



AIAE Project Leading Edge: From Plan to Action

**Prof. Eric Eboh,
Executive Director, AIAE**

In a landmark development, the African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) commenced the process of articulating a 5-year Strategic Plan 2009-2013, codenamed Project Leading Edge, in January 2008. By the end of September 2008, the draft Strategic Plan was ready. Project Leading Edge is a 5-year strategic plan that articulates AIAE's niche goals, strategies and programmes from 2009-2013. The Plan is a medium-term strategy aimed at intensifying the achievement of the AIAE mission. The purpose is to enhance AIAE's competitive position in the promotion of evidence-based research in

Nigeria and Africa. It would provide the monitoring framework for benchmarking and evaluating sustainable organisational



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development and operational effectiveness. Project Leading Edge serves as a paradigmatic menu of priorities for consolidating achievements and learning lessons. The Plan

articulates robust strategies and programmes that will bolster AIAE's relevance and impact in a changing research and policy environment. The Strategic Plan indeed symbolises AIAE Vision Intensified.

Project Leading Edge originated from the Concept Paper on "Repositioning AIAE for the Leading-Edge", prepared by the Executive Director, Prof. Eric Eboh, in January 2008. Towards developing the draft document, we created four subcommittees and a general drafting committee. The subcommittees include: research and study programmes; institutional capacity strengthening; networking and collaboration; and financing and resource mobilisation. Using the template and guidelines contained in the Executive

continued on the back page

ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING

The Institute recently conducted a two-day workshop on Enhancing the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Training organised for lecturers and instructors of the Central Bank of Nigeria/University of Nigeria Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Onitsha. The workshop held at the Bridgewater Hotel, Enugu on the 4th and 5th November 2008. It had the aim of enhancing the ability and effectiveness of the lecturers and instructors in delivering critical entrepreneurship skills and competencies to the trainees at the Centre.

modules and sought to re-tool and equip the lecturers and instructors with cutting-edge ideas, best practices and methodologies that

would make them more efficient and effective in imparting competencies and skills to trainees at the centre. The modules used were essentially focused on improving the lecturers' and instructors' communication tools and

continued on the back page



A group photograph of the participants taken after the training programme

The workshop was structured in six

AIAE hosts World Bank meeting on Doing Business

In line with the ongoing collaboration between AIAE and the World Bank in research and policy dialogue for improving the business climate across Nigeria, the Institute hosted a meeting of World Bank Doing Business Team and business stakeholders in the southeast states including government and organised private sector. The meeting held on 27 November, 2008 at the Bridgewater Hotel, Enugu. It was attended by government officials from the five southeast states and officials of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture. The meeting provided the forum for World Bank team to explain the purpose and methods of the survey and the role of the different stakeholders.

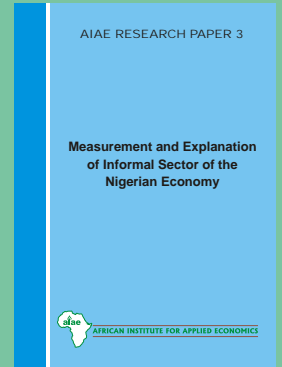


South Eastern stakeholders pose with the World Bank team for a group photograph

New!

AIAE Research Paper 3: Measurement and Explanation of Informal Sector of the Nigerian Economy

The latest paper in the AIAE Research Paper Series is a study on “The Measurement and Explanation of the Informal Sector of the Nigerian Economy”. It is the end product of a study carried out with funding support from the USAID REFORMS programme,



on a subcontract from Development Alternatives Inc (DAI), Betseda, U.S.A. The study sought to explain the size and character of the informal sector of the Nigerian economy. In its approach, it adopted both macroeconomic and microeconomic analyses. The macroeconomic model used was the Multiple-Indicator Multiple-Cause (MIMIC) model, and it was applied to estimate the determinants and size of the informal sector in relation to the Gross Domestic Product. Data proceeding from a national survey that formed part of study was analysed using a combination of techniques including the ordered multinomial Logit Model and the Cobb-Douglass Production Function. Copies of the paper can be obtained at the Institute.

Associate Fellows Forum

On the 6th of November, the Associate Fellows of the Institute converged in order to deliberate on a number of issues concerning it. A special Forum of Associate Fellows held at the Conference Hall of Bridgewater Hotel in Enugu.

At the very top of the billing was a review of the recently prepared Strategic Plan of the Institute: Project Leading Edge. After a brief presentation by Prof. Eric Eboh, the Executive Director, the Fellows made a number of comments and suggestions. A few other issues were discussed such as how to re-energise the Thematic Workgroups which are at the core of the Institute's Research Strategy.



Some Associate Fellows of the Institute at a recent meeting

Challenges of Mortgage Finance in Nigeria

The 29th of October, 2008 saw Enugu Forum hold its periodic policy seminar. The policy colloquium was titled: The Challenges of Mortgage Finance in Nigeria - Questions of Access and Sustainability. The colloquium held at the Conference Hall of Sunshine Hotel, Enugu and was attended by participants from a wide variety of sectors in society, varying from the finance industry and civil society to the academia.

The session kicked off with a welcome address by the Executive Director of the Institute, Prof. Eric Eboh. In his address, he introduced the moderator, panelists and discussants and gave a brief overview of the Enugu Forum and the relevance of the chosen theme in the context of the current economic and financial landscape. Mr. John Okoye of Zenith Bank PLC moderated the day's proceedings.

There were three key speakers who addressed the issue from different viewpoints. Stanley Ukeje, a Principal Economist with the Central Bank of Nigeria, spoke from an economic perspective, presenting a paper titled "Supply and Demand Perspectives on Mortgage Finance in Nigeria".

The second speaker focused on sharing his insights as a mortgage finance practitioner. Mr. Oloyede Obatoyinbo, Group Head, Mortgage Finance FCMB PLC, shared his practical experiences in Mortgage Finance, relating the challenges and opportunities faced in Mortgage Financing in Nigeria.

Prof. R.A.C.E Achara, a legal practitioner and academic, rounded off the session of panelists with his presentation on

the legal and regulatory bottlenecks of Mortgage Finance in Nigeria.

After the key presentations, there was a lively open session in which participants elicited information, expressed doubts and made comments on the discussions conducted thus far.

Judging from the keen interest shown by all the participants as well as the lively discourse, the colloquium was a huge success.



A cross section of the main discussants at the Policy Colloquium

AIAE News

From 7-10 October, 2008, **Celestine Nzeh**, a researcher with the Institute, participated on the 10th Annual National Conference of the Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economists (NAAE), which held at the University of Abuja. During the conference, Mr. Nzeh presented a paper on: "Population Density and Agricultural Land Use in Enugu Agricultural zone.

Oliver Ujah, another researcher with the Institute, attended the 10th International Conference and Exhibition of the Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME) which held from 28

- 29 October, 2009, at the Calabar Cultural Complex, Calabar, Cross Rivers State. The conference was themed: "Pivotal Role of Indigenous Entrepreneurs in Nigeria Vision 2020".

Two members of the research staff of the Institute, **Dr. Chukwuma Agu** and **Mr. Amaechi Chukwu**, recently attended the 3rd Annual Conference and International Faculty meeting of the Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa (TRAPCA), which held in Tanzania from 13-14 November, 2008. In the conference, Dr. Chukwuma Agu presented a paper entitled "China, India, Africa: Beginnings of an

Infinite Debate. Commentary on the Impact of China Trade on African Growth."

Dr. **Chukwuma Agu** also attended the 2nd International Law and Trade Conference, as well as the 3rd Legal, Privacy and Security Issues Conference organised by the International Association of IT lawyers in Prague, Czech Republic from 3-5 September, 2008. There he presented two papers, one of which was entitled "Port Inefficiency and Participation in ECOWAS Common External Tariff: Addressing the Human Factor."

State Governments pledge cooperation on BECANS II

BECANS II got a major boost when it was recently endorsed by representatives of the State Governments at the joint meeting of the National Council on Development Planning (NCDP) and the Joint Planning Board (JPB), which was held at the Hydro Hotels, Minna, Niger State from 27-28 October, 2008. The meeting was attended by delegates from 28 States of the Federation and Abuja as well as other stakeholders. In all, 177 delegates attended the meeting.

At the meeting the delegates were updated on progress made on the Second Cycle of BECANS Programme. A brief on the programme was presented by Mr. Amaechi Chukwu, the BECANS Desk Officer.

The meeting noted, with satisfaction, the conclusion of the first cycle of the BECANS project and the emergence of BECANS II. It went on to urge the States to cooperate in the proposed sensitization activities for data collection purposes.

The BECANS programme has proved effective in influencing state-level reforms for better business environment. Many states have reacted to the BECANS results by making positive adjustments in administrative procedures and institutional processes that increase efficiency of service delivery in such areas as tax collection, land administration, business support and entrepreneurship development.

Entrepreneurship Training: Continued from front page
techniques for training students.

At the end of the workshop the participants issued a communiqué in which they called for other similarly empowering workshops from their management and showed gratitude to the Institute for the quality of the organization of the workshop and the instruction offered. The two-week workshop was greatly appreciated by the participants and other stakeholders and summarised as a successful and enriching experience.

AIAE Project Leading Edge: Continued from front page

Director's Concept Paper, the subcommittees undertook information gathering, brainstorming sessions/group discussions, strategy/programme reviews and drafting sessions. The template provided for the review of achievements, experiences and lessons since inception; analysis of key challenges and opportunities, strengths and weaknesses; and forward-looking to 2013 in terms of strategic priorities, programmes and actions. The draft reports of the various subcommittees were synthesized into a Strategy Document by the General Drafting Committee, led by the Executive Director.

The draft Strategic Plan was presented for consideration by the Board of Directors on 17 October 2008, at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja. The Board of Directors adopted the Strategic Plan for further reviews. Sequel to the meeting of the Board of Directors, and to ensure wide consultation, an Associate Fellows Forum was convened specifically to review the Plan, on the 6th of November, 2008, at Bridgewater Hotel, Enugu. Feedback comments from distinguished members of the Board of Directors, Associate Fellows and other Institute's stakeholders would be collated and utilised in revising the draft document. Finally, the revised document will be taken to the Board of Directors, for ratification.

From now, the next logical step is to begin implementation of the Strategic Plan. As we progress in implementing the Plan, we would match achievements against predefined benchmarks and milestones. Implementing Project Leading Edge requires understanding and cooperation by all AIAE stakeholders: Associate Fellows, Board of Directors, users of our Research, Friends and Partners. We need to devise and implement actionable measures to achieve our targets. This is how we can make AIAE grow progressively and sustainably. This is our collective challenge, an obligation we have and a clarion call we should respond to.

Our ability to get our goals will depend on effective teamwork by Staff and Research Fellows. This calls for unwavering commitment, constant hardwork and progressive leadership. We need the leadership culture described by John Maxwell as "360° Leadership". It is about dynamic, all-round and all-time leadership which entails "leading up", "leading down" and "leading across". We have a noble Vision and our Mission is clear-cut. The Strategic Plan offers a powerful articulate instrument to operationalise our mission. We will remain competitive, not just by formulating the Plan, but by implementing it well. Now is the time for action; concerted and robust action. Let's join hands to work together for harnessing AIAE competitive advantage for the leading edge. Because of our core values of hard work, discipline, excellence and integrity, I am very optimistic that we will succeed. Sure, we will succeed.

