

Youth mobilization & engagement – Initiatives to foster entrepreneurship among youth

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to suggest ways to foster entrepreneurship among youth in the form of mobilization and engagement initiatives. It is an attempt to bring both human and non-human resources together to undertake developmental activities in order to achieve sustainable development as it is of paramount importance to create an equitable society that creates space for and empowers youth to attain their socioeconomic potential and become self-reliant by fostering entrepreneurship. Mobilization strategy requires significant investment in time and resources. The mobilization and engagement initiatives if taken seriously have the potential to impact all levels of the socio-economic development. The study defines the objective that must be achieved to actively mobilize and engage youth. For this purpose, strategies for each objective and activities for each strategy have been developed. A competency framework has also been developed by identifying the competences required for roles within the key functional areas for successful implementation of the entire programme of youth mobilization and engagement. The research could be of great significance to entrepreneurship developments institutes, both national as well as international.

Keywords: Community mobilization, awareness camps, structured awareness programs, entrepreneurship clubs, knowledge camps.

1. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

A) Objective:

Awareness: It is an initiative to create entrepreneurship awareness in the communities. Entrepreneurship Awareness Drive (EAD) is to be carried out in such a way so as to reach a wide segment of communities and create entrepreneurial attitudes in youth.

Strategy 1: Entrepreneurship Awareness Camps(EACs)

Activity 1: Entrepreneurship Awareness Camps should be organized in communities which include successful entrepreneurs speaking about their entrepreneurial experiences and offering entrepreneurial guidance to youth.

Strategy 2: Campaigning

Activity 2: Awareness campaign or outreach effort must have a fully interactive platform to build and engage key audiences. The suggested initiatives are as mentioned below:

1. Online and offline Public Relation campaigns
2. Online campaigning through resourceful portal
3. Mass media campaigns

Strategy 3: Awareness through media

Activity 3: Awareness initiatives through media are highlighted below:

1. Talk shows on radio, television especially local TV channels, youth pages of local dailies and magazines.
2. Social media channels like facebook, twitter, youtube, blogspot, etc.
3. Entertainment-education or 'edutainment' to increase audience members' knowledge about entrepreneurship with the help of faculty and successful entrepreneurs.

Strategy 4: Structured Awareness Programs(SAPs)

Activity 4:

SAPs be conducted in schools (class 10th to 12th), colleges, and universities, technical institutes in collaboration with educational institutions, business schools and leading entrepreneurs thereby creating awareness in youth about various aspects which are of great significance from entrepreneurship point of view like personal planning, work readiness, social leadership, financial literacy and business entrepreneurship.

B)Objective:

Mobilization:In the era of information and communication revolutions, aided by previous revolutions and mass production, the economies are polarizing towards employment-dependency and this is certainly not in the interest of the mankind in the long run. Hence an urgent need is felt to foster entrepreneurship to pave way for greater freedom or independency for the growth of youth. In this connection, certain strategies have been developed to mobilize youth and develop entrepreneurial attitude in them.

Strategy 1: Entrepreneurship Clubs(E-Clubs)

Activity 1: The Entrepreneurship Club aims to provide a conduit by which aspiring entrepreneurs can access entrepreneurial resources and network with community entrepreneurs.

1. E-Clubs be formed within the educational institutes where group of students share ideas under guidance of mentors to promote entrepreneurial mind set.
2. Guest lectures should be held on entrepreneurial topics such as: developing a business plan, raising capital, industry specific entrepreneurship and other entrepreneurial issues.

Strategy 2: Entrepreneurial success stories

Activity 2: Entrepreneurial success stories can be used as a motivational tool. Make existing entrepreneurial success stories and potential entrepreneurial opportunities more visible through promotion of role models which is done by organizing talk shows at various places.

Strategy 3: Business Plan Competitions

Activity 3:

Organize business idea and business plan competitions for youth so as to provide a platform to youth to develop and share their business ideas and ultimately gain an opportunity to obtain useful knowledge and experience needed to translate a business idea into a successful business venture.

Strategy 4: Knowledge Camps

Activity 4:

Knowledge Camps should be organized at several educational institutes which aims at encouraging youth to interact among themselves regarding new emergent technologies, business opportunities and business issues like alternate energy, etc. the purpose of which is to invoke interest in entrepreneurship among youth.

Strategy 5: Industrial Visits

Activity 5:

Depending upon the knowledge, skills and interest in a particular sector, the teams of community youth be taken to industrial visits for getting hands-on experience in live business environment. This will help the youth in building right entrepreneurial attitude.

C)Objective:

Facilitation: Facilitation begins by offering linkages between entrepreneurs and Centres for Trainings and Skill Development thereby helping entrepreneurs participate in various training programmes. It also helps them to avail the financing options available by establishing a linkage between entrepreneurs and Finance Institutions.

Strategy 1: Establishing linkages between entrepreneurs and Centres for Training and Skill Development

Activity 1: In order to establish linkages between entrepreneurs and Centres for Training and Skill Development in an effective manner, following activities should be conducted:

1. Conduct structured programs about the training programmes being offered at different entrepreneurship development institutes.
2. Circulate information brochures and flyers among youth.
3. Ensure efficiency and effectiveness in distribution of forms and conducting counseling sessions for youth.

Strategy 2: Establish linkages between entrepreneurs and Finance Institutions

Activity 2: In order to establish effective linkages between entrepreneurs and Finance Institutions Development, following activities should be conducted:

1. Conduct Structured Awareness Programs about the schemes offered by government for entrepreneurs.
2. Circulate information brochures and flyers among youth.
3. Conduct programs for introducing the various financing options available to youth.

D)Objective:

Stakeholder management: Stakeholders are individuals and groups with a multitude of interests, expectations, and demands as to what an organization should provide to society. Entrepreneurship Development Institutes should involve themselves in stakeholder management to support organization's strategic objective by creating positive relationships with stakeholders through the appropriate management of their expectations and objective.

Strategy 1: Stakeholder management with youth as stakeholder.

Activity 1: It is of utmost importance to maintain a positive relationship with youth in order to foster entrepreneurship. Following activities are suggested to execute the same:

1. Counselling sessions followed by regular feedbacks.
2. Structured meetings with community youth.
3. Relationship building with youth through social media and networking channels.
4. Create women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in communities and train them in different skills to foster women entrepreneurship.

Strategy 2: Stakeholder management with government as stakeholder.

Activity 2: Government support is of great importance for entrepreneurship to flourish in any state, keeping this in view the following initiatives are suggested:

1. Develop liaison with government departments to make sure that there are enough resources on hand to help develop relevant policies and assist in the implementation of entrepreneurship programs.
2. Invite government officials for discussions on implementation issues of existing schemes and development of new schemes which would cater to different segments of society.
3. Collaboration with different government departments which can provide sector-specific assistance to the budding entrepreneurs on various fronts.
4. Develop information products in form of videos and PowerPoint presentations about the government schemes, business trainings and sector-specific trainings offered at different institutes.

Strategy 3: Stakeholder management with successful entrepreneurs.

Activity 3: Following activities are suggested for effective Stakeholder management with successful entrepreneurs.

1. Invite successful entrepreneurs in the events to share their experiences and offer guidance to youth on entrepreneurship.
2. To build long term relationship with them, Entrepreneurship Development Institutes should offer them affiliate membership so that they can be called for delivering guest lectures & offering guidance on developing a business plan, industry specific entrepreneurship and other entrepreneurial issues.

Strategy 4:Stakeholder management with educational institutions as stakeholders.

Activity 4: Educational institutions can play a pivotal role in entrepreneurship development among youth. Following activities are suggested for effective stakeholder management with educational institutions:

1. Partner with colleges and universities for organizing competitions, seminars and workshops for developing entrepreneurial spirit in the youth.
2. Offering internship programs at Entrepreneurship Development Institutes for college and university students, the ultimate purpose of which is to inculcate and develop entrepreneurial attitude in them by imparting entrepreneurial education throughout the program.

Strategy 5:Stakeholder management with media.

Activity5: Media is growing at a faster pace these days, symbolizing its importance to all spheres of development. Considering this, following initiatives should be taken for effective Stakeholder management with media as a stakeholder:

1. Liaison with editors of newspapers.
2. Active discussions on online portals, social networking websites.
3. Partnering with media channels like radio, TV for organizing talk shows and interactive programs on entrepreneurship.

Strategy 6: Stakeholder management with NGOs and development organizations as stakeholders.

Activity6:

Partner with NGOs and development organizations with whom we can co-ordinate and organize initiatives like awareness camps, business competitions, seminars, and workshops.

E)Objective:

In-house production: Entrepreneurship Development Institutes should establish in-house production wherein the videos are created and displayed to aware, educate and motivate youth for entrepreneurship. Also, the instructional videos are displayed to youth to help them in establishing business units.

Strategy: Fostering entrepreneurship through inspirational and educative videos and animations.

Activity: To establish in-house production, following activities should be conducted:

1. Develop and display educational, instructional, motivational and inspiring videos about entrepreneurship in schools, colleges and universities.
2. Make CDs of videos and animations followed by mass circulation of the same.

F) Objective:

Publications: A separate unit in an Entrepreneurship Development Institute should be established and given the responsibility to publish the whole content for the organization which includes the print work as well as the electronic versions of books, magazines and periodicals.

Strategy: Making information easily available to all the stakeholders.

Activity: Information can be made available to aspiring entrepreneurs through following sources:

1. Newsletters
2. Research journals
3. Entrepreneurship magazines
4. Books
5. Electronic versions of all the publications

G) Objective:

Knowledge and content management: Knowledge and content management system includes a set of processes and technologies that support the collection, managing, and publishing of information in any form or medium.

Strategy: Create and publish the content to support access to it.

Activity: To carry out this objective, it is important to assign responsibilities to following:

1. Creator - responsible for creating and editing content.
2. Editor - responsible for tuning the content message and the style of delivery.
3. Publisher - responsible for releasing the content for use.
4. Administrator - responsible for managing access permissions to folders and files, usually accomplished by assigning access rights to user groups. Admins may also assist and support users in various ways.

H) Objective:

Event management: Focus on managing the events of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute which includes corporate events, meetings, conferences about different entrepreneurial aspects.

Strategy: Focus on managing the events of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute which includes corporate events, meetings, conferences about different entrepreneurial aspects.

Activity:For effective event management, the following activities are suggested:

1. Identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually launching the event.
2. Assign responsibilities to different employees for event design, audio-visual production, scriptwriting, logistics and of course, client service.

2. COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Competency framework enables managers to identify the competences required for a role within the key functional areas and map the employee's suitability and effectiveness for that role. They can assess whether the staff has the skills, knowledge and abilities required to fill different roles, enabling them to better plan their career progression.

The purpose of the competency framework is to:

1. Specify the competences for the key functional areas;
2. Enable the identification of competence-based professional role profiles and definitions;
3. Provide a career and continuing professional development planning tool for practitioners.

A) **Key functional area:** Awareness

Competencies required:

1. Ability to identify and organize resources needed to accomplish tasks such as organizing awareness camps
2. Effectively develop a network of contacts inside and outside the organization to gain and share information
3. Sufficient knowledge of computer and internet necessary to spread awareness online
4. Able to maintain a functioning network of contacts in the media for raising awareness through media
5. Ability to convey information orally to individuals or groups to ensure that they understand the message
6. Ability to develop and deliver written information to individuals or groups to ensure that they understand the message

B) **Key functional area:** Mobilization

Competencies required:

1. Good organizing skills needed to organize events, competitions and talk shows within and outside the organization
2. Effectively network with educational institutions, industry and individuals seizing opportunities to pursue a set of agreed upon Objective
3. Develop promotional activities based on monitoring/evaluation of information identifying areas requiring higher visibility
4. Able to assess activities to improve impact and effectiveness of mobilization
5. Ability to convey information clearly and concisely to groups or individuals either verbally or in writing to ensure that they understand the information and the message

C) **Key functional area:** Facilitation

Competencies required:

1. Skill and ability in coordinating, facilitating, and participating in a collaborative approach to facilitate linkages
2. Good listening skills to clarify issues the target is not clear about by asking how, why, where, when and what questions.
3. Able to organize resources effectively to conduct structured programs for spreading information
4. Sense of responsibility to ensure information is disseminated to all

D) **Key functional area:** Stakeholder management

Competencies required:

1. Establish, build and sustain effective relationships with internal as well as external stakeholders
2. Persuading skills to put forward any case with logic before government, educational institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders
3. Anticipate stakeholder needs and address them promptly and effectively
4. Keep the stakeholder informed in case of problems or delays in the provision of services
5. Assist other functional units to provide service beyond the stakeholder's expectations by seeking information
 - o about the real and underlying needs of different stakeholders
6. Manage and resolve conflicts with individuals and groups both within and outside the organization to achieve win-win solutions

E) **Key functional area:** In-house production

Competencies required:

1. Generate new ideas and propose new, more effective ways of doing things
2. Conceptualizes more effective approaches to create an environment that fosters innovation and innovative thinking
3. Ample knowledge to develop educational, instructional, motivational and inspiring videos about entrepreneurship
4. Creative skills required to design and develop attractive videos

F) **Key functional area:** Publications

Competencies required:

1. Ability to develop and deliver written information to individuals or groups to ensure that they understand the message

2. Build and manage relationships with individuals having expertise in different knowledge areas to develop content
3. Keep abreast of new developments in the area of entrepreneurship to update the content every now and then
4. Make information easily available to all stakeholders by publishing content in print as well as electronic format

G) **Key functional area:** Knowledge and content management

Competencies required:

1. Actively produce and disseminate new knowledge
2. Acknowledge others' skill sets and expertise, encourage and create learning opportunities for others
3. Share knowledge, skills and learning from experiences across different situations and contexts to encourage professional development
4. Promote the development of information and knowledge management including the use of technology

H) **Key functional area:** Event management

Competencies required:

1. Conceptual skills needed to devise a concept for event
2. Ability to develop and execute plans at all stages to make the event a success
3. Ability to assign responsibilities to employees for different functions based on their competencies
4. Ability to resolve issues in a peaceful manner

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