



## Entrepreneurship education and project initiation in community development in the Niger Delta Region

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### Abstract

The study looked into how much entrepreneurship education has helped young people in Bayelsa and Rivers States start community development initiatives. Two research questions and one hypothesis were developed to direct the study. 9,476 enrolled adult learners made up the target group, and 924 young people from adult education programs-255 from Bayelsa State and 693 from Rivers State-were chosen using the snowball sampling technique. A researcher-designed tool called the Questionnaire on Entrepreneurship Education and Project Initiation in Community Development (QEEPICD) was used to gather data. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the instrument's reliability; the results showed a coefficient of 0.81, which indicates excellent internal consistency. The mean of 2.50 was chosen as the criterion mean for decision-making in the mean and standard deviation analysis of the research questions. The results showed that, especially in the areas of communication skills and opportunity identification, entrepreneurship education has played a significant role in empowering young people in Bayelsa and Rivers States to launch community development projects. Based on these results, the study suggested that in order to promote self-reliance and socioeconomic change in the Niger Delta, the government should continue and enhance the promotion of entrepreneurial education through informal training programs.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, education, community development

### Introduction

In recent times, community members have been seeking ways to develop their communities through planning and execution of community development projects. This is achieved through community self-help projects. Community development is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action to tackle their felt needs (United Nations 2014). This has become a veritable tool to improve community well-being and to enable communities advance technologically in order to measure up to global standards. Community development takes a process. According to Frank and Smith (2011), it involves, initiation, planning, mobilizing, supervision, execution and evaluation. Community development according to Anyanwu (1992) as cited in Pere-ere & Erekpokeme (2015) serves as a movement for social change and as an educational method. This means that while the process of bringing about a desired change is ongoing; community members learn along the way. This affirms the core principles of adult education: that learning is most effective as long as it is grounded in the learners lived experiences and immediate needs (Dewey, 1938, as cited in Ignatius & Umotong, 2022).

Even though government renders assistance to help the process of community development in communities, community members still need to build their capacities which according to Frank and Smith involve acquiring skills, knowledge and, abilities. Acquiring education is one way to develop skills among community members. Gary Becker (1964) who developed the human capital theory believe that for the productive capacity in any human to increase, they will have to keep acquiring additional knowledge: the type of knowledge that is not focused on economic viability alone but that transforms the individual's perspective to become an active agent of social change; what according to Mezirow (1991) as cited in Tolba & Youssef (2024) is termed as

transformative learning. Education is important because it helps community members to become self-reliant that promotes community capacity. Entrepreneurship education which instils in the trainee, skills required to build community capacity like technical, managerial, communication, creativity, marketing, record keeping skills etc has therefore become imperative to awaken the learner in order to transform his socio-economic realities through collective project initiation. This awakening according to Paulo Friere (2018), as cited in Takona (2025) is required so the learner through a deep critical awakening can become conscious so as to understand the social, political and economic realities around him as well as drive his own realities to an achievable end rather than allow others "bank" their own ideas on him.

It has been observed presently in Bayelsa and Rivers states that community members who are expected to build community capacity by acquiring skills are rather involved in ills like yahoo-Yahoo (scamming), ritual killings, drug addiction, vandalization and other vices. This is a clear indicator that perhaps there is a disconnect between what education is offering and the socio-economic realities of the youths in the region. The government has since the creation of Bayelsa and Rivers states funded several entrepreneurship education training programmes for community members to acquire skills and to boost their human capital. For instance, the NDDC youth internship scheme (NDDC, 2025), Presidential Amnesty Programme (2026), National vocational skills acquisition programme (Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation (FMINO), 2021), Skill Up Artisan Programme (SUPA), (Industrial Training Fund (ITF), 2021) and NDDC skill Acquisition & Rural Development Project (Sunday & Ekpeyoung, 2021) etc. According to Aun (2018), entrepreneurship training programmes have a strong effect on youth employment.

Aboobakar & Renjini (2020) also share a similar view that entrepreneurship training is effective in triggering in the learner entrepreneurial intentions. Also, records reveal that there has been a high percent of youth enrolment and engagement in these programmes (NDDC, 2025). According to Knowles (2018) adult learners are more likely to engage in any learning activity when they believe it will help them tackle or solve challenges plaguing their lives however, our present reality falls short. Youth in this rejoin have engaged in these training programmes but how it has helped them develop their communities is yet to be determined. This has created a gap in knowledge which the researcher intends to fill. With the numerous entrepreneurship training programmes and a high enrolment rate by youths in the region over the years, how has it helped youth, who are community members in the community development process with respect to the initiation of project? To the knowledge of the researcher, there is limited literature to this regard. What is the extent to which entrepreneurship education programmes have helped community members in the initiation of projects in community development in Bayelsa and Rivers States? This study sought to find answers.

### Theoretical Framework

The study hinges on Knowles theory of andragogy that the adult learner is motivated to learn as long as they perceive that the knowledge acquired will help solve problems or tackle tasks in their daily experiences (Knowles, 2020). It is also hinged on Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (2018) which posits that learning is a complex process because changes take place based on how the learner sees a problem and how his expectations can affect his perception, behavior and feelings. Both theories were adopted for the study because a major challenge in the Niger Delta region is the lack of community infrastructure and economic self-sufficiency meaning most adults will be willing to engage in any learning activity that will help them curb these challenges. Mezirow's theory is also relevant to the study since adult education should help the learner grow beyond acquiring skills to redefining their role in society beyond what one sees himself presently to who one should become. With respect to the study, entrepreneurship education should not only be conceived as a roadmap to employment and self-sufficiency but a pathway and a transformative process that will help initiate collective action for the overall good of the community.

### Objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine the extent which entrepreneurship education programmes have helped community members in project initiation in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which entrepreneurship education contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa State.
2. Find out the extent to which entrepreneurship education contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects in Rivers State.
3. Ascertain if there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which entrepreneurship education has

contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were used for the study:

1. To what extent has entrepreneurship education contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa State?
2. To what extent has entrepreneurship education contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects in Rivers State?

### Hypothesis

To further ascertain the relationship between both groups, the following hypothesis was used for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which entrepreneurship education has contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects.

### Methods

#### Sample

9,476 registered adult learners in Bayelsa State who were enrolled in both public and private adult education programs made up the study group. 948 young people, or 10% of the students enrolled in adult education programs in the states of Bayelsa and Rivers, were chosen from this group (255 from Bayelsa and 693 from Rivers). The snowball sampling approach was used to gather the sample. This strategy is in line with Ting *et al.* (2025), who pointed out that researchers can use participants' social networks and choose an appropriate sample size during the research process. Because the participants were spread out over several, frequently inaccessible places in Bayelsa and Rivers States, the technique was deemed appropriate.

#### Instrument

A self-created survey called the Questionnaire on Entrepreneurship Education and Project Initiation in Community Development (QEEPICD) was used to gather data. Three specialists from Niger Delta University's Faculty of Education's Department of Educational Foundations validated the tool. To improve the instrument's validity, their suggestions, errors, and comments were taken into consideration.

There were two sections to the questionnaire: While Section B dealt with topics pertaining to the research questions, Section A collected demographic data from the respondents. Very High Extent (VHE) (3.50–4.00), High Extent (HE) (2.50–3.49), Low Extent (LE) (1.50–2.49), and Very Low Extent (VLE) (1.00–1.49) were the four points on the scale used to organize the responses. Using registered adult learners enrolled in adult education programs, a pilot test was carried out outside the primary study area.

The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the instrument's internal consistency reliability. With an overall reliability value of 0.81, which indicates satisfactory dependability, the reliability coefficients for Technical Skills, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Skills, and Management Skills (Clusters A–C) were 0.87, 0.85, and 0.79, respectively.

**Design**

In order to accurately convey the data and provide a systematic description of the target population's characteristics and answers, the study used a descriptive survey research approach. The demographic information in Section A of the survey was analyzed using straightforward percentages. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to analyze Section B, which dealt with the study topics and important variables. The criterion mean for decision-making was 2.50.

As explained in the appendices, the questionnaires were distributed and collected directly throughout the specified regions. A total of 924 useable questionnaires were obtained from the 255 and 693 copies that were given to respondents in Bayelsa and Rivers States, respectively. Some of the

copies were either incorrectly filled out or handled inappropriately, thus only 245 and 679 valid copies were successfully recovered.

**Results**

**Response Rates for Research Question 1**

According to the data, Bayelsa State respondents recorded mean scores that were highly indicative of items 1 through 9. With standard deviations of 0.72, 0.76, 0.76, 0.73, 0.74, 0.73, and 0.69, respectively, the corresponding mean values were 2.69, 2.61, 2.61, 2.76, 2.71, 2.77, 2.68, 2.69, and 2.84. The results show that entrepreneurship education has significantly aided in the launch of projects among young people in Bayelsa State, with a cluster mean of 2.70 and a standard deviation of 0.92.

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which entrepreneurship education has contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in Bayelsa state

S/N	Items	Bayelsa = 245		
			SD	Rmk
1	I acquire networking skills for expansion of business activities to enhance my input in initiating community development projects	2.59	.72	High extent
2.	I acquire knowledge of business plan to improve my contribution in planning community development projects	2.61	.76	High extent
3	I acquire knowledge of computer operation skills to help my input on project initiation in the community	2.61	.76	High extent
4	I acquire knowledge in the use of machine to enhance my contribution in the initiation of projects in the community	2.76	.73	High extent
5	I acquire knowledge on building of trust to encourage my participation towards initiation of projects in the community	2.71	.74	High extent
6	I acquire information dissemination skills to enhance my contribution towards project initiation in the community	2.77	.73	High extent
7	I have an understanding of suitable language of communication for more input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.68	.74	High extent
8	I acquire time management skills to encourage my contribution in initiation of projects in the community	2.69	.73	High extent
9	I acquire knowledge on identification of opportunities to improve my input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.84	.69	High extent
	Cluster mean	2.70	.92	High extent

Cut-off Mean =2.50; N =245

**Response Rates for Research Question 2**

Table 2 displays the answers to this question. For items 1–9, Rivers State respondents reported mean scores of 2.69, 2.70, 2.62, 2.75, 2.71, 2.76, 2.69, 2.69, and 2.72, which indicate a high extent. Standard deviations for the related values were 0.72, 0.72, 0.74, 0.72, 0.73, 0.72, 0.73, 0.73, and 0.73. The standard deviation of 0.95 and the cluster mean of 2.70 show that entrepreneurship education has greatly aided young people in Rivers State in starting projects.

According to the combined findings from the two states,

entrepreneurship education is considered a very valuable resource in the region. The tightly ranging and below 1.00 standard deviation values indicate that respondents' perceptions of the influence of entrepreneurship education are similar. These results align with those of Aboobakar and Renjini (2020), who pointed out that entrepreneurship education is widely acknowledged as an essential instrument for fostering socioeconomic development and strengthening the human capital base in underdeveloped nations.

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which entrepreneurship education has contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in Rivers state

S/N	Items	Rivers = 679		
			SD	Rmk
1	I acquire networking skills for expansion of business activities to enhance my input in initiating community development projects	2.69	.72	High extent
2	I acquire knowledge of business plan to improve my contribution in planning community development projects	2.70	.72	High extent
3	I acquire knowledge of computer operation skills to help my input on project initiation in the community	2.62	.74	High extent
4	I acquire knowledge in the use of machine to enhance my contribution in the initiation of projects in the community	2.75	.72	High extent
5	I acquire knowledge on building of trust to encourage my participation towards initiation of projects in	2.71	.73	High extent

the community				
6	I acquire information dissemination skills to enhance my contribution towards project initiation in the community	2.76	.72	High extent
7	I have an understanding of suitable language of communication for more input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.69	.73	High extent
8	I acquire time management skills to encourage my contribution in initiation of projects in the community	2.69	.73	High extent
9	I acquire knowledge on identification of opportunities to improve my input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.72	.73	High extent
Cluster mean		2.70	.95	High extent

Cut-off Mean =2.50; N =679

### Response Rates for Test of Hypothesis 1

All items showed no significant changes, with the exception of item 9, which had a probability value below the 0.05 level of significance, according to Table 3. The cluster analysis revealed that the p-value of 0.58, which is greater than 0.05, was connected with the computed t-value (t-cal = 0.72). As a result, the null hypothesis was approved.

This result suggests that the mean evaluations of young people from Bayelsa and Rivers States about how much entrepreneurship education has aided in project start for community development initiatives do not differ significantly. The fact that both states showed consistency indicates that the benefits of entrepreneurship education cut across state lines, underscoring the need for a more uniform framework for adult education in the area.

**Table 3:** T-test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which entrepreneurship education has contributed to the initiation of projects by youth in community development projects

	Items	Bayelsa = 254		Rivers = 679		T <sub>cal</sub>	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
			SD		SD			
1.	I acquire networking skills for expansion of business activities to enhance my input in initiating community development projects	2.59	.72	2.69	.72	1.96	.46	NS
2.	I acquire knowledge of business plan to improve my contribution in planning community development projects	2.61	.76	2.70	.72	1.66	.06	NS
3.	I acquire knowledge of computer operation skills to help my input on project initiation in the community	2.61	.76	2.62	.74	.19	.58	NS
4.	I acquire knowledge in the use of machine to enhance my contribution in the initiation of projects in the community	2.76	.73	2.75	.72	.17	.77	NS
5.	I acquire knowledge on building of trust to encourage my participation towards initiation of projects in the community	2.71	.74	2.71	.73	.14	.90	NS
6.	I acquire information dissemination skills to enhance my contribution towards project initiation in the community	2.77	.73	2.76	.72	.09	.76	NS
7.	I have an understanding of suitable language of communication for more input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.68	.74	2.69	.73	.18	.69	NS
8.	I acquire time management skills to encourage my contribution of initiation of projects in the community	2.69	.73	2.69	.73	.01	.97	NS
9.	I acquire knowledge on identification of opportunities to improve my input in the initiation of projects in the community	2.84	.69	2.72	.73	2.11	.04	S
Cluster mean		2.70	.92	2.70	.95	1.72	.58	NS

### Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that entrepreneurship education has contributed to a high extent in the initiation of projects by youth in community development in Bayelsa and Rivers states. This high level of contribution may not have been unconnected with the acquisition of communication skills by participants of entrepreneurship education. This skill provides them with knowledge to relate with people, thereby, building trust with each other on their involvement in initiation of projects for community development. This finding is in corroboration with scholars like Zubir *et al.*, (2025) who emphasize the value of critical thinking as a core soft skill in academics and Zubir *et al* (2011) who opine that soft skills are the backbone of the community building process because it helps communities to become resilient. This further aligns with the social system theory by Parsons (1971) which opines that a community's internal bonds need to be strong for it to be healthy. The study of Ilemona, Akoji & Mathew (2013) reported that majority of respondents saw high rates of poverty to be associated with lack of entrepreneurship skills. The

implication of this findings is that the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by community members is believed to trigger their involvement in activities such as the initiation of projects for the well-being of their community. Oruna *et al.*, (2025) conceives Entrepreneurship education as a trigger in non-formal education, acting as a bridge between individual poverty alleviation and group regional stability. The knowledge on the identification of opportunities to improve their input in the initiation of projects and knowledge on establishment of business ventures for empowerment of the unemployed were found to have contributed to the initiation of projects by community members. The findings of Daluba and Odiba (2013) corroborate with these views when they reported that entrepreneurship skills such as creativity, innovativeness, practical, communication, administrative and others were needed by students for self-employability. Bashir (2025) carried out a study on the impact of entrepreneurship skill acquisition in Taraba state. Among the findings of the study is that entrepreneurship education can significantly enhance

youth capacity for economic independence with beneficiaries having the ability to start and own their businesses.

The need for self-employability is informed by the fact that most community members are found to be ignorant on various opportunities capable of empowering them. Also, the study of Olori and Olori (2018) revealed that adequate awareness of vocational programmes and captivating apprenticeship skill packages were found as some of the strategies for empowering community members. Other studies have also revealed a strong relationship between acquiring skills and self-reliance. It is worthy to note that adult education programmes when integrated can trigger in the learners a zeal or motivation to initiate new projects especial community-based enterprises which is very significant. This is very significant because educators would have succeeded in turning theory into practice and moving beyond the classroom into entrepreneurial hubs. This suggests a significant implication for all stakeholders in adult education and community development.

### Implications for Adult Learners and Educators

The study reveals significant implications for educators and learners in adult education. Results validate the need for Youth and community members to acquire multi-dimensional skills through entrepreneurship education as a drive way to civic engagement and leadership since most respondents conceive that acquiring skills in entrepreneur education can help them in project initiation. The low standard deviation scores also highlight the quality of entrepreneurship education and thus, suggests that the current instructional methods are yielding consistent results across the region. Educators should thus, drive entrepreneurship education curriculums from rote vocational trainings to practical capacity building such that trainee's capacity can grow so they can become purposeful and take actions themselves.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study, reveal that entrepreneurship education programmes have highly contributed to the initiation of projects by community members in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers States. This reveal the critical role of non-formal education in regional stability as evidenced in recent studies indicating a need for soft skills and other competencies which will aid the adult learner to improve from just being a passive participator to an active one in society. Entrepreneurship education is thus required to help bridge that gap and to transcend between acquiring individual skills and collective action.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are given based on the findings of this study:

1. The Bayelsa state government should intensify efforts in funding entrepreneurial training programmes to keep them running so that more learners can benefit from these programmes. This is recommended to promote sustainability and long-term monitoring.
2. Educators should develop curriculums on other training areas to improve entrepreneurial skills and to accommodate the varying needs of adult learners like integrated digital literacy and social entrepreneurship education. Incorporating these into entrepreneurial

training programmes will further enable our alignment with current global standards.

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