

IMPACT OF YOUTH ORGANIZATION'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANGWA-RUKUBA COMMUNITY IN JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper focused on the impact of youth organization on the development of Angwa-Rukuba Community in Jos North Local Government of Plateau State, Nigeria. Development of any community all over the world depends largely on the extent to which all members of that community (men, Women, and youths) can collectively pull their resources together to meet the needs of their community. Youth organizations within a community usually collaborate with other members of the community to bring about the desired change to their community. This study focused on these three research questions: What are the various factors contributing to the effective mobilization of youths for participation in community development? What are the impacts of Angwa-Rukuba youths organization on the development of their community? and What are the constraints of participation of Angwa-Rukuba youths in the development of their community. The population studied comprised of all registered members of Angwa-Rukuba "Boys" youth organization which was 306. A sample of 45 members and five members of executives were randomly selected for the study. A 24- item structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data obtained was analyzed using simple percentages count. The results shows that the factors influencing AngwaRukuba youths' participation in community development project are projects meeting their felt needs, development interest, and peer pressure. Impact of Angwa-Rukuba youth is being felt in the areas of traffic control, security, environmental sanitation, citizen mobilization and promotion of cultural activities. However, their influence was not being felt in the area of education, health, and provision of rural infrastructure. Among the identified problems militating against youth activities in the community are inter-tribal violence, financial constraints, suspicion of youth by adults and insecurity. The paper recommended among other things that government should ensure peace and stability in our communities, organize training workshops for youth leaders, and that the adults in our communities should have a strong trust in the activities of their youths in order to make them participate actively in the development of their communities.

Keywords: Youths, youths' organisations, participation, development, community development

Introduction

The role of youths in community development cannot be overemphasized. This is because they are in their best energetic stage to carryout every energy demanding task. This is in line with the UN General Assembly resolution 58/133, which reiterates the “importance of the full and effective participation of youth and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Programme of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation”. Subsequent resolutions have also dealt with policies and programmes involving youth as well as promoting youth participation in social and economic development.

Participation according to BrasaJelagat (2013) as a concept occupies a central place in development with resultant potential to influence, challenge and change modifies the state of affairs for the benefits of community members. For a community to develop therefore, participation of the entire community population is essential to effect change in their community. Community development cannot just hop which people are idle, rather it occurs when collective approach is used to identify and tackle the problems facing a community.

Youth according to UN Population Division, 2005 are individuals who are between the age of 15 and 24 years and they constitute about 30% of developing countries Population. This percentage cannot be neglected when development of any country is to be discussed. Youth are not just important for the development of their community because of their population alone, but because of their stage in life which make them agile and active. Youth are usually young men and women who are not children nor adults but are usually referred to as young adults. They constitute a larger and younger work force that can drive economic development faster and plays significant role in national security, leadership and social development of their communities (Udeinsi, Daasi, Emoh and Zubkbee (2013). They can participate in any community building process as active members of their countries.

Youth participation in their community development could be motivated by various factors such as financial and material benefits, parent pressure, peer pressure, culture, project meeting their needs, willingness to serve the community among others. According to Reid (2000) in Waweru, 2015, community participation is not on idle principle, rather it is based on what the community derive from involvement, in achieving more results and with greater benefit to the community as a whole. Rajani (1999) opined that it is only through participation that youth development skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources. In other words, youth participation in community development can also lead to youths individual improvement and development. Youths involvement in community development centered on, poverty eradication, environment sanitation, security, traffic control food and nutrition, water and security. Aminu (2012) highlighted contributions of youth in community development as follows: Extension education, clearing and drawing of drainage and culverts, sinking and drag-out wells, road maintenance, health enlightenment campaign, among others.

The involvement of youth in community development can be in two main forms; by collaborating with adults in the planning, execution and maintenance of community self-help projects or by initiating and executing their own self-help projects within the community. Researchers have identified various factors that are challenges to youth participation in community development programmes. Findings from a study on youths attitude to rural development projects by Okuwusi, 2018, revealed that improper and inadequate awareness, low level of exposure, Non-challant attitude, insufficient training, lack of encouragement by chiefs and elders of the community, intermittent change of government, and selfishness on the part of the youth leaders were the factors that affected youth participation in development programmes. Adequate awareness of community development programmes is necessary to encourage youths to participate more in rural development projects. While most studies concentrated on rural youths, this study is out to examine the role of Angua Rukuba youths in the development of their urban community.

Statement of Problem

The population of youth of any community usually outnumbered the adults for this reason, youth of any community cannot neglect as far as development is concerned. Due to their age and physical fitness, they can function effectively in development process than the adults. The adults can provide the leadership and guiding roles in order for the youth to understand their expected roles in the development of their communities.

Although, youth are great asset to their communities on the issue of development, they are however being confronted by a lot challenges which may hinder them from playing their expected roles in the development of their communities. Some of the major challenges facing the youth include: insecurity, unemployment, inflation and poverty. These challenges have made some of our youths to engage themselves in unprofitable, time wasting and worthless exercise such as watching films, chatting on mobile phones, watching football, yahoo or internet frauds, among others. Some of them have also been brain washed by religion, politician and ethnic agitators rendering them unprofitable to themselves and their communities. Despite all these challenges youths are still involving themselves and playing their roles in one way or the other in the development of their communities. It is above all these that this study intended to answer the following questions.

1. What are the factors that promote AnguaRukuba youths' participation in the development of their community?
2. In what areas are AnguaRukuba youths contributing to the development of their community?
3. What are the factors militating against the participation of AnguaRukuba youth in the development of their community?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will expose the roles of youth as well as the benefits of their participation. Findings of this study will be beneficial to both adults and youth in a community as they will not be in darkness as to the role of youths in community development. The study will also suggest solutions to the challenges facing youth participation in community development.

Conceptual Definitions

Concept of Youth

The term youth could best be understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That's why, as a category, the word youth is more flexible than other fixed age-groups. Human groups are best defined by age particularly in relation to education and employment, because 'youth' is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. The Secretary-General first referred to the current definition of youth in 1981 in his report to the General Assembly on International Youth Year (A/36/215, para.8 of the annex) and endorsed it in ensuing reports (A/40/256, para. 19 of the annex). However, in both the reports, the Secretary-General also recognized that, apart from that statistical definition, the meaning of the term 'youth' varies in different societies around the world. When the General Assembly, by its resolution 50/81 in 1995, adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, it reiterated that the United Nations defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24. The General Assembly, UN entities, instruments and regional organizations have somewhat different definitions of youth, which the United Nations secretariat recognizes. The youth are young people between the ages of ten and nineteen years.

The [Commonwealth defines youth](#) as 15-29 years of age. The [African Youth Charter](#) defines youth as “any individual between 15-35 years of age and seeks to resolve longstanding debates about defining youth within the African context and based on Africa's development realities.” The national youth policy of Ghana by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) (2010) considers the “youth” as people who are between fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35) years. The [Nigerian National Youth Policy](#) defines youth as anyone between the age of 18 and 35.

Youth. According to Ayerterey (2002), “refers to young people who fall between the ages of ten and twenty-five years”. Yakubu and Abdulai on their part indicated that the youth are young people between the ages of ten and nineteen years. Youth can thus be seen as the period of development from the beginning of puberty to maturity and early adulthood... They are young people who are energetic, exuberant and full of ambitions. The youth possess certain qualities which could be used in the community development process. It is, therefore, important that every community put measures in place to harness and utilize the competences of the youth to bring about progress in the community. Young people should be assisted through various community initiatives to equip them with relevant skills, attitudes and values necessary for the community and national development. Since this study was carried out in Nigeria, youth in this study were between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

Concept of Participation

There is no agreement among planners and professionals about the contribution of community participation to improving the lives of people, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Some completely dismiss its value altogether, while others believe that it is the 'magic bullet', that will ensure improvements especially in the context of poverty alleviation. Despite this lack of agreement, community participation has continued to be promoted as a key to development. Although advocacy for participation waxes and wanes, today, it is once again seen by many governments, the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as critical to programme planning and poverty alleviation (World Bank, 1996). The World Bank's reasons for community participation are:

1. Local people have a great amount of experience and insight into what works, what does not work and why.
2. Involving local people in planning projects can increase their commitment to the project.
3. Involving local people can help them to develop technical and managerial skills and thereby increase their opportunities for employment.
4. Involving local people helps to increase the resources available for the programme.
5. Involving local people is a way to bring about 'social learning' for both planners and beneficiaries. 'Social learning' means the development of partnerships between professionals and local people, in which, each group learns from the other (World Bank, 1966).

Participation is a concept that is being used in a wide variety of fields, and that has obtained an evenly large range of meanings. A generic definition of participation is 'a process which allows employees to exert some influence over their work and the conditions under which they work' ([Heller et al., 2004](#) 15). Others have conceptualized participation as a matter of degree or as a hierarchy of practices ([Arnstein, 1969](#); [Pateman, 1976](#); [Wilkinson and Dundon, 2010](#)), with simple interaction and information dissemination at one end and actual power sharing and joint decision making at the other. Similar differentiation has been made between actual *participation*, defined on the basis of being bipartisan collaboration, and *involvement*, being managerially controlled involvement of employees in decision making ([Hyman and Mason, 1995](#)).

Concept of Community Development

Community development is the mobilisation of community members to actively participate in initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation, solving social problems, and achieving social development (O'Brien, 2009). Similarly, Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2012) define community development as a process that entails organisation, facilitation, and action, which allows people to establish ways to create the community they want to live in. These definitions make it clear that community development can only take place when there is a concerted effort among community members who share common goal of improving their well-being and that of their community. Through community development process, relationships are built and as Barnett and Brennan (2006) point out, when individuals interact with one another, they begin to mutually understand collective needs and create awareness of opportunities for involvement.

Cornwall (2010) explains that a significant component of community development is the focus on community empowerment which targets personal empowerment and positive action that addresses poverty, health and other challenges. Community developers harness local economic, human, and physical resources to secure daily requirements and respond to changing needs and conditions in the community (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan, 2012).

The concept of community development gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s with guidance from the UN and its affiliated agencies including UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, and UNIFEF, which supported the process of reconstructing the economy, especially in the Third World where there was an urgent need to improve living standards among the poor (Campfens, 1997). Because people have been living as a group, the introduction of community development paradigm could be well-aligned with international agencies' strategies and goals of poverty reduction through community-building measures and producing community-wide positive impacts. From 1968, community development got more attention from social workers, education professionals and governments who produced some influential reports and provided some funding (Henderson, 2008) for taking further steps to combat poverty. Since then, community development has been significantly focused on poverty eradication with the involvement of international agencies and recipient countries.

Community development is understood differently according to people's varied experiences and backgrounds, from development facilitators, to academics, scientists, business elites, local people and youth. Phillips and Pittman (2009,) express that: Most practitioners think of community development as an outcome—physical, social and economic improvement in a community—while most academicians think of community development as a process—the ability of community to act collectively and enhancing the ability to do so. Bunye and Jimu perceive that community development has a strong connection with concepts like participation, empowerment and mobilisation (Bunye, 2013; Jimu, 2008). Consequently, a majority of development agencies have been involving and employing these concepts at the grassroots level via participants' experiences and backgrounds. In short, community development is explained and employed by different professionals using varied approaches and methods.

Youth Participation Community Development

The term 'youth participation' is used to refer to the practice of involving young people in service delivery and decision-making in their communities. Youth participation is a process of involving young people in the in- situations and decisions that affect their lives. It includes initiatives that emphasize educational reform, juvenile justice, environmental quality, and other issues; that involve populations distinguished by class, race, gender, and other characteristics; and that operate in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and neighbourhoods of large cities in developing areas and industrial nations worldwide. As expressions of participation, young people are organizing groups for social and political action, planning programs of their own choosing,

and advocating their interests in the community. They are raising consciousness, educating others on matters that concern them, and providing services of their own choosing.

Youth participation in community development is beneficial not only to the community but to the youth themselves. This could be observed in the four justifications for youth participation identified by Giuliamoth(2011). These justifications include:

- A thin-right-based justification: It suggests that young people are full, rights bearing citizens, and as such have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them.
- Participation as radical employment: This presents a critical call for young people's collective employment perse. Proponents of this view suggest that participation as a process that requires power sharing can shift the balance of power between the generations and redress young people's marginalization (Drek, 2002).
- Participation for efficiency in policy practical services; this implies that participation with young people through some sort of enlightenment effect produces youth more informed policy or practice.
- Developmental justification: This suggests that participation is desirable because it can be used to encourage positive youth development. it suggests that by engaging in decision-making, young people can learn the social and emotional skills necessary to thrive as adults.

Methodology

This study has been designed to assess the roles of youth in the development of Angwa-Rukuba community of Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The study targets all youths in Angus Rubab community of Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. A sample of fifty male youths was selected. They were randomly chosen on the basis of their availability and willingness to be involved in the study. The primary sources of data collection used for this study was a self-designed questionnaire comprising of carefully designed question for respondents to answer. The questionnaire contained two sections; the first section focused on bio-data of the individual respondent while the second section dealt with questions that addressed the study research objectives. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentages were used to analyze the facts sought by the questionnaire.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the factors that promote AngwaRukuba youths' participation in the development of their community?

S/N	Factors	% Yes	% No	Total
1	Financial benefits	10	90	100
2	Material benefits	16	84	100
3	Development interest	83	13	100
4	Parent's pressure	11	89	100
5	Peer pressure	61	39	100
6	Project meet needs	92	8	100
7	Mobilization by the government	0	100	100

From the above Table, the result reveals that AngwaRukuba youths are mostly influenced participate in community development projects when the project meet their needs, closely followed by their interest to serve their community and their interest of development at heart. Furthermore, the findings 90% shows that majority of the respondents 90% and 84% are not participating in the community development projects for financial or material gain. Majority of the respondents 89% were not also influenced to participate by their parents while 61% were mobilized to participate by their peers. Government does not by any way mobilize any of the respondents to participate in community development projects. This finding disagree with Bowen (2007) who posited that material and non-material incentives prompt communities to participate in the community development project.

On development interest and project meets, needs the findings agreed with the findings of Masiyiwa and Kiyoshi (2008) in a study in Tanzania that community members participate effectively when they perceived those interventions being undertaken by a project address their immediate needs. It also agrees with the findings of Bhatnagar and Williams (1992), that people support and participate in project that account for their needs.

Research Question 2: What are the areas where Angwa youths are participating in development?

Table 2: Areas where AngwaRukuba youths are participating in community development

S/N	Areas of Participation	Response		
		% Yes	% No	Total
1	Resolving conflicts	42	48	100
2	Provision of labor for self -help projects	61	39	100
3	Provision of political information	97	3	100
4	Formation of vigilant group for securing and maintenance of poor	100	0	100
5	Initiating development projects	22	78	100
6	Provision of education	83	27	100
7	Mobilization of funds for self -help project	91	9	100
8	Annual cultural festivals	85	15	100
9	Traffic control	80	20	100
10	Health awareness campaign	73	27	100

Table 2 shows that 42% of the respondents are involved in conflict resolution, 61% are involved in the provision of labor for self-help projects, 92% are involved in the provision of political education, 100% are involved in provision of security and maintenance of peace while 22% are involved in the initiation of development projects. Furthermore, 83% of the respondents are involved in the provision of education, 91% are involved in the mobilization of fund for self-help projects, 85% are involved in annual cultural festivals while 98% are involved in traffic control.

It could be seen from Table 2 above that all the respondents are involved in formation of vigilant group for security and maintenance of peace in their community. When the secretary of the youth association was asked why all of the youths are involved in the provision of security, he stated that because Angwa- Rukuba is an unborn community, there are security challenges usually posed by the community neighboring tribe which often resulted in loss of lives and properties.

This makes the youth to organize themselves into groups to man strategic spots in the community both day and night to forestall the invasion of the community by youth from her neighboring communities.

Traffic control is another area where majority of the youth are involved. The main market of the community is located along the main road and at a major junction which joins the community with other communities. Traffic control becomes important so as to reduce the traffic congestion usually experienced everyday around the market. The findings also revealed that most of the youth are involved in the provision of political education for the residents of the community so that members of the community will be aware of their civic rights.

Other areas where AngwaRukuba youths are participating in the community development are in the provision of education, mobilization of funds for self-help projects and health awareness campaigns. In summary, the findings revealed that Angwa- Rukuba youths are actively participating in the development of their community.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges militating against the participation of Angwa - Rukuba youths in the development of their community.

Table 3: Challenges facing youth participation

S/N	Challenges	Response		
		% Yes	% No	Total
1	Insufficient funds	82	18	100
2	Uncooperative attitude of members	56	44	100
3	Leadership problems	18	82	100
4	Conflicts with the adults	62	38	100
5	Security	94	6	100
6	Partisan politics	31	69	100
7	Poor communication and lack of awareness	21	79	100

Table 3 above shows that majority (82%) of the respondents agreed that insufficient fund, uncooperative attitude of members (50%), conflicts with adult (62%) and insecurity (94%) are the major factors militating against effective participation of Anguwa- Rukuba youths in the development of their community. Leadership problems, partisan politics, and poor communication are not part of the factors that affecting effective participation of youths in community development.

In-security is identified as the major challenges facing the participation of youth in the development of their community. It should be noted that no significant development can take place in any community where peace and safety of lives and property cannot be guaranteed. Next to in-security is insufficient fund, since majority of the respondents are students and unemployed, this could explain the reason why insufficient funds is a challenge to their participation. The pace of funds in community development cannot be overlooked as funds are required at every stage of community development projects and intervention.

The respondents suggested the following solutions to the problems facing youth participation in community development.

1. Government at all levels should as a matter of urgency find solutions to the problems of insecurity by making both the soldier and policemen available in the community both day and night to maintain peace and order.
2. The government through the ministry of youth and social development should organize regular workshops and seminars for youth so as to educate them on their roles in the development of their community.
3. Government should be made available to different youth organizations to as to embark on projects that will be beneficial to their communities without hindrance.
4. A regular meeting of the youth associations was also suggested so as to bridge the information gap between the youth and their leaders to reduce uncooperative attitudes of some members.

Conclusion

Generally, the findings indicate that Angwa- Rukuba youth are participating actively in the development of their community. Major factors motivating their participation involved project meeting the needs of the community members, to serve their community, and development interest. They are assisting their community members to meet their various needs. The youth are not after any material or financial gain but only to ensure the development of their community.

Some areas where Angwa-Rukuba youths are being involved in their community development are in the formation of vigilante group for security, traffic control, provision of political information, participation in annual cultural festivals and provision of labour for community self-help projects. No community can develop in the midst of insecurity and threat to lives and property. The efforts of the youths in tackling the issues of insecurity in the community is yielding positive results as members of the community can carry out their business without any fear of molestation.

Major challenges identified by Angwa-Rukuba youths militating against their effective participation are in-security, insufficient funds, conflicts with adults and uncooperative attitudes of some youths in the community. Communities should address the challenges facing youths' participation in community development such as insecurity and conflicts with adults in order to increase youths effective participation in community development.

Recommendations

The youth should be encouraged to organize themselves into youth associations in order to engage in activities that could be promote the development of their communities. Government at all levels should be part in place measures that will address various challenges facing youth's participation in community development activities. The issue of insecurity should be adequately addressed so that youths can contribute their quota to the development of their communities with little or no hindrance. The challenge of inadequate finance should be addressed by attending to the problem of unemployment among youths through direct employment or by exposing them to skill acquisition programme that can lead to self-employment, when youths are gainfully employed, it be convenient for them to contribute towards self-employment projects in their community. Regular workshops and seminars should also be organized for youths to against them with their roles in the society and hoe they can live in harmony with their leaders and other members of their community.

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