

Education

'Imperative of leadership, skills devt in curriculum'

By **Iyabo Lawal**

EXPERTS in the education sector have emphasised the need for government to include leadership and skills development in the curriculum, especially at primary and secondary education levels.

Doing this, they noted, will enable schools produce fit-for-purpose and future-ready learners that would not only create wealth, but be solution providers, even while still in school rather than job seekers after graduation.

They made this known at a one-day workshop organised by a private learning education centre, Teesas Education, in Lagos.

The hybrid event, which was organised in conjunction with FranklinCovey, a global education resource training centre, was attended by school owners and administrators, drawn from within and outside the state.

They discussed leadership development in children, with a focus on the transformative "leader in me" programme, which addresses school development in three core areas: culture, leadership, and academics, and enhances student devel-

opment by coaching them to look towards becoming effective leaders now and in the future.

Chief Executive Officer of Teesas Education, Mr Osayi Izedonmwem, said the programme was designed as a paradigm shift from the old ways, where school activities are given new perspectives that will shape learners' orientations, thinking, and

focus to be life-ready leaders right from school.

He pointed out that the era where students are taught and prepared primarily to pass exams for the purpose of getting paid employment rather than becoming wealth creators and leaders in their chosen fields is no longer relevant in today's world, where new knowledge of doing things is evol-

ving daily.

"In today's world, there is a huge transformation from the industrial age to the knowledge economy and to have our learners prepared for that knowledge economy we need to develop their social, emotional, and leadership skills."

Izedonmwem noted that this identified gap is what the "leader in me programme"

aims to address by inculcating seven habits of highly effective people in children as they pursue their academic journey.

He said this was responsible for the difference between the technologically advanced countries and Africa, with the former leading the latter with a wide gap.

Giving insight into the programme, the Regional Director of partnering FranklinCovey Education, Mr Justin Permenter, noted that there is a shift from the industrial to the knowledge economy, and every country must move along so as not to be left behind.

Permenter, who spoke virtually at the event, shared insights from the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs 2023 Report that suggested that analytical and creative thinking, technological literacy, empathy and active listening, teamwork, leadership, and social influence are some of the skills needed for future workers.

He also made reference to McKinsey's Future of work skills report, released last year, in which cognitive, interpersonal, self-leadership, and digital skills were

identified as four categories of high-demand skills in the world of work across sectors of the economy.

He emphasised that it is important that children, especially in Africa, are also trained in those skills like their peers in developed countries to make them fit for the 21st century economy.

In their separate contributions to the sub-theme of the workshop, "Implementing socio-emotional leadership development in schools using leaders in me," the discussants acknowledged that there is a need to re-evaluate Nigeria's school curriculum to incorporate contents that will make learning more practical than theoretical.

The discussants, namely: Dr Femi Ogunsanya, who is the founder of Oxbridge Tutorial College; Mrs Modupe Adeyinka-Oni, the Executive Director of Standard Bearers School, as well as Mrs Monica Lewis, Head of Pegasus Schools, said incorporating the leader in me programme in the school curriculum would make a difference.

Specifically, Ogunsanya noted that the leader in me programme was about restoring lost values in youths.



Vice President, Human Resources and Admin, Teesas Education, Mr Tom Ighalo (left); Executive Director of Standard Bearers School, Mrs Modupe Adeyinka-Oni; Chairman and Founder, Teesas Education; Mr Osayi Izedonmwem; Founder, Oxbridge Tutorial College, Dr Femi Ogunsanya, and Head, Pegasus Schools, Mrs Monica Lewis, at the Teesas Leader in Me Programme.

New City varsity gears up for academic activities as NUC visits

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

ATEAM from the National Universities Commission (NUC) recently visited the New City University (NCU) campus situated on kilometre 50, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, Aiyetoro, Ogun State, to inspect the resources and physical facilities of the faculties of Law, Communication and Media Studies, as well as Basic and Medical Sciences, before issuing operational license for the commencement of academic activities.

The team, led by the Acting Director, Establishment of Private Universities (DEPU), Samuel Adejoh, comprised the Acting Director, Academic Planning, Abubakar Girei, Deputy Director, Masterplan and Infrastructure, Mustapha Rasheed, Bart Okoho and Chinegwu Kemchukwu.

In his remarks, Adejoh noted that the establishment of private institutions across the country have significantly increased access to university education.

He explained that the visit to the university was for the purpose of assessing and inspecting the quality of physical resources and infrastructure put in place before the commission gives the go ahead to the university to commence degree programmes.

He lauded the founder for his efforts in building an institution of quality standard, noting that the provision of state-of-the-art facilities is commendable.

Adejoh also assured of the commission's readiness to support the university in its task of providing qualitative education, and producing graduates who would be able to compete globally.

He said: "While giving you the support you desire to make your dreams come to fruition, NUC is committed to quality."

The founder, Akin Akingbesote, expressed confidence that once the university secures its operational license, it would spare no efforts in providing a world-class learning

environment that nurtures academic excellence, fosters innovation and promotes personal growth.

He described the school as an institution committed to shaping the future of education by empowering students to excel in a rapidly evolving world.

Akingbesote said: "Our university is founded on the principles of integrity, inclusivity and social responsibility. We believe in the power of education to transform lives and build a better future for all. Our commitment to diversity and equity is unwavering and we are dedicated to creating a campus culture that celebrates differences and values in every individual," he said.

Similarly, Chairman, implementation committee of the new institution, Prof. Ralph Akinfeleye, said all is set on the part of the management to deliver qualitative learning experience to prospective students.

He assured the NUC team that the institution would not deviate from the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) offered by the commission.

Akinfeleye said the university is particularly interested in linking the town and gown by engaging excellent professors across fields and experts from the industry to provide quality training to the students.

"We want to promote academic activities of relevance, and in doing this, we must mindful of the yardstick laid by the NUC. Our objective is to promote education for growth and not education for gain. We want to promote what we called pedagogical purity in all the courses where student would not just learn and leave, but equipped to make positive impacts in the society."

On affordability, Akinfeleye said due to the current economic challenges in the country the university has put in place seamless payment plans to ease the financial burden on parents and guardians.

Organisation rewards students with best homegrown innovations

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

COMMITTED to providing opportunities for young innovators in Nigeria to thrive, STEMite Zone Fair, a non-governmental organisation, has rewarded students across public and private schools in Lagos for showcasing homegrown innovations that address some of the challenges they face in their daily lives.

About 35 schools across the state exhibited over 120 science projects at the first-of-its-kind fair, which focused primarily on promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for participants aged between eight and 16.

The winners in the primary, junior and senior secondary categories were rewarded with N500,000 each, while the first and second runners-up received N250,000 and N100,000 each, respectively.

Founder, STEMite Zone Fair, Ibukun Elebute, said the exhibition was to spark curiosity in the minds of young Nigerians to develop innovative solutions that would address some of the local challenges, rather than rely on innovative solutions from abroad.

She noted that the initiative to empower young children through the STEMite platform was due to her passion

to address the huge gap in innovative skills among secondary school students.

Elebute, who is based in Canada, said Nigeria must be intentional about empowering the young generation with innovative skills, and the confidence to explore, innovate, and transform their future. This, she said, must begin from the grassroots.

She said: "Our vision is not just to hold a science fair in Lagos, but to ignite a scientific and creative revolution that would impact the world coming out from Nigeria. Our ultimate goal is to see a wave of homegrown innovations springing from the fertile minds of these young scientists and creators over the next decade."

"We aspire to create an environment where Nigerians feel empowered to think critically, question, innovate, and find STEM solutions to everyday challenges," Elebute added.

Beyond the cash prizes, she noted that the winners would have the opportunity of attending a fellowship programme with some tech companies across the world to help them become experts in their chosen field.

On his part, Senior Special Assistant on Basic and Secondary Education to Lagos State governor, Eniola

Opeyemi, applauded the organisation for the innovative event, assuring of government's readiness to collaborate with the firm to empower more students.

He said: "Seeing beautiful projects by the students, we are going to support this initiative and we are craving that you do more of this to find solutions to the existing problems in the society."

A STEMite ambassador, who doubles as a Biology teacher at the Jagunmolu Girls Senior Grammar School, Temitope Adekunle, said her students displayed innovative solutions that solve power challenges, recycling; using plastic bottles to make chair and table for reading, and colour psychology which focuses on how colour affect the feeling of people when wearing a particular colour.

One of the judges at the event, Oluwaseun Kayode, commended the students for demonstrating high-level skills.

Kayode, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Schoolinka, said: "The truth is that from all the things I have seen so far, the students are building projects from their personal experiences. They are building solutions to the challenges that they are facing themselves, which is very good."