

Electronic Learning and Youth- Pastoralist' Livelihood in Conflict Zone of Taraba Nigeria.

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Abstract

Conflict is a reality in Africa as shown in the prominent and intense situations in Darfur region of Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, Rwanda Angola, Burundi, and Republic of Congo. Nigeria recorded several violent conflicts in many rural communities. Such conflicts explain noticeable distortions in farmers' livelihoods since they live and earn their living from rural areas. A case in point is prominent conflict reported in the middle belt region of Nigeria among the TIV and Jukun in Wukari community of Taraba State. The benefits of ICTs, of especial concern to the youth of developing countries like those in Africa, are: distance learning, healthcare information and provision, information provision and job creation: government services, agricultural information and e-commerce including web site development. Therefore search for appropriate solution to problems of unemployment, poverty malnutrition, and crime cases precipitated by the conflict among youth in the zone necessitate this research. The four severely affected locations were purposively selected while simple random technique was used to select thirty pastoral youths from each location. Fully equipped Information Communication Training Centre (ICTC) was established in each location. Interview schedule and questionnaire were used to carry out ICTC impact assessment. Data were analysed using frequency count, percentage, and chi-square and t- test statistical analysis. Result revealed that majority (85.0%) of farmers was in the age range of 18-25 while 65.0% of them were literate. Eight five percent of the farmers combined sheep and goat keeping with computer business. Specifically 65.0% and 85.3% involved in telephone called and selling of computer and hand set respectively. Concerning information seeking pattern, 86.2%, 58.4% and 75.4 % sought for improved sheep and goat breeding, market's information, and registered for online business transaction respectively using internet facility and mobile phone. Also 42.3% became employer of labour. There is no association between farmers' educational level and ICT component utilization. Sheep and goat production level was statistically different before and after training at $P < 0.05$.

Key Words: Electronic-learning, youth, internet facilities, sheep and goat, production

Introduction

Worldwide, there were 1.2 billion youth aged between 15-24 years old in the world (United Nation,2007a). Their vitality and creativity made them among country's greatest assets. When these positive traits are effectively promoted, the youth can play a fundamental role in national economic and social development. Neglecting the potential of young people is an economic and social waste (Adedoyin, 2005). Despite their merits to nations economic the International Labour Organisation (2008) found out that global youth unemployment has been on the rise by 14.8 per cent between 1995 and 2005, from 74 million to 85 million. Consequently most of them are suffering from poverty.

In a situation of widespread poverty and lack of opportunity, the growing number of disaffected youth has been associated with an escalation of urban crime, outbursts of ethnic violence and political instability most especially in Africa countries. Conflict is a reality in Africa as shown in the prominent and intense situations in Darfur region of Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, Rwanda Angola, Burundi, and Republic of Congo. Major problems affecting African youth are wars and socioeconomic problems, lack of training opportunities, lack of education, low health and a lack of government (ILO,2008) . These problems serve to perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty not only among the youth themselves, but also among the family members that they support. Those stricken by poverty in turn lack the income to translate their needs into effective demand especially the rural youth that constitute a large and critical share of the youth population in developing countries (FAO,2002).

Many young people fight in war most especially in developing countries. Lesson from Nigeria as one of the most populated in Africa revealed that she has recorded several violent conflicts in many rural communities of which youth played prominent roles (FRO 2002,).

Such conflicts explain noticeable distortions in farmers' livelihoods since they live and earn their living from rural areas. A case in point is prominent conflict reported in the middle belt region of Nigeria among the Tiv and Jukun in Wukari community of Taraba State in 1998-2001. The conflicts claimed several lives of youth and adults, retarded economic growth and destruction of properties and displacement of pastoral farmers from their farms (Bolarinwa 2007). Prior to the violent conflict youth in Taraba state kept sheep and goat for subsistence and economic reasons. In either role it has been found that keeping sheep is an effective measure of reducing poverty and improving small scale pastoralist livelihood status (Geoff , Wilson 2009) . However, in recent years we have seen a gradual shift from the traditional focus on agricultural production to a wider focus on rural development, of which agriculture is a part (FAO and UNESCO, 2003). Concomitantly, there is a push to expand off, and nonfarm employment, in addition to on-farm employment, so as to increase the income generation opportunities available to the youth. These demand side measures to increase employment for the rural youth, need to be accompanied by supply side measures, namely education and training. The latter are two of the most powerful weapons in the fight against rural poverty and for rural development. Unfortunately, these are also among the most frequently neglected aspects of rural development (FAO and UNESCO, 2003). In line with UNESCO principle a pilot project on the use of ICT components for empowerment of youth in conflict zones of Tarba state was conducted during conflict de-escalating period. The pilot project was sponsored by philanthropies outside conflict zones and Council for Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Darkar Senegal. Use of ICT components training was conducted for the youth in the zones. Training on the use of ICT components was conducted because it has been found that access to ICT by the people increase access and participation in education, social and economic activities that contribute to well being of the

people involved. With ICTs intervention, it has been realised that the interactive nature of these facilities provide a conducive environment where people's livelihood status has been improved (Kaino ,2010). Quest for the extent to which ICTs components has been providing solutions to conflict problems necessitate this research. Research objectives are to:

identify personal characteristic of youth farmers which aid adoption of ICT,

ascertain employment pattern of youth after ICT training,

ascertain information seeking pattern of pastoral youth farmers after training,

assesses sheep and goat production level after ICT training and

determine the extent to which youth farmers involved in ICT business transaction .

determine the extent to which adoption of ICTs affect farmers livelihood

Methodology

Pilot project on the use of ICT components for empowerment of youth in conflict zones of Tarba state was conducted during conflict de-escalating period. The pilot project was sponsored by philanthropies outside conflict zones and Council for Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) based in Dakar Senegal. The four locations that were severely affected by the violent conflict were purposively selected while simple random technique was used to select thirty pastoral youths from each location using agricultural extension agent list as sampling frame work. Fully equipped Information Communication Training Centre (ICTC) meant for training the youth was rented in each location. Interview schedule and questionnaire were used to ascertain the extent to which training on the use of ICT

components improved their profession and living standard. Data were analysed using frequency count, percentage, and chi-square and t-test statistical analyses.

Result and Discussion

Personal Characteristic of Youth Pastoral Farmers

Result in Table 1 indicates that majority (85.0%) of the youth were in age bracket of between 15-25 years while 65.0% of were literate. Sixty-eight percent of the youth farmers belonged to medium production scale category. It could be inferred from the result that the youth farmers were their active age which UNESCO (2007) classified as the vitality and creativity age of which youth are country's greatest assets. Majority (87.5%) of the pastoralist was male while 12.5 % was female. It can be inferred from the result of the finding that fewer women were involved in rearing of animals.

Table 1: Personal Characteristic of Youth Pastoral Farmers

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
<15	3	15.0
15- 25	102	85.0
26-35	4	3.3
36-45	5	4.2
> 45	6	5.0
Sex		
Male	105	87.5
Female	15	12.5
Marital status		
Single	78	65.0
Married	35	29.1
Divorce	5	
Widow	2	1.8
Educational Status		
No formal education	42	35.0
Primary	15	12.5

Secondary	53	44.2
Tertiary	10	8.3
Production capacity scale		
Small (10-20)	25	20.8
Medium 21-50	82	68.3
Large >50	13	10.9

Youth employment situation before and after the ICT training

As indicated in Table 2 52.0% of the youth engaged in keeping sheep and goat and 48.0% were not employed prior to ICT training. However, after ICT training 85.0% of the youth combined sheep and goat keeping with computer business. The implication of the result is that some of the youth that were not employed before ICT training were employed after training. Hence, the training has positive impact on the employment of the youth in the zone. Therefore the use of ICT components provided means of livelihood to the youth in the zone.

Table 2: Youth employment situation before and after the ICT training

Employments	Before		After	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sheep and goat/computer Business	-	-	102	85.0
Sheep and goat keeping only	74	62.0	18	15.0
Non –employed	46	48.0	-	-

Type of ICT businesses youth farmers were doing before and after ICT training

Result in Table 3 indicates that 65.0% and 85. % of the farmers was involved in operating mobile phone and selling of handsets respectively. The finding confirmed the specific area of computer business of which the youth farmers engaged in as indicated in Table 2. It could be inferred from the result that the ICT have impacted positively on the youth farmers in the direction of rural youth employment.

Table 3: Type of ICT businesses youth farmers were doing before and after ICT training

Type of business	Before		After	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Selling of computer	-		25	20.8
Selling of Hand sett	-		102	85.0
Repairing of Computer and hand sett	-		35	29.2
Operating mobile phone call Centre	-		78	65

Information seeking pattern before ICT training.

As indicated in Table 4a 15.0%, 14.1% and 13.3% of the pastoralist sought for availability of improved sheep and goat breed, purchase of drugs and Veterinarian information respectively using mobile phone prior to use of ICT components. However, Table 4b indicated that after the training higher proportion (85.9%, 75.5% and 73.3%) sought for availability of improved sheep and goats breed, purchase of drugs and Veterinarian information respectively using mobile phone. It can be observed from Table 4b that youth made use of internet facility after the training more than before training. Hence, it can be deduced from the finding that pastoralist knowledge of information was positively affected consequently their means of livelihood is likely to be positively affected too.

Table 4 a Information seeking pattern before ICT training.

Information	Sources		
	Extension Agents	Mobile phone	Internet

	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Improved sheep and goat						
Breed	88	73.3	18	15.0	-	-
Marketing information	34	28.3	12	10.0	-	-
Register online transaction	-	-	-	-	-	-
Treatment requirement for						
Disease	67	55.8	14	11.6	-	-
Veterinarian	24	20.0	16	13.3	-	-
Purchase of Drugs	77	64.1	17	14.1	-	-
Management practices	95	79.1	11	9.2	-	-

Table 4 b Information seeking pattern after ICT training.

Information	Sources					
	Extension Agents		Mobile phone		Internet	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Improved sheep and goat						
Breed	17	14.1	103	85.9	-	-
Marketing information	34	28.3	71	58.4	15	12.5
-						
Register online transaction	-	-	14	11.6	90	75.5
Treatment requirement for						
Disease	67	55.8	44	36.6	9	7.6
Veterinarian	24	20.0	88	73.3	8	6.7
Purchase of Drugs	27	22.5	91	75.8	2	1.6
Management practices	19	15.8	51	42.2	50	42.0

Sheep and goat production number before and after ICT training

The result in Table 5 indicates that youth farmer mean production number of 134.2 and 101.0 of sheep and goat respectively prior to ICT training were lower than their mean production number of 812.2 and 623.4 of sheep and goat respectively after training. It could be inferred from the study result that ICT training has tremendously improved sheep and goat production in the study area. Hence, the knowledge of ICT improved means of generating means of livelihood the factors that determine livelihood status of the sheep and goat farmers.

Table 5: Sheep and goat production number before and after ICT training

Variables	Production Mean	
	Before Training	After Training
Sheep	134.2	812.2
Goat	101.0	623.4

T- test analysis of pastoral youth farmer's livelihood before and after training

It has been found in Table 6 that livelihood status of youth farmer is statistically different before and after ICT training. This implies that farmer's livelihood was lower prior to conduct ICT training. However, as the youth is utilizing ICT knowledge gained during training, there is a corresponding positive change in their livelihood status.

Table 6: T- test analysis of Pastoral Youth farmer's Livelihood before and after Training

Variable	Period	No of cases	Means Different	t-cal	P -value
Livelihood Status	Before	120	4099.2	3.34	1.96
	After	120			

Conclusion and recommendation

Available data analysed in this survey have shown that majority of the pastoralists were young and literate. Livestock production most especially rearing of animal is predominantly male occupation and majority of them belong to medium production capacity category. Also majority of the pastoralists diverted their effort toward production that will improve their living standard after ICT training. Higher proportion of them sought for sheep and goat relevant information from the available ICT components rather than waiting for extension agent to come and disseminate information fortnightly.

Based on the findings it is concluded that this research focus on young people rather than ICT technology hence, youth farmer's production and livelihood status were improved. Success of this research stem from the fact that ICTs are merely a tool for information exchange and dissemination it was used in conjunction with adequate needs-analysis, existing programs as well as with innovative methods to provide maximum benefit to the marginalized youth in the communities so they can benefit from increased exposure to information, training and income-generating opportunities and work for the development of their communities. The following recommendation are suggested in organising conflict intervention programme for any community in addition to distribution of relief packages a demand driven and sustainable livelihood improvement project such as ICT usage training should accompany it.

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