

Chapter 10

Profiling Student Entrepreneurial Enterprises at Howard College Campus: Students' Livelihood Opportunities and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

It is against student financial and skills-related challenges that this chapter profiles income entrepreneurial enterprises initiated and managed by students at Howard College Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Challenges faced by youth-students are exacerbated by lack of labour required skills, lack of employment opportunities, lack of funding, and lack of entrepreneurial skills and competencies. In this regard, the chapter argues that student entrepreneurship remains one of the strategies university-based youth or students could employ not only to gain business skills and experience, but also a forum through which students are able to put their creative ideas into income generating projects. The profiles of student enterprises are generated through questions such as when, who, and how such projects operate in terms of economic opportunities and challenges faced. The chapter uses both primary and secondary data obtained from already published literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1994, South African higher education has undergone tremendous transformation including the development of educational policies and their amendments. The outcomes of higher education transformation led to the merging of various institutions resulting in 23 academic institutions being formed (Mpofu-Walsh, 2017). Since the merger, two additional universities were built, one in Mpumalanga and the second one at Kimberly in the North West Province culminating into 26 universities (Mpofu-Walsh, 2017). Thus, in a democratic dispensation, and as part of redress, restructuring of higher education saw the opening up of previously only white institutions (English and Afrikaans) such as Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Free State, Rand Afrikaanse (now University of Johannesburg) for black students for the first time (World Bank Group, 2028). However, the paradox of this transformation resulted in massification and flooding of students academically unprepared to survive in the institutions of higher learning. The consequences of massification coupled with lack of funding in higher education has led to high dropouts and incomplete degrees. Under-resourced universities especially the previously marginalized and Bantustan institutions, continue to struggle to transform themselves into academically credible entities. Under-resourced universities in particular funding is not only a South African challenge but a wide spread in African higher education institutions. In Africa, socio-economic challenges such as unequal distribution of resources, poverty and inequality (Amtaika, 2017, p. 1), higher education remains unfinished business. These challenges together with state bureaucracy not only drive away highly qualified and trained experts and academics. Attest to these challenges were unearthed by students' protests demanding for institutional transformation and quality free higher education through FMF movement (Mzileni, 2018).

Challenges faced by youth-students are exacerbated by lack of labour required skills, lack of employment opportunities, lack of funding and lack of entrepreneurial skills and competencies (Okechukwu, 2019). Youth unemployment among the young people is the highest in the country with 38.2% (Stats SA, 2018). The category of youth affected by unemployment is those between the age cohorts of 15-24 and 25-34) (The Presidency, 2019, p. 129). Youth unemployment remains one of the major challenges and it has been estimated to be sitting at 53%, making it's the highest in the world (McCauley, 2019, p. 4). This is then worsened by slow economic growth and lack of investment in youth programmes. The graduate unemployment rate of South Africa is estimated at 33.5% for the youth (15-24) and 10.2% for those aged 25-34 (Stats SA. 2019). Unemployed graduate phenomenon as depicted by the FeesMustFall campaign is exacerbated by untransformed curriculum which do not provide students with relevant skills matching the labour demands. In this regard, the chapter argues that student entrepreneurship remains one of the strategies university-based youth

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