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TOPIC: NEW GENERATION OF CREATIVES AND GENERATIVES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is one of the most diversified and most populous countries in the world. As a multi-ethnic state, Nigeria is inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups with over 500 distinct languages all identifying with a wide variety of cultures. The one called “Giant of Africa” has been home to a number of ancient and indigenous pre-colonial states and kingdoms over the millennia. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the world, with an estimated 206 million inhabitants as of late 2019. It has the third-largest youth population in the world, after India and China, with more than 90 million of its population under the age of eighteen. Even with a population as large as this with a cultural structure as diverse as their, the Nigerian government has failed to diversify and improve its economy in line with increasing demand of technology and creativity in the world as of today. After the fall of the price of oil in 2014 Nigeria’s economy and money value has suffered badly. The government decided to go into agriculture which is not a bad idea but going **solely** into agriculture is the problem. The world is beginning to dwell more on technology and creatives and it’s benefits to the world at large and how it can be maximized in this country are the main concern of this essay

Creativity and technology dates far back as the days of Williams Shakespeare, Pablo Picasso, Thomas Edison and Karl Benz. To the world at large it’s relevance is not a new or shocking thing. Many countries in the world have tapped into this fast-growing phenomenon. Most African countries however have either been introduced to it or have seen the relevance of creating and developing for themselves late due to colonial oppression. Creatives and technologists have helped to develop their societies by making lives easier for the people in their attack to problems of the society and humanity. They express and present these problems in such a way that isn’t refined or influenced to favour the government. Because of the appreciation of their work by the government, they have managed to create fields and industries, like Car production and design, Fashion, Music, Multimedia, Architecture etc., that has been used to generate useful revenue for their country.

Nigeria was not exempted from this expression of talents. In the 20th century, Nigeria’s creative and technological industries were dominated by names like Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Keziah Jones, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Chinwe Chukwuogo-Roy and Philip Emeagwali. Most of these people received tertiary educations overseas and developed on what they learnt. Some tried their best to develop the country in their little ways but were restricted by the corrupt and deprioritized government in power at the time. This act of ignorance is what has left Nigeria, a country filled brilliant, creative and innovative minds, to be a spectator to the technological and creative development of the world.

In recent times, technology and creatives have been used to improve various fields in unimaginable ways. The Medical industry, Security, Fashion, Communications, Aeronautics, Robotics, Space and Nuclear technology, etc. With the development of technology, different countries have accelerated the value of their economy by 30%. The introduction of brilliant and broad new fields like Computer aided designs and Social media marketing has introduced new areas of profession from which taxes can be generated to create more revenue. Occupations like Car design, Architecture, Engineering, Social media influencing, Social media marketing, Editing, Digital fashion designing and the likes, have paved the way for billions of Dollars to boost the economies of various countries.

After the recent recognition of these fields and their benefits to various economies, studies show that as at their time of recognition, people who practiced these fields acquired the necessary skills as hobbies and attained the heights they did through proactive self-development. Comparing the future numbers, the most feasible thing to do was to include these fields as courses into the curriculum of their tertiary institutions.

In the Nigerian society, the professions or occupations that are seen as respectable are Law, Medicine related professions and Engineering related professions. As recognized as the Engineering related professions are, the Electrical and Technological aspects are not given much credit by many, they are seen as people who will end up as “Electricians”. This mentality is what has kept Nigeria in the predicament that she is still in right now. Courses like Computer Science & Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Business Information Systems, Computer Sciences, Cyber Security, Data Science & Big Data, Geographical Information Systems, Health Informatics, Human Computer Interaction, IT Security, Informatics & Information Sciences, Machine Learning, Software Engineering, Video Games & Multimedia and Web Technologies & Cloud Computing are not studied or paid attention to in Nigeria. This is because our government simply hasn’t looked deep into the benefits of these courses to our economy if taken seriously. The people who have the opportunity to study these courses abroad do so and are unable to practice in Nigeria because there is little or no opportunity for their knowledge and skill to be maximised. If you don’t understand, imagine a company like Sony or Gameloft being Nigerian owned. Imagine the amount of revenue that will create for our economy.

Asides from the government, the elite Nigerians also share the blame in neglecting the creatives. People rather buy foreign art or foreign clothing or foreign music or invest in foreign books for local examinations than the works of our own people in Nigeria. The government fails to invest in the Music industry, the Filmmaking industry, the Publishing industry, etc. Various countries that produce oil also have various industries from which they get additional revenue. In Nigeria, oil is the main source of revenue even in the prevailing fall in oil prices.

The first step to diversifying the economy is to include Creative and Technology inclined courses and subjects in our Educational curriculum. Funds should be allocated towards the development of the curriculum. Appropriate actions like reaching out to various companies and professionals to carry out workshops and awareness seminars at various levels of our Educational system. Provision should be made for the approval and development of specialised institutions, training centres and academies (eg. Institutes of technology, Computer training centres, Dance academies, Football academiesetc.). Starting from the curriculum is very important because there is no better way to secure a developed future other than developing the training system of those who are the future.

Diversifying the Nigerian economy will increase the rate of job opportunities for Nigerians who have studied in and outside Nigeria. The use of technology in fields like Medicine and Engineering will place Nigeria top in the market once again. Expanding our industries and investing in Game makers, Filmmakers, Animation, Fashion, Networking, Telecoms and other forms of media will bring a variety to our market and in turn attract more customers. It will encourage more Nigerians and even foreigners to invest in the Nigerian economy and Nigeria will be once again live its name as the African Giant.