DOES CONTEXT MATTER? ENTREPRENEURIAL TEACHING AND TRAINING IN RURAL GHANA

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ABSTRACT
Models for training in entrepreneurship abound. Existing models include Alexander Osterwalder’s Business Model Canvas, Steve Blank’s Customer Development process, Eric Ries’ Lean Start-up, and Bill Aulet’s Disciplined Entrepreneurships. These have been developed mainly in the North American context and were developed based on consistencies in the practice of entrepreneurship within those contexts. A question that begs to be answered is whether or not, the context within which an entrepreneurial model is developed, influences the model itself, and the mode in which the model is taught and deployed. Tasked with developing entrepreneurial teaching content for rural communities in Ghana, a needs assessment to probe and understand the relationship between context and entrepreneurial training was conducted to assess whether the contextual differences would influence entrepreneurial training and development in rural communities. Engaging ethnographic research methods including observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, it was discovered that, the differences within the contexts would not allow direct transposing of the existing models. The need to make specific modifications resulted in a modified content to be tested for entrepreneurial training in the rural context. This paper makes a case from secondary data that, context matters in entrepreneurial training and development. It further reports on the major findings of the needs assessment conducted, highlighting the similarities and differences in context and implications of the findings where entrepreneurial training is concerned.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Training, Business Modelling, Rural Communities

1.0 Introduction
It has been reported that, with almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24, Africa has the youngest population in the world (African Economic Outlook, 2015). This report noted that, this number keeps growing. Prior to this, it was reported that, if the increase in the working population of the African continent, continued to grow at this rate, then the continent’s labour force will be 1 billion strong by 2040, making it the largest in the world (McKinsey Global Institute [MGI], 2010). In this same report, projections made for the continent, suggested that the collective contribution of the continent to the world’s GDP will rise from US$1.6 trillion in 2008 to US$2.6 trillion in 2020 where, the combined consumer spending will rise from US$800 billion to US$1.4 trillion, from 2008 to 2020. In addition to this, it noted that, in 2020, some 128 million Africans (more than half of households in Africa) will have discretionary spending power with about 50% of its population living in urban centres. This brings home the point of an anticipated increase in rural-urban migration, to the detriment of the sustenance of rural communities and urban centres. The collapse of a properly functioning social structure, with a good balance of rural and urban populations, necessitating the development of rural communities, could potentially be inevitable.
In a later report on *Africa at work: Job Creation and Inclusive Growth*, published in 2012 again by MGI, the points made in their 2010 report, was crystalized. Africa will benefit from 72 million paying jobs, by 36% of its workforce, by 2020, hence the need to accelerate wage paying employment (MGI, 2012). It continued by stating that, with an anticipated 48% of Africa’s population with secondary or tertiary education, improving the literacy rate, it is essential to position Africa to take advantage of its resources, which according to MGI (2012), has been the underpinning factor to its growth and development. This is unfortunate in the wake of strong global commodity prices. This report, mentioned that, outside of Africa, urbanization increase in consumer households and a dynamic private sector, is not seen as what it is the potentially main catalyst of growth on the continent. There is the need to capitalize on its dynamic private sector, to aid in the alleviation of Africa’s biggest challenge: unemployment, described by Ighobor (2013) as chronic unemployment, which needs to be addressed in order not to cripple the continent.

It is essential therefore, for entrepreneurial education across sectors and locations, to ensure that, African youth, and indeed, Ghanaian youth, take advantage of all the potential the continent holds for the very near future. With about 60% of uncultivated arable land available worldwide, according to *Lions on the Move*, agri-business, and its allied businesses, should be of interest, in the training and development of entrepreneurs. In an effort to do this, a consortium was formed to contribute to the work being done in the area of training entrepreneurs especially in rural communities in Ghana, where the main source of household income is farming, to help manage the unemployment challenges plaguing the continent. Additionally, it will work at helping youth in these communities start entrepreneurial ventures in the agri-sector and its allied services to curb rural-urban migration. These will position them to take advantage of the future growth prospects described by the *African Economic Outlook* and the MGI reports.

2.0 Background
2.1 Entrepreneurship training
Blank (2013a), in *Why Lean Start-up Changes Everything*, summarized the process of developing a start-up by combining 3 tools: The Lean Start-up method proposed by Ries (2011), the Business Model Canvas (BMC) proposed by Osterwalder (2010) and his own Customer Development Process in Blank (2013b). These tools have been used by educators and trainers entrepreneurs the world over, in an attempt to create a new breed of entrepreneurs who solve problems, utilising customer centered design. This new wave, starting mainly with the rise of tech-businesses, has made its way into other sectors.

The Lean Start-up, looks at how today’s entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses that have been developed through an iterative build-test-learn-measure model. This model is built on the principles of Agile Development. Martin and Martin (2007) described the Agile Development process as a process that promotes sustained development, while keeping the ‘developer’ and the customer/user, at the same pace. In that, the ‘developer’, by employing customer centered design, keeps the customer/user, in the loop of the development process by testing evolving aspects of their output, to gain feedback from the customer/user, and learn from it to improve their output. This is done using what Ries (2011) in the 6th chapter, described as the Minimum Viable Product (MVP). Ries made the point that, by going through this process of ‘shipping’ various forms of an MVP, which could be viewed as variations of low fidelity prototypes made for the purpose of obtaining feedback, the customer is as much part of the designing process as the designer himself.
While Ries was going through the understanding and research work on the Lean Start-up, a team of researchers, led by Alexander Osterwalder (2010), were also battling with basics of business modelling. Their aim, was to come up with a model that will serve as a ‘universal language’ for business people: start-up and existing businesses alike, to model their businesses. Though, Blank was very emphatic on the fact that a start-up was not a smaller version of a large company, Osterwalder suggested that, both could model their businesses, using a single simple universal language. A merging point can be found in Blank’s argument that, “start-ups are usually searching for a business model, while existing companies, are usually executing the found business model”. It is important to note that both business types can innovate using the lean start-up model.

Osterwalder (2010) and his team, developed the Business Model Canvas (BMC), with 9 elements: value proposition, customer segments, channels, customer relations, revenue models, key activities, key resources, key partners, and cost structure. Going through an iterative process, which is detailed in Blank’s customer development process, will lead to the finding of a replicable and scalable business model for a start-up, or some innovation in the model for an existing business. The Customer Development process has 4 levels: Customer Discovery, Customer Validation, Customer Creation and Company Building. The first 2 levels make up the ‘search’ phase of the entrepreneurial process, while the last two, make up the ‘execute’ phase of the process. Blank proposed as much iteration as possible within phases before iterating across phases.

Bill Aulet (2013), proposed another, yet similar process. Like the previous model, this model seeks to dispel the myth that entrepreneurship cannot be taught, and shows how innovation-driven entrepreneurship can be broken down into discreet behaviours and processes that can be taught. The process contains 24 steps, grouped into 6 themes: who is your customer; what can you do for your customer; how does he acquire your product; how do you make money off your product; how do you design and build your product; and how do you scale your business.

In as much as these models and processes provide a good basis to the teaching of entrepreneurship, and has been tested and proven for novices, when a team of entrepreneurial educators who use these models to teach in an urban context, were tasked with developing entrepreneurs in a rural context, there was concern as to whether or not the same methods would work. The need to understand how contextual characteristics affect the teaching and training of entrepreneurs became apparent.

2.2 Entrepreneurship training in rural communities
Welter (2011) asserted that, context is important in entrepreneurship development. He defined context and ways of embedding context in entrepreneurship training models. According to him, contexts refer to location, business, social systems, society, spatial, or institutional factors. These, he said, could be temporal based on some non-permanent conditions or historical, which could be more permanent. It is therefore important to consider these in the investigation and description of context, as it has an impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystems of different settings and determines the degree of understanding of the when, how, and why entrepreneurship happens, and who the participants are.

For Munyanyiwa and Mutsaue (2015), entrepreneurship training, taking into consideration the rural context is determined by amenities like social services, availability of standard business infrastructure and the likes. By studying the entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges in rural Zimbabwe, they concluded that, ‘self-employment’ which can be described as entrepreneurship,
is the key to the unemployment issues, as well as to rural-urban migration. Equipping folks in rural communities, was therefore key in achieving this objective. Challenges they identified in the rural communities included a general lack of standard business infrastructure, rural - urban migration, lack of social amenities and lack of individual capabilities required for start-up creations and operations. These challenges, alongside the lack of the necessary social amenities and infrastructure, in their opinion, would not aid the development of successful businesses in rural settings. Understanding the context, as described by Welter (2011), would therefore aid in finding lasting solutions to these challenges discussed by Munyanyiwa and Mutsaue (2015).

Stathopoulou, Psaltopoulo and Skuras (2004) noted that, even though the entrepreneurial process is the same in both rural and urban areas, the rural context brings about diverse challenges and prospects, thus agreeing to both Welter (2011) and Munyanyiwa and Mutsaue (2015). Siemens (2012), however disagreed with Stathopoulou et al., (2004) that, entrepreneurship in both rural and urban area are the same. He asserted that, entrepreneurship in the rural sector is totally different from entrepreneurship in the urban sector in terms of resource availability, challenges, motivation and delivery of entrepreneurship content. Additionally, that, owners of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the rural areas, lacked the skills and capabilities needed for start-up and its operations. Christaller (1966) summarized this by stating that, businesses or entrepreneurial ventures, can be operated with ease in rural areas if the issues are peculiar to the geographical location of the area, and the prospects and resource availability are adequately managed. Therefore, sight should not be lost to the fact that, it will be inappropriate to use contemporary entrepreneurship models and methods of teaching to train entrepreneurs in rural communities, as asserted by Siemens (2012).

Startiene and Remeikiene (2009), detailed demographic characteristics, which in their opinion affect sustainable entrepreneurship negatively and positively. These factors, they said, influence the success or survival of the business, and include: gender, age, education, emigration, ethnic minorities, race, and marital status among others. Apart from these demographic factors, they mentioned that, another very important factor was the willingness and determination of the person, to actually start a business. Mahmud et al., (2011), agreed when they assessed the effectiveness of basic student entrepreneurial programmes among local university graduates who had undergone the training programme in agro-entrepreneurship development. They concluded that, the possibility of entrepreneurship development in a particular setting is influenced by exogenous factors, including age, education level, business friendly environment, and the existence of entrepreneurial role models amongst others.

Morris, Kuratko, and Schindehutte (2001) viewed the entrepreneurship process to be influenced by access to a business friendly environment, availability of the required factor endowments, ability to acquire desired resources, and ability to implement and manage the business concept. It can be inferred from this that, factors such as the literacy level of a person, as well as the exogenous factors described by Mahmud et al., (2011), are contributing factors to the teaching of and actual ability to run a successful entrepreneurial venture. Chen et al., (1998) also introduced an additional dimension, when they stated that, a person's belief in their ability to successfully perform the roles and tasks of an entrepreneur determines the development of an entrepreneurial training. Finally, Pyysia¨inen Anderson, McElwee and Vesala (2006), in their study, which reviewed the training of farmers through the ‘usual’ entrepreneurship process, realised that, there is different entrepreneurial skills requirement for different contexts.
Therefore, when educators, who have had experience teaching entrepreneurship at the tertiary level in urban setting in Ghana and North America, were tasked with developing a curriculum for entrepreneurial training and development amongst youth in cocoa growing areas in Ghana, the need to assess the needs of the people in these communities, was critical. The team therefore sought to adopt some ethnographic research methods, to help in understanding the context very well, and table all the peculiar characteristics, that could potentially determine how the content and methods should be structured.

3.0 Conducting the needs assessment
Eisenhart (1988) described ethnography as a research method in which the researcher observes people in their natural environment so as to gain insight into the ways in which people inhabit their spaces, use their products and interact with the various physical, social, economic and ecological systems around them. She went on to explain that, it is a heavily qualitative research method, involving much participant-observation, where the researcher observes and records the actions and decision-making processes of individuals and groups in a given environment. For the purposes of understanding the operational areas, of the effort to train youth in cocoa growing areas in Ghana, in entrepreneurship, this was deemed as the most appropriate research method to use. This was the case because, ethnographic research, will provide an opportunity to delve into and understand the exogenous factors described by Mahmud et al., (2011), as well as the personal belief characteristics described by Chen et al., (1998), essential to the appropriate training and development of entrepreneurs in the contexts the project is targeting.

The methods adopted for the purpose of this research, included in-depth interviews, observations and focus group discussions (FGD). The respondents included potential participants of the training effort, a cross section of parents, teachers in the community, a cross-section of community leaders and elders, cocoa farmers in the communities, purchasing clerks who were stationed in the communities, and Programme Officers of the consortium, who were the field managers. Table 1 below provides details of the purpose for considering each of the respondent groupings.

Table 1: Stakeholders we interacted with and our interest in them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups/ Individuals</th>
<th>Purpose for being considered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinion leaders and elders</td>
<td>• The community’s posturing towards the business incubator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa farmers, parents and purchasing clerks</td>
<td>• The value placed on the industry as a career option for the youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The value chain, its challenges and opportunities, gaps that needed filling, and problems that could be solved with the introduction of new enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>• What business opportunities there are within the localities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What business opportunities they see in the cocoa value chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>• If they can support as facilitators – with respect to time, capacity, and willingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If they can double up as coaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The method of data gathering from each of these groupings was determined in the field, based on what circumstances were encountered in the various communities. The focus was on methods that would spark conversations on select areas of interest; to give the researchers a deeper understanding of the context, the number of respondents available, and the type of information required. The communities visited are detailed in Table 2 below: a minimum of 1 working day was spent in each of the communities.

Table 2: Location visited and the Programme Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ansah</td>
<td>New Edubiase</td>
<td>Asante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bopa</td>
<td>Sefwi-Wiaso</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appiakrom</td>
<td>Sefwi-Wiaso</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asempaneye</td>
<td>Elleukrom</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A research protocol was thus developed to aid in determining interviewers and the format of questioning as well as what to observe, to be able to arrive at the information required. Interview, FGD and observation guides were developed to help the team collect the relevant data. The data was captured in multiple forms, audio, video and written.

After the field effort, all of the data was transcribed and analysed using basic content and thematic analysis. Content Analysis as explained by Berelson (1952) is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Holsti (1969) added to this by defining it as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specific characteristics of messages. According to Bryman (2004) and Riessman (2004), Thematic Analysis, which is described as one of the four models of narrative analysis places emphasis on what is said rather than how it is said. For the purposes of this needs assessment, it was essential to make inferences from the rich qualitative data that was collected, hence the adaptation of these two methods.

4.0 Discussion of the key findings from the needs assessment

From the four communities visited, respondents were obtained for most of the respondent groupings required. Table 3 presents the number of respondents interacted with and the gender distribution. It was difficult to lay hands on entrepreneurs outside the cocoa production chain, as they were not interested. However, some of the farmers also had small ventures as entrepreneurs in the sale of agrochemicals, development and sale of seedlings and labour services that aid cocoa production in the locality. Farmers with additional micro-businesses were also asked questions in entrepreneurship.
The following subsections present the key findings\(^1\) from the field. It will provide some background of the various communities, and then delve into the key findings and its implications.

**Table 3: List of interviewees in location visited with their gender distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ansah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential participant</td>
<td>2 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa Farmers</td>
<td>10 (M=9, W=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>6 (M=4, W=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Leader/Elders</td>
<td>1 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>1 (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing clerk</td>
<td>2 (M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M = male, F = female

4.1 The communities visited

Ansah is a peri-urban community that has electricity, four paid boreholes, six churches, one health facility, presence of telecommunications network and a highway road that passes through the community. It has no feeder roads within the community and the housing facilities within the community are mainly constructed with sandcrete and mud usually with a detached wooden bathroom but no public toilet. There is a primary and junior high school and a playing field which doubles as the recreational centre for the youth. Although Ansah is a farming community, there is an increase in youth migration to nearby towns (Kumasi and Cape Coast) to find greener pastures. There is a sawmill factory in the community that employs some of the young men. The team did not meet any young women in Ansah but learnt they worked as storekeepers and traders in nearby towns, or were married with children.

Bopa is a rural community that has three private schools, two public schools, one JHS excluding kindergarten and an SHS. The community has electricity, a small town water system, access to all the telecommunication networks, one health facility and a highway that passes through it, but no feeder roads. Housing structures are either sandcrete block, wood or mud with dethatched bathrooms and a paid public toilet. The community has different church denominations with two

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\(^1\) It will not present the very detailed conversations and observational data, but a summary of the findings to aid the discussions for the purposes of this paper. This detail, is contained in a report which is available upon request.
active NGOs permanently stationed to support development: Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) and Christian Rural Aid Network (CRAN). The main means of transportation within the community being by foot and bicycle. Members of the community derive a lot of pleasure from farming as it is the main income generation activity in the community.

Appiahkrom is a rural community with farming as the principal occupation for community members. There is a highway that passes through the community but no feeder roads within the community. There is a basic and JHS school, excluding SHS. The community has access to electricity, paid borehole, different denomination churches, a health clinic and access to the various telecommunication networks. The houses are made of sandcrete blocks, wood or mud, with wooden dethatched bathrooms and paid public toilets. Most of the farms are on the hill. Cargill is the only organization that aids in community development though they are not an NGO. The main source of entertainment is soccer, music jams, bars and television.

Asempanaye is a rural farming community. The village has good social amenities: electricity, schools, churches, paid borehole, telecommunication network services and a health facility. The houses within the community are made of sandcrete blocks with a few mud houses. Each house has its own wooden or sandcrete block bathroom and toilet. The community had an HFC bank and a police station. They had no issue of teenage pregnancy and none of the youth was engaged in alcohol or drugs due to strict traditional rules and sanctions.

4.2 The potential participants to be trained

In five (5) FGD groupings, thirty-four (34) young men and twelve (12) young women, making a total of forty-six (46) youth, were engaged in conversation. Out of the 46 respondents, about 40% of them were Junior High School (JHS) graduates, 35% of them Senior High School (SHS) dropouts and the rest SHS graduates, most with poor grades hence very few tertiary education options. The objective of the FGDs was to first initiate discussions on selected issues to gain in-depth understanding of their context, interests, aspirations, challenges and the likes, within the shortest possible time, and secondly, to understand how they thought the programme will impact them. Their thoughts on the programme’s impact was obtained after we gave them a description of the programme.

The youth we found were predominantly engaged as cocoa farmers (about 40% of them), machine operators in a timber company, ‘okada’ riders (commercial motorbike transportation services), and artisans, with a good number engaged in odd jobs. One of them was a pupil teacher. Their aspirations included becoming cocoa farmers, crop and livestock farmers, police officers, teachers, Purchasing Clerks (PCs), traders, and farming services providers. They were of the view that cocoa farming, is very lucrative. For most of them, farming was all they were familiar with, as it had been passed from generation to generation. Their opinion was however that, their parents did not currently generate good proceeds from cocoa farming because they lacked good financial knowledge and business acumen. They felt they lacked same, and were very willing to learn, given the opportunity.

They knew and understood the cocoa production chain, and were aware of some opportunities within the value chain, which included disease control services, spraying services, agrochemical vending, seedling production, transportation services among others. Currently however, they were all engaged in some aspect of the cocoa production chain, with some even owning farms – though small in size (less than 2 acres). It was interesting to note however that, some of them, though
semi-literates, had gotten stuck to some of the bad practices that their parents use on the farms. For example, a male cocoa farmer remarked that:

“If we practice the spacing taught by the extension agents, we will not have enough cocoa trees on our farms. We prefer to practice ‘atodwe3’ which does not leave the farm looking bare when a seedling dies from draught”.

According to cocoa extension agents, his practice for example does not allow enough air to circulate in the farm, contributing to low yields. Some did not even believe in pruning, as they were of the opinion that, it reduced the size of the cocoa tree. The team realized some truth in it, Mahmud et al., (2011) concludes that the existence of entrepreneurial role models impacted the context of entrepreneurial training. The participants’ mind set would need to be shifted during the training, not only with respect to content, but also in life skills and motivation.

One other interesting insights, was that, the youth though engaged in farming now, did not like the tedious and laborious nature of farming, and were interested in exploring new and innovative practices that will make it less laborious yet productive.

4.3 Insights to benefit the project
The project, for which the needs assessment was conducted, seeks to empower youth in cocoa growing areas, by teaching them the basics of entrepreneurship and to equip them with entrepreneurial skills. The participants will go through a 4-month training with an output of a tested business concept, which will then be fed into an incubator. In the business incubator, they will be supported through the provision of technical assistance, and granted access to financing to ensure they execute these models. Ultimately, the project will position this youth, to create meaningful employment for themselves and other youth in the community, while they provide services that support cocoa production in their communities all geared towards national development.

From the data collected from all the respondent groupings, it was discovered that, the target youth in all the communities are very enthusiastic towards the project. They see this as an opportunity, a second chance at a life that did not go too well for them – hence the need to drop out of school. They were very willing to engage in cocoa production allied services along the cocoa production chain, as well as other opportunities in their localities. Unfortunately, for a settlement like Ansah, a peri urban community where there are other opportunities like working in a sawmill as a labourer, trade, shop keeping and ‘okada’ (commercial motorbike transportation services), they were not interested in building businesses. This was because, these other opportunities are, providing them with enough income for the short-term which was their main focus.

It was interesting to note that, most of the youth know about ‘business’ and were more inclined towards starting small businesses without necessarily looking out for entrepreneurial opportunities and, a large enough customer base for the ventures they start. This has in the past resulted in a lot of failure. Most of the current business persons, lacked training in the basics of good business practices like book-keeping, customer feedback, good customer services, planning out their operations to ensure it was optimum, and related others. However, at a very high level, these concepts will be very difficult for them to grasp hence there will be the need for the content to be restructured to suit the environment and the characteristics of the people to be trained. For those who were currently running some ventures, be it farming or some cocoa production allied services, they lacked basic knowledge in financial management, which resulted in a good number of business failures as well.
It was interesting to note however that, community members, from the elders in the community to the youth, are proud to be associated to cocoa, as they understand how it contributes to the economic development of the nation. The respondents were found to be hard working cocoa farmers, who should be making reasonable earnings from their farms, but for the small farm sizes and their piecemeal approach as community farmers. One very interesting discovery was that, virtually every member of the community farmed some cocoa. Some of the parents gave their children pieces of land to farm cocoa once they reached adulthood – this in the opinion of the research team, is a good initiation into adulthood and the need to run an activity to provide one’s income.

There was however a strong affinity towards government, which is represented by the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD). They were generally of the opinion that, the COCOBOD did not pay them a fair price for cocoa beans, the extension services were not as accessible as they will need, and farming inputs were not as regular and in the right quantities as is required for their farm sizes. They were of the opinion that, they were producing under capacity and needed support to produce more from their farms. It was however interesting to note, after some probing and through some observations, that, some of the farmers were not adhering to the right cocoa farm maintenance practices for a number of reasons including: lack of capital to engage labour, lack of knowledge and expertise, and traditional beliefs.

The Purchasing Clerks (PC), who are called “Kokoo Krakyi” in the production chain, have expanded from purchasing cocoa. In all the communities visited, and as is the case for all the PCs interviewed, it was realized that, they also served as money lenders to mainly cocoa farmers. Some of these farmers even took loans against cocoa that they would harvest at the end of the cocoa season. The PCs however failed to train the farmers on financial management so a lot of the time farmers hedged the same cocoa with multiple PCs, and also failed to pay back the loans, resulting in a lot of bad debt for the PCs. From the perspective of the PCs, entrepreneurial training was very essential, especially for the cocoa farmers, as in their opinion, they needed to address cocoa farming from an enterprise perspective.

Parents were very excited to see their children become cocoa farmers, but were caught in a dilemma where what could be potentially very lucrative, was not as lucrative for multiple reasons, and wanted better fortunes for their children. For them, there were two options: the first being that they are able to see their children through their education so they secure white-collar jobs, or that they are exposed to the kind of entrepreneurial training that the project was going to offer, so they know how to manage businesses very well. They asserted to the fact that, cocoa farming is very lucrative, but they as cocoa farmers themselves, lacked the business and financial literacy to manage their farms and finances properly.

The most alarming discovery in this exercise was about the general attitude of the respondents – young and old alike. Their general posturing is that of helplessness in self. They all had high external locus of control, believing that they did not control things that happened in their lives and blamed misfortunes on the government, and other external parities. For example, a lot of them were complaining about access to fertilizers and were not thinking about how they could resort to other supplement like poultry litter. Poultry litter is a mixture of poultry excreta, spilled feed, feathers, and material used as bedding in poultry operations, such as sawdust. Their overreliance on ‘salvation’ coming from some external source, did not make it possible for them to find solutions to some of their problems. This was worrying as entrepreneurs will need to have high internal locus of control. A majority of the youth were however convinced that if they build the right capacities, they will be able to better their own fortunes.
Some entrepreneurial opportunity options identified in the communities included: cocoa nurseries, ‘susu’/ savings institutions, labour contracting, adult educationists, agrochemical shops, parasitic plant removers, spraying contractors, drying contractors, compost manufacturers, purchasing clerks, transporters, among others. Other interesting insights were that, the communities all have basic schools, and some even with secondary schools. The teachers are a mix of teacher training graduate and some graduate teachers with only a few pupil teachers. These teachers could be trained as coaches as they live in the community. Having local resident coaching would be important to provide the consistent role models that the participants need to succeed. The risks lie in the possibility of them being transferred within the period, and also the fact that they are not entrepreneurs hence coaching entrepreneurial ventures might not come to them very easily. These risks will be considered in the structuring of the project to ensure they are mitigated.

Knowledge gaps identified, to be filled by the curriculum, include: financial management; planning and scheduling; professionalism; access to capital; entrepreneurial and small business management education; assistance with good farming practices; access to lands; farm management; assistance with good social practice; access to good conditioned roads to farms; and poor / lack of extension services delivery. Even though these concepts are very high level, it will be essential for the curriculum to be broken down into very simple terms to aid comprehension, once the training sessions commence.

5.0 Conclusions
From the needs assessment conducted, it was realized that, it is still very essential to use entrepreneurial methodologies postulated by the likes of Blank (2013b), Ries (2011), Osterwalder (2010), Martin and Martin (2007 and Aulet (2013). As summarized in Blank (2013a), the Eric Ries’ Lean Start-up does change the thinking in entrepreneurial training, and allows for a more practical approach to the training of entrepreneurship across contexts.

The big difference, however, is that, from the study, it is clear that Welter (2011) was right about the fact that the method of entrepreneurial training and development, is highly influenced by the context, requiring that one considers the location, business, social systems, society, spatial, or institutional factors. For example, in the locations described, it is very clear that though they have access to some basic amenities which will aid training, and could serve as channels to reaching customers and be reached, some of them were still limited. The trainer will, therefore, need to take these into consideration. This is in line with what Munyanyiwa and Mutsaue (2015), said about the fact that, amenities like social services, availability of standard business infrastructure and the likes, are essential to the selection of the training type.

The data did prove Stathopoulou et al., (2004) right when they said that, the entrepreneurial process is the same in both rural and urban areas, however, it is essential to adapt the training process to the different contexts as the rural context brings about diverse challenges and prospects. As was suggested by Startiene and Remeikiene (2009), some demographics were collected from the field work, and registration information collected by the consortium lead. This gave a good idea of the demographics to be considered in developing the curriculum and the selection of a pedagogy. This is in line with Mahmud et al., (2011), who concluded that, entrepreneurship development is influenced by exogenous factors, including age, education level, business friendly environment and entrepreneurial role model amongst others.

It is absolutely essential that, the content and teaching approach is tailored to fit the contexts under consideration. As Pyysia¨inen et al., (2006), stated, it was realised that there is the need for
different entrepreneurial and life skills requirement for this particular context, which the researchers will note, moving forward on the project.

6.0 Way forward for the project
It will be essential to revisit the strategy for the project, as has been developed. The draft curriculum will also need to be revised, to ensure that, the insights from the needs assessment is taken into consideration where the content and mode of delivery is concerned. Activities, examples, and models, will need to be adapted to satisfy the needs of the participants to be trained.

The needs assessment helped the research team, which is part of the curriculum development team for the project, gain a better appreciation of what work has to go into the development of the curriculum. Also, these insights helped in planning out the mode the pilot study for the project should adopt, how facilitators, coaches and mentors will be recruited and trained, as well as how monitoring and evaluation will need to be done to ensure that project goals were being met.

The team, which was new to the cocoa production chain, as it occurs in practice, gained first-hand knowledge for the effort. The insights gained from this knowledge will result in changing aspects of the initial approach to opportunity identification, to ensure that, the content provides the facilitators and participants with a very good guide to identifying problem areas along the production chain, to find innovative solutions which can be commercialized.

The next steps for the project is to develop the curriculum, pilot it and commence training. The literature was right about the need to tailor the content and process of delivery to aid in the achievement of the goals of the training effort. This has been confirmed by the needs assessment. The team thus describes this effort as a successful one.

7.0 References


