

Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS II) Programme

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION STRATEGY 2025 - 2030

Niger State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria



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Niger State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria

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“
*Education is not a privilege for the few,
but a necessity for the masses.
For it is the foundation of any society.*”

- Dr. Roni Ajao

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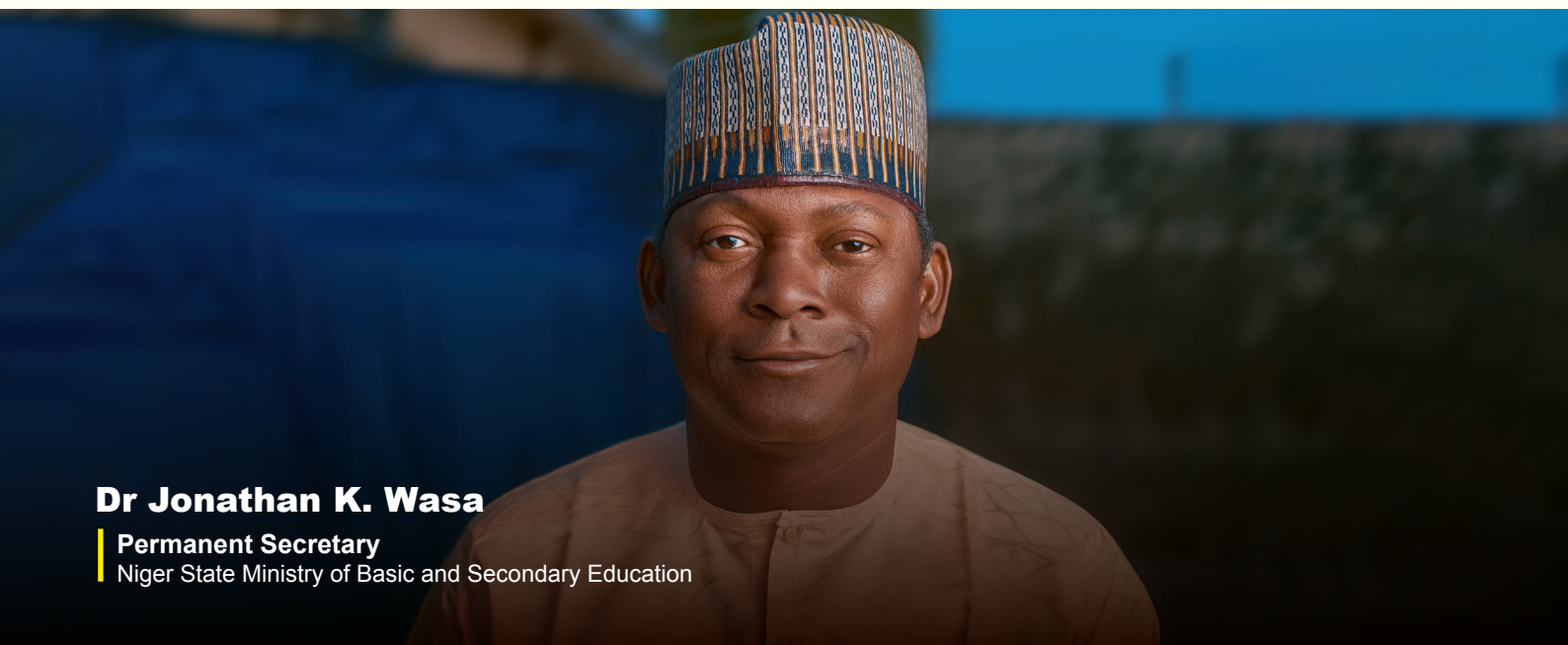
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Acknowledgement

A portrait of Dr Jonathan K. Wasa, a man with short black hair, wearing a traditional blue and white patterned cap and a light blue traditional shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage.

Dr Jonathan K. Wasa

Permanent Secretary

Niger State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education

The success of this report, which outlines the TENS II Programmes Approach to the Problems in Education System, would have not been possible without the invaluable contributions and support of many individuals and organisations. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the stakeholders whose active engagement and commitment have been central to the development of the TENS II Programme.

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Additionally, we express our appreciation to the TENS II Committee and the TENS II Technical Team members for their ongoing collaboration and dedication. Their involve-

ment has been key to ensuring that the deliverables, such as, the Education Census, Geo-mapping and Verification exercise, Focus groups interviews, Out of school children, the Nomadic assessment report, Entrepreneurship Strategy were successfully delivered.

Special thanks to those who have participated in this process, helping to identify schools and ensure that the necessary buy-in was achieved at the critical stages of the TENS II Programme.

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Preface

A portrait of Dr. Hadiza Asabe Mohammed, a woman wearing a colorful patterned headwrap and glasses, looking slightly to the side. The background is softly blurred, showing an indoor setting with a tufted leather sofa and some decorative items.

Dr Hadiza Asabe Mohammed

Honourable Commissioner
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This Strategy for ‘Accelerating the Delivery of Entrepreneurship Education in the Primary and Secondary Schools Curricula in Niger State’ is a response to the commitment made by the Niger State government under the leadership of His Excellency Mohammed Umaru Bago, the Executive Governor of Niger State, to improve the quality of education in Niger State which supports the vision of a New Niger.

The strategy forms part of the Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS II) Programme. The Programme aims to rebuild, transform and ultimately sustain an education system suitable for the 21st Century and is led by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, with support from the following key ministries: the Ministry for Tertiary Education, the Ministry for Budgeting and Planning, the Ministry for Pastoral and Nomadic Affairs, and the Ministry for Communication Technology and Digital Economy. Other ministries include the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the Ministry for Homeland Security, the Ministry of Rural and Community Development, the Ministry of Land and Survey, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Women Affairs. MRL® Public Sector Con-

sultants Ltd will support the implementation of the TENS II Programme overseeing the Programme Management aspect of the various projects.

Key to the transformation in the education sector is the need for pupils and students to develop skills to be more entrepreneurial in the future. This is due to the lack of ‘white collar’ jobs in the labour market and the changing nature of skills required for the 21st century.

Components of this strategy are therefore based on discussions and interviews held with commissioners, permanent secretaries, school principals and administrators, teachers, parents, students, government officials, and educational specialists to understand the challenges to entrepreneurship education and put forward recommendations to enable and enhance entrepreneurship within Niger State. The interviews and focus groups used to guide the development of this strategy were conducted in Niger State in July 2024.

A review of the literature and current government practices was also utilised to support the development of this strategy. A separate Entrepreneurship Action Plan will be developed by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.

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1

BACKGROUND



There is a global consensus that entrepreneurship facilitates economic growth through job creation and innovation (Raposo and Paco, 2011). In the same vein, there is agreement amongst Nigerian experts and policy makers that vocational and technical skills acquired by students through entrepreneurship education when deployed to create a pool of viable small and medium scale businesses also serve the critical purpose of stimulating economic development in the country (Onwadi, 2023). It is this recognition of the economic role of entrepreneurship that has accounted for the increasing interest in the development of entrepreneurship curriculum and the pride of place

accorded to the mainstreaming of entrepreneurial education into all levels of education by the National Policy of Education. Within the purview of policy government operations and socioeconomic realities, entrepreneurship is recognised as a real driver of positive socioeconomic change signposted by the manifestation of high creativity, innovation, job creation, increased national productivity, economic growth, social gains and overall quality of life. Thus, entrepreneurship is a veritable instrument for dealing with the challenges of unemployment, poverty, and economic retrogression.

1.1 Need for the Entrepreneurial Strategy

In the Focus Group Discussion carried out during the scoping exercise for the TENS II Programme, stakeholders expressed grave concern about the rising level of unemployment in the State, specifically highlighting entrepreneurship education as important for creating jobs within the community and enabling school leavers to become more independent and self-reliant. In a State with such high levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment these benefits should be sufficient to encourage the development and implementation of entrepreneurship within the school curriculum. This is expected

to happen through the promotion and deployment of an Entrepreneurship Education Strategy that could address the lack of appropriate teachers and teaching resources, the nonexistence of private-sector collaboration low levels of infrastructure, inadequate or the absence of teaching materials, and poor security. The Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Strategy, 2025 – 2029 is meant to meet this need for a holistic framework for delivering functional evidence driven entrepreneurship education at the Basic and Post Basic Education levels in the State. In responding to the need to link this strategy with the



overall developmental perspectives of the government, it would offer solutions to overcome challenges of unemployment by aligning the development of the Entrepreneurship Strategy with the economic development strategies of Niger State through the 'Niger State Medium Term Sector Plan' and as part of the comprehensive TENS II Programme to improve the quality of education. This alignment will bring about stronger synergies between the Niger State Government, the private sector and the implementation of entrepreneurship education, which are necessary for the successful and sustainable implementation of entrepreneurship education within the school system.

1.2 Strategy Development Methodology

This strategy document is developed using three key approaches. First, a critical review of the global, national and subnational unemployment phenomenon was carried to gain insights into the nature of unemployment and how entrepreneurship education was designed and implemented to create functional entrepreneurs in and through the school system especially at the Basic and Post Basic levels. Second, there was engagement with principal officers of the Niger State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and other institutional stakeholders for a high-level dialogue to build consensus around the focus and other fundamentals of the strategy and to factor identified

challenges into the developmental process. Third, a Focus Group Discussion (FCD) was planned and carried out with participants that represented critical operational staff of primary and secondary schools that included principals, head teachers, teachers and other stakeholders from outside the school system.

1.3 Underlying Assumptions of the Strategy

For the avoidance of doubt, this Entrepreneurship Education Strategy is driven by the underlying assumptions that:

1. Entrepreneurship is the key to national and sub-national socioeconomic development, personal prosperity and happiness and the most mitigating intervention against poverty and unemployment.
2. Entrepreneurship can be taught in formal and non-formal setting and produces the best outcomes when the two forms of delivery channels are synergized to achieve common goals and objectives.
3. Entrepreneurship can be taught to all ages beginning from primary school age children, secondary students through tertiary education to adults pursuing different human endeavours.



4. Education is beneficial to those who eventually ended up being entrepreneurs or non-entrepreneurs in later life; and
5. Education is best delivered, and the most optimal outcomes attained in an ecosystem of public policy formulators, entrepreneurship educators, development partners, investors and sponsors working in concert to design, fund and implement.

1.4 Structure of the Development Methodology

The document is developed in a logical sequence that makes it easy to move through the strategy formulation. Therefore, this approach presents key sections of the document in a coherent and innovative manner and is used to achieve the organisation of the key aspects of the strategy document as follows:

Section 1: **Introduction**

Section 2: **Strategy Development Contexts**

Section 3: **Fundamentals and Components of the Strategy**

Section 4: **Governance and Implementation Mechanism**

Section 5: **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Section 6: **Conclusion**

2

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CONTEXTS AND PRACTICES

This section takes a representative view of the landscape of entrepreneurship education from the various perspectives of knowledge base, best practices and delivery mechanism. It offers conceptual clarification used to provide theoretical foundation for the development of the strategy, cross national practices in entrepreneurship education and reviews of the status of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in Niger State including obvious challenges that require attention in the choice and presentation of strategy.

This chapter is organised as follows:

1. Conceptual Context of Entrepreneurship Education
2. School-Based Entrepreneurship Programmes in Other Countries
3. Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria
4. Entrepreneurship Education in Niger State, Nigeria
5. Directions for Niger State Entrepreneurship Education.

2.1 Conceptual Context of Entrepreneurship Education

2.1.1 What is Entrepreneurship?

One definition of entrepreneurship views it as a process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to the resources that they currently control (Chiemeka-Unogu, 2020). This definition goes further than explaining the entrepreneur as someone who is

“To help many people that don’t have work, to work on their own,” (TENS II Focus Groups Discussions, 2024)

which was the general explanation given by those participating in the focus groups. The prevalent understanding within the focus groups of the entrepreneur is as a businessman, with entrepreneurial education as a training course to provide individuals with the skills for self-employment, “to help many people that don’t have work, to work on their own,” (TENS II Focus Groups Discussions, 2024).



Whilst an entrepreneur can develop and manage a business successfully, more importantly, the entrepreneur exhibits specific behaviours and traits that allow for the exploitation of opportunities and resources. Entrepreneurial training, therefore, develops traits such as, creative and independent thinking that promotes innovation, risk-taking, organisation, management, and soft skills that will enable collaboration and attract investment (Joseph and Iweyah, 2024). Given the above definition, the entrepreneur's skills are, therefore, not limited to self-employment but are quite essential in larger organisations seeking to remain competitive in a globally integrated marketplace. As such, entrepreneurial skills should not only be viewed as providing for self-employment but also necessary within a larger organisational context and, as such, essential for all those seeking any form of employment. Taken as a whole, Joseph and Iweyah (2024), refer to Entrepreneurship Education as

“...the process of professional application of knowledge, attitude, skills, and competence which includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve set objectives...It is more than teaching students how to become independent business owners...Entrepreneurship education prepares students for life-long learning, which is essential to competitiveness in the knowledge economy” (p.189).

Therefore, entrepreneurship education not only addresses the need to provide viable self-employment but is also critical for the sustainability of any business enterprise. For example, the entrepreneur Jeff Bezos saw an opportunity created by the growth of access to the Internet. Whilst he did not have the resources, Jeff Bezos convinced 22 of the 60¹ people he approached to invest in his company, Amazon, an online bookstore that, within five years, had expanded into selling other consumer products. To date, Am-

azon's services and products have not stopped expanding, making him one of the wealthiest men in the world. It would be hard to argue that if Amazon had remained an online bookstore, it would be as successful as it is now, and the argument could be made that it would no longer be in existence. The crucial point is that entrepreneurship skills are necessary for companies to innovate and remain competitive in an increasingly globally integrated economy. Looking inward, Nigeria can boast of its own entrepreneurs, such as, Aliko Dangote with Dangote Cement, Abdul-samad Rabi'u – BUA Foods, Adenuga – Glo, etc.

2.1.2 Focus Group and Distinction between Entrepreneur and Businessman

The focus group participants mostly recognised the importance of entrepreneurship education, but we would argue that they did not fully grasp how important it is. As such, many felt that the way to implement entrepreneurship education was to have a specific course.

“We have entrepreneurship, but not as a subject,” said one participant; another said, “My advice to you is to get it inculcated into the school curriculum as a subject like Mathematics and English Language” (TENS II Focus Group Participants). “We have entrepreneurship, but not as a subject,” said one participant; another said, “My advice to you is to get it inculcated into the school curriculum as a subject like Mathematics and English Language” (TENS II Focus Group Participants).

Such suggestions, whilst valid, sprout from an understanding of entrepreneurship education as similar to a business course, rather than viewing it as a training programme that would nurture and develop mindsets and critical thinking. These skills are necessary for a sustainable and viable commercial life. It would be very difficult for the student to develop creativity, in-

¹ <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/2143375/1994-he-convinced-22-family-and-friends-each-payretrieved> 12/08/2024

novation, and an appetite for risk in a single course during a school day but then be directed to not use any of those skills and aptitudes in any other subject throughout the day.

Therefore, an entrepreneurship education programme and a business course delivery are different.

It is therefore important to understand these differences to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved. To further understand the differences, it is important to contrast an entrepreneur with a businessman/businesswoman, as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Contrasting Characteristics between Entrepreneur and Businessman

ASPECT	ENTREPRENEUR	BUSINESSMAN/ BUSINESSWOMAN
INNOVATION	Focuses on innovation and creating new markets or new products/services.	Often operates within established markets and is involved in an established idea.
RISK	Involves higher risk due to uncertainty and novelty.	Generally, involves lower risk with established products/services.
OBJECTIVE	Whilst profit is an aim it is secondary to solve problems and create value.	The focus is on earning profits/income.
GROWTH POTENTIAL	High growth potential through scalability.	Growth is often steady and incremental.
COMPETITION	Low competition due to innovative product.	High competition as operates with an established product/service in an established market.
ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION	Creates jobs and contributes to GDP growth.	Creates jobs and contributes to GDP growth, but continuous innovation is necessary to maintain market share in a competitive environment,
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Requires effective management of financial, human, and physical resources	Requires effective management of financial, human, and physical resources.

Table 1 above highlights some important differences between the entrepreneur and the businessman, primarily focused on the innovative and creative nature of the entrepreneur, the entrepreneur's larger appetite for risk and the ability to spot opportunities that others would not have seen.

Any person establishing a new business or managing an existing one needs technical and vocational training. These skills normally fall under financial and organisational management and are crucial to ensuring any business enterprise remains viable. These skills can be delivered within a discreet course.

We have also argued that there is another layer of skills that the entrepreneur possesses. These skills include creative and critical thinking abilities, an appetite for higher levels of risk, and resilience, all of which become the entrepreneur's default thinking patterns. For the student to adopt these skills and aptitudes so that they become life skills it is necessary that a holistic approach is adopted so that these skills are embedded across the whole school curriculum.

2.2 School-based Entrepreneurship Programmes in Other Countries

The positive link between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneur activities within an ecosystem is well established (Raposo and Paco, 2011; European Commission 2015; Prasakti and Idrus, 2024). The inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum from primary school is particularly well embedded in developed countries. As noted above, entrepreneurship education encompasses training and developing mindsets and soft skills essential for the entrepreneur to adopt creative and innovative thinking, resilience and problem-solving skills. These skills can be nurtured in the students from the primary school curriculum, enabling the students to adopt the thinking patterns of an entrepreneur.

This section highlights a number of school entrepreneurship programmes delivered in developed countries. The aim is to identify and contrast the elements of the programmes and their resource needs with the intention of illuminating options to be included in an Action Plan for Niger State.

2.2.1 Junior Achievement (USA)²

This programme, implemented from kindergarten through to high school, links the school curriculum with life outside of the classroom through activities such as job shadowing, simulating the business environment, mentorships and supporting student-run businesses. The programme is delivered through partnerships with local businesses. Research has shown that those who participate have a higher rate of business ownership and employment.

2.2.2 Young Enterprise (UK)³

A registered UK charity that offers a range of pro-

grammes for students aged 4 - 25 years, varying in length from half a day to one year, delivered by both private sector volunteers as well as trained teachers. Activities focus on both mindset skills as well as the development of technical and vocational skills that improves employability through adaptability to changing job market and business knowledge.

2.2.3 Aflatoun International⁴ (Worldwide close bracket

With an emphasis on girls and vulnerable groups, this programme seeks to equip children up to the age of 18 with social and financial skills to deal with the challenges and take advantages of opportunities. Delivered mainly through NGOs and governments in over 100 countries.

2.2.4 Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (Europe)⁵

As part of the Junior Achievement Worldwide Programme, this certification is awarded to students aged 15 - 19, who have gained entrepreneurship skills, knowledge, competences and attitude that now qualifies them to establish their own venture or become employed. The programme is delivered in schools in partnership with Junior Achievement Europe and its private sector volunteers.

2.2.5 Education for Enterprise (New Zealand)⁶

With the Ministry of Education at the helm, this programme provides resources and support for schools to integrate entrepreneurship across the primary and secondary school curriculum. The initiative provides opportunities for creating links between learning and real-life situations by combining classroom learning with participation in the wider community. The Ministry of Education supports teacher professional development and provides curriculum resources for schools.

² <https://jausa.ja.org/>

³ <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/what-we-do/>

⁴ <https://aflatoun.org/join-the-movement/join/>

⁵ <https://jaeurope.org/learning-experiences/certification/>

⁶ <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Education-for-Enterprise/Developing-an-E4E-school#collapsible3>



2.2.6 Injaz Al-Arab (Middle East & North Africa)⁷

Aimed primarily at students aged 11 - 24 and working under four main pillars: workforce readiness, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and STEM, this programme strives to bridge the gap between education and the labour market requirements through hands-on, highly relevant training and mentoring programs delivered by volunteer business leaders and entrepreneurs.

2.2.7 Summary

A common feature across all the programmes is the broad goal of the entrepreneurship programme to give the students the necessary skills and tools for life. The programmes regard the skills and tools learnt as necessary for the student to participate fully in a workforce that has become more unpredictable.

A comparison across the six programmes highlighted here shows the variation in programme implementation, stakeholder involvement, and of age of engagement. The Junior Achievement USA programme mainly relies on business and community volunteers and therefore, does not face the challenges of training teachers for the delivery of its programme. In the UK, the programme implementation is more hybrid

in nature, shared between the private sector and trained schoolteachers. However, the downside of this approach is that it has led to a lower uptake.

Where there is not that breadth and depth of community and business involvement, the Ministry plays a stronger role, as in New Zealand. The private sector and community organisations still have a role, and the Ministry is very much engaged in supporting the creation of links between private enterprises and schools.

Finally, there are regional and pan-regional programmes such as Entrepreneurial Skills Pass Europe, Injaz Al-Arab and Aflatoun, which leverage the resources in a region in order to implement a holistic entrepreneurship programme. Notwithstanding, these programmes have to address the challenge of ensuring consistency across the different countries and institutions.

2.3 Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, culturally diverse federation of 36 autonomous states and the Federal Capital Territory⁸. Whilst Nigeria experienced sustained economic growth at the beginning of the 21st century, growth rates have de-

⁷ <https://www.injazalarab.org/>

⁸ The World Bank in Nigeria, retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#1>

creased since 2015. This, coupled with inflation, pushed inflation rates up to 34.2% in June 2024.⁹

The World Bank reports that whilst recent measures (Q3 2023) of unemployment in Nigeria is 5%, poverty levels in Nigeria are very high, just over 30%¹⁰. An explanation for the seeming low unemployment rate but high poverty levels is the measure of underemployment in Nigeria. A high percentage (nearly 15%) of employed Nigerians are working fewer hours than they want to and therefore cannot make the income to meet their needs and nearly 25% of employed Nigerians work more than 1 job to supplement their income.¹¹ Therefore, the Nigerian government needs to implement policies that not only increase the number of jobs available but also expand the remuneration from current jobs and increase productivity in the workforce. However, it is recognised the government recently increased the minimum wage from N30,000 to N70,000 for government workers at the federal level. Some states have followed the steps of the Federal government including Niger State. For example, to attract and retain Youth Corp members in the State, the Niger State government offered Youth Corp members for 2023/24 N200,000, which is the highest in the country, thereby attracting much-needed talent, a large proportion who have been deployed to teach in primary and secondary schools across the State.

2.3.1 Mainstreaming Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment and a powerful weapon for fighting poverty in the country (Ogwu, 2023).

In 2013, the National Policy in Education explicitly included entrepreneurship education as a key component of the curriculum at all levels of education and has sought to implement this through several activities including curriculum development and reform, and teacher training but there has been a slow implementation of these initiatives because of the lack of funding injected into the sector (Nwaordu, 2024).

But the lack of funding available is only partially responsible for the slow implementation of an entrepreneurship education strategy in Nigeria, for it has been argued that there are foundational flaws in the conceptualisation and design of the strategy that has led to a dissatisfaction of initiatives to date, as well as, inept revisions of the strategy to deal with this dissatisfaction (Akinyemi, 2023).

One of the major flaws in the conceptualisation of the Nigerian entrepreneurship strategy is the presumption that all business owners, particularly Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) business owners, are entrepreneurs. As previously stated in this strategy, business owners and entrepreneurs both acquire similar technical and vocational skills related to financial and organisational planning. However, the entrepreneur also embodies a unique skill set related to innovation, creativity, risk bearing, seeing opportunities that others do not etc. This fundamental misunderstanding of the skill set that the entrepreneur embodies, has narrowed the focus of entrepreneurship education policies to the technical knowledge of establishing a business without giving sufficient attention to the promotion of creativity and innovation.

⁸ The World Bank in Nigeria, retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#1>

⁹ Nigeria's inflation rate rose to a 28-year high in June 2024 retrieved at <https://nesgroup.org/blog/Nigeria%E2%80%99s-inflation-rate-rose-to-a-28-year-high-in-June-2024#:~:text=The%20National%20Bureau%20of%20Statistics,34.0%20percent%20in%20May%202024.>

¹⁰ Nigeria's dichotomy: low unemployment, high poverty rates. World Bank Blogs retrieved from <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/nigerias-dichotomy-low-unemployment-high-poverty-rates>

¹¹ Why do so many Nigerian workers remain poor? Labor force surveys may have the answer. World Bank Blogs <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/why-do-so-many-nigerian-workers-remain-poor-labor-force-surveys-may-have-answer#:~:text=Around%2013.0%20percent%20of%20employed,to%20find%20a%20secondary%20job.>



Whilst entrepreneurship education strategies in the more developed countries have emphasised creativity and problem-solving, in Nigeria, those education strategies have focused on business enterprise (Akinyemi 2023). The Nigerian strategy has focused on enabling people to acquire a skill that they can then use in a trade, and then providing knowledge and support to establish a business enterprise associated with the trade. This is not entrepreneurship. There must be support and motivation for creativity and innovative problem-solving activities.

Another flaw in the development of entrepreneurship education strategies in Nigeria has been the academic emphasis placed on educational institutions and the lack of connection with industries. There is a reliance on academic institutions to be the centres of problem solving but then there is a disconnect between where that problem-solving activity occurs and where the problems occur. In developed countries, the nexus between industry and research centres such as universities is very close.

For example, in the UK, government funding for research, although granted to a university, often requires an industry partner. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is on the site of the University of Cambridge's teaching hospitals, thereby allowing academics, industry, and healthcare professionals to be in the same space and share knowledge, enabling the rapid and effective transformation of research into clinical practice.¹² The inquiring mind of the academic

is in close proximity to the experiences of the medical practitioner and this breeds creativity and innovation, leading to solutions that can be rapidly implemented. Without this proximity, there will be a slower translation from academic research output into practice and a disconnect between the on-the-ground problems and the research needed to find solutions. In Nigeria, the lack of connection between academic research institutions and industry downplays innovation and leads producers and manufacturers to copy or import from more developed countries (Akinyemi 2023).

Whilst a national entrepreneurship education programme does require sufficient funding to support initiatives, particularly in the areas of teacher training and providing learning resources etc., more importantly, the education strategies must target the needs of entrepreneurship if the goals are to be achieved.

Measuring entrepreneurial outcomes in terms of the number of start-ups does not provide a true reflection on entrepreneurial activity. A true measure of entrepreneurship will consider the innovation and creative activity behind those start-ups which can be reflected in patent applications. As previously discussed, if business enterprises are to generate the jobs and wealth that is needed to ensure sustainable growth, they need to be continuously innovative because of the pressures of a competitive global market. Supporting creativity and innovation needs to be a foundational part of any entrepreneurship education strategy.

¹² See <https://cambridge-biomedical.com/the-campus/>

2.4 Entrepreneurship Education in Niger State, Nigeria

Niger State, the largest state by land area in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is in the north-central geopolitical zone and shares a border with the Republic of Benin. The population growth rate of Niger State at 3.4% is faster than that of Nigeria. Given that 3 Hydro-Electric dams are located in the State, Niger State is sometimes referred to as the Power State. Despite this proximity to a power supply, the economy is primarily agrarian with around 85% of the population engaged in farming¹³. The Niger State government is implementing a strategy for using the state's natural resources to drive economic growth and development through Niger Foods Security Systems and Logistics Ltd, whose mission is to establish an efficient and profitable agriculture business, involved in the production, processing and transportation of a diversified portfolio of agricultural products and activities¹⁴.

Within this context of the Niger State government's pro-growth and investment policies, a team from MRL® Public Sector Consultants Ltd, led by Dr. Roni Ajao and Dr. Chika Ezeugwu, conducted interviews and focus group meetings in 18 of the 25 wards in Niger State in July 2024¹⁵.

During these discussions, participants were asked to provide insight into their own understanding of entrepreneurship education, the importance they placed on this type of education, whether there was any noticeable gender disparity amongst those students showing an interest in entrepreneurship education, the challenges faced in either delivering an entrepreneurship education programme or learning from one, and what can be done to overcome these challenges. All the participants strongly felt that entrepreneurship

should be in the school curriculum because of the skills learnt would enable the school leaver to engage independently in an economic activity. In addition, respondents noted that although it was not its own separate subject, certain business and trade courses within the school curriculum did have what they felt were entrepreneurship components. The vast majority of the respondents regarded entrepreneurship as a business studies, and suggestions were made that the students, under the guidance of their schools could engage in business enterprises that met the needs of the local community, would help raise funds for the school and support the students' needs. Those that linked entrepreneurship education more closely with business studies, commented that entrepreneurship could be more closely linked with specific, relatable subjects such as Home-Economics and Agriculture.

Questions were asked about the students' interests in entrepreneurship education and whether that interest revealed gender bias. The responses have led to an indeterminant conclusion as just as many as those who felt that boys were more interested than girls, also reflected the contrary opinion. What was consistent was the insistence that all students should be given the opportunity to receive entrepreneurship education.

A number of the challenges to the teaching of entrepreneurship in primary and secondary were related to the current crisis in the education sector in Niger State that hinders the delivery of basic education. Participants noted that lack of security on school premises, lack of qualified teachers, high student-to-teacher ratios and the lack of infrastructure and materials, all of which inhibit day-to-day learning, would also pose a barrier to the delivery of an entrepreneurship education programme.

¹³ This is Our Niger State retrieved from <https://nigerstate.gov.ng/about-niger/>

¹⁴ Niger Foods Security Systems and Logistics Ltd retrieved from <https://nigerfoods.com/about>

¹⁵ Focus group meetings and interviews were held in Agaie, Agwara, Bida, Borgu, Bosso, Edati, Gbako, Katcha, Kontagora, Lapai, Lavun, Mashegu, Mokwa, Paiko, Rafi, Rijau, Suleja, Wushishi

Despite these challenges, everyone who participated in the group discussions expressed a determination that these challenges could be overcome. In particular, they noted that the challenges posed by a lack of suitable teachers, materials and resources could be overcome by increasing the role of local businesses, the private sector and appropriate NGOs in delivering the entrepreneurship curriculum.

Respondents were also quite keen to have practical activities be part of the entrepreneurship education programme and gave examples such as, entrepreneurship clubs, statewide competitions, and centres of learning in which digital hubs can also be located to promote learning. All these suggestions offer practical solutions to deal with the lack of infrastructure and security on school premises. However, it must be noted that the respondents were quite insistent that entrepreneur education should be available to everyone. Implementation solutions that would require students to travel away from their local communities in order to access the necessary resources should include viable transportation arrangements for the children.

The current crisis in the education sector in Niger State, greatly hinders the implementation of a holistic entrepreneurial education programme in all primary and secondary schools. However, those stakeholders participating in the focus group discussion are firm in their desire that the school children be given an entrepreneurship education. This desire strongly coincides with the government's own affirmations about the "dynamic and enterprising youth population in the state and its commitment to policies and programmes centred on youth development".¹⁶

An example of youth entrepreneurial development in the state is the STEAM-FARM. This initiative teaches school children entrepreneurial skills embedded in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Details of the initiative is discussed below.

2.4.1 What is STEAM Education?

In 2006 researcher Georgette Yakman had the epiphany that the study of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) could be improved and enriched by the creativity of arts subjects. She added an "A" to STEM and STEAM was born. Like STEM, a STEAM curriculum combines all of those disciplines and comes with no solid definition or set standard on how to implement it.

Although people often compare STEM and STEAM, the addition of art creates a significant difference between the two. STEAM is more inclusive than STEM. It includes everything from fine art and performance art to subjects such as photography and even English literature. Most importantly, it puts an emphasis on how we communicate and express STEAM-related ideas.

2.4.2 Why is STEAM Agrow Concept Education Important?

STEAM Agrow is important because it equips learners with the skills they need to fill essential roles such as doctors, engineers, and technological innovators. However, it also ensures learners have the critical skills needed to excel in any field, including creative careers like design and writing, or even acting and music.

By approaching farming Education in particular, through the lens of STEAM. The Niger State government are recognising that being an expert and educated farmer matters just as much as any scientists, technologies, engineers, and mathematicians. The concept will surely ensure that all students have the opportunity to flourish, no matter their natural skills and passions. An added benefit is that the STEAM Agrow farming concept supports innovation and creative thinking that enhances and solves so many issues the state and Nigeria as a nation is facing.

¹⁶ <https://nigerstate.gov.ng/acting-governor-of-niger-state-comrade-yakubu-garba-calls-on-youth-to-always-engage-in-meaningful-dialogue-to-ensure-peace-in-the-state/>

2.4.3 Benefits of Agrow STEAM Education

Agrow STEAM Education comes with all the advantages of multidimensional learning benefits:

Creativity: STEAM encourages creative thinking and imagination, cultivating an open-minded approach and providing a healthy outlet to combat the stress that life sometimes throws.

Teamwork: Agrow STEAM education fosters soft skills and collaboration with learners, often working together as a team. This improves students' confidence as they develop group membership and leadership.

Empathy: Agrow STEAM Education helps all types of students develop empathy and social skills. Working together to solve problems requires students and teachers to develop their own opinions while working to understand the perspectives and feelings of others. These are critical social and emotional intelligence skills.

2.4.4 Why does Niger State Government want to focus on Agrow Education farming the STEAM way?

As part of the entrepreneurship development drive within the education system, teaching and learning through STEAM Agrow Education will address the needs of different types of learners. It allows and focuses on developing whole student solutions that are accessible and relevant for all learners. The hands-on learning educational solutions using STEAM lessons are designed to inspire interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM), in students from early childhood development, primary school, secondary school up to tertiary level.

Agrow STEAM Education reignites joy in learning by bringing purposeful fun and discovery to the classroom through discovery and project-based learning. These are proven to improve cognitive, social, emotional, creative, and physical learning outcomes.



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These playful, hands-on Agrow STEAM learning and experiences lead STEAM Education. These playful, hands-on Agrow STEAM learning and education experiences lead to the development of an agrarian whole learner that is being:

1. Joyful
2. Meaningful
3. Actively engaging
4. Interactive
5. Socially interactive.

To date, students are actively experimenting with STEAM mindset at schools such as, Mariam Babangida Senior Secondary School and Zarumai Primary and Junior Secondary School, Minna. Their lesson activities in the farms are based on exploring to gain, deepen, and apply new knowledge and skills essential to success in future education and careers. The Niger State government is developing a plan to implement the initiative in schools across the state. Recent support for the expansion of the programme has been given by Niger Foods.

For example, the German Development Agency (GIZ) has been active in Nigeria since 1974. GIZ's work helps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and are in alliance with 5 states, which include, Jos, Niger, Borno, Yola and Calabar.

Niger State being one of the states, has identified the need to tackle unemployment in the state by fostering entrepreneurship skills among young people and has decided collaborated with GIZ through Sea-hub.

SEA-HUB (Students Entrepreneurship Activity Hub) is an intervention program funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ to help Niger State curb its high youth unemployment. SEA-HUB is aimed at providing training, education, mentorship and practical entrepreneurship experience and activities for students in the secondary school level. One of the goals for Sea-hub is targeted at inculcating basic entrepreneurship training to prepare students for the



future, students of the projects now implement community based projects from their own business proceeds. Some of the entrepreneurial skills are: Plaiting hair, using palm fruits to make brooms, shea butter processing, cosmetics, to mention a few.

Since its launch the Sea-hub initiative has covered 15 LGAs. Plans are currently underway to expand to all 25 Local Government Areas commencing in 2025 for a wider reach. This is one of the current initiatives by the Niger State Government to develop and improve entrepreneurial skills and education.

2.5 Directions for Niger State Entrepreneurship Education

We have undertaken a conceptual review of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education and also reviewed ideas and best practices from different countries vis-à-vis what is obtainable in Nigeria. Similarly, we have reviewed the context within which Niger State is approaching the delivery of entrepreneurship education. Inherent in these four areas of

considerations are valuable lessons for informing the focus and substance of developing a functional entrepreneurship education strategy for Niger State.

2.5.1 Business and Life Skills to be incorporated into the Curriculum

Certain technical and vocational skills related to business enterprises, such as financial planning and organisational development, can be taught as a module within the school curriculum. However, the development and training of an entrepreneur's mindset and life skills must be embedded in all subjects of the school curriculum and should be implemented appropriately from early years of education straight through to tertiary education.

2.5.2 Private Sector and NGOs to Play a Key Role

Given the current state of the education system in Niger State, the government should strongly encourage the participation of the private sector and relevant NGOs to deliver the entrepreneurship education programme, particularly in the early stages.

2.5.3 Focus on Development of Creativity and Problem Solving

Policymakers and officials responsible for developing education strategies need to strongly emphasize the development of creativity and problem-solving skills at all levels of education. Inquisitive minds, critical thinking, and growth mindsets need to be encouraged and valued if the education strategy is to achieve the goals of lowering unemployment and generating wealth.

2.5.4 Leveraging Alternative Sources of Funding

The Niger State government must move forward in its efforts to deliver an entrepreneurship education programme to the school children. Alternative sources of resources, such as the private sector and appropriate NGO programmes, should be harnessed to support the delivery of this programme. Resource mobilisation to support entrepreneurship education would also optimise attracting funding from development partners, donor agencies, foundations and individual contributions.

NIGER STATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION STRATEGY



This section presents the key components of Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Strategy developed from the background of accepted conceptual formulations of field research, and lessons learnt from the deployment of best practices from other countries and the Nigerian context. It is organised as follows:

3.1 Vision, Mission and Goals of Entrepreneurship Education

The vision, mission and goals of Niger State Entrepreneurship Education crafted for and aligned to the New Niger Development initiative are presented in the section below:

3.1.1 The Vision

The vision of a New Niger is one of prosperity that has overcome the challenges of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty, especially among the youth in the state. The entrepreneurship education strategy fits into the vision of a New Niger, supporting the development of skills necessary to support and contribute to economic growth in the State. By creating job creators instead of job seekers, the entrepreneurship education strategy is contributing to sustainable economic growth and wealth creation in Niger State.

3.1.2 The Mission

To make high-quality entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition accessible to all school-aged children in Niger State, thus providing them with the opportunity to participate in and contribute fully to the economic ambitions of the State.

3.1.3 The Goals

The goals of the entrepreneurship education strategy are as follows:

1. To ensure that the delivery of an entrepreneurship education strategy reflects a clear understanding of the value of entrepreneurship and the mindset and skillset embodied in the entrepreneur.
2. To encourage the collaboration of private businesses and NGOs in developing and implementing the entrepreneurship education strategy.
3. To foster stronger links between private enterprises and research institutions to enhance and value continuous innovation and its translation into valuable practical uses to benefit the State and the wider Nigerian economy.
4. To develop a skilled workforce that addresses the needs of Niger State.
5. To provide individuals with the skills necessary

to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by a fast-moving, globally integrated knowledge economy.

3.2 Fundamentals of Niger State Entrepreneurship Strategy

An initial step in developing an appropriate entrepreneurship education strategy is to consider the fundamentals of entrepreneurship education, which in the case of Niger State are categorised into the following areas.

3.2.1 Valuing and Promoting Innovation and Creativity

The value of entrepreneurship is that it brings about sustainable job and wealth creation and it does this through continuous innovation and problem solving.

1. This can be approached in the curriculum through age-appropriate group projects linked to local scenarios and issues, across all subjects.
2. Out of school workshops can also provide a means of promoting creativity and critical thinking and for older students especially, these workshops can introduce them to the concepts of ideation, process mapping etc.
3. Finally, promoting state-wide challenges and competitions would also foster innovative and creative thinking and the development of problem-solving skills. Encouraging the involvement of the private sector in delivering workshops and organising competitions would create those links necessary for the implementation of a good entrepreneurship strategy.

3.2.2 Supporting Risk-Taking and Resilience Building

The entrepreneur is a risk-taker and sees and pursues an opportunity even when he/she does not have re-

sources in hand to do so. At the same time, many of the risks will not bring positive returns but the entrepreneur is able to move forward after suffering a loss and pursue another idea. The entrepreneur is comfortable with being uncomfortable.

1. Mentorship programmes where entrepreneurs share insights about their journey as well as provide support to new business owners is essential.
2. Students can be exposed to case studies which highlight business successes as well as failures.
3. Students need to be pushed outside their comfort zones and be encouraged when they do not succeed. Failures should not be punished but the value of failure as a learning experience and a platform for the next step needs to be promoted.

3.2.3 Encouraging Opportunity Recognition

Whereas the enterprising businessman enters an established market, the entrepreneur sees an opportunity which others do not. The entrepreneur is able to identify the gap in the market.

1. The curriculum delivery needs to support an inquisitive, curious mind willing to question the status quo. Students should be encouraged to ask questions and explore options.
2. Introduce market research elements such as talking to stakeholders/consumers, identifying needs, into group projects. Have local businesses work with students on market research projects.
3. Research institutions and businesses should be encouraged to hold regular symposiums and knowledge-sharing events.

3.2.4 Business Friendly Communication skills

The entrepreneur needs to be an effective listener and communicator. The entrepreneur identifies opportunities and needs to be engaging with people. As the entrepreneur never has the resources to pursue the ideas, the entrepreneur needs to be effective at raising funds/investment.

1. Students should be encouraged to practice presentation skills across all subjects.
2. Speech and elocution classes that prepare students for oral presentations and persuasive communication.
3. Students should be taught quality business oriented intelligible active listening skills.

3.2.5 Financial literacy skills

Ultimately, the entrepreneur's goal is to earn an income to meet needs. The entrepreneur is pursuing a profitable business venture and will need minimum financial literacy to assess and manage risks effectively and convince others to invest. Training in financial planning/forecasting and budgeting and the design of a business plan. This should be supplemented with training in organisational planning.



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3.2.6 Vocational Competencies

The acquisition of vocational skills in various trades available to pupils and students is a key consideration of this entrepreneurship education. The preceding five items under the fundamentals of entrepreneurship education are critical performance factors. However, they are all subordinated to vocational competencies that constitute the centre of entrepreneurship around which other skills orbit to produce entrepreneurial outcomes in terms of the national development, societal prosperity and personal happiness and contentment of individuals.

3.2.7 Other Considerations

The outcomes of Focus Group Discussions helped to define key considerations that should inform the development of any entrepreneurship education. Particularly, the discussions forwarded the following recommendations as a means of firming up the development of functional entrepreneurship education.

1. There is a need to communicate a clear understanding of entrepreneurship and the difference between entrepreneurship education and vocational training. It was apparent in the focus group discussions that most people believed entrepreneurship education to be the same as a vocational business studies course. This misunderstanding is also shown to be present at the national strategy levels, so all stakeholders in Niger State need to come to a clear understanding of entrepreneurship, the skills and aptitudes of an entrepreneur, and the necessity of promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable job creation and wealth formation.
2. The crisis in the education sector in Niger State can also be viewed as an opportunity to get some of the fundamentals in place that are needed for an entrepreneurship education strategy. When

addressing the infrastructural and human resource needs in the education sector, it would be a missed opportunity not to consider the entrepreneurship education strategy's fundamentals.

3. The training and acquisition of the entrepreneur skill set should be integrated into the curriculum. The skills associated with the mindset such as resilience, creative thinking, problem solving, risk-taking, should be part of the learning experiences in the subjects of the current curriculum and not be set apart in a separate course.
4. The involvement of the private sector and appropriate NGOs is fundamental to the development and implementation of an entrepreneurship education programme. Students need to see the skills in action and hear about the experiences of the business community. Businesses need to be exposed to the inquiring minds of academic research centres.
5. Entrepreneurship education and training need to be contextually grounded. The growth and development of Niger Foods Security System and Logistics Ltd should play a significant role in the entrepreneurship education strategy in Niger State. For example, through the STEAM Farms.

3.3 Components of the Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Strategy

The strategy is constituted by six components addressing different aspects of the delivery of functional entrepreneurship education. Core activities of the key components would be captured, properly costed and provided for under implementation plan to be developed by a technical team drawn from the Ministry and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). However, brief description of the key components is given as follows.

3.3.1 Programme Access, Retention and Completion (Enrolment into the Programme)

This component launches the programme with a focus on the execution of preparatory activities and the design, flag off and sustenance of enrolment into the various offerings of the entrepreneurship education. Campaigns, advocacy, dialogue and other engagement activities as well as public awareness and sensitization targeted at different stakeholders would be planned and executed among others. The objects of this component are to create enough programme awareness, encourage actual productive participation, get communities to accept ownership of the programme and maintain momentum from flag off to the maturity of the programme and beyond

3.3.2 Curriculum Selection, Development and Standardization

The introduction of entrepreneurship education and its development to maturity requires a selection and incremental addition of offerings as well as the selection and development of appropriate curriculum and other content materials. It also requires the determination and maintenance of benchmarks and standards through effective deployment of quality assurance processes. These core activities would be the purview of this component.

3.3.3 Identification, Rehabilitation and Construction of Entrepreneurial Facilities

This component deals with the identification of vocational hubs or centres where entrepreneurship training is to take place. Existing facilities (workshops and laboratories) across the three senatorial districts will also be selected for rehabilitation to required standards for effective delivery of entrepreneurship education. Additional purpose-built facilities would be provided as the implementation of the initiative expands with growing enrolment into programme.

3.3.4 Procurement of Appropriate Equipment, Tools and Peripherals

The vocational aspect of entrepreneurship education requires the procurement and distribution of equipment, instruments and other devices. This component of the strategy is focused on creating a list of, procuring and distributing required equipment and tools appropriate for the teaching of each vocation. The equipment should be modern, automated and digital to make the programme appealing and in tune with the technology demands of the 21st century.

3.3.5 Selection, Recruitment and Capacity Development of Personnel

This component provides for the staffing of the programme from the managerial level to the operational/technical staff. Under this component, the recruitment of qualified personnel (business mentors and development officers, technicians, tutors, artisans etc.) in chosen professional, commercial and vocational areas for the programme would be done. Internally, personnel could be posting to occupy relevant programme positions. Training would also be made available to managers, teachers and participating learners in the programme.

3.3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme

The performance of the programme would be under constant review to ensure that it is continuously on track and measuring up to its expectations in terms of producing the desired outputs and outcomes. A monitoring and evaluation framework is to developed and made a part of the action plan for implementing this strategy. For this purpose, a monitoring and evaluation officer would be part of the programme management unit of entrepreneurship education implementation.

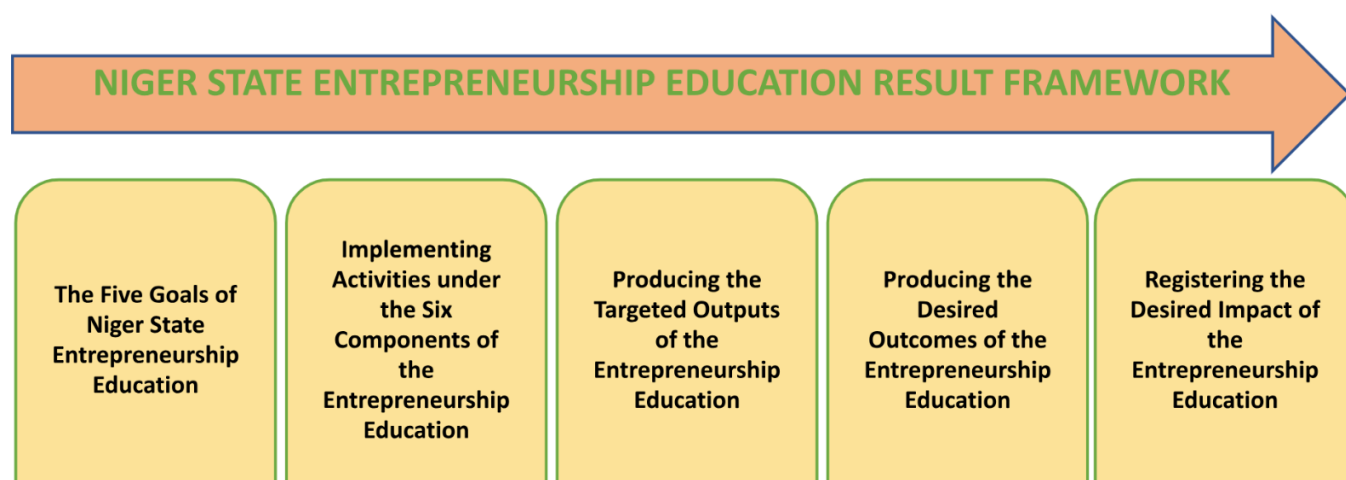
3.4 Sustainable Funding of the Programme

In the many challenges identified during the review of literature and outcomes of the focus group discussions, the inadequacy of funding featured prominently as one of the key obstacles to the delivery of functional entrepreneurship education. Thus, the realization of the goals and objectives of this strategy cannot be accomplished without adequate and sustainable provisions of funding. To mitigate the negative impact of inadequate funding, mobilizing resources from multiple reliable sources is a necessity. To guarantee adequate and sustained funding, resource mobilization would target budgetary provisions, development partner finance, institutional and government (private) endowment, corporate and private foundations, corporate social responsibility sources, non-governmental organizations, and individuals where applicable. Resource mobilization would be extended to sources that are willing and able to donate in kind i.e., equipment, devices and other items.

3.5 Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Results Framework

The following figure is the framework that would define the implementation of entrepreneurship education in the State. With the five goals well defined and the activities under the six components of the entrepreneurship education implemented with the highest quality standards, the appropriate results in terms of target output, expected outcomes and the desired impacts. The production of the results anticipated in the framework means by the end of the initial five-year period, Basic and Secondary Education would go from the current level of dysfunctionality to one of relevance that produces students with not only knowledge and character but employable skills that make them productive members of the society.

Figure : Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Results Framework



The above results framework covers the continuum right from the goals of the entrepreneurship education through the delivery of the various activities to be implemented as determined in the action plan to be prepared by the task team of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and tracking of the ultimate results to be produced in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact on the total field of Basic And Secondary

Education in the State. Progress would tracked and results evaluated by both internal and external assessors and evaluators on incremental yearly basis to end of the first five years to determine the successful, challenges and lessons of the strategy implementation.

4

GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION



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This section presents the governance structure, a bird's eye view of the yearly phases of activities and entrepreneurship hubs to be established for the purpose of implementing the Niger State Entrepreneurship Education Programme in the State.

4.1 Governance Structure

The governance structure of the programme is constituted by organs specially created for driving the effective implementation of the entrepreneurship education. The organs are the TENS II Programme Committee, the State Steering Committee, Programme Management Unit, Entrepreneurship Education Hubs and Vocational Departments.

4.1.1 Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS II) Committee

The Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS II) Committee chaired by the Hon Commissioner of Basic and Secondary Education with Programme Management support from external consultants will be responsible for ensuring the coordination and implementation of the Entrepreneurial Education Strategy across the State to meet the requirements of the TENS II aims and objectives.

4.1.2 State Steering Committee (SSC)

The State Steering Committee is composed of high-level system managers of special grade and directorate level charged with the responsibility to oversight the implementation of the entrepreneurship education project at all levels but with special emphasis on policy compliance and programme quality.

4.1.3 State Programme Management Unit (SPMU)

The State Programme Management Unit (SPMU) is composed of specially selected officers that would be charged with the responsibility to manage, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programme from the State level through the local government to the school level. It would have Education Management Information System, Finance, Monitoring and Evaluation, Safeguard and other related officers.

4.1.4 Local Government Management Unit (LGMU)

The Local Government Management Unit is to be in charge of the administration, organization and evaluation of entrepreneurship education at each of the Local Government Area (LGA). It shall be composed

of officers with background in technical, vocational, business and commercial subjects and trained in entrepreneurship training and mentoring skills. The Unit is responsible for the effective participation of the schools at the LGA. It directs and coordinates the work of the school entrepreneurship education Masters or Desk officers and operation link them with appropriate Entrepreneurship Education Hub.

4.1.5 Entrepreneurship Hub Management Team (EHMT)

The Entrepreneurship Hub Management Team will be responsible for the organization and administration of the Hubs to be created as focal centres for the delivery of out-of-school entrepreneurship with or without private sector participation. The team would link up with other stakeholders to ensure that learners at the Basic and Secondary Education levels have access to the most function entrepreneurship skills acquisition centers.

4.1.6 Vocational Department Management Unit

These are units to be created under each entrepreneurship hub to take charge of a specific vocational offering designated for a defined catchment school area. The unit would be responsible for organizing, managing, and sustaining the units by guaranteeing the availability of relevant services to be offered by the units.

4.2 Five Year Implementation Plan

The pendency of the Entrepreneurship Education Strategy would be five years broken down into annual specific activities. The implementation of the five-year strategy has taken into the current economic, security and the crisis in the education sector in the State. Some of the challenges that informed the development of the five-year strategy are:

1. Poor infrastructure in schools impacts teachers' ability to deliver the current curriculum through

group projects, workshops, presentations, etc.

2. The unavailability of financial resources to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives.
3. Lack of specialist teachers to teach and embed entrepreneurial skill sets as part of the national curriculum.
4. Unacceptably low teacher-to-student ratios that limit creativity and innovative thinking in the learning environment.
5. Limited number of private sector organisations to partner with schools, particularly in rural areas.

While the strategy notes the appropriate measures that the government has taken to address the significant challenges in the education sector; it did not lose sight of the fact there are still areas of entrepreneurship education that can be delivered and tested in the early phases of the programme. Equipped with SMART enabled (i.e., specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and with a specific timeframe) activities and expectations, the deployment of the strategy would form the backbone of the State's Entrepreneurship Education.

4.2.1 Development and Pilot Phase (Year 1)

The core activities to be carried out during the execution of the development and pilot phase include the following:

1. Develop an accurate and complete understanding of entrepreneurship and the value of entrepreneurship to the economic ambitions of Niger State and communicate this message purposefully within the State to all stakeholders and interest groups within and outside the education sphere
2. Enhance and Develop Curriculum Modules: Design ways of implementing the current curriculum across all subjects to support the development of

entrepreneurial skills, particularly communication and presentation skills, creativity and innovation.

3. **Establish Partnerships:** Encourage collaborations with the Niger State business community and NGOs working closely with the relevant ministries, such as, the Niger State Investment and Promotions Agency (NSIPA), Ministry for Industries, Trade and Investment, Ministry for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry for Communication Technology and Digital Economy, Ministry for Science and Technology, that can support the delivery of the entrepreneurship education strategy. This should also include investigating ways of encouraging new investors to participate in the education strategy. For example, through an organization's or a business's Corporate Social responsibility policy or community initiatives.
4. **Funding Allocation:** Allocate a percentage of the education budget towards the development of entrepreneurship. This budget should be ring-fenced and used specifically for entrepreneurship education within schools.
5. **Pilot new teaching methods in schools** that underpins entrepreneurship education where infrastructure and teaching resources permit. Assess and measure their efficacy.
6. **Teacher Training Workshops:** Organise workshops to communicate to teachers, the ambitions of the Entrepreneurship Education strategy, the relationship with the economic vision for Niger State and the ways the strategy is to be delivered across the curriculum.
7. **Mandatory Training:** The Niger State government should introduce mandatory training for all teaching staff in primary and secondary schools for entrepreneurship training.
8. **Curriculum delivery:** Train teachers on successful curriculum delivery methods and pedagogy as it relates to entrepreneurship to embed the skills necessary for entrepreneurship education.
9. **Establish Entrepreneurship Clubs/Hubs:** Establish and set up centers, in partnership with the private sector and NGOs, where students can engage with real-life projects and workshops and be mentored.
10. **Entrepreneurial Summer School Camps:** Establish mandatory summer school camps for all children from primary school through senior secondary school.
11. **Competitions:** Develop competitions amongst schools in entrepreneurship similar to competitions in STEM initiatives, math challenges, etc.



4.2.2 Expansion and Resource Allocation (Year 2)

The core activities to be carried out during the expansion and resource allocation phase include the following:

1. Expand Curriculum Integration: Adapt teaching methods to deliver all subjects in a way that promotes the student's development of entrepreneurship skills.
2. Pilot teaching methods in schools across the twenty-five local government areas and assess efficacy.
3. Continuous Teacher Training: Provide ongoing professional development for teachers to deliver the curriculum in a way that supports the development of entrepreneurship skills.
4. Expand the number of entrepreneurship hubs/clubs across the State
5. Funding Plan: Continue with private sector participation, with allocation for funding for resources, i.e., teachers and infrastructure development to support entrepreneurship development in schools.
6. Entrepreneurship Fairs and Competitions: Continue the Collaboration with the private sector to organise events and competitions that would be accessible to schools and the entrepreneurship clubs/hubs by increasing the number of schools and organisations taking part across the State.

4.2.3 Expansion, Evaluation and Refinement (Year 3)

The core activities to be carried out during the expansion, evaluation and refinement phase include the following:

1. Ensure that all teachers across Niger State have been given the appropriate training in understanding entrepreneurship skills acquisition and development and are employing the appropriate teaching methods and integration with the national curriculum.
2. Assess teaching methods: Gather feedback from students and teachers on the new teaching methods and work with the State institutions, such as the Niger State Professional Teachers Development Institute (NSPTDI) to address issues relating to teaching methods.
3. Curriculum Expansion: Identify gaps in the current curriculum that hinders the promotion of entrepreneurship skills and address these with new modules.
4. Scale Up Enterprises: Expand entrepreneur clubs and hubs and encourage the establishment of school-based enterprises and private sector partnerships with schools. Increase the number of participants in entrepreneurship fairs, workshops, and competitions.
5. Continuous Teacher Training: Provide ongoing professional development for teachers through the Niger State Professional Development Institute (NSTPDI) to enable the curriculum to be delivered in a way that supports the development of entrepreneurship skills. Introduce hybrid training sessions. This will enable some sessions to be available online, which can be accessed anytime.

4.2.4 Full Implementation and Continuous Improvement (Year 4 – 5)

The core activities to be carried out during the full implementation and continuous improvement phase include the following:

1. Full Curriculum Integration: Implement entrepreneurship skills development across all subjects in primary and secondary schools through appropriate teaching methods.
2. Implement technical modules within the school curriculum at appropriate stages.
3. Assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on student outcomes and Niger State's economy. Identify areas for improvement, pilot new methods and assess its impact.
4. Use technology to share outcomes and learning effectively.

4.3 Implementation Approach

This strategy has adopted a dual approach to the delivery of entrepreneurship education through the deployment of the preceding 4–5-year strategic plan. These approaches are:

4.3.1 Class Based Instruction

This involves the development and delivery of curriculum content delivered in the classroom through mainstreaming the teaching of entrepreneurship competencies in critical areas like business idea generation, conceptualisation and implementation; development of business planning; investment, financing and budgeting; marketing and business communications; business operations management; business performance tracking; record keeping and managing human and materials resources among others. To enable the optimization of the class-based entrepreneurship instruction, it is required to be mainstreamed into the daily schedule of the schools through inclusion in the daily school timetable.



4.3.2 Acquisition of Vocational Competencies at Entrepreneurship Hubs

This is very critical to the achievement of the of the goals and objectives of this entrepreneurship education strategy. A key sustainable approach to achieve the desired entrepreneurship objectives is to have a place where vocational skills could be acquired uninterrupted using appropriate equipment and tools. With many schools expected to key into the project in phases, a time will come when the desired equip-

ment and tools cannot be provided and maintained in every school. A way to mitigate this unavoidable emergent challenge is to adopt the entrepreneurship hub option. For the purpose of this strategy a hub is defined as “”. A hub may be for a specific vocation/ trade or for a collection of different vocations/trades. The choice and creation of either should be done with caution after due SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses by a competent professional or team.



4.3.3 Independent Private Sector Led Entrepreneurship Centres

While to guarantee sustainability and quality, government would have to invest in the creation (i.e., establishment of entrepreneurship hubs), it is necessary for it to collaborate with the private sector to ensure the use of functional private facilities. This will guarantee that more students access skills acquisition opportunities in a user-friendly context with appropriate modern equipment, tools and devices that would move entrepreneurship from a labour intensive to a technology driven enterprise.

4.4 Mitigating Implementation Challenges

This strategy has identified the numerous challenges to be confronted by the efforts directed at the optimal delivery of entrepreneurship education in the State. While noting the numerous challenges, this strategy has put forward the following mitigation measures:

1. Conduct comprehensive training for teachers and administrators to illustrate the benefits of entrepreneurship education as a means to deal with possible resistance to change that the strategy may demands;
2. Deliberate allocation of specific but adequate budget for equipment, tools and materials and seek partnership with businesses for resource donations and sponsorships;
3. Establish clear expectations and agreements with mentors and create a backup pool of mentors to address the challenge of inconsistent and fewer mentor participation;
4. Utilize interactive tools and games to teach financial literacy and engaging real life driven vocational and trade training address possible low student engagement in the project.

4.5 Setting up a Tast Team

A task team shall be set up to do the following: -

1. Consider the business or trade areas to be introduced as the project is implemented from the pilot year through the other years.
2. Determine using appropriate criteria for the selection of pilot schools and subsequent inclusion of other schools as the project expands.
3. Proposed the basic requirements to be provided to enable the commencement of the project as soon as it is feasible.
4. Develop development appropriate in terms of the age and educational level of the pupils/students and to develop the curriculum for the purpose.
5. Present criteria for the mainstreaming of entrepreneurship education into the school daily timetable.
6. Propose modalities for the selection of the location of Entrepreneurship Education Hub and their optimal allocation of equipment and tools for relevant vocations under each of the Hubs.
7. Propose modalities for the integration of tertiary education (i.e., Polytechnic/Monotechnic, etc.) into the project and upgrading of technical vocational schools to entrepreneurship Hub.
8. Lead the process for the development of realistically costed action plan for the five-year pendency of this strategic plan by Ministry.

5

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

Monitoring and evaluation are key requirements of every strategic document. It is a set of activities that ensure that the implementation of every project or programme is designed and handled in a manner that guarantees the achievement of its stated goals and objectives. This component of the entrepreneurship education strategy meets this need to provide for monitoring and evaluation processes and mechanism that will enable the results of the use of inputs to produce the intended outputs, outcomes and impact of the entrepreneurship education project in the State.

5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation as a Key Requirement

Monitoring and Evaluation shall be the driving force behind the implementation of the entrepreneurship education strategy because of the critical role it plays in keeping a project on course and guaranteeing the delivery of its goals and objectives. The State Steering Committee and the State Project Implementation Unit in collaboration with relevant stakeholders at the local, district and state levels shall be responsible for ensuring that M and E activities are carried out at all the relevant levels of the entrepreneurship education project. Two types of M&E processes shall be carried out at designated points in time; one set by internal staff and another set by external experts. All M&E activities shall be for the purpose of determining project success, lessons learnt and for the continuous improvement of the project.

5.2 Linking M&E with the Annual Entrepreneurship Education

Generally, the annual action plan of the entrepreneurship education project shall constitute the results framework for achieving its goals and objectives. Since the tracking and monitoring of the project shall be based on verifiable evidence, the M&E shall be linked directly to the action plan taking notice of

the activities intended, the target outputs and impact to be produced using the acceptable source of evidence and method of collection of the data required to be used in the process. The outcomes of M&E processes shall inform the review or otherwise of activities and targets to be achieved.

5.3 Essence of the Monitoring and Evaluation Process

5.3.1 Holistic Orientation

The monitoring mechanism for the entrepreneurship education project would be driven by a framework to be developed by the Ministry as part of the overall action plan for delivering and achieving the goals and objectives of the project. The specifics of monitoring and evaluation would be hinged on clearly defined activities, well intentioned performance indicators, responsibility delineation and holistic tracking of input utilization and the production of outputs, outcomes and project impact. It shall highlight challenges at all levels of implementation as well as across governance, implementation and targets aspects of the project among others.

5.3.2 Effective Feedback System

Monitoring and Evaluation would leverage on intra-project consultation and communication to ensure that there is reliable generation of feedback and its utilisation to track and assess the progress, opportunities and challenges of the entrepreneurship education implementation across the school system. Minutes, reports and other communication tools would be used to keep tab on the project implementation with a view to optimizing the use of personnel, resources, materials and finance vis-à-vis the achievement of outputs and other anticipated project results. A key expectation of the feedback utilization is the continuous improvement of the project across its various dimensions including performance of personnel



and external partners as well as sourcing of funding and the quality of resource management. Some of the means of generating feedback would include:

1. Minutes of Meetings
2. Visitation Reports
3. Programme Evaluation Reports
4. Survey of Outcomes
5. Focus Group Discussions
6. Data Collected through other means.

5.3.3 Enhancing Decision Making

M & E processes shall lead to the production of different types of reports that should help facilitate and improve the quality of decision making at all levels of the project as it is ongoing. This is meant to improve the quality of the proactive management of project implementation and ensure the progressive tracking of its performance with gaps and challenges being identified and addressed. An effective reporting mechanism shall be developed to complement and guarantee that they contribute to enabling quality decisions be made and implemented faster and more productively.

5.4 Focus of the Monitoring and Evaluation Process

5.4.1 Evidence Based Outputs and Outcomes

The monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the entrepreneurship education shall be focused on continuous tracking of the outputs/outcomes as well as their relevance and quality to the realization of project goals and objectives. The results are to be produced in their most evidential and usable form.

5.4.2 Inclusiveness

This is a key consideration of any development-oriented project. For a very long time, the issue of discrimination especially against girls/women as well as vulnerable groups have been at the centre of the socioeconomic development of a nation or sub-nation. Monitoring and Evaluation of the project would target the tracking and execution of thought-out inclusivity measures as safeguard for protecting the needs, interests and well-being of girls and members

of the various vulnerable groups. The intent should be on tracking all aspects of the project to guarantee that girls and vulnerable groups are allowed and encouraged to effectively participate and benefit from their active participation in the entrepreneurship education project.

5.4.3 Transparency

Project transparency is essential for its success by virtue of its openness and provision for accountability and effective participation by stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation actions would be deployed to see that procedures, rules and guidelines are strictly adhered to especially in matters of budgeting and financial management. Similarly, expenditure tracking, utilization mapping and records (both hard and soft documentations) would also constitute part of the M & E with responsibilities properly delineated and officers are held to account for their performance or lack of it.

5.5 Multi-level Monitoring and Evaluation

The project implementation of entrepreneurship education would cover different levels namely, state, senatorial district, entrepreneurship education hub and the school. The need to look at performance of the project across the various programmes or vocations on offer is also germane. Consequently, specific and goal driven monitoring and evaluation activities would be carried out at each level to safeguard that every level is performing optimally as expected. But, more importantly, M&E activities would also target the determination of the synergy or lack of it across the different levels of implementation. This is in consonance with the maxim that ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its part’. Areas of dissonance and lag or obstacles would be identified, analysed and corrected or addressed to achieve the best of operational outcomes for the project. Specifically, M&E would take place at the following levels:

1. State level of Ministries, Departments and Agencies
2. Senatorial District/Federal Constituency Level
3. Entrepreneurship Education Hub Level
4. Business, Trade or Vocation Level
5. Local Government Area Level
6. Participating School Level.

5.6 Scheduled Monitoring and Evaluation

Through the time continuum (i.e., 5 years) of the implementation of entrepreneurship education project, system wide monitoring and evaluation to be executed by external experts would take place annually, mid-term and by the end of the five-year tenure of project. The objectives of the M&E activities would be to capture project status – its gains and challenges. In addition to the terminal M&E, a Project Performance Review would be carried out to determine project achievement, sustainability status and determination of lessons learnt for improvement of future project conception and implementation.

5.7 Use of External Monitors and Evaluators

The entrepreneurship education strategy would leverage on the use of professional external monitors and evaluators to achieve a more objective assessment of the implementation of the programme as an ongoing enterprise. The existing independent Consultants for the TENS II Programme will be utilised to undertake the monitoring and evaluation exercise, and/or external monitors would be selected through public advert and a transparent procurement process to ensure the best value addition. The programme performance review will be carried out at specified intervals and would also be carried out by the State external experts to be selected on the basis of transparent public procurement process or as may be determined by the TENS II Board or the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.

CONCLUSION



Entrepreneurship education for school-aged children is increasingly recognised as essential for fostering innovation, self-employment, and economic growth. As revealed in this strategy, several best practices and case studies emphasise the importance of integrating entrepreneurship into education for all school-aged children.

This Entrepreneurship Education strategy therefore has a mission to foster innovation and self-reliance through integration of entrepreneurship as a subject/

course at the primary and secondary levels of education in Niger State. The successful implementation of the strategy would equip students with the knowledge and skills to identify and exploit business opportunities for self-reliance and to stimulate economic growth in the long term.

APPENDIX A

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Questions to Assess Current Status of Entrepreneurship Skills Integration in Niger State Secondary Schools

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATE

Exploring the problem within the education system and possible solution in Niger state, Federal Republic Of Nigeria.

Proposed participant per focus group

- Student
- Teacher
- Parents
- School administrators
- Education officials
- Local business leaders
- Education and entrepreneurship experts
- Community leaders

We aim to have a representative from each focus group category to ensure views from different stakeholders in the education sector (as applicable).

Introduction

Greetings (Sannu)! Thank you for participating in the Transforming Education in Niger State (TENS II) Programme Focus Group. Please note, the interviews will be recorded as stated in the consent letter. The main purpose of the focus group is to explore the entrepreneurship perception, problems and possible solution within the education system in Niger state as part of TENS II program. More specifically, your view and thought on improving the education system and making it globally competitive would be appreciated.

Please note that there is no right or wrong answer, and the questions are not aimed at testing your knowledge. Please feel free to express yourself in any language you prefer. The focus group is an open discussion. Therefore every participants views are respected and considered important. The discussion is confidential, and all participant responses will be kept anonymous.

Interviewer: Please let me know if we have any question before we commence. If no question, the interviewer says, please let me know when you are ready, so I can start the recording and ask the questions (Wait for a verbal responses and ensure each participant has signed the consent form).

Please note: An entrepreneur is someone who start or own a business. Whether it's in farming, retail, manufacturing, or in service sector.

1. **Students (Secondary School): Perception and interest in entrepreneurship education Questions**

1. What does entrepreneurship mean to you?
2. How do you think learning entrepreneurship can benefit your career goals?
3. What types of entrepreneurship activities will you like to participate in?
4. What are the main challenges you face in learning about entrepreneurship?
5. Would you like to be an entrepreneur? if yes, why?

2. **Teachers (Primary and Secondary School): Challenges and Needs in Teaching Entrepreneurship**

Questions

1. What are the challenge you face when teaching entrepreneurship?
2. How can the school support you better in teaching entrepreneurship?
3. What resources or training are necessary to improve entrepreneurship education?
4. How do you currently assess student understanding of entrepreneurship concepts?
5. Do you think student are interested in learning about entrepreneurship? If not, why?
6. How can student be supported to encourage interest in entrepreneurship?
7. Does interest in entrepreneurship education differ in boys and girls?

3. **Parents: Parental Support and Perception of Entrepreneurship Education**

1. What are your views on your children learning entrepreneurship?
2. How will entrepreneurship education benefits your child career goals?
3. What challenges do you think children face in learning entrepreneurship education?
4. What support can you provide to help your child learn about entrepreneurship?

4. **School Administrators: Implementation and Integration of Entrepreneurship Education**

Questions

1. Is entrepreneurship taught in your school? If yes, move to question 2. If no, then skip to question 5.
2. What challenges do you face in integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum?
3. How do you measure the success of entrepreneurship education and program in your school?
4. What resources and support do you need to improve entrepreneurship education?
5. How can the community and local businesses support your student entrepreneurship education?
6. How receptive are students and teachers to entrepreneurship education?
7. What resources and training do teachers needs to teach entrepreneurship?
8. How do you collaborate with local businesses and community leaders to enhance entrepreneurship education?
9. What feedback have you received from parents regarding entrepreneurship programs?
10. What role do you think digital tools and technology can play in entrepreneurship education?
11. How can extra curricular activities be used to support entrepreneurship education?
12. What measures are in place to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in accessing entrepreneurship education?

5. Local Business Owners and Entrepreneurship: Collaboration and Practical Experience

Questions

1. Do you think students are encouraged to learn about entrepreneurship in society?
2. How can local businesses support schools in teaching entrepreneurship?
3. What practical skill do you think a student should have to go into entrepreneurship?
4. How can local businesses support student entrepreneurship? This may include practical experience?
5. How can schools collaborate with local businesses to achieve this (referring to question 5)?
6. What role do you think digital tools and technology can play in entrepreneurship education?
7. How can schools better prepare students for entrepreneurship education?
8. Does interest in entrepreneurship education differ in boys and girls?

6. Education Officials and Key Stakeholders: Policy And Support For Entrepreneurship

Questions

1. What policies are currently in place to support entrepreneurship education?
2. What are the main challenges in promoting entrepreneurship education at the state level?
3. How do you measure the impact of entrepreneurship education initiatives?
4. What additional support do you think is needed to improve entrepreneurship education (from government, schools, non-governmental organizations etc)?
5. How is technology adapted to aid student entrepreneurship?
6. What best entrepreneurship practice can be adopted in Niger state to encourage student participation?
7. How can a curriculum be designed to foster entrepreneurship education?
8. How can local businesses participate in facilitating student entrepreneurship education?
9. How can entrepreneurship education be made inclusive for boys and girls and children that are out of schools?

7. Community Leaders

1. How do you perceive the importance of entrepreneurship education for children in your community?
2. What challenges do you think schools face in implementing entrepreneurship education?
3. How can the community support schools delivering effective entrepreneurship curriculum?
4. What cultural factors should be considered when developing an entrepreneurship curriculum?
5. How can entrepreneurship education benefit the local community?
6. What role do you see for technology in enhancing entrepreneurship education in your community?
7. How can local traditions and values be integrated into entrepreneurship education?
8. How can out of school children be included in entrepreneurship education programs?
9. What support do you think is needed from the government and other stakeholders to enhance entrepreneurship education?



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