

An Investigation into Empowering Youth through Training for Eradicating Poverty: The contribution of Non-Governmental Organizations in Ogba Ethnic Nationality of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

Youth development is great asset to national economic growth and income generation especially in the utilization of their creative ingenuity as the driving force of demand and supply. This research is to investigate empowering youth through training and eradicating poverty through the contribution of non-governmental organization in Ogba ethnic nationality in Rivers State. The objectives of the study is to identify the role of non-governmental organization in SMEs business and poverty eradication among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality, to identify the method of non-governmental organization in training the youth association in curbing poverty in Ogba ethnic nationality. Descriptive research design is used to collect both secondary and primary information. The population of the study is 2900 youths of the 60 youth associations of Ogba ethnic nationality, with sample size of 300, gotten through the use of Taro Yamane statistical relation. Questionnaire was the instrument adopted in collecting numerical data from respondents. Weighted Mean was used to analyze the research questions and hypotheses. Findings reveal that, there is high significant relationship between the processes admitted in SME business selection by the NGOs and eradicating poverty. It was recommended that government should provide the enabling environment and needed support in terms of finance, training, as well as material to this bodies (NGOs) since they are closer to the grassroots (local communities) to drive the needed socio-economic empowerment to lift the resources of this trained youths for a better tomorrow and become a more positive and productive community builders.

Keywords: Small and Medium Enterprises, Empowering Youth, Eradicating Poverty, Training, Non-governmental Organization.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a nation has its larger population dominated by the youths and if there will be any sort of change in the economy, this population must be made productive. Since, sustainable growth begins from the grassroots, rural transformation is of great importance. According to Ime (2014) "The core problem of widespread poverty, growing irregularity, rapid population growth and rising unemployment all find their origins in the stagnation and too often retrogression of economic life in rural area". Poverty which is mostly witness in our local communities is as a result of the lack of basic provision of amenities by government that enhances self-sustainability. However, may stem from things like illiteracy, low income, ignorance, ill-health and various forms of deprivations, this is why Oludotun (2001) in Emmanuel and Muhammed (2009) said that "The increasing rate of crime such as armed robbery, advance fee fraud (419), corruption, prostitution, nepotism, drug trafficking, cultism and other social vices are definitely the product of persistent poverty in the country. This condition has its fallout on the youth perception, existence and productivity (Apan & Uford, 2024b).

It is said that a region like the Niger Delta which is endowed with abundance of 'black gold', the crude oil in its ocean has her youths leaving in abject penury. Courtesy mismanagement or misappropriation by commission or government agency set up in the region to deal with the challenges of the area end up increasing the poverty index.

Poverty in the words of Benjamin (2018) are traced to a reduction in the economic growth, unemployment, corruption, bad governance, diversion of funds into non-developmental project, fund embezzlement, inappropriate micro-economic policies, inadequate endowment of human capital, debt or borrowing, labour market deficiencies that were caused by limited growth in job creation, low productivity, low wages in the informal sector and poor development of human resources.

There is a growing concern at the rate of poverty among the youth of Rivers State among the youth of Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni (ONELGA) Local Government Area in the state which have experience several degrees of crisis in the region.

Youth who are seen as the drivers of much modern economy whose idea and contribution to development has impacted greatly on the global scene are lying waste in the rich oil nerve of the state, Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area due to non-useful engagement. It was about this prime age that the likes of Mark Zegaberg of Facebook, BillGate of Microsoft, Ibifuro of (Cinforest), etc. had breakthrough as a result of positive engagement.

It is upon the vulnerability of these youths that politician catch on and use them as thugs to gain their cheap political ambition and after which dumps them and leaving them more hopeless and helpless than they were. Succinctly, some other youths engage themselves in kopi-fire business (Illegal bunkering) as a means of livelihood.

It is on these setbacks that this research work intends to look at the non-governmental organization involvement in poverty eradication with particular emphasis on the youth association in the Ogba ethnic national of Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine empowering youth, eradicating poverty; the contribution of non-governmental organization in Ogba ethnic nationality in Rivers State with the following objectives:

- To identify the measures used by non-governmental organization in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality.
- To identify the training method used by non-governmental organization in eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality.

In bid to achieve the objective of this study, the following questions would be answered.

- What measure do the non-governmental organizations use in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality?
- What is the training method used by non-governmental organization in eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality?

The following research hypothesis was used to judge the research questions.

- There is a positive relationship in the measures used by the NGOs in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association.
- There is a positive relationship between the training method used by the NGOs and eradicating poverty among the youth association.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Concept of Non-Governmental Organizations

Willets (2002) affirmed that the term “NGO” was made popular in the 1945 Charter of United Nations Organization (UNO) which differentiated between participation rights for intergovernmental specialized agencies and international private organizations. Historically, most NGOs emerged from relatively small-scale origins and metamorphosed into larger organizations (Besler & Sezerel, 2011). Small scale as operationalized in this study refers to the micro level where an individual takes action or a group of people of like minds congregate to tackle a perennial socioeconomic and political problem. By inference, NGOs in Nigeria predated 1945 having existed in various forms of age groups, social clubs and descendant associations, which were established by various passionate or influential persons, private organizations, missionary institutions, etc. Since 1930 (NNNGO.org, 2014), the documented NGOs in Nigeria were mainly community-based and they drew membership from defined demographics, ethnic affinities and proximate geographical axis.

Non-Government Organizations in Nigeria and Poverty Alleviation Initiatives

The first was the Farm Settlement Option introduced in 1960's. The intention of the Nigerian government was to develop both the export and cash crops. In 1972, the scheme collapsed but birthed the National Accelerated Food Production project. The projective was to create an avenue for testing and adapting agricultural research findings and making such available to farmers. In 1973, Agriculture Development Project (ADP) was established to provide credit facilities for the development of agricultural projects, in order to promote integrated rural developments. It was partly financed and executed by the World Bank, but became moribund after a brief spell. Operation Feed the Nation came on board in 1976 to arouse in Nigerians, the habit of cultivating food and cash crops in order to be self-reliant. It only succeeded in arousing the awareness of increasing food production without any appreciable increase in agricultural

production. In 1977 the Rural Banking Scheme was designed to bring banking nearer to the people at the grassroots through granting of credit facilities. In addition, the Federal Military Government in 1978 introduced Austerity Measures by banning the importation of some goods and placing others on license. Government expenditure was greatly reduced and emphasis was placed on the consumption of made-in-Nigeria goods. But the measures were relaxed in 1979.

The Non-Governmental Organization in Nigeria (NGO)

There are several non-governmental organizations in Nigeria, however, few and their activities are mention in this study, they are:

Africa Youth Growth Foundation; Clean Foundation; Plan International Nigerian Heart Foundation and Foundation for Skills Development among others.

Non-governmental organization business development and Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs)

Most of the developed countries of the world have their giant place in the economy of nations by exploit and contribution of SMEs to the GDP and wealth creation through jobs. Adeosun and Shittu, in Oluremi and Maku (2024) noted “SMEs are highly regarded as the core in any economy as they perform a vital role in growth, employment creation, poverty reduction, innovative thinking and entrepreneurship. Adding that there can be no overstatement of the importance of SMEs in Nigeria as they provide a substantial contribution to both the creation of jobs and the GDP. It has long been acknowledged that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play a critical role in reducing poverty, fostering economic growth, and creating jobs in both developed and developing countries (UNCTAD, 2020, Oluremi and Maku 2024)”. It remains obvious that the primary position of SMEs to the economic performance of a nation can not be under played. Critically, the NGOs have a crucial and supportive to play in promoting business development initiative among SSE and MSE through collaborations. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) defines SMEs as follows:

- Micro-enterprises: fewer than 10 employees and annual revenues of ₦5 million or less
- Small enterprises: 10-49 employees and annual revenues of ₦5 million to ₦50 million
- Medium-sized enterprises: 50-199 employees and annual revenues of ₦50 million to ₦500 million

According to Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development (2001), BDS includes a wide range of services including training, consultancy, marketing, technology

development and transfer and business linkages among others. The business development delivered by NGOs are as below as in (Barton, 1997: 29-30; ILO, 2003:3)

- Training, skill development and technical assistance including mentoring and simple book keeping, management training
- Business advisory and or consulting services
- Market development services including:
 - Establishing and managing alternative and or fair trade channels
 - Improving supply systems for inputs and technology
 - Organizing SSEs to meet scale requirements for new market opportunities
 - Storage and warehousing
 - Facilitating linkages with buyers, including export buyers and corporate procurement agents.
 - Support infrastructure and facilities, including business incubators, business service centres,
 - Association based services
 - Research and development for groups of micro-enterprises including, development and testing of new technologies
 - Organizational development support including :
 - Promoting of inter-firm linkages,
 - Association development.
 - Policy research and advocacy support

The mentioned provide avenue for improvement for SSE and SME to gain appreciable support geared towards expansion of asset and human capacity to meet industry challenge.

Training and Eradicating Poverty

Training remains a key aspect of economic development and wealth integration as it provides for acquisition of new skill to meet in demand technology and advancement.

Training empowers the trained to have confidence to delivered on the task and to achieve set out goals. Training is the process of teaching or learning the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to perform a specific job or task. It involves a systematic and structured approach to developing the abilities and competencies of individuals or groups.

Some Training methods are as below:

- On-the-job training: is a type of training that takes place while an individual is performing their actual job. It involves learning by doing, where the trainee is guided and supported by a supervisor, mentor, or experienced colleague.
- Vestibule training is a type of on-the-job training that takes place in a simulated work environment, often located near the actual workplace. The term "vestibule" refers to a transitional space or area, which in this context, serves as a training space that mimics the actual work environment.
- Supervisory training is a type of training designed to equip supervisors with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to effectively manage and lead their teams.
- Apprenticeship training is a type of work-based training where an individual (apprentice) learns a trade, skill, or occupation by working under the guidance of an experienced professional (mentor or supervisor).
- Laboratory training is a type of training that takes place in a laboratory setting, where trainees learn and practice scientific, technical, or medical procedures and techniques.

The National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP)

As revealed in the approved blueprint for the establishment of (NAPEP), the program will serve as a central coordination point for all anti-poverty efforts from the local government level to the national level by which schemes would be executed with the sole purpose of eradicating absolute poverty. This is the only government embarking on eradication; a shift from the traditional concept of alleviation. According to Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti (2006), NAPEP has been structured to integrate four sectoral schemes which include:

The Seven-Point Agenda

The civilian administration that started in 2007 under the leadership of late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua proposed a Seven-Point Agenda of development. The agenda later became the policy thrust of the administration. The main objectives and principles of the agenda include improving the general well-being of Nigerians and making the country become one of the biggest economies in the world by the year 2020. The agenda has critical infrastructure as the first key area of focus. This includes power, transportation, national gas distribution and

telecommunication. The second focus is to address the existing issues in the Niger Delta. Food Security constitutes the third priority area. The fourth area is human capital development and the land tenure reform is the fifth key area. The sixth key area is national security while the seventh area focuses on poverty alleviation and wealth creation. Although the Seven-Point Agenda appears to have a broad coverage to address the various development challenges facing the country, it has been widely criticized by development experts.

Set Back in Government Strategies on Poverty Alleviation

A number of factors have contributed to the failure of past poverty alleviation programmers and efforts. Some of them are:

- Lack of targeting mechanisms for the poor: most of the programmers do not focus directly on the poor.
- Political and policy instability: this has resulted in frequent policy changes and inconsistent implementation, which in turn have prevented the continuous progress of the programmers.
- Severe budgetary, management and governance problems: these have afflicted most of the programmers, resulting in either uncompleted, broken down and abandoned facilities, which are most times unstaffed and unequipped.
- Overextended scope of activities of most institutions resulting in resources being spread too thinly on too many activities. DFRRRI and BLP, for example, covered almost every sector and overlapped with many other existing programmers.
- Lack of accountability and transparency: these made the programmers to serve as conduit pipes for draining national resources etc.

The Poverty Reduction Way Forward

Since the causes of poverty are multidimensional, in the same way the strategies for poverty reduction must also be multidimensional. The following suggestions are made: According to Aliyu (1999), as cited in Aluko (2003:263), a very strong and solid foundation is essential for the successful implementation of poverty reduction programmers in any developing country. The solid base should be in the areas of:

a) National Security and Political stability; b) Discipline; c) Infrastructural Développement; d) Economic stability and provision of adequate welfare services.

Again, the World Bank in its 1996 report suggests two strategies. These are:

- Promotion of the productive use of the poor's most abundant asset-labour. This invariably calls for policies that create market incentives, stable social and political institutions, good infrastructure and adaptable technology.
- Making basic social services available to the poor. Hence primary health care, family planning, balanced nutrition and primary education are of prime importance.

The Youth

In the work of Salama (2009) youth constitute about 11.2 billion of the world population and between the ages 15 and 24 years. According to the world Youth Nglint (2007) in Salama "Stated that benefit is only achievable from young people capability when privileges accorded them in development process are usually nurtured and protected. Pur, Sketche and Sabo (2007) argued that youth are seen as young people in a society with much creative idea, new approach to life, with much energy and problem solving. Again, Soeze (2009) in Pur et al (2007) defined youth as "An individual between 18-40 years". Onyeozini (2002) added that of the 1.2 billion youth population of the year 2002, 53% live in rural area.

Youth Association

According to Maimder (1972) "Youth Association is defined as an organized group of young people who consciously and creatively employ their knowledge, resources and skill to cause effective change and improvement in their physical, social, economic, political and physiological wellbeing". Maimder identified three elements which when present in a youth association causes a multinier effect and transformation in the people per see. These basic elements which are skill, knowledge and resources are the drovers of any modern society today. Therefore, it could be said that where these three elements of a youth association are adequately harness there you see the various improvement and changes in the people political, physiological, economic, social and physical wellbeing. This is why the youth association is a tool for or platform for change in any society. A community with a vibrant youth association is more likely to drive the desire changes in that community because with their energy level are capable of implementing and following up on the programmes, they set out to achieve. Youth association cuts across the nation, state and

local government level down to the grassroots which makes it a formidable tool to bring about the needed growth and development in any of the areas of life (Akpan & Uford, 2024a).

Youth Empowerment and Challenges

In the words of Makombe in Salama (2009) empowerment implies to “take control over material assets, ideology and intellectual resources, the material assets so to be influenced may be human, financial or physical, as people’s bodies and labor, money, access to money, land water and forest, intellectual resources are ideas, information and knowledge. Control over ideology means the ability to sustain, propagate, institutionalize specific sets beliefs, attitudes, generate values, and behavior-virtually showing how people view and function within a given political and socio-economic environment”.

There are several types of youth empowerment that may cause disruptive transformation in the youth to take control and negotiate their way for the needed change in their life. These element types are according to (Salama, 2009, Spicker, 2003) political empowerment, socio-cultural empowerment and economic empowerment. They argued that with political empowerment one has the capabilities associated with enlarging their democratic self-governance. Thus, it brings about equitable representation in decision making processes and institution and again, respect for fundamental right set out by international norms. Political empowerment also “encompasses legal empowerment, generally understood as the process of acquiring the knowledge essential to protect one’s rights and to assert them under the law”. It is a way through which youths could be empowered by making purposeful demand from public office holders (public servant) and private bodies who are in position of public resources.

As in Agenzia Fides (2019) as said Mgr. Oyejola “The 10 most challenges spotted by the 1,600 surveyed young people are lack of affordable housing, family problem, lack of employment opportunities, substance abuse, negative stereotyping, issue related to body image, crime, failure to succeed in education system, pressure of 24-hours social networking and pressure of materialism.

Like every other thing that leaves and survive in any society, there are bound to be challenges which may come in their various forms. These challenges may come as a result of the peculiarity of environment so found. In my view the challenges are:

- **Financial Challenge:** Most youth association does not have the financial base to carry out some of their laudable ideas because they are financially handicapped. Their means of founding in most cases are not enough to carry out project not to talk of sustaining the association itself. Therefore, they are handcuff in taken desire stride as at when required. So, most youth association leave on donor institution, benefactors, NGO, etc. for their financing project. This situation is as a result of the reason that most of the members of the association are unemployed or do not have a substantial business they may be doing.
- **Political Challenge:** It is more evident in today Nigeria that most youth association has one power tussle or the other. Either of tenure elongation or abuse of political rights, some are driven along political divide from the larger society and sees the idea of her member from an opposition party as counterproductive know matter how novel that idea might be. Thus, these weakened the center and bring about hostility which may slow down the growth and development of that youth association or sometime result in the suspension or disband of the association.
- **External Influence:** Due to lack of financial freedom on the part of most youth association, they suffer sometime from unnecessary interference from their donor agent, benefactors or sponsors. Also, some politician in the area often interferes with the activities of the youth association especially when it does not favor their liking or see them that they do not buy his philosophy and programmers which is seen as a threat. Such situation sometimes leads to crises just to bring down the association. However, if external influence could be in the positive direction, in the way of controlling areas of the association weakness to achieving more of her goal then this external influence becomes healthy.
- **Economic Challenge:** The economic situation in the country has a lot to play in the lively cycle of the youth association at all level. This is because most of the activities to be carried out are measured economic change of the time. For instance, most youth association have designed their programmer and activities for the year 2020 with the

hope of achieving them. But with the inception of Covid-19 which lead to lock down on many economic activities which have crippled many businesses (Uford & Mfon, 2023) and likewise other may posse threat to the lively-hood or extinction of some youth association because of economic hardship they may be facing. Some may even go bankrupt because of the huge interest on borrowing to finance project.

- **Social Challenge:** The current wave of globalization has infiltrated into most of our social ways of doing things especially in fashion style, social network, cultural values and norm.

METHODOLOGY

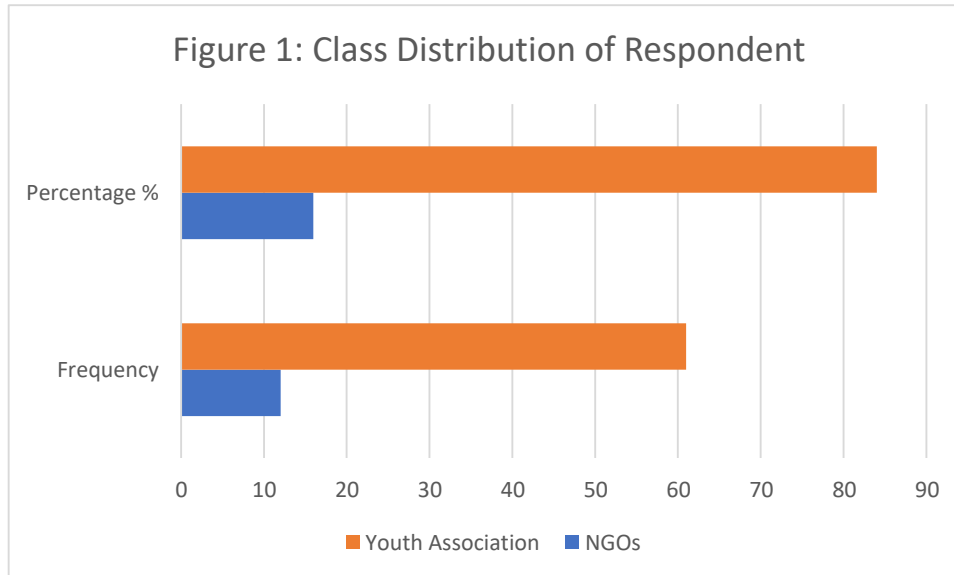
The study adopts the descriptive research design with the population 2,900 youths of the 60 youth's associations of Ogba ethnic nationality with sample size of 300 gotten through Taro Yamene statistical relation. The instrument for the collection of information or data was the questionnaire while data were analyzed using frequencies; percentages (%) for the demographic variables, mean were used to analyze the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Table 1.1: Class Distribution of Respondent

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
NGOs	12	16
Youth Association	61	84
Total	73	100

Source: Researcher Survey 2024



Again figure 1, shows that the non-governmental organization in the area which participated in the process were 12 representing 16.0% while the youth association that participated in the process were 61 representing 84.0%

Research Question 1: What measure do the non-governmental organizations use in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality?

Table 1.2

S/N	Respondent Frequency				Total	Mean	
	SA	A	D	SD			
7.	116	124	24	36	300	3.07	Accepted
8.	121	121	13	45	300	3.06	Accepted
9.	121	103	9	67	300	2.93	Accepted
10.	85	103	48	64	300	2.70	Accepted
11..	109	146	15	30	300	3.11	Accepted

Total	552	597	109	242	1500	2.97	
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Source: Researcher Survey, 2024

Table 1.2 shows that 116 and 124 of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the association pay fees to be admitted by the NGOs, whereas 24 and 36 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed to the view. Again, 121 of the respondents both strongly agreed and agreed that procession of CAC registration is a condition for admission while 13 and 45 respondents different on the option. Though, 121 and 103 respondents strongly agreed and agreed that recommendation is a condition for admission and 9 and 67 disagreed and strongly disagreed over the view. Too, 85 and 100 strongly agreed that meeting up minimum rules and regulation is a condition for admission whereas 48 and 64 disagreed and strongly disagreed to the opinion.

Research Question 2: What is the training method used by non-governmental organization in eradicating poverty among youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality?

Table 1.3

S/N	Respondent Frequency				Total	Mean	Remark
	SA	A	D	SD			
12.	64	127	42	67	300	2.63	Accepted
13.	98	127	36	39	300	3.95	Accepted
14.	85	127	24	64	300	2.78	Accepted
15.	91	127	64	18	300	2.97	Accepted
16.	79	182	30	9	300	3.10	Accepted
Total	417	690	196	197	1500	3.09	

Source: Researcher Survey, 2024

Table 1.3 shows that 64 and 127 respondents strongly agreed and agreed that training done through the laboratory improve their person whereas 42 and 67 respondents hold a different view. Again, 98 and 127 respondents strongly agreed and agreed that training by apprenticeship increases their productivity while 36 and 39 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion. Also, 85 and 127 strongly agreed and agreed that classroom training improves their scope whereas, 24 and 64 respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion. However, 91 and 127 of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that training is done through vestibule improve their job readiness and 64 and 18 disagreed and strongly disagreed on the view. Moreover, 79 and 182 of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that supervisory training improvised their managerial ability while on the other hand 30 and 9 of the respondent disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion.

Discussions and Findings

Research question 1: Hypotheses one- There is a positive relationship in the measures used by the NGOs in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association.

The mean average of table 1.1 is 2.97 which is above the mean score of 2.5. Therefore, the hypotheses one which says there is a positive relationship in the measures used by the NGOs in SMEs business development and eradicating poverty among youth association is accepted. The implication is that there is a condition for admitting youth association by the NGOs in Ogba ethnic nationality.

Research question 2: Hypotheses Two- There is a positive relationship between the training method used by the NGOs and eradicating poverty among the youth association.

In table 1.2 the means average value is 3.09 as against the mean score of 2.5. Thus, the hypotheses two which says There is a positive relationship between the training method used by the NGOs and eradicating poverty among the youth association is accepted. It implies that all the training method employed by the NGOs in poverty alleviation of the youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality was effective.

Findings

The finding shows that training done through apprenticeship and supervisory measure is more effective. The finding also shows that despite their acceptance of laboratory training method, they buy in much when compared to other measures. It shows that training method have a significant role in the building of the youth association in Ogba ethnic nationality. The finding reveals that forming cooperative business gained more acceptances among the youth association. Again, more interest was shown in the acceptance of provision for forum for sub-loan. The finding shows that the youth association indicated high interest in the receipt of grant. It again shows that considerable amount of interest by the youth association were also in the area of self-independent through accumulated savings.

Conclusion

The role of the Non-Governmental Organization in augmenting government in some areas of affair to drive the needed human resource development as well capacity building cannot be over emphasized. This is evidence in the kind of project and programmers given to the teaming youth association to bring about socio-economic empowerment not only in the city but also to the local communities as in Ogba ethnic nationality.

Again, most youth association in Ogba is encourage through the business development of the NGOs to be registered entity with the Corporate Affair Commission as they attained other business skills. This implies that the youth association has the potential of forming cooperative society to expand their access base and become more economically empowered.

However, it is noticed that there is a reduce interest in craftsmanship among the youth association which mean the skill work force is on the low (Technical skills) and should be encouraged.

Finally, the Non-Governmental Organization are like subsidiary of government who at one point or the other has always been at the door steps of the populace providing one form of assistance or the other as measure in alleviating the poverty condition in our community.

Recommendation

From the study the following recommendation were made:

- The youth association should be encouraged to form collaboration that will drive the needed capital for business expansion.
- More technical skill trade should be encouraged among the youth to grow the medium work force in the area.
- Because of the high expectation in the training programme the NGOs should do further evaluation on the participating youth association to ascertain the improvement in area of business.
- The government should support the NGOs with startup kits for trainees after completion of their programmers.

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