

OkowaPlus

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB CREATION OFFICER

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Real People. Real Stories. Real Change

*The amazing success stories of youths whose lives are being transformed through **STEP** and **YAGEP***

Savouring and Sustaining the Fruits of Job Creation



As at date, the State Government's flagship job creation programmes – Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) - have successfully run the first cycle, that is, 2015 round, with the harvest of first fruits – STEPpreneurs and YAGEpreneurs. Resulting from this success, the Delta State job creation model (STEP and YAGEP) is eliciting a lot of interest from a wide range of stakeholders, specifically, the target clientele (unemployed youths), private sector establishments, non-governmental organisations and international development partners.

In line with the promise of His Excellency the Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, to run the job creation programmes on a continuous basis, the second cycle, that is, 2016 round, is ongoing. With a target intake of 1,000 unemployed youths, the 2016 cycle of programme implementation is actualizing some reform measures aimed at improving training and organization and streamlining the support for enterprise start-up.

The completion of the first cycle and commencement of the second cycle marks a critical juncture for stock-taking, reality checks and lessons learning. To help our reflection and forward-looking, we should answer the questions: What has worked? Which are the winning factors? How do we build upon the first fruits?

In retrospection, I can reveal, from my vantage position as the day-to-day manager of the job creation programme, that the critical drivers of success of STEP and YAGEP are namely;

- the accuracy in selecting the intended target beneficiaries
- the all-encompassing nature and high quality of training;
- enforcement of discipline among the trainers and trainees;
- integrity of the enterprise starter packs;
- and good handling of complaints, that is, efficient feedback response mechanism.

These effectiveness drivers would not have existed at all without the fundamental success enablers, which are the innovative institutional framework, conducive

working atmosphere and sound political leadership provided by Governor Okowa.

Moreover, the success drivers are underpinned by the fact that, from a philosophical standpoint, the programme design and implementation are trainee-centred, service-oriented and results-based. In the same wise, every design element and implementation measure is focused primarily on turning unemployed youths into entrepreneurs, leaders and managers. The STEP and YAGEP training and mentoring process aim beyond raising entrepreneurs, to producing leaders and managers that have high levels of personal responsibility and personal effectiveness.

As we savour the first fruits of these programmes, it is equally vital to ponder about sustaining and enhancing effectiveness and impacts. Hence, the thematic focus of this edition of the OkowaPlus is very auspicious and functional. The rationale for the thematic focus is to respond to the present information and enlightenment needs of stakeholders as they reflect on the past and look forward.

So, in line with the goal of enlightening stakeholders with programme updates, this third edition of OkowaPlus features, among others, testimonies and action illustrations of STEPpreneurs and YAGEpreneurs regarding their respective enterprises. In addition to the demonstration effects, the testimonies and illustrations have powerful motivating influence on new and upcoming entrants – features that are critical for justifying public spending, sustaining public confidence and eliciting greater stakeholder support.

Beyond the testimonies and illustrations, however, the decisive factor in sustaining the fruits of STEP and YAGEP is the extent to which the trio ingredients of implementation success are upheld – quality, integrity and discipline. In all, reflecting on the past and looking to the future, I make a clarion call to all stakeholders to see it as a collective responsibility to preserve these success ingredients.

Prof. Eric Eboh

Chief Job Creation Officer

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THE VISION

Strategic Wealth Creation
and Provision of Jobs for
all Deltans

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aimed at Political/Social
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Agricultural Reforms
and Accelerated
Industrialisation

Relevant Health and
Education Policies

Transformed Environment
through Urban Renewal

Government Distributes 270 Fish Smoking Kilns to Women Cooperatives

Following the recent distribution of 183 fish kilns to various women groups in Delta North and Central Senatorial Districts, 87 more have been donated to women cooperatives in Delta South.

The fish smoking kilns were distributed to the women by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer at three centres in Ughelli, Warri and Koko under the Production and Processing Support Programme (PPSP) of the Job Creation Scheme.

The 87 women cooperative groups were drawn from the 87 wards in the eight local government areas of the senatorial district. Presenting 44 fish smoking kilns to the women groups from Isoko North, Isoko South, Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas in Ughelli Township Stadium, Prof. Eric Eboh, the State's Chief Job Creation Officer said the distribution of the kilns to women groups across the State was to empower women at the grassroots in fulfilment of His Excellency, Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa's promise of prosperity for all Deltans.

Prof. Eboh, represented by the Executive Assistant to the Governor on Political Matters, Mr. Jerry Erugdegde, explained that the smoking kilns are grants to the women meant to engage them meaningfully in fish processing as well as to boost fish production in the state.

At Government House Annex, Warri, where women cooperative groups from Warri South, Warri South West and Burutu Local Government Areas received 33 kilns, the women were charged to take their business seriously by making judicious use of the equipment so as to generate income for themselves and their families. Prof. Eboh urged them to sustain the existing cooperation among themselves to enable them benefit from other government programmes and policies targeted at women in the State.



Beneficiaries of fish smoking kilns in Warri

Mr. Erugdegde was also at Koko where he distributed 10 fish smoking kilns to women groups in Warri North Local Government Area with a call on them to use the equipment to create job and wealth through fish processing and to meet the high demand for fish in Delta State and Nigeria.

Responding on behalf of the women

groups, Mrs. Felicia Babudor from Patani Local Government Area, expressed their gratitude to Governor Okowa for his commitment to the welfare of women and the poor, pledging that they would make good use of the fish smoking kilns to generate wealth for themselves and their families.

2016 Cycle STEP/YAGEP Trainees undergo Entrepreneurship and Business Management Training Course

The 2016 cycle of STEP/YAGEP trainees have been charged to see themselves as change agents.

The State's Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof. Eric Eboh, gave the charge while flagging-off the Entrepreneurship and Business Management Training (EBMT) course organized for the trainees by his office.

Unlike the 2015 cycle, the training programme commenced on Friday 11th November, 2016, and

was simultaneously held in four locations across the State. According to Eboh, the purpose of the new arrangement was to bring the EBMT closer to the training/ internship centres of the trainees. The course ran for four consecutive Fridays and was wrapped on Friday, December 02, 2016.

In his opening remarks, the Chief Job Creation Officer advised the trainees to maximise the training offered to actualise their goals and aspirations in life. He pointed out that the overall purpose of the

training was not just to transform them into entrepreneurs but leaders and managers as well.

In separate remarks, Peace Umukoro from Isoko South in Catering and Confectionery (STEP) and Joel Egwuelu from Ika North East in Fishery (YAGEP) expressed their happiness for the opportunity to be

part of the programme. They said their participation has delivered them from lives of unemployment and stagnation, promising to work hard to become successful entrepreneurs.

The trainees were taken through modules in "Coping with Business Risk and Challenges," "Product

Branding," "Meaning and Functions of Business Plan," "How to Prepare a Business Plan," and "How to Keep Basic Business Records and Accounts." Others include "How to Finance Your Business," "How to Partner with other Businesses" and "How to Start and Grow your Business."

Ensure Job Creation Data are "Valid, Verifiable and Useable," Prof. Eboh tells MDAs



Workshop on collation and review of job creation achievements in MDAs

A two-day workshop for data collation and review of job creation achievements of the Delta State Government through its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) has been held, with a call on the participants to ensure that job creation data is "valid, verifiable and useable."

The workshop organized by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer in Asaba had participants majorly Directors of Planning, Research and Statistics (DPRS) with their Schedule Officers, drawn

from selected MDAs that have jurisdiction relating to job creation either through direct or indirect jobs. Addressing them, the Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, stated that the directive from Governor Ifeanyi Okowa "is an innovation to measure and track job creation by the MDAs in line with international best practices."

He said one of the instruments for job creation is the data template approved and adopted by the State Executive Council to establish a benchmark and systematic

framework for measuring and tracking job creation in the MDAs. He noted that job creation numbers is a very important economic statistics indicator to gauge the pulse of an economy over a given period of time.

Prof Eboh listed the four categories of jobs created in the State to include direct skilled jobs, indirect skilled jobs, direct unskilled jobs and indirect unskilled jobs. While describing direct jobs as jobs created through the programmes of the State Government, he explained that indirect jobs are jobs created in projects and activities implemented by contractors engaged by the State Government. He then called on the DPRSs to collaborate to harmonize statistical figures generated in other matters of Government's policies and programmes in order to avoid disseminating inconsistent and conflicting statistics to the public.

Responding, some of the participants expressed satisfaction for the organisation of the workshop and gave assurances that they would be proactive to ensure that statistical figures are harmonized.

The highpoint of the event was the presentation of job creation data by MDAs. It would be recalled that in the First Year Performance Report of the Okowa-led administration, the State Government created a total of 17,173 direct and indirect jobs.

Commercial Cultivation of Crops on the Way, as Delta State Government Signs MoU with Agri All Africa

To boost food production and drive economic diversification of the State, Delta State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Agri All Africa, a South African company engaged in commercial farming, for commercial farming of rice, maize, cassava and vegetables.

At the MoU signing ceremony on October 24, 2016, Prof. Eboh, reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to the agricultural sector, adding that food sufficiency is one of the cardinal programmes of the S.M.A.R.T agenda. According to Eboh, "we are confident that what we are doing today is an important step in the right direction. In many years to come, we shall be reaping from the seed that we are sowing today."

He explained that under the terms of the agreement, Agri All Africa has the mandate to invest in commercial farming and to support contract grower projects for maize, rice, cassava and vegetable. The company is also expected to carry out agronomic investigations and feasibility analysis to enable value chain development in the production of rice, maize, cassava and vegetable.

The State Government, on the other hand, is to identify and facilitate access to arable land for the cultivation of the commodities, siting of associated processing facilities and provide critical infrastructure in the identified farmland. Prof. Eboh expressed satisfaction that the State Government and Agri All Africa have voluntarily agreed to the terms by signing the MOU.

Responding, Mr Dirk Hanekom, the Chief Executive Officer of Agri All Africa,



affirmed that his company is involved in commercial agriculture, adding that the business and investment environment in the State have been a deciding factor for them.

On his part, the Executive Assistant to the Governor on Investment and the facilitator of the partnership, Mr Paul

Nma, pointed out that the partnership would expose the State to investors in agriculture. The signing of the MOU was witnessed by the Director-General, Delta State Capital Territory Development Agency, Chief Clement Ofuani and the Business Development Manager of Agri All Africa, Mr Stanley Winterbach, among others.

STEPreneurs, YAGEPreneurs Shine at Delta Silver Jubilee

The Delta State 25th anniversary celebrations have come and gone, but memories of that epochal event continue to linger in the minds of all those who witnessed it. At the Economic and Investment Summit, which was the highlight of the celebration, the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer like other Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government was on ground to showcase its achievements and the potential investment opportunities in Delta State.

The Job Creation Exhibition Stand was the cynosure of all eyes as beneficiaries of the State's Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme, Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme and Production and Processing Support Programme showcased their skills and industry. A total of 13 STEPpreneurs, three

YAGEPreneurs and two PPSP beneficiaries brought their products for exhibition and marketing.

The products on display included locally made fashion outfits such as men's suits, ties, shirts, senator's suits, dinner gowns, skirts, blouses, beaded jewellery and ornaments, cosmetics and home care products. Others were hair barbing services, makeover, catering products, interlocking stones and a conduit wiring of a prototype two-bedroom flat. Also on display were poultry, piggery, crops produce and packaged cassava products.

The State Governor, Senator Ifeanyi Okowa, conducted other dignitaries including Vice-President, Yemi Osinbajo; Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal and Minister of Finance, Kemi Adeosun round the exhibition stand.





Kester Akpobome, a STEPreneur exhibits his products to dignitaries at the Investment and Economic Summit during the State's silver jubilee celebrations

Impressed with what he saw, Governor Okowa commended the *STEPreneurs* and *YAGEPreneurs* for being good ambassadors of the State Government's Job Creation Scheme.

Some of the visitors to the Stand also expressed satisfaction with the State Government's commitment to tackling

youth unemployment through STEP and YAGEP, urging the Government to put measures in place to provide market linkages and value chain development.

In separate remarks, Kester Agbogidi Akpobome, a *STEPreneur* in electrical installations and repairs and Festus Onyeachole, a *YAGEPreneur* in poultry

said their participation in the State Government's Job Creation Scheme has transformed them from being job seekers to entrepreneurs and wealth creators. They expressed their gratitude to Governor Okowa for the opportunity to become self-reliant, while urging other unemployed youths to take advantage of the unique opportunity provided by the various job creation programmes of the State Government.

Speaking with newsmen, the Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof. Eric Eboh, said it was a great privilege for the Job Creation Office to be part of the historic silver jubilee celebration. According to him, the success stories of the 2015 cycle of *STEPreneurs* and *YAGEPreneurs* would inspire government to do more for the youth of Delta State, adding that the engagement of the private sector is a key element that would ensure sustainability of the scheme.

***YAGEPreneurs* Hail Okowa, Describe YAGEP as Panacea to Youth Unemployment**

Beneficiaries of the Delta State Government's Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) have described the programme as a panacea to youth unemployment in the State.

This was the view of some of the beneficiaries when Governor Ifeanyi Okowa visited YAGEP Cluster Farms located at Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) in Ibusa, Oshimili North Local Government Area and Ekpan-Ovu in Ethiope East Local Government Area as part of the activities that marked his one year in office. In separate interviews, they expressed their gratitude to the Governor for the foresight in tackling youth unemployment through the Job Creation Scheme.

The Ekpan-Ovu YAGEP Cluster farm had six male and two female poultry farmers. Speaking on their behalf, Emmanuel Akporin, the coordinator of the centre said they were glad to be among the first beneficiaries of the programme, lauding the State Government for this innovation in youth empowerment.

Akporin disclosed that each *YAGEPreneur* was given a fully equipped poultry pen,

200 broilers and 400 point of lay birds, 150 bags of feeds and other technical support during start off. One of the *YAGEPreneurs*, Lucky Imodge Irikefe, a graduate of Mechanical Engineering, explained the rationale behind the elevated platform which he constructed for his broilers. He said the platform was to protect the birds from dirt and diseases in order to make them healthier and bigger than other birds their age.

Addressing the *YAGEPreneurs* and the audience, Governor Okowa expressed his gratitude to the Chairman of the Local Government Council and leaders of Ekpan-Ovu Community for their cooperation

and support of his administration's Job Creation Scheme.

While stating that Monitoring and Mentoring are part of the design for the Job Creation Scheme, the Governor tasked the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer to ensure effective mentorship of the *YAGEPreneurs* and to provide the farmers with marketing support to help them succeed in their enterprises.

Governor Okowa promised to engage more youths who are interested in fishery, poultry, piggery and crop production as well as those willing to acquire vocational skills in the next cycle of the programme.



Chinweike Nwankwo, a YAGEPreneur explains a point to Gov Okowa at ADP, Ibusa

He enjoined youths in the State to imbibe the right attitude and to project themselves as responsible leaders of tomorrow at all times. The Governor was conducted round the farm by the State's Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh.

The Governor also visited ADP YAGEP Cluster Farm in Ibusa comprising 21 YAGEPreneurs with 18 of them in poultry, two in fishery and one person in piggery. Testifying, Blessing Nwokolo said the training and the starter stock she received from the State Government have changed her life positively, adding: "with these my

future is bright. I plan to recycle the funds. I have sold off my broilers at maturity, and I have made new order from CHI Farms, Ibadan."

A piggery farmer, Chijioke Anana, affirmed that he received eight in-pigs and two boars from the State Government and would receive the sum of ₦303,000.00 to be paid in three instalments to feed them for six months. The YAGEPreneur in Fishery, Chiweike Nwankwo said the programme is a clear indication of the State Government's commitment to take youths off the streets, calling on other

youths to seize the opportunity to become self-employed.

Governor Okowa, said his visit had encouraged and reassured him that the Government was on the right path with the Job Creation Scheme. He advised them to maintain a high level of hygiene by clearing their surroundings and by keeping their pens neat at all times to keep their stock healthy and disease free. He expressed satisfaction with their conduct, advising them to learn from one another in order to improve their productivity.

YAGEP Cluster Farms, Transforming the Agricultural Landscape of Delta State

The Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), one of the Job Creation Programmes of the Delta State Government, is aimed at encouraging youths to engage in agriculture by equipping them with the requisite knowledge, facilities and starter stocks to begin their own enterprises. As part of the efforts in realizing this lofty objective, YAGEPreneurs are co-located in cluster farms across the state. To a great extent, co-locating them in designated cluster farms has been of immense benefits to the YAGEPreneurs as well as to the Government.

In the 2015 Cycle, the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer established a total of 19 cluster farms for 151 YAGEPreneurs engaged either in poultry, fishery or piggery. The cluster farms are located in Aboh Ogwashi, Ubulu-Uku, ADP-Ibusa, Alisime, Eko-Ibada (Amukpe), Camp 74-Asaba, Edjoppe, Ekpan-Ovu, Koko, Kpakhiana and Mereje. Others are sited in Obiaruku, Oghara, Otor-Iyede, Otor-Udu, Owa-Alero, Ozoro, Umusam and Uro-Irri. Each cluster farm has functional facilities such as well-equipped pens for livestock, a borehole, water regulator, pumping machine, a generator and other farming items.

According to Prof Eboh, the cluster farms have the potential to transform the agriculture sector of the State's economy. He listed some of the advantages of the cluster farms as;

- improved programme targeting as a result of high concentration of many

YAGEPreneurs in one location;

- collaboration, peer-learning and cooperation among the YAGEPreneurs
- cost effectiveness as it enables the provision of infrastructure and services to them in a single location;
- provision of a platform to reach YAGEPreneurs with external support including agricultural extension services, farm management advisory, common marketing support, joint procurement of input and training/capacity building activities.

The Chairman of Camp 74 Fish Farmers Association, Mr Nwanneka Upright, lauded the efforts of the State Government in establishing some of the YAGEPreneurs in clusters, adding that the eight YAGEPreneurs located in Camp 74 have a lot to benefit. He said the advantages outweigh the challenges, stressing, "if you want to walk fast, walk alone, but if you want to walk far, walk together."

Mr Nwanneka said with about 252 fish farmers in one location, research findings and experiences are shared with one another to enable individual farmers cope with challenges as fish diseases, feeds and



CJCO, Prof. Eric Eboh inspects a piggery PEN at ADP Ibusa

best practices in fish farming that could boost their productivity. According to him, cluster farming encourages members to organize themselves into cooperative societies of 10, 20 or 30 persons to enable them access loans, buy feeds and fingerlings at cheaper rates.

While stating that cluster farming attracts interventions/aids from government, non-governmental organizations and foreign donor agencies, he explained that the cluster has received lots of interventions from the State Government in the form of loans, grants, solar-powered energy, a bridge, a utility van amongst others.

He told reporters that the fish smoking kilns donated to the camp by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has helped members to go into fish processing thereby providing good market links, reducing wastages and poor pricing by buyers.

Persons with Disabilities Join STEP, YAGEP

The Delta State Job Creation Programmes, Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), have received another boost with an additional fifty (50) trainees comprising Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

A one-day Orientation Course was organised for them by the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social Development at Songhai Delta, Amukpe on Tuesday, December 13, 2016.

Declaring open the Orientation Course, the Honourable Commissioner for Women Affairs, Social and Community Development, Rev. Omatsola Williams, said their inclusion into the Job Creation Scheme is in fulfilment of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's promise of prosperity for all Deltans, regardless of their status.

The Women Affairs Commissioner affirmed that the Orientation Programme was to enlighten all the participants in the programme including the trainees, trainers and interpreters towards smooth implementation in order to achieve the desired results.

She pointed out that the 50 beneficiaries were evenly drawn from across the State on the basis of two (2) per Local Government Area and on cluster to cluster basis irrespective of birth, tribe, religion, social status, circumstances and health condition.

She disclosed that this first batch of 50 PwDs engaged in STEP/YAGEP will be trained in their chosen trades ranging from Information Communication and Technology (ICT), Hairdressing, Carpentry, Fashion Design, Fishery, Catering/Confectionery and so on.

According to Mrs Williams, the beneficiaries consist of 25 physically challenged persons, 13 deaf persons and four ex-lepers who would receive varied trainings in their choice enterprises while eight vision impaired persons who had earlier received training in Lagos State under the sponsorship of the State Government will be empowered to begin fishery enterprises.



A cross section of PwDs

She explained that the training programmes for the beneficiaries range between 3-6 months depending on the trade, using the Community Base Vocational Rehabilitation (CBVR) Model Approach in which each trainee is attached to a relevant trainer within his/her respective communities of residence.

She also said that the services of interpreters have been engaged to interface between the trainees and their trainers to make the training sections for the deaf more effective, stressing that those of them in the same locality and in the same trade would be clustered to one trainer to facilitate their learning. She added that they are to resume January 9, 2017 after the Christmas break to begin their training programmes.

She harped on the activities of the State Government geared towards the welfare of PwDs to include:

- Maintenance of persons affected with leprosy across the State;
- Annual sponsorship of vision impaired trainees of Delta State origin to Nigeria Farm Craft Centre for the blind in Lagos State;
- Regular rescue, evacuation and rehabilitation of mentally challenged destitutes across the State;
- The recent set up of a ten member Persons with Disabilities Steering Committee placed on a monthly stipend to oversee the affairs of PwDs in the State;
- Purchase and regular distribution

of various types of mobility aids and appliances to the needy and physically challenged persons in the State and

- Collaboration with relevant NGOs and other government agencies on issues relating to the welfare of PwDs in the State.

The State's Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof Eric Eboh, reiterated the State Government's commitment to the welfare of PwDs, adding that the STEP and YAGEP are to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills required to make them self-reliant and business managers.

Prof Eboh reaffirmed that they would be given starter packs after their training period to begin their own enterprises and would be paid a monthly stipend of #10,000.00 within the three to six months training duration and for another three months gestation period after they start their businesses. As the pioneer set of PwDs, he charged them to make good use of the opportunity to better their lives by being of good conduct.

Responding on behalf of others, the State Chairman of PwDs, Comrade Isaac Obruch, lauded the kind gesture of the State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, for running an all-inclusive Government emphasizing that, "Governor Okowa is transforming disability to ability." He tasked his co-trainees to take the training programme seriously and make the State proud of them.



R-L, Samuel Ochuko, Danielson Chwukuyem, Ethor Edomero and Bradouyai Augustine, beneficiaries of 2015 cycle giving their testimonies

OkowaPlus: Changing Lives, Shaping Destinies

The Job Creation Scheme is no longer a concept; it is a reality and we have results to show.

BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH AND LOVETH ANGOZI

On September 28, 2016, the excitement in the Conference Hall of Songhai Delta, Amukpe in Sapele Local Government Area, was palpable as the 2016 cycle of the State Government's Job Creation Scheme kicked off with aplomb. The joy and enthusiasm of the participants reached fever pitch upon the arrival of our amiable and hardworking Governor, Senator, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa to perform the

formal inauguration ceremony.

However, the ceremony soon turned into a celebration of sorts when four graduates of the 2015 cycle stepped forward to tell their success stories. It was a very sobering and moving moment; their stories erased any lingering doubts about the wisdom and efficacy of the Job Creation Scheme. Indeed, if the 2016 batch of trainees needed any form of motivation they got it in full measure.

Samuel Idijighere Ochuko, a fashion designer from Ughelli South Local Government Area was the first to deliver what was truly a "life changing" testimony; one that may have elicited tears of joy from some in the audience.

He said: "After I received my starter pack and that wonderful, surprising cash, I went straight to establish my business in Warri. I printed complimentary cards and shared them to anyone I saw wearing a



Keep up the good work', Gov Okowa seems to be saying to Bradouyai

suit with an opening at the back. I told them I could make something better than the one they were wearing. Not too long, calls started coming in and, to the glory of God, as many of them that came to me, I satisfied them.

"A man recommended me to a Nigerian who lives in the United Kingdom, who then recommended me to others. As I speak to you now, I have four customers patronizing me from the UK. One of them recommended me to the Vice Chancellor of the Delta State University. I now make his clothes. Last week, three schools gave me a contract to sew their school uniforms."

Amidst thunderous applause, Ochuko added that he also wanted to show his appreciation to His Excellency, the Governor. "Your Excellency, after receiving the starter pack, I went straight to the market to assess the cost of the starter pack.

After that assessment, I was filled with joy when I realised the cost of what you have invested in me. That night I prayed and made a vow that the proceeds from my first job will be used to appreciate you. Secondly, I made a vow that 10 per cent of the fee from my first apprentice and the drink presented will be used to appreciate you, my Governor. Sir, in fulfilment of my vow, here are the items."

Humbled by the gesture, Governor Okowa appreciated Ochuko's gifts but advised him to use those gifts to thank and glorify God. "I want something that will beautify your life the more," the Governor remarked. "Give the ten per cent that you have brought to me to the pastor of your church and he will bless you. You have done well but you are going to reap more out of it when you dedicate your business to God."

Another testifier, Danielson

Chukwuyem, a poultry farmer, from Ika South Local Government Area narrated his experience.

"After graduating from school, there was no job so I became a taxi driver. One day, I saw an advertisement calling for application into the Delta State STEP/YAGEP programmes. I was interested and I applied. Luckily, I was taken and trained. At the end of the training, I was empowered with 600 birds, 150 bags of bird feeds, a poultry pen with battery cages and other items. Your Excellency, it will shock you that in less than 7 months, I have over 800 birds. In addition, I have a crop farm. I am a product of Governor Okowa's good thinking."

In her testimony, Ethor Odomero, a YAGEPpreneur in crop production from Isoko North Local Government Area, told the gathering that the Job creation scheme has "transformed my life."

"I was trained and empowered through YAGEP and also given a



Danielson Chukwuyem in his poultry



Ethor Odomero-crop farmer



Samuel Ochuko in his shop



Austine Bradouyai displaying his wares

reasonable amount of money to lease a land and I planted cassava. Today, to the glory of God, I have started processing my cassava to improved cassava flour and fufu flour. I receive calls from every part of the country to supply fufu flour. After seven years of joblessness, I am now employed and have also employed two persons as well."

antidote to unemployment in the State.

Finally, Bradouyai Augustine, a native of Burutu Local Government Area who was trained in fashion designing and tailoring said: "I graduated in 2010 and was jobless for five years. I came across this programme and keyed into it by

W h i l e appreciating the Delta State Government and Governor for this "great initiative," she urged and encouraged the youth to embrace the Job Creation Scheme, adding that it is the

going for fashion designing and tailoring because I have passion for fashion. Thereafter, I was empowered to start my own business. To God be the glory, my business is doing very well. During the six-month training, we were paid monthly. With that money I was able to register my business with the Corporate Affairs Commission. I have also opened an account with First Bank. I have my business running in Asaba. Presently, I am working on my own label. This is an initiative that makes one work for oneself without pressure from a boss."

Following the wonderful testimonials from the beneficiaries of the 2015 cycle of the STEP/YAGEP, the Governor congratulated them and other beneficiaries of the 2015 cycle, urging those in the 2016 cycle to emulate their good examples.

Profiles

*It is a truism that greatness can be achieved through different ways. Some persons have greatness bestowed on them, while others acquire greatness through sheer determination and hard work. The latter could best describe some STEPpreneurs and YAGEpreneurs who have distinguished themselves in their chosen enterprises. Among the numerous success stories recorded so far from the beneficiaries of 2015 Cycle of the Delta State Government Job Creation Programmes, **Bridget Apodor**, a STEPpreneur and **Joshua Asaboro**, a YAGEpreneur stand tall among their contemporaries. Driven by the passion to excel beyond the means made available to them, they have displayed great enthusiasm coupled with distinctive innovations as young entrepreneurs in less than one year of starting their businesses.*

We spoke to them on their journey so far.

'Okowa Has Done Something Great for the Youth'

Bridget Apodor is a Cosmetologist and a Beauty Therapist. She hails from Bomadi Local Government Area and is a graduate of Economics from Delta State University, Abraka. As an entrepreneur, she is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Chevonne Skin Therapy and Spa located at Shop 2, 23 Road Market, Off 4th Avenue, Festac Town, Lagos State. Currently, Bridget has nine (9) products, comprising skin care and household products to her credit.

How did you get into this programme?

I was hired to input data in the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer. Coincidentally, I had applied to be trained in Cosmetology. I was fortunate to be admitted into the programme.

Why did you choose Cosmetology?

I have passion for beauty, skin care and make-up. I want to make people beautiful, happy and fulfilled.

For how long were you unemployed?

I was unemployed for six years after graduation from the university. I was in and out of private jobs for those years without a steady means of livelihood. I was discouraged and confused. But thanks be to God, I was prayerful. Hearing God's word encouraged me and I believed that someday there would be a change. Suddenly the change came. It was a drastic change. The opportunity came; my husband came; the training came. I was trained for three months by the Delta State Government at "Body and Mind", Asaba.

How did you go into production of your products?

After the three months training, I had something to do because the Government trained me, but I decided to train further in the production of these products. Being that I use my home as my business address, with the sum of ₦115,000.00 I received from the State Government and the support of my husband, I registered somewhere in Lagos where I was taught how to produce all the products I exhibited at Delta State Economic and Investment Summit.

Speak on your Brand Name, "Chevonne".



Bridget Apodor working on a client

I was inspired by the knowledge acquired during the Entrepreneurship and Business Management Training for trainees as well as the knowledge I received in Lagos. I can say my success is based on them. At present, I am working with my lawyer to register Chevonne Skin Therapy and Spa with Corporate Affairs Commission. I have Chevonne Lotion; Facial Cream; Shower Gel; Antiseptic; Air Freshener; Dish Wash among others. I have good patronage. In fact, the business is growing.

Tell us more about your enterprise.

I have clients I am working on. I use my equipment, which is my starter pack, at home. There is money in the business. Clients come for facial treatment, massage, pedicure, waxing as well as for my cosmetic products. In Lagos, shop rent is expensive more than it is in Asaba. I am working hard to be fully established. I want to open a spa where I can have a reception and all the units in a spa. Then, I will employ people to man the units and apply to Government to train other people. By the special grace of God, I shall realize this in 2017.

Can you then say Governor Okowa's Job and Wealth Creation Policy has impacted positively on you?

Yes! For six years, I was jobless and I was not meaningfully engaged, but Dr. Okowa has given me reasons to laugh. People say Okowa has not achieved anything, but I stand to counter it. That is not true. He has done something great for the youth. I am a testimony. I encourage other unemployed youths

to key into these programmes. Through Senator Okowa's Government, I have realised that the Government can do a lot for its people. His Government is the best I have experienced. I am so excited!

Your Future Plans

I want to make Chevonne Skin Therapy and Spa and my products household names in the world of beauty therapy.

'I Discovered Myself During the Training'

Joshua Asaboro is a YAGEpreneur in poultry business. He studied Business Information System at the University of East London in the United Kingdom. On his return to Nigeria after his studies, he was trained in Poultry and is now the Managing Director of Joshboro Ventures located at Ajarho, Opposite Anglican Church in Ughelli. Surprisingly, he has grown his business within a very short time and has six people working with him. Joshua speaks on his take on the State Government's Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP).

What informed your choice of poultry as an enterprise?

I chose poultry because I had some experience in poultry before now. Being an entrepreneur has been my passion. I had always aspired to work for myself and to own an enterprise. So immediately I saw the application form, I was interested and applied to be trained in poultry.

With what did the State Government start you up after the training?

I received 200 broilers, 400 point of lay birds, 150 bags of feeds, a poultry pen with battery cages and monthly stipend for three months. I was established in a cluster farm at Udu.

What progress have you made?

My enterprise is growing and I am expanding. I have increased my broilers to 1,250, while my laying birds are now 1,380. The layers lay 35-40 crates of eggs daily. I have been able to relocate from the YAGEP Cluster Farm at Udu to a personal site. Six persons work with me, precisely three permanent staff, two corps members and a student on industrial training (IT).

Your progress is quite remarkable. How have you been able to achieve all these within a short period?

Actually, I got support from my family and I also obtained a loan from a cooperative society in addition to the starter stock I received from the State Government. The course on Entrepreneurship and Business Management Training was also inspiring. The training was an insight on how to go about running one's own business, an added advantage as it reminded me about business ethics and best practices in business management. I discovered myself during the lectures on "Individual



Joshua Asaboro working in his poultry

Responsibility" and "Personal Effectiveness" during the Orientation Course.

What is your assessment of the State Government's YAGEP?

I am in agreement with the State Government's vision on agriculture. Agriculture is one of the solutions to youth unemployment, economic diversification as well as overcoming the present economic recession in the country, but the Government has to enlighten the youths that agriculture is not an easy road. So many of them are coming into the farm for the first time. The pressure is very high. Some did not know how to care for the birds. Youths in agriculture require lots of support and mentoring for the enterprises to survive.

Future Plans

I want to diversify, expand and seek support from Government.

INTERVIEWS BY GERTRUDE ONYKACHUKWU-UTEH

More Success Stories

Name: Ubara Othuke

LGA: Isoko South

Enterprise: Piggery

Shop Address: Otor-Iyede Cluster Farm, Isoko North Local Government Area

Testimony: Piggery is a very interesting and viable business. It has been a good experience. A sow can farrow a minimum of eight piglets and I had the range of 6-11 piglets per farrow. They have all farrowed; I am about to restock. I was given 8 in-pigs and two boars, but I now have 60 pigs after seven months. By June next year, I should have more than 100 pigs.

Future Plans: Expansion! I want to own a giant farm and diversify into poultry and fishery.



Othuke Ubara feeding his pigs

Name: Garrand Joy

LGA: Isoko South

Enterprise: Fishery

Shop Address: Otor-Iyede Cluster Farms, Isoko North Local Government Area

Testimony: The programme has been positive so far. Experience sharing in the cluster farm has been rewarding even though challenging. I have sold off my starter stock; I am about to restock.

Future Plans: I want to expand, own my land and dig my fish pond.



Joy Garrand standing by her fish pond

Name: Grace Mrakpor

LGA: Ughelli South

Enterprise: Fashion Designing and Tailoring

Business name: Arems Design

Shop address: 16, Lady Stella Oghoro Street, Asaba

Testimony: The training brought out the hidden talent in me. Within five months of practice, I am already working on a wedding gown. I have three apprentices. With this business, I have been able to support my family.

Future plans: To become an international designer.



Grace Mrakpor with her trainees

Name: Emordi Blessing Ifeanyichukwu

LGA: Oshimili North

Enterprise: Catering and Confectionary

Shop address: 6, Nwanze Obi Odogwu Street, Asaba

Testimony: It has been great; it gave me hope of a means of livelihood without searching for a job. I am in partnership with another STEPreneur, Karen O. Arugbayi, and we have branches in Warri and Port-Harcourt.

Future plans: To own a bakery and to employ at least 10 persons



Ify Blessing Emordi making confectionary

Name: Precious Edafeadhe

LGA: Isoko North

Enterprise: Fishery

Shop Address: Otor-Iyede Cluster Farm

Testimony: It has been a great help to me. I can say I am employed and I now pay my bills. It is financial freedom for me. Within six months, I have grown from 2,000 to 6,000 fishes. Cluster farming has promoted partnership and networking.

Future Plans: I want to expand, leave Government land to my own land.



Precious Edafeadhe feeding his fish

Name: America Omamuzo Fredrick

LGA: Isoko North

Enterprise: Fishery

Shop Address: Otor-Iyede Cluster Farm

Testimony: I have done my first season, now in the second. The knowledge gained was rich; I have the capability to train others. I have improved financially and that has helped my family. I have grown from having 2,000 fishes to 5,700 fishes.

Future Plans: To acquire a land for farming



America Omamuzo Federick at his fish farm

Name: Victor Ubieghan

LGA: Ughelli North

Enterprise: Electrical Installation and Repairs

Shop Address: 22, Oteri Road, Ughelli

Testimony: Being an engineering graduate, participating in STEP was an added advantage. The four-Step Adjustable Ladder in my starter pack has been very useful to me.

Future Plans: Looking forward to expanding and to employing a sales girl while I work in the field.



Victor Ubieghan at work in his shop

Name: Akpophre Festus

LGA: Patani

Enterprise: Electrical Installation and Repairs

Shop Address: 22, Oteri Road, Ughelli

Testimony: There is prospect. I have done five major jobs. I network with other electricians who sometimes sublet their contracts to me.

Future Plans: To diversify, especially into mobile internet services



Festus Akpophre at work in his shop

Name: Winifred Nworji

LGA: Oshimili South

Enterprise: Hairdressing and Makeover

Business name: Nifre Beauty World

Address: 52, Isieke street, Asaba

Testimony: It has been both challenging and educative. It has helped me financially.

Future plans: Grow my business and expand to accommodate other aspects of beauty therapy.



Winifred Nworji at work

Name: Lateef Bolarinwa

LGA: Non-Indigene

Enterprise: Tiling

Shop Address: 10, Udumoto Street, Ekan

Testimony: I have been having jobs and it has been rewarding.

Future Plans: I want to grow and expand.



Lateef Bolarinwa

Name: Dike Mary

LGA: Aniocha North

Enterprise: Poultry

Business name: May Farm

Address: ADP Cluster Farm, Ibusa

Testimony: I am happy to be a poultry farmer. The training equipped me with knowledge in poultry business. Agriculture is one of the keys to employment.

Future plan: To establish a personal farm on a large scale.



Mary Dike collecting eggs from her poultry farm

Name: Oma Cynthia Ehire

LGA: Sapele

Enterprise: Decoration and Event Management

Business Name: Omas Event

Shop Address: 73, Akintola Street, Sapele

Testimony: The training opened my eyes to other aspects of entertainment such as makeover and catering. With the money made from events, I have expanded my business. It has been wonderful. I am training six persons currently. In 2014, I never saw myself to be where I am today. I am excited and fulfilled. I decorated the Conference Hall at Songhai Delta, venue of 2016 cycle Orientation Course.

Future Plans: I see myself doing decoration and event management for the Presidency.

Name: **Chiweike Nwankwo**

LGA: Oshimili North

Enterprise: Fishery

Address: ADP Cluster Farm, Ibusa.

Testimony: It is fun and excellent. As you can see, I am already expanding. I was given 2,000 juveniles; I now have 5,000 fishes.

Future plans: I want to go into fish processing



Oma Cynthia Ehire, and her staff putting up decorations



Chiweike Nwankwo

Name: **Stanley Idietakare**

LGA: Ughelli North

Enterprise: Poultry

Address: ADP, Ibusa

Testimony: I have made progress. The programme has impacted my life positively in terms of knowledge and experience.

Future plan: To own a personal farm. I plan to engage an assistant as I expand.



Stanley Idietakare feeding his chickens

Name: **Kingsley Mordi**

LGA: Oshimili North

Enterprise: Interlocking

Business name: Kings & Rehoboth Limited

Address: 1, Oniawa Street, by Ogbeweille Roundabout, Ibusa

Testimony: Though challenging, I am happy. The orientation programme contributed 90% to my success, while the field work is 10%. I own two factories. I was given 100 moulds to start, but I now own 2,000. From 25 kerbs I have moved to 240 kerbs. I have three trainees and I am a resource person to

community based NGOs.

Future plan: I plan to own the best interlocking business in Nigeria.



Kingley Mordi at work

Name: **Avwerosuo Omojevwe**

LGA: Ughelli South

Enterprise: Catering and Confectionary

Business name: A & E Catering Services

Address: 14, Uche Okonkwo St., off DLA Road, Asaba.

Testimony: I was unemployed, but I am now engaged and it has helped me to contribute to the upkeep of my family. I am already training one person to assist me.

Future Plans: I want to develop, grow and expand into cake decorating



Avwerosuo Omojevwe at work

Name: **Akpomreta Akpobome**

LGA: Ughelli South

Enterprise: Fashion Designing and Tailoring

Business Name: Dunamis Fashion World

Shop Address: 5, Okere Road, Warri

Testimony: I am grateful to God for this empowerment to own a business. My finances have improved and I have customers regularly. I have two apprentices and two employees.

Future Plans: I want to expand, open other branches, empower other youths and be one of the best designers in Nigeria.



Akpobome Akpomreta at work

Name: Faith Ozadhe

LGA: Ethiope East

Enterprise: Bead Making

Shop Address: Opp Jarolak Hotel, Osubi, Warri

Testimony: I am making progress though it has been very challenging.

Future Plans: To grow my business and be a major outlet for sale of bead accessories.



Faith Ozadhe at work

Name: Authentic Ojuwa

LGA: Ukwuani

Enterprise: Computer Hardware Maintenance and Repairs

Shop Address: 77, Ekeruche Street, Obiaruku

Testimony: It has been good. Aside my academic qualification, the technical knowledge and skills have added to my profile. I am getting money from it.

Future Plans: Grow my business and to open a computer school where I can train youths in software and hardware technology.



Authentic Ojuwa carrying out repairs on a computer

Name: Ojo Oguntayo

LGA: Non-Indigene

Enterprise: Barbing

Address: 20, Egbenonwu Street, off Iziokpor Road, Obiaruku

Testimony: I am making money gradually.

Future Plan: I want to expand



Ojo Oguntayo grooming a client

Name: Kingsley Ikodudu

LGA: Isoko North

Enterprise: Poultry

Address: Hephzibah Farms, Otor-Owhe

Business Name: Hephzibah Farms.

Testimony: I have been able to increase my layers from 400 to 784 which lay a total of 19 crates of eggs daily. I also have 100 table size broilers sold at #5,000.00 to #6,000.00 weighing between 5-6kg. A night watchman and two attendants are on

my payroll.

Future Plans: By next year, I want to increase my layers to 1,500.



Ikodudu Kingsley at his poultry farm

Name: Frances Enyi

LGA: Aniocha South

Enterprise: Poultry

Address: Aboh Ogwashi YAGEP Cluster Farm

Testimony: I can boast of 750 broilers and 400 layers. I have employed someone to work for me. My birds lay a minimum of nine crates of eggs daily.

Future Plans: To own my personal farm, increase my stock, expand to fishery and employ more people.



Frances Enyi in broiler pen with 200 broilers

Name: Festus Onyeacholem

LGA: Ika South

Enterprise: Poultry

Address: Alisime YAGEP Cluster Farm

Testimony: In less than one year, I have grown my business and I now have 760 layers and 300 broilers. My birds lay a minimum of nine and half crates of eggs daily and I have two employees.

Future Plans: By this time next year, I should have 5,000 birds.



Festus Onyeacholem feeding hens at his poultry farm

PHOTOSPEAK



Shedrack Otunji, a STEPreneur at work



Bridget Apodor, a STEPreneur displays her cosmetics



Joy Onyema, a STEPreneur displays her works



Vivian Igelige, a STEPreneur in Catering and Confectionery displays her products



Ethor Odemero showcases her farm produce & processed products



Gloria Ekatu-Umukoro, a STEPreneur in fashion design and tailoring at work



Omovie Ogenewaire, a STEPreneur in fashion design displays her products



Festus Onyeacholem, a YAGEPreneur showcases his poultry produce



Kingsley Mordi, a STEPreneur in interlocking paving stone making displays his products



A side view of Owanta Agro Centre



Agric Commissioner, Mr Austin Chikezie congratulates the new management of Owanta Agro Centre



VP, Prof. Osinbajo admires Job Creation brochure



HE, Gov. Okowa explains STEP to VP, Prof. Osinbajo @ Delta 25



STEP & YAGEP trainees at the inauguration of 2016 Cycle



Gov. Okowa exchanging pleasantries with the Chairman, Delta State Traditional Rulers Council, Dr. Emmanuel Ejezior II, The Obi of Owa Kingdom



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa (M), his deputy, Barr. Kingsley Otuaro and the CICO, Prof. Eric Eboh at the inauguration of 2016 Cycle of STEP, YAGEP & GEEP at Songhai Delta, Amukpe



Beneficiaries of 2015 Cycle at the inauguration of 2016 Cycle



Trainees entertaining guests at the inauguration ceremony of 2016 Cycle



Governor Okowa exchanges views with the CICO, Prof. Eric Eboh during the inauguration ceremony of 2016 Cycle Of STEP/YAGEP at Songhai Delta, Amukpe



Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa and His Royal Majesty, Ogurime-Rime, Ukori I, Ovie of Agbon Kingdom at YAGEP Cluster Farm at Ekpán-Ovu



HE, Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa, inspects YAGEP Cluster Farm at Ekpan-Ovu



CICO, Prof Eric Eboh explains a point to the Obi Of Mbiri, Dr Ifeanyichukwu Aliekwe on Delta State Agro Industrial Parks



Stakeholders and foreign investors meet with Obi of Mbiri



Site inspection by stakeholders on agro-industrial park



CICO, Prof. Eboh and dignitaries at job creation exhibition stand



Beneficiaries of fish smoking kilns in Warri



Workshop on collation and review of job creation achievements in MDAs

2016 Cycle: Another Milestone in the Implementation of the Job Creation Scheme



BY GERTRUDE ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH

Strategic Wealth Creation and Provision of Jobs for all Deltans, the main policy thrust of Governor Ifeanyi Okowa's S.M.A.R.T agenda, are synonymous with entrepreneurship. In the face of the current economic down turn when it is no longer possible for most states in Nigeria, including Delta State Government, to recruit unemployed youths into the Civil Service, entrepreneurship has become the way out of employment. It is the sure roadmap to economic diversification.

To this end, Delta State Government under the leadership of Governor Okowa has taken giant strides towards nurturing its youths to become entrepreneurs and employers of labour. Through the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer, it inaugurated the maiden cycle of its Job Creation Scheme on the 26th of August, 2015. The 2015 Cycle of its Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP) had about 1,300 youths drawn from the 25 Local Government Areas in the State. These youths were trained in life skills, entrepreneurship, and business management and given starter packs/stocks to begin their own enterprises. They comprised 1,044 *STEPpreneurs* and 256 *YAGEpreneurs*. Testimonies abound of their success stories as a good number of them are making remarkable progress, have become trainers or have employed one or two persons to work with them.

Despite the economic recession plaguing the country, additional milestone was made on the 28th of September, 2016 when the State Government inaugurated the 2016 Cycle with about 1,000 trainees. In the words of His Excellency, the Governor: "I am very passionate about this programme. By the special grace of God, we shall keep the programme alive. We had a 2015 cycle, a 2016 Cycle and it is my dream that in 2017, there will be two batches." He expressed unhappiness that many youths in the State have remained unmarried because they are unemployed. "The more the number of youths that have skills and go into agriculture, the more we can have families that we can boast of," he added.

He commended the 2015 cycle for their success stories. "I am glad that lots of them are doing well," he enthused. "Gone are the days of begging. We are not training you to start up to remain one. We are training you to become job creators and drive the economy of Delta State". One cannot but concur with the Governor who foresees that in years to come, through the Job Creation Scheme, Delta State would become the China of Nigeria with so many growing micro, small and medium scale enterprises. No doubt, with the enthusiasm and innovation of youths engaged in the programme, coupled with the monitoring and mentoring mechanism put in place to ensure business success, these businesses are programmed to succeed.

In a goodwill message to the trainees, His Royal Majesty, Emmanuel Efeziomor II, Obi of Owa Kingdom and Chairman of the Delta State

Traditional Rulers Council, expressed satisfaction with the success of the scheme. "This is a revolution that will put food on your table; a revolution that will extricate you from the shackles of poverty," his royal majesty declared on behalf of other traditional rulers present.

According to the Chief Job Creation Officer, Prof. Eric Eboh, the Job Creation Scheme has become the key policy driver for turning unemployed youths into entrepreneurs, business owners, managers and leaders. He disclosed that to further strengthen the success outcome of the programmes, strategic reforms were introduced to consolidate on existing achievements, avoid inadequacies of the past and to overcome observed risks and challenges. The strategic reforms as itemized by Prof. Eboh are:

1. Co-location of YAGEP trainees in commercial-scale cluster farms to enhance project targeting, monitoring, resource use efficiency and market offtake.
2. Starter pack for establishment of enterprises has two tied components of "job creation grant" and "job creation microcredit" to make beneficiaries more accountable.
3. Entrepreneurship and business management training to run concurrently with the vocational skills training in order to save time and to promote effective learning.
4. Upfront dissemination of information of the training process, privileges, obligations and responsibilities of trainees and their guarantors.
5. Introduction of Graduate Employment Enhancement Programme (GEEP) in the 2016 Cycle to cater for a distinct group of unemployed graduates and professionals.
6. Stronger collaboration with the private sector in drafting of training manuals, signing-on to oversight responsibilities by guarantors of trainees as spelt out in the Bond Agreement Form and the use of only private enterprises and corporate establishments as training and internship centers.
7. More technical support and collaboration for training, monitoring, mentoring and service delivery feedback by international development partners and non-governmental organizations.

Finally, while our great *STEPpreneurs* and *YAGEpreneurs* seize the opportunity provided them to work out a better future for themselves, it is hoped that they would transform Delta State into the economic hub of Nigeria, sufficient in food production, rich in Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and less dependent on federal allocation from sale of crude oil.

MRS ONYEKACHUKWU-UTEH IS COMMUNICATION OFFICER, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB CREATION OFFICER, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, ASABA.

It is hoped that as the parks develop, there will be a progression to a second layer of processing based on the materials produced



Architectural impression of Delta State Agro-Industrial Parks

From the foregoing, it is evident that Delta State under Governor Okowa is set for an agricultural revolution.

Land Acquisition Committee Swings into Action

As part of efforts to improve the ease of doing business in Delta State, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa on July 01, 2016 inaugurated a 12-member Land Acquisition Committee under the coordination of the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer. With membership drawn from relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the committee is charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a Land Bank. The Land Bank will serve as a repository of available arable land that can be accessed and utilized by investors that are partnering with the State Government for the purpose of agricultural, industrial and other land-based economic development. The members of the Committee are:-

- The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development- Chairman;
- The Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources- Vice Chairman;
- The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Economic Planning- Member;
- The Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Justice- Member;
- The Chief Job Creation Officer- Coordinator;
- The Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Agriculture- Member;
- The Director of Lands, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development- Member;
- The General Manager, Communal Farms- Member;
- Mr Gerry Ossai- Member;
- Dr. Theo Okpidi- Member;
- Dr. Julius Oritsejafor- Member and
- Mr Joseph Efi- Secretary (Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer)

On inception, the Committee broke into three working groups representing the three Senatorial Districts of the State, which have conducted field trips to local communities to identify and map out arable land that can be acquired by the State Government for agricultural use, or taken-up by private agricultural investors. This has been achieved

with the cooperation of the local communities.

So far, the Committee has accumulated a Land Bank comprising 30,000 hectares of arable land across the State. Progress is being made on preparing location sketches of the respective land areas and completing the documentation necessities.

AMCC, Providing Market Linkages to Farmers

The 16- member Agricultural Marketing Coordination Committee (AMCC) under the coordination of the Office of the Chief Job Creation Officer is charged with the responsibility of tackling marketing challenges and has been working to ease the pains of farmers in this regard. Soon after their inauguration on Thursday, February 25, 2016, the Committee carried out an analysis of the market situation by;

- Taking inventory of existing and potential markets for priority agricultural commodities;
- Brokering and facilitating market linkages and off-taker arrangements between farmers and processors/ market agents;
- Diagnosing commodity marketing chains for bottlenecks, gaps and challenges;
- Applying solutions for alleviating the identified marketing problems;
- Sensitizing and enlightening of farmers and producers on existing and prospective markets and how to access them; and
- Building the capacity of farmers and producers on market penetration, product development, market targeting, market responsiveness

and price negotiation.

Thereafter, the Committee constituted Commodity Working Groups (CWGs) covering aquaculture, cassava, vegetables, oil palm, rice, maize and plantain. The CWGs interface with farmers, producers, market agents and value chain operators in the commodity space and develop a work plan for consultation, dialogue, capacity building, brokerage and facilitation. Remarkable progress has been made in these areas.

- Production of Commodity Linkage Models to enhance market access and processors' off take;
- Development of commodity enterprise budgets to inform pricing negotiations;
- Sensitization and enlightenment of commodity producers on available markets; and
- Increased role and influence of farmer's cooperatives in agricultural marketing activities.

Within 10 months, the AMCC is living up to its mandate. As it continues to seek ways to ameliorate the plight of farmers by linking them to the right buyers and processors, prosperity will be delivered and our farmers will have reasons to smile.

Now that You are an Entrepreneur, What Next?

BY MARIAN O. ASHIKODI



You were enrolled and have successfully participated in the Delta State job creation programmes. Lucky you! At the end of your training, you were given starter packs and start-up capital. Now, you are a *STEPpreneur* or *YAGEpreneur*. So, what next? How will you impact positively on yourself, your family, the society, the government and the world at large?

Anybody who successfully scales through the process of selecting and training under the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP) and the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), would attest to the rigorous training, enforcement of discipline and standards, close monitoring and mentoring in the programmes.

Do not forget your roots. Your family was there with you throughout the days of your toil and search for useful employment/business venture. First of all, you should make them proud of you by ensuring that you put your starter pack and start-up capital to good use. You should not be listed as one of those persons who did not endure in their chosen endeavour, but rather, be counted as one of those who started and finished well. Your enlistment into Sen. Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa's job creation programmes is a passport to so many good things in life. It is not a secret that Delta State Government lends a lot of support to budding entrepreneurs through the State's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (DEMSMA). Therefore, you have the potential to expand your businesses by making sure that you optimise the opportunities provided by the state government via micro credit.

As you make income, do not fail to save. While taking care of your immediate basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, never forget the principle of delayed gratification. Many people have fallen by the wayside when they got caught up in the euphoria of sudden wealth and failed to maximize the potentials of their newly gotten wealth. But it is the vision of Governor Okowa that through you, the society will take a good turn and values will be upheld and promoted further.

You owe the society a duty to succeed in your now chosen business enterprise. You have to keep at your business, by contributing your quota to the provision of services either in skills enterprise or agricultural production. You have to contribute your quota to the payment of taxes, which every serious and responsible business woman/man does. You should be willing and ready to lend a hand to the training of upcoming and interested youth in your area of expertise, just like you have been helped. Also, you should be able to contribute your quota towards good display of social responsibility by ensuring the best business management practices and that your business activities do not impact negatively on your immediate environment.

Your ultimate success depends on not just what you have learnt from your training centres, but also whether you improve your skills as time goes on. To improve your proficiency, you should be open to learning and self-improvement. Do not fail to seek and utilise skill-improvement opportunities in your business

enterprise. Collaborate with fellow business enterprises for mutual benefit. Attend workshops and trade fairs to connect with other businesses and people.

Truly, you will agree with me that the government has done well and gone a step further to enhance the welfare of its citizenry through making provisions for the job creation programmes. Your first and last duty to the government would be to ensure that you succeed! Governor Okowa would always say, "your success is my success". You have to succeed in order to hold true the legacies and efforts of our dear Governor. Also, you have to succeed for yourself, your family, the society, and the future generation.

The country has taken a different turn in its economies and we thank God for providing us in Delta State with 'an escape route out of unemployment'. There may be some dark points in your start-up that may stretch you to give up on your business pursuits. This kind of experience is not new and history has it that many more great men and women are made from failures who 'rose up, dusted their pants and began again'. Let us stop and ask ourselves some salient questions. For example, how did our trainers get up to the level in which they are at present? What do we do to maximize the opportunities created with the massive population in our country Nigeria? There is a reason why you chose the skill/farming enterprise you were trained in. Do you still uphold that *raison d'être*?

In all of this, look back to where you are coming from, the stages you had to go through to get to where you are now and the antecedents of the known wealthiest persons in the world. Most of the world's wealthiest men and women are entrepreneurs and here you are, as a *STEPpreneur*/*YAGEpreneur*.

Finally, I should add that you are also a beneficiary of the trust of the Governor of Delta State. This kind of trust calls for your success. At the time the Governor came into office, there was widespread unemployment, resulting from many years of embargo on recruitment in the civil service which was hitherto, the major employer of labour in Delta State. It was also the period when we experienced a fall in the supply and price of crude oil, the major source of revenue for the Federal Republic of Nigeria. How then could the Governor sustain his promise of prosperity for all?

The challenge of funding the programmes of the S.M.A.R.T agenda, nonetheless, was not sufficient to deter him having recognised that the seeds planted by grooming entrepreneurs in the state would ultimately yield fruits that would far outweigh the pains of cringing under the weight of strict budgeting. Our Governor is a shining example of what it means to plough and sow in the planting season in order to reap bountifully at harvest time!

Now that you are an entrepreneur, endeavour to make your life, family and society better.

MRS ASHIKODI IS COORDINATOR, CORPORATE AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JOB CREATION OFFICER, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, ASABA.



The overarching goal of the job and wealth creation scheme is to equip participants with the technical know-how, vocational/technical skills, values and resources to become self-employed and employers of labour.

- Gov. Ifeanyi Okowa,
August 26, 2015



Jobs. Jobs. Jobs.



Unemployed youths are being trained and established in their various choice enterprises under the Job Creation Scheme of the Delta State Government. These entrepreneurs are among the actors that are now helping to drive the economic diversification of the State.

GOV. OKOWA IS KEEPING HIS PROMISES!



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-Nurturing Entrepreneurs, Creating Wealth