

**DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE  
GRADES 10 AND 11 SYLLABI FOR BUSINESS  
SUBJECTS IN ERITREA**

**ALEM BERAKI OGHBU**

**DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE  
GRADES 10 AND 11 SYLLABI FOR BUSINESS  
SUBJECTS IN ERITREA**

**ALEM BERAKI OGHBU**

A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Masters in Philosophy, Faculty of Education.

**Supervisor: Mr. Eslyn B. H. Isaacs**  
**Co-supervisor: Professor Juliana Smith**

September 2003



## ABSTRACT

### DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE GRADES 10 AND 11 SYLLABI FOR BUSINESS SUBJECTS IN ERITREA

M.Phil mini-thesis, Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape.

It is believed that the inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in the curriculum will equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and values that could help them for employment and self-employment in their future careers. In Eritrea, Entrepreneurship Education is not yet offered as a secondary school subject. However Business (Commerce) Education, which is more related to Entrepreneurship Education is offered in two comprehensive secondary schools.

In the light of the existing Business Education, as mentioned above, the study has attempted to examine the current status of grades 10 and 11 syllabi in relation to the development of entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, and values. The study also explores whether the syllabi for business subjects (Bookkeeping and Economics) are appropriate to equip students with entrepreneurial skills and characteristics such as creativity, innovation, risk taking, problem solving and decision-making. In addition, the study has tried to see whether modern teaching materials such as textbooks and computers supplemented the syllabi, and instructional methods. Furthermore, the condition of the commerce teachers in regard to workshops and in-service training is assessed.

In this study, a review of appropriate available literature is done in the area of Business and Entrepreneurship Education. Various definitions of Business Education and entrepreneurship are identified. The entrepreneurial skills and characteristics, and the relevance of Business Education and Entrepreneurship Education are elaborated. Thus, the purpose of Business or Entrepreneurship Education is to prepare students to fit into the workplace, to start their own business and to prepare students for entrepreneurial opportunities. Moreover, the development of Business or Entrepreneurship Education is discussed.

Data were collected by interviewing teachers and the members of the Department of General Education. In this regard, seven commerce teachers, two members of the Department of General Education, and one former member of the Commerce Panel were interviewed. Students also completed questionnaires. Sixty student questionnaires were completed and returned. In addition to this, documents of the grade 10 and 11 Bookkeeping and Economics syllabi are presented and analyzed. The results of the study were analyzed in terms of appropriate qualitative and quantitative descriptions.

The analysis of the data revealed that the grades 10 and 11 syllabi for business subjects have not been updated for many years. The syllabi are more or less similar to the syllabi, which were being used during the colonial period of the Ethiopian regime. For this reason, the existing syllabi are unable to reflect much of the Eritrean context. The syllabi of the business subjects do not explicitly include the necessary

entrepreneurial knowledge skills, and values, which are required in modern business environments. More specifically, the Bookkeeping syllabus lays more emphasis on equipping students to develop the skill of record keeping, and preparing financial statements of manufacturing and merchandise enterprises. In the teaching learning process of Bookkeeping, students seem to be playing only with numbers. This does not allow for the development of critical and creative thinking. Similarly, the Eritrean grades 10 and 11 Economics syllabus only orientates students to the economic terminology and general economics concepts. Therefore, students are not expected to be creative, innovative, problem-solvers and decision-makers after completion of their respective grades.

Lastly, as an outcome of the findings, various recommendations are made.

September 2003

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- My wife Eden Tesfahannes;
- My dearest children, Henok, Mical and Rahel; and
- My mother Mihret Tesfazghi.

## DECLARATION

I declare that *Development of Entrepreneurship in the Grades 10 and 11 Syllabi for Business Subjects in Eritrea* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Alem Beraki Oghbu

September 2003

Signed: -----

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people and institutions that have inspired and supported me in completing this thesis.

To my supervisor, Mr. Eslyn Isaacs, warm thanks and appreciation for supporting and guiding this work. Many thanks to my co-supervisor Prof. Juliana Smith for helping me through the difficult times and providing a listening ear.

I am thankful to the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development of the University of Asmara for making it possible for me to pursue my study at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Special thanks go to the commerce teachers and commerce students at Keih-Bahri and Asmara Comprehensive Secondary Schools who participated in this study.

I am also thankful to the members of the Supervision Division at the Department of General Education and former member of the Commerce Panel for their participation in this research.

My thanks go to Mr. Hailesellassie Kelati for his assistance and encouragement.

Finally, and most importantly, my sincere appreciation to my wife, Eden Tesfahannes, who looked after our children in my absence of two years from home while pursuing my study at the University of the Western Cape. Thanks to my mother Mihret Tesfazghi and my sisters for their prayers and for always believing in me.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the study	4
1.3 Statement of the problem	8
1.4 Aims of the study	10
1.5 Research question	11
1.6 Limitations of the study	11
1.7 Significance of the study	12
1.8 Structure of the study	12
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Business Education	14
2.3 Entrepreneurship	17
2.3.1 Overview of entrepreneurial skills and characteristics	20
2.3.2 Entrepreneurship Education	23
2.4 Issues in the Business Education curriculum	26
2.4.1 Definition of curriculum	26
2.4.1.1 Subject syllabus	26
2.4.1.2 Subject curriculum	27
2.4.2 Approaches to curriculum development	28
2.4.3 Developing Business Education curriculum	29
2.4.3.1 Components of an effective curriculum for Entrepreneurial Education	33
2.5 Purpose and relevance of Business/Entrepreneurship Education	36
2.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills and values through teaching	39
2.7 Necessary skills for business employment	45
2.8 Summary	47

## **CHAPTER THREE**

<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>49</b>
3.1 Introduction	49
3.2 Subjects and research sites	49
3.3 The research design	50
3.4 Data collection method	53
3.4.1 Interviews	54
3.4.1.1 Teachers' interviews	56
3.4.1.2 Interviewing members of the Department of General Education	57
3.4.2 Questionnaire	57
3.4.2.1 Students' questionnaire	60
3.4.3 Document analysis	61
3.5 Ethical consideration of the study	61
3.6 Summary	62

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

<b>DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS</b>	<b>64</b>
4.1 Introduction	64
4.2 Document analysis of the syllabi of the Business Subjects	64
4.2.1 Contents and objectives of Bookkeeping syllabus for grade 10	65
4.2.2 Contents and objectives of Bookkeeping syllabus for grade 11	66
4.2.3 Contents and objectives of the Economics syllabus for grade 10	67
4.2.4 Contents and objectives of the Economics syllabus for grade 11	70
4.3 Interviews with teachers and their responses	73
4.3.1 Aims of Business Education	74
4.3.2 Relevance of the contents of the Business Education syllabi	77
4.3.3 Participation of stakeholders in Business Education curriculum development	81
4.3.4 Inclusion and exclusion of topics in the syllabi for business subjects	83

4.4	Interviews with members of the Department of General Education and their responses	84
4.4.1	Development and objectives of Business Education	85
4.4.2	Provision of workshops and in-service training to teachers	88
4.5	Students' questionnaire and their responses	89
4.6	Summary	95

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	Overview of the study	98
5.2	Major findings of the study	99
5.3	Recommendations	105
4.4	Concluding remarks	108

### **BIBLIOGRAGHY**

<b>APPENDIX I</b>	Letter of permission	110
<b>APPENDIX II</b>	Interview questions for teachers	
<b>APPENDIX III</b>	Interview questions for members of DGE	
<b>APPENDIX IV</b>	Students' questionnaire	
<b>APPENDIX V</b>	Grade 10 Bookkeeping syllabi outline	
<b>APPENDIX VI</b>	Grade 11 Bookkeeping syllabi outline	
<b>APPENDIX VII</b>	Grade 10 Economics syllabi outline	
<b>APPENDIX VIII</b>	Grade 11 Economics syllabi outline	

## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1 Entrepreneurial competencies	21
Table 2.2 Overall objectives for a course in entrepreneurship	25
Table 2.3 Curricular ideas	35
Table 2.4 Types of skills required in entrepreneurship	43
Table 2.5 General office competencies and changing technology skills	45
Table 3.1 Advantages and disadvantages with regard to interviews	55
Table 4.1 Contents and objectives of Bookkeeping syllabus for grad 10	65
Table 4.2 Contents and objectives of Bookkeeping syllabus for grade 11	66
Table 4.3 Contents and objectives of Economics syllabus for grade 10	67
Table 4.4 Contents and objectives of Economics syllabus for grade 11	70
Table 4.5 Teachers' profile	74
Table 4.6 Students' profile	89
Table 4.7 Parents' occupation	90
Table 4.8 Reasons for joining the commerce stream	90
Table 4.9 Students' post school/university career plan	91
Table 4.10 Responses in regard to the aims and contents of Business Education	92
Table 4.11 Inclusion of entrepreneurial characteristics and skills in the the Business Education syllabi	93

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Integrating the business function into an economic structure	16
Figure 2.2 Gillie's planning model	31
Figure 2.3 Problem-solving model	44

## ACRONYMS

ACC	Asmara Commerce College
AECC	Accounting Education Change Commission
CBE	Commercial Bank of Eritrea
EPLF	Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front
DGE	Department of General Education
DTEA	Department of Technical and Adult Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NBEA	National Business Education Association

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Eritrea is located in the horn of Africa, bordered by the Red Sea in the north-east and east, Djibouti in the south-east, Ethiopia in the south, and the Sudan in the west and north, and covers an area of 124 300 square kilometers including over 300 islands.

Eritrea's strategic position at the entrance to the Red Sea puts it at the center of the important international crossroads, connecting Europe with the Persian Gulf and countries bordering the Indian and Atlantic Ocean. With over 1 000 kilometers of the Red Sea coastline, including two deep-water ports, it is well positioned to access both regional and global markets. However, despite the potential for immense development, the basic factors of development including physical and social, as well as institutional infrastructures of Eritrea, have been severely affected by the thirty years prolonged war and the policies of the colonial regimes (Eritrean Investment Center, 1995).

Before its liberation in 1991, Eritrea had been under different colonial powers for almost a century. The Italians ruled the country for about fifty years until their total defeat by the British in 1941. The British ruled Eritrea for ten years before Ethiopia took over. It was only after thirty years that Eritrea could achieve its independence from Ethiopia in 1991 (Habte, 2000).

According to Weldemariam (1997), Eritrean education, like other African countries, inherited its educational systems from a variety of foreign sources. As a consequence, the curriculum in different historical periods did not reflect the interest of the Eritrean people rather did it reflect the ideological interests of the colonizers. Modern education was introduced to Eritrea by the Italians who had the intention to exploit and use the cheap labor in the industries and factories they started in Eritrea. However, it was very limited in scope. Only a few nationals were given the

opportunity to attend the Italian medium schools from grades 1 to 4. Thus, native Eritreans were not allowed to study beyond four years of primary education. The number of elementary schools was very few. The level of education was considered sufficient to inculcate the necessary skills for the labour force required by the colonial administration.

The British administration, which replaced Italian colonialism in Eritrea, improved the educational systems. It is generally believed that in ten years, the British doubled the number of schools in the country. Moreover, many teachers were recruited to teach Arabic and Tigrigna languages. In comparison with the Italian colonizers, the British administration established a high standard of education. Nevertheless, the curriculum remained essentially academic and hence inadequate to meet the needs and interests of the people of Eritrea. Thus, the curriculum was not aimed to develop the people's consciousness in regard to their national identity. Moreover, the British administration tried to separate the unification of the people, which was against the interest of the people of Eritrea.

Following the British administration, Eritrea enjoyed a limited freedom between 1952 and 1961 in a federation with Ethiopia. In 1962, Emperor Haileselassie of Ethiopia cancelled a United Nations resolution plan for free election and annexed Eritrea without the willingness of the Eritrean people (Harber, 1997). This action resulted in a war between Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1961-1991. During the Ethiopian occupation, elementary schools were opened in the rural areas, whilst secondary schools, vocational schools, nursery schools, and teachers training institutes were opened in the urban areas. In line with this, the curriculum was changed to reflect the cultural values and political aspirations of the ruling class as part of a long-term strategy to eliminate the Eritrean identity. Hence, the quality of education that had been achieved during the British administration, started to deteriorate (Harber, 1997).

During the struggle for independence, the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) introduced a basic education program in the liberated areas. During that time, valuable experience was gained in the design and implementation of basic education and the development of an educational policy suitable for the situation that prevailed in the liberated areas. This contributed to the development of a curriculum for elementary

and junior secondary schools, which reflected to a limited extent the political, cultural, historical, psychological and economic background of the Eritrean people in general. As soon as independence was realized, the education system as well as other sectors was virtually destroyed during the war. Since independence, however, a major reconstruction had been undertaken. In addition, considerable efforts have been made at all levels to enhance the quality of education in Eritrea (Ministry of Education, hereafter MOE, 1998, Education Brief).

The structure of the existing educational systems of Eritrea is based on a 5-3-4 model. This model implies that five years of elementary school, three years of junior secondary school, and four years of senior secondary school. Although there are nine spoken languages in the country, the medium of instruction from junior secondary schools is English, which is a second language for both students and teachers. Currently there are 44 secondary schools of which 38 are governmental while the remaining are private schools distributed in six regional ("zobas") administrations in relation to the density of the student population.

Only two of the 44 senior secondary schools in the country are comprehensive secondary schools that offer business subjects. These schools are Asmara and Keih-Bahri Comprehensive Secondary Schools. They are selected for this study and both of them are found in Asmara, the capital City of Eritrea. The Business Education subjects offered at the comprehensive secondary schools have remained unchanging over the years and the subjects currently taught are General Business, Bookkeeping, Economics and Typing. Grade 8 and grade 9 students are offered Bookkeeping and General Business while students in grade 10 and grade 11 are offered Bookkeeping, Economics, Typing and Commercial Mathematics. It is therefore not surprising if a limited number of students are included.

The main concern of the study is to explore the general contents of the syllabi of the business subjects, namely, Bookkeeping and Economics particularly taught in grade 10 and 11, and to describe to what extent the syllabi include entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and values.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Eritrea is a new nation and as a consequence the majority of the businesses are in the earliest stage of business development. In the modern information era, the role of the small business enterprises in the national and global economy is of crucial importance. Birch (1987: 34) describes that for some time now, entrepreneurial businesses have created more new jobs than large corporations. With the vast majority of new jobs are being created by small businesses, and with more people starting their own businesses, perhaps it is time to take another look at what business schools are presenting to the labour market as trained, prepared graduates. However, for any one going into a business for the first time, it is important to have entrepreneurial skills and abilities in the areas of decision making, assuming responsibility and taking risk before time is spent on gathering information and analyzing it.

Regarding the above, Business Education plays a significant role in the development of managerial and entrepreneurial skills, which are the driving forces for the economic development of the country in general and to the business enterprises in particular. Nevertheless, how does one acquire the necessary skills required by small and medium enterprises? One assumption of today's Business Education is to introduce entrepreneurial courses into the curriculum of the business subjects. From the Entrepreneurial Education students could acquire some basic business skills in starting and running their own businesses in future time and ultimately they would develop the capacity for problem-solving, creativity, innovation and risk taking that are the critical ingredients for entrepreneurship. Whether or not, such an assumption is valid is beyond the scope of this study. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that learning business subjects in school contribute directly or indirectly to the development of entrepreneurship. Thus entrepreneurship is widely regarded as instrumental in economic growth and for creating jobs (Nunn and Craig, 2001).

Floyed and Crank (1977: 12) state that the Business Education curriculum in the secondary schools serves the needs of the youth of the nation through:

- Occupational and career guidance, career orientation and exploration of jobs and requirements in business.

- Development of occupational knowledge, attitudes and skills that oriented around job classifications of a) clerical b) Bookkeeping and Accounting c) data processing d) marketing and sales e) business ownership and management.
- Development of consumer knowledge, attitudes and skills that permit one to make appropriate and reasoned decisions in the selection, buying and use of consumer goods and services.
- Development of understanding regarding the organization and operation of the nation's economic system that will permit one to make personal economic decisions that are appropriate for the economic system as a whole.
- Development of personal-skills that permit one to become a fully functioning individual in the personal business activities of life.

According to the document of the Department of General Education (hereafter DGE, 1997: 6) in Eritrea, some of the aims of secondary education are:

- To offer necessary knowledge, understanding and skills, and the application of these abilities to meet personal and social change.
- To instill a sense of self-discipline, self-confidence, self-reliance, creativity, initiative and personal responsibility.
- To promote the development of the learners' potential in line with their needs and interests.
- To enable students to develop skills of problem solving, inquiry, information gathering, analysis, interpretation, communication and other essential learning processes.
- To relay a firm-foundation for further education and the world of work.
- To prepare a sound base for an understanding and appreciation of science and technology together with the development of knowledge, values, attitudes and commitment to protect and improve the environment.

If we look at the aims of the Business Education curriculum stated by Floyed and Crank and the aims of secondary education in Eritrea, they are not contradictory. In one-way or another, they have similarities. Although the aims of secondary education in Eritrea are indicated in general, there are some points, which reflect the need of the youth to become an entrepreneur. These points are indicated in the aims of the Business Education stated by Floyed and Crank. In short, both cases state the aims of enabling students to develop knowledge and skills that will help them in their future careers. Having this general aim, therefore, it is necessary to look at the background

of Business (Commerce) Education offering at the Eritrean comprehensive secondary schools.

To revitalize the quality of education in the comprehensive secondary schools in Eritrea, panels of Commerce, Technique and Agriculture were established under the name of 'Technical and Commerce panel' at the DGE in 1992. The Commerce Panel included people with expertise in Bookkeeping and Economics while the Technical Panel included people with expertise in Electricity, Metal, and Woodwork. The Agricultural Panel was included in the Technical and Commerce Panels. However, there was no a representative person for Agriculture at the DGE. In order to run education effectively and efficiently in the comprehensive secondary schools, a general study, observation and evaluation were performed in the secondary schools in 1992. Consequently, in 1993, by allocating and restructuring the materials and human resources, only three schools were selected to offer Technical, Agricultural and Business Education. The selection was based on their historical, organizational, material and human resource rewards they had. Each school decided to offer two streams from the three disciplines in addition to the academic subjects.

The selected schools are:

- Asmara Comprehensive Secondary School, offering commerce and agriculture;
- Keih-Bahri Comprehensive Secondary School, offering commerce and technique; and
- Halay Comprehensive Secondary School, offering technique and agriculture.

Based on the above decisions, the Technical and Commerce Panel started its work as enthusiastically as the other panels at the DGE. The panel prepared syllabi for the Technical and Commerce Streams. These syllabi still form the basis for teaching. During that time, the Commerce Panel was actively working on the preparation on the textbooks for the business subjects as the other academic panels did. However, a decision came from the higher authority that the Technical and Commerce Panel had to move from the DGE and joined the Department of Technical and Adult Education (hereafter DTEA) within the MOE. Since then, the business subjects such as

Bookkeeping and Economics remained without having prescribed textbooks. The reason why the panel moved away from the DGE was unclear for Business Education teachers and caused dissatisfaction. The Business Education teachers claimed that the DTEA did not take any consideration in developing and updating the Business Education offering at the comprehensive secondary schools. It did not make any contact with the concerned teachers and did not visit the schools offering business and technical subjects. Since 1994, the DTEA has not made any effort in developing and updating the syllabi of business subjects and it is believed that this was part of the reason why the Business Education curriculum is in doubt.

According to the document of supervision in the DGE, a study was conducted in 1997 on the comprehensive secondary schools. The aim of the study was to know the situation of the comprehensive secondary schools and to identify the main problem areas, challenge the comprehensive secondary schools, to arrange a workshop, to discuss the main issues obtained from the study and to develop a set of implementable solutions.

Although the study was completed and the findings reported in 1997, the first workshop was only conducted in 2000. The participants to the workshop were commerce and technical teachers, school directors, head of supervision, one member from human resource department of MOE, one member from vocational and adult education department, chairman of teachers' national union, and the head of the regional education department (Kahsay, 1997).

Based on the previous report, many problems were mentioned in the workshop. To mention a few:

- There were many problems in organizing, leading and evaluating the comprehensive secondary schools;
- No attempt was made to solve the problems faced by the schools;
- No one tried to help technically, morally and financially, and
- There was no a concerned person who took responsibility to solve the problems.

Consequently, this created an unfavorable condition in the teaching and learning process and the students became the victims of these problems.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When Eritrea was not a master of its destiny, very little business development took place, because the past colonial regimes never encouraged such activities. One evidence for this fact was that the Chamber of Commerce, which was established in the 1940s, had only 500 members and none of these was Eritreans. This state of affairs continued to 1970 (Membrahtu, 1995).

Furthermore, the colonial regime of Ethiopia did its best to weaken the indigenous entrepreneurs. Under the pretext of socialism, the regime nationalized and almost all the major manufacturing enterprises directed their income to financing the war it waged against the Eritrean Liberation Army. The aim of the group was to ensure Eritrea's independence. The few enterprises that were not nationalized did not perform too well. During the time of the war, it was difficult to obtain a license or certificate to start and manage a business. In line with this, Business Education subjects were not recognized as important subjects. Although Business Education subjects such as General Business, Bookkeeping and Economics were taught in the secondary schools, the students were not encouraged to become entrepreneurs.

It is commonly believed that economic growth can be achieved through an increase of the number of entrepreneurs in the country. Timmons (1994: 5) is of the opinion that entrepreneurs are fueling the engine for the economic engine of the country. Similarly, Liedholm and Mead (1999: 1) explain "... micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are major features of the economic landscape in all developing countries today." According to these authors, many third world governments have recognized the contribution of these enterprises to the creation of jobs and to the alleviation of poverty. This aspect has been given prominence in many governmental development plans.

When Eritrea gained its independence in May 1991, the government realized that small enterprise developments are vital for the economic development of the country. In order to encourage the people to engage in entrepreneurial activities, the government developed and implemented a free market and privatization policy. Eritrean's economic development policy is anchored upon the establishment of a