

## **Empowering Nigeria's Future: Integrating Entrepreneurship Education in Primary School Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian primary school curriculum as a strategy to mitigate future economic challenges. Nigeria is facing persistent economic uncertainties, exacerbated by factors such as youth unemployment and over dependency on oil revenue. Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among young learners emerges as a critical strategy for long-term economic resilience. This will serve as strategic tool for equipping the younger generation with the skills, mindset, and resilience needed to navigate and transform Nigeria's economic landscape in the face of future realities. Drawing upon international best practices, such as Junior Achievement (JA) in U.S.A and many others tailored to the Nigerian context, this study presented a blueprint and explores the potential impact of introducing entrepreneurship education at the primary level. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature cum studies, the study evaluates the feasibility, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and anticipated outcomes of integrating entrepreneurship education into primary schools. Since primary education level is the foundation on which other education system is built upon, the research recommends that policymakers, educators, and stakeholders should collaboratively revise national curriculum standards to incorporate entrepreneurship education as a core component of primary education, and ensure that entrepreneurship competencies and learning objectives are integrated into subject-specific curricula and assessment frameworks to provide pupils with comprehensive exposure to entrepreneurial concepts and skills.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, Primary school curriculum, Economic challenges,

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship as a concept is defined as the procedure of developing something novel and valuable by investing time and effort which also involve taking on financial and personal risks, and reaping the benefits of financial and personal independence (Steier, Chrisman & Chua, 2015). Entrepreneurship education equips individuals with the skills, mindset, and knowledge needed to identify opportunities, adapt to change, and navigate challenges in dynamic economic environments (Erkollar, 2023). Owing to the manifold advantages of entrepreneurship education and its alignment with international best practices, the Federal Government of Nigeria has directed educational institutions to give priority to entrepreneurship education in their curricula as a means of tackling the nation's persistently high unemployment rate (Olanrewaju, 2024). Hence,

awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship education has been on the rise (Miço & Cungu, 2023). The Nigerian government's intentions and worries are directed at higher institutions at the expense of lower education levels, which serve as the fundamental building blocks for higher education. Ironically, primary education was seen as the solid educational foundation upon which all other systems are constructed and was thought to hold the secret to the system's success or failure (FRN, 2014). Fortunately, this important concept (Entrepreneurship) can be formed at an early age through relevant and adequate educational activities.

Wilfred-Bonse, Aboho & Ogwuche, (2019) highlighted strategies that should be adopted in developing entrepreneurial skills in students as:

1. Use of Competent and Qualified Teachers
2. Teaching Strategies
3. Creating a Positive Attitude towards Entrepreneurship
4. Creating Enabling Environment/Training Centre
5. School Seminars/Workshops
6. Regular Visitation to Entrepreneurs in the Community
7. Internship
8. Practical Entrepreneurship Counselling

Wilfred-Bonse, Aboho, & Ogwuche (2019) emphasized that the development of entrepreneurial skills in students requires deliberate and strategic approaches, including the use of competent and qualified teachers, effective teaching strategies, fostering a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship, creating enabling environments and training centers, organizing school seminars and workshops, facilitating regular visits to entrepreneurs in the community, providing internship opportunities, and offering practical entrepreneurship counseling.

Contributing to the need for entrepreneurship education for self-survival, Ayeduso (2004) identified the following objectives of entrepreneurship collaboration as participating in workshops, seminars, and boot camps. All mentioned as organized by entrepreneurship education experts, industry professionals, and successful entrepreneur. Meanwhile all of these and others can be applied at the primary school level, and will yield positive outcomes. It worth noting that amongst the goals of primary level of education are to develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment, provide the child with basic tools for preparation for life endeavours among others.

By investing in comprehensive training and capacity building initiatives for primary school stakeholders, Nigeria can build a cadre of skilled and empowered teachers capable of effectively integrating entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum, thereby equipping pupils with essential entrepreneurial competencies and preparing them for success in the 21st-century economy. Going by the way of global practices, European Commission (2012) has been exhorting its member states to implement entrepreneurship programs with the hope of honing students' entrepreneurial skills.

Evidences around the World integrating entrepreneurship education into Primary/Basic school curriculum is not completely new around the world. Here are some examples of best practices of entrepreneurship education at the basic/primary education level from various countries. In Finland for instance, The Finnish National Agency for Education (2016) emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial competence in basic education, and thereby incorporates entrepreneurship education as part of its national curriculum from an early age. This includes project-based learning, where students engage in real-life problem-solving activities and develop entrepreneurial skills.

Similarly, The United States has various programs aimed at fostering entrepreneurship from an early age, such as Junior Achievement (JA). JA provides programs that teach learners about business, economics, and entrepreneurship through hands-on activities and competitions. JA operates in schools across the U.S., with documented successes in improving students' understanding of entrepreneurship and business concepts. Furthermore, Denmark has implemented initiatives like Entrepreneurship Week and the creation of mini-companies in primary schools, where learners develop and run their own small businesses. Evidence shows that, The Foundation for Entrepreneurship – Young Enterprise Denmark supports these activities, providing resources and frameworks for schools to implement entrepreneurship education.

Singapore's Ministry of Education has integrated entrepreneurship into its Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curriculum. This includes activities like school-based enterprises and entrepreneurship fairs. Evidence shows that Schools such as Raffles Institution and Hwa Chong Institution have successfully implemented these programs, showing positive outcomes in learners' engagement and entrepreneurial mindset development. Lastly, programs like the Young Entrepreneurs Project (YEP) in Australia provide primary school students with opportunities to develop business ideas and understand basic economic principles. The Australian Government's

Department of Education supports the initiatives, which have shown positive impacts on learners' entrepreneurial skills and confidence.

### **Benefits of entrepreneurial education**

Anticipated Outcomes and Potential Impact of Integrating Entrepreneurship Education in the Nigerian Primary School Curriculum include:

I. *Cultivating Entrepreneurial Mindset*: Integrating entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum will cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among Nigerian youth, enabling them to identify opportunities, think creatively, take initiative, and persevere in the face of challenges (Kay et al., 2019). This, in turn, will foster a culture of innovation and resilience essential for economic success.

II. *Empowering Self-Employment and Job Creation*: Teaching young Nigerians entrepreneurial skills and knowledge from an early age may empower their minds towards self-employment and job creation. Studies have shown that entrepreneurship education can significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors (Galloway et al., 2017). By adopting entrepreneurship education, Nigeria can reduce unemployment rates and foster economic self-sufficiency.

III. *Encouraging Economic Diversification*: Entrepreneurship education will encourage diversification of Nigeria's economy by fostering the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across diverse sectors. Research has demonstrated that entrepreneurship education can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial competencies, leading to increased entrepreneurial activity and economic growth (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). As pupils grow up with the skills and confidence to start and sustain businesses, Nigeria can reduce its over-reliance on oil revenue and promote economic resilience.

IV. *Stimulating Innovation and Technological Advancement*: Integrating entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum will stimulate innovation and technological advancement in Nigeria. Students will learn to harness technology, leverage digital platforms, and develop innovative solutions to address local challenges and opportunities (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). This, in turn, will drive economic growth and competitiveness in the global market.

V. *Reducing Poverty and Inequality*: Entrepreneurship education has the potential to reduce poverty and inequality by providing marginalized communities with the skills, resources, and

support needed to participate in economic activities (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). By fostering inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems and empowering underrepresented groups, entrepreneurship education will promote socio-economic inclusion and equitable development.

*VI. Developing a Resilient and Dynamic Business Ecosystem:* The integration of entrepreneurship education will contribute to the development of a resilient and dynamic business ecosystem in Nigeria. As more entrepreneurs emerge from primary schools with the skills to start and scale businesses, there will be a proliferation of startups, SMEs, and innovative enterprises driving economic growth, job creation, and wealth generation across the country (Acs et al., 2017).

*VII. Fostering Long-Term Economic Sustainability:* Entrepreneurship education lays the groundwork for long-term economic sustainability by nurturing a generation of entrepreneurial leaders, innovators, and problem-solvers equipped to navigate complex economic challenges and seize emerging opportunities (Hynes & Richardson, 2007). By instilling a culture of entrepreneurship and resilience within Nigerian society, entrepreneurship education may contribute to building a more prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

Overall, integrating entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian primary school curriculum holds the potential to transform the country's economic landscape, fostering innovation, job creation, diversification, and inclusive growth while building resilience against future economic uncertainties. By investing in the entrepreneurial potential of its youth, Nigeria can unlock new pathways to prosperity and sustainable development.

### **Blueprint for Integrating Entrepreneurship Education into Primary Education in Nigeria**

The objective for this blueprint shall be to incorporate entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian primary school curriculum, fostering entrepreneurial competence and skills among young learners.

#### **Key Components of the blueprint**

**1. National Curriculum Integration:** Incorporate entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian national curriculum for primary education, emphasizing its importance in developing entrepreneurial competence.

**2. Project-Based Learning:** Adopt project-based learning approaches, where students engage in real-life problem-solving activities, developing entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, innovation, and risk-taking.

**3. Practical Entrepreneurial Experience:** Provide opportunities for students to gain practical entrepreneurial experience through activities such as:

- i. Creating and managing mini-companies
- ii. Developing and marketing products or services
- iii. Participating in entrepreneurship competitions and fairs

**4. Teacher Training and Support:** Offer training and support for teachers to effectively integrate entrepreneurship education into their teaching practices.

**5. Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Foster partnerships with local businesses, entrepreneurship organizations, and community groups to provide resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities for students.

**6. Entrepreneurship Week:** Organize an Entrepreneurship Week, where students can participate in entrepreneurship-related activities, such as workshops, seminars, and competitions.

**7. School-Based Enterprises:** Encourage schools to establish school-based enterprises, where students can develop and run their own small businesses.

**8. Entrepreneurship Fairs:** Organize entrepreneurship fairs, where students can showcase their entrepreneurial projects and products.

### **Implementation Strategy**

**1. Pilot Program:** Launch a pilot program in select primary schools to test and refine the entrepreneurship education curriculum and implementation strategy.

**2. National Rollout:** Roll out the entrepreneurship education program nationwide, providing training and support for teachers and stakeholders.

**3. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the program and identify areas for improvement.

### **Expected Outcomes**

**1. Developed Entrepreneurial Competence:** Students will develop essential entrepreneurial skills, including creativity, innovation, and risk-taking.

**2. Improved Problem-Solving Skills:** Students will enhance their problem-solving skills through project-based learning and practical entrepreneurial experiences.

3. *Increased Entrepreneurial Mindset*: Students will develop an entrepreneurial mindset, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

### **Roadmap to achieving the Blueprint for Integrating Entrepreneurship Education into Primary Education in Nigeria**

Researchers, school administrators and other stakeholders at the primary school level must ensure they engage relevant government agencies such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, and National Board for Technical Education in collaborative efforts to integrate entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum. They should work closely with policymakers to develop supportive policies, allocate resources, and incorporate entrepreneurship education into national education frameworks and standards.

Efforts must be put in place to ensure a smooth collaboration with primary schools, teacher training institutions, and educational authorities to ensure seamless integration of entrepreneurship education into the curriculum. Provide support, guidance, and resources to schools and educators to facilitate effective implementation of entrepreneurship education initiatives.

Primary school teachers and educators should be involved in the curriculum development process and provide them with training, professional development, and capacity-building opportunities related to entrepreneurship education. This effort may foster a culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and peer learning among educators to enhance their confidence and competence in delivering entrepreneurship education.

Engage pupils and parents in the conversation about the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship education. Organize awareness campaigns, parent-teacher meetings, and student-led initiatives to promote understanding, support, and participation in entrepreneurship education activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Partner with businesses, startups, entrepreneurs, and industry associations to provide learners with real-world exposure to entrepreneurship. Facilitate internships, mentorship programs, and industry visits to connect learners with entrepreneurial role models, opportunities, and experiences. Collaborate with industry stakeholders to develop relevant curriculum materials, case studies, and practical learning experiences aligned with market needs and trends.

Work with non-profit organizations, NGOs, and community groups to complement government efforts in promoting entrepreneurship education. Collaborate on outreach programs,

community-based initiatives, and capacity-building workshops targeting underserved communities, disadvantaged youth, and marginalized groups. Leverage the expertise and networks of civil society organizations to reach a wider audience and foster inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Partner with universities, research institutions, and entrepreneurship centers to leverage their expertise, research findings, and resources in entrepreneurship education. Collaborate on curriculum development, teacher training programs, and research projects aimed at advancing entrepreneurship education theory, practice, and impact.

Seek support and collaboration from international organizations, development agencies, and donors with expertise in entrepreneurship education and capacity building. Tap into funding opportunities, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange platforms to strengthen entrepreneurship education initiatives and scale up impact. Collaborate with international partners to learn from global best practices, adapt relevant models, and foster cross-cultural learning and collaboration.

Collaborate with monitoring and evaluation partners, including research firms, evaluation experts, and academic institutions, to design and implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for entrepreneurship education initiatives. Work together to collect data, assess program effectiveness, measure outcomes, and generate evidence-based insights to inform programme decisions, policy advocacy, and continuous improvement.

By engaging stakeholders from diverse sectors and fostering collaboration and partnership, Nigeria can build a strong ecosystem for entrepreneurship education that supports holistic development, empowers its youth, and drives sustainable economic growth and resilience.

## **Conclusion**

The integration of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian primary school curriculum represents a transformative step towards building a resilient and entrepreneurial nation. By equipping young Nigerians with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to succeed as entrepreneurs, this initiative holds the promise of unleashing a wave of creativity, innovation, and economic empowerment across the country. Entrepreneurship education may instill in Nigerian pupils the entrepreneurial mindset characterized by initiative, resilience, and adaptability. From a young age, learners will learn to identify opportunities, solve problems, and navigate challenges,



fostering a culture of innovation and self-reliance that is essential for economic resilience in an ever-changing world.

Moreover, integrating entrepreneurship education may contribute to job creation and youth empowerment, as students graduate with the skills and confidence to start and sustain businesses. By fostering a generation of job creators rather than job seekers, entrepreneurship education will reduce unemployment rates and promote economic self-sufficiency among Nigerian youth. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education will drive economic diversification by encouraging the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across diverse sectors. As learners graduate with the skills to start businesses in areas such as technology, agriculture, manufacturing, and services, Nigeria's economy will become more resilient, less reliant on oil revenue, and better able to withstand external shocks. Additionally, entrepreneurship education may promote inclusive growth and poverty reduction by providing marginalized communities, including women, rural populations, and disadvantaged youth, with the skills, resources, and support needed to participate in economic activities. By fostering inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems, Nigeria can harness the potential of all its citizens to drive economic development and social progress.

Lastly, the integration of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian primary school curriculum holds immense potential to transform the country's economic landscape and build a more resilient and entrepreneurial nation. By investing in the entrepreneurial potential of its youth, Nigeria can unlock new pathways to prosperity, sustainable development, and inclusive growth for generations to come. Through collaborative efforts and sustained commitment, Nigeria can realize its vision of a vibrant and resilient economy powered by a generation of innovative and entrepreneurial leaders

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations for policymakers and education authorities on integrating entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian primary school curriculum:

Policymakers should develop clear policy guidelines and frameworks that mandate the integration of entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum. These guidelines should outline objectives, learning outcomes, implementation strategies, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure effective integration and accountability

Allocate sufficient financial, human, and infrastructural resources to support the implementation of entrepreneurship education initiatives in primary schools. This includes funding for curriculum development, teacher training, capacity building, educational materials, and infrastructure upgrades necessary for delivering entrepreneurship education effectively

Revise national curriculum standards to incorporate entrepreneurship education as a core component of primary education. Ensure that entrepreneurship competencies and learning objectives are integrated into subject-specific curricula and assessment frameworks to provide students with comprehensive exposure to entrepreneurial concepts and skills.

Encourage cross-curricular approaches to entrepreneurship education that integrate entrepreneurial concepts, skills, and activities across various subjects such as mathematics, social studies, language arts, and science. Promote interdisciplinary learning experiences that foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills essential for entrepreneurship.

Develop and implement comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs focused on entrepreneurship education. Equip teachers with the knowledge, pedagogical skills, and resources needed to effectively deliver entrepreneurship education in the classroom. Offer ongoing support, mentoring, and capacity building opportunities to ensure sustained teacher competence and confidence in teaching entrepreneurship.

Foster partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups to support entrepreneurship education initiatives. Collaborate with private sector stakeholders to provide mentorship, internship opportunities, and real-world experiences for students, as well as to develop curriculum materials and resources aligned with industry needs and trends.

Engage stakeholders, such as; parents, learners, educators, policymakers, and community leaders, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of entrepreneurship education initiatives. Foster dialogue, collaboration, and participation to ensure that entrepreneurship education efforts are responsive to local needs, preferences, and contexts.

Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the implementation and impact of entrepreneurship education in primary schools. Collect data on learners' outcomes, teacher performance, curriculum effectiveness, and stakeholder engagement to inform decision-making, identify areas for improvement, and drive continuous quality enhancement.

Advocate for sustained political commitment, funding, and support for entrepreneurship education as a strategic priority in Nigeria's education agenda. Highlight the economic, social, and developmental benefits of entrepreneurship education in building human capital, fostering innovation, and promoting inclusive growth and resilience.

Encourage research, innovation, and knowledge exchange in entrepreneurship education through partnerships with academic institutions, research organizations, and international collaborators. Support research projects, pilot initiatives, and best practice dissemination efforts to generate evidence-based insights, inform policy formulation, and contribute to global knowledge sharing in entrepreneurship education.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and education authorities can lay the foundation for a robust entrepreneurship education ecosystem in Nigerian primary schools, empowering students with the skills, mindset, and opportunities needed to succeed as entrepreneurs and contribute to the nation's economic development and prosperity.

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