

## Entrepreneurship Education and Exceptional Persons: A Challenge For Libraries In Developing Countries

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### ABSTRACT

*The article examined entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, the exceptional person and highlights the benefits of entrepreneurship in the society and promotion of entrepreneurship. The place of libraries, their resource as associated with exceptional persons are discussed. Also examined are some perspectives on entrepreneurship and libraries, challenges of libraries in developing countries on the provision of materials on entrepreneurship education for exceptional persons. The paper concludes by pausing challenges to key areas that serve as bottlenecks to exceptional persons in the society, especially as it relates to use of the library.*

### Introduction

Today's world is full of challenges. There is high rate of unemployment globally, and everywhere people are encouraged to be innovative. Even with the prevalence of white collar jobs, it is expedient to acquire entrepreneurial skills, which can be used as means of generating extra income (Christian Women Mirror, 2010).

Also it is a known fact that there is no shortage of articles and books discussing the changing nature of libraries in the digital age, words such as entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and exceptional persons, perspectives on entrepreneurship and libraries, challenges of libraries in providing resources in entrepreneurship for exceptional persons make only occasional appearances. In the light of the above, this article intends to examine entrepreneurship education and exceptional persons: a challenge for libraries.

### Entrepreneurship

What is entrepreneurship? There is no straightforward answer to this question. However, different authors have suggested different definitions to suit their circumstance. According to Shapero (1975) it is a term that deals with initiative. In the view of Ranstandt (1984) it is process of creating incremental wealth. For Hisrich and Brush (1985), Hisrich and Peters (1992 and 1995) it is the process of creating something different with value. It is a human creative act that builds something of value (Timmons, 1997 and Attayi, 2007). These focus on entrepreneurship as being associated with taking opportunities. Murphy, Lias and Welch (2006) define entrepreneurship as the 'discovery, evolution and utilization of future goods and services'. To [www.nwda.co.uk](http://www.nwda.co.uk) it is turning ideas into a success, being imaginative, creative, inventive, problem solving --- even just about making things more interesting. Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity driven (Morrisette and Schraeder, 2007). While Christian Women Mirror (2010) explained it as the process of identifying, developing and a vision to life. An entrepreneur is also viewed as an innovator. He introduces new ideas, new products, new techniques, opens up new markets and so on. He perceives business opportunities and takes advantages of the scarce resources to use them. The exceptional person could be regarded as an entrepreneur who takes the advantage of his situation and put it into best opportunities. Such opportunities could be entrepreneurship education and effective utilization of the library to fulfill such goals.

### Entrepreneurship Education

Every individual desire education to be a better person in the society. Education is a lifelong social process of directed learning (Mishra, Acharya and Bansal, 2007). Education is considered as the life wire of any nation, its industries and its general development (NUT, 2009). Education offers one the opportunity to be creative, think independently and to be innovative. Therefore entrepreneurship education for the exceptional persons will depend on the level of conventional education attended by the individual.

Entrepreneurship education is any comprehensively planned effort undertaken by individuals, institutions and agencies to develop competence in people that are intended to lead to self-employment generation. It focuses on the development of skills necessary for entrepreneurship which include development of an entrepreneurial spirit, characteristics and personality; development of enterprise-building and small business development, capabilities to initiate and start one's own business; development of technical, technological and other professional competence needed for productive work and employment, and lastly development of managerial abilities to run the business or other self-employment successfully (Attayi, 2007).

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Ogbor and Ikhimokpa, 2009). According to them what makes entrepreneurship education distinctive is its focus on realization of opportunity.

Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2005) viewed entrepreneurship education as a lifelong learning process starting from elementary school and progressing through all levels of education, including adult education

and education for exceptional persons. The standards and their supporting performance indicators are a framework for teachers to use in building appropriate objectives, learning activities and assessments for target audience. These standards and their supporting performance indicators could be found in the library, whereby users, including exceptional persons, can have access to them.

The consortium further state that using this framework, students including exceptional persons will have:-

1. Progressively more challenging educational activities
2. Experiences that will enable them to develop the insight needed to discover and create entrepreneurial opportunities.
3. The expertise to successfully start and manage their own business to take advantage of these opportunities.

Centre for Entrepreneurial Development (CFED, 2005) suggests that incorporating entrepreneurship education into the existing traditional school system normalizes self employment as a life goal, while exposing youth and young adults (including all exceptional persons) to entrepreneurship education outside of the school system allows creative thinking about the economic challenges and opportunities available in their own areas. Entrepreneurship education is significant for all categories of people (the exceptional persons inclusive). But who is an exceptional person?

#### **The exceptional person:**

Haring (1978) opined that 'exceptional' refers to any person who deviates from the norm, either by higher than average or lower than average performance or ability. The exceptional person is different from his or her peers; different in the way he/she looks or the way he/she moves his/her body; different in the way he/she responds to the world around him/her; different in the way he/she learns or fails to learn. Exceptional persons, according to Haring (1978), possess one or more of the followings:

1. Sensory handicaps, including those with learning and vision impairments.
2. Mental deviations, including the gifted as well as the mentally retarded.
3. Communication disorders, such as speech and language disorders.
4. Learning disabilities
5. Behaviour disorders
6. Health impairments, including neurological defects, orthopedic conditions, diseases such as muscular dystrophy and sickle cell anemia, birth defects, and developmental disabilities.

In the view of Hallahan and Kauffman (1982) and Abang (2005), exceptional persons are those who require special education and related services if they are to realize their full human potential. They require special education because they are markedly different from most persons in one or more of the following ways; they are mentally retarded, gifted, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped, or have disordered speech or language, impaired hearing, or impaired sight.

The exceptional person, just as his/her peers that are considered to be normal, are expected to use the library for research, learning and teaching purposes and to take due advantage of the resources available in the libraries to be a better entrepreneur.

#### **Entrepreneurial traits**

To be successful in business, an entrepreneur needs to be endowed with the following characteristics as postulated by Attayi (2007); independence, strong will for achievement, hardworking, frugality, honesty, creativity, innovation, initiative, risk taking, social adroitness. Other characteristics are political sagacity, future orientation, bright appearance, tactical knowledge of the job, organizational ability, mental alertness, environmental scanning, total and big pictures, ability to cope with ambiguity, and lastly self confidence.

Entrepreneurial quality check in the opinion of Lambert and Rowley (2008) include:

- \* Self confidence, one should have a self belief and passion about ones product or service.
- \* Self determination -- a belief that the outcome of events is down to one's own actions, rather than based on external factors or other people's actions.
- \* Being a self -- starter -- the ability to take the innovative, work independently and to develop ones ideas.
- \* Judgment -- the ability to be open -- minded when listening to people's advice, while bearing in mind ones objectives for the business.
- \* Commitment -- the willingness to make personal sacrifices through long hours and loss of leisure time.
- \* Perseverance -- the ability to continue despite setbacks, financial insecurity and exposure to risk.
- \* Initiative -- the ability to be resourceful and proactive, rather than adopting a passive "wait to see" approach.

The above points by Lambert and Rowley (2008) offer a summary of the traits of an entrepreneur. This implies entrepreneurs are innovators. They seek opportunities, take the innovative and have the commitment and

perseverance to see things through. Therefore, to be a successful entrepreneur, one needs to do intensive research which should cover feasibility studies, market survey, study some advantages and disadvantages of different products etc. The resources that can help achieve these goals could be obtained in the library. This means the library is the best gateway for exceptional persons to be accomplished entrepreneurs.

**Benefits of Entrepreneurship in the society:**

Every successful entrepreneur brings about benefits not only for himself/herself, but for his immediate locality, region/states, country/nation and the world as a whole. Johanson (2004) categorized the benefits that can be derived from entrepreneurship activities into seventeen points namely: enormous personal financial gain; self-employment, own bossing, offering more job satisfaction and flexibility of the work force; employment for others, often in better jobs; development of more industries especially in rural areas or regions disadvantaged by economic changes for example due to globalization effects; encouragement of the processing of local materials into finished goods for domestic consumption as well as for export; income generation and increase higher quality products; healthy competition thus encouraging higher quality products. Other benefits are more goods and services available; development of new markets; promotion of the use of modern technology in small scale manufacturing to enhance higher productivity; encouragement of more researches/studies and development of modern machines and equipment for domestic consumption; development of qualities and attitudes among potential entrepreneurs to bring about significant changes in the rural areas; freedom from the dependency on the jobs offered others. Lastly, other benefits include; ability to have great accomplishments; reduction of the informal economy; emigration of talents may be stopped by a better domestic entrepreneurship climate and finally serious tax advantages.

In line with the above therefore, it is expected that the exceptional persons in the society can benefit from any of these activities highlighted above. They (the exceptional persons) can make choices from these activities and empower themselves economically. They can utilize their talents and potentialities to the benefit of themselves and the society at large, if these challenges are given serious attentions.

**Promotion of Entrepreneurship in the society:**

Considering entrepreneurship potential in supporting economic growth and social cohesion, it is the policy goal of many governments to develop a culture of entrepreneurial thinking (Johanson, 2004). This can be done in a number of ways namely: integrating entrepreneurship into education systems, legislating to encourage risk-taking and national campaign. An example of the latter is the United Kingdom's enterprise week which was launched in 2004.

Outside of the political world, research has been conducted on the presence of entrepreneurial theories in doctoral economic programmes. Johanson (2004) as a fellow at the Ration Institute in Sweden discovered such content to be sparse. He fears such will dilute doctoral programmes and will fail to train young economists to analyze problems in a relevant way. This therefore offers gap in the field of knowledge and exceptional persons can be part of those that can fill such gap, if they offer themselves for higher education and be part of the researchers that will later be consultants in the society that will promote the role of entrepreneurship.

**Libraries, resources and exceptional persons:**

Libraries are major sources for data collection and information retrieval in institutions/organizations that value balanced knowledge, quality education and the promotion of entrepreneurship. Wikipedia (2007) defines a library as a collection of information, resources and services, organized for use, and maintained by a public body, an institution or a private individual/organization. The collection and services are used by people who choose not to or cannot afford to purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have or who require professional assistance with their research, especially to promote entrepreneurship. However, modern Libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. In addition, to provide materials, they also provide the service specialists who are experts in matters related to finding and organizing information and interpreting information needs, called libraries. More recently, libraries are understood as extending beyond the physical walls of a building, by including materials accessible by electronic means, and by providing the assistance of librarians in navigating and analyzing tremendous amounts of knowledge with a variety of digital tools.

Fasoye (1995) pointed out that library resources are those materials made up of books, audiovisual software, audiovisual hardware and other pedagogical materials used in the teaching and learning process. Library materials here are synonymous with educational resources, learning resources or media resources. Resources should be accessible to all students at appropriate times, the resources should be available in formats that are accessible to all users; sensitive information should be accessed anonymously in appropriate locations (Nottinghamshire Library Audit, 2008/9).

Exceptional persons, as already defined, are those with disabilities that require special attention by specialists in the various needs of such persons. However, it is a common knowledge that libraries in developing nations are lacking in manpower, to handle the information needs of exceptional persons be it public, academic, schools, or special libraries. The buildings are designed only for normal persons neglecting the exceptional person's requirements. Similarly, in terms of resource selections, no attention is given to the information needs of exceptional persons, especially the visually impaired.

Though the National Policy on Education of Nigeria (2007) has some provisions for the exceptional persons but it is still a paper idea and not a reality. Published books, journals, magazines, newspapers etc are only printed to take care of the sighted; it has no provision for the vision impaired. The libraries in the developing nations do not make provisions for the physical and health impairments nor for behaviour disorders. These are challenges the libraries need to address, if needs of all exceptional persons will be properly handled by libraries.

#### **Some perspectives on entrepreneurship and libraries**

Lambert and Rowley (2008), Warner (1990), Nicholson (1992) and Riggs (1989) pointed to the fact that funding pressure and the marketization of the public sector in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Britain generated a small flurry of interest in enterprise and fund – raising activities in libraries. There is the occasional article on this subject. Exceptional persons can take advantage of such opportunities and write articles that could be kept in the library for users, expressing their views and opinions on the subject matter.

Libraries are seen by some as an incubating place for innovations, contributing to local and regional economic, community and cultural development, and going one step further in exploring their role in facilitating learning (Lambert and Rowley, 2008, Skrzyszewski and Cubberly, 1997 and Li (2006). This implies that if exceptional persons patronize the library and explore the resources available on the subject; they will have a better focus on the subject matter and will arrive at better opportunities that will better their lives.

In another development, Nijboer (2006) cited in Lambert and Rowley (2008) suggests that libraries need to be cultural entrepreneurs in order to create and maintain thriving libraries in the internet age. Nijboer further suggests that libraries in an experience economy can offer four types of experiences: entertainment, education, escapist and aesthetic. These are areas that exceptional persons can effectively put in their potentialities, which could be of benefit to the library and themselves.

#### **Challenges of Libraries in the provision of materials on Entrepreneurship education for exceptional persons.**

While contributing to the field of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship, Christian Women Mirror (CWM, 2010) state that business owned and operated by entrepreneurs take different forms. That some are owned by an individual while, others are owned by two or more persons. The form of business ownership an entrepreneur selects may be dependent upon his/her circumstances, abilities, resources, environment and the characteristics of the business. The Mirror suggests that the prospective owner should evaluate in detail the characteristics of each form of business, their advantages and disadvantages and then select a form of business ownership that matches his/her interest, including exceptional persons. In an ideal situation the library is expected to provide the basic resources that would guide the prospective entrepreneur (the exceptional persons inclusive) obtain information that would help them take concrete decisions in the type of enterprise to operate.

According to the CWM (2010) several small business ideas abound in the field of Agriculture, Manufacturing, construction, transportation, information communication technology, Educational services, General services, printing and Publishing, Professional services and a host of others. The greatest challenges to libraries in developing countries are: How many libraries will boast of turning adequate resources for exceptional persons in any of the field listed above? How many libraries are up – to – date in their collection development that would assist the exceptional persons in decision taking, when it comes to choice of the type of business or enterprise they will be engaged in, this 21<sup>st</sup> century?. Are there trained librarians in the field of entrepreneurship education that can serve as specialists in the library to guide exceptional persons? How many libraries do have resources in both print and non-print forms in entrepreneurship education that would be of benefit to exceptional persons? How many exceptional persons do patronize libraries in developing countries for the sake of writing entrepreneurship literature that would challenge the libraries? How many libraries in developing countries are viable enough in terms of databases in entrepreneurship education to assist exceptional persons?

#### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

- (1) For entrepreneurship education to be relevant to exceptional persons in our society, all types of bottleneck in providing them with effective education should be addressed by all and sundry. Library buildings should be designed/re-designed in such a way that the basic needs of exceptional persons is put into consideration,



especially exits and movement to staircases. By doing so, it will make it conducive for all exceptional persons to have access to the library and utilize the materials effectively.

- (2) Provision of library resources should also cover the information needs of all categories of exceptional persons. There is the great need for the training of librarians that will provide the information needs of all categories of exceptional persons.
- (3) The portion of the National Policy on Education that deals with exceptional persons should be implemented fully.
- (4) Entrepreneurship should be a complete course in the curriculum of exceptional persons, and should be handled by specialists in entrepreneurship/special education.
- (5) Inclusive education should be encouraged at all levels of education, from early childhood education to tertiary institutions, as such will eradicate stigmatization of exceptional persons in the society.
- (6) Publishers of all types of printed materials should endeavour to transcribe such information into Braille for the purpose of the visually impaired in the society and such should be backed by appropriate law.
- (7) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services in libraries should take care of all categories of exceptional persons in the society.
- (8) All academic libraries should have in their stock both printed and non-printed materials on entrepreneurship, and such resources should be made available to exceptional persons with no difficulty when demanded for research.
- (9) Government should provide funding for entrepreneurship programmes or activities initiated by exceptional persons.
- (10) Parents and siblings of exceptional persons should be trained free of charge, by government in areas of special education that will make them handle their wards with absolute care and love.
- (11) Centers for entrepreneurship training should be established for exceptional persons in each senatorial zone in Nigeria, to serve as a model to all other developing nations and these centers should have libraries.
- (12) Conducive environment should be created in all educational institutions for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship skills in developing nations. Such should be able to cater for the needs of exceptional persons.

### **Conclusion**

This article examined a number of issues that relate to entrepreneurship education and exceptional persons. It highlights the role of the library as it contributes in providing information on entrepreneurship to the society including exceptional persons. The paper also discussed the challenges of libraries with respect to the provision of materials on entrepreneurship education in developing countries. In conclusion, the paper postulated a number of suggestions and recommendations which if adhered to will guarantee better living for the exceptional persons.

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