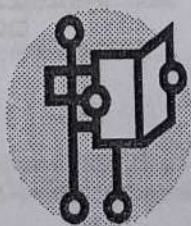


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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JOURNAL

At the 7th Annual General Meeting of the International Research and Development Network of Children and Youth in Agriculture Programme (CY AP-Network: visit our website www.cyiapnetwork.org for more information) held at Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria on the 28th November, 2006, it was resolved that a journal named Annals of Child and Youth Studies (ACYS) of the Network be established. Dr. Dixon Olutade Torimiro, an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria was unanimously appointed as the Editor-in-Chief and the Department was chosen as the Editorial Office of the Journal.

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ASSESSMENT OF UNICEF PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF KWARA STATE

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Abstract

The study assessed the UNICEF programmes/projects in the rural communities of Kwara state, Nigeria. It explored the basic needs of rural children, the UNICEF programmes/projects available to them and their perception on the programmes/projects. It also identified the constraints faced in accessing the programmes/projects in the study areas. A random sampling technique was used to select 120 children from Isin and Ilorin East Local Government Areas of Kwara State where UNICEF programmes/projects were implemented. Data were obtained through interview schedules and analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and Chi-square. The study revealed that 38.3% of the respondents were within the age range of 7-9 years, 52.2% were male while 45.5% were female. Some, (54.2%) of the respondents' fathers were farmers. UNICEF programmes/projects mainly available to rural children was immunization programme (87.5%) while only (20.8%) had access to potable drinking water. Most respondents strongly agreed that the UNICEF WASH programmes had improved their welfare. Insufficient teachers in schools (28.3%), transportation cost (27.5%), shortage of health workers (25%), poor maintenance of UNICEF facilities (12.5%), insufficient facilities (3.3%), cultural influence (1.7%) and failure of government to comply with the programme/project funding arrangement (1.7%) were identified as the main constraints facing rural children in assessing UNICEF programmes/projects. Further analysis showed that sex and religion of the respondents had no significant effect on the children's access to UNICEF facilities while their age and class were significantly related to their access to the facilities. The study therefore recommended the need for provision of boreholes and more enlightenment programmes on sanitation practices in schools in the rural communities.

Keywords: Assessment, Programme, Rural, Communities

Introduction

The child right act defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years. The act contains a universal set of standards and principles for survival, development, protection and participation of children and recognizes children as human beings and subjects of rights. UNICEF Nigeria (2011) reported that this has made children very important members of the society and therefore, provision must be made for their welfare. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the world's leading children's organization, founded in 1946 by the United Nations to provide food, clothing and rehabilitation programs to European children brutalized in World War II (1935-1945). UNICEF office was established in Lagos, Nigeria in 1953. Since then, the federal Government has been working in collaboration with the UNICEF in order to bring about development to the rural people in terms of health services for mother and children. At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to shape a broad vision to fight poverty in its many dimensions. That vision, which was translated into eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has remained the overarching development framework for the world for the past 15 years. Millennium Development Goals

Report (2015). According to this report,

- The primary school net enrollment rate in the developing regions has reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000.
- The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000.
- Sub-Saharan Africa has had the best record of improvement in primary education of any region since the MDGs were established. The region achieved a 20 percentage point increase in the net enrolment rate from 2000 to 2015, compared to a gain of 8 percentage points between 1990 and 2000.
- The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83 percent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2015. The gap between women and men has narrowed.

Six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can best be met as the rights of children to health, education, protection and equality. They will only be sustained as the rights of every child are realized. These same six match the goals set out in 'A World Fit for Children'. And so, UNICEF's work with children necessarily assumes a central role in meeting both sets of goals and in

making the world a better place for all. UNICEF's roles include; Advocacy, research and action that create a protective environment that will; allow every child the best start in life, ensure every girl and every boy a quality primary school education, safeguard every child against disease and disability, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide care for every child affected, shield every child from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. UNICEF works in more than 90 countries around the world to improve water supplies and sanitation facilities in schools and communities and to promote safe hygiene practices. They sponsor a wide range of activities and work with many partners, including families, communities, governments and like-minded organizations. In emergencies, they provide relief to communities threatened by disrupted water supplies and diseases (UNICEF, 2003). All UNICEF water and sanitation projects are designed to contribute to the MDG targets for water and sanitation; this to halve by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation. United Nations Development Programme Report (2006)

Rural communities in Kwara state and Nigeria as a whole suffer scarcity of water especially during the dry seasons.

Lack of water supply predisposes children to series of health hazards as water is needed to maintain good hygiene and stay healthy. In times of scarcity, children have to go to streams or rivers in search of water to be used in the house thereby missing school. There is an increasing body of evidence showing that improving water, sanitation and hygiene in both communities and schools can have a significant impact on enrolment levels, on the ratio of girls to boys in schools, on educational achievement and on the quality of education. Water availability in households is an important factor in the enrolment, attendance and drop-out rates of children. In areas where safe water sources are distant, girls are often obliged to miss school to help fetch water. This is most often seen in African countries with low water coverage rates, but the correlation has also been documented in countries in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. UNDP Report (2006). Also according to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2011), UNICEF contributed to an additional 4.8 million people gaining access to improved water sources; 0.9 million people gaining access to sanitation, mostly in underserved rural areas; 1.1 million pupils gaining access to WASH facilities in over 1,150 schools; and to hygiene awareness campaigns reaching

over 60 million people. Nigeria was certified free of dracunculiasis in 2012. Over the years, Nigeria has made improvements in the well-being of its children; the country is on track to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6. However, progress towards achieving the remaining Goals is limited. Under-five mortality fell from 201 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 124 per 1,000 in 2011, while infant mortality fell from 100 to 78 per 1,000. The maternal mortality ratio has improved, dropping from 800 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 630 per 100,000 live births. The main causes of infant and child deaths are pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and neonatal causes, compounded by under-nutrition and vaccine-preventable diseases. The poorest population quintile has an under-five mortality rate of 220 per 1,000 births, compared to 90 per 1,000 among the richest quintile. (National Population Commission, 2008). Routine immunization levels increased from 11 percent in 2007 to 28 percent in 2011. MICS (2011).

This study is therefore, poised to assess the UNICEF programmes/projects in rural communities. The general objective of the study is to assess the UNICEF programmes/projects in the rural communities of Kwara state, Nigeria while the specific objectives are to: describe the socio-economic

characteristics of the respondents, identify UNICEF projects available in the study area, ascertain the respondents perception on the UNICEF programs in the study area and determine the condition of the UNICEF projects in the study area.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Ilorin East and Isin Local Government Areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. Kwara state falls in the North central part of Nigeria. The state is geographically located between latitude 7° 20' and 11° 05' north of the equator longitude 2° 05' and 6° 45' east of the prime meridian. (Ogunlade, Oladele and Babatunde, 2009). Kwara State was created in 1967. The state shares boundaries with Niger State in the north, Kogi State in the east, Benin Republic in the west and Osun, Oyo. in the south (Ellen and Kellog, 2005). Kwara state has a land area of 36,825 square kilometers and a population of 2.37 million people. The state is a confluence of cultures, populated by the Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Nupes, Barubas and others. The state also has 3 senatorial districts cutting across 16 local government areas but isin local government and Ilorin east local government are the focus of the study.

Sampling technique and sample size

Two of three local government areas where UNICEF programmes/programs are in operation were randomly selected. From the two local government areas, purposive random sampling was used to select three villages; Oke-Aba, Oba-Isin and Olasirin from Isin Local Government Area because they are more actively involved in the programmes under study and two villages; Oha-meje and Ayetoro-oja were also purposively selected from Ilorin East Local Government Area for the same reason. Twenty-four children each were randomly selected from the five villages given a total of 120 respondents. The survey instrument used to elicit primary data was scheduled interviews by meeting the respondents' one after the other with the guidance of their school teachers while the secondary data were derived from documents and other materials from UNICEF office. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean score and were used while the inferential statistic used was Chi-square. In terms of measuring the variables, the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were measured using simple frequencies and percentages. For example, age of respondents were measured in years,

and respondents' sex was classified into male and female. The perception of respondents on UNICEF projects/programmes were measured on a 5 point Likert-type scale of strongly agreed, agreed, etc. The type of UNICEF projects available in the communities were also measured using frequency counts and percentages while the constraints being faced by respondents were rated based on their percentages.

Results and discussion

Entries in table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents which showed that many (38.3%) of them fall within the age range of 7-9 years. Also, most (54.2%) of the respondents were male while 45.8 percent were female. This showed that more boys were enrolled in schools than girls in the rural communities. This is in agreement with the UNICEF (2005) report that about 7.3 million Nigerian children are out of school. The report indicates that disproportionate percentages of the children are girls who constitute about 60% due largely to traditional practices and prejudices ranged against girl child education in a "patriarchal milieu". Also, UNICEF (2010) estimates that over 100 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2008, 52 per cent of them were girls. To

buttress this, there is also evidence that a lack of clean and private sanitation and washing facilities in schools discourages girls from attending school full time and forces some to drop out. This becomes more pronounced as girls reach puberty and privacy and security concerns become more important. UNICEF support programmes that focus on providing girl-friendly sanitation and washing facilities are needed in schools to curb the rate at which girls drop out of school. Much is yet to be done in some countries in Africa and Asia as few as 10 per cent of schools have adequate and separate sanitation facilities, while student-to-latrines ratios can be as high as 150:1. (UNDP Report, 2006) Furthermore, the many (52.5%) of the rural children were muslims while less than 50% were christians. The table further indicated that, majority of the pupils (54.2%) were within primary 4-6 and also most of the respondents' fathers (54.2%) were farmers, 11.7% were civil servants and 10% were teachers while the other 24.1% were tailors, traders, blacksmiths, hunters, drivers, carpenters, photographers, and vulcanizers. From the table, it is evident that the majority of the people living in the rural communities are peasant farmers who need development in order to make life comfortable and improve their standards of living so as

to bring about high productivity to enhance food security. In the absence of mechanized farming, more labor is needed on the farms and children tend to be used as labor to assist their fathers on farms.

UNICEF programmes/projects were provided to the rural children so as to improve their welfare and bring about changes in their ways of lives. Table 2 showed that above 90% of the respondents indicated that programmes/projects on provision of potable drinking water, VIP toilets in schools, hand washing equipment, deworming, immunization, books to enhance learning, treated mosquito nets, HIV/AIDS and provision of refuse bins were always available in their area. This implies that almost of all the children in the study area have accesses to safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities which are crucial for survival, growth and well being. This is in consonance with the Nigeria Country Document (2013) that UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the GAVI Alliance supported the introduction of new vaccines. Technical support and commodities vaccines, vitamin A, long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and deworming drugs which were provided for the initiation of maternal, neonatal and child health weeks in all LGAs. Coverage of vitamin A was 75

per cent for children and women during each round.

In Table 3, 8 attitudinal statements were presented to the respondents for them to rank based on the scales of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Undecided, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed. The respondents ranked "The program has helped to improve my welfare and Provision of school furniture has enhanced attendance" 1st with the mean score of 4.8. The WASH program introduced has reduced the spread of contagious diseases such as cholera, dysentery etc, Provision of water in schools has increased school attendance, Sanitation prevents diseases and death and Sanitation makes our environment conducive for living" ranked 2nd with a mean score of 4.7, "Immunization /de-worming makes children healthy and prevent wide spread of diseases" ranked 3rd with a mean score of 4.6 and "Sanitation club in the school has enlightened me to educate my parents and influence my community positively" ranked 4th with a mean score of 4.5. This supports the UNDP Report (2006) on the fact that UNICEF-supported school-based hygiene education projects in China and Nigeria have reported increases of between 75 percent and 80 percent in hand-washing with soap amongst students. When school-based programmes are designed in a

coordinated way with wider community programmes, children can be helped to become 'agents of change' to pass on the health and hygiene information learned at school to family and community members leading to benefits for the entire community. The implication of the ranking is that the respondents had a positive perception of all the attitudinal statements presented to them on the programmes/projects of UNICEF in the study areas.

The condition of UNICEF programmes/projects in the study areas refer to the state of the programmes/projects available in the communities and how well they have benefited the children. Table 4 revealed that bore-hole and sanitation (99.2%), provision of toilet (100%) provision of refuse bins (98.3%), hand washing campaign (100%), provision of child friendly materials (100%) provision of books to pupils (100%), girl child education (98.3), immunization/de-worming(100%), provision of health centers (99.2%), provision of drugs (98.3%), provision of mosquitoes net (95.0%), sensitization of people about HIV/AIDS (100%) preaching against stigmatization (98.3%) child right act(100%) were the programs present and continuous in the areas. This implies that UNICEF

programmes/projects have contributed to the welfare of the children in the study areas. Unhygienic environments and poor hygiene practices result in chronic diarrhoea, which is a leading cause of death in people living with HIV/AIDS and it is associated with further depression of the immune system and an increase in opportunistic infections. Safe water is essential in areas where HIV-positive mothers use infant formula as a breast milk substitute and as part of an overall treatment, care and support package for people living with HIV/AIDS. (UNDP Report, 2006) However, less than 15% of the respondents indicated that provision of bore holes (0.8%), provision of refuse bins (1.7%), encouragement of girls to go to school (1.7%), provision of health centres (0.8%), provision of drugs (1.7%), provision of treated mosquito nets (5.0%) and preaching against HIV/AIDS stigmatization (1.7%) were programmes that were present but not sustainable.

Table 5 showed that the constraints hindering the rural children in accessing the UNICEF programmes/projects the most was insufficient teachers in school with a percentage of 28.3%. Not surprisingly, teacher absenteeism has a strong negative impact on educational quality; studies have shown that a 5% increase

in teacher absence rates reduced average learning gains over the course of an academic year by 4% to 8% (UNICEF, 2012) also, a shortage of teachers manifests itself in a lack of consistent attendance for those hired to work in difficult areas. Back-to-school campaigns in countries in transition are especially dependent on water supplies. Teachers are hesitant to relocate to communities without a reliable and safe source of water. UNDP Report (2006). This showed that there is a need for more teachers in schools so as to make it easier for the children to enjoy the benefits of the UNICEF programmes/projects and improve their standard of education. This is followed by the transportation problem which constituted 27.5%, this implies that some of the rural roads were not in good conditions which could be a reason for teachers and students absenteeism from schools. 25% of the respondents reported that there was shortage of health workers. 12.5% reported that UNICEF facilities such as toilets, hand washing equipment and sanitation materials in their schools were insufficient in their schools.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics of the rural children and their perception on

UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area

Table 6 shows that sex and religion of respondent $\chi^2 = 0.833$ and 0.300 ; $p > 0.05$ had no significant relationship with their perception on UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area while significant relationship existed between respondent age and class ($\chi^2 = 32.20$ and 0.300 ; $p < 0.05$) and perception on UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area.

The null hypothesis is thus accepted that there is no significant relationship between religion and sex of the respondents and their perception on UNICEF programmes/projects while we reject the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between the age and class of respondents and their perception on UNICEF facilities.

This implies that age and class of the respondents have a significant effect on how they perceive the UNICEF programmes/projects. It could be inferred that the older the children and the higher their classes, the better their perception on the UNICEF programmes/projects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that UNICEF programmes/projects have been effective in improving the welfare of the children in Isin and Ilorin East Local Government Areas of Kwara state. Some of the programmes/projects include; provision of VIP toilets, immunization and de-worming programmes, hand washing campaign, child friendly materials/equipment, HIV/AIDS education and child right act. Also, the children have access to most of the programs to a satisfactory level. However, a few projects like; provision of bore holes, refuse bins, girl child education, health centers, drugs, treated mosquito nets and preaching against stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS were not well maintained. Given that the hypothesis tested showed that there is no significant relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics (sex and religion) of respondents and their perception on UNICEF programmes, it implies that sex and religion do not influence their perception of the UNICEF programmes/projects. Hence, respondents would favourably consider any programme in as much as such programme would be beneficial to them. On the other hand, the study, as verified by the hypothesis, showed that age and class have a link with their

perception of UNICEF programmes. In order to reduce child mortality and illiteracy, the study therefore, recommends that stakeholders including the local communities, state and federal government; should work out a more efficient maintenance mechanism in order to enhance the sustainability of the UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area. Additionally, since there is a positive significant relationship between age and perception of respondents, the UNICEF projects should first be introduced to the older children in higher classes before extending it to other spheres of the communities. This is to further boost a strong perception and enhance the acceptance of the programmes.

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Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Personal characteristics	frequency	percentage
Age (years)		
4-6	13	10.8
7-9	46	38.3
10-12	45	37.5
13-15	16	13.3
Sex		
Male	65	54.2
Female	55	45.8
Religion		
Christianity	57	47.5
Islam	63	52.5
Class		
Primary 1-3	31	25.8
Primary 4-6	65	54.2
JSS 1-3	24	20.0
Father's occupation		
Teacher	12	10.0
Farmer	65	54.2
Tailor	5	4.2
Trader	11	9.2
Civil servant	14	11.7
Blacksmith	3	2.5
Hunter	3	2.5
Driver	3	2.5
Carpenter	2	1.7
Photographer	1	0.8
Vulcanizer	1	0.8

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 2. UNICEF programmes/projects available to the children in the study area

Projects/programs	Freq (N)	Percentage (%)
Potable drinking water	25	20.8
VIP toilets	37	30.8
Hand wash equipment	82	68.3
De-worming programme	74	61.6
Immunization programme	105	87.5
Provision of books	66	55.0
Treated mosquito nets	88	73.3
HIV/AIDS campaign programme	92	76.6
Provision of refuse bins	89	74.2

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Multiple Responses.

Adefalu L.L, S.A. Aderinoye-Abdulwahab, ASSESSMEN OF UNICEF PROGRAMMES/
N.A. Rabi- Adebayo and F. Kehinde PROJECTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES
OF KWARA STATE

Table 3. Perception of respondents on UNICEF programs/projects in the study area

Statements	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Undeci ded	Disagree d	Strongly disagree d	Total	Mean score value	Rank
The program has helped to improve my welfare	94(78.3)	25(20.8)	-	1(0.8)	-	572	4.8	1 st
Provision of school furniture has enhanced attendance	70(58.3)	45(37.5)	3(2.5)	3(1.7)	-	570	4.8	1 st
The WASH program introduced has reduced the spread of contagious diseases such as cholera, dysentery etc	85(70)	34(28.3)	-	1(0.8)	-	563	4.7	2 nd
Provision of water in schools has increased school attendance	84(70)	33(27.5)	2(1.7)	1(0.8)	-	560	4.7	2 nd
Sanitation prevents diseases and death	75(62.5)	45(37.5)	-	-	-	555	4.7	2 nd
Sanitation makes our environment conducive for living	74(61.7)	46(38.5)	-	-	-	555	4.7	2 nd
Immunization /de-worming makes children healthy and prevent wide spread of diseases	90(75)*	30(25)	-	-	-	554	4.6	3 rd
Sanitation club in the school has enlightened me to educate my parents and influence my community positively.	83(69.2)	33(27.5)	-	-	-	545	4.5	4 th

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 4. Perceived condition of UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area

Programs/Projects	Present and Continuous		Present but not sustainable		Not present at all	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Bore holes	119	99.2	1	0.8	-	-
VIP Toilets	120	100	-	-	-	-
Refuse bin	118	98.3	2	1.7	-	-
Hand washing Campaign	120	100	-	-	-	-
Child friendly materials / equipment	120	100	-	-	-	-
Provision of books to pupils	120	100	-	-	-	-
Girl child education	118	98.3	2	1.7	-	-
Immunization/de-worming	120	100	-	-	-	-
Provision of health centres	119	99.2	1	0.8	-	-
Provision of drugs	118	98.3	2	1.7	-	-
Provision of treated mosquito nets	114	95.0	6	5.0	-	-
Sensitization of the people about HIV/AIDS	120	100	-	-	-	-
Preaching against stigmatization	118	98.3	2	1.7	-	-
Child right act	120	100	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 5. Constraints facing respondents in accessing UNICEF programmes/projects

Constraints	Frequency	percentage %	rating
Insufficient teachers in schools	34	28.3	1 st
Transportation cost	33	27.5	2 nd
Shortage of health workers	30	25.0	3 rd
Poor maintenance of UNICEF facilities	15	12.5	4 th
Insufficient facilities	4	3.3	5 th
Cultural influence	2	1.7	6 th
Failure of government to comply with the project funding arrangement	2	1.7	6 th

Sources: Field Survey, 2014

Table 6. Relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics of the children and their perception on UNICEF programmes/projects in the study area

Variable	Df	X ²	P-value	Inference
Age	3	32.20	0.000	Significant
Sex	1	0.833	0.361	Non-signif
Class	2	24.05	0.000	Significant
Religion	1	0.300	0.584	Non-signif

Sources: Field survey, 2014

*significant at 0.05 level