Innovations

Evaluation of the Livelihood Improvement: Family Enterprise Project for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) Programme on Living Standard of Youths in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The Study Evaluated the Effect of the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise Project for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) Programme on Living Standard of Youths in Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; describe the social economic characteristics of the youth beneficiaries; ascertain the socioeconomic status of LIFE-ND beneficiaries before the programme; identify the socioeconomic status of LIFE-ND beneficiaries after the programme; and investigate the changes in youth problem behaviours. A purposive sampling procedure was applied in the selection of one hundred and twenty-five (125) respondents for the study. The data involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The result showed that majority (63.2%) of the respondents were male. The mean age of the beneficiaries was 30 years. Majority (52.0%) of the respondents in the study area were married. Only about 42.4% of the respondents had tertiary education. The mean household size in the beneficiaries was 4 persons. The mean farm size in the area is 1.12 hectares. The mean farming experience of the beneficiaries was 3 years. It was observed that the overall t-value for difference in behavioural changes before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was 6.021. This implies that the difference in gambling, drinking, smoking, and womanizing/prostitution before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was highly significant. The study showed that out of the 23 material items examined in the study only 16 of them showed significant differences before and after participation. There is was significant difference between the cultural possession of item before and after the LIFE-ND programme. The study showed that there was a significant difference in poultry farming activities (t-value = -9.939; $p<0.01$) before and after participation at 1% level of significance. There was a significant difference in ability to read English (t-value = -2.152; $p<0.05$), membership of social clubs (t-value = 4.221; $p<0.01$), income level (t-value = -8.005; $p<0.01$), Socioeconomic status of the youth beneficiaries (t-value = -9.197; $p<0.01$) before and after participation. The study recommended that there should be need to expand the programme to cover more beneficiaries given the positive effect of the programme on their standard of living.

Keywords: *1.Livelihood improvement; 2.family enterprise; 3.living standard; 4.youth empowerment; 5.vices curbing.*

Introduction

Nigeria, being Africa's most populous nation, has 42 percent of the youth and 36 percent of the women either unemployed or underemployed. The specific issue of youth underemployment in the rural areas assessed at 23.5 percent requires review to reduce poverty both now and into the future (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2020). Oil exports which represent 95 percent of export income and 70 percent of government income, have been declining since 2014 because of marked down oil production brought about by

falling international costs and expanding sabotage of oil production facilities in the Niger Delta region by unsettled youth (Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (LIFE-ND), 2019) (IFAD, 2019).

Nigeria is transcendently a rural economy with more than 60 percent of the populace living in rural areas, 90 percent of whom are employed in subsistence farming. Rural poverty was assessed at 44.9 percent in 2013 against an urban poverty rate of 12.6 percent (National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS), 2015). Inaccessibility to land, private sector exclusion, and absence of starting capital and dependable market outlets deter women and youths from taking part in agriculture to work out their livelihood (NNHS, 2015). Smallholder productivity is often under 70 percent of the potential and is declining because of soil depletion, low take-up of innovation, poor agricultural practices, and low support of the private sector in extension services (LIFE-ND, 2019).

The LIFE-ND which started in Nigeria in 2019straightforwardly upholds Nigeria's agricultural policy and the vital system for youth business and job creation (LIFE-ND, 2017). The LIFE-ND project funded by IFAD is aimed at enhancing income, food security and job creation for rural youths within the age bracket of 18-35 years and women headed household with children below 15 years through the incubation model in Niger Delta states of Abia, Bayelsa, Edo, Delta, Ondo, Cross River, Imo, Akwa Ibom and Rivers (Ewepu, 2021).This Strategic Framework focus on the growing number of unemployed youth, particularly in rural areas.

As stated in LIFE-ND (2019) by IFAD (2019), project design reports, the two main components that encompass the activities of LIEF-ND are; enhancement of economic opportunity for rural youth and women headed household; and project management and coordination. The goal of component 1 is to work with the foundation of profitable agribusiness by beneficiaries, demonstrated by the quantity of paid jobs, youth and poor women's responsibility, expanded ability to handle work and business, and further developed market investment and access (IFAD, 2019). The normal outcomes of Component 1 are: market-driven rural business incubators reinforcement; production, efficiency and showcasing of agro-entrepreneurs development through public-private partnership (PPP) models; market access, cooperation and profitability of beneficiaries and market actors upgrade through manageable enterprises and further development of market foundation; and increased simplicity of beneficiaries agribusiness. The outcome of component 2 (Project Management and Coordination) is to efficiently and effectively manage project achieving results withcommunication and knowledge management integrated in allaspects of operations (IFAD, 2019).Nigeria's most elevated potential for good work creation in agriculture is in the south, including the Niger Delta, where little agribusinesses have exhibited exceptional accomplishment under the now closed, IFAD-financed Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP). Under CBNRMP youth are occupied with agriculture based on high market demand, undiscovered freedoms to deliver and market profitable products, and high private-sector premium in sectoral development (IFAD, 2017). The LIFE-ND project utilizes the incubator and *incubatee* model steered by CBNRMP where profitable rural agribusinesses were created with, to coach adjoining youth to develop more noteworthy volumes, prompting higher value enterprises and community livelihoods, and occupations for the youth. The project addresses the articulated gender hole in access by women to land, useful resources, innovation, finance, and markets. This plan of LIFE-ND further expands on the accomplishments of IFAD-helped Value Chain Development Project (VCDP) that keeps on making maintainable partners' foundation which connects rural smallholders to private off-takers; just as, the IFAD-helped Rural Finance Institution Building Project (RUFIN) that created financial institutions in rural areas and elevated neighbourhood level investment funds to raise venture reserves (IFAD, 2019).Previous governments in Nigeria had put forth a lot of attempts to raise and return agriculture to its past glory. This was done through the creation of agricultural and rural development programmes to address the agriculture/food and poverty issues confronting the nation (Ojo *et al.*, 2013). Some of these programmes were: National Accelerated Food Production Project (NAFPP) 1974, Agricultural Development Project (ADP) 1974, River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) 1975, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) 1976, Green Revolution (GR) 1979, Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP), 1980, Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) 1986 and National Agricultural Support Project 1992, (Gambo, 2016).

As indicated by Egeonu (2014) regardless of the endeavours of the different offices of development or rural areas, Nigeria is sinking further in underdevelopment and poverty particularly in the rural areas of the Niger

Delta. There is still the significant expense of food, expanding food import charges, the high pervasiveness of poverty and the issue of food frailty in the country. Nigeria is as of now one of the world's biggest food importers. In 2014, Nigeria imported about 3.8 million tonnes of wheat and 2.9 million tonnes of rice (IFAD, 2015).Wages in rural areas are low subsequently rural populace stays poor. Smallholder agriculture, the main occupation of the people in rural areas in Nigeria, is rain-fed described by helpless capital development. The issue of poverty in the nation has been depicted as "broad and extreme" (World Bank, 2016). It is worth noting that poverty rate is as high as 80% in some southern states, compared with the 64% national figure (LIFE-ND, 2019). Consequently, the poverty circumstance of the rural poor and weak groups in agricultural nations like Nigeria, and the requirement for its improvement, have prompted the conceptualization of different designated and non-designated poverty-lightening programmes worldwide. An illustration of such programmes is LIFE-ND which was designed to resolve the issue of poverty by working on the livelihood, and everyday environment of rural youths and female-headed households, utilizing the incubators and incubatees model, which is viewed as a proficient and viable way to deal with poverty reduction and along these lines, in the implementation of LIFE-ND in Nigeria (IFAD, 2019). Since the beginning of the LIFE-ND in 2019, no evaluation has been directed on the effect of the program either on the productivity or the livelihood of the members. There is anyway shortage of information on the effect of the program on the productivity of the marginalized and vulnerable participants in the study area. It is not exactly clear how much the LIFE-ND programme had affected the productivity and day-to-day environment of profiting rural networks in Delta State. This study will be conducted to evaluate the effect of the livelihood improvement family enterprise project for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) programme on living standard of youths in Delta State, Nigeria. This study was thus conceptualised to evaluate the effect of the livelihood improvement family enterprise project for the Niger Delta (LIFE-ND) programme on living standard of youths in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it was carried out to ascertain the socioeconomic status of LIFE-ND beneficiaries before and after the programme; investigate the changes in youth problematic behaviours; examine the material and cultural possession of LIFE-ND beneficiaries before and after the programme; assess the social participation of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND programme.

It was hypothesised that there is no significant difference between SES of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND programme and there is no significant difference in the behaviour of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND programme.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework detailed how the dependent variable relates with the independent variables in the study as shown in figure 2.1. The dependent variables which are the Socioeconomic Status (SES) of the beneficiaries are divided into; Income level, behavioural change, Social participation, Material possession and Cultural possession. The independent variable the level of youths participation in the LIFE-ND programme. Thus, the study seeks to know how the impact of LIFE-ND programme has led to a change in the SES of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries.

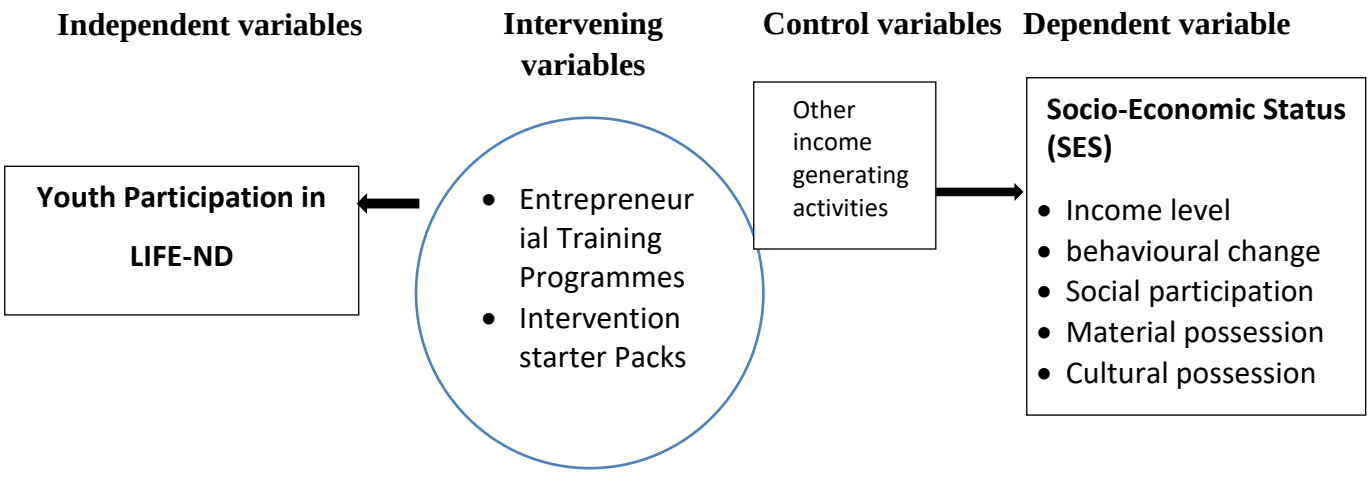

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework of Analysis

Methodology

This study was be carried out in Delta State. Delta State is an oil-producing state in Nigeria situated in the region known as Niger Delta with a population of5,663,362(male 2,888,315 and female of 2,775,047) (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016). The State covers a total land area of 16,842km^2 (Federal Republic of Nigeria Gazette, 2007). The State lies between longitude 5^0.00 and 6^{0}45^{0}E and latitude 5^0.00 and 6^0.30N. It is bounded in the north by Edo State, the south by Bayelsa and River State, the east by Anambra State and the west by Ondo State. The state was created on August 27th, 1991 from the defunct Bendel State. Its administrative capital is the city of Asaba. It has a coast belt interlace with rivulets that form parts of the Niger Delta.
Delta State consists of twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas grouped into three agricultural zones which are: Delta South, Delta North, and Delta Central. There are 9 Local Government Areas in Delta North: Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Ika Northeast, Ika South, Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, Ukwuani. There are 8 Local Government Areas in Delta Central: Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Okpe, Sapele, Udu, Uvwie, Ughelli North, Ughelli South. There are 8 Local Government Areas in Delta South: Bomadi, Burutu, Isoko North, Isoko South, Patani, Warri North, Warri South, and Warri Southeast. The state enjoys a tropical climate with two distinct seasons namely: the rainy season (March-November) and the dry season (December-March). Rainfall is at its highest peak in July. Annual rainfall is about 256.5mm to 190mm in the North. The temperature varies between 20^{o}c and 34^{o}c. The natural vegetation of the State varies from mangrove swamps along with the coastal areas to an evergreen forest in the freshwater zone and derived savannah in the north. The State is richly endowed with fertile agricultural land that is suitable for agricultural production and their main occupation is farming and fishing. Major food crops and cash crops are grown in the State include Maize, Cassava, Yam, Plantain, Vegetables e.g. green leaves, bitter leaf, scent leaf, waterleaf, etc. fruits such as oranges, banana, pineapples, paw-paw, guava, etc. They also engage in livestock farming such as pigs, goats, poultry birds, fisheries, etc. and the sale of agro-allied products.

A purposive sampling procedure was applied in the selection of one hundred and twenty five (125) respondents for this study. This involved selection of all the incubatees in the ongoing LIFE-ND programme. A complete list of all the incubatees was gotten from the LIFE-ND office at Ibusa, Delta State.

Data for this study were collected by the use of structured interview schedule. The interview schedule was administered by the researcher and trained enumerators. The interview schedule was divided into the following sections:

- Socioeconomic characteristics of LIFE-ND beneficiaries;
- Socioeconomic status indicators of LIFE-ND beneficiaries:
- Material possession items
- Cultural possession items
- Economic possession/secondary income generating activities
- Social participation items

Face validity was ascertained by consulting the research supervisor and other experts. It was thereafter restructured in accordance with the corrections.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument used for the study, the questionnaire used were pilot tested. Test-retest reliability method was carried out according to Eromedoghene and Ovwigho (2019).

a) Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents were measured as follows;
    - Sex: Sex was measured by nominal value of male (1) and female (2)
    - Age: Respondents were asked to indicate their chronological age in years.
    - Marital status: This was measured by nominal value of single (1), married (2), divorced (3) and widowed (4).
    - Education: Level of Education was measured by the number of years equivalent to the certificate obtained. For those who had in-complete education, the equivalent number of years when the person stopped was taken as number of years of education. No formal education was scored zero (0).

- Household size: Respondents were asked to indicate the number of persons in a household under the head of the farm family.
- Farm size: This was measured in hectares.
- Income: This was measured in naira (₦)
- Farming experience: This was measured in years.

The data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics.Objectives (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) were achieved using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages and mean. The null hypotheses HO_1, HO_2, HO_3 and HO_4 were tested using independent sample t-test

Model specification

The modified formula for point-biserial correlation

$$rpbis = \frac{MP - MN}{ST} * \sqrt{p(1-p)} \quad \text{.....(1)}$$

Source: Henrysson (1971) in Ovwigho, B.O. (2009) and Eromedoghene and Ovwigho (2019). Validation of Socio-economic Status Indicators

Where;

rpbis = Symbol for Point–Biserial correlation

MP = Mean criterion score for heads of farm families who possessed the item.

MN = Mean criterion score for heads of farm families who did not possessed the item.

ST = Standard deviation of the criterion scores

P = Proportion of heads of farm families who possessed the item.

Formula for T-test

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{N_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{N_2}}} \quad \text{.....(2)}$$

Source: Ryabko, Stognienko and Shokin (2004). A new test for randomness and its application to some cryptographic problems

Where:

$\overline{X}_1$ = mean of first set of values

$\overline{X}_2$ = mean of second set of values

S_1= standard deviation of first set of values

S_2 = standard deviation of second set of values

N_1= total number of values in first set

N_2 = total number of values in the second set

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

The result in Table 4.1 shows the distribution of socioeconomic characteristics of LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area. The socioeconomic characteristics examined include; sex, age, marital status, educational level, household size, farm size and farming experience.

Sex: The result in Table 4.1 reveals that majority (63.2%) of the respondents were male while 36.8% were female. This result implies that LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area is dominated by males.

Age: The result in Table 1 shows that about 44.40% of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries were in the age range of between 26 and 31 years. The mean age of the beneficiaries was 30 years. The implication is that there is a

deliberate policy in the choice of LIFE-ND beneficiaries that are within the active productive workforce. Beneficiaries in this age group are considered active and better risk takers in the sense that they are rational decision makers and time is at their disposal to establish reputation within the community. This result agrees with the assertion of Alufohai, Ugolor and Edemhanria (2015) that younger farmers tend to be more willing to participate in agricultural programmes than older ones.

Marital status: Majority (52.0%) of the respondents in the study area were married while 1.6% were divorced. About 42.4% were single while 4.0% were widowed. This result is a clear indication that most of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area have stable homes. Also, the fact that most were married suggests a sense of responsibility.

Educational level: As shown in Table 1, 0.8% of the respondents had no formal education. About 8.8% had primary education while 48.0% had secondary education. Only about 42.4% of the respondents had tertiary education. This result implies that majority of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area are educated and generally have positive attitude toward accepti nh7561g new innovation and development initiatives as affirmed by Shehu, Yusuf and Egwuma (2021).

Household size: Majority (50.4%) of the respondents had a household size of 4 – 6 persons. About 36.0% had 1 – 3 persons while 13.6% of the respondents had 7 – 9 persons. The mean household size in the study area was 4 persons. This result is an indication that LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area have small families which may not be able to act as an advantage for labour availability. According to Alufohai, Ugolor and Edemhanria (2015) having a large household size has implications for access to family labour by the respondents.

Farm size: The distribution of LIFE-ND beneficiaries according to farm size reveals that most (94.4%) of the respondents had less than 1 hectare of farm lands. About 1.6% had between 1 – 1.99 and 3-3.99 hectares. Only 2.4% of the respondents had between 2 – 2.99 hectares of farm land. The mean farm size in the study area is 1.12 hectares which indicated that LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area are actually small scale farmers. Akinyemi, Aiyelaagbe, and Akyeampong (2010) reported that a large percentage of agricultural production in Nigeria is still very much in the hands of small scale farmers who incorporate it into different farming systems. This finding is supported by Anyaegbunam, Nto, Okoye and Madu (2012) who found that farmers' average farm holdings was about 2ha. Small size of farms is likely to limit yield but use of improved technologies can enhance their production efficiency. It was in this realization that made the programme to have as an objective the provision of strategic inputs to farmers to improve yields though the size is small.

Farming experience: The result in Table 1 reveals that 26.4% of the respondents had between 5 – 8 years of farming experience. Most (71.2%) had 1 – 4 years of farming experience while 2.4% had 9 – 12 years of farming experience. The result further indicated that the mean farming experience was 3 years which indicated that LIFE-ND beneficiaries in the study area were relatively new in the business.

Table 1 Socioeconomic characteristic of the respondents

Variable	**Frequency (%)**	**Mean/Mode**	**Remarks**
Sex			
Male	79 (63.2)	Male	Male dominated
Female	46 (36.8)		
Age			
20 - 25 years	16 (12.8)		
26 – 31 years	55 (44.0)	30 years	Average
32 – 37 years	53 (42.4)		

38 – 43 years	1 (0.8)		
Marital status			
Single	53 (42.4)		
Married	65 (52.0)	Married	Dominated by married farmers
Divorced	2 (1.6)		
Widowed	5 (4.0)		
Education level			
Non formal	1 (0.8)		
Primary	11 (8.8)		
Secondary	60 (48.0)	Secondary	Dominated by secondary
Tertiary	53 (42.4)		
Household size			
1 – 3 persons	45 (36.0)		
4 – 6 persons	63 (50.4)	4 persons	Average
7 – 9 persons	17 (13.6)		
Farm size			
Less than 1 Ha	118 (94.4)	1.12 hectares	Average
1.00-1.99 Ha	2 (1.6)		
2.00-2.99 Ha	3 (2.4)		
3.00-3.99 Ha	2 (1.6)		
Farming experience			
1 – 4 years	89 (71.2)	3 years	Average
5 – 8 years	33 (26.4)		
9 – 12 years	3 (2.4)		

Behavioural Changes Before and After Participation in the LIFE-ND Programme

The results in Table 2 shows the behavioural changes of the youth beneficiaries before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme. The various behavioural traits that were of importance to this study were; gambling, drinking, smoking and womanizing/prostitution.

Gambling: The study revealed that 10.4% of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries were involved in gambling before their participation in the programme. After participation, the number of beneficiaries that were involved in gambling reduced to 0.8%.This result implies that youth involvement in LIFE-ND programme has the potential of reducing their desire to get involved gambling activities. This is attributed to the fact that being conscious of the amount of energy put into the work to make money, no one would like to misuse it away in gambling. Secondly, with the income they realize, they no longer look for other ways of gambling to look for money. According to

Christopher (2021) there are more downsides to gambling socially than economically. Without knowledge and restraint, it's very easy for some people to develop addictions and lose on more than just money, but their housing and social standing as well.

Drinking: The result from the study reveals that about 1.6% of the LIFE-ND beneficiaries were involved in drinking before participation in the programme. After participation, the percentage of beneficiaries involved in drinking was 2.4%. This result indicates that there was an increase in the percentage of LIFE-ND beneficiaries that were involved in drinking after participating in the programme. As a consequence of the steady income they achieve after the programme, they now have enough money to "enjoy" with. This result agrees with that of Azagba and Sharaf (2011) who stated that job strain increases drinking intensity for heavy drinkers

Smoking: In terms of smoking, about 8.0% of the beneficiaries were involved in smoking before participation in the LIFE-ND programme. After the programme, the number of beneficiaries involved in smoking reduced to 5.6%.This reduction in the percentage of smokers after the programme might be as the result of the enlightenment given to beneficiaries on the negative effects of smoking during the LIFE-ND programme. Secondly, with their engagement in work, they were no longer idle as most smokers smoke because they are idle. This result is consistent with that of Department for Health and Social Care [DHSC] (2017), who opined that smoking is associated with lower productivity and losses in economic output due to increases in mortality and morbidity for the smoking population.

Womanizing/prostitution: The percentage of beneficiaries involved in womanizing/prostitution before the LIFE-ND programme was 2.4%. This percentage was reduced to 0.8% after participation. This reduction might be as a result of the fact that beneficiaries now find themselves in more prestigious gainful employment which is agriculture. Thus, they find it difficult to spend such hard earned money on women. According to Ansah (2019), the more women a man chases, the more he chases away his destiny. The easiest way to snuff out a great future is to never be satisfied with one woman. If a spouse is an extremely hard thing for a man to keep, wealth will be extremely impossible for such a man to keep as well.Generally, it was observed that the overall t-value in Table 3 for the difference in behavioural changes before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was 6.021. This implies that the difference in gambling, drinking, smoking and womanizing/prostitution before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was highly significant. According to the IFAD Nigeria Country Programme Manager, Patrick Habamenshi agricultural potentials of the youths in the communities were being harnessed by the project and the project has addressed the challenges of youth restiveness and other social vices in the Niger Delta region by making them productive, self-reliant and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product, GDP, and also to create more employment in the region (Ewepu, 2021).

Table 2 Behavioural Changes Before and After Participation in the LIFE-ND Programme

Behaviour	**Before**	**After**
Gambling		
Yes	13 (10.4)	1 (0.8)
No	112 (89.6)	124 (99.2)
Drinking		
Yes	2 (1.6)	3 (2.4)
No	123 (98.4)	122 (97.6)
Smoking		
Yes	10 (8.0)	7 (5.6)
No	115 (92.0)	118 (94.4)
Womanizing/prostitution		

Yes	3 (2.4)	1 (0.8)
No	122 (97.6)	124 (99.2)

Table 3 Difference in Behavioural Changes Before and After Participation in the LIFE-ND Programme

Behavioural Changes	**Spearman correlation**	**Asymptotic standardized error**	**t-value**	**Sig.**	**Remarks**
Before and after participation (Gambling)	0.292	0.139	3.382	0.001	Significant
Before and after participation (Drinking)	0.407	0.284	4.936	0.000	Significant
Before and after participation (Smoking)	0.577	0.145	7.831	0.000	Significant
Before and after participation (Womanizing/prostitution)	0.582	0.236	7.938	0.000	Significant
Overall			**6.021**		

Difference between the material possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme

The difference between the material possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme is presented in Table 4. It can be observed that out of the 23 material items examined in the study only 16 of them showed significant differences before and after participation. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the material and cultural possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND program is hereby rejected. The various material possessions that showed significant differences include; ownership of cement house in the village (t-value = 4.094; $p<0.01$); ownership of cement house outside the village (t-value = 2.376; $p<0.01$); water system toilet (t-value = 13.219; $p<0.01$); ownership of land in the village (t-value = 4.472; $p<0.01$); motor cycle (t-value = 2.276; $p<0.01$); motor car (t-value = 4.114; $p<0.01$); CD/DVD player (t-value = 22.106; $p<0.01$); television (t-value = 4.217; $p<0.01$); executive chairs (t-value = 7.568; $p<0.01$); personal generator (t-value = 2.433; $p<0.01$); dining set table (t-value = 2.934; $p<0.01$); electric blender (t-value = 8.525; $p<0.01$); GSM (t-value = 2.755; $p<0.01$); wrist watch (t-value = 4.008; $p<0.01$); cutlasses (t-value = 8.593; $p<0.01$) and spade/shovel (t-value = 2.650; $p<0.01$).

The result in Table 4 further reveals that some of the material possessions by the LIFE-ND beneficiaries increased significantly after participation. These items include; ownership of cement house in the village; ownership of cement house outside the village; motor cycle; motor car; CD/DVD player; television; electric blender and cutlasses. The result suggests that participation in the LIFE-ND programme gives the youth more capacity to increase their possession of material items. The beneficiaries were able to acquire material items with the intervention of the programme than before the intervention. This could be attributed to the fact that their income had increased with the programme and so they were able to spend more out of it. This result tallies with that of Manga, Abubakar, Baba and Hassan (2015) who stated that participation in the programme caused the total number of household items owned by the beneficiaries to increase.

Generally, it was observed that the overall t-value for the difference between the material possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme was 4.342. This implies that the difference in material possession of the various material items before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was significant.

Table 4 Difference between the material possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme

Material possession	Before/after participation	$\bar{x}$	t-value	Sig.	Remarks
Ownership of cement house in the village	Before	4.0960	4.094	0.000	Significant
	After	4.4960			
Ownership of cement house outside the village	Before	3.9920	2.376	0.019	Significant
	After	4.1600			
Water system toilet	Before	5.3440	13.219	0.000	Significant
	After	4.1280			
Cabinet beds	Before	3.8720	0.030	0.976	Not Significant
	After	3.8640			
Ownership of land in the village	Before	4.3760	4.472	0.000	Significant
	After	3.9440			
Personal bore hole	Before	4.0800	1.462	0.146	Not Significant
	After	4.1760			
Motor cycle	Before	4.0480	2.276	0.025	Significant
	After	4.3440			
Motor car	Before	4.0080	4.114	0.000	Significant
	After	4.5040			
CD/DVD player	Before	4.0080	22.106	0.000	Significant
	After	7.5200			
Television	Before	3.9280	4.217	0.000	Significant
	After	4.6320			
Ceiling/table fan	Before	4.0320	0.000	1.000	Not Significant
	After	4.0320			
Executive chairs	Before	4.0240	7.568	0.000	Significant
	After	3.2800			
Personal generator	Before	4.5207	2.433	0.016	Significant
	After	3.6612			
Refrigerator	Before	4.4113	0.740	0.461	Not Significant
	After	4.2823			
Dining set table	Before	4.1680	2.934	0.004	Significant

	After	3.7680			
Electric blender	Before	4.4080	8.525	0.000	Significant
	After	5.8720			
Electric/ coal iron	Before	4.7680	0.119	0.906	Not Significant
	After	4.7520			
GSM	Before	4.4240	2.755	0.007	Significant
	After	4.1600			
Wrist watch	Before	4.3200	4.008	0.000	Significant
	After	3.9760			
Pairs of shoes	Before	3.9040	1.082	0.281	Not Significant
	After	4.0400			
Rooms with cemented floor	Before	4.0560	0.113	0.910	Not Significant
	After	4.0400			
Cutlasses	Before	2.9840	8.593	0.000	Significant
	After	4.4400			
Spade/shovel	Before	3.7520	2.650	0.009	Significant
	After	3.3680			
Overall			**4.342**		

Difference between the cultural possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme

As shown in Table 5, it can be observed that that there is a significant difference between the cultural possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme. These cultural items include single wrapper (t-value = 3.408; $p<0.01$) and George wrapper (t-value = 2.174; $p<0.05$). This result further shows that there was an increase in the possession of these cultural items as presented in Table 5. The difference was prompted by the fact that they now make or create income which enable them to have the capability to purchase such material items. In so many communities, these cultural items form one's social status. These items are regarded as status symbols.

The overall t-value for the difference between the cultural possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme was 2.791. This implies that the difference in cultural possession of the various cultural items before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was significant.

Table 5 Difference between the cultural possession of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme

Cultural possession	**Before/after participation**	$\bar{x}$	**t-value**	**Sig.**	**Remarks**
Single wrapper	Before	3.5200	3.408	0.001	Significant
	After	3.9280			
George wrapper	Before	3.8160	2.174	0.032	Significant
	After	4.0960			
Overall			**2.791**		

Income generating activities/economic items

The income generating activities/economic items of the beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND programme are presented in Table 6. The result shows that there was a significant difference in poultry farming activities (t-value = 9.939; p<0.01) before and after participation at 1% level of significance. This result further revealed that poultry farming activities of the beneficiaries increased after the LIFE-ND programme. This result is in agreement with that of Gambo, Muhammad, Abel & Muhammad (2017) who stated that IFAD programmes had positive impact on the farm income generating activities of participants. The result is in line with the core objectives of the LIFE-ND programme which is aimed at enhancing incomeand job creation for rural youths within the age bracket of 18-35 years and women headed household with children below 15 years through the incubation model in Niger Delta states of Nigeria (Ewepu, 2021).

The overall t-value for the difference between the income generating activities/economic items of youth before and after the LIFE-ND programme was 5.039. This implies that the difference in income generating activities/economic items before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was significant.

Table 6 Income generating activities/economic items

Income generating activities	**Before/after participation**	$\bar{x}$	**t-value**	**Sig.**	**Remarks**
Fish ponds	Before	2.3680	0.140	0.124	Not Significant
	After	2.3440			
Poultry	Before	0.6240	9.939	0.000	Significant
	After	3.2560			
Overall			**5.039**		

Difference between the social participation of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

The difference between the social participation of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program is presented in Table 7. The result showed that there was a significant difference in ability to read English (t-value = 2.152; p<0.05), ability to write in english (t-value = 4.391; p<0.01) and membership of social clubs (t-value = 4.221; p<0.01). It can be seen from the result of this study that the LIFE-ND programme gave the beneficiaries an opportunity to improve in their ability to read English language. This might be as a result of the fact that English language was a major means of communication during the programme.

Generally, it was observed that the overall t-value for the difference between the social participation of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program was 2.228. This implies that the difference in social participation of the youths before and after participation in the LIFE-ND programme was not significant.

Table 7 Difference between the social participation of youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

Social participation	**Before/after participation**	$\bar{x}$	**t-value**	**Sig.**	**Remarks**
Read in English	Before	3.4400	2.152	0.033	Significant
	After	3.5840			
Write in English	Before	3.6400	4.391	0.000	Significant
	After	3.7280			
Read your native dialect	Before	3.6800	1.420	0.158	Not Significant

	After	3.7440			
Membership of social clubs	Before	4.3600	4.221	0.000	Significant
	After	3.7920			
Official in a Christian organization	Before	3.9600	0.239	0.812	Not Significant
	After	3.9280			
Membership of cooperative	Before	3.6400	0.948	0.345	Not Significant
	After	3.7760			
Overall			**2.228**		

Difference between the income level of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

The result in Table 8 shows the difference between the income level of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program. This result reveals that there was a huge significant difference in the income level (t-value = 8.005; $p<0.01$) before and after participation. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the income level of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program is hereby rejected. It was further revealed that there was an increase in the income level of beneficiaries after the LIFE-ND programme. This finding agrees with that of Rozwadowska (2011), who noted that community-based youth empowerment programme helps to improve livelihoods of rural households in the areas of living conditions and health as a direct result of enhanced productivity and income.

Table 8 Difference between the income level of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

Income level	**Before/after participation**	$\bar{x}$	**t-value**	**Sig.**	**Remarks**
Income	Before	92,080.0000	8.005	0.000	Significant
	After	181,600.0000			

Difference between the socioeconomic status (SES) of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

The difference between the socioeconomic status (SES) of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program is shown in Table 9. This result reveals that there was a significant difference in the SES of the youth beneficiaries (t-value = 9.197; $p<0.01$) before and after participation. It was further revealed that there was an increase in the SES of the youth beneficiaries after the LIFE-ND programme. This study is in agreement with that of Illo, Ango, Usman and Aminu (2015) who stated that participating in to IFAD Programme has positive impact towards reducing poverty of the participants through improving their income and living standards. According to Alufohai, Ugolor and Edemhanria (2015), community-based youth empowerment programmes had positive effect on farmers in Nigeria since it improved the standard of living of beneficiaries. Also, Manga *et al.* (2015) concluded in their study that intervention of the youth empowerment programmes in Nigeria had improved the socioeconomic status of the beneficiaries because of the positive effect it had on their income, value of asset and their general well-being or livelihood.

Table 9 Difference between the socioeconomic status (SES) of the youth beneficiaries before and after the LIFE-ND program

Socioeconomic Status (SES)	Before/after participation	$\bar{x}$	t-value	Sig.	Remarks
Socioeconomic Status	Before	123.0000	9.197	0.000	Significant
	After	133.1905			

Conclusion

Based on the empirical evidence emanating from the findings of this study, the LIFE-ND has achieved its goal of improving the living standard of youth beneficiaries in Delta State, Nigeria in the period of study. The LIFE-ND had positive impact on the material and cultural possession, social participation, income and socioeconomic status of the participants. The study pointed out that the LIFE-ND programme was able to correct some negative behavioural traits among the participants.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study the following recommendations were made:

i. There may be need to expand the programme to cover more beneficiaries given the positive effect of the programme on their standard of living.
ii. The programme should be made more gender sensitive by incorporating more females as the study showed few women beneficiaries.
iii. Having impacted so much on agriculture, it is recommended that LIFE-ND programme be used as one of the means to transform agriculture in Nigeria in line with the agricultural transformation agenda.
iv. The LIFE-ND programme is recommended to cover more local government areas, villages and communities in the study area.

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