**UNIVERSITY OF PORTHARCOURT**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE**

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**PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE (UPEC)**

Many have asked what makes University of Port Harcourt unique. We are excited to announce to the world that it is our passion and motivation to build an institution that radiates excellence and is truly entrepreneurial.

To achieve these, we established an Entrepreneurship Centre equipped to provide a practical orientation to complement our taught-entrepreneurship courses, and as well increase knowledge of entrepreneurial education among all our students, as we produce a generation of graduates empowered to provide economic and social values where they find themselves.

In our characteristic fashion of positively influencing our environment and stakeholders, the door of the Centre is open to all individuals irrespective of academic or social background in search of an excellent and practical opportunity to acquire technical and managerial skills necessary to be competitive and successful in today’s corporate world and beyond. We, therefore invite you to visit our Centre and experience our uniqueness.

Our Centre which is a product of the synergy between theory and practice is solidly positioned to partner with those who will take advantage of its services, as we are passionate about building a sure and wealthy future in the midst of growing competition for scarce resources.

To achieve our objective, we have outlined numerous programmes and courses with different duration, which are customized to provide the right business solutions for individuals and corporate bodies.

Our activities are powered by a team of highly motivated individuals drawn from the academia, industry, alumni and friends of the University committed to the innovative, competitive, profitable and sustainable enterprises.

This uniqueness is possible because of the comfortable and dynamic environment within which we are established and operate. We therefore, assure you of best experience as you avail yourself and organization of any of our programmes or services.

**MSMEs**

**BACKGROUND**

Nigeria is a country with a growing unemployment rate and in the minds of many there seem to be no possibility that this will change in the near future. The reason for this lack of optimism is borne out of the absence of business ventures, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) capable of absorbing the growing number of youths graduating from tertiary institutions across the country. Inspite of previous and ongoing interventions by corporate, government and nongovernmental organisations, unemployment and its attendant challenges seem to remain as they were. Recent manifestation of

Violence, crime, civil disturbances and general insecurity across the country fuelled by unemployed youths has also shown the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of these interventions. Over time and drawing from best practices across the world experience has shown that for the unemployment challenge to go, individuals must go beyond seeking paid employment to starting businesses of their own.

To make this a reality, all interventions towards promoting enterprise development must go beyond the focus of current interventions to be one that promotes innovation as an important ingredient of entrepreneurship.

To this end, the University of Port Harcourt on the 18th of April 2008 established its Entrepreneurship Centre to complement its compulsory entrepreneurship courses for all undergraduate students, to serve as the link between theory and practice. As an Entrepreneurial University, it is hoped that with this dual approach it will be a trail blazer in graduating students with a desire to pursue entrepreneurial careers. This Centre is unique as it seeks to promote entrepreneurship in an innovative and practical way. In doing this, it will focus on building an entrepreneurial mindset in all students before their graduation. And in line with the objective and duties of the University to its external stakeholder, it will open its doors to the larger society to contribute to its socioeconomic development.

Though fully owned by the University of Port Harcourt, the Centre in line with its guiding philosophy of being innovative and entrepreneurial, will seek to a large extent, to be self-sustaining. It will therefore, partner with individuals, development agencies, corporate organisations and governments for funding as well as charge appropriate fees for its services. These partners (that will be considered friends of the Centre) will provide internship opportunities for students. This will be advertised and students encouraged applying to the Centre for a place in the internship opportunity (of a growing business). Under the mentoring session, we will invite successful business persons in different fields to come tell their stories and answer questions from students.

For our external stakeholders our programmes shall comprise of regular and short term courses. The regular courses will run for longer duration after which certificates and diplomas will be awarded. The regular courses will run for between one and three month’s duration while the short courses will run for between one to seven days. These trainings may be held outside the Centre. Training programmes will comprise of lectures, case study, group work, field trips and hands on exercises (Practical).

**VISION STATEMENT**

….. to build Africa’s Foremost Enterprise Development and Training Centre.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

….. to reduce youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria through the promotion of enterprise development by providing training that will ensure skill acquisition, innovation and entrepreneurship with a practical focus.

**OUR OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Centre are to:

* Inculcate a culture of innovation driven entrepreneurship in students
* Facilitate the recognition of business opportunities
* Promote the creation of new ventures
* Facilitate business partnership between the university and corporations
* Promote and advocate entrepreneurship as a sustainable strategy for poverty reduction
* Develop vocational skills in youths
* Build capacity in local governments (to promote rural entrepreneurship and guide entrepreneurs)
* Develop managerial competence for small businesses
* Promote women entrepreneurship.
* Facilitate access to venture capital

**CORE VALUES**

To ensure the attainment of our goals, we will be guided by some values, this we shall hold sacrosanct as we perform our duties to stakeholders. The following values will therefore be promoted in the Centre:

EXCELLENCE

CREATIVITY

INNOVATIVENESS

TRANSPARENCY

SELF-RELIANCE

INTEGRITY

VALUE-ADDING

RESPECT

MERIT

ACCOUNTABILITY

**OUR ADVANTAGE**

In our pool of facilitators are private business persons, who are successfully running their own businesses and seasoned academics with years of research and corporate experiences in the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities and the creation and management of small and medium scale businesses. Our programme therefore is a product of the combination of theory, research and practice; a three dimensional approach to entrepreneurship which is built around the promotion of innovation

and accurate market information, necessary for successful and profitable implementation of business ideas.

**PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**

Our programmes which will be in two parts, one for our primary constituency (which are students, lecturers and researchers in the University) and the second will focus on external stakeholders.

Programmes for our primary constituency which will be done in collaboration with some strategic Units in the University such as Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICTC), Arts Village, Consultancy, Research and Development Centre (CORDEC), Community Service, Science Engineering Workshop, Faculties and Departments, which comprise of the following:

1. Entrepreneurship Camp: a two weeks intensive training for graduating students: This training will be held after their final examinations. This programme should be made compulsory and form part of their graduation process. The focus is to train them to seek business opportunities while on and after their national service.
2. Idea Conception, Feasibility Study and Business Plan Workshop: This will be for students, academic and non-academic staff. This will take advantage of inventions, specialized projects and researches being carried out within the University, to promote the creation of business ventures tailored towards meeting the needs of individuals and corporate bodies in the society.
3. Inter-Faculty Business Competition: The aim is to promote creativity in a competitive environment. The Centre will organize competitions among faculties and students; which will focus on assessing the ability of contestants to identify and proffer solutions to societal problems, make recommendations that may inform future government policies or the creation of a sustainable social enterprise.
4. Internship and Mentoring Session: Under this arrangement, the Centre in collaboration with businesses that will provide internship opportunities for graduating students at various relevant firms.

**SHORT SPECIALISED/CERTIFICATES COURSES**

These specialized courses will be run between one to seven days, and will be designed to meet specific areas of need in the running of small businesses.

These courses will cover the following areas:

1. Accounting for small business
2. Problem solving and Decision Making
3. Small Business Financing

1. Feasibility Study and Business Plan
2. Innovation and Entrepreneurship
3. Marketing and Selling
4. Building Negotiation Skills
5. Operations Management
6. Business Law
7. Team Building and Human Resource Management
8. Time Management
9. Information and Communication Technology
10. Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Training
11. Social Business
12. Microfinancing
13. Risk Management
14. System Building in Business
15. Social Responsibility and Business Ethics

To complement these training programmes, the following activities and services will also be rendered.

1. Consultancy and Business Advisory Services for small business owners, investors (institutional and corporate) and aspiring entrepreneurs in the following areas: conduct of marketing research, feasibility study, business planning, strategic planning, recruitment and staff training, establishment of skill acquisition centres and programmes.
2. Conferences and fora on Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management will be periodic. This will encourage knowledge sharing among stakeholders on global best practices.
3. Reality Show/Competition: Resident reality television shows/competitions tailored towards the development of entrepreneurial mindset, managerial skills, conception of business ideas and plans will be organized. This programme will be advertised for interested persons to apply and be absorbed into the programme, after an intensive interview.
4. Workshops, Seminars and round tables.
5. Entrepreneurship Boot camps for students, staff and host communities.
6. Young Entrepreneurs Innovation Contest (YEIC).
7. M.Sc./PGD Entrepreneurship: The philosophy of the post graduate programme is to develop high level entrepreneurship skills and knowledge in the students that is needed to start new businesses and to make existing ones sustainable.

**REGULAR PROGRAMMES**

1. **Master of Science and Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship:**

The M.Sc. is a Two to Three years Programme, while the PGD is a One year programme, both aimed at enhancing the Entrepreneurship Competence of graduates of the Programme for managerial and business performances.

1. **Train The Trainer (3T):** This is targeted at those to be engaged or already engaged in the training of youths and women towards encouraging them to pursue entrepreneurship. This programme will also provide participants with best practices in implementing funds disbursement and follow-up. It is therefore about the building of capacity for government agencies and corporate bodies involved in the promotion of enterprise development.
2. **Graduate Entrepreneurship Training (GET):** This is an entrepreneurship course for graduates. The focus will be on training participants to take advantage of their tertiary education to identify opportunities in their area of study and other areas in starting their own businesses. This will require participants, having sessions with established business persons in their areas of specialization such as Management Sciences, Tourism, Arts, Engineering, Agriculture, Medical Sciences, Geology and Mining etc.
3. **Youth Empowerment Education (YEE**): This is for secondary and primary school leavers who may have no vocational skill. They will be trained in their preferred vocations and also taught how to establish and manage business that will guarantee their desire for independence while meeting the needs of their immediate environment.
4. **Entrepreneurs Linkage (networking) and Mentoring (ELM**): This is a programme designed to link entrepreneurs to mentors, who will afford them access to the knowledge and experience of successful businessmen/women and professionals who are operating businesses of their interest. This is primarily designed for small business owners.
5. **Entrepreneurship Training for Females (ETF):** This is a specialized training, designed to provide operational and managerial skills for women in business that don’t have formal education. It is to be conducted in languages that participants are conversant with. This will be conducted in partnership with government, women advocacy organisations and microfinance institutions.
6. **Entrepreneurship Training for Retirees (ETR):** Every year individuals exit their jobs for many reasons. One group out of this lot is those leaving their jobs because they have attained the mandatory retirement age or have served the maximum service years. Irrespective of the reason(s) and their age, many of these individuals may still want to make a living. In view of our belief that individuals can start their own businesses after retirement, this training is targeted at retirees and potential retirees. This training will take into consideration age, experience, interest, available resources etc.

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