

Training Needs of Youth Leaders in Egor, Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo Local Government Areas of Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined training needs of youth leaders in Ikpoba-Okha, Egor and Oredo Local Government Areas of Edo State. One Hundred and twenty youth leaders randomly drawn from selected youth organizations were used as study respondents. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to obtain data on respondents' personal characteristics, participation in and retraining in leadership skills. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at $p=0.05$. Findings show that most of the youth leaders were males (56.7%), singles (68.3%) while 31.7% were within the age bracket 18 -25 years and holders of OND/NCE (30.0%). Training needs were expressed as highly required in motivating other youths ($\bar{x}=3.25$), promotion of community service ($\bar{x}=3.05$) and discussion of current issues ($\bar{x}=3.18$). Youths leadership training needs showed significant positive relationship with family size ($r=0.23$) and educational level ($r=0.29$). Capacity building for the youth leaders in identified areas should be done by relevant government youth development agencies. The need to develop youth leadership in income generating activities, agriculture and home management was also recommended.

Keywords: Leadership, Training, Youths

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Youths are assets to any society because of the need for continuity and self sustenance. About 25% of Nigerian population is youths within the age range of 19-40 years (Otor and Ejembi, 2005). The population of Nigerian youths from the 2006 population census using age bracket of 15-30 and going by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) limits is about 60 million. They are the agile, inquisitive, mobile and the potential resource for sustainable development of any nation. They develop interest in various careers and aspire to take over from the older generations. Oloruntoba,(2002) asserts that youths in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovations.

Various rural and urban youths organizations exist through which the youths are empowered by governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Youth clubs or organizations also exist at community, local government, state and national levels. Leadership is provided among the members. This aids learning and their individual and corporate development by participating in club meetings, serving as officer, leaders of committee, appearing

on programmes and competing in contests, hence preparing them for action in the society.

Leadership is the act of influencing people to cooperate towards the achievement of goals (Ekong, 2005). A leader is a harmonizer, planner, spokesman, educator, represent group ideals and also as described by Otor and Ejembi (2005) a "servant of the group". This involves qualities/attributes such as boldness, initiative, empathy, knowledge, leadership skills among others. Aims of youth organizations according to Otor and Ejembi (2005) could be classified into educational, economic, social and recreational. These require good leaders to guide the process by which the aims are achieved.

In recognition of the importance of youths and their leadership in national development, relevant skills to improve their effectiveness need to be identified and improved upon to ensure they gain the interest and cooperation of members. The training and guidance of youths in various programmes in the community is vested in various leaders including school teachers, religious leaders, and extension workers and several others who should be in regular contact with the youths.

Leadership is one of these skills that must be practiced to be mastered. Good leadership involves planning ahead, and seeing what needs to be done. It

has to do with how to motivate others, helping others, to work as a team, and putting aside your own want in order to help the team to function properly. Any club will provide leadership opportunities, but having a good leader to watch and learn from requires leadership skill. A good leader will help others learn how to lead, and can give tips and skills that can be put into practice.

Training is the process of acquiring specific skills to perform a job better. It is an educational process for the provision of knowledge and skills to bring about desired changes in attitude in order to improve the competence of the trainee. The end product is the development of innate leadership and managerial ability, intellectual understanding of the technical know-how of the management situation (Okpere, 1990). Training helps people to become qualified and proficient in doing some jobs. An effective training demands that all stakeholders should be committed and supportive to the realization of the goal. It is expected to commence with the identification of training needs.

A need is defined as an inclusion term to embrace drives, impulses, goal set, urges, motives, cravings, desires, wants and wishes (Oladoja 1994). To make training relevant, the needs must be identified which is the gap between what is and what ought to be. Training need exists when there is a gap between what is required of a person to perform his job competently and what he actually knows. It is affirmed that training needs have to be determined before training programmes can be relevant, so that real needs of trainees can be met Oyedele (2001). The gap according to Oloruntoba (2002) include gaps in knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour. Youth programmes are educational processes aimed at developing these.

Youth development programming involves youth leadership programmes that offers young people opportunities to participate actively in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the programme in which they participate. It focuses on experiential learning or learning by doing, it is also an important element of leadership development. This kind of learning blends participation in the experience with opportunities to share, discuss, process relevant thoughts and feelings and generalizes these into principles and guidelines for living and apply what has been learned to other situation (Boyd, 2001).

Certain knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary for effective service as a volunteer youth leader in a rural youth programme. In most cases only few youth volunteer leader possess all the qualities of effective leadership. Leadership training can provide leaders with the opportunity to learn more about their roles and increase and capacity

development or effective leadership. This study is therefore undertaken to analyse the form and content of leadership training programme needed by youth leaders in Egor, Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo Local Government Areas of Edo state.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess the training needs of youth organizational leaders in Egor, Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo Local government Areas of Edo state. The specific objectives were to:

- i) examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
- ii) identify the youth leadership activities implemented among the organizations;
- iii) examine the level of participation of youths in the activities;
- iv) identify the leadership training needs of the respondents

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Egor, Oredo and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Edo state all located in Edo south geopolitical zone. Edo state is made up of 18 LGAs. Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba-Okha local government areas comprised 12, 10 and 10 wards respectively. The main occupations of the people in these local government areas are farming, trading and civil service. The study focuses on leadership training needs of youth located in Egor, Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo LGAs. Two (2) wards were randomly selected from each local government area. From each ward, 20 youth leaders of various youth organizations under the umbrella of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) which is the apex body of all youth organizations were selected by a simple random process for the study. This gives a total of 120 youth leaders who were respondents in this study. Primary data were collected using well structured questionnaire and interview schedule. Variables measured included respondents' socio-economic characteristics; youth leadership activities implemented among the organizations, level of participation of youth leaders in leadership activities and the leadership training needs of the respondents. A list of activities (24) was presented to respondents to select which of the activities youth leaders engaged themselves. Participation of youth leaders in leadership activities was measured as very low(1), low (2), high (3) and very high (4). A mean ≥ 2.5 implies high participation and mean < 2.5 is low participation. The leadership training needs of youth leaders was assessed by asking respondents to indicate leadership activities they require training in and was operationalised as highly needed (3), needed (2), just needed (1) not needed (0). Data

were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at $p=0.05$.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Data in Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were males (56.7%), single (68.3%) while about one third had OND/NCE (30.0 %) and were between the age group of 18-25 years (31.7%). Also, 56.7% were Christians and indigenes (21.7%) of the study areas. Only 11.7% were engaged in full time farming while civil servants, teachers and traders were 28.3%, 21.7% and 8.3% respectively. .

As shown in Table 1, youth leaders in the study area were males, single being very young in age and majority of them were holders of either OND or NCE certificates. Those married among them, had a modal family size of between 1 and 5 members per household. The youth leaders had low interest in agriculture as more than half (58.3%) of them were employed in non-agricultural occupations such as civil service (28.3%), teaching (21.7%) and trading (8.3%) and with only 11.7% of them engaged in full time farming.

Membership of youth organizations

As shown in Table 2, majority of the youths who were involved in leadership activities belonged to the Red Cross society (35.0%), followed by the Scout Association (20%) and least for the Girl's Brigade (1.7%). This is an indication that the female youths are not actively involved in leadership activities.

Participation of youths in leadership development activities implemented

Table 3 highlights the youth leadership activities and their level of participation. The youths were involved in all the leadership activities. However, their participation in communication, planning and implementation activities was generally low. On the other hand, youth leaders' participation in provision of support activities was high except the participation in attending monthly meetings to discuss current issues that affect youth ($\bar{x}=2.28$) and participation in community activities ($\bar{x}=2.30$). The highest level of youth leaders' participation was observed with motivating other youth ($\bar{x}=3.00$) and mobilizing other youths with mean score 3.0 and the lowest level of participation was in participation in agricultural extension trainings ($\bar{x} = 1.13$).

TABLE 1
Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by personal characteristics (n=120)

Personal characteristics	Freq	Percentage
Sex		
Male	68	56.7
Female	52	43.3
Marital Status		
No response	4	3.3
Single	82	68.3
Married	28	23.3
Divorced	6	5.0
Age		
< 20 yrs	36	30.0
18-25 yrs	39	31.7
26-33 yrs	26	21.7
34-40 yrs	18	15.0
No response	2	1.7
Educational level		
No formal education	6	5.0
Primary school	8	6.7
JSCE	12	10.0
SSCE	22	18.3
OND/NCE	36	30.0
HND/Degree	24	20.0
No response	12	10.0
Family size		
1-5	62	51.7
6-10	32	26.7
>10	12	10.0
No response	14	11.6
Occupation		
Full time farming	14	11.7
Civil Servant	34	28.3
Teaching	26	21.7
Trading	10	8.3
No response	36	30.0
Religion		
Islam	4	3.3
Christianity	26	21.7
Traditional	68	56.7
Religion	22	18.4

TABLE 2
Distribution of youth leaders according to membership of youth organizations

Youth organization	Freq.	Percentage
Red cross	42	35.0
Scout association	24	20.0
Man O' war	10	8.3
Anglican	8	6.7
Youth Catholic	4	3.4
Youth Baptize	6	5.0
Youth Christian Fellowship	10	8.3
Boys brigade of Nigeria	4	3.4
Girls brigade of Nigeria	2	1.7
Auxiliary youth	4	3.3
Regal ambassador youth	6	5.0
Total	120	100.0

TABLE 3
Mean distribution of youths' participation in leadership development activities.

Leadership activities	Mean	S.D	Remark
Communication activities			
Effectively Communicating decision to others	2.32	0.887	Low
Offering support to others	2.33	0.892	Low
Providing input and feedback to the community programme	2.33	0.889	Low
Openness in discussing current issues in the community one's action and attitude toward others	2.18	1.092	Low
Planning and implementation activities			
promoting community service	2.15	0.766	Low
Reviewing grant proposals	2.23	0.766	Low
Making funding decisions	2.13	0.900	Low
Display of specific skills	2.27	0.877	Low
Influencing and motivating one's peer	2.23	0.827	Low
Accessible to others youth and interest adults	2.35	0.868	Low
Making healthy choice for oneself and encouraging those choice in others	2.38	0.989	Low
Participation in agricultural extension trainings	1.13	1.031	Low
Provision of support services to local government administration			
Attending monthly meetings to discuss current issues that affect youth	2.28	0.972	Low
Observe local officials when performing their duties	2.57	1.027	High
Helping the less fortunate/privileged	2.67	1.079	High
Fund raising for charity for kids	2.67	1.079	High
Promoting other kinds of community service	2.67	1.125	High
Human Resource Development	2.75	1.045	High
Mobilizing other youths	3.00	1.130	High
Human relation	2.97	1.069	High
Motivating other youths	3.00	1.037	High
Participation in community activities	2.30	1.435	Low

However, on the basis of the standard deviation scores, there were fewer variations in the level of participation in communication, planning and implementation leadership activities than they were with provision of support services to local government administration. Generally, youth leaders engage more in community development and human relations and involving other youths in most of their programmes. However, in most cases youth

participation in any activity has been reported to depend on the importance they attach to the activities.

Training needs of youths in leadership activities:

As shown in Table 4, training needs were expressed in virtually all the activities except agricultural extension training activities with mean score of 1.16. The most highly needed training was indicated for motivating other youths (mean=3.27)

while no desire for training was expressed for agricultural extension training activities. The standard deviation figures particularly express the fact that leadership skills gaps exist among the youth leaders in the study area. This ranking could be linked with the result on Table 3 in which youth leaders participated more in youth motivation activities. The training needs desired by the youth leaders reflect the fact that motivating other youth will require communication skills and competence that are needed to be developed through training. If the training needs are addressed, the leadership activities have the potential to bring about youth development, peer influence, socialization and change in youths in the study area.

Relationships between the socio-economic characteristics and training needs of respondents:

Correlation analysis results showing the relationship between the socio-economic

characteristics of respondents and their training needs are as presented in Table 5. The results reveal that out of six independent variables studied, two variables exhibited positive significant relationship with desire for re-training in communication, planning, implementation and provision of support services leadership skills activities. The results show that education had positive and significant relationship with communication ($r=0.290$; $p<0.05$), planning and implementation ($r=0.259$; $p<0.01$) and provision of support services ($r=0.255$; $p<0.05$) leadership skills activities. Family size had positive and significant relationship with communication leadership training needs of respondents. These findings imply that the more educated youth leaders in addition to ability to read and write, the greater the opportunities to actively participate in leadership activities in the community. Also, the youth leaders maintaining large families have higher leadership sense of responsibilities than those with small families.

TABLE 4
Mean distribution of youth leaders by training needs in leadership activities.

Leadership activities	Mean	S.D	Remark
Communication activities			
Effectively Communicating decision to others	2.97	0.879	Needed
Offering support to others	2.88	1.070	Needed
Providing input and feedback to the community programme	2.75	1.031	Needed
Openness in discussing current issues in the community one's action and attitude toward others	2.95	1.076	Needed
Planning and implementation activities			
promoting community service	3.05	0.924	Needed
Reviewing grant proposals	3.10	1.095	Needed
Making funding decisions	3.12	1.039	Needed
Display of specific skills	3.08	1.134	Needed
Influencing and motivating one's peer	2.95	0.942	Needed
Accessible to others youth and interest adults	2.85	1.050	Needed
Making healthy choice for oneself and encouraging those choice in others	2.95	0.942	Needed
Participation in agricultural extension trainings	1.16	0.913	Not needed
Provision of support services to local government administration			
Attending monthly meetings to discuss current issues that affect youth	3.18	0.900	Needed
Observe local officials when performing their duties	2.85	0.913	Needed
Helping the less fortunate/privileged	2.98	0.907	Needed
Fund raising for charity for kids	3.09	0.863	Needed
Promoting other kinds of community service	3.19	0.846	Needed
Human Resource Development	3.13	0.913	Needed
Mobilizing other youths	3.15	1.038	Needed
Human relation	3.15	1.038	Needed
Motivating other youths	3.27	0.900	Needed
Participation in community activities	2.97	0.879	Needed

Mean ≥ 2.5 training is needed and mean < 2.5 training is not needed.

TABLE 5
Correlation analysis results showing relationship between respondents' personal characteristics and leadership training needs.

Personal characteristics	Youth leadership activities		
	Communication skills (r)	Planning and implementation activities (r)	Provision of support services to local government administration (r)
Age	0.021	0.021	0.005
Education	0.290*	0.259**	0.255*
Family size	0.235*	0.137	0.248

*significant at 5% level; **significant at 1% level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study show that youth leaders in the study area had low interest in agriculture. Majority of the youths who were involved in leadership activities belonged to the Red Cross Society. The youth leaders were more interested participating in leadership activities connected with community development activities than agriculture-related activities. Training needs were expressed by the youth leaders in virtually all the activities except agricultural extension training activities and they were willing to receive more training that will enhance their competences. Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a compelling need to encourage youth leaders in the study area to take up leadership roles in agricultural production activities. This is necessitated by the fact that aging is setting in for the current crop of farmers, hence the need to transfer responsibilities to younger ones becomes imperative.
2. To fill the leadership skills gaps among the youth leaders in the study area, arrangements should be put in place by relevant youth development agencies to organize leadership training workshops and seminars on a regular basis for the general youth in the study area.

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