

**SUSTAINABLE PRIVATE /PUBLIC SECTOR INTERVENTION IN
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: LEVERAGING ON THE ALUMNI FOR A
VIBRANT UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS LINKAGE AND GRADUATE CAREER
ENHANCEMENT**

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**SUMMER SCHOOL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
THEME: CULTIVATING NEW FRONTIERS IN EMPLOYABILITY RESEARCH FOR SKILLS AND
CAREER ENHANCEMENT**

**VENUE: IDRIS ABDULKADIR AUDITORIUM, NUC, ABUJA
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PREAMBLE

- ▶ **In a knowledge economy, how do we get our (University Alumni to respond to and understand the need to partner with the university system beyond the ceremonial and mundane?** This will be addressed through a multiplicity of questions:
- ▶ How is the Alumni expected to contribute to employability in the global age?
- ▶ How do they open the pathways for their universities and society in diverse sectors?
- ▶ How do we create a synergy that brings together the private and public sectors to get a buy-in into the university system to jointly create a seamless idea of human development (Triple Helix)?
- ▶ Since we now live in a historic environment and moment, how should we align our thoughts and actions with current realities?
- ▶ Universities are expected to enhance their visions and missions of teaching, research and community service through collaborations and partnerships. How do we develop a productive country that has in place institutions and structures for sustainable development?
- ▶ How do we begin to equip our students with entrepreneurial mindset that allows them to create the necessary interface with Industry, government, and alumni to become co-creators of development?
- ▶ How do we address the mindset challenge assailing the society in a wholesome manner?

Unemployability and Unemployment : A National Malaise and Double-edged Sword

- ▶ Universities are growing in Nigeria.
- ▶ But many of our graduates are being graduated without either the requisite skills, knowledge or mindset to function adequately in a knowledge economy.
- ▶ Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that graduate unemployment in Nigeria rose from 3.5 percent in 2010 to 23.7 percent in 2016 and later to 40.1 percent in 2020.
- ▶ Figures above were before the removal of fuel subsidy and the floating of the Naira,
- ▶ Two days ago, Nestle Nigeria reported N123,8 billion net foreign exchange loss in H1 2023 from N2.13 billion in H1 2022. The firm closed with N69.12 billion loss before tax from N43.74 billion before tax reported in corresponding period of 2022.
- ▶ Ill-equipped universities and poorly paid lecturers
- ▶ What is the absorptive capacity of the economy?
- ▶ Is 'Japa' (frenetic outward migration by mostly young people and professionals) the solution?

Growing a more inclusive Alumni for Sustainable Development

- ▶ Alumni are key stakeholders in university development and sustainable development nationally.
- ▶ All Universities should establish or enhance their Alumni-Student Linkage Programme.
- ▶ There are different shapes, scales, and intensities of alumni relations around the world.
- ▶ How do you harness this great resource?
- ▶ Traditionally, Universities have always welcomed their Alumni through what is generally known as 'home-coming' days - good for networking.
- ▶ Universities are, therefore, expected to track and identify the strength of their former students in every field.
- ▶ In this globalised and knowledge-based economy, an up-to-date database of students and former students is of great imperative.
- ▶ University managements should also learn to value and respect the opinions and strategic recommendations proposed by the Alumni to solve critical challenges.
- ▶ So, how can Universities derive more benefits from their former students?

The Veritable Handshake: University/Alumni Engagement

- ▶ How can the alumni transform their junior colleagues into active and useful graduates?
- ▶ There is much to be said for the partnership between the alumni and their Alma Mater.
- ▶ Alumni Associations are known to create spaces of interaction within a community of people who share a unique experience
- ▶ Alumni of any university bring strength and contribute to their alma mater's reputation.
- ▶ It is , therefore, imperative that we strengthen relations between the alumni, the university, for the benefits of students.

The University Alumni Engagement Model

- ▶ How do you build and sustain mutually beneficial and enduring relationships between the university and its alumni?
- ▶ The University's website must be up and running.
- ▶ It must be available to give information, suggestions, and feedbacks.
- ▶ Promotion of Chairs, Fellowships, Scholarships, awards, etc to promote research and scholarships.
- ▶ Share useful personal experiences with student
- ▶ Self-discipline, character management , soft skills and career choices and opportunities.
- ▶ Serve as role models to authenticate the quality and effectiveness of the teaching, research and service provided by the university.
- ▶ Governing Councils and Alumni Associations

Promoting Revenue Generation and Skills Development

- ▶ The role of the alumni is crucial for the growth and development of not only their universities but also the career enhancement of the students in their former schools.
- ▶ They are vital for revenue mobilization i.e. contribution to Endowment Funds- such as is evident with Harvard and Al Azhar University in Cairo.
- ▶ Fundraisings
- ▶ Placement opportunities for students
- ▶ Professionals amongst them can develop innovative strategies and explore skills relevant to their former universities.
- ▶ Alumni can facilitate the entry of the University into industry networks
- ▶ Facilitate knowledge transfer to improve the university's capacity and reputation nationally and globally.

Immersive Learning and Career-Ready Competencies: Developing a Talent Pipeline

- ▶ How do we get faculty, staff and students to add value to what we do?
- ▶ Engage students to undertake immersive learning in their companies
- ▶ What is also important is that as Teachers/Scholars, we can through skill infusion and immersive learning create better graduates and add valuable feedback to our curriculum as we prepare our products for industry standards of career-ready competencies.

The Future of University/Alumni Relations

- ▶ Leveraging more on our alumni in a knowledge economy also means being more proactive in putting an effective database together.
- ▶ In some countries, student services are provided by specific units or departments of the university.
- ▶ In others, such as France, they are outsourced to specialised organisations such as the CNOUS (Centre National des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires) (National Centre for University and Schools).
- ▶ Alumni relations can now through an alumni database and information system formally connect talents with opportunities- providing fresh graduates with information, choice, flexibility work opportunities
- ▶ Outsourcing alumni database can promote the ways in which university/Alumni engagement are delivered in a global age.
- ▶ The NUC has started the database of full Professors in Nigerian universities.
- ▶ It is high time they also worked with universities to commence a database of Nigerian university alumni nationally and internationally.

The Alumni and Higher Order and Effective Employability Skills

- ▶ The Alumni should be put to better use to explore the skills needed to thrive in a fast-changing world.
- ▶ Targeted higher order and effective employability skills and capacity building
- ▶ The distribution of sections of alumni engagements and employment.
- ▶ Help universities to adopt an integrated competence model of employability that combines occupational attributes into an integrated concept of micro, macro and meta competencies.
- ▶ This view combines technical , vocational knowledge and general support and micro-level competencies with macro-level behaviour and attitude with special consideration for strategies, policies, systems and resources that enhance graduate employability (Wellman, 2010).
- ▶ We should now develop a practical approach to employability and the alumni should take centre stage in this.

Interfacing With the Artisan and Why Skills Matter

