitude. Again, those who were employed were not performing optimally either that they were trained with obsolete and ill-maintained facilities; workshops and laboratories for practical

skill acquisition. The resultant effects of these were extreme poverty, unemployment, terrorism, kidnaping, institutionalized corruption, over-dependent on other nations for assistance, weak economy and other anti social vices.

Education for the future in Nigeria should emphasize employability skills, job-creation, competency, performance, capacity building, training, retraining, and retention. This call underscores the need for **entrepreneurship** education programmes with vocational and technical education skills in specific areas like building technology as an aspect of technical education for equipping the individuals with skills and abilities in application of practical knowledge for real life. Entrepreneurship in building technology education will enable the beneficiaries to acquire specific skills that will enable them fit well in the world of work as self-employed and job generators.

Entrepreneurship in building technology education will create entrepreneurs who will not only be self employed but will be imaginative in thinking, innovative, confident, responsible, perseverance and ability to calculate and take risks. Integrating entrepreneurship education into Nigerian education system will help in stemming

the tide of unemployment, youth restiveness and other anti-social vices in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education should be seen as an agent of transformation that needs well equipped infrastructural facilities such as workshops, laboratories, tools, equipment, machinery, materials, regularly supply of power (electricity) and water, good learning environments with well equipped libraries and sufficient quality teachers to utilize these educational facilities for teaching and learning.

This new transformation agenda should de-emphasize spending much time in theories without practical. It is suggested here that time-sharing should be 40% or less for theories while skills acquisition in form of practical should be 60% or more in vocational and technical institutions. For Nigeria to attain the vision 20, 2020, since that of 20, 2015 is fast elapsing without an appreciable achievement; it requires a functional, qualitative, and timely education to prepare her citizenry with adequate entrepreneurial skills and competencies to meet and face the global challenges (Ibrahim and Agali, 2011).

The development and survival of any nation depends on what the citizenry will be able to contribute and not

necessarily what the nation will do for the citizens. The nation will only provide enabling environment to enable the citizens to perform optimally. Nigeria growth and survival depends largely on how it will be able to utilize her local contents to advance her technology.

Entrepreneurship in building technology education will empower the youths and make them job creators rather than job seekers which in-turn will help to move the country forward. Based on this premise, this discussion will focus on entrepreneurship, education, *building* technology, youth and unemployment. Also to be discussed are issues in entrepreneurship and building technology education, challenges of entrepreneurship, building technology, youth unemployment and action sought.

### ***Entrepreneurship***

Entrepreneurship is associated with the activities related to establishment and running of business ventures. Kilby (1971) cited in Ile (2001) noted that entrepreneurship is the ability and willingness of an individual to seek out investment opportunities establish and run an enterprise successfully. Osioma (2009) opined that entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth by translating dreams, visions, and ideas

into economically viable entities. He stressed that entrepreneurship is result of a disciplined and systematic process of applying creativity and innovation to needs and opportunities in the marketplace. Entrepreneurship involves the application of focused strategies to new ideas and new insight to create products or services to satisfy customer's needs or provide solutions to existing problems.

The birth, growth and survival of entrepreneurial venture depends on the ability of the entrepreneur to identify investment opportunities, make appropriate decision to exploit the opportunities, manage scarce resources, organize and manage human and material resources for attainment of the goals. Alabi (2010) quoting Ilo (1991) described entrepreneurship as an area that involved attitudes and skills essential for responding to one's environment when conceiving, starting and managing a business enterprise. Hornby (2004) described entrepreneurship as the ability to organize a business, undertaking and assume the risks for the sake of profit, or the ability and willingness of a person to initiate, control and direct; the processes of production of goods and services and bear the attendant risks' thereof.

In the same vein,

entrepreneurship is a structured knowledge provided to empower the youths as a means of development of the total man who is creative, confident, analytical, innovative, independent, self-sufficient and capable of responding positively to starting and assuming the risk of a business entries (Alabi, 2010).

### ***Education***

The concept of education has been variously defined by various scholars and researchers. Attah (1997) cited in Mgbada (2010) perceived education as a liberating force which is an essential ingredient for national economic progress. She stressed that education ensures the mobility and development of one's potentials. Individually, it provides its possessor with a mental capacity and intellectual preparedness for carrying out major tasks

Ocho (2010) opined that education is an instrument for survival, growth, and development of the society. Further, he explained that education cannot be understood except in the context of society, which educates the individual for its own sake. The individual is not the end while society is the end in education, he explained. Nwangwu (2010) was of the opinion that education is a means of social mobility, achieving social status and economic returns. Okenwa and Onaga (2011) described education as an agent of

socialization, vehicle for transmitting the goals, aims, aspiration, desires, cultural norms, and the heritage of any given society to its young ones. Through it, the culture of the society is being preserved and prevented from extinction.

Education is a process rather than a product, the quality of the knowledge and skills one acquired that will enable one achieve higher levels of moral judgment, decency, integrity and a better service to the society.

### ***Building Technology Education***

Building is a process of constructing or making or putting parts or materials together to form a whole, such as houses and other structures. Often we hear building operations that is steps, techniques, methods, or sequences of constructing houses. On the other hand, technology is the study or mastery and utilization of manufacturing methods, or systematic application of knowledge to practical tasks in industry.

Nnajiofor and Enemuoh (2011) quoting Eze (2007), described technology as the application of scientific knowledge, skills, work attitudes, tools and equipment to the evaluation of new processes and the adaptation of these processes to the production of goods and services for the benefit of mankind. Building technology therefore is the body of knowledge, skills,

procedures, and methods of provision and utilization of shelters for mankind.

### ***Youth***

Youth could be described as the state of being young referring to men and women not far advanced in life or age that is, those who are still growing or developing. Akande (2011) citing National Bureau of Statistics (1995 - 2005) revealed that a huge chunk of the population in Nigeria belong to the category of youths. By age description, youths fall in age bracket of 13 - 45 years old. This stage in man or woman is the age when they are full of creativity, innovative and bubbles with energies. Akande (2011) described youth as age of adventure, a bridge between the adolescent and the adult hood.

Youth is the most useful stage in one's life when the body and soul are intact.

They are full of vigor and proud. This stage should be handled with care so as to get the best out of life, but if wasted, the individual(s) and the nation will for generations to come have cause to regret.

### ***Unemployment***

Unemployment could be described as state of being unemployed, that is, not working, not able to get work whether or not one possesses employability skills. Ibeneme (2007)

opined that people who have nothing doing for a living will gradually slide into poverty and hunger which is dangerous for economic and social development of any nation. Gross unemployment in Nigeria could be linked to deficiencies and unwillingness of youths to embrace entrepreneurship education for skill acquisition in different occupations.

### ***Issues in Entrepreneurship Education***

Entrepreneurship education, a late comer in Nigeria educational system is a dynamic process of creating incremental wealth by translating dreams, visions and ideas into economically viable entities. Entrepreneurship education has not been fully understood and embraced in all levels of the educational system hence it has not made any significant impact in reducing unemployment and poverty. Majority of youths may not be willing to embrace entrepreneurship education since it de-emphasizes job seeking in place of job creation. Youths believe that the essence of schooling is to acquire certificates or qualifications that will enable them to secure government employment and not to be self-employed. If not, one would have gone to learn a trade through apprenticeship under a master craftsman or tradesman than wasting time schooling. This is a

wrong notion.

Great entrepreneurs are well educated. Arthur Guinness who established Guinness brand of drinks since 1759 in Dublin about 252 years ago might have started the venture as an entrepreneur with a vision to be a job creator rather than a job seeker. Today Guinness brand of products are world class drinks. Bill Gate a Microsoft genius, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Ford, Nissan, Coca-cola, Benson and Hedges, Innoson and other world class names in industries and business ventures were not established, owned and managed by any government. They were established by entrepreneurs who were willing to take risks of translating their dreams and innovative ideas into opportunities. Today these opportunities have printed their footsteps in the sand of time that will not be forgotten by generations yet unborn.

#### ***Issues in Building Technology Education***

Building Technology education prepares the recipients with relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes in operating principles of fabrication, maintenance and repairs of buildings and other similar structures. Training is in the areas of building design and draftsmanship, building construction (block/bricklaying and concrete works),

architectural drawings and design, plumbing and pipe fitting, painting and decoration and carpentry/joinery.

Building technology education is perceived by youth as being associated with low status symbols and majority of them would not like to be linked with derogatory names as mason, block/bricklayer, carpenter, etc. Building technology, according to Onyia (2010), is practical intensive in terms of setting out a building, laying or bonding block walls, concrete works, design and preparation of building working drawings. Majority of the youths would like to be linked with white collar jobs rather than blue collar jobs where building technology belongs.

#### ***Issues in Youth Unemployment***

Nigeria labour markets are since over-saturated. Older ones refuse to retire from the jobs they are holding to give way for younger ones with new ideas, visions, excitements and adventures. No efforts are made to create new jobs either. The education system is deficient because it does not prepare and equip many of its graduates to be job creators and employers. The consequences are high rates of unemployment, poverty and low productivity.

Unemployment neither gives power nor authority to act. The dilemma of

high rate of unemployment has brought the gross national product (GNP), gross domestic product (GDP) and the country's development at crossroads. A country desiring to take its place among the commit of developed nations is unable to get its ventures together in stimulating a national consciousness that can propel self-motivated development (Akande, 2011). Unemployment deprives its victim the economic power and denies the nation the opportunity to utilize young manpower trained over the years. The purchasing power of the unemployed is affected which reflects on the economy of the country.

Unemployment has created jobs for the youths that are vulnerable to illegal means of livelihood, such as violent crimes, suicide bombings, kidnaping, militancy, ethnic/communal violence, drug addition, raping, thuggery, armed robbery, cultism, oil bunkering, and prostitution. These groups of people cluster around in the slums and ghettos. They are social misfits. The side effect is that the security, peace, stability, pride and the over-all national development is threatened. In Nigeria, police and prison cells are stocked with youths who were nabbed for one petty crimes or the other out of necessity to provide their immediate needs and relieve their

boredom. These incapacitated young energies would have been useful to the economy of this country if they were properly engaged into active production.

Albert, Emah and Ezeano (2009) were of the opinion that many Nigerian youths were idle and eager to fend for themselves after graduating from school. This tendency has driven them to seek ways to earn a living whether by conventional or unconventional means. This ugly means have cumulative effect of eroding previous gains made. Until government redirect efforts in tackling and solving the problem of chronic unemployment, the dreams of Nigeria to be seated among the comity of industrialized nations of the world by 20, 2020 will be a mirage.

### ***Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education***

Entrepreneurship education has several challenges that limit its growth and development. These challenges according to Ile (2001) include:

- Poor funding - Governments funding of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is very poor. For individuals the ability to accumulate or raise fund to set up entrepreneurship is very low.
- Lack of infrastructural facilities, access roads, steady supply of

electricity and pipe born water etc.

- Technological changes as a hindrance may occur in form of non-availability of needed machineries and raw materials that need to be imported. Changes in technology render the ones in use before obsolete.
- Shortage of skilled manpower or experts in certain occupational areas could pose a hindrance in entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. These necessities sourcing the skilled manpower overseas at a high cost.
- Another challenge comes inform of stiff competition from goods and services produced by similar entrepreneurs especially the imported ones which are usually sold at a cheaper prices than locally produced ones.
- Development of entrepreneurship can be negatively affected by abuse in administration of government assistance to small business organizations.

### **Challenges of Building Technology Education**

Employability skills and knowledge are important in training for creating self-employment in specific areas to enable the trainees meet the challenges

and new changes in the world of work.

Inadequate provision of building technology facilities for qualitative teaching and learning of building technology education programme is a hindrance. These facilities according Okenwa, (2012) include:

- **Consumables:** These are materials for practical activities such as aggregates (fine and coarse), cement, water, reinforcing materials, drawing sheets etc.
- **Non-consumable:** These include machines, basic hand tools, equipment, instructional materials, library, computers, drawing instruments etc.
- **Infrastructure:** These include drawing studios, laboratories, workshops, classrooms and good offices.
- **Human Resources:** Quality trained teachers, lecturers, instructors, technicians, attendants, etc, to consciously inculcate planned employable skills to the trainees are not available. Few ones available are aging out without younger ones willing to take their places.
- **Services:** The epileptic nature of power supply and no stand-by generating sets, irregular pipe born water supply, poor means of



communication and mobility from one point to another are challenges.

**Funding:** Inadequate funding is another problem facing building technology education in Nigeria.

- **Technology changes:** Change in technology being in new ideas and new ways of doing things better than before. If these changes are difficult to come by, then we will be left to operate with obsolete ideas, facilities, experiences and curriculum.
- **Relevance:** Changes in technology which introduce new skills, tools, methods, equipment and materials bring doubts and questions whether the present curricula are still relevant or need to be revised in tune with current events.

- **Poor public perception:** Youths associate building technology as being laborious, dirty job and a discipline with low self esteem.

#### **Challenges of Youths Unemployment**

Albert, Emah and Ezeano (2009) observed that in Nigeria, about 80% of unemployed persons are youths at the peak of their productive stages in life. Some of the factors militating against

youth employment according to Albert, Emah and Ezeano (2009) and Akande (2011) include:

- **Lack of employability skills** - Most Nigerian youths were educated but did not acquire skills that will fetch those jobs in their chosen areas of specialization.
- **Technological Changes** - Technological changes brought in new machines, tools, equipment, materials, methods, products and services which are far from the training and knowledge they received during their trainings. This undermines youth employment.
- **Poor Emphasis on Practical works** - sadly, most institutions teaching building technology courses devote 80% time for theory while the remaining 20% may be for the practical.
- Unwillingness of the youths to engage themselves into vocational and technical courses such as building technology. They believe that Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is meant for those youths who are academic misfits, who only need to be rehabilitated by learning a trade.

**Action Sought**

It is now clear to most Nigerians that possession of certificates even up to Ph.D level is no longer a guarantee for immediate employment (Abbas and Muazu, 2010). Governments and their agencies, and companies are downsizing their workforce, thus adding to the already saturated unemployed labour market. There is an urgent need to get out of these woes and entrepreneurship education could be the answer only if:

1. Government could adequately fund the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria especially in higher institutions though provision of all the needed infrastructural facilities, tools, equipment, materials and other education instructional materials in various occupational areas.
2. Government could invest on training, retraining and retention of teachers in certain occupational areas who in turn will impact the required skills to the students for a better employment on graduation. On graduation students should be assisted to set up their own choice of entrepreneurial ventures.
3. During the teaching and learning

of entrepreneurship education more time should be spent on skills acquisition through regular practical activities and the students should

be taught managerial skills so that on graduation, they will be able to initiate and manage their own business ventures well.

4. Youths should be motivated to embraced entrepreneurship education in various occupational areas as a means of job creation and poverty alleviation. This may go a long way to cancel the notion that entrepreneurship education is for those who are academically never

**Conclusion**

Nigeria as a matter of urgency should be in desperate search of means of solving or providing solutions to her army of unemployed youths who are rooming the streets of major cities in search of none existing jobs. If majority of them are provided with means of livelihood, the high rate of poverty, crimes and insecurity would have be reduced for a better Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

1. Building technology education curriculum should be restructured to emphasis training

on employability skills and competencies.

2. Government should create stimulating programmes that will reduce to the barest minimum high rate of youth unemployment.
3. Institutions teaching building technology education should devote more time to practical work than theory.
4. Institutions teaching building technology education should be provided with workshops and laboratories equipped with standard state of art instructional facilities.

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