



ANALYSIS OF YOUTHS PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF WEST AFRICA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAMME IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

¹Etuk, U. R., ² Okorie, N. and ¹ Umoren, E.

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Uyo, P M B 1017, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

²Department of Agricultural Education, Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, Akwa Ibom State
Correspondence contact details: unyrobot@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study assessed youth participation in West African Agricultural Productivity Project in Akwa Ibom State. A multi- stage sampling procedure was adopted to select 82 respondents for the study. A structured questionnaire was used in collecting data for the study. Analysis of data was carried out using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentages and means. Findings from the study showed that the major sources of information about WAAPP were from Faculty of Agriculture, University of Uyo (72.3%), friends (14.4%), and Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Agriculture (6.0%). The major activities participated by youths were identification of project needs (m=2.63) and group formations (m=2.64). Perceived effects of participation showed a positive effect of WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme in the areas of teamwork (m= 2.67), access to inputs (m=2.82), self-confidence (m=2.61), high productivity (m=2.67), easy access to extension services (m=2.38), income generation (m=2.68) and decision making ability (m=2.52). On constraints to youths participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO activities, poor social value on agricultural based livelihood (m=2.81), poor income on agricultural based livelihood (m=2.72), cultural barriers (m=2.70), family issues (m=2.68), poor marketing structure (m=2.64), among others turned significant. It was recommended that WAAPP officials and its partners intensify efforts in the areas of timely input supply and social/marketing structure for better operation of WAAPP.

Keywords: Youths, participation, Community Development, West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been the mainstay of our Nigerian economy. It contributes about 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs about 70% of the working population (Central Intelligence Agency-CIA, 2012). It provides environmental benefits such as conservation guaranteed sustainable management of renewable natural resources and preserved bio-diversity (Preslistore 2013). The discovery of oil in Nigeria at Oloibiri in 1958 which would have complemented agricultural practice did otherwise. The discovery of oil dwindled the progress of agriculture in Nigeria. The effect of this has not only been felt at the microeconomic level but also reflected in the macroeconomic level of the economy's welfare. This has also led to a decline in the youths' participation in agriculture. The decline in the number of youth participation in agriculture has made agriculture unattractive and non-lucrative (Muhammad-Lawal, Omotoesho and Palola, 2009).

Since 42 years ago when problems of rural Nigeria was first included in the third National Development Plan (1975-1980) as Rural Development Policy, there has been a plethora of concepts, models, methods and strategies put up by various governments in Nigeria for sustainable rural development. Such programmes and projects included Directorate for food , Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) , , National Directorate For Employment (NDE) Family Support (FS), River Basin and Rural Development Authority (RBRDA) and many others . Recently government programmes aimed at youth participation include West Africa Agricultural productivity Programme

and the Graduate Unemployment Youths Support Scheme (GUYSS) known as FADAMA GUYSS. Studies such as Etuk *et. al.* (2016) and Ekong and Ekong (2016) have shown that some of these programmes (National Directorate For Employment (NDE) and FADAMA) have a positive effect on rural youths in terms of high participation in community decisions, leadership, grassroots democracy etc.

West Africa Agricultural productivity programme is saddled with mandate of promoting youth's participation in agricultural activities through community driven approach and youths need -led approach with grassroots democracy (Akapaio, 2015). West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) was created by the economic community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) in 2010, in a bid to enhance agricultural productivity in the region.

WAAPP - Nigeria started in 2010 and collaborates with Agricultural Research Institutes, and tertiary institutions to make agriculture more productive and sustainable. WAAPP is a five-year programme initiated by ECOWAS and funded largely by the World Bank (West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) 2013). In Akwa Ibom State, WAAPP has engaged youths in agricultural enterprises in large-scale adoption of improved technologies, economic improvement of resources of poor farmers, the creation of job opportunities, enhancement and ensuring food scarcity, and operation of an Agricultural Research Outreach Centre (Akpabio, 2015). The choice of sixteen (16) villages and six (6) secondary schools was adopted as



model enclaves. In all, aquaculture projects, poultry projects (polopin), and cassava-maize projects and entrepreneurship training programmes were covered. Marketing of the product was carried out and income generated from proceeds was deposited by various group coordinators at the University of Uyo Microfinance Bank. One of the major objectives of WAAPP is to enhance youth's participation in agriculture and community development; there is a dearth of information on the success of WAAPP. The study, therefore, seeks to analyse youth's participation in agriculture and community development activities of WAAPP in Akwa Ibom State.

The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the sources of information about WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme by the respondents
- ii. ascertain the level of youths participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme
- iii. assess the perceived effects of participating in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme among the respondents
- iv. ascertain the constraints faced by the respondents in participating in WAAPP activities

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. A multi stage sampling procedure was employed to sample the respondents for this study. In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique

was adopted to select 10 groups out of the 26 groups available to capture only the youth groups while other groups (adult men and women) were not captured. A total of 820 youths were identified in the 10 selected youth groups. Ten (10) percent of the 820 youths were selected by simple random procedure from the total group lists containing all the youths that participated in the programme. Thus a total of 82 respondents were used for the study.

Data for the study were obtained using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Information about WAAPP by youths in Akwa Ibom State

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by the source(s) of information about WAAPP. It reveals that the respondents mostly get information about WAAPP from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Uyo (72.3%). This could be owed to the fact that there is a direct collaboration between WAAPP and the University of Uyo (WAAPP-UNIUYO), and the extension officials from University of Uyo were engaged in enlightenment campaign on WAAPP activities. It further shows that WAAPP has the potential to bridge the gap of information dissemination to youths. Another source that followed the University of Uyo was from friends (14.4%). The next source that followed was the State Ministry of Agriculture (6.0%).

Table 1: Sources of Information on WAAPP Activities

Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Internet	1	1.2
UNIUYO	60	72.3
State Ministry of Agriculture	5	6.0
Print Media	1	1.2
Television	1	1.2
Radio	1	1.2
Friends	12	14.5
AKADEP	2	2.4

The level of Participation of Youths in WAAPP-UNIUYO Agricultural and Community Development Activities

It is evident from Table 2 that respondents participated at different levels in the WAAPP-UNIUYO Agricultural and Community Development Activities. The youths were highly participated in all the activities identified except in Project supervision. The major activities

participated by youths were identification of project needs ($m=2.63$), group formations ($m=2.64$), pro-vitamin A bio-fortified production ($m=2.34$) and decision making ($m=2.34$). These are indications that youths actively participated in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative Programme. Apparently, this gives the hope of sustainability of the programme if well implemented.



Table 2: Level of youths participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme

Participation variables	Mean (m)
Identification of project needs	2.63
Mobilization of resources	2.01
Choice of project	2.14
Implementation of projects	2.06
Project supervision	1.06
Decision making	2.34
Planning for implementation	2.16
Fish farming	2.03
Poultry production (broiler) using polopin	2.14
Cassava processing	2.29
Group formations	2.64
Community sensitization	2.14
Produce/product marketing	2.31
Input supply/delivery	2.01
AROC establishment	1.01
Value chain programmes	1.82
Pro-vitamin A bio-fortified production	2.34
Group banking transaction	2.27

Level of agricultural and community participation among youth participants of WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme

Table 3 shows that 81.2% of the respondents have a high level of participation in agricultural and community development

programme. It is an indication that WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme has facilitated youths' participation in agricultural and community development activities. This finding agrees with Lyocks *et al.* (2014) that shows high willingness of youths' participation in agricultural activities.

Table 3: Level of youth participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO programme

Participation index	Interpretation	Frequency and percentage participation
0.00 – 1.99	Low	16 (18.8)
2.00 – 3.00	High	69 (81.2)

Perceived effect of participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme among respondents

Results in Table 5 shows that the respondents' perceived effect of WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme was positive in all the variables. The most positive effect were in the areas of improving initiatives in community development activities (m=2.82) improving teamwork (m=2.67), increasing access to inputs (m=2.83), improving self-confidence (m=2.61), increasing high productivity (m=2.67), enhancing easy access to extension services (m=), improving income generation (m=2.68) and enhancing decision-making ability (m=2.52). This is an indication that WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative

programme in the study areas has been able to achieve one of the cardinal objectives of increasing youth participation in agricultural activities. This buttressed the view of Ekwere (2014) who stated that empirical records of WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme have positively raised students' interest in an agricultural science course. The result also corroborates with the work of Sinkaye and Ajayi (2012) who posited that effective participation of farmers in development projects is largely influenced by the way an intervention programme is implemented by the actors. It is feasible in the study area that WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme participated by the youths has a positive effect as perceived (as listed in Table 5) by the youths.

Table 5: Perceived effect of participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme among respondents

Perceived Effect Variables	Mean	Remark
Increases Self-confidence	2.61	Positive effect
Improves Leadership ability	2.67	Positive effect
Increases Decision-making ability	2.52	Positive effect
Improves Income generation	2.68	Positive effect
Enhances Teamwork	2.67	Positive effect
increases Access to inputs	2.83	Positive effect



Perceived Effect Variables	Mean	Remark
Improves Access to agricultural information	2.66	Positive effect
Aid in High productivity	2.67	Positive effect
Enhances Effective marketing	2.01	Positive effect
Improves Initiative in community development work	2.81	Positive effect
Raises Capacity building in entrepreneurship	2.17	Positive effect
Enhances Easy access to extension service	2.38	Positive effect
Mean	2.56	Positive effect

Mean of ≥ 2.0 - high effect and ≤ 1.99 - low effect

Analysis of constraint to youths participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme using factor analysis

As shown in Table 6, eight out of eighteen variables were perceived as constraints to youths' participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO Collaborative programme. lack of resource Centre (m=2.39), delay in implementation of project(m=2.50), inadequate infrastructural facilities to support farming and community development activities(m=2.41), poor marketing structure(m=2.64), delay in supply(m=2.53),

cultural barriers(m=2.70), family issues(m=2.68), poor social values on agricultural based livelihood(m=2.81), poor income from agricultural based livelihood(m=2.72) were the constraints to the youths participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO activities in Akwa ibom State. These findings agree with Nwaogwugwu and Obele (2017) which points out that poor social values on agricultural based livelihood and poor income from agricultural based livelihood were the major constraints to the youths participation in agricultural livelihood.

Table 6: Constraints to youth participation

Constraint Variables	Mean scores
1 Lack of resource centre	2.39
2 Non-functional project facilities	1.02
3 Non-involvement of youths in project identification	0.88
4 Non-involvement of youths in project implementation	1.23
5 Delay in implementation of projects	2.50
6 Inadequacy in supply of project inputs	1.51
7 Insufficient information from the donor agency	1.00
8 Poor communication and information sharing between WAAPP officials and youths	0.52
9 Inadequate infrastructural facilities to support farming and community development activities	2.41
10 Poor extension services	1.22
11 Poor marketing structure	2.64
12 Delay in input supply	2.53
13 Projects not centred on felt needs	1.14
14 Complexity of recommended technologies	1.40
15 Cultural barriers	2.70
16 Family issues	2.68
17 Poor social value on agricultural based livelihood	2.81
18 Poor income from agricultural based livelihood	2.72
Midpoint = 2.0	

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has provided empirical evidence on youth participation in WAPP – UNIUYO collaborative programme in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme has enhanced high youth participation in agricultural and community development activities in the study area. The programme has also acted as a complementary dissemination in the state. A negative perception of youths on the programme was on the issue of effective marketing and capacity building in entrepreneurship.

WAAPP-UNIUYO collaborative programme was effective in increasing participation of youths in agricultural and rural development activities in the study area.

The programme has significantly contributed to the individual empowerment through self-confidence, decision-making ability, leadership etc. The perceived effect of participating in WAAPP-UNIUYO by the respondents is positive. The most pressing constraints faced by the youths in their participation in WAAPP-UNIUYO were Poor social value on agricultural based livelihood



and Poor income from agricultural based livelihood. The WAAPP officials and its partners should intensify effort in the areas of timely supply of inputs to participants, since most of the agricultural activities are time bound.

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