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THE IMPLICATION OF THE NEW EDUCATION ROADMAP TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATED TRANSFORMATION OF ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Building the future of younger generations is the unalterable role of higher education everywhere. For this purpose, countries develop a plan or strategy in order to harmonize their education system with their development endeavours and comply with the dynamism of the time. Cognizant to this, Ethiopia has also launched a new 'educational roadmap' to transform its educational system to accord with the requirements of 21st century education systems that play roles of transforming the socio-economic development of the nation. This article is therefore, dedicated to explore the basic research question that; to what extent the new Ethiopian Education Roadmap will pave a way for entrepreneurial orientation of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the country, by employing a method of qualitative document analysis on the draft roadmap document and focus group discussion held in two of the country's public higher educational institutions together with a literature review of various sources. The enquiry is made from the point of view of Clark's (1998) seven tenets of entrepreneurial higher educational institutions and after a thorough discussion on these tenets, the article concluded that beyond addressing the problems of former education system, Ethiopia needs to set up an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the HEIs which demands internally driven transformation in the universities in line with the nation's development aspirations in order to entrepreneurially inspire the graduates and hence control unemployment in particular and alleviate problems of current economic, social and political catastrophes in general.

KEYWORDS

Ethiopia, HEIs, entrepreneurial orientation.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher educations in 21st century is anticipated to play very vital role for sociocultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals (World Declaration of Higher Education (WDHE), 1998). Consequently, higher educational institutions are facing the challenges and difficulties related to financing, relevance of programs, employability of graduates, and establishment of efficient co-operation among stakeholders. As a result, developing entrepreneurial skills and initiatives becomes a major concern of higher education today.

On the other hand, a country's educational policies, strategies and action plans have the most profound effect in developing the cutting-edge ideas for tailoring the whole system that fosters the desired overall development of its people. Cognizant to this fact, Ethiopia has also launched a new 'educational roadmap' to transform the educational system to accord with the requirements of 21st century educational systems that play roles of transforming the socio-economic development, particularly the industrialization process and hence to transform Ethiopian society and place the country on a trajectory to become a lower middle-income economy by the year, 2030 (Ethiopian Ministry of Education; Education Strategy Centre (ESC), 2018).

The main purpose of the 'new educational roadmap' as stated by the draft document is "to reform the education sector in accordance with the national vision and development goals targeting at achieving peace, unity- with-diversity, broad and rapid socio-economic growth, establishment of democratic systems and good governance.

This article is thus, neither a full-fledged scrutiny of the draft roadmap nor it addresses all aspects of the draft document with regard to HEIs. Rather it only identifies if there are missing components that may contribute to the flourishing of entrepreneurial orientation in Ethiopian HEIs with reference to the entrepreneurial university tenets (governance and leadership, diversity of funding, internationalization, entrepreneurship development in teaching-learning, institutional capacity, people & incentives, pathways for entrepreneurs, and measuring the impact of entrepreneurial university); framed by Clark (1998) which is used as a conceptual framework in this article. So this paper tried to address the gaps pointed-out by the document from the preceding education system, the resolutions brought forward and what important aspects are missed regarding the issue under study in order to indicate an alternative courses of action necessary to make sure that the country's higher education will be in the right track in the next decades making substantial contribution towards the nation's development agendas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical embedment of this research article is dynamic capabilities view (Helfat et al., 2007) which constitutes an extension to the resource - based perspective (Collis & Montgomery, 1995). Dynamic capabilities are an organization's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address the rapidly changing environment (Teece et al., 1997). Its central focus is on the degree of 'fit' over time between an organization's changing external environment and its changing portfolio of activities and capabilities (Porter, 1996). It is widely accepted that an organization's capability to innovate is closely tied to its intellectual capital, or its ability to utilize its knowledge resources (Stewart, 1997).

In light of this, Universities need to be reoriented in to entrepreneurial organizations and environments held together by common values/missions and not detailed control systems. To develop as an entrepreneurial organization with an entrepreneurial culture the entrepreneurial activities should be established in the strategy guided by a working mission with an entrepreneurial vision for the future of the institution. Accordingly, their strategies could have specific objectives for entrepreneurship with associated performance indicators such as generating entrepreneurial motivation, cognition, and attitudes; generating entrepreneurial competences and skills; support business start-ups; commercialize research results through technology transfers and business start-ups; generate revenues for the institution from spin-off activities; strengthen co-operation between the institution and local firms. (EU-OECD, 2012)

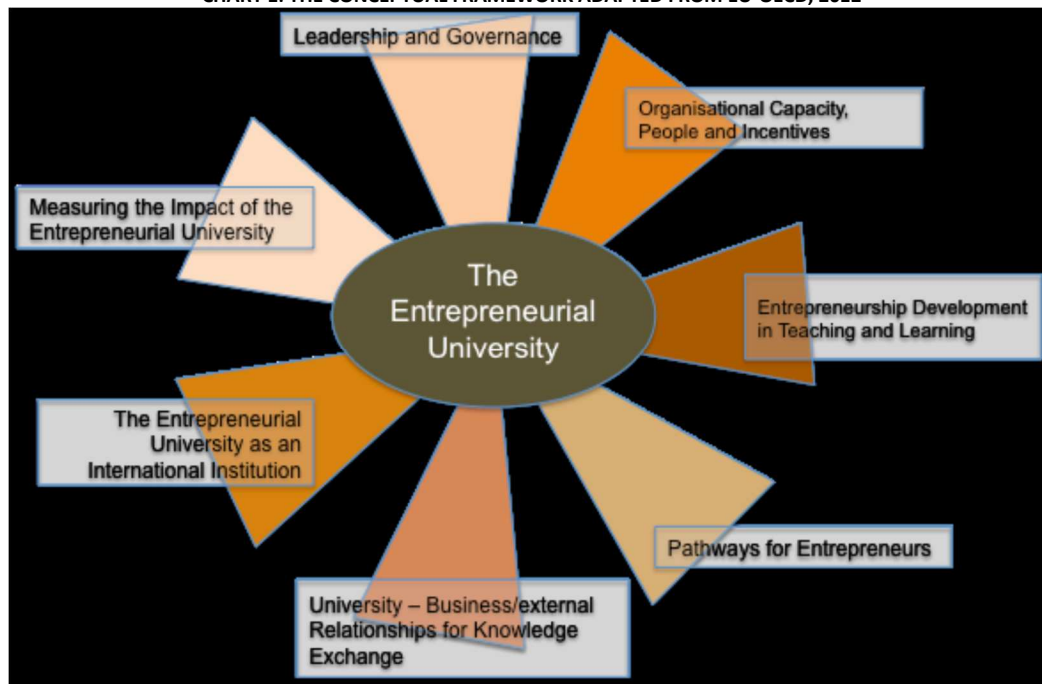
There are many different models for coordinating and integrating entrepreneurial activities across a university (Gibb, 2013). Whichever model is employed however, it should enable the institution to capitalize its existing relationships, coordinate across departments, faculties and other centres, and avoid the duplication of work within a university and its local entrepreneurship ecosystem. To score highly, universities should have an entrepreneurship structure in place which coordinates activities within the institution and with other stakeholders within the local entrepreneurship ecosystem. In this regard, overcoming bureaucratic barriers and creating an enabling governance and leadership structure is key to entrepreneurship. Universities with fewer barriers or hierarchies find it easier to undertake entrepreneurial activities and speed up idea creation and decision making. New centres and structures for the development of new activities can be formed easily. Higher educational institutions are ought to maximize autonomy and individual ownership of initiatives (EU-OECD, 2012).

It is a dried fact that Universities play quite a lot of roles in their communities and one of their key functions is to catalyse and drive individual, social and community development. To be front liner, universities should be active players, linked to their external environment by having a strong presence in the community. This might include for example, providing facilities to others from outside the institution, participating in regional clusters, supporting local cultural and artistic activities, providing opportunities for regional start-ups or established companies and taking an active role in determining the strategic direction of local development (UNU-IAS, 2018).

Meanwhile, Universities are constrained by their own organizational structures and approaches, making it more difficult to carry out the types of entrepreneurial activities which support their strategic objectives. Some of the key areas a university may look at, if it wishes to minimize the organizational constraints in fulfilling its entrepreneurial agenda, includes the financial strategy, attracting and retaining the right people and incentivizing entrepreneurial behaviour in individuals (John, et al, 2004).

Based on theoretical underpins above, the conceptual framework for this study is portrayed diagrammatically below by array of seven constructs: leadership & governance, institutional capability, people and incentives, entrepreneurship development in teaching & learning, internationalization, university-industry networking, entrepreneurial intensity as pathway for entrepreneurs, and measuring the impact of entrepreneurial university.

CHART 1: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ADAPTED FROM EU-OECD, 2012



OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To Investigate the extent to which the new Ethiopian Education Roadmap will pave a way for entrepreneurial orientation of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the country.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is dedicated to explore to what extent the new 'Ethiopian Education Roadmap' will pave a way for entrepreneurial orientation of HEIs in the country. For achieving this purpose, a method of document analysis is employed on the draft roadmap document, released by Ministry of Education Educational Strategy Centre. A review of related literature such as the World Declaration of Higher Education (WDHE), analysis of outputs from workshops by Wolkite university faculty on the draft roadmap dated September 19-21, 2019 and focus group discussion in two case study universities; namely Jimma University and Wolkite University are used to substantiate the enquiry. The focus group discussions are held with lecturers, university officials and business people on 26/03/2019 and 11/04/2019 in Jimma University and Wolkite University respectively. The two universities are selected purposively based on convenience and year of establishment. Accordingly, Jimma University represents the 'first generation' universities and Wolkite University represents the 'third generation' universities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

As per the draft roadmap the two basic elements lacking in the existing education system leadership and governance of higher education are accountability and autonomy. The draft roadmap states that though official documents talk about accountability across all levels of governance, there is a perceived gap that accountability is missed at all levels of the education governance. Accountability along the lines of decentralized units of decision makers; who is accountable to whom, how they are held accountable and for what is not clear or not practiced.

On the other hand, there should be a good balance between autonomy and accountability in higher education institutions. Currently universities are not given sufficient autonomy to manage their universities, raise funds and introduce new innovations in teaching and research. Autonomy should not so much be an issue of control, but of contracting and measuring performance based on mutually agreed outputs and outcomes (OECD, 2001).

However, the document admits that the existing higher education leadership and management is highly overwhelmed by routine tasks rather than focusing on strategizing universities core mission, and the selection and appointment process is not transparent, competitive and merit based. Inefficiency and corruption are imminent in the administration and finance sections of the HEIs¹. Teshome (2004) argues that the major challenge of Ethiopian HEIs relates to the inadequate capacity, lack of transparency and participatory approach of the leadership and management at sector level and in the higher education institutions. Article 13(A) of WDHE (1998) states that the management and financing of higher education require the development of appropriate planning and policy-analysis capacities and strategies to secure appropriately streamlined management and the cost-effective use of resources. Allied with this, the draft roadmap document also proposes the necessity of professionalizing leadership and management for efficiency and effectiveness. The leadership and management recruitment, selection and appointment have to be based on transparent and objective criteria/key performance indicators (KPI), followed by continuous training and leadership development.

¹ : Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 61

However, the draft roadmap overlooked the urgency of redefining the governance structure and roles of Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE), Higher Education Relevance and Quality Assurance (HERQA), University board and management (senate) etc. and more importantly revisiting the legislations to ensure the effectiveness of procedures and administrative rules. Moreover, there is nothing mentioned in the document about the extent of involvement as well as the role distinction and cooperation between administrative and academic staffs in the governance and leadership of the universities. Therefore, since governance and leadership are the necessary conditions for entrepreneurial oriented transformation of HEIs, matching autonomous and vibrant leadership with motivated steering core needs to be given due consideration.

FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

One of highly emphasized areas in the draft roadmap is financing or funding of HEIs whereby numerous financing related pitfalls in the former system are identified. Funding sources are very limited for the Ethiopian HEIs to the extent that, for many universities, government funding is the only source. Higher education users (students) pay (share) only subsidized direct cost of food, dormitory and 15% of education services. The budget allocation is hardly related to performance related to learning achievements and problem-solving research outputs. Budget allocation is mainly for teaching and learning, little for research and technology transfer/community services. The direct research budget is below 1% of the total budget allocated to universities.² Flexible budget allocation based on block grant is not yet exercised while Proclamation 650/2009 of the country allows to do so. The current line of budget is so tight and is not encouraging research activities. Universities do not have the autonomy to transfer from one budget line to another as need arises and to get permission to transfer budget from one line to another takes substantial amount of time. Moreover, it takes at least five months to release budget after it is approved. There are problems in the utilization of the finance as it is restricted only in one fiscal year. The procurement system is also bottle neck for research, community service and technology transfer projects. Universities are not able to use their internal revenue generated autonomously and flexibly. The university leadership cannot decide on financial outlays freely, as it has wait for permission from other bodies [mainly Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED)]. The current financial system is highly tight and does not allow universities to use the budget they generated.

After detecting all these and other financing related problems of HEIs, the roadmap brought forward the following reforms into effect.

- A. Implementation of block grant allocation formula as it is flexible mode based on the Higher Education Proclamation 650/2009 as a solution for the current problem higher education faced in financing (performance-based allocation than back history of expenditure-based funding). In this case, the new Education Proclamation issued following the roadmap, states that “public institutions shall be funded by the Federal Government or States through block grant systems based on strategic plan agreements” (Higher Education Proclamation 1152/2019). However, the implementation of this statement is set aside for a regulation to be issued by the council of ministers.
- B. To increase gradually the cost sharing of students from the current 15% to 30% over the next 15 years.
- C. Promote use of diversified financing modalities of higher education funding sources other than the government financing i.e. pushing higher education institutions to generate income and partially cover their expenses [through research, consultancy and tuition fee and other income generation activities].
- D. Developing guidelines for the generation and execution of internal revenue of universities that provides greater autonomy for HEIs [with suited accountability in place].
- E. Revise the rigid rule of purchasing and using budget on time with quality education inputs.
- F. There should be a national HEI input procurement framework to have a continuous/smooth and sustainable flow of HEI inputs (teaching, research, Technology Transfer, and Community Service inputs) to use their budget effectively and efficiently. (Inconsistent with autonomy and differentiation of the universities)
- G. Universities should strengthen their University-Industry Linkages, local and international partnerships and use this collaborative work as a means of their institutional funding sources.
- H. Based on the differentiation of universities proposed, there should be a competitive research and technology transfer budget award for the execution of mega projects which can solve clearly stated/prioritized national problems.

The brain staking question here is that, truly improving the education finance and the structure of financing requires strong commitment and investment on decentralization of the financing system through standardized and transparent financial structure with an appropriate check and balance. This is because the rigid central control system couldn't minimize if not worsen the financial mismanagement and corruption scandals in the institutions. Putting the above propositions in a nutshell calls for ensuring autonomy and accountability system so that educational institutions will fully be authorized to plan, allocate and utilize finance as per their demands and plans (WB Sectoral study, 2003).

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY AS AN INTERNATIONALIZED INSTITUTION

Connecting Ethiopian HEIs to world class universities and research Institutions is key to increase the quality of education. Though the document says nothing about problems in the existing system on the issue of internationalization, it forwards some emphasis areas in the roadmap period. But the adversity of plagiarism abandoned in the HEIs could be strongly condemned by the roadmap before envisioning internationalization.

The major strategies proposed by the roadmap for internationalization includes (1) building capacity of HEIs in attracting students and staff from overseas, and research grants; (2) internationalization of teaching and research activities without compromising the country's developmental need, and (3) encourage staff and student mobility programs (Africa wide and/or worldwide)³.

Moreover, it suggests to assure quality standards in universities by introducing university's ranking system based on key performance outcome indicators such as publication in reputable journals, patented technologies, number of students enrolled and graduates passed exit exam, employability of graduates, and number of international students attracted.

However, the document fails to address the very difficult task of converting the brain drain into brain gain and overlook the issue of higher education teaching personnel in meeting the UNESCO recommendations about the status of HEIs teaching personnel (World Conference on Higher Education (1998))

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Many have been arguing that harmonization of undergraduate curricula, introduction of modular teaching, continuous assessment, and peer learning, and the establishment and operation of quality assurance mechanisms to be the major achievements of the previous higher education system (Teshome, 2004). Amazingly, after decades of strong denial by the advocators and cadres, the new roadmap document came to admit that the aforementioned elements had little positive impact on the quality HEIs' core processes, i.e. teaching and learning⁴. The Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development (2014) recognized that HEIs are responsible “to develop students and all types of learners into critical and creative thinkers and professionals to acquire relevant competences and capabilities for future-oriented innovation in order to find solutions to complex, transdisciplinary and transboundary issues, and to foster understanding and practice of collective values and principles that guide attitudes and transformations, respecting the environmental limits of our planet, through education, training, research and outreach activities” (UNU-IAS, 2018).

The curricula of HEIs are not geared toward the development of employability and other lifelong learning skills among graduates. Filling this gap demands changing the old structure of curriculum (knowledge-based) to give way to a new one, *competency-based* type of curriculum--which stresses identification of professional/vocational skills, job-specific skills and transferable skills a graduate may have after completing a program. Relatively the HEIs have been proving good cognitive knowledge, but not on non-cognitive knowledge or employability skills such as computer skills, research skills, communication skills, life skills and entrepreneur skills. The general education curriculum did not adequately include the life skills and practical skills, and similarly university education is inadequate in skill and practical orientation. The former programs at the Ethiopian universities have not been providing entrepreneurial skills, while developing entrepreneurial

²: Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 62

³: Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 53

⁴: Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 53

skills and initiatives should become major concerns of higher education in Ethiopia today due to the fact that the country is devastatingly suffering from unemployment of youth graduates.

In this case, the new roadmap and the new entrepreneurship syllabus and module that followed brought about some changes (entrepreneurship become common course at freshman level, supporting courses such as critical thinking and emerging trends and technologies are added to the curriculum). To address the issue of who will teach entrepreneurship in universities, the roadmap intended to develop a guideline that allows universities to appoint industry leaders as part time professors so that they can periodically provide lectures for students; though it seems not an easy task in its practicality. Sufficient job also needs to be done in setting up different incubation centres, demonstration parks, and exposure visits to be part of the teaching and learning environment. The curriculum design and organization by itself needs to be competency based and various ways of "differentiation" of universities must be explored. Because differentiation promotes institutional quality and system competitiveness, accountability, and sustainability.

It is stated in the roadmap that the new education system aspires to create citizens that are holistic, balanced (between cognitive and non-cognitive skills includes value) and entrepreneurial⁵. If this is the case, universities must be allowed to choose their areas of specialization and excellent based on their strength and opportunities with local, national and international context.

Quality of university education is also linked with quality of secondary schools. The students must come prepared for university education. Most students join higher education without having sufficient knowledge of the subject to join university and without having readiness for university education (Habtamu, 2016).

UNIVERSITY – BUSINESS/EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS FOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The existing university-industry linkage was found inadequate hence students did not have ample exposure to real-world of work as well as the teaching of practitioners from industry.⁶

The roadmap identified poor research infrastructure, poor integration of teaching and research, poor linkage of research findings to the community, and low potential of universities to solve problems of industries, and poor university-industry linkage as the main discrepancies in this regard. Research topics are driven by interests of researchers and donors, with little or no serious relationships with prevailing policy concerns. Universities have weak or no ties whatsoever, with technology users. Consequently, research results tend to be refuted by policy makers, dismissing them as being too academic or not suited to solve the country's socio-economic problems.⁷

The universities are further criticized for the limitation in active engagement of faculty in research because of limited research time and incentives, and inefficient and corrupt financial and procurement services at university level. More severely, the absence of plagiarism control mechanisms made the achievement in research to be by far below the level of the country's aspiration. There is poor oversight of research applicability, scarcity of knowledge frontiers, and limited number of personnel available to conduct high quality and relevant research in the country's HEIs. As a result, most research conducted by higher education are short of addressing community problems and are found less relevant for the country's development.⁸

As a solution, the roadmap insists the promotion of local journals that meets international standards so as researchers can gain experience of publishing their research finding in peer review national and international journals in addition to improving research infrastructure (laboratory, publishing, transport etc.). It is also proposed to introduce university student internship service program mentioned under Unity with Diversity section, which required students to spend additional one year after the end of their 3rd year undergraduate study.⁹

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, PEOPLE AND INCENTIVES

One of the very critical role players in higher education in general and in entrepreneurial oriented institutions in particular, which unfortunately given a very little emphasis in the roadmap draft document, is the human capital and institutional capacity. The only two issues in this regard mentioned as problematic areas by the roadmap are Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and institutional inefficiency.¹⁰ Regarding the former the roadmap says; "universities (more severe in the recently established universities-3rd generation universities) are encountered with poor connectivity and a lack of technical expertise to properly develop and use ICT for academic and research purposes."

On the other hand, the [Ethiopian public universities overall] ratio of administrative staff vis-à-vis academics is close 3:1, which is highly inefficient. Most academic staff of HEI in Ethiopia are not engaged in research and community services, while they are supposed to allocate 75% of their time on teaching and 25% on research and community services (Ethiopian Higher Education Program (EHEP), 2009).

Given this, the roadmap urges measures to be taken to improve the university support system to increase the efficiency of finance, purchasing and other services provided to research and community services which requires more attention than those of other sections.

However, the issues of faculty's academic freedom, lack of adequate resources and facilities, teachers' working condition, salary and incentives, etc. remained unnoticed and the problems seem to persist, though.¹¹ The expatriate staff attraction trend in the HEIs in Ethiopia is narrowly framed in that the wide majority of the Indian professors hired by the universities do not pass through a proper scrutiny which becomes another means of Corruption allegation for the higher officials of the institutions and many complaints are heard from the students about their competence.

On the other hand, the dominance of ethnic politics in the university's atmosphere make it very difficult to attract and maintain qualified and diversified staff which is significantly compromising quality and creativity in universities. This is another unresolved issue to continue being bottleneck of Ethiopian HEIs.

Therefore, it is really vital to ensure appropriate professional and financial status of academic staff and have appropriately trained administrative and technical personnel for HEIs to score high in any of their endeavours.

Out of the seven parameters used as a foretaste in this paper, two of them; 'Pathways for entrepreneurs' and 'Measuring the impact of the Entrepreneurial University' are totally unaddressed by the draft roadmap document. For the remaining also not expressed in strongest terms assuring the government's commitment.

PATHWAYS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Supporting entrepreneurial initiative of their faculties and students becomes one of the major concerns of higher education today, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers but above all to become job creators. Higher education institutions should give the opportunity to students and staff to fully develop their own abilities with a sense of social responsibility, educating them to become full participants in democratic society and promoters of changes that will foster equity and justice (WDHE, 1998).

The links between higher education, the world of work and other parts of society should be strengthened and renewed through the participation of its representatives in the governance of institutions, the increased use of domestic and international apprenticeship/work-study opportunities for students and teachers, the exchange of personnel between the world of work and higher education institutions and revised curricula more closely aligned with working practices through different mechanisms such as community based education. Ill-advisedly, this important factor seems to be missed in the new roadmap. Henceforth, partnership, based on common interest, mutual respect and credibility should be a prime matrix for renewal in higher education (ibid).

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

The monitoring unit of government called Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) is deemed to be toothless in the eyes of public HEIs in that nothing to do except making a regular visit around them (Woldegiorgis, 2015). Therefore, instead of such government dependent unit, impact monitoring requires

⁵ : Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 54

⁶ : Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 54

⁷ : Focus Group Discussion at Jimma University, 26/03/2019

⁸ Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap: page 61

⁹ Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 60

¹⁰: Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap page 51

¹¹: Focus Group Discussions at Jimma University and Wolkite University on 26/03/2019 and 11/04/2019 respectively

the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in all aspects of higher education. The evaluation process and the criteria also need reconsideration to include curriculum and pedagogical undertakings, extra-curricular activities such as guidance and counselling services, the framework of institutional arrangements, policy-making, and institutional governance; (WDHE, 1998). More importantly, there should be mechanisms in place for checking of the progress and effectiveness of the roadmap periodically. It should not take decades to understand the success and failure of the system. One among such kind of mechanisms is the Labour Market Information System (LMIS), an active labour market policy instrument that collects, evaluates and provides labour market information to both the labour supply side and the labour demand side (ILO, 2018).

CONCLUSION

With regard to entrepreneurial oriented transformation of Ethiopian HEIs, the new education road-map remained to be half-shed in that it worked hard in the curriculum and program aspect but failed to bring about resolutions in setting an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Ethiopian HEIs.

The roadmap seems to be more dedicated to intensely work out in identifying the problems and pitfalls in the old education system and made little effort to foresee the upcoming endeavours in the global as well as national developments, and strategically synchronize them into policies, curriculums and programs.

To sum-up, the new education roadmap can only be just an initial step while entrepreneurially inspiring the universities require the overall reform of the universities in the seven fundamental tenets addressed in the discussion part and it is indeed timely and demanding to make internally driven transformation in the universities in line with the nation's development aspirations. To this end, reforming higher education and research in Ethiopia will significantly contribute to alleviating problems of current social and political crisis, and becoming increasingly marginalized in the world economy.

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