

CAPACITY BUILDING AS A PROACTIVE ACTION TOWARDS YOUTHS' DEVELOPMENT SUSTAINABILITY IN IGBO LAND

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ABSTRACT: *Capacity-building is very important especially for youths of the Eastern Nigeria, with particular reference to Igbo. Igbos are unarguable the most intelligent and industrious ethnic nationality in Africa. By this, capacity-building is a resource facilitator for them. This research discourse therefore examines the role of capacity building in youths' empowerment in Igbo land; role of capacity in youths' skill acquisition in Igbo land, as well the role of capacity building in entrepreneurship development in Igbo land. Findings showed that capacity-building has various dimensions; and it is very important in the resourcefulness and flourishing socio-cultural tendencies of the Igbos.*

KEYWORDS: Capacity-Building, Proactive Action, Youths' Development, Sustainability, Igboland (Igbos)

INTRODUCTION

Youth is a major force in bringing movement and change. The contemporary Igbo youth is faced with the problem declining sense of industry. Youths are the major productive stakeholders that have innovative ideas in planning, policy making and decision making as change agents for sustainable development. Cargo (2003), asserted that Youths are the greatest assets that any nation can have, they are regarded as the future leaders and they are the investment for a country's development. They also serve as a good measure in which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. Obadan, (2012), opined that our generation has empowered our youth with schools without education, with problems without solutions, with corruption without righteousness, with hatred without love, with politics without development.

According to Connell, (2000), Youth development programs seek to meet these goals by helping youth to build a series of assets and skills that are necessary to successfully navigate adolescence and, eventually came to adulthood. Youth Empowerment in any development is imperative not only for national development but because the transitional period from childhood to adulthood is quite a challenge. Youth participation is also good for Development Corporation which should be based on broad national level policy dialogue. Youth are filled with vigor and fresh energies which need to be properly harnessed through empowerment that will discourage them from

engaging in social vices which constrain sustainable development in the state.

Kim (1999), described youth participation in a community-based task force made up of representatives from social agencies and organizations. In the process, youth members would practice the core skills while creating, planning, and evaluating their activities. Akpoveta and Agbomah (2009) asserted that the increasing incidence of youth unemployment particularly, graduate unemployment in Nigeria has been associated with existing weaknesses in the nations' educational system which places more emphasis on paper qualification than functional or pragmatic education.

Babalola (2011) asserted that sustainable development is the development which permits for economic growth in which sufficient attention is not given to skill training for youth and adults but at the same time demands the protection of the environment and is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. Hence, this study wants to investigate if capacity building will serve as a proactive action in curbing irresponsible living of youths in Igbo land.

Statement of Problem

The statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics has it that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country; with 64 million of

them unemployed, while 1.6 million are underemployed (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). Among the causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria are rural-urban migration, rural underemployment and urban unemployment, lack of employable skills, rapid population growth, and absence of vibrant manufacturing sector. While these facts may not have captured in totality the youth unemployment scenario in Nigeria, they point to the fact that the situation is a very critical one. To address this menace, various regimes in Nigeria have initiated development programs geared towards self-employment and self-dependence among the youths. Agencies and institutions have been established with the mandate of combating unemployment and poverty facing the youths.

One of these institutions is the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), established in 1986 (NDE, 2009). With the realization that one of the major causes of unemployment among the youth is lack of skills for wage employment or to become self-employed, the NDE designed the Vocational Skills Acquisition Training to train youths in a wide range of vocational skills in view of making them self-employed and economically self-reliant (NDE, 2009). The skill acquisition programs have been identified as panacea for the high youth unemployment, poverty and hunger in Nigeria, where statistics have shown that 70 percent of the unemployed population of the country is unskilled (Ojei, 2010). It is to this end that this study wants to investigate the extent to which capacity building will serve as a proactive action towards curbing irresponsible living of youths in Igbo land.

Purpose of the Study

The general aim of this study is to find out if capacity building will serve as a proactive action towards youths' development sustainability in Igbo land. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Determine the role of capacity building in youths' empowerment in Igbo land.
2. Examine the role of capacity in youths' skill acquisition in Igbo land.
3. Investigate the role of capacity building in entrepreneurship development in Igbo land.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of capacity building in youths' empowerment in Igbo land?

2. What is the role of capacity building in youths' skills acquisition in Igbo land?
3. What is the role of capacity building in entrepreneurship development of youths' in Igbo land?

Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical importance

Theoretically this study will provide relevant theories that are useful in explaining the importance of capacity building among the youths. Also, this study will make available relevant literature that validates the importance of capacity building among the youths in Igbo land.

Practically this study will serve as reference both to the government, further researchers, youths and students. To the government, this study will bring into focus the essence of capacity building among the youths. To the researchers, this study will make available relevant literatures that can be useful in their research, also, to the youths and students, the study will teach the youths and students why they need to acquire skills and become independent rather than looking for non-existing white-collar jobs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Capacity Building

There are a variety of definitions and interpretations of the concept of capacity building depending on who uses it and in what context. Capacity development has been defined as the process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities – both individually and collectively to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives (McGinty, 2002). Some definitions focus on the existence of commitments, skills, resources and problem-solving abilities of the community, often as these are connected to a particular program or institution (Goodman et al., 1998).

With regard to the many definitions of the concept, Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal (2001) explain that capacity building can take place on the individual, organizational and community level; and that some capacity focus on affective connections and shared values, while others are concerned with processes of participation and engagement. They further talked about community capacity building, stressing those definitions of community capacity building focus on a range of dimensions and issues (Chaskin, Brown,

Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001). Further, capacity building captures three main types of activity, namely:

- Developing skills - learning and training opportunities for individuals and groups, and sharing through networks and mutual support, to develop skills, knowledge and confidence.
- Developing structures – developing the organizational structures and strengths of community groups, communities of interest and networks.
- Developing support – developing the availability of practical support to enable the development of skills and structures.

Goodman et al. (1998) discuss some dimensions of capacity to include notions of participation and leadership, skills and resources, social and inter-organizational networks, sense of community and understanding of community history.

Capacity Building for Empowerment

Capacity building is an effective strategy for promoting empowerment. Slogans such as "helping people to help themselves" and the proverb, "teach a man to fish" point directly at capacity building. Capacity building is seen as a process by which individuals, groups and organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to perform core functions, solve problems and define and achieve objectives; to understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner (UNDP, 2017). Eade (2017) sees it as an approach to development, which encompasses all the fields that influence the development sphere (Eade, 2017). Thus, it identifies the weaknesses that people experience in achieving their basic rights, and finding proper means through which to increase their ability to overcome the causes of their exclusion and suffering. Capacity building encompasses a strong process of learning and education.

In addition, for capacity building to be sustainable, new technologies, new knowledge and information need to be introduced, especially in this period of information and communication technology. Capacity building is a comprehensive process that involves all dimensions of life. It is not so much a matter of just implementing a project or enhancing a particular aspect of life. It is an approach to

development, which aims to enhance the capability of people in a comprehensive manner. As a people-centered activity, capacity building is a process of community development where people are the focus of capacity enhancement. It creates an enabling environment where people are developed in order to manage themselves and contribute to their societies. To this end, community development becomes the ultimate output of capacity building process. Thus, capacity building is a response to community development needs. On this understanding of capacity building as a process, Eade and Williams (2015) elaborate the concept as: Men and women becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives; about personal growth together with public action; about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression and discrimination; and about the realization of human potential through social and economic justice. Above all, it is about the process of transforming lives, and transforming societies (Eade & Williams, 2015). In this process of capacity building, people acquire and improve their abilities. This creates an avenue for them as individuals and as members of the community to achieve their development objectives.

Human Capacity Building (HCB)

The concept of human development, as defined in the United Nations Human Development Report (2004), is a process of expanding human choices through the expansion of human capacity and action. Aforementioned to the report: The three vital capabilities of human development are for people to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and have a decent standard of living... In the light of the above proposal, another United Nations development report (1998) emphasized the importance of focusing on people, their capacities and opportunities as a goal of development efforts. In addition, since people are at the heart of sustainable development, which includes the fight against poverty.

It can be understood how Akindale (1999) explains that individuals, groups and entire communities are required to learn, adapt and adapt to collaborate in an organized effort to facilitate and achieve national sustainable development, thereby minimizing poverty. Okorie (2003) highlights the scenario as an

effective tool for managing people who work in an organization and gives them the opportunity to be more productive and get job-satisfaction, which also confirms the organization's genuine interest in its philosophy, culture and goals forever, which also includes human resources for sustainability of organization and economy.

Capacity-building can be interpreted from a human capital perspective if people have the necessary knowledge and skills necessary for individual growth and for national growth and development. The capacity needed by a country for sustainable development depends mainly on the adequacy and relevance of the initiative. According to Banjoko (2002: 91), capacity building in the Nigerian government is necessary because the link between demand and supply is weak. In higher education institutes, there is a lack of real means that make it difficult to develop suitable workers. In this context, Banjoko trusts that there is need for support and change. He also noted that educational institutions were isolated and that communities were poor. For him, the development of teaching materials in schools is ineffective.

Alternative capacity-building opportunities are not recognized adequately. In his view the three cases mentioned above make capacity building necessary, adding that Nigeria needs to use capacity-building strategies and other ways to strengthen people and change current practices. With regard to capacity, capacity building is a means of achieving productivity and sustainable development Ajayi (2006) recommends that special importance be given to maximizing productivity and effectiveness via human capacity building, motivating community development activities as well as cooperation of all stakeholders.

It is evident that today there is a desperate need to develop effective administration in industries and organizations of both private and public segments. This needs developed out of the understanding that the progress and development of Nigeria significantly depends on the existence of a well-organized, devoted, inventive and creative workforce, Nwankwo (2014).

Community Capacity Building (CCB)

Community capacity-building (CCB) involves enabling all individuals of the community, including the lowliest and most deprived, to develop their abilities and

capabilities to better control their lives and contribute to comprehensive native development. Local communities can not only be connected, they can also be more resilient and more able to cope with economic and social challenges. National and local governments can be encouraged to build meaningful and effective capacity-building capacities for the community and to strengthen the capacities already established by communities to become more integrated. OECD/Noya & Clarence (2009).

According to Noya and Clarence (2009) CCB has been developed as a notion because strategies are necessary to address the significant social and economic decline in cities and regions experiencing major economic changes and the consequences of long-term and deep-rooted unemployment depending on social benefits. Community capacity is seen as the collaboration between human capital, managerial resources and societal capital of a given community that can be used to solve communal problems in order to improve or maintain the well-being of the particular society. It can operate through informal social processes and organized efforts (Chaskin, 2001) In addition, S. Skinner, (2006) view CCB is seen as activities, resources and support that enhance the skills, abilities and confidence of individuals and communities for effective action and leadership in community development.

To strengthen community capacity to shape, device and advocate their identifiable answers to their problems to allow them design and exercise control over their physical, societal, financial and cultural surroundings is the ongoing process to promote the appropriate local leadership and management that enables communities to be responsible for their development through their members to take decision for their own development. First it is a non-stop process. Community capacity building should not be about experimental schemes and temporary interventions (Mowbray, 2005), but must involve commitment and long-term effort.

Theoretical Framework

Basic Need Theory by Jhingan (2002)

For this study, the basic need approach was adopted as a framework. The fundamental argument in this theory is that societies need certain basic needs in order to achieve meaningful development. The provision of

basic needs such as health, education, food, water, sanitation and housing directly affect poverty in less time and with less money, Jhingan (2002) Basic needs increase output and earnings via human development in the form of knowledgeable and healthy individuals.

However, the problem of the basic needs approach is that there is no common ground on these needs. According to Rogers (1996), an individual's basic requirements are measured relatively irrelevant to others needs and are seen as "necessities" to "privileges" - freedom of speech, access to quality and standard education, information, consumer protection and amortize facilities, the right to partake in decision making and implementation both at the national and local level. In another dimension, meeting human needs and improving quality of life is seen as the primary goals of development rather than building the economic wealth of the nation (Rogers, 1996).

Chinsman (1999) noted that the long-term development approach, which was exclusively synonymous with economic growth, was no longer sustainable and may not have improved people's well-being as strong as expected. He stressed the importance of basic needs: Generally, the main goal of state development is to eliminate poverty, provide employment and meet the basic needs of the populace, which means that basic goods and services such as shelter, education, food, water and healthcare facilities among others must be accessible to all and sundry (Chinsman, 1999).

The success of the community is assessed and measured in terms of the availability of basic social facilities such as electricity, healthcare, school, clean and portable drinking water, road network, market, electricity and other things to improve the quality of life. If central, regional and local governments provide the necessary facilities and enabling environment (basic needs) for development of its human capital (capacity building) for individuals, institutions and communities, the community and national development will be achieved.

Empirical Review

Syed (2012) conducted a study on inclusion of entrepreneurship education in Malaysia's learning institutions and concluded that entrepreneurial educational development is key to the development of human capacity in order to meet political, social and economic development need of the country. Sofolure et

al., (2013) agreed with this assertion and emphasized the need for entrepreneurship education as a surety to job creation, youth empowerment and wealth creation.

Ojeifo (2013) on the other hand noted that entrepreneurship education will equip students with the skills that will make them self-reliant. John (2012) conducted a study to analyze the impact of entrepreneurship capacity building in Nigeria. The results from this study showed that the educational systems in developing nations particularly Africa have not been structured to foster an entrepreneurship mindset. This flaw according to the study is a contributory factor to the slow pace of entrepreneurship in Africa and in response, suggested that the structure of Africa's educational system should be reviewed.

Allan (2002) also argued for a new approach in entrepreneurship education. The study also pointed out that such an approach is unlikely to come from university business schools but rather an organizational revolution which can be managed within a university.

METHOD

Participants: The implication of the research is on Igbo youths. Therefore, the idea explored in the research were acquired from the significant persons such as Igbo youths, resourced persons, entrepreneurs and the elderly. The idea of few of them were acquired through face to face interview, while some of them have their ideas acquired from print and online media.

Instruments: The instrument used for the research was an interview. The interview was conducted by the researcher in order to elicit the opinion of the Igbos on the variables of interest. Again, the research accessed periodicals, newspaper, journals and magazines.

Procedure: The researcher approached Igbo youths, resource persons, entrepreneurs and the elderly explained to them the essence of the research. Having assured them of a confidentiality of their responses, she proceeded to ask them some questions of which she recorded their responses. The researcher also engaged the participants on discussions on capacity building and its role in youths' development in Igbo land. The discussion with the participants focused primarily on youth empowerment programmes, skill acquisition, and entrepreneurship development which constitute the purpose (objectives) of the

research, as well as the dimensions of capacity-building.

Design and Statistics: The design used for this research is a descriptive design. According to Raj (2014), a descriptive design is that which allows a researcher to observe and describe the behaviour of a group of people.

FINDINGS

A number of findings has been made in the research. The findings are presented as given below:

On Youths' Empowerment

1. Youth's empowerment in Igbo land increases sports and recreational facilities in eastern states.
2. It promotes sexual health (safe sex) campaign among youths in Igbo land.
3. It serves as a means of providing financial aids to small and medium scale enterprises among youths in Igbo land.
4. It helps to sharpen leadership and managerial competencies among youths in Igbo land.

On Skill Acquisition

1. Skill acquisition among Igbo youths promote enhanced leadership skills.
2. It serves as a means of reducing crime rate among Igbo youths.
3. Skill acquisition among Igbo youths Increase in Youth Empowerment
4. Skill acquisition among youths in Igbo land increases youth participation in communal activities
5. It increases the level of creativity and innovation among youths in Igbo land.

On Entrepreneurship

1. Entrepreneurship development among the youths in Igbo land increases the employability level of youths
2. It promotes financial independence among youths in Igbo land.
3. Entrepreneurship development among youths in Igbo land helps to promote and sustain the economy of eastern states.
4. It helps to showcase the richness and beauty of culture and tradition in eastern states.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result is consistent with previous findings of Babalola, (2011) they showed that there is significant relationship between youth empowerment and youth programmes and

capacity building for sustainable development. Hence, capacity building is indeed one of the key proactive actions towards curbing irresponsible living of youths in Igbo land and in Nigerians as a whole which in turn is geared towards increasing success, equity and stability. We must fully empower the nation's greatest untapped resource.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that:

1. Youth's empowerment serves as proactive action towards youth's development sustainability in Igbo land.
2. Skill acquisition serves as proactive action towards youth's development sustainability in Igbo land.
3. Entrepreneurship serves as proactive action towards youth's development sustainability in Igbo land.

Limitation of the Research

The research was limited to the extent that it adopted theoretical pattern, no empirical data was collected. However, indept discourse was done in order to probe the variables of interest.

Recommendations

1. There is need for government to improve on their youth empowerment program in order to engage the youth meaningfully. This will help to rechannel their minds from negative activities to positive engagement.
2. Entrepreneurial orientation and wealth creation skills should be sustained and encourage in Igbo land. This can start from the family and communities so as to make it value system of the society.

Suggestions

1. It is suggested for future research on this topic to be empirical. This is to examine whether similar knowledge may be observed.
2. Also, further study should employ the use of experimental design in other to look out for the cause and effect relationship in the study.

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