

Effect of Capacity Building Programme of Development Agencies on Well Being of Beneficiaries in Niger Delta Nigeria

Uranta, D.

Department of Sociology, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Doi:10.5296/jsr.v4i2.4522

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v4i2.4522>

ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of capacity building programmes of development agencies (NDDC and SPDC) on well being of beneficiaries in the Niger delta, by assessing participant's income before and after participation and their perception about the effects of the training programme on them using multidimensional criteria such as their educational, health, shelter, skill acquisition and general standard of living needs. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected from the 22 capacity development (study) centers chosen from Rivers and Bayelsa state using purposive-cluster and random sampling techniques. The result of the study indicates that there was a nominal positive change of income in favour of the participating youths exposed to the programme, the study concluded that the skills acquisition programmes of the development agencies were effective at improving the wellbeing needs of the participants. It was recommended that donors of both programmes SPDC and NDDC should ensure sustainability by creating more study centres with well-equipped facilities for the training; effective supervision, and monitoring. There is need for adequate funding to ensure prompt payment of stipends and starter packs. Apart from this, experts and professionals should be engaged to train this youth.

Keywords: Capacity building, youth employment, income level, standard of living.

INTRODUCTION

International Labour Organization (ILO, 1996) observed that among the causes of unemployment, Nigeria's educational system has also contributed to the unemployment problem in the country, since the emphasis of their education had been on reading and writing without any vocational training or special skills. The young school leaver or dropout was ill-equipped for wage employment. Unemployment demoralizes the individual and makes him/her feel unwanted by the society. Youth employment is a crucial issue in Nigeria because the youth constitute a major part of the labour force and they have innovative ideas, which among other factors are important in the development process of the country. A large proportion of the youth however is unemployed. The negative consequences include psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, and gradual drift of some visible unemployed youths into all manner of criminal behaviour (Adebayo, 1999).

The problem of youth unemployment is not peculiar to Nigeria. Several reasons have been advanced for the difficulty in surmounting the challenge of unemployment. Among the factors suggested were those of corruption, poor managerial capacity at the public service level, Nigerian's worsening debt situation, low productivity and absence of skills training programmes. The government in attempting to solve this problem of unemployment devised some strategies among which are self- employment schemes so that additional job seekers can be absorbed.

UNDP (2002) observed that young people make up more than 50% of the population of the countries of Africa. It further hinted that these young people are a potential resource for growth and social development if gainfully and productively engaged and that they could be a source of devastating social tension and conflict if not engaged. In Nigeria, the degree to which youth can contribute to the possibilities of their counties is constrained by circumscribed life changes, job opportunities being of the major circumferences. The counties number of jobless young people on the streets of major Nigerian cities bears ample witness to the limited job and other opportunities that the youth of the country have. Yet the development of the continent rests squarely on them.

The problem of youth unemployment is not peculiar to Akwa Ibom State (Ekpo. 2002) observed that the main drivers of youth unemployment in the state are (a) the generalized lack of employment opportunities due to the underdevelopment of the economy; the employment prospects of Nigeria's youth are diminished by the already high rate of unemployment and underemployment (b) high rates of population growth; (c) sluggish or stagnant economics; (d) small formal private sector; (e) low literacy rates; (f) poor quality education and an education sector that increasingly equips young people with limited skills. There is no generalized definition of the term "youth". In Mozambique for example, youth is defined as the 14-35 age group. In Uganda it is the 13-34years age groups and in Nigeria, youths are defined as the 0-35 age group.

Employment has a lot to do with one's standard of living as unemployment is usually associated with poverty. UNDP (2002) observed that poverty in Nigeria is associated with high unemployment. Employment has far reaching effects on the quality of life. The unskilled school leavers and dropouts need to acquire necessary skills in areas of their choice to enable them earn a living. To Olamola (1988) "the livelihood of a person depends on the type of employment opportunity at his control", while Alimi (1988) did state that 'employment gives income to the employed person.

The need to build the capacity of young men and women in the Niger Delta area cannot be overemphasized. With the increasing unemployment issues in the country, many youth have felt discouraged in life generally. This is one of the reasons why social vices are on the rise. Development agencies therefore included human capacity development as part of their corporate social responsibility in the Niger Delta. The study therefore examined effect of capacity building programme of development agencies on well being of beneficiaries in Niger delta Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The Niger Delta Region comprises of nine states, namely, Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers,

Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, Abia and Imo state. The region has 185 local government areas and a population of 26.7 million in the year 2002 projection by the Nigerian population commission. It is wetland and covers 70, 000km². It produces 100% of Nigeria's oil and gas resources. The region is rich in agriculture resources including palm oil, Cassava, Rubber, Cocoa, cola nut, and a diversity of aquatic resources. The two states were chosen for the study because of oil exploration and exploitation which began from these areas.

A combination of purposive-cluster and random sampling techniques was adopted for the study. Twenty two (22) study centers made up of twelve (12) from rivers state and ten (10) from Bayelsa state were randomly selected, from which a sample size of 300 were purposively selected. This includes 166 respondents made up of thirteen (13) respondents each out of 10 study centers and eighteen (18) respondents from each of the remaining 2 centers selected in rivers state respectively; and 86 respondents made up of nine (9) respondents each from nine study centers and eighteen (18) respondents from the remaining study center selected in Bayelsa state respectively. However, twenty nine (38) copies of questionnaire were discarded due to incomplete information and inconsistency. Thus, 262 respondents constituted the sample size for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effects of the Skill Acquisition Programme of SPDC and NDDC on the Well-Being of the

Trained Youths in Rivers and Bayelsa State

Income change of participants of the training programmes after participating in the programme was used here as a proxy for well-being of the participants. Having derived this, we also verified whether there was a significant change in the income of those who benefited from the programme after the training or not using t-test. From Table 1, it was observed that the participants had a mean income of twelve thousand seven hundred and fourty five naira sixty Kobo only (₦12, 745.60K) as their usual income before participating in the programme. The distribution had a Standard Deviation of 14,495.48. On the other hand the mean income of youths who participated in the programme after they had been exposed to the programme was twenty three thousand three hundred and thirty five naira seventy Kobo only (₦23,335.70K).

This distribution had a standard deviation of 18378.07. The two distributions exhibited a correlation of 0.40 which was significant at 1% alpha level. This implied that change in proportion of income after exposure to the programme and initial levels of incomes of youths who participated in the programme were moving in the same direction and the changes were correlated positively. Looking at the difference in the income of participants before and after participation, a nominal positive change of income in favour of the participating youths exposed to the programme was observed to the tune of ten thousand five hundred and ninety naria ten Kobo (₦10,590.1k). We need to know whether this difference in income was by chance or it was statistically valid at ninety five percent confidence levels (5% level of significance). In summary we wanted to know whether the income change was statistically different from zero. This was the same as testing the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the two mean (i.e. the mean of income change after participating in

the training programme minus the mean of income before participating in the programme was not equal to zero). The calculated t-statistics, for a two-tailed test, had an estimated t statistic of -9.572, while the critical value of the t-distribution at 5% significance level for 270 degrees of freedom was 1.968 as shown in table 1. Since the calculated t-ratio (-9.572), was greater than the critical value (1.968) at 270 degrees of freedom and the chosen alpha level (5%) therefore the null hypothesis stipulated above is rejected. Therefore income change was statistically significant at a 95% confidence factor. This implied that the monthly income differential experienced by participants after participating in the training programme of SPDC and NDDC in the study area was not by chance. It was a major variation.

The results reinforce the assertion that skill acquisition programmes were capable of providing employment for the youths, thus reducing their levels of dependencies on crime, militancy and other vices that could emanate from idleness and poverty.

Table 1: Statistics of Youth participant's income before and after participation

variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-val	p-val	Remarks
Income _bf_ prog	271	12745.65	14495.48451	270	-9.572	0.000	Significant
(Naira)							
Income_after_prog	271		18378.07095				
(Naira)		23335.79					

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Attendance scores at the three phases of the programme were ranked as “did not participate” were only 1.8%, a negligible proportion.

Income of Participants: Before the programme, most of the participants were applicants and unemployed and those who worked received a mean income of ₦11,140.23. However, after their training and some of those who were employed could now earn a maximum of ₦84,000 and above. This underscores the fact the skill acquisition programme was useful to the youths.

The data in table 1 clearly depicts the income of the participants before and after the programme as calculated using t-test.

Table 2 elicited responses on participants' perception about the effects of the training programme on them using multidimensional criteria which included questions relating to their well-being in terms of serving their educational, health, shelter, skill acquisition and general standard of living needs. Each questionnaire item that recorded a mean score below 1.50 (equivalent to 50% and below) was considered rejected by the respondents as “No” while the items that recorded a mean score of 1.50 and above (i.e. equivalent to an index of 50% and above) was considered agreed to (meaning “YES”). “Yes” had a score of 2 while “No” had a score of 1.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Scores on Multidimensional Indicators of Well-being of Beneficiaries

Questionnaire Item	Mean NDDC	Remark	Mean SPDC	Remark
I can pay for my younger ones in school	1.16	No	1.56	Yes
Be able to further my schooling	1.50	Yes	1.84	Yes
Be able to acquire books and uniforms for my wards in school	1.35	No	1.38	No
I can seek medical care at far places	1.42	No	1.41	No
I can also offset my medical bills without help from friends and love ones.	1.18	No	1.01	No
I am no longer afraid to attend hospital	1.19	No	1.26	No
I can now buy and process my health insurance forms for the family	1.53	Yes	1.45	No
I can now secure one bedroom flat for my family	1.48	No	1.44	No
I now have a functional television set	1.40	No	1.35	No
I can now afford a GSM handset	1.14	No	1.35	No
I now own a radio set	1.25	No	1.38	No
I can now afford a small functional generator	1.41	No	1.48	No
I can now buy a standing fan	1.17	No	1.27	No
I can now buy furniture for my house	1.32	No	1.79	Yes
I can afford 3 square meal a day for my family	1.35	No	1.29	No
I am able to buy food stuff in bulk	1.51	Yes	1.42	No
I am able to afford beverages and fruits	1.28	No	1.38	No
I can now take balance diet	1.23	No	1.30	No
I can provide job for myself	1.18	No	1.29	No
I can train others to acquire skill	1.16	No	1.29	No
I can now join cooperative traders	1.32	No	1.34	No
I am now self reliant	1.53	Yes	1.79	Yes
I can now create jobs for others	1.36	No	1.69	Yes

Source: Field Survey, 2009

In response to the first item, while NDDC programme participants disagreed to the suggestion that the programme could enable them pay for their siblings at school (mean = 1.16) the SPDC counterparts affirmed that they were able to pay for their siblings school fees after passing through the programme (mean = 1.56). With regards to the second item (A2), both the NDDC and SPDC participants agreed that they should be able to further their education after the training programmes. Both NDDC and SPDC youth participants equally agreed unanimously that they were able to acquire books and uniforms for their wards in school (item A3); seek medical care at far places (item B1); offset their medical bills without

help from friends and loved ones (item B2); and were no longer afraid of attending hospital (B3). With regards to item B4, while NDDC participants agreed that they could buy and process health insurance forms for the family after attending the programme (mean = 1.53), the participants of SPDC disagreed (mean=1.45).

The beneficiaries of the SPDC and NDDC training programmes were unanimous too in saying “no” to questionnaire items C1 to C6 which meant that they could not secure one bedroom flat for their families, nor obtain a functional home electrical appliances such as television set for themselves, a GSM handset, radio set, a power generator nor even a standing fan for themselves. However while NDDC participants admitted they could not afford home furniture using the skills obtained their SPDC counterparts concurred that they could own home furniture with their skills. (1) The respondents’ response was influenced by level of education acquired before the programme; and this affected their reaction to the questionnaire. It also implied that the respondents were either not properly trained or had never secured job yet. Both groups disagreed to not being able to afford 3 squares meal a day for their families.

However NDDC participants claimed they could buy food stuff in bulk unlike their SDPC counterparts who disagreed to the item. From the results in the table 4.4a, it was found that most items raised in the questionnaire concerning the effect of the programme on the well-being of the participants were positively received or agreed to. This affirmed the earlier test using t-test which corroborated the positive effects of the programme on the well-being of the participating trainees in terms of income change.

We therefore concluded that the training programme, viewed from a multi-dimensional concept of “well-being” i.e. socio-economic well being, is deemed effective. Some items on the well being question were however rejected by the respondents. Some items rejected by SPDC and NDDC were; buying GSM handset, offsetting hospital bills, buying a functional generator set, taking balance diet, and buying radio set.

Some welfare indicators were deemed unsatisfactorily met by both NDDC and SPDC trainees. The deficiency of the programme to properly address these well being challenges calls for policy action or more relevance of the programme to be able to brace up to some of these teething challenges beyond the ordinary ones agreed to by the respondents. The two groups being studied disagreed to the response that they could afford beverages and fruits; take balanced diets; provide jobs for themselves; train others to acquire skills and be able to join cooperative traders. Both admitted they had become self reliant. As for ability to create job for others, only the SPDC group answered in the affirmative. There were some variations in the respondent’s sense of judgment perhaps these may be based on the individual experience. Again their experience implied that NDDC could not meet up to the standard when compared to SPDC. Therefore efforts should be made to ensure that NDDC measured up to the respondents expectations. On the whole it appeared that the SPDC group gave more overall affirmative answers to the questionnaire items (more of “yes”) with (overall mean of 1.42) than the NDDC group (with overall mean of 1.32).

Going from the result obtained, it was glaring that SPDC skill acquisition group had a mean of 1.42 while NDDC 1.32. This could suggest for certain mechanism to be put forward by SPDC to ensure that their programme addressed the need of their oil producing villages.

These certain investment could be the follow up, prompt payment of stipends, provision of starter pack, use of NGO's and non disruption of training periods. Perhaps job might be given after qualification; and micro-credit facilities may be made available for their graduates. All these may be possible because SPDC operated as a private firm compared to NDDC which was government instrument that sought to favour their members in recruitment. It is also believed that NDDC even though is autonomous, could not operate freely without government intervention in some cases like skills acquisition programme.

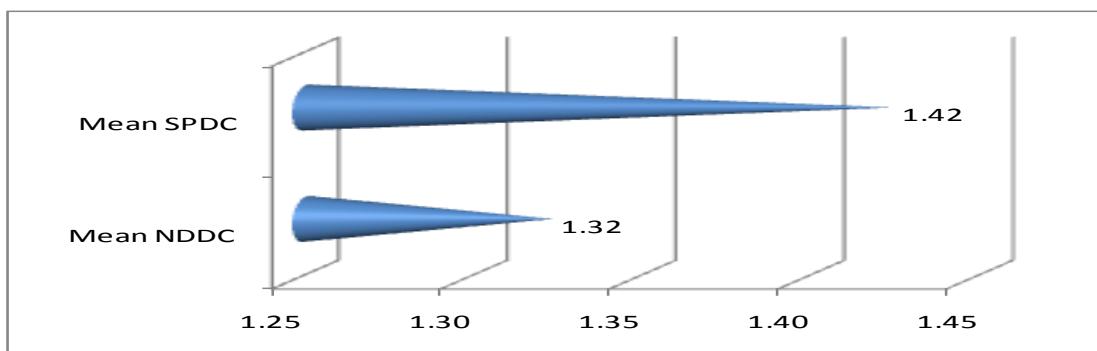


Figure 2: The Overall Index of Responses to the “Yes” and “No” items in the questionnaire comparing Respondents’ Scores on Multidimensional Indicators of Well-being of Beneficiaries

CONCLUSION

The study examined the effect of capacity building programmes of development agencies on well being of beneficiaries in the Niger delta, by assessing participant’s income before and after participation and their perception about the effects of the training programme on them using multidimensional criteria such as their educational, health, shelter, skill acquisition and general standard of living needs. From the result of the study, it was observed that there was a nominal positive change of income in favour of the participating youths exposed to the programme. Also from a multi-dimensional concept of “well-being” i.e. socio-economic well being, the programme is deemed effective. This corroborates the assertion that skill acquisition programmes are capable of providing employment for the youths, thus reducing their levels of dependencies on crime, militancy and other vices that could emanate from idleness and poverty.

It is thus concluded that the skills acquisition programmes of the development agencies were effective at improving the wellbeing needs of the participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings of the study, the following have recommended in order to make the programme more effective and relevant:

- The donors of both programmes SPDC and NDDC should ensure that these programmes are sustained by ensuring that more married youth and unmarried were engaged. From the report it was proved that the high level of participation of the

youth contributed to the effectiveness of the programmes. Therefore more study centres with well-equipped facilities be made available for the training.

- The SPDC and NDDC should endeavour to reduce some of the constraint encountered by the respondents such as lack of sensitization, lack of operation plan, time for testing and irregular payments of stipends and starter packs. It was found that even the few starter pack with little stipends, the respondent were able to continue the programme in spite of its problems. So they rated the effect of the training positive especially those from SPDC.
- The Government and the private sector should ensure Skills Acquisition Training Programme is effective. This could be done by effective supervision, monitoring and provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT), modern equipment for easy learning. There is need to ensure that adequate funding is made available to ensure prompt payment of stipends and starter packs. Apart from this, experts and professionals should be engaged to train this youth.
- Government in addition should ensure that these graduate youths secure job or are given micro credit facilities which could be paid back.

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