



MILLENNIALS EMPOWERMENT: EXAMINING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper contributes to knowledge and theory building in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper critically examines the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme and its relevance as a youth economic empowerment programme through the lenses of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Strategy entry points for promoting economic empowerment of youth.

Findings: While YouWiN is a significant intervention towards entrepreneurship development, it presents some flaws and limitations in the design and implementation process, which may challenge sustainable economic development. Hence, there is a need to explore the millennials empowerment paradigm in the light of three key complementary action-oriented approaches to youth entrepreneurship development.

Originality/value: Three key complementary action-oriented approaches to youth entrepreneurship policy/programme design, implementation and evaluation for government, private and voluntary sector are proposed. These are in the form of facilitating participatory engagement and diversity, managing drivers (push/pull factors) of entrepreneurship, and

ensuring access to enablers/support. The author highlights the need for further debate and critical inputs to improve theory building towards a normative framework in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship. This will not only reduce poverty, but also promote intergenerational equity and sustainable development.

Keywords: Youth; entrepreneurship; empowerment; economic development; sustainability; theory building

INTRODUCTION

Youth are a great human resource, future leaders and hope for the advancement of the global economy. The 21st century has witnessed a prevalence of youth empowerment issues in the front-burner of global development discourse, with various initiatives and programmes by the government, the private sector and the voluntary sector to promote the wellbeing and development of young people. The post-2015 development agenda process saw numerous engagements and consultations to mainstream and prioritise the youth. This follows observations that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not address most of the salient issues of youth development. This is especially true with regards to the inclusion of youth in socio-political and economic development, against the backdrop of a global trend of low-level participation in governance, social deprivations, unemployment and other youth development issues in both developed and developing economies (Gough et al., 2013; Bersaglio et al., 2015). Although these issues manifest in varying degrees in different countries, there is a unanimous consensus among policy makers, researchers, development agencies and other stakeholders that the youth have been marginalised in global development budgets and programming, thereby compromising investment performance in meeting global poverty, health, education and employment goals.

Addressing issues of youth inclusion and participation in society requires an holistic intervention that targets psychosocial, economic and political empowerment. In Nigeria, one major area of deprivation and exclusion challenge for the youth is in economic and livelihood pathways. Nigeria is a country of contrasts; although it is endowed with enormous human and natural resources, it remains in the category of countries with high rates of poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth and other vulnerable groups of the population (World Bank, 1996; Toyin et al., 2015). The unemployment rate in Nigeria in 2012 stood at 23.9%, while 54% of the youth are unemployed based the national baseline youth survey report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012). Regrettably, evidence has shown continuous inadequate investment in youth empowerment programmes that will enhance the active participation of youth in the political economy over the years (Ogbuanya and Ofonmbuk, 2015). This is worsened by observed high failure rates of government policies and programmes across various sectors in Nigeria, especially those related to economic

and entrepreneurial development. This is because they are usually bedevilled by lack of proper needs assessment and research, poor design, inadequate information and communication, inconsistent financing, misappropriation of funds, corruption and poor implementation (Onuoha, 2011; Muftau, 2015; Onuoha and Ogbuji, 2015).

Indeed, there is yearning for entrepreneurial development among the youth as a panacea to unemployment; this has driven some of them into various Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) ventures. However, challenges abound in the endeavour as many factors have been identified to be militating against SME entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. These factors include a bottle-neck in obtaining finance, monetary policy, lack of electricity power supply, poor policy and programme implementation and monitoring, among others (Muftau, 2015; Ayegba and Omale, 2016). This raises an issue regarding the need for an enabling environment and support system to promote SMEs in Nigeria, especially among the youth population.

In a bid to tackle some of the issues of entrepreneurial (SME) development and stimulate job creation, economic growth and diversification, the Nigerian government introduced a youth empowerment programme known as the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) to support youth in developing and executing business ideas that will also create jobs. This paper aims to critically examine and discuss the relevance of the YouWiN Programme as a youth economic empowerment strategy through the lenses of the UNDP Youth Strategy entry points for promoting the economic empowerment of youth. It lays the foundation for further discourse and theorisation of entrepreneurship in research, policy and programming process by proposing three key complementary action-oriented approaches to youth entrepreneurship development. It contributes to knowledge and theory building towards a normative framework for youth empowerment and entrepreneurship. Hence, it is a work in progress and will be advanced through further analysis, academic debates and critical input from other researchers, policy makers, youth and all relevant contributors to the discourse.

This paper has three main sections, the first section provides a brief description of the YouWiN Programme, the second section examines YouWiN's fit as a youth economic empowerment programme, while the third section explores the millennials empowerment paradigm in the light of three key complementary action-oriented approaches to youth entrepreneurship development. It then concludes by highlighting the implications for further research, theory building and debate on youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme

In a renewed effort by the government to promote SME financing and encourage microeconomic development by generating private sector employment, the Federal

Government of Nigeria introduced the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme. The initiative was launched in October 2011 as an innovative business plan competition. It was implemented by the Ministries of Finance, Communication Technology (CT), Youth Development, and Women Affairs and Social Development, in partnership with the World Bank, UK Department for International Development and the organised private sector. The goal of the YouWiN programme is to create jobs by assisting aspiring young Nigerian entrepreneurs to initiate and implement business ideas and employ others. It provides aspiring youth with an opportunity to showcase their business insight and skills to business leaders, investors and mentors (YouWiN, 2013a). The specific objectives of the programme are to:

1. attract ideas and innovations from young entrepreneurial aspirants from universities, polytechnics, technical colleges, and other post-secondary institutions in Nigeria;
2. provide a one-time equity grant for selected aspiring entrepreneurs to start or expand their business concepts and mitigate start up risks;
3. generate hundreds of thousands of new jobs for currently unemployed Nigerian youth over the three years during which the three cycles will be implemented;
4. provide business training for thousands of aspiring youth entrepreneurs spread across all geo-political zones in Nigeria;
5. encourage expansion, specialisation and spin-offs of existing businesses in Nigeria;
6. enable young entrepreneurs to access a wide business professional network and improve their visibility.

The eligibility criteria for the business plan competition include:

- must be a proven citizen of Nigeria no older than 45 years with post-secondary school qualification;
- proposed business venture must be within the national borders with the intention of employing Nigerian citizens;
- proposed venture must not entail the production or distribution of weapons, alcoholic beverages, tobacco or/and gambling or any activities in contradiction with the Nigerian constitution; and finally
- must prepare an innovative business concept summary (YouWiN, 2013a).

Three editions of the programme have been implemented and the selection process for the award stage in each edition involved a call for concept notes advertisement, vetting of applications, then shortlisted applicants were selected to submit their business plan. Training sessions were organised for the shortlisted applicants across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria (North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South and South-West), after which they submitted full business plans for assessment and selection of awardees. The business plans were assessed by the Pan African University, with quality assurance provided by Plymouth Business School in the UK, followed by an award of grants to selected awardees (YouWiN, 2013a). The

post-award support stage involves management monitoring and mentoring, including pairing of awardees with experienced entrepreneurs as mentors in providing needed support to ensure the successful execution of their business plan, while partner institutions, including the Small and Medium Enterprises Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the UK School for Startups, monitor the implementation process (YouWiN, 2014). The monitors work hand-in-hand with awardees to review their business plan, and decide on the minimum milestones based on the business plan. The mentors serve as a skills and experience pool to guide awardees in running their businesses. One to five mentees are assigned, with whom they are required to meet at least once every month in a face-to-face session. In the grant-making process and disbursement of funds, awardees receive a range of 1–10 million naira, depending on their business plan. They are paid in tranches based on the progress report on targets, monitors’ feedback and job creation milestones (McKenzie, 2015). See Table 1 that shows data of the competition process in the three editions of the YouWiN process.

Table 1 YouWiN Editions Award Process Statistics

<i>YouWin Editions</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>			
	<i>Concept Notes</i>	<i>Qualifiers Trained</i>	<i>Bus. Plan Submitted</i>	<i>Awardees Funded</i>
1st Edition	23,821	6,000	4,513	1,200
2nd Edition	65,970	6,000	5,406	1,200
3rd Edition	114,461	6,000	-	1,500
Total	204,252	18,000		3,900

Source: YouWiN Bulletins (YouWin, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2014)

Although there have been many efforts by the government to stimulate SMEs in Nigeria, the YouWiN programme has been applauded as a brave initiative that presents opportunities for entrepreneurship development that will have a multiplier effect, not only in job creation, but also in economic and markets development. One of its significant results is the bridging of the finance gap, which is a major issue that has been identified as mitigating against entrepreneurship (SME) development and startups in Nigeria (Muftau, 2015). However, the programme could present some salient design and implementation limitations that challenge its effectiveness in economic empowerment of youth if critically examined.

YouWiN in Promoting the Economic Empowerment of Youth

The concept of youth empowerment is a widely viewed one, but comprehensively it involves developing the capacity of youth to take control of their development through

ensuring an enabling environment for individual and collective youth inclusion and active participation in civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society. Going by this meaning, youth empowerment will support youth in improving their wellbeing, as well as making valuable contributions to development in their communities. Therefore, in other to explore YouWiN's fit as a youth empowerment programme, the UNDP's Youth Strategy 2014–2017, with the theme “Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future” is used as a reference framework. This juxtaposition is reasonable based on the premise that the strategy was designed and adopted as a global framework for youth development programming and interventions in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship and political inclusion in countries of the United Nations. In its youth strategy, the UNDP “recognises decent work and livelihood creation including through local economic development, as chief determinants in the socioeconomic empowerment of youth” (UNDP, 2014, p.2). Hence, it emphasises the creation, availability and accessibility of opportunities for young people to fully engage in the various productive sectors that it asserts would facilitate transformational change in human development, generational inequality and social protection. This underpins the main thrust of the YouWiN programme as an entrepreneurial (SME) development initiative for youth employment and job creation.

Furthermore, the YouWiN programme goal and objectives aligns with the first expected outcome for the UNDP Youth Strategy, which is to:

“increase economic empowerment of youth, adapting sustainable development pathways to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce socioeconomic inequality and exclusion through building productive capacities of youth and an enabling environment for enhanced youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship” (UNDP, 2014, p.25).

In other words, the design of the YouWiN programme is suitable as a youth empowerment intervention to enhance the inclusion and participation of youth in economic activities that will ensure their right to livelihood is protected, as well as promoting human development and a more equitable socioeconomic development. The programme was designed to create a platform where ambitious youth will pursue their business ideas, fund their plan, apply their skills and connect with investors and mentors, compete for grants and capacity development funds and support as nascent entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing businesses.

The UNDP strategy suggests strategic entry points for promoting economic empowerment of youth by outlining the needed interventions from three perspectives: demand for labour, supply of labour, and the policy environment. From the demand for labour perspective, the strategy is to “support young persons’ access to finance, markets and other resources that will increase their productive capacities and competitiveness” (UNDP, 2014, p.27); this includes loans, grants, capacity building, mentorship, business support services and incubators. In this aspect, the YouWiN programme

incorporated the funding of business plans with capacity development to encourage selected youth entrepreneurs to participate in the SMEs of the economy, which created access to finance. However, the provision of access to finance is very minimal as many of the proposals submitted were not funded due to limited funds.

Statistics from the programme bureau report indicate that a total of 204,252 aspiring entrepreneurs submitted concept notes for the first, second and third editions of YouWiN. Of these, 18,000 qualified to advance to the next stage and were trained on business plan development and SME management, while only 3,900 beneficiaries were awarded funding grants after the submission of business plans (see Table 1). This shows a very high interest and needs by hundreds of thousands of youth entrepreneurs in Nigeria, to which only a few could be met by the programme. To this end, the programme has been criticised for low coverage and inadequate capacity to support many promising businesses, in addition to inconsistent disbursement of award funds (Farayibi, 2015).

Meanwhile, a very commendable component of the programme was the training, mentoring and monitoring of beneficiaries at different stages of the application and grant award administration. A study by Ebiringa (2013) revealed that the mentoring and monitoring process helped to create sustainability through building the capacity of the youth entrepreneurs for creativity, resilience, customer satisfaction, and risk management, as well as focusing on socially and environmentally responsible value creation in the market. This finding is in line with Baker (2006), which suggests that entrepreneurial actions targeted at solving unemployment and income inequality must address social and environmental change in order to create sustainable economic development.

The supply of labour perspective is focused on promoting skills development and experience of youth at all levels. This is in order to increase their employability and ability to be gainfully engaged in the labour market and the economy generally. Although the YouWiN programme is more focused on developing the capacity of the beneficiaries as entrepreneurs to become self-employed and be able to employ others, the skills acquired from the programme is also helpful for employment in the labour market as an alternative to self-employment, especially for those who were not shortlisted for the award of a grant after the training stage. However, one of the flaws in the programme is that it targets only higher education graduates; it excludes the large chunk of youth with lower qualifications who have promising business ideas/plans and are in need of support for their growing enterprise.

The issue of enabling policy and environment is essential in every empowerment process, without which there would be no real impact as beneficiaries may not achieve the desired outcome. For this reason, the policy environment perspective “support the development and implementation of institutional and policy frameworks conducive to youth employment and entrepreneurship” (UNDP, 2014, p.28). In a study covering over 3,000 entrepreneurs, and 18 banks and government/multilateral

agencies, KPMG (2014) identified a non-conducive enabling environment (80%), inconsistent government policies (56%), and lack of access to finance/capital (45%) as the three top challenges faced by SMEs in Nigeria based on data collected from the respondents. This is an indication that although YouWiN is providing funds and training for youth entrepreneurs, that is not enough. More needs to be done in the areas of favourable economic/market policy and infrastructural development to support these businesses.

The Youth Strategy also mandated that special recognition be given to breaking barriers to diversity in empowering the youth such as it relates to involving women and other disadvantaged youth groups. This is essential for diverse and inclusive economic growth that will encourage a more even distribution of income and challenge poverty and inequality. Commendably, in the YouWiN programme, the issue of gender mainstreaming was emphasised by encouraging women to apply and compete with their male counterparts. Notwithstanding, there were only 18% female awardees in the first edition of the programme (YouWiN, 2013a). In a response to further provide more room for female beneficiaries, the second edition of the programme targeted solely female entrepreneurs as a result of their poor participation in the first edition. This saw a massive number of applicants, with 200% more than the previous edition at the first stage of concept note submission. It is reported that 65,970 concept note applications were submitted. From these, 6,000 qualified for the next stage for training, while 1,200 female entrepreneurs were awarded grants to fund their business plans (see Table 1).

Nevertheless, one of the major flaws identified in the implementation of YouWiN is poor information and publicity, which constitutes a barrier to diversity and equal opportunity. According to a study by Onuoha and Ogbuji (2015), only 14% from a sample of 384 respondents were aware of the YouWiN programme, indicating a very low awareness level and information dissemination about the programme, especially among those living in suburban or rural areas. This finding is in line with a study by Igwe and Onah (2013) that suggests poor information and accessibility to the YouWiN programme among young graduates seeking entrepreneurship development and empowerment opportunities. This indeed raises a serious concern about equal opportunities policy and practices in the implementation of the programme, and affects its effectiveness as an empowerment programme.

In addition, the policy environment perspective also advocates the promotion of “investment in sectors with the potential for growth in youth employment, such as the service sector e.g. in tourism or ICT-based services” (UNDP, 2014, p.29). Laudably, sectors of the economy targeted in the YouWiN programme conform to the above strategy, as the three most represented sectors among the awardees are agriculture, IT/Telecommunications services, and food and drinks manufacturing (YouWiN, 2013a; McKenzie, 2015). These sectors are less explored and are argued to possess the highest potential for creating employment and generating high return on investment.

They are also very much viable to diversifying the economy of Nigeria away from the oil and gas sector (Iyoboyi and Na-Allah, 2014; Anyaehie and Areji, 2015; Nwafor and Udensi, 2015). This is promising because the needs of the huge population of Nigeria are currently met by relying on importation. Therefore, a pull investment strategy of responding to local consumers' needs, which is a sustainable strategy for effective market-creating innovations, is apt for the economy (Christensen et al., 2017). This can be feasible through supporting existing and nascent youth entrepreneurs to cash into existing non-consumption and non-production to create disruptive innovations that will benefit the consumers and the market. It will also create employment, boost government revenue and promote sustainable development. An experimental assessment by McKenzie (2015) reported that YouWiN has succeeded in generating more business and creating employment; it also has great potential for producing entrepreneurs with disruptive innovations that will flourish beyond the ordinary microenterprises.

Having examined the YouWiN programme in the light of the strategic entry points for promoting economic empowerment of youth and identified its significance and limitations, the next section will propose a complementary action-oriented approach to youth entrepreneurship development, based on the various indicative findings and assumptions from the foregoing discussions and elements of social critical theory lenses of youth empowerment.

The Millennials Empowerment Paradigm

Society has witnessed a shift in generational sociology, transiting from a dimension of sociocultural conflict of values to the dynamics of socioeconomic inequalities and power relation, with the millennials at the centre stage of this transformation. Described as the generation born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s, the millennials are the most educated generation, yet they are said to be faced with the most difficult socioeconomic and increasing generational inequality situation of all times. This is manifest through continuing decline in youth employment, affordable housing, social welfare and benefits, access to finance, and high cost of education. This poses a very challenging situation with pressure on the youth, rising tension among the older generation and unease about the upcoming generation (Howe and Strauss, 2000). Therefore, the economic empowerment of the millennials has become an inevitable integral part of sustainable development plans and efforts globally, with entrepreneurship development suggested as an important gateway. The argument behind this is that promoting youth entrepreneurship will not only facilitate inclusive market growth, generate employment, reduce poverty and inequality (World Bank, 1996; Awoyemi et al., 2015, Muftau, 2015, Ayegba and Omale, 2016), it will also provoke disruptive innovations for effective economic growth and prosperity (Christensen et al., 2017; Ogamba, 2017). It goes without saying that

economic empowerment through youth entrepreneurship development that encourages disruptive innovations, and a pull investment strategy that targets local needs, is fundamental for sustainable development.

Drawing from results of participatory research and analysis of four youth empowerment models, Jennings et al. (2006, p.41) identified six key dimensions of critical youth empowerment as:

- a welcoming and safe environment;
- meaningful participation and engagement;
- equitable power-sharing between youth and adults;
- engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes;
- participation in socio-political processes to effect change; and
- integrated individual- and community-level empowerment.

Therefore, a youth entrepreneurship development framework focusing on economic empowerment should incorporate these dimensions for effective and sustainable social change. Similarly, millennials have been identified as diverse and inclusive, socially and environmentally responsible, more attracted to experiences and access, as well as valuing collaboration, connection, peer relationship, mentorship and constructive ideas (Howe and Strauss, 2000; Irving, 2015). These are strengths that could be maximised to positively engage the youth in innovative ventures and positive socio-economic development. However, for this to be effective, government, the private sector and the voluntary sector must respond to the various barriers that deter the youth from setting up and running a business, and provide incentives to encourage entrepreneurial ventures.

Consequently, from the foregoing, it is deduced that millennials empowerment through youth entrepreneurship development required three key action-oriented approaches to be effective:

- (1) facilitating participatory engagement and diversity;
- (2) managing drivers (push/pull factors) of entrepreneurship;
- (3) ensuring access to enablers/support.

Facilitating Participatory Engagement and Diversity

Participation and effective engagement is key to any youth entrepreneurship development process; this is because it allows for an experiential learning process that is necessary for independence and competent application of capacity developed overtime in making a significant contribution to socioeconomic development. It also allows for fair power sharing between the youth and adults/stakeholders in decision making and execution. This may be reflected in the empowerment process in the form of consultations, encouraging collaboration, building connections, peer relationships, and

promoting intergenerational engagement. Also key is the need to promote diversity and equal opportunity for every youth, no matter their dispositions and interests, to get involved and be treated fairly in the process. This may be reflected in the form of gender mainstreaming, social class inclusion, participation by various educational attainment levels, geographical inclusion (rural, suburban and urban), sector variety, and integration of environmentally responsive behaviours. The premise behind participation and an effective engagement approach is that youths can become agents of social change themselves, rather than just targets to be changed.

Managing Drivers (Push/Pull Factors) of Entrepreneurship

The drivers of entrepreneurship are those factors that attract youths towards setting up their own business and becoming self-employed. They could be classified into (a) push factors (usually negative), i.e. circumstances that make them want to leave their current situation, position or employment to become entrepreneurs, and (b) pull factors (usually positive), i.e. advantages, incentives or information that make them want to go into entrepreneurship and self-employment. Therefore, in the economic empowerment of youth through entrepreneurship development, proper management and channelling of the drivers of entrepreneurship would yield positive outcomes. These drivers include entrepreneurship education (formal and non-formal), entrepreneurship programmes (by government, private and voluntary sector), innovation incubation, entrepreneurial acculturation, investment protection laws and regulations, market size, unemployment issues, and behaviour change communication (BCC) on career development (e.g. discouraging the obsession for white-collar jobs). The premise behind managing drivers (push/pull factors) of entrepreneurship is that it will encourage youths, both nascent and active entrepreneurs, to explore innovative ventures and create opportunities for a sustainable entrepreneurial culture for economic empowerment and growth in society.

Ensuring Access to Enablers/Support

The enablers of entrepreneurship are those policies, services and infrastructures that facilitate the efficient running of business ventures and allow entrepreneurial efforts to thrive. In this way, an enabler will also tackle the barriers to entrepreneurial actions and development among the youth. As has been widely acknowledged, businesses need an enabling environment to succeed. This could be in the form of availability and access to finance, physical infrastructure and technology (e.g. electricity, the Internet), training and capacity development, research and development, information sharing and communication, favourable macroeconomic policy, business support, and availability of raw materials and resources. The premise behind ensuring access to

enablers/support is that creating a favourable environment and supporting youths to navigate the barriers to initiating and sustaining innovative businesses, will guarantee their active and continued participation in the economy, and promote equitable and sustainable economic development.

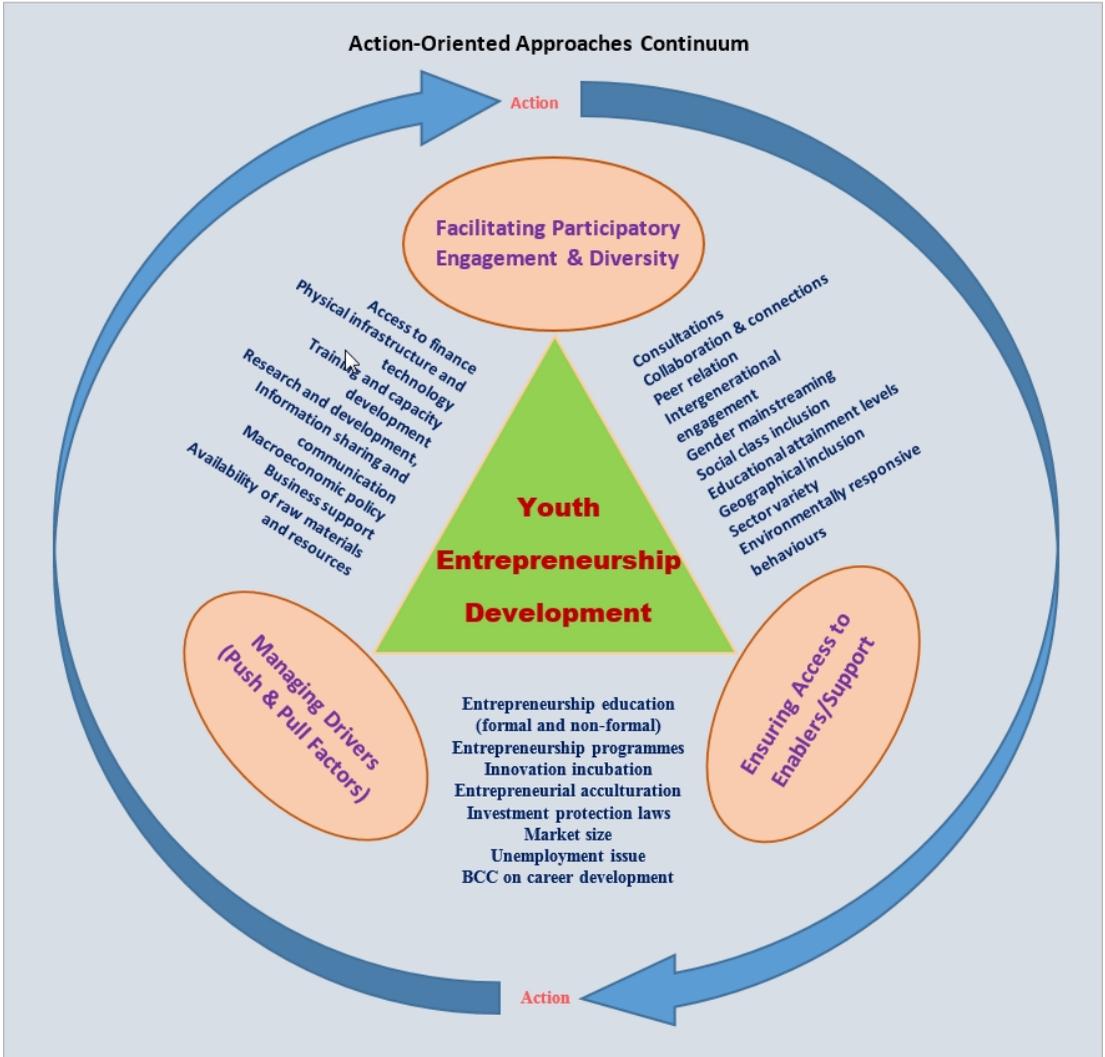


Figure 1 Action-Oriented Approaches to Youth Entrepreneurship Development

Source: Devised by author

Figure 1 illustrates the interactions of the three key action-oriented approaches in a continuum as an integrated, interdependent and action driven process. In summary, the proposed action-oriented approaches are complementary and applicable to

policy/programme design, implementation and monitoring, and for researching youth entrepreneurship development. They are also useful for developing a framework for assessing youth empowerment programmes, based on the integration of the processes and outcomes at the individual and collective levels accordingly. Subsequent papers will unpack the fundamental components of these approaches by situating them within the empowerment and entrepreneurship milieu and theory.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has been able to explore issues of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development in policy and practice by critically examining the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) Programme through the lenses of the UNDP Youth Strategy entry points for promoting economic empowerment of youth. The YouWiN programme is applauded as a major intervention aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and innovation among the youth with the goal of creating employment, reducing economic dependence, and improving market system development. However, an inclusive assessment of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship programmes requires a robust view towards an understanding of the socioeconomic and political systems, circumstances and the change process. This is more so in YouWiN since the entrepreneurial process includes learning in which human and social factors are as important as the economic factors. While entrepreneurship (SMEs) development is the bedrock for the diversification and industrialisation of every economy, evidence suggests that youths can be major drivers of innovation for profitable business ventures. However:

“innovation is not a convenient venture; it is a daunting endeavour to create solutions that meet a need. So it’s essential to strengthen young African entrepreneurs’ ability to cash in on non-consumption opportunities and create disruptive innovations that will benefit consumers” (Ogamba, 2017, p.22).

This will, in turn, benefit the market as well as create employment, boost government revenue, and advance economic growth and sustainable development.

To realise this, there is a need for more robust and inclusive programme design in entrepreneurial development targeting youths, in order to increase active participation across-the-board and reduce inequality in economic opportunities. This should be done by maximising the qualities of the youth population and the new generation of young entrepreneurs driving creativity.

Applying the three key action-oriented approaches in policy and programming will ensure youth entrepreneurship development is innovation driven, and create markets for domestic prosperity and global development. Finally, this paper is foundational to further discourse analysis on theory, policy and programming process. Therefore,

further debate and input will be helpful in improving the proposed action-oriented approaches for theory building towards a normative framework in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship.

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BIOGRAPHY

Ikedinachi Ogamba is a Doctoral Researcher at the University of Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, UK. He has several years' experience in international development with expertise in research, policy advocacy, project management, and monitoring and evaluation having worked in various programmes and organisations. His interests include inclusive entrepreneurship, poverty eradication, well-being and sustainable development. Ike is a member of various international professional bodies including the Human Development and Capabilities Association (HDCA), and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Research Network (EERN). He holds an MA in International Development (with Distinction) from the University College London's Institute of Education. He is also a trained Market System Development (MSD) Specialist, and certified in Global Project and Change Management.