

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, SELF EMPLOYMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated youth empowerment, self employment and enhancement of entrepreneurship in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two objectives and two research questions were used for the study. This research utilized a descriptive design. The population figure consisted of 2,601,772, which included all young people in Rivers State. A sample of 400 was established using the Taro Yamane formula. The research utilized a combination of primary and secondary data. The questionnaire was the instrument used for the study. The instrument was face validated by professionals in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. Furthermore, the reliability value of 0.92 Correlation Co-efficient was obtained for the study. After gathering numerical data, the researcher used percentage to analyze the bio-data of respondents and the research questions of the questionnaire obtained from the field. The findings of the study indicated that acquiring skills is crucial for empowering young people to become self-employed. Among others, the findings of the study also showed that Skill development not only fosters job creation among youth but also increases their chances of gainful employment and encourages interest in entrepreneurship. With these findings, the study recommended among others that the Rivers State Government should partner with schools such as the Rivers State Polytechnic, Rivers State College of Arts and Science, and a range of vocational training centres to provide skill development initiative entrepreneurship programmes such as Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA) and the Songhai Initiative in order to improve youth empowerment and employment in the State.

Keywords: Youth Empowerment, Self Employment, Enhancement, Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been associated with the activities of individuals operating in the private sector with the view that the entrepreneurs must perform the most complex tasks of the business. Although others may work for the owner and manager of the business, it is ultimately the responsibility of the entrepreneur to make sure that the work gets done. However, there is increasing evidence to suggest that the concept and practice of entrepreneurship have a role to play in public sector organizations, as most governments in the world are now becoming more market oriented. Entrepreneurship development goes beyond building a support system for entrepreneurs; it is a strategy of transformation. It also includes fostering public policies that invest in entrepreneurship development to impact positively on the development of the economy.

Empowering Nigerian youth can unlock their potential and contribute to the country's economic growth and social progress. By prioritizing youth empowerment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship, Nigeria can harness the energy, creativity, and dynamism of its young population to drive sustainable economic growth, create job opportunities, and foster social inclusion. Youth empowerment means providing an enabling environment for youths to develop their true potentials so that they can contribute to the development of the society. The major instrument needed to empower youths is education. As already stated, entrepreneurship education gives necessary skills to individuals to make them self-reliant economically and self fulfilled in Nigeria, and indeed in most third world countries.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is experiencing a significant increase in its youth population, accompanied by an elevated unemployment rate among young individuals. A significant number of Nigerian young people do not have access to quality education, vocational training, or programmes aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills. This limits their capacity to gain the essential knowledge and skills required to launch and operate successful enterprises. This results in limited economic prospects, which can fuel social unrest and involvement in illegal activities. Youth crime seems to be one of the most significant issues hindering sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. Despite the various empowerment initiatives implemented by both the federal and state governments to promote youth self-sufficiency and serve as a deterrent to entrepreneurial development, lack of self-reliance appears to remain elevated. The economic difficulties faced by society have led to widespread poverty and malnutrition, which significantly affect the vulnerable youth. They are missing nearly all the essential elements required for a decent standard of living, including stable jobs, nutritious food, quality healthcare, clothing, and accessible education.

Young people facing poverty and unemployment exhibit increased rate of criminal behaviours, and they are also more likely to be involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Many individuals, who lack both formal and informal education, as well as employment due to insufficient funds or inadequate skills, engage in various criminal activities such as theft, pick pocketing, sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, and ritual killings (Obananya, 2022). Numerous studies have been undertaken to explore the concept of youth empowerment as a means to promote self employment and entrepreneurship development. Obananya (2022,P.146) studied "Skill Acquisition of Students and Entrepreneurship Education in Public Universities in Anambra State, Nigeria," and the findings indicated that the private sector's contributions to empowerment focus more on education than economic development, suggesting that education is their primary priority.

Nelson (2020, P.135) studied "Effect of Youth Empowerment Programmes on Youth Unemployment in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State" and the results showed that a sizeable number of beneficiaries (youths) of the programmes are now productively engaged and self-reliant as their income level have risen visibly and can now afford basic necessities of life to some extent.

Nelson (2022, P. 135) made the foregoing findings, through the following methodological procedures such as:

Data were generated through the conduct of interviews with coordinators of the programmes and administration of copies of questionnaire to beneficiaries. Data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while Spearman rank correlation was used to test hypotheses.

Raymond (2022, P.88) investigated "Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Economic Development in Nigeria" and found that in Nigeria, sustainable entrepreneurship has a strong link to long-term economic development. These findings were made in consideration of the following methodological procedures:

Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 135 entrepreneurs was used for the study using infinite population method. Data relating to research question were analyzed with five point likert's scale. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's correlated coefficient at 1% level of significance (Raymond, 2022 P.88).

In spite of the foregoing studies none addressed the levels of youth empowerment, self employment and how to enhance entrepreneurship which this study seeks to address in River State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine how youth empowerment programmes can help encourage self employment and enhance entrepreneurship in Rivers state. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the link between skill acquisition and self employment in Rivers state.
- ii. Explore how soft loans can enhance entrepreneurship in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posited for the study:

- i. To what extent can skill acquisition be linked with self employment in Rivers State?
- ii. How can soft loans enhance entrepreneurship in Rivers State?

Literature Review

Skill Acquisition and Self Employment

Isidore (2016, P.18) investigated "Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition, Psychosocial Factors and Youth's Self Employment in Malaysia" and found that self-motivation had higher influence on self-employment than social influence; though both had significant positive relationships. Isidore (2016) also found that most Malaysian youth graduates had low risk-taking propensity. Isidore (2016), having made the foregoing findings, adopted a survey method and a proportionate stratified random sampling method to collect data from 600

entrepreneurship graduates, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation method.

Okeleke (2017, P. 181) studied the "Impact of Skills Acquisition on Self-Employability Readiness in Delta State, Nigeria" and the findings established that:

Gender and experimental conditions do not have significant impact on self-employability potentials among unemployed graduates. It is evident from the finding that gender and experimental conditions do not have significant impact on self-employability readiness among unemployed graduates. The findings further revealed that there is significant interaction effect of experimental conditions and family background on self-employability readiness. The study also revealed that there is significant interaction effect of experimental conditions and family background on self-employability potentials.

Okeleke (2017, P. 181) in achieving the foregoing findings, adopted the following methodological procedures:

Descriptive survey and quasi experimental pre and post-test control group designs were adopted for the study. Multi-stage and Simple random sampling techniques were used to select 118 participants consisting of 64 male and 54 female participants drawn from three Local Government Areas out of one senatorial district in Delta State. Three research instruments were adapted and used to generate data for the study and they were: Perceived Skill Acquisition Scale (PSAS), Entrepreneur Potential Inventory (EPI) and Business Readiness Index (BRI). Six research questions were raised and six research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Results from the analysis of data indicated that four hypotheses were rejected while two were accepted. The study also revealed that experimental conditions had significant impact on self-employability readiness among unemployed graduates.

Table 1: Types of Enterprises Engaged in by Youths in Rivers State

S/N	Enterprise	Responses	Rank
1.	Tailoring	210(9.72)	1 st
2.	Car and carpel wash	170(7.87)	2 nd
3.	Driving (Taxi, Bus & Napep)	160(7.41)	3 rd
4.	Carpentry	157(7.27)	4 th
5.	Beauty/Barbing salon	154(7.13)	5 th
6.	Petty trading	137(6.34)	6 th

7.	Laundry services	133(6.16)	7 th
8.	Repair of generators	120(5.56)	8 th
9.	Running of business centres	116(5.37)	9 th
10.	Sales and repair of handsets	108(5.00)	10 th
11.	Dying of clothes	105(4.86)	11 th
12.	Vending (News papers & recharge cards)	104(4.81)	12 th
13.	Automobile mechanics	91(4.21)	13 th
14.	Interlocks production/fixing	84(3.89)	14 th

Source: Daniel (2020)

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings of Private Sector’s Contributions to Youth Empowerment

S/N	Contributions	SPDC	UBA	MTN	Men of Means	Remark
1.	Award of scholarship	3.4	1.4	2.0	2.3	Reject
2.	Renovation/construction of classroom blocks	3.5	1.6	1.8	2.3	Reject
3.	Provision of instructional materials to schools	2.8	2.0	2.2	2.3	Reject
4.	Sponsorship of academic competitions	2.7	1.8	2.0	2.2	Reject
5.	Leadership training	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.1	Reject
6.	Skills training and acquisition	2.3	1.0	2.0	1.8	Reject
7.	Sexuality awareness campaign	2.4	1.0	1.8	1.7	Reject
8.	Sponsorship of sports competition and development	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.3	Reject
9.	Provision of sports and recreation facilities	2.4	1.6	2.2	2.0	Reject
10.	Sponsorship/organization of talent hunts	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	Reject
11.	Financial grants for small scale businesses	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.8	Reject
12.	Distribution of starter-packs for artisans	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.0	Reject
13.	Distribution of farm inputs to youths	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.2	Reject
14.	Generous employment of youths	2.3	2.0	1.8	2.0	Reject
15.	Capacity building workshop for school teachers	2.6	1.8	2.0	2.1	Reject
		2.4	1.6	2.0	2.0	Reject

Source: Nnodim, 2014

established so as to fill the gaps that might have been left out in the research. Egide (2023, P.144) worked on “Micro Finance Credit Scheme and Youth Entrepreneurship Performance in Rwanda” and found that:

Fixed pay and salary increased employees' performances. The majority agreed with this opinion while the minority disagreed with it. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, indicating that the independent variable influences youth entrepreneurs' performance at Vision Fund, Rwanda. The regression equation demonstrated that youth entrepreneurs' performance at Vision Fund, Rwanda will always depend on a constant factor of 0.453, regardless of other factors. The majority of respondents agreed that microfinance has an average number of days a borrower needs to pay bills and obligations in specified periods, while minority disagreed. The ANOVA

showed a p-value less than 0.05, indicating that there is no statistical significant relationship between credit limits and collection period and youth entrepreneurs' performance.

Rotimi (2019, P.252) carried out a research on "Impacts of Financial Institutions: Micro Loan among Youths in Kwara State, Nigeria." The study found that a significant impact of microcredit on processes of financial institutions help to reduce poverty indicators in Nigeria. Rotimi (2019) noted that the need for banks in the country to introduce less aggressive mechanisms for profit formed a socialist basis.

Godson (2013, P. 1) conducted a study on "The Impact of Microfinance on the Development of Small Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in the Ledzorkuku-Krowor Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana" and found that:

A significant number of the SMEs have the knowledge of the existence of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) and some acknowledge positive contributions of MFIs loans towards promoting their growth. Other than financial support, it is recommended that microfinance institutions should at all-time give professional advice to SMEs since proper professional advice will inform the lending microfinance institutions whether the amount the SME requested for is too much for the project or less. The study also suggested that seminars and workshops should be organized by the microfinance institutions to educate SMEs on their policies, and judicious use of funds for SMEs and what it takes to assess loans. Also, the microfinance institutions should initiate more developmental projects in order to win the confidence and trust of the SMEs.

Godson (2013, P. 1) achieved the above results by employing the following methodological procedures:

Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting the 70 SMEs and 30 MFIs that constituted the sample size of the research. Structured questionnaire was designed to facilitate the acquisition of relevant data which was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics which involved simple percentage graphical charts and illustrations was tactically applied in data presentations and analysis.

Godwin (2023, P.12) studied the "Impact of Entrepreneurship Institutions on Access to Micro-Financing for Sustainable Enterprise in Aniocha-North Local Government Area in Delta State, Nigeria, and found that entrepreneurship institutions impact entrepreneurs' access to micro-financing and enterprise sustainability in emerging economies. Godwin (2023, P.12) achieved the foregoing by using the following methodological procedures:

This study adopted a descriptive survey research method, gathering data by using a questionnaire that served as the basis for analysis. Regression analysis techniques from the Statistical Package for Social Science were used to test the hypothesis. The study's participants and research population, respectively, comprised of 711 active National Youth Service Corps members from the Aniocha-North Local Government Area in Delta State, Nigeria. Hence, the study recommends, as a policy implication, that entrepreneurship institutions should be established with capacity to provide for micro-finance enterprises, which will guarantee their sustainability, productivity and viability.

Igwenagu (2014, P.13) carried out a study on the "Analysis of the Impact of Micro-Finance Banks on the Performance of SMEs in Nigeria", and observed that access to microfinance significantly enhanced the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. This means that the operation of microfinance banks is an impetus for the performance and growth of SMEs. However, other firm level variables such as business size, business age, business location, loan size, loan maturity etc. are found to have positive effect on enterprises' growth (Igwenagu, 2014, P.13). Igwenagu (2014,P.13) achieved these results by using the following methodological procedures:

The data used were both primary and secondary generated from questionnaires and annual report of 300 randomly selected SMEs that have accessed funds from micro finance banks in Nigeria. These data were statistically analyzed based on the research hypothesis using regression analysis as a tool to determine the relationship.

Russell (2013, P.9) investigated the "Impact of Finance on Entrepreneurship Growth in Nigeria." The study discovered that finance, interest rate, real gross domestic product, unemployment and industrial productivity are significant to entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Russell, 2013). The results also showed a uni-directional Granger causal relationship and suggested that access to finance by entrepreneurs has significant relationship with economic growth in Nigeria (Russell, 2013).

Adekunle (2020, P.69) worked on the "Impact of Microfinance Bank Credit and its Debt Servicing on the Profitability of SMEs in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria," and found that MFBs loans and microfinance banks loans debt service deteriorate significantly the profitability of selected SMEs in the Alimosho local government area of Lagos state. Adekunle (2020, P.69) obtained this result by using the following methodological procedures:

A survey was carried out involving 387 SMEs in Alimosho LGA, Lagos State and information was extracted using a well-structured questionnaire to answer research hypotheses raised. Evidence from the simple linear regression outputs of SPSS was used. Policy recommendations to the Federal Government, commercial banks, Microfinance Banks (MFBs) and the apex bank of MFBs should lighten the terms of lending including increasing the duration of the loans to ease repayment by SMEs; MFBs should adopt flexible requirements suitable for small-scale and medium enterprises as pertaining documentation and other specialized services to engender SMEs growth; MFBs should cover the lacuna of ex-post verification by setting up a digital platform where progress of projects cum businesses for which loans are granted are effectively monitored at lesser costs.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a descriptive design. The approach was employed as the researcher depended on the perspectives and insights of the participants. The young people in Rivers State make up a significant portion of the state's total population. The study's population consisted of 2,601,772, encompassing all young individuals in Rivers State. A sample of 400 was used after the calculation based on the Taro Yamane formula. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. To achieve this, simple random sampling technique was used to select one Local Government Area (LGA) out of the 23 LGAs in Rivers State. All the 23 LGAs were written on papers and wrapped. All wrapped papers were put in a basket for picking. One research assistant was called to shuffle the wrapped papers as well as pick one LGA from the basket. The research assistant picked Port Harcourt LGA for the study. In the instance of this procedure, the researchers purposively picked 400 youth respondents who often came to Port Harcourt Local Government Council for the study. The research utilized a combination of primary and secondary data.

The research employed the questionnaire as the tool for gathering data. The method consists of two components: Part A and Part B. Part A focuses on the biographic characteristics of the respondents, such as sex, age, occupation, marital status and educational qualifications, whereas Part B includes structured questions related to two research questions of the study. Responses to each item were assessed using a 4-point scoring scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) received 4 points, Agree (A) received 3 points, Disagree (D) received 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) received 1 point. The data collection process included administering the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents selected, and collecting them for analysis in this study.

The research utilized face validity. The validity of the instrument was confirmed by distributing the draft version of the questionnaire to the Sociology experts in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Choba. To ensure the study's reliability, the researcher used the test-retest method for the study. The test-retest method was achieved by giving the same assessment to participants two times in Rivers State. The test-retest method demonstrated that the instrument was reliable and safe for use in the study; and it achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.92. After gathering

numerical data from the field, the researchers and their assistants used percentage to analyze the participants' bio data and the research questions obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed for appropriate results in the study area.

Table 3: Biographic Data of Respondents

Demographic Variables		Percentage
Sex		
Males	160	40
Females	240	60
Total	400	100
Age		
20-29 years	150	37.5
30-39 years	80	20
40-49years	170	42.5
Total	400	100
Occupation		
Farming	120	30
Civil Service	30	7.5
Self-Employed	130	32.5
Business/Trading	120	30
Total	400	100
Marital Status		
Single	140	35
Married	120	30
Divorced	40	10
Separated	100	25
Total	400	100
Education Qualifications		
First School Leaving Certificates (FSLCs)	40	10
West African Senior School Certificates (WASSCs) and National Examinations Council (NECO) Certificates	120	30
Bachelor of Art (BA), Bachelor of Science (B.SC), Bachelor of Education (B.ED) Certificates	140	35
Other Certificates	100	25
Total	400	100

Source: Oriji & Kenechukwu (2024), Field Work

The results in Table 3 showed that the study had a total of 160 male respondents which represents (40%) of the retrieved copies of questionnaire. It further revealed that 240 females participated in the study which represents (60%) of the respondents for the study.

The results in Table 3 indicated that 150 (37.5%) of the respondents fell within the age brackets of 20-29years, 80 (20%) of the respondents fell within the age brackets of 30-39 years, 170 (42.5%) of the respondents fell within the age brackets of 40-49 years.

The results in Table 3 showed the occupation of distribution of respondents. It was revealed that 120 (30%) were into farming, 30 (7.5%) were in civil service, 130 (32.5%) were self-employed, and 120 (30%) were in business/trading. The results in Table 3 showed that respondents that were single were 140 (35%), married were 120 (30%), divorced were 40 (10%), and separated were 100 (25%). The results in Table 3 which represented the educational qualifications of respondents showed that 40 (10%) of respondents have FLSCs, 120 (30%) have WASSCs and NECO certificates, 140 (35%) have B.A, B.SC and B.ED certificates and 100 (25%) have other certificates.

Research Question 1: To what extent can skills acquisition be linked with self employment in Rivers State?

Table 4: Skills Acquisition and Self Employment in Rivers State

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Skills acquisition plays a big role in equipping youths to be self employed	120 30%	230 57.5%	30 7.5%	20 5%
2	Skills acquisition enhances job creation among youths	130 32.5%	220 55%	20 5%	30 7.5%
3	Skills acquisition enables youths to be gainfully employed	120 30%	240 60%	20 5%	20 5%
4	Skills acquisition helps youths to develop interest in self-employment	230 57.5%	130 32.5%	10 2.5%	30 7.5%

Source: Orij & Kenechukwu (2024), Field Work

The results in Table 4 showed that 120 respondents, representing 30% of the study respondents SA to items 1 that skills acquisition plays a big role in equipping youths to be self employed, while 230 (57.5%) A, 30 (7.5%) D, and 20 (5%) SD. Also, the results of item 2 indicated that 130 respondents, representing 32.5% of the study respondents SA that the skills acquisition enhances job creation among youths, while 220 (55%) A, 20 (5%) D, and 30 (7.5%) SD. Again, results of item 3 of the same Table 4 indicated that 120 (30%) respondents SA that skills acquisition enables youths to be gainfully employed, 240 (60%) A, 20 (5%) D, while 20 (5%) SD. Finally, the results in Table 4, item 4 indicated that 230 respondents, representing 57.5% of the study respondents SA that skills acquisition helps youths to develop interest in self-employment, 130 (32.5%) A, 10 (2.5%) D, while 30 (7.5%) SD.

Research Question 2: How can soft loans enhance entrepreneurship in Rivers State?

Table 5: How Soft Loans can enhance Entrepreneurship in Rivers State

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	D	SD
5	Soft loans enable youths to start-up new businesses for themselves	180 45%	160 40%	20 5%	40 10%
6	Soft loans play a significant role in helping youths to acquire capital for new businesses	110 27.5%	250 62.5%	30 7.5%	10 2.5%
7	With soft loans youths can become successful entrepreneurs	100 25%	260 65%	15 3.75%	25 6.25%

8	Soft loans help youths to start small and grow big in businesses	180 45%	160 40%	40 10%	20 5%
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Source: Oriji & Kenechukwu (2024), Field Work

The results in Table 5 showed that 180 respondents, representing 45% of the study respondents SA to item 5 that soft loans enable youths to start-up new businesses for themselves, while 160 (40%) A, 20 (5%) D, and 40 (10%) SD. Also, the results of item 6 indicated that 110 respondents, representing 27.5% of the study respondents SA that soft loans play a significant role in helping youths to acquire capital for new businesses, while 250 (62.5%) A, 30 (7.5%) D, and 10 (2.5%) SD. Again, results of item 7 of the same table indicated that 100 (25%) respondents SA that with soft loans youths can become successful entrepreneurs, 260(65%) A, 15 (3.75%) D, while 25 (6.25%) SD. Finally, the results in Table 5, item 8 indicated that 180 respondents, representing 45% of the study respondents SA that soft loans help youths to start small and grow big in businesses, 160 (40%) A, 40 (10%) D while 20 (5%) SD.

Discussion of Findings

This study critically examines youth empowerment, self employment and enhancement of entrepreneurship in Rivers State. In the research question one, the findings of the study revealed that skills acquisition plays a big role in equipping youths to be self employed, skills acquisition enables job creation among youths, skills acquisition enables youths to be gainfully employed and skills acquisition helps youths to develop interest in self-employment. This is supported by Okeleke (2017, P. 181) who studied the "Impact of Skills Acquisition on Self-Employability Readiness in Delta State, Nigeria," and the findings established that Gender and experimental conditions do not have significant impact on self-employability potentials among unemployed graduates.

Also, in the research question two, the findings of the study revealed that soft loans enable youths to start-up new businesses for themselves, soft loans play a significant role in helping youths to acquire capital for new businesses, with soft loans youths can become successful entrepreneurs and soft loans help youths to start small and grow big in businesses. These findings are in consonance with Rotimi (2019, P.252) who in his study titled "Financial Institutions: Micro Loan among Youths in Kwara State, Nigeria" found a significant impact of microcredit on processes of financial institutions help to reduce poverty indicators in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, the study established that skills acquisition plays a big role in equipping youths to be self employed, skills acquisition enhances job creation among youths, skills acquisition enables youths to be gainfully employed and skills acquisition helps youth to develop interest in self-employment. Also the results revealed that soft loans enable youths to start-up new businesses for themselves, soft loans play a significant role in helping youths to acquire capital for new businesses, with soft loans youths can become successful entrepreneurs and soft loans help youths to start small and grow big in businesses. Therefore, if the results and recommendations produced in this research are adequately followed, they will yield positive results and help youths to refrain from criminal activities, and embrace entrepreneurship in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Rivers State Government should partner with schools such as the Rivers State Polytechnic, Rivers State College of Arts and Science, and a range of vocational training centres to provide skill development initiative entrepreneurship programmes such as Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), and the Songhai Initiative in order to improve youth empowerment and employment in the State.
2. Rivers State Government should provide young people with different business grants, loans etc., including those provided through its Microfinance agencies, with the aim of fast-tracking self-employment for economic growth that would improve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the State.
3. Private sector enterprises should partner with Rivers State Government to train unemployed youths on different technical skills and graduate programmes that are sustainable for youths' self-reliance and fulfilment in the state.

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