

IMPROVING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA THROUGH THE PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH.

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Abstract

Technical and vocational Education and Training (TVET) is established to provide skilled manpower needs in public/private partnership. TVET has been used by several developed countries as an instrument for development because of its impact on productivity and economic development. Public/Private partnership in TVET will be the engine for economic growth, create opportunity for employment and wealth creation. This paper highlights the concepts of Public/Private Partnership, Public/Private Partnership models, benefits of partnering in TVET, why government use private partnerships, the TVET-PPP experiences in Nigeria, areas of PPP intervention for the improvement of TVET, challenges in Public/Private Partnership in TVET. The paper conclude that PPP in TVET must be supported by the national government and designed to support creation and training in Technical and Vocational Education. On the basis of this, recommendations were made which call for government and its agencies in TVET sector should organize sensitization workshop and seminars aimed at enlightening people on the benefits and other complexities of PPP project.

Keywords: Public/Private Partnership (PPP), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Introduction

Vocational education is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupations. Vocational Education provides the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for effective

employment in specific occupation. Vocational Technical Education assures that a choice of an occupation has been made and that appropriate training is needed to enable the individual enter or advance in the chosen occupation. For Okoro (1996) Vocational Technology

Education may be regarded as that aspect of the total education process that focuses on individual occupations. Its function is to provide knowledge, develop skills, and inculcate the attitudes that are necessary for entry and progress in any occupation. The establishment of Vocational Education programme should be based on needs of the country, the needs of the community and the needs of the individual citizens.

In essence therefore, TVET can be regarded as a multifaceted multi-disciplinary and pragmatic field of study, aimed at equipping the individuals with required vocational and technical education literacy skills, which will enhance their relevance and functionality in the society. As a result, it plays a vital and indispensable role in the development of the society. It is the bedrock upon which a country's socio-economic, technological and cultural advancement must be built. This type of education according to Baiyelo (2010) has the economic role of providing qualified manpower by changing the individuals and in enabling them to use complex technology. The emphasis therefore, is not only on the provision of skilled manpower for a static economy but also continuing to do so for a dynamic one, especially with changing societal needs for technological advancement.

In Nigeria, the government has recognized the socio-economic status of TVET as it increasingly views skills development as an important factor in the drive to enhance productivity, stimulate economic

competitiveness and raise people out of poverty. It is perhaps, in this regard that Uwaifo (2010) reiterated that throughout the country, there is a growing awareness about the need for vocational and technical education. This improvement in societal perception and interest has culminated in demands for changes in content, organization and delivery of vocational and technical curricula to reflect a new emphasis on technology. All is not well with TVET system of learning in Nigeria. Indeed the training of the technical personnel has witnessed formidable challenges ranging from poor funding to inadequate facilities both quantitatively and qualitatively, non – availability of adequate human capacity, brain drain and poor staff training and retention profiles among others.

Concepts of Public/Private Partnership and TVET

The need for Technological advancement calls for the intervention of TVET. Since no nation can develop if it fails to give attention to human resource development, it becomes imperative that adequate attention be paid to TVET to ensure attainment of technological advancement. Private sector refers to establishment owned by individuals (entrepreneurs) who are concerned with profit-making. They include industrial establishments and institutions owned by individuals. The public sector on the other hand refers to the general establishments of the society and the government which are owned by the masses (Citizens). There is therefore, the

need to involve the private and public sectors as well as the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in funding, financing and training of teachers, other staff and students to ensure technological advancement through TVET. A partnership is an agreement among various parties to cooperate to ensure attainment of a goal. Partnership is a strategic alliance or relationships between two or more people or parties. It is based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding and obligations. According to Piyasiri, Suraweera & Edirinsooriya (2008), two types of Partnership are available. These are the formal, partnership which obtains where each party's roles and obligations are spelt out in a written agreement and the informal partnership where the roles and obligations are agreed verbally. There is need for private and public partnership in TVET to ensure technological advancement of Nigeria.

The role of public/private partnership in TVET cannot be over emphasized in any society, the aim being to bring employers more actively involved in the system. The reasons employers must be engaged according to Hawley & Pack (2005), is to firstly, improve system level of governance. Secondly, to encourage social partnership in planning technical and vocational education and training with employers. Thirdly, there is sense among educators that the quality of education will be improved, if employer involvement in curriculum and testing is made

Finally, there remains a need to engage employers at the local level in the teaching and learning process. Public/private partnership is important if a country must have high quality TVET because this concept allows for regular communication between employers and TVET providers. This communication enables TVET providers to learn what skills are in demands in the labour market and also provides clues on techniques to train for jobs that change regularly (Grubb & Lazerson, 2004).

Grubb & Lazerson (2004) concluded thus, partnership of public/private in TVET makes it possible for employers to have input into the curriculum of TVET and often gives them a recruiting tool to attract the skilled worker which is the glue that links TVET providers and employers. The term is used to represent a range of public policy systems, and curriculum framework that have a shared goal to lighten the level of communication among educators and employers.

Public/Private Partnership Models

Brand (1998), Gill & Dar (2002) & Rauner (1998), averred that the German system of such partnership (dual system) is one model of public/private engagement based on a law from 1969 that mandates a particular governance structure for TVET. At the heart of the German system is a delegation of responsibility for curriculum and assessment to a coalition of labour representatives, business and educators. The business plays a particularly complex

role managing the system by monitoring the quality of training provided by firms in the dual system. They further held that the following components must be in place for proper application of the German model;

- A legislative framework that requires firms to invest in training of newly hired workers.
- A funding mechanism through a combination of federal, regional and business spending.
- The capacity to carry out jobs analysis and curriculum development.
- Local institutions that represents the interest of business and
- Trained professionals' instructions and administrators.

Another model for private involvement in TVET is that used in Japan, which is completely different from that used in German model, but relevant in the USA and other nations with social networks (Kariya & Rosenbaum, 2003, Rosenbaum, 2002). This model is based on a local relationship and depends on high school staff correctly analyzing the skills of potential graduates and their fit with the academic and vocational needs of employers. This model encourages government use of incentives such as tax levies to promote training

The third model focuses on encouraging firm level training through government policy. This is usually called a "Human Resource Development" or "Workforce Development System" in countries that have this kind of program. This includes South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore.

They evolved in East Asia largely as governments in the 1960s – 1980s tried to strengthen economic growth through spending on both initial and further vocational training (Ashton, Green, James & Sung 1999, The World Bank (1993). The core of this Human Resources Development strategies are taxation policies that allow the governments to collect revenue from firms and then allow government to use these resources to train within their own companies.

Recent studies from Gill & Dar (2000), and Johnson & Adams (2004) provide some basis for stating that government have increasingly used incentives, such as taxes and levies to promote training. Also Ziderman (2001), emphasized that firms do under-train and that governments need to play an increasingly active role in promoting training. However, Ziderman went further to show that national training funds need to be carefully monitored for sustainability of the training financing and those proper controls are in place to assure that funds are spent on appropriate training activities.

Benefits of Partnering in TVET

According to African Development Fund (ADF) (2006), the benefits of PPPs includes'

- Speedy, efficient cost effective delivery of training programmes.
- Poverty reduction through human resources development'

- Improved access to qualify TVET in formal and non-formal training institutions;
- Enhancement of employment-oriented skills for youths and adults;
- Reduction the rate of school dropout and their potentials harnessed through skill training centers;
- Innovation and diversity in the provision of public services.

Why Government should use Private Partnerships

Governments world-wide have sought to increase the involvement of the private sector to the delivery of public services. These initiatives, in line with the findings of Ndagi (2010) have taken many forms such as the outright privatization of previously stated-owned industries, contracting out of service and the use of private finance in the provision of social infrastructures and services. There are therefore several reasons the governments are attracted to PPPs. According to Njidda (2009) they include the potential for value of money, early project delivery, gains from innovation, obviating the needs to borrow to finance infrastructure investment, and access to improved services. The relevant government agency, according to Nlidda, is responsible for assessing whether a project offers values for money compared with the most efficient form of public delivery. Some governments find PPPs politically attractive in that PPPs entail that private sector partners to supply 'public' services.

It can be asserted that a PPP programme offers a long-term, sustainable approach to

improving social infrastructures, enhancing the value of public assets and making better use of taxpayer's money. In support of these observations, Ndagi (2010) highlighted the following as part of the reasons government adopts the PPP model:

- PPP enhances governments' capacity to develop integrated solutions to infrastructure provisions, decline decay.
- It facilitates creative, innovative, cost reducing and faster approaches to project implementation.
- It enhances public management, improved quality services and generation of additional revenues.
- It facilitates access to skills, experience and technology while enhancing transfer and acquisition of technical knowledge know-how.
- Above all it allows for transfer of risks which are inherent to project partners on agreed sharing formula.

Conclusively, adopting PPPs to finance infrastructural development have become inevitable by governments in most parts of the globe because of the simple reality that government alone can not muster sufficient resources to meet the needs of citizens. In essence therefore, PPPs have developed due to financial shortages in the public sector as it further demonstrate the ability to harness additional financial resources and operating efficiencies inherent in the private sector.

The TVET-PPP Experiences in Nigeria

At this time of economic crises, as PPP has a very vital role to play in the development of TVET in this country. The culture of co-operations and partnership in TVET by private enterprises' is relatively new in Nigeria. One of the commonly cited examples is the approval given by the past regimes of Obasanjo in the year 2007 for collaboration between human resources development agencies, and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and some private enterprises in Nigeria. As part of its contribution to revitalize TVET in Nigeria (one of the key reform initiatives of the past Obasanjo's regime), NBTE has gone into partnership with some private institutions in Nigeria in order to facilitate TVET development for technology and scientific innovation, and above all,

industrial and economic self-sustenance of the country. Abukakar (2010) reported that NBTE recently introduced Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEI) and Innovations Enterprise Institutions (IEL) which offer courses leading to the award of National Vocational Certificate (NVC) and National Innovation Diploma (NID). These institutions are principally private sector driven and they offer vocational, technical, professional education and other skills-based training at post-basic and post-secondary level to equip teeming unemployed youths and working adults with employment skills and knowledge that will meet the increasing demand for technical manpower by various sectors of the nation's economy.

Table 1: Captures the pioneer private institutions approved by NBTE to commence training from March 2008.

1	Kano Innovation Vocational Institutions (KIV),	NVC – Carpentry and Joinery
2	Fada Road, Kano	NVC- Welding/Fabrication
3	National Innovation Training Centre, Off Isaac Boro Road, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State	NID-Soft & Hardware Eng's
4	Yahaya Hamza Institute of Advanced Technology,	NID-Networking & System Security
5	Ahmadu Bello Way, 1 st Floor Bank of the North Building Kaduna	NID-Networking & System Security
6	ICT Academy, 54 Nsikak Eduok Avenue, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.	NID-Professional Development in Ecc & M
7	Environmental Sustainability Thinking and Action Centres (ESTAC), Phase 6, Trans Ekulu, Enugu, Enugu State. Business Education Council (BEC), 13 Randle Road, Apapa. Lagos.	NID-Networking & system Security NID-Block Laying & Concreting NID-Building Construction

- 8 City Gate Institution Technology, 3rd Floor, Baboos Building. Oluyoke Way, Ibadan Afion Digital Institution Plot 365, Obafemi Awolowo Way, Jabi Abuja.
- NID-Film & TV Production
NID-Soft & Hardware Engr.
NID-Networking & System Security
NID-Multimedia Technology
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Source: Ndagi (2010)

Other PPP experience in Nigeria is that of collaboration with some international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As part of the crusade to reposition and revitalize TVET for the development of technological and scientific innovation in Nigeria, some NGOs have gone into partnership with Nigeria by offering technical experience, vocational competence and financial capability for the improvement of TVET. Notable among these NGOs as represented by Abubakar (2010) are:

- The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Regional Bureau for Education Development in Africa (BREDA)
- African Development Bank (AFRDB)
- German International Cooperation (GIZ)

Collaboration with the NGOs are in diverse fields such as: capacity building for teachers, provision of modern equipment, facilities and tools, TVET revitalization strategy and updating of curricula, as well as updating and localization of curriculum

with emphasis on innovation learning, teaching and training materials (LTTM) development.

Despite the laudable approach of collaboration between the private sectors and NGOs in revitalizing TVET in Nigeria, there are serious emerging challenges which may mar the attainment of the desired vision of the government in terms of improving and widening access to TVET as well as meeting the needs of the industries. Some of these challenges include:

- Inadequate sensitization and awareness of the benefits of PPP on the part organized private sector and other stakeholders of TVET in Nigeria.
- Poor monitoring and evaluations mechanism to check the level of success or otherwise of the VEIs and IEIs.
- Bureaucratic bottles necks by the government in terms of facilitating the collaboration between the private sectors and TVET institutions.
- Inadequate capacity building for TVET related training institutions and organized private sectors for better understanding of the PPP projects.
- Inadequate incorporation of our indigenous crafts and vocations in the

new partnership process. Such indigenous crafts like general dying and leather works, mat weaving, brass work and blacksmithing, pottery and ceramic production are conspicuously missing in the new curricula developed for VEI and IEI.

- Poor implementation of the laudable policy aimed at revitalizing TVET through collaboration with the private enterprise.
- Lack of enabling and enticing environment to promote and attract the private sector to embrace PPP programme for revitalizing TVET.

Areas of PPP Intervention for the Improvement of TVET

Technical vocational educational and training (TVET) has been identified as an important segment in the education and training system of many countries around the world, helping to develop a professionally skilled workforce vital to the economic growth of nations. Grunwald (2008) asserted that the economic growth vital for a country's development and for combating poverty is impossible without private sector participation. According to Grunwald, private enterprises play an essential role in creating jobs and income for society and individuals. In support of this assertion, Abubakar (2010) highlighted that repositioning and subsequent improvement of TVET targeted at development of technology and scientific innovations can not be achieved by government alone but it has to be in collaboration or partnership with private

enterprises that have the technical expertise, vocational competences and financial capability.

In improving the training in vocational and technical education, the private sector intervention may take diverse forms. The contribution intervention may include technology support in terms of training and retraining of staff. Provision of capital and expertise through participation in curriculum development, networks, and access to modern production equipment, tools, machines and technical know-how. To corroborate these views, Grunwald (2008) listed out the following as key areas of collaboration between TVET institutions and the private sector. The areas include"

- Identifying training needs of technical staff;
- Setting standards for the vocational and technical educators;
- Developing training programmes/syllabi for TVET institutions;
- Training and retaining of technical teachers and workshop attendants;
- Developing teaching and learning materials.
- Qualifying and supplying teachers and instructors;
- Planning and implementing training measure;
- Setting up and implementing resting and examination systems;
- Evaluating the relevance, significance, effectiveness and efficiency as well as

impact of training measures and related activities; and

- Financing activities.

It will be expected that the synergy between the TVET institutions (government) and private enterprises will bring about efficient delivery of services (skills development) because of the private sector richness and endowment in financial resources, technology, technical know-how and others, whereas the public sector has strong policies to guide the private sector; thus the combination will not only be overwhelming but also tremendous.

Challenges for Public/Private Partnership in TVET

- As good and encouraging as this concept of public/private partnership and TVET, it is not without some challenges. Some of the prevalent challenges include:
- **Public Perception:** A sizeable number of people in Nigeria do not appreciate the concept of TVET. The preferences for university education against technical and vocational education are a clear indication of the trend.
- **Inadequate Manpower:** The delivery of quality TVET is dependent on the competence of the instructors. Most instructors possess the theoretical knowledge but lack the technical and practical skills. Also instructors may not abreast with new technologies in the work. These dampen the interest of the investors in TVET.

- **Availability of Employment:** The ultimate aim of TVET is employment. There are not enough industries and companies willing and ready to employ TVET graduates because employers assume they lack saleable skills and knowledge. But the situation could be better if the PPP is fully encouraged.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** There is little or no infrastructure and future positive policies put on ground by the government for TVET scholars and graduates. This is a problem as the private/public sectors do not have anything on discussion to consolidate on, hence most interested citizens are discouraged.
- **Irregular and Inconsistent Government Policy:** Governments have not been able to put on ground strong and reliable programmes and policy that will encourage public/private sectors to get involved in the development of TVET.
- **Lack of Appropriate career guidance with schools and homes:** Most times the concept does not necessarily benefit small or medium sized companies but only benefits large firms (Ziderman, 2002).

Conclusion

The use of legislative tools to build social partnership is necessary but not sufficient action for government to increase employer involvement in TVET. The social partnership must be supported by the

national government and designed to support creation and training in Technical Vocational Education.

Recommendations

This paper opines that once the emerging challenges militating against the laudable effort of revitalizing TVET is adequately tackled, then the much desired objectives of repositioning TVET for the development of this country can be attained. As a way forward, the paper recommends:

- Immediate incorporation of our indigenous crafts and vocations to form part and parcel of functional curricula relevant to TVET. To this end, our institutions should be tasked in conduct research to ascertain local crafts and vocations that can be developed and could be marketable globally.
- Government and its agencies in TVET sector should organize sensitization workshop and seminars aimed at enlightening people on the benefits and other complexities of PPP project.
- Government agencies like NBTE, and NABTEB should initiate feed back mechanism targeted at assessing the level of success or otherwise of the VELs and IEIs. This could be achieved through adequate monitoring and evaluation.
- The bureaucracy of initiating partnership between TVET providers and interested private sector should be drastically reduced to hasten the process and attract more investors.
- Friendly policies and enticing/enabling environment should be provided by the

government and its agencies for PPP to strive.

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