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Vocational Training, A State of Emergency or National Vocational Education Initiative

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# Overview

The need for vocational training should be considered a state of emergency by policy makers and those with funds and skills to provide needed knowledge in the shortest possible time. Liberia, having been in a 14 year civil war, led to many adults without basic educational skills. Due to Liberia’s high unemployment at about 85% ([see report from 2009-2014](http://www.aneki.com/country-trend/Liberia__Unemployment_rate_growth.html)), the need to make vocational education a priority, is urgent. This will curtail unemployment, reduce criminal activities and set the nation on a path for economic growth.

Our dream is to see vocational training provided nationwide, we can start by finding a few pilot schools in three counties.

Based on the current poverty rate in most minority communities in the U.S and in the Diaspora, it will be highly beneficial for this proposal to be used for these communities as well.

# Goals

1. Make vocational training mandatory for highschool students
2. Reduce unemployment
3. Empower youth
4. Create skilled entrepreneurs
5. Improve economic growth
6. Partner with vocational schools

# Specifications

The following provides more details on how goals will be achieved

**Make vocational training mandatory for high school students**

Providing vocational training in high school will help students to immediately start contributing to society. A student with a mere high school diploma, leaves school only knowing how to read and write. Mandating vocational training will ensure that all students become contributors to economic growth.

Furthermore, since most colleges are based in Monrovia, consequently we are leaving approximately all students in rural areas without any future after high school. Providing vocational training for students in high school will benefit rural students, if their parents cannot afford to send them to Monrovia for college.

Many families in our society struggle to pay the school fees for their children due to lack of income. Some students don’t have both parents, thus leading to one parent becoming the sole provider for the family. This usually leads to a parent deciding to send some of their children to school while others wait for their turn.

For instance, an older sibling might get the opportunity to go to school first while a younger sibling wait for their parent to make more funds available. While this is not the only unique situation a family might encounter, it is only used here to illustrate the importance of making vocational training part of high school education.

A student in the situation above, upon graduation from high school, immediately feels obliged to help his parents. Therefore, providing vocational training while that child is in school will not only assist them but also equip them to earn money while they pay their own fees to college.

**Reduce unemployment**

Making vocation training mandatory in high school will ensure that all students graduate with an employable skill upon graduating high school. These skills will assist in developing our nation’s key infrastructures such as roads, bridges etc.

Providing vocational training in agriculture will enable students to not only provide needed food for their families, but also enable them to reduce the nation’s reliance on import of agricultural produce.

As students leave high school they can choose to find a job or work for themselves using their acquire skill.

**Create skilled entrepreneur**

Our nation will experience a burst in entrepreneurship when vocational skills are taught in high school. We need plumbers, carpenters, masons electricians, farmers to name a few, to build our country crumbling infrastructure.

Ironically, most of these skills are only found in Monrovia. Therefore, providing these skills to students nationwide will create multiple ventures around the country. We will see a boom in our export as we create more products that our population cannot consume.

As international export improves, entrepreneurs will hire more students right out of high school and best of all is students will be able to pay for advance degrees since they will have jobs.

**Empower youth and reduce prostitution**

Due to unemployment, we are sadly seeing most of our boys and girls opting for prostitution. Providing vocational training will give our boys and girls a choice. If they are empowered and can feed and clothe themselves, we will see a huge drop in prostitution and teenage pregnancy.

Our hope is to give our children the opportunity to grow and enjoy their childhood. Providing vocational training will not only protect their innocence, but also empower them to be independent like in most developed countries.

**Improve economic growth**

By providing vocational training in high school Liberia will benefit by increasing its GDP.

According to [Aneki](http://www.aneki.com/country-trend/Liberia__Unemployment_rate_growth.html)[[1]](#footnote-1), Liberia’s unemployment rate have remained steady at 85% between 2009-2014.

Currently, 99% of all high school graduates leave school only knowing how to read and write. The other 1% might pick up skills like braiding hair, cutting hair, and selling products so they will continue in those fields after graduation.

That leaves 99% of our students with skills in reading and writing only. Even with having the basic skills of reading and writing, most kids are without any source of revenue to further their education. This usually has a devastating impact on the economy.

However, if all students leave school with a skill, they would probably already be working before they graduate from high school thereby improving our economic growth.

Due to lack of jobs, many parents struggle to send their children to college. Furthermore, due to the limited amount of colleges, the country might see approximately 50% of high school students enrolling in college, while the remaining 49% wait for probably a year before entering college.

By providing vocational skills in high school, the approximately 49% of students waiting to enter college, could start working in their chosen vocational fields. Vocational training might prevent a lot of smart kids from participating in criminal activities, since they will have jobs because of their acquired skills.

No matter where their acquired skill take them, at least these students will be given the opportunity to contribute to the nation’s wealth and growth and consequently drop the unemployment rate. One never know where their skills could take them, but having a skill will definitely make a difference in a child’s life.

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## Implementation

According to a [Bushchicken article](https://www.bushchicken.com/liberia-has-high-enrollment-of-students-but-82-dropout-rate-for-12th-grade/) in March 2015, Liberia has one of the highest students enrollment in Africa, but approximately 82% of these students drop out in 12th grade. According to the article, 52% of students who took the WAEC failed and only 48% passed.

As illustrated by this article, 52% these students would have to study to retake the WAEC before they even try to enroll in college. This could take years, or some would just give up.

Therefore, it would expedient to start the program in middle school, right before they enter high school. This would give them hope, or something to hold on to if they don’t pass the WAEC.

The program will function as follows:

1. **High School and Vocational School Partnership**
   1. All private and public schools will be mandated to partner with vocational schools and vice versa
   2. All vocational schools will allocate time in their schedule to teach middle school students
   3. The program will last until they finish high school
   4. If a student drops out of high school, they will be forced to complete vocational training
2. **Funding** 
   1. Students will enter the program free
   2. All students will be taxed for five years after completing the program
   3. Private schools will be taxed every year at a reduced rate based on the number of students.
   4. All public servants will be taxed for the first five years of starting work within the public sector.
   5. All private companies will be taxed to contribute to training of students

**Funding Estimate**

Illustrated here is an estimate of how the the program could be funded.

1. **Through Government Taxation**

As the government mandates the inclusion of vocational programs in schools, it can tax every employed citizens and businesses to fund the program as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Resource | Total Entity | Tax Amount/month | Yearly Total/monthly tax\*12 |
| Business | 10,000 | $5 | $600,000 |
| Schools | 2,000 | $25 | $600,000 |
| Public Servant | 25,000 | $5 | $1,500,000 |
| Grand Total | 37,000 | $35 | $2,700,000 |

1. **Non-profit fundraising/ Other sources**

This proposal is meant to be hybrid. That is, it should function with or without government support. In this case, students will join the program voluntarily, based on their interest and financial needs. The following illustrates how the program could be funded without Government support.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Resource | Total Entity | Tax Amount/month | Yearly = total entity \* monthly tax\*12 |
| Non-Profit Organizations | 10,000 | $3 | $360,000 |
| Diaspora Liberians | 100,000 | $1 | $1,200,000 |
| Other Sources | 1000 | $5 | $60,000 |
| Grand Total | 111,000 | $9 | $1,620,000 |

1. **Skills Provided**

Vocational training will be based on the country’s needed skills. Even though training will be provided for different skills, the following will be mandated in all schools. Vocational schools will work with companies to provide training for skills that are in demand.

Skills will include but not limited to:

Plumbing, welding, auto mechanic, electrical, carpentry, animal husbandry, farming, masonry, drafting, panting, programing, hardware repair and waste management.

1. **Training Providers**

Since the program will be funded by public and private partnerships, trainers will come from all backgrounds. Trainers will include, but not limited to the following:

* 1. Employees from companies
  2. Retired workers
  3. Trained teachers
  4. Alumni of programs
  5. Seniors in program
  6. others

1. **Graduation**

Upon completion of program, students will receive recognition based on the level of completion. Students failing to complete program, will be granted the opportunity to re-enroll in the program and continue from where they stopped.

* 1. Master
     1. This recognition will be given to students who complete the full program starting from middle to high school
  2. Intermediate
     1. This will be granted to students who spend more than two years in the program, but drop out of the program.
  3. Beginner
     1. This will be granted to any student completing less than 2 years in the program.

# Conclusion

## Benefits

With many individuals struggling to feed their families, providing students with the opportunity to acquire skills while in school will give them a sense of pride upon graduation. Students will be ready to enter the job market, and be ready to contribute to the growth of our nation.

## Importance

This is considered a state of emergency, because most developing countries do not currently have enough jobs for all students graduating from college, not to mention those completing high school.

By implementing this proposal, we believe that our youth will be empowered. If nations have ever dreamed of its prosperity, this will provide the key, as they will see a boom in entrepreneurship. We are of the highest conviction that this is the key to lifting communities the world over out of poverty thus enabling them to gain competitive edge in the international market.

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1. "Countries in Africa - Aneki." <http://www.aneki.com/africa.html>. Accessed 17 Feb. 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)