

YOUTHS' ENGAGEMENT AND THE ATTAINMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN "OLOGUNERU" COMMUNITY, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Engagement of community members across board particularly the youths which constitute energy-driven and conscious population is said to be the springboard for the realization of development programmes in the community. It is on this premise that this study examined youths' engagement and the attainment of community development programmes in "Ologuneru" community, Ido Local Government area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Ex-post-facto research design was adopted for this study and the study population comprised of 4 registered Youths' Associations' membership which was 281. Cluster and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 141 respondents. Structured Questionnaire with $r = 0.087$ was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using: Frequency counts, Percentages, Mean score, Standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. It was found that Youths' engagement in development programmes have significant positive impacts on the attainments of community development programmes. Based on the findings, the study recommends that; fatalistic attitudes of the Adults and constraints towards Youths' engagements should be addressed as well as constants recognition of youths' population in the scheme of development agenda for uppermost attainment of development programmes in the community.

Keywords: Youths, Engagement, Development, Programmes, Community

Introduction

Youths' Engagement encapsulates active participations and involvement of young people in the affairs of the community which spans from involvement at the identification of felt need, planning, and to mostly partnership in making decisions that affects the youths and the community at large. Youths' engagement results in making the younger generations responsible and a process of bringing about positive social change in the community. Youths' engagements according to Mark (2005), is a central principle of the youths' development and ecological perspectives of human developments, thus, young people are agents of their own development. In this sense, youths should be seen as

more than passive or tokenist recipients of external influences, instead they should be actively involved in shaping their own development and destiny by interacting with the adult population and opportunities available particularly in their respective communities for capacity building, empowerments and decision making process.

Developments plans and agenda are rolled out year-in-year-out at the local states and national levels in Nigeria. But instead of the goals of development efforts meeting the yearnings of the populace particularly the youths, the reverse is the case, hence, youth uprising, revolts and other social-vices becomes the other of the day in communities. It is expected therefore, that through youths' engagements communities can do better in the areas of creating services, opportunities and supports that young people need to develop in healthy ways (Olufemi, 2014).

Nigeria is endowed with numerous human and natural resources, but the strategies and policy frameworks of governments of all levels have not encourage active engagements of the citizens particularly the younger generation that constitutes almost sixty percent of the population to harness these resources. This is in contrary to the historical developing of communities' projects in Nigeria which was centered on active citizens. Participation populations and such programme marks the stage in the life of community and the social activities whereby members of the communities are actively engaged to six issues pool resources together towards solving the identified problem(s), Oyelami, Adewole and Oladele (2018). Rowland (2011), further argued that, the development of communities is a dynamic process involving all segments of the locality including the often-overlooked youths' population. Youths' engagements in development process is therefore virile in accomplishment of predetermined goals and objectives in the communities which in all cases, reinforces national and global development.

Community development programme can be said to be a self-directional effort of the people by the people and for the people. To Hills (2011) such project is approached whereby the community members undertaken programmes in order to better the living condition in the community. Again, Johnson, (2008) equates development projects in the community as the improvement in the physical and material wellbeing including livelihood of people in the community. Community development programme therefore, helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potentials in order to address their problems and needs which are shared (Effiong, 2012). Community development

programme realization uphold basic principles of people's involvement in bringing about better socio-economic and political conditions irrespective of differences in the community.

In Nigeria, communities' development programme is not new. Oduaran (1994), Oyelami (2017), and Tolu and Abe, (2011) observed that before the advent of colonial administration, various communities designed development-oriented activities on their own in order to improve standards of living. The spirit of self-help which forms the present day strategy for community development was guided by the zeal of the people as they harnessed and pool local resources and undertook communities' development projects like building of markets, community halls, road expansion and maintenance, tree planting to check erosion and communal palm fruits harvesting and securing of community by mostly the youths.

The youths in question can be conceptualized as a people within the age bracket of 18 and 24 years, (Liveright, 2013), also 15 and 24 years but varies around the world (UN, 2008). For example, in Nigeria, youths is a period between ages 16 to 35, whereas in Cameroun, it is a period between the age 14 and 25 years. Youth is a period of transition from being dependent to construction of self-concept, being influenced by peers, life style and gender (UN, 2008). Youths constitute the most active labour force of every community. There are about 1.2 billion youths between the age bracket of 15 and 24 years in the world and about one billion live in developing countries (World Bank Report, 2010). Similarly, Nigerian National Baseline Survey (2015) showed that nearly 50% of developing world population are youth within the age bracket of 15 and 35 years, this is often referred to as the youth bulge, since young people constitute a high proportion of many country population as evidenced in Nigeria with a population over 174,507,539 million people out of which 64 million are youth with about 54% of them unemployed (Nigeria National Baseline Youth Survey, 2015).

The increase in youth population represents both a challenge and a responsibility to the community as majority of the youth may not have any source of income and livelihood. It is visibly noticed in the community today that the lingering effect of youth bulge create un-conducive atmosphere in various communities with most of them being idle, unemployed and displaying unruly behaviors (Rowland, 2011). To this end, if the youths' energies are not adequately harnessed and engaged it thus become problem. Youths must therefore be effectively mobilised and involved as asset, beneficiaries and partners in community development activities abound in various communities; instead of displaying their unruly behaviors as militants, terrorists' and other restiveness in the community. Youths provide an inevitable resource for programme planning and effective evaluation. As youths are brought into and connected with community development programme, they become veritable tools towards programme objectives realization. The resultant effect of this is sustained positive relationship with adults, their peers and community development experts, apart from realizing that they are valued citizens of their communities, such collaborations and participations also leads to skill enhancements, empowerments and confidence-building traits, which will help prepare the youths for active development service in the future (Obetta,2014).

Youths' engagement in the context of this study refers to their active involvement and real influence in the decisions that affects youths lives. In this approach, engagements quality is measured not only by its scope, such as the number of young people who attend a number of activities or are involved in a programme, but also by the quality of youth contributions to the community development process starting from felt-need identification to the appraisal process of the development project in the community concern. Engagement is therefore effective when youths have positive effects on the project process, influence a particular decision and produce a favorable outcome (Umar & Mohammed, 2014). It is worth mentioning according to Oyelami, (2017) that historically, youths have played a very prominent role in the continual process of governance. The youths were also responsible for the various changes as witnessed in the history of various communities. Youths generally are daring, full of energy and vigor, inquisitive, enterprising, exuberant, self-sacrificing, and full of dreams, beautiful initiatives and hopes. All these attributes of youths can be used to boost and achieve community development projects. There is a strong belief that youths' effective involvement in self-help community development projects by community leaders and adults are desirable in the quests for the qualitative development in communities especially in todays' continued decrease in

the votes and allocations for development projects by the government at all levels in Nigeria. It could also, to a great extent make the youths become responsible and realize that they also have commitment to themselves, the communities and the nation at large.

Interestingly, engagements in community development project by the entire population including the youths was the theme of the 1986 United Nation Declaration on Right to Development which was first recognized in 1981. The article 22 of the UN Charter on Human and Peoples' Right says; that "everybody shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity". This was subsequently proclaimed by the United Nations in 1986 as a group right which was reaffirmed by the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Hence, a right-based approach to youths' involvement in community development programme had been advocated and adopted by the member's states of the UN as well as bilateral donor agencies, such as UNDP and USAID. Understanding the dynamics of youth in every local context is therefore essential for effective community development activities. This is because each generation of youth certainly would exhibit their own characteristics and may face different challenges that would also require its own peculiar solution approach. No wonder Kelly (2008), Olufemi. (2014) noted that in most developing countries of the world, the youth have not been properly integrated into community development activities by the governments and communities. In addition, Olufemi (2014) said it has always been a common belief among most people in developing countries like Nigeria, that every development issues is the sole responsibility of the government and her agencies to provide infrastructural and physical facilities as well as social amenities. Considering the obvious economic crisis in Nigeria, it may not be possible that government budget capacity accommodates the magnitude of development challenges in the country. Consequently, communities seem to be on the right track to improving their welfare facilities through self-help projects.

If we take mental trips across Nigeria communities today from North to the South and from East to the West, the common stories are those of armed conflict, armed robbery, hunger and outright starvation, poverty, disease, extra- judicial killing, corruption, misappropriation of public funds and electoral fraud. The resultant effects of these social ills in the communities was non-engagement of the youths in the affairs of the communities. The seemingly lack of direction for youth and manipulations through ethnicity and religion. These ills must be addressed through engagement of youth as important facilitators of community development projects because they are innovative, inquisitive and creative in problem solving and as well as having enduring interest during discussion

and continuous dialogue during ongoing project in order to forestall anomalies at the early stage, which if not rectified will cause irreparable damage to the project. (Sieng, 2012).

Considering the fact that community development project has a wide variety of activities it is expected that effective involvement of all beneficiaries in the activities gives room for the opportunity to learn how to develop potentials and talents as well as acquire more relevant skills that would help youths to grow and contribute meaningfully to community development projects. Addressing the non-participation of the beneficiaries Sieng (2012) argued that, abandoned community projects are attributed to lack of political will, poor planning, poor implementation, inadequate funding, poor monitoring, supervision and evaluation. In summary, Smith (2010), noticed that youths are heterogeneous group with wealth of life experiences, cultural background, education and social groups affiliations that can make positive impacts in the community development process depending on where they live.

In developing countries like Nigeria, communities are known for embarking on self-help development projects but the irony is that they hardly complete most of these projects. Evidence from the pilot study by the researcher in the study area, showed various abandoned self-help projects. It seems not possible to even ascertain the areas and level of involvement of all stakeholders in the communities especially the youth who are supposed to fast track development projects. Engagement of the youth population is at the level of tokenism, youths are mere recipients of the development programmes. Hence, the essence of this study which focused on examining the influence of youth engagement on the attainment of development projects in “Ologuneru” community in Ido local government area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of youth engagements and the attainment of development goals in the community. The specific objectives are to: Identify the development programmes that youth in Ologuneru community participated in; Find out the importance of youths’ engagements in planning on the identification of felt needs in Ologuneru community; Find out if youths’ engagement in decision making correlate with attainment of development programmes in Ologuneru community and find out the constraints to youths’ engagements in development programmes in Ologuneru community.

Research Questions

1. What are the developmental Programmes that youth in Ologuneru community participated in?
2. What are the constraints to youths' engagements in development programmes in Ologuneru community?

Research Hypotheses

Two research hypotheses were tested viz;

1. There is a significant correlation between youths' engagements in planning and identification of felt needs in Ologuneru community.
2. Significant correlation does not exist between youth engagements in decision making process and attainment of development programmes in Ologuneru community.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design of Ex-post-facto type was used for this study. Ex-post-facto remains relevant to this study because of its strengths which emphasized non-manipulations of variable(s) in the study and apt reportation of the events as they occurred in the study area (community). In this case, youths' engagement in development programmes had occurred, hence, the researcher reported such engagement in development programmes as they had happened.

The population comprised of four registered youths' associations in "Ologuneru" community in Ido local government area of Oyo State, With 281 members, as at the time of this study. The researcher sought the attention and approval of the Community Development Unit of Ido local government at her headquarter in Ido to have access to the four registered Youths Associations in "Ologuneru" community. (Table 1 below shows the registered Youths Associations in the community under study).

Table 1: Youths' associations in Ologuneru community

Names of Associations	Population of Members	Location/ Club House
Ologuneru Central Youth Association	67	Ologuneru Central
Better 9ja Club	87	Ologuneru Central
Eminent Youth Organisation	86	Sheu Area, Ologuneru
Ekerin Youth & Sport Association	41	Ekerin Ologuneru

Source: Community Development Unit, Ido LGA, Ile-Ido, 2022

The population of the registered members of the association as at the time of this study was 281. Youth associations in the study area have been clustered into four registered associations. From each of the existing cluster, fifty percent of the members were randomly selected making 141. It should be noted that each member from the cluster had equal chance of being selected as representative of the cluster. In relation to this, the sample size for this study was 141 respondents. Instruments for data collection was structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was anchored on modified four-point Likert rating scale of SA- Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, D-Disagreed and SD-Strongly Disagreed. The structured questionnaire was also divided into 2 sections "A and B". Section "A" dealt with bio-data of the respondents such as age, religion, sex, tribe and year of association's membership.

Section "B" on the other hand was designed to tease out and captured the relationships between statement items on the questionnaire and objectives of the study as well as eliciting information on youth engagements and attainment of development programmes in the community.

The research instrument was validated by experts in community development and development studies of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. Reliability was ascertained for questionnaire through a test-re-test method which involved twenty-five respondents who were outside the main study. Correlation Co-efficient method was used to determine the reliability which showed an overall scale of 0.87 and considered high enough to be used for data collection. One hundred and forty-one questionnaires were distributed but 137 questionnaires properly completed and returned were used for data analysis. Frequency counts, tables, percentages, mean scores, standard deviation and weighted mean were used to answer the research questions, in which values were attached to SA= 4, A=3, D=2 and SD=1 which gave 10 points and 10 divided by 4 is equal to 2.5 which was the calculated weighted mean. Therefore any mean score below 2.5 is seen as negative response while any mean score of 2.5 and above were seen as positive response. The two hypotheses formulated were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Data Analysis and results of this study with particular reference to research questions and hypotheses were presented in tabular forms as follow.

Table 2: Distributions of Respondents' Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	105	76.6	76.6
Female	32	23.4	23.4
Total	137	100.00	100.00

Table 2 above indicates that out of 137 respondents used for this study, 105 or 76.6% were males while 32 or 23.4% were females. This implies that there are more male members of the social clubs in "Ologuneru community" than the female members, also the engagements of the males in community development programmes are more than that of the females.

Research Question 1: What are the developmental Programmes that youth in Ologuneru community participated in?

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Developmental programmes

Responses	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Clearing of Access Roads	137	3.42	0.75
Organisations of Sports	137	2.62	0.99
Felt Needs Identifications	137	2.90	0.81
Building of Markets	137	3.31	0.87
Community Hall	137	2.91	0.80
Community Security	137	2.93	0.85
Weighted Mean		3.015	

Table 2 shows the respondents opinions on the developmental programmes that youths in "Ologuneru" community participated. All six items listed recorded high Mean Score ranging from 2.62 to 3.42 out of maximum score of 4.0. The weighted mean of 3.015 was also recorded. The implication is that youth are participating in the development programmes in "Ologuneru community" and that

youth engagement in development programmes had enhanced attainment of development programmes in the community under study.

Research Question 2: What are the constraints to youths' engagements in development programmes in Ologuneru community?

Table 4: Summary of constraints to youth engagement in community development programmes

Challenges	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Conflict of Interest	137	3.41	0.77
Arrogance on the part of adults	137	2.90	0.81
Poor recruitment of youths	137	2.91	0.80
Ambiguities in developments projects	137	2.93	0.85
Inadequate authentications of camsent	137	3.33	0.75
Inadequate data	137	3.33	0.75
Distrust among youths	137	3.45	0.67
Weighted Mean		3.192	

Table 4 shows the respondents opinions on the constraints to youth engagements and participation in community development programmes in the community under study. All the seven items listed recorded high mean scores ranging from 2.90 to 3.45 out of maximum mean score of 5.0. The weighted mean score of 3.192 was also recorded. The implication of this was that there are multi-faceted and multi-dimensional issues and challenges facing youth engagement in community development programmes which were revealed in Table 4 above.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant corrections between youth's engagement in planning and the identification of felt needs in the community.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient of youths' engagement in planning and identification of felt-needs

Variables	N	X	SD	Cal.	P
Engagement in planning	137	61.272	9.201	0.1026	0.013
Felt-needs identification	137	132.340	20.561		

Significant at 0.05 level of significant.

Table 5 above shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient results of Youths engagement in planning process and identification of felt needs in the community. The results indicate a calculated value of 0.1026 and table value of 0.013. Since the calculated value is higher than the table value, it implies that there is a positive significant correlation between Youths engagement in planning and identification of felt needs in the community. Thus, earlier postulated hypothesis is therefore rejected.

H₀: Significant correlation does not exist between Youths engagement in decision making process and attainment of development programmes in the community.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient of youth engagement in decision making and attainment of development programmes

Variables	N	X	SD	Cal.	P
Engagement in decision making	137	25.150	3.0941	32.5	0.182
Development programmes	137	129.200	40.0047		

Significant at 0.05 level of significant

Table 6 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient results of Youths engagement in decision making process and attainment of community development programmes. The results indicate a calculated value of 32.5 and table value of 0.182. Calculated value is higher than P value. Thus, hypotheses earlier stated is rejected. This implies that there is a positive significant correlation between Youth engagement in decision making process and the attainment of development programmes in the community.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one revealed numerous programmes in the community of “Ologuneru”, Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Such programmes include; clearing of access roads, building of markets stalls, community security, community hall, felt needs identification and organization of sports and games by the Youth clubs. Lending credence to the above, Hills (2011) while identifying development programmes in the community stressed that community project is a coordinated approach whereby community members undertook programmes in order to better the living condition of the people (children, young and adults) residing in that community.

Research question two identified various constraints to youths’ engagement in community development programmes in the community understudy. Such constraints include: Conflict of interest, arrogances on the parts of adults, poor recruitments of Youth club memberships, ambiguities in development projects, inadequate articulation of causal model, inadequate data and distrust among youths’ club members were the revealed constraints/challenges to youths’ engagements in development programmes in Ologuneru community. Lending credence to the constraints of youth engagement in development programmes in the community, Leach, Adetila and Yusuf (2013) listed Youth engagement constraints in community development programmes to include but not limited to: lack of trust, improper mobilization strategies, fund, arrogances on the part of the adult population, fatalistic attitude of the adults towards development projects, ego and autocratic nature of the adult population as well as youth restfulness. It is on this note that Cole (2007) warned that, neglecting youths’ participation and engagement in decision making mostly lead to failure of community development programmes.

The results of hypothesis one revealed that the youth engagement in planning had positive significant correlation on identification of felt-needs in community. Felt-needs identification participation is one of the major conditions for project sustainability in the community. Corroborating this, Oyelami (2017) stressed that such engagement in planning of felt-needs identification by the direct beneficiaries always tease out “Weness and ours” of the development programme(s). Also, Clark (2010), Hermosillo (2012) and Hills (2011) in separate studies have argued that engagement in planning and active participation of the direct beneficiaries in development projects always breed sustainability of the project in the community. Olufemi (2014) also buttressed the relevance of youth engagement in planning by stressing that, with youths’ engagements, community can do better in the areas of

creating services, opportunities and support needed for the attainment of development programmes in the community.

The results of hypothesis two, revealed that youths' engagement in decision making process had positive significant correlation on the attainment of development programmes in the community. This was in line with Mark (2005) findings who observed that youths' engagement is a central principle of youths' development and ecological participation of human development, which implies that young people are agents of their own development. In the same vein, Rowland (2011) argued that, the development of the community is a dynamic process involving all segments of the locality including the often over-looked youths' population. Similarly, while tracing the evolutionary trends of community development process in Nigeria, Oyelami (2010) argued that youths' population have been participating in development process in such areas as: Sports and games, building of kings' palace, building of market and stalls, building of community hall and construction of access roads as well as securing of the community from the mostly external aggressors. Examples of such were found in the activities of the "ESO" - the military outfits of the Yoruba tribe in South-West zone of Nigeria under the leadership of "Aare-ona-kakanfo" and the "Age grades" mostly among the Igbo tribes in the South-East zone of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Community can be homogenous as well as heterogenous. What is important for community development is mobilization and pooling of resources together to enhance the capacities of the membership of that community. This study had addressed the on youths' engagement in and constraints to development programmes in "Ologuneru" community, Oyo State, Nigeria. It can therefore be concluded that, since the contributions of individuals and groups differ in community service, efforts should be made by the stakeholders to harness the inputs of all for collective gains.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations the study offer for effective engagement of youths in community development programmes:

1. Youths constraints and fatalistic attitudes of the adults should be addressed for effective engagement of youths' population in community service.

2. Youths' engagements in felt-needs identification should be encouraged and harnessed for realization and sustainability of development programmes in the community.
3. Decisions are made for collective gains, as such, youths population who are the direct beneficiaries of decisions should be actively engaged in decision-making process.

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