



Capacity Building For Sustainable Development: The Case of Ekiti State Enterprise Development Agency

BY

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Abstract

Skill acquisition and generation of employment have remained a constant factor in Nigerian Government Policy. In Ekiti State, the Ekiti State Enterprise Development Agency, (EEDA) was initiated by government to promote self-dependence and self-reliance in the generation of gainful Self-employment. The agency is to act as an economic catalyst that can stimulate real and sustainable rapid industrialization of the state, thereby creating opportunities for wealth creation for the citizens and economic growth for the state. The study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the EEDA Programme in Ekiti State. To do this, data was collected from one hundred beneficiaries and fifty trainers through the use of questionnaire and oral interview. The results were later analyzed and discussed. Recommendations for improvement were made by the researcher.

Key words: Economic Growth, Skill Acquisition and Capacity Building.

Introduction

The lack of acquisition of vocational skills on the part of individuals has been considered the bane of the economy of many African societies, particularly Nigeria. This is so because, in Nigeria for instance, the educational system operated at post-independence period had placed much emphasis on academic excellence rather than acquisition of vocational skills. In other words, the system focused on and emphasized subjects in the humanities or arts at the expense of vocational subjects which can facilitate practical skills acquisition. The system for so many years was carried on entirely like that without any conscious or deliberate effort to adapt it to the cultural, social and ethical values of our society. As a result, the system has failed to achieve the desired objectives that were expected from the education of this country. Since education is considered to be the most effective means of bringing about total change that would ensure accelerated economic growth and national development for the country, there was a need to tailor the educational system to suit the local existential situation of Nigerians (Omoniyi and Osunde, 2023).

Unfortunately, the Nigerian experience fell short of what was expected. Omoniyi and Osunde (2023) attributed the problem to Over-production of persons with little or no relevant vocational ability. According to them, the education and training of people in the country remain lopsided. The adverse consequence was that unemployment rate has

assumed an alarming proportion. In its effort to seek a way out of the problem, the Ekiti State Government constituted a scheme known as Ekiti State Enterprise Development Agency (EEDA). The scheme was specifically designed to promote acquisition of vocational skills and facilitate the spirit of creativity, self-reliance and independence. It sought to inculcate in the beneficiaries the knowledge of vocational skills, in order to promote gainful self-employment. In the circumstances therefore, it was necessary to conduct a study to appraise the state of the art of the programme in terms of its operation.

Conceptualizing Capacity Building

The United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP, 2020) has defined “capacity” as “the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner”. The terms “capacity building” or “capacity development” describe the task of establishing human and institutional capacity.

The UNDP sees capacity building as a long-term continual process of development that involves all stakeholders; including ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, professionals, community members, academics and more. Capacity building uses a country’s human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capacities. The goal of capacity building is to tackle problems related to policy and methods of development, while considering the potential, limits and needs of the people of the country concerned. The UNDP outlines that capacity building takes place on an individual, institutional and at the societal level.

Capacity Building Process

In the UNDP’s 2015-2020 “strategic plan for development”, it offers a five-step process for systematic capacity building. The steps are:

1. **Engage Stakeholders on Capacity Development:** An effective capacity building process must encourage participation by all those involved. If stakeholder are involved and share ownership in the process of development they will fill more responsible for the outcome and sustainability of the development. Engaging stakeholders who are directly affected by the situation allows for more effective decision making, it also makes development work more transparent.
2. **Access Capacity Needs and Assets:** Assessing pre-existing capacities through engagement with stakeholders allows capacity builders to see what areas require additional training, what arrears should be prioritized, and what capacity can be incorporated into local and institutional development strategies.
3. **Formulate a Capacity Development Response:** The UNDP says that once an assessment has been completed, a capacity building response must be created based on four core issues:
 - A. *Institutional arrangements:* Assessments often find out that institutions are inefficient because of bad or weak policies, procedures, resource management, organization, leadership, frameworks and communication. The UNDP and its network work to fix problems associated with institutional arrangements by developing human resource frameworks “cover policies and procedures for recruitment, performance evaluation systems, and ethics and values”.
 - B. *Leadership:* The UNDP believes that leadership by either an individual or an organization can catalyze the achievement of development objectives. Strong leadership allows for easier adaptation to changes, strong leaders can also influence people.
 - C. *Knowledge:* The UNDP believes knowledge is the foundation of capacity. They believe greater investment should be made in establishing strong education systems and opportunities for continued learning and the development of professional skills. They support the engagement in post-secondary education reforms, continued learning and domestic knowledge services.
 - D. *Accountability:* The implementation of accountability measures facilitates better performance and efficiency. A lack of accountability measures in institutions allows for the proliferation of corruption.
4. **Implement a Capacity Development Response:** Implementing a capacity building programme should involve the inclusion of multiple system; national and local institutions. It should involve continual

reassessment and expect change depending on changing situations. It should include evaluative indications to measure the effective of initiated programmes.

5. **Evaluate Capacity Development:** Evaluation of capacity building promotes accountability. Measurement should be based on changes in an institution's performance. According to Kaplan (2022), evaluation should be based on changes in performance based around the four main issues: institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge and accountability.

An overview of Ekiti State Enterprise and Economic Development Agency, EEDA (Capacity Building and Skill Acquisition Strategy)

The Ekiti State Enterprise Development Agency was set up by law No 2 of 2023 as passed by the State House of Assembly. The Agency was set up to encourage, promote and coordinate investment activities in the state with a view to stimulating economic growth of the state. It is an organization interested in the improvement of the quality of lives of the citizenry through the creation of wealth.

Objectives of Ekiti State Enterprise Development Agency (EEDA).

The general objectives of EEDA include;

1. To contribute to the sustainable development of Ekiti State through generation of profitable investments, maximization of return on investment and acting as a catalyst for investments.
2. To support the state government's key goals of employment generation, poverty alleviation and improvement in the quality of life to citizenry. The specific objectives of EEDA are:
 1. Enable youth to acquire vocational skills that would promote gainful self-employment.
 2. Make trainees (youths) self-reliant
 3. Raise trainees general standard of living
 4. Help trainees cope with technological changes
 5. Enable trainees to become productive and useful citizens. (Ekiti State Ministry of Information; 2020).

Functions of the Agency

- Coordinate and monitor all enterprise promotion activities in the state;
- Initiate and provide support measures that will enhance the investment climate in the state for all categories of investors;
- Promote investments inside and outside the state through effective promotional means;
- Identify specific projects and secure interested investors for such projects;
- Provide input into Government policies on industrialization;
- Disseminate information about investment opportunities in the state to all stakeholders.

Agency's Target Group

- Organized Private Sectors
- Potential local and foreign investors
- Existing investors
- Professional bodies
- Trade groups
- Informal sectors: Artisans, farmers and technicians, unemployed Youths etc.

The agency is to focus on developing Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME's) across the state. This will be executed strategically through:

- Upgrading existing (SME's) for better efficiency and output
- Setting up new ones through employment schemes
- Reviving moribund ones through fund injection

- Setting up centers for Entrepreneurial Development
- Establishment of industrial parks and Enterprise zones
- Hosting of local and International Business summit and Expos. (Ekiti State Ministry of Information, 2023).

The Effectiveness of Ekiti State Enterprise and Economic Development Agency in Skill Acquisition Programme.

The programme has continued to expand and grown in view of the expressed desire and need to provide Ekiti people with vocational skills that would make them self-reliant and able to cope with the technologically changing world.

In spite of this, it is not quite certain whether the programme has adequately promoted the skills desired for the youths in the state. There are indications that the problem of appropriate skills acquisition by the people of Ekiti State, particularly youths has remained intractable. Apart from this, skills training and development require facilities and resources, which must be made available in the appropriate quantity in order to ensure success. It would also appear that there are certain inherent problems within the operational framework or implementation of the programme. In these circumstances therefore, it was necessary to conduct a study to appraise the state of the art of the programme in terms of its operation. Objectively the problem of the study was: has the Ekiti Enterprise Development Agency and vocational skills acquisition programme been effective?

Research Questions

Based on the focus of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do the trainees and trainers rate the state of facilities available for the implementation of the programme?
2. Is there any significant difference in the perceptions of the trainees and trainers on the adequacy of the deviation of the time allowed for training in the programme?
3. Are the young people adequately motivated for the programme?
4. Are the programmes adequately funded?

Methodology

The ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. This design was adopted because the researcher was not involved in the manipulation of any of the independent variables. The population for the study comprised trainees and trainers of the vocational skills training programme in Ekiti State. The trainers are those who provide vocational training for participants at the various centers across the sixteen local government areas in the state.

The sample consisted of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents made up of one hundred (100) trainees and fifty (50) trainers randomly selected from sixteen training centers in Ekiti State using a simple random sampling technique.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information on the facilities available, the objectives of the programme, training needs, duration of training and overall perception of its operation.

Results

Tables 1: Rating of Facilities by Trainees and Trainers

Options	Group Trainees	Trainers		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	80	80	45	90
Adequate	20	20	5	10
Total	100	100	50	100

The data in Table I shows that a total of 80 (80%) trainees of the 100 used for the evaluation stated that the facilities were inadequate. On the other hand, 45 (90%) trainers indicated that the available facilities were inadequate only 20 or 20% of trainees were of the opinion that the facilities were adequate whereas only 5 or 5% of trainers agreed that the facilities were adequate. It is therefore obvious that the facilities were inadequate.

Table 2: Assessment of the Objectives of the Programme by the Trainees and Trainers

S/N	Programme Objectives	Trainees Response		Trainers Response	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Enable youth to acquire vocational skills that would promote gainful self-employment	65%	35%	60%	40%
2.	Make trainees self-reliant	55%	45%	60%	40%
3.	Raise trainees general standard of living	75%	25%	87%	13%
4.	Help trainees cope with technological changes	93%	7%	74%	26%
5.	Enable trainees to become productive and useful citizens	98%	2%	91%	9%

The response analyzed on Table 2 indicated that all the objectives of the programmes are welcomed and accepted by both the trainees and trainers as laudable and the result showed that the most important objectives of the programme are perceived by the trainees and trainers was to enable the trainees to acquire vocational skills that would make them gainfully self-employed as a means of promoting self-reliance and making them more productive and useful citizens. The marginal objectives of the programme was to raise the general standard of living of the participants and to help them also to cope with technological changes. This ranked as 4th and 5th respectively.

Tables 3: Data on the Level of Youth Motivation for the Programme.

Options	Group Trainees	Trainers		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	15	4	8
No	85	85	46	92
Total	100	100	50	100

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that only 15 of those interviewed indicated that youth were adequately motivated for the programme. This represents 15 percent. On the other hand, 85 of them stated that youth were not

motivated for the programme. This shows that the young people for whom the programme was assigned were not adequately motivated for the programme.

Tables 4: Rating the Funding of the Programme by the Trainees and Trainers

Options	Group Trainees	Trainers		
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	68	68	42	84
Adequate	32	32	8	16
Total	100	100	50	100

The data in Table 4 showed that 68 percent of the respondents indicate that the programme is not adequately funded which only 32 percent of them agreed that the programme is adequately funded. On the other hand, 84 percent of the trainers were of the opinion that the programme is not adequately funded were as only 16 percent of the trainers agreed that the programme is well funded. It is therefore obvious that the programme is not adequately funded by the government.

Discussion of Results

The results obtained from the analysis indicate that the most important and strongest objectives of the vocational skills acquisition training programme are to enable the participants or trainees to acquire vocational skills that would make them self-reliant as well as become more productive and useful citizens in the country. At the same time, the result also indicated that the programme has the capacity to meet the needs of the people.

However, it was interesting to note that the available facilities were rated as inadequate. This may likely impede programme performance and the attitude of the trainees towards the programme. Unfortunately, young people for whom the programme is meant were found not to be adequately motivated for the programme. This situation probably explains the dwindling interest being shown by the target audience in the programme.

Conclusion and Recommendation

There is no doubt that the programme is a laudable one and a welcome development in view of its anticipated benefits. It is capable of promoting vocational skills acquisition among the youths and thereby ensuring gainful self-employment and creating more employment opportunities for other members of society. The success of the programme rest squarely on adequate funding, adequate facilities and a high level of accountability on the part of the administrative staff charged with the responsibility of managing and coordinating the programme. The number of participants in the programme was small, which indicates a vacuum in policy implementation. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are hereby proffered:

Regular monitoring of the programme should be embarked upon. A high level of accountability should be encouraged to ensure judicious use of available resources and also guarantee prudent management. In addition, regular evaluation should be made to provide immediate feedback, and spot areas will require modifications in order to continue to sustain the programme.

The pattern of administering the programme, particularly the disbursement of training funds to trainers, should be validated and reviewed on a continuous basis. Adequate provision of facilities and equipment's should be maintained, and this should be accompanied with increased funding of the programme.

Mental transformation (i.e. a kind of enlightened drive) should be pursued vigorously to enable more people to participate and benefit from the programme. Young people should be adequately motivated and encouraged to enlist in the programme.

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