



CAEL Series for Entrepreneurship and Leadership Development in Africa

A Knowledge Transfer report by the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL), University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

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“Developing and sustaining best practices in entrepreneurship, enterprise & management in a university of environment”

Executive Summary

Africa is becoming fully integrated with the wider modern economy in terms of developing high growth potential. The expanding informal economy fuelled by the appetite for individual success and a strong political will to promote education-industry partnership and compulsory entrepreneurship education in the higher education sector and start-ups have become key drivers of this integration. However, over the last few years, the economic activity gap between northern and southern Nigeria has continued to widen exacerbated by the Boko Haram crisis, leading to almost intractable levels over political schism. So in the context of the uncertainty of Nigeria’s socio-economic and political landscape, we need to reflect upon the role of entrepreneurship, its capacity to contribute to socio-economic development, and more importantly the capability of Nigeria’s HE sector to deliver entrepreneurship education.

In parallel with dealing with several other challenges related to low student retention rate and poor graduate employability, HE institutions were required to develop curriculum, establish entrepreneurship centres and build human capacity for entrepreneurship delivery. The idea was to encourage higher education providers to unlock the individual potentials and capacities, including the personality traits often associated as key drivers of success for business start-ups. Studies show that in addition to personality traits, education and training, education-industry partnership also plays a vital role in developing entrepreneurial activity.

In order to respond to government directive and explore the opportunity to develop entrepreneurship education delivery capability as well as foster education-industry partnership, higher education institutions in Nigeria have partnered with the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL), University of Wolverhampton. This report attempts to explain the nature and benefits of this partnership, specifically with the University of Maiduguri in northern Nigeria. The outcomes of the Maiduguri project are very encouraging. They reflect a good example of international knowledge transfer and best practice initiatives in entrepreneurship developed and designed by CAEL. They demonstrate how CAEL and partners can work closely together to develop bespoke entrepreneurship education delivery capability. Also, they help us understand how entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship centre can support the business creation process: i.e., how individuals e.g., students, graduates, youth, women and institutions can be developed into entrepreneurs, what contributions can be made by higher education institutions, how the link can be made



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between business creation process, higher education activities, regional economic development and economic policies.

The capacity building project with the University of Maiduguri was delivered under three separate but related strategic phases below:

- a. Providing UNIMAID staffs/students with understanding of the pedagogy, research and principles of entrepreneurship education
- b. Developing a curriculum template for entrepreneurship degree programme
- c. Operationalising UNIMAID's £3.5million Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED)

These capacities, referred to as CAEL's knowledge transfer and capacity building model, are used to create entrepreneurship education capabilities. In tandem with the topics e.g., stimulating enterprise knowledge, vocational skills and entrepreneurial behaviours and the initiatives presented in this report, providing the necessary start-up support infrastructure is also a key element to creating and nurturing successful businesses. For example, on the one hand, higher education institutions could support the development and integration of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum and establish entrepreneurship centres of excellence to promote the creation of start-ups infrastructure that reflect and meet the economic and sector specific needs of its region. Government on the other hand working with higher education institutions and key sector stakeholders could provide valuable support through the provision of financial assistance to young entrepreneurs with a proven business concept.



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Introduction

The abduction in April 2014 of more than 250 school girls in Chibok, a small town near Maiduguri Nigeria, drew international attention to the scale of terror unleashed by the dreaded Boko Haram in the region. Stakeholders have recognised the urgent need to tackle the twin problems of poverty and youth unemployment, which are especially high in the region and are associated with high rates of recruitment by the terror group. In response to this challenge, the federal government of Nigeria through the nation's central bank provided some funding for the setting up of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (CEED) at the University of Maiduguri. This bespoke training on entrepreneurship education development and delivery was therefore provided by the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL) for the staff of CEED. Participants include the director and deputy director of the CEED, as well as head of units at the new entrepreneurship centre. The sessions held between 8th and 17th October 2012 at the University of Wolverhampton, UK.

This Knowledge Transfer Programme is part of CAEL's ongoing intervention in the areas of capacity building for entrepreneurship education and enterprise development in Africa. Within the past five years, the centre has run training programmes focusing on entrepreneurship education and curriculum development, and leadership training workshops. More than 150 executives of higher institutions in Africa, including vice chancellors, provosts, and directors of centres, have participated in the training programmes. They represent more than 40 institutions of higher education, mostly from Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship education in a conflict environment: focus on Maiduguri, Nigeria

Maiduguri is the capital city of Borno State and the largest city in Northeastern Nigeria, covering an area of 543km², and with an estimated population of 1 million (Mayomi & Mohammed, 2014). Borno State, established by the federal military government in 1976, is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. With an estimated population of 5.2 million and a landmass of 61,435km², it is the largest state by landmass in Nigeria. Borno State is located in the Northeastern part of the country and lies between latitudes 100 and 140 N, and longitudes 110 30' and 140 45' E (University of Maiduguri, 2009). It is bordered by Niger Republic to the North, Chad to the North East, and Cameroon to the East. Within Nigeria, it shares borders with other Northeastern states of Adamawa, Yobe and Gombe states.

In 2002, the terrorist group Boko Haram was formed in Maiduguri by radical cleric Mohammed Yusuf. Its official name is *Jamaatu Ahlus-SunnahLidda Awati Wal Jihad*, the Arabic for "People Committed to The Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad". Its popular name, Boko Haram, derives from its core teaching that western education is forbidden (Adesoji, 2010). In April 2014, Boko Haram abducted more than 250 school girls from Chibok, near Maiduguri in Northeast Nigeria (Peters, 2014). Their whereabouts is still



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unknown. Analysts have pointed out that the emergence and growth of Boko Haram is closely associated with exceptionally high levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in Nigeria, and Northeast Nigeria in particular (Rogers, 2012; Salaam, 2012). Official figures indicate that the Northeast region of Nigeria is the most deprived in terms of poverty, unemployment, and education access (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012; World Bank, 2013), and these have been identified as the most significant risk factors contributing to the spread of Boko Haram insurgency.

Several scholars have examined how entrepreneurs can explore and exploit investment and growth opportunities in base of the economic pyramid (BOP) contexts characterised by deep and widespread poverty and low-income consumers (Pitta, Guesalaga, & Marshall, 2008; Seelos & Mair, 2007). Among other things, scholars have observed that businesses can achieve the dual goal of making profit and alleviating poverty by building new resources and capabilities and forging new partnerships in BOP markets (Seelos & Mair, 2007). In other words, they can combine the roles and goals of commercial and social entrepreneurship. However, conflict zones present a peculiar set of challenges for entrepreneurs. In addition to extreme poverty and low consumption associated with BOP contexts, markets in conflict zones are often characterised by lack of functioning legal systems, absence of key infrastructures, shortage of skilled people, and overall volatility associated with violence, lawlessness and criminality (Anderson, Markides, & Kupp, 2010; Bruck, Naude, & Verwimp, 2013).

A number of recent entrepreneurship studies have highlighted the impacts of conflicts on entrepreneurial activities, as well as the impact of entrepreneurs on conflict situations. Bruck et al., (2013) observed that the impacts of wars and conflicts on infrastructures, market stability and other macro-economic outcomes negatively affect entrepreneurial opportunities for profitable investments. Entrepreneurs in these environments have to grapple with higher transaction costs, higher risks and the challenge of disrupted, smaller markets (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, & Steen, 2010). In spite of these challenges, or perhaps because of them, entrepreneurs in conflict zones generally manifest higher levels of resilience, tenacity, and ingenuity. Resilient entrepreneurs tend to be optimistic in the face of setbacks, and they are highly resourceful in overcoming or changing difficult situations to their advantage (Bullough, Renko, & Myatt, 2014).

Entrepreneurship can also have transformative effect on conflict situations. This transformative impact has been observed in the case of the Rwandan coffee sector, where economic liberalisation and enhanced entrepreneurial activities were found to be associated with not just economic growth but positive social change among the populace (Tobias & Boudreaux, 2011). Strong (2009) also reported similar impact in Northern Ireland, where increased economic freedom and high growth of indigenous entrepreneurial activities led to violence reduction and contributed significantly to the end of decades of war.



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Training activities/review

The training programme featured sessions on:

- Stimulating Enterprise Knowledge
- Mentoring & Entrepreneurial Learning
- Operations Management in Entrepreneurship Centres
- Development & Management of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
- Stimulating vocational skills amongst students
- Stimulating Entrepreneurial Behaviours
- International Enterprise
- Developing Linkages with Entrepreneurship Centres (e.g., Roles of Science Parks, Tech Transfer Offices, Patent Protection)
- Small Businesses & Enterprise - Financing Small Business (Theory & Practices)
- Rural Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
- Internal Marketing & Entrepreneurship
- Roles of ICT and Digital Media in Entrepreneurship Development (e.g., Video Conferencing).

Activities

Drawing from the experience of the University of Wolverhampton, the participants were taken through a list of key ideas and things to consider in designing a good entrepreneurship education curriculum: a) a shift from a transmission model (learning about) to an experiential model (learning for); b) learning that is centred on investigating 'real' problems and opportunities (not discipline focused); c) student project-based learning involving independent and team based investigation and presentation of solutions; d) experiential, practice-based, work/ community located learning opportunities. Participants were also encouraged to draw on their local contexts of violence and uncertainty by introducing conditions of risk, uncertainty and ambiguity introduced into the learning and assessment process to develop students' judgement and coping capacity. Furthermore, the delegates were introduced to the FACETS- Focus, Advantage, Creativity, Ego, Team and Social- model (Thompson, 2004), a diagnostic tool they can use to assess and quantify students' entrepreneurial potentials in a comparable way.

The sessions also explored the concept of enterprise learning within the framework of the SKABE model, incorporating: i) Skills – cognitive and practiced processes; ii) Knowledge – applied theory and concepts; iii) Attitudes – positive thinking/conditioning; iv) Behaviour – receptivity and self-confidence; v) Experiential – active enterprise applications. Enterprise was discussed in a broad context as a generator of three forms of capital: financial capital, social capital, and aesthetic capital (Jones, 2012).



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The training participants highlighted how the training has helped them to introduce new ideas and improve existing practices at the new entrepreneurship centre in Maiduguri. Three after the training, Dr Mohammed Madawaki, then deputy director and now acting director of CEED, said that “we have seen and adopted good practices from the University of Wolverhampton and replicated those that are replicatable. Experts have also visited Maiduguri from Wolverhampton and conducted very fruitful workshops that have enhanced our way of doing things”. He stated further that the skills acquired from this training programme had helped equipped the trainers in Maiduguri to better deliver the entrepreneurship programme. One of the major impacts now is “the enthusiasm on the part of the students for entrepreneurial undertaking. Some of them have already developed plans for micro business after graduation (Madawaki, 2015).

Recommendations

Based on the training, the following recommendations were made to the delegates from the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, on how they can run an effective entrepreneurship programme in an environment characterised by widespread poverty, conflict and uncertainty:

1. Develop an entrepreneurship programme that is centred on active learning. The centre should place as much value on affective learning as it does on cognitive learning.
2. Engage experts and other stakeholders involved with design of the entrepreneurship programme to focus special attention on the peculiar challenges associated with terrorist insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. Among other things, curriculum provision should focus on developing entrepreneurial resilience and coping strategies in the midst of the insurgency.
3. Build partnerships with financial institutions especially with respect to provision of seed funding for aspiring entrepreneurs who have graduated from the programme.
4. Develop knowledge transfer partnerships with the local business community. Engage local entrepreneurs in the process of curriculum development and delivery, and promote linkages between students, graduates and businesses.
5. Develop a more structured and more productive incubation unit that draws from the mentorship and support of academic experts and local and regional entrepreneurs.
6. Work more closely with local governments to extend entrepreneurship education provision beyond the four walls of the university to non-students and less educated youth who are most vulnerable to Boko Haram propaganda.
7. Work with local and regional governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to provide support for Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), especially with respect to setting up new enterprises and providing entrepreneurship training at IDP camps.
8. Establish active collaboration with other institutions, both locally and nationally, to share ideas and improve local practices on entrepreneurship education, in keeping with best practices in the rest of the world.



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9. Provide a dynamic entrepreneurship programme that, while focusing mainly on business entrepreneurs in response to pressing needs of the local context, also reflects two other forms of entrepreneurship: social entrepreneurship and artistic entrepreneurs. This provides the students with opportunities to explore a wider range of options in the pursuit of their entrepreneurial intentions and ambitions.
10. Liaise with the federal government, relevant national agencies and other stakeholders towards the enactment and full implementations of policies and provision of resources and opportunities to support entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

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