

# **ENGAGING AND SECURING OUR YOUTHS: MAKING OUR SOCIETY SAFE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a consensus on the prevalence of the twin malaise of poverty and social discontent in Nigeria that have necessitated treatments and remedies without abetting. Several prescriptions had been tried in the past but either the diagnosis was wrong or the prescriptions ineffective. DIFRI, NAPEP, FAMILY SUPPORT and other youth empowerment programmes have had the same objectives. 'Empowerment – 'as a concept is something we do to another, - but we see people as already innately powerful. Some analysts will focus on facilitating, a process of reconnecting with, reclaiming and manifesting power from within. By supporting change agents to map out their gifts, talents and capabilities that can be leveraged for social change, we support the deepening of agency and autonomy and the identification of ways to make one's unique contribution to the common good. By her leadership and direction, the CBN has intervened through the Micro Finance Banks in making some soft loans available to enterprises. The administration has also recently launched an Industrial Revolution for the country towards growing and sustaining entrepreneurship. The best we can do at this stage is to give our support and encouragement towards a better economy.

Our objective in this phase of training conference is to help these future change leaders to expand their sense of self awareness, develop tools for transforming oppression and suffering, and cultivate compassion as well as the capacity to initiate social change responsibly. In this, we invite youths to contemplate the roots of the oppression they have experienced so as to understand their role in transforming suffering among their immediate neighbors and the larger society. This mindfulness helps them to develop the capacity to find clarity grounded in their unique sense of purpose. We believe it is essential for future change leaders to invest as much in inner transformation as they do in outer solutions, so that they may avoid the pitfalls of burn-out, abuse of power, reactivity, or pursuits that detract from the potential for positive social change. We hope to initiate conscious social change as a process led by responsible and ethical change agents drawn from Wards and Local Governments in Anambra State who engage in their own practice towards deeper self knowledge and personal transformation, while striving to advance positive change for the common good- a social entrepreneur.

All over history, the entrepreneur is an innovator and creative visionary dedicated to advancing systematic social or environmental change. Just like the business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs create new organizations, products, or services that have pattern changing implications, utilizing business principles to maximize social value creation. With vision and discernment, our youths will be able to identify gaps, develop theories /solutions about how change occurs and experiment their ideas, often taking risks, but never compromising their integrity.

## **ABSTRACT**

To every child in every era and every society, growing up has always been filled with passion, goals for achievement and the ideals that future holds for each. Mother nature and society have also been very kind and bountiful, dealing to each according to her own measure and likeness. All over history, youths have grown to adulthood while inheriting treasures and intrinsic values from the older generation. They have also left their foot prints in the sands of time while enriching the cultural values of the society.

Nigeria, as a country has long gone beyond this state of nature. As some will say; 'Behind us are everything we hold dear and cherish; family health, shelter, job opportunities and happiness. Ahead of us are everything we dread; hunger, homelessness, disease and death. 'Social units like

family, villages and districts are becoming increasingly ineffective in the face of social and economic changes in the present day Nigeria. Economic pressures on the society have broken the organic bonds within the family while the bond/solidarity that held the village and districts units together have given way. The global village concept and the need for the survival of the state itself [Nigeria] have not helped our youths. They are increasingly exposed to pressures and stress without any dampers.

Individual reactions to these forces vary. They largely depend on the personality constitution and intrinsic values dominant in each individual but often deriving from the society itself. Light at the end of the tunnel often provide hope and courage to expectantly ride the storm with certainty. It serves as a cushion or damper to moderate reactions and adjustments. It also stabilizes the individual. But left at Hobbesian state of nature, survival is an instinct natural to every individual. Ways and means are multitude depending on the personalities involved and it looks like both the state and society have neglected our youths for too long without adequate provisions for adjustments in the rapidly changing environment. Adequate allowances have not been made for our youths and our educational system has not properly equipped them for a positive interface with the changing environment. Wide spread unemployment in every sector of the economy has made survival and a connect to the society more daunting.

Our fear is that the youths are going through a state of anomie. Their reactions are varied, disturbing and threatening the very rubric of the society itself. As a result, rules on how people ought to behave with each other have broken down and people do not know what to expect from one another. Norms and mores have changed. The predictive power of our common nature and convergence of values have been eroded. The youths are on a free wheel or auto pilot, each person fending for himself according to his/her circumstances. As this is in Anambra State, so it is in the 35 other states including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Survival is an instinct natural to man. Ways and means are varied depending on the constitution of the individual. Our youths have reacted in many adverse ways to the detriment of the survival of the society itself. This near state of anomy is at the root cause of vices dominant in our urban and rural areas. Some of these include armed robbery, kidnaping, and political violence, modern day slavery in the form of house helps or prostitution among others. We believe that there can be an intervention towards a better tomorrow.

## **THESIS**

Nigeria has remained a country with a great promise whose potentials have remained largely a dream. This mirage is in spite of the manifest abundant human and material resources within. The individual perseverance and enterprise of the Nigeria citizen stands him out in every continent and in every endeavor. Prior to independence, economic analysts had ranked Nigeria as one of the top 20 economies with the prospects of leading and defining world growth by the turn of the century.

Other countries within this ranking have obviously moved on through a combination of planning and practice to fulfill this prophesy and have claimed leadership and dominance in world economy. Nigeria still has the capacity to claim her rightful position in the global economy only through a set of integrated planning, sustained committed political action and mobilization of the populace.

It is a common knowledge that small and medium scale enterprises constitute the major determinants of a nation's GDP and Per Capita Income. It is also ranked as the greatest employer of labour in every economy absorbing hundreds of thousands of new entrants every year. This is in sharp contrast to multi-million dollar industrial organizations and high-tech industries. We have the perseverance and entrepreneurship as evidenced by the exploits of Nigerians in Diaspora in the international arena

The question one may then ask is why these are not replicated within Nigeria? Why have other countries with similar endowments or less potentials moved on to be ranked as developed or developing economies while Nigeria is still classified as an underdeveloped economy with precarious Human Development Indices.

It is also possible that a myriad of opportunities exist which either have remained unnoticed, or neglected. The present global economic crisis and the failure of established economic theories to predict and prescribe solutions indicate that our situation may not be hopeless after all. It has only opened a broad window for new perspective and positive action.

## **METHODS.**

This can be achieved through enhanced self-awareness, personal development and conscious planning for growth and sustainability. Self-awareness exposes us to the infinite powers inherent in every individual and our capacity for achievement/success. Personal development prepares us for the challenges ahead while equipping us with necessary life tools for peak performance. We also need to analyze our business practices to build models and structures for economic growth and efficiency. This underscores the fact that while capital is essential in the growth and survival of every enterprise, the entrepreneur remains the key element.

Seminarmate is conscious of the fact that learning is a lifelong activity. We believe that empathy remains one of the most effective ways of transforming the individual. Knowledge and information are not objects that are simply thrown at the recipient. We view them as attributes that are developed jointly and drawn out from the individual for an enduring and positive transformation. We have adopted unique and life changing models through interactive conferences and seminars. We seek to achieve conscious social change led by responsible adults towards deeper self knowledge and personal transformation while striving to advance positive change for the common good – a social entrepreneur. With vision and discernment participants identify gaps, develop theories on how changes occur, and finally demonstrate the most the remarkable compassion and commitment to the society and the causes they serve. This is why we lay great emphasis on seminars, conferences and interactive fora for a maximum effect.

Consequently, the Seminar will focus on:

- The Role and Aspects of Capital in economic Development.
- Equipping the Entrepreneur to withstand the Challenges of Entrepreneurship.
- Peak Performance Training, Self Awareness and Enrichment of the Individual.
- Organizing and Managing Micro and Small Businesses, A sample business plan.
- Analyzing Business Models and Structures for Growth and Sustainability.
- Skill Acquisition and booth camp Training.

The themes will be treated under the following sub-heads;

1. The Entrepreneur as the Engine for Growth in Business- Self Awareness, Leadership, Values and Imperatives for Growth.
2. Organizing for Growth, - Models and Structures as Platforms for Growth in Business.
3. Sources of Funding and Funding Constraints in the Un-organized Private Sector [UPS] Maximizing Growth Potentials in the UPS.
4. Organizing and Managing Micro and Small Businesses. A sample business plan and how important is a business plan in modern business today.
5. Micro Finance Banks, Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises and Vision 20-20-20.
6. Mentorship and Business Guide

We at SeminarMATE envisage a two-day seminar that is free following in concept that permits exhaustive discussions, clarifications.

SeminarMATE works with a host of seasoned resource persons and discussants for this purpose. This project consists of the following components:

### **DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT::**

Motivation and Reconnecting the individual to the society. Our theme and practice in this phase of training conference is to help these future change leaders to expand their sense of self awareness, develop tools for transforming oppression and suffering, cultivate compassion and develop the capacity to initiate social change responsibly. In this, we invite youths to contemplate the roots of the oppression they have experienced so as to understand their role in transforming suffering among their immediate neighbours and larger society. Through motivation, we enable the youths to see vision where they had seen ominous clouds. The essence is to ignite passion and zeal for positive achievement among the participants while showing the way forward. We know that capital is not the determining factor to business growth. We shall also be able to separate those who are already in business and those without business and work with both groups together.

### **PEAK PERFORMANCE TRAINING AND SELF ENRICHMENT:**

SeminarMATE believe that;

- Every human creation is equal before man and before God.
- That every individual in his natural state is endowed with enormous mindfulness and aspirations to higher values in life.
- That the individual is innately powerful and can reach to high goals when offered a platform. Peak Milk says, "it is in you".

The focus of the theme is to help our youths to understand and imitate successful entrepreneurs and to achieve the same results. It also aims to improve the vision and horizon of our youths instead of immediate short term benefits.

### **SKILL ACQUISITION PROCESS/ BOOTH CAMP TRAINING:**

This consists of in-conference walk through introduction to skills, trades and business opportunities available to youths within the society.

We have incorporated booth camps in selected micro and small scale enterprises as immediate business leads for participants. Experts and practitioners in the respective fields will man the booths where participants will experience a walk through training/introduction in their chosen trades.

Here, we discuss relevant skills, business opportunities, capital requirements and capital formation. Among these include;

- Fish Farming
- Burnt Brick Making
- Shoe making and Cobbler Services
- Interior Decoration
- Event management and Planning
- Satellite TV installation and Maintenance
- Network Marketing
- Mobile telephone handset repair and servicing
- Cassava Farming and Production
- Restaurants and Outdoor catering
- Plumbing and Water Works

- POP and plaster works
- Aluminum Profiling and Installation
- Tile laying and installation

And many more.

## **ATTENDANCE**

This programme is designed for;

1. Adults who desire profitable self employment but lacks the drive, vision and passion for success.
2. It also appeals to those already engaged but desire to take their business to the next level and unlock the enormous potentials within the state.

Seminarmate is in position to prepare a learning session for a maximum of about 200 persons per session. We will be able to do more than one session within the state as may be needed.

## **DURATION.**

This programme is designed in two parts that can be taken simultaneously or in separate parts.

A] A two day intensive programme that takes the theory and boot camp component of the programme.

B] A 3 to 6 months attachment programme to ongoing businesses within the geographical region after the boot camp training where participants are attached to similar organizations for practical experience.

## **SELECTION:**

Participants are expected from every ward in the state, trade clusters and youth leaders within the State.

## **LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION:**

The language of presentation shall be subtle and soft in English to accommodate mixed educational categories.

## **POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF THE PROGRAMME:**

The economic and political benefits of this programme are immense and include the following;

- It leads our youths to self employment instead of searching endlessly for non existent white collar jobs.
- It lends a good hand to the Anambra State Government in her attempt to eradicate poverty particularly in the rural population.
- The constant population drift to the urban centers are checked since our youths can identify profitable economic engagements within every community instead of drifting to Abuja or Lagos or joining kidnap gangs or Boko Haram within and around.
- It leads our youths away from such vices like thuggery, kidnapping and armed robbery and prostitution since our youths can profitably engage themselves.
- The less privileged and economically disabled youths will experience practical dividends of democracy.

- The youths will experience policy shift by the administration by the Governor who thinks and works with them.
- Breeds positive youth leaders that serve as role models to their communities.

## **PART B**

### **MENTORING AND BUSINESS GUIDE**

This part of the training programme is an essential part particularly for those who are not currently engaged in their careers of choice. What we do here is to give participants a guide to the entry part of their chosen career and monitor them for a period of up to 6 months in most cases. Mentoring, Networking and establishment of participants in their chosen trade skills is a post seminar event where Seminarmate opts to establish participants who do not have an ongoing business to establish one. This is to help participants acquire necessary practical experience and aptitudes in the required trades and skills. The duration of this phase of training is expected to last between 3 and 6 months. Seminarmate will also serve as alternative business advisers to participants providing support and linkage with microfinance banks where capital is a major impediment to positively reconnecting the individual to the society. Social Capital will play very active roles in this component. Within this period, Seminarmate will visit and assess trainees in their bases at least once every month and give reports to the ministry/agency as they progress.

The part B of the programme is expected to commence about one month after the seminar if so desired to enable us attaché participants to existing businesses within the state or in some cases the nearest town to the state to get this training.