



Youths' Involvement in Community and Social Development Projects in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study determined youths' perceptions of the effects of their involvement in community development projects in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically it identified the various community development projects that were implemented among the youths in the study area, determined the extent to which youths participated in the community development projects, identified the livelihood activities among youths and determined effects of involvement in community development projects on youths' livelihood. Simple random sampling was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) respondents for the study. Data for the study was collected from primary sources. The mean age of the youths in the study area was 25.9 years. The findings from the study showed that 55.0% of the respondents were male, while 45.0% were female. The study indicated that majority (45.0%) of the youths completed tertiary education. Findings showed that 99.0% of the youths were aware of CSDP, while 21.0% were not aware. The study showed that the youths were involved in the implementation of Electricity (32.5%), Borehole (25.8%), road rehabilitation (11.7%), health centre (10.8%), Drainage (10.0%) and schools (9.2%). The study indicated that 12.5% respondents participated by mobilization of community members, project identification (1.7%), project plan (2.5%), project execution (0.8%), monitoring and evaluation (2.5%) while fund raising (8.3%) in electricity supply. The study showed that 43.3% of the youths contributed to CSDP through labour, 32.5% gave money, 20.8% contributed through supervision and 3.3% contributed materials. The major livelihood activities among the youths in the study area include trading (16.7%), teaching (13.3%), mechanic (9.6%) and Farming (6.7%). The results show that CSDP effects include training opportunities ($x = 2.792$), increased awareness on innovation ($x = 2.742$). The result of the correlation analysis also shows that age ($r = -0.014$, $p \leq 0.05$), Sex ($r = -0.014$, $p > 0.05$) and marital status ($r = 0.156$, $p > 0.05$) and Education ($r = -0.045$, $p > 0.05$).with involvement in CSDP.

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INTRODUCTION

Development implies growth plus positive changes; it is the qualitative and quantitative changes in the economy which is multi-faceted including development of human capital, social infrastructures, safety, literacy and other aspect of the economy. Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritizing the actions of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policies. Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective actions and generate solutions to the identified problems. It involves the action of all (learned and unlearned, skilled, activist, leader, citizens or non citizens) with the objective of building a stronger and

flexible community. Community development cuts across all nations in the common wealth i.e. it is recognized internationally (Common Wealth) (2010). It seeks the empowerment of local and geographical communities of common interests or identities. It strengthens the capacity of people as citizens through their community groups, organizations and networks. Also, the capacity of public, private or non-governmental agencies and institutions to work in dialogue with citizens for change in their community is enhanced. Community development helps people to recognize and develop their abilities, potentials and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs (Rothman *et al*, 2001).

Youth involvement in community development is very crucial to any community or society as they are a special group of people with strong passion and stamina for achieving certain goals and objectives. A youth ranges from age 18-35 years according to the “Adopted National Youth Policy” and constitutes the majority of Nigeria’s 166.2 million population. Youth development is the process through which adolescents acquire the cognitive, social and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate life (Adebobola, 2014). A direct need exists for program and policy planners to better understand the role, impact, and possibilities presented by youth involvement in the community development process. Historically, youths’ input in decision-making, problem-solving, local action, and evaluation in communities has received only limited attention. Youths in any society are known to be the leaders of tomorrow; hence, their role in sustainable national development cannot be over-emphasized. But they have been given less attention by the Nigerian government by not properly integrating them into the process of national development (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2005; Giwa, 2008). They need these opportunities to take responsibility, to identify themselves with their homes/villages, to influence their environment and their society at large. Therefore, there is a need for encouragement and support for youths to get involved in community development, though only few are exposed to the benefits gotten from this participation because of the mindset of ‘Self’. Everyone is self centered but the orientation must be changed so as to benefit both the youth (enhance skills and competence) and the community. Interestingly, recent trends suggest that youth are playing an increasingly important role in the development of their communities (Sherrod, 2002). Youth ideas, strengths and interests are required to strive for what they need and how their needs can be met effectively via community development.

Community and social development project (CSDP) is a partnership between communities, Local Government Areas and State agencies on poverty reduction. CSDP is a scaled up version of Community Poverty Reduction Project which was aimed at assisting to fight poverty by empowering the poor through provision of social services. The overall goal of CSDP is to improve access to services for human development which will be achieved through; empowerment of community, empowerment of local government, realignment of the sectors to improve service delivery, accountability, transparency and communication at all level and capacity building. CSDP is assisted by the World Bank and co-financed by the Nigerian Federal and State Governments. Under CSDP, at least 380million dollars will be spent in interested Nigerian States, Local Government Areas and communities over the next five (5) years on improving the standard of living in communities by sustainably increasing access of the poor to

improved social and natural resource infrastructure services. The project is expected to have a positive impact with respect to human development outcomes through financing social and economic common goods as well as upward and downward accountability between communities, L.G.As and States.

Community groups that have built coalitions for local change over the years are now engaging the youth as leaders in order to improve their quality of life. It was discovered that youth are very effective at producing impacts at multiple levels because they weave together youth development, community development and social change into a cycle. This initiative encourages participants by promoting psychological empowerment, leadership development and socio-political development. It also brings about community-level impacts, such as new program implementation, policy change and institutional building. Social changes include intergenerational and multicultural collaboration in the exercise of power. This interplay between youth development, community development and social change is in relation to the growth and effort to engage youth in civil society as youths must learn to function as effective members of the society (Nitzberg, 2005). This view of youth participation primarily, is for public contribution and community change rather than individual development.

Young people seek to gain economic independence or self-sufficiency. Most youth are either employed (self-employed or wage earners) or in the labour force, although in terms of productivity the issue is not only about unemployment but also under-employment. It is thus better to focus on livelihood improvement of the most disadvantaged youth. In respect to this, youth livelihood programs must engage and support youth, especially those economically active and focused on the immediate needs of their households and who desire more sustainable and socially constructive livelihood pathways. Different community development programs will help them acquire the relevant competencies and resources necessary to enhance their livelihoods and ultimately the livelihood of others within their communities (David, 2013). Livelihood is the occupation, work, or other means by which one earns an income to provide necessities, growth and abundance for the individual and the family. Livelihood preparation involves basic education (including vocational training, life skills and technical training). Once youth basic skills are improved, they are prepared to find better ways of improving their quality of life by getting a job, starting a business, engaging in economic activity in the informal sector, increasing the amount of food by growing vegetables or raising animals, improving their housing, and being better able to take care of their family responsibilities (Educational Quality Improvement Program, 2005). It is widely alleged that youth development is at the periphery of the development agenda in most countries, given that youth

comprise such a large proportion of the rural labour force, most development projects and programmes in the rural areas do promote youth livelihood to a great extent (Bennell, 1999).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

That youths have played tremendous roles in community development is a fact that cannot be overemphasized. Youths are formidable part of any society. Historically, youths’ input in local decision making, problem solving and community action has received only limited attention. It is also often the case that only token gestures have been presented to youths resulting in limited contributions to long-term community involvement. Similarly, a process for clearly defining youth roles, responsibilities and ownership has often been lacking in applied programming. However, recent trends suggest that youths are being called upon to play increasingly important roles in the development of their communities (Huber, *et al.*, 2003). Youths’ contributions to community sustainability are immense and in many communities they have demonstrated active participation in community developmental programs and initiatives. It was based on this that the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. what were the various community development projects that were implemented among the respondents?
2. to what extent did youths participate in the community development projects?
3. what were the livelihood activities among the youths?
4. what effects does CSDP projects have?

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to determine youths’ perceptions of the effects of their involvement in community development projects in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Ilorin East and Ilorin South of Kwara State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. identify the various community development projects that were implemented among the youths in the study area,
2. determine the extent to which youths participated in the community development projects,
3. identify the livelihood activities among youths and
4. determine if the involvement in community development projects had effect on youth livelihood

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between respondents’ socio economic characteristics and their participation in community development projects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The study was carried out in Ilorin South and Ilorin East of Kwara State, Nigeria. Kwara State is located in the North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria and covers about 290m elevation above the sea level, 8.5⁰N latitude and 4.55⁰E longitude with about 814,192 inhabitants Kwara State among the 36 other states was created 27th may 1967 when general Yakubu Gowon broke the four regions that constituted the federation of Nigeria into 12. The state is acknowledged as the heart of tourism in Nigeria because of the variety, quality and potentials of its tourist attraction. Two (2) Local Government Areas was selected at random from the sixteen (16) Local Government Areas in Kwara State. Thereafter, Five (5) communities were selected from each Local Government to give a total of 10 communities. Each community was divided into two (2)wards, 6 youths were randomly selected from each ward to give a sum of twelve (12) youths from each community thus, summing up to be one hundred and twenty (120) respondents.

Data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through a well-structured interview schedule. Secondary data was sourced from journals, text books, relevant projects and other relevant information from the internet. The information that was collected include: Data on the socio economic characteristics (which include; age, gender, number of children etc.), the community development projects carried out in that area, which one they were involved in, extent of participation and effect of participation on youths livelihood. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The descriptive statistical tools used include frequency distribution, mean and percentages, to determine the socio economic characteristics of the youths engaged in community development in the study area. These characteristics include age, gender, marital status, number of children, educational level, occupation e.t.c. The hypotheses for the study were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to examine the effect of community development on youth livelihood

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, sex, marital status, religion, occupation, educational level etc are presented and discussed here (Table 1). The mean age of the youths in the study area was 25.9 years. The results showed that about 41.7% were within 24-29 years while 34.2% of them were within the 18-23 years. This implies that the majority of the Respondents were between (24-29) years of age. At this age it is expected that the youths are matured enough to think more responsibly and partake in any developmental projects targeted at improving their communities.

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The findings from the study also showed that 55.0% of the respondents were male, while 45.0% were female. This implies that the male were more involved in community social development project in the study area. This may be as a result of the fact that male youth are physically stronger than their female counterpart. The results also indicated that 72.5% of the respondents were Christian while 27.5% were Muslim, this implies that we have more Christian youths than other religion in the study area. The result shows that 80.8% of respondents were Yoruba, 10.8% were Igbo while 8.3% were Hausa. This implies that majority of the respondents in the study area were Yoruba. It also shows that Community Social Development Projects (CSDP)

allowed both the indigene and non-indigene of the participating communities to benefits from their projects. The study indicated that majority (45.0%) of the youths completed tertiary education, 32.5% attempted tertiary institution, 17.5% completed secondary school education, 2.5% attempted secondary school education, 1.7% does not have formal education while 0.8% attempted primary school education. This implies that majority of the youth had tertiary education and therefore, they were innovative, creative, and able to contribute to social development projects in their community. Furthermore, the results show that 76.7 percent of the youths were single, while 23.3 percent were married.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age (in years)	18-23	41	34.2	25.9
	24-29	50	41.7	
	30-35	29	24.2	
Sex	Male	66	55.0	
	Female	54	45.0	
Religion	Christianity	87	72.5	
	Islam	33	27.5	
Ethnicity	Yoruba	97	80.8	
	Igbo	13	10.8	
	Hausa	10	8.3	
Educational level	Completed tertiary school	54	45.0	
	Attempted tertiary school	39	32.5	
	Completed secondary school	21	17.5	
	Attempted secondary school	3	2.5	
	Non formal education	2	1.7	
	Completed primary school	1	0.8	
Marital status	Attempted primary school	-	-	
	Single	92	76.7	
	Married	28	23.3	
	Separated	-	-	
	Divorced	-	-	
	Widow/widower	-	-	

Awareness of Community Social Development Projects Implemented

Findings showed that 99.0% of the youths were aware of CSDP, while 21.0% were not aware of them. In the study area, seven (7) Community Social Development Projects were identified which included Borehole, Electrification, Road Rehabilitation, Schools, Health Centres, Town

Hall/Civic Centre and Drainage. The study indicated that various community social development projects were implemented in the study area which ranges from, Electricity (31.7%), Borehole (27.5%), road rehabilitation (11.7%), Health Centres (10.8%), Drainage (10.0%), school (8.3%),. This implies that much project has being carried out on electricity and borehole with less concentration on others.

Table 2: Awareness of Community Social Development Projects Implemented

CSDP Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	99	82.7
No	21	17.5
CSDP Implemented		
Electrification	38	31.7
Borehole Erection	33	27.5
Road rehabilitation	14	11.7
Health Centres	13	10.8
Drainage Construction	12	10.0
School	10	8.3
Town Hall and Civic Centre	12	10.0

Youths Involvement in CSDP

The study showed that the youths were involved in the implementation of Electricity (32.5%), Borehole (25.8%), road rehabilitation (11.7%), health centre (10.8%), Drainage (10.0%) and schools (9.2%). It therefore means that CSDP allows the youths to be carried along among the older

women and men in their communities. This implies that the youths were more involved in the different development projects; this has the advantage of ensuring increased access to and sustainability of the projects. It will promote cooperation and greater level of commitment to community development projects.

Table 3: Youths’ Involvement in CSDP

CSDP	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Electrification	39	32.5
Borehole Erection	31	25.8
Road	14	11.7
Health centre	13	10.8
Drainage construction	12	10.0
School	11	9.2
Town hall/civic centre	12	10.0

*Multiple responses

Stages of Youth Participation and Contributions in CSDP

The study indicated that 12.5% respondents participated by mobilization of community members, project identification (1.7%), project plan(2.5%), project execution (0.8%), monitoring and evaluation (2.5%) while fund raising (8.3%) in electricity supply. The findings further indicated that 43.3% contributed to CSDP through labour, 32.5%

contributed money towards the 10% conterpact fund , 20.8% contributed through supervision and 3.3% contributed materials. This implies that majority were involved in contributing labour. This means that CSDP also allowed the youths to have their own inputs in community development projects that were implemented in their communities; this will accord them a higher level of sense of belonging and responsibility in their communities.

Table 4: Stages of Participation

S/N	Project	Community member mobilization	Project identification	Project plan	Project execution	Monitoring and evaluation	Fund raising
1	Electricity supply	15(12.5%)	2(1.7%)	3(2.5%)	1(0.8%)	3(2.5%)	10(8.3%)
2	Road rehabilitation	3(2.5%)	1(0.8%)	2(1.7%)	4(3.3%)	2(1.7%)	2(1.7%)
3	Schools	6(5.0%)	3(2.5%)	4(3.3%)	1(0.8%)	5(4.2%)	19(15.8%)
4	Health centres	8(6.7%)	3(2.5%)	-	2(1.7%)	-	-
5	Borehole erection	12(10%)	6(5%)	1(0.8)	6(5.0%)	-	-
6	Townhall/civic centres	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Drainage	2(1.7%)	1(0.8%)	-	4(3.3%)	-	5(4.2%)

*Multiple responses

YOUTH’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CSDP

Table 5: Respondents’ Contributions to CSDP

Contribution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Labour	52	43.3
Money	39	32.5
Supervision/advisory	25	20.8
Materials	4	3.3
Land and properties	-	-
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey 2015

Livelihood activities among the youth

Table 6 shows various that majority (41.7%) of the respondents were students. Other major livelihood activities

among the youths in the study area include trading (16.7%), teaching (13.3%), mechanic (9.6%) and Farming (6.7%). This implies trading, teaching and mechanic were the major

livelihood activities among the youths in the study area. Some of the youths were also bricklayers (5.0%), Hair

dressers (5.0%) and dry cleaners (2.4%)

Table 6: Livelihood activities among the Youths

Livelihood Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Students	50	41.7
Trading	20	16.7
Teaching	16	13.3
Framing	8	6.7
Hair dressing	6	5.0
Bricklaying	6	5.0
Dry cleaning	2	2.4
Mechanic	8	9.6
Carpentry	4	4.8

Source: Field survey 2015

Effects of CSDP on the Youths’ Livelihood

Table 7 shows effects of CSDP on the youths’ livelihood. The youth claimed that CSDP had very high effect on their livelihood such as; training opportunities (x = 2.792), increases awareness on innovation (x =2.742), While the-

youth agreed that CSDP had low effect on their livelihood such as; Increases the number of educated (x =2.18) and Reduced cost of transportation (x=2.28). This implies that CSDP had high effect on the livelihood of the youth in the study area.

Table 7: Perceptions of the Effects of CSDP

Effects	No	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Mean X	SD
Training opportunities		17(14.2)	26(21.7)	22(18.3)	20(16.7)	2.792	1.460
Increases awareness on innovation		19(15.8)	33(27.5)	17(14.2)	8(6.7)	2.742	3.833
Improvement of welfare		29(24.2)	41(34.2)	20(16.7)	9(7.5)	2.725	1.159
Improved knowledge		24(20)	24(45)	16(13.3)	6(5)	2.700	1.058
Access to health services		20(16.7)	31(25.8)	21(17.5)	6(5)	2.683	3.146
Enhance entrepreneurship		17(14.2)	41(34.2)	19(15.8)	8(6.7)	2.658	1.509
Reduces Time of work		16(13.3)	29(24.2)	20(16.7)	4(3.3)	2.600	3.924
Poverty reduction		21(17.5)	26(21.7)	23(19.2)	12(10)	2.583	1.369
Reduce infection		27(22.5)	44(36.7)	15(12.5)	7(5.8)	2.567	1.143
Improved standard of living		29(24.2)	42(35)	19(15.8)	3(2.5)	2.529	1.080
Reduce mortality		24(20)	38(31.7)	17(14.2)	8(6.7)	2.525	1.222
Enhance sanitation		31(25.8)	35(29.2)	19(15.8)	6(5)	2.517	1.167
Reduce food spoilage		22(18.3)	19(15.8)	17(14.2)	8(6.7)	2.48	3.271
Access to information		26(21.7)	36(30)	17(14.2)	4(3.3)	2.38	1.160
Increased output		23(19.2)	32(26.7)	18(15.0)	4(3.3)	2.31	1.201
Reduced cost of transportation		12(10)	25(20.8)	16(13.3)	11(9.2)	2.28	1.40
Increases number of educated		18(15)	24(20)	9(7.5)	12(10)	2.18	1.36

Source: Field survey 2015

Perception about involvement in CSDP

Table 8 shows the perception of the youth about involvement in CSDP. The respondents agreed that involvement in CSDP enhances growth and development in the community (x=4.14), low performance of the leaders (x=3.842), It promote relationship between youths and adult (x =3.808), and improves youth competence (x =3.742). The respondents were undecided that involvement in CSDP

created employment for unemployed youths (x =3.20), has not improved the quality and the quantity of productivity, (x =2.925), increases profit (x=3.108) and does not bring promotion and recognition at work (x =2.975). However the respondents disagreed that involvement in CSDP does not improve standard of living (x= 2.808) and does not enhance sense of responsibility in people (x=2.783).

Table 8: Perception about involvement in CSDP

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	X	SD
It enhances growth and development	12(10)	11(9.2)	12(10)	47(39.2)	37(30.8)	4.142	4.762
There is low performance of the leaders	8(6.7)	37(30.8)	24(20)	29(24.2)	18(15)	3.842	4.404
Promote relationship between youths and adults	8(6.7)	13(10.8)	12(10)	48(40)	39(32.5)	3.808	1.197
It improves youths competence	10(8.3)	24(20)	17(14.2)	43(35.8)	25(20.8)	3.742	3.825
It provides facilities to the community	6(5)	17(14.2)	24(20)	47(39.2)	26(21.7)	3.583	1.127
It provides employment for the unemployed	18(15)	18(15)	29(24.2)	23(19.2)	13(10.8)	3.200	1.326
It increases profit	16(13.3)	26(21.7)	21(17.5)	43(35.8)	14(11.7)	3.108	1.255
It does not bring promotion and recognition	16(13.3)	34(28.3)	26(21.7)	25(20.8)	19(15.8)	2.975	1.293
It has not improved the quality and quantity of productivity	13(10.8)	39(32.5)	26(21.7)	28(23.3)	14(11.7)	2.925	1.210
It does not improve standard of living	22(18.3)	38(31.7)	16(13.3)	29(24.2)	15(12.5)	2.808	1.330
It has not enhance sense of responsibility	24(20)	33(27.5)	25(20.8)	21(17.5)	17(14.2)	2.783	1.336
It does not increase sales	16(13.3)	46(38.3)	26(21.7)	13(10.8)	19(15.8)	2.775	1.273

Sig. (2-tailed)	.872
N	119
	120

Source: Computed Field survey 2015

Hypothesis

Table 9 shows the test of hypothesis between the youth socioeconomic characteristics and their participation in CSDP. The result of the correlation analysis shows that age was insignificant ($r = -0.014, p \leq 0.05$) there is no significant

relation between participation in CSDP and Sex ($r = -0.014, p > 0.05$) marital status ($r = 0.156, p > 0.05$) and Education ($r = -0.045, p > 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative is rejected.

Table 9: Correlation analysis showing relationship between the youth socioeconomic characteristics and their participation in CSDP

Socioeconomic characteristics	r-value	p-value	Remark
CSDP	1	0.000	Significant
Sex	-0.016	0.861	Insignificant
Age	0.014	0.878	Insignificant
Marital Status	0.156	0.089	Insignificant
Education	-0.045	0.622	Insignificant

Source: Computed Field survey 2015

CONCLUSION

For growth and development in any community, there is the need for presence of basic infrastructures to improve the well-being and standard of living of that geographical area. Hence, CSDP has helped in making provisions for these amenities as seen from the study. The findings of this study revealed that local youths receive recognition through CSDP in their area, therefore, more projects should be embarked on to improve their standard of living.

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