Melting the icebergs: mainstreaming Nigerian youths into cocoa production

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INTRODUCTION

• Agriculture in pre-oil boom
Cocoa was one of the major cash crop and earned Nigeria 2\textsuperscript{nd} in the World Market

• Oil boom and associated problems

Neglect of the farming sector

• Agricultural development and youth – the present
Youth is very important in cocoa farming because of the labour intensity
Problems of Agriculture

• Inability of the government to integrate youth into the mainstream of Agricultural development program

• Declining productivity of the cocoa farms and national output due to old age of farmers and ageing trees- Need for young farmers and young trees

Youth categories

• 14-35 years (UNESCO) Ghana
• 18-35 years (ILO, 2005) Nigeria
• 18-38 years (African Union, 2006)
Producers’ Age distribution pattern

Figure 1
QUALITIES OF YOUTH
• Youth in Nigeria are ages between 16-40 years
• They constitute 65 % of the labour force
• Active and change oriented
• Energetic,
• Dynamic,
• Eager to learn,
• Bounds spirit,
• Optimistic for future,
• Receptiveness to new ideas and
• Searching for avenue to direct their energies.

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Nigeria Cocoa Production is decreasing

PROBLEM
At an average age of 65 years, the population of Cocoa farmers in Nigeria will be completely depleted in the next decade

BENEFITS
- Increase in cocoa production
- Youth employment
- Better livelihood
- Increase in Nigeria contribution to World Market
- Increase Nigeria Gross Domestic Product

SOLUTION
Mainstreaming youths into cocoa farming through behavioural change (Extensive extension training, group formation in 14 major producing states, Platform formation, availability of inputs and role modelling)

SO WHAT?
If substantial youth participation in Cocoa production is attained, productivity will be boosted, export increased and balance of trade improved

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THE ICEBERGS

- However, environment and situations have changed their mind to an ice block (iceberg)
- Government policies have not favoured them
- High level of unemployment
- Vulnerability to unstable business environment
- High bank lending rate
- All these factors have led into migration from cocoa farming practices to other jobs
- Youth-job migrations are controlled by Push and Pull factors
MELTING THE ICEBERGS - PROCESS

ICEBERG (YOUTH. MIND) PROGRAMS

CUP (AGRICULTURAL)

The process of putting figure 1 in two will lead to 3 things

1. Break the 1
2. Break 2 or unprepared youth to work on
3. Break the 1 and 2

These are what happens when the government wants to bring the farm

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Process of mainstreaming
1. Involves melting the Icebergs through behavioural change model

Mainstreaming Process
Melt the icebergs through Behavioural change model
(Trans-theoretical model)
MELTING THE ICEBERGS

• Paradigm shift – Melting the iceberg is a paradigm shift, remoulding their minds to fit into the program

• Behavioural change model – The paradigm shift is a gradual process that uses Trans-theoretical model of five stages

• Stage – 1: Precontemplation (Youth are not ready to get involved; the present situation)

• Stage – 2: Contemplation (Building trust in them to get them ready)

• Stage – 3: Preparation (Putting everything in place – building the platform for involvement) setting up business incubation platform for youth

• Stage – 4: Action- implementation and monitoring of projects

• Stage – 5: Maintenance - sustainability of the projects involving youth

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PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

**PUSH FACTORS**
- Limited access to land
- Inadequate access to financial services
- Insufficient access to knowledge, information and education
- Difficulties in accessing green job
- Limited access to market
- Limited involvement in policy dialogue

**PULL FACTORS**
- Availability of legislated policy backing youth involvement
- Insurance policies
- Availability of market
- Flexible land policies
- Inclusion in Policy dialogue
- Adequate information and training on farm practices
- Guaranty financial support
- Access to farm inputs
- Appropriateness in government interventions
Way forward

• Availability of land for youth
• Accessibility to inputs
• Stable and sustainable market price
• Training on good agricultural practices
• Agricultural insurance policies should be put in place
• Formation of young farmers’ club in schools
• Development of youth entrepreneur
• Establishment of video centers and e-commerce for recreation and business, respectively in the rural areas
• Young Farmers’ Club at Prospect High School Abanla Oyo State
• WORLD BANK/CROSS RIVERS STATE WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT TRAINING PROGRAM WITH CRIN ON COCOA VALUE ADDITION
Conclusion

• Mainstreaming the youth – The future depends on youths in cocoa farming as cocoa farming has been bedevilled with aging cocoa farmers

• Youths have some pull factors that could encourage them into cocoa farming if properly harnessed by the government
NOW
WHAT???