

The Value of Civil Society Groups for Upgrading Digital Employment Skills

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Introduction

Key factor in the youth restiveness in the north is the unemployment crisis– this particularly has provided the recruitment base for the insurgency in the northeast

Without addressing this unemployment problem, there can be no economic recovery in the region

Indeed, an economic recovery strategies need to turn this army of human dregs into a human capital that is at once productive and also economically empowered to be part of the market of goods and services

A Paradox that needs to be undone

- ▶ One key problem that many speakers have pointed out is the mismatch of skills –there is unemployment but at the same time shortage of relevant skills
 - ▶ Indeed, there is expansion of the tertiary education sector while most employers are complaining of not right the right skills
 - ▶ There is thus a gap in the education system that it is producing those with the relevant competencies in too few numbers
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What are the Changes we see around us?

- ▶ With information and communication technology, it has become a global village that you connect to anyone, anywhere, anytime
 - ▶ Borders remain mere geographical reference points, as you can live in one country, be working in another and be spending your earnings in yet another
 - ▶ We live to today in an extremely dynamic world, with things literally changing everyday
 - ▶ It is a globalized world where in spite of all, there is a move to homogeneity of norms and practices, even as cultural attitudes and practices differ
 - ▶ Today's issues are more complex than those of past years: we are talking about nations grappling with globalization, the world confronting climate change, complex new diseases, etc
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What do these changes demand of us?

- They demand in us the ability to interact, use and live in a technology dependent space
- They force us to depart from viewing problems from a narrow one-discipline perspective to using multi-disciplinary lens
- They demand a life long commitment to learning new things as the world is dynamic
- They require new skills that will enable us to make the best use of the opportunities that the new world presents to us while contributing to mitigating the negative consequences that are evident also
- These new skills that respond to the dynamism and complexity of today's are collectively referred to as 21st century skills

21st Century Skill Sets

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
- Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
- Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening
- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspaces

More of the 21st Century Skill sets

- Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
- Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy
- Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
- Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
- Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method
- Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
- Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety

So we need our subject competencies skills, but also others

- 21st century skills are not replacement of conventional discipline-based skills and competences
- These are still needed but they are not sufficient in today's complex world.
- Today's problems and issues require multi-disciplinary approach which conventional discipline-based competences are inadequate to handle.
- Recruiters are not looking for just skills in interviewees but ability to learn new skills from the interviewees
- 21st century skills give individuals the ability to confront new situations and quickly adapt to changing situations as society rapidly also changes, that is the ability to constantly be able to learn new skills

Decomposing 21st Century Skills

- Pedagogy: critical thinking, creativity, etc are not content. They are more about the methodology that is deployed in training. The education system can adjust easily to incorporate this
- Tools: some of the skills set in the 21st century skills are mere tools such as learning to use ICTs. The education system can cope with basic skills both more advanced skills have
- Contents: a few others are contents which curriculum limited cannot allow the education system to incorporate. This is where CSOS will have to complement the education system

Mainstreaming 2st Skills in the teaching and training

- ▶ Be experiential than merely producing facts to students
 - ▶ Deploy experiential and participatory learning
 - ▶ Focus on demonstration and actual understanding rather than on passing examination
 - ▶ Encourage collaborative learning
 - ▶ Move from doing project to project-based learning
 - ▶ Embrace open-ended learning and curriculum rather than a closed one
 - ▶ Encourage and nurture curiosity and questioning on the part of the pupils rather than acceptance and belief
 - ▶ Use ICT simulation tools where experimentation is not possible
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From 1.0 competencies to 2.0 competencies

- ▶ Our educational system seems to only be capable of providing subject based competencies, what I call 1.0 competences.
- ▶ But what investors need is 2.0 competencies, that is 21st skills
- ▶ It is here that I locate the role of CSOs as complementary to the education system in addressing the gaps in skills need
- ▶ The major plank of this role is bridging the gap between skill outcomes of existing tertiary education training and the skills needed by industry

Role 1 – Training on Digital Skills

- Basic IT Skills– last year along CITAD trained over 4000 youth in Kano, Jigawa and Bauchi States such as
 - Over 1500 with support from IREX
 - 500 women and girls with support from International Institution of Education (IIE)
 - Over 500 with support from Microsoft
- Website design and deployment– CLEEN Foundation, PIN, CITAD among many
- Mobile apps development– this summer for instance CITAD in conjunction with EVERAT program of University of California with run a summer training program in Abuja for young women on apps development
- Infographic, Data literacy and data visualization –ccHub has built a reputation of providing
- Embedded systems design– currently CITAD and the Science and Technology Forum, Zaria are experimenting the retraining of freshly I graduated electrical and mechanical engineers in embedded systems to design to enable them respond to local challenges using digital design concept
- Film and video editing – CITAD
- Outsourcing for example PIN in Lagos
- Content Development
- Games and animation
- GSM Repairs– CITAD and Kano State Government have trained 1500 in the last two years
- Etc

Role 2–Entrepreneurship Training

- ▶ Tertiary education sector teaches entrepreneurship as a compulsory examinable subject
- ▶ This makes the focus more about passing the examination, than about learning about real entrepreneurship. Such learning should be experiential than merely producing facts to students
- ▶ CSOs because they are not focused on examination, can on demonstration that prioritize actual understanding rather than just passing examination
- ▶ They also embrace open-ended learning and open-ended curriculum rather than a closed one

Role 3–Mentoring and Internship Services

- ▶ CSOS organize and run many mentoring programmes, much of it, e-based
- ▶ As e-based, they are not only avenue for the beneficiaries to have access to highly accomplished mentors but also make the beneficiaries acquire digital skills as they
- ▶ A number of organizations also provide space for students to spend their holidays or even industrial attachment programme to learning digital skills every year from example, CITAD hosts over 50 students from various universities on a rolling basis
- ▶ Its e-mentoring platform (www.mentoringatcitad.org.ng) is matching young people with mentors

Role 4–Incubator ship

- ▶ A number of CSOs provide space for training of creative minds to develop ideas and products
- ▶ One such example is the ccHub in Lagos. It has through this programme been able to come up with many IT solutions that its associates have developed
- ▶ CITAD instituted an annual Mobile apps development competition among youth (<http://www.citad.org/apps-development-competition-announcement>) with the aim of getting with to turn their creativity in social products

Role 5–Enterprise Development services

- ▶ Youth empowerment and job creation in most northern states take the form of providing training and a provide of some once off support. The result is that these prospective entrepreneurs never turn into actual entrepreneurs
- ▶ CSOs can help provide regular and sustained enterprise development service clinics to youth entrepreneurship schemes to help the young beneficiaries navigate their ways in developing their ideas
- ▶ CITAD has done this also for many beneficiaries of YouWin as well as for the Bank of Industry (BoI) programme–Grooming Enterprise Leaders (GEL)

Role 6– Job Placemen Preparation and Job Placement Service

- ▶ A number of CSOs provides what can be calling a grooming services fro prospective employees
- ▶ These grooming services include training young people on employability skills such as communication skills, team work, interview attendance skills, listening ability, leadership capabilities, time management, work place conflict management, etc
- ▶ CITAD has for yea ran what it Job Seekers Information Services (JOSIS) in which CITAD provides information to job seekers as well as conducting training on interview attendance and other reference services. A number of people have gained employment through the scheme. It has upgraded into a job placement services, assisting employers to recruit staff

What is CITAD trying to do now?

- ▶ Bringing all these strands together under one roof, CITAD is establishing a youth development hub call the *Tunbin Gigawa* Project or the aHub in Kano
 - ▶ It is to provide a multi-purpose youth development platform for incubation, mentoring and client-customer relation nurturing that will help to overcome the problems of traditional you empowerment programmes
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The aHub Objectives

- ▶ Provide space for youth aspiring entrepreneurs and technology developers to work unhindered by either power, connectivity or facility challenges
 - ▶ Provide continuing support for mentoring services to the youth through access to highly accomplished professionals and business people
 - ▶ Provide a link between youth solution providers and the market such that such market demands should be a vehicle to drive local productivity, innovation and creativity rather than sourcing such needs from outside
 - ▶ Create a space for technology experimentation, innovation and creativity by youth people
 - ▶ Provide 21st century skills training for young people
 - ▶ Support the growth of small scale enterprises through technology and business incubation which would be a vehicle for economic recovery of the region
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Components

- ▶ **Entrepreneurs work space:** Here youth who are unemployed but have ideas on some technological innovation or creativity that they are working on can have access to work space, connectivity, IT facilities and power for them to work and create technology solutions
- ▶ **Technology Incubation:** The goal here is to enable innovators and creators to drive their products to the market through a series of business facilitation process.
- ▶ **Skill Development:** consolidation of existing skill training programmes, taking into account the dynamics of the society and its changing skills needs
- ▶ **Job Placement Services (JOPLAS):** will enroll youth people with specific skill set and connecting them directly to prospective employers. Enrolled youth will also receive training on 21st century skills
- ▶ **eMentoring:** CITAD would will upgrade its current mentoring scheme (www.mentorignatcitad.org.ng) to ensure that all incubator businesses have mentors who would guide them through as they daily continue to confront the problem of developing their businesses
- ▶ **VeMart:** One of the key challenges new enterprise face is marketing in the face of established names and a system of dealing with companies on the basis of past record. The TGP will create a one stop market for its incubators, connecting them with prospective clients both as individuals and as consortia, depending on the nature of the specific projects they will be interested in bidding for. To this end, therefore, a plank of the TGP is Virtual Marketing and networking for the goods and services by the youths in the house

Conclusion

- ▶ CSOs offer a lot in terms of skills development
 - ▶ This is useful to the governments and employers, including investors, who are looking for suitably skilled personnel
 - ▶ Unfortunately, there is very little appreciation of this from either governments in the north and the private and there is little understanding of how to work with the private sector by the CSOs
 - ▶ Yet, if what the journey to the economic recovery in the north is to acquire the right traction, there must be synergy and collaboration between these three legs of the society.
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