

## FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING QUALITY BUSINESS EDUCATION TO SCHOOL CHILDREN INVOLVED IN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES USING INTERACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA INSTRUCTION.

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### Abstract

*In Nigeria, various factors such as ineffective leadership, school failure, breakdown in family affiliations, conflicts and terrorism have thrown many young learners into difficult economic circumstances. These learners often engage in business activities such as street hawking and bus conducting in order to make money to feed, pay school charges and support their families. This abuses the rights of the children, exposes them to hazards and reduces the time they spend participating in school. Yet, many of the children do not make profit that is enough to change their economic situations and thus, remain poor. This paper proposes a strategic response to mitigate the situation of these school children involved in business activities (SCIBA). The paper presents a framework that can be used to develop good quality business education programme for the children based on the literature. The framework also includes the delivery of the programmes through Interactive Social Media Instruction, a model of the Interactive radio instruction. The main objective is to help school children involved in hazardous business activities to profitably undertake child-friendly economic activities that preserve their dignity and enhance their entrepreneurial aptitude while allowing them to participate fully in school. This proposal suggests a move away from the current strategy that involves “chasing” and “arresting” the SCIBA to a new approach that involves gathering, educating and guiding them. It requires effective collaboration among a complex and interconnected group of stakeholders - governments, policy makers, planners, educators, parents/guardians.*

**Keywords:** School children, business activities, quality, business education, interactive social media instruction, interactive radio instruction

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### Introduction

Children are very important population group in Nigeria given that they are the future of the country. The Child Rights Act of 2003 defines children as people below the age of 18 years (UNICEF 2011; Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, 2013). In Nigeria, children form a substantial proportion of the country's population. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2017), children of 0 – 14

years constitute 42.54% of the population while 15 – 24years constituted 19.61%. However, millions of these children are from poor families and are going through difficult economic circumstances as their basic needs for food, shelter, education, medical care, protection and security are unmet. Poverty seems to have persisted in many Nigerian communities in spite of the efforts of Nigerian

governments and international organizations. An assessment of the post-independence period showed that poverty, unemployment, rapid decline in standards of living and quality of life have persisted in the country particularly in the urban areas (Edet, Onete and Okefre, 2009). Indeed, poverty in Nigeria remains significant at 33.1% (Obanya, 2016). In June 2018, the Brookings Institution projected that Nigeria had overtaken India as the poverty capital of the world, with 86.9 million extremely poor people (Vanguard, 2019). In 2019, the World Poverty Clock, created by a Vienna-based world data lab, 91.16 million Nigerians were living below a dollar a day as at February, 2019 (Vanguard, 2019).

The poverty situation of the country impacts on children's participation in school as many parents cannot afford education for their children. Although basic education is meant to be free, there are substantial costs usually associated with learning materials and uniforms (Nigerian Education Data Survey, 2010; Education Sector Analysis, 2009). Inability of parents to bear these costs and meet other basic needs such as send learners out of school, into begging or engaging in business activities such as street hawking which abuse their rights and expose them to various risks including

of/inadequate guidance (Nigerian Bulletin, 2016).

Some stakeholders have shown concern by delegating taskforce or police to arrest children that engage in hazardous business activities (Nzeagwu, 2017; ThankGod-Amadi, 2017). While it is important to take measures to stop the children from engaging in hazardous business activities and encourage or force them to attend school, a pertinent question is: Where should they get money to feed and bear the costs of schooling? Article 18 of the Child Rights Act of 2003 stated that parents are responsible for taking care of their children while Article 20 state that children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language (UNICEF, 2010). In addition, article 6 of the Act mandates Governments to ensure that children survive and develop healthily (UNICEF, 2010) and the Child's Right Legislation in Nigeria contains that every government in Nigeria shall strive to provide medical and health care, adequate nutrition and safe drinking water, hygienic and sanitized environments and combat diseases and malnutrition among other responsibilities

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accidents, sexual abuse, exploitation, disease and death (Aruya, 2017; Chopra, 2015). Unfortunately, when school children engage in business activities, it reduces the time they spend on academic activities, which in turn, leads to low academic performance. Moreover, many of the children do not make profit from the businesses they engage in due to inadequate business competence as well as lack

(UNICEF, 2011). However, with 47 percent of children aged 5-14 years engaged in child labour in Nigeria (NBS, UNICEF, UNFPA, 2011), and the fact that analysis of extant literature (such as UNICEF, 2006, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, 2011, & UNICEF, 2016) indicate that this situation has been persistent and on the increase across decades, it is obvious that many of the stakeholders in the lives of Nigerian children are unable to

effectively enforce the instruments meant to protect children.

The above situation requires stakeholders, especially governments and NGOs to rethink their strategies. Providing a practicable answer to the above question is important given that stopping the children from engaging in business activities without providing any effective palliative measures to help their situations can be equally hazardous. This is because some of the children may engage in criminal activities, prostitution, and drug abuse and may suffer malnutrition, exploitation, disease, early marriage, death or may remain poor for life and raise even poorer generations. This paper, therefore, proposes a response to the situation of school children involved in business activities (SCIBA). It provides a framework for developing and delivering quality targeted business education and guidance to help the SCIBA:

1. engage profitably in child-friendly businesses that match their interests such as tutoring younger children, making snacks and juices and selling in kiosks around the home and creating art works (paintings, greeting cards, bead jewelries) and selling to family, friends and neighbors
2. adapt business models and practices that: protect their dignity and reputation as children; encourage them to remain in school, complete the school cycle and continue schooling; enable them remain safe and healthy; and help them get adequate rest, leisure and enjoyment of physical, mental and spiritual health which they are entitled to as children.

The education could be delivered using Interactive Social Media Instruction (ISMI). The ISMI is an instructional methodology in which trained facilitators could deliver active learning programmes developed by professionals on social media to a group of learners using mobile

phones. The next sections present a description of (1) the school children involved in business activities (SCIBA) (2) the proposed business education programme for the SCIBA and (3) the interactive social media instruction methodology. The process for developing and delivering the programme as well as the cost structure and possible sources of finance are also discussed in detail.

### **School children engaged in business activities in Nigeria**

In order to meet their basic needs and attend school, millions of Nigerian learners engage in economic activities during or after school. Some of these activities are regarded as child labour which Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity (FMLP) conceptualized as engagement of children below 18 years of age in any work that is essentially exploitative and injurious to the physical, social and cognitive development of the child. Indeed 47.1% of students are child labourers while school attendance among them was 76.1%. The national child labour survey (FOS/ILO/SIMPOC, 2000) classified over 2 million children as being in worst forms of child labour because they worked very long hours (15 hours or more) in dangerous conditions (FMLP, 2013). Out of the school-going and working children, 36.3% were engaged in economic activities while the rest were engaged in house-keeping (FMLP, 2013). Some of the activities they engage in include: producing and hawking simple goods such as plantain chips, groundnuts, local pastries; cobbling and shoe shining; car washing; bus conducting; and hairdressing. These children are usually children of unemployed parents and nomadic parents in drought-stricken areas and those of ethnic minority groups (United Nations, 2011). In addition, since the beginning of 2014, Nigeria has been overwhelmed by the

effects of conflicts and terrorism which resulted in 2,155,618 individuals displaced as a consequence of the intensification of attacks by Boko Haram, as well as the counter-insurgency activities of the Nigerian Government (International organization for migration, 2016). Hence some of the children are those of families that have been broken by social crisis while many of them are orphans. As at 2014, Orphaned children in Nigeria were 9,900,000 (UNICEF, 2016).

While learners' engagement in business activities has been a source of great concern, these learners can be great assets. The fact that the children did not take the option of becoming street beggars or continuing to depend on unable parents and die off someday, but rather engaged in business activities to feed themselves, support their families, pay their school charges and keep schooling, may be an indicator of strong will and entrepreneurial aptitude that if properly harnessed, can result in millions of successful entrepreneurs in the future.

### **Quality Business Education Programme for school children engaged in business activities**

Business education is a programme that helps people acquire business-related competencies. It performs the following specific roles:

- Educates individuals for and about business
- Provides continuous programme of planned learning experiences designed to equip individuals to produce and distribute goods and services as workers; to use the results of production as consumers; and to produce and make judicious socio-economic decisions as citizens

- Provide career information that helps students relate their interest, needs and abilities to opportunities in business (Osuala, 2009).

### *Quality in the context of business education for school children involved in business activities*

#### *(SCIBA)*

In order for business education to play these roles effectively for SCIBA, the programme must be of good quality. Three of the desirable dimensions of quality education identified by UNICEF are very applicable:

- Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and life skills, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in wellmanaged classrooms and schools and employ skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (UNICEF, 2000).

In addition, Okpala (2014) states that quality education is inclusive and provides equal opportunities as well as motivates students to continue schooling. This indicates that equity is an important aspect of quality. In light of the foregoing, quality business education can be described as a programme that has relevant contents and processes and driven by teachers who are sufficiently qualified, motivated, respected and trained as well as delivers the targeted outcome. Thus, quality business education for SCIBA must have contents and processes that are relevant to the children;

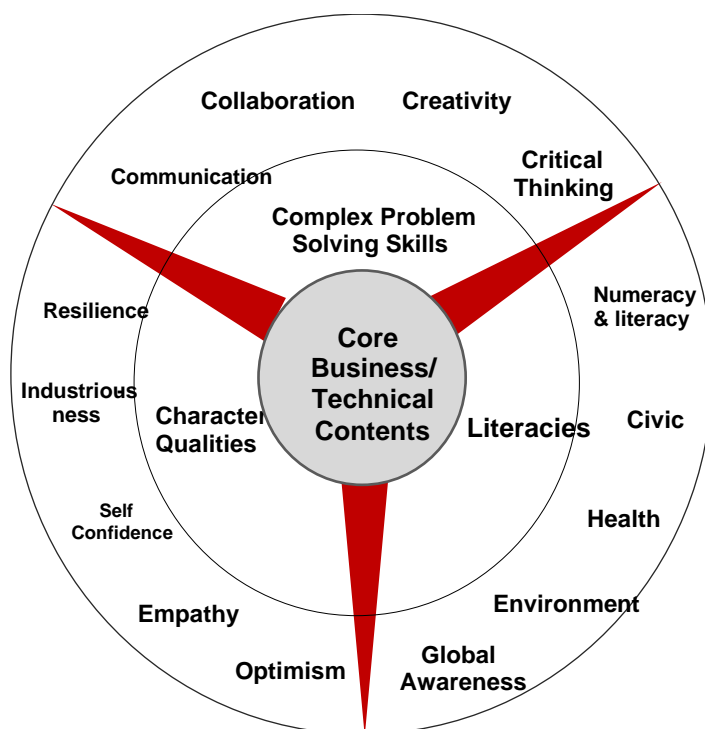
respect their rights; include all categories of SCIBA and in the end, change their economic situation, sustain their interest in education, improve their entrepreneurial aptitude and make them obedient and peaceful citizens of Nigeria. The programme should be developed by experts and delivered by trained facilitators.

*Proposed contents of business education programme for school children involved in business activities (SCIBA)*

The contents of business education programme for SCIBA is a blend of core business modules, problem solving soft skills, literacies and character qualities. These aspects must all be taught together to enable the programme achieve its objectives. The framework below shows the contents that are appropriate for educating the SCIBA.

interest. Therefore, it should include a set of business subjects that are geared towards enabling the children generate and select child-friendly business ideas; set clear goals and targets; assess a market and develop creative new products; learn different ways they can access financing for their businesses; locate themselves and their businesses appropriately; set rates for services and prices for items; advertise goods and services using simple means like handmade fliers and posters; manage money effectively; negotiate appropriately; sell effectively; satisfy and retain their customers; utilize their time effectively, and improve their technical (hard) skills in their areas of choice.

Within the context of these core business subjects, the learners need to be exposed to



*Figure 1: Contents of Business Education programme for Learners Engaging in Business Activities*

The core business contents are those that equip the learners with business/entrepreneurial skills as well as technical skills in areas of their

some literacies including basic numeracy and literacy, civic, health, environmental literacies and global awareness. These skills are known as

foundational skills and they serve as the base upon which students need to build more advanced and equally important competencies and character qualities (WEF, 2016). The literacy skills will enable them: understand their responsibilities, rights and duties as Nigerian children; understand the importance of peace and peaceful coexistence; understand global connections and their implications; understand primary health issues – common diseases, prevention and care as well as build capacity to obtain, interpret and understand basic health information and services and using such information and services including proper diet, nutrition, exercise, risk avoidance and stress reduction ((Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2009) and will enable them understand their environments, respect, preserve and benefit from it.

The SCIBA should also learn certain problem-solving skills to enable them face non-routine challenges that characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The skills will enable them establish, maintain and benefit from valuable relationships, think critically, ask questions, interpret words appropriately and differentiate facts from fiction. In addition to these, an important set of qualities such as resilience, industriousness, selfconfidence, optimism and empathy among others should equally be built into the teaching of the core contents. Incorporating these skills will enable the SCIBA toughen up and become more able to deal with challenges and setbacks of life; build habit of hard work and strong work ethics; have faith in their own ideas and believe in themselves; have a positive outlook and a can-do spirit; relate, support and respect others while establishing positive connections with them.

### **What is Interactive Social Media Instruction?**

The ISMI is an active learning system that delivers full instruction through social media such as *facebook*, *WhatsApp* and *Instagram* to enhance or generate higher quality teaching and learning. The most important elements in ISMI are:

**Goals:** (a) ISMI is designed to improve the quality of instruction that takes place in traditional face-to-face classrooms or to generate basic teaching and learning activities in out-of-school situations. (b) ISMI also designed to increase study time for learners who are social media addicts (c) ISMI is designed to help standardize the quality of instructions and to deliver high quality instructions at low cost.

**Features of instruction:** (a) Scripts are written by any expert, while characters that are appropriate for the target audience need to be carefully selected (b) The instructions should include questions, exercises, games and other activities that match the audience characteristics in terms of age, culture, etc. and should allow adequate time for the participants to respond (c) ISMI can be audio (Such as using the *Whatsapp* audio tool) or video that can be played on *instagram* or *twitter*.

**Medium and gadgets:** (a) ISMI instructions are distributed to facilitators and transmitted to the

### **Table 1. Differences between IRI and ISMI**

learners through social media (*WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, *facebook*, etc) using mainly smart phones. Facilitators can use tablets or laptops if they can afford those gadgets by themselves (b) The audio/video is played to small or large

group of learners using a suitable size of speaker.

Based on the above descriptions, ISMI can be said to be a model of the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI). IRI, according to World Bank (2007) is a distance learning system that combines radio broadcast with active learning to improve educational quality and teaching practices. ISMI has a number of similarities with IRI. For example, both are distance education systems that can improve education quality within existing structures. In addition, both require writing of engaging scripts with short pauses that allow students and teachers respond to tasks. However, ISMI is different in terms of the technology used, the target for the solution as well as cost and scaling opportunities. However, ISMI is different in some ways as shown in Table 1.

SNO	Area	IRI	ISMI
1	Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economically disadvantaged group in rural areas</li> <li>▪ primary school classrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economically advantaged and disadvantaged groups in urban and rural areas (Can be used to increase chances of studying and performance for learners who are social media addicts)</li> <li>▪ can be designed for students at all levels of education</li> </ul>
2	Gadget	Radio –old-fashioned singlefunction technology that is no longer in use by many people	Cell phones – modern, fashionable, multifunction technology already owned by many teachers and students
4	Scaling	scaling is difficult due to reliance on state, national TVs to broadcast	easier to scale up as teachers and students can circulate lessons within minutes across classrooms states and countries
6	Reach/coverage	Reaches the people within the broadcast area; Radio signals may not be available in many rural communities	once the instructions are received, they can be played anywhere with or without mobile network or data
8	Learning Materials	Regular school text books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School textbooks for in-school learners</li> <li>▪ Quick reference cards – a one-carddocument for out-of-school children</li> </ul>

The ISMI instruction for business education of the SCIBA should contain adequate business cases, business success stories as well as role plays that are suitable to the characteristics of the SCIBA. In addition, characters should be those attractive to children so that the children can learn from them and the Programme should be scheduled in such a way that it will not disturb learners school attendance

## **Theoretical Background**

### *Social Constructivist Theory*

The Business education of the SCIBA anchors on the Social Constructivism Theory which is concerned about the way that reality and knowledge are constructed. In terms of origin, Burr (1995) acknowledges the major influence of Berger and Luckman (1991) in its development and also emphasizes that they, in turn, acknowledge the influence of Mead, Marx, Schutz and Durkheim on their thinking (Andrews, 2012). The theory assumes that understanding, significance and meaning are developed in coordination with other human beings (Amenih and Asi, 2015). A very important element of social constructivism is that it places great emphasis on interactions between people and how they use language to construct their reality (Leeds-Hurwitz (2009; Andrew, 2012; & Amenih and Asi, 2015) and regards social practices such as collaborative activities people engage in as the means of learning (Andrew, 2012; & Amenih and Asi, 2015). These are in line with earlier views of Vygotsky (1978) and Roth (2000) that cognitive growth occurs first on a social level by engaging in social activities such as interacting and collaborating with others and then it can be internalized by individuals and not the other way round. Thus, social constructivists teaching approaches emphasize reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeship, problembased instruction and other methods that involve learning with others (Shunk 200 cited in Amenih and Asi, 2012).

In line with the social constructivist view, the business education programme for SCIBA is highly interactive, requiring learners and their facilitators to actively engage in playing games and role play; listening to business stories and solving business-related problems collaboratively by sharing their individual perspectives (collaborative elaboration) and harmonizing their views. By so doing, they construct their reality; they make meanings of their present situations and environment as well as create a vision of their future. They construct this reality together which never existed and which each individual SCIBA could not have been able to discover.

*21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning Frameworks* The contents and methods of delivering the programme takes into consideration the framework for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning developed by the partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – a partnership of over 30 organizations around the globe that have made significant impact on education such as Pearson, McGraw-Hill, Educational Testing Services (ETS), Global Scholar and Microsoft Corporation. The Framework is basically a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise and literacies students must master to succeed in work and life (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, 2012). In the same the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2015) identified a set of 21<sup>st</sup>

century skills that are required to thrive in the present economy and encourage teachers to teach the skills. The skills were classified as follows:

1. Foundational literacies (How students apply core skills to everyday task) such skills include: Literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural literacy.
2. Competencies (how students approach complex challenges). The skills include critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication and collaboration
3. Character qualities (how students approach their changing environment. The skills include (curiosity, initiative, persistence grit, adaptability, leadership, social and cultural awareness.

### **Developing the Business Education Programme for school children engaged in business activities (SCIBA)**

In order to design and implement the business education programme for the SCIBA, a design team should go through four phases' namely planning, production, delivery and evaluation as shown in figure 2.

- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| 4. Detailed management plan that includes plans for management of key processes, resources, quality, time, cost, stakeholders and risks | line with the approved scripts that can be used within the specified duration | learners |
|---|---|----------|

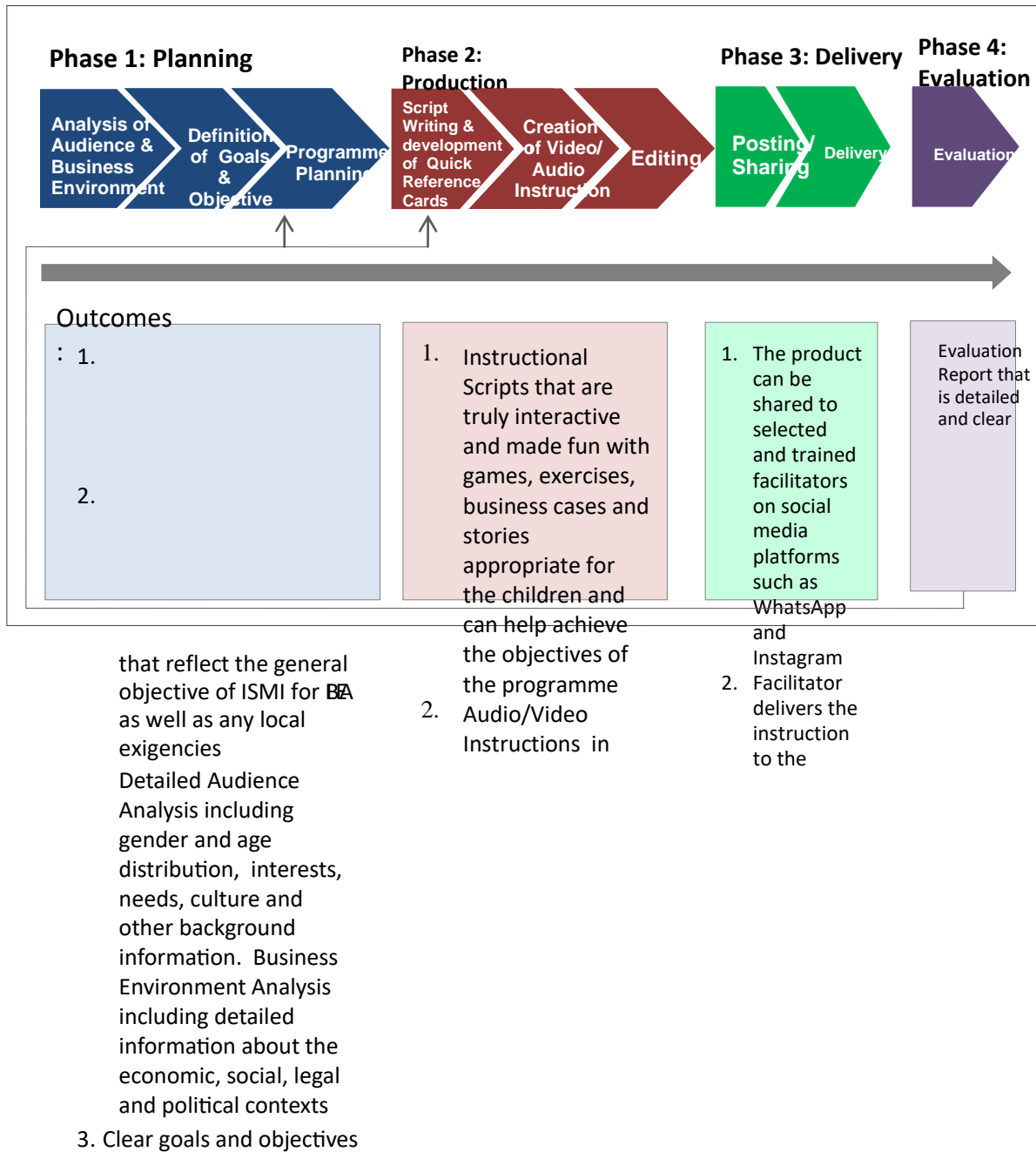


Figure 2. Process for developing the ISMI programme for business education of school children involved in business activities

**Planning**

The main task in the planning phase is to understand the audience (age, gender, culture religion, interests, needs and environments), set clear goals and objectives for the programme based on the understanding of the audience and the understanding of the audience and develop an action plan. Although the major goals of the programme are clear, all audiences and business environments are not the same. Therefore, every programme developed for the SCIBA is expected to be unique based on needs, environment culture and norms of the SCIBA. The programme planning exercise requires a team of experts including someone or people who understand the principle and pedagogy of ISMI, subject matter experts, IT specialists, producers, evaluators and project management experts. The programme plan should be detailed and contain the following:

1. *Programme structure*: including programme duration, time of instructions, venue and proposed key marketing information for the programme
2. *Instructions*: which includes the courses and their goals; Modules in each course that can be delivered in 40 minutes as well as the instructional objectives for each module; evaluation strategies for assessment of learning outcomes and post programme evaluation (follow-up)
3. *Quality and resource management*: including number of facilitators required as well as training and development plan; List of required facilities including venue, cell phones, speakers, etc; Budget and how support will be obtained
4. *Stakeholder engagement including list*: of stakeholders in the programme, including their interests and level of influence on the programme as well as a detailed communication plan which details all the what (message), when (timing) and how (medium) to communicate with stakeholders during the life of the programme to ensure their full engagement.
5. *Risk management plan*: which identifies the risks that could prevent achievement of the project objective (financial, procurement, management, security and technical risks) as well as mitigation strategies to ensure the programme can be successfully implemented.

## **Production**

The first stage in the production phase is writing the scripts and creating quick reference cards (QRC). Important issues in script writing for instructional purposes were highlighted by World Bank (2007) which stated that the job of a scriptwriter is to bring the educational activities to life by using characters and settings that enliven the instructional strategies. It further states that it is useful for scriptwriters to have classroom experiences so that they can see the connection between the entertaining aspects and the pedagogical aspects of writing scripts. Based on these and other considerations specific to ISMI, the stages for writing scripts for ISMI programmes include:

1. Select the team members (teams should include subject matter experts and creative artists who have classroom experience)
2. Train the script writers to acquaint them with the pedagogical contexts

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3. Write the scripts and develop the QRC (the cards should be a one paper document that has all the important notes on the course which learners may make references to in the future)
4. Pilot test the script with focus on the technical quality and its ability to achieve the stated instructional goals and revise it with feedback from the test.

The next stage in the production phase is to produce the audio/video instruction. Characters in the programme should have qualities that children like such as friendliness and attractiveness so that the children will be able to learn from them. The characters should also have equal representation of males and females. The video or audio should then be edited to ensure that it can deliver the instructional objectives within the expected duration of the lesson.

### **Delivery and Evaluation**

Delivery of ISMI programmes take place through mobile phones. The instruction is sent to all facilitators who have been trained to deliver the programme. Determining whether to go for a video or audio option depends on the facilities available for the programme. Facilitator delivers the programme based on standards agreed at the training.

### **Cost Structure, Distribution and Sources of Finance**

Although ISMI programmes promises to be low-cost, there are some fixed and recurrent costs involved in developing and delivering the programmes. The fixed cost which is the cost of its development is always higher than the recurrent cost. Table 2 shows the cost items and possible sources of finance:

production of the videos, corps members may be engaged as facilitators and individuals may be approached to volunteer to provide other services.

**Table 2. Cost Distribution and Sources of Finance for the Business Education programme for the SCIBA**

Cost Items	Donors/NGOs	Governments			Private Organizations (Partnerships or as CSR sponsorship)	Communities (Associations/Unions, Religious Organizations, etc)
		Federal	State	Local		
<b>Fixed cost</b>						
Script writing	X	X	X	X	X	
Production (Audio, video & Quick Reference Cards)	X	X	X	X	X	
Training for facilitators	X	X	X	X	X	
Cell phones and speakers	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Variable Cost</b>						
Data		X	X	X	X	X
Facilitator salaries	X	X	X	X	X	X
Venue			X	X		X

The cost structure of ISMI programmes differ all the cost items are applicable. There is need to depending on the application. However, in the case of explore means of reducing cost. For example, the Business Education Programme for the SCIBA, students may be used as characters and for actual

## Conclusion

There is need for key stakeholders to be more responsive (not reactive) and strategic in trying to stop learners from engaging in hazardous business activities during or after school and make them focus more on their education. This paper suggests that instead of mandating a taskforce to chase and 'arrest' the SCIBA, a taskforce should be mandated to gather, educate and guide them towards a more profitable child-friendly business activity that can change their lives and change Nigeria. It is hoped that designing and implementing the business education programme for the learners engaged in business activities using ISMI will help millions of children in economic crisis in Nigeria become better people. However, achieving this feat ultimately requires effective collaboration among a complex and interconnected group of stakeholders including governments, policy makers, planners, educators, funders and the SCIBA as well.

## Recommendations

1. *Quality Control*: For the sake of ensuring good and standardized quality for the programmes, it is important that appropriate government organization such as Ministry of youth development or the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) be involved in the development and approval of programme plans, script writing and production. All ISMI materials should have mark of quality and authorization by the relevant organization on the print materials or displayed/voiced at the beginning of the audio/videos.
2. *Charges*: The ISMI programmes for the SCIBA, wherever it is conducted, should be offered to the SCIBA 100% free and truly free. There should be no hidden charges that will prevent the SCIBA from attending the programme.
3. *Research*: there is need for researchers to undertake pilot projects involving experiments to test the development and delivery of the programme as proposed.
4. It is also important to test its efficacy in delivering programmes in other fields (other than business)
5. Researchers could also experiment the use of ISMI to improve learning for in-school children and older learners.

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