# Students are badly prepared for globalization, IBM study shows

**By Emmanuel Ogala**

Only four out of 10 university students believe their education has prepared them sufficiently to address issues of globalization and environmental sustainability, a new IBM study has shown.

The study was conducted by IBM's Institute for Business Value and the results reflect the views of more than 3,600 students in more than 40 countries around the world. The study was designed to gauge the attitudes and opinions of the next-generation global work-force and business leaders on issues of globalisation associated with knowledge acquired from university education.

"Asked how well their education has prepared them in a number of areas connected with globalisation, only four out of 10 students believe their education has prepared them well to address these issues," Sean McLean, University Relations Manager, IBM Sub Saharan Africa said.

"Despite the challenges and threats of globalisation, students today tend to view it as an opportunity and have a global view of shared responsibility for both environmental issues and societal prosperity."

**More to be done**

According to the IBM report, more needs to be done to help prepare students for an increasingly global world where issues around sustainability are key factors.

The new IBM survey was conducted as an extension of the 2010 IBM CEO Study, 'Capitalising on Complexity,' which discovered that today's chief executives are charting a new course of action in response to the increasing complexity of the world's business and competitive environment.

The report also revealed that students too showed a belief in technology as an important part of resolving emerging and existing global problems.

"Students surveyed not only see technology as a tool to provide increased access to information, but also as a powerful analytical tool to reduce uncertainty about the future." George Enema, the communications and demand officer, IBM West Africa, said.

**Partial to environment**

According to the report, today's students believe that using technologies in a fact-based management style continually enriches personal experience and education with varied sources of new insights to deal with the explosion of real-time information.

"Students, for the most part, shared the views of CEOs and even agreed on very specific courses of action: embodying creative leadership, reinventing customer relationships and building more dexterous operating models," Mr Enema added.

Nevertheless, for all the areas of agreement between students and CEOs, twice as many students selected **globalisation** and environmental issues as among the top three factors to impact organisations and expected major consequences to business and society from a scarcity of resources.

"What these students are saying is that they understand the complexities inherent in a world that is getting closer, smaller and more interconnected all the time, and the implications of those changes for their careers," Mr McLean said. "As a result, they expressed some very different -- and powerful --expectations about the responsibilities of business and governments, and by extension, for the paths their careers will take."

**IBM** is currently working in several African countries to help address the skills gap. In Nigeria, **IBM** specialists from around the world are working with the Cross River State University of Science and Technology in updating the university's curriculum as well as transferring skills.