MASS CREATIVITY: & AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Professor E.J. Otagbueagu (Ed)
MASS CREATIVITY: &
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Edited
Professor E.J. Otagbenuagu, Ph.D.
Director
Institute of African Studies
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.

Proceedings of the Roundtable on Creativity and Problem Solving for African Development held in the University of Nigeria on December 12, 2006; under the auspices of the Institute of African Studies:

Publication of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

December 2007.
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Iyioma Eru is a senior scholar from a Foundation known as Scholars in the, United States of America. He is also the Director, Global Creativity Network and African initiatives for Creativity and Innovation.

as invited from the United States as the guest lecturer by the Institute of African studies to present a keynote address on creativity in African Development.

Professor Elizabeth Anyakoha is a professor in the Department of Vocational Education, University of Nigeria. Professor Anyakoha is a prolific writer an inclusive researcher and prime mover.

Dr. Vicky Onu is a senior lecturer in the Department of Education Foundation University of Nigeria and she holds a parallel appointment as senior researcher fellow in the Institute of African Studies of the same University. Dr. Vicky Onu is a good and brilliant scholar in her own right.
A WELCOME ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA PROFESSOR C.O. NEBO DURING THE COMMUNITY FORUM ORGANIZED BY THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES ON MASS CREATIVITY AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA HELD IN THE AUDITORIUM OF THE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2006 by 10a.m.

Members of the Governing Council of the University of Nigeria here present,

- The Deputy Vice Chancellors,
- The Directors of African Network on Creative Problem Solving (ANCIPS) and the Representative of USA Consortium on Creativity and Participatory Development in Africa, Dr Etuk and Mrs Moji Rufai.
- Hon Commissioner for Education, Enugu State,
- The Registrar
- Other Principal Officers of the University,
- The Co-ordinator, National Teachers’ Institute, Enugu State,
- Deans of Faculty/Schools/Directors of Institutes/Centers,
- Heads of Academic/Non-Academic Departments/Units
- Distinguished Guests
neglect under the misa of corruption and military dictatorship. Despite the huge natural and human endowments, Nigeria and the rest of Africa have continued to rank very high in the world poverty index. Most of our communities and institutions have remained cruddy with little or no amenities to recommend them to the schemes of things in the modern world. Unemployment rate continues to rise daily at geometric proportions despite the determination of most African Heads of States to arrest the trend. These and other socio-economic maladies which are prevalent in our societies are symptoms which show that the collective fecundity and the traditional synergy which characterize the African way of life have not been harnessed fully for development. It is heartwarming to note that Africans have now risen to face these challenges through such initiatives as the mass creativity and participatory development programme.

I use this opportunity to welcome Dr. Etk, Effioog, Director of African Network on Creative Problem Solving who is an alumnus of our University and who has shown great concern for the development of Africa through this creativity initiative which has made this forum possible. I also have the pleasure to recognise and welcome Mrs Moji Rufai, a legal arbitrator and mediator and chairperson, African Community for Creativity and Innovation who is in the team for today’s event.

I am told that other foundations would have participated in this event but could not do so because of the current uncertainties which surround air travels in Nigeria. This is indeed, regrettable.

I implore the participants in this forum to use the opportunity well to develop new insights and strategies for creative problem solving which will help to put African
Lions and Lionesses

Ladies and Gentlemen,

gives me great pleasure to present this welcome address to you this forum. This event could not have come at a better time than now when our university, our nation, and indeed, the entire continent have embarked on reforms that will help to accelerate the pace of development for the global empowerment of our people.

Some of the contributory factors for the under-development of Nigeria and the other African nations range from the under-utilization of the creative potentialities of the people to lack of commitment on the part of governments, the organized and informal sectors to inculcate and sustain the culture of creativity in the citizenry. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that academic curricula appear to be silent on such critical matters. Cultism, and different forms of malpractices and the attendant hue and cry about falling standards of education point to the mismatch between our national needs and the model of education and training which our educational system offers.

Africa was once reputed as one of the cradles of civilization in the world. Historical records indicate that she attained the position by faithful exploitation of her creative genius and traditional communal spirit. Ironically, African nations seem to have lost the lessons of their history and the drive to recover their past glory.

Creativity which was the bedrock of African life and which sustained her ancient civilization and economy has suffered
It is my hope that this collaboration with ANCIPS and the participating Foundations in the USA will yield remarkable initiatives that will eliminate poverty in the African Continent. We are happy to take the lead as partners in this initiative and as Nigeria’s Premier University.

I know that for the leader of the delegation, our own Dr. Akinwumi, today’s event is good home coming for him. As a super power, we expect that his visit will bring showers of blessings and decisions which will enhance the rating of his alma mater, the University of Nigeria, as a world-class institution. I also hope the initiative that has been planned for today’s Community forum and the Round-table discussions that have been scheduled for tomorrow that the team will mount strong advocacy for the sale of our African Studies programmes in the USA and beyond.

I wish the team a pleasant and rewarding experience and journey home.

On this note, ladies and gentlemen, I declare the forum open. Thank you and God bless you.

Professor C.O. Nebo
Vice Chancellor
A WELCOME ADDRESS PRESENTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, PROFESSOR E.J. OTAGBURUAGU DURING THE UNIVERSITY FORUM Organized BY THE MASS CREATIVITY AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA INITIATIVE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2006 IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA.

PROTOCOL

- The Vice Chancellor, Professor C.O. Nebo (ably Represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Professor Mosto Onuoha)
- Deputy Vice Chancellors
- The Director, African Network on Creative Problem Solving (ANCIPS) and the Representative of the USA-Based Consortium on Creativity and Participatory Development in Africa, Dr. Effiong Etuk
- The Chairman, African Community for Creativity and Innovation and Co-Director, Global Creativity Consulting, Barrister Moji Rafai
- The Registrar
- Other Principal Officers of the University
- The Co-ordinator, National Teachers’ Institute, Enugu State.
African creativity for participatory development at all levels of societal functioning.

With these convictions therefore, and with the encouragement of the present University Administration through its decisive reform programs, we began a search for an institutional framework that would help us to redirect the course of our national life on the path of wholesome creativity, insightful problem solving and participatory development. In our search, we discovered that there were Nigerians at home and abroad who had devoted their time and energy in the development of systematic paradigms that would make creativity a basis for national development, and who were at the same time ready to link us with foundations in the rest of world. We found our friend, an Africanist of distinction, Dr. Etuk and his American-based consortium. Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, we are glad that these development experts are here today to address us on issues on mass creativity and participatory development which had been a source of great concern to our University under your leadership. We are grateful to you for approving the collaboration with them, and for the wonderful hosting rights you have provided for them and the support you gave the forum. We are sure that the presentations in this forum will provide veritable tools for better productivity in our society and provide us with the launching pad for maximizing the use of our creative potentials in our daily run of life.

It is therefore my pleasure to welcome our participants to the event.

Thank you

Professor E.J. Otagburug, FCAI, (Director).
my pleasure to welcome you all to this occasion. We are here to
initiate an organization which I think will help to revitalize the
African economy and indeed, the rest of Africa. So much had been
in the past about the under-development of Africa and its people;
very little has been done in concrete terms to put Africa on the
track of positive change and development. A major cause of the
underdevelopment of Nigeria and the rest of Africa is the failure to
stimulate the benchmark of training programmes in the
natural sector and relate it to economic and development
atives. National or institutional reform agenda cannot be
acted upon if they are not driven by creativity.

The economies of most African nation states have been run in
creative ways and have been made subservient to the
cumbersome of the developed world. In the bid to reposition these
cumbersome, African governments have resorted to different reforms.
These efforts may not be able to provide the much-needed panacea for
developmental dilemma of African States.
National or institutional reform agenda will be successful, and can be
acted upon only if they are driven by creativity. The means for African
development must begin with a deliberate policy to harness and utilize
First of all, I want to salute the Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, the Director, Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, and Dr. Victoria Onu of the same university for their vision of a greater Africa and for planning and hosting this Roundtable to explore ways to translate that vision into practical action. I also want to thank the Vice Chancellor for giving me the opportunity to participate in this historic event.

Then, on Thursday last week, Dr. Victoria Onu asked me to be prepared to address the Roundtable, the first thoughts that came to my mind were: What can I say that will be worth the time that participants are going to be listening to me? What can I say that would help to focus our three-day deliberations?

I thought about so many different things to say; but none of them appealed to me as much as the issue that I finally selected for our collective reflection. My hope is that it will touch your heart as deeply as it does my own.

Titled “Mass Creativity: The Only Viable Way Forward for Africa,” this is the painful and, at the same time, sobering conclusion that I have reached after very many years of
thoughtful reflections on the economic, social, and political vicissitudes of our beloved continent.

That conclusion has been summarized in the following three-paragraph synopsis of this address:
demands for “identity,” “self-expression,” “meaning,” “purpose,” and “personal fulfillment” suggest that we may be entering a period in human history when every social, economic, and political action – from parenting to education, leadership, management, healing, governance, and even international relations – will acquire its legitimacy and measure its success by the extent to which it enables the affected individuals and groups to realize their creative potentialities.”

Africa’s Predicament: A Creativity Crisis

Widespread and growing poverty, unemployment, hunger, crime, and related crises in Africa remain the single biggest embarrassment and challenge to the peoples of the continent, both at home and in Diaspora. With more than half the continent’s population living on less than US$1 per day; with the mortality rate of children under 5 years of age at 140 per 1000, and life-expectancy at birth at only 54 years; with only 58 percent of the population having access to safe water, and with the rate of illiteracy for people over 15 at 41 per cent, African Heads of State and Government have come to the conclusion that it is time to rethink the continent’s development.

Contrary to previously held assumptions, African Heads of State and Government maintain that the continent’s economic and social crises are not due to lack of natural resources or of human capacity, but to inadequate recognition and exploitation of the creativity and ingenuity of the African peoples in their own development. That conclusion is articulated in the New
If we seriously hope to resolve the mounting challenges facing Africa, if we are to achieve the laudable and vitally important economic and social revitalization objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, if we are to launch and sustain an "African Renaissance" as envisaged by African Heads of State and Government and to translate their dream of an "African Century" into reality, the creativity and ingenuity of the masses of the African peoples will be critical, and will need to be accorded the highest priority at all levels and in all sectors of the African society. The cutting edge of our continental revival and the only guarantee of Africa's relevance in a rapidly globalizing world society can no longer be left to chance occurrence; but must be deliberately sought out and nurtured, officially encouraged and supported, vigorously promoted, productively and beneficially engaged."...

"Until the masses of the African people — toddlers, school children, students, adolescents, boys, girls, workers, men, women — come to recognize, or are enabled to appreciate, the tremendous potentials with which they, each, are endowed, until they come to believe in their intrinsic worth as humans and, therefore, their individual and collective abilities to achieve greatness and, literally, to change the world, no actions we can take, however drastic, and no inducements we can provide, however attractive, are going to significantly improve the continent's economic, social, and/or political situation". ...

The global awakening to human potentialities and possibilities and the concomitant and increasingly strident
In respect to natural resources, African Heads of State and Governments affirm that Africa has all the resources she needs to solve the challenges that she is facing. In this connection, they note that:

“Africa remains the poorest continent despite being one of the most richly endowed regions of the world. The resources ... to launch a war on poverty and underdevelopment exist in abundance, and are within our reach. What is required to mobilise these resources and to use them properly is bold and imaginative leadership that is genuinely committed to sustained human development effort and poverty eradication ...”

(NPAD, paragraphs 6, 9, and 19)

In respect to human capacity, however, African Heads of State and Government regret that not enough had been done to tap the potentialities of the African peoples for the economic, social, and political development of the continent. Acknowledging the impact of colonialism, the Cold War, the workings of the international economic system on the continent, African Heads of State and Government also observe the fact that:

“... Many African governments did not empower their peoples to embark on development initiatives.”
to realize their creative potential ... [which] in many important ways remains under-exploited and under-developed"

(NEPAD, paragraphs 11, 23)

The emphasis on “African ownership of the development process” and “anchoring the redevelopment of the continent on the resources and resourcefulness of the African people,” underscores the importance that African Heads of State and Government attach to the creativity and ingenuity of the African peoples in the continent’s economic and social revitalization.

Personal Observations

I totally agree with African Heads of State and Government and with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). I would even go further and suggest that Africa’s crises are, essentially, a creativity crisis – the inability of the vast majority of our brothers and sisters to recognize, to develop, and to engage their creative abilities – their distinctive and most important human attribute – in significant and beneficial local, national, continental, and/or planetary actions. The result of this deprivation is widespread: personal sense of inadequacy, frustration, and meaninglessness of which most of the other “crises” are but the symptoms.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, therefore, the challenges facing Africa are not the multitude of disparate “crises” that we have been made to believe – AIDS, poverty, hunger,
unemployment, underemployment, "population explosion," declining productivity, environmental degradation, disaffection with school, substance abuse, crime, mutual suspicion, group hatred, destructiveness, violence, civil wars, etc. As such, their solution is not going to be found in many of the widely publicized approaches, most of which are merely treating the symptoms while ignoring the underlying problem.

If we therefore seriously hope to resolve the mounting challenges facing Africa, if we are to achieve the laudable and vitaly important economic and social revitalization objectives of the New Partnership for Economic Development, if we are to launch and sustain an "African Renaissance" as envisaged by African Heads of State and Government and to translate their dream of an "African Century" into reality, the creativity and ingenuity of the masses of the African peoples will be critical, and will have to be accorded the highest priority at all levels and in all sectors of the African society. The cutting edge of our continental revival and the only guarantee of Africa’s relevance in a rapidly globalizing world society can no longer be left to chance occurrence; but must be deliberately sought out and nurtured, actively and officially encouraged and supported, vigorously promoted, productively and beneficially engaged.

Creativity Defined

But what, exactly, is creativity? Depending on which books you read or which creativity scholars you speak with, you are very likely to come away with different, sometimes conflicting, notions of creativity. Some of these differences are cosmetic; others are fundamental, and need to be explained and well understood.
There is, first, the view of creativity as a mysterious attribute of a gifted few. In this view, Mozart was creative. Beethoven was creative. Michelangelo was creative. Leonardo da Vinci was creative. So also were Shakespeare, Chaucer, Einstein, and a few other great names in history. Presumably, no other person could be “creative.”

There is, second, what I call the “mechanistic” view of creativity as a teachable and learnable “skill,” mediated by a set of tools and techniques that any person, any institution, any organization, or any community can acquire and use to develop new products and/or services, or to resolve the challenges that he, she, or it is facing.

There is, third, the view of creativity as an artistic predisposition characteristic of painters, sculptors, musicians, dancers, poets, writers, architects, etc. No person, other than these professionals, could be “creative.”

There is, finally, the view of creativity as a universal human attribute—a inherent quality within each of us that only needs to be recognized or discovered, encouraged, developed, and given practical expression in everyday human activities—from the seemingly mundane, to the technically most intricate. Abraham Maslow’s oft-quoted “a first-rate soup is more creative than a second-rate painting” illustrates the universal applicability, and relevance of creativity.

The evidence upon which this last view of creativity is based further defines it as the dominant necessity of human life and the one drive that ultimately shapes all the rest. A study that will
was born and uniquely equipped to do — until one is able to find a "project" or "projects" that engage one’s unique set of abilities.

Close examination of the African economic, social, and political situation reveals a disquieting anomaly: We have, on the one hand, monumental local and continental needs to be met, innovative new products to be developed and services to be provided, our deteriorating natural environment to be restored and preserved, new uses for previously discarded items, imaginative solutions to be developed for our protracted problems, and so on, and so forth. We have, on the other hand, both an abundance of natural resources and a vast reservoir of largely untapped creativity of eight hundred million people, yearning for recognition, for development, and for practical expression or utilization in the rebuilding of our beloved continent.

(Parenthetically, the same anomaly is true globally, where, as Oliver Wendell Holmes observes, "most of us go to our graves with our music still inside [unplayed, unheard, unapplauded].")

Speaking metaphorically, Africa’s deepening crisis is a clear case of "starving in the midst of plenty." True, we have very difficult problems to solve and portentous challenges to meet. But we also have eight hundred million highly talented and imaginative people to solve those problems and to meet those challenges. What is needed, then, is the "key" to unlock those talents and to engage them in the revitalization of our continent.

Fabricating, trying out, retooling, and disseminating that "key" is what the African Mass Creativity initiative is all about. The initiative’s global counterparts include the “Global Creativity
soon be made available to African Creativity. Leaders conclusively demonstrates:

- The inherence of creativity in human nature and, therefore, its universal distribution.
- The centrality of creativity in human life - its primacy among the forces driving our behaviour and shaping our lives.
- The absolute necessity of being able to actualise one’s creative potential, both for meaningful existence and for responsible social and ecological behaviour.

Four generalizations emerge from these principles of human creativity: The first is the uniqueness or the one-of-a-kind quality(ies) that every human being embodies or represents. The second is the psychic compulsion or the inner necessity to realize one’s potential, i.e., to recognize, to develop, and to engage one’s unique abilities, one’s creative endowment, in the service of fellow human beings and the planet. The third is the sense of mission, calling, vocation, purpose, identity, personal fulfilment, and harmony (with oneself, with fellow human beings, and with the world at large) that come with being able to live out one’s uniqueness, to make a distinctive contribution in one’s community, institution, organization, and/or society. The fourth, conversely, is the constant and inevitable (psychic) uneasiness, frustration, anger, meaninglessness, and disappointment that keep nagging until one is able to discover and to pursue what one
Consciousness,” the “Global Creativity Marshall Plan,” and “Engaging the Creative Many,” projects.

Rationale for the African Mass Creativity Initiative

If we accept the traditional concept of creativity as the exclusive attribute of a gifted few individuals, or of artists and musicians, the idea of “mass creativity” must be a contradiction in terms, if not an outright affront to the received wisdom. Very fortunately for humanity, that elitist view of creativity has been successfully discredited by the mounting evidence of great things from the least likely places.

The evidence upon which the African Mass Creativity initiative is based indicates that every human being that has ever lived, or is currently living, can bring about something that never existed before, and, actually, can change the world for the better. The evidence further suggests that only to the extent that human beings are able to realize their innate creative potential or, in Paulo Freire’s words, only to the extent that people are able to “speak their word ... to name their world ... and to participate in changing it” are they likely to lead responsible, socially and ecologically beneficial lives. Conversely, the evidence suggests that most of the psychological and social problems that are ruining the lives and destinies of countless millions of people, traumatizing families and societies, and even threatening to wreck modern civilization are the direct result of the inability of most of us to, in the words of Henry David Thoreau, “exist more fully and [to] realize more of our human potential.”
These, then, are the "reasons" underlying African Mass Creativity and Participatory Development. Related reasons for the continental initiative are the growing realization that:

- Eradicating poverty in Africa, improving the quality of life of her peoples, and placing the continent on the path of sustainable growth and development require, very critically, creative, enterprising, and collaborative African peoples pooling their unique abilities to create wealth for themselves, solve their own problems, and direct their own development.

- Africa's development is only partly economic growth and material well-being. The other part is ample opportunities for the continent's eight hundred million people to develop and to engage their natural abilities — their creativity — in important and beneficial social and environmental actions, and the resultant sense of individual and collective worth.

- Successful and sustainable development of the African continent depends on the ability of the people of a village or community to analyze their situation, develop appropriate solutions to their problems and, very critically, generate the economic prosperity needed to implement and sustain the solutions they have developed.

- The magnitude and complexity of Africa's development challenges call for imaginative responses and the widest possible public participation in developing and implementing those responses.
organizations. The following start-up activities are currently being considered along with others that are going to be proposed by participating individuals, institutions, and organizations:

- Identify and enlist a corps of committed volunteer resource persons (to be known as African Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators) who can drive the initiative in their respective communities, institutions, organizations, and countries. Ideally, these should be persons whose personal initiatives have brought about significant improvement in their respective communities, institutions, or organizations.

- Network African Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators for exchange of experiences, models, methods, lessons and, where necessary, unified actions on common problems.

- Develop and provide necessary publicity materials and targeted user-friendly capacity building resources.

- Encourage resource networks to strengthen individual and collective effectiveness of the people, institutions, communities, and organizations that are working in the same areas, focusing on related issues, or trying to achieve a particular goal.

- Facilitate the participation of African Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators in international creativity conferences, thus to renew their critical thinking and creative problem solving skills and also connect with their global counterparts.
Solutions to many of the challenges facing Africa already exist in different cultures in the continent, and only need to be recognized, publicized, shared, and upgraded as appropriate.

There is sufficient knowledge, tools, experience, and commitment to mobilize and harness the unique insights and abilities of the African people to meet the challenges facing the continent and to sustain her own development.

African people, themselves, hold the key to their continent’s recovery and development; and Africa already has enough potential creativity leaders and enterprise facilitators who, actively mobilized, can jump-start and sustain the continental renaissance.

Africa’s traditional values (i.e., universal brotherhood of mankind, community and the sense of belonging, intrinsic worth of people, relatedness of all life, and reverence for Mother Nature) are the last remaining hope for humanity. (According to some World Futurists,) Africa is not only the birthplace of humanity, but also its likely future. “Africa may likely tell the next human story.”

Start-Up Activities

African Mass Creativity and Participatory Development is an ongoing program, starting with a Train-the-Trainer phase. The goal in this phase of the program is to provide a coherent strategy as well as the tools for strengthening the capacity of African Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators to lead and direct the initiative in their respective communities, institutions, and
Launch relevant internet websites to: (a) electronically link individual, groups, institutions, and organizations that are actively finding imaginative solutions to the challenges facing the continent; (b) provide a forum for exchange of information and experience among African Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators; and (c) mainstream and actively promote Africa's gifts to world culture.

Organize regional and continental creativity and innovation conferences, including an All-Africa Creativity Congress.

Anticipated Benefits

African Mass Creativity and Participatory Development is expected to provide several long-term benefits not only to the participating individuals, communities, institutions, and organizations, but also to the whole continent. Some of those benefits are:

- A significantly enlarged pool of indigenous Creativity Leaders and Enterprise Facilitators, spread across the continent.
- Rapid spread of innovative new development initiatives and ideas throughout the continent.
- One-stop source of information on successful development initiatives from around the world (indicating what is working, what is not working, and why).
Resource networks of individuals, institutions, communities, and organizations that are tackling similar or related problems.

Better understanding of the systemic origin of many of Africa’s challenges and, therefore, more imaginative strategies for resolving them.

Strong intercultural collaboration and less tribal suspicions and resentment, resulting from working together with people who hold different tribal values or who share different interests, concerns, and priorities.

The combination of methods, perspectives, and approaches from different cultures achieves solutions that might have eluded traditional localized approaches.

Greater local self-reliance translates into reduced dependence on government and external aid. Participating communities think in terms of what they can give themselves and less in terms of what the government can do for them.

A Case for Action

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is very important that action – concrete, visible, high impact, action – follows this three-day deliberation. Too much is at stake for us to do otherwise. The material and psychological well-being of our people, the future of our children, and, ultimately, our place in the world depend on what we make of this time together.
urgent development actions of our time. Besides, this is one of the few things, perhaps the only thing you can do that will: a) put you on a path of permanent exhilaration, growth, and progress; b) fill your life with meaning, purpose, and direction and at the same time bring you as much financial and material rewards as you are willing and able to contribute; and c) guarantee you a lucrative and deeply satisfying "employment" for the rest of your life.

Anticipated Resistance

A program of action as unfamiliar as Mass Creativity is almost certain to spark resistance and to meet implementation obstacles. Resistance can be expected from those whose status, position, and means of livelihood depend on continued, but false, division of humanity into the creative few and the "uncreative" many. Resistance can also be expected from those who never, for a moment, consider that the creativity-stifling ideas, assumptions, values, beliefs, and traditions by which they have lived and worked all their lives could possibly be false and, indeed, inimical to our collective well-being and the future of our civilization and our Planet. As paradoxical as it may seem, resistance can be expected from many of the people whose circumstances would be significantly improved by the Mass Creativity initiative — people whose economic and social predicaments are not due to lack of ability but to their inability to actualize their God-given potential. (This is simply because most of us have been so anaesthetized by modern conveniences or so brutalized by circumstances that we do not think that there is a different, more liberating, more meaningful, and more fulfilling way to live.) Finally, resistance and discouragement can be
There is every likelihood that we are going to be able to achieve a viable creativity vision for our people and our continent. But vision alone is just that: vision, a dream. As our late colleague, Barbara Gilles, recently observed,

"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes time. But vision and action can change the world."

Practically every one of us has participated in one or more of those “serious-minded,” well-planned, and well-attended conferences that even produced glossy communiqués; but they ended there. After two or more of those “fine words without action,” the normal human tendency is to degenerate into apathy; So what ...! Arnold Toynbee has provided a recipe. According to the famous historian,

"Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm; and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: an idea that takes the imagination by storm, and an intelligible plan of action for carrying that idea into practice."

My hope is that our three days together in this great university will produce concrete actions that will help to set the course for the much-desired and critically important continental Renaissance.

To those who might be wondering what’s in it for me, I want to assure you that there is a lot — perhaps much more than any single one of us can foresee. In African Mass Creativity and Participatory Development, you are participating in one of the
expected from those who look at the magnitude and complexity of the challenges that our continent is facing and despair of their resolution.

Whatever the obstacles or resistance to the continental Mass Creativity initiative, however, we can take courage in the facts that (a) the psycho-spiritual well-being of the vast majority of our brothers and sisters, our collective survival as a species, and, indeed, the future of Planet Earth critically depend on what we do (or fail to do); (b) there is a massive and, from all indications, unstoppable global awakening to a greater, more fulfilling, human existence of the type that the African Mass Creativity initiative is promoting; (c) as the famous Chinese religious leader Lao Tzu observes, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step; and (d) in African Mass Creativity initiative, we are merely promoting and responding to a principle of Life that needs no humaan justification.

Vote of Thanks

On behalf of the delegates and participants both in this Roundtable and in the many follow-up actions that are likely going to be discussed and planned, I want to thank the University of Nigeria, in general, and its Institute of African Studies, in particular, for kick-starting the African Mass Creativity and participatory Development initiative. This address would not be complete if I didn’t let the University and the Institute know the historic importance of their decision to host this event.

By spearheading what is destined to be one of the most significant development actions of our time, the University of Nigeria and its Institute of African Studies have secured for
We are not Alone

A line I read sometime ago suggests that the universe tends to respond to our intentions. Otherwise known as "volitional causality," this is the often vindicated observation that our thoughts create our reality. Two letters of invitation, one from the Peace Corps of Nigeria and the other from the Institute of African Studies of the University of Nigeria, have galvanized the interest of leading world creativity leaders, institutions, associations, and organizations in what we are trying to do. As a matter of fact, eleven delegates from Canada, Europe, and the United States had accepted the invitation to participate in this Roundtable, and they were making arrangements for their travel.

Our international colleagues understand; and they are willing and prepared to collaborate with us in this historic initiative. Letters of support from a number of affiliated institutions and organizations are available for your review. I have been informed that more letters of support arrived after I had left. These, too, will be made available for your review in due course.
Wouldn’t it be nice to have each of us say with Dr. Victoria Osondu:

_Arise and let us build!_

Wouldn’t it be nice to have each of us contemplate with Mrs. Mojisola Rafai:

Why is it that before the establishment of so many educational institutions in Africa, we had full employment. And now, with a very large proportion of our population as literate or even university graduates, most of our brothers and sisters are either unemployed or grossly underemployed?
I need hardly say that collaboration is a two-way traffic: You scratch my back, I scratch your back. Our international friends and collaborators eagerly look forward to our participation in their own national and regional creativity programs. My hope is that we will equip ourselves sufficiently and be prepared to help out in any part of the world that needs our help, just as we expect the rest of the world to come to assist us when and where we need help.

Concluding Remarks

This final appeal applies not only to each of us here but to every well-meaning African person that is alive today. In the African Mass Creativity and Participatory Development initiative, we have the greatest opportunity we will ever have to make our lives really matter and deeply count — to help our country, our continent and, ultimately, the human race. It is an opportunity we should be proud of, knowing that we are engaged in the noblest purpose that has ever stirred the human spirit. Never before has any of us been challenged so profoundly, to use what is best in us to secure the long-term future of our own respective villages, our own states, our own country, and our beloved continent — Africa. Never before have our talents and our personal efforts been more needed than at the present moment of our continental predicament. Never before have our country and our continent been so dependent on each and every single one of us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask, wouldn’t it be nice to have each of us step up and say, “I would like to see so, so, and so in my community, in my institution, in my organization, in my local government, in my state, or in my country; and I want to be the one to make it happen!”
Thank you, again, for inviting me to be part of this historic event. May God guide us to decide and to do what is right and best for our continent and, ultimately, for all of humanity.
Introduction

Many problems plague individuals, families, companies, school, and nations today. In Nigeria for instance we have graduate unemployment/wrong employment under employment, hunger, environmental pollution, poverty, diseases, conflicts, terrorism, etc. These problems are crying out for solution. But people are waiting for solutions to come from government or sources other than the “self”. However, it has now been established that problem solving potentials and ideas abound within individuals and that these can and need to be brought forth, energized and made to focus on the problems currently facing humanity. What does this mean? Creative problem-solvers are needed, who can break off small chunks of the big problems into workable units or sub-problems, then gradually find solutions to the sub-problems. When the solutions are applied the massive problems will dissolve.

The Creative Education Foundation in New York organizes the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI) annually. The 2006 CPSI was held in Loyol University Chicago 25th to 30th June 2006 and some members of the university were opertun to attend. It focused on, among other things, the producing creative problem-solvers and further grooming of those who were already master creative problem-solvers, innovators, entreprenuers and leaders in various areas of
ii. Nationalities of participants.

iii. Occupations/interests of participants.

iv. Challenges which people came with. Participants came with their personal, business or community challenges and problems yearning for solutions.

2. Team teaching approach.

3. Variations of individual and group activities (ranging from group of 2 to 10).

4. Divergent and convergent thinking.

Major concern of the Spring Board was creative problem solving training based on Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving Model of (i). Explore the challenge, (ii). Generate Ideas and (iii). Prepare for Action, as shown in fig. 1.

![Fig 1. Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving Model](image-url)
Development Programme (MCPDP) for Africa and this Roundtable. I am convinced that MCPDP for Africa has arisen to accomplish as "a capacity building initiative for the development of creative and innovation driven leaders and enterprise facilitators by the year 2015.

As a way of exploring the enormous potential and promise of the MCPDP for Africa (starting from Nigeria), it might be necessary to give few highlights of my experience with the CPSI 2006.

The CPSI 2006 was to me a very active, dynamic, real, powerful, divergent and creative "elephant." What does this mean? It was a very great event of many events and programmes that ran concurrently, with up to 135 countries represented by far more than 1000 participants. So one can only describe the "elephant" from one's own perspective. There were numerous programmes. As a first timer, I was only qualified for The Spring Board, though provisions were made for participants to attend many other sessions when Spring Board sessions were not on. I will therefore focus on the Spring Board and specifically on my Team F of 32 participants. There were other Spring Board Teams. My team was characterized by:

1. Diversity in
   i. Age ranging from young and fresh university graduates/lecturers to professors, entrepreneurs, business executives, consultants, etc.
Every-body came with at least a problem and was bent on sourcing creative solutions. Many got potential solutions e.g. the two participants from New Orleans who presented the Tsunami challenges obtain meaningful insights to potential solutions.

There was a special plenary for Spring Board where our thinking profiles were analyzed. From the analysis I saw myself.

What I have been able to do with my CPIS experience

1. It has given me an improved creativity prospective in my work with graduate students to identify meaningful research problems.

2. It impacted so much on our Home Economics research Association of Nigeria (HERAN) 2006 Annual Conference

3. It has informed the theme of our HERAN 2007 Annual Conference.

4. I have incorporated creative problem solving tools and techniques into my undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

5. It has given birth to Family and Child Development Centre, where it is intended that programmes for turning talents into gold will be mounted, for the purpose of promoting creativity.
Final Greetings

The Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria Sir, other Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Rectors, The Director, Institute of African Studies, Dr. Victoria Onu, Gentlemen of the Press, Very Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I bring to you greetings and assurances of continued collaboration from several Canadian, European, and American Creativity Associations and Organizations, including Centaur Federal Consulting Group, the Creative Education Foundation, Facilitators Without Borders, Forum Foundation, European Creativity Association, International Federation of Creativity Organizations, Live A
in his foreword to one of Dr Etuk’s books, *Great Insight on Human Creativity*, said “I told him (Etuk) that I felt he could be as important to the continent of Africa as Alex Osborn has been in the United States and throughout the world. I feel that Dr Etuk has the vision, the fire, the determination that Dr Osborn had in his many decades of commitment to nurturing and spreading creativity. I urged Dr Etuk to carry the image of Dr Osborn as his symbol— to become the Alex Osborn of the African continent.” Dr E Etuk the Founding Director of African Network on Creative Problem Solving (ANCPS) is here because the appointed time has come. He was not deterred by the recent air disasters in Nigeria. He is concerned about (i). The problems that plague us in Nigeria and Africa; ii. The creative problem-solving potentials and multiple intelligences/ideas which Nigerians could have turned into solutions to our problems, which are rather (regrettably) wrongly channeled into undesirable areas, such as youth restiveness, culticism, armed robbery, and examination malpractices which have produced many certificated illiterates who cannot use their education to solve problems. This last problem is supported by a 2004 National Universities Commission (NUC) survey designed; among other things, to determine the gaps in knowledge and skills that Nigeria university graduates bring to the labour market, and the gaps in knowledge, skills and attitudes the graduates should bridge, in order to meet the expectations of employers of labour and the demands of the national economy. This study revealed various strengths and weaknesses among the graduates. Some of the weaknesses portray their serious need for creative problem solving tools and techniques. These weaknesses include:

i. Inability to conceptualize issues
Further lessons from CPIS 2006

1. It is vital to prepare adequately for CPIS prior to attendance and to be there from the first day. I was ill-prepared for the challenges of CPIS. Part of the reason was not knowing much about the institute before attending. For instance, I could not respond to the thinking profile questionnaire on-line before attending CPIS. Our Nigerian group also arrived Chicago on Sunday afternoon and could not participate in the opening ceremony, therefore we missed the initial orientation activities.

2. The problems people came up with in my Spring Board class were not our (Nigeria and African) problems and my problems seemed strange to the other participants e.g. hostel and classroom accommodation problems, hunger and poverty, unemployment, poor waste management, etc. This situation emphasizes the need for a Creative Problem Institute with the African perspective. We, from Nigeria and Africa need to acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes which CPIS of USA offers and bring such to bear on our Nigerian and African situations, so that we can effectively explore our African challenges, generate ideas that are consistent with the Nigeria and African peculiarities and prepare for appropriate actions.

Focusing on Africa

There is a man here who has a vision, a dream. He is like a woman in labour and preoccupied with wanting to push out ideas, and produce creative problem solvers in Nigeria and Africa. He has a mission. This man is Dr E. Etuk. Parnes S.J
ii. A high proportion lack confidence
iii. Lack of discipline and reasonableness
iv. Lack of entrepreneurial spirit and abilities.
v. Incoherence in analyzing issues, i.e. lack of analytical skills.
vi. Poor goal setting by university students who are not interested in quest of knowledge but merely of the certificate (NUC 2004).

It follows that we have serious problems. Therefore we need to evolve ways of helping ourselves. Individuals must be enabled to develop their potentials to the fullest. The task of engineering creative problem solving potentials from the family, nursery schools, primary, through secondary to tertiary levels of education and into government and private sector in Nigeria is enormous and multidimensional. It requires multidisciplinary approach, and with all hands on deck. If, for instance children are made aware of their creative potentials and become substantially motivated to develop such. They will then be able to start early in life to identify problems and seek solutions. Consequently, they will grow up knowing that they should be “creative problem solvers” and not “problem creators”. The children will also learn to shun examination malpractices even when their parents urge them to indulge in it. Parents will not seek special centres for their children. University lecturers will no longer give in to corrupting research in university will be geared to ward creative problem solving, human potential will be developed. Innovative initiatives and entrepreneurship will be encouraged. Value systems will change. Many of our problems will be solved and we will have a better Nigeria and Africa.
References:


stimulated by problematic situation, guided by interest and
resulting in the generation of statistically infrequent, valuable and
appropriate ideas useful in turning challenges of life into fruitful,
beneficial and profitable outcomes. The implication of this
definition suggests the individual's sensitivity to what it considered
a problematic situation and where his interests lies.

Creativity has been defined by Nwazuoke (1996) as a
complex behaviour in which an individual utilizes his mental
resources in such a unique way that a novel product which is
adaptive to reality emerges. This novel product could be ideas or
materials and could meet the need of the moment. Creativity is
further defined by Odua (2001) as that inner drive to explore and
produce, an energy driven force reflecting itself in awareness of
the presence of problems, deficiencies and gaps, and not stopping
till a novel solution is found. This definition describes creativity as
the ability to develop ideas that are unique useful and worthy of
further elaborations. The use of ideas, working on it (them) until
something comes out of it.

In taking a hard look on the concept of creativity, Nwazuoke
(1996) cited Malvin (1995) and opined that the definitions of
creativity in the field has emerged with the following core
elements:

1. The process of inventing something new.
2. Thinking of new ideas that are useful.
3. Heightened perception of one's surroundings resulting in a
   unique outlook.
4. The ability to make connections from various pieces of
   information in a novel way, and to bring these ideas to
   fruitful result
5. Invention or expression of that which is both original to the
   creator and useful.

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Abstract

This paper summarized creativity as a mental process consciously undertaken for profitable outcomes. It discussed reasons why nations like Nigeria is failing to address cultural factors that inhibit creativity and to train her youths to think creatively has accepted poverty and continuous raising of unemployable youths. The values of creativity and positive steps to foster creativity were discussed. It concluded that since creativity is a trainable skill, Nigeria must as a matter of urgency embark on training her youths who are future leaders in order to remain relevant on the globe.

Creativity in the past has been defined by some as the ability to draw, paint or play musical instruments. This limits the term to arts related subjects only. Others say creativity is the ability to develop unique ideas and to think divergently in solving problems. Baer (1996) puts it that creativity is the power to connect the incontestable. However taking creativity from its original Latin word 'creatus', it means to 'bring into being'. In this sense, it implies departure from the conventional things around to producing new ones.

Creativity therefore, is a mental process undertaken by an individual or a group of people to produce new ideas, new concepts, new designs, process information in such a way that the result is new, original and meaningful. It is also the process of devising alternative ways of solving problems. Animasahun (2002) conceptualized creativity as a conscious cognitive process.
the individuals surrounding or environment is mentioned. Equally, the individuals environment which or enables disabled can be held responsible for an enriched life (idea filled life) or otherwise is highlighted. This agrees with an earlier work of Davis and Scott (1971) who observed that to a large extent, deprivations creativity embody the following elements:

1. Mental process
2. Usually the presence of a problem to be urgently solved.
3. Creativity results in novel solutions.
4. Creative in their immediate uses.

From the foregoing, one can deduce that creativity is the capacity to produce products ideas or compositions of any sort, which are unique, satisfactory and are essentially novel or novel and previously unknown to the producer. It involves divergent thinking, critical thinking and other problem solving skills. It is made manifest in the presence of problems that need to be solved and it results in novel and valuable solutions and alternatives. The concept and nature of creativity has a close tie with the following terms: imagination, newness, innovation; invention, novelty, initiation, uniqueness ingenuity and unusuallness.

The Nigerian nation like most developing nations is faced with the harsh realities of problems. They are faced with myriad of local and global problems which include poverty, unemployment, diseases and conflicts (Anyakoha 2006). These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in most developing countries. These problems and situation therefore call for the training of educated individuals who can function effectively in the society. To correct the above stated anomalies, the educational system at all levels would need to be rearranged to concern itself with the development of sound human capital required for national
development. There is the need to provide sector specific skills by establishing a base of capable professionals and entrepreneurs (Ocho 2005). This reality presently lacking in Nigeria, is substantiated by the cry of the Federal Government about the urgent need and the current move to bring back professionals to create a knowledgeable workforce with practical skills demanded for by employers of labour. However, it is hoped that these cries will be properly addressed to yield permanent fruits and not merely produce sports and pockets of successes as is the usual case with programmes in Nigeria.

Nigerian education is currently at a crossroad as far as producing individuals who will work to deserve and justify their pay, work independently, globally and bring creativity into their workplace. The current mismatch between what Nigerian economy needs and what Nigerian Youths are made to study in school is becoming very appalling.

The result of a three week large scale, rapid national survey in 2004 jointly sponsored by National University Commission (NCU) and Education Trust Fund (ETF) to determine the needs of the labour market that Nigeria University graduates are failing to meet, showed that of 100 individuals and 20 organizations visited, 44% rated Nigerian Science graduate as average in competence, 56% rated them as average in innovation, 50% rated them average in Rational judgement, 63% as average in leadership skills, 44% as average in Creativity. On needed skills like literacy, oral communication, Information technology, entrepreneurial, analytical, problem solving and decision making 60% rated them as poor. These data can be said to explain why there has been very obvious increase in unemployment rate. One of the reason given was that these graduates were simply unemployable.
Creativity is a basic tool for progress in any undertaking, any family, community or society. Ozioko (2006) highlighting the importance of creativity in the society stated that the conditions of modern day living characterised by complexities of hardships and interdependence call for increased level of creativity. It is only creativity that is the answer or solution to a society like ours bewildered with widespread and growing poverty, unemployment, hunger, crime and related crises Efiong (2006) in paper titled Mass Creativity. The only viable way forward for Africa had this to say:

"If we seriously hope to resolve the mounting challenges facing Africa, if we are to achieve the laudable and vitally important economic and social revitalization objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, if we are to launch and sustain an African “Renaissance” as envisaged by African heads of state and government and to translate their dream of an African century into reality, the creativity and ingenuity of the African people will be critical and will need to be accorded the highest priority at all levels and in all sectors of the African society. The cutting edge of our continental revival and the only guarantee of Africa’s relevance in a rapidly globalizing world society can no longer be left to chance occurrence; but must be deliberately sought out and nurtured, officially encouraged and supported vigorously promoted, productively and beneficially engaged."

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This paper therefore discusses the topic of Creativity and Nigerian youths considering the followings:

- Values of creativity
- Nigerian culture: Enhancing or incubating creativity?
- Positive steps to foster creativity among Nigerian youths
- Conclusion

**Value of Creativity**

Creativity is beneficial to both the individual creator and the society in general. The creative individual has the belief that there is some kind of solution to problems that arise and that the solutions can be discovered if the person applies himself to the problem. In this way he gets his problems solved. He has the greater receptivity for new ideas and initiatives and stands to enjoy the benefits that researches in different facets of life endeavor would offer. The environment and life that an individual is accustomed to is fast changing and being replaced by new patterns and standards. Under these changing situations, simple conformity to the past may lead to unresolved problems and consequent unhappiness. Creativity helps one to develop his talents, tap his unused potentials and generate more ideas and become self-actualized.

Necessity for creativity in the day to day activities cannot be over emphasized. People of all ages are confronted with problems and situations that require decisions to improve the human condition. However, many problems remain unsolved due to the fact that people try to cope with modern challenges using their repertoire of knowledge and skills. Hence, the societal problems become more complicated (Animusahum, 2002). Leaving many problems to pile up definitely can be very trying for individuals
The above passage is as it concerns Africa in general but it is a macrocosm of what is obtainable in Nigeria. In fact it is not an overstatement to say that it is more real in Nigeria than any other society or part of Africa.

In Nigeria, millions of people live in miserable conditions of life. The creative ones are therefore expected to attend to, or create solutions to the problems which emanate from such miserable conditions (Nwazuoke, 1989 in Ozioko, 2006). If Nigeria is actually aware of her problems, is consciously interested in getting out of them, then, she needs to give room for creativity, generating alternative ideas which would liberate her from the problems whereby she will become useful to herself.

The key word to Creativity therefore, is insight which emphasizes the might or ability to see a new thing (Woolfolk, 1998). The question is however, will people with insight automatically become Creative? The answer is that the possession of Creative ability ensures that an individual might exhibit creative behaviour to a noteworthy degree. However, the individual’s motivation, temperamental traits and his willingness to learn will also count. It also includes according to Onu (2006) this individuals urge to engage in new things, tendency to favour or not to favour objects, self confidence and willingness to take risks. These are all contributing factors that determines who will exhibit creativity.

Nigerian Culture: Enhancing or Inhibiting Creativity?

Culture is the way of life of people. It embraces all that contributes to the survival of man such as arts, crafts, drama, dress, education, literature, music, politics, religion and technology. Kreitner (1998) referred to societal culture as a social glue binding members together. According to Kreitner the glue is made up of norms values attitudes, role expectations, taboos, symbols, heroes,
while at times are positive, may sometimes hinder or inhibit creativity. Furthermore, the society is filled with norms and expectations. When an individual deviates therefore, he is seen as a minor, different and deviant.

Nigeria like many other nations has lots of things embedded in the culture that might not encourage creativity. It is possible that many of Nigerian population might have not for a moment thought of, considered that the creativity-stifling ideas, assumptions values, beliefs and traditions by which they have lived and worked all their lives could possibly be false and indeed could be injurious to the collective well-being and the future of their civilization. This situation might be due to ignorance rather than choice.

In a paper on promoting Entrepreneurship creativity, Ozioko (2006) found that there are life styles and attitude Nigerians adhere to that cage us from being creative.

These as delineated from Ozioko (2006) include:

- **Ambiguity avoidance** - Many people choose to go for being simple, direct, specific and objective in their manner of thinking and ways of doing things. However, creativity is said to thrive in complexities.

- **Wealth inheritance** - There is this tradition that when a man dies, his sons inherit his wealth and property. These ideas are assumed to make some people lazy, bearing in mind that inheritance will certainly come and will be enough to sustain them. Hence no need to hassle.

- **Resistance to change** - Change is constant. Yet, in the thinking of many, things are to be done as it has been from the past. After all, history repeats itself. This attitude makes
The contention that over rigid demarcation of sex roles is an inhibitor to creativity was cited by Nwazuoke (1996) from Oko (1983). In some parts of Nigeria there is this insistence that certain activities (like nursing, cooking, music are for females, engineering or politics for males). They opined that when professions are sex faked it does not help the course of creativity.

By their traditional nature, Nigerian schools are committed to a curriculum that seems to be intellectually based, formal oriented and directed by an external examination system. Aminu (1987) pointed out that, even though Creative thinking is associated with high levels of achievements in many fields and presumably valued by society. Yet, it values individuality and freedom of expression. This is lacking in Nigerian schools. Nigerian type of educational system does not seem to encourage creative thinkers. The typical standardized measure of intelligence is the multiple-choice test, which is diametrically opposed to creative thinkers’ problem solving process. To a creative thinker, it may seem more productive to try finding reasons why all the choices on a multiple question could be correct than to select the preferred answer (Gale Group, 2001). Furthermore, Gale et al. added that most classroom teaching is heavily biased towards the learning style of convergent thinkers, a fact that helps to explain the dismal school performance of such legendary geniuses as Albert Eineten and Thomas Alva Edison who were considered retarded and expelled from school.

In most Nigerian schools, the students are strictly expected to conform to rules, standards and to replicate the known. Nwazuoke (1997) stated that the regular Nigeria school system has been implicated as a system that hinders creative behaviours in children because of its conformist values. Students are expected to be found worthy in character and in learning. It is noted that administrators according to Nwazuoke (1997) would interprete
people become fixed and not flexible in their thoughts and actions.

- **Destiny adherence** - The wrong notion that whether one works, thinks or not his destiny will surely manifest. This wrong idea makes people not to make effort, explore or think creatively.

With the presence of above attitude and adherence, it will need a miracle for growth and development to occur in any society. It is noted that certain practice in the society may prevent an individual, a group or even the society itself from seeking more efficient solutions to nagging problems (Shallcross, 1981). She cited Plato’s fatalistic statement that history repeats itself as a way of discouraging people from attempting changes. In the same vein, Shallcross observed that the centuries-old argument of predestination versus free will in religious circles inhibit the exercise of the people’s creative potentials. Many religions according to her have used fear and conformity as basic tenets. In some religious circles, any individual who questions the obvious is seen by other worshippers as lacking faith. So, to conform to the existing order, individuals tend to accept things as they are without attempting or bothering to effect changes.

Writing under what she termed sociological barriers to creativity, Shallcross (1981) equally asserted that a society shares a set of morals and traditions which are characterized by collective activities, interests and behaviours. Any unique behaviour that suggested change or like are considered subversive and threaten the stability and security that others derive. Negative reactions to people’s expressions from their own group therefore can cause them to experience the feeling of being less self-significant. The resultant effect is that often an individual retreats in order to feel accepted.
character in this instance to mean conformity to norms which at

time are unprogressive. The above expectations are suspected to
result in fixations.

Many researchers concerned about the effect of fixation
have listed factors and conditions that may lead to it. In line with
this, Tucker (1994) listed some school conditions that hinder
creativity in students. They include:

- Very large classes where regimentation is obvious
- A highly organised schedule of class activities.
- Strict authoritarian discipline and the belief of teachers
  that creative students are hard to manage and their work
  harder to grade than that of the conformists.
- Strong emphasis on memorization and imitation.
- Discouragement of anything or behaviour that falls
  outside the prescribed pattern.

These conditions can be said to be prevalent in most
Nigerian Schools. The dilapidated and wasted nature of
community schools have furthermore been worsened with the
introduction of Universal Basic Education. The situation has
forced more children to use the few available spaces in class.
Other school conditions inhibiting creativity include:

- Instructional strategies that do not engage students in
  experiential learning but lead them to observe interpret,
  analyse make and consider consequences.
- Teacher strategies that do not contextualize learning to
  provide students with opportunities to work and reflect
  self-reliance and flexibility, provide prompt feedback and
  contains ongoing assessment.
Teachers not serving as facilitators, thereby forcing students to construct their own knowledge through learning, application, action review and reflection.

The above supposition are true in most Nigerian schools where the teacher is the sole authority and custodian of knowledge and the students “passive answer absorbers” (Oha, 2001). Not much therefore is got in terms of creativity in schools.

It is not out of place therefore to conclude that the Nigerian cultural orientation in general and educational overview in particular needs creative re-think in order to embrace development.

The vital position youths occupy in the society and the fact that creativity as at its peak at this stage makes the need to promote creativity among this group very urgent. The period of youth is equally said to be a turbulent one. It is a time full of confusion and conflicts, problems of adjustment and difficulties in making decisions. They need to be trained to be creative to give them the necessary psychological and economic support against frustration and conflicts that often accompany rapid rate of socio-economic changes the society. Failing to do this they get themselves involved in negative creativity evidenced by cultism, 419 (Advancedfee fraud) and other menacing acts. In addition, the youths are the future of the nation. They are the leaders of tomorrow. The present generation is definitely going to hand over the mantle of the affairs of the nation to them. Therefore, they need creativity to be able steer the wheels of the future of the country they belong to right.

Fostering Creativity among Nigerian Youths

Training in creativity can help the individual view problems from different perspectives. It is also useful in generating unique solutions (VanGundy, 1992). The need for training in creativity
seen them continuing for years thereafter to think creatively — their parents have told me that they saw it happening. Many of the children now adults, said it happened. The indication here is that creativity can no longer be regarded as being only genetically endowed in individuals. It is the time to identify methods and techniques that enhance creativity and apply them in Nigeria classrooms.

To foster creativity in students, both parents and teachers should learn to respect their children’s and pupils ideas and not only welcome them, but encourage and tease them out always. Teachers have to challenge themselves on daily basis to ignite creative spirit in the students. They have to work to put greater emphasis on recognizing and advocating the use of creative thinking in the classroom. The students ability and effort to think divergently to question the seemingly unquestionable, to take initiative, to remain brave enough and take risks are exactly what teachers should invite, welcome and nurture in order to develop creativity in their students.

The use of reinforcement is equally potent. Nwazuko (1996) opined that when subjects were reinforced for making creative responses, they showed more creative behaviour. Ozioko (2006) cited Coleman (1979) as stating that, one sure way of fostering creativity is by providing a favourable social environment. Coleman also suggested that fostering openness to new experiences would be very much conducive to exercising of the individual’s creative potentials. In addition Ozioko stipulated the following from Oko (1983) ways of enhancing creativity in our youths:

- Students should be made to appreciate and imbibe the general aspect of information.
can be explained based on recent technological advances, short production cycles, global trade possibilities and fluctuating labour force. The link between creativity and problem-solving skills are strong. Creativity will ensure that the individual is involved in initiating new projects, create opportunities while solving problems. Knowledge of creativity will also ensure that the individual learns to produce practical solutions to newly defined initiatives. These and other things are what Creative problem-solving in the realm of creativity encourages.

Creativity is a universal human attribute – an inherent quality within each of living beings. It that only needs to be recognized or discovered, encouraged, developed, Effong (2006). It is a practical expression in every day human activities – from the seemingly mundane to the technically most intricate. In confirmation of this fact, Nwazwoke (1996) maintained that no man is totally bereft of creative behaviour, the fire is only waiting to be ignited. There is the need therefore for education to rekindle and foster creativity in youths for the actualization. In fact one of the most urgent needs of Nigeria today is to find empirical ways of fostering creativity in her youths.

Literature has revealed that creativity is susceptible to training. Allegro, Chifari and Ottarino (2001) stated that schools and teachers can stimulate their students in the acquisition of creative thinking. They argued further that the achievement of insight is the result of a process that involves didactic procedures that allow each student to develop his own individuality. Daris (1992) discussing the trainability of creativity also quoted Torance (1987b) as asserting thus: "I know that it is possible to teach children to think creatively and it can be done in a variety of ways, I have done it. I have seen my wife do it. I have seen other excellent teachers do it. I have seen children who had seemed previously to be "non-thinkers" learn to think creatively, and I have
Teachers should teach that a problem might have many different interpretations and solutions.

Teachers should encourage selfknowledge, self-trust and risk-taking in students.

Teachers should stress discovery and explorations for the students.

There should be no insistence on sex for certain subjects or activities (like nursing, cooking for females, engineering, medicine for males).

School curriculum assessment should not be based on academic achievement only (school academic achievement is a reflection of standard and conformity rather than creativity).

Higher order thinking skills (divergent/lateral thinking critical thinking and convergent/evaluative thinking) have to be infused into the teaching strategies used by teachers in schools.

Suggestions on the ways of nurturing creativity were also listed by Nwazuko (1996) as follows:

- Try not to interrupt children when they are deeply involved in creative activities. Allow projects to be worked on overtime.
- Allow some flexibility in scheduling. A rigid schedule can interfere with the creative process.
- Look for ways to integrate interests — creatively gifted people often have many interests.
- Provide a variety of materials to experiment with. Boxes, plastic containers can make excellent materials for creative activities.
- Listen to and encourage ideas and suggestions. Give children your attention and help.
Furthermore, it is important that teachers become creative themselves so that they will serve as models for the children to develop their creative thinking abilities. Teachers have to equally welcome new ideas, refrain from doing the same way, time after time, try different and even unusual teaching strategies in the classrooms, demonstrate spontaneity and brainstorm aloud regularly. As children see their teachers take exciting risks in learning and observe how they appreciate searching for new ways to solve problems, the children grow to see the same things in themselves, and their creative spirit really, begin to bubble (Basr, 1996).

Conclusion

Having gone through what creativity is about, the beneficiaries thereof, the hindrances and enhancements of the same, it is obvious that Nigeria as a country is consciously or unconsciously in dire need of creative individuals. Lack of this asset is a cog in the wheel of development of this country. This is an undeniable fact because eradicating poverty in Nigeria, improving the quality of life of her peoples and placing the country on the part of sustainable growth and development requires very critical creative, enterprising and collaborative Nigerian people pooling their unique abilities to create wealth for themselves, solve their own problems and direct their own development. In word of Effong, ... we may be entering into a period in human history when every social, economic and political action from parenting to education, leadership, management, healing, governance, and even international relations will acquire its legitimacy and measure its
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success by the extent to which it enables the affected individuals and groups to realize their creative potentialities.

Creativity however is a teachable and learnable skill if can be taught to Nigerian youths using sets of tools and techniques that in due time, any person, institution, organization or community in the country can acquire and use it to develop new products and or services and to resolve the challenges that are ahead. It is the collective our responsibility of Nigerians to encourage their youths to utilize their creative thinking abilities, otherwise, they will be in danger of losing them. If they lose such abilities, then the adults have failed them, failed Nigeria and the future society.


Onu, V.C. (2006). Developing Creativity and Problem-solving Skills for Entrepreneurship HERAN.


Preamble

African Creativity Network in collaboration with the Institute of African Studies of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), held a Roundtable on Mass Creativity and Participatory Development in Africa at the Institute of African Studies, UNN, from 13th to 14th December, 2006. Participants were drawn from the education sector, business, nongovernmental organizations, students, and policy makers.

The Roundtable was opened by the Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Professor C. O. Nnoli, represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Professor Mosi Onoh. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Efiong Etek, Founding Director, African Communities for Creativity and Innovation.

The participants brainstormed a wide-range of issues and challenges in Africa's development.

Findings

Participants identified several factors militating against Africa's development, including poverty, corruption, crime, insecurity, ethnic and religious conflicts, and the abandonment of Africa's enduring values, and many more.

Participants noted with regret the inadequate exploitation of the creative potential of the African people for the development of the continent and attributed Africa's reoccurring crises largely to that inadequacy.
African people by the introduction of important life skills such as creativity, creative problem solving, and critical thinking into the curriculum at all levels and as a matter of urgency.

Africa’s traditional values (i.e., universal brotherhood of mankind, community and the sense of belonging, intrinsic worth of people, relatedness of all life, and reverence for Mother Nature) are the last remaining hope for humanity and, actively, should be promoted in all our economic, social, and political actions. (As to some World Futurists are beginning to observe, Africa is not only the birthplace of humanity, but also its likely future. “Africa may likely tell the next human story.”)

African people, themselves, hold the key to their continent’s recovery and development; and Africa already has enough potential creativity leaders and enterprise facilitators who, actively mobilized, can jump-start and sustain the continental renaissance.

Conclusion

We the participants at this Roundtable are fully aware that the drive to turn around Africa’s fortunes requires the participation of people at all levels and in all sectors of the African society. We therefore call on everyone to take seriously and to spread the message that no one but ourselves can develop our communities, our countries, and our continent for us.

We acknowledge that we have merely sown the seed at the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria. But the journey of a thousand miles always begins with one step.

We therefore call on every well-meaning African, both at home and in Diaspora, to join the Continental Creativity Crusade to
Participants bemoaned the breakdown of African traditional value system, the breakdown of the education system, the breakdown of the work ethics, general insecurity of life, and the near-total collapse of the social infrastructure.

Participants adopted the view of creativity as a universal human attribute – an inherent quality that is within every African person and that only needs to be recognized, mobilized, and harnessed for the development of their respective villages, institutions, organizations, and national societies.

Participants lamented the anomaly of monumental continental crises while the creativity of the peoples of Africa goes undiscovered and untapped for the continent’s development. Participants therefore regarded Africa’s crises as “starving in the midst of plenty.”

Recommendations

Africa’s development should be the concern of all Africans. The search for the solution to Africa’s challenges should be seen as a crusade involving all segments of the African society.

Poverty eradication should be made a priority in all African countries and should focus on the mobilization of the creative abilities of the African people to create wealth for themselves, solve their own problems, and direct their own development.

Successful and sustainable development of the African continent depends on the ability of the people of a village or community to analyze their situation, develop appropriate solutions to their problems and, very critically, generate the economic prosperity needed to implement and sustain the solutions they have developed.

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mobilise the vast but long-neglected ingenuity of our people for the
development of our continent.

Acknowledgement

We appreciate the encouragement and support of the Vice
Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, our chief host.

We also appreciate the understanding and support of our
international collaborators: Centaur Federal Consulting Group, the
Creative Education Foundation, Facilitators Without Borders,
Forum Foundation, European Creativity Association, International
Federation of Creativity Organizations, Live A Difference
Center, Stuart C. Dind Institute for Social Innovation, and Unity
Scholars.
WAY FORWARD:

A. PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE (WHAT?)


B. METHODOLOGY

I. To network with NGOs, R and Ds, Educational Institutes, Philanthropists, cultural groups, trade Unions, government agencies, industrial and business organizations for the realization of the objectives identified in section ‘A’ above.

II. Strategies adopted will include:

Conferencing
In-service training programmes
Advertising including the use of drama
Direct mobilization.
Collaborating partners and affiliate agencies as well as the Institute will join hands to finance the Project.

Local input
International input

The local funding input will be in the form of accommodation, provision of staff, transport, and materials.

G. PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Professor E.J. Otugburooga
Professor Peter Nwangwu representing UNRED.
Dr. Vicko Owo
Professor Lizzy Anyokoha
Dr. Okpapkara
Professor Mawerki (Ghana)
Professor Kolo (Rector College of Education Minna)
Professor L.K. Nwazuecke (U.I.),
A Cameroonian Professor
Professor O.O. Otiona Director NERDC

Community Participation

To be determined
C. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience and beneficiaries of the programme will include:

- Policy makers
- Industrialists
- Traditional Leaders
- Workers and Teachers
- The Youth
- Faith-based groups
- Cultural and women organizations.
- Trade Unions

D. DURATION

The programme will last for a period of 4 years. It will commence with a Continental Roundtable on Mass creativity and Participatory Development which will be hosted by the Institute of African Studies between December 11 and 14th 2006. This event will mark the commencement of the programme. The first day will be used for strategic plan-essentially an in-house affair.

2nd Day will be University of Nigeria community forum in which the visiting ANCIPS member from the US will speak to the community.

3rd Day Community Tour and Dinner, Group photographs.

4th Day Departure.

E. PROGRAMME PROPER

This initiative will be sustained through workshops, training programmes, seminars, materials production on problem solving, creative/critical thinking skills.
FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT TO BECOME A REALITY, THE CONTINENTAL ROUND TABLE MADE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AND TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENTS OF AFRICAN NATIONS MUST SHOW COMMITMENT:

- Raise literacy level
- Create more job opportunities
- Stop exam nation malpractices in schools
- Diversify the economy
- Restructure education to produce job creators
- Patriotism
- Reduce level/rate of poverty
- Eliminate cultism in schools
- Reduce armed robbery
- Reduce harmful cultural practices against women
- Regular power and water supply to the citizens
- Clean and healthy environment
- Discouragement of brain-drain
- Use of communication as a means of reducing violence
- Care of the disabled
- Care/rehabilitation of destitutes
- Care of the elderly
- Concerted fight against corruption
- Cooperation among Africans through accountability
- Promoting accountability
Greater participation of elites in governance

Encourage proper poverty reduction of alleviation

Reduce child abuse

De-emphasise paper qualification

Promote health of the people

Stop human trafficking

Promote learning and teaching of English through ICT

Promote Government/private sector partnership

Promote adequate nutrition for the rural child

Sanitise political practices and system

Value reorientation an urgent priority

Encourage women

Promoting waste to wealth

Encouraging locally made goods

Encouraging leaders to probe predecessors.

Encouraging religious tolerance

Developing safe transportation systems

Developing good road network

Developing cheap and efficient public transportation systems

Removal of ethnicity in politics and governance

Encouragement of brotherhood among the citizens

Making agriculture attractive

Tolerance of privatization

Encourage R&Ds and make them
• Encouraging entrepreneurship
• Encouraging of dignity in labour
• De-emphasis paper qualification
• More aggressive fight against HIV/AIDS Awareness
• Nutrition for rural children
• Sanitization of political system and process
• Encourage women to engage in politics
• Ensuring security of lives and property
• Encourage vocational education
• UBE in Africa
• Better refuse disposal mechanism for clean environment

• Elimination of ethnic discrimination
• Strengthen family values
• Encourage research and development
• Checking the excesses police and all law enforcement agencies
- Participation in politics
- Ensuring security of life and property
- Promote school industry link
- Promoting relevant education
- Craftsmen collaboration
- Encouraging indigenous technology
- Recognition and use of talents
- Productive use of land
- Elimination of Armed Robbery
- Reduction of harmful cultural practices against women/widow
- Greater participation of elites in politics
- Encourage proper parenting and reduce child abuse
- Relevant
- Check excesses of law enforcement agents
- Discourage coups among African nations
- Urban renewals & better urban planning
- Addressing the problems of the African child
- Making people believe in their countries
- Raise literacy levels
- Concerted fight against corruption
- Promoting accountability
- Encouraging the use of locally made goods
- Religious tolerance
- Probing past leaders