

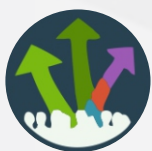


FOUNDATION FOR PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA

**NIGER DELTA
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PATHWAYS
PROGRAM**

NDYEP

***A Framework & Model for
Youth Employment
Intervention***



**NIGER - DELTA
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PATHWAYS**

ABOUT **PIND**

The Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND Foundation) is a Nigerian non-profit corporate social enterprise established in 2010 by Chevron Corporation as a regional strategy for addressing the multi-faceted and deep-rooted social and economic problems in the Niger Delta rather than the symptoms. PIND focuses on economic development and peace building because one is not possible without the other. PIND works to achieve this by growing networks of international and local partners to collaborate in developing and implementing innovative program solutions that will result in stability and increase in income and employment in the region. This would, in turn, contribute to our end goal of reducing poverty and conflict in the Niger Delta.

NDYEP

The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) aims to contribute to addressing the critical issue of youth unemployment in the Niger Delta, specifically youth job readiness, workforce development, and job creation in three priority states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers. The vision of the programme is to develop models of youth job readiness and workforce development that offer young people opportunity to secure sustainable jobs or develop enterprises by developing and providing quality training that equips them with market tailored skills.

The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways Program is implemented by PIND Foundation with initial funding by The Ford Foundation.



FORD
FOUNDATION

Introduction

Youth unemployment is one of the most significant development challenges facing governments and development partners in Nigeria today. Unemployment in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta affects all categories of youth, regardless of their educational attainment. The sustained levels of unemployment and lack of economic opportunities, especially for youth, has been linked to the many conflicts and youth restiveness experienced in the region. PIND understands this connection between lack of economic opportunities and violence and its significance in this very fragile environment.

Therefore, in 2017, it initiated the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) Program, a pilot project that actively targets unemployed, out-of-school and vulnerable youth. NDYEP model of skills development and transition to jobs is demand driven and competency focused, strengthens the ecosystem of actors while modeling multiple pathways to employment, including formal waged jobs and entrepreneurship. The success of the program is predicated on partnerships with key stakeholders in the youth employment ecosystem.

This document describes the key features underpinning PIND's NDYEP model and provides very useful guidance to governments and policy makers, youth-serving organizations, private sector companies and other stakeholders interested in implementing an evidence-based model for youth training and employment interventions.

Context

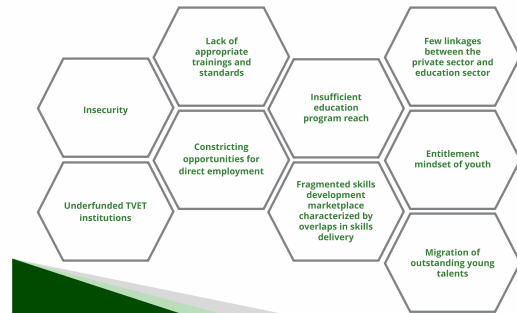
Nigeria currently suffers from a “labor market trifecta” of jobless growth, an expanding population and unemployable youth. Despite decades of reasonably steady economic growth, the Nigerian economy has simply not generated the jobs required to sustain its large and growing youth population. Of significance is the fact that more than 55% of the youth in the labor force are either unemployed or underemployed in the Q3 of 2018 and the challenge of youth unemployment cuts across all categories of youth regardless of their educational attainment. Skills mismatch remains a prime challenge confronting Nigeria's workforce development with a marked misalignment of labour supply and labour demand. It is also the case that unemployment continues to be significantly higher amongst women (26.6%) compared to men (20.3%) as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in the third quarter of 2018.

The Unemployment Challenge Is Deeper In The Niger Delta

In the midst of its rich endowments of people and nature, the Niger Delta in recent years has witnessed conflicts and youth restiveness, which have impacted significantly on Nigeria's economy and environment. This situation has often been linked to sustained levels of unemployment, poverty and lack of economic opportunities especially for youth. This is, in part, because the oil sector being the dominant economic sector provides only 0.01% of Nigeria's total jobs.

The Niger Delta, paradoxically, has recorded some of the highest rates of unemployment in Nigeria with unemployment rates above the national average. For example, in the third quarter of 2018, both Akwa Ibom and Rivers States reported the highest unemployment rates at 37.7% and 36.4% respectively, compared to the national average of 23.1% for the same period. This was also the case for the corresponding period in 2017. The result is that, many young persons, especially those at the grassroots, suffer in the midst of plenty, and unless they are given better orientation and linked to economic opportunities, the crisis will keep escalating. Addressing this issue is probably the most significant development challenge for governments and actors at the national and subnational levels, and especially in the Niger Delta.

Challenges Confronting Nigeria's Workforce Development



Taking action through NDYEP

PIND understands the critical connection between lack of economic opportunities and violence and the imperative of taking action now.

It is for this reason that in 2017, PIND initiated the Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) program to actively target youth in the region, and address identified systemic constraints through an evidence-driven and demand led approach. The aim being to develop and pilot models of skills training that not only equip youths with market relevant technical skills in key growth sectors, but supports their transitioning into employment and entrepreneurship as pathways to work. The project actively targets unemployed, out-of-school and vulnerable youth including young women and people with disabilities.

Through the program, at least 3,000 youth would be equipped with the relevant sector-specific and soft skills in ICT, construction and agriculture in the target States. Thereafter, promote adoption and scale up across the 9 States of the Niger Delta.

Goals of NDYEP



Develop models of job-readiness or workforce development that provide 3000 marginalized young men and women in the Niger Delta the opportunity to secure sustainable jobs through quality training that prepares them with market relevant skills

Pilot Areas: 3 of the 9 Niger Delta States
(Akwa Ibom, Abia and Rivers States)

Scale up Area: All 9 Niger Delta States.
Starting in Delta State in 2020
Focus Sectors: ICT, Agriculture
and Construction and Renewable
Energy



Drawing on lessons learnt over the last decade of active work in the Delta, PIND understands clearly that traditional modes of youth workforce development, especially as it relates to technical and vocational skill training, have not been very successful. As such, innovative methodologies that engage youth outside of traditional training models and adapted to our specific context in the Niger Delta might be more successful. This is at the core of the NDYEP model and is indeed relevant for any transformative program with any chance of being adaptable and scalable within the region.

UNDERSTANDING THE NDYEP MODEL

Key features and philosophy of approach

Evidence-led and demand-driven

Nigeria's educational system currently produces school leavers and graduates that

do not have the right skills set and therefore are not fit for the jobs that are available. NDYEP responds to the actual need within the labor market by carrying out systematic research, analysis and understanding of how this employment market functions to determine specific occupations and skill sets currently in demand and those technical and soft skills that are currently being supplied and how they are being delivered. The research findings are critically evaluated and help to determine the priority sectors for skills development in each State given the peculiarities of their economy and the intervention designs are tailored accordingly.

Competency focused

NDYEP focuses on developing the requisite skills and knowledge for successful job performance by the youth in the relevant sectors. Rather than focusing on traditional skills-building and training, NDYEP takes an innovative approach to developing a competent and confident workforce and a corps of local entrepreneurs that can bolster employment in the States. The project seeks to promote a competency-based approach to technical and vocational training through collaboration with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The plan is to develop a competency framework that will underpin, and ultimately lead to accreditation of training programs and participants following the national skills qualification framework developed by NBTE, especially for the building construction skills.

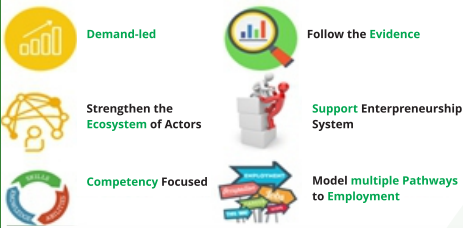


Trainees at a
Computer Hardware
Maintenance Training

Modeling multiple pathways to employment

The economies of the pilot States are largely agrarian – which reflects the national economy – and therefore agriculture is the largest employer

Model and Philosophy of Approach



of labor, followed by the civil service. Though oil producing, there are very limited employment opportunities within the oil & gas sector and others such as manufacturing and industrial, within the three pilot States.

In view of this, NDYEP is developing multiple pathways as models to simultaneous skills development and job creation in these States. One broad pathway, which combines the development of technical skills with soft skills would lead to formal, waged employment. A second approach builds the pathway to self-employment through the development of dynamic entrepreneurship skills either in Agribusiness or ICT that would ultimately transform the youth who graduate from the program into a new class of job creators.

Strengthening the Ecosystem of Actors

Employers, Job seekers, Policy Makers and Trainers are key stakeholders of NDYEP. The model is working to strengthen coordination and facilitate positive engagements among these actors to ensure the development of an enabling environment for focused skills training and development that leads to employment and entrepreneurship. Technical support will be

provided to relevant government agencies and training institutions to promote adoption and scale up of the model.

Advisory Committee
Member,
Engr. Suleiman Yusuf
of National Board
for Technical Education
on Project Site Visit



Entrepreneurship plus support system

Most of the traditional skills acquisition programs fail to deliver sustainable results because they do not pay enough attention to what happens to entrepreneurs that they produce post-training. NDYEP is working round this pitfall by developing a robust infrastructure for post-training support that assists the young entrepreneurs/emerging startups navigate the very harsh conditions of the business world that cause business failure. This support system is built on a foundation of business advisory services, market linkages, and access to finance both as investment or working capital for growth and expansion.

Underlying Theory of change

The formal education system and skills acquisition programs do not pay enough

attention to skills that are in demand by employers. Similarly, little or no consideration is given to the personality traits and social skills that enable graduates of these programs to function effectively and harmoniously in the work place as well as to whether they are able to find jobs or not post-training.

The hypothesis therefore is that if we are able to develop a good understanding of market relevant skills and are able to design and develop integrated technical and soft skills training programs complemented by entrepreneurship training where appropriate, and with a strong focus on post training support, then we are better able to assure graduates' transition to sustainable jobs either in formal, waged employment settings or in entrepreneurship.

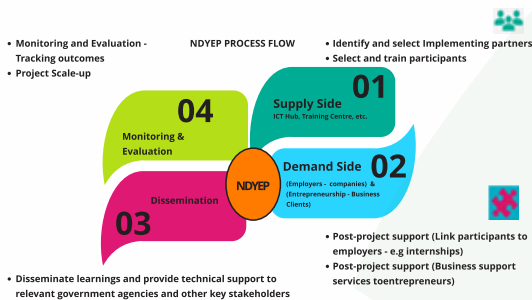
The NDYEP program works on the broad logic that:

If sector targeting and skills development content can be sufficiently tailored to local economic context, then a combination of;

- 1 Tailored training for young people which includes technical and soft skills and entrepreneurship
- 2 Support into employment or entrepreneurship and
- 3 Capacity support to existing training organizations

Will move a cohort of young people from unemployment into employment; stimulate the local economy through upskilling enterprise and strengthen the ecosystem of actors and their interactions.

Using the NDYEP approach that engages local stakeholders, empowers actors, and generates evidence, it will provide the basis for scale up to benefit further youth cohorts in the States.



Guidance notes in developing a youth skills training for employment program in the Niger Delta.

Drawing on the experience and lessons from PIND's NDYEP program, the identification and adoption of an appropriate framework to train and support unemployed youth into work requires a basic four-step process:

Step 1: Understand the Market

Map the ecosystem of stakeholders, understand the key constraints to youth employment- conduct a labor market assessment. It is important to understand that youth are not necessarily a homogenous group. Each sub-group (rural, urban, educated, not educated etc.) has its own set of constraints that hinder its entry to the labor market. Therefore, a sustainable intervention needs to be informed by a clear understanding of the market and evidence from field studies. This will ensure that interventions are demand led, relevant to youth aspirations and facilitate transition to work and income earning opportunities.

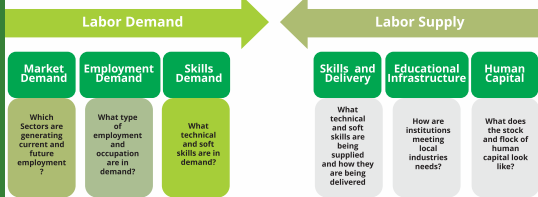
PIND first conducted a study to understand the dynamics of the ecosystem, the key drivers and barriers of youth labor absorption in the Niger Delta, types of skills in demand and existing and potential mechanisms for delivering skills training in ways that emphasize the transition into employment or entrepreneurship.

Insights from this study showed that entrepreneurship is increasingly perceived as a viable career pathway by youth and is a key driver for youth labor absorption. In

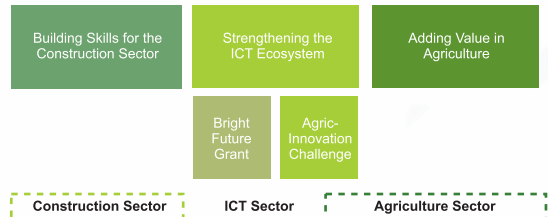
similar vein, flexible, non-traditional types of employment such as freelance, project-based work are becoming appealing to youth.

sectors with potentials for growth and youth employment (shown below) and designed interventions to train youth in the project States in these areas.

Analytical Approach: Assessing the Economics of the Labor Market



Summary of Pilot Interventions



Conducting this study helps with identification and selection of sectors with growth potential and prospects for youth labor absorption. It will improve targeting of youth, identification of required skills and mechanisms for bridging skills gaps. It provides an informed basis for intervention design.

In selecting specific industry segments, some labor market supply and demand factors are considered. Factors such as potential of the segment to absorb youth labor, generate income in short term, potential to leverage existing private sector dynamism and potential for increased investment into the sector were considered.

The market assessment is usually the beginning of the stakeholder engagement process which must actively involve participants on both the demand and supply sides, governments and the youth.

Additional considerations on the supply side were; alignment of the skills with youth career interest or types of employment appealing to youth (aspirational) and potential for inclusion of vulnerable populations and gender.

Step 2: Select sectors and interventions that respond to the constraints

On the basis of analysis and stakeholder engagements and through a process of co-creation, specific industry segment or value chain component of priority areas are selected and program intervention designed:

The PIND studies indicate that many universities and other educational institutions are interested in aligning their needs with the private sector. However, universities, polytechnics tend to upgrade curriculum every 4-5 years and are reportedly not always well-informed by

The NDYEP project identified three key

reportedly not always well-informed by prevailing employment demand requirements, leaving cohorts of students at risk for being unprepared for the current needs of the labor market. So private sector employers still complain that young graduates do not have a balanced education between practical training and theory. This is a gap that needs to be bridged.

This gap in many cases is being filled through nontraditional technical and vocational education programs that are bridging the knowledge and skills gap. In ICT for instance, a number of tech-hubs, maker spaces and platforms have emerged and are providing youth access to market-relevant technical skills. NDYEP recognizes the increasing role of these channels and is integrating them in its programming.

Demonstration
of a Computer
Numeric Control
Machine at
**Clintonel Innovation
Centre, Aba.**



Flexibility is Key

PIND/NDYEP adopts a flexible approach and continues to explore opportunities in other sectors/industries specific to each State. For instance, it is exploring opportunities for youth skills development and employment in the leather industry in Abia State.

Step 3: Implement using a demand led (end-to-end) approach

As mentioned in previous sections, PIND NDYEP project is implemented with certain core principles and processes in mind. All interventions implemented under the NDYEP project are guided by the following: Market-driven: Takes into account market dynamics, including both supply and demand factors, as well as the roles of other market actors within the sector,

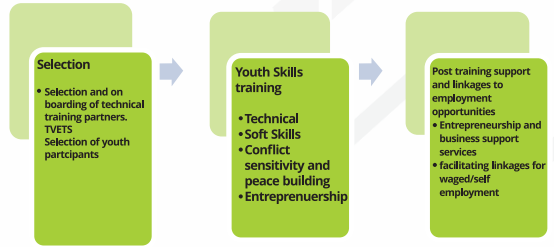
so that the program strengthens the market rather than distort it.

Sustainable: Prioritizes strengthening linkages between market actors and building their capacity to provide services, rather than program staff providing services that will end after the program is over.

Inclusive: Aims to be inclusive of groups that are traditionally excluded, including vulnerable youth, especially young women and people living with disabilities. Targets 40% inclusive participation in all programs

The implementation model involves

- Hands-on training in market relevant technical skills
- Integrating soft skills, conflict sensitivity and peace building in technical training
- Working with the private sector, implementing partners and networks to support transition to work and enterprise. Providing additional entrepreneurship training, business support service /advisory
- Building an ecosystem of players
- Documenting and disseminating lessons
- Providing technical support to key stakeholders and governments



NDYEP Key Implementation Phases

Hands-on tiling by a female trainee



Step 4: Evaluate the project impact

To ensure that the NDYEP program is a good use of resources and of young people's time, the program evaluation is built into the program design. Findings from the program evaluation provides the basis to adjust program design to better meet objectives for future projects. This would be used to inform potential program participants and stakeholders (including funders) on the effectiveness of a particular program design, and could be the basis for a new government policy.

NDYEP's experience suggests the following broad lessons for creating successful approaches

1. Approach

Ensure that the goal of the initiative is clearly focused on employment and/or business competence outcomes, not simply training.

This means at the design stage including components for post-training support to trainees into sustainable employment / business.

2. Partner and trainee selection

Aim to work with organizations embedded in the sector as actors / entrepreneurs, and engage them in a transparent, competitive selection process. Wherever possible, aim to work to the strengths of selected organizations, drawing on existing relationships, specializations, and opportunities. In turn, engaged organizations should invest early in building relationships with other stakeholders in the sector who have an interest in seeing the field strengthened, especially in terms of skilled labor.

Similarly, trainees must be selected in an open and transparent process on the basis of clear criteria.

3. Curriculum

The training curriculum should be integrated in two dimensions:

i) Integrating soft skills and business skills into a strong technical skills training for the sector.

Soft skills should be relevant and adapted to the context, for example including peace building approaches in the Niger Delta.

ii) Integrating a strong hands-on approach and practical elements for the technical skills and the soft skills, enabling students to apply their learning in practice at each step.

i) Conduct focused outreach prior to trainee selection: liaise with specialist organizations who understand the needs of and have links to people with disabilities;

ii) Design women-specific advertising for work sectors which do not normally include women;

iii) Consider showcasing women trainees in non-traditional sectors from the early batches to act as role models and mentors for subsequent batches of women entering the sector.

4. Inclusion

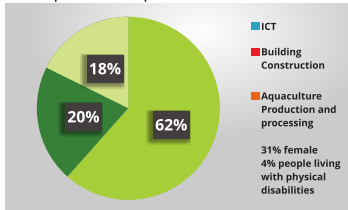
Set out to achieve an inclusive process which supports people with disabilities and contributes to gender equality. To do this:

Program Results



1,637 Participants Accessed NDYEP facilitated learning opportunities across the three-project States

1,468 Participants (89.6%) Completed the technical training programs, soft and entrepreneurship skills.



645 or 43.9% Linked to waged employment or are starting own enterprises. 392 Waged Employment 253 Self Employed.

99 or 6.7% went through job - job apprenticeship/internships

49.4% remaining from the first phase to be linked to opportunities will receive additional post training support - business advisory, entrepreneurship training and access to finance.

PIND is open to partnership with States for NDYEP model adoption



Learn More

www.pindfoundation.org

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Vist or Call

Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta

📍 25 Jimmy Carter Crescent, Asokoro
Abuja – Nigeria
+234 (09) 291 0454

Economic Development Center Warri

📍 No. 1 PIND-EDC Drive
Egbokodo-Itsekiri, Warri, Delta State
08172401598, 09030808794

Economic Development Center Port Harcourt

📍 50 B/C, Omerelu Street
GRA Phase 1, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
08110521802, 09034577987



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