

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. The first inaugural lecture I attended was that of Professor Abraham Adegboyega Jibowo in 1989 during which I led a team of final year students from Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University), Ago-Iwoye where I obtained my first degree, to stage a conceptual playlet as a prelude to his Inaugural Lecture. That particular event aroused my interest in academics and I have since been looking forward to a day like this. On this note, I want to give glory to God for piloting my academic career and making this day a reality in my life. I am also happy to inform this audience that today's inaugural lecturer is the 1<sup>st</sup> alumnus of the Ogun State University's College of Agricultural Sciences to bag a Ph.D. degree, the 1<sup>st</sup> to be pronounced a professor for which he was celebrated, and the 1<sup>st</sup> to present an inaugural lecture. However, this lecture is the 5<sup>th</sup> in the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, 1<sup>st</sup> in the last 24 years and 257<sup>th</sup> in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Just as we did for our highly respected academic father – Professor Jibowo then, I have been nurturing the idea of organizing a conceptual playlet that will be presented as a prelude to my own inaugural lecture, too. However, I think that the idea could better be replaced by reflecting on a duet conceptual playlet (See Box1) that was staged by Professor A.J. Farinde and my very humble self to describe the situation of the Nigerian farm children during our participation in a FAO's sponsored Rural Youth Leaders Training Programme in 2004 held in the Bavarian Farmers' Union Training Centre in Herrching, Germany.

**Box 1: Summary of a Conceptual Playlet on Situation of the Nigerian Farm Child**

A typical Nigerian farmer, old and impoverished standing on his farm within a rural community passionately pleading with his son to come back home and take over his farmland. The aged farmer observed that the child is not making it in the city as he still comes very often to the village to solicit for fund and food items. However, despite this precarious situation, the child vehemently resists the plea and persists on staying in the city, which apparently could not guarantee a sustainable livelihood. The aged farmer, on the other hand, keeps lamenting his hopeless situation as no child will take over the farm resources after his death. ***Who will then bring the farm child back to the farm?***

This vignette serves as a very good and relevant prelude for conceptualizing my Inaugural Lecture entitled: *Who will bring farm children back to the farm?* Shortly after the presentation of the playlet, an elderly erudite American Scholar - Professor Don, who served as one of the resource persons at the training, emotionally confessed that that day was the first time in his life that he would shed tears over the problem of Africa.

This scenario is apparently the situation of majority of the Nigerian farmers and farm children. That said, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I am greatly delighted to inform you that seeking answer to this poser through research, teaching and community services has been my focus since I joined the University system more than 18 years ago.

I have deliberately titled this Inaugural Lecture as '**Who will bring farm children back to the farm?**' and not 'what will bring farm children back to the farm?' as some people might think because I am well informed that the issues regarding what and even how could be easily addressed if the human factor, which is central to

any change is radically determined. Bringing a farm child back to the farm will significantly transform the rural economy and engender the farm continuity and sustainability, employment generation and wealth creation, increase in food production and productivity, poverty and hunger alleviation, and assurance of national food security; and in the urban centres, there will be outright decongestion and reduction in crime rate. All these will largely contribute to the overall goal of the country's agricultural transformation agenda.

In order to facilitate a very clear understanding of my lecture, I have organized my thought into the following major captions:

- Conceptualizing a farm child and the Nigerian farm
- Agricultural development efforts in Nigeria: the missing link
- Theoretical foundation for farm child development
- Building of conceptual models for farm child studies
- Highlights of some farm child based fundamental research findings
- Effort towards institutionalizing farm child research and development in Nigeria: some historical note
- Modeling farm children as young animator: an emerging approach for complimenting extension roles
- Bringing farm children back to the farm: the way forward
- Conclusion

## **CONCEPTUALIZING A FARMCHILD AND THE NIGERIAN FARM**

Literarily in Yorubaland, a farm child is referred to as *Omo-Oko*, which is a child that is raised on the farm. The compound word, that is a farm child, has been synonymously used by different scholars (Jibowo, 1998; Ogunfiditimi, 1998; Farinde *et al.*, 1999;

Adedoyin, 1999; Idowu, 1999; Torimiro, 1999; Torimiro and Lawal, 1999; Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a and b; Torimiro *et al.*, 2008; Torimiro *et al.*, 2011) as rural child, farmer's child, child farmer, farm youth and rural youth. These scholars considered a combination of either the place of birth, age, farm socialization status, farm ruggedness, parental dependency or farmer's parentage in contextualizing a farm child. In the context of this lecture, therefore, a farm child is conceptualized as *a child born on the farm, socialized into farming and found to have developed adequate cultural capital suitable for farming right from his or her tender age* (Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a).

The farm children are characterized by innovation proneness, minimal risks aversion, faster reaction time, less fear of failure, less conservation, greater physical strength, greater knowledge acquisition propensity, faster rate of learning, love for adventure and preference for boldness (Torimiro, 1995; Jibowo and Sotomi, 1996).

Ekong (2003) described Nigerian farms as small size family farms in which family members contribute the required labour. According to Olatubosun (1975), majority of the Nigerian farmers operate less than 2 hectares of farmland, which has made them to be characterized as smallholder farmers. The farm communities are endowed with farm children who constitute more than half of the farm population. Majority of these farm children, although, were socialized into farming from their childhood, often abandon the farm communities for urban centers at the point of youth-hood (Alao, 1980) with the aim of getting white collar jobs. Apart from the consequent population increase and its attendant problems in the urban areas, majority of these farm children also find it difficult to survive the challenges of the urban life. Their failure in the urban centers has been attributed to poor education and low level

of relevant skills, which make it difficult for them to compete with those raised in the cities. Some of the reasons attributed to why they are quitting the farm are:

- inadequate infrastructure and social amenities;
- poor living standard of their parents;
- non-lucrativeness of farming; and
- high taste for cities.

Consequently, the farm communities are deprived of these farm children's naturally acquired skills in farming and ruggedness for practicing farming, which should have constituted a major asset for agricultural and rural development in Nigeria. This situation has made many aged farmers to remain hopeless on the farms with nobody to take over from them. Most of these farmers are increasingly working beyond retirement age of 60 years, which is accompanied with diminishing strength, low productivity and income, invariably affecting the food security of the nation. More so, as farming remains a largely inherited occupation and one in which the transfer of business control and ownership to the next generation is critical to the development of the business (Fennell, 1981; Glauben *et al.*, 2004). Then the question remains, ***Who will bring these farm children back to the farm?***

## **AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN NIGERIA: THE MISSING LINK**

Nigerian agriculture is largely rural based with about 80 per cent of its population living in rural areas of which children and youth constitute a large segment (Auta and Omotayo, 1995). More so, Alao (1998) reported that about 90% of this population depends on agriculture and agriculture related activities for their means of subsistence and livelihood. This sector is expected to provide sufficient food for the ever growing population, supply raw materials for agro-based industries and generate export products

for foreign exchange earnings as well as provision of employment for a significant number of people.

In attempts to realize these expectations, successive Nigerian governments have, at different occasions, put in place many agricultural policies, programmes and projects. These, according to Adedoyin *et al.* (1999) include: National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), 1972; first generation Integrated Agricultural Development Projects (1<sup>st</sup> generation ADPs) 1975; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), 1976; River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), 1976; National Committee on Green Revolution (NCGR), 1979; the World Bank assisted Agricultural Development Projects (2<sup>nd</sup> generation ADPs), 1986; Better Life Programme (BLP), 1989; National Land Development Authority (NALDA), 1991; National Fadama I Development Project, 1991; Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), 1997; Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), 1999; National Programme for Food Security, (2001); National Fadama II Development Project, 2004; National Fadama III Development Project, 2008; Cassava adding Value for Africa (CAVA), 2010; Farmers Business School (FBS), 2010; and the ongoing Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA).

Also, another effort of note is the involvement of young school leavers and graduates in agricultural production through programmes such as Farm Settlement Scheme, National Directorate of Employment (agricultural programme), Schools Agricultural Programmes, Graduate Farmers' Scheme and School Leavers' Farms. All these were targeted at rural youth as intended beneficiaries. However, Ogunfowora (1989) reported that implementation of rural youth programmes had not brought about the expected development in agriculture and improvement in the performance of its roles. Idowu and Adeniji (1998) attributed the

failure to inadequate modalities adopted in the implementation of the various programmes.

A national survey conducted in Nigeria in 1995 revealed that none of the past efforts significantly recognized the contributions of farm children to agricultural development; and there was no specific programmes targeting the farm children participating in farming activities (Torimiro and Adedoyin, 1998). This is in line with the observation of Adewunmi *et al.* (1992) that over the years, policy pronouncements and programmes of the Nigerian government on agriculture have not given adequate recognition to the role of children and youth in agriculture. Whereas, over 66 per cent of farmers were found to engage an average of four of their children in farming activities (Torimiro, 1995), this has been identified as a missing link in the process of ensuring continuity and adequate development in agriculture. The missing link was not only missing in programmes and in practices; it was also absent in agricultural development theory. Mr. Vice-chancellor, Sir, filling this gap has shaped my intellectual odyssey as well as my community services spanning almost two decades. Specifically, Mr. Vice-chancellor, I have not only narrowed the lacunae by operationalizing Erikson's (1996) psychoanalytic theory as the basis for intellectual articulation of farm children's involvement in agriculture; I have also founded a National Research and Development Programme of Children and Youth in Agriculture (CYIAP-Network) in Nigeria, which provides both experimental and experiential bases for programming pragmatic programmes among farm children. I will reflect more on this later.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR FARM CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

In order to offer a theoretical explanation for understanding farm child development studies, Torimiro *et al.* (1999) adopted Erikson's (1956) psychoanalytic theory of child development. The theory is simple to understand and relevant to the Nigeria's farm environment. According to Erikson (1956), development, when carried into socio-psychological science and applied to personality formation, takes into consideration the progressive changes in each individual's adaptive functioning, with their consequent integration of constitutional and learned factors. Development in this sense refers to the multiple processes which are instrumental to the building of each individual's personality (Maier, 1965). Farm child development, therefore, specifically comprises the sequential phases, steps, levels or stages through which a farm child's personality undergoes in his or her childhood and youth-hood. A farm child development study considers the dynamics of personality evolvements and their products by dealing with the quantitative and qualitative factors which help in shaping an individual personality.

Essentially, farm child development is perceived as the relationship between the in-born virtues, family's historio-cultural heritage and socio-cultural environment. Psycho-analytic theory of farm child development assumes that farm children (Torimiro *et al.*, 1999):

- have farmer(s)' parentage;
- are raised and nurtured in the farm environment;
- are socialized into farming from their childhood;
- relate with members of the farm family and the entire farm community;

- develop potentials in farming activities into which they are socialized; and
- grow to participate in the farming activities and develop their personality.

The psycho-analytic theory of farm child development, therefore, considers a farm child to be a component member of farm family, and having his inherent ego, which may be latent for a short while, until the socialization process begins. A farm child relates with his parents within the farm family content and in relation to the entire farm community. He then grows to become a product of various farm multi-variable influences, among which are the family, peer group, institutions, environment and their socio-cultural realities. In fact, interaction between the child and the various farm variables at the socialization stage (Torimiro and Lawal, 1999) reveals many of the inborn attributes that are peculiar to the members of the farm family to which the child belongs.

These attributes, however, become more expressive in the conduct of farm children as they advance in age and become conscious of themselves. They seek for more opportunities to develop themselves in order to enhance their personality. If their quest for personality development is not satisfactorily achievable within the farm community, then, they are prompted to break away into another environment that is alien to their farm background. **Who will then bring the farm child back to the farm?**

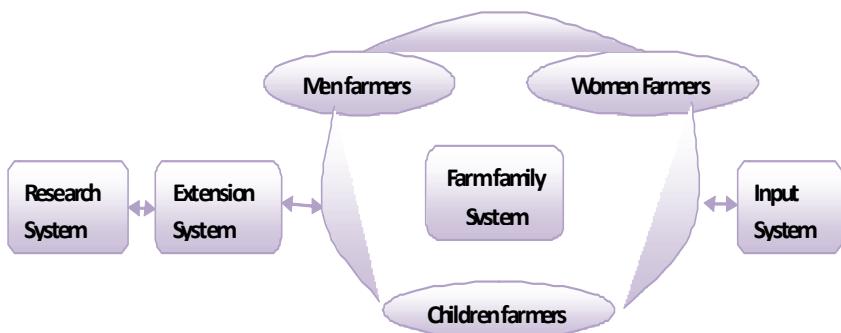
## **BUILDING CONCEPTUAL MODELS FOR FARM CHILD STUDIES**

The advent of rigorous studies on farm child development championed by the inaugural lecturer in the mid-nineties in Nigeria, under the leadership of his mentor – Late Professor

Samson Folawunmi Adedoyin, has popularized farm child/ farm family research activities vis-à-vis re-operationalisation of agricultural extension in Nigeria (Adedoyin and Torimiro, 1998). Agricultural extension, according to Williams (1981), is a service, which assists farmers through educational procedures in improving their production efficiency and income and, improving their standard of living. Adedoyin, *et al.* (1997) further identified the scope of extension services as including capacity building for agricultural production, wise use and development of natural and renewable resources, value addition and product development, rural socio-economic development, family living and home management, women and youth development and leadership development.

The Federal Ministries of Agriculture and the States' Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) are involved in hiring and training agricultural extension workers to carry out these services with farm families. According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Rural Development (1992) the optimal farm family to extension agent ratio in Nigeria is 200 farm families to one full-time extension agent (200:1); however, the current ratio is much higher than the optimal: It is 1:1,590 - 7,000 and 1:1,275-5,600 in some South East and South West states of Nigeria, respectively (Agbamu, 2005). Thus, the Nigeria ratio compared to some Third World countries, such as India (200:1) and Kenya (250:1) is appalling and detrimental to agricultural development. The insufficiency of extension workers in the country has led to a stagnant or rather slow rate of development in rural areas. This is because the extension programmes could not be sustained to the level of adequately upgrading farmers' knowledge, skills, and productivity without adequate number of workers.

Also, in the past, emphasis on research - extension - farm system model has been on the men-farmers generally without critically and analytically examining the significant contribution of the other members (children, youth and women) of the farm family component of Research - Extension - Farm family - Input Linkages System (REFILS), their socio - economic differences, vulnerability and their relationships with the research and extension activities. REFILS, although, addresses the issue of input as an important component of the linkage system, it was found to be deficient in the areas of farm children's contribution to farming; thus it could not be used to offer explanation in farm child studies. Some of our research activities (Torimiro *et al.*, 1998) have been able to address some of these concerns. For instance, our review of the previous research - extension - farm linkages system model led to the development of a new model: *a modified systemic research - extension - farm family - input linkages model* (See Figure 1). This gives room for an expanded scope in farm family research and extension activities, and accommodates the assessment of children's and youth's contribution to farming.

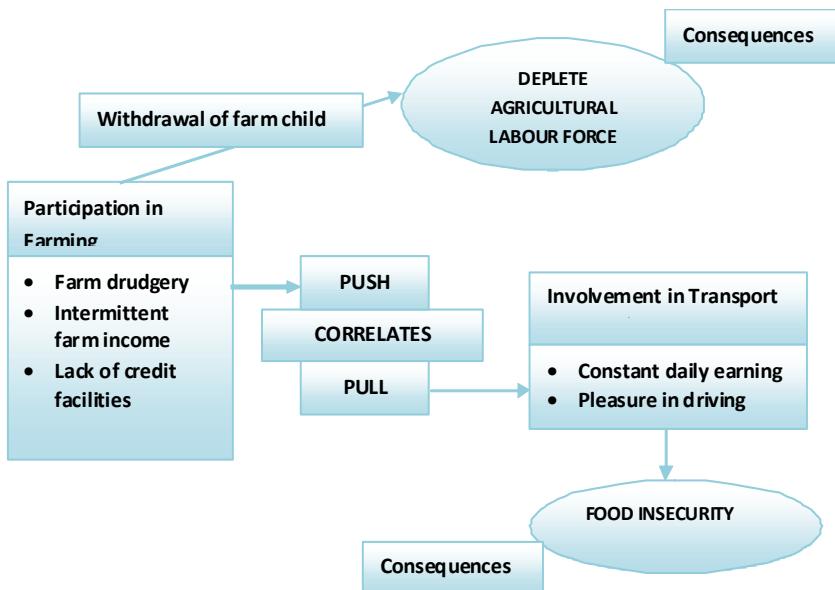


**Figure 1:** A Modified Systemic Research- Extension- Farm Family- Input Linkages Model

**Source:** Torimiro *et al.* (1998)

This modified model has been observed to have the following merits for extension service in Nigeria:

- operationalisation of a systemic model that gives adequate consideration for farm children will facilitate the flow and understanding of information emanating from the extension system that are meant for farm children;
- most advantageously, high literacy virtue, which is an innovative attribute of the children (Torimiro *et al.*, 1998), can constitute an asset for extension work in effectively reaching to more farm families. Such children can further increase the multiplier effects of the extension activities in rural areas;
- the interactive effect among the various components of the farm family is expected to be a good learning experience for the various categories of farmers and the extension agents, most especially with the individual component being given a separate or independent attention in the course of implementing the extension programmes; and
- linkages with cognate agencies such as the ADPs, faculties of agriculture, schools of agriculture, ministries of agriculture, research institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc will facilitate the generation of problem-solving and need-based improved technologies for farm children that can be channeled through a cost-effective multi-media approach.



**Figure 2:** Model showing push and pull correlates and consequences of farm child's involvement in transportation business.

**Source:** Torimiro *et al.* (2008)

Torimiro *et al.* (2008) also considered Rains and Fei's (1961) dual economy model, which assumes that a typical less-developed country is characterized by the existence of two distinct sectors, namely: the modern sector and the subsistence sector. The main thrust of this model is that the subsistence sector is characterized by a lack of technology, underutilization of resources, low productivity of labour and absence of savings and capital formation, while the peculiarities of the modern sector are high productivity of labour, credit facilities, technology and capital formation. However, in the context of this lecture, the modern and subsistence sectors are represented by transportation business and farming, respectively, and the farm children signify the agricultural

labour. The characteristics of the subsistence and modern sectors, as identified by Lewis (1954) and Rains and Fei (1961) reflect the farm-related push factors and transportation - related pull factors, respectively, on the Nigerian farm child. Their unprecedented abandonment of farm enterprises for the transportation business and its inevitable consequences are schematically explained in Figure 1, which highlights the likely socio-economic push and pull correlates of farm children's involvement in transportation business and their consequences for the agricultural labour force and food security. Farm drudgery, intermittent farm income, and lack of credit facilities are the surrogates of the push factor, just as steady daily earnings from transportation and pleasure in driving are the proxies of the pull factor. The concomitant effects of the push-and-pull factors on the rural economy are the depletion of the agricultural labour force and food insecurity.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME FARM CHILD-BASED FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH FINDINGS**

For a clearer understanding of farm children's situation, some seminal studies are worthy of note. They include farm parents' perspectives of child abuse and child labour (Ajayi and Torimiro, 2004), farm children's attitude towards farming, their perception of farming, their socialization process into farming, their participation in farming activities vis-à-vis their interest (Adedoyin *et al.*, 1997) and satisfaction (Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a) in farming, their reasons for getting involved in farming, their needs for sustainability in farming (Mann *et al.*, 1998; Adedoyin *et al.*, 1998; Torimiro *et al.*, 2001) and what they will need for crop production (Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006b). This growing body of literature eloquently articulates the fundamentals for bringing farm children back to the farm.

## **Theoretical Perspectives of Child Abuse and Child Labour: Exploration of Global Ideals**

Our seminal works on farm parents' perspectives of the notions of child abuse and child labour explored the global ethical ideals of the notions in comparison with African cultural realities using focus group discussion sessions organized in six farm communities in southwest Nigeria (Ajayi and Torimiro, 2004). The global view of child abuse was highlighted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1997) to include any labour of children that may be exploitative (See Box 2). Abuse, according to Ebigbo (1990), is connoted so long as the child's well being is endangered irrespective of motive and socio-cultural norms.

### **Box 2: Characterization of Child Abuse**

- Full time work too early an age
- Too many hours spent working
- Work that exerts undue physical, social and psychological stress
- Work and live on street in bad condition
- Inadequate pay
- Too much responsibility
- Work that hampers access to education
- Work that undermines children's dignity and self esteem
- Work that is detrimental to full social and psychological development

Source: UNICEF (1997)

Nkuly (2000), in consonant with the International Labour Organization (ILO), conceptualized child labour as remunerated or unremunerated work by a young person under a certain age, the work of which impairs the young's personal development, health, safety, and well being physically, mentally and psychologically, impairment of which is in violation of national and international law. Onyago and Kayango Male (1982) characterized the various

working conditions under which child labour could be perceived (see Box 3).

**Box 3: Characterization of Child Labour**

- Lack of freedom of movement
- Emphasis on the child's inferior status
- Overwork at tedious, exhausting jobs
- Emphasis on complete obedience to the employer
- Control of child managed through beatings and insult
- No emotional warmth
- Expectation that the child will behave totally like an adult
- Expression of developmental needs by the child seen as disobedience by employers
- Strong belief by employers that the child's situation is good especially compared with home conditions
- Underpayment
- Brief period of childhood, with a 'push' into adulthood

Source: Onyango and Kayango Male (1982)

These views according to Ajayi and Torimiro (2004) are mere theories which are not realistic in African situation.

### **Understanding Farm Parents' Perspectives of Child Labour and Abuse in Southwest Nigeria**

In the course of our literature search, some authors such as Osuma (1990) and Negwa (1998) mentioned that involvement of children in farming is a form of child labour and consequently an abuse. Contrary to these views, Jibowo (1992) and Torimiro and Lawal (1998) viewed children's involvement in farming as socialization process into African traditional occupation. In an attempt to have a clear perspective of child labour and child abuse as obtainable in farm communities in southwest Nigeria, twelve FGD sessions in

two groups of equal gender (Ajayi and Torimiro, 2004) were guided to discuss what exactly they know as child labour and child abuse.

The results revealed that the use of child labour and child abuse sounds alien to the communities. However, a further explanation showed that the communities at large frown at exposing children to some things that can endanger their lives and ruin their future (see Box 4). Each of the twelve discussion sessions agreed that children aged between 6 and 18 do participate in farming activities, which they did not see as absurd but rather see it as a way of life. Some viewed their participation as natural given and, to some, it is voluntarily compulsory. In summary, every discussion session had the impression that the reason for raising children is partly to assist and support their parents, and since farming is what their parents do for a living, they must take part in the farming activities. More so, some parents see the children's participation as a way of training and socializing them into farming. However, the women in the various sessions, most especially those of polygamous background, laid more emphasis on the future well-being and security of their children as the major reason for involvement. These imply that the communities acknowledged children's participation in farming as normal to promote continuity and sustainability in their farming culture.

**Box 4: Farm Parents' Perceived Child Abuse and Child Labour**

- ‘We know, and it is established from experience that whatever is done to a child is to make him or her wise, better and even stronger’.
- ‘You see, we heard of child abuse and child labour especially in cities, where children do not go to school but rather go to market and hawk goods on the streets. They even sleep under bridges. But here, we know ourselves, we check each other, our children are monitored closely. We do our best to train them at home, on the farm and also send them to school’.

- ‘We do not think our children complain of any abuse, we determine what they do, we do not give them too strong work to do. We were at least once like them. Our parents took care of us now we are responsible adults, then we have to do our best. If they fall sick we are in trouble, and their good living is paramount to us. We do not put them into child labour or abuse’.
- ‘Yes, there is child abuse, when a child is supposed to be in school and he is not there. That is a child abuse’.
- ‘As women, we found ourselves in polygamy; we ensure that our own children are not lazy because of our old age. Lazy children cannot be responsible enough to take care of someone at old age and little could be expected from step children. Therefore, training is essential and should not be discouraged. We do not see it as abuse, except we want to establish ‘elder abuse’ i.e. in future the untrained children refusing to cater for us in our old age’.
- ‘As mothers, we only do not want our children to be sick or in danger. In as much as that is prevented, whatever they were asked to do is a form of training and not abuse’.
- ‘In farming, children are trained and not abused. When a child is being mishandled, the community frowns at it and elders wade into the situation’.

Source: Ajayi and Torimiro (2004).

## **Farm Children’s Involvement in Farming: Socialization Process, Reasons, Interest, Satisfaction and Hazards**

Schematic illustration of the socialization process of children into farming was documented as starting from age four when they merely accompany their parents to farms, observing them on the farm, gradually initiating them into farming activities, giving independent assignment on farming activities and full participation in farming (Torimiro and Lawal, 1998). Inquiries (Farinde *et al.*, 1999, Ajayi and Torimiro, 2004; Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a)

were done on why farm children are going into farming, data in Table 1 and Figure 3 summarized our findings.

**Table 1: Distribution of Farm Children by Reasons for Engaging in Farming Activities**

S/N	Farm Children's Reasons for Engaging in Farming	*Percentage
1.	Farming is the last option left for me in life	88.90
2.	Other professionals rely on the farmers for their survival	46.30
3.	Farming is profitable	40.70
4.	Farming is the traditional occupation of our family	38.90
5.	Farming enables me to feed my family very well and sell excess	29.60
6.	Farming brings happiness and joy into my life.	29.60
7.	Farming is the only way I can manage landed property given me	18.50
8.	I like farming as a profession	16.70
9.	Farming is a blessed profession	16.70
10.	Since I did not go to school, farming is the only way I can make legitimate money	16.70

\*Multiple responses

Source: Farinde *et al.* (1999)

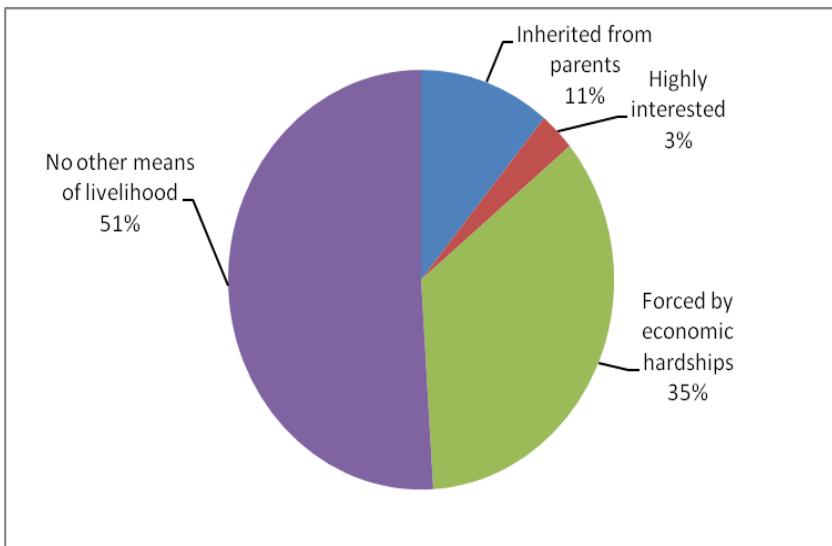


Figure 3: Farm children's reasons for going into farming  
 Source: Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a

Also, the interest and aspiration of in-school farm children in farming were investigated, which revealed that their interest in farming could only be sustained by their relatively high aspiration in furthering their education in agriculture and future economic investment in farming (Adedoyin *et al.*, 1997). In order to compare the relationships between the farm youth's levels of participation in thirty-crop farming activities identified vis-à-vis their levels of interest and satisfaction derived, weighted means of their participation, interest and satisfaction derived in each of the activities were calculated and ranked as shown in Table 2. The results revealed that most of the activities in which the farm children participated much attracted a very low interest with a relatively low satisfaction. For instance, weeding was ranked number one with weighted mean of 3.8924 while their interest in it

was ranked 28 and satisfaction derived was ranked 7. This implies that most of the children only participate in most crop farming activities without deriving any interest or satisfaction in them. However, they showed high level of interest in and derived more satisfaction from their participation in marketing, storage and processing activities.

**Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Crop Farming Activities in Relation to Rank Order of Farm Children Levels of Participation, Interest and Satisfaction**

Crop Farming Activities Index	Level of Participation		Level of Interest		Level of Satisfaction	
	Weighted Mean	Rank	Weighted Mean	Rank	Weighted Mean	Rank
Weeding	3.8924	1	1.0028	28	1.3059	7
Harvesting	3.8300	2	2.1813	4	1.6487	5
Marketing	3.7848	3	3.5609	1	1.9858	3
Ridge making	3.7734	4	1.0595	23	1.0339	20
Storage	3.7677	5	2.3399	3	2.0878	2
Heap making	3.7355	6	1.0623	22	1.0057	24
Processing	3.7195	7	2.3711	2	2.0963	1
Planting	3.6232	8	1.3116	9	1.4051	6
Pilferage control	3.1897	9	1.7762	5	1.7875	4
Disease control	2.6062	10	1.4533	6	1.2550	9
Bed making	2.5950	11	1.1105	18	1.0227	22
Pest control	2.5637	12	1.4025	7	1.2068	11
Spraying of chemicals	2.4674	13	1.3768	8	1.3031	8
Pruning	2.3907	14	1.2210	11	1.1926	12
Supplying	2.1048	15	1.3059	10	1.0595	17
Thinning	2.0793	16	1.2096	12	1.1785	13
Transplanting	2.0170	17	1.2040	13	1.1048	15
Crop rotation	1.9660	18	1.0198	27	1.1615	14

Fertilizer application	1.9348	19	1.1586	14	1.2606	10
Fallowing	1.6346	20	1.1331	16	1.1926	12
Staking	1.5496	21	1.0368	25	1.0918	22
Nursery	1.4674	22	1.1275	17	1.0198	22
Mulching	1.4164	23	1.0652	21	1.0113	23
Manure application	1.2691	24	1.0623	22	1.0453	18
Irrigation	1.1671	25	1.1360	15	1.0623	16
Drainage/flood control	1.0594	26	1.0935	19	1.0113	23
Compost making	1.0481	27	1.0623	22	1.0283	20
Cover cropping	1.0283	28	1.0907	20	1.0113	23
Land clearing	1.0255	29	1.0340	26	1.0339	19
Green manuring	1.0198	30	1.0560	24	1.0000	25

Source: Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006b.

Our studies (Farinde *et al.*, 1999; Torimiro *et al.*, 2003) on farm children's involvement in crop production and animal rearing (see Plates 1-4) also identified some of the hazards to which they are exposed. For instance, data in Table 3 showed the hazards related to crop production. More so, in animal rearing, the Fulani children that are involved identified road accident, exposure to hardship, back pains, neck pains, snake bites, nasal disease, exposure to danger and leg pains as the major problems encountered (Torimiro *et al.*, 2003).



Plate 1: A male farm child weeding maize plot

Plate 2: A female farm child weeding vegetable plot



Plate 3: A male farm child feeding his cattle

Plate 4: A female farm child peeling cassava

**Table 3: Distribution of Farm Children by Hazards Experienced when Participating in Crop Production**

Hazards Associated with Crop Farming	*Percentage
Stepping on sharp objects (wounds)	55.6
Bees/Insect stings/Bites	50.0
Attack from wild beasts/animals	40.7
Stray bullets from hunting expedition group	31.5
Infected soil with micro-organisms	27.8
Polluted water	16.7
Snake bite	14.8
Farm accident (deep cuts)	13.0
Consumption of toxic food and leaves	13.0
Misapplication of chemicals	11.1
Attack by robbers	9.3
Sudden sickness with no medical attention	9.3
Kidnapping	7.4
Falling objects unknowingly	5.6

\*Multiple responses

Source: Farinde *et al.* (1999)

### **Farm children and their Needs for Sustainability on the Farm**

In Adedoyin *et al.*, 1998; Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a, we identified sixteen items ranked by the farm youth as mostly needed for them to be sustained in crop farming business (see Table 4). In addition, the needs for sustainability in farm business and their socio-economic correlates with crop production were further established as family size, years of formal education, farming experience, income, satisfaction derived, gender and career aspiration among others (Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006b).

**Table 4: Rank Order of Farm Children Weighted Mean Score of Sustainable Needs in Crop Production**

Sustainable Needs Index	Mean Scores	Rank Order
Credit or grant facility	3.9462	1
Subsidy	3.8074	2
Incentive	3.6204	3
Recognition	3.5977	4
Drinkable water supply	3.5354	5
Health centre	3.4873	6
Electricity supply	3.2975	7
Banking facility	3.2578	8
Marketing facility	3.2521	9
Motorable roads	3.1586	10
Postal agency	3.0907	11
Extension training	3.0765	12
Recreation centre	3.0255	13
Agricultural youth programmes	2.9008	14
Schools located in their community	2.8074	15
Audio-visual centre	2.7904	16

Source: Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006a

Production needs of farm children were further determined by asking them to rank each of the 36 items (see Table 5) generally perceived to be primarily required for effective crop farming activities according to their order of importance. Drawings and photographs of some of the items which were enumerated by their different local names were also provided as a guide for the interviewees. Fertilizers, tractor services, bulldozer services etc were ranked among the major production needs. Further, socio-economic correlates of the production needs of farm children were established using Pearson's correlation ( $r$ ) analysis at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that years of formal education ( $r=0.219$ ), years of farming ( $r=0.116$ ) and income ( $r=0.138$ ) had a positive and significant relationship with production needs.

**Table 5: Rank Order of Farm Children Weighted Mean Score of Production Needs**

Production Needs Index	Mean Scores	Rank Order	Production Needs Index	Mean Scores	Rank Order
Fertilizer	3.7025	1	Axe	2.7025	18
Tractor services	3.6431	2	Sickle	2.4164	19
Bulldozer service	3.5071	3	Spade	2.3881	20
Hand gloves	3.4278	4	Hand trowel	2.3021	21
Cutlasses	3.4023	5	Knapsack sprayer	2.2465	22
Herbicides	3.3967	6	Head pan	2.2181	23
Storage facilities	3.1813	7	Garden fork	2.2040	24
Processing facilities	3.1700	8	Watering can	2.0255	25
Hoe	3.1671	9	Tapping knife	1.8385	26
Sacks of jute bags	3.1020	10	Hand fork	1.7904	27
Hired labour	3.0850	11	Shears	1.7819	28
Shovel	2.9688	12	Mattock	1.7309	29
Rain boot	2.9660	13	Dibber	1.6374	30
Improved seeds	2.9348	14	Irrigation	1.6062	31
Pesticides	2.9178	15	Secateurs	1.5637	32
Rake	2.9178	15	Dam	1.2776	33
Wheel barrow	2.8527	16	Drainage structure or flood control devices	1.3436	34
Preservation	2.7365	17	Land	0.4334	35

Source: Torimiro and Oluborode, 2006b

Our studies on rural children's/youth's involvement in household food security activities, entrepreneurial activities and car wash activities established the children's levels of involvement in the various non-farming activities within the rural economy. Furthermore, my work on children exploitation in the labour process, which won the Laureateship of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)'s Child and Youth Studies Institute, offered empirical exposition on

the influence of globalization on the children exploitation in the labour process and child culture in some selected labour sites (Torimiro, 2009).

Our studies on the Nigerian rural youths in a culture of undignified survival strategies, children's involvement in entrepreneurship in rural communities, gender analysis of ICTs usage among the in-school farm youth, farm youth and usage of HIV/AIDS prevention strategies and push and pull correlates of farm youth's involvement in transportation addressed the contemporary issues related to the youth survival, vulnerability and sustainability on the farm, from which their implications for food security were drawn (Torimiro and Kolawole, 2005; Torimiro and Dionco-Adetayo, 2005; Torimiro *et al.*, 2007; Torimiro *et al.*, 2008; Torimiro *et al.*, 2008; Okorie *et al.*, 2009; Torimiro *et al.*, 2009, Torimiro and Okorie, 2009, Torimiro *et al.*, 2010 and Famuyiwa and Torimiro, 2011).

## **EFFORT TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALIZING FARM CHILD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: SOME HISTORICAL NOTE**

The history of farm child research and development in Nigeria will be incomplete without reflecting on the institutionalization of Children in Agriculture Programme (CIAP) in Nigeria. This Programme, which has significantly served as a vehicle for raising consciousness of academics, researchers and development experts for the need for concerted efforts into farm child research, was co-initiated by late Professor S.F. Adedoyin and the Inaugural Lecturer. The rationale is based on the premise that if the entire farm families are to be adequately integrated into agricultural development programme, then the issues involve doing more than focusing on the adult farmers (men or women) alone; that is, giving significant attention to farm children whose contributions to

farming almost equate those of adult farmers (Adedoyin and Torimiro, 2004). The farm children through enculturation and socialization processes have naturally invested their early life interest, time and energy in farming activities. We assumed that the experiences gained by these individuals overtime need to be critically understood, protected and nurtured. We also assumed that these children possessed naturally endowed potentials, cultural capital and tendencies to continue with farming if their needs and interests were strategically sustained through agriculturally oriented programme (Torimiro, 1995).

Hence, CIAP was then conceptualized as an integrated human and agricultural development initiative aimed at building farming knowledge, skills, experiences and dignity of honest labour into the socialization and education processes right from childhood (Adedoyin, 1999). It is hoped that this effort will facilitate capacity building and empowerment of farm children for agricultural sensitivity, which will predispose them to favourable and/or future career in farming. The overall goal, however, is to institutionalize CIAP into a programme for promoting continuity of farming and sustainable agricultural productivity as a way for enhancing food self-sufficiency, nutritional well-being of people, modernization and industrialization of agriculture, popularization of farming as income earning and profitable ventures, rural transformation, improved livelihood and overall economic development of Nigeria (Adedoyin and Torimiro, 2004).

Although, the United Nation's Convention on the right of the child described any human being under the age of eighteen years as children (UN, 2002), CIAP has adopted this age as they are not mature enough to vote and be voted for at elections. Also, using the dependency factor, most people of ages up to 18 years still depend on adults for their survival, protection and development. In

the same vein, CIAP has adopted a more elastic age range for youth which is 13-40 years based on circumstances of poverty, unemployment and deprivations that are prevalent in Nigeria, which makes some people to still be dependants at the age of 40 years. To this end, CIAP's work covers farm children and youth programmes.

Our baseline research efforts under CIAP cover the following areas (Adedoyin and Torimiro, 1998):

- Socio-economic characteristics of farm children involved in diverse agricultural activities such as crop production, animal rearing and their level of involvement;
- Infrastructure and social amenities requirement of farm children involved in farming activities;
- Identification of needs and interest of farm children involved in farming activities;
- Role of farm children in farm family decision making process;
- Farm children's socialization process into farming activities;
- Factors influencing the participation of farm children in farming activities.

These efforts gave us the confidence to call for the first National Research Network Meeting and Conference of CIAP in Nigeria using popular mobilization and participation approach, which was held in 1998. The Conference attracted about 80 distinguished academics from universities, research institutes and other tertiary institutions; professional extension, development workers, and top policy makers from government, non-government, community based and independent organizations as well as the mass media organizations who participated at the technical sessions and

network meeting. So far, ten of such conferences had been hosted by higher educational institutions across Nigeria (see Table 6).

<b>Table 6: CIAP/ CYIAP Network Conferences in Nigeria: Where, Themes and When</b>		
Where held	Conference Themes	When held
Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye,	Rural children and the future food security of Nigeria	23 - 26 March, 1998.
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,	Farm Children and Agricultural Productivity in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.	3 - 7 May, 1999.
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu.	Sustainable Children -in - Agriculture Programme in Nigeria	26 - 30 June, 2000.
University of Agriculture, Makurdi.	Research and Policy Issues for Children in Agriculture.	9-12 October, 2001.
Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan.	Protecting the Nigerian Child from Food Insecurity and Poverty.	12-14 December, 2002.
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin, Lagos State.	The Nigerian Child and the National Plan for Livelihood in Nigeria.	13 - 16 October, 2003.
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State..	Childhood and Youth-hood Issues in the Era of Reforms in Nigeria.	November 28- December 1, 2005
University of Ilorin, Kwara State	Challenges Faced by Children and Youth and the Responses by Development Service Providers in Nigeria.	27 -30 November , 2006
Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo.	Remedying the Factors Impeding Children and Youth Development in Nigeria's Agrarian.	26 -29 November , 2007
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Farm Children and food Security Issues in Nigeria.	11 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013

The name was later changed from Children-in-Agriculture Programme (CIAP) to National Research and Development Network of Children and Youth in Agriculture Programme (CYIAP-Network) in 2006 to reflect its broad aim of promoting research activities and programmes focusing on retaining interests of children and youths in agriculture. CYIAP Network has since remained the only national body of professionals, academics, researchers and other development stakeholders in Nigeria working through research and development activities to sustain agriculture as the bedrock of the national economy by socializing children and empowering youths towards sustainable occupational interest in agriculture and associated industries. CYIAP-Network holds annual national conferences and Network meetings, rotated among tertiary institutions and agricultural research institutes in Nigeria where active members exist. It also publishes journal (*Annals of Child and Youth Studies*), proceedings, books of readings, authored books and participates nationally and globally in advocacy programmes in support of farm child development.

The overall aim of CIAP is summarized in a two stanzas philosophical watch song of CIAP club composed by the Inaugural Lecturer:

8: 7: 8: 8: 7: 8: 8:

1. “We are farm – child – ren of today  
Born out of vision for a mission  
We learn to lead and till to feed  
Lif – ting farming to a greater height.
2. The old glory must come to stay  
Hail, hail, we are leading on  
Tilling and culturing to feed our nation  
Oh, God support our great vision”.  
(Torimiro, 1999; Torimiro, 1999).

Mr. Vice - Chancellor, Sir, I am glad to inform this audience that at the Annual General Meeting of the 10<sup>th</sup> CYIAP-Network Conference held in this University, the Inaugural Lecturer was elected the President. Also at the Conference, CYIAP - Network after 15 years of rigorous research activities in Nigeria inaugurated Young Farmers' Congress (YFC) in Osun State (see plate 5) under the patronship of the State Governor - Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola, as its first intended initiative to linking theory with practice through provision of a strategic platform for government of any Nigerian state where its annual conference and meetings are held. This is to strategically facilitate the identification and nurturing of practising young farmers across the state for the purpose of bringing them to a level of rural farm industrialists. The objectives of the Congress are to:

- cultivate and maintain a good image of farming through the activities of the young farmers in rural communities of the participating states with a view to stimulating the interest of their peers who have lost interest in farming;
- support the young farmers to actualise their farming potentials through the collaborative efforts between the university-based agricultural extension (in this case, Obafemi Awolowo University's Department of Agricultural Extension & Rural Development/Isoya Rural Development Unit) and the relevant organs of state government (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security);
- inculcate in them and promote leadership and team-playing skills among the young farmers with a view to bringing them to a level of becoming modern rural farm industrialists.

The overall goal of this initiative is to increase the food basket and modernization of rural farming in the participating states, which will facilitate the actualization of the National Agricultural

Transformation Agenda and enhancing agriculture and enhance agricultural and rural development. It is also a strategy to bring farm children back to the farm.



Plate 5: Young Farmers' Congress during convocation by the Osun State Governor in the Obafemi Awolowo University Conference Centre, Ile-Ife

## **MODELLING FARM CHILDREN AS YOUNG ANIMATOR: AN EMERGING APPROACH FOR COMPLEMENTING EXTENSION ROLES**

It is also noteworthy to reflect on our recent pilot international research focusing on enhancing potentials of farm children in Nigeria and Botswana by modeling them as young animator on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) devices for the purpose of complimenting extension services. A

*young animator as conceptualized in the Project is a secondary school boy or girl, of farmers' parentage, between the age of 13 and 20 years, involved in farming activities, trained and empowered to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) devices, such as computers, internet, mobile phone and the likes, on how to disseminate improved farm practices to farmers with whom they are trained to work for the overall goal of increasing farm productivity (Torimiro et al., 2013).*

This pilot project was conceived against the background of a dearth of extension agent to farm families, high illiteracy rate, inadequate use of ICTs due to unavailability of facilities and technical deficiency, low farm productivity and high poverty level prevailing among smallholder farmers.

In the project rural school-based young animators were modeled for the overall purpose of enhancing a sustainable use of ICTs in farming communities for improving agricultural productivity and alleviating poverty in Nigeria and Botswana.



Plate 6: A typical ICTs Resource Centre in Nigeria



Plate 7: Young Animators being trained on computer usage in one of the ICTs Resource Centres in Nigeria

In both countries, physical structures were put in place in each of the selected schools (see Plate 6); students were organized and inaugurated into Young Animators' Club; five farmers were attached to each young animator within their community; focus group discussions were conducted among the various stakeholders for the purpose of developing policy guide for the operation of the Young Animators' Club (YAC); training workshops were conducted for the YAC members (see Plate 7), school coordinators and extension workers to build their capacity on ICTs devices appreciation; enlightenment campaigns were organized in the participating communities through the participating farmers to create awareness on the ICTs usage and usefulness to the farmers; a registered web site ([www.younganimatorsclub.org](http://www.younganimatorsclub.org)) was designed and launched to provide an electronic platform for agricultural information sharing; and a joint meeting of the project personnel,

members of the Young Animators' Club, participating smallholder farmers and other stakeholders was conducted to provide a platform for evaluation and impact assessment of the entire project.

Some of the key findings were documented with the intent of providing solution towards bringing farm children back to the farm. The results include:

- On-the-spot /need assessments revealed that the knowledge, accessibility and usability levels of ICTs and supporting facilities of the schools were generally poor; however, they were higher in Botswana than in Nigeria, which has made the teachers and students in the former to be more ICTs compliant and more amenable to the use of ICT devices.
- While each of the Batswana rural schools were provided with a well equipped computer laboratories with ICT facilities, none of the selected Nigerian rural schools had computer facilities for teachers' and students' access and use.
- A set of computer available in each of the Nigerian schools were installed in the Principal's office supposedly meant for administrative purposes, although in an environment without electricity.
- None of the extension workers was provided with ICT devices in their offices in the two countries; however, the need assessment revealed that Batswana extension workers have a higher and easier access to ICT facilities through other sources, which has made them to have a better knowledge of ICTs than their Nigerian counterparts.

- On-the-spot /need assessments further revealed that the knowledge, accessibility and usability levels of ICTs were very low among the smallholder farmers in the selected rural communities of the two countries.
- Impact assessment of the project revealed, among others, a high level of awareness of ICT potential for enhancing farm productivity among the smallholder farmers through the activities of the young animators.
- More so, there was a significant increase in ICTs usage by the extension agents and schools – coordinators and students participating in the project. Although, majority of the students, teachers and the extension workers indicated that their proficiency will be enhanced through continual use of the ICTs.

The key challenges, especially in Nigeria, are poor electricity, inadequate security of the ICT devices in the ICTs Resource Centres, and poor internet connectivity. The recommendations in Box 5 were made at the end of the Project.

### **Box 5: Recommendations towards Strengthening the Young Animators**

#### **Complementing extension service delivery**

- The project advocates policy, through the Ministries of education and agriculture, for integrating young animators into extension operational system as a veritable tool for complimenting extension services via ICT tool for enhancing extension service delivery.

#### **Strengthening the capacity of young animators**

- The ICT capacity of the rural designated school hosting the Young Animators Club must be adequately built with provision of a well equipped ICT Resource Centre under a management arrangement involving the town and gown.
- Ethical issues relating to the operational activities of the young animators must be exhaustively considered by relevant stakeholders (school head, teachers, parents, farmers, young animators and extension workers) and formulate a policy guide for operationalising the young animators' club in rural schools.

#### **Strengthening the capacity of Extension Workers and Farmers**

- Extension workers need to be adequately provided with laptops that have internet facility to enable them function effectively. Farmers need to be adequately empowered with mobile phones.
- Visiting the young animators in the ICTs Resource Centre by the extension workers on a fortnightly basis and monitoring of the young animators activities by the school based coordinators will require time and financial commitments which must be adequately remunerated.

#### **Sustainability**

- Element of Internally Generated Revenue must be integrated into the running of the ICTs Resource Centre in order to ensure sustainability.

## **BRINGING FARM CHILDREN BACK TO THE FARM: THE WAY FORWARD**

The question, again: Who will bring the farm children back to the farm? A deep reflection on answering this question has inspired in

my thoughts some strategic suggestions based on my eighteen years of research experience on farm children:

- There is the need for a national survey on farm children's situational analysis with respect to their socio-economic situation vis-à-vis farm communities' social and infrastructural amenities, farm land resource availability, accessibility, and use by different categories of farmers and in diverse areas of farming activities in which they are involved and their levels of involvement, quantification of their contribution to national food basket and their identified needs. Such analysis is very necessary for putting in place a national policy guide that will engender vital enabling environment for sustainability of farm children in farming and the re-attraction of those who have left farming.
- Creating a data base of farm children based on local government areas, farm communities, gender disaggregation and their demographic/socio-economic statuses with a view to embarking on a periodic strategic succession planning of farming by the farm children in Nigeria.
- Developing a holistic package of farm child development plan and programmes within Nigeria's farm structure in order to facilitate the farm child retention on the farm and their effective participation in the farm business of their choice. This should be operationalized in two ways: i) by giving due consideration to *in-school farm children* who may have capacity for furthering their education in agriculture and ii) by investing in *out-of-school farm children* who may not have capacity for formal education but are interested in farming.
- Consciously and strategically adding values to farm children's socio-economic status and recognition in

Nigeria's agricultural sector through issuance of license indicating their farm worth. This strategy can also facilitate an effective drive for registering and tracking farm children vis-à-vis the farm operations in which they are involved.

- Organization of farm children into cooperative groups based in farm communities with a view to enabling them access credit facilities, agro-services, extension services and other social services.
- Government must take advantage of CYIAP-Network, which has become a very effective vehicle driving research on farm children and conferencing on issues relating to them in Nigeria by collaborating with its network as major stakeholder in developing a national policy and programmes targeting the farm children.
- The instrument proposing the emerging young animators and young farmers' congress should be sharpened and the two groups be nurtured and adopted as models in the process of bringing farm children back to the farm.

## CONCLUSION

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, bringing the farm children back to the farm and retention of the few who are still on the farm is a must if Nigeria's agricultural transformation agenda is to be sustained. The future of agriculture and indeed the quest for realization of future farm industrialization in the country can only be attained if the issues relating to farm children are genuinely reflected upon and seriously backed up with relevant policies and necessary actions.

In this lecture, I think that I have been able to lay into the hand of 'Mr. Who', that is expected to bring the farm children back to the farm the *wherewithal* for taking action in looking for the farm children and bringing them back to the farm.

Mr. Vice-chancellor, Sir, kindly permit me to quickly seize this opportunity to appreciate few individuals and organizations whom God has used to significantly contribute to my academic career and today's lecture. Again, I give thanks to the Almighty God who has graciously brought me out of miry clay of dunghill, cleansed me whole with the blood of Jesus and set me on high in the king's palace and more so, for preserving me for today's inaugural lecture in this great University of which I am very proud to be an alumnus. Special thanks to my paternal grand ma – late Mrs. Felicia Jolade Torimiro (alias *Mama Eleja*) my step father- late Mr. Victor Adebayo Oloyede and *Maami* - Mrs. Olajumoke Torimiro-Oloyede (God used them mightily for my upbringing and early education). My special thanks go to the Apostolic Faith Church – where I was taught how best to serve God to whom I have given all my life.

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Ayoola and Timilehin Torimiro, for their love, understanding and full support.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. This is the end of an accomplished mission. God bless you for your attention!

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