

## Advancing Human Resource Planning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education in a Developing Economy

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### Abstract

The paper, examined ways human resource planning in education can be used to improved current educational needs. Human resource planning is defined as the process by which an organisation ensures the right number of qualified persons are employed to occupy vacant position in an organisation. The importance of human resource planning in 21<sup>st</sup> century education was discussed. The challenges of human resource planning in 21<sup>st</sup> century education were addressed in the paper. It was concluded that advancing human resource planning in 21<sup>st</sup> century education would require HR personnel to improve their education to cope with the current trends associated with 21<sup>st</sup> century education. In addition, creativity in handing complex HR related issues in education would improve HRP in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was suggested that; (1). Government should ensure that accurate data and records of employees and learners are kept for adequate planning of human resources in education in future. (2) Government should ensure the best personnel are employed to oversee human resource planning activities in education for optimum result and effective educational delivery.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Planning, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education, Developing Economy, Manpower.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable tool for sustainable human development, and a necessity for national development. However, study skills acquired from schools is no longer sufficient for learners to thrive in today's changing world. It therefore behoves on educational planners and policy makers to inculcate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education principles in the learning programmes for students. 21<sup>st</sup> century education is therefore the type of education that responds to the economical, technological, and social shifts that are happening at an ever increasing pace in our society today. It is an education that provides student with skills and competencies needed to thrive in today's world. Planning for human

resources in education in this case would require special kind of skills to meet up with the demands of 21st century education. It therefore behoves on HR professionals to improve HR management and the planning process to effectively plan for learners and the education system to meet up with the ever changing requirements of the society today. This is so because proper human resource planning in education will inspire the needed change the school needs to catch up with the changes in the society. In this case, the right or qualified human resources (manpower/personnel) should be adequately employed or deployed to a position that fits the qualification of the employee after due consideration.

Advancing HRP in 21<sup>st</sup> century education in a developing economy like Nigeria would require HR personnel to obtain certain knowledge and skills that may not be a prerequisite many years ago. But these skills are a necessity if HR personnel are to thrive in today's world. To advance HR planning, HR personnel would have to improve or advance their education, be creative in handling HR related issues, and seeking out challenges. Acquisition of these skills will enable learners thrive in today's world. It is so because mere acquisition of the knowledge passed on by instructors in the school will only limit learners' growth. Learners may not be prepared to thrive or survive in today's world that is constantly changing. It therefore behoves on government and other relevant stakeholders to provide students with functional academic content with experiences that foster the skills, mindsets and knowledge required for students to become lifelong learners, and contribute meaningfully to our ever-changing world.

To achieve this, emphasis should be placed in human resource planning in education. Proper planning of human resources in any organization, education inclusive will avail the qualified person to occupy the right position and at the right time, and doing the right things. It is therefore essential for the schools system to take appropriate steps for effective utilization of human resources at their disposal.

Proper planning of human resources in education will enable the right instructors with necessary experience tackle the issues and challenges facing 21<sup>st</sup> century education. This can only be achieved with proper and timely planning of human resources in education especially in developing economies where their educational system is at a development stage.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Human Resource Planning**

Before defining human resource planning, the concept of human resource is explored. Human resource can be regarded as a single person or an individual who is an employee of an organisation. That individual therefore becomes part of the workforce of the organisation. The term, 'human resource' can also be regarded as 'manpower'. On the other hand, human resource planning (HRP) is the process by which an organisation ensures that it has the right member of people and the kind of people qualified for a position, at the right place, and doing the things they are expected to do to help the organisation achieve its goals.

Human resource planning consist of putting the right number and kind of people at the right place, right time, doing the right things for which they are suited (manpower planning, n.d). Dalvi (n.d) defined Human Resource Planning (HRP) as the process of systematically reviewing HR requirements to ensure that the required member of employees with the required skills is available when they are needed. Dalvi further added that getting the right member of qualified people into the right job is the crux of the problem here. In other words, it is the responsibility of human resource planners to ensure that the required number of people with the right qualification are employed or deployed at the particular time for efficiency. Vetter (n.d) as cited in Dalvi (n.d) viewed human

resource planning as a process by which an organisation should move from its current manpower power to its desired manpower position. Through planning, management strives to have the right member and right kind of people at the right places at right time, doing the things that will result in both organization and individual receiving maximum long run benefit. In a similar vein, Adam and Somer (2021) argued that human resource planning (HRP) is the continuous process of systematic planning ahead to achieve optimum use of an organisations most valuable assets, that is, quality employees. Graham (1990) as cited in Okoh (2008) argued that manpower planning is an attempt to forecast how many and what kind of employees will be required in the future, and to what extent this demand is likely to be met. In a similar vein, Pattern (1971) as cited in Okoh (2005) defined manpower planning as a process by which an organisation ensures that it has the right number of people, and the right kind of people, in the right place, at the right time, doing things for which they are economically most useful. From the aforementioned, it can be deduced that human resource planning is set out to plan for the intake of employees into an organisation. This involves putting the right number of people, the kind of people in the right place and at the appropriate time.

### **Advancing Human Resource Planning in Education**

To advance means to accelerate the growth or progress of something, or a process. It can also be referred to the act of bringing something forward for notice, consideration or acceptance. The term, advancing is synonymous to ‘improving’, ‘increasing’ or ‘progressing’. In the context of this work, advancing human resource planning in Education will mean improving human resource planning activities to meet up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements in education. By so doing, efforts will be made on improving the skills HR professionals, their approach to work and their attitudes towards work so they can match the current demands of today’s world. In this case, improved education for advance knowledge of HR planning, creativity in handling complex HR related issues in education, seeking out challenges to withstand unforeseen educational issues, and being open to educational changes, etc, would enable HR professionals plan effectively for 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

21<sup>st</sup> century education is a type of education that responds to the technological, economical, and societal changes that are happening in the world today. In other words, 21<sup>st</sup> century education is set out to train learners to succeed in today’s world where mere acquisition of knowledge would not be sufficient to succeed as a result of technological and economic advancement in the world today. In addition, Barnet (n.d) as cited in Rich (2010) argued that twenty-first century learning means that students master content while producing, synthesizing, and evaluating information from a wide variety of subjects and sources with an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures. Barnet added that students demonstrate the three Rs, but also three Cs: creativity, communication, and collaboration. They demonstrate digital literacy as well as civic responsibility. In a similar vein, Wessling (n.d) as cited in Rich (2010) opined that twenty-first century learning embodies an approach to teaching that marries content to skill. Without skills, students are left to memorize facts, recall details for worksheets, and relegate their educational experience to passivity. Without content, students may engage in problem-solving or team-working experiences that fall into triviality, into relevance without rigor. Instead, the 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning paradigm offers an opportunity to synergize the margins of the content vs. skills debate and bring it into a framework that dispels these dichotomies.

According to Moore (n.d) as cited in Rich (2010), students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century learn in a global classroom and it’s not necessarily within four walls. They are more inclined to find

information by accessing the internet through cell phones and computers, or chatting with friends on a social networking site. Moore further added that many teachers are monitoring and issuing assignment via virtual classrooms. Similarly, Singer (n.d) as cited in Rich (2010) opined that adaptability, complex communication skills, non-routine problem solving, self-management, and system thinking are essential skills in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce.

In another dimension, 21st century learning refers to developing learning, literacy and life skills as part of the classroom experience. Learning skills encompass critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, which have been identified as essential for successfully adapting to modern work environments. Literacy skills, including information, media and technology literacy, focus on understanding figures evaluating a source's credibility and understanding the machines and computer networks that we rely upon today. Life skills include flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity and social skills. These skills help students strategize projects, maintain efficiency and network with others. (twenty-first century learning, n.d).

The essence of twenty-first century education is therefore geared towards making learners more versatile and relatively independent and self-sufficient in today's world. These skills would be more useful in a developing economy like Nigeria where unemployment is high, and there is a relatively lower standard of living.

### **Developing Economy**

There is no acceptable definition of the concept of developing economy. It is important to note that the term 'developing economy' can also be referred to as 'less developed economy' or 'under developed country'. Ordinarily, though, a developing economy is an economy where people have a relatively low standard of living and an undeveloped industrial base than other countries. Eugene (n.d) as cited in Kwatian (n.d) defined an underdeveloped country as a country characterized by (i) mass poverty which is chronic and not the result of temporary misfortune and (ii) obsolete methods of production and social organization, which means that the poverty is not due to poor natural resources, and hence could presumably be lessened by methods already proved in other countries. According to Bauer and Yamey (n.d) as cited in Kwatian (n.d), the term under developed countries usually refer loosely to countries or regions with level of real income and capital per head of population which are low by the standards of North America, Western Europe and Australia. Todara (n.d) as cite in Kwatiah (n.d) argued that underdeveloped economy is that economy in which there are low levels of living, absolute poverty, low per capita income, low consumption levels, poor health services, high death rates, high birth rates and dependence on foreign countries. In addition, Gunnar (n.d) as cited in Kwatiah (n.d) observed that an underdeveloped country is that country in which there is a constellations of numerous undesirable conditions of work and life; output, income and levels of living are low, many modes of production, attitude and behaviour patterns are disadvantageous, and there are unfavourable institutions. There is a general causal relationship among all these conditions. From the aforementioned definitions of a developing economy, it can be deduced that the various authors agreed that a developing economy or country is one that is citizens have a low standard of living with an under developed industrial base. This poor state of living can be seen in their life styles, their attitude and behavior patterns.

### **Steps in Human Resource Planning (HRP) in Education**

Human resource planning is a process through which the right person for a position in the school is ensured. To achieve this, the process should be well planned, and the procedure clear for everyone to understand. Smriti (n.d) highlighted six steps in human planning as:

1. **Analyzing Organizational Objectives:** The objectives set out to be achieved in the long or short run in various fields such as finance, staff promotion, staff transfer, school expansion, staff employment, curriculum expansion, retirement etc. should be properly analyzed. Analyzing gives the idea about the work to be done in the school system. Analyses of these objectives also provides for assessing the human resource requirement for each department and activity in the school.
2. **Inventory of Present Human Resources:** From the updated human resource information storage system, the current number of employees, the capacity, performance and potential can be analysed. To fill the various job requirement, the internal sources, employees from within the school organization and external sources, that is, candidates from various placement agencies can be estimated.
3. **Forecasting Demand and Supply of Human Resource:** One of the steps involved in effectively planning of human resource is to forecast demand and supply of human resource. Manpower needed at different positions in the school organisation according to their job profile is to be estimated. The available manpower from internal or external sources is to be evaluated. This will encourage proper placement of job description and job specification of one particular work, and the profile of the person should be suitable to it.
4. **Estimating Manpower Gaps:** It is one of the objectives of human resource planning to access the demand for, and supply of human resources in education, and match both to know shortages and surpluses on both side in kind and in number. This will enable the human resource department to know over staffing and under staffing. Thus, appropriate actions will be taken to either employ more manpower or down size the number of employees.
5. **Formulating the Human Resource Action Plan:** The human resource plan depends on whether there is deficit or surplus in the school organisation. Accordingly, the plan may be finalized either for new recruitment, training, inter departmental transfer in case of deficit or termination, or voluntary retirement schemes and redeployment in case of surplus.
6. **Monitoring, Control and Feedback:** At this stage, human resource action plan is implemented. Human resources (manpower) are deployed to different departments and areas according to requirements, and personnel profiles and records are reviewed and updated over a period of time. The plan is closely monitored to identify the deficiencies in the system that will be removed consequently. Finally, comparison between the human resource plan and its actual implementation is done to ensure the appropriate action and the availability of the required number of employees for various jobs.

### **Importance of Human Resource Planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

The need or importance of human resource planning in education cannot be over emphasizes. This is important because of the ever changing nature of our society today. It therefore behoves on human resource management to plan for education that will be befit 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of education and the society at large. The following points will discuss the need and importance of human resource planning in education.

1. **Assessing Future Manpower Needs:** It is the responsibility of HRP department to plan for employees in advance. Through HRP, one can plan for the right number and type of

employee to occupy non-academic positions or teaching positions in schools. This will reduce the burden of surplus manpower or shortage of manpower in education, as proper care will be taken to replace retired staff, or deploying teaching staff to areas that need their competence.

2. **Foundation for Other Human Resource Management Function:** Human resource planning sets the pace for human resource management to follow. HRP provides the necessary information needed for HRM to function effectively. Like recruitment, selection, training, promotion, transfer, redeployment, development etc.
3. **Coping with Change:** Change and innovation in the society and education will require proper planning to adjust to the change. Changes in the society like use of technology, government guidelines or policies will affect education. This will affect the type of personnel or manpower to employ, qualification and experience of the employees, and the content of the job. HRP therefore helps organization in adjusting to new changes.
4. **Higher Productivity:** Productivity level increases when human resources are placed in the right position with the right qualification. HRP ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff are properly placed in schools especially as it relates to the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. With the right personnel, occupying a position, it will lead to minimum waste of time, money, efforts and energies. This is as a result of proper staffing and training of manpower.
5. **Expansion and Diversification Plans:** During expansion of schools, and diversification of some content in the curriculum, more employees are needed at various levels. Through proper HRP, the school comes to know about the exact requirement of staff in future plans.
6. **Motivation:** HRP does not only focus on putting the right people on the right job, but also involves motivating personnel for better performance. All types of staff incentive is an integral part of staffing function that the HRP department focus on.
7. **Identification of Talents:** HRP in education identify talents and potential talents in a concern and accordingly, training programmes can be initiated to develop these talents that will in the long run bring value to the education system.

### **Advancing Human Resource Planning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

In advancing Human Resource Planning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education, effort should be made in improving human resource needs that will be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Education Hallerman et al. (2019) suggested that 21<sup>st</sup> century Education is one that responds to the economical technological and societal shifts that are happening at an ever increasing pace. Hallerman et al. added that it's an education that sets children up to succeed in a world where more than half of the jobs they will have over their carers don't even exist yet. Human resource planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can be advanced through the following ways;

1. **Improved Education to Cope with the Demand of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Needs:** Through improved and a better education, human resource planner will be better prepared to cope with the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of education. With so many career options available for human resources professionals, it's important to comprehend the full extent of what one can achieve in the field. Advancement of one's career through acquiring further education such as

a master of business administration (MBA), master of education management and other related management degrees would advance the competence of HR professionals to cope with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. In addition, exposure to regular training, workshop and seminars can add more value to the human resource personnel for the task ahead. Advancement of education will therefore prepare HR personnel with the required skills needed to succeed, especially as it relates to 21<sup>st</sup> century education requirements.

2. **Creativity in Handling Complex 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Issues:** Creativity among human resource professionals will improve their skills and enable them cope with the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The ability to be imaginative in problem solving will enable human resource managers find new and exciting ways of solving problems 21<sup>st</sup> century education problems. However, some ways to help foster creative thinking and boost performance among HR personnel at the work place would include:
3. **Encourage People to be Creative:** Human resource planning can be advanced through encouraging people to be creative. Human beings are creative at heart. Simply giving those within the organisation permission to think outside the box can immediately lighten the mood and encourage new ideas. (Victoria University, 2015). In this case, inspiring human resource personnel to be imaginative as they encounter daily educational problems can spur them to think outside the box in solving 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs.
4. **Fostering Collaboration:** Collaboration among human resource specialist can advance the course of human resource planning in 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Human resource planners are in a position to help foster collaboration among one another in the workplace. This can be done through arranging for workshops, mentoring or planning day sessions. Consequently, these joint endeavour among human resource professionals will enable them become more active and prepared in carrying out their responsibility to tackle 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs.
5. **Recognize and Reward Creativity:** Being a creative personnel without appreciation and motivation can be demotivating. Human resource managers should strive to recognize and reward personnel who have gone the extra mile to solve a problem. When employees are happy of their work environment and see their ideas in action, they will be inspired to come up with more ideas. Recognition and reward of employees for better performance will encourage critical thinking and would boost performance.
6. **Engaging the Right 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Planners:** Human resource planning can be advanced in 21<sup>st</sup> century education when qualified and experienced personnel are recruited to the system. Well-connected people with the right qualification and experience can add value to the group for better performance. With the right people in the system, human resource planners can strive to meet up with the demand of 21<sup>st</sup> century education.
7. **Seeking Out Challenges to Solve 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational Needs:** Human resource planners should not be satisfied with the status quo, as the society today is dynamic. Being proactive and seeking out new solutions to problems is key to improving human resource planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By seeking out challenges in the environment, human resource specialist will be demonstrating the ability to think critically, and apply the new thinking to solve today's educational problem. Human resource personnel are however expected to step out of their comfort zone regularly, and challenge themselves to find new solutions to solve

current problems. Thus, furthering (improving) education and seeking new challenges will help human resource professionals gain new skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs.

8. **Being Open to Change:** Fear of the unknown can hamper development and progress among human resource specialists and employees. It behoves on human resource professionals to guide employees through the moments of the change. Change management can reduce uncertainty, reduce negative impact and engage a workforce. Expanding of knowledge with critical thinking skills, digital illiteracy, problem solving skills, technical skills, etc, will help enable HR professionals welcome any form of change faced in the society today. Openness to change will therefore advance HR planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Education.

### **Challenges of Advancing Human Resource Planning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

Human resource planning in 21<sup>st</sup> century education has failed to reach its goals especially in developing economies as a result of some bottle necks that has constantly interfered in the process HR planning. These challenges include:

1. **Inaccurate Data:** The inability to keep relevant records of employees is one of the most difficult challenges faced by educational planners in developing economies. Planning involves forecasting the demand for, and supply of human resources. In this case accurate forecasting of future demand and supply of human resource needs will not be in possible due to inaccurate data. Developing economies have failed to effectively plan for their educational system as a result of this deficiency.
2. **Uncertainties:** Due to the ever changing nature of the world today, it is more difficult to plan effectively without the urge to alter such plan in the nearest future, due to uncertainties especially in today's world. Rajsheka (n.d) argued that technological changes in market fluctuations are uncertainties, which serve as constraints to human resource planning. It is therefore not advisable to depend on general judgment of manpower in the face of rapid changes in the society.
3. **Inadequate Skilled Personnel:** Most educational planners in developing economies lack the competence needed in planning. Ololube (2019) argued that qualified planners are the most significant resource that can lead to greater and efficient planning, productivity and performance. The quality of planners in this case could make or mar the effectiveness of educational planning in any society. Inadequate skilled personnel is therefore a challenge to the smooth operation of human resource planning.
4. **Resistance by Employers and Employees:** Many employers of labour resist HRP as they believe it increases the cost of manpower. Employees and trade unions feels that due to widespread unemployment, people will be available for jobs when required. Employees also believe that human resource planning increases their workload and regulates them through productivity bargaining. This opposition from employers and employees have undermined the effectiveness of human resource planning, which is a challenge to effective human resource activity.
5. **Lack of Purpose:** Educational planners in developing economies do not fully understand the tenets of human resource planning. They however, lack a strong sense of purpose as this affects their job performance.

6. **Economic Circumstances:** Budgeting allocations for education especially in developing economies is not usually commensurate with project education sector has set out to achieve. In other words, funds allocated her for education planning is inadequate for proper planning to take place. Poor funding of education planning stands as one of the major factors militating against effective planning and implementation of educational programmes.
7. **Time Factor and Expenses:** Human resource planning is a time-consuming and expensive exercise. Ample time and cost will be needed in data collection and forecasting in human resource planning. In the case of developing economics, such time may not be given to educational planners to come up with their findings. Available funds may be insufficient for proper planning and implementation of educational programmes.
8. **Poor Planning:** Educational planning for human resource in developing economies have been inadequate when compared with the enormous challenges facing their educational system. The lack of proper planning poses a significant obstacle to the advancement of education across the countries. The success of any educational system can be attributed to proper planning by educational management. In fact, planning of human and material resources will properly guide the allocation and utilization of educational resources in the school systems. Ololube (2019) argued that planning is required to arrest areas of wasted resources and to make educational production more successful. He added that for any educational system to truly develop, effective planning is indispensable as education and planning are essential characteristics for effective education.

### **Strategies for Advancing Human Resource Planning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education**

Human resources planning in education is a function responsible for managing academic and non-academic employees in the education sector, ensuring that schools have the right and qualified employee to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs. Effective planning requires a look at the current and future needs of the school organisation, a review of existing resources (human resources) and their skills, and an evaluation of available talents inside and outside the school organization. In other words, it behoves on HRP to take into account educational needs of learners in 21<sup>st</sup> century as they plan for human resources. Leigh (n.d) identified some human resource planning strategies. They include:

1. **Educational Needs, Current and Future:** Effective human resource planning must be tied to the immediate and future needs of education. Human resource planners should be aware of the staffing needs of schools so that efforts can be made to incorporate present needs of learners and their future needs as regards acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. In other words, human resources professionals can strategize by assessing the future needs of learners as it relates to changes in technology or new innovations that require new and different skills or method of teaching.
2. **Staff Skills, Experience and Tenure:** Human resource planners need to assess current staff skills and experience. By so doing, they will come to understand the gaps that exist between existing skills and the skills needed to prosecute the task of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. By so doing, human resource planners will consider the kind of training that will enable employees close these gaps. In addition, they will come to understand what new staffing requirements does the gap suggest? Finally, human resource leaders need to look towards the future in

terms of considering employee retirement, and the potential for turnover, particularly in key position in education sector.

- 3. Availability of Talent:** The identification of staffing needs can lay the foundation for the development of human resources strategies to provide an environment that will ensure the retention of key employees in the system. In addition, human resource professionals consider access to new talent (staff) that can fill present and future gaps. By so doing, human resource planners will consider whether educational needs can be met through current staff, with addition of specific training or recruiting a new staff or even transferring staff from a school where they are surplus to a school where there is short supply of manpower.

## CONCLUSION

The success of education especially in developing economies depends largely on its ability to plan, and effectively implement the plan. Human resource planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in education will therefore plan for education to meet up with the ever changing needs of the world today. 21<sup>st</sup> century education is a type of education that responds to the technological, economical, and societal changes that are happening in the world today. It involves teaching skills such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, creativity, effective communication and problem solving skills. Acquisition of these skills by learners would require the competence of human resource planners to plan, recruit, train and retrain manpower for effective implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. In addition, it behoves on human resource planners to take into account the delicate nature of developing countries as they plan for manpower 21<sup>st</sup> century needs.

## SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study, the following suggestions are made:

1. Government through the ministry of education at all levels should ensure accurate data and school records are kept as it relates to manpower and learners needs. Accurate school record will enable educational planners plan for the future and immediate need of learners and employees.
2. Government should ensure the best personnel are employed as members of human resource management team. Qualified educational planners would ensure efficiency in the planning process.
3. School heads and employees should not resist the advancement of human resource planning. Human resource planning is set out to plan for manpower and learners' needs in the schools which is geared towards equipping learners with the right skills to function in today's world (21<sup>st</sup> century).
4. Government should ensure educational planners are regularly trained for the personnel to understand the purpose and duties of human resource planning, as they carry out their work. This orientation will motivate planners for better performance.
5. Government should adequately fund the activities of human resource planning. This would facilitate the implementation of human resource plan in education.
6. Government should make planning for educational management a priority. Best results cannot be achieved if human resource planning is haphazardly done. Well planned activities of HRP will produce a positive result.

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