

Chapter 10

Nurturing the Industrial Economy Through Enterprise Education: The Case of Kenyan Universities

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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the importance of ensuring adequate supply of highly educated workers, many countries have expanded and reformed their educational programmes. Despite this, many manufacturing companies are struggling to recruit. Employers have to recruit and organize for trainings to bridge skill gaps. This raises questions on the preparedness of human resource with regard to supporting economic development in countries. It is also a wakeup call for universities to reexamine the kind of education propagated through systems in their countries. The chapter presents ideas on concept of enterprise education, role of university education in nurturing industrial economy, theoretical base for enterprise education, designing curriculum for enterprise education, strategies for incorporating enterprise education in university curriculum, available opportunities for universities to embrace enterprise education, and the likely challenges. The final part of the chapter presents progress by universities in embedding enterprise education and implications for educational theory and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Education is humanity's best hope and most effective means in the quest to achieve sustainable development. To achieve this, quality education in terms of producing functional graduates is of paramount importance. At all levels of education, most systems of education fall short of what is required in developing skills,

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knowledge and values needed to address issues that arise from social and economic changes nationally and internationally. In recent decades countries have witnessed the emergence and consolidation of the so called knowledge economy (the use of knowledge to create goods and services) in which economic success does not critically depend on natural resources, physical capital and low-skill labour but rather on the effective utilization of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills, and innovative potential (Stehr and Mast, 2012). World economies are moving towards a more advanced knowledge – driven economy where knowledge is a strategic resource. It is only through knowledge that the world can be transformed. Education and training system should create a sustainable pool of highly trained human resource capital that underpins ambitions of building a knowledge-based economy.

Economic performance is viewed as being closely related to the education and skills of the labour force, underpinned by effective research and development (R&D) capacity. In this new economic paradigm, there is consensus that degree holders have a strategic role to play in the success of nations (European University association, 2010). In recognition of the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of highly educated workers, and self-sustaining graduates, many countries have expanded and reformed their educational programmes. In quantitative terms, the number of degrees awarded in universities has increased dramatically and in qualitative terms, extensive reforms have been implemented in various degree programmes. There are debates on whether university programmes are sufficiently well designed to equip graduates with the skills they need to rapidly adjust to the productive environment of work places and also to sustain the economy. The usual claim is that graduates lack employability skills and they also seem not to be functional in society. Governments across the world are working to close the gap between education and the workplace, enabling their citizens to progress from one to the other, support economic growth, navigate changes in working practices and live fulfilling lives. Significantly, both enterprise and entrepreneurship education are experiencing a period of major change within a context of austerity, high unemployment and low economic growth rate.

Materu (2013) notes that, globally university education in many countries has not been able to tailor its content and pedagogy to the social economic and cultural realities of its people and has not been capable of developing solutions to local problems. Instead universities continue to uphold an education system that is centered on schooling rather than learning. Consequently, universities are producing people who consistently look to the west for models of development and are hence incapable of producing knowledge that match their own social and physical environment (UNESCO, 2017).

Despite mainstreaming of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) at the national development policy level in many African countries, and despite the growing emphasis on the instrumentality of universities in promoting economic competitiveness and sustainable development, higher education institutions in many countries remain poorly integrated in the emerging knowledge-based development paradigm and discourse (Carrillo, 2006). Higher education institutions still lack the required vision, resources, capacity and leadership to embrace science, technology and innovation. The disjoint between national-level policies and institutional realities represents a major challenge to the realization of knowledge-based economies in African countries. Senior leadership within universities therefore require skills and capacity strengthening to be able to embed knowledge, enterprise, and innovation into their strategic plans and research programmes in order to achieve their mandate as catalysts of development. The purpose of this paper is to contribute ideas on enterprise education as a way of making graduates more functional and productive in terms of enhancing industrial economy in countries.

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