



Youth Entrepreneurship

A Key to Sustainable Community

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Many Generation Z youths have the qualities necessary to become entrepreneurs. Promoting youth entrepreneurship can aid economic development in communities.

Entrepreneurship is the development of a business that generates economic development in one's community. Innovation is a key component to entrepreneurship. When a person creates a business, he or she is demonstrating innovation by presenting the change to the market and creating something new. Entrepreneurs problem solve and offer unique and innovative solutions to problems in their community.

Entrepreneurship offers various benefits to individuals and communities, such as economic growth, self-fulfillment, and the creation of jobs for community members. Despite these benefits to individuals and communities, only some choose a career in entrepreneurship. For this reason, promoting youth entrepreneurship is important. Youths demonstrate the necessary qualities to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and economically contribute to their communities.

Gen Z and Entrepreneurship

Generation Z, youths born during the years 2000 to 2025, tend to have the qualities necessary for entrepre-

neurship. They are often self-motivators, self-starters, and self-learners. Additionally, Gen Z youths are motivated by advancement and interest in their work. In fact, many aspire to be entrepreneurs by transforming their hobby into a business. These youths are kinesthetic learners, and thus, they learn best by "doing."

Gen Z youths are highly adaptive to technology and prefer to use technology in all aspects of life. Their ability to use technology makes entrepreneurship an ideal career option for them, given the role technology now has in entrepreneurship. Technology provides a means for businesses to better communicate to form connections, develop ideas, and receive feedback. Technology is also a useful tool for advertising, whether through websites or social media platforms.

Experiential Learning and Youth Entrepreneurship Education

The majority of youths have supportive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, yet many never become involved in entrepreneurial endeavors. Thus, entrepreneurship education programs are beneficial and essential for the development and economic growth of communities.

Several aspects of experiential learning are vital for youth entrepreneurship. Experiential learning is premised

on the notion that learners gain higher quality learning when they actively experience and problem solve through the material. Experiential learning opportunities allow youths to learn from mistakes and to improve their competence, decision-making, and skills. This learning approach is a meaningful element in entrepreneurship education, specifically for Gen Z, as entrepreneurs learn by experience and by “doing.” They learn through problem solving, experimentation, replication, and making mistakes. Experiential and hands-on work is beneficial for youth entrepreneurship learning. It is difficult to communicate the complexities of entrepreneurship to students by lecture alone. For students to gain entrepreneurial competence, they must learn by experiencing and should interact with businesses in their community to learn authentic work practices and gain experience.

Moreover, experiential learning in entrepreneurship education ensures that students learn not only necessary entrepreneurship information, but also techniques in a safe environment. Experiential learning includes learners’ reflections and evaluations (both individually and collaboratively) to gain a deeper understanding of their experience. Overall, experiential learning related to entrepreneurship positively influences students’ intentions and attitudes towards entrepreneurial participation.

Tips for Building Entrepreneurial Acumen among Youths

Assess Youths’ Assumptions. When addressing an issue, ask youths what their assumptions, or ideas, are and how they could test their ideas. This helps youths to sort out their ideas and develop a plan for how to test their idea. Encourage youths to think about what exactly they are testing.

Encourage Them to Build a Prototype. A prototype is a 3D model or example of their idea. A prototype helps youths to examine if their idea is functional and potential challenges that they had not thought about. Prototypes also help youths to describe their idea more effectively. Adults should encourage youths to present and discuss the prototypes they design. Many youth entrepreneurship programs that include a prototype-building curriculum are offered to communities through university extension programs.

Promote Diversity. With diversity comes innovation

and new ideas. A diverse group of people working together to solve a problem is more effective than a group of people who think the same way and approach a problem in a similar manner. Teamwork and different ways of thinking should be encouraged among youths.

Ask Questions about Their Process. Asking the youths questions can promote further learning and help them to refine their ideas. Questions can also help youths to further organize their thoughts and predict potential outcomes of their idea. For instance, adults can ask a youth “Can you explain your idea using your own words?” or “How does your concept support the problem you have identified?”

RESOURCES

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