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## SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Youths' socio-economic well-being in Southwest Nigeria: What role can empowerment/poverty reduction programmes play?

Olawale Y. Olonade<sup>1\*</sup>, Tayo O. George<sup>1</sup>, David Imhonopi<sup>1</sup>, Mathew E. Egharevba<sup>1</sup> and Adamu G. Kasa<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Despite several empowerment/poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria, the youths' plight has worsened with evidence of the increased unemployment rate, poverty, and social exclusion. This study examines the impact of several empowerment/poverty reduction programmes on the youths' well-being in southwest Nigeria. The study adopts the quantitative method using questionnaires for data collection. A total of 425 copies of the questionnaire were collected and analysed using frequency distribution tables and cross tabulation. It was found that despite the high level of awareness (74.6%) of the various empowerment programmes, only a few (17.2%) have benefitted from them. Among those who have benefitted, only 41.2% have what they currently do related to the empowerment they once benefitted. The majority of the respondents, 61.6%, consider the programmes resourceful. Based on the findings, the study recommends properly implementing the empowerment programmes to ensure that those who need them are the beneficiaries, rather than a medium for political expediency. Also, a youth trust fund where youths who have undergone empowerment programmes can always access funds for their start-ups needs to be established. This will promote wealth creation opportunities among the youths and ensure the sustainability of the programmes.

**Subjects:** Sociology; Sociology & Social Policy; Urban Sociology - Urban Studies

**Keywords:** empowerment; Southwest; programmes; unemployment; well-being; youths

### 1. Introduction

Nigeria is one of Africa's economic and demographic hubs, with an estimated population of more than 210 million people in 2021 (Frankema, 2021; National Bureau of Statistics, 2018b). Over 65% of Nigeria's population is under the age of 35, with 35% of the population between 15 and 30 (Population Reference Bureau (PRB), 2018; Usamah et al., 2019). This group of people constitutes the active working population in Nigeria (Omobowale et al., 2020). As Imhonopi and Urim (2018) averred, Nigeria is one of the central African countries with a large youth population. However, rather than utilising the potential of these vast human resources, Nigerian youths have been bedevilled with a myriad of challenges ranging from unemployment to poverty and social exclusion (Osabuohien et al., 2020). As the AFDB (2016) averred, most African youths lack stable economic opportunities. Out of the 420 million African youths aged 15–35, one-third are unemployed and discouraged, another third are vulnerable or underemployed, and only one in six is in wage employment.

The above scenario is also reflected in the Nigerian situation, where the unemployment rate has increased rapidly. By the end of the first quarter of 2017, unemployment in Nigeria was put at 40%, with the youths forming the more significant part of this percentage (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018b). From the NBS report, the unemployment rate for Nigerian youths within the third quarter of 2017 alone stood at 33.1 per cent for those aged 15 to 24 and 20.2 per cent for those aged 25 to 34 (Ojoye, 2018), showing how disreputable youth unemployment in Nigeria had become. This presents a paradox of suffering amid plenty, considering the vast human and material resources that the country is endowed with (Apata et al., 2010). This situation depicts a gross underutilisation of the available human and natural resources, primarily responsible for the nations' underdeveloped status.

The value of a country is known not by its riches or assets but by its people's quality. The youths have been described as Africa's greatest asset. If properly harnessed, this resourceful working-age population could support increased productivity and more robust inclusive economic growth across the continent (AFDB, 2016). Most prominent cities globally have their socio-economic and political life driven by human personnel. For instance, industrialised economies like China, Japan, and some Asian countries are driven by their youth population, especially those with the required skills to thrive when provided with a reasonably moderate enabling environment. These societies have witnessed tremendous progress within a specific timeframe. However, the scenario is different in many developing nations, including Nigeria, where the youths in the urban centres are faced with unemployment, homelessness, economic hardship, slum life, and other socio-economic problems mainly due to poor planning and lack of effective youth-development policies (Obi-Ani & Isiani, 2020; Okeke et al., 2020).

Successive Nigerian governments, non-governmental bodies, and international organisations have recognised the importance of youths in nation-building and have initiated several youth empowerment/poverty alleviation programmes. However, the impact of many of these programmes has left much to be desired, as many of such programmes have remained inconclusive (Holt & Neely, 2011; Ogunmefun & Okuneye, 2020). Against this backdrop, this study seeks to assess the impact of many of these programmes on the welfare of Nigerian youths and suggest a way forward.

## 2. Review of literature and theoretical framework

Youth empowerment can be defined as young people acquiring requisite skills and values for independence and self-sustenance. In the 21st century, skill development has been identified as the future wave. That is the current trend that will promote sustainable income and well-being. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019) admits that youth skill development is a sine qua non to the growth of many nations. When youths are thoroughly built with essential skills, they are likely to stand alone and assist others in finding their bearing in the emerging world. It is believed that when youths are empowered, they will likely promote overall national development and increase employability and gross domestic products. One of the main advantages of youth empowerment schemes is ensuring that youths are viable, engaged, and functional in solving personal and societal problems. As George et al. (2021) posited, skill acquisition and entrepreneurial empowerment remain vital for poverty alleviation in dwindling economic fortunes and massive unemployment.

The Nigerian society is notable for churning out various developmental initiatives targeted at the youths, aged, women, and even girls. These empowerment programmes cut across the Nigerian social, educational, economic, political, and psychological sectors. Several benefits have accrued to youth empowerment in Nigeria due to these initiatives. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019) outlines some benefits. These include making for the transfer of skills and work ethics and facilitating the process of nation-building and development. Also, it helps to reduce the crime rate, leading to self-employment and rapid industrialisation; it enables one to consider vital tenets of societal values and commit oneself to worthwhile values.

The country's youths have recently been a subject to be taken care of due to the alarming rate of unemployment. The government and other relevant stakeholders have attempted to make life easier

for the Nigerian youths through training and retraining programmes, empowerment programmes, entrepreneurship by the Nigerian government through its various agencies such as the World Bank, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and even private-sector philanthropists. Undoubtedly, some NGOs and notable private individuals like the Tony Elumelu Foundation and LEEP Africa, among others, have committed resources to ensure these unemployment crises are averted. All these were done to enhance the creation of jobs, reduction of poverty, and generation of income both for individuals and government, thereby bringing about economic diversification, which will help reduce overdependence on government and oil revenue, hence leading to economic growth and development (Maslow & Chung, 2013). Despite these initiatives, Nigeria's increasing unemployment rate has remained unabated, resulting in youth unrest, social exclusion, and general underdevelopment.

There are several other youths empowerment programmes in Nigeria, among which are Youth Empowering People (YEP), Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI); Youth Entrepreneur Support Program (YES-P); Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA); New Era Foundation, and N-Power Empowerment Programme, Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN), Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Africa Youth Empowerment Nigeria (AYEN). It is believed that graduates who are beneficiaries of the programme will help place the country in a strategic location regarding economic and political needs, yearnings, and aspirations (Holt & Neely, 2011). This will help the government of the day achieve self-sufficiency in food security, improve Nigeria's technological sphere, aid development and promote the wellness of the country's people through their quota.

Many programmes mandate equipping graduates with skills in software development, hardware service professionals, animators, graphic artists, building services professionals, artisans, and others to solve personal and societal problems. Many of these programmes aimed to inculcate the can-do spirit of innovation in a business establishment, wealth creation, and expansion (Heinze et al., 2010). Over one thousand entrepreneurs were assembled to showcase their talents and skills and guide them in innovative business makeup and capital initiative, which will likely increase their great ideas and dreams of being an entrepreneur materialised. As lofty as many of these programmes are, several challenges like corruption, politicisation, and policy inconsistencies, among others, are bedevilling the effectiveness of the programmes. Holt and Neely (2011) affirmed that despite some of these policies and programmes that showcase employability and entrepreneurship skills, there continued to be a persistent rise in youth unemployment and vulnerability. Table 1 below shows some of the various empowerment programmes in Nigeria by the government, private organisations, and international organisations targeted at the Nigerian youths.

### **2.1. Modernisation theory**

The study adopts the modernisation theory as a framework for the various empowerment programmes targeted at the Nigerian youths. Modernisation theory posited that development must be structured in line with the Western World for development to occur in third world nations. That is, programmes and policies must be Western-oriented to gain wider acceptability. Hence, most of the developmental programmes in many third-world countries are often Western-oriented without considering the peculiar challenges of each milieu (Mahakwe, 2022). This has primarily contributed to Nigeria's poor implementation of many youth empowerment programmes. This theory portrays youths' empowerment programmes in the light of westernisation and explains the reason behind the abysmal performance of many of those programmes in addressing the needs of the target population. The Nigerian government and other stakeholders relies heavily on foreign aids, loans and helps from many of these Western nations and more often than not, these benefits come with stringent conditions (Ukponu et al., 2022). This ultimately affect the implementation of many of the policies initiated by the Nigerian government.

**Table 1. Various youths empowerment programmes in Nigeria and their year of establishment**

<b>Empowerment Programmes</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
International Centre for Development Affairs	2022
Youth Entrepreneur Support Program (YES-P)	2020
Young Entrepreneurs of Nigeria (YEN)	2017
Npower	2016
African Youth Empowerment Nigeria (AYEN)	2015
Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P)	2012
Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS)	2012
Diamon- Crest for Youth Education Foundation	2012
Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (YEDI)	2011
Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin)	2011
Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA)	2011
Foundation for Skills Development	2009
Lagos Digital Village	2004
LEAP Africa	2002
New Era Foundation	2000
Youth for Technology Foundation	2001
United Nations of Youth Network Nigeria	1991

Source: Researchers' compilation, 2022

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Research design and study population

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with a quantitative research method for the data collection and was conducted in the two major cities in southwest Nigeria, Lagos and Ibadan metropolis. The southwest is one of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and the Oyo States. The zones house over forty-five million Nigerians (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). However, only two cities of Lagos and Ibadan metropolises, were selected for this study due to their cosmopolitan nature, population size, and economic activities. Lagos, for instance, is the only city in Nigeria referred to as a megacity because of its over 20 million people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Akanle & Adejare, 2017). Also, the city of Ibadan was chosen because it is the third most populous city in Nigeria and formerly the second most populous city in West Africa. These two cities also play host to most Nigerian youths searching for a better life. The choice of this study in these two cities is also premised on the fact that the United Nations (2017) has reported that between 2018 and 2050, 35% of Nigerians will be urban dwellers. The study population comprises youths between 15–35 years living in the study location of Ibadan and Lagos metropolises. The study's focus on youths is based on the African Union definition that defined youths as those within the age bracket of 15–35 years.

#### 3.2. Sample size determination

The sample size for this study was determined based on methodological prescriptions of Taherdoost (2017) drawn from Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula for an unknown population. For this study, a sample size of 370 is recommended using the formula, and this is because the population of the study exceeded 10,000. It considers a 50% variance or heterogeneity of people, 95% confidence level, and 5% margin error. However, since the sample size is less than the population of the study, this study, therefore, adopts the principles of Bartlett et al. (2001), which suggests that the most effective way to meet the minimum samples is to

increase the sample size by 50% in the first distribution. Thus, the sample size for respondents was increased from 370 to 555 to make up for possible attrition.

### 3.3. Sampling technique and research instrument

The study adopts a multi-stage sampling method, a variant of the probability sampling method, to identify and select the study participants. The first stage involves the purposive selection of Lagos and Ibadan metropolises. The second stage also involves the purposive sampling of the two local government areas in Lagos and Ibadan cities. Alimosho and Ikeja local government areas were selected in Lagos, while Ibadan North and Ibadan North East were selected in Ibadan, Oyo State, due to their peculiarities. For instance, Alimosho is the largest local government area in Lagos State, with about 2 million people, and houses several slums due to the increasing urban sprawl. Also, Ikeja is the State capital with its government house and serves as the State’s industrial hub.

Moreover, Ikeja consists of urban and commercial areas such as Agidingbi, Alausa, Akiode, GRA, Ogba, Opebi, Oregun, and Magodo, where most young people find employment opportunities. Furthermore, both Ibadan North and Ibadan North East LGAs are among the four main local government areas that make up Ibadan. The State government secretariat in Agodi is in one of the selected local government areas.

The third stage was the random selection of eight (8) urban communities within the selected four (4) local government areas of Lagos and Ibadan metropolis. This gave each of the communities in the LGAs equal chances of being selected. For Alimosho LGA, the following communities Agbado/Oke-Odo, Ayobo/Ipaja, Alimosho LG, Egbe/Idimu, Ikotun/Igando, and Mosan Okunola, make up the LGA (Fagbohun et al., 2020). In addition, the LGAs contain the urban area of Egbeda/Akowonjo. Many in-migrants are found in these places due to the relatively affordable lifestyle. The last stage was the convenience administration of the questionnaire to respondents in places of worship, sports viewing centres, sports centres and job interviewing/recruitment centres, motor/motorcycle park offices, and newspaper stands. This is because many youths (15–35) are found in large numbers in these various locations. The selected communities in each of the selected four LGAs in the two cities are presented in Table 2 below:

The study adopted a quantitative method of data collection. Therefore, the research instrument involves using a self-prepared questionnaire administered to respondents (youths between the age of 15–35) to elicit information on their socio-demographic characteristics and the impacts of the various empowerment programmes on their well-being. At the end of the study, 425 copies of the questionnaire were duly filled out and returned for analysis. The data were analysed using frequency distribution tables and cross tabulation. All the ethical guidelines of anonymity, voluntariness and malfeasance were strictly adhered to in this study as respondents were duly informed of the purpose of the study and had the opportunity to either be part of the study or otherwise.

**Table 2. Shows the study areas for the respondents**

State	LGA	Urban Centres
Lagos	Alimosho LGA	Ipaja/Ayobo and Egbeda area
	Ikeja LGA	Oregun and Ogba area
Oyo (Ibadan)	Ibadan North LGA	Agbowo and Ojoo area
	Ibadan North East LGA	Total Garden and Orita Bashorun area

Source: Researchers’ Compilation, 2022

## 4. Results and findings

### 4.1. Demographic data analysis

Table 3 depicts the distribution of respondents' socio-demographic traits. The table shows that the respondents within the age category of 20 to 34 have the highest frequency, 319, representing 75%. This indicates that most of the respondents for this study are in their active youth age and duly qualify for this study. Only 65 out of the 425 respondents, representing 15.3%, were between

**Table 3. Percentage distribution of respondents by selected socio-demographic characteristics**

Selected variables	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Age group (Years)</b>		
15-19	65	15.3
20-24	128	30.1
25-29	114	26.8
30-34	77	18.1
35	41	9.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	232	54.6
Female	193	45.4
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
No school	11	2.6
Primary	9	2.1
Secondary	329	77.4
Tertiary	76	17.9
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	330	77.6
Widowed	13	3.1
Married	70	16.5
Separated	8	1.9
Divorce	4	.9
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	354	83.3
Islam	63	14.8
African Traditional Religion	5	1.2
Others, specify	3	.7
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employed	99	23.3
Self-employed	169	39.8
Underemployed	102	24.0
Unemployed	55	12.9
<b>Monthly income</b>		
Less than N50,000	213	50.1
N51,000-N100,000	138	32.3
<b>Number of years spent in the city</b>		
5 to 10 years	99	23.4
10 years and above	326	76.6
<b>Total</b>	425	100

Source: Researchers' survey, 2022

15 to 19, while 41 respondents, representing 9.6% of the total respondents, were 35 years and above. In other words, respondents below 19 and aged 35 and above constitute the study participants' lowest percentage. Also, from the table, 232 (54.6%) of the 425 respondents, the highest, were male, while 193 (45.4%) were female out of 425 respondents. This indicates that the research adequately covers both the male and female populations. The table also shows that only 11 (2.6%) did not go to school at all, 9 (2.1%) had primary school education, and the highest of the respondents, 329 (77.4%), had secondary education. In contrast, the remaining 76 respondents (17.9%) had tertiary education. Also, 330 (77.6%) out of the 425 respondents, which is the highest, are single, 13 (3.1%) were widowed, 70 (16.5%) were still married, 8 (1.9%) had been separated, while only 4 (.9%) were divorced. On respondents' religious affiliation, 324 of the respondents, representing 83.3%, which is the highest, are Christians; 63 of the respondents, representing 14.8%, practice Islam, while the remaining three, representing .7%, practice other religions like atheism.

On their employment status, 99 of the respondents, representing 23.3 per cent, which is the lowest, are employed, and 102 of the respondents, representing 24.0%, are underemployed (these are the people whose income do not match their academic qualification). Only 55 of the respondents, representing 12.9 per cent, have no employment at all, while 169 of the respondents, representing 39.8%, are the highest, are self-employed. This means the majority of the respondents are self-employed. On monthly income, the highest respondents, 213, representing 50.1 per cent, earn less than N50,000 monthly, while only 38 of the respondents, representing 8.9 per cent, earn above N151,000 monthly.

**Table 4** assesses the impact of various youth empowerment programmes in Southwest Nigeria. From the table, 41 of the respondents, representing 9.6%, are not sure if they have heard of any empowerment/poverty alleviation programme, 67 of the respondents, representing 15.8%, have not heard of any empowerment/poverty alleviation programme. In contrast, the highest of the respondents, 317, representing 74.6%, have heard of empowerment/poverty alleviation programmes. Also, the table shows that the majority of the respondents, 352, representing 82.8 per cent, have not benefitted from any empowerment programme, and only 73 of the respondents, representing 17.2%, have benefitted from empowerment programmes. This implies that although many of these empowerment programmes have been initiated by different government agencies, few people have benefited. Also, 19 of the respondents, representing 26.0 per cent, have benefitted from Lagos state youth empowerment, 17 (23.3%) have benefitted from OSOPADEC, and 17 (23.3%) have benefitted from Npower, 18 (24.7%) have benefitted from Vocational training. In contrast, the remaining 2 (2.7%) have benefitted from WAPA.

On the resourcefulness of the empowerment programme, 28 of the respondents, representing 38.4 per cent, think they are not resourceful, while the highest of the respondents, 45, representing 61.6 per cent, found them resourceful. The table further shows that of the 73 respondents who have benefitted from any empowerment programmes, 69.9 per cent are no longer on the empowerment programme, while only 30.1 per cent are still on the empowerment programme. Furthermore, 56.9 per cent of the respondents do not have what they are doing presently related to the empowerment programme they once benefitted from, while only 41.2 per cent have what they are currently doing related to the empowerment programme they once benefitted from. This speaks a lot about the sustainability of some of these empowerment programmes. Lastly, 292 of the respondents, representing 68.7 per cent, do not think the Nigerian government is doing enough for the youth population at all, while only 32 of the respondents, representing 7.5%, think the Nigerian government is doing enough for the youth population.

## **5. Impact of various empowerment programmes on the youths' well-being in southwest Nigeria**

**Table 5** indicate that  $\chi(1) = 3.306^a$ ,  $p = .770$ . The statistical result shows no significant relationship between respondents' knowledge of empowerment/poverty alleviation programmes and



**Table 4. Percentage distribution of respondents by impact of various youth empowerment programmes on their well-being in Southwest Nigeria**

<b>Selected variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Heard of any empowerment/ poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria</b>		
Not sure	41	9.6
No	67	15.8
Yes	317	74.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Benefitted from any empowerment programme</b>		
No	352	82.8
Yes	73	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Name of empowerment programme benefitted from (For those who have benefitted)</b>		
Lagos State youth empowerment	19	26.0
OSOPADEC	17	23.3
Npower	17	23.3
Vocational training	18	24.7
<b>Resourcefulness of the empowerment programme benefitted from</b>		
Not resourceful	28	38.4
Resourceful	45	61.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
Yes	22	30.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>If not, is what you are doing presently connected to the empowerment programme you once benefitted from</b>		
Maybe	1	1.9
No	29	56.9
Yes	21	41.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Think the Nigerian government is doing enough for the youth population in southwest Nigeria</b>		
Not at all	292	68.7
No, I don't think so	101	23.8
Yes, I think so	32	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researchers' survey, 2022

benefiting from the programme. Despite the various poverty alleviation programmes, it has not culminated in improvement in the welfare of youths in the city. Also, from Table 4, 69.9 per cent of the respondents are no longer on the empowerment programmes they once benefitted from, and 56.9 per cent do not have their current engagement related to the empowerment programme they once benefitted from. This means that many of these programmes like the Npower, SURE-P, YEDI,

**Table 5. Relationship between knowledge of empowerment programme and benefit from it**

Heard of any empowerment programme	Benefit from any		
	No	Yes	Total
Not sure	95.0%	5.0%	100
No	86.8%	13.2%	100
Yes	91.8%	8.2%	100
<b>Total</b>	90.8%	9.2%	100
<b>Pearson's Chi-square (df)</b>	3.306 <sup>a</sup>		
<b>Significance value</b>	.770		

AYEN, YEN, YEP, and YOUWIN, among others, do not have any lasting impact on the target participants. Hence, they are not sustainable. More importantly, the result is that almost all the respondents, 92.5% (not at all + I don't think so), do not think that the Nigerian government is doing enough to ensure that these programmes have lasting impacts on its teeming youth population. This has resulted in the constant movement of the youths from place to place in search of greener pastures.

## 6. Discussion of findings

For many decades, the world has witnessed unprecedented urbanisation due to rural-urban migration, particularly in developing societies (Ibeabuchi et al., 2018). Eremia, Toma and Sanduleac (2017) averred that the rapid expansion of urban life had resulted from in-migration from rural areas to urban centres due to fast socio-economic growth and development. This has increased housing challenges, infrastructural deficit, unemployment, crime, and traffic congestion (Ibeabuchi et al., 2018; Imhonopi and Urim, 2018). Most worrisome is the fact that as a result of the increasing migration of youths from their rural communities to the urban centres, the rural areas are experiencing a dwindling of talents and potential mainly due to the infrastructural deficit that is primarily responsible for youths' movement into the city centres (Uma et al., 2013). However, it is noted by George et al. (2014) that the loss of young men and women experienced in the rural communities has not translated into gains for the urban centres. This situation was described by Adepoju (2019) as migrating from rural poverty to urban miseries.

The findings of this study show that there is no significant relationship between respondents' knowledge of empowerment programmes and their benefits from them. This implies that although there has been various youth empowerment/ poverty alleviation programmes, it has not impacted the well-being of southwest youths. This finding resonates with Odunlami and Akanle (2021), positing that unemployment is among the most formidable and life-threatening challenges in many African countries. Estimates from the World Bank and African Development Bank in 2020 put youth unemployment in Africa at 60 per cent. Holt and Neely (2011) identified the Nigerian government's various empowerment/ poverty alleviation programmes. It was affirmed that irrespective of how well these policies were conceived, the processes have remained inconclusive, leading to a persistent rise in youth unemployment and vulnerability. Thus, instead of improved living conditions, many face untold hardship in terms of housing and access to necessities of life.

## 7. Conclusion and recommendation

Flowing from the above, it is evident that despite several empowerment/ poverty alleviation programmes by different levels of the Nigerian governments, private individuals, NGOs, and international organisations targeted at the youths in southwest Nigeria, there has not been much impact on the welfare of the youths in the region. Instead, many have continued to live in abject poverty, with the urban centres facing the threats of crimes, insecurity, and other related crises. As it is often said, policymakers in Nigeria are not bereft of sound policies; the challenge has instead

been with the political will for proper implementation. Some of these programmes lack consistency due to government change, which is mainly responsible for their lack of sustainability.

Based on the study findings, it was recommended that empowerment/ poverty alleviation programmes must be adequately monitored to ensure that those who need them are the beneficiaries. Beyond political expediency and as a reward for thuggery during electioneering campaigns, empowerment programmes must ensure that those who benefit need it and are monitored until they make the best out of them. Also, non-governmental organisations must ensure they seek adequate data on unemployed people and identify the area of interest of many people before embarking on empowering them. This will ensure the right people get the right skill, and society will become better for it. Furthermore, there is a need for a National Youth Trust Fund (NYTF), where the Nigerian youths who have undergone empowerment can access start-up funds and use the knowledge garnered in such programmes. This will ensure the sustainability of the programmes and bring about wealth creation among Nigerian youths.

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