

**Sub-theme 5: Public Private Participation in the Provision of
Technical and Vocational Education**

**Public Private Partnerships for Efficient Funding and Delivery of
Technical and Vocational Education in Nigeria.**

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Abstract

Inefficient delivery of technical and vocational education which has been persistently aggravated by poor funding has been identified as one of the major problems of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. This paper therefore advocates the need for public private partnerships towards efficient funding and delivery of technical vocational education which is necessary for the production of adequate and globally competitive graduates. The current situation of technical and vocational education in Nigeria was reported in the paper and the roles of public and private sector in the delivery of technical and vocational education were discussed among others.

Introduction

The delivery of technical and vocational education in Nigeria over the years has not been encouraging, several reasons have been advanced for this setback which include structural imbalance, poor societal attitudes and inadequate financing of technical and vocational education programme among others [FME, 2000; Uthman, 2000; Ohize, 2004 & Umar, 2005]. The problem of inadequate funding has been viewed to have overbearing effects on the delivery of technical and vocational education. Various poverty eradication programmes through acquisition of vocational skill embarked upon by government and non-governmental organizations [NGOs] is an evident that there is fresh awareness of the critical role that technical and vocational education plays in national

development. In spite of this awareness technical and vocational education still suffer the problem of inadequate funding.

Over the years, financing of education in general has been the sole responsibility of the government. The National Policy on Education [2004] states that education is an expensive social service and require adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of the education programme. It further reveals that the financing of education is joint responsibility of the federal, state, local governments and private sector; as such government welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations. The participation of the private sector however, has not been too encouraging for quite some time now. Due to other financial commitments, the government finds it very difficult to cope with the financial requirements of education at all levels. It is important to state here that government has been making tireless efforts to finance technical and vocational education programmes since inception. Despite these efforts, Olusegun, (2000) cited in Emah (2005) reported that funding is grossly inadequate. He further maintains that attention should be directed towards alternative ways of funding technical and vocational education, which is capital expensive.

In a related development, the federal government master plan for 2001-2010 suggested that for technical and vocational education policy design and delivery to be achieved, a new partnership between government, employers, vocational industries, trade union and the society must be established, which will create a coherent frame work to enable the launching of national strategy for change. It won't be out of place therefore to say that the present scope and demand of technical and vocational education in terms of funding and delivery is presently beyond what government can handle alone. Since every individual benefits from a good return from education, the government and cooperate organizations should support the acquisition of skills through funding and other interventions.

Importance of Vocational and Technical Education

Technical and vocational education which is education for skill acquisition has been identified and globally accepted as a panacea for a true national development. It is in this regard that the federal government having realized that technical and vocational education holds the key to the nation becoming technologically relevant and internationally competitive in world market; and after a careful assessment of how far we have gone vis-à-vis where we should be that a national seminar was convened in the year 2000, to enable Nigerians to rethink the input, process and product of technical and vocational education and propose directions for the reforms. Area identified as deserving priority attention included the following:

- ❖ Getting all Nigerians youths to benefit from qualitative technical and vocational education.
- ❖ Provision of leaning experience [curriculum] that would ensure that beneficiaries of technical and vocational education scheme have jobs for solving many Nigeria social – economic problems.
- ❖ Provision of conducive environment that will ensure that students derive maximum benefit from technical and vocational education.
- ❖ Enhancement of technical and vocational institutions
- ❖ Integration of the nation's rich apprenticeship training system into the technical and vocational education to enhance performance. e.t.c.

It was suggested that adequate fund should be provided for successful implementation of the program. Sources of funding proposed among others included the following:

- Education tax fund [ETF]
- Non government organization [NGOs]
- Grant and aid from multilateral and bilateral organizations
- Internally generated funds from commercialization of institution projects which are demand driven and community based
- Organized private sector [OPS] e.t.c

One of the most important features of vocational and technical education is its orientation towards the world of work and emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. Technical and vocational education delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty. Technical and vocational education can also be delivered at different level of sophistication, meaning that technical and vocational education institutions can respond to the different training needs of the learner from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds, and prepare them for gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods, therefore making the youth, the poor and the vulnerable of the society to benefit. Technical and vocational education is therefore a means of empowering individuals to take to control of their lives [COMEDAF II+2007].

Current Situation of Technical & vocational Education (TVE) in Nigeria

Technical and vocational education in Nigeria is delivered at different levels in different types of institutions which include universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, Technical and vocational schools. The delivery of technical and vocational education in Nigeria is characterized by Low quality training, poor public perception, weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, poor infractural facilities, poor management and inadequate funding among others. The National Policy on Education [2004] stipulates that government welcomes the participation of voluntary agencies communities and private individual in the establishment and management of schools. However participation of the private sector in delivery of technical and vocational education in Nigeria has not been impressive.

The federal government master plan on technical and vocational education for 2001 – 2010 noted that technical and vocational education is in a state of crisis in Nigeria. Problems of technical and vocational education in Nigeria are categorized into three broad groups.

- ❖ Structural imbalance and system configuration
- ❖ Inadequate resource input and consequent low output and

- ❖ Poor societal attitude towards acceptance of technical and vocational education as an alternative form education.

If these problems are allowed to persist, the delivery of technical and vocational education could be severely hampered. In the same vein, Aina [2000] stressed that inspite of the fact that technical and vocational skills empower young people and adults to play active role in the development of a nation, technical and vocational education in Nigeria is fraught with problems which militate against its ability to provide adequate number and quality of skilled and technical manpower required to lift our country from the abyss of technological irrelevant and economic depression.

The Role of Public Sector

The public sector is that part of the economic and administrative life that deals with delivery of goods and services by and for the government, whether national, regional, or local/municipal. These activities range from delivery of social security, administration, urban planning and organizing national defense. Public financing of technical and vocational institutions, according to Ibeneme [2005] is provided through public revenue [government funds]. The government should therefore as matter of concern:

1. Encourage private sector training. This can be achieved through the creation of favorable policy environment by reducing distortions in incentives and establishing compulsory polices when the incentive cannot be improved. Reducing the regulation of private sector can accelerate the response of the private sector to a changing policy environment.
2. Encourage employer training: Employer training capacity should be encouraged. This the government can safety can assist by providing information to employers on external training opportunities as well as technical assistance for training of trainer for developing polices and plans for enterprise training.

3. Improve management capacity building: This involves building capacity for effective technical and vocational education administration, policy making, policy implementation, supervision and control, as well as for effective teaching and management. Management capacity building is regarded as the most important because it is concern with resources operation and utilization to achieve set goals of an organization.
4. Curriculum design based on industries needs: The government should design the curriculum to meet industrial and organizational needs. It should be designed in such a way to reflect technological change and societal needs. Others include:
 - Give legislative backing to national technical and vocational education policies
 - Introduce polices and incentive that will support increased private sector participation in technical and vocational education delivery;
 - Partner with informal technical and vocational education trainer to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills into their training programmes;
 - Invest in training material and equipment;
 - Invest in technical and vocational education instructor training and enhance status of instructors;
 - Introduce sustainable financing scheme for technical and vocational education;
 - Increase funding support to the sector;
 - Introduce ICT into technical and vocational education;
 - Constantly monitor and periodically evaluate the performance of the system and apply corrective measure accordingly.

The Role of the Private Sector

Private sector is the fundamental part of the economy that is both run for profit and is not controlled by the state. The private sector can be regarded as one

that takes the risk and initiative to establish and operate an enterprise for the purpose of making profit. In this era of rapid economic and technological change, if we want to compete favourably with other nations, we need to improve productivity throughout the economy, which not only require capital investment but also a workforce that has the flexibility to acquire new skills for new jobs as the structure of the economies and occupation change. It is common knowledge that the economy of Nigeria can only be developed and sustained if the private sector is influenced to create wealth and employment for the populace; as such there is need for the intervention of private sector in order to help Nigeria meet these challenges. According to a world bank report [1991], training in the private sector by private employers and private training institutions can be the most efficient way to develop the skills of workforce.

Since government efforts alone are insufficient to cope with the funding of technical and vocational education, private sector participation should be encouraged in order for Nigeria to achieve its target in a meaningful educational development. Some major area to be looked into among others includes;

1. Establishment of private technical institutions: Government's efforts in encouraging private sector participation in establishing private institution are a step in the right direction. This would in a way bring education closer to previously excluded groups. Similar effort should be extended to individual and co-operate organizations to establish technical institutions.
2. Students industrial work experience scheme [SIWES]: The cost of siwes training has the sole responsibility of the government through its agency [ITF]. The participation of private sector through apprenticeship training should be highly encouraged to continue and fully support the ITF. This would bring about effective and efficient ways of transmitting technological education thereby ensuring reasonable national development.
3. Establish links between institutions and industries: This would be relevance in the progressive development of technical and vocational education as link would assist both institution and industries in accessing of products

from the institution and the quality of product from the industry. The feedback from one end would determine the framework of more effective planning at each end.

Conclusion

The role of public and private sector in revitalizing technical and vocational education cannot be overemphasized. Public private sector participation is about people, the society and development. The development tends to ginger people's aspiration as well as uplifts their social and economic lives. Public private participation also brings cordial working relationship between various organizations within the context of building confidence in overall development of society and polity. The federal government should, as a matter of concern encourage the public private participation, especially in its effort to revitalize technical and vocational education in the country.

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