

TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP: A BRIDGE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

BY

LUCAS, B. OJO (Ph.D), OLUGBENRO, S. O & ENAMUDU, P.G

School of Technical Education

In Affiliation with University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos

E- mail: lucasjobab@yahoo.com

Abstract

Nigerian educational system has been witnessing an explosion in the context of declining resource inputs particularly from the government. Many of the developing nations have thus realized that the principal mechanism for developing human knowledge and economic growth is through TVET. Technical Vocational Education and Training TVET is a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that encourages skills acquisition, knowledge and attitudes needed for professional careers. The paper viewed Public-Private Partnership (PPP) as a strategy for revamping TVET for adequate technology advancement and economic growth in Nigeria through collaboration. The paper took a critical look at the needs for Public-Private Partnership in TVET, benefits and its relative importance to the economic development. Constraints on TVET as well as way forward were also highlighted. The paper recommends that a linkage between schools and the private sector should be strengthened to ensure appropriate interface with the world of work. This could be achieved through constant invitation of private sectors to participate in school TEVT programmes.

Key words: Public- Private Partnership (PPP), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Introduction

Technical Vocational Education and Training was one of the earliest education systems in Nigeria with systems of apprenticeship established in various trades: 'pottery, smiting, basketry, wood-carving and the likes in various nation states (Ojo and Olaniyan, 2012). TVET is that form of education that encourages skills acquisition, knowledge and attitudes needed for professional careers (UNESCO, 2011). In Nigeria, TVET is usually carried

out in specialized institutions such as Industrial and Training Institutions, Polytechnics, Universities, Vocational and Technical Institutions and informal sectors. Education is the key to development but technology education is the master key in development. In view of this, the Federal Government of Nigeria established NBTE in January 1977 to standardize curricular development and regulates accreditation process. In the same vein The National

Policy on Education (2004) stated the aims of Technical Education as:

- To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades.
- To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environment problems for the use and convenience of man.
- To give an introduction to professional studies in any memory and other technologies.
- to give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant and
- To enable our young men and women have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Having set up the above in the National Policy on Education (2004), the technical vocational education and training should be able to achieve the following:

- a. Full employment opportunity for the youths
- b. Technological advancement and economic development.
- c. International economic and political independence
- d. Reduction of crime and social vices

- e. Effective supervision and administration of vocational programmes and institutions by technical vocational experts.

In Nigeria, the unfortunate neglect of TVET is an obstacle to national development. Unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youth causing untold hardship, suffering, dejection, frustration and over dependent on family members and friends. The high rate of unemployment among youths has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country (Ajufo, 2013). More than half of the Nigerian population is under the age of 30years according to the National Population Commission (2013).

Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) observed from the excerpts of statistics obtained from the National Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty (80) million representing 60% of the total population of the country. Sixty four (64) million of them are unemployed while one million six hundred thousand (1.6 million) are underemployed whereas about 112.5 Million Nigerian live below the poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Ojo and Olaniyan (2012) attributed the youth unemployment problems to four major factors (1) high population growth, it is estimated that there are approximately 6 million addition to the population every year, and 1.8 million new entrants to the labour market annually.

- i. Low literary rates – Nigerian has low education outcomes with high dropout rate, about 10.5 million Nigerian children are out of school
- ii. Poor investment climate; and
- iii. A lack of targeted investment in key youth- dominated sectors.

The fast pace of development recorded in such nations like Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil among others have clearly shown that development is driven by innovativeness, creativity and enterprise of the people. Unfortunately, Nigeria has not been able to enact similar feats owing to poor linkage between knowledge and development, and between the private and public sector of the economy. This may have been due to lack of appropriate technical and vocational skills and insufficient entrepreneurial culture in the educational system (Adeniyi, 2012). On TVET development in schools, UNESCO (2000) noted with regret that less than 1% of secondary education in Nigeria is oriented towards technical and vocational skills. According to Okoye and Okwelle (2013), the economy of any nation does not solely depend on the educated population, but partly on having a large part of skilled workers that can handle the rapidly changing demands of the labour market.

Within the framework of the National Policy on Education, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is seen as an integral part of general education and as a means of preparing the citizens for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work. To boost

economic development, to revamp TVET and reduced unemployment rate, there is an urgent need for private public partnership collaboration for effective TVET skills acquisition program.

Objectives of the Paper

The objectives of this study are:

- To recognize the major policy context regarding Public-Private Partnership in TVET.
- To have a deeper understanding about Public-Private Partnership for economic development in Nigeria
- To analyze the constraints/challenges of TVET in Nigeria.
- To identify strategies to strengthen the Public-Private Partnership in TVET sector in Nigeria.
- To proffer practical solutions to improve PPP in TVET for economic development.

Defining TVET

Technical Vocational Education and Training is a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills and enables achievement of high academic and standards, leadership, preparation for industry, defined word and advanced education (Ojo, 2011). TVET gives individuals the skills to work as a productive citizen in a global society. Immaculate (2005) in his opinion said that “technical and vocational education were learning experience meant to be impacted to

an individual systematically in order to get him/her adequately equipped for a good employment in a recognized occupation.

TVET programme includes numerous occupational areas such as agriculture, various trades, health services and technical training (Brickmen, 2006). Technical Vocational Education and Training according to Raymond (2007) is about work and training for work. It develops occupational competence and teaches those skills which enables an individual earn a living as cited by Kayoma (2009) in Okorie (2001).

The National Policy on Education (2004) defined Technical Vocational Education as that aspect of education that leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. In this sense, it forms a practical segment of education that involves skills acquisition.

Challenges/Constraints of TVET in Nigeria

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are critical for initial skills development and for re-skilling. TVET in Nigeria are faced with some challenges / constraints that hinder its growths and economic development.

- **Inadequate Financing:** To finance TVET is capital intensive; hence it is too expensive for the government to finance. Even the private sectors do struggle in vain to secure adequate financial supports from banks and

financial agencies. If success is achieved in securing loan, there is also non-availability of long term financing and high interest rate.

- **Unfavourable Image of TVET:** The unfavourable image of TVET has restricted many youths from enrolling in TVET programmes. The total neglect of TVET in Nigeria has hindered its development. Even local society and foreigners do categories TVET as education for the academically disadvantage.
- **Lack of insufficient equipment for quality learning:** This affects the quality of TVET graduates which reduces their employability by potential employers. The equipments are too expensive hence the teachers respond to the delivery of theoretical training than impacting practical skills. Thus, the training needs are often neglected and not prioritized according to industry skills and workforce development.
- **Inconsistent Government Policies:** The federal government has not been consistent in the implementation of education policies; laudable policies have often been hampered by incessant facilities, and lack of continuity by successive government. Also, there is limited provision of participation in the policy formulation / review process by private sectors.
- **Mismatch between the labour market & TVET Programme:** Most TVET institutions do not impact their graduate with sufficient entrepreneurship skills,

hence, the training offered and the skills needed is at variance which could lead to shortage of skilled workers. The emerging markets the world over require skilled workers for new jobs created by these growing economies.

Conceptualizing Public- Private Partnership (PPP)

Public Private Partnership (PPP) is emerging as a new development arrangement which has become a favorite tool for providing public services and developing society in both developed and developing countries. A popular way of defining PPP is as a tool of governance or management that provides a novel approach to delivering goods and services to citizens (Hodge and Greve, 2007).

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) is a government service or private business venture which is funded and operated through a partnership of government and one or more private companies. PPP has been said to be a long term agreement between a government agency and a private partner for the delivery of goods or services with both party sharing in the risks and rewards inherent in the delivery of goods or service which include financial risks and responsibilities (Dabak, 2014)

Public Private Partnership is an answer to the high demand for infrastructure which is at all time high which is not being correctly met by traditional contracting methods. Private companies in conjunction with the

public sector or one of its branches have therefore introduced this solution which provide a more integrated financial design construction, maintenance and operational solution to infrastructure projects. There are two basic forms of PPP: contractual and institutional. Although institution PPP have been quite successful in some circumstances, particularly in countries with well-developed institutional and regulating capacities, contractual PPP are significantly more common, especially in developing economies. PPP is viewed as a generic term for the relationships formed between the private sector and public bodies often with the aim of introducing private sector resources and/or expertise in order to help provide and deliver public sector assets and services (Education International, 2009).

According to Deish (2001) Public Private Partnership exists when the private sector joins with the public sector in pursuit of a common goal. The personnel composition and structure of any private public partnership is unique. The government of Nepal's National Planning Commission (2011) defined PPP as the blending of resources and asset from both public and private sectors with an objective of providing a more efficient and cost effective means of infrastructure and service delivery representing better value to people than traditional direct public delivery. Such partnerships potentially include the design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of public

infrastructure and facilities or the operation of services to meet public needs. They add that all projects that meet the under listed definitions are to be executed under PPP arrangement. The definitions are:

- A contractual agreement between a public entity and private entity.
- For the delivery of infrastructure or services in the public interest.
- Where the public partner focuses principally on the output and allows the private partner to determine the input.
- In which a substantial transfer of appropriate risk takes place to the private party.
- Where the private party or parties have investments at risk, although capital investment may not be required in all PPPs.
- Where better value for money can be demonstrated than traditional public provision.

A Policy Framework for PPPs, Department of the Environment and Local Government, Ireland, defined Public- Private Partnership (PPP) as a business relationship between a private sector company and a government agency for the purpose of completing a project that will serve the public. PPP can be used to finance, build and operate projects such as public transportation, networks, parks and convention areas/centres. Financing a project through a PPP can allow a project to be completed sooner or make it a possibility in the first place. In the same vein, the government of India National PPP Policy (2011) defines

PPP as an arrangement between government / statutory entity/government owned entity on one side and a private sector entity on the other, for the provision of public assets and/or public services, through investments being made/or management being undertaken by the private sector entity, for a specified period of time, where there is well defined allocation of risk between the private sector and the public entity and the private entity received performance linked payments that conform (or are benchmarked) to specified and pre-determined performance standards, measurably by the public entity or its representatives.

There are two fundamental drivers for PPPs. Firstly, PPPs are claimed to enable the public sector to harness the expertise and efficiencies that the private can bring to the delivery of certain facilities and services traditionally procured and delivered by the public sector. Secondly, a PPP is structured so that the public sector body seeking to make a capital investment does not incur any borrowing, rather the PPP borrowing is incurred by the private sector vehicle implementing the project.

Infrastructure financing is critical to infrastructural development. All of the World's fastest growing economic understands that by removing infrastructural bottlenecks, they can accelerate economic growth, create jobs, raise their quality of life index and also have a sustained impact on reducing inflation.

The Needs for PPP in TVET

Public-Private Partnerships have a key role to play in the development of the TVET in Nigeria. If Technical Vocational Education and Training is to be meaningful and successful in Nigeria, then partnerships are needed between public and private sectors to partner effectively with TVET and skill acquisition programme. Maigida (2014) advanced the following as reasons for the needs:

- i. High cost of providing infrastructure for effective TVET programme.
- ii. Most countries of the world have realized that state alone cannot provide the needed access to high quality infrastructure and skill training.
- iii. Private sector involvement whether at provision of infrastructure or at the level of training delivery can greatly enhance what the state affords.

Potential Benefits of Public-Private Partnership for Economic Development

According to Colverson (2012), the following benefits can be derived from PPP initiatives:

- i. Value of Money: Utilizing private sector skills and technology to deliver projects in a more efficient manner, resulting in either lower costs or a superior product for the same investment.
- ii. Optimization of Design and Operation: Using outputs based specification allows room for and promotes

innovative solutions from the private sector on the design, operation and maintenance aspects of the project, with the intention of improving effectiveness while reducing costs over the whole life cycle of the project.

- iii. Quicker of Delivery Project: Private sector capacity and flexibility are seen to be superior to the public sector, and PPPs therefore allow projects to be finished more quickly and on schedule than those attributed to public sector provision. With PPP, the bureaucratic tendencies are reduce thereby making projects to be completed on time.
- iv. Risk Transfer: Project risks (e.g. finance, timeframe, planning permits, community consultations) are transferred to the party best equipped to deal with it, both in terms of expertise and costs, to the stability and benefit of the project.
- v. Increased Investment: In public infrastructure, governments are able to implement projects more frequently and on a larger scale because the private sector finance element reduces its need to raise or budget additional funds, as is the case in standard procurement.
- vi. Increased budget/financing certainty: The transfer of responsibility (and risk) to the private sector for some of the project elements shields governments from unforeseen financial liabilities following cost overruns, delays, or operational difficulties that would otherwise impact upon the budget bottom line. Project finances are

- secured for the length of the contract and not subject to cyclical political budget adjustments, allowing for greater investment planning and efficiencies throughout the management, operation and maintenance phases of the project.
- vii. Improved Service Delivery: PPP allows both sectors to operate within their sphere of expertise, the government in policy and governance, the private sector in the technical aspects of design, construction, operation, and management. Payments that are linked to performance targets or requirements provide an incentive to perform that is too often absent in public provision of services.
- viii. Access to additional capital/off-balance sheet financing: Because all or a large percentage of finance in PPP is provided by the private sector, the government is not responsible for raising funds from within its own coffers or adjusting budgets to allow for large infrastructure spending. This is particularly advantageous during times of fiscal crisis where the government is already short of funds or where the government may have a poor credit rating and is not able to raise the necessary finance. International and national accounting standards do provide some guidance as to what and how PPPs are recorded on balance sheets, but the issue is far from secure.
- ix. Political Advantage: There is political leverage to be gained from PPP agreements in terms of public

perception and financial management credentials, as projects are delivered on time with less impact on the budget and provide superior quality infrastructure or services.

- x. Private sector growth and stability: PPPs provide the private sector with access to reduced risk, secure, long-term investment opportunities that are underwritten by government contracts. Such agreements ensure private capital flows, provide investment opportunities, and stimulate local industry and job markets.

The Way Forward to TVET and PPP for Economic Development

The following points are germane to the development of TVET in Nigeria.

- i. TVET should be seen to perform the role of developing workforce capability rather than just offering pre-employment training. It should be seen as an end in itself that allows people to gain skills to enter the workforce and to become a productive citizen.
- ii. Provision of adequate funding of TVET should be of paramount importance to the Federal Government of Nigeria. UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of the total budget should be allocated to Education has not been achieved in Nigeria. According to the World Bank Development Report, 1.3 billion, 15-30years old youth now live in the developing world.
- iii. The Public Private Sectors and industries should be allowed to actively and meaningfully participate in

- strengthening TVET policies in the country.
- iv. TVET must respond to labour market demands. Industries should be consulted periodically to provide specific advice on occupations and skills in demand, and to identify key skills, project priorities for their sectors, hence the need for information and data on labour market and employment statistics.
 - v. Teaching and Training quality and skills competencies should be improved by allowing PPP to get involved in the provision of guidance and counseling services.
2. In order to make TVET products move relevant in the industry, efforts should be made to update and harmonize curriculum in line with international best practices and also to involve key stakeholders in curriculum development.
 3. Linkages between schools and the private sector should be strengthened (SIWES) to ensure appropriate interface with the world of work. Nigeria's TVET needs to be market focused. TVET policy, strategy should take into account what the market really needs.
 4. For the improvement of the quality of TVET graduates, private sectors should be encouraged to participate in the restructuring and training and re-training of TVET in institution of higher learning.
 5. Federal Government should provide enabling environment with a view to allow Public-Private investment in TVET for economic development.

Conclusion

Public Private Partnership has become a favourite tool for providing public services in both developed and developing countries. Hence, PPP in TVET remains a bridge to economic development in Nigeria. TVET is very vital for technological advancement and economic growth. Therefore involvement of PPP in TVET would invariably improve employability of individual in labour market, increased productivity in industries and reduce the rate of poverty in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. The Federal Government should put in place a partnership framework established by law and guided by a clear policy and strategy to provide guidelines upon which PPPs in TVET could be implemented for the purposes of clarity and sustainability.

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