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## **Strategies for Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Employment in Southern Borno of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Unemployment has continued to bedevil societies globally, particularly its prevalence among youths. Youth unemployment, which remains one of the most pressing economic challenge in Borno state is exacerbated by the Boko Haram conflict-related displacement, slow economic recovery and limited access to relevant skills training. This research seemed to ascertain ways to enhance entrepreneurship education programmes, providing modalities for youths to establish and sustain their own businesses. This research has focused on identifying areas of curriculum enhancement, business incubation, digital entrepreneurship and training, to determine the preferred government agency needed by the community and to identify the best entrepreneurship curricula development for the specific local government area. This was done by voting against the problems affecting their local government in each sector, one after the other. The most urgent problems were identified through ranking and representation of urban and rural population in the study areas. These included; Biu local government and Bayo local government areas of Borno state. While purposive sampling approach was used to select key participants for the study. This research has focused on ways to reduce youth unemployment, improve economic stability and foster youth-led innovation in Borno state.

**Keyword:** Youth Unemployment, Entrepreneurship Education, Economic Recovery, Borno State, Nigeria

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## Introduction

Borno state has been struggling with economic decline and high unemployment rates, since the outbreak of Boko Haram conflict in 2009. The conflict has created instability in the region and particularly Borno state which before the conflict, was centre for international trade because of its border with five countries (JRS international, 2024; ACRC, 2021; ACAPS 2015). As a result of the conflict, massive displacement became a common feature of the state and many people lost their means of livelihood, particularly young people, who lost the opportunity to either continue acquisition of marketable skills or never had the opportunity at all, thus limiting their ability to secure formal employment or start business and effective entrepreneurship endeavours (Oghuvbu and Okoli, 2020).

Entrepreneurship education has always offered a suitable situation of employing youths with business development skills, financial literacy, and sometimes access to startup funding, fostering self-employment and job creation in Borno state and beyond (Jibrin *et al.*, 2024; Goniri and Aloom, 2020). In addition, there are often the observable critical limitations such as inadequate entrepreneurship education curricula that fail to align with the state's unique economic realities, a lack of hands-on training in key areas such as business management, financial literacy, and digital marketing and insufficient integration of digital entrepreneurship into vocational education programmes. Additionally, restricted access to seed funding and micro-loans, prevent promising youth-led startups from launching and sustaining successful businesses, further hindering economic recovery and job creation in the region. Therefore enhancing entrepreneurship education has become imperative to accelerate Borno state's recovery by improving youth employment through relevant skill-based training. More than ever, youths require enhancement in their practical business skills, ways to fostering youth-led enterprises that generates jobs, drive innovation and strengthen local economic development. Also, the role of entrepreneurship education in promoting resilience in the post-conflict settings, enabling displaced youths to rebuild their livelihoods, needs to be maximized. This research explored strategies to enhance entrepreneurship education to realize these benefits in Borno state.

## Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment in Borno State has remained a concern. Despite the efforts of successive governments. Since the outbreak of the insurgency, youth unemployment has continued to increase. The conflict has led to limited practical business skills, curriculum issues and displacements, resulting to limited mentorship in terms of business and entrepreneurship. The conflict has led to thousands of young people's abilities being restricted to access training and employment opportunities (JRS international, 2024; ACRC, 2021; ACAPS 2015). It is noticeable that entrepreneurship in Borno state is affected (exacerbated by Boko Haram conflict) by limitation of the entrepreneurship education curricula tailored to the specific realities of Borno State, limited and sometimes absence of hands-on entrepreneurship training, covering business management, financial literacy, and digital marketing. Limited and often absence of modalities to integrate digital entrepreneurship training into existing vocational education programmes, limited access to seed funding and micro-loans to promising youth-led startups, enabling them to launch sustainable businesses. Hence, it has become imperative to look at possibilities and ways to solve this problem that has limited the pace of economic recovery in Borno State. Therefore, this research seek to examine areas for curriculum enhancement, business incubation, digital entrepreneurship training, and vocational skill integration.

## Objectives of the study

The purpose of this research was to ascertain ways to enhance entrepreneurship education programmes in Borno State. The objectives of this research were to:

- i. Determine the type of entrepreneur required by the local government area.
- ii. Determine the most preferred government agency by the local government area.
- iii. Identify areas to enhance entrepreneurship education curricula tailored to the specific economic realities of Borno state.

## Literature Review

Entrepreneurship education occupies a critical place in areas of economic recovery and growth, particularly in regions with prevalence of unemployment, economic instability, or post-conflict complications. Besides its critical role of stabilizing and ailing economy, it enables individuals to acquire business skills, financial literacy and innovation which by extension create job and drive economic expansion through the growth of informal business sectors and reducing the overdependence on formal employment, especially among youths (Kritikos, 2024). Entrepreneurship education foster innovation, drives employment and strengthens local economies (Rahmawati, 2025; Glaeser *et al.*, 2015). For individuals, education promotes employment, earnings and poverty reduction. According to World Bank group (2025) there is a 10% increase in hourly earnings for every extra year of schooling, thus driving long-term economic growth, spurring innovation, strengthening institutions, and fostering social cohesion in societies. Although, according to Caliendo *et al.*, (2014) that only a few persons have the drive to become entrepreneurs because of, among other limitations high tolerance for the uncertainty that comes with innovation. Nevertheless, nations that invest in structured entrepreneurship education experience higher rates of self-employment and economic resilience (Kritikos, 2024).

Youth unemployment is a global challenge. Youth unemployment, underemployment, informal employment and working poverty are problems in every part of the world, especially in developing countries (United Nations, 2020). United Nations (2020) observed that Nigeria has high youth unemployment rate, with many graduates unable to secure jobs matching their skills and that each year, 4-5 million young Nigerians enter the labour market that is not creating jobs fast enough, thus further dragging them into not just an economic complication but national security threat (Abimbola, 2025). Education system in Nigeria traditionally focus on theory, while entrepreneurship remains underdeveloped, it has become necessary to enhance entrepreneurship education at this point, particularly investing in vocational and digital skills training, expand credit and regulatory support for start-ups (Abimbola, 2025).

For conflict affected regions such as Borno States, the economy has obviously suffered due to conflict related displacement. However, entrepreneurship education is useful in post-conflict regions to enable them rebuild their economies by empowering displaced persons, especially youths to create business opportunities (United Nations, 2020). As a strategic solution to the global employment crisis, youth entrepreneurship, particularly for young individuals facing difficulties in securing jobs is necessary to; promote both youth employment and sustainable development (Chigunta and Chisupa, 2013; Schott, Kew, and Cheraghi, 2015 cited in United Nations, 2020).

### Materials and methods

The research adopted the structured approach of ranking the priority of entrepreneurship, government agencies and the entrepreneurship curricula development needed in the two Local Government Areas (LGAs) Biu and Bayo Local Government Areas. Balloting process of their preferred needs was used. This was done by identifying the needs of the stakeholders, which included the community leaders, business owners, religious leaders, officials of the L.G.A and the residents. This was carried out by listing the categories of the entrepreneurs, government agencies, etc and allowing the stakeholders to indicate their preferred needs based on priority through balloting. The ballots were analysed and determined the priority of each category of entrepreneur in each LGA. The total score for each category of entrepreneur in each LGA were determined.

### Result and Discussion

Table one, shows that the highest response was 53%, that is software developers, then followed by agricultural entrepreneur which is 18% and then 17% of health care professionals and the least was educational providers with 17%.

Table two revealed that job creation had 61% of response, followed by 20% of improved infrastructures and then 10% responded to innovation, the least was the provision of essential services which attracted 9%. In table three it was indicated that 42% of respondents responded to opportunity identification, 32% responded to overcoming fear of failures and 21% resourcefulness and the least in resilience which had 5%.

Table four showed that 58 respondents welcomed the ideas of agricultural entrepreneurs, 20% responded to health care professionals, 12% responded to health care professionals, 12% responded to software developers and the least was educational providers. Table five indicated that improved infrastructure attracted 64% of the respondents, 21% responded to provision of essential services, 9% responded to job creation and the least responded to innovation was 6%. Table six revealed that 43% of respondents, responded to resourcefulness, followed by resilience which attracted 22% of the respondents and the opportunity identification attracted 17% and the least was 8% of the respondents.

### Discussions

At Biu, it was observed that most respondents wanted to see more software developers' entrepreneurs in their location based on the frequency, percentage and their cumulative which shows that 53% of those interacted with, was of the opinion. It showed that software developers had the highest numbers of respondents which means the type of entrepreneurs needed in the locality, which shows that attitude development towards software skills like business networking and business literacy is needed. This agrees with the works of Maryam Yahaya and Muhammad Ibrahim Abdullahi (2025) which emphasized on the use of crypto currency adoption on youth empowerment in Kano Nigeria. Also, Omoyajawo *et al.*, (2025), focused on rethinking inclusive entrepreneurship education in underserved communities using Artificial Intelligence and digital business platforms. With digital rights, skills and education, employment opportunities could be achieved.

It was observed that at Bayo Local Government Area, the respondents availed themselves with Agricultural entrepreneurs when asked the type of entrepreneur needed in their community. About 58% of the members of the L.G.A showed preference in Agricultural entrepreneurship, which entails the availability of irrigation and accessibility of water bodies. Once the entrepreneurship education is given to the youths, availability of lands and agricultural enterprises would be sustained and this agrees with the work of Kalagbor and Harry (2019) which focused on entrepreneurship development and youth employment in Nigeria. Youth entrepreneurship development programmes and youth initiatives for sustainable Agricultural practice in Nigeria.

There were other respondents that responded to overcoming fear of failure which was 8% of the population. They showed preference in the inculcation of entrepreneurship curricula development. This confirms fears people do have when setting up enterprises, but was contrary to European Commission (2006) which stated that a training gives rise to a waken sense of innovativeness, ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve the objectives and to master one's own life. UNICEF (2006) main aim of youth entrepreneurship initiatives is to provide young people with

opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and social impact translating to preparing young people to transition from education to productive work and active citizenship with focus on skills development, digital learning and livelihood pathways.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Entrepreneurship education can be a powerful tool in addressing unemployment in the state, by providing youths with the necessary skills, knowledge and support, the state can empower them to create their own businesses thereby driving economic growth and reducing poverty (being employers of labour), reducing pressure on the government in the sphere of labour market. Giving the priority to entrepreneurship education, can help in reduction of poverty and raise standard of living i.e. opening up new employment opportunities and achieving economic growth. Improving entrepreneurship education amongst youths in the state is very important for combating the high levels of unemployment and boosting the economy.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- I. Entrepreneurship education amongst the youth should reflect the necessary aspects of business, which includes planning, resilience, financial literacy and networking.
- II. Government should make start up pack available for the youths to be able to set up their own businesses once they are given training.
- III. Government should provide a clear roadmap of ways to understanding the entrepreneurship programmes.
- IV. Adequate infrastructural facilities, conducive business atmosphere, should be provided by the government.

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**Tables****Table 1:** which type of entrepreneur would you like to see more in your locality?

| <b>Respond</b>            | <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Agricultural entrepreneur | 18                | 18                   | 18                  |
| Software developer        | 53                | 53                   | 71                  |
| Health care professional  | 12                | 12                   | 83                  |
| Education providers       | 17                | 17                   | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>           |                     |

**Table 2:** which of the government agencies would you prefer in your area?

| <b>Respond</b>             | <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Job creation               | 61                | 61                   | 61                  |
| Improved infrastructure    | 20                | 20                   | 81                  |
| Provide essential services | 09                | 9                    | 90                  |
| Innovation                 | 10                | 10                   | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>           |                     |

**Table 3:** which of the following would you prefer to be inculcated in entrepreneurship curricula development?

| <b>Respond</b>             | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Opportunity identification | 42                 | 42                   | 42                  |
| Resourcefulness            | 21                 | 21                   | 63                  |
| Resilience                 | 05                 | 05                   | 68                  |
| Overcoming fear of failure | 32                 | 32                   | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>           |                     |

**Table 4:** which types of entrepreneur would you like to see more in locality?

| <b>Respond</b>            | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Agricultural entrepreneur | 58                 | 58                   | 58                  |
| Software developer        | 12                 | 12                   | 70                  |
| Health care professionals | 20                 | 20                   | 90                  |
| Education providers       | 10                 | 10                   | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>           |                     |

**Table 5:** which of the government agencies would you prefer in your area?

| <b>Respond</b>             | <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Job creation               | 09                | 9                    | 9                   |
| Improve infrastructure     | 64                | 64                   | 73                  |
| Provide essential services | 21                | 21                   | 94                  |
| Innovation                 | 06                | 6                    | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b>           |                     |

**Table 6:** which of the following would you prefer to be inculcated in entrepreneurship curricula development?

| <b>Respond</b>             | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Percentages %</b> | <b>Cumulative %</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Opportunity identification | 17                 | 17                   | 17                  |
| Resourcefulness            | 43                 | 43                   | 60                  |
| Resilience                 | 22                 | 22                   | 82                  |
| Overcoming fear of failure | 8                  | 18                   | 100                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100</b>         | <b>100</b>           |                     |