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## JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

## CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

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## SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or sub-community is a function of their deliberate participation in matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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# HUMAN CAPITAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPIRIT OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY IN ZIMBABWE

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## Abstract

*Recent discussions have stressed the need for improved human capital development (HCD) in Zimbabwe and other developing nations on the grounds that, a nation's human capital is vital for future technological breakthroughs, international competitiveness and sustainable economic development towards the improvement in service delivery. This research study explains the importance of human capital, programme and project development strategies towards improving service delivery in the country. The article adopts a desktop study in formulating the relevant meaning of HCD, project and programme development towards effective service delivery in the country. The key findings and emerging issues indicate that investing in HCD is a key factor in developing projects and programmes in the spirit of industrialisation towards improving service delivery in Zimbabwe as it promotes entrepreneurship, job creation, wealth creation, youth empowerment, peaceful society and economic development.*

## INTRODUCTION

Initially, human capital development is an important factor for innovation and economic development in modern industries. In the long run, the impact of project and programme development on service delivery is also a critical factor as it supports innovation,

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creates employment and improves capacity utilisation through improved levels of production in the industries, hence economic development will be achieved in less developed countries like Zimbabwe.

#### **CONCEPTUALISING THE DISCOURSE: DEFINING AND SCOPING TERMS**

Human capital recognises intangible assets and qualities that improve worker performance and benefit the economy. These qualities cannot be separated from the people who receive or possess them. Human capital is the economic value of abilities and qualities of labour that influence innovation and productivity through educating the economically active workforce in the country (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). Investing in these qualities produces greater economic output and improves economic performance and service delivery. The investments are called human capital because workers are not separate from these assets. In a corporation, it is called talent management and is under the Human Resources Department.

Project Development is the systematic use of resources, knowledge and practices to design and implement a given project and meet its goals and objectives under specific requirements (Raheem, 2018). It is also defined as the process of transforming available project inputs into desired outputs by consuming available resources.

Programme Development is the process of formulating, improving and expanding an educational, managerial or service-oriented work plan, programme, programme a series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished. The concept of programme management is about deciding priorities (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001), managing a portfolio of projects, the availability of resources, their skills, and how they work on different projects. It can be a mix of product development, service management, account management, pre-sales activities, solutions and support. The priorities should be agreed upon with the client and their management. Managing inventories and developing adoptive solutions and trade-offs, among various product features, is also part of programme management and development.

In many countries, projects vary from initiation to completion, which are very key to a functional economy. In most cases, projects and services delivery in this Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) are very key in HCD as they improve the roles of service delivery managers that lead cross-functional teams, integrated skills and capabilities from across organisations to deliver services to various clients around the globe (Tanaka, Spohr and D'Amico, 2015). The nature of the projects enhances a wide range of services and specialist skills. The African Bank is one of the key funders of projects on the continent as it has the vision for HDC in Africa to create jobs, provide equal opportunities and harness the potential of over one billion people, to promote inclusive growth. This vision is very much in line with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s vision which is that of a continent with the human capital to build and sustain vibrant, competitive economies that can reduce poverty and ensure sustained high levels of growth. In current global economies, service delivery and management are a huge challenge, hence the need to promote human capital development in collaboration with project and programme development, is a key success for improving levels of service delivery in the economy (Sofoluwe *et al.*, 2018). In this case, service delivery management requires strong leadership, managerial and techno-functional skills and that is what the current industry is looking for, so that well-skilled personnel will deal with challenges experienced in developing economies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In developing economies, unorganised sectors in the country cannot provide gainful employment as productivity in the industrial sector is very key and, in this case, they are very low, hence the need for HCD and mechanisation to improve the level of output (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). The level of skill development influences the level of productivity in functional industries. As a result, many governments that have been neglecting human capital lose on both counts. Human capital can be substituted by mechanisation to increase output and to increase the level of service delivery in the country. There is need for adequate training of staff. From a global perspective, many developing countries are well known for exporting human capital/skilled labour to developed countries and the remittances are sent back to original



countries, but in the case of Zimbabwe, the government is not promoting HCD for export purposes, hence most of experienced people left the country for self-gain (Shizha and Kariwo, 2012).

The importance of human capital exportation to the economy is that remittances play a significant role in poverty reduction and increase in per capita consumption levels in the country. In addition, remittances, unlike foreign direct investments and portfolio investments, contribute to project and service delivery in the country as they are less erratic and are not influenced by a slowdown in the world economy (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). In developed nations in Europe and the USA, there is a high demand for skilled labour and developing countries must be able to supply their skilled labour to those nations for their gain. This indicates that the government has a critical role in directly running education institutions to develop well-skilled labour for both local industries and meet international labour market demand.

The results indicated that, to fully achieve HCD in the country to boost productivity and output in the industry, there is need for the government to subsidise the education sector so as to promote entrepreneurship development. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education, job creation, wealth creation, youth empowerment, economic development, technological progress and service delivery.

Innovation and project development are recognised as the key economic concern, as it represents the greatest societal concern associated with the 4IR. The largest beneficiaries of innovation tend to be the providers of intellectual and physical capital, the innovators, shareholders and investors, which explains the rising gap in wealth between those dependent on capital versus labour (Alpkan *et al.*, 2010). Technology is, therefore, one of the main reasons' incomes have stagnated, or even decreased. For a majority of the population in high-income countries, the demand for highly skilled workers has increased, while the demand for workers with less education and lower skills has decreased. The result is a job market with a strong demand at the high and low ends, but a hollowing out of the middle.

The current project development in Zimbabwe has several aspects of human capital in this modern industrial revolution. The role of HCD influences productivity, employment and growth of employment, through several projects being done in the country. Consequently, employment cannot be increased without investing in the construction sector of the economy since many projects are versed in this sector (Geoffrey and Bischoff, 2020). Project development provides gainful employment as productivity in this sector is low and is also declining. This helps in improving service delivery. Human skill in project delivery influences productivity mainly in the construction sector, hence the need to educate people to get the best out of them (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001).

Realising this vision requires measures to increase youth employment opportunities and competitiveness as part of an integrated approach across sectors, including support for private sector engagement, and the use of new and productive technologies in project development (Jones and Romer, 2010). This will also require high quality, accessible service delivery at the different levels of the systems, accountable and responsive to the end-users. Innovative safety nets that respond to particular circumstances in Zimbabwe are needed to cushion vulnerable populations against shocks. These interventions have the potential to reduce poverty, to be responsive to the needs of the rural and urban poor and to empower women to build sustainable livelihoods (Motolani, 2018).

Programme development is one of the key essential cost-efficiency of service delivery in an economy. Effective programme development in the modern industry helps in the provision of services across municipalities in the country, as the level of pooling or joint provision of services among municipalities; the saliency of local taxes, as compared with regional grants, in its operating budget; the presence of external public comptrollers; and the magnitude of the municipality's accumulated past investment in infrastructures (Brian, 2007). This helps in improving governance through clear and well-structured programmes that use information and communication technologies (ICT) in delivering services to the people that improve efficiency, accountability and transparency, and reduce bribes in the delivery of services.

The available literature has been published by different scholars suggesting that ICT can be used in diverse applications to accelerate information dissemination, improve the efficiency of public services, increase the transparency and accountability of government administration, reduce corruption and facilitate citizen participation in local governance. However, there are few analytical studies or impact assessments confirming that such benefits have been delivered in large-scale projects (Bhatnagar and Singh, 2010). Bhatnagar (2013) recognises the important role of ICT in reducing corruption but points out that it has not been easy to harness this potential. In assessing the status of e-governance (i.e., ICT use in delivering government services) the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) survey of 2012 noted that, while it is important to continue with service delivery, governments must increasingly begin to rethink terms of e-government and e-governance.

The scope of e-government should be widened for a transformative role of the government toward cohesive, coordinated and integrated processes and institutions (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). Since the e-governance activity in developing countries in Africa is, at best, at a moderate level, there is scope to expand the deployment of e-governance in programme and project development. It is important to understand the full potential of deploying ICT to improve delivery of services. It is equally important to understand the challenges in harnessing this potential by identifying the critical success factors for wide-scale deployment.

As underdeveloped countries of the world progress and gradually catch up with the more established nations, conventional wisdom has it that the advanced nations will lose their competitive advantage. The shift in developing nations from craft to industrial labour, and from hand to machine work, produces great increases in productivity (Anyanwu, 2018). Meanwhile, in the advanced nations, affluence and discretionary spending, shift consumer and industrial demand increasingly into low-productivity, labour-intensive service activities automotive repair, travel, commercial lodging, entertainment, restaurants, shopping, insurance brokerage, medical care and

education, to name a few. The result, so the argument goes, is that the advanced nations lose their advantage even faster than the developing nations expand their manufacturing industries.

In the advanced nations, this has, of late, produced the paradoxical proposition that their expanding service appetites shift demand in directions that are little susceptible to the employment of mass-production efficiencies. This, in time, leads to rising general price levels and, finally, to reduced living standards. Since it costs more to buy less-efficiently produced services, one's money does not go as far (Anderson and Hussey, 2000). Those are the supposed cybernetics of world economics advantage that ultimately lead to demand for costly service amenities, while producing a parallel no-frills catch-up effort among the less advantaged. The latter, finally, not only catch up, but surpass the original leaders because, for one reason, their technology is more modern.

Zimbabwe's current industrial policy is rightly focused on attracting large firms through the development of special economic zones and improving trade logistics. At the same time, it is important to build links with smaller firms that make up the local economy, to improve service delivery through meeting the current demands of people. In Africa, the level of growth in the local and regional economies is increasingly pulling local manufacturing too (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). As in many other African countries, Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania have not yet had a full discussion on digital economy and what it could mean for the manufacturing sector of the economy. In more advanced African countries like South Africa, Rwanda and Botswana, these measures of digitalisation are being implemented as a foundation on which to build the economy. In this case, it is crucial to still grow 'traditional' industrial capabilities while it still can, for example, by attracting and developing the manufacturing sector targeting foreign markets such as the US and European markets although it takes time and effort.

## **EMERGING ISSUES AND DEBATES**

While public employment service delivery in many developed countries is rendered in a differentiated, needs- or profile-based

approach, it remains entrenched in a traditional one-size-fits-all, first-come-first-served approach (Contractor and Mudambi, 2008). The right servicing model offers a system of continuous assessment and determination of the “right” level of service delivery that achieves a specific socioeconomic outcome following organisational attributes, citizen preferences and resource availability. For developing countries typically faced with data and resource limitations, the model can be operationalised through the cognitive information processing approach to career problem-solving and decision-making that has an established record of successful HCD in the world.

Digitalisation is one-way African countries can leverage the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), boost the manufacturing sector and create more productive jobs to improve their service delivery. By lowering the unit costs of production, information exchange and transactions, digital technologies can help African economies to develop new value chains and strengthen existing ones. In the future, technological innovation will also lead to a supply-side miracle, with long-term gains in efficiency and productivity (Saravanan and Shreedhar, 2011). Transportation and communication costs will drop, logistics and global supply chains will become more effective, and the cost of trade will diminish, all of which will open new markets and drive economic growth.

A persistent digital divide can lead to re-shoring of manufacturing tasks, limited offshoring of digitally advanced production in the future and a slowdown in technology diffusion. All this can harm development in African economies. A key trend is the development of technology-enabled platforms that combine both demand and supply to disrupt existing industry structures, such as those seen within the “sharing” or “on-demand” economy (Kuratko *et al.*, 2001). These technology platforms, rendered easy to use by the smartphone, convene people, assets and data, thus creating entirely new ways of consuming goods and services in the process. In addition, they lower the barriers for businesses and individuals to create wealth, altering the personal and professional environments of workers. These new

business platforms are rapidly multiplying into many new services, ranging from laundry to shopping, from chores to parking and from massages to travel.

Investments in human capital can provide increased returns on a bank's investments in infrastructure. Ensuring that the requisite skilled workforce is in place to install and maintain infrastructure investments will help ensure the sustainability of, and returns to, the bank's infrastructure investments (Wood and Bischoff, 2020). The Support to Higher Education, Science and Technology projects can build capacity to train engineers, technicians and managers to run the infrastructure investments. In return, the many of the bank's infrastructure investments have potentially large high definition (HD) outcomes as reflected in several bank infrastructure sector strategy documents. Urban infrastructure projects can focus on supplying basic education and nutrition and health services in underserved environments. Rural energy projects can assist education and health by ensuring energy supplies to schools, clinics and hospitals and deploying household energy solutions that improve early childhood education and the livelihood of mothers (Wallenborn, 2010). The 2007 Operational Strategy of the African Water Facility notes the need to expand access to improved sanitation, with enhanced hygiene promotion and education components.

## **CONCLUSION**

Africa is a continent with remarkable economic potential yet is the least developed continent largely due to its inadequate human capital to transform this potential into social and economic development. The focus is on the provision of adequate education in entrepreneurship programmes since it is the cornerstone of human capital development in other developed countries and, in Zimbabwe, it has not produced a desirable outcome to revive economic performance. The important role of HCD towards effective service delivery is helping in reducing the mistakes within government departments and it assisting in transparency and accountability, hence the importance of recognising the role of human resource professionals in HCD in Zimbabwe deserves serious attention. Therefore, this article has elaborated on the importance of HCD in the economy towards service delivery.

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