MEETING THE NEEDS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiative by the United Nation General Assembly in 2015 following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 that terminated in 2015 after 15 years of implementation and execution period. Among the objectives of sustainable development are to make sure the MDGs are kept on the right track until the eight goals are fully realized. The paper reviewed the strategies employed in the implementation of SDGs, in which

entrepreneurship education as one method of eradication poverty and unemployment among the people especially the youth who constitute substantial number in African continent. Many countries across Europe, Asia and the US have a lot in mobilizing their people especially youth in developing skills and mindset in business development right from primary through secondary to tertiary level through entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial organs like Kaufmann Foundation and Colman Foundation. There is need for Africa particularly Nigeria to develop Private Partnership Programme with private organizations to assist in training the youths in entrepreneurship skill development while higher institutions of learning should continue in their academic pursue in training and research in preparing the students in the field of entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: MDGs, SDGs, Entrepreneurial, Entrepreneurship Education, Training, Research, Development

The United Nation General Assembly in 2000 moved to life better to the generality of human beings across the globe. Based on this belief the United Nation General Assembly came up with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) programme, which lasted for 15 years commencing from 2001and ended by 2015. Udjo and Pillay (2015) posited that

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were put forward in early 2000 and the targets are to be reached in 2015. The MDGs are an inclusive set of well-defined goals that primarily seek to put development at the forefront of national agendas by persuading governments to commit resources to address socio-economic backlogs in their respective countries.

In September of the year 2000, leaders of 189 countries met at the United Nations in New York and endorsed the Millennium Declaration, a commitment to work together to build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world (UN, 2015). The MDGs comprises of 8 areas hoped to be addressed and reduced to the minimal of which poverty being the first. Poverty level across the globe especially among the developing and under developing countries is at higher side. The aim of MDGs agenda among them is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (UNICEF, 2003).

To tackle poverty means to devise means that can assist by engaging the unemployed population into jobs that they can do or even develop by themselves and sustain it by the year 2015. With this in mind, Director-General (WHO) said “in 2015 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) come to the end of their term, and a post-2015 agenda, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) took their place”

(WHO, 2015) to last for another 15 years, meaning terminating in the year 2030. Jarod posited that "the SDGs are a United Nations-sponsored effort to create a common set of development goals for all communities in every country, with a deadline for attainment of 2030". United National General Assembly new agenda "Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development" was developed and adopted. This agenda follows the UN Conference on Sustainable Development tagged 'Rio+20 Conference', which took place in June 2012 and led to the formation of Open Working Group on SDGs that came up with proposal on the SDGs. The belief behind such move was to bring governments, aid organizations, foundations and NGOs to the surface in making sure that global problems urgently need to be solved and how to measure progress and solutions.

Eradicating poverty can be achieved through creating employment opportunities so that the target groups could successfully engage and sustain the business. Similarly the target groups need not only empowerment but skills and tools in developing, running and sustaining the business. This prompted the mounting programme in entrepreneurship education in the educational curriculum. By doing so, students in higher institutions will be trained with skill and mindset to initiate and manage business of their interest. This assertion is viewed by Ghina (2014) that "implementation of entrepreneurship education within universities is aim to infuse the entrepreneurial culture and spirit of the students; create new educated entrepreneurs and new businesses based on science and technology". Offering such training will carry the students into the market more than viewing the office work. In similar vein, Fatima and Yagoub in 2015 observed that "there is a tacit assumption that links between providing entrepreneurship education and promised economic growth, generating employment opportunity and enhancing economic development at large".

What is 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs)?

Toward the end of the MDGs implementation period the United Nations at its final meeting on 19 July 2014, the group unanimously approved a draft set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In turn, these were finalized by the U. N. General Assembly at a Special Summit on Sustainable Development from 25th – 27th September, 2015. The SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which started a global effort in 2000 to tackle the indignity of poverty. The MDGs established measurable, universally-agreed objectives for tackling extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly diseases, and expanding primary education to all children, among other development priorities. To this end according to World Health Organization (WHO) in 2015

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is of unprecedented scope and ambition, applicable to all countries, and goes well beyond the MDGs. While poverty eradication, health, education, and food security and nutrition remain priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise a broad range of economic, social

and environmental objectives, and offer the prospect of more peaceful and inclusive societies.

This is a clear linkage between the agendas and their operational tools. This prompted the United Nations (UN) general assembly adopted new development agenda tagged "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which is post-2015 framework that will go beyond the MDGs.

In its preamble, UN in 2016 declared "this Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty" is key to the survival of humanity. This effort followed the general remark on MDGs across the globe, which WHO in 2015 accorded that

During the MDG era, many global progress records were set. The MDGs have gone a long way to changing the way we think and talk about the world, shaping the international discourse and debate on development, and have also contributed to major increases in development assistance. However, several limitations of the MDGs have also become apparent, including a limited focus, resulting in verticalization of health and disease programmes in countries, a lack of attention to strengthening health systems, the emphasis on a "one-size-fits-all" development planning approach, and a focus on aggregate targets rather than equity.

This, "the SDGs reflect an opportunity for us to come together to advocate for positive change built on the values of solidarity, human dignity, care for creation, and inclusive participation" (CAFOD, 2015). This is an indication that SDGs can be use to advocate for more equitable development based on tackling the root causes of poverty and unsustainable development.

The SDGs is made up of 17 agendas that are interconnected, whereby getting solution to one is a solution to all. This is similar to the comment made by UN Secretary General in the report "Sustainable Development Goals Report of 2017"; he said "the 2030 Agenda is deliberately ambitious and transformational, with a set of 17 integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals and targets to guide us" (UN, 2017).

Teaching Entrepreneurship Education for Development

Before considering entrepreneurship as a learning package, let define the term. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) viewed entrepreneurship education to reflect enterprise education from which it is defined as "a process of equipping students (or graduates) with an enhanced capacity to generate ideas and skills to make them happen". According to Shane in Hussain (2015) entrepreneurship is a process "in which consist of capability to identify opportunity, collect resources, organize them and adapt strategy so that opportunity can be exploited". The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship according to Leckéus (2015) defined entrepreneurship education as "content, methods and activities supporting the creation of knowledge, competencies and experiences that make it possible for students to initiate and participate in

entrepreneurial value creating processes." European Commission (2012) recommended that entrepreneurship education should fully integrate into university curricula based on the belief that the primary purpose is to develop skill and mindset in business initiation, development and sustainability. Lorz in 2011 reported that the European Commission in 2008 declared that the "important role of education in promoting more entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours... is widely recognized". Entrepreneurship education has gained ground and teaching the concept is changing the perception of government, education curriculum and the generality of society considering employability after graduation. On this basis, Charney and Libecap (2010:7) identified reasons on why entrepreneurship education became popular, which include

The study of enterprise creation and the development of business plans allow students to integrate accounting, economics, finance, marketing and other business disciplines. As such, it offers an enriching, integrative educational experience. It promotes the founding of new businesses by graduates and builds critical decision-making skills that enhance the success of graduates in the job market. It increases technology transfer from the university to the market through the development of technology-based business plans and student involvement with technology licensing. Entrepreneurship education forges links between the business and academic communities.

The inclusion of entrepreneurship education in schools is aimed at building the skill and competency in business development by focusing not only on "Know-what" for imparting basic definitions and concepts of business knowledge, management and entrepreneurial norms, which is more of theory and this helps less to proficiency but to include "Know-who" component, which enhances students networking at societal level by developing interaction with different entrepreneurial people, such as business man, entrepreneurial role models, professors, and classmates will help in training the students in business initiating, development and sustainability.

Therefore offering entrepreneurship education can make students "gain skills such as, autonomy, leadership, creativity, initiative, perseverance, self-confidence, sense of responsibility and solidarity" (Korakakis, 2014) and are necessary tools to excel them whether they aim to be entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs. The idea of infusing entrepreneurship into education also has spurred much enthusiasm in the last few decades. A myriad of effects has been stated to result from this, such as economic growth, job creation and increased societal resilience, but also individual growth, increased school engagement and improved equality"(Leckéus, 2015). However, he listed certain impendence that cropped up in the development of entrepreneurship education, which include "lack of time and resources, teachers' fear of commercialism, impeding educational structures, assessment difficulties and lack of definitional clarity."

Hence, imparting the necessary knowhow is to have them gain skills that are applicable to all of their future endeavours. What entrepreneurship-based learning does is that it instills confidence within students early on. They are thus able to see that they

can accomplish whatever they set up to do. When a young person realizes that he holds the key to his futures, this equals to limitless possibilities with sustainability.

Curriculum in entrepreneurship is vital and needs approach that will make the journey profitable. In this respect, "best practices in terms of curriculum content and methods of teaching entrepreneurship on the tertiary level, and to explore how they correlate with practices recommended by the entrepreneurial learning field of research, in order to contribute to extracting best practice" (Fatima and Yagoub, 2015). However, teaching entrepreneurship in the traditional way can not deliver the intended result. Thus, holistic approach to effective teaching of entrepreneurship education should involve theoretical courses aiming to increase entrepreneurial awareness and practical-oriented ones that aim to produce graduates ready to start a business. Similarly practical-oriented courses open entrepreneurial learning suggestions for practices to engage students in acquiring entrepreneurial competencies.

Some perceived entrepreneurship as a talent with which one is born and cannot be taught but Aronnson and Birch in Fatima and Yagoub (2015) argued that "entrepreneurship education programmes are able to contribute to the challenge of codifying entrepreneurial skills like selling, managing people and product development into a teachable curriculum". From this Fatima and Yagoub identified three ways of teaching entrepreneurship education, thus

- Uses theoretical content and teacher-centred teaching method which is teaching "about" entrepreneurship and aims to increase students' awareness about entrepreneurship as a career choice.
- The second and third themes—teaching "for" and "through" entrepreneurship—aim to graduate entrepreneurs and are more learner-centred, and are designed to build entrepreneurial skills rather than only providing content.

This assertion about teaching entrepreneurship education in three ways is carried by Lackéus in 2015 that teaching entrepreneurship could be

a. Teaching "about" entrepreneurship means a content-laden and theoretical approach aiming to give a general understanding of the phenomenon.

b. Teaching "for" entrepreneurship means an occupationally oriented approach aiming at giving budding entrepreneurs the requisite knowledge and skills.

c. Teaching "through" means a process based and often experiential approach where students go through an actual entrepreneurial learning process

In any way entrepreneurship education has connection to economic value in terms of mobilizing manufacturing tools to market

Entrepreneurship Education and Sustainable Development Goals

It is worth mentioning that where there is poverty, hunger equally is present and where there is employment there is economic development and equally there exists progrssion and sustainability. The SDGs aim at keeping the MDGs train moving and by end of the period the poverty level will go down to the minimal by "giving people in

every part of the world the support they need to lift themselves out of poverty in all its manifestations" (UN, 2017). However, training in job oriented field will go a long way lifting people out of poverty. Engaging people especially the youth in business initiative and development is the key solution to poverty eradication. Thus, embarking in teaching entrepreneurship education will emerge as a solution to sustainable development socially and economically. Hence, "Goal 1 focuses on ending poverty through interrelated strategies, including the promotion of social protection systems, decent employment and building the resilience of the poor" (UN, 2017).

Teaching Entrepreneurship Education through Research and Innovation

Taking entrepreneurship as a field of study like other social sciences is not enough to meet the objectives of the programme. Most problems identified with teaching of entrepreneurship education lies with teaching methodology and learning materials or deficiency of the curriculum. In this regard Europe in her project called "Europe 2020", a strategic plan to transform Europe into entrepreneurial region as core of the plan. In this vein, Europe wants "innovative, well-educated, and entrepreneurial citizens who, whatever their walk of life, have the spirit and inquisitiveness to think in new ways, and the courage to meet and adapt to the challenges facing them" (European Commission, 2012).

In their paper, Fatima and Yagoub (2015) believed that "the curricula content and teaching methods vary depending on the programme's objectives—from theoretical courses aiming to increase entrepreneurial awareness to practical-oriented ones that aim to produce graduates ready to start a business". There is relationship between practical-oriented courses with entrepreneurial learning package for practices to engage students in acquiring entrepreneurial competencies.

There is a view on what entrepreneurship entailed. This view is into two ways, which Shrivastava and Shrivastava (2013) suggested and include

a. Entrepreneurship refers to owning and managing a business. This is the occupational notion of entrepreneurship i.e. creation of new business.

b. Entrepreneurship refers to entrepreneurial behavior in the sense of seizing an economic opportunity. This is the behavioral notion of entrepreneurship.

Thus, these methods are vital in designing the curriculum content to be structured to offer the skill and competencies needed.

Conclusion

It is obvious that to meet the SDGs by 2030, entrepreneurship education must be seen as inevitable tools toward eradicating poverty, hunger and creating healthy environment. By providing entrepreneurship training from primary school level up to tertiary level, there are chances of developing the business skill and mindset needed to make large number of unemployed youth entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial service providers. This is achievable by creating the entrepreneurial environment through

mounting entrepreneurial programmes at community level and creating research based and practically oriented entrepreneurial academic programmes that will expose the students to true life scenario.

Recommendations

Based on the foregone, considering the following recommendations, SDGs by 2030's 17 agendas are attainable.

1. Higher institutions should design entrepreneurship curriculum to involve research aspect through which students are to plan and conduct research as part of the course.
2. Equally higher institutions should have private partnership collaboration with entrepreneurship development agencies locally and internationally where lecture series and workshop are to be delivered by seasoned entrepreneurs.
3. Business organizations, financial institutions, industries should invest in entrepreneurial research projects with higher institutions.
4. Research results of such nature should be use in developing further entrepreneurial outlets and sell to potential entrepreneurs.
5. There is need for private entrepreneurial foundations like Kaufmann and Colman foundations in US to aid in entrepreneurial training in our societies, Africa needs regional integrative approach in entrepreneurship entrepreneurial programmes to cater for the young ones.
6. Lastly, despite the amount of aids from developed nations, African development lies with our political commitment, anti-corruption crusade and transparency and social inclusion in governance toward attaining SDGs.

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