

# THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE IN NIGERIA



## Editors

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**THE NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE IN NIGERIA**

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Bem Japhet Audu, Maryam Hamza

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## PREFACE

Community development service as a general concept, is rooted at the heart of African people and society from pre-colonial period. Its meaning lies in the general belief and culture of the people who always come together to take action on what's important to them and their collective progress and sustainable peace. It has supported communities and people in the way in which decisions are made. Community development service is fundamentally based on the contemporary values of human rights, social justice, equality and respect for diversity.

The general principles that sustain and uphold the culture of community development service in Africa include: Self-determination (people and communities have the right to make their own choices and decisions); empowerment (people should be able to control and use their own assets and means to influence); collective action (coming together in groups or organisations strengthens peoples' voices) and community participation.

The importance of community development service CDS cannot be exhaustive. It provides practical support to communities and people; it creates effort towards sustainable peace and development for a stable community and encourage oneness because every member feel belongs. Finally, it contributes positively to societal health, wellbeing, wealth, justice and opportunity in Africa.

This original and fundamental means of building and sustaining African/Nigerian societies was distorted during western imperial activities in the continent.

The establishment of NYSC in 1973 by the military government of General Yakubu Gowon, principally to rebuild and reintegrate the constituent ethno-cultural/religious groups of a war-torn country through the youths had applied the community Development service since inception. To achieve this noble objective, the community development service was adapted and incorporated into

the NYSC scheme which made the corps members to work closely with the host communities for the collective well-being of every Nigerian.

Over the past four decades now, the NYSC Scheme has proved to be an effective facilitator for national development and cohesion through the apparatus of corps members' participation in various forms of community development service programmes and projects. This all-important contribution to the socio-economic development of Nigeria has not yet been comprehensively isolated and documented. It is for this onerous task that the study/book is shouldered with appraisal, documenting and presenting this influence and exploit of the scheme to Nigerians and the scholarly world.

The book encompasses the history of the development of Nigerian society which is very crucial also, that can even be traced to pre-colonial period. The practice of collective and joint effort in handling public issues and developmental project in indigenous communities is inherently part of our culture. Indeed rural progress and social well-being of the people depends mostly on these values. The establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme principally to build stronger understanding and national integration among the diverse constituent peoples/groups of Nigeria after the Civil war is a laudable decision.

This book studies the framework or principles of the CDS, how the principal youth institution in the country imbibed and adapted the principles as a two-edged achievement within the one-year national service.

First, the community development service was not only an integral objective of the scheme from inception in 1973 but an inevitable panacea for building national cohesion amongst the diverse constituent groups in Nigeria. This is because the CDS inherently brought the corps members closer to the members of the host communities, remove exiting suspicion and built trust in the progression of their collective social intercourse within the timeframe. Thus it covers most CDS

groups that touch the heart of the Nigerian society like health and hygiene, education and Mass Literacy, Charity, Road safety, EFCC, Drugs, Emergency Vanguards with NEMA amongst others and their vital contributions to humanity. Indeed, the individual CDS project carried out by corps members goes deeper in provoking this unity because it is a project in the heart of the community but identified and worked jointly till completion, which gives both a course to smile at the end.

Second, the NYSC CDS contributed in no small measure to the National development in Nigeria which also formed the cardinal preoccupation of this book. It therefore highlighted several case studies of such exploits like fostering intergroup relations, sustainable peace, literacy and sensitization of the public on crucial issues which values are priceless.

Finally, the book explicates the challenges faced by the NYSC community development service and prospects to harness more benefits in Nigeria.

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May God Bless us all.

**Shuaibu Ibrahim, Ojeng E. Tangban, Bem J. Audu, and Maryam Hamza.**      *April, 2021.*

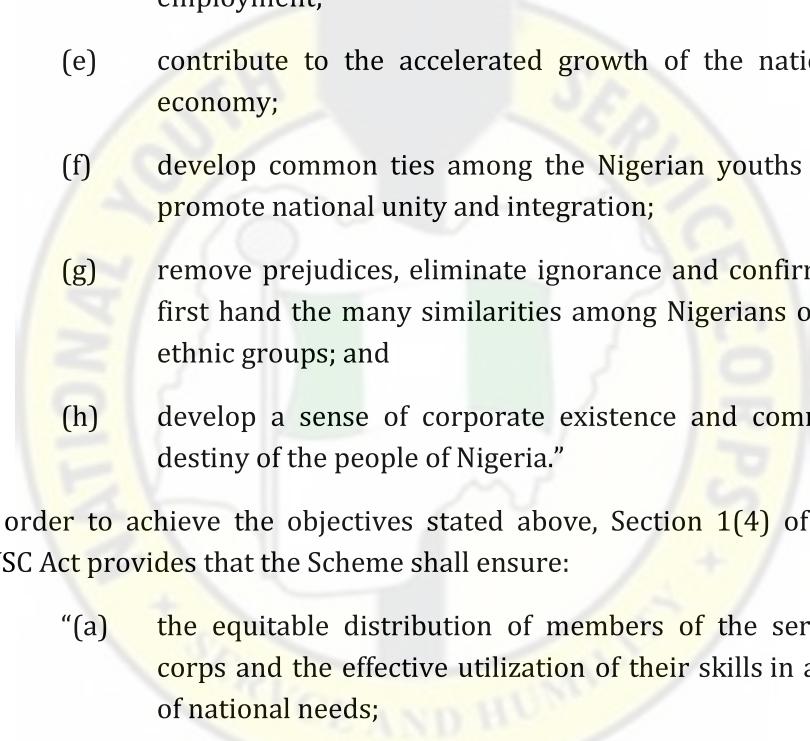
## INTRODUCTION

### **Brief History of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 by the government of General Yakubu Gowon. The history of the scheme is traceable to the events that took place in Nigeria towards the last half of 1960s. The years 1967-1970 were characterized by the Nigerian civil war. At the end of the war, the General Gowon administration came up with new policies that would promote post-conflict peace, reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Consequently, the vital need for national unity led to the birth of the NYSC idea. The NYSC Scheme came into being through Decree No. 24 of 22nd May 1973. It states that the NYSC is being established with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity. After 20 years of existence, the 1973 Decree was repealed and replaced with No. 51 of 16th June, 1993, now referred to as the National Youth Service Corps Act, Cap. N84, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004. The Act is preserved by Section 315 (5) (a) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), thereby, making the NYSC Act part and parcel of the constitution.

According to Section 1(3) of the NYSC Act, the objectives of the Scheme are to:

- “(a) inculcate discipline in Nigerian youths by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work and of patriotic and loyal service to Nigeria in any situation they may find themselves;
- (b) raise the moral tone of the Nigerian youths by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of nation achievements, social and cultural improvement;

- 
- (c) develop in Nigerian youths the attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experience and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilization in the national interest;
  - (d) enable Nigerian youths acquire the spirit of self-reliance by encouraging them to develop skills for self-employment;
  - (e) contribute to the accelerated growth of the national economy;
  - (f) develop common ties among the Nigerian youths and promote national unity and integration;
  - (g) remove prejudices, eliminate ignorance and confirm at first hand the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups; and
  - (h) develop a sense of corporate existence and common destiny of the people of Nigeria.”

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, Section 1(4) of the NYSC Act provides that the Scheme shall ensure:

- “(a) the equitable distribution of members of the service corps and the effective utilization of their skills in area of national needs;
- (b) that are far as possible, Nigerian youths are assigned to jobs in States other than their States of origin;
- (c) that such group of Nigerian youths assigned to work together is as representative of Nigeria as far as possible;

- (d) that the Nigerian youths are exposed to the mode of living of the people in different parts of Nigeria.
- (e) the Nigerian youths are encouraged to eschew religious intolerance by accommodating religious differences;
- (f) the members of the service corps are encouraged to seek a year for their one year national service, career employment all over Nigeria, thus promoting the free movement of labour;
- (g) that employers are induced partly through their experience with members of the service corps to employ more readily and on a permanent basis, qualified Nigerians, irrespective of the States or origin."

Basically, the aims and objectives of the NYSC is to reinforce institutional efficiency and effectiveness as well as youth development in the country. It is accepted in several quarters that NYSC is a viable platform for the transitioning of youths into self-reliant adults and the improvement of general welfare and development. The NYSC programme has since inception facilitated steady and effective supply and distribution of skilled manpower, breaking of social and cultural barriers as well as the building of friendly bridges across ethno-linguistic boundaries. It has also assisted in the promotion of values, national unity and development, rekindled interest in neglected but vital areas of national development and promoted leadership qualities in the youths. The Scheme has four (4) cardinal programmes which are: Mobilisation/Orientation, Primary Assignment, Community Development Service and Winding-Up/Passing- Out Exercise.

The maximum age requirement for youths under the scheme is thirty (30) years old. They are also engaged in community development programmes and activities. According to Section 2(2) of the NYSC Act, the only groups of youth exempted are those that have served in the

Armed forces or the Nigerian Police for a period of more than nine (9) months or in the security agencies, those over thirty (30) years of age and those conferred with National Honours. In addition, the choice of youths above every other age group was based on the fact that they are considered the most active change agents needed in building a united Nigeria, and a way of achieving this is for the youths to imbibe and nurture a sense of common belonging and national consciousness which would transcend political, social, state and ethnic loyalties.

At the onset of the NYSC in 1973, only 2,346 graduates were mobilized. However, judging by the evolution of the Scheme, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of graduates that are participating annually. NYSC is capable of bringing out the best qualities in Nigerian youth and imparting in them the right attitude and value for nation building that serves as catalyst to national development, sense of pride and fulfillment of its participating graduate youths. The criteria observed in the deployment of Corps members include:

- the equality of states,
- ability of states to absorb the service of participants,
- posting based on concessional considerations (marital and health grounds), posting on demand from various federal government establishments,
- the supportive role of a government is also increasingly becoming a factor in the placement of corps members,
- the deployment of corps members has retained its traditional process with the majority of corps members going to the classrooms.

The Scheme's presence is felt and noticed in all the LGAs in the country, creating higher emphasis in the rural and grass root development in line with its objectives since inception.

Community Development Service in Historical Context

# 1

## Community Development Service in Historical Context

Nadir A. Nasidi

### Introduction

Community Development Service has been an integral part of human development throughout the existence of man. Apart from the fact that it is a global phenomenon, the case of sub-Saharan Africa is not only unique, but is also deeply rooted in the African tradition. This tradition is surely that of self-help as both individualistic and collective responsibility for the betterment of all and sundry. Patel and Wilson observe that communities normally organize themselves for community service which is directly hinged on voluntary

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engagements<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore rationale that most African communities have specific words for community service. Some of these words include the Kiswahili *Kujitolea*, the Hausa *aikingayya* or the *Ubuntu* tradition derived from the Bantu culture<sup>2</sup>. In specification to Nigeria, Community service is no doubt common to virtually all Nigerian cultures. Its beginning however, is unconsciously buried in the distant past. Community service cuts across different spheres of human life ranging from collective sanitations, hunting in bands, building, rituals to the provision of security mostly by either vigilante, or secret societies<sup>3</sup>. Though people of all classes and ages engaged in community services world-wide, the youths play a bigger role in this regard probably due to their brawn and youthful exuberance. In line with this assertion, Manyerere argues that, 'youth involvement in development programmes is crucial to empower their communities; as well as to make them lifelong participants in development projects by inculcating in them a sense of ownership in development initiatives'<sup>4</sup>.

Chan and Elder opine that youth's participation in community service is directly linked to the efforts made by their parents in that regard. This according to them is the fact that parents can shape their children's

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<sup>1</sup>L.Patel, and T. Wilson, 'Civic Service in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33.4,(2014).

<sup>2</sup>N.Menon, , A Moore. andSherraden, M., '*Understanding Service: Words in the Context of History and Culture*. Washington: Centre for Social Development Global Service Institute,2002.

<sup>3</sup>N. A. Nasidi, 'Religious Diversity and Peaceful Co-existence on the Mambilla Plateau: A Lesson for the Nigerian State'. In Osakwe, C.C., *Leadership and Complex Military Operations*,(Kaduna: Centre for the Study of Leadership and Complex Military Operations, Nigerian Defense Academy, 2015), 564-573, Enemou, F.C., 'Youth Mobilisation for Nation-Building: The Case of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme in Nigeria', A Paper prepared for the Ford Foundation Workshop in Youth Involvement as a Strategy for Social, Economic and Democratic Development, Costa Rica, 2001.

<sup>4</sup>D. Manyerere, 'The Role of Youth Volunteerism in the Achievement of Local Development Initiatives in Iringa Region, Tanzania', *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies*, 17.1, (2019): 82.

### Community Development Service in Historical Context

social choices through their social and economic actions, which invariably, inspire them about the importance and relevance of community service to one's societal development<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, community development can take many shapes and forms depending on the needs and circumstances on ground. In this regard therefore, it may be social, political, or economic. Not only that, it may be in terms of monetary support, services rendered or even as a moral support.

Community development service had also been part and parcel of the human life in both historical and recent times. In the post-colonial period however, the emergence of various local and international organisations have championed the cause of community development in many ways. Though the focus of this paper is not directly on the roles of such organisations, an effort is made to examine the dynamics of community development in a fast changing world that is grounded in science and technology. This is more so with the globalization of the world by reducing it to a small village with the internet as its *modus operandi*.

This paper therefore, attempts to provide a holistic view of the historical evolution of community development services, its roles in the socio-political and economic life of human beings and of course, some of the challenges associated with it. To achieve this goal, a number of literature is equally reviewed with the sole aim of not only defining the concept of community development service, but also in contextualizing it within the Nigerian experience through its multi-ethnic settings. Analysis and submissions of this paper are not water-tight, an effort is also made to explore the major contributions of community

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<sup>5</sup>C. G Chan, and G. H Elder, 'Family Influences on the Social Participation of Youth: The Effects of Parental Social Involvement and Farming', *Rural Sociology*, 66.1, (2001): 22-42. See also, Fletcher, A.C., Elder, G.H. AND Mekos, D., 'Parental Influences on Adolescent Involvement in Community Activities', *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10 (2000): 29-48., Parke, R.D. and Ladd, G.N. (Eds.), *Family-Peer Relationships: Modes of Linkages*. U.S.A: Routledge,2016.

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development service and some of the factors debilitating against it. Though the title of this paper seems to be generic rather than specific, it made an incursion into the role of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as an example of the dual mental effort in the promotion of unity and community development service across the Nigerian state.

### **Community Development**

Though there is no universally accepted definition of development, many scholars have made several attempts to define the concept. This is so because, even development theorists do not provide a meaningful explanation of the concept of development.<sup>6</sup> As the development needs of one country differs from another so is the context that tends to shape the definition of the term. For instance, the effort made by scholars to give development a purely economic undertone is not only misleading, but also, grossly deficient as it fails to take into consideration, its socio-cultural and political dimensions. It is in line with this submission that Pearson argues that development does not refer to either social, political, or economic spheres of humans, but it is distinctively a hybrid term for ‘a myriad of strategies adopted for socio-economic and environmental transformation from current states to desired ones.<sup>7</sup>

In theorizing the concept of development, which is deeply rooted in the western civilization, a number of theories evolved with the aim of understanding the dynamics and facts of development at least in several contexts. Among these theories popularized by scholars are; Modernization and Dependency. Of all these theories however, Grass-root and Development theory tends to suit the major thrusts of this paper. This theory deals with any effort made by an individual, groups and government to enhance the capacity of grass-root levels of people

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<sup>6</sup>R. Abuiyada‘Traditional Development Theories Have Failed with Reference to GAD’, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 9.9, (2008): 1.

<sup>7</sup>R.Pearson, ‘Rethinking Gender Matters in Development’, in Allen, T. and Thomas, A. (Eds.). Poverty and Development into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

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so as to influence their, or rather, develop them socially, politically, or even economically.<sup>8</sup>

Community Development can be seen as both a phenomenon dealing with the reorganization and reorientation of economic and social system, or as a continuous process of improving the quality of human lives in its entirety. This by extension, incorporates (1) Raising peoples' standard of living with particular reference to incomes, consumption and utility (2) providing a conducive atmosphere to enhance peoples' self-esteem through the introduction of socio-political and economic systems to promote mutual respect for all and (3) to provide freedom of choice in terms of variables, varieties of goods and services.

In defining the concept of development generally, Rabie attempts to give the term a broader perspective rather than reducing it strictly to economic explanation. According to him:

Development is basically an economic concept that has positive connotations; it involves the application of certain economic and technical measures to utilize available resources to instigate economic growth and improve peoples' quality of life. In the 1950s and 1960s, development was largely referred to as economic growth, which meant a qualitative rather than quantitative change in economic performance. Consequently, development theories were designed to activate and accelerate the process of economic growth and move developing nations along the path charted by industrial activity to relying primarily on industrial production and trade<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>J. Friedman, *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*. Oxford: Oxford Blackwell Press, 1980.

<sup>9</sup>M., ARabieTheory of Sustainable Socio-Cultural and Economic Development, (Unpublished Paper, 2016).

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To Rabie, it is an obvious misconception for one to define development from a purely economic point of view. This is because, no amount of money pumped can develop an economy if it excludes the culture governing the ethics and psychology of the people who are supposed to be managing the economy, especially by enacting sound policies and programmes. This particular view is also supported by many scholars<sup>10</sup>.

### **NYSC and Community Development Service**

With the termination of the Nigerian First Republic (1960-1966) as a result of the first coup that took place, the country plunged into socio-economic and political confusion.<sup>11</sup> Among the factors that further polarized the country and its people, particularly along divisive religion-regional lines were tribalism, nepotism, corruption and ill-feeling towards people of different religion-cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This is because; Nigerians fail to define their relationships with their differences. The 1966 coup therefore opened the Pandora's Box the end results were the July Counter-Coup and the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). Through these turbulent and chaotic times, many Nigerians lost their lives and properties worth billions of Naira, infrastructures as well were destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

From the foregoing, it would be observed that the focal point of the NYSC scheme is to foster national unity, mutual understanding and

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<sup>10</sup>J. Soares and R., Quintella 'Development: An Analysis of Concepts, Measurement and Indicators', *Brazilian Administration Review*, 5.2 (2008): 1.

<sup>11</sup>N. A Nasidi, 'Exploring the Dimensions of Secessionist Agitations: Security Threats and Implications for Nigeria 1966-2016', in *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*, Vol. 2. London: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers,2017, pg289-304.

<sup>12</sup> Among the leaders killed were; Sir Ahmadu Bello (The Premier of the Northern Region and the Sardauna of Sokoto), Sir AbubakarTafawaBalewa (The Prime Minister of Nigeria), Chief Samuel Ladoke (The Premier of the Western Region), Chief Festus OkotieEboh (The Federal Minister of Finance), and some senior northern Nigerian military officers like ZakariMaimalari, Col. Kuru Muhammad, Col. Ralph Shodeinde, Lieutenant Colonels AbogoLargema and Yakubu Pam.

### Community Development Service in Historical Context

respect among Nigerians. It should be noted that, apart from the series of training (both mental and physical) given to the Nigerian graduates during their three weeks camping, they are also assigned Primary Assignments (PA), especially at schools (both public and private), hospitals (for medical graduates), government and private firms, to mention, but just a few. It is therefore at such places of Primary Assignments that corps members are introduced into the rubrics of community development as they are paid some stipends, but not salaries to render services based on their respective areas of specialization.

Furthermore, in one of their working days, corps members are mandated to attend a Community Development Service at any of the bodies they are assigned to such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), to mention, but four. Part of the major objectives of the CDS is to:<sup>13</sup>

1. Inculcate in the corps members the tradition of the dignity of labour.
2. Bring them closer to their host communities and by teaching them to contribute to the local development efforts.
3. Provide a good platform for corps members, through working with the host community, to acquire local customs and comprehensive knowledge of the people.
4. Motivate their local communities to enable the spirit of self-help projects without relying on the government.

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<sup>13</sup> For details, see the following; NYSC, *Decree and Amendments*. No. 28 Vol. 60, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Part A, 1973, NYSC, *NYSC Handbook*. Lagos: NYSC Directorate, 1974, NYSC,*A Compendium of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme: Ten Years of Service to the Nation*(Lagos: NYSC Directorate, 1983), NYSC,*Community Development Service*. Lagos: NYSC Directorate,1984. NYSC,*12 Years of National Youth Service in Nigeria: 1973-1985* (Lagos: NYSC Directorate, 1985,NYSC, *The Integrator: Annual Publication of NYSC Scheme*. Imo State: NYSC,1989.

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The nature of the NYSC's CDS cuts across almost every facet of life such as; building roads, bridge construction, sanitation, spread of education through teaching, or the establishment of libraries, rendering free medical care, especially to the less privileged, enlightenment of community based organisations (CBOs), among many important things. To ensure the full participation of corps members, a number of penalties is set aside for defaulters. Through this process, many of them learn the culture of community development service. Meanwhile, awards are also given by both the NYSC and the CDS groups to outstanding corps members in community development issues. This recognition has no doubt lured many Nigerian graduates into putting in their best (physical, mental and financial) in trying to change the lives of their host communities in a number of ways. With that spirit of self-help, many corps members extend the same tradition to their respective working places (both public and private) many years after their one year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). It is also on this basis that the following sub-head looks into the role of community development service in the lives of both the actors and the various beneficiaries at local and national levels.

### **The Role of Community Development Service**

Since this paper has previously attempted to define the concept of community development, this section focuses mainly on the importance of community development service. One of the most important roles of community service is the fact that it promotes the spirit of philanthropy amongst people. This is no doubt one of the main aims of the NYSC programme. The hope is that, as soon as corps members pass out from the scheme, most of them imbibe the habit of community development, which they carry with them as a guiding tradition throughout their lives.

Community development service also brings a lot of development into the lives of the beneficiaries. This may come in different modes. For

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instance, a community that is in a dire need of water supply will surely appreciate anyone who can provide it for them. This is because it can change their lives in many ways. Meanwhile, community development service always contributes to the development of not only a community, but a state and a nation by extension. Large number of philanthropists can transform a society in its entirety even without government involvement and this is the sole aim of CDS in the NYSC scheme. One can conveniently cite as many examples as possible about the way and manner corps members transform the lives of fellow Nigerians via the CDS. This development ranges from the building of schools, dispensaries, to the construction of culverts. In many instances, communities hosting corps members are empowered with capital to run businesses. This no doubt, brought a lot of development to the various Nigerian societies.

Similarly, through community development services, the growing rate of animosity between Nigerians, particularly after the Civil War years are reduced to the lowest ebb. This is because; Corps members who come from different states of the federation positively affected the lives of their host communities irrespective of their ethnic groups, religions, gender or regions. In response, the most stereotyped stories and rumours navigating the breadth and length of the nation, especially between Northerners and Southerners are either negated or properly understood within their respective contexts. For instance, corps members serving in Northern Nigeria are always cautioned about the fierce and brutal character of the people of the region, which is always proven wrong. On the other side, many Northerners are also ill-informed about the people of the South against whom cannibalism is unjustly and erroneously labeled.

Community development service equally promotes the culture of reciprocating goodness and generosity between people. A community that benefited from a particular development project for example would naturally be accommodative to its philanthropists. Through the

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NYSC CDS groups, many a relationship was built between the corps members and their host communities many years after the one mandatory service year. In such instances, one finds it even difficult sometimes to understand the nature of such relationships, which seem to have transcended mere friendship to blood-like relations.

### **Challenges**

Despite the fact that community development plays important roles in the transformation of any human society, it however, has a number of challenges. These challenges may be social, economic, political, cultural, geographical or even ideological. One of the major challenges of community development in most communities is lack of proper cooperation, especially between the philanthropists and their beneficiaries. This is because, one's religious inclination, or social status may serve as a barrier for his goodwill in contributing to the development of the people. It would be absurd to many Muslims for instance for a Christian philanthropist to build a mosque for them or Muslim building a Church for the Christians.

Moreover, the presence of corrupt officials in a community may also mar societal progress as much as community development service is concerned. There are many circumstances in which the money set aside for community development are either mismanaged or completely stolen by such corrupt people. This no doubt is a stumbling block to societal development not only in relation to community development, but also in terms of leadership. Though some Nigerian communities have a number of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that are normally shouldered with the responsibilities of their communities and its development, the infiltration of corruption into almost all aspects of the Nigerian life poses a serious challenge to community development. In some cases, such CBOs are established by selfish individuals so as to serve as a money-making industry even at the detriment of the people in particular and the nation in general.

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The last but not least, the main focus of many developmental projects is often lost due to lack of proper knowledge about the basic needs of a community. In this regard, one may find an individual or even a government misplacing priorities. For example, a community that is suffering from water shortages cannot have water-ways as a remedy. In view of this therefore, many community developmental projects are defeated even before execution and thus, it is one of the challenges of community development in Nigeria.

Though the NYSC CDS scheme is designed to ensure a full delivery of community development projects throughout Nigeria, it has not completely escaped some of the challenges discussed. That is why the level of success recorded in terms of projects executed by corps members in different communities and geographical location, also differs. Despite this challenge however, the CDS scheme contributed immensely to community development at various levels.

### Conclusion

This paper attempted an overview of community development service in historical context. Though Community Development as a term has no universally accepted definition, an effort is made to conceptualise it, at least, within the context of the Nigerian experience with particular reference to the NYSC/CDS scheme. It is also argued that community development service is an old African tradition mainly to promote the spirit of self-help and philanthropy.

The paper also threw a little new light into the major roles of community development. Among these contributions are; the promotion of self-help, the abolition of animosity in the hearts of two or more contending factions, the socio-economic and political development of communities, among other important roles. On the contrary, the paper also examined some of the major challenges of community development in most societies across the globe, but layed emphasis on the Nigerian condition. Some of these challenges are;

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corruption, misplacement of priorities, religious cultural barriers, to mention, but three. The paper concludes by stating that despite the challenges associated with community development service in most Nigerian communities, it contributed immeasurably to the socio-economic and political development of the people.



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## 2

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### Introduction

The effort of eradicating poverty and the quest of attaining standard means of livelihood is the major objective of every government; as every government desires a developed nation.<sup>1</sup> Development is a vital requisite to the growth and sustenance of any vibrant nation and in order to maintain the requisite level of growth across board.

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Z. Bonye, Arkum Thaddeus, AasoglenangEbenezer Owusu-Sekyere. “Community development in Ghana: theory and practice.” *European Scientific Journal* 9, no.17 (June 2013) 79.79–101.

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Community development is important. Community development as a process in Nigeria began during the colonial administration. After the Second World War, the British Colonial Office became concerned with community development in order to increase the rate of economic buoyance in the colonies.<sup>2</sup> Community development process and practices therefore entails the inclusion and participation of different interest groups, stakeholders and actors including the people whose livelihood projects are geared at improving, government and non-governmental bodies, funding organisations, project experts and executors.<sup>3</sup>

The Community Development Service (CDS) of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is one of the four cardinal points of the scheme. This study attempts to discuss NYSC and community development service in Nigeria. Community development is vital to the growth and development of any vibrant nation. Over the years, efforts have continued to be made by the government in terms community development services across the nation, and are evident in the continuous growth and development of communities. One of such efforts to entrench community development in the nation was its inculcation in the NYSC scheme in 1973. This chapter adopts the use of primary sources in form of archival materials of official government gazette; and, secondary data were also used to corroborate these sources of information. The study adopted documentary analyses to arrive at the conclusion that the community development programme of the NYSC is indeed very well-articulated and has been serving its purposes despite challenges. The focus is on the origin of the

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<sup>2</sup>Smith, M. K. "What is community development."The encyclopedia of informal education. Accessed January 25, 2021, <http://infed.org/mobi/what-is-community-development/>.

<sup>3</sup>Akande, J. O. "Community Development in Nigeria: Historical Account and Lessons from the Defects of the Past." *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development* 5, no.1 (2010). 62. 61-72.

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community development services of the NYSC, how it is carried out and its impact on the host communities.

### **Community Development Service in the NYSC**

The NYSC, having been established in 1973 by the then General Yakubu Gowon regime, in furtherance to the Federal Government's post-war policy of Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation, has community development as a principal part of its activities. The aim of the NYSC was to recalibrate a new generation of Nigerians who were detribalized, disciplined and patriotic and had developed common ties within the Nigerian state. They were to be posted outside their states of origin where they would serve in new communities and gain employment; to promote national unity and integrity. The stipulated objectives of the scheme as contained in the Act are:

- a. to inculcate discipline in Nigerian youths by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work and of patriotic and loyal service to Nigeria in any situation they may find themselves;
- b. to raise the moral tone of the Nigerian youths by giving them the opportunity to learn about higher ideals of national achievements and social and cultural improvement; to develop in Nigerian youths the attitudes of mind, acquired through shared experience and suitable training, which will make them more amenable to mobilization in the national interest;
- c. to enable Nigerian youths acquire the spirit of self-resilience by encouraging them to develop skills for self-employment; to contribute to the accelerated growth of the national economy; to develop common ties among the Nigerian Youths and promote national unity and integration; to encourage members of the service corps to seek, at the end of their corps service, career employment

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- all over the country thus promoting the free movement of labour;
- d. to enable Nigerian youths to acquire the spirit of self-reliance.<sup>4</sup>

All these objectives will aid in removing prejudices, eliminating ignorance and make bare the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups, and herald a sense of corporate existence and common destiny of the people of Nigeria. These objectives of the NYSC are pursued through the four Cardinal programmes of the Scheme, namely: Orientation Course, Primary Assignment, Community Development Service and Winding-up/ Passing-out Programme. In assessing NYSC vis-à-vis its community development service in the nation, our concentration in this chapter will be on the scheme's third cardinal programme; Community Development Service.

The community development service programmes of the NYSC runs alongside with the primary assignment. It is a platform for corps members to initiate and execute projects aimed at improving the living standards of their host communities. Some of these projects include; the construction and renovation of culverts and bridges, removal of waste materials, and other basic infrastructures; awareness campaigns on vital issues in the society such as, voters education, campaigns for proper sanitation etc.; educational projects; medical outreaches especially in remote villages, among other varying issues . In addition, the scheme is into diverse forms of community development service collaborations with the Government, Non-Governmental Organizations, International Organizations and other well-meaning Nigerians.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This can be found in the National Archives, Kaduna. File No. CSA/OFF/148. *Office of the Secretary to the Interim Common Services Agency.National Youth Service Corps.* Accessed 16/02/2021

<sup>5</sup> National Youth Service Corps, *ABC of Community Development Service*, (Abuja, Nigeria:NYSC.May 2015), 2.

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Through, the community development programme, members of the service corps work with the local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programmes which impact positively on the socioeconomic development of the host communities. Thus, over the years, the community development service programme has metamorphosed to a department in the NYSC whose vision and mission are; to galvanise the great potentials of the Nigerian youths and generate community interest towards national development and to enhance the living standard of host communities at all times. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the community development service of the NYSC is to improve the economic, health, political and socio-cultural conditions of host communities towards sustainable development.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Objectives of Community Development Service under the NYSC Scheme**

The overarching goal of every Community Development project of the NYSC is to contribute to the welfare of the society, to leave a mark of honour and a legacy worthy of emulation behind. Thus, its impact is felt by the Community, the corps members and all other individuals who come across such projects.

The objectives of the CDS as stipulated by the NYSC are both community developmental and human capacity building oriented in nature. These objectives are: impacting positively on the improvement of rural community life; developing the spirit of self-reliance in the corps members; inculcating in the Nigerian Youth the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism and creativity by utilizing the challenges posed by rural development; exposing corps members to diverse

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<sup>6</sup>Nysc.gov.ng Editors.“Community Development Service and Special Projects Department.”NYSC Official Website.Accessed 16/02/2021.  
<https://www.nysc.gov.ng/cds.html>.

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traditions and customs of their host communities; providing the forum for corps members to experiment with ideas and translate them into concrete achievements thereby relying less on foreign technology and encouraging the use of local raw materials in the execution of projects; harnessing the enormous energy, talents and skills of corps members into an effective machinery of change in our rural communities; providing on-the job-training, skill sets and experience for corps members; providing complementary service in our National development activities, by ensuring that our underprivileged population learn basic techniques for self-help through the appropriate technology concept being promoted by NYSC; to instil in corps members the tradition of dignity of labour and productivity; to complement the activities of government at all levels in the stride towards national development.<sup>7</sup>

**Classifications of Community Development Service under the NYSC**

Community Development Service (CDS) under the NYSC is classified into three main groups: The Group Community Development Service; the Personal/ Individual Community Development Service; and the Collaborative Community Development Service. The Group Community Development Service (Group CDS) has been made compulsory for corps members.<sup>8</sup> It is carried out once in a week by corps members in their various NYSC local government secretariats. On the selected week day, they are not expected to attend duties in their places of their primary assignment; rather, they converge in their assigned CDS groups to execute projects and programmes that will improve the living conditions of their host communities. There are over fifteen Group CDS

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<sup>7</sup>National Archives, Kaduna (NAK)File No. CSA/OFF/148.*Office of the Secretary to the Interim Common Services Agency.National Youth Service Corps.*Accessed 16/02/2021

<sup>8</sup>National Youth Service Corps, *ABC of Community Development Service*, (Abuja, Nigeria: NYSC. May 2015), 2.

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under the NYSC and the number continues to grow in relation to the challenge that needs to be solved in the society.<sup>9</sup>

Some Group CDS include; the NYSC Sports and Cultural CDS, which has an annual programme aimed at encouraging the development of the spirit of sportsmanship and building healthy competition among corps members as well as the appreciation and promotion of their host communities' values and culture; the SDGs CDS, which trains volunteers in line with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. These corps members thus become saddled with the responsibility of carrying out community developmental projects in their host communities in tandem with the 17 sustainable development goals of the United Nations; the Medical and Health Services which enlightens members of host communities about health related issues and carries out projects that guarantees the health and wellbeing of members of host communities. Other Group CDS includes; Editorial and Publicity, the Red Cross; Anti-Corruption Group; Legal Aid, among several others.

The Personal/ Individual Community Development Service (Personal/Individual CDS) are projects executed by individual corps members in their host communities based on community felt-needs. Corps members are encouraged in addition to the Group CDS to look out for areas where they could individually make impact in their host communities. It could be on construction projects like building of incinerators, bridges, classroom blocks, laboratory facilities for schools etc. States/FCT Coordinators encourage corps members to embark on personal CDS projects as these further buttresses and equips the corps members with the spirit of self-reliance which is an objective of the scheme.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>ABC of Community Development Service...2015

<sup>10</sup>ABC of Community Development Service...2015

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The Collaborative Community Development Service is characterized by projects in partnership with the National and Non-Governmental Organisations and other establishments to implement development programmes. In this classification of CDS, the NYSC signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the partners, clearly stating each partner's roles and responsibilities, while the Corps members are involved as Volunteers. Examples of the collaborative CDS include: NYSC/NEMA partnership on sensitisation and training of corps members as Emergency Vanguards; NYSC/Federal Ministry of Environment partnership on planting of one (1) million trees every year; NYSC/NDLEA partnership on training of corps members, sensitisation campaigns and the formation of clubs to promote a drug-free society. The NYSC also collaborates with several agencies and organisations to render useful and rewarding services to host communities through corps members.

Some of the organisations which have partnered with the NYSC include: Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN); Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO); Mercy Corps Nigeria; National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA); United Nations Children Education Funds (UNICEF); National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC); National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA); Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP SDGs); Guardian of the Nations International (GOTNI); National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHDA); Mind The Gap (E-Green); United Nations Millennium Campaign Office (UNMC), among several continuously emerging collaborations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>ABC of Community Development Service...2015

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**Table 1: Table showing various CDS Groups, Objectives and Activities**

| S/N | CDS Groups            | Objectives  | Activities   |
|-----|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1.  | Corps Legal Aid Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Free legal services to the lessprivileged and indigent prisoninmates (Victims of denials and violation of rights).</li><li>• Sensitization of the public onfundamental human rights</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocacy</li><li>• Visit to prisons</li><li>• Legal service to inmates and indigent persons</li><li>• Public lecture and awareness on fundamental human rights</li></ul>           |
| 2.  | Sports Group          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create avenue for recreation and healthy rivalry among Corps Members and the community.</li><li>• Awaken the consciousness ofliving healthy and purpose fullfestyles through participation in one form of physical activity or the other</li><li>• Identify talents among Corps Members</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participation in Sports competitions</li><li>• Identifying and Training members of the Community on sporting activities</li><li>• Organizing various Sports Competitions</li></ul> |

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|    |   |  |   |
|----|---|--|---|
| 3. | Cultural and Tourism Group (Band, Dance, Drama & Tourism)                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote arts and Culture</li><li>• Dissemination of vital socio-economic and political problems and prospects through entertainment.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying talents</li><li>• Entertainment</li><li>• Setting up of the Schemes theatre groups</li></ul>  |
| 4. | Education Development Group (Mass Literacy, Adult Education, Extra Murals, ICT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance the educational standard of the host community</li><li>• Career guidance and counseling for students</li></ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campaign against illiteracy</li><li>• Organizing extra-mural classes for adults</li><li>• Organizing of in-school programmes</li></ul>          |
| 5. | Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group (Eco vanguard, NESREA)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote and sustain healthy environment</li><li>• To create awareness on sustainable environment management and regeneration</li></ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree planting</li><li>• Sanitation</li><li>• Drainage Control</li><li>• Erosion Control</li><li>• Reforestation</li><li>• Landscaping</li></ul> |
| 6. | Editorial/ Publicity Group  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complement the activities of the NYSC Public Relations Unit disseminating Information to the Community</li></ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making presentation on mass media to enlighten people on activities of the NYSC and socio-cultural education.</li></ul>                         |

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|     |  |   |  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 7.  | Road Safety  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To contribute to public safetyon our roads</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization and controlof traffic</li><li>• Rendering first aid to accident victims</li><li>• Establishment of roadsafety clubs in schools</li></ul> |
| 8.  | Reproductive Health & HIV/ AIDS Group                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To train and mentor Students</li><li>• To mobilize and strengthen community based responseson HIV/AIDS prevention</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization and Campaign</li></ul>   |
| 9.  | Anti-Corruption Group (EFCC & ICPC)                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help in eradicating corruption through awareness campaign</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization</li><li>• Creation of awareness in schools and organizations</li><li>• Establish Anti-Corruption groups or clubs in schools</li></ul>    |
| 10. | Service Delivery Group (Attitudinal Change, Re Branding) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensitization on Servicedelivery and good work ethics</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training</li><li>• Sensitization</li><li>• Group discussions onvalue re-orientation</li></ul>  |

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|     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 11. | SDGs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create awareness and actualize the goals of SDGs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocacy and Mentoring of the host Community</li> <li>Implementing SDGs-driven projects</li> </ul>   |
| 12. | Drug Free and Quality Control Group (NDLEA, NAFDAC, SON) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eradication of fake and adulterated foods and drugs</li> <li>Create awareness on danger and consequences of drug abuse.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of drugfree clubs in Schools</li> <li>Ensuring linkages with the host Communities</li> </ul>   |
| 13. | Agro-Allied Group  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support agro allied activities in host communities</li> <li>To promote better food production and security</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstration farms/Extension Services</li> <li>Establishment of Farmers Cooperative Societies</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Teaching of new farming techniques to communities</li> </ul> |
| 14. | Charity Services and Gender Group                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To improve the living standard of the down trodden.</li> <li>Charity outreaches to the public</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilize funds and other resources for lessprivileged</li> <li>Visits to orphanages &amp; prisons</li> <li>Donation of materials to homes</li> </ul>                                   |

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|     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 15. | Disaster Management Group (NEMA)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create awareness on disaster management</li> <li>• To disseminate information on how to manage disaster through Corps Emergency Vanguards.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public enlightenment on disaster management and control through the emergency Vanguards</li> <li>• Disaster management</li> <li>• Liaison with NEMA on how to assist during emergencies</li> <li>• Formation of emergency vanguard club in schools.</li> </ul> |
| 16. | Medical and Health Services Group (Red Cross, Breast Without Spot, Polio Plus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion and provision of Medical Services</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical outreach</li> <li>• First Aid administration</li> <li>• Establishment of Community based clinics</li> <li>• Setting up and managing activities of clinic for the NYSC Secretariat</li> </ul>   |

Table Showing CDS Groups, Objectives and Activities

**Source:** NYSC (2016)

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### **Strategies Employed by the NYSC in Carrying out its Community Development Service**

The steps used by the NYSC to ensure that all community development projects are well articulated and carried out by corps members for the benefit of their host communities consist of the use of professional project management skills such as; community entry; identification of projects through needs assessment; project/programme selection; programme or project approval; mobilisation of funds and materials; project execution; and, project commissioning and handing over to the community.

- i. **Community Entry:** This is the identification and engagement of the stakeholders in the host community. These stakeholders range from the traditional leaders of the community, religious leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, opinion leaders, and other key stakeholders as the case may be. During community entry, there must be proper interaction with the host community in order to jointly identify projects based on the felt needs of the community. In conjunction with the local government inspector and zonal inspector, the corps member is also expected to build preliminary opinion and support base for the project through sensitization and advocacy for the community head/village head; Youth leaders, opinion leader; school principal; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Community Based Organisations (CBOs) Community Development Agencies (CDAs) and FBOs; and public spirited individuals. Also, consents where possible will have to be obtained from community leaders for the site and execution of projects. Community entry is the point of familiarization to make all these possible.

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- ii. **Identification of Projects through Needs Assessment:** The two basic techniques for carrying out needs assessment for an appropriate community development project is by observing the challenges faced by the host community. For instance, lack of potable water, medical facility, educational institution, link road or bridge or prevalence of common diseases, illiteracy, non-basic skills, ignorance, or drug abuse can be a challenge faced by the community. Through discussions with members of the community ranging from youths, market women, opinion leaders and elders at the community entry stage, these challenges may be identified. And to ensure that the challenge identified is of foremost importance to the community, discussions of project proposal or what the community wants to be done for it is carried out.
- iii. **Project/Programme Selection:** The factors that guide the choice of community development projects in the NYSC are measured through the SMART test of project management and the felt-needs of the community. In the SMART test, projects must be Specific (defined), Measurable (visible outcome when completed), Achievable (Possible to execute), rewarding (benefits when completed) and Time-bound (deadline for completion). The felt-needs of the community ensures that the community is put first in any project to be carried out. Carrying out a community development project that is not the felt-needs of the community amounts to a futile and meaningless effort as such projects mostly end up poorly managed or not being utilised in totality. For these reasons, needs-assessments must be carried out first.

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- iv. **Programme/Project Approval:** For a proposed CDS project to be approved under the NYSC, a written proposal, with the relevance of the project clearly stated, must be forwarded by the corps member addressed to the NYSC state coordinator through the local and zonal inspectors. Also, sustainability and benefits of the project to the community on the long-run must be stated. The location and accessibility of the project is important as projects to be executed by corps members should not be in disputed areas and should be accessible to members of the host community. Also, all proposed projects approved must be completed within the service year.
- v. **Mobilization of Funds and Resources:** Funding of a CDS project is the shared responsibility of the host community, government and stakeholders who are beneficiaries of such projects. On no account is a corps member expected to fund community development projects from his/her personal money, as doing so would nullify the viability of the project. Funds for project execution can be sourced through; Corporate organizations; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Philanthropists; Government Agencies; Public spirited individuals in the community; political office holders/ representatives. Furthermore, there should be a comprehensive analysis of income and expenditure of funds and other resources received with receipts attached. This is done for the purpose of accountability. Mobilization of resources should not be done in isolation but in conjunction with community members and other relevant stakeholders.
- vi. **Project Execution:** After the above steps have been carried out, the corps member can begin the execution of the project within the time frame expected. During the

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execution of the project, corps members are expected to submit progress report with documentary/pictorial evidence bimonthly until the project reaches completion. Once a project is completed, a Completion Report is to be submitted to the NYSC State Secretariat.

vii. **Commissioning and handing over to the Community:**

Community development projects of corps members are commissioned by their local government inspector or State Coordinator. Giving of feedback to persons that donated towards the execution of the project is crucial.

The community participatory approach built into the aforementioned steps allows for decision making on projects to be jointly taken which ultimately leads to sustainability of such projects and community ownership. Thus, making such projects viable to the host community.

**Table 2: Showing the various stages of NYSC and CDS**

| TIMELINE | ACTIVITY  |
|----------|---|
| Month 1  | ORIENTATION CAMP  |
| Month 2  | PLACEMENT OF CORPS MEMBER ON CDS GROUPS AND SETTLING DOWN                                   |
| Month 3  | DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS   |
| Month 4  | DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS CONTINUED   |
| Month 5  | APPROVALS OF PROPOSALS AND PROJECT COMMENCEMENT   |
| Month 6  | SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF PROJECTS BY RELEVANT OFFICERS                                 |
| Month 7  | COLLATION AND SUBMISSION OF QUARTERLY REPORTS<br>LATE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS AND APPROVALS |

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|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Month 8  | CONTINUATION OF PROJECT EXECUTION AND SUPERVISION BY RELEVANT OFFICERS<br>LATE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS AND APPROVALS |
| Month 9  | CONTINUATION OF PROJECT EXECUTION AND SUPERVISION BY RELEVANT OFFICERS   |
| Month 10 | FINAL REPORTS AND INAUGURATION OF PROJECT  |
| Month 11 | PASSING OUT  |

Generic Timeline for a CDS Activity of a Corps Member

**Source:** NYSC (2015)

**Major Achievements of the Community Development Service of the NYSC**

Achievements of the NYSC through community development are majorly assessed by the number of projects commissioned and the impacts such projects have on members of the host community. NYSC CDS have been able to increase the participation of young Nigerians in community development activities nationwide. In 2015 alone, through the programmes of the CDS department in the NYSC, there was training and deployment of 5,332 Corps SDGs Advocates in the 36 States and FCT (2015 Batch 'B' corps members only).<sup>12</sup> Training of 376 WAP agro-entrepreneurs was also done, as well as their empowerment with start-up capital of between N200,000.00 and N300,000.00 to establish their agro-enterprises. These, among other various training and empowerment of corps members have been able to empower them to carry out community development projects.

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<sup>12</sup>Nysc.gov.ng Editors. "Community Development Service and Special Projects Department."NYSC Official Website. Accessed 16/02/2021.  
<https://www.nysc.gov.ng/cds.html>.

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In the aspect of Health and Well-being, Corps members carry out medical outreaches, first aid treatments, and establish community based clinics. Medical Outreach to the IDP Camp in Howai, Mile 6, Jalingo by the NYSC Medical and Health CDS (Batch A and B 2020/21) Jalingo, Taraba State.<sup>13</sup> Medical Outreach by SDGs CDS group Gwagwalada, to Ledi II village in Gwagwalada, Abuja. In 2019, there was the implementation of a one-week nationwide medical outreach under the NYSC Health Initiative for Rural Dwellers (HIRD), a programme that engaged corps health personnel with the support of other medical personnel in addressing health challenges in the rural areas. No fewer than 63,864 persons with various ailments were reached across the country during the programme. Sensitization and training on Combating Ebola Virus Disease (COMEVID) during the 2015 Batches 'A' and 'B' Orientation Course across the country. Over 6,332 corps members were trained to carry out further sensitization on the disease in their various host communities.<sup>14</sup> Medical CDS group (Batch A 2015) at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital. Francis Okoye who served with Millennium Development Group, Offa, Kwara State distributed 100 pieces of treated mosquito nets in line with MDGs Goal 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases), 400 learning materials to selected schools in line with MDG's Goal 2 (Achieving Universal Basic Education) and trained less privilege mothers on skills acquisition like baking in line with MDG's Goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) in 2012.<sup>15</sup> Other projects that encourage community members to earn income from local production, self-reliance, enhance standard of education and even political awareness

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<sup>13</sup> Medical & Health CDS Group, Taraba State.

<https://www.twitter.com/HealthCds/> Published 07/02/2021

<sup>14</sup> Nysc.gov.ng Editors. "Community Development Service and Special Projects Department." NYSC Official Website. Accessed 16/02/2021.

<https://www.nysc.gov.ng/cds.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Abdullahi, Muhammad & Ehiyamen, Osezua & Cheri, Lawan & Chikaji, Aliyu. Analysis Of The Implementation Of Community Development Service Projects Of National Youth Service Corps: Channels And Hindrances. Volume2. (2016). 129

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are carried out across the 36 states and capital to promote grassroots development.

Research and development has been equally promoted by the facilitation of NYSC partnership with the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC) Office through engagement of corps members as Enumerators in the 774 local government areas and selected schools for the second phase of 'My World' Survey across the country. Nigeria is leading the poll and is likely to emerge the overall lead in the survey, which is centered on development issues. Nigeria's lead in the largest citizen survey in the history of the United Nations is expected to translate into greater commitment of both citizens and government in implementing the SDGs. Successful partnership with UNICEF on the UN U-Report project has also led to the registration of over one million U-Reporters in Nigeria, the largest number in the world. Though NYSC met the target of mobilising one (1) million U-Reporters by August, 2015, the registration of U-Reporters still continues on the platform.<sup>16</sup> All these programmes in partnership with the NYSC has been able to promote research and development in Nigeria.

The sense of self-fulfillment that comes with adding value to the lives of people and communities cannot be over emphasised. Furthermore, the immense appreciation shown by communities as well as project beneficiaries coupled with the skill acquired in project management are of great value to committed corps members who execute CDS projects in the course of the scheme. Ultimately, the scheme provides opportunity for corps members, based on a procedure of selection, evaluation and verification of CDS projects, performance in the place of primary assignment, orientation course and winding up activities, to be given the following awards;

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<sup>16</sup>"Community Development Service and Special Projects Department" ...  
<https://www.nysc.gov.ng/cds.html>.

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- i. State Coordinator's letter of commendation
- ii. Local Government Honours Award
- iii. State government Honours Award
- iv. Presidential Honours Award

It is worthy of note to State that through the community development activities of the scheme, the NYSC is recognized by development partners as a principal organization and a major player on the issue of development within communities and across the nation.<sup>17</sup> The overarching goal of every CDS project is to contribute to the welfare of the society, to leave a mark of honour and a legacy worthy of emulation behind. Therefore, carrying out CDS projects does not translate to winning an award. And the scheme is not under compulsion to reward you for carrying out a community development project.

### **Major Challenges Faced by the NYSC in Community Development in Nigeria**

NYSC CDS has been faced with numerous challenges arising from poor perception and dearth of knowledge of the corps members and members of host communities on the objectives of the CDS. Implementing CDS project is hindered by several factors including but not limited to inadequate encouragement and motivation of corps members.

In 2012, CM Oyediran Igboasanmi Israel in an interview was reported to have suffered negative statements by people when he showed interest in building a Primary Healthcare Centre at a community in Buruku LGA of Benue state. Although he later executed the project to the last, he suffered setbacks from people with discouraging comments like "such projects are for government", "you are wasting your time", "who will

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<sup>17</sup>"Community Development Service and Special Projects Department" ...  
<https://www.nysc.gov.ng/cds.html>.

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give you such amount".<sup>18</sup> Due to improper or inadequate encouragement by host communities, corps members are not encouraged to embark on CDS projects as they spend a lot of time and energy trying to carry out majorly their primary assignment and care for their selves. Even when projects are of interest to Corps members, only NYSC officials are seen encouraging it.

The bureaucratic processes involved in drafting a proposal, determining community's need, seeking for sponsorship, getting approvals, managing resources, etc. discourages corps members from partaking in CDS activities because these procedures consume a lot of time, energy and monetary resources before they can be accomplished. Although, some CDS projects are never forgotten by host communities, corps members are not well appreciated. Reward is not the essence of carrying out a CDS project, but the benefit of being commended for engaging in community development cannot be emphasised. Rewards such as recommendation letters will go a long way in making a corps member want to continue to carry out community development projects even after the scheme. Also, randomly selecting CDS Groups for Corps members, without letting them pick their areas of interest or specialization leads many to show lackadaisical attitude towards the programme.

### **Conclusion**

The Community Development Service (CDS) of the NYSC is one of the four cardinal points of the NYSC. The Scheme is committed to the implementation of its constitutionally constituted objectives and has equally played complementary roles with other organizations that are saddled with the execution of programmes at the heart of community

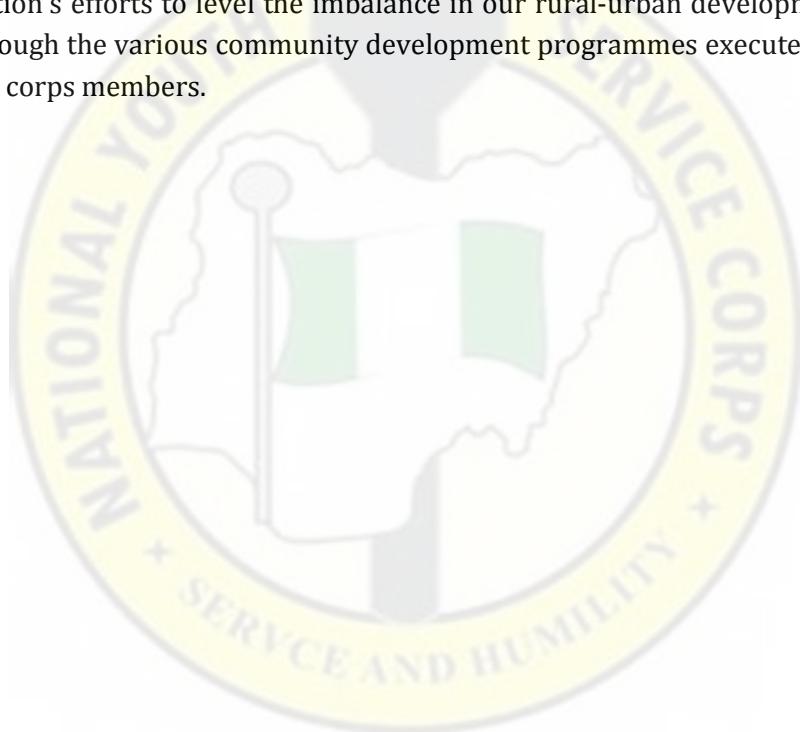
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<sup>18</sup>Abdullahi, Muhammad &Ehiyamen, Osezua& Cheri, Lawan&Chikaji, Aliyu. Analysis Of The Implementation Of Community Development Service Projects Of National Youth Service Corps: Channels And Hindrances. Volume2.(2016). 128. 123-136.

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development. Corps members continuously work with the local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects which impact positively the development of the host communities.

Since its inception in 1973, the National Youth Service Corps has been making great contributions in the social, political and economic development of the nation. The scheme has been in the vanguard of the Nation's efforts to level the imbalance in our rural-urban development through the various community development programmes executed by the corps members.



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# 3

## NYSC and Community Development in Nigeria: Contributions, Challenges and Prospects

Rukayya Maisara Wali

### Introduction

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established by Decree No. 24 of 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1973 in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the Nigerian economy after the Civil War. As stated by the decree, NYSC was created in order to encourage and develop common ties among youths of Nigeria with the sole aim of promoting national unity and integration<sup>1</sup>. However, major problems such as poverty, lack of socio-religious tolerance, shortage of skilled manpower, inadequate socio-

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<sup>1</sup>NYSC, *Community Development Service* (Lagos: NYSC Directorate, 1984).

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economic infrastructural facilities, disunity, necessitated the establishment of the NYSC scheme.

The community development service on the other hand, is no doubt a major component of the NYSC through which the corps members work in collaboration with local communities to promote self-reliance by executing developmental projects in all its manifestations, as well as programmes that would contribute to socio-economic and political development in Nigeria. Akume et al argue that:

The CDS (Community Development Service) requires that corps members use their acquired skills to provide services such as education, healthcare delivery, rural infrastructural and community development. Agriculture, science and technology and enlightenment campaigns for the benefit of their host community...as such, ensuring the success of community development service imposes on the corps members to wear a spirit coated with dedication and enthusiasm irrespective of the challenges they might face in so far as they are not life-threatening<sup>2</sup>.

Akume et al's proposition can strongly stand simply because the NYSC scheme brings together students of all disciplines such as History, Medicine, Engineering, Economics, Accounting, Mathematics, ICT, Information Technology, among others. In this way therefore, the scheme can easily muster the needed manpower in virtually all aspects of human life. Meanwhile, the training normally given to the corps members would surely compliment their expertise in various fields of

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<sup>2</sup>A.T. Akume, M. Solomon, and O.A,Mohammed, ‘Conflict, the NYSC Programme and the Question of Policy Relevance in Present Day Nigeria: An Assessment’, in D.A Abdurrahman,, I.S., Ogundiya, T. Garba, and I.M. Dankani (eds.), 50 Years of Nigeria’s Nationhood: Issues and Challenges for Sustainable Development (Ibadan: Crown F. Publishers, 2012), 106.

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human endeavor. It is for much the same reason that many states of the Nigerian federation rely heavily on the expertise of the corps members so as to run their affairs cap in hand.

This chapter therefore examines the major reasons behind the establishment of the NYSC scheme, as well as its relations with community development service, particularly within the NYSC scheme and beyond. It also examines the major contributions of the programme, challenges and prospects. Though NYSC as a scheme relate with virtually all government and non-governmental agencies throughout Nigeria, an effort would be made to study it as a phenomenon with an ever lasting impact not only on the youths, but also on the socio-economic and political aspects of the Nigerian state in general.

### **NYSC and Community Development Service**

Youths are one of the central and greatest assets any nation can have. They are the future leaders and the greatest investment for the development of any country. The extent of the contribution of youths and their roles, especially in the society at large is directly linked to the development and future of the country. Nigeria's population for instance, is predominantly young with a population of about one hundred and forty million<sup>3</sup>. This is to say that, one third of the whole population comprises youths largely between the ages of 10 to 24. The recognition of this fact led to the development of the national youth policy at both state and federal levels among which is the National Youth Service Corps launched in 1973 to promote national unity and integration and expose graduates to leadership roles, but with particular reference to community development projects. The community development service however, is one of the most crucial contributions of the NYSC in an attempt to harness skills, creativity, and innovation of corps members. The programme obliges the corps

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<sup>3</sup> Please, see records on the Nigerian population census of 2006.

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members to identify the needs of their host communities and undertake different developmental projects, which is beneficial to their host communities<sup>4</sup>. It is paramount to reaffirm the significance of community development service in harnessing the nation's economy, especially in rural areas of the country<sup>5</sup>.

### **Objectives of NYSC/CDS**

The objectives of NYSC/CDS as stated in corps members Community Development Service handbook are;

1. Impacting positively on the improvement of rural community life.
2. Developing entrepreneurship skills in corps members.
3. Exposing corps members to diverse traditions and customs of the host communities.
4. Harnessing different talents and skills of corps members.
5. Instilling in corps members the tradition of dignity of labour and productivity.
6. To complement the activities of government at all levels towards national development.

Looking at the above mentioned objectives, one would be convinced that the CDS is meant to train corps member along philanthropic lines. Through this process, many a corps member has carried the same training along to their work places throughout their public and private life. It has also had positive impact on the socio-economic and political life of many Nigerian communities during and after the NYSC CDS programme.

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<sup>4</sup>NYSC, *Decree and Amendments*. No. 28 Vol. 60, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Part A, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> NYSC, *A Compendium of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme: Ten Years of Service to the Nation* (Lagos: NYSC Directorate, 1983).

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### **Classification of NYSC CDS**

The Community Development Service can basically be classified into three major categories. This section therefore looks at these three broad categories (1) Group Community Development Service (2) Personal/Individual Community Service and; (3) Collaborative Community Development Service. These three categories would briefly be discussed in the following sub-heads.

#### **Group Community Development Service**

This comprises of corps members forming into different groups though with various aims and purposes. Here, developmental activities are carried out once in a week such as visits to prisons, delivering public lectures and awareness on some fundamental human rights that are more or less trampled upon by strong individuals at the detriment of the weaker ones, campaigns against illiteracy, sanitation, sensitization campaigns, to mention, but just a few. This process therefore, ensures and improves the living conditions of the host communities.

#### **Individual CDS**

In this category, individual corps members design and anchor a number of programmes that have direct bearing on societal or communal needs. Corps members observe major problems bedeviling a community or engage in discussions to identify the needs of the community, especially its youths, community leaders, traders and community based organizations (CBOs). For instance, building toilets, construction of classrooms, market stalls, primary healthcare, culverts and the construction of bridges. Corps members also source their funds from other organisations, philanthropists, to positively bring changes into the lives of their host communities.

#### **Collaborative CDS**

This last category deals with the creation of partnerships with government and non-governmental organisations to implement certain

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development services. Corps members usually serve as volunteers in this type of collaborative programme. Major programmes include; Road Safety Group, Reproductive Health Group, Anti-Corruption Group, Service Delivery Group, Drug Free and Quality Control Group, Medical and Health Services Group, among others.

In all the three categories discussed above, one important thing remains constant—an effort geared towards the improvement of the human conditions in its various forms and contexts. Though it may be personal, group, or collaborative in nature, the corps members and the NYSC scheme play an important role in the promotion and development of the socio-economic and political life of their host communities. It is in this juncture that the following sub-head examines the major contributions of Community Development Service to both the corps members and their host communities.

### **Contributions**

Community Development Service executed by corps members has resulted in socio-economic development in various communities through the establishment of schools, public toilets, building libraries, sensitisations, campaigns and public enlightenment carried out in many communities on social problems such as corruption, drug abuse, especially amongst youths, road safety, medical care, entrepreneurial skills, among other important issues. To say that NYSC has contributed immensely to the development of the various Nigerian communities is no doubt an understatement. In this regard therefore, many scholars have written extensively on the unique roles of both the corps members and the NYSC scheme to the improvement of the human condition in Nigeria<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>Ademowo, Y., 'NYSC: Exploring the Diversity in the Unity of Nigeria'. Retrieved May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from [www.nigerian.newspaper.com/national-youth-service-corps.htm](http://www.nigerian.newspaper.com/national-youth-service-corps.htm).

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In the 2012 Batch ‘B’ Orientation Course for instance, the NYSC successfully trained 45,000 corps members in various skill areas. 5,404 specialized in agro-allied skills and 5, 509 in food processing and preservation, 8,035 in culture and tourism related skills and 5,062 in cosmetology<sup>7</sup>. ICT had 8, 119, 2,057 acquired skills in construction, 2,837 in beautification and 2, 425 in education<sup>8</sup>.

Though the contributions of NYSC to national development and integration cannot be quantified, it would be summed up in the following points:

1. It facilitates regular and effective distribution of skilled manpower throughout the government.
2. It builds friendly bridges across ethno-linguistic boundaries, particularly through sporadic intermarriages.
3. It promotes values of national unity and development.
4. It rekindles interest in neglected, but vital areas of national development, especially agriculture.
5. It promotes leadership in youths. The regular and continuous participation of corps members in various community development services such as census, elections, immunization programmes, medical care, and entertainment clubs constantly pricks the conscience of the nation to the right course of development.
6. NYSC has contributed to the educational development of the country, especially from junior secondary and tertiary levels.
7. Community development programme introduced in 1976/1977 has helped a lot in promoting learning, tourism, healthcare and agricultural development. In the 2012 Batch ‘B’ orientation

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<sup>7</sup>A.A., Aba, ‘Nigerian Politics, 1999-2009: Images from Chinua Achebe’s Mirror’, in Joseph, M. and Terhemba, W. (eds.), *The Press and Literature in the Fourth Republic*, (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers), 133-147.

<sup>8</sup>Uomwen, D., ‘Tackling NYSC’s Security Challenge’, <http://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/10/tackling-nysc-security-challenge/>. Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2014.

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course for instance, 45,000 corps members were trained in various skill areas.

### **Challenges**

Any successful programme no matter how good it is can never be devoid of problems and challenges (both intrinsic and extrinsic). On this basis therefore, since the NYSC and its CDS programme are not watertight, there are some challenges. In recent years, Nigeria has been battling with insecurity the peak of which is Boko-Haram insurgency and terrorism, which has displaced a lot of Nigerians, especially in the Northeastern part of the country. Thousands of people were killed, wounded, or displaced. This also coupled with the destruction of properties worth Billions of Naira<sup>9</sup>. Amidst all this, the NYSC programme is seriously affected in many ways. For example, an attempt to protect the lives of corps members, the three weeks camping used for their orientation, training and drilling are completely secured after which some would redeploy to other states to complete the service year, it also created inconvenience on the side of the government and the NYSC. This was more pronounced in the affected areas such as Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. When examined closely, it would be discovered that the operation of the NYSC programme was affected in some states conflicts during the most turbulent periods (from 2012-2016). This also coupled with a number of reported skirmishes and ethno-religious conflicts and post-election violence in some parts of Nigeria such as Wukari, Ibbi, and Southern Kaduna, to mention a few.

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<sup>9</sup> For details on Boko-Haram and the destruction of the Nigerian state, please, see the following; Abba, A., ‘The Disappointing Hour: A Review of My Transition Hour by Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan’ (Department of History: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2019), 9, Aondoawase, S. J., ‘*Combating Terrorism in the Contemporary Society*’ (SOHA Production Ltd, 2015), Attah, B., ‘Join the Caravan: The Ideology of Political Authority in Islam from IbnTaymiyya to Boko Haram in North-Eastern Nigeria’, *Perspectives in Terrorism*, 7 (3) (2013): 30-43.

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Still on the security issue, the growing rate of banditry and kidnapping in many Northern states has also created additional security challenges not only to the NYSC scheme, but also to the peaceful coexistence of the people in the areas. For this reason, many parents became mindful of sending their children for the one year NYSC service programme. Invariably, most corps members refused to serve in the states they were posted to and hence, the rising number of those demanding relocations either to their hometowns, or to their neighbouring states. The growing concern of parents in this regard is directly linked to the fear of kidnapping and its attendant repercussions. This problem has also affected the smooth-running of the NYSC scheme, let alone its CDS programme as the central focus of this chapter.

The onset of the Corona Virus as a global pandemic is another serious blow to the NYSC scheme. This is because, the deadly nature of the virus particularly in terms of rapid spread made it mandatory for governments world-wide to adopt the famous policy of lockdown and social distancing. To ensure a quick response to tackling the virus even after locking their countries, governments also ordered for the closure of all gathering including schools, public and private offices, markets, sport complexes, clubs, to mention, but just a few.

All programmes demanding direct physical contact like the NYSC were equally put on hold temporarily. Throughout the period of the lockdown, corps members were asked to stay at home and observe all the measures for combating the Corona Virus such social distancing, washing of hands with soap and sanitizers, wearing of face masks, among the most important strategies. The implication was that all important activities imbued in the NYSC scheme such as PPA (working at their Place of Primary Assignment), monthly clearance, and Community Development Service (CDS) were put on hold until the situation improved. Thus, this is not only the biggest challenge the NYSC has faced, but also the most trying period of its history with a lot of lessons to learn, especially that geared towards the promotion of and

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development of the programme in the future. Some of the challenges posed by the Corona Virus also brought out to the government the need to reinvest in some aspects of the NYSC such as camp facilities, equipment, as well as the re-evaluation of the scheme.

Part of the major consequences of the lockdown period was inflation, growth of crimes, and redundancy as many businesses collapsed. In view of this therefore, the government has to place a lot of effort in resuscitating the national economy. In the recommendation part of this chapter, this issue is extensively discussed. Like every ministry, or agency the NYSC scheme has to be given a special attention so as to enhance on its mandate of fostering national integration and mutual respect amongst Nigerians. One would argue that supposing there is no programme like NYSC in Nigeria, the emergence of many socio-political and economic problems bedevilling the nation to the extent of polarizing if not breaking it, there would be a serious, but urgent need to introduce one. For those who are acquainted with the historical development of the Nigerian state the role played by the NYSC scheme in the promotion of peace and national integration cannot be over emphasized. For this reasons therefore, the government must pay a special attention to it by improving the programme, enhancing the financial welfare of its workers, equipping them with state of the art paraphernalia so as to discharge their duties smoothly and efficiently.

### Prospects

Based on the above discussion, this chapter also sees possibilities through which the NYSC scheme can be improved positively, specifically based on results on the CDS. The following are some of the prospects of the scheme:

1. There is increasing need for progressive re-organization of the NYSC in this era of multiple security crises.
2. Improved welfare package-funds should be made available for individual and group projects.

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3. Security of lives and properties must be guaranteed to ascertain the willingness of graduates to participate in the scheme.
4. Adequate monitoring and evaluation should be put in place in order to ensure funds are properly utilised.
5. Commitment of the scheme's management and proper guidance of corps members, as well as availability of operational facilities and logistics.
6. corrupt officials should be punished so as to serve as a deterrent to other corrupt officials.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed extensively on the role of NYSC in community development service in Nigeria. Part of the contribution of the NYSC scheme are; (1) promotion of effective skilled manpower (2) breaking of socio-cultural barriers (3) building of bridges across ethno-religious groups in Nigeria (4) promotion of values and national unity and (5) the development of leadership qualities among Nigerian youths. Though the NYSC scheme plays an important role in the socio-economic and political development of the Nigerian state, it experiences a number of challenges among which are; the growing rate of corruption, inadequate sensitisation of the public on NYSC CDS operation/functions, lack of adequate funds for CDS projects or programmes, poor funding of the scheme, to mention a few. Despite these problems, this chapter seems to have provided some possible solutions to ameliorate them.

Some of the solutions to the challenges of the NYSC scheme as the chapter proposes are; the need for an increased, but progressive reorganization of the NYSC scheme, the improvement of welfare package, enhancement of security apparatus, and the establishment of functional mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. The chapter concludes that despite the challenges associated with the NYSC scheme, its contributions, particularly in the promotion of national unity and integration cannot be over-emphasized.

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# 4

## **An Appraisal of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Community Development Service (CDS) Group**

Praise Fisayo Akinniyi

### **Introduction**

The culture of graduate youths serving their countries has been practiced in different forms in different countries across the world, including the United States, Israel, India, Ghana, among others. There are currently about 75 countries in the world wherein such national services are practiced. Often times, such services are military and compulsory as in Nigeria, Denmark, Russia and Germany, to name a

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few. Although the capacity in which citizens serve varies from one country to another. More often than not, the varying factors lies in service term, age, gender, required number of youths, goals of service, alternative service options and even public opinions about the service-call.<sup>1</sup>

In recent times, there have been renewed clarion calls for youth enrollment in the fight against corruption. This focus on youth participation in anti-corruption is significant due to the fact that youths make up the vast majority of the population, particularly in African nations. The United Nations estimates the continent's population at 1.3 billion, of which 65% are below the age of 35.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is not just evident that the African youth bears the most brunt of corruption, but that they have inescapably become accomplices in corruption for patronage and survival.<sup>3</sup>

The pervasive nature of corruption, particularly political and bureaucratic corruption no doubt hinders the progress of the youths in African countries. This scourge can be said to be responsible for mass youth migration from and within the sub-Saharan. Young people from Nigeria, Senegal, Libya, Ghana among others, constantly migrate to European nations for greener pastures, and often times through dare-devil voyages across the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>4</sup> This shows the desperation with which youths seek better living opportunities, mostly because the countries' management is ridden in corruption and bereft of developmental opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup>National Commission on Service. (2018). *Mandatory Service Around the Globe*. <http://medium.com/@inspire2serveUS/mandatory-service-around-the-globe>.

<sup>2</sup>UN. Youth Empowerment. *Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSA)*.2019.

<sup>3</sup>K. Edward, Arresting Corruption in Africa: Role of the Youth. *Institute for Security Studies*. Policy Brief 119.2018, November.

<sup>4</sup>L. Ikuteyijo. Why Young Nigerians Risk Illegal Migration to Find their 'Eldorado'. *The Conversation*.2020, January 21. <http://theconversation-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/theconversation.com/amp/why-young-nigerians-risk-illegal-migration-to-find>

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In Nigeria, the foremost anti-graft agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) initiated a partnership with the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as a platform from which to draft Nigerian youths in the fight against corruption. Under the auspices of the Community Development Service (CDS) groups, the EFCC and the NYSC corps members embark on sensitization campaigns and symposiums across the country with a “say no to corruption” motto.<sup>5</sup> It is thus imperative to elucidate on corruption and its consequent nexus with the youth, to highlight the role of the youth in the fight against corruption and to access the nature and successes of the partnership between the EFCC and NYSC in this agenda.

#### **The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC): A Historical Note**

The military government of General Yakubu Gowon established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on 22nd May, 1973 in an effort to rebuild, reconstruct and reconcile the Nigerian federation after the disparaging three-year civil war of 1963 to 1967. According to the decree No. 24, the corps was established to properly encourage and develop common ties among the youths of Nigeria and to promote national unity. Each of the thirty-six states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory has an orientation camp to which graduates are evenly deployed outside their places of birth and domicile. Only university and subsequently polytechnic graduates are required to take part in the compulsory NYSC Scheme.<sup>6</sup>

Corps members are mobilized to the various orientation camps and trained for three weeks in the different orientation camps. At the end of

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<sup>5</sup>EFCC.EFCC/NYSC Integrity Group Sensitizes Schools, Donates. February 21, 2020. <http://www.efccnigeria.org/efcc/news/5500-efcc-nysc-integrity-group-sensitizes-schools>.

<sup>6</sup>NYSC Directorate Headquarters. *NYSC - About Scheme*.2017. <http://www.nysc.gov.ng/aboutscheme.html>.

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the training, the corps members are posted to their appropriate fields of Primary Assignment, where they would remain and work for the remaining part of the service year. The service years then end with a Passing out Parade.<sup>7</sup>

Corruption, especially pervasive corruption, is indisputably antithetical to socio-economic development. Nigeria, the most populous country and largest economy in the African continent is immensely caught in the web of political (and bureaucratic) corruption, and at an undeniably alarming rate. Some of the prevalent forms of corruption in the Nigerian public sector includes: bribery, electoral corruption, ghost-worker phenomenon, budgeting corruption, nepotism, forgery, theft and procurement scams among others. These forms of corruption are closely related to the existing social norms of the country. This is essentially due to the patrimonial nature of the state.<sup>8</sup>

Over the years, successive governments have designed various policies, measures, and programs to fight the menace of corruption in Nigeria. For instance, Shagari's policy of Ethical Revolution to fight corruption through the introduction of Code of Conduct for public servants introduced in 1981; the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) by the Buhari/Idiagbon administration in 1984; the Ethical and Social Mobilization Crusade by the Babangida regime in 1986 as well as War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C) by Abacha's administration in 1994. These efforts remained largely at the level of rhetoric, and did not yield significant change. However, the most significant of these measures hitherto are those of Presidents Obasanjo and Buhari. President Obasanjo, a former military head of state, who was sworn in as the first civilian president after long years of military

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<sup>7</sup>M. Ohagenyi. *Boko Haram and Threat to NYSC Programme*.2014.  
[https://www.google.com.ng/?gfe\\_rd=cr&ei=ighIU-3HIMTR8gePIHABg#q=pdf+security+threats+to+NYSC](https://www.google.com.ng/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=ighIU-3HIMTR8gePIHABg#q=pdf+security+threats+to+NYSC).

<sup>8</sup>Transparency International. *U4 Expert Answer*.Anti-Corruption Resource Center. CMI Institute. 2014.

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rule vouched to tackle corruption, and thus established two bodies – the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission [ICPC].<sup>9</sup>

The EFCC was established through an Act of Parliament in 2002, and started operations in 2003. The Act mandates the EFCC to combat financial and economic crimes. The Commission is empowered to investigate, prosecute, and penalize economic and financial crimes and is mandated with the responsibility of enforcing the provisions of other laws and regulations relating to economic and financial crimes, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Establishment Act (2004), the Money Laundering Act (1995), the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act (2004), the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act (1995), the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act (1994), the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (1991), as well as the Miscellaneous Offences Act.<sup>10</sup>

The agency is acclaimed to have achieved much in the areas of; cleansing of the banking sub-sector, reorganisation of critical agencies of government, prosecution and conviction of corrupt top public officers, record convictions for money laundering and terrorism, recovery and return of proceeds of crime, setting up of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and taking action against terrorist financing, setting up a machinery for monitoring activities in the oil industry and prevention of illegal bunkering, partnership with Microsoft against internet scam and identity theft, and capacity building for law enforcement and judicial officials, since its establishment in 2003.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>N. Nwaodu, A Review of Anti-Corruption Wars in Nigeria. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 2(3):153-174.2014.

<sup>10</sup>N. Nwaodu, A Review of Anti-Corruption Wars in Nigeria...

<sup>11</sup>A. Fatai, An Appraisal of the Performance of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Nigeria. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and*

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The table below shows the list of cash and property recoveries between May 29, 2015 and May 25, 2016.

**Table 4.1: Recovered Loots  
Cash Recoveries**

| Serial | Items  | Naira             | US Dollar      | GBPounds     | Euro   |
|--------|--|-------------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| 1      | EFCC Cash at hand  | 39,169,911,023.00 | 128,494,076.66 | 2,355        | 11,250 |
| 2      | Royalty/tax/payment to FGN account in JP Morgan account New York | 4,642,958,711.48  | 40,727,253.65  |              |        |
| 3      | ONSA Funds Recovery Account in CBN                               | 5,665,305,527.41  | 8,000,000.00   |              |        |
| 4      | VAT recovered from companies by ONSA                             | 529,588,293.47    |                |              |        |
| 5      | EFCC Recovered Funds Account in CBN                              | 19,267,730,359.36 | 455,253.80     |              |        |
| 6      | ICPC Revenue Collection Recovery in CBN                          | 869,957,444.89    |                |              |        |
| 7      | Office of the Attorney General                                   | 5,500,000,000     | 5,500,000      |              |        |
| 8      | DSS Recoveries   | 47,707,000.5      | 1,943,000.5    | 3,506,000.46 |        |
| 9      | ICPC Cash Asset Recovery   | 2,632,196,271.71  |                |              |        |
|        | Total  | 78,325,354,631.82 | 185,119,584.61 | 3,508,355.46 | 11,250 |

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*Comparative Criminology 54(6) 1047-1069. SAGE Publications.2010.*

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**Table 4.2: Recoveries under Interim Forfeiture**

| Serial | Items  | Naira              | US Dollar        | GB Pounds    | Euro       |
|--------|--|--------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| 1      | Cash in bank under interim forfeiture        | 8,281,577,243.92   | 1,819,866,364.73 | 3,800.00     | 113,399.17 |
| 2      | Amount frozen in bank                        | 48,159,179,518.90  | 7,131,369,498.49 | 605,647.55   |            |
| 3      | Value of properties under interim forfeiture | 41,534,605,998.00  | 77,844,600.00    | 1,875,000.00 | 190,000.00 |
| 4      | Value of cars under interim forfeiture       | 52,500,000.00      |                  |              |            |
| 5      | ONSA Funds under interim forfeiture          | 27,001,464,125.20  | 43,771,433.73    |              |            |
| 6      | Value of Assets Recovered by ONSA            | 512,000,000.00     |                  |              |            |
| 7      | ONSA Assets under interim forfeiture         | 260,000,000.00     |                  |              |            |
| 8      | DSS Recoveries Frozen Banks                  | 658,929,000.00     | 226,476.20       |              |            |
| 9      | EFCC Cash in Bank under final forfeiture     | 103,225,209.41     | 17,165,547.00    |              |            |
|        | Total  | 126,563,481,095.43 | 9,090,243,920.15 | 2,484,447.55 | 303,399.17 |
|        | Grand Total                                  | 204,888,835,727.25 | 9,275,363,504.76 | 5,992,803.01 | 314,649.17 |

**Table 4.3: Funds Awaiting Return from Foreign Jurisdictions**

|   | Jurisdiction | US Dollar     | GB Pounds | Euro      |
|---|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Switzerland  | 32100000      |           |           |
| 2 | UK           |               | 6900000   |           |
| 3 | UAE          | 310501        |           | 11826.11  |
| 4 | USA          | 6225.1        |           |           |
|   | Total        | 321,316,726.1 | 6,900,000 | 11,826.11 |

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**Table 4.4: Non Cash Recoveries**

| Serial | Items                | Quantity |      |      |
|--------|----------------------|----------|------|------|
|        |                      | ICPC     | EFCC | ONSA |
| 1      | Farmland             | 22       |      |      |
| 2      | Plot of Land         | 4        |      |      |
| 3      | Uncompleted Building | 1        |      |      |
| 4      | Completed Building   | 33       | 145  | 4    |
| 5      | Vehicles             | 22       | 3    |      |
| 6      | Maritime Vessels     |          | 5    |      |
|        | Total                | 82       | 153  | 4    |

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Under the erstwhile Ibrahim Magu-led EFCC, the commission recorded a total of 603 convictions between 2015 and May 29, 2018. An aggregate of 103, 195 and 189 convictions recorded in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. Most of these convictions were secured within three years of filing the cases in court, however these cases can largely be categorized as low profile economic and financial crimes such as advance fee fraud (that is, obtaining by false pretences) criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust, forgery and uttering, employment scam, impersonation and currency counterfeiting; rather than 'grand' crimes arising from the embezzlement of public funds, illegally dealing in petroleum products and money laundering and the likes.<sup>13</sup>

Although it is popularly argued that the fight against corruption in Nigeria can be described as a fight against an oligarchy with immense resources to fight back, as the EFCC is failing to successfully prosecute top government officials.<sup>14</sup> However, the performance of the EFCC so far is nearly laudable. It appears that there is a reduction in the area of bank fraud and flagrant abuse of office. Unlike in the past, Nigerians,

<sup>12</sup>E. Akinkuotu, *List of EFCC recoveries*. The Punch. 2016, April 13.

<sup>13</sup>The Nation News Paper. *EFCC Secures 603 Convictions in Three Years*. 2018, May 29.

<sup>14</sup>E. Onyema. *The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission...*

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especially the serving public officials, are now conscious of the fact that their activities are constantly monitored by the watch dog – EFCC and that they can be summoned at any time to give account of their public service.

In Africa, issues of national development cannot be sufficiently discussed without recourse to corruption, parochialism and nepotism. In fact, corruption is often conceptualized along the purviews of Patronage and nepotism, which has deep-seated cultural roots. The structure of the patronage system is based on social relationships between clients seeking for a man with the ability of friendship, power and connections to ‘protect’ them, and a patron who accepts these duties in return for political allegiance. In patronage, the patron has the power to offer gains which the client desires.<sup>15</sup> Examples of such could be the construction of a road near the client’s house, or the recruitment of the client (or his relative) in an office in which the patron has control. In most African societies, patrons are referred to as ‘Big Men.’ In Nigeria, this has a local equivalence in local languages which have been in usage since pre-colonial era. A ‘big man’ is known amongst the Hausa people as ‘maigida’ (landlord or the head of a household), in Yoruba – ‘baba-isale’ (father of the underground world) and in Ibo – *Nnam-Ukwu* (my master).

In Kenya, they are referred to as ‘mtu-mkubwa’ or ‘mungu-baba’ (big father or great father). These words often go beyond its literal meaning in day-to-day conversations. However, what is much disturbing is the evolution of this socio-economic system into the political field and worst still, the preposterous nature of what patrons now ask for from their clients as reward for providing them with illicit services. To this

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<sup>15</sup>B. Rasak, God Fatherism and Political Patronage in Nigeria: A Theoretical Overview. *Political Science Review*. Vol. 8(1):77-101. 2017.

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end, Ogunyemi<sup>16</sup> asserts that “corruption is a social vice that confers some rewards (tangible or intangible) on perpetrators at the expense of their victims, be they individuals or sovereign state.”

### **Impact of Corruption on the Nigerian Youths**

Corruption undoubtedly has negative impact on national development. However, the impact of corruption on Nigeria’s youths is profound, pervasive and underemphasized. Murimi Kauthia<sup>17</sup> asserts that young people more often than not, bear the brunt of corruption. According to the African Union statistics, 65% of African population is below the age of 35 and is projected to have doubled as at 2020. These statistics imply that the youths are clearly the most vulnerable population to corruption; whether as voters, students, clients or entrepreneurs. From demand for bribes to get enrollment into tertiary institutions, to securing employment, to obtaining national licenses, permits and identifications, to be bribed on a voting queue and receiving handouts from politicians for illicit purposes.<sup>18</sup>

It is evident that the endemic nature of corruption particularly in the political and bureaucratic institutions of African countries is factors responsible for youth migration from and within the continent. Young school graduates in Nigeria, for example, believe that their chances of securing jobs in Nigeria are compromised by corruption. It is common place to find passing-out corps members carrying placards and soliciting for jobs on social media given that, the monthly allowance of the NYSC is about to end and their chances of gaining employment are slim since they do not have “connection.” To buttress this point, over 20,000 Nigerians were estimated to have embarked on very risky

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<sup>16</sup>O. Adetunji. Historical Evidence of Corruption in Colonial Nigeria: An Analysis of Financial Records in the Decolonization Period, 1950–1960. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 1-17. 2016.

<sup>17</sup>Kauthia, Edward,Murimi. Arresting Corruption in Africa: Role of the Youth.*Institute for Security Studies*.Policy Brief 119.2018, November.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

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journeys across the Mediterranean Sea in 2016 alone.<sup>19</sup> This shows the desperation with which youths seek better living opportunities, mostly because the country's management is ridden in corruption and bereft of developmental opportunities.

Taking a cue from Murimi's argument, youths are not just victims of corruption, but have inadvertently become accomplices in corruption, putting it succinctly thus:

Of concern is the reality that African youths are not just victims of corruption, but are engaging in and tolerating corruption. It is alleged that the youth, despite pronouncements and aspirations for legitimacy as equal partners, have colluded in dysfunctional relationships of expediency and opportunism – working the system as they hustle to eke out a living and gain advantage.<sup>20</sup>

### **The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Community Development Service (CDS) Groups**

The NYSC Community Development Service (CDS) is a programme in which corps members contribute positively to the development of their respective host communities throughout their service year. These community services over the decades have largely bridged the gap between rural and urban communities and contributed to the overall social, political and economic transformation in Nigeria.<sup>21</sup> According to reports of the NYSC-CDS, the CDS programmes, whether group or

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<sup>19</sup>Lanre, Ikuteyijo. Why Young Nigerians Risk Illegal Migration to Find their 'Eldorado'. *The Conversation*.2020, January 21. <http://theconversation.com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/theconversation.com/amp/why-young-nigerians-risk-illegal-migration-to-find>

<sup>20</sup>Kauthia, Edward, Murimi. Arresting Corruption in Africa: Role of the Youth. *Institute for Security Studies*. Policy Brief 119.2018, November.5-6.

<sup>21</sup>NYSC Directorate Headquarters. *NYSC - About Scheme*.2017. <http://www.nysc.gov.ng/aboutscheme.html>.

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personal have transformed Nigerian communities in the areas of agriculture, education, health care delivery, infrastructure, technology, communication, poverty eradication, economic empowerment, social services and more significantly, patriotism and socio-cultural renaissance.<sup>22</sup>

The following according to the documentation of the NYSC-CDS<sup>23</sup>, are the various CDS groups in the program:

- Corps Legal Aid Group (CLAG); they provide free legal services to vulnerable members of the society and sensitise the public on their fundamental human rights.
- Sports CDS Group; they create opportunities for recreation, healthy rivalry and healthy living among corps members.
- Environmental protection and Sanitation Group (NEMA/NESREA Vanguard); they create awareness and promote a sustainable environment, with activities including tree planting, sanitation and afforestation, among others.
- Education Development Group (mass literacy, adult education, extra murals ICT); they enhance education standard and provide career guidance and counselling.
- Cultural and Tourism Group (band, dance, drama and tourism); they promote arts and culture and enhance sociopolitical and economic prospects.
- Road Safety Club (RSC) Group; they contribute to public safety on roads, through sensitizations, traffic control, delivery of first aid to victims of accidents and establishment of road safety clubs in schools.
- Editorial/Publicity Group; they support the activities of the NYSC public relations in broadcasting information to the general public.
- Disaster Management Group (NEMA); through a liaison with

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<sup>22</sup>NYSC-CDS.*A to Z of NYSC CDS*.2021. <http://nysc-cds.com/cds-clubs>.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

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- NEMA, they provide awareness on disaster management and control and form emergency vanguard clubs in schools.
- Medical and Health Services Group (Red Cross, Breast Without Spot, Polio Plus, among others); they promote and provide medical services.
  - Service Delivery Group (Attitudinal Change, Rebranding); they sensitize the public on service delivery and good work ethics.
  - Drug Free and Quality Control Group (NDLEA, NAFDAC, SON); they promote the eradication of fake and adulterated foods and drugs, create awareness on the inherent dangers of drug abuse and establish drug-free clubs in schools.
  - Charity Service and Gender Group; they canvass for better living for the vulnerable in the communities, mobilize funds and embark on charity outreaches, as well as donation of materials to homes and camps.
  - The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Group; they create awareness and support the actualization of the 17 actions of the SDGs.
  - Agro-allied Group; they support agro-allied activities and promote better food production and security.
  - Anti-Corruption Group (EFCC and ICPC); they promote the eradication of corruption primarily through campaigns, including the establishment of anti-corruption clubs in schools.
  - Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Group; they train and mentor students and mobilize and support community based responses on HIV/AIDS prevention.

Some of these groups, however, may not be found in some states because these groups are often merged together if their functions are compatible. For instance, Disaster Management Group (NEMA Vanguard) is compatible with Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group (NESREA Vanguard). Thus, some states have such CDS groups

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merged as one.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned earlier, these community services could be personal/individual or collaborative/group. While the former suggests projects/programmes executed by individual corps members in their given communities, the latter suggests such services executed by groups, often in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations in their respective host communities. And the recruitment of corps members into these collaborative groups often begins from the orientation camps. However, this study particularly focuses on the Anti-Corruption CDS Group, particularly the NYSC liaison with EFCC.

#### **The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Community Development Service (CDS) Group in Perspective**

The anti-corruption CDS of the NYSC known as the EFCC/NYSC CDS Group, or popularly called, the Integrity CDS group, is an initiative of the anti-graft Commission charged to campaign on the behalf of the EFCC as a preventive mandate. This initiative is designed to foster attitudinal and mental re-orientation among youths, as agents of change across all ages, cultures and vocations within the country. The group seeks to encourage youths, including those in secondary schools, on the need to imbibe the culture of honesty, discipline and accountability at all times.<sup>25</sup>

The EFCC, particularly under the erstwhile administration of Ibrahim Magu has engaged the youths as whistleblowers in the fight against corruption. In his charge, he said "you all should be agents of change and also whistleblowers of criminal acts. Report any evil activities around your environments, whenever and wherever you find

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<sup>24</sup>NYSC-CDS.A to Z of NYSC CDS.2021. <http://nysc-cds.com/cds-clubs>.

<sup>25</sup>EFCC.EFCC/NYSC Integrity Group Sensitizes Schools, Donates. February 21, 2020. <http://www.efccnigeria.org/efcc/news/5500-efcc-nysc-integrity-group-sensitizes-schools>.

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yourselves." According to the commission's chairman, to achieve this charge, corps members must keep enlisting massively in the EFCC Integrity CDS group in the course of their one-year national service so as to be drafted into the fight against corruption.<sup>26</sup>

The available records of the EFCC inform that; the Integrity CDS group has embarked on several campaigns, sensitisations and vocational partnerships in secondary schools, Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps and radio programmes; and established EFCC anticorruption clubs across the nation. There have also been several rallies, walkathons and marches in most cities in the country. In February 2020 for instance, a 10-million-man-match anticorruption rally was organized across the 36 states including the FCT, facilitating awareness among all stakeholders in the fight against corruption in the country.<sup>27</sup><sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, the corps themselves are sensitized against participating in vote buying and selling as they perform given duties during general elections. The CDS members are considered as integrity ambassadors to other corps members and indeed society at large. In Sokoto state, the EFCC Zonal Head, Abdullahi Lawal, testified to the relevance of the CDS in the state. According to him, corps members blew the whistle on fund diversion during the 2019 elections which led to the recovery of N320 million.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>EFCC. *Don't Get Involved in Vote Buying, Selling, EFCC Warns NYSC Members*. 28 February, 2019. <http://www.efccnigeria.org/efcc/news/3824-don-t-get-involved-in-vote-buying-selling-efcc>.

<sup>28</sup>Olaleye, Aluko. *EFCC, NYSC Conduct Nationwide March Against Corruption*. 2020, February 14<http://punchng-com.cdn.amproject.org/v/s/punchng.com/efcc-nysc-conduct-nation>.

<sup>29</sup>Pulse Nigeria. *NYSC Members' Petition Led to Recovery of N320m – EFCC*. 14 February, 2020. <http://www-pulse-ng.cdn.amproject.org/v/s/www.pulse.ng/news/local/how-nysc>.

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Consequently, the Integrity CDS has particularly canvassed against vote-buying and ballot-box snatching during elections in the country. The group has sensitized several stake holders in the country, including Nigerians in IDP camps, who due to their vulnerable state have become ready victims of vote buying in exchange for palliatives packages from donours. The erstwhile national president of the CDS, Batta Wakil, iterated that in their visits to IDPs, the displaced persons complained about their benefactors demanding for Permanent Voter's Cards (PVC) in exchange for assistance. Thus, the CDS group has seized this challenge to educate people on their right and duty to object to, and report, such corrupt overtures, while the CDS group also monitors these IDPs closely during election periods.<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, youths are typically more attuned with social media and mobile applications; therefore, these platforms are ordinarily expected to be enthusiastically and sufficiently employed by corps members as trendy and veritable platforms for radical anticorruption campaigns. Quite surprisingly, the Facebook pages of the various state Integrity groups rarely have engaging information about corruption and the fights against it. Perhaps, this general lull is due to the hydra-headed nature of corruption, which rears its ugly head deep into society's social frame and counters its fighters. This dilemma is what Ogburn William, in his structural functionalism theory referred to as cultural lag.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>EFCC. *Don't Get Involved in Vote Buying, Selling, EFCC Warns NYSC Members.* 28 February, 2019. <http://www.efccnigeria.org/efcc/news/3824-don-t-get-involved-in-vote-buying-selling-efcc>.

<sup>31</sup>Balon, Jan. *The Theory of Cultural Lag: Social Science and its Audience in the Works of Thorstein Veblen and William F. Ogburn.* The Czech Academy of Sciences. 2017. [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/325112734\\_the\\_theory\\_of\\_cultural\\_lag](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/325112734_the_theory_of_cultural_lag).

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### **Conclusion**

This study sought to understand the nature of corruption in the Nigerian state, with focal reference on the workings and activities of the NYSC/EFCC CDS group as a veritable platform for engaging the youths in the fight against corruption. In this regard, the study considered the historical context of both institutions, that is, the NYSC and EFCC, which primarily highlighted the proceeding factors that necessitated the establishment of these institutions as well as their core objectives and achievements hitherto. Furthermore, divergent perspectives on the issues of conscriptions and mandatory national service were considered from around the globe. The study gathered that in several countries, youths serve the nation, and in varying capacities basically bothering on age, service term, gender, goal of service, number of conscripts among other varying principles. In Nigeria, the NYSC was established for the critical purpose of national integration, patriotism and all-round youth development.

The significant take-home point of this paper is the fact that, youths as a matter of expediency must be drafted as combatants in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. This is primarily because the youths form the largest percentage of the country's population, and worst still, are the worst-hit in the fallback of corruption. Today the youths are not victims of corruption, but have become inescapable accomplice in corrupt acts. Therefore, the NYSC is identified as veritable platform through which government and the anti-corruption agencies combat corruption. Furthermore, the research found out that although the partnership between the NYSC and EFCC is commendable, veritable and durable, however, the partnership, operationalism and activities remain insufficient, in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. This work further suggests the following:

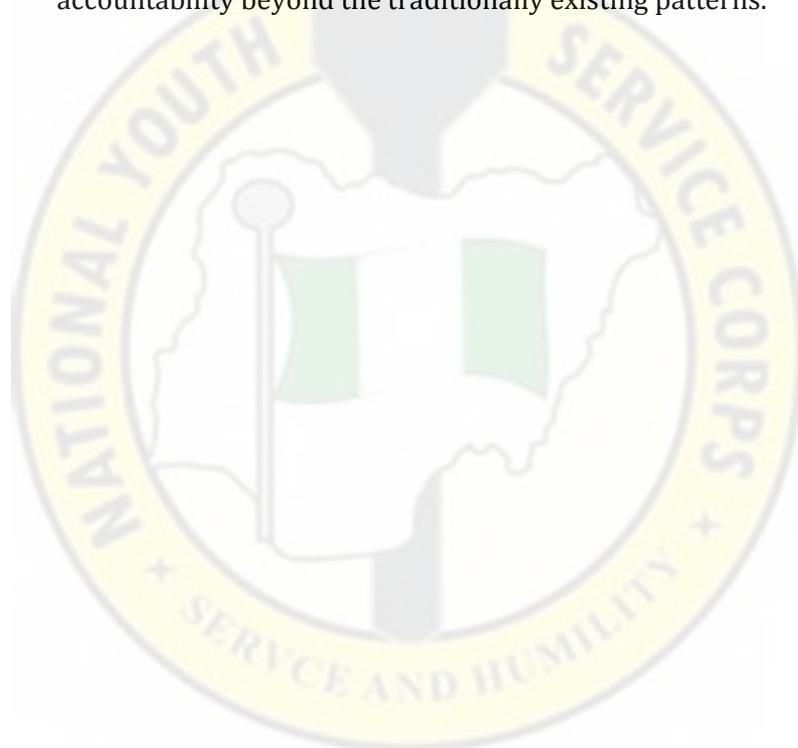
- The EFCC, NYSC and other relevant institutions of anti-corruption and national development should further utilize social media, and even music, movies and other trendy

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platforms to make policies and strategies in the fight against corruption.

- The law enforcement agencies, including the EFCC and ICPC should ensure that youths who blow the whistle on corrupt acts be provided adequate witness protection.
- Nigerian youths need to be given better level playing field in matters of anti-corruption initiatives, public information and accountability beyond the traditionally existing patterns.



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<sup>1</sup>Transparency International. *U4 Expert Answer*. Anti-Corruption Resource Center. CMI Institute. 2014.

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## National Youth Service Corps and Media for Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

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### Introduction

The media comprises of newspapers, radio, television and other forms of communication tools such as the social media; Emails, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter which is classified under the internet. It has become a major tool of development in today's society, and this is because society has become mediated; people in today's world, live in an environment that is more interconnected than before and this has extended peoples' awareness to the outside and their immediate spheres of observation. This is because the media has become crucial

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for people to beware of even the most basic facts about their immediate surroundings; by accessing information from radio, television and newspaper programs devoted primarily to entertainment and information dissemination.

It has played effective roles in shaping public opinion and perception on major aspects of political and social issues. And thus, any organized society, government or institution which takes the media for granted does so at its own peril. Thus, the great power of the mass media to influence and shape public opinion (cannot be underestimated), it is recognized all over the world, because the media constitute a very powerful component of propaganda machinery utilized by governments, organized people, interest groups, business organizations to influence and control people.<sup>1</sup>

The media is referred to as the “Fourth Estate of the Realm” after the executive, the legislature and the Judiciary.<sup>2</sup> This shows that, the influence of the mass media, its power and its impact over today’s modern societies cannot be denied. The media plays an important role in the development of societies and countries all over the world, and has enough potential that can contribute effectively to even conflict resolution and reconciliation. Audu succinctly captures this when he stated rightly that, *“the media can help build peace and social consensus, without which democracy is threatened, and has capacity to provide warring groups mechanism for mediation, representation and voice, so that they can settle their differences peacefully.”*<sup>3</sup> Development cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Osisioma B.C Nwolise, “Media Correspondents, Security Agents Relations and The Issues of Nigeria’s National Security,” in ... p. 75

<sup>2</sup> Ray A. Udeajah, *Broadcasting and politics in Nigeria 1963-2003*, Enugu: SNAAP Press LTD, 2004, p. 2

<sup>3</sup>Bem J. Audu, “The Foreign Media and Nigeria’s 2015 General Elections”, John T. Tsuwa and Elijah T. Ikpanor (eds) *The 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: Emerging Issue*, Abuja: Donafrique Publishers, 2017, p. 43.

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achieved in a society where there is segregation and no peaceful social coexistence.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of development as they argue is to 'raise the knowledge base of a national economy' in such a way that people are able contribute to 'economic growth', 'human development', and 'sustainable development' in different nation states. On the one hand while some see development as providing opportunities, basic infrastructure, and human welfare support systems, development is also conceptualized as the 'level of access to resources' and the 'ease through which people meet their needs'.<sup>5</sup> That is to say, some Nigerians see development as 'human development. The two main ways in which people discuss development are in terms of the wealth of places or the welfare of people. As we will see, there are several ways to measure both types of wealth. The various definition of development defines it as economic growth, improving living standards, or enhancing people's control over their own lives.<sup>6</sup> But Rodney argues that development cannot be seen purely as an economic affair, but as an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment.<sup>7</sup> It is on the above context that this study seeks to examine the National Youth service Corps and media for socio-economic development in Nigeria

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<sup>4</sup>Okpeh O. Okpeh Jr. "Emerging Security Threats in Nigeria: Patterns and Implication on National Development" in S. Ibrahim (Ed.s) *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*, London: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers, Vol. 1, 2017, p. 363

<sup>5</sup>Full text p. 151

<sup>6</sup>Scott Straus and Barry Driscoll, *International Studies; Global Forces, Interactions, and Tensions*, Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc., 2019, p. 402.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Abuja: Panaf Publishing Inc. 1972, p. 5

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### **NYSC Partnership with the Media for National Development and its Impact**

The media through its free flow of information to the general public can influence development via effective communication effective communication will bring about desired social and even economic development, because with adequate information being passed out to the general public people get to learn about new ideas and inventions that would aid their development. According to Wilbur Schramm, adequate flow of information in a developing country is necessary more than a flow from the top political hierarchy to the bottom. It must carry information which the people need to play their parts in a modern society.<sup>8</sup>

Increasing number of radios, newspapers and cinemas will not necessarily bring about a corresponding increase in the rate of social change. Merely multiplying messages and channels is not enough.<sup>9</sup> But rather programmes that would involve discussions, media chats and even question and answer programmes aired by the media can positively influence development in a society, This is the approach NYSC has adopted in its partnership with the media for development. Example of how this approach works effectively is the instance Wilbur Schramm cited when he asserts that;:

Several countries have found that adding a farm radio programme has not by itself appeared to accomplish much in the adoption of new practices. Yet a question and answer programme on farm practices in Jordan has proved to be very useful, and the combination of radio broadcast with group discussion in rural forums has been helpful in bringing about change.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Wilbur Schramm, "Mass Media and National Development," Standford: Standford University Press, UNESCO, 1964, p. 13

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 16

<sup>10</sup>Ibid

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**i. Television Programmes**

Television is a medium that has great effect on people, because of its visual and audio capability, it is virtually found in almost all homes in urban and even some rural areas in Nigeria. It is a powerful medium that has even been used to shape the world outlook of many in the society. Through television programmes like dramas, reality shows, soap opera, movies, T.V contest and news etc. the perception of many has been influenced. Thus, realizing the potentials of television, NYSC has so far been able to partner with various T.V stations to bring about development in Nigeria. According to Msharili Musa: her reign as deputy director programmes of NTA Kaduna network center witnessed two NYSC programmes under the 'Corps members Forum' that were aired by the Kaduna network center before the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the whole arrangement.<sup>11</sup> Suleiman on his part stated that while he was in Jos and serving in the Community Development group (C.D.S) which he belonged to, they had programmes like the Millennium Development Goals programmes (M.D.G) and Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.G) programmes aired on television. They used this medium to bring the leaders of the various CDS groups to discuss about developmental projects each group was working on. As a result of the discussions on the forum, people were sensitized and enlightened.<sup>12</sup>

**The Impact of Television Programmes on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria**

One of the impacts the NYSC programmes aired on Television had was the reduction of violence in Nigeria especially during elections. For instance, Suleiman narrated a history of how as a Youth Corps member,

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<sup>11</sup> Oral Interview with Msharili Musa, 56 years, Deputy Director Programmes Nigeria Television Authority (N.T.A Kaduna Network Center), Interviewed at the N.T.A Kaduna Network Center on February 12, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Oral Interview with Suleiman Sani, 29 years, Nigeria Television Authority (N.T.A Kaduna Network Center) interviewed at N.T.A Kaduna Network Center, on February 19, 2021.

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during the build-up to the 2019 elections, his CDS group used the media to sensitize and educate the general public on how the youth were the main tools used to create chaos and anarchy. They discussed issues regarding the activities of Nigerian Politicians. How they were using the youths to achieve their selfish interest, and urged the youths not to allow themselves to be used to perpetrate violence during the general elections. Other programmes aired at the Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV), Jos by the 'Corps members Forum' include a documentary titled "Beauty for Ashes", which was a peace documentary project highlighting the consequence of violence. This documentary was aired on Saturdays by 9.am under the 'Corps members Forum Initiatives" and a rebroadcast on Tuesday by 9:00am. These programmes really helped in reducing violence in Plateau state especially during the last elections.

### **Radio Programmes**

Nigeria is a country with on average literacy population, and radio is an ideal medium for both the literate and illiterate population that can't read and write. They both can get information about issues and events from the radio. The National Youth Service scheme realizing the potential of radio, adopted it as one of the Media to partner with in the dissemination of information for the development and unity of Nigeria. According to Francis Y. Mai-Karfi, the NYSC Corps members were usually posted to the Kaduna state media corporation for their service, and part of the programmes scheduled by the Corporation for the Corps members includes a 30 minuets programme titled "Corpers" Forum." He was supervising the programme at that time, and Corps members belonging to different groups under the Community Development Service (CDS) came together to discuss and even debate about their experience. They also discussed about political, economic and social developments taking place in the country and this helped to educate and enlighten the ordinary Nigerian about issues and developments. To make the programme more interesting the name of

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the programme was later changed from “Corps members Forum” to “From Me to You”<sup>13</sup>

### **Impact of Radio Programmes**

One of the impacts recorded by this programme, was the education of the girl child in Kaduna state. According to Francis Y. Mai-Karfi “before the commencement of the ‘Corps members Forum’ programme by KSMC, there was serious decline in girl child education in Kaduna state, but with the introduction of the programme, there was a sharp increase in the education of the girl child over the years.<sup>14</sup>This shows that parents were now enlightened and educated on the need to educate the girl child.

#### **ii. Newspaper (Print Media)**

The Newspaper is another important medium through which information is passed to the public but the problem of literacy affects those who cannot read or write. Thus, it does not appeal to all, this is a disadvantage that has continued to influence the patronage of the Newspaper in Nigeria, especially in rural areas. Today, Newspaper is known to be one of the media that captures the interest of the older section of the general population. Investigation has revealed that there was no formal partnership between NYSC and Newspaper outlets officially, and this is because of the large number of Newspaper outlets.<sup>15</sup> According to Shola Ojo; rather it was the Sun Newspaper which he works with that covered some of the NYSC developmental programmes, and he was the correspondent that covered them. Furthermore he said that one of the programmes he remembered

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<sup>13</sup> Oral Interview with Francis Y. Mai-Karfi,, 49 years, Programmes Supervisor interviewed at the Kaduna StateMedia Corporation on February 25, 2021.

<sup>14</sup>Oral Interview with Francis Y. Mai-Karfi,49 Years, Programmes Supervisor, Interviewed at Kaduna State Media Corporation, on February 25, 2021.

<sup>15</sup>Oral Interview with Shola Ojo, 40 Years, Journalist of the Sun Newspaper, Interviewed at the Office of the National Union of Journalist Kadunaon March 1, 2021.

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covering is the “Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development” (SAED).<sup>16</sup>

### **Impact of Newspaper**

According to Shola Ojo: One of the impacts that the SAED programme had, was mostly on the Youth Corps members because they were taught entrepreneurial skills like fish farming, poultry and tailoring. These skills that were acquired via the SAED programme had gone a long way in helping some of the Corps members, because after their youth service programme some of them had used the skills to create jobs for themselves.<sup>17</sup>

### **Social Media**

The internet was a recent development in Nigeria, with the impact of cyber communication and the internet, information dissemination in Nigeria has been remarkable. The increased number of computer, telephone, internet and mobile technology has made Nigerians to embrace social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Nigeria currently records the highest number of internet users in Africa; the country is reported to have 70,300,000 internet users out of the 297,885,898 internet users in Africa as at June 2014, while.<sup>18</sup> Because social media it is a recent development, it is until recently that NYSC began to use it to pass information that would foster the unity of Nigeria and bring about development. For instance, in a recent charge by the Director General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Brig. Gen. Shuaibu Ibrahim in Emure-Ekiti during the

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Moses M. Duruji, "Social Media and the 2015 Presidential Electioneering Campaign; The Case of Naira Land Forum," In John T. Tsuwa and Elijah T. Ikpanor (Eds.) *The 2015 General Elections in Nigeria; Emerging Issues*, Abuja: DonAfrique Publishers, 2017, p. 152.

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Batch 'B'. stream II Orientation, he cautioned Corps members against the use of social media to promote disunity in Nigeria. He further said that rather than promoting division among different ethnic groups, Corps members should be ambassadors of national development.

Corps members should tread with caution; social media should not be used to propagate disunity in the country. Do not be an evangelist of hate speech, rather be ready to render selfless services for national development and transformation.<sup>19</sup>

In another development, when the Director General of NYSC visited National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), he opined that a strategic partnership between NYSC and NITDA will bring about a significant drop in the number of fake news that pervades our social media in Nigeria. "*Strengthening this partnership would assist the NYSC to overcome some of the menaces it is facing especially checkmating the spread of fake news on social media,*" he said. He cited an example with the story of a JSS2 student alleged to have impregnated a Corps member, the D.G described the abuse of social media as worrisome and appealed to NITDA to stem the tide. He added that;

Something has to be done to checkmate the menace of social media to save us from various embarrassments. Things that have happened in the past are now being put forwarded on social media to look like recent events. People are using the platforms to defraud unsuspecting members of the public. You can imagine people creating accounts to defraud Corps. members claiming they can help them to be redeployed, he exclaimed. He called for the arrest of such people to

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<sup>19</sup>Aljazirahnews.com/don't-use-social-media-to-promote-disunity-nysc-D.G-tells-corp-members/06-Sep-2019/ accessed on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 by 5.07pm

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serve as deterrents to others so as to reduce the menace.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, we will be looking at the following platforms under the social media such as Face-book, Twitter and U-report:

### **Face-Book**

As at June 2012 Face-book as a social media site had 6,630,200 active users in Nigeria. Face-book has helped to connect millions of users all over the world using their internet connection. Instance of how NYSC had used Face-book to publicise recent developments, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014, when a Face-book post stated that, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) flagged off a two day workshop in Abuja on how to keep Ebola virus disease (EVD) out of Nigeria. It stated that the workshop was a training programme for NYSC Schedule officers in the States and selected Corps members from the 36 States and the FCT.<sup>21</sup> This was one of the means that the NYSC educated Nigerian about the Ebola virus. Such information sharing helped Nigeria to keep the Ebola virus out of its borders while it ravaged neighboring West African countries.

### **Impact of Face-Book**

The enlightening of the general public through Face-book by NYSC played a very crucial role in the battle against Ebola in 2014. The impact it had was, because many Nigerian youths are on Face-book. NYSC used its Face-book page to post messages that enlightened and educated them about the virus. This also helped in reducing the spread of fake news that were circulating online about the Ebola Virus.

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<sup>20</sup> NITDA. GOV.NG/partnership-with-nitda-will-checkmate-the-spread-of-fake-news-on-social-media-dg-nysc/

<sup>21</sup> NYSC Facebook Page of 29-10-2014, accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 by 3.51pm

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### **Twitter**

Twitter is a free social networking micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short post called ‘tweets’. Twitter account users can broadcast tweets and follow other users.<sup>22</sup> Recently the Director General of the National Youth Service corps Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim while addressing staffs of NYSC before the commencement of their 2021 senior staff promotion examination at the public service institute in Abuja stated that, “*the scheme would continue to tap the potentials of Corps members and harness it for socio-economic development.*”<sup>23</sup> He said that there was need to consolidate on the relevance of the scheme and also expand its frontiers for societal growth. This statement was tweeted on the NYSC twitter handle.<sup>24</sup>

### **Impact of Twitter**

The statement of the D.G which states that “We must tap into the potentials of Corps members because they have talents.” Immediately had a positive impact, it served as a moral boaster to some of the Corps members who immediately re-tweeted their excitement on the NYSC twitter handle.<sup>25</sup> Here, we can see the powerful impact such statement has on the youth, it will continue to serve as boaster to the moral of some of the youths who would want to come out with new ideas and innovation for the betterment and development of Nigeria.

### **U-Report**

U-Report is a free SMS tool used for community participation designed to address issues that the population (Society) cares about.<sup>26</sup> The U-Report is an innovation based and user centered social monitoring

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<sup>22</sup>[www.whatis.techtarget.com/definition/twitter](http://www.whatis.techtarget.com/definition/twitter) accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 by 6.13pm

<sup>23</sup> [Mobile.twitter.com/officialnysc/](http://Mobile.twitter.com/officialnysc/) accessed on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 by 3:15 pm

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Nigeria. U-Report.In/Join.

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platform which is designed to strengthen community led development, citizen engagement and positive change.<sup>27</sup>The National Youth Service Corps has been using the U-Report to send SMS containing important information about events and issues that concerns Nigeria's interest and development, SMS alerts are usually sent to Corps members and the general public. According to the Nations newspaper of 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 with the headline "NYSC to enlist 100,000 U-Reporters in Niger", the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has mobilized its members in Niger state to enlist 100,000 people on the U-Report platform.<sup>28</sup> According to Sunday Ajah, while he was serving at Kebbi state he was enrolled into the U-Report and he has continued to receive SMS about developments occurring in Nigeria. Example of the type of messages he has received the COVID-19 pandemic. The message educates himself on how to protect him from contracting the Virus.<sup>29</sup>

### **Impact of U-Report**

Through this sensitization by NYSC using U-report the impact can be seen in the decline and reduction of Covid-19 cases, because the public were now educated and enlightened on how to use face mask, hand sanitizer and washing of hands to avoid contracting and spreading the virus. Helpline numbers to call when one suspects to have contract the virus were also sent via U-Report.

### **Media Chat**

Media chat is usually a forum where various stake holders particularly Journalist are invited to discuss sundry issues of importance. In November, 2020 the Director General of the NYSC had a media chat. In attendance was the Director General of the Nigeria Center for Disease

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<sup>27</sup> The Nation Newspaper, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> The Nation Newspaper, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Oral Interview with Sunday Ajah, 29 Years, Administrative Assistant, Interviewed at the AirForce Institute of Technology Faculty of Ground and Communication Engineering, on February 4, 2021.

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Control (NCDC) Dr. Chikwe Ihekweaju, Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists F.C.T Council Comrade Emmanuel Ogbeche and Vice Chairman Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) Mr. Stanley Ogadigo who represented the NIPR Chairman. The Director General used the forum to intimate the public on the spread of COVID-19 in NYSC Camps of the Scheme resumes its suspended Orientation programme.

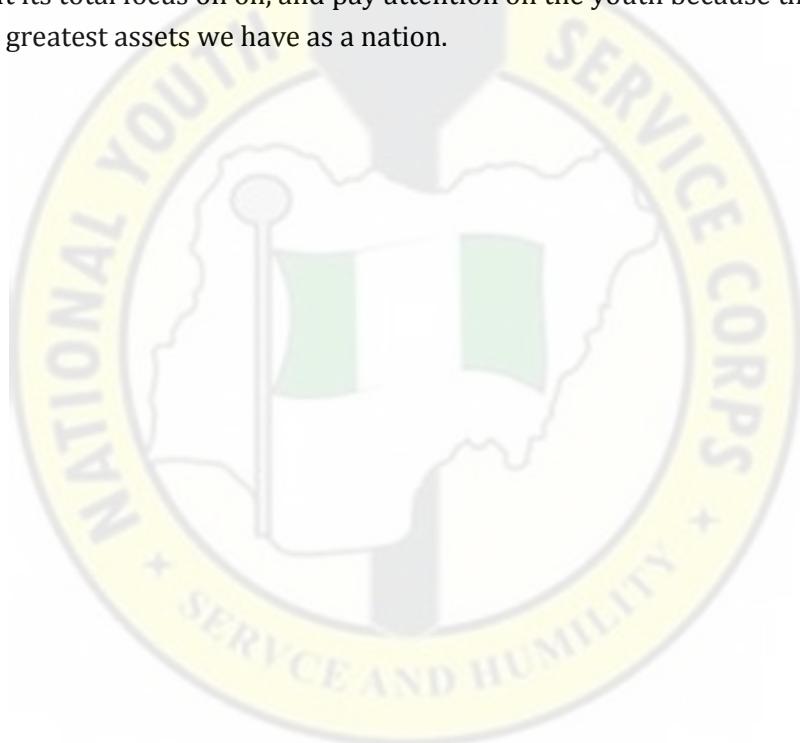
The impact of such media chats is that, stakeholders in the Scheme are better informed about activities of the NYSC.

### **Conclusion**

There are series of initiatives used by the NYSC in its partnership with the media to bring about development in Nigeria, One of such initiatives is the Millennium Development Goals framework that has been engrafted into the Community Development Service programmes, this programme covers programmes like the war against poverty (WAP), Family and Community Life Reorientation Programme and the MDGs Advocacy Creation Programme. But despite the commendable effort of both the media and NYSC towards attaining development via its partnership, there are series of problems that this partnership would need to work on to achieve the desired goal. First the amount of information available and the wideness of its distribution is an important aspect in the spread and smoothness of development, also understanding the cultural environment would go a long way in helping the effectiveness of how an information can be received by the society. The problem of language barrier is also there, since Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society; thus, it becomes difficult to effectively communicate and pass information and ideas to the general public effectively. Also due to the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria it becomes difficult for the un-educated section of the populace to get information via newspaper and the internet, so there will be a need to apply the use of the local language in disseminating information to the public.

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Funding as we are all aware is an essential resource for any project to have headway, due to the poor funding of some of these programmes; some of them had to be suspended. Lack of access to social media by the poor section of the society, due to the cost of android phones and data had made it difficult for the poor to access the internet, so most of them miss out on such news and events happening in the country. To be able to achieve development the Federal government of Nigeria needs to shift its total focus on oil, and pay attention on the youth because that is the greatest assets we have as a nation.



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DG, NYSC, Brig Gen Ibrahim poses with some of the Corps Participants at a graduation ceremony.



Gov. Zulum of Borno State presenting gifts to a Corps Participant  
at a graduation ceremony



Cross-section of Corps members at the graduation ceremony of 269 Doctors  
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NDLEA/DRUG Free Club Sensitizes Government Technical College Farufaru, Sokoto to sensitize them on The Psychological Effects of Drug Abuse on Nigeria youths.



NYSC Medical and Health Services Group



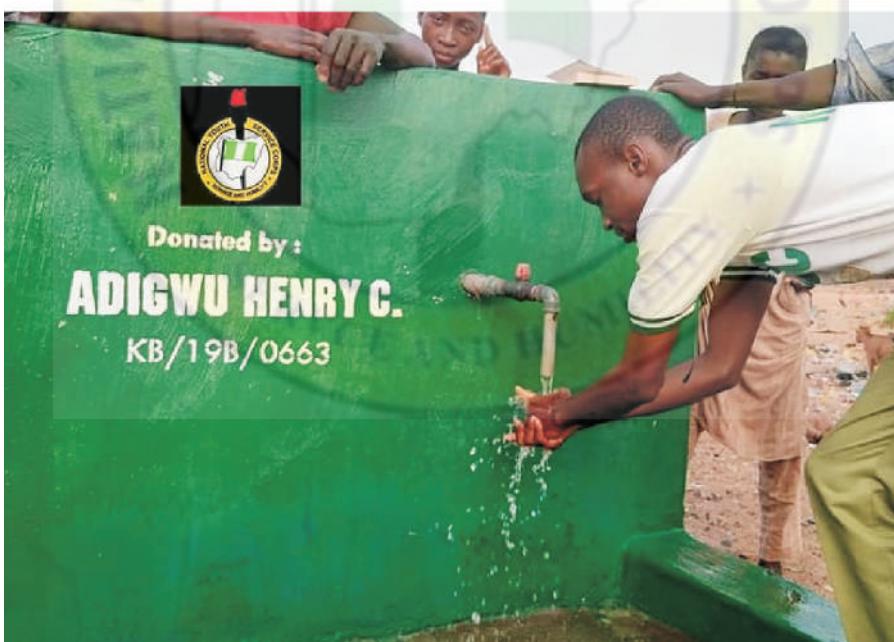
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NEMA/NYSC EMV CDS



Construction of Zebra Crossing by NYSC/FRSC Club in Calabar



NYSC Charity Services and Gender Group  
Construct borehole for the community



NYSC Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group  
Corps Members and Officials Launching NYSC National Environmental  
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NYSC Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS Group



NYSC Sport CDS Group



NYSC Cultural and Tourism CDS Group

National Youth Service Corps and Development Partners in Nigeria

# 6

## National Youth Service Corps and Development Partners in Nigeria

Kukwen Andetsiva Joseph

### Introduction

The origin of the National Youth Service Corps can be traced to events which culminated in the Nigerian Civil war 1967 – 1970. The then government of General Yakubu Gowon came up with post war or post conflict peace building measures best captured in his three (3) Rs of Reconciliation, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. The need for National cohesion led to the emergence of National Youth Service Corps. Being a military regime which depends on decrees and edicts in administering Nigeria, the scheme came into effect by Decree No. 24 of

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22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1973.<sup>1</sup> The whole essence of the NYSC is to encourage the development of communities and the promotion of National unity. The objectives of the scheme were contained or captured in Decree No. 51 of 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1993 which include among other things.

- To develop the virtue of discipline in Nigerian youths; through hard work and patriotism as well as loyalty to Nigeria in whatever circumstances;
- To boast the morale of the Nigerian youths, by affording them the opportunities to learn the great ideals of national achievement, as well as social and cultural development.
- To prepare Nigerian youths psychologically through various training which will enable them take tasks in line with Nigeria's national interest.
- To develop that bond among Nigerian youth which will promote national unity by ensuring that youths are assigned to jobs outside their state of origin, all groups or groupings in the scheme should have a national outlook as well as exposing the youths to other cultures in the country.
- To prepare Nigerian youths who have gone through the scheme to seek career opportunities around the country, a situation which promotes movement and availability of labour.
- To encourage employers to identify and hire qualified Nigerians irrespective of their background and
- To develop in Nigerians youth the spirit of being self-reliant.<sup>2</sup>

### Development Strategy of NYSC

Having identified the essence of the national youth service scheme which harps on the development of various communities by the youth as well as to foster National cohesion, the Scheme has gone into partnership with development partners in order to actualize this

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<sup>1</sup> NYSC “**Hand Book: Background to the National youth Service Corps Scheme**”  
NYSC online

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.219

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vision. The scheme has devised and developed avenues through which such partnership will be beneficial in the pursuit of Nigeria's national interest. Two programmes of the scheme best captures the development drive of the National Youth Service Corps , the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) as well as the Community Development Service (CDS). What this means is that, the scheme seek to pursue two prong development strategies which entails the development of the skills among the Nigerians youths which will prepare them for the development of the various communities in which they find themselves. The Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme was created in 2012 to tame the rising tide of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The department is saddled with the responsibility of sensitizing Corps member as well as affording them practical knowledge on entrepreneurship and self-employment.

This is done through collaboration with both the public and private sectors. The programme aims at promoting self-reliance in the minds of Nigerian youths by equipping them with knowledge both theoretical and practical on entrepreneurship. This when put to use will in-turn boasts economic development and curb the menace of unemployment. The SAED training which begins during the Orientation course runs through the service year based on the learning module of the trainers. The National youth service Corps programme on skills acquisition focuses on twelve major business areas which include agro-allied, culture and tourism, food processing and preservation, ICT, construction, environment, power and energy, education, film and photography, cosmetology, beautification as well as automobile.<sup>3</sup>

Another strategy of the National Youth Service Corps to ensure development is through the Community Development Service (CDS).

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<sup>3</sup>Youth policy box “national Youth Service Corp – Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (NYSC - SAED) Nigeria” Youth policy tool box online

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This is a component of the National Youth Service Corps which affords Corps members the opportunity to work with local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically identifying and executing development projects and programmes which improves the socio-economic development of the host communities. Corps members are assigned to a particular Community Development Service (CDS) group as his/her group CDS. While personal (CDS) project or programme, is optional for Corps members who show interest. Attendance for group CDS is once in a week, while the remaining four days are to be spent in the place of primary assignment.<sup>4</sup> This component of national youth service Corps has certain objectives which includes improving rural community life; Instilling entrepreneurial spirit among Corps members; using rural conditions as a ground for developing among youths the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism and creativity; exposing Corps members to the diverse traditions and customs of the host communities; providing avenues for Corps to develop ideas and turn those ideas into tangible achievements thereby reducing reliance on foreign technology as well as encourage the use of local raw materials in the execution of projects; Turning the enormous skills and talents of Corps members into an effective machinery of change in our rural communities; Corps members are afforded the opportunity to learn on the job; To provide complementary service in our National development activities, by developing the entrepreneurial skills of rural dwellers for self-reliance, through the use of appropriate technology adopted National Youth Service Corps; inculcating the virtue of tradition of dignity of labour and productivity; To complement the activities of government at all levels in the drive towards national development.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ABC of Community Development Service

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad ABdullahi and Al CHikaji “Issues in Community Development Service Schemes of Nigeria, National Youth Service Corps and its relevance to

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The scheme also categorized the Community Development Service (CDS) to include the following;

- a) **Group CDS:** This entails community development service where Corps members are expected to use one day in a week for this category of community development service. Here Corps members are exempted from duties in their places of Primary Assignment on such days. Such days are set aside for the execution of projects and programmes that will enhance the standard of livingof host communities.
- b) **Personal CDS:** In this category of Community Development Service, Corps members can execute project or programme in their host communities at individual level; based onthe felt needs. Corps members are at liberty to look out for areas where they can make individual impact in the community. It could be construction projects like building of toilets, bridges, classrooms etc. or social/ educational projects or programmes like establishment of libraries, extra mural classes, charity work, vocational training for empowerment of unemployed youths etc. Where a project or programme requires financial support, Corps members are encouraged to source fund from other organization after getting approval from the management of the National Youth ServiceCorps
- c) **Collaborative CDS:** In this category, the scheme partners with National and non-government organization and other establishments to implement development programmes. The scheme signs MOU with the partners, clearly stating each partners roles/responsibilities.Corps members are usually involved as volunteers on this programme. Collaborators in this type of Community Development Service (CDS) include Road Safety Group (Federal Road Safety Corps ), Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDs group, Anti-corruption (Economic and Financial Crimes

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### **The Role of Development Partners in the Support for NYSC Scheme in Nigeria**

In order to effectively pursue its developmental goals as captured by the two components of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) as well as the Community Development Service, the National Youth Service Corps has ventured into partnership with both public and private organizations. These partners are here referred to as development partners. And their role in the pursuit of the development strides of the National Youth Service Corps will be discussed.

One of the most visible roles of the development partners of the National Youth Service Corps can be seen from the area of financing or funding. Most critical to any need for development is the availability of funds to help propel such development. Cooperate financial entities have partnered the NYSC in order to make available funds as start-up packs or packages for business plans of Corps members or funds to grow already existing business ventures. For instance in 2019 Unity Bank came up with a financial package to help the business initiative of Corps members. The initiative was named "corprenuerhip". It was coined from the words "Corper" and "Entrepreneurship." The corprenuerhip challenge was a modest entrepreneurship development initiative aimed at developing the entrepreneurial capacities of youth Corps members during their one year compulsory service to the nation. The first phase of the partnership between the

### National Youth Service Corps and Development Partners in Nigeria

mid-tier lender and the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme of the National Youth Service Corps was held in camps like Lagos, Abuja, Edo and Ogun state, though the business pitch took place in only two states. The winner of the challenge in Lagos got five hundred thousand naira (500,000) for pitching an online clothing store for women's wear. While the first and second runner up went home with three hundred thousand naira (300,000) and two hundred naira (200,000) respectively. It is worthy to state here that in 2018, youth unemployment reached record level of 38% in the second quarter and dropped slightly to 36.5% in the third quarter. The bank came up with this initiative to encourage and develop entrepreneurship which is one of the ways to address the problem of youth unemployment.<sup>6</sup>

But by far the most generous financial packages to fund the development strides of the National Youth Service Corps , comes from the Central Bank of Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria has developed a lot of funding packages for the benefits of youths across the country. One of such is the Youth Entrepreneurship Development programme (YEDP).<sup>7</sup> This programme was launched in March, 2016 to leverage the creative capabilities and resourcefulness of Nigerian youths to achieve high level economic development. This was in recognition of the youth as agents of economic recovery and diversification. Data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics in the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) quarter of 2015, suggest that out of the 36.3 million, which represents 48.6% of Nigerian work force, 13.6 million or 37.7% of them were either unemployed or underemployed. There was the need to address this situation in view of the bright ideas and big dreams among youths who were constrained

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<sup>6</sup>Segun Adams “Unity Bank, NYSC SAED Partnership to promote Youth Enterprise” *Business Day Nov. 25, 2019*

<sup>7</sup>Central Bank of Nigeria “Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YEDP)” Central Bank of Nigeria  
Guidelines P.1

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by finance. The aim of this initiative is to address the triple issues of insufficiency, high cost, and inadequate term of capital usually faced by youth entrepreneurs and start-ups. This package comes with three (3) million naira facility for eligible youth or ten (10) million naira for groups of 3-5 youths. The interest rate is pegged at nine (9%) per annum. The tenure largely depends on the complex nature of the project and cash flow, but is between one (1) year for working capital loan and three (3) years for term loan. The package also requires collateral which are academic and NYSC certificates, third party guarantees and other movable assets.<sup>8</sup>

Though the target beneficiaries are members of the National Youth Service Corps, (NYSC) non NYSC members are also captured. The programme shows that areas of funding include start-ups and expansion projects in agriculture like (fish farming, poultry snail farming), cottage industry, creative industry (tourism, arts and crafts) and information and communication technology ICT etc.<sup>9</sup> But it is worthy to state here that the financial packages or funding deployed by the Central Bank of Nigeria are often times routed through commercial banks. For instance, the Central Bank of Nigeria adopted Heritage Bank as the sole pilot bank for the Youth Innovate Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YIEDP). This package deployed by the Central Bank of Nigeria has actually created funding opportunities for the National Youth Service Corps developmental strides.<sup>10</sup>

Bank of Industry is also one of the partners which propel National Youth Service Corps development objectives in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> The Bank of Industry in Nigeria is one of the development partners which make available funds to the NYSC scheme. For instance, the Bank of Industry

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Dayo Adetiloye Business Hub “Apply for 3 million loan from Heritage Bank for Youths” Dayo Adetiloye Business Hub 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 online

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came up with the Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund Programme in 2018. The programme was designed to encourage entrepreneurship among serving members of the National Youth Service Corps. The Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund makes available loans of up to two (2) million naira at zero (0%) interest rate to support enterprises and potentially viable business ideas. The Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund which is a two (2) billion naira package seeks to encourage serving members of the National youth service Corps to became employers of labour by going into business as against being job seekers; check the entrepreneurship capacity gap among serving NYSC members who are expected to come up with bankable business plans after a three day capacity building programme; engender financial inclusion by “de-risking” members of the National Youth Service Corps thereby making them eligible for loans ranging from five hundred thousand (500,000) naira to two (2) million naira which will be provided by the bank of industry; ensure that the business of the eventual beneficiaries are sustained through effective monitoring by the National Youth Service Corp Directorate and the Bank of Industry.<sup>12</sup>

Another role played by development partners of the National Youth Service Corps is in the area of providing technical support or assistance to the scheme. One of the development partners which offer technical support to the National Youth Service Corps is the International Laboaur Organisation (ILO). This can be seen from the institutionalization of the use of International Labour Organization’s Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)curriculum in their training programme. The Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) is a system of inter related training packages and support materials for small scale entrepreneurs to start and grow their business. It seeks to improve the viability of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSMES) through

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<sup>12</sup>Opportunities for Africa “Bank of Industry (2 billion) Graduate Entrepreneurship (GEF) Programme 2018 for National Youth Service Corps Members” Opportunities for Africa January 17 2018.

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management principles suitable for developing countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) assists Business Development Service (BDS) organizations to develop the skills required to implement, monitor, manage and finance the training programme and build a training system which is sustainable at the national level thereby contributing to sustainable economic development and employment creation.<sup>13</sup>

Another funding agency that also support the NYSC programme is the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) which emerged from a management training package known as “Look After Your Firm” which was developed in Sweden in the late 1970s, through the Sweden Employers’ Federation for local and medium entrepreneurs. By 1977, the Swedish International Development Agency funded a project for the International Labour Organization where documents which portray the situation of entrepreneurs in the developing countries were developed. And that package was named Improve Your Business (IYB).

In the early 1990s the International Labour Organisation’s technical activities in the Fiji islands came up with another training package known as the Start Your Business (SYB) aimed at addressing potential start-ups. This programme soon gained International recognition and grew as the Generate Your Business Idea (GYB) was developed. And they all use the SIYB Business Game for motivation and learning where real life business situations are simulated. By the late 1990s the International Labour Organization (ILO) decided to bring all training packages and other associated management tools together in a common frame work called “Start and Improve Your Business” (SIYB) programme.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid P. 1

12. Opportunities for Africa “Bank of Industry (2 Billion Naira) Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund (GEF) Programme 2018 for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members” opportunities for Africa January 17, 2018

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The start and improve your Business training package is planned in separate training packages include the Generate Your Business Idea (GYB), Start Your Business (SYB) Improve Your Business (IYB) and Expand Your Business (EYB) and are all developed to adapt to the progressive stages of business development. Generate Your Business Idea (GYB) is meant for people who would like to start a business, and who through training, develop a concrete business idea ready for implementation. A GYB course typically lasts 2-3 days. Start Your Business (SYB) is for would be entrepreneurs who want to start a small business and already have concrete business idea. The programme is a combination of training, field work and after training support, and helps participants assess their readiness to start a business and to prepare a business plan and evaluate its viability. SYB courses are usually delivered in 5 days. Improve Your Business (IYB) introduces already practicing entrepreneurs to principles of business. Its six modules which include (marketing, costing, buying and stock control, record keeping, planning for your business, and people and productivity) can be taught individually or all combined in a full course. If the full course using all modules is delivered, its duration is approximately 7 days. Expand Your Business (EYB) provides growth oriented small and medium enterprises with the practical tools for business growth, assisting them through training and non-training interventions with a focus on business strategy to expand their business.

The main output from the training programme is a business growth plan which includes chapters marketing, operations, and human resources, financial and strategic management. These chapters can also be used as stand-alone training and support products. If the full content of EYB is delivered, its duration is 1-2 weeks; like for the shorter

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courses above, the course delivery can be spread over a longer time span (for instance 1-2 days per week over several months)<sup>14</sup>

The start and improve your Business program has an institutional approach and a multiplier strategy. After a survey of business opportunities in a given country or region which calls for business management training solutions, the International Labour Organization builds the capacity of indigenous or local training providers to ensures the implementation of SIYB training and other related activities. It also provides International Training and Certificates to a group of Start and Improve Your Business Master Trainer who will assume leadership and or ownership of the programme. The whole essence of the multiplier strategy deployed by the International Labor Organization is to ensure sustainability and quality assurance at the national level.

At global level, coordinating and monitoring of SIYB activities in different countries falls under the supervision of the SIYB Global Coordination Team located in the small and medium unit of the Enterprises Department at International Labour Organization headquarters.

Its main functions include the development and certification/licensing of Master Trainers; maintaining the quality of SIYB materials through updates of international versions and quality control of local adaption efforts; and leading monitoring and evaluation efforts through the development and maintenance of tools for tracking and assessing SIYB activities globally. Overall country coordination of the introduction and implementation of SIYB is often initially handled by an in-country International Labour Organisation office or project or, in some instances, by a National Public or Private Organisation involved in SME

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<sup>14</sup>International Labour Organization “Building Entrepreneurship skills to increase youth employability in Nigeria” International Labour Organization 22 February, 2016 online

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development to which International Labour Organisation has delegated this function. Once SIYB has been introduced in a country, in cases where the coordination of activities was initially carried out by the International Labour Organisation, this responsibility is gradually handed over to a national organization with which the International Labour Organisation signs an agreement. In some countries, SIYB association has been set up to perform this role. In terms of training implementation, SIYB Trainers are based in local organizations which regularly provide services to MSMEs; in the SIYB system these organizations are called "Training Service Providers" (TSPs).

The management of the TSPs where the Trainer is based, signs an agreement with the SIYB coordinating body in which the use of the programme and outreach numbers are defined before the Trainer is trained. SIYB Master Trainers, who are selected from Trainers and further trained and certified by the International Labour Organisation, have a key role in planning, organizing and conducting Training of Trainers (TOT) programmes and follow-up measures. They are also responsible for marketing SIYB programme, selecting new partner organizations, quality control of SIYB programme, material adaptation and conducting SIYB impact assessments and evaluations at national level. In addition to these organizations, other organizations may be involved, depending on country context. For instance, the printing or distribution of materials may be delegated to a particular organization in a country.

The introduction of SIYB in country starts with making contact with SIYB global coordination Team, which will authorize the process and also provide guidance on the steps involved, resources required, and other operational matters. Once the institution leading the in-country process has the agreement of the SIYB Global Coordinating Team, the actual introduction of SIYB will normally include the following steps:

- 1. Assessing the market for SIYB:** an assessment needs to be made of the demand for any supply of business management

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training in the context at hand, so as to determine whether there is sufficient (paying) demand for the programme, whether there are other similar or competing offers, what the local SIYB programme should look like in terms of content so as to respond to the needs potential beneficiaries, and what implementation arrangements would work best in specific context;

2. **Selecting partner organizations and defining partnership:** based on the results of the market assessment partner organizations are evaluated and selected for both the delivery of training (TSPs) as well as for ensuring other supporting functions such as materials production and distribution.
3. **Developing Trainers:** the next step is normally the selection of potential SIYB Trainers from among the trainers affiliated with a TSP partner organization. Once selected, the candidates will undergo a Trainer development cycle including taking part in formal trainings in a workshop setting as well as a practice period of conducting training, following which successful candidates are certified as SIYB Trainers.
4. **Developing Master Trainers:** while international Master Trainers may be contracted to develop a first batch of trainers in a country it is usually desirable to have a group of Master Trainers in country to ensure higher level functions including the training of further trainers, marketing and monitoring activities. Master Trainer candidates are selected from among Trainers who have exhibited exemplary performance, and then undergo a Master Trainer development cycle, upon completion; successful candidates are certified as SIYB Master Trainers. The development of Master Trainers may take place early on in the process of introducing SIYB; in other cases, it may only happen once SIYB has been introduced and has been running for some time.

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5. **Adapting and distributing materials:** Adaptations and translations of material may be needed for the sake of meeting the needs of the target groups. Whether the standard global materials are used or whether adapted materials are produced, in either case, printing and distribution arrangements will need to be defined at the country level in collaboration with the SIYB Global Coordination Team.
6. **Roll out at entrepreneur level:** Once a pool of Trainers (and Master Trainers) has been certified and training materials are ready for use, roll out at entrepreneur level can take place. Trainers (and the organization they belong to) have a key role in marketing, preparing for and conducting SIYB trainings and providing follow up support and monitoring the final beneficiaries.
7. **M and E:** The monitoring of SIYB activities is critical for ensuring its effectiveness. Once SIYB has been introduced, apart from periodic evaluation or impact assessments which may be undertaken, SIYB is continuously monitored at the level of Trainers, Master Trainers and entrepreneurs. The standard SIYB monitoring and evaluation tools including an online system and, the SIYB gateway therefore need to be introduced from the outset and reporting lines need to be defined.
8. **Planning for sustainability:** When SIYB is launched in a country, it is important to start planning ways of sustaining SIYB activities in the long term, beyond its initial introduction, and to design measures for ensuring adequate institutional capacity, technical quality and cost recovery.

While market assessment will normally always take place at the beginning, the phases of selecting partner organizations, adapting materials or determining distribution arrangements may take place in different sequence. Many of these processes will also continue beyond the introductory phase. For instance, once an SIYB programme has

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been set up in a country, it will most likely continue to train new Trainers throughout its duration in addition to the first batch of Trainers trained at the outset so as to scale up activity levels, or it may opt to develop Master Trainers in order to enhance quality and to promote and expand the programme.<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, the International Labour Organization ILO was able to train forty (40) officials of the National Youth Service Corps as Master Trainers of Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) in 2018. And over the years the International Labour Organization (ILO) has continued to play active role as development partners of the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) particularly through the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme. Some of the International Labour Organization (ILO) contributions include: Developing Frame Work for the implementation of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship; Developing a Curriculum on Entrepreneurship Development in various camps; Providing Funds for the First debriefing meeting on Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Programme Staff from across the country and partners in May, 2012; Providing Capacity Building Awareness to Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) Officials, like the sponsoring of nine (9) officials to Turin, Morocco and Zambia since 2013; mobilisation of funds, materials and technical support for SAED programme; campaign for entrepreneurship development and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria <sup>16</sup>Closely related to this is provision of specialized trainings for Corps members by some development partners. One of such development partners which provides specialized training for the National Youth Service Corps is the Institute for Tourism Professional of Nigeria (ITPN). It is a National Certification

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<sup>15</sup>International Labour Organization “Building Entrepreneurship skills to increase youth employability in Nigeria” International Labour Organization 22 February, 2016 online

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

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and Professional body which trains members on hospitality, travel, tourism and allied occupations in Nigeria; with members both in the public and private sectors as well as non-profit sectors.

The primary duty of the body is to ensure the highest standard professional competence, set professional standard and provide development opportunities through various means which include qualification, training courses and events. The institute for Tourism Professionals of Nigeria ITPN-NYSC Hospitality and Tourism and proficiency certificate is a six (6) months free lecture programme for Corps members in all parts of the country. It has as its main objective to support the National Youth Services Corps with the development of hospitality and tourism by honing the skills of Corps members and making those who want to build professional career successful.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to note that hospitality and tourism industry remains one of the largest industries in the world with employment opportunities. Some of the unique features of the industry are that it is labour intensive, it creates job per unit of capital invested, it has the capacity to accommodate multiple skills, and it also creates opportunities for entrepreneurs across the hospitality and tourism value chain. As a way of curriculum development the ITPN-NYSC Hospitality and Tourism Proficiency Certificate (PHCT) is structured in the following manner which includes five modules:-

- a. PCHT 101: The contemporary Hospitality and Tourism Industry
- b. PCHT 102: The Hospitality and Tourism Business Tool Kit
- c. PCHT 103: Leadership and Management for Service Industries
- d. PCHT 104: Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
- e. PCHT 105: Concepts and Innovations in Hospitality and Tourism

At the end of which members will qualify for a Graduate Members Certificate and or Proficiency Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism

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(PCHT).<sup>17</sup> Another development partner which provides specialized training for National Youth Services Corps members is the National Institute of Management (NIM chartered). The National Institute of Management (chartered) began its programme with the National Youth Service Corps in 2005. It is also a six (6) months free lectures programme for Corps members with a nationwide coverage.

Its objective is continual support to the scheme through the honing of management and Entrepreneurial Skills of Corps members, in order to make them employable and self reliant. The curriculum of the National Institute of Management (chartered) includes courses like Management Principles and Practice, Business Communication, Project Management, Entrepreneurship, Corporate Law and Business Ethics. Successful candidates are formally admitted as members of the institute through an induction programme. They are also issued two (2) certificates which include Graduate Membership Certificate and Proficiency Certificate in Management.<sup>18</sup>

Development Partners of the National Youth Services Corps do also offer Interventionist assistance to aid the development objectives of the scheme. While it is true that the Central Bank of Nigeria has provided financial backing to the National Youth Service Scheme as a development partner, the banks role can be viewed in the broader perspective of intervention. The bank being alarmed by the performance of the Nigeria economy has sought to intervene in critical areas to achieve growth and development of the economy. For instance, the performance of the Nigerian economy as revealed by the National Bureau of Statistics shows that in the third quarter of 2015, out of the 36.3 million youths which represent 48% of Nigerian labour force, 13.6

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<sup>17</sup> Institute of Tourism Professionals of Nigeria “ITPN-NYSC Proficiency Programme” Institute for Tourism Professionals of Nigeria 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 online

<sup>18</sup> Chiamaka Adindu “NIM Partners NYSC to train Corps members in Professional Course” Calabar NYSC News 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 online

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million or 37.7% of them were either unemployed or under-employed.<sup>19</sup>

This worrying situation could not be allowed to subsist as it portends dangers where youth with great ideas and big dreams have been held back due to lack of fund. This youth unemployment called for intervention by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This came through the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development which is domiciled in the National Youth Service Corps.

One of such intervention came in the form of 2.5 billion which the Central Bank of Nigeria began to disburse to members of the National Youth Service Corp to address the challenge of youth unemployment. This intervention which was launched on March 15,2016 was to assist the Youth Corps members' actualise their business ideas. This initiative was called the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme. This is part of central banks effort to deepen credit delivery to address the challenges of unemployment, promote entrepreneurial spirits among Nigerian youths and enhance the spread of small and medium enterprises. The programme is aimed at harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of the teeming youths by providing timely and affordable facility to implement business ideas. This is to ensure sustainable mechanism to stimulate employment, contribute to non-oil Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and address the challenge of youth restiveness. The objectives of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme are to harness the entrepreneurship skills and innovative capacities of youths; ease access to finance for youth entrepreneurs through a well structured business model; stimulate the flow of finance to start-up enterprises; encourage job creation; increase the contribution of the non-oil sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and promote diversification of the economy. There are two types of

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<sup>19</sup> Central Bank of Nigeria “Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme”  
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facilities and they include Term loan and working capital. The facility will not be used for the refinancing of projects. In terms of tenure, loans have a maximum tenure of 36 months depending on the complexity of the project. Tenure of each project shall be determined in relation to cash flow; working capital facility of 12 months with a maximum roll over 12 months subject to approval; the programme allows for moratorium of 3 months in the loan repayment schedule and qualified projects for moratorium shall be determined on case by case basis. The 2.5 billion was drawn from the 220 billion Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMES) fund. This intervention was created to provide low cost, long termed funds to MSMES to build their capacity for employment creation, economic growth and development. The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme is aimed at creating one million jobs and to develop the entrepreneurial capacity of the youth as well as to make available a facility of not more than 3 million naira to finance and operate a business.<sup>20</sup>

The focus of this intervention programme are start-ups and expansion projects which covers agricultural value chain like (fish, farming, mining and solid minerals), cottage industry, arts and crafts, information and communications Technology (ICT) the initiative was also created to enable the Central Bank of Nigeria conserve huge foreign exchange which has been expended on importation of goods and services. The facility has modalities and include: loan amount shall be 3 million for a single obligor and 10 million for group projects jointly owned by 3-5 qualified beneficiaries on Interest Rate, lending banks shall access the fund at two percent (2%) from the Central Bank of Nigeria and disburse to qualified candidates at a maximum rate of nine percent (9%) per annum, including all charges; funding shall come from the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEGF); NYSC Discharge Certificate shall be the collateral from

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<sup>20</sup> Central Bank of Nigeria “Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme”  
Central Bank of Nigeria 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 online

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beneficiaries; artisans are to use their School Leaving Certificate or Technical Certificate or approved Proficiency Certificate from National Board for Technical Education (NBTE); third party guarantors will also be provided as additional collateral; lending bank shall obtain at least one credit report on promoter(s) for all projects; the cost of training for beneficiaries will be shared between the Central Bank of Nigeria and the lending bank in a ratio of 50:50 or any other agreed ratio; in order to support start-ups and youth entrepreneurs by way of incentive, risk sharing on start-ups will be at 50:50 between the Central Bank of Nigeria and the lending bank; disbursement shall be in tranches and attached to project/ equipment financing to minimize fund diversion by beneficiaries; all movable collaterals used to secure the loan shall be registered on the National Collateral Registry (NCR) by the lending bank; within two weeks of loan repayment, the lending bank shall discharge all registered movable collaterals on the National Collateral Registry and notify the customer accordingly.

The programme offers equal opportunity intervention in all respects, geo-political zone, gender, able and disabled etc; applicants will be pre-qualified by lending bank using an online portal; pre-qualified applicants will undergo training before they can access the facility. Training will be handled by the Central Bank of Nigeria Entrepreneurship Development Centers (EDCs); pre-qualified applicants will submit their business proposal to the lending bank for scrutiny; successful applicants will submit loan application in a particular format to the lending bank; lending banks shall receive, process, approve and forward the request for the facility from successful candidates to the Central Bank of Nigeria; each request must be accompanied with the following:

- (a) A business plan which clearly captures the financing plan, economic benefits etc
- (b) Statement of affairs for start-ups and companies with less than 3 years of existence

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- (c) Offer documents between the bank and the loan applicants
- (d) Certificate of incorporation or registration of Business Name
- (e) Brief on directors/ partners
- (f) At least one credit report of the promoter/ entrepreneur.
- (g) Proposed schedule of fund disbursement and repayment.
- (h) Evidence of third party guarantee acceptable to the lending bank.<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting to note that the National Youth Service Corps Scheme Mobilise around three hundred (300,000) thousand graduates who partake in the mandatory one year National Service for graduate who are not above the age of thirty (30).

Another development partner of the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) which offers interventionist assistance to the scheme is the World Bank. The global financial institution is known to have intervened in several Youths Development Programme in Nigeria. One of such youth friendly intervention is the 150 million dollars set aside by the global financial institution to Nigeria. The focus of the intervention is on governance, non-oil growth and human development.

The criteria for selection is based on what states requires, agreement with government, state level governance capability and commitment as well as geographical balance in all the six geopolitical zones and existing state programme. The strategy is to ensure that international assistance are targeted on the right priorities, and also allow development partners to coordinate in collaboration with the National Planning Commission, in order to avoid duplication and increase the impact of the assistance. The coordinators of the programme were

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<sup>21</sup>*Central Bank of Nigeria “Youth Entrepreneurship Development programme” Central Bank of Nigeria (YEDP) Guidelines P. 1*

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impressed by the connection of the Ministry of Youth Development by the Nigeria Government.<sup>22</sup>

The World Bank through United Nations International Children Fund (UNICEF) also set aside one (1) billion dollars through an initiative called Generation Unlimited. This is to prepare the World's 1.8 billion Young people to work and be engaged in profitable ventures. The target is to train Secondary School Students who will be trained for employment and entrepreneurship. This initiative was launched in order to engage the Youth in global progress towards growth, prosperity and stability, where the right skills and opportunities are created, for the youths to drive global growth and prosperity. It is also an important aspect of World Bank Group's Human Capital Project where countries are mobilized to channel more investments toward improving people especially the youth.<sup>24</sup>This World Bank investment is aimed at driving curriculum changes in formal education so that skills and knowledge are aligned with demands of Workplace, easy access to skill programme outside formal education both in peace time and crisis situation as well as areas which are susceptible to humanitarian needs, make effort to match job seekers with employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, preparing young people to be flexible and imbued with problems solving skills which they need to succeed as engaged citizens.<sup>23</sup>

But one of the most visible interventions of the World Bank to National Youths Service Corps is the provision of decent and habitable accommodation for Corps members. This World Bank intervention to the Scheme came in to Oba Community in Ayete, Ibarapa North local government area of Oyo State. Corps members have been known to

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<sup>22</sup> Proshare “\$150m grant: World Bank wants Nigerian youth empowered” Proshare, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 online

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

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reject serving in the community due to lack of decent and habitable accommodation.

In order to address this challenge of accommodation, the Oyo State Government through the Oyo State Community and Social Development Agency in collaboration with the World Bank provided a ten (10) room accommodation to the Corps members serving in that community. This intervention went a long way in motivating the youth Corps members in that community to put in more for the development of education in the community. The Baptist Secondary School, Ayete witnessed tremendous improvement as there were improvement in the reading culture of students given that Corps member organised extra classes for the students.<sup>24</sup>

### **Major Challenges Facing NYSC Scheme in Modern Times**

The growing insecurity in the country has also become a major challenge to the development drive of the National Youth Service Corps. Corps members on one year mandatory service have been caught up in indigenous, ethnic or political violence in various parts of Nigeria. This situation particularly the insurgency in the North East and armed banditry and kidnapping in the north western parts of Nigeria has been worrying. It will be recalled that at the peak of this insurgency Corps members were not posted to the North-East. This has denied the region of development which would have been brought to bear in the region through the partnership between the National Youth Service Corps and her development partners and which would have improved the economy through the Corps members in serving the communities during and after their service.

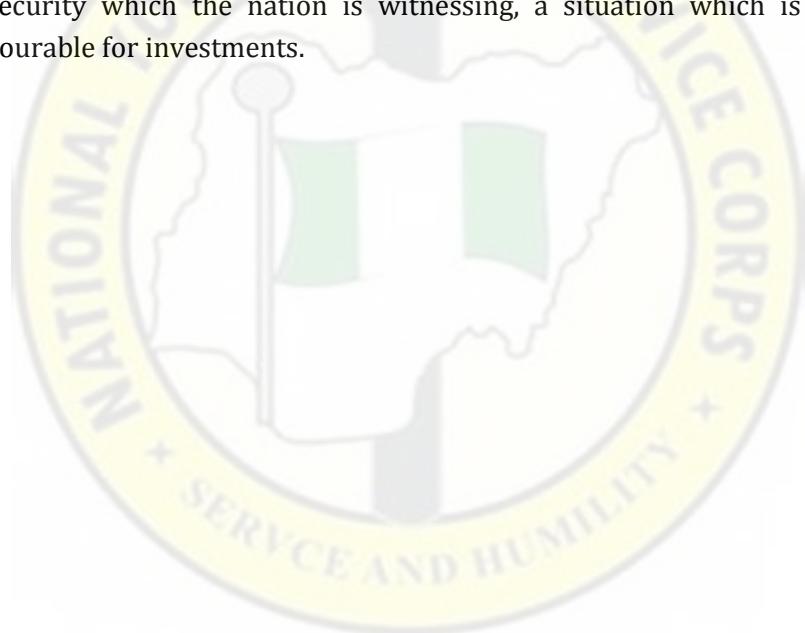
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<sup>24</sup> Ibid

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### **Conclusion**

The National Youth Service Corps and her development partners have been making efforts to ensure the economic growth and development of Nigeria. This effort began since inception of the scheme over forty years ago. This can be seen from the measures developed which have evolved over the years. The scheme has been able to access finance or funds, technical supports as well intervention in critical areas of the economy to achieve the sole aim of development. However, the scheme has been beset with challenges which tend to undermine her development efforts. Such challenges include: the increasing rate of insecurity which the nation is witnessing, a situation which is not favourable for investments.



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7

## NYSC and the MDGs Programmes in Nigeria

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### Introduction

Nigeria is among countries in the world that are confronted with developmental challenges such as illiteracy, poverty, infant/maternal mortality, poor access to water and basic sanitations, gender discrimination, HIV/AIDS, malaria and many others. Interestingly, these challenges are not present only in Nigeria, but in many countries in the world. As a result, this has led to the need for the United Nations Organization (UNO) to map out strategies to help in bringing these setbacks to an end. The organization ratified the Millennium Declaration which resulted to the establishment of the Millennium

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Development Goals (MDGs) made up of eight (8) objectives in September, 2000.

In Nigeria's situation, for the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals to be attained successfully, all hands needed to be on deck to make it work. Ministries, Departments, Agencies and nongovernmental organisations and many more were involved in many MDGs programmes. Prominent among them is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), established by the Gowon-led administration in the year 1973 to mobilise Nigerian Youths (graduates) to get involved not only in engendering unity, peace and cohesion, but also to improve National Development.

The NYSC has four (4) cardinal stages, which include the Orientation course, Primary Assignment, the Community Development Services (CDS) and the Winding-up/Passing-out. The CDS has sixteen (16) groups, and out of these groups, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) groups are one of the CDS groups that was created with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the MDGs for Nigeria. The NYSC was said to have made a lot of impact across communities in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this chapter seeks to examine the role of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the implementation of the MDGs programmes in Nigeria.

### **NYSC and the Community Development Service (CDS) Groups**

Community Development Service is among the four (4) cardinal programmes of the NYSC and one of the major parts of the NYSC activities. The main aim of the CDS group is to help develop communities across Nigeria while assisting Corps members to gain familiarity with the culture of the host community. Simply the modes of operation of CDS groups is to make developmental contributions to communities ranging from sensitization down to provision of basic

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needs paramount to the host community.<sup>1</sup> This aspect under the NYSC scheme is where corps members in the course of their service period contribute positively towards the development of host communities where they are posted. The vision of the Community Development Service department is to harness the great potentials of corps members for the interest of the host community and ultimately national development. The mission also is to enhance the living standards of host communities of corps members at all times. And the goal is to improve the economic, health, political & socio-cultural conditions of host communities.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the objectives of the CDS are; to make positive impact in the lives of people living in rural communities; to develop the spirit of entrepreneurship in every Corps members to make use of challenges of rural development as an avenue to indoctrinate the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism and creativity; to harness the huge talents and skills of corps-members into an effective machinery of change in rural communities; to provide complimentary service in national development activities; by ensuring that the under-privileged population learn basic techniques for self-help through the appropriate technology concept being promoted by the NYSC; and also to complement the activities of the federal, state and local levels in the stride towards national development.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>K. Ologunro, “16 NYSC CDS Groups and their Functions”, *Zikoko*, last updated May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://www.zikoko.com/life/nysc-diary/16-nysc-cds-groups-and-their-functions/>

<sup>2</sup> The Counselor, “All About NYSC CDS Community Development Service”, *Father Prada*, last updated August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://fatherprada.com/blog/guide/all-about-nysc-cds-community-development-service/>

<sup>3</sup> The Counselor, “All About NYSC”,

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All corps members are expected to use one day in a week for group CDS activities. They are not expected to attend to duties in their places of primary assignment on the day of community development services because such days are committed for execution of development projects as well as programmes that will improve the living conditions of their host communities.

The Community Development Service department is headed by a Director who coordinates the three (3) divisions and seven (7) branches. The divisions are; the Community Development Service Division, Scheme Collaborations and Special Projects Division.

Under the Community Development Service Division. Is the Traditional Community Development Service under which Corps members are expected to spend one day in a week for the group CDS activities. There are sixteen (16) NYSC-CDS groups which corps members can belong to and they include; Corp Legal Aid Group (CLAG), Sports Group, Culture and Tourism Group, Education Development Group, Environmental Protection & Sanitation, Editorial/Publicity, Road Safety, Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS, Anti-corruption, Service Delivery, Millennium Development Goals, Medical & Health Service, Drug-free & Quality Control, Agro-allied group, Charity Service and Gender, and Disaster Management.<sup>4</sup>

Personal/individual CDS is under the purview of the Community Development Service Division. Also known as the year round community Development Service, Corps members are encourage to initiate and execute personal projects in their host communities depending on what is the major concern or felt need of the community. They are encouraged to look out for areas where they could make an individual impact in the community. It can include construction/rehabilitation of schools, toilets, incinerators, bridges,

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<sup>4</sup> NYSC, “Community Development Service”,

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classrooms, chairs and desks, games facilities for schools etc. It can also include social and educational projects like ICT laboratory establishments, school libraries, extra-mural classes, campaigns, charity works or vocational training for empowering youths.<sup>5</sup>

The Scheme Collaborations Division deals with partnership with Government & Non-governmental Organizations and other establishments to ensure successful implementation of programmes.

The NYSC CDS department is successfully in collaboration with many international, regional, national as well as local agencies in many areas of human & societal developmental needs towards meeting both national and global challenges. Today as a result of these collaboration, it have generated training and programmes of different types with various agencies like the World Bank, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), British Council, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) etc.<sup>6</sup>

### **NYSC and the MDGs: An Existing Relationship**

The Millennium Development Goals are the eight (8) international development goals that were officially established after the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000. The Millennium Summit endorsed a United Nations Millennium Declaration in New York, USA, which contained six (6) fundamental principles and values viz; freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The declaration was regarded as an extraordinary global commitment and one of the most significant UN documents in recent times. The declaration further stated that these values are to be translated into actions by the key objectives of

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<sup>5</sup> The Counselor, “All About NYSC”,

<sup>6</sup> NYSC, “Community Development Service”,

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significance expressively identified by the following; peace, security and disarmament; development & poverty eradication; protecting our common environment; human rights, democracy and good governance; protecting the vulnerable; meeting the special needs of Africa; and strengthening the United Nations.<sup>7</sup>

It was this epoch-making declaration that gave birth to the eight (8) time-bound goals known as the Millennium Development Goals with several targets and indicators to be achieved by 2015. A record of 189 countries and 23 international organizations at the end of the UN General Assembly agreed to achieve these targets which attracted a global attention from the very day it was unveiled. The goals are;

1. to eradicate poverty and hunger
2. achieve universal basic education
3. promote gender equality and empower women
4. reduce child mortality
5. improve maternal health
6. combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other related diseases
7. ensure environmental sustainability;
8. and develop a global partnership for development.<sup>8</sup>

The major aim of the MDGs is to encourage development by improving the social and economic conditions among developing countries through eradication of poverty, and building partnership with the belief that the wave of globalization will become a more positive force for everybody across the world.

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<sup>7</sup> A. Musa, “Attainability of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria: Current Challenges and Future Prospects”, *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, Vol.6, No.19, (2015), 45-50.

<sup>8</sup>A. A. Alawiye-Adams, and A.Babatunde, “Successful Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria: What Roles the Financial Systems are Expected to Perform?” (December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013). Available at SSRN: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2368244>

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Nigeria, like many other countries, was among the signatory to the MDGs who pursued it with enthusiasm approaches from the beginning. In order to make it a success, a lot of efforts were made such as; negotiations for debt relief, partnerships with nations and agencies for financial and human resources, establishment of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs, and OSAG-MDGs (at state level), establishment of assessment and monitoring committees on the MDGs, securing Conditional Grants as well as putting the MDGs-related issues a high order of priority.<sup>9</sup>

Another significant effort was to involve the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as a major player in the effort realise the Millennium Development Goals. In response to this involvement, MDGs group was created and included as part of the CDS groups of the NYSC. This was a way for corps members to participate in development activities in host communities across Nigeria.<sup>10</sup>

The MDGs CDS group of the NYSC was established with the vision and mission to be one of the critical contributors towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and redirecting Nigeria youths achieving greater height through the Small Scale Enterprises and Small Scale Industries (SMEs & SMIs). The MDGs CDS group is known for organizing awareness campaigns about the MDGs and the strategies for achieving the MDGs targets. The corps members are trained for ten (10) weeks and after the training, a project is done to add to the development of the community and the nation at large.

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<sup>9</sup>Mr. Gabriel Okosiemema (Retired OSAG-MDGs staff), interviewed by the author, Port Harcourt, February 8<sup>th</sup> 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Joshua Okun, (CDS Coordinator), interviewed by the author, Asaba, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

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### **Role of the NYSC on MDGs Programmes in Nigeria**

It is generally believed that Nigeria is never left out of the list of countries plagued by global problems of under-development among which are; poverty and hunger, mass illiteracy, acute shortage of man power in addition to unequal distribution of skilled human resources across the country.<sup>11</sup>Other developmental challenges present in Nigeria are; lack of socio-economic or basic infrastructural facilities, inadequate access to water and basic sanitation, poor access to primary health care facilities, etc.

The Community Development Services of the NYSC has succeeded to a very large extent in harnessing the skills, creativities and innovativeness of corps members. The MDGs CDS groups have made tremendous efforts in many programmes towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Members of the MDGs CDS group were able to identify the needs of their host communities and also involve the members of their host communities in the course of executing projects that meet the needs of the people. The efforts of the NYSC towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria according to the eight (8) objectives are hereby explained below;

**Goal 1:** The first goal is to eradicate poverty and hunger and the target is to reduce the rate by half before the year 2015.The NYSC through the MDGs CDS groups has done so many surveys, researches and interactions that revealed that a large number of Nigerians are living below \$1 per day. As the population increases, the rate of employment also increases. Furthermore, it was also revealed that the inability of youths to engage in agriculture as a means of self-employment is as a result of lack of access to financial resources, loans from micro-finance banks, land, the increasing rate of unemployment as well as the loss of

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<sup>11</sup> C. N. Anumudu, A. Umar, and M. E. Madu, “Review of Poverty Reduction Policies in Nigeria: Myth and Reality”, *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, Vol. 1, No.2, (2013), 1-16

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interest on the sector itself. Due to high rate of poverty and unemployment, and in order to survive, a lot of youths have resorted to civil unrest, drug abuse, kidnapping, human trafficking, armed robbery, terrorism etc.<sup>12</sup>

In response to this challenge, the NYSC through the MDGs CDS groups mapped out a number of strategies towards reducing the increasing rate of poverty in the country. They collaborated with agencies in many areas of human and social development. For example, the collaboration between the NYSC and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) have engendered series of engagements with interested youths in agriculture so as to put unemployment, poverty and hunger to a controllable level. An empowerment programme called the NYSC/MDGs/WAP was created which sought to equip corps members with entrepreneurial skills/training in agriculture by empowering them with interest-free loans to generate employment rather than seeking for white-collar jobs. Over the years the programme is said to have empowered over 3,500 participants in various enterprises.<sup>13</sup> Among them are graduates, non-graduates and school leavers. Many of them after receiving the loans used it to establish agro-business enterprises due to the trainings they received (like poultry farming, fish farming, snailery, animal husbandry, livestock farming). Some of them diversified into other non-agricultural businesses, while others who already had a business used the loans to scale it up.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. Anthony Agbi (Lecturer), interviewed by the author, Abuja, February 12<sup>th</sup> 2021

<sup>13</sup> Sarafat A. Tijani and M. A. Ayinla, “Effects of the NYSC/MDGs/WAP Agro-Enterprise Loan on Beneficiaries’ Well-being in South-West Nigeria”, *Nigerian Journal of Rural Sociology*, Vol.15, No.2, (March 2015), 55

<sup>14</sup> Tijani and Ayinla, “Effects of the NYSC/MDGs/WAP”, 60

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As a result of involvements in the NYSC/MDGs/WAP scheme, a lot of Nigerian youths were empowered, to become self employed. Many beneficiaries testified that they were better-off than the way they were after getting involved in the programmes as it helped them to become entrepreneurs instead of remaining unemployed which made them vulnerable to depression, low self-esteem, frustration and among other.<sup>15</sup>

**Goal 2:** The second goal of the MDGs is to achieve universal basic education. The target of this goal is to ensure that by the end of 2015, children, everywhere, both boys and girls alike, will be able to enroll and complete a full course of primary schooling. From the survey of the MDGs of the NYSC, it was observed that millions of children were not in school. For both boys and girls, this problem was noticeable mostly in rural areas while in some urban areas the percentage of children was very low.

There was always difficulty in keeping the pupils in school after being enrolled and also the inability to complete primary school which lack of financial resources on the side of the concerned parents was one of the reasons.<sup>16</sup> Due to underfunding by some state governments, there were inadequate educational infrastructures and as a result buildings were in poor conditions teachers were not paid regularly. There were primary school pupils sitting on the floor because many schools across the country did not have enough tables, chairs and even desks for the teachers to sit. Even where they were available, they were not in a good condition.<sup>17</sup> Buildings were not friendly as some dilapidated places where putting the pupils in danger.

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<sup>15</sup>BabatundeIpaye, Counselling the Unemployed: Some Exploratory Ideas for the Nigerian Counsellors, Counsellor, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Annabel Emeh (Corp Member), interviewed by the author, Abuja, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

<sup>17</sup>Emeh, Interview.

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The NYSC made a lot of efforts with respect to the implementation of policies of the Universal Basic Education. The MDGs CDS of the NYSC made sure they reached out to communities so as to pass the message to everyone that education is now free and compulsory for every child, and no parent has an excuse as to why a child should not be in school. Other efforts include public sensitization of the importance of primary education, enrolling of school children, rehabilitation of existing primary schools, donation of textbooks, notebooks and writing materials to pupils, provision of chairs, tables and desks, inspecting and monitoring of children across communities who are not in school, and organizing of extra-mural lessons for pupils after regular school hours especially for those who are in primary five (5) or six (6).<sup>18</sup>In addition to the building of schools, 4-compartment toilets were constructed, some were renovated, and constructions of water supply schemes were made available. With the interventions by MDGs CDS group of the NYSC, thousands of existing primary schools were rehabilitated (like painting of the walls, fixing of new school gates and mounting of sign boards for schools).<sup>19</sup>

As a result of these interventions, large number of pupils was enrolled into schools after being encouraged by parents due to the reorientation messages received. There were no longer issues like students complaining about notebooks and text books and writing materials, and a greater number of pupils who were able to complete the primary school level enrolled into Junior Secondary School level.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew Soyinka, “A Bail-out Package for Education”, *Tell Magazine*, November 2008, 30

<sup>19</sup> OSAG-MDGs, *Rivers State Millennium Development Goals: 2006 Report*, Port Harcourt, UNDP, 2006, 26

<sup>20</sup>Emeh, Interview

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**Goal 3:** The third objective of the Millennium Development Goals is to promote gender equality and empower women. The target is to eliminate gender disparity both in primary and secondary education, and also to improve the ratio of girls to boy that are literate before 2015 endpoint. The NYSC through the efforts of the MDGs CDS group observed that more boys are enrolled into schools than girls. Enrolments of boys into schools were higher than girls whereby the ratio of boys outnumbering girls was 2:1.<sup>21</sup> It was revealed that many parents especially in rural areas preferred it that way because of cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices in the homes, schools and the society which do not encourage girls and women. For example, some parents believed that it was better to have more boys than girls and so more money were rather spent on the boys. More girls were withdrawn from schools than the boys to assist in house chores and for early marriages.<sup>22</sup> At school, some teachers discouraged girls with the belief that the boys were more intelligent than them. In many societies, some people believed that it was better to marry-out the girls than to send them to school due to wrong beliefs that after education, a woman would end up in the kitchen, no matter how educated.<sup>23</sup> In addition, girls and young women lacked sufficient sensitization that encourages protection against sexual harassment.

In response to these challenges, the NYSC was able to carry out campaigns that frown against discrimination of gender, by spreading the belief that all human beings are created equal and must be given equal opportunity. They assisted the Universal Basic Education Board at all state level in making sure that more girls are enrolled into primary schools so as to reduce the ratio to 1:1. Consequently, they

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<sup>21</sup> Miss Adorable Peters (ex-corps member), Interviewed by the author, Port Harcourt, February 9<sup>th</sup> 2021

<sup>22</sup> Peters, Interview.

<sup>23</sup> Engr. Eustace Anigbo (UBE Staff), Interviewed by the author, Abuja, January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

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were able to debunk the belief that boys are more intelligent than girls as many examination records showed many girls performing excellently.<sup>24</sup>

**Goal 4:** This was to reduce child mortality. The target was to reduce by two-third (2/3), the rate of infants dying before the age of five (5). It was revealed that the rate of child mortality has been on the increase, reaching and going beyond 100 per 1,000 lives per birth as the years keep rolling by. Some cases occur before delivery, after delivery and even before the child gets to the age of five (under-5 mortality).<sup>25</sup> It was also proven that the cause of child mortality boils down to some health diseases that are now preventable like pneumonia, malaria, diarrhea, measles, tuberculosis, malnutrition, including injuries. And factors that lead to such increasing risk of child mortality included low immunization coverage, ignorance, low literacy rate, poverty, and poor accessibility to health centres especially the majority of people who live on the creeks and islands or even slums.<sup>26</sup>

In attaining this objective of the Millennium Development Goals, having discovered what has been responsible for persistent occurrences of child mortality, the MDGs CDS of the NYSC acknowledged that there is need for the general public to be aware that these diseases are now preventable and even curable, instead of staying “in the dark”. This made them to organise series of sensitization campaigns on malaria, malnutrition, cholera, polio and the need to seek medical attention when symptoms are noticeable. Furthermore, they took this as a cause for concern to put more efforts and strategies towards reducing the rate of this challenge as quickly as possible like influencing funding

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<sup>24</sup>Anigbo, Interview.

<sup>25</sup> Federal Ministry of Health, “Nigeria State Data Profiles”, *Healthy Newborn Network*, accessed on February 18th, 2021,

<http://www.healthynewbornnetwork.org/page/nigeria-data>

<sup>26</sup> Federal Ministry of Health, “Nigeria State Data”,

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commitments by state governments in key-MDGs sectors through the Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS), so that a lot of projects and services can be provided; primary health care systems can be revitalized, and more Public Health Care centre scan be constructed or refurbished.

What the CDS group did was to identify communities that were lacking access to primary health care centres, inadequate medical facilities or equipment in existing health centres, and low immunization coverage which might add to number of death rates.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, more primary health care centers across communities in Nigeria were either built or rehabilitated in thousands of units, medical equipment that were either not available or in low quality and quantity in many PHCs were finally provided. In the aspect of availability of drugs, in order to reduce the rate of these diseases revealed to be preventable and curable, drugs or medicines for each particular cure and treatment of these diseases were provided and made available in large and surplus quantity every time it is needed so as to avoid such infant mortality from occurring at a high rate.<sup>28</sup>

Having understood that prevention is better than cure, immunization services were introduced and carried out on the children for preventing major illnesses from occurring. Some actions were done through injections and giving drops of syrups from the tube to the mouth of the child. Some vaccines were medically prepared to immune the children for a long period of time. The MDGs CDS group of the NYSC was able to identify communities that had no immunization units or low immunization coverage in the sense that the distance from a community to PHCs was children can be immunized is very far. In order to reduce this barrier, the MDGs CDS group with the assistance of medical practitioners was able to set up many immunization units in

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<sup>27</sup>Mr. Nonso Muoka (ex-Corps Member), Interviewed by the author, February 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Muoka, Interview

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Nigerian communities so as to widen the coverage.<sup>29</sup> On many occasions, the MDGs CDS group was able to organize mobile immunization exercises whereby health workers were able to move from schools to schools or even places of worship to get children immunized after receiving consents from community heads, religious leaders or whoever is in charge. Due to wrong beliefs of some parents over this exercise, religious and traditional leaders were involved in the campaign to enlighten the people, especially the male heads of households to understand the importance of allowing their children/wards to be immunized.<sup>30</sup>

In order to avoid malnutrition which is one of the most prominent cause of child mortality in Nigeria, what was recommended during sensitization programmes by the MDGs CDS group across communities were; the encouragement of exclusive breast-feeding for at least six months, adequate complementary feeding starting at about six (6) months continued with breast-feeding for two years, appropriate nutritional care of sick and malnourished children, adequate intake of Vitamin A for children just to mention a few.<sup>31</sup>

**Goal 5:** This goal is to improve maternal health. The target is to reduce by three-quarter (3/4), the rate at which women are dying during child birth. Research also shows that more than 70 percent of maternal deaths in Nigeria were due to five major complications which were haemorrhage, infection, unsafe abortion, hypertensive disease of pregnancy and obstructed labour. Also, poor access to and utilization of quality and reproductive health services contributes to the high maternal mortality level in Nigeria. Some pregnant women do not

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<sup>29</sup>Muoka, Interview

<sup>30</sup>Peters, Interview

<sup>31</sup>Peters, Interview

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register for antenatal in any health centres and consequently do not get examined after the delivery of their babies.<sup>32</sup>

The MDGs CDS group of the NYSC was charged with several tasks like contributing towards making sure the general public knows that of maternal deaths can be prevented if specified instructions are observed; identifying communities with low proportion of births attended to by skilled health personnel, emphasize the need for family planning and the importance of observing ante-natal care to women. In corollary of the previous goal, intervention efforts were made towards reducing the high percentage of mothers dying during child birth, before and after. Some of them include helping the OSSAP-MDGs to identify communities that have no primary health care services so as to establish one, in order to increase the coverage of maternal care instead of taking the risk of going to a far distance for medical attentions.<sup>33</sup> Like child health care service, maternal health care services were provided through the primary health care systems across the country.

**Goal 6:** This is the sixth goal which is to combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, by reversing into half, the rate at which the virus are spreading on a high prevalence. Nigeria is never left out as one of the countries having a high rate of peoples living with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other related diseases. The major sets of people who are victims of this virus are pregnant women, young children and adults at a youthful age, traders and illiterates (who had never had any form of formal education). Study showed that a lot of individuals residing in urban areas of Nigeria are aware of its existence unlike those residing at the

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<sup>32</sup> A.Imdad, M. Yakoob and Z. Bhutta, “Impact of Maternal Education about Complementary Feeding and Provision of Complimentary Foods on Child Growth in Developing Countries”, *BMC Public Health*, Supplement 3, S25, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011, 11, doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-11-S3-S25

<sup>33</sup>Muoka, Interview.

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rural areas. It has shown that half of the world's population is at risks of having malaria.<sup>34</sup> It is an endemic in Nigeria that has become a prominent cause of morbidity and mortality in Nigeria. Most malaria cases and deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa and the set of people who suffers this disease are mostly children under the age of five (5), pregnant women, patients living with HIV/AIDS and even non-immune migrants.

When the MDGs came into full implementation, the NYSC through the MDGs CDS team went into actions immediately to control the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. Although various control programs were instituted beginning at the national level when the National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA) was established with the task to provide a general political, coordination, and programme and oversight functions. Interestingly, the NYSC was said to have collaborated with the agency and has assisted in a good number of development projects.<sup>35</sup>

Having discovered that majority of Nigerians who have adequate knowledge of the spread of HIV/AIDS are those residing in urban areas, which implies that the percentage of people living in rural areas who are aware of the spread of the disease are very low. The MDGs CDS group of the NYSC through many supports from related agencies or action committees was able to spread awareness on a high scale across rural communities. Majority of what has been discussed about were; when HIV/AIDS started, how it can be contracted, as well as how it can be prevented. Interestingly, how an infected woman who is pregnant can transfer this virus to her unborn child, and also how it can be prevented before delivery were explained in may awareness campaigns

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<sup>34</sup> FGN, *National Policy on HIV/AIDS 2003*, Abuja, FGN, 2003, 17

<sup>35</sup>Mr.Ayomide Benson (NYSC Official), Interviewed by the author, Kaduna, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

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and sensitization programmes.<sup>36</sup> Community members who were not clear about certain information were encouraged to ask questions to be clarified. As a result of these programmes organized by the NYSC CDS team, the percentage of awareness about the virus across communities in Nigeria began to grow which will engender serious caution for prevention or abstinence.

Moreover, the NYSC assisted with many strategies in the course of its public enlightenment exercise. Some of which include; promotion of safe sexual behaviour, appropriate use of condoms; voluntary counselling and testing, ensured the respect for, and protection of the rights of all Nigerians including persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.<sup>37</sup>The MDGs CDS teams across the country were able to carry out some tests like; Blood Pressure, Sugar level and HIV status. If the HIV status is negative, he/she is advised on how to keep up with the prevention, but if it is positive he/she is counselled on how to get proper treatment and stay healthy to avoid the situation getting worse.<sup>38</sup>On the aspect of Malaria, enlightenment exercises were still carried out across Nigeria with the information that malaria is still as deadly as it has been known. It was revealed that there are many households that still sleep without treated nets. The MDGs CDS were able to facilitate donation of insecticide-treated nets to hospitals and health centres across the country. And they were also able to provide anti-malarial drugs to reduce the rate at which people are having malaria.<sup>39</sup>

**Goal 7:** This is to ensure environmental sustainability. The target is to integrate the principle of sustainable development into countries programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources; improve

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<sup>36</sup> Benson, Interview.

<sup>37</sup> Peters, Interview

<sup>38</sup>Peters, Interview

<sup>39</sup>Peters, Interview

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access to safe drinking water; and also improve access to basic sanitation by 50% before 2015. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) via the efforts of the MDGs CDS groups observed lack of access to safe drinking water and lack of basic sanitation due to poor acts of waste disposal and high rate of urban slum dwellers across Nigeria. The proportions of households with access to all these basic needs are very low.

Residents were into the habit of disposing wastes and garbage improperly especially the market places. Objects like bottles (breakable and unbreakable), nylons and papers sometimes are intentionally thrown into the roads. Even when efforts are made wastes are poorly collected from homes and littered back to the streets and major roads. In terms of the environment of schools, personal hygiene and sanitation status are very poor. Some places were polluted thereby making the pupils vulnerable to all kinds of challenges to their health.<sup>40</sup> The hygiene and sanitary conditions were also critical and had been identified as contributory to the effective retention and of girls in school, particularly in some parts of the country.

In order to attain the 7<sup>th</sup> objective of the MDGs, the NYSC was able to collaborate with ministries, departments and agencies in carrying out many projects. The MDGs CDS groups were able to rehabilitate many borehole facilities across the country. Prominent among these places were schools, market places and public areas within communities. This was because many of the water facilities were constructed a long time ago and it has not been attended to by the authorities who are responsible for them.<sup>41</sup> Provided the fact that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is a universal responsibility, the NYSC through the CDS group were able to play their own parts in order to

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<sup>40</sup>Mrs. Stella Adegoke (NYSC Official), Interview by the author, February 18<sup>th</sup> 2021

<sup>41</sup>Mr. Dare Oluwibe (Corps member), Interview by the author, February 18<sup>th</sup> 2021

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ensure environmental sustainability. For example, at least once or twice a month, they were able to go to market places and public motor parks to carry out sanitation exercises like sweeping the premises. In addition, many market women and motor park workers have been sensitized about the importance of sanitations to both them and the commuters.<sup>42</sup>

**Goal 8:** The eight and the last objective of the goal is to develop a global partnership for development. This was with the target to achieve reduction and cancellation of debt among countries; avoid discriminatory trade and financial system among countries. With so many development projects already on ground, rather than relying on the government for assistance with resources, the NYSC believe that partnership with other government of advanced countries, donor agencies and international organizations is a great strategy towards its successes.

On the part of the NYSC, the major role it played is to enhance productivity of every youth, and also make information and technologies available across Nigeria. From the beginning of the MDGs program the MDGs CDS group of the NYSC have succeeded in collaborating with a lot of Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDA) international organizations and even Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Examples of them are; Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of water resources and Rural Development, United Nations Millennium Campaign, UNICEF, UBE (at both national and state level), USAID, National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) and many more.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Oluwibe, Interview

<sup>43</sup>Okun, Interview

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As a result of these collaborations with many organizations/groups, the NYSC has achieved a lot towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. This is because these partnerships were able to assist mostly in terms of finance, human resources, strategic development programmes which consequently hastened development in many places across Nigeria. In terms of finance they were able to receive a good number of funds which enabled them to execute a lot of projects both as a CDS group and as an individual. In terms of human resources, many development experts either from the OSSAP-MDGs or other MDAs that are MDGs-related were able to serve as advisors to the MDGs CDS group in order to improve the ways in which development activities can be carried out across communities in Nigeria. And, in terms of strategic development programmes, when sensitization programmes in line with GOALS 3 to 7, members of these partner groups are often invited as resource persons with a wider knowledge to enlighten the public about the purpose of such sensitization campaigns.<sup>44</sup>

### **Challenges of the NYSC in MDGs Programmes in Nigeria**

Undoubtedly, in course of many efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria, the NYSC encountered challenges along the line. Some challenges are hereby explained below;

**Financial Constraints:** Compared to many other challenges, the issue of funding is regarded as the most prominent challenges in the course of achieving concerned objectives. Financial constraints have been a major problem for the NYSC towards carrying out plans successfully. For example, there were cases where some vital projects needed a great deal of funds to be carried out but due to lack of funds, some had to stop half way while some were even abandoned.<sup>45</sup> And this was one of the reasons why some corps members resorted into carrying out

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<sup>44</sup>Okun, Interview

<sup>45</sup> Peters, Interview

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development programs individually or as sub-groups across many schools and other public places in Nigeria.

**Logistics Challenges:** In this aspect, it involves movement of both people and items needed for execution of development projects from place to place. For example, some locations needed to be covered for developmental projects are very far. Because the MDGs CDS groups do not have a vehicle of their own, they always charter public vehicles to convey themselves and the equipment they will need, which might be very expensive.<sup>46</sup>

**Lack of Cooperation from Community Members:** This is a vital expectation for successful activities towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, yet it poses a challenge, whereby the involvement of community members in MDGs CDS programmes is very low due to some perceptions. For example, the MDGs CDS programmes are regarded as project made only for the corps member for whom they will be rewarded at the end. Some community members see the MDGs programmes by corps members as an avenue for them to gain recognition and not a selfless service.<sup>47</sup> Due to such perceptions or inadequate understanding of the MDGs CDS groups' mission, a lot of community members have not been able to get involved.

**Low Cooperation from Corps Members:** This is a serious challenge which implies that lack of cooperation from corps members who are the champions of development will result to a colossal failure of the vision and mission of the MDGs. Many corps members never make themselves available for development programmes, meetings, seminars and sensitization campaigns across communities. Even financial

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<sup>46</sup> Peters, Interview

<sup>47</sup> Precious Arigbo, Gideon Onuekwusi, Dorothy Ikoro and Taiwo Adeogun, "Community Involvement in the National Youth Service Corps Community Development Service Projects in Abia State, Nigeria", *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol. 23 (4), (October 2019), 66-75,

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contribution to the group for completion of programmes has never been encouraging. Consequently, many MDG CDS groups have left many projects either pending completion or not done at all.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the programmes initiated by the NYSC towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria. It began by giving a historical development of the NYSC explaining that it was established in 1973 after the Nigerian Civil War ended in 1970. This was a platform for Nigerian Youths to be deployed to different states across Nigeria to understand cultures and traditions of other tribes or ethnic groups and also promote unity. The chapter also discussed the relationship between the NYSC and the CDS which explained that in order to contribute towards development of communities, many CDS groups were created to attend to the needs of host communities of Corps members.

Therefore, in order for the NYSC to contribute towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs CDS group was created to carry out many MDGs-related programmes which include; sensitization programmes, rehabilitations/renovations of buildings (like schools, health centres and markets), as well as donations of different relief materials to community members. Challenges ranging from poor funding down to lack of cooperation were the major factors hindering a successful achievement of the MDGs programmes. The Millennium Development Goals has elapsed in 2015 and it has been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals. And, it is recommended that the Nigerian Government should provide adequate funds to the NYSC improve facilities and also encourage cooperation among corps members for effective execution of CDS programmes.

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<sup>48</sup>Muoka, Interview

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# 8

## **NYSC, Community Development Service and the Sensitization Programs in Nigeria**

Mohammed Liman Murtala

### **Introduction**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme is a direct product of the aftermath of the 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil War. The ugly effects of the war plunged the country to the brink of disintegration. There was therefore need to infuse the ideals of unity and togetherness in the country at all costs. Several efforts were put in place as strategies to reconstruct, reconcile, and rebuild the Nigerian nation among which was the establishment of the NYSC Scheme. The NYSC scheme was established on 22nd May, 1973 by Decree 24 of 1973, later amended by

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Decree No. 21 of 1985 which was also later replaced by Decree No. 51 of 16th June, 1993 to inculcate discipline in Nigerian youth by instilling in them a tradition of industry at work and of patriotism and loyal service to the nation; develop common ties among them and promote National Unity and enable youths to acquire the spirit of self-reliance among other noble objectives.<sup>1</sup> The NYSC scheme was designed as a mandatory one year national service programme for Nigerian graduates not above the age of 30. The cardinal programmes of the scheme are Orientation Courses primary assignment, Community Development Service, and winding up/passing-out. This paper, therefore, seeks to study the role of the NYSC scheme, in carrying out sensitization and awareness campaigns in partnership with other organisations thereby, galvanizing and championing the socio-economic and political development of the host communities.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

For explanation and the need for a meaningful understanding of the subject matter, there is a need to clarify several concepts that are relevant to the topic under study.

### **Community Development**

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council's report on Concept and Principles of Community Development, community development is "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems." It is a broad concept, applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens, and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Community development

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<sup>1</sup> National Youth Service Corps Year Book, 2013 Edition. p23.

<sup>2</sup> concepts and principles of community development and recommendations on further practical measures to be taken by international organizations Author(s): United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Social Commission (Eleventh

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seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. These skills are often created through the formation of social groups working for a common agenda. It is important to also note that one of the basic guiding principles of community development according to the report is that, the activities undertaken must correspond to the basic needs of the community which occupies the center stage in the context of our study.

### **Public awareness/sensitisation Campaign**

To Rasmussen University Library and Learning Services, a public awareness campaign is a marketing effort to build public recognition of a problem through media, messaging, and an organized set of communication tactics. These campaigns target a large number of people over a specific period to try and generate specific outcomes or achieve pre-determined goals.<sup>3</sup> It can further be viewed as a sustained effort to educate individuals and boost public knowledge about an organization's cause or issue which in turn will bring a meaningful understanding of a particular phenomenon, leading to the socio-economic and political development of communities.<sup>4</sup> Awareness campaigns are one of the most popular, effective, and flexible ways to raise public interest and educate a community about a project, ranging from health care, agriculture, education, and other aspects of societal development.

The community development projects undertaken by the Corps members can be best understood in two ways, namely; infrastructural projects and human development projects. The infrastructural projects

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Session) Source: *Ekistics*, Vol. 4, No. 26 (NOVEMBER 1957), pp. 92-96

Published by: Athens Center of *Ekistics* Stable URL:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43613175> Accessed: 31-01-2017 14:36 UTC.p1

<sup>3</sup>S.Bouder.Criticalcomponentsforpublicawarenesscampaigns. <https://advocacyunleashed.kontribune.com/articles/1371>. (2013)

<sup>4</sup> ABC of Community Development Service, NYSC Community Development Service and Special Project, 2016.p6

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include projects like the construction of classrooms, bridges, roads, bus stops, status, and symbols among others. While human development projects include donations to the less-privileged, organisation of extra-mural classes, adult literacy campaigns, skill acquisition/ vocational training, sports development, and immunization and sensitization campaigns, which improved the way of life and living standards of the communities.

As part of the national service activities, sensitization campaigns by the Youth Corps Members fall within the category of collaborative and group Community Development Service. This entails the signing of MOUs by the scheme with different organizations across the various aspect of human development. It is therefore imperative within the context of this study to examine the structural modules of the NYSC Community Development Service CDS concerning our understanding of the topic under study.

### **The Infrastructural Project**

This involves the impactful activities of the Corps members based on community felt needs. It involves the identification and solving of critical areas of infrastructural deficit of the host communities. An example of these areas could be the construction of bridges, classrooms, the building of toilets, incinerators, provision of games facilities in schools, equipping libraries with books, and vocational training for empowerment among others. To execute this project, it is expected that the Corps members will solicit funds from philanthropies, politicians, donor agencies, private organizations in and outside of the community, but on no account should a Corps member write a letter to any of the above-stated organizations without passing through the State Coordinator.

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### **Human Development Project**

In this category, Corps members volunteer in public awareness and sensitizations campaigns, educating the public on various aspect of community development like the SDGs campaign, UNICEF, WHO, NDLEA, NAFDAC, FRSC, USAID, UNESCO, EFCC/ICPC, WOTCLEF, LEGAL AID, SERVICOM, SON among many others. From the recent studies available, Corps members executed more human development projects than infrastructural projects. This is expected because of the huge amount of capital and the bureaucracy involved in executing infrastructural projects.<sup>5</sup> This finding conforms with the observation of Inuwa that community members perceived the provisions of infrastructural projects by Corps members as least effective when compared to the educational projects of the NYSC CDS. To buttress this Jack has this to say;

We don't get too involved in infrastructural projects as funds were involved to get those kinds of projects done. Infrastructural projects tend to require huge funds compared to sensitization campaigns which require less cash. More so, Corps members don't get funds from NYSC to embark on projects, they have to source funds mostly from the community stakeholders and philanthropists. And so with the little, the Corps members have it is only justifiable that infrastructural projects would be a challenge to them and less expensive campaigns like sensitization tend to be more feasible.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Jeremiah Jack, 31, ex-corp member, Nigerian Defence Academy PG School, 08/03/2021.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah Jack, 31, ex-corp member, Nigerian Defence Academy PG School, 08/03/2021.

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In contrast to the above, the NYSC encourages Corps members to embark on infrastructural projects but they are cautioned not to use personal funds to execute such project. Most times, they are advised to seek funds from politicians and well-to-do community stakeholders who can support them to complete of the projects. Also, it is on record that Corps members are supposed to put up a project plan, having identified a community development project.<sup>7</sup>

### **NYSC - Community Development Service CDS an Overview**

The NYSC-CDS is one of the four cardinal programmes of the NYSC Scheme that requires the positive contribution of the Corps members to the development of their host communities.<sup>8</sup> Every Corps member must participate in the community development programme. It is carried out for the whole service-year and involves assigning Corps members to CDS groups to align with the members of their host community to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programmes which impact positively on the socio-economic development of the society.<sup>9</sup> More so, community development service is as old as the evolutionary period of the African societies. This can be best understood from the words of Enegwea and Umoden thus;

One of the most significant attributes of pre-colonial African societies was their regular resort to collective community effort as a means of meeting common challenges. For many centuries, it was through this indigenous arrangement that communities built fortifications for their collective security, build roads and bridges to facilitate transportation, and cleared forest to make way for farms. Long before the colonial administrators came with their “development plan” many Nigerian

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<sup>7</sup>Jeremiah Jack Interviewed.

<sup>8</sup> National Youth Service Corp Year Book, 2018 Edition.p46

<sup>9</sup> ABC of Community Development Service, NYSC Community Development Service and Special Project, 2016.pvi

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societies had perfected mechanisms by which their people could identify common needs...frequently re-enforcing the idea that the members of each community were the primary architects of their destiny.<sup>10</sup>

It is expected of a Corps member to identify and execute development projects in his host community, which in essence means the impact he/she will make to that community will live forever as his/her legacy in the development of the society. Inuwa for example hails from Katsina but served in Niger State and has participated in the SDG CDS group, he gave an account of his participatory role in the sensitization campaign on self-reliance at Bogkoita community in Chanchaga LG of the state:

We have first of all identified that the community has so many potentials in agricultural produce, mostly in yam production, but they are very slow to adopting the modern techniques of farming as well as expanding their market beyond the confine of their community as this is the order of the day. Women can be said to have been relegated to the farming activities too which the team of the campaigners enlightened the community through the Chief that there are other exploits in small-scale businesses that the women can partake and make headways. All our submissions were accepted by the people and they promised to take advantage of it henceforth.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> G Enegwea and G Umoden, NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service, (Lagos: Gabumo Publishing Company LTD, 1993).P59

<sup>11</sup> S T Inuwa, 31, ex-corp member Niger State, Nigerian Defence Academy PG School, 08,03,2021.

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### **Objectives of the NYSC-CDS**

In the quest to prepare the Youth Corps Members to meet the national development aspiration, the scheme had developed a handbook with the CDS operational guidelines titled; "ABC of Community Development Service". The objectives, classification, purpose and activities, funding of projects among others was spelled out as follows;

- I. Impacting positively on the improvement of rural community life.
- II. Developing the spirit of entrepreneurship in the Corps Members.
- III. To utilize the challenges which rural development poses and inculcate in the Nigerian Youth the ideals and capacities for leadership, endurance, selflessness, community service, national service, patriotism, and creativity.
- IV. Exposing Corps Members to diverse traditions and customs of the host communities.
- V. Providing the forum for Corps Members to experiment with ideas and translate them into concrete achievements thereby relying less on foreign technology and encouraging the use of local raw materials in the execution of projects.
- VI. Harnessing the enormous talents and skills of Corps Members into effective machinery of change in our rural communities.
- VII. Providing on-the-job training and experience for Corps Members.
- VIII. Providing complimentary service in our National development activities, by ensuring that our underprivileged population learns basic techniques for self-help through the appropriate technology concept being promoted by NYSC.
- IX. To instill in Corps Members the tradition of the dignity of labour and productivity.
- X. To complement the activities of government at all levels in the stride towards national development.

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### **Classification of CDS**

The CDS component of NYSC is classified into various categories as discussed below (NYSC, 2015):

- I. **Group CDS:** This is the type of CDS activity whereby Corps Members are formed into various groups for various purposes and aims. Corps Members are expected to use one day in a week for this category of CDS and are not expected to attend duties in their Places of Primary Assignment on such days. Such days are dedicated to the execution of projects and programmes that will improve the living conditions of their host communities.
- II. **Personal CDS:** This is the type of CDS activity where individual Corps Members can execute projects/programmes in their host communities based on the community's felt needs. Corps Members are encouraged in addition to the group CDS to look out for areas where they could make an individual impact in the community. It could be construction projects like building toilets, bridges, classrooms, etc., or social/educational projects/programmes such as the establishment of libraries, extramural classes, charity work, vocational training for empowerment of unemployed youths, etc. Where a project/programme requires financial support, Corps Members are encouraged to source funds from other organisations after getting approval from the management of NYSC.
- III. **Collaborative CDS:** The scheme partners with National and Non-Governmental organizations and other establishments to implement development programmes. The Scheme signs MOU with the partners, clearly stating each partner's roles/responsibilities. Corps Members are usually involved as Volunteers in this programme. Collaborators in this type of CDS include Road Safety Group (Federal Road Safety Corps), Reproductive Health & HIV/AIDS Group, Anti-Corruption (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission & Independent Corrupt Practices and others related offenses Commission)

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Group, Service Delivery Group (Attitudinal Change, Re-Branding), Sustainable Development Goals, Medical and Health Services Group (Red Cross, Breast Without Spot, Polio Plus, etc.), Drug-Free and Quality Control Group (National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control, Standards Organisation of Nigeria), etc.<sup>12</sup>

### **Collaborative CDS and Sensitization Campaigns in Nigeria.**

As noted earlier NYSC has entered into collaborations and partnerships with National and Non-Governmental Organisations and other institutions and establishments using Corps members as volunteers in the sensitization of the public in various segments of community development. There are a plethora of these organizations in partnership with NYSC. We shall enumerate some of them, their purpose, and activities. It is in the interest of this chapter to as well engage some Corps members on their various experiences in Community Development Service, their involvement in the sensitization campaign shall also be explored in due course.

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<sup>12</sup> M. Abdullahi, O. Ehiyamen and L. Cheri, Analysis of the Implementation of Community Development Service Projects of National Youth Service Corps: Channels And Hindrances, *Ilorin Journal of Administration and Development*, Vol 2 No, 2, Dec, 2016.p5

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**Table 8.1**

| S/N | CDS GROUPS            | PURPOSE  | ACTIVITIES   |
|-----|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1   | Corps Legal Aid Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free legal services to the less privileged and indigent prison inmates (Victims of denials and violation of rights)</li> <li>• Sensitization of the public on fundamental human rights</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Visit to prisons</li> <li>• Legal service to inmates and indigent persons</li> <li>• Public lecture and awareness on fundamental human rights.</li> </ul> |
| 2   | Sport Group           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates avenue for recreation and healthy rivalry among Corps Members and the community.</li> <li>• Arousing the consciousness of living healthy and purposeful lifestyles through participation in one form of physical activity or the other</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Sports competitions</li> <li>• Identifying and Training members of the Community</li> <li>• Organizing Sports Competitions</li> </ul>                        |

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|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying talents among Corps Members</li></ul>  |  |
| 3 | Cultural  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting arts and Culture</li><li>• Dissemination of vital socio-economic and political problems and prospects.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying talents</li><li>• Entertainment</li><li>• Setting up of the schemes the at regroups</li></ul>  |
| 4 | Educational Development Group (Mass Literacy, Adult Education, Extra Murals, ICT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance the Education Standard of the host community</li><li>• Career guidance and counseling for students</li></ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campaign against Illiteracy</li><li>• Organizing Extramural classes for Adults</li><li>• Organizing ofin school programmes</li></ul>             |
| 5 | Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group (Eco Vanguard, NASREA)              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote</li><li>• To create</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree planting</li><li>• Sanitation</li><li>• Drainage Control</li><li>• Erosion Control</li><li>• Reforestation.</li><li>• Landscaping</li></ul> |

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|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 6 | Editorial/<br>Publicity<br>Group                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliment the activities of the NYSC PRU in disseminating Information to the Community</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a presentation on mass media to enlighten people on socio-cultural education.</li> </ul>   |
| 7 | Road Safety<br>Group                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To contribute to public safety on our roads</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitization and control of traffic</li> <li>• Rendering first aid to accident victims</li> <li>• Establishment of road safety clubs in schools</li> </ul> |
| 8 | Reproductive Health &<br>HIV/ AIDS<br>Group      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To train and mentor Students</li> <li>• To mobilize and strengthen community based responses on HIV/AIDS prevention</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitization</li> </ul>  |
| 9 | Anti-<br>Corruption<br>Group<br>(EFCC &<br>ICPC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help in eradicating corruption through Campaign</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitization</li> <li>• Creation of awareness in schools and organizations</li> <li>• Establish Anti - Corruption Clubs in schools</li> </ul>              |

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|    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
| 10 | Service Delivery Group (Attitudinal Change, Re-Branding)                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sensitization</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Training</li><li>Sensitization</li><li>Group discussions</li></ul>   |
| 11 | SDGs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To create awareness and actualize the goals of SDGs</li></ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Advocacy and Mentoring of the host Community</li></ul>   |
| 12 | Medical and Health Services Group (Red Cross, Breast Without Spot, Polio Plus) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promotion and provision of Medical Services</li></ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Health outreach</li><li>First Aid administration</li><li>Establishment</li><li>Setting up of clinic for the NYSC Secretariat</li></ul> |
| 13 | Drug Free and Quality Control Group (NDLEA, NAFDAC, SON)                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Eradication of fake drugs</li><li>Create awareness of the danger of drug abuse.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establishment of drug free clubs in Schools</li><li>Ensuring linkages with the host communities.</li></ul>                             |

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|    |                                   |   |   |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| 14 | Agro-Allied Group                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support agro allied activities in host communities</li> <li>• To promote better food production and security.</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration farms/Extension Services</li> <li>• Establishment of Farmers Cooperative Societies</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Teaching of new farming techniques</li> <li>• Communities</li> </ul> |
| 15 | Charity Services and Gender Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the living standard of the downtrodden</li> <li>• Charity outreaches to the public</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilize funds and other resources for less privileged</li> <li>• Visits of orphanages &amp;prisons</li> <li>• Donation of materials to homes</li> </ul>   |
| 16 | Disaster Management Group (NEMA)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create awareness on disaster management</li> <li>• To disseminate information on how to manage disasters through Corps Emergency</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public enlightenment on disaster management and control through the emergency Vanguards</li> <li>• Disaster management</li> <li>• Liaison with</li> </ul>  |

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|  |  |            |  |
|--|--|------------|--|
|  |  | Vanguards. | NEMA on how to assist during emergencies<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formation of emergency vanguard club in schools.</li></ul> |
|--|--|------------|--|

**Source:** ABC of Community Development Service, NYSC Community Development Service, and Special Project, 2016.p4

Deducing from the fifth purpose of the NYSC Community Development program which has been to enlighten and educate the public on the operations of the NYSC. They also engaged in the enlightenment campaigns to the public as well as awareness for the national and international organizations in partnership with NYSC. A more coherent view on the significance of enlightenment campaigns in the rural areas was put forward by Enegwea and Umoden thus;

The presence of the Corps members in rural areas, and their involvement in projects within the local community, serves to stimulate greater interest in the NYSC among curious villagers. The presence of the Corps members in their midst allows the villagers to meet, sometimes for the first time, a Nigerian from some other part of the country.<sup>13</sup>

This communication between the youth Corps member and their host communities aided greatly the sensitization campaigns as they required some semblance of synergy to be able to pass any message to the communities. An example of these sensitization campaigns and their impact can be seen as follows.

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<sup>13</sup> G Enegwea and G Umoden, NYSC: Twenty Years of National Service..p.63  
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One of the Community Development Service groups, the Federal Road Safety aims to reach out to the public through the youth Corps members via sensitizations and awareness campaign in the public safety of our roads, basic rules and regulations of traffic, the importance of securing a license, rendering first aid to accident victims, drawing zebra signs as well as the establishment of road safety clubs in secondary schools.<sup>14</sup> Aside from the sensitization campaign which aims to educate the public, they also identify and execute projects in that community that needed to be done especially concerning the FRSC mandate. It may interest you to note that NYSC Corps members under the FRSC CDS group are more actively engaged in the activities of road safety unlike others, they are given uniforms and badges for identification purposes. There is also an allowance in form of stipends although not regularly for the Corps members in appreciation of their participation.<sup>15</sup> Aliyu, an ex- Corps member who served in Katsina has this to say;

At the end of our NYSC engagement in June 2019, we contributed money amongst ourselves to buy some of the basic apparatus required in the first aid kit that we can afford; we took it to a community under Batagarawa Local Government, specifically to the community's primary health care center. We, first of all, wrote a letter to the village head informing him of our intentions to contribute and he approved it. We gathered on a particular date and delivered the items to them. We further used the opportunity to run a blood group test on some selected women and old people by the medical practitioners amongst us. They

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<sup>14</sup>KelechiEgwu, 29,excorper, Bakori Local Government, Katsina, 06/03/2021.

<sup>15</sup>Mohammed Tijjani, 45, NYSC Staff, NYSC State Secretariate Kaduna, 09/03/2021.

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appreciated our gesture and prayed for us to succeed in our future endeavors.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, there is the National Emergency Management Agency CDS which is aimed at sensitizing and embarking on campaigns and outreaches to communities, schools, and market places on disaster management and emergency control. The NYSC through its National Emergency Vanguard CDS have collaborated with NEMA in the area of providing emergency relief and other relief materials that enable victims of a natural disasters such as drought, fire and other forms of disasters. Corps members from the NYSC Emergency Vanguards also embark on sensitive operations like provision of emergency aids to accident and flood victims, and formation of emergency vanguard club in schools. On the NEMA CDS sensitization campaign, Sulaiman opined that;

“during our CDS programmes, we embarked on sensitization and awareness creation to Kalgo community of Birnin Kebbi on emergency ways of controlling fire outbreak, in the process of this sensitization, we go along with fire extinguishers for practical exhibition on ways to quench fire, safety and precautionary measures on how to prevent a fire like the putting off of electricity and electronic devices.”<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, among the NYSC Community Development Service groups, is the Environmental Protection and Sanitation group meant to promote and sustain a healthy environment. Corps members are engaged to create awareness on sustainable environment management and regeneration.<sup>18</sup> Among the activities of the group is tree planting, landscaping, erosion control, sanitization, drainage control among

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<sup>16</sup> Aliyu Dalhatu, 31, Student, UNGUWAN SARKI Kaduna, 02/13/2021.

<sup>17</sup> Bilal Sulaiman, 35, Student, Nigerian Defence Academy, 04/03/2021

<sup>18</sup> ABC of Community Development Service, NYSC Community Development Service and Special Project, 2016.p5

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others. The Corps members according to Tijjani, did not only create awareness, but also actively engaged in sweeping of public places like motor parks, schools, and palaces among others.<sup>19</sup>Yusuf gave an account of his experience on the environmental sensitization campaign:

We carried out sensitization on open defecation in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State. We first of all noticed a problem of open defecation in the Bodesadu community; we interacted with the people through the village head, we found out that, most of the landlords in that community build their houses without a toilet, which necessitated people to defecate outside. Very fortunate to our campaign committee, most of the landlords in question used to attend PTA meetings, in market places, the chief's palace among other places. We were, therefore, able to convince most of them to build toilets.<sup>20</sup>

In the aspect of promoting arts and culture, Ntukogu, who served in Lokoja Local Government of Kogi State noted that "we have two mandates in the Culture and Tourism CDS group. Firstly, we help other groups to disseminate vital information to the public concerning their various mandates. This is so because we have our band subgroup. We organized drama, dancing competition, participate in festive celebrations, if any and so much more. This gives us the ability to gathers a large crowd and use the medium to enlighten them on so many community socio-economic and political development projects. We engage also in the identification of talents among peers in the community. Besides, via entertainment, we were able to sensitize our host community on the importance of preserving their culture and recording account of their traditions and heritage. We organized

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<sup>19</sup> Mohammed Tijjani, 45, NYSC Staff, NYSC State Secretariat Kaduna,  
09/03/2021

<sup>20</sup>Jamiu Yusuf, 30, Lecturer, Nigerian Defence Academy ,Kaduna, 01/03/2021

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carnivals, and set up theatre groups in schools, under which we used to take the students to museums and other cultural sites.<sup>21</sup>

Corruption has for long been an issue of national concern in Nigeria;<sup>22</sup> it deep-rooted into the system which requires adequate attention that includes creation of awareness to the public on the need to eradicate corruption from the society. Part of this effort was seen in the engagement of NYSC members in sensitization campaigns under the Community Development Service group. Ishaq, stressed that "we carried out a sensitization campaign in two forms which include; public sensitization campaign to the public and school based campaigns in Kano State. We reached out to markets motor parks, and roadside business owners among others. The school based campaign targeted secondary school students. We introduced them to the functions of EFCC and ICPC and their statutory roles as citizens in actualizing a corrupt-free society."<sup>23</sup>

Others include the legal aid CDS group. This involves graduates of law and other related professions; they offer free legal service to the downtrodden and less privileged in the community and sensitize them on their fundamental human rights. The group extends their service to the prisons where they advocate for the inmates especially victims of circumstances and violation of human rights. Mass literacy also among the advocacy carried out by Corps members, it involves a campaign against illiteracy and the organization of adult education in their respective host communities. These activities no doubt has over the years helped immensely in reaching out to the public on various aspects of human capacity development.

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<sup>21</sup>OzinnaTochukwuNtukogu, 30, Student, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, 08/02/2021.

<sup>22</sup> O. Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimention Publishers, 1980).p34

<sup>23</sup>AbubakarIshaq, 27, Student, UnguwanDosa Kaduna,09/03/2021

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### **Challenges of Sensitization Campaigns**

One of the challenges faced by the Corps member sensitization campaigns is their language barrier. In most cases, NYSC members used to find it difficult to pass across messages due to language barrier. In rural areas, you are either assigned an interpreter from the natives or you must have learnt to speak the native language. The rural people most times will prefer that messages are passed to them in their traditional language, however, the structure of NYSC does not usually allow Corps members to serve in their states, hence, Corps members have to make do with interpreters. Again, interpreters may not necessarily send the proper messages across.

Another challenge worthy of note is in sufficient time especially while sensitizing school pupils. Normally school hours are pre-design with periods of lessons, resulting in, Corps members being given break hours or Fridays during sports to pass across whichever message they may have.

Additionally, distance is another challenge faced by the Corps members in carrying out sensitization campaigns. In most cases, Corps members experience difficulties in conveying themselves to the rural areas. Unlike the case of some very few groups that used to provide mobility to Corps members, majority allowed the burden on the campaigners.

The financial aspect of the execution of the projects is usually an issue of concern which in some instances Corps members had to tax themselves to be able to buy some writing materials for the pupils in of school sensitization campaigns.

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### **Conclusion**

From the above narrative, therefore, the role of the NYSC Corps members in the sensitization of the public for societal development cannot be overemphasized. The committed effort of the Corps members in impacting the lives of the people especially the rural communities is encouraging, despite the numerous challenges faced as pointed out in the paper. The NYSC Scheme by establishing the Community Development Service CDS as part of the obligatory activities to be carried out by the Corps members can be said to be aware to its responsibilities. Furthermore, the for capacity development projects with international, national, and Non-governmental organizations aided the positive socio-economic contributions of the NYSC members to their various host communities. However, there is a need for more synergy with existing local systems where Corps members carry out their activities. This will solve issues of coordination and language barriers.

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# 9

## **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Campaign for a Drug Free Society: Implications for Counselling**

Usman Bakari

### **Introduction**

One of the primary goals of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) since its establishment in 1973 is to inculcate in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community, and promote unity among all Nigerians.<sup>1</sup> These cannot be achieved if the youths are in deep use of substance abuse. In an effort to curb this menace, the Federal

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nysc.gov.ng/aboutscheme.html>

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government established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1989 to combat the trafficking, production and consumption of substance abuse, which includes illicit drugs in Nigeria. The agency has not yet put a stop to these ugly trends. Hard drugs are commonly found in the country at door steps for sale and consumption. The availability and accessibility encourage youths to experiment with these substances, sometimes in schools or outside the school environments. The researcher has observed that, substance abuse and dependence has become a canker worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the society and affects many youths in Nigeria. It has continued to base a threat to the effective survival of our societies, communities, nations especially, Nigeria. This menace is detrimental to education and the health of our youths.

It is also evident that lives and properties are lost daily, simply because people engage in substance abuse. Behaviours of youths as a result of drug addiction are also associated with various psychological, physiological, emotional, moral and psychosocial problems. It has also led to multiple unhealthy behaviours among youths in Nigeria, such as death from different road accidents, pre-marital sex, unwanted pregnancy, alcoholism, stealing, burglary, armed robbery, kidnapping, raping and many more social vices. This problem has caused many youths to engage in prostitution, cultism and violence, parents, neighbors and thereby resulting in health-related problems like mental disorder and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2016) revealed that, at least 15.3 million persons have drug use disorders in the world<sup>2</sup>. In the same vein, the WHO stated that, in Nigeria, more than twenty-six thousand, two hundred and twenty (26,220) youths die yearly because of drugs,

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<sup>2</sup>World Health Organization, (2016) Facts and figures from [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/facts/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/en/)

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with the percentage of 1.38%<sup>3</sup>. Also, illicit drug use is injurious to young adults. The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has stated that substance abuse is a major problem in schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

It is against this background that the chapter examines the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Campaign for a Drug Free Society: Implications for Counselling.

### **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Community Development Service (CDS)**

Corps members from Drug-Free Clubs do organise public enlightenment campaigns through lectures, debates, seminars, rallies, in schools, motor parks, markets and public squares in their host communities.<sup>5</sup> This is in line with the objectives of the National Youths Service Corps. These activities have impacted positively on the development of rural communities. The objectives are to also, instill in Corps members the tradition of dignity of labour and productivity, to complement the activities of government at all levels in national development.<sup>6</sup> Community Development Service (CDS) group have the mandate to enlighten Nigerians, especially youths on Drug Free society in collaboration with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SAN). These CDS groups were created by NYSC to assist in eradicating fake and adulterated foods and drugs, create awareness on the dangers of drug abuse, to establish drug free clubs in Schools and to ensure linkages with the host Communities. The NYSC initiated, developed and

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<sup>3</sup>World Health Organisation, WHO, (2014). World health rankings live longer live better. Retrieved from <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/country-health-profile/Nigeria>.

<sup>4</sup>Akanbi et al. 2015)

<sup>5</sup> <https://portal.nysc.org.ng/nysc3/Programmes.aspx>

<sup>6</sup>(Abdullahi 2019)

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executed these programmes which resulted in socio-economic development in various communities. These were achieved because the Corps Members were responsible and trained in and outside the orientation camps.<sup>7</sup>

### **Conceptual Clarifications: Substance Abuse**

This concept has been viewed by many researchers differently based on their perceptions or affiliations. A substance is a chemical that alters a person's mood or behavior when it is smoked, injected, drunk, inhaled, snorted<sup>8</sup>, or swallowed in pill form.<sup>9</sup> The WHO defined substance abuse as any harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (e.g. cocaine, amphetamine, cannabis, opium, codeine and so on). In addition, substance abuse is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use occurring within a 12-month period that leads to significant impairment or distress evidenced by one or more of the following: (a) failure to meet obligations, (b) use of substances in physically hazardous situations, (c) legal problems, or (d) interpersonal problems.<sup>10</sup>

In the same vein, Adel Wadie defines substance abuse as a maladaptive pattern of behavior in substance use leading to significant impairment or distress as it manifests by one or more of the following symptoms that occur within a 12-month period: (a) recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major roles or obligations at work, school, or home; (b) recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g. driving an automobile or operating a

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<sup>7</sup>(Abdullahi 2019)

<sup>8</sup> Making air quickly up or down into nose.

<sup>9</sup> Halgin, P.R & Whitbourne, S.K. (2010).Abnormal Psychology: Published by McGraw-Hill, an imprint of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.pp. 392 Sixth edition

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p.2

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machine when impaired by substance use); (c) recurrent substance use relating to legal problems (e.g. arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct); and (d) continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems exacerbated by the effects of the substance (e.g. argument with spouse about consequences of intoxication or physical fights).<sup>11</sup>

In the context of the DSM-IV, substance abuse is a term and criterion for substance-related disorders. Wikipedia (2016) defined a 'drug' as any substance other than food, that when inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed, absorbed via a patch on the skin or dissolved under the tongue causes a physiological change in the body. Folawiyo (1988) scientifically defines drug as any substance other than food, which by its chemical nature, affects the structure or function of the living organism. To a physician, a drug is any substance used as a medicine in the treatment of a physical or mental disease. When used in the context of drug abuse, the term becomes inflammatory. The meaning of a drug becomes social rather than scientific.

Also, according to Kwajafa, a drug is said to be abused when it is not recommended by an authorized medical practitioner, when its use is forbidden by law or it is socially unacceptable or when it is used excessively, even if it is socially accepted substance such as alcohol.<sup>12</sup> Olonode defined substance abuse as the excessive use of drug or use of illegal drugs or use of a drug when it is not prescribed by a medical doctor or when not medically necessary.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) defined drug abuse as drug use that results in the physical, mental, emotional and social impairment of the body organs. A drug is any substance used as medicine or used to cloud

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<sup>11</sup>Adel Wadie (2012) as cited in Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders IV (DSM – IV, 2000),

<sup>12</sup>Kwajafa (1992),

<sup>13</sup>Olonode (2007) as in Baba (2017)

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or change perception in an attempt to blot out reality or escape from disturbing stimulations.<sup>14</sup>

### **Prevalence of Substance Abuse in Nigeria**

Substance abuse is a global public health problem that impacts negatively on health, family, society, educational and professional life. Majority of youths ignorantly depend on one form of substance or the other for various daily activities such as social, educational, political and sport/entertainment. A descriptive study was conducted among 359 rural youths aged 15-35 years. The prevalence of drug abuse was 10% and the most abused drug was Tramadol (52.8%). The result indicated that youth in the study area abuse drugs such as Tramadol.<sup>15</sup> Also, interviews were conducted with 406,17-year-old youth (90% of those eligible),forty-five percent of foster care youth reported using alcohol or illicit drugs within the last six months; 49% had tried drugs sometime during their lifetime and 35% met criteria for a substance use disorder. A diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also predicted increased likelihood of poly substance use and substance abuse disorder<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, substance abuse among youths is fast becoming a global public health concern. A study assessed the prevalence and factors associated with substance abuse in selected public schools in Ogbomoso, South-West Nigeria. 249 participated in the study, the mean age of our respondents was  $16.3 \pm 2SD$ ; 40.0% of them had positive attitude to substance abuse while 21.7% had ever consumed alcoholic drinks. Tramadol was the most commonly abused substance apart from alcohol; reported by 39.0% of the substance abusers. Most (35.5%) of the substance abusers did so believing it could enhance their academic performance.

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<sup>14</sup> According to Silverman (1978) as cited in Mburza (2011)

<sup>15</sup>Gobir et al. 2016

<sup>16</sup>Vaughn et al. 2007

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The proportion of respondents who were substance abusers was significantly higher among students who had not received any formal lectures on the subject at school compared to those who had.(47.5% vs 29.7%; $p=0.023$ ).<sup>17</sup>On the other hand, alcohol is the most widely used substance abuse among youths in Nigeria. Underage drinking poses a serious public health problem in most colleges and despite the health and safety risk, consumption of alcohol is rising. Having recourse to the public health objective on alcohol by the WTO, is to reduce the health burden caused by the harmful use of alcohol, thereby saving live and reducing injuries, binge drinking and the consequences of alcohol consumption.<sup>18</sup>In the light of the foregoing, substance abuse is one of the most common behavioural problems among youths in Nigeria.

### **Substance Abuse Awareness**

Corps members in their CDS that involve host communities, schools, and other public places embarked on enlightening the people on the menace of substance abuse in the country. The need for awareness and sensitisation in curbing substance abuse or misuse among youths in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It is evidently clear that researchers are of the view that, awareness should be created among youths for proper precautions against substance abuse. They suggested that enhanced awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse comorbidity in high-risk, impoverished populations are critical to understanding the mechanisms of substance.<sup>19</sup>

In a study of awareness of substance abuse and other health-related behaviors among preschool children the result shows that, only fifteen per cent among the participants could identify the concept of drug consumption for non-medical purposes, depicted by a girl taking oral

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<sup>17</sup>Idowu et al. 2018)

<sup>18</sup>Adekeye et al., 2019

<sup>19</sup>Khoury et al. 2010

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medication in a psychedelic setting.<sup>20</sup> The media is the major source of awareness and knowledge of substances.<sup>21</sup> Efforts' involving major stakeholders is needed to scale-up campaigns for reducing drug and substance abuse among school children. This can be achieved through raising awareness about the consequences of substance abuse; building capacity to strengthen coping mechanisms to stress and to those presenting with effects resulting from use of these substances and review academic curricula.<sup>22</sup> In a study of Pattern of Substance Abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in a Southwestern Nigerian City, Majority of the respondents were males (60.7%) and within the 16-19 year age group (65.5%). Respondents whose parents are married were 81.4%, while those with divorced/separated parents were 10.5% and those with single parents were 8.1%. Of the 420 interviewed respondents, 372 (88.6%) claimed awareness of existence of substances which can be abused. Majority of respondents had positive attitude towards substance abuse and 87.4% said they will do everything to ensure they discourage a friend from using such substances.<sup>23</sup>

Studies on younger populations have demonstrated a positive association between awareness about substance abuse and their attitudes toward substances. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country with strict laws regarding availability and use of addictive substances. Addictive behaviors tend to be concealed by the users in the Saudi community. However, some studies have revealed that drug abuse is more common in the Saudi community than was previously thought,

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<sup>20</sup>(Tennant, 2019)

<sup>21</sup>(Garechaba, Yohana, and Esther 2017

<sup>22</sup>(Garechaba, Yohana, and Esther 2017). Perceptions of school going adolescents about substance abuse in Ramotswa, Botswana: Journal of Public Health and Epidemiology

<sup>23</sup> Pattern of Substance Abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in a Southwestern Nigerian City: International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities 2013 vol.4 issue 2.

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thus it is necessary to have estimates of existing awareness regarding substance abuse.<sup>24</sup> Drug and substance abuse have been on the increase and this has raised concern among most peers particularly in developing countries, where interventions towards addressing this vice have yielded little results. These vices have led to a number of high-risk behaviours such as engaging in crime, unprotected sexual intercourse, violence, destruction of property and poor academic performance.<sup>25</sup> School teachers, traditional rulers, government agents and youths are the stakeholders that can take the campaign for a drug free society to the next level or greater height.

### **Prevention Strategies of Substance Abuse**

It is the responsibility of the Corps Members to educate themselves on the prevention strategies so that communities around the country can benefit from their services. The purpose of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is to promote the primary prevention and control of drug abuse, which means preventing drug abuse before it starts, and controlling it before it escalates.<sup>26</sup> Recent advances in psychosocial research and neurosciences have provided new avenues for prevention of substance abuse at the individual and community level. A series of risk and protective factors affecting the likelihood of using and abusing substances have been identified. The scope of prevention has been broadened, allowing the prescription of different interventions for individuals according to their varying degrees of vulnerability to substance experimentation, continuous use and dependence. An increased awareness of comorbidity between mental and substance use disorders provides an arena for prevention within psychiatry and related disciplines. The integration of prevention within healthy life style policies and programs, including interventions at the

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<sup>24</sup>(Siddiqui and Salim, 2016)

<sup>25</sup>Kiriru 2018)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/171694.pdf>

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school, family and community levels, is more likely to produce the desired outcomes<sup>27</sup>

### **Substances Commonly Abused by Youths in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has identified six major classes of substances most frequently and commonly abused in Nigeria as follows: Stimulants, Sedatives, Narcotics, Hallucinogens, tranquilizers and miscellaneous. Also, the most common types of abused drugs according to NAFDAC (2000) as cited by<sup>28</sup>) are categorized as follows: -

1. **Stimulants:** These are substances that directly act and stimulate the central nervous system. Users at the initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increase. The major source of these comes from caffeine substance.
2. **Hallucinogens';** these are drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. Thus, producing distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy, they normally come from marijuana, LSD etc.
3. **Narcotics:** These drugs relieve pains, induce sleeping and they are addictive. They are found in heroin, codeine, opium etc.
4. **Sedatives:** These drugs are among the most widely used and abused. This is largely due to the belief that they relieve stress and anxiety, and some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation or help users to forget their problems. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine, chloroform.
5. **Tranquilizers:** They are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness; they are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium etc.

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<sup>27</sup>Medina-Mora 2005)

<sup>28</sup>Haladu (2003

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According to the National Training Manual on Adolescent Reproductive Health, [ARH] (2001) alcohol, coffee, tea, kola nuts, cannabis (Indians Hemp), stimulants (dexamphetamine), anxiety relieving drugs (Valium, Lexotan), narcotics (heroin), cocaine, solvents and hallucinogens are some of the drugs commonly abused in Nigeria. The two commonest drugs abused by adolescents are alcohol and tobacco (cigarette). These are also known as the 'gateway' drugs. The most commonly used substances were codeine (85%), alcohol (75%), cannabis (70%), tramadol (65%), rohypnol (65%), and tobacco (50%)<sup>29</sup>.

| DRUG GROUP  | EFFECTS   | DANGER  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>STIMULANTS</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cocaine (crack, gbana)</li> <li>• Caffeine (coffee)</li> <li>• Nicotine/ Tobacco (cigarette, snuff)</li> <li>• Amphetamines(Chinese Capsule "CC").</li> </ul> | Can cause increase in energy and activity.<br><br>Can suppress hunger.<br><br>Produces a state of excitement, feeling good or a state of euphoria (the intensity of the feeling depends on type of drug e.g., cocaine is stronger than caffeine in coffee). | Sleeplessness/Anxiety<br><br>Irregular heartbeat, Possible heart failure. Over excitement or hypomania.<br><br>Hallucinations, other forms of mental disorders (amphetamine and cocaine can cause Psychosis).<br><br>Recklessness.<br><br>Tolerance and psychological dependence develop quickly. |

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<sup>29</sup> Adekeye et al. 2017)

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|                   |   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>DEPRESSANT</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol (beer,wine,ogogoro Opia-pia, ogura,burukutu,akpet esh).</li> <li>Benzodiazepines (Valium, Lexotan).</li> <li>Barbiturates</li> </ul> | <p>Make a person "feel good" at the beginning. Can cause depressive illness. Slows down body functions. Cause sleep or Drowsiness. Lead to fall in blood pressure, slowing of the heart and respiratory rate. Unconsciousness and even death.</p> | <p>Drowsiness<br/>Uncoordinated behaviour and actions.<br/>Difficulty in operating machines, driving a car, bus, trailer, truck, under the influence of alcohol.<br/>Unconsciousness death.</p>   |
| <b>MARIJUANA</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indian hemp (cannabis, weed, Igbo, ganja, wee-wee, pot, stone, hashish)</li> </ul>   | <p>Alters the way people see, hear, and feel.<br/>Can cause fear or change fear making the user bold and more daring.<br/>Can cause dryness of mouth and throat.<br/>Disorientation.<br/>Confusion.</p>   | <p>Problem of co-ordination.<br/>Long term use can decrease libido, and effect sperm production.<br/>Like cigarette smoking, it can cause damage to the respiratory system especially the lungs.<br/>Can change motivation.<br/>Precipitates mental illness</p> |

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|                  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|
| <b>INHALANTS</b> | Inhaled fumes can cause:<br>-Excitation<br>-Disinhibition<br>-Euphoria | Dizziness<br>Inco-ordination/Unsteady gait<br>Slurred speech<br>Lethargy<br>Tremor<br>Generalized muscle weakness<br>Blurred vision<br>Euphoria<br>Stupor or coma |
| <b>NACORTICS</b> | Can induce nausea, drowsiness and changes in mood                      | Nausea or Vomiting<br>Muscles aches<br>Watering of eyes and running of noses<br>Sweating<br>Chills<br>Diarrhea<br>Yawning<br>Fever<br>Insomnia                    |

**Fig 9.1:** A Table Showing Various Drug Groups, Their effects and Dangers its Posses to Human Health.

Source: Authors Compilation

### Campaign Strategies for a Drug Free Society

The role of NYSC, the parents, mass media, community, home leaders, schools and religious centres in reducing substance abuse cannot be overemphasised. They play vital roles in curbing the menace of

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substance abuse in the country. The campaign should focus on primary prevention for three key reasons.

- a. First, primary prevention targets the underlying causes of drug use, and, therefore, has the greatest potential to reduce the scope of the problem over the long term.
- b. Second, over time a primary prevention campaign will lessen the need for drug treatment services, which are in critically short supply.
- c. And third, a media campaign has greater potential to affirm and reinforce the anti-drug attitudes of youth who are not involved in drug use than to persuade experienced drug users to change their behaviour<sup>30</sup>.

The National Youth Service Corps through its Drug Free CDS group embarks on series of campaigns all over the country on the effect of drug abuse. As noted by NYSC Drug free group Katsina when they staged a walk against the abuse of drugs:

"We enlightened the general public on the dangers of drugs abuse and the different form of threats these drugs pose to health. We also staged a walk between kofar kwaya Round-about and the popular Narto Car Park, where our members addressed both the transporters and passengers on the dangers of the use of illicit drugs"<sup>31</sup>

Mental health and substance use disorders among children, youth, and young adults are major threats to the health and well-being of younger populations which often carry over into adulthood. The costs of treatment for mental health and addictive disorders, which create an

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<sup>30</sup> The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign Communication Strategy Statement:

<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/171694.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> NYSC Drug Free Katsina State, Towards a Drug Free Nigeria Facebook post, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

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enormous burden on the affected individuals, their families, and society, have stimulated increasing interest in prevention practices that can impede the onset or reduce the severity of the disorders. Prevention practices have emerged in a variety of settings, including programs for selected at-risk populations (such as children and youth in the child welfare system), school-based interventions, interventions in primary care settings, and community services designed to address a broad array of mental health needs and populations. Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among young people, reducing risks for mental disorders, focusing special attention on the research based and program experience with younger populations that have emerged since that time. Researchers, such as those involved in prevention science, mental health, education, substance abuse, juvenile justice, health, child and youth development, as well as policy makers involved in state and local mental health, substance abuse, welfare, education, and justice will depend on this updated information on the status of research and suggested directions for the field of mental health and prevention of disorders<sup>32</sup>

### **Treatment for Substance Abuse Using Counselling**

Hope is a vital component of psychological healing and plays a critical role in counselling (Koehn, O'Neill, and Sherry 2012). Substance abuse treatment involves four distinct phases: prevention, detoxification, rehabilitation and relapse prevention<sup>33</sup>. In addition, the four major categories of drug treatment studied by Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study (DATOS) included outpatient methadone programs, long-term residential programmes, outpatient drug-free programs, and short-term inpatient programs. In outpatient methadone programs, clients are given methadone to reduce cravings for heroin and block its effects. They also receive counselling and vocational skills development

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<sup>32</sup>O'Connell, Boat, and Warner, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Williams & Wilkins: Mass Publishing Egypt(1997). Psychiatry.

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to help them rebuild their lives. In long-term residential programs, clients are given continual drug-free treatment in a residential community they share with counsellors and fellow recovering addicts (sometimes called a therapeutic community). In outpatient drug-free programs, a wide range of psychosocial approaches are used, including 12-step programs. In short-term inpatient programs, clients are stabilized medically and then are encouraged to remain abstinent through taking steps to change their lifestyle. The methods used in these treatment formats rely on one or more components of biological treatment combined with psychotherapy and efforts to provide clients with social supports and improvements in their occupational and family functioning.<sup>34</sup>

The efficacy of Psychological techniques, especially Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in managing or changing learned behaviours like attitude, anxiety, phobia, depression, study habits and substance abuse cannot be over exaggerated.<sup>35</sup> Counselling gives curative measures in reducing tendencies, dependencies and abuse of substance among all and sundry. As an expert in counselling industry, proper use of behavioural, cognitive and affective techniques in changing or reducing the menace of substance abuse is of paramount significance. Integrating HIV prevention into substance abuse counselling is recommended to ameliorate the health outcomes of men who have sex with others.<sup>36</sup> Adolescents need effective lifestyle counselling precisely because health problems are so common. Good-quality lifestyle counselling can prevent the problems from becoming

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<sup>34</sup> Halgin, P.R & Whitbourne, S.K. (2010). *Abnormal Psychology*: Published by McGraw-Hill, an imprint of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. pp. 422 Sixth edition

<sup>35</sup> Bakari, U. (2018). Efficacy of a Cognitive Behavioural Programme on Changing Positive Attitudes Towards Substance among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba state Nigeria. A Ph.D. theses submitted to the department of psychology, University of Bahri, Sudan.

<sup>36</sup> (Spector and Pinto 2011)

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worse and decrease the costs of health care. Nurse practitioners in schools are well positioned to promote adolescent health<sup>37</sup>.

A study revealed that, most adolescents (84%) reported that the counselling resources related to school-based health care are quite good for their lives. Most of them reported that nutrition (70%) and physical activity (63%) related to lifestyle counselling are sufficient. Approximately half of adolescents (51%) considered the counselling related to substance abuse as being sufficient. Most (80%) felt that the level of interaction during counselling is good. Overall, the majority of adolescents reported that goal-oriented lifestyle counselling (67%) and adolescent-centred counselling (69%) are good<sup>38</sup> Students(youths) experience various challenges during their studies, such as personal problems, academic difficulties and mental health problems. Counselling centres/units play a valuable role in providing support systems for youths in need.<sup>39</sup> Traditional psychotherapeutic methods also play an important role in recovery for many people with substance related disorders. For some people, inpatient care is necessary at least for a brief duration while they proceed through a process of detoxification; during a period lasting from a few weeks to several months of residential care, some individuals stabilize physically and psychologically by participating in a multimodal program. For many people, outpatient treatment helps them attain their goals, although many psychotherapists strongly recommend that recovering clients also participate in a 12-step program in which they have access to ongoing support on a regular and consistent basis.

The NYSC also embark on counselling in schools. Mostly, counselling focused on the effects of drug abuse and this has helped in great

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<sup>37</sup>Myllymäki, Ruotsalainen, and Kääriäinen 2017)

<sup>38</sup>(Myllymäki, Ruotsalainen, and Kääriäinen 2017). Adolescents' evaluations of the quality of lifestyle counselling in school-based health care: Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences.

<sup>39</sup>Cilliears, Pretorius, and Van der Westhuizen 2011

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measure in curbing the menace of drug abuse among children and even youths. Also, the NYSC under the NYSC drug-free CDS groups have created various anti-drug clubs in secondary schools for sensitizations against the misuse of drugs. Furthermore, the NYSC has visited various rehabilitation centers, engaging in counselling of the already redeemed inmates on the effects of going back into active drugs taking and misuse and its effect on their health.

### **Conclusion**

A Drug is any substance other than food, that when inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed, absorbed via a patch on the skin or dissolved under the tongue causes a physiological change in the body. Substance abuse is categorised into stimulants, inhalants, depressants and hallucinogens. Signs of substance abuse include physical, social, psychological and behavioural signs. Youths abuse substances because of ignorance, inquisitiveness, experiments and to feel comfortable. Counselling techniques can change psychotropic behaviours of substance abusers. Counsellors, psychologists, social workers should intensify efforts by organising seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences for substance abusers, and parents so that the menace of substance abuse can be minimized.

### **Recommendations**

1. New Counselling centres should be created in the country for proper youths' awareness, prevention and rehabilitation of substance abusers.
2. Experts (counsellor, psychiatrists and social workers) should be deployed to those centres to manage youths with substance abuse.
3. Retreat, seminars, workshops, symposia and public lectures should be done consistently for youths' proper adjustment to normal life.

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# 10

## **The NYSC and the Internally Displaced Persons in Northeast Nigeria, c. 2009-2019**

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### **Introduction**

It is a well-known fact that Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of displaced persons in the world and in 2018 accounted for about 10 million internally displaced by conflict and generalised violence.<sup>1</sup> This does not include internal displacement induced by development projects that are regulated by states. Between July and October, 2018 the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) estimated that a

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<sup>1</sup> E. Anuforo, V. Ojubana and B. Alade, “Safeguarding Dignity, Health of Pregnant Teenagers in IDP Camps”, *Daily Newsletter*, 2019, 9.

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total of 7.7 million people were affected by inter-communal conflicts and flooding across the federation.<sup>2</sup> Out of the affected population, 2.1 million people were internally displaced (IDPs) as a result of terrorist activities.<sup>3</sup>

Boko Haram terrorist group has been killing people and destroying homes, leading to the influx of millions of internally displaced persons who have turned Maiduguri and other major cities in the northern region into camps. There are over 1.5 million IDPs that are displaced from the six states in the northeast region of Nigeria who were left with no option than to leave the comfort of their homes to take refuge in major cities as IDPs.<sup>4</sup>

In 2013, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) gave a report that Boko Haram terrorists had forced residents of various communities in the northeast region to take refuge in Maiduguri, Yola, Bauchi, Gombe, Jalingo, Damaturu, Kaduna, Kano and Abuja but as at July 2016, about 1.5 million IDPs are being camped in various public school premises, newly-completed but yet to be commissioned housing estates, as well as among host communities in northeast, and other regions. IDPs largely remain within the boundaries of their nations.<sup>5</sup> It is the sole duty of the federal government and state government to cater for the humanitarian needs of IDPs. International law precludes IDPs from enjoying the same status as refugees. The Protection of IDPs including activities that are meant to ensure that their rights are protected must be clearly defined in all interventions. This includes safety from armed attack; sexual violence; the right to participate in making decisions that affect them; and the fundamental rights of the

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<sup>2</sup>National Emergency Management Agency Annual Report, Abuja: Yaliman Press Ltd, 2013

<sup>3</sup> . Anuforo, V. Ojugbana and B. Alade, “Safeguarding Dignity, Health of Pregnant...9.

<sup>4</sup>National Emergency Management...2013.

<sup>5</sup>National Emergency Management...2013.

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IDPs.<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development which is at the forefront of catering for IDPs in Nigeria is overwhelmed in providing protection to all the displaced by ensuring that; IDPs do not suffer rape and thefts, female IDPs do not resort to prostitution to support themselves, food or non-food items are not stolen from IDP recipients and armed groups do not live or circulate in IDP camps. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme was created with the sole aim of reconciling Nigeria after the civil war assists the government in the protection, counselling, and medical provision for IDPs. It is against this background that this study examines the impact of NYSC in catering for IDPs in the northeast region of Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Internally Displaced Persons**

Internally Displaced Persons under international law are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obligated to flee or to have cause to leave their homes or place of habitual residence in particular, due to or in order to stave off the effect of armed conflict, violations of human rights, situations of generalized violence, natural or manmade disasters, to another place considered relatively safe within their own national borders.<sup>7</sup>

#### **NYSC Surgical Teams**

In this paper, NYSC surgical teams refers to medical doctors, nurses and other medical personnel who are undergoing the compulsory one year

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<sup>6</sup> A. Bilak, *et al*, “Global Report on Internal Displacement”, *Internal Displaced Monitoring Center and Norwegian Refugee Council*, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> T. Ocha, *Guiding Principles on Internally Displacement*, New York: UN, 2003, 89-91.

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NYSC scheme in IDP camps, healthcare facilities in the northeast region of Nigeria.

### **National Youth Service Corps: A Historical Note**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 by the government of General Yakubu Gowon.<sup>8</sup> The historical background of the Scheme is traceable to the events that took place in Nigeria towards the last half of the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> The years 1967-1970 were characterised by the Nigerian civil war. At the end of the war, the General Gowon administration came up with new policies that would promote post-conflict peace, reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Consequently, the vital need for national unity led to the birth of the NYSC. The NYSC programme was established through Decree 24 of 22nd May, 1973.<sup>10</sup> It states that the NYSC is being established with a view to the proper encouragement and development of communities through the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity.

The youth are exposed to the modes of living of the people in different parts of the country with a view to removing prejudices, eliminating ignorance and confirming at first hand the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups. To encourage members of the service Corps to seek at the end of their Corps service, career employment all over the country thus promoting the free movement of labour.

- i. To induce employers, partly through their experience with members of the service Corps, to employ more readily qualified Nigerians irrespective of their states of origin and,

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<sup>8</sup> A. Adedeji, "The National Youth Service Corps: Its Genesis and Formative Years"; in M. M. Owosina, S. O. Ojo, J. A. Ibitoye, J. Yusuf, M. B. Abodunde, Adamolekun and M. F. Kolajo (Eds.) *A Compendium of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme: Ten Years of Service to the Nation*, Lagos: Super Colour Productions, 1983, 18-47

<sup>9</sup> A. Adedeji, "The National Youth Service Corps: Its Genesis and Formative...23.

<sup>10</sup> A. Adedeji, "The National Youth Service Corps: Its Genesis and Formative...23.

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- ii. To enable Nigerian youths to acquire the spirit of self-reliance.<sup>11</sup>

However, the contemporary Nigerian society has witnessed the death of some Corps members in states that they were posted to serve. The violent killings of many Nigerian graduates serving the country in different towns and cities in Nigeria, and particularly the Boko Haram menace in the northeast forced Corps members not to accept posting to the northeast for the mandatory one-year National Youth Service (NYSC) scheme because of insecurity prevailing in the country. Prior to the emergence of insurgency, the northeast region depended largely on the youth service scheme to provide a substantial portion of trained professionals required to run its post-primary schools and primary medical/health centres.

Therefore, the refusal of Corps members to accept postings to the state had created a horrible shortage of qualified personnel, and that has made provision of essential social services even more difficult to run in the state. Schools, offices, and hospitals suffer from Boko Haram attacks every time. The destructions of towns and villages by Boko Haram insurgents had led to the total collapse of social relationships and economic structures that had existed for many years before those towns and villages were attacked and destroyed by the terrorist organization.

### **Boko Haram and Internally Displaced Persons in the Northeast**

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are security and social problems that affect not only Nigeria but the entire world. In Nigeria, has had its share of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs). During the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970, a good number of eastern Nigerians crossed Nigeria's border to become refugees in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, but the majority of south easterners were internally displaced within

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<sup>11</sup> A. Adedeji, "The National Youth Service Corps: Its Genesis and Formative...30.

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Nigeria. More recently, constant ethnic and religious clashes, communal clashes due to boundary disputes, grazing land disputes between farmers and pastoralists and widespread flooding across states in Nigeria which became unprecedented in 2012 have all converged to bring the issue of internal displacement to the front burner of political discourse and federal government policy and consequent appropriation of funds.<sup>12</sup>

The conflict in the North-East of Nigeria arising from the Boko Haram insurgency which emerged in 2009 appears to have triggered the highest displacement of hundreds of thousands of affected victims who have been compelled by the intensity of the conflict (both terrorist attacks and military operations against the terrorists) to flee their homes, businesses and farms, to safer parts of the country. More than 1.76 million people are internally displaced in the North Eastern region of Nigeria. It is estimated that the total number of IDPs in the North East and the North Central Nigeria is over 2 million people, making Nigeria host to the six largest IDP populations in the world.<sup>13</sup> Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States experienced a critical increase in IDPs throughout 2015 and 2016. In February 2015, the number of IDPs displaced as a result of the armed conflict was estimated at 946,000; by October 2016, this figure had risen to an estimated 1.68 million. Of these, the majority are located in Borno State, including approximately 528,000 IDPs in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, and 864,000 IDPs in areas outside of Maiduguri Metropolis, often beyond the reach of humanitarian actors.<sup>14</sup> While 22% of these IDPs are residing in official IDP camps and camp-like settings, the majority are residing within the host community.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> S. Kabiru, “The Nature and Management of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria from 2012-2015”, *Unpublished B.Sc Project, Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2017*, 34-37.

<sup>13</sup> Kabiru, “The Nature and Management of Internally Displaced...37.

<sup>14</sup> S. Kabiru, “The Nature and Management of Internally Displaced...37.

<sup>15</sup> S. Kabiru, “The Nature and Management of Internally Displaced...39.

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From the forgoing, the displaced populations are living in squalid conditions characterized by overcrowding and limited access to safe, sanitary and dignified accommodation. IDPs and returnees in Nigeria hosted in camps and displacement sites are often living in congested shelters or isolated in insecure or inhospitable areas, making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The situation is most precarious in settlements such as camps, displacement sites, and unfinished buildings. The lack of shelter is, therefore, a major and persistent challenge and one of the main barriers to return. Displaced people in the region also face precarious health conditions and have poor access to health services. The health problems they report are mostly related to the change in their living conditions.

In addition, access to food and drinking water, as well as meeting their basic needs, remain problematic for most displaced people, especially in semi-arid regions. Limitations in access, availability, and quality have made water the most significant source of conflict between the displaced and host communities. Severe malnutrition in Nigeria and asylum countries has become more prevalent as the quantity and quality of available food has dramatically decreased. Some 5.2 million people are facing acute food insecurity in north-east Nigeria, an increase of 50 per cent since March 2016.<sup>16</sup> Affected households have had consecutive years of restricted income levels, destruction of assets and livelihoods, and reduced food access, leading to an increase in negative coping strategies in IDP camps.

#### **Effect of the IDP Crisis on Children**

Issues related to children have been the most thoughtful to all civilizations and cultures in human history. In developing countries and societies on the African continent, the coming of children into families

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<sup>16</sup>Adeejat-Kubra, “Towards the Evolution of Legal and Institutional Frameworks for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, Vol. 6, No.5, 2018, 141-153.

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are heralded with elaborate preparations, cultural and religious rituals and ceremonies often occasioned by gifts to the celebrants (families). This is as governments most times institute policies and programs that cater and support pregnant women and thus encourage safe deliveries. The Nigerian society sees children as its glitz, future hopes and strength. Below are some of the predicaments of children as a result of the crisis in the northeast but it is not limited to the following.

### **Child Labour Occasioned by the IDPs Crisis**

Child labour is simply the exploitation of innocent children under 18 years to undertake economic activities like mining and farming among others.<sup>17</sup> It could also be referred to as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of opportunity to attend school as well as impede their growth and development. Education helps to develop the child's personality, talent, and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent, thereby, preparing him/her for an active adult life in the society. Until the child reaches six years, the immediate family members are the main and often the only support system needed to ensure his/her healthy growth and development. According to report, about 5000 children were working illegally in the northeast.<sup>18</sup> This is against the United Nations General Assembly Child Right Act of 1989 Article 32, which asserts that children should not be encouraged in work deemed to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health. The children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), stipulates that child's exploitation is prohibited.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, as a result of the prevailing crisis in the Northeast the plight of children looks grim as they are the most affected by draught, illiteracy, and

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<sup>17</sup> M. Ogege, "Insecurity and Sustainable Development: The Boko Haram Debacle in Nigeria". *American International Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 2 No.7, October, 2013, 5.

<sup>18</sup> M. Ogege, "Insecurity and Sustainable Development: The Boko Haram...5.

<sup>19</sup> Adeejat-Kubra, "Towards the Evolution of Legal and Institutional...135.

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diseases. Poverty is the greatest single force which creates the conditions for the flow of children in the work place.

About 5000 children under 15 years old in the northeast are in formal employment working long hours with poor pay and were exposed to substantial health hazards which highlight the deleterious impact of child labour on the child's physical and emotional wellbeing.<sup>20</sup> What obtains today is that probably, due to poverty, mostly as a result of crisis in the Northeast, parents in IDP camps handover their children to cities dwellers, who must often fail to put them through school, rather using them as unpaid servants or street hawkers.

Reports exist of gory stories of road accidents, inhuman treatment such as chopping of hands, starvation, bathing in oil or hot water on these children by their care givers. Hawking by boys and girls is thus widespread in the northeast and parents clearly recognize that the practice holds dangers for children.

### **Child Begging Occasioned by the IDPs Crisis**

The use of children for street begging is a worldwide problem and commonly seen in the northeast. Child beggars are victims of neglect occasioned by the Boko Haram insurrection in northern Nigeria where the Moslem religion is predominantly practiced and begging is allowed, young boys and girls lead handicapped adults about on the streets to beg. They receive pittance for their services. Apart from this, because many parents believe that good parenting means that children should be brought up strictly and with religious training, most parents in IDP camps in Abuja sends mostly male, but also some female children, to the Koranic Mallams who are versed in teaching the Koran. Many of the Mallams are not educated in the western sense. Some parents, having entrusted their children to these religious teachers, never visit them or

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<sup>20</sup>IDMC, Internal Displacement monitoring Centre, Nigeria: Multiple Displacement Crises over Shadowed by Boko Haram. Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria. December 9, 2014.

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inquire about them subsequently. The Mallams consequently live off the children, sending them onto the streets to beg and to forage for food on refuse dumps. According to report, parents and Mallams were found to be both responsible for the practice. The parents of child beggars were most often physically disabled and destitute, or those who lost their source of livelihood as a result of crisis in the Northeast while the Mallams use the proceeds of beggar children to support their schools. The Mallams often move from city to city and when they die, or if the beggars whom the children help, die, the children reportedly become delinquent street dwellers if male, and prostitutes if female. The children are thus, exposed to health hazards and are ill-cared for, and are destitutes.

### **The Effect of the IDP's Crisis on Women and Children**

Conflict situations across nations are experienced by both men and women differently. Though women do not participate in active hostilities in majority but they overwhelmingly suffer great harm. Feminist scholarship, throughout decades has shown that wars are gendered in their causes and consequences. From the kind of language used by the state leaders, to the policies employed by various armed groups in conflicts, a gendered ideology always remains at work as a consequence of this; women are targeted with various forms of gender-based violence.<sup>21</sup>

For one to understand how women are surviving the conflict, we should be aware of what exactly the challenges of being a woman suffering abuse. There is need to also know the gender specific challenges of surviving a conflict in order to understand how and why it is inevitable to have women on the table when negotiating for peace. For us to find solutions to the gender gap in post-conflict resolutions, the roots of gendered armed conflicts must be explored.

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<sup>21</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, "The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". *Disaster Management Platform*, Abuja, August 2015, 18.

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In order to work towards the possible solutions of the systematic victimization of women during armed conflicts through a gender inclusive path, there is need to look into these patterns of violence and understand how they work. Post-war justice provided by international law through hybrid or ad hoc tribunals is critical but is not the only solution.

As for any conflict in the world, women and children are the worst-hit. Women and children constitute the majority of the internally displaced in any conflict. They are struggling to keep the families together and to provide food and shelter to their children. The problem for them is not only this unforeseen alteration in the conventional gender roles of the society but also gender-based violence in the form of harassment and humiliation. They have lost family members, ran out of money, do not have enough to eat, braving daily threats to their safety and are being forced into isolation for losing all of this.

Most of them have reported being sexually harassed by police and local security guards on the process of running away from conflict zone. Some of them confessed that they were offered help in return for sexual favours. In the absence of formal arrangements to accommodate these unwanted displaced persons, women are forced to live with their children and belongings out in the open sky, braving the harshest of weather, rain, or freezing cold.<sup>22</sup> These women are increasingly falling prey to sexual harassment, exploitation, and sex trade in return for basic aid. From security personnel to charity organizations, the miserable condition of these women is exploited by these fraudulent local people.

The effect of the crisis mentioned above and numerous others left out is that women and children are the most common, helpless and

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<sup>22</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, "The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko...18.

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defenseless victims of conflict, who suffer debilitating long-term consequences. Whilst severe conflict, state failure, civil and ethnic wars increase male mortality due to direct participation, female mortality is a result of indirect armed conflict participation with devastating public health impacts. Women suffer disproportionately due to disability; poor living conditions; malnutrition; sexual disease; pregnancy related diseases and intentional injury” in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. Post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and suicide are among some of the more crippling mental health conditions.<sup>23</sup>

Sexual violence, rape, the ‘burden of caring for others’, which increases in times of conflict, makes women vulnerable and imperils the lives and futures of their children with generational effects. From records, it has been clearly been shown that the Internally Displaced Persons camp that was set up by the government during the crisis was flooded by women and children. Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) estimates that during the last ten years, an estimated 5000 children have also been killed as a result of armed conflicts, while the young survivors have been left traumatized, exploited, wounded, mutilated or disabled.<sup>24</sup>

Separation from parents and the extended family makes children vulnerable to sexual victimization and civilian targets of abduction, and maiming in addition to involuntary enlistment as informant or perpetrator of violent and forced labour. Lack of access to healthcare, basic sanitation, and education has irreversible lifetime consequences.

### **Successes, Challenges and Prospects of NYSC in IDP Camps**

The NYSC is one of the agencies which provide humanitarian support to victims of insurgency in the northeast region. Although several international and national agencies are also catering for the IDPs in the

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<sup>23</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, “The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko...18.

<sup>24</sup>IDMC, Internal Displacement monitoring Centre, Nigeria: Multiple...2014.

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country, the NYSC's apt response machinery to crises was handy and effective in saving hundreds of lives that could have been lost. There is no gainsaying violence in the North-east has affected millions of lives negatively, an estimated population of 2.1 million people are said to have been internally displaced with about 1.8million host population.<sup>25</sup> The humanitarian needs of this population have increased overtime in the Northeast, reason being that, the advancement of the Boko Haram insurgency into the interior cut off healthcare provision and food for the affected communities and IDPs in particular.<sup>26</sup> The result was acute malnutrition both in adult and children.

Starvation and malnutrition both in adult and children due to lack of food became pronounced in the northeast. In furtherance, lack of medical care resulting to diseases and deaths among the displaced people was at an abysmal rate. Thus, it will be just to say that, several humanitarian actors have engaged in interventions that would improve at least the living condition and health of the IDPs. An organization that has significantly matched up to standard with its humanitarian response in the Northeast is the NYSC.

In 2017, the NYSC scheme increased its humanitarian aid response in the North-east and some other parts of the country where communal clashes and urban conflicts were visible. Worthy of note is the relief support materials and provision of food, posting of Corps members to IDP camps to work as counsellors and medical personnel. The NYSC through its Community Development Service (CDS) programme also provided access to clean water and medical care. On several occasions, the Corps members working as counsellors facilitated the restoration of missing or broken family ties caused by the crises in the region. In Borno state for instance, Corps members in partnership with the

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<sup>25</sup> B. Murtala, "Boko Haram Insurgency and Spate of Insecurity in Nigeria: Manifestation of Governance Crises". *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 10, 2015, 24-26.

<sup>26</sup> B. Murtala, "Boko Haram Insurgency and Spate of...26.

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National Emergency Management (NEMA) moved into perilous areas like Sabon Gari, Damboa, Dikwa, Monguno, Gamboru-Ngala and so on where they assisted residents and IDPs with food, medicare and counselling where necessary.<sup>27</sup>

A major concern of the NYSC was to get to the hard-to-reach areas where there was severe food shortage and hunger. Many of these communities missed out on planting season for more than 3 years. It is not an exaggeration that the people remained dependent on hand outs from donor agencies until such a time that their crops are harvested. Worried by the plight, Corps members through CDS provided food rations for three months to 500 IDPs in the Northeast, 3195 IDPs both in the North East received essential household items through the CDS.<sup>28</sup> Like all other sectors of human existence in the northeast, the health sector had its gory story of the Boko Haram attacks on the region. Hospitals and installations were abruptly brought to ruins. Doctors, nurses and other health and medical personnel were killed, while survivors fled into different directions to safer places leading to complete breakdown of the system. The NYSC in response provided support to primary and mobile state health clinics in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa through the regular chain of medical supplies, equipment supply and training of locals by Corps members. NYSC surgical teams also provided cares for the wounded and IDPs in need of emergency surgical care in Borno State Specialist Hospital. A total of 200 patients attended 14 NYSC supported Centre's for primary health care and 6 mobile clinics serving IDPs, returnees and residents in the northeast region. A total of 1000 children were in NYSC supported clinics in the North east, while about 649 children who suffered from acute malnutrition were also treated at the NYSC supported clinics in the

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<sup>27</sup>National Emergency Management Agency, “Federal Government Off Massive Distribution of Relief Materials in States affected by the Insurgency”. September 21,2014, 1-2.

<sup>28</sup>Hamza Suleiman, “NYSC Offers Free Medical Services to 1,000 IDPs in Borno, NN, 29 September, 2020, 11.

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region. A total of 700 wounded patients were treated by the NYSC medical doctors in Maiduguri, out of whom 55 were hospitalized.<sup>29</sup> In a similar effort, NYSC members also provided mental health and psychosocial support to 158 IDPs in the region.<sup>30</sup>

Statistically, only 10% of over 2million IDPs are living in the IDP camps. Most IDPs resides in host communities temporarily.<sup>31</sup>This led to acute shortage and breakdown of infrastructure both at the camps and in the communities due to excessive over-stretching of the existing facilities such as water and sanitation. However, solutions were not far to seek as the NYSC intervened in these areas by improving access to good water and hygiene through the CDS. Consequently, a total of 130,000 returnees in the North east including the Middle Belt were assisted to have access to improved water and their hygiene and sanitation conditions.<sup>32</sup>At inception the armed conflict exacerbated a difficult access to healthcare in the northeast as most parts of the region is underdeveloped. Many clinics and health care centres were in shambles caused by severe attacks and the health personnel fled for safety. The NYSC had to support and collaborate with primary health care centres under the Ministries of Health in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states respectively. NYSC assisted with medicine and also gave technical support for the identification and treatment of diseases. NYSC members who are doctors provided care for the wounded in need of emergency surgical care in the north-east and also trained staff of Nigerian hospitals countrywide to enhance their skills in the treatment and management of wounded patients. Furthermore, the NYSC also provided psychosocial support for trauma-affected victims of the armed conflict, security agents in IDP camps and volunteers assisting

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<sup>29</sup>Hamza Suleiman, “NYSC Offers Free Medical Services to 1,000 IDPs...11.

<sup>30</sup>Hamza Suleiman, “NYSC Offers Free Medical Services to 1,000 IDPs...11.

<sup>31</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, “The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko...18.

<sup>32</sup>Kabiru, “The Nature and Management of Internally Displaced...67.

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them in discharging their duty.<sup>33</sup>The NYSC through Corps members posted to the northeast also provided the following services:

- i. More than 5000 patients, including 1500 children, attended 25 NYSC-supported centres for primary health care and 4 mobile clinics serving the displaced, returnees, and residents in north-eastern Nigeria.
- ii. Over 6000 children were delivered in NYSC-supported clinics. Around 9000 children under five suffering from severe acute malnutrition were treated in NYSC-supported clinics in northeast Nigeria.
- iii. More than 10,000 people affected by the armed conflict and other situations of violence received psychosocial support.<sup>34</sup>

The high numbers of displaced people in the north-east puts a big strain on human basic needs, such as resources like water and sanitation installations. Corps members through CDS upgraded water points and sanitation facilities in displacement camps and affected host communities.

The period of War expose civilians and those who try to give aids as potential target. Providing assistance while protecting the providers is a crucial issue for all stakeholders involved in relief, refugee and human rights work in conflict settings. The increasing numbers of NGOs and their workers has intensified the problems of inadequate security.<sup>35</sup>Corps members working in conflict zones are vulnerable and at times experience real dangers. Although there is very little study or documentation, many sources agree that in recent years there has been an increase in the number and degree of threats to Corps members. There exist a number of reasons for this. Notably, Boko Haram view

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<sup>33</sup> Austin Ajayi, “NYSC to Post Corps Members to IDPs Camps” *Premium Times*, April 28, 2018.

<sup>34</sup>Chuka Francis, “NYSC Offers Free Medical Treatments to 1000 IDPS in Borno” *Daily Times*, 29 May, 2020.

<sup>35</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, “The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko...18.

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Corps members as “soft” targets which can easily be attacked due to their lack of communal links.

Aside security threats which has led to a huge number of IDPs all over the country, it is pertinent to note that there are still security threats within the recognized IDP camps which range from suicide attacks, physical violence, theft, rape, even murder too. The major security threats to IDP camps are discussed further. Physical violence is a major nuisance posing security challenges even within the camps and to Corps members serving there. Such nefarious acts result to injuries and most times to death.

The social conditions of the Corps members tend to get even more dangerous in cases where governments have collapsed and there is no exerted authority which can provide security. Mubi, Gombi in the early 2013 can be used as an example of this, where aggressors frequently attacked banks. In less chaotic situations, Corps members face problems such as inadequate transportation and frequent delays by damaged roads, mines, bandits, snipers, unpredictable travel requirement and checkpoints.

One important factor that is very glaring in Nigeria is cultural and religious diversity. Nigeria is made up of not less than two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups, each with their own peculiar language. Corp members are usually deployed to states other than their own. The only medium of instruction and communication is the English language. Consequently, it is always difficult for Corps members to communicate effectively with the locals especially those in rural areas. This is very common in the northeast – a region which is still finding it very difficult to fully embrace Western education. The IDPs prefer to be taught in Hausa language which is widely spoken in the region.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Muhammad SaniSidi, “The Humanitarian Consequences of the Boko...18.

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Furthermore, Nigeria is roughly divided between a mainly Muslim north and mainly Christian south. So Corps members from one divide who may find themselves in another divide may unknowingly be doing something that insults the sensibilities of their host communities. For instance, Islam is a very conservative religion. Most parents of Islamic faith are deeply opposed to the teaching of sex education to their children. Cases have been established where parents in IDP camps came threatening Corps members because their daughters were reportedly taught how to maintain personal hygiene, including washing of inner wears regularly. This also extends to counselling and the teaching of the reproductive system in a subject like Biology where students are taught the various functions of the reproductive organs.

While language barriers pose challenges on an everyday basis, miscommunication in IDP camps can become fatal. Without adequate strategies and language solutions in place to ensure effective communication, IDPs can lose the incentive to seek the healthcare and counselling they need. IDPs suffering from pain or illness are already anxious, and when patients cannot understand their doctors, errors are more likely to occur. Addressing language barriers are critical for Corps members in providing healthcare services that feels safe, trustworthy, and accommodating to all individuals.<sup>37</sup>

NYSC members often use family members and friends of patients as interpreters in IDP camps, and that can present a series of problems. Such interpreters may lack the appropriate language skills and knowledge of medical terminology. Additionally, such communication compromises confidentiality, censors important information, and jeopardizes family dynamics, especially when children are used to interpret. According to Partida, studies show that the skills of trained interpreters go beyond an ability to speak a language, especially when

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<sup>37</sup>Njadvara Musa, “NYSC gives free Medical Services to 2,000 Borno IDPs, *Guardian Nigeria*, 13 September, 2020.

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technical concepts have no translation in their language.<sup>38</sup> Having Corps members who speak the same language as his or her patients, especially if he or she is of a similar cultural background, can help Corps members serving in IDP camps accomplish the following:

- i. Save time
- ii. Eliminate errors in communication
- iii. Aid proper and effective diagnosis and treatment

Also, bolstering security for Corps members and IDPs: The federal government should deploy more police in IDP camps and its environs; ensure they are better equipped; improve local ties to gather better intelligence; and respond speedily to early warnings and distress calls from Corps members and this will go a long way in making Corps members feel secured.

### **Conclusion**

The Boko Haram insurgency which started in 2009 is a major factor that has led to a massive number of Internally Displaced Persons scattered all over the Northern region. The IDPs were moved from the affected areas to IDP camps so as to avoid further security threats. Interestingly, IDP camps which are supposed to be a place of safety are still challenged by other social vices which pose a threat to the security of the internally displaced persons and Corps members serving there. The major security threats in the IDP camps are physical violence, rape and theft/robbery. Some of these security threats are perpetuated by the officials who are supposed to maintain security and the rights of life for the internally displaced persons. And the major sets of people who are more vulnerable to these threats are Corps members, women and children. Having accessed all these, it is therefore recommended, that safety is not just by building camps but as well putting well-defined

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<sup>38</sup> Ellie Kemp, “Language Barriers in the Humanitarian Response in North-eastern Nigeria” *Crisis Response Group*, 2018, 5.

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measures towards ensuring security even within the camps as the IDPs are also vulnerable to suicide attacks.

Secondly, the principles of taking care of Internally Displaced Persons should be upheld in high regards and responsibility both by the government officials and the IDPs themselves.

Security is everybody's business. This article recommends a stiffer punitive measure for anyone, both the security operatives and the IDPs themselves who engage in any act that threatens the security of Corps members and that of the IDPs. Also, the results of this study have revealed that IDPs have medical problems and counselling needs and the number of Corps members posted to IDP camps and other health facilities in the northeast are not enough to tackle these issues. So much more needs to be done and need to be acted upon very fast so as to avoid other forms of security threats may go beyond the capability of the security personnel.

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11

**The National Youth Service Corps and Disaster Control: A Study of the Activities of the NYSC Emergency Vanguards with NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency)**

Suleiman Bilal Ishaq

**Introduction**

Efforts at fostering community development, and promoting NYSC collaboration with some Federal government specialised agencies have been issues of interest to various actors and stakeholders. Governments at all levels in Nigeria have their specific and perhaps unique policy and conventions of promoting community development activities. Similarly the NYSC has partnered with some government

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agencies through its Community Development Services (CDS) to bring about meaningful changes in the society. To some extent, beneficiary communities have also been contributing significantly to the initiation, execution and management of community development projects/programmes.

Emergencies and Disasters can either be natural or man-made. Floods, earth quakes, tornados; etc are classified as natural disasters since humans have little or no control over their occurrence. On the other hand, flood, explosions, epidemics, chemical/biological weapons, wars, land degradation, deforestation, desertification, wild land fires, loss of biodiversity, land, water and air pollution, climate change, sea level rise and ozone depletion are man-made occurrences since they are direct consequences of human actions and inactions. Natural or man-made disasters have devastating impacts on victims and environment because victims are often ill prepared for it.<sup>1</sup>

The NYSC Emergency Vanguard are a group of NYSC members whose aim is to support the efforts of NEMA in the area of creating awareness on disaster management, disseminating information on how to manage disasters through Corps Emergency Vanguards, Public enlightenment on disaster management and control through the emergency Vanguards, disaster management, cooperating with NEMA on how to assist during emergencies and formation of emergency vanguard club in schools for the purpose of educating the students on how to address emergencies in case of any outbreak.

This study is an attempt to examine the activities of the NYSC emergency vanguards with the NEMA especially in the area of emergency and disaster control. This work is divided into five sections apart from the introduction, the first section focuses on conceptual

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<sup>1</sup> N.E. Anthony etal, “An Overview of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Management In Nigeria: A Study Of Nema” *World Educators Forum: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 1, 2019, 285-306.

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clarifications of terms, the second section focuses on the background to the formation of the NYSC, and the third section focuses on NEMA and its activities, the fourth section focuses on the activities of the NYSC emergency vanguards with the NEMA, the fifth sections examines the challenges faced by Emergency Vanguards in their collaborative activities with NEMA and finally, conclusion. The work found out that despite some challenges impeding the progress of these collaborative efforts between NEMA and the NYSC Emergency Vanguards, they were able to still make meaningful contributions in assisting NEMA and to their host communities.

### Conceptual Clarification

**Disaster Control:** Disaster, also called “calamity” and “catastrophe” is a sudden, devastating event that causes serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society with widespread human, material, economic and/or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own level of resources.<sup>2</sup> It is a multifaceted event, open to a range of different interpretations and though often caused by nature, may also have human origins. The combination of hazards, vulnerability, and inability to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk results in disaster. Traditionally, natural disasters have been seen as situations that create challenges and problems mainly of a humanitarian nature.<sup>3</sup> Disaster control aims to minimize the broad consequences of a disaster and demands full preparedness with regard to organizational readiness, communication, and coordination among all partners; resource availability; and professional engagement.

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<sup>2</sup> P.L. Ingrassia et al. “Education and training initiatives for crisis management in the European Union: a web-based analysis of available programs”. *Prehospital Disaster Medicine* 2014; 29 (2): 115-26.

<sup>3</sup>Ingrassia et al. “Education and training...

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**Emergency Management:** Emergency Management is the actions taken to prepare communities to be less vulnerable and better able to respond to emergencies. It could be organized activities undertaken to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from actual or potential emergencies. It is also, the organization and management of the resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies with the aim to reduce the harmful effects of all hazards.<sup>4</sup>

**Community Development Service:** Community Development Service (CDS) is one of the four (4) Cardinal Programmes of NYSC in which corps members contribute positively to the development of their host communities throughout the period of national service. Since its creation in 1973, the National Youth Service Corps has been making great contributions in the social, political and economic transformation of the nation. In recent times, the scheme has been in the vanguard of the nation's drive to correct the imbalance in our rural-urban development through the various community development programmes executed by corps members. These programmes have revolutionized our communities in the areas of education, health care delivery, agriculture, communication, infrastructure, technology, economic empowerment, poverty eradication, social services and above all national consciousness and socio-cultural regeneration.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Background to the Establishment of NEMA**

Successive Nigerian Governments have promulgated laws and created policies to establish institutions or organizations that will impact the citizens positively. These institutions or organisations focused on establishing agencies for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of

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<sup>4</sup> “The United Nations Office of Disasters Risk Reduction” accessed 8/3/2021  
<https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/47804>

<sup>5</sup>“ABC” of Community Development Service” NYSC, NDHQ Abuja, October 2014.

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victims who have been affected by natural or artificial disasters like windstorm, communal clash, fire disaster etc. What the government seek to achieve in establishing these agencies are stated in their broad objectives in relation to economic development which ultimately leads to the increase in the welfare of the people. Organised disaster management in Nigeria dates back to 1906, when the Fire Brigade was established with a mandate of fire fighting and other supplementary services during emergencies. This approach was however replaced with informal arrangements domiciled in the offices of the then Head of State and State Governors, as disaster response was considered a serious national issue. This arrangement continued until 1972/1973, when the country got hit with a devastating drought. The drought had negative socio-economic repercussions and there was loss of lives and properties, a development that led to the establishment of the National Emergency Relief Agency (NERA) in 1976. NERA's main activity was the collection and distribution of relief materials to disaster victims. Considering the limited scope of the Agency, the government in 1993 decided to expand its scope to include all areas of disasters. This was backed up with decree 199 of 1993, which raised the status of the agency to an independent body under the Presidency as a unit in the Secretary to the Government of the Federation's Office. NERA later became National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) established through Act 12 (as amended) by Act 50 of 1999 as an agency supervised by the Presidency and is responsible for managing disasters in Nigeria. In addition to a new vision to build a culture of preparedness, prevention, response and community resilience to disaster in Nigeria, that were previously not captured by NERA.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). “Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry.”

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NEMA's mission is basically to co-ordinate resources towards efficient and effective disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and responses in the country. The occurrence of disaster often calls for the support of both national and international organisations especially, as far as the provision of relief materials is concerned. Consequently, disaster relief remains extremely important in disaster management. However, this approach alone does not proactively address the need to reduce the human and environmental impact of future disaster. Recent approaches in the area of disaster management are indicative of the need for a new paradigm that focuses on reducing the risk of disasters, with the involvement and participation of communities in the management of disaster effects. This emerging paradigm opines those countries objectives and the results or outcomes, that is, when the desired result on the target beneficiaries are not achieved, lack adequate resources funding and other infrastructures such as working equipment and good communication system. They have issues of getting approval for relief interventions by the presidency as well as lack of political will by the ruling party during each civilian era. These are some of the problems militating against the implementation of disaster management by the National Emergency Management Agency<sup>7</sup>.

### **The National Emergency Management Agency: Functions and Structural organisation**

The National Emergency Management Agency aims to coordinate resources towards efficient and effective disaster prevention, preparation, mitigation and response in Nigeria. They are also focused on building a culture of preparedness, prevention, and response and community resilience to disaster in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>N.E. Anthony etal, “An Overview of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Management In Nigeria: A Study Of Nema” *World Educators Forum: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 1, 2019, 285-306.

<sup>8</sup> “NEMA”<http://nema.gov.ng/2131-2/> Accessed on the 14/3/21 at 11:26am

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The activity of NEMA includes:

- Collating data from relevant agencies so as to enhance forecasting, planning and field operation of disaster management;
- Educating and informing the public on disaster prevention and control measures;
- Co-ordinating and facilitating the provision of necessary resources for search and rescue and other types of disaster curtailment activities in response to distress call;
- Co-ordinating the activities of all voluntary organizations engaged in emergency relief operations in any part of the Federation;
- Receiving financial and technical aid from international organizations and nongovernmental agencies for the purpose of disaster management in Nigeria;
- Collecting emergency relief supply from local, foreign sources, including international and non-governmental agencies;
- Distributing emergency relief materials to victims of natural or other disasters and to assist in the rehabilitation of the victims where necessary;
- Liaising with State Emergency Management committees established under section 8 of this Act to assess and monitor where necessary, the distribution of relief materials to disaster victims;
- Processing relief assistance to such countries as may be determined from time to time;
- Liaising with the United Nations Disaster Reduction Organization or such other international bodies for the reduction of natural and other disasters;
- Preparing the annual budget for disaster management in Nigeria; and;

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- Performing such other functions which in the opinion of the Agency are required for the purpose of achieving its objectives under this Act.<sup>9</sup>

**National Disaster Management Framework:** The National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF) is a document developed to serve as a regulatory guideline for effective and efficient disaster management in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup> The framework has the following regulations:

- It framework defines measurable, flexible and adaptable coordinating structures, and aligns key roles and responsibilities of disaster management stakeholders across the nation.
- It describes specific authorities and best practices for managing disasters.
- It explains a paradigm shift from response and recovery in disaster management to disaster risk reduction.
- It offers a holistic approach to disaster management and serves as a legal instrument to address the need for consistency among multiple stakeholders.
- It is a coherent, transparent and inclusive policy for disaster management in Nigeria.
- All Relevant disaster management stakeholders can use this document as justification for organisational preparedness using the roles that have been assigned to them in it.
- The plan ensures that all sectors in humanitarian responses such as Camp Management, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Basic Education, Food and Nutrition, Logistics, Telecommunication and Security are addressed.

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<sup>9</sup>“NEMA”<http://nema.gov.ng/2131-2/> Accessed on the 14/3/21 at 11:26am

<sup>10</sup>N.E. Anthony etal, “An Overview of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Management In Nigeria: A Study Of Nema” *World Educators Forum: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 1, 2019, 285-306.

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- It also serves as a link between National, Regional and International humanitarian actors. The National Disaster Management Framework is a foundation upon which all plans, policies, programmes and procedures for disaster management is created, developed or sustained. The framework was developed to look at the following: Institutional Capacity, Coordination mechanisms, Disaster Risk Assessment, Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Prevention, Preparedness/Mitigation, Disaster Rehabilitation, and Facilitators<sup>11</sup>.

### **Primary and Secondary Emergency Response Institutions in Nigeria**

Although these are agencies/ institutions that could respond in cases of emergencies, but NEMA is at the centre point of coordinating emergencies response disaster management in Nigeria these are:

- Nigeria Police Force (NPF)
- Federal Fire Service (FFS)
- Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC)
- Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)
- Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRSC)
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
- Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA)
- Nigeria Maritime and safety administration (NIMASA)
- Nigerian Inland Water Ways (NIWA)
- Directorate of Road Transport Services (DRTS/VIOs)
- Private Construction Companies
- International Development Partners (NGOs)
- Federal/ State Ministry of Health (FMOH)
- Federal/ State Ministry of Environment (F/SMEnv)
- Federal/ State Ministry of Works (F/SMOW)

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<sup>11</sup>“NEMA@10: The Story So Far”

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- Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA)
- Federal Ministry of Transport (FMOT)
- Federal Ministry of Aviation (FMOAvi)
- Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN)
- Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS)
- Nigerian Customs Service (NCS)
- Nigerian Prison Service (NPS)
- Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB)
- Military (Army, Navy, Air Force) – Disaster Response Units (DRUs).<sup>12</sup>

#### **Activities of the NYSC Emergency Vanguards with the NEMA.**

Disaster management has always been misconceived to be responsibilities of government alone. But disasters directly affect people and communities. Therefore it calls for the active participation of Emergency Vanguards. The idea of inculcating the Emergency Vanguards into the trend of activities of NEMA was conceived out of the desire to ensure greater participation of the Vanguards in the management of disasters in their locations especially where they are actively engaged in their community service. Their activity ranges from training of the people in basic principles of disaster management and precautionary measures in curtailing spread of epidemics, natural and man-made emergencies.<sup>13</sup>

The review of various documents studied revealed that NEMA over the years has some milestone achievements to its credit, especially in the area of effective and efficient coordination, cooperation and communication on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Disaster Management even under the coordination of NEMA. It is almost

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<sup>12</sup> N.E. Anthony etal, “An Overview of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Management In Nigeria: A Study Of Nema” *World Educators Forum: An International Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 1, 2019, 285-306.

<sup>13</sup> B.R. Lindsay, “Federal Emergency Management: A Brief Introduction”. Media Briefing by an Analyst in American National Government., 2012.

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impossible to quantify and qualify the numerous achievements recorded since the establishment of NEMA. However, information put out on NEMA's press release and retrieved in 2016 highlights some significant landmarks from the gains of its various structures. These are in line with the given mandates of the agency. As part of its achievement, NEMA has been able to engage volunteers and collaborators in carrying out its activities, among these volunteers are: the NYSC-Emergency Management Vanguards, which was earlier discussed, the Grassroots Emergency Volunteers, Executive Volunteer and Stakeholder Collaborators. For the purpose of this study, we shall focus on the NYSC-Emergency Vanguards.<sup>14</sup>

The creation of the Emergency Management Vanguards (EMVs) by the National Emergency Management agency was aimed at using NYSC Corps members as vanguards for a standardised proactive Disaster Management nationwide. Disaster response activities are not solely the work of experts and emergency responders from government disaster management organisation alone, local volunteers, organisations, business concerns and citizens have active roles to play. The rationale behind this being that disasters most often happen at local communities and so it becomes most imperative to train young men and women at the grass roots to respond promptly before any national assistance. Reports have shown that the NYSC Emergency Vanguards were very useful in awareness creation, early warnings and information dissemination. Their activities have helped greatly in overcoming a number of disasters. It is desirable to expand and sustain these activities by involving more youth volunteer organizations.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"NEMA" <http://nema.gov.ng/2131-2/> Accessed 14/3/21..

<sup>15</sup>"NEMA" <http://nema.gov.ng/2131-2/> Accessed 14/3/21.

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The activities of the NYSC Emergency Vanguards with the National Emergency Management Agency include the following:

**Public enlightenment on disaster management and control through the emergency Vanguards:** The functions of the agency cover creating awareness on disasters, as such, NEMA has been very active in mounting campaigns over periodic disasters management through the Emergency Vanguards disasters such as epidemics, fire outbreak, drought etc. Each raining season, NEMA, with the Emergency Vanguards embarks on the creation of awareness on the dangers of flood by sensitizing the people on what they need to know about the hazards, preventive measures and how to cope with the risk when prevention is impossible. In recognition of the pertinent role played by the Emergency Vanguards, the Agency sensitizes them too on the need to embark on campaigns in their respective community service areas. NEMA has always been on hand to support with expertise guidance and participation.<sup>16</sup>

**Disaster management and Liaison with NEMA on how to assist during emergencies**

The Emergency Vanguards embark on disaster management with NEMA for the rehabilitation of disaster victims. The agency has engaged in the rehabilitation of communities affected and continuously threatened by disasters. This they do with the aid of Emergency Vanguards. A case in point is the collaboration with the Emergency Vanguards to rehabilitate the Agwagune community in Biaffe LGA of Cross River State. The victims were provided with a total of 400 houses.<sup>17</sup> Also, the agency, in distributing relief materials to bring succor to victims of various disasters in the country mostly embark on the exercise with the Emergency Vanguards, a case in point is the aid

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<sup>16</sup>Abdullahi Musa, NYSC official, 45+, Interviewed at NYSC secretariat, 10/03/2021

<sup>17</sup>ChibozorOkeke, ex-corps member 31+, Interviewed at U/romi, 10/3/2021.

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distribution to the victims ravaged by flooding that took place at the premises of Lamido Dakingari palace, Dakingari town, in Suru Local Government Area Kebbi State where relief materials were distributed to victims. During this exercise, corps members and the State Emergency Management Agency officials were primarily in charge of the distribution process in the area.<sup>18</sup> There is virtually no significant disaster that can be said to have overwhelmed the agency's capability or resources. It is worthy of note to state that with the establishment of the zonal offices in 2006, the agency commenced an intense and direct distribution of relief materials to victims with the active collaboration of the states and other stakeholders like the NYSC Emergency Vanguards.

#### **Formation of Emergency Vanguard Club in Schools.**

The NYSC Emergency Vanguard in collaboration with NEMA carry out sensitization campaigns in schools and overtime have created clubs in various schools. These clubs hold their activities and sensitisations weekends. That is the clubs usually hold its meeting and activities on Fridays. The major purpose of creating these clubs is not only for secondary school students to advocate for safety and emergency control within the school but to also carry their campaign out to their immediate environment. The NYSC Emergency Vanguard and staffs of NEMA visit these school clubs mostly at two weeks intervals to train and retrain them on the essence of carrying out sensitization and in their schools and even occasional outings to their immediate environment.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> AbubakarIliyasu, ex-corps member, 33+, Interviewed at T/Wada, 10/3/2021.

<sup>19</sup> AbubakarIliyasu, ex-corps member, 33+, Interviewed at T/Wada, 10/3/2021.

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### **Challenges of Disaster Control**

Below are some of the challenges, constituting a bane to effective and efficient emergency and disaster management or control especially as it affects the role of NYSC as a partner agency to NEMA:

- **Organizational Pride/ego/personality:** Depending on the personality at the helms of affair, in some cases, NEMA sidelines and declines the offers of Emergency Vanguards, especially in the area of embarking on field works.
- **Hidden agenda:** Hidden Agenda displayed by some of the officials of the agency has also impede the progress of the activities of these collaborative agencies especially the Emergency Vanguards, as it was reported that, unlike what is obtainable with the NYSC road safety groups, where the corps members are actively engaged in the activities of the road safety corps, the Emergency Vanguards only participate passively in the core activities of NEMA. This has been attributed to the attitudes of the NEMA officials and their hidden agenda.
- **Mistrust or lack of confidence in coordinators:** It has been noted that the issue of mistrust and lack of confidence among the agencies staffs especially the coordinators has greatly impede the success of the efforts of the Emergency Vanguards and NEMA
- **Inadequate top-level (leadership) support:** The issue of support and encouragement from the agency is another factor that has slowed the performance and active engagement of the Emergency Vanguards in the activities of NEMA. The lack of moral and financial support (although optional) from the leadership of the agency also lowers the morale of the corps members to engage in their activities.
- **Funding:** The issue of funding is another challenge, as these Vanguards only rely on their monthly stipends and weekly

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contributions at CDS meetings in order to raise funds that will enable them to embark on sensitization campaigns.<sup>20</sup>

### **Conclusion**

It is evident from the above that the NYSC Emergency Vanguards, even though grappling with some challenges, were able to contribute meaningfully in the area of disaster control and has assisted the NEMA in carrying out some of its major functions. This is a great achievement for the Vanguard and the scheme entirely. By doing this also, the Vanguards have helped to contribute to the development of their various host communities through sensitization and routine campaign on safety measures and emergency steps on fire outbreak. This work has been able to examine some of the activities of NEMA and how the Emergency Vanguards have been able to key into some of the programmes of NEMA, the work also discussed some of the challenges faced by Emergency Vanguards in their collaborative efforts with NEMA. The work concludes by noting that even though there were some challenges impeding the progress of these collaborative efforts between NEMA and the NYSC Emergency Vanguards, they still were able to make meaningful contributions in assisting NEMA and their host communities.

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<sup>20</sup>AbubakarIliyasu, ex-corps member, 33+, Interviewed at T/Wada, 10/3/2021.

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**National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the  
Campaign for a Drug Free Society: Implications for  
Counselling**

Usman Bakari

**Introduction**

One of the primary goals of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) since its establishment in 1973 is to inculcate in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community, and to emphasise the spirit of oneness among all Nigerians, irrespective of cultural or social background.<sup>1</sup> These cannot be achieved if the youths are in deep use of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nysc.gov.ng/aboutscheme.html>

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substance abuse. In an effort to curb this menace, the Federal government established the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in 1989 to combat the trafficking, production and consumption of substance abuse, which includes illicit drugs in Nigeria. The agency has not yet put a stop to these ugly trends. Hard drugs are commonly found in the country at door steps for sale and consumption. The availability and encourage youths to experiment with these substances, sometimes in schools or outside the school environments. The researcher has observed that, substance abuse and dependence have become a canker-worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the society and affects many youths in Nigeria. It has continued to create a threat to the effective survival of our societies, communities, nations especially, Nigeria. This menace is detrimental to education and the health of our youths.

It is also evident that lives and properties are lost daily, simply because people do engage in substance abuse. Behaviours of youths as a result of drug addiction are also associated with various psychological, physiological, emotional, moral and psychosocial problems. It has also led to multiple unhealthy behaviours among youths in Nigeria, such as death from different road accidents, hired killers, pre-marital sex, unwanted pregnancy, alcoholism, stealing, burglary, armed robbery, kidnapping, raping and many more social vices. This problem has caused many youths especially corps members to drop out of the national assignment, engage in prostitution, cultism and violence, parents, neighbors and thereby resulting in health-related problems like mental disorder and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2016) revealed that, at least 15.3 million persons have drug use disorders in the world<sup>2</sup>. In the same vein, the WHO stated that, in Nigeria, more than twenty-six thousand,

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<sup>2</sup>World Health Organization, (2016) Facts and figures from [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/facts/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/en/)

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two hundred and twenty (26,220) youths die yearly because of drugs, with the percentage of 1.38%<sup>3</sup>. Also, illicit drug use is injurious to young adults. The Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has stated that substance abuse is a major problem in schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

It is against this background that the chapter examines the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Campaign for a Drug Free Society: Implications for Counselling.

### **National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Community Development Service (CDS)**

Corps members from Drug-Free Clubs do organise public enlightenment campaigns through lectures, debates, seminars, rallies, in schools, motor parks, markets and public squares in their host communities.<sup>5</sup> This is the heart of the objectives of the National Youths Service Corps to communities in Nigeria. These activities have impacted positively on the improvement of rural community life and development of their minds towards entrepreneurship. The objectives are to also, instill in Corps members the tradition of dignity of labour and productivity, to complement the activities of government at all levels in the stride towards national development.<sup>6</sup> Community Development Service (CDS) group have the mandate to enlighten Nigerians, especially youths on Drug Free society in collaboration with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SAN). These CDS groups were created by NYSC to eradicate fake and adulterated foods and drugs, create awareness on

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<sup>3</sup>World Health Organisation, WHO, (2014). World health rankings live longer live better. Retrieved from <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/country-health-profile/Nigeria>.

<sup>4</sup>Akanbi et al. 2015)

<sup>5</sup> <https://portal.nysc.org.ng/nysc3/Programmes.aspx>

<sup>6</sup>(Abdullahi 2019)

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the dangers of drug abuse, to establish drug free clubs in Schools and to ensure linkages with the host Communities. These laudable objectives cannot be achieved if the youths (corps members) are indulging in substance abuse, misuse or dependence. The NYSC initiated, developed and executed these programmes which resulted in socio-economic development in various communities. These were achieved because the Corps Members were responsible and trained in and outside the orientation camps.<sup>7</sup>

### **Conceptual Clarifications: Substance Abuse**

This concept has been viewed by many researchers differently based on their perceptions or affiliations. A substance is a chemical that alters a person's mood or behavior when it is smoked, injected, drunk, inhaled, snorted<sup>8</sup>, or swallowed in pill form.<sup>9</sup>The WHO defined substance abuse as any harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs (e.g. cocaine, amphetamine, cannabis, opium, codeine and so on). In addition, substance abuse is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use occurring within a 12-month period that leads to significant impairment or distress evidenced by one or more of the following: (a) failure to meet obligations, (b) use of substances in physically hazardous situations, (c) legal problems, or (d) interpersonal problems.<sup>10</sup>

In the same vein, the Adel Wadie defines substance abuse as a maladaptive pattern of behavior in substance use leading to significant impairment or distress as it manifests by one or more of the following

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<sup>7</sup>(Abdullahi 2019)

<sup>8</sup> Making air quickly up or down into nose.

<sup>9</sup> Halgin, P.R & Whitbourne, S.K. (2010).Abnormal Psychology: Published by McGraw-Hill, an imprint of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.pp. 392 Sixth edition

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p.2

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symptoms that occur within a 12-month period: (a) recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major roles or obligations at work, school, or home; (b) recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g. driving an automobile or operating a machine when impaired by substance use); (c) recurrent substance use relating to legal problems (e.g. arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct); and (d) continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems exacerbated by the effects of the substance (e.g. argument with spouse about consequences of intoxication or physical fights).<sup>11</sup>

In the context of the DSM-IV, substance abuse is a term and criterion for substance-related disorders. Wikipedia (2016) defined a 'drug' as any substance other than food, that when inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed, absorbed via a patch on the skin or dissolved under the tongue causes a physiological change in the body. Folawiyo (1988) scientifically defines drug as any substance other than food, which by its chemical nature, affects the structure or function of the living organism. To a physician, a drug is any substance used as a medicine in the treatment of a physical or mental disease. When used in the context of drug abuse, the term becomes inflammatory. The meaning of a drug becomes social rather than scientific.

Also, according to Kwajafa, a drug is said to be abused when it is not recommended by an authorized medical practitioner, when its use is forbidden by law or it is socially unacceptable or when it is used excessively, even if it is socially accepted substance such as alcohol.<sup>12</sup> Olonode defined substance abuse as the excessive use of drug or use of illegal drugs or use of a drug when it is not prescribed by a medical doctor or when not medically necessary.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the National

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<sup>11</sup> Adel Wadie (2012) as cited in Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders IV (DSM – IV, 2000),

<sup>12</sup> Kwajafa (1992),

<sup>13</sup> Olonode (2007) as in Baba (2017)

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Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) defined drug abuse as drug use that results in the physical, mental, emotional and social impairment of the body organs. A drug is any substance used as medicine or used to cloud or change perception in an attempt to blot out reality or escape from disturbing stimulations.<sup>14</sup>

### **Prevalence of Substance Abuse in Nigeria**

Substance abuse is a global public health problem that impacts negatively on health, family, society, educational and professional life. Majority of youths ignorantly depend on one form of substance or the other for various daily activities such as social, educational, political and sport/entertainment. A descriptive study was conducted among 359 rural youths aged 15-35 years. The prevalence of drug abuse was 10% and the most abused drug was Tramadol (52.8%). The result indicated that youth in the study area abuse drugs such as Tramadol.<sup>15</sup> Also, interviews were conducted with 406,17-year-old youth (90% of those eligible),forty-five percent of foster care youth reported using alcohol or illicit drugs within the last six months; 49% had tried drugs sometime during their lifetime and 35% met criteria for a substance use disorder. A diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also predicted increased likelihood of poly substance use and substance abuse disorder<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, substance abuse among youths is fast becoming a global public health concern. A study assessed the prevalence and factors associated with substance abuse in selected public schools in Ogbomoso, South-West Nigeria. 249 participated in the study, the mean age of our respondents was  $16.3 \pm 2SD$ ; 40.0% of them had positive attitude to substance abuse while 21.7% had ever consumed alcoholic drinks. Tramadol was the most commonly abused substance apart from

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<sup>14</sup> According to Silverman (1978) as cited in Mburza (2011)

<sup>15</sup>Gobir et al. 2016

<sup>16</sup>Vaughn et al. 2007

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alcohol; reported by 39.0% of the substance abusers. Most (35.5%) of the substance abusers did so believing it could enhance their academic performance.

The proportion of respondents who were substance abusers was significantly higher among students who had not received any formal lectures on the subject at school compared to those who had.(47.5% vs 29.7%; $p=0.023$ ).<sup>17</sup>On the other hand, alcohol is the most widely used substance abuse among youths in Nigeria. Underage drinking poses a serious public health problem in most colleges and despite the health and safety risk, consumption of alcohol is rising. Having recourse to the public health objective on alcohol by the WTO, is to reduce the health burden caused by the harmful use of alcohol, thereby saving live and reducing injuries, binge drinking and the consequences of alcohol consumption.<sup>18</sup>In the light of the foregoing, substance abuse is one of the most common behavioural problems among youths in Nigeria.

### **Substance Abuse Awareness**

Corps members in their CDS that involve host communities, schools, and other public places embarked on enlightening the people on the menace of substance abuse in the country. The need for awareness and sensitisation in curbing substance abuse or misuse among youths in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It is evidently clear that researchers are of the view that, awareness should be created among youths for proper precautions against substance abuse. They suggested that enhanced awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and substance abuse comorbidity in high-risk, impoverished populations are critical to understanding the mechanisms of substance.<sup>19</sup>

In a study of awareness of substance abuse and other health-related behaviors among preschool children the result shows that, only fifteen

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<sup>17</sup>Idowu et al. 2018)

<sup>18</sup>Adekeye et al., 2019

<sup>19</sup>Khoury et al. 2010

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per cent among the participants could identify the concept of drug consumption for non-medical purposes, depicted by a girl taking oral medication in a psychedelic setting.<sup>20</sup>The media is the major source of awareness and knowledge of substances.<sup>21</sup> Efforts needed involving major stakeholders is needed to scale-up campaigns for reducing drug and substance abuse among school children. This can be achieved through raising awareness about the consequences of substance abuse; building capacity to strengthen coping mechanisms to stress and to those presenting with effects resulting from use of these substances and review academic curricula.<sup>22</sup> In a study of Pattern of Substance Abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in a Southwestern Nigerian City, Majority of the respondents were males (60.7%) and within the 16-19 year age group (65.5%). Respondents whose parents are married were 81.4%, while those with divorced/separated parents were 10.5% and those with single parents were 8.1%. Of the 420 interviewed respondents, 372 (88.6%) claimed awareness of existence of substances which can be abused. Majority of respondents had positive attitude towards substance abuse and 87.4% said they will do everything to ensure they discourage a friend from using such substances.<sup>23</sup>

Studies on younger populations have demonstrated a positive association between awareness about substance abuse and their attitudes toward substances. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country with strict laws regarding availability and use of addictive substances. Addictive behaviors tend to be concealed by the users in the Saudi

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<sup>20</sup>(Tennant, 2019)

<sup>21</sup>(Garechaba, Yohana, and Esther 2017

<sup>22</sup>(Garechaba, Yohana, and Esther 2017). Perceptions of school going adolescents about substance abuse in Ramotswa, Botswana: Journal of Public Health and Epidemiology

<sup>23</sup> Pattern of Substance Abuse among Senior Secondary School Students in a Southwestern Nigerian City: International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities 2013 vol.4 issue 2.

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community. However, some studies have revealed that drug abuse is more common in the Saudi community than was previously thought, thus it is necessary to have estimates of existing awareness regarding substance abuse.<sup>24</sup> Drug and substance abuse have been on the increase and this has raised concern among most peers particularly in developing countries, where interventions towards addressing this vice have yielded little results. These vices have led to a number of high-risk behaviours such as engaging in crime, unprotected sexual intercourse, violence, destruction of property and poor academic performance.<sup>25</sup> School teachers, traditional rulers, government agents and youths are the stakeholders that can take the campaign for a drug free society to the next level or greater height.

### **Prevention Strategies of Substance Abuse**

It is the responsibility of the Corps Members to educate themselves on the prevention strategies so that communities around the country can benefit from their services. The purpose of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is to promote the primary prevention and control of drug abuse, which means preventing drug abuse before it starts, and controlling it before it escalates.<sup>26</sup> Recent advances in psychosocial research and neurosciences have provided new avenues for prevention of substance abuse at the individual and community level. A series of risk and protective factors affecting the likelihood of using and abusing substances have been identified. The scope of prevention has been broadened, allowing the prescription of different interventions for individuals according to their varying degrees of vulnerability to substance experimentation, continuous use and dependence. An increased awareness of comorbidity between mental and substance use disorders provides an arena for prevention within psychiatry and related disciplines. The integration of prevention within

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<sup>24</sup>(Siddiqui and Salim, 2016)

<sup>25</sup>Kiriru 2018)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/171694.pdf>

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healthy life style policies and programs, including interventions at the school, family and community levels, is more likely to produce the desired outcomes<sup>27</sup>

### **Substances Commonly Abused by Youths in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, the National Drug and Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has identified six major classes of substances most frequently and commonly abused in Nigeria as follows: Stimulants, Sedatives, Narcotics, Hallucinogens, tranquilizers and miscellaneous. Also, the most common types of abused drugs according to NAFDAC (2000) as cited by<sup>28</sup>) are categorized as follows: -

1. **Stimulants:** These are substances that directly act and stimulate the central nervous system. Users at the initial stage experience pleasant effects such as energy increase. The major source of these comes from caffeine substance.
2. **Hallucinogens';** these are drugs that alter the sensory processing unit in the brain. Thus, producing distorted perception, feeling of anxiety and euphoria, sadness and inner joy, they normally come from marijuana, LSD etc.
3. **Narcotics:** These drugs relieve pains, induce sleeping and they are addictive. They are found in heroin, codeine, opium etc.
4. **Sedatives:** These drugs are among the most widely used and abused. This is largely due to the belief that they relieve stress and anxiety, and some of them induce sleep, ease tension, cause relaxation or help users to forget their problems. They are sourced from valium, alcohol, promethazine, chloroform.
5. **Tranquilizers:** They are believed to produce calmness without bringing drowsiness; they are chiefly derived from Librium, Valium etc.

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<sup>27</sup>Medina-Mora 2005)

<sup>28</sup>Haladu (2003

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According to the National Training Manual on Adolescent Reproductive Health, [ARH] (2001) alcohol, coffee, tea, kola nuts, cannabis (Indians Hemp), stimulants (dexamphetamine), anxiety relieving drugs (Valium, Lexotan), narcotics (heroin), cocaine, solvents and hallucinogens are some of the drugs commonly abused in Nigeria. The two commonest drugs abused by adolescents are alcohol and tobacco (cigarette). These are also known as the 'gateway' drugs. The most commonly used substances were codeine (85%), alcohol (75%), cannabis (70%), tramadol (65%), rohypnol (65%), and tobacco (50%)<sup>29</sup>.

| DRUG GROUP  | EFFECTS   | DANGER  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>STIMULANTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cocaine (crack, gbana)</li><li>• Caffeine (coffee)</li><li>• Nicotine/ Tobacco (cigarette, snuff)</li><li>• Amphetamines(Chinese Capsule "CC").</li></ul> | Can cause increase in energy and activity.<br>Can suppress hunger.<br>Produces a state of excitement, feeling good or a state of euphoria (the intensity of the feeling depends on type of drug e.g., cocaine is stronger than caffeine in coffee). | Sleeplessness/Anxiety<br>Irregular heartbeat, Possible heart failure. Over excitement or hypomania.<br>Hallucinations, other forms of mental disorders (amphetamine and cocaine can cause Psychosis).<br>Recklessness.<br>Tolerance and psychological dependence develop quickly. |

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<sup>29</sup>Adekeye et al. 2017)

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|                   |  |   |   |
|-------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>DEPRESSANT</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol (beer,wine,ogogor o Opia-pia, ogura,burukutu,ak petesh).</li> <li>• Benzodiazepines (Valium, Lexotan).</li> <li>• Barbiturates</li> </ul> | <p>Make a person “feel good” at the beginning. Can cause depressive illness. Slows down body functions. Cause sleep or Drowsiness. Lead to fall in blood pressure, slowing of the heart and respiratory rate. Unconsciousness and even death.</p> | <p>Drowsiness<br/>Uncoordinated behaviour and actions.<br/>Difficulty in operating machines, driving a car, bus, trailer, truck, under the influence of alcohol.<br/>Unconsciousness death.</p>   |
| <b>MARIJUANA</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian hemp (cannabis, weed, Igbo, ganja, wee-wee, pot, stone, hashish)</li> </ul>  | <p>Alters the way people see, hear, and feel.<br/>Can cause fear or change fear making the user bold and more daring.<br/>Can cause dryness of mouth and throat.<br/>Disorientation.<br/>Confusion.</p>   | <p>Problem of co-ordination.<br/>Long term use can decrease libido, and effect sperm production.<br/>Like cigarette smoking, it can cause damage to the respiratory system especially the lungs.<br/>Can change motivation.<br/>Precipitates mental illness</p> |

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|--|--|---|
| <b>INHALANTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Glue (solutions for patching shoes)</li><li>• Paint thinner</li><li>• Nail-polish remover</li><li>• Aerosols (hair spray)</li><li>• Petrol</li><li>• Gutter</li></ul> | Inhaled fumes can cause:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Excitation</li><li>-Disinhibition</li><li>-Euphoria</li></ul> | Dizziness Incoordination/Unsteady gait<br>Slurred speech<br>Lethargy<br>Tremor<br>Generalized muscle weakness<br>Blurred vision<br>Euphoria<br>Stupor or coma |
| <b>NARCOTICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heroin</li><li>• Morphine</li><li>• Codeine</li></ul>   | Can induce nausea, drowsiness and changes in mood  | Nausea or Vomiting<br>Muscles aches<br>Watering of eyes and running of noses<br>Sweating<br>Chills<br>Diarrhea<br>Yawning<br>Fever<br>Insomnia                |

**Fig 12.1: A Table Showing Various Drug Groups, Their effects and Dangers its Poses to Human Health.**

**Source:** Authors Compilation

#### **Campaign Strategies for a Drug Free Society**

The role of NYSC, the parents, mass media, community, home leaders, schools and religious centres in reducing substance abuse cannot be overemphasised. They play vital roles in curbing the menace of substance abuse in the country. The campaign should focus on primary prevention for three key reasons.

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- a. First, primary prevention targets the underlying causes of drug use, and, therefore, has the greatest potential to reduce the scope of the problem over the long term.
- b. Second, over time a primary prevention campaign will lessen the need for drug treatment services, which are in critically short supply.
- c. And third, a media campaign has greater potential to affirm and reinforce the anti-drug attitudes of youth who are not involved in drug use than to persuade experienced drug users to change their behaviour<sup>30</sup>.

The National Youth Service Corps through its Drug Free CDS group embarks on series of campaigns all over the country on the effect of drug abuse. As noted by NYSC Drug free group Katsina when they staged a walk against the abuse of drugs:

"We enlightened the general public on the dangers of drugs abuse and the different form of threats these drugs pose to health. We also staged a walk between kofar kwaya Round-about and the popular Narto Car Park, where our members addressed both the transporters and passengers on the dangers of the use of illicit drugs"<sup>31</sup>

Mental health and substance use disorders among children, youth, and young adults are major threats to the health and well-being of younger populations which often carry over into adulthood. The costs of treatment for mental health and addictive disorders, which create an enormous burden on the affected individuals, their families, and society, have stimulated increasing interest in prevention practices that

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<sup>30</sup> The National Youth Anti-Dr Anti-Drug Media Campaign Communication Strategy Statement:

<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ondcp/171694.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> NYSC Drug Free Katsina State, Towards a Drug Free Nigeria Facebook post, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

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can impede the onset or reduce the severity of the disorders. Prevention practices have emerged in a variety of settings, including programs for selected at-risk populations (such as children and youth in the child welfare system), school-based interventions, interventions in primary care settings, and community services designed to address a broad array of mental health needs and populations. Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among young people, reducing risks for mental disorders, focusing special attention on the research base and program experience with younger populations that have emerged since that time. Researchers, such as those involved in prevention science, mental health, education, substance abuse, juvenile justice, health, child and youth development, as well as policy makers involved in state and local mental health, substance abuse, welfare, education, and justice will depend on this updated information on the status of research and suggested directions for the field of mental health and prevention of disorders<sup>32</sup>

### **Treatment for Substance Abuse Using Counselling**

Hope is a vital component of psychological healing and plays a critical role in counselling (Koehn, O'Neill, and Sherry 2012). Substance abuse treatment involves four distinct phases: prevention, detoxification, rehabilitation and relapse prevention<sup>33</sup>. In addition, the four major categories of drug treatment studied by Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study (DATOS) included outpatient methadone programs, long-term residential programmes, outpatient drug-free programs, and short-term inpatient programs. In outpatient methadone programs, clients are given methadone to reduce cravings for heroin and block its effects. They also receive counselling and vocational skills development to help them rebuild their lives. In long-term residential programs, clients are given continual drug-free treatment in a residential

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<sup>32</sup>O'Connell, Boat, and Warner, 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Williams & Wilkins: Mass Publishing Egypt(1997). Psychiatry.

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community they share with counsellors and fellow recovering addicts (sometimes called a therapeutic community). In outpatient drug-free programs, a wide range of psychosocial approaches are used, including 12-step programs. In short-term inpatient programs, clients are stabilized medically and then are encouraged to remain abstinent through taking steps to change their lifestyle. The methods used in these treatment formats rely on one or more components of biological treatment combined with psychotherapy and efforts to provide clients with social supports and improvements in their occupational and family functioning.<sup>34</sup>

The efficacy of Psychological techniques, especially Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in managing or changing learned behaviours like attitude, anxiety, phobia, depression, study habits and substance abuse cannot be over exaggerated.<sup>35</sup> Counselling gives curative measures in reducing tendencies, dependencies and abuse of substance among all and sundry. As an expert in counselling industry, proper use of behavioural, cognitive and affective techniques in changing or reducing the menace of substance abuse is of paramount significance. Integrating HIV prevention into substance abuse counselling is recommended to ameliorate the health outcomes of men who have sex with others.<sup>36</sup> Adolescents need effective lifestyle counselling precisely because health problems are so common. Good-quality lifestyle counselling can prevent the problems from becoming

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<sup>34</sup> Halgin, P.R & Whitbourne, S.K. (2010). Abnormal Psychology: Published by McGraw-Hill, an imprint of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. pp. 422 Sixth edition

<sup>35</sup> Bakari, U. (2018). Efficacy of a Cognitive Behavioural Programme on Changing Positive Attitudes Towards Substance among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba state Nigeria. A Ph.D. theses submitted to the department of psychology, University of Bahri, Sudan.

<sup>36</sup> (Spector and Pinto 2011)

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worse and decrease the costs of health care. Nurse practitioners in schools are well positioned to promote adolescent health<sup>37</sup>.

A study revealed that, most adolescents (84%) reported that the counselling resources related to school-based health care are quite good for their lives. Most of them reported that nutrition (70%) and physical activity (63%) related to lifestyle counselling are sufficient. Approximately half of adolescents (51%) considered the counselling related to substance abuse as being sufficient. Most (80%) felt that the level of interaction during counselling is good. Overall, the majority of adolescents reported that goal-oriented lifestyle counselling (67%) and adolescent-centred counselling (69%) are good<sup>38</sup> Students(youths) experience various challenges during their studies, such as personal problems, academic difficulties and mental health problems. Counselling centres/units play a valuable role in providing support systems for youths in need.<sup>39</sup> Traditional psychotherapeutic methods also play an important role in recovery for many people with substance related disorders. For some people, inpatient care is necessary at least for a brief duration while they proceed through a process of detoxification; during a period lasting from a few weeks to several months of residential care, some individuals stabilize physically and psychologically by participating in a multimodal program. For many people, outpatient treatment helps them attain their goals, although many psychotherapists strongly recommend that recovering clients also participate in a 12-step program in which they have access to ongoing support on a regular and consistent basis.

The NYSC also embark on a counselling in schools, mostly, counselling took place on the effects of drug abuse as this has helped to a great

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<sup>37</sup>Myllymäki, Ruotsalainen, and Kääriäinen 2017)

<sup>38</sup>(Myllymäki, Ruotsalainen, and Kääriäinen 2017). Adolescents' evaluations of the quality of lifestyle counselling in school-based health care: Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences.

<sup>39</sup>Cilliears, Pretorius, and Van der Westhuizen 2011

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measure in curbing the menace of drug abuse among the children and even youths. Also, the NYSC under the NYSC drug free group have created various anti-drug clubs in secondary schools which serves as a form of sensitization against the misuse of drugs. Furthermore, the NYSC has visited various rehabilitation centers, engaging in counselling of the already redeemed inmates on the effects of going back into active drugs taking and misuse and its effect on their health.

### **Concluding Remarks**

A Drug is any substance other than food, that when inhaled, injected, smoked, consumed, absorbed via a patch on the skin or dissolved under the tongue causes a physiological change in the body. Substance abuse is categorised into stimulants, inhalants, depressants and hallucinogens. Signs of substance abuse include physical, social, psychological and behavioural signs. Youths abuse substances because of ignorance, inquisitiveness, and experiments and to feel comfortable. Counselling techniques can change psychotropic behaviours of substance abusers. Counsellors, psychologists, social workers should intensify efforts by organising seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences for substance abusers, parents so that the menace of substance abuse can be minimized drastically.

### **Recommendations**

1. New Counselling centres should be created by the Director General in various NYSC Orientation camps in the country for proper youths' awareness, prevention and rehabilitation of substance abusers.
2. Experts (counsellor, psychiatrists and social workers) should be deployed to those centres to manage youths with substance abuse.
3. Retreat, seminars, workshops, symposia and public lectures should be done consistently for youths' proper adjustment to normal life.

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## **The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme and Afforestation Campaign Programme in Nigeria**

Lawrence Okechukwu Udeagbala  
and  
Solomon Ayegba Usman

### **Introduction**

Globally speaking, the importance of environment for human existence including other animals, trees, aquatic lives among other habitats in the ecosystem cannot be over-emphasised. Indeed, continuation of life of humans and other living organisms within the environment is influenced largely by the maintenance and sustenance of the

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environment. Hence, Platt, Billings, Gates, Olmsted, Shanks and Tester<sup>1</sup> assert, “a living organism is a product of its environment and its genetic code.” It’s the growing realisation of this that make several countries of the world as well as international and regional organisations to make environmental sustainability and protection of ecosystem policy priority area. For example, recognising the need to preserve the environment from catastrophic destruction of human civilisation and natural resources, the first ever world conference on the environment, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from June 5 – 16, 1972<sup>2</sup> where the environment was the major issue discussed. The participants adopted series of principles for sound management of the environment including the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment and several other resolutions. The twenty-six (26) principles of the Stockholm Declaration placed environmental issues at the forefront of international concerns and marked the start of a dialogue between the industrialised and developing countries on the link between economic growth, the pollution of the air, water, and oceans and the well-being of people around the world. On the other hand, The Action Plan was grouped into three main categories of Global Environmental Assessment Program, the Environmental management activities and International measures to support assessment and management activities carried out at the national and international levels. The Stockholm Conference led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1972 with the headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Subsequent UN conferences on the environment include the popular Rio Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Platt, W. D. Billings, David M. Gates, Charles E. Olmsted, Royal E. Shanks and John R. Tester, “The Importance of Environment to Life” *BioScience* Vol. 14, No.7 (1964): 25, accessed on March 16, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1293232>.

<sup>2</sup> UN, “Conferences: Environment and Sustainable Development”, accessed on March 16, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972> and <https://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.48/INF.5/rev.1..>

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14 June 1992; the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21, New York, 23-27 June 1997; and the Millennium Summit, New York, 6-8 September 2000 (with the Millennium Development Goals MDGs outcome). Others are Johannesburg 2002, New York 2005; New York 2010; Rio 2012; New York 2013 and New York 2015.

The mission of the UNEP is to among others, “provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”<sup>3</sup>In addition to this, the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution 38/161 on December 19, 1983, welcomed the establishment of a special commission.<sup>4</sup> The commission was mandated to make report available on environment and the global challenges up to year 2000 and beyond, including proposed strategies for sustainable development. Heeding the urgent call, the UN through its then Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, set up World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (now known as the Brundtland Commission) headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Prime Minister of Norway. Writing the Chairman’s Foreword to the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future on March 20, 1987, Gro Harlem Brundtland<sup>5</sup> painted the graphic condition of degraded environment and the threats it posed to human survival and sustainability of the ecosystem. According to her:

The present decade has been marked by a retreat from social concerns. Scientists bring to our attention urgent

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<sup>3</sup> UNEP, “Why does UN Environment Programme matters?”. Available at <https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/why-does-un-environment-matter>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

<sup>4</sup>Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/wced>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

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but complex problems bearing on our very survival: a warming globe, threats to the Earth's ozone layer, deserts consuming agricultural land. We respond by demanding more details, and by assigning the problems to institutions ill-equipped to cope with them. Environmental degradation, first seen as mainly a problem of the rich nations and a side effect of industrial wealth, has become a survival issue for developing nations. It is part of the downward spiral of linked ecological and economic decline in which many of the poorest nations are trapped. Despite official hope expressed on all sides, no trends identifiable today, no programmes or policies, offer any real hope of narrowing the growing gap between rich and poor nations. And as part of our "development", we have amassed weapons arsenals capable of diverting the paths that evolution has followed for millions of years and of creating a planet our ancestors would not recognise<sup>6</sup>.

Since then, there have been series of concrete attempts geared towards preserving the environment to achieve sustainable development in terms of "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"<sup>7</sup>. For example, the UN General Assembly of September 6-8, 2000, in New York, United States, dubbed, "The Millennium Summit" produced the global affirmative and action plan called the Millennium

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>See The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED's) 1987 Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

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Development Goals (MDGs). The eight and last goal of the MDGs is tagged: "Ensure environmental sustainability".

While addressing the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on February 9, 2020, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, on the climate change crisis said, "Africa was the least responsible for accelerated global warming, but among the first and worst to suffer"<sup>8</sup>. This view is corroborated by Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) report, which says, "Climate change is mainly caused by the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) and African countries only contribute to this in a very slight way"<sup>9</sup>.

In his submission, Akin Mabogunje<sup>10</sup> believes that Sub-Saharan Africa suffers the worst form of environmental problems, including deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, wetland degradation, and insect infestation. Efforts to deal with these problems, however, have been handicapped by a real failure to understand their nature and possible remedies. While admitting that the people of this region are highly irresponsible toward the environment and looks to the international community to save them from themselves, he contends that the international community has not shown any genuine concern for it until recently. To him therefore, it is clear that the environmental challenges in sub-Saharan Africa are more complex than the simple model linking environmental degradation to population growth and inappropriate macroeconomic policies indicates. Because of this

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<sup>8</sup>UN News (2020, February 9). AU Summit: Guterres calls for 'collective, comprehensive, coordinated' response to challenges facing Africa. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1057011>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), Climate Change Adaptation and the Fight Against Desertification: Introductory Note No. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Tunis, 2007, p. 9. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ax357e/ax357e.pdf>. Accessed on 16 March 2021.

<sup>10</sup>Akin L. Mabogunje, The Environmental Challenges in Sub Saharan Africa. In: *Environment*, 37(4), May 1995, p. 4.

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complexity, no easy solutions are available. But whatever policies are adopted, to succeed they must increase peoples' interest in protecting the environment by involving them directly in the process; reduce the incidence of poverty to reduce the pressure on natural resources; and show people how a high level of resource use can go hand-in-hand with the maintenance of environmental quality.

Today, analysts<sup>11</sup> believed that welfare and development remain pressing global problems relating to human survival, they nonetheless argue Nigeria has the world's highest annual deforestation rate of primary forest at 55.7%. The country is one of the two largest losers of annual natural forests in Africa.<sup>12</sup> At 11.1%, Nigeria's annual deforestation rate of natural forest is the highest in the world and puts it on the pace to lose virtually all its primary forest within few years. It is a major problem occurring in many parts of the country and the most adversely affected region is the less endowed Northern part of the country<sup>13</sup>.

Therefore, it is in this context that the chapter examines the afforestation campaign programme in Nigeria by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme. To achieve this, the chapter is divided into six main sections in addition to the introduction. After the introductory part, the second section focuses on the clarification of concepts that are central to the discussion. While part three appraises various activities and factors that lead to deforestation in Nigeria, the

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<sup>11</sup> Abdullahi, A., Girei, A. A., Usman, I. S., and Abubakar, M. G., Assessment of Adaptation Strategies for Deforestation and Climate Change: Implication for Agricultural Extension System in Nigeria. In: *International Journal of Innovative Agriculture & Biology Research*, 5(2), 2017, pp. 11 –17.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance, Azare, I. M.; Abdullahi M. S.; Adebayo, A. A.; Dantata, I. J.; and Duala, T., Deforestation, Desert Encroachment, Climate Change and Agricultural Production in the Sudano-Sahelian Region of Nigeria. In: *Journal of Applied Science and Environmental Management*, 24(1), 2020 (January), pp. 127 – 132.

<sup>13</sup> See Abdullahi, A. et al, *op cit.*

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fourth section examines the consequences of deforestation and efforts geared towards afforestation. The fifth subdivision interrogates the role of the NYSC in the afforestation exercise while the sixth concludes.

### I. Interrogation and Conceptualization of Concepts

Here in this chapter, we interrogate concepts that are considered imperative to our discussion as well as understanding of the discourse. Hence, key terms like desertification and deforestation, afforestation, reforestation and afforestation campaign are subjected to critical yet in exhaustive examination.

▪ **Desertification and Deforestation:** According to Glantz and Orlovsky desertification is a complex phenomenon requiring the expertise of researchers in such disciplines as climatology, soil science, meteorology, hydrology, range science, agronomy, veterinary medicine, as well as geography, political science, economics and anthropology.<sup>14</sup> Researchers in these and other disciplines, as well as from many national and bureaucratic (institutional) perspectives, have defined it in many different ways by each emphasizing different aspects of the phenomenon. Thus, it is safe to say that the desert had once upon a time been a better place with life and vegetation, grasses and trees, different species of animals and human beings with perhaps, scenic and natural ambience, then something untoward happened, and the place became a wasteland and deserted. Usually, desertification is caused by long hot dry season with short rainy season.<sup>15</sup> From this, even though inventory by Michael H. Glantz indicates that there are over hundred definitions of desertification, it can be easily discerned what it is

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Nasiru Idris Medugu, M. Rafee Majid, Foziah Johar and I.D. Choji “The role of afforestation programme in combating desertification in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (2010), pp. 35-47.

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without much emphasis.<sup>16</sup> To Mainguet, as commonly used, the word desertification means an environmental crisis, which produces desert-like conditions in any ecosystem.<sup>17</sup>

While some authors consider desertification to be a process of change, others perceive it as the end result of a process of change. This distinction in the view of Glantz and Orlovsky<sup>18</sup> underlies one of the main disagreements about what constitutes desertification. Notwithstanding, desertification as a process to them has generally been viewed as a series of incremental and sometimes step-wise, changes in biological productivity in arid, semi-arid, and sub-humid ecosystems. It can encompass such changes as a decline in yield of the same crop or, more drastically, the replacement of one vegetative species by another maybe equally productive or equally useful, or even a decrease in the density of the existing vegetative cover. As event, desertification is the creation of desert-like conditions (where perhaps none had existed in the recent past) as the end result of a process of change. Concisely, desertification is the persistent degradation of dryland ecosystems by variations in climate and human activities.

On the other hand, deforestation is similar to if not the same with desertification. According to van Kooten and Bulte<sup>19</sup>, deforestation is the conversion of forest to an alternative permanent non-forested land use such as agriculture, grazing or urban development. However, the

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<sup>16</sup> Michael H. Glantz (Ed.), *Desertification: Environmental Degradation in and around Arid Lands* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977). See also, Michael H Glantz, and N. S. Orlovsky, "Desertification: A Review of the Concept", *Desertification Control Bulletin*, 9 (Kenya, Nairobi: UNEP, 1983), 15 – 22.  
<http://www.ciesin.org/docs/002-479/002-479.html>.

<sup>17</sup> See Monique Mainguet, *Desertification: Natural Background and Human Mismanagement*.

<sup>18</sup> Michael H Glantz, and N. S. Orlovsky, "Desertification: A Review of the Concept".

<sup>19</sup> Van G. C. Kooten and, E. H. Bulte, *The Economics of Nature: Managing Biological Assets* (Blackwells, 2000).

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exception, according to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is that a plantation of trees established primarily for timber production is not to be considered as forest and therefore does not classify natural forest conversion to plantation as deforestation even though it still records it as a loss of natural forests<sup>20</sup>. Some studies<sup>21</sup> carried out revealed that while deforestation is now no longer significant in the developed temperate countries and in fact, many temperate countries now are recording increases in forest area, it remains prevalent in the developing temperate nations and sub-tropical areas. Mostly, developed nations are located in temperate domains while developing nations are in tropical domains<sup>22</sup>. Thus, deforestation is likened to forest degradation which occurs when the ecosystem functions of the forest are degraded but where the area remains forested rather than cleared. In this respect, FAO does not consider tree plantations that provide non-timber products to be forest even though it does classify rubber plantations as forest<sup>23</sup>.

- **Afforestation, Reforestation and Afforestation Campaign:** According to Michael Bredemeier and Achim Dohrenbusch of the University of Göttingen, Germany, "Afforestation is the human-induced conversion of land that has not been forested for a period of at least 50 years to forested land through planting, seeding or the human-induced promotion of natural seed sources."<sup>24</sup> They went further to argue that

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<sup>20</sup> See Sumit Chakravarty, S. K. Ghosh, C. P. Suresh, A. N. Dey and Gopal Shukla, "Deforestation: Causes, Effects and Control Strategies" in Clement Akais Okia (Ed.), *Global Perspectives on Sustainable Forest Management* (Rijeka, Croatia: In Tech, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Anonymous, *The Forest Resources of the Temperate Zones, Vol. II* (Rome, Italy: FAO, 1990) and, Anonymous, *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010-Main Report: FAO Forestry Paper 163* (Rome, Italy: FAO, 2010), p. 340.

<sup>22</sup> Sumit Chakravarty *et al.*, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous, *Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2010-Main Report: FAO Forestry Paper 163*.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Bredemeier and Achim Dohrenbusch, "Biodiversity: Structure and Function, Vol. II - Afforestation and Reforestation", *Encyclopedia of Life Support*

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reforestation (or re-afforestation) is “the establishment of forest in an area where there was no forest during the last 50 years with the previous crop being replaced either by different species or by the same species as before”<sup>25</sup>. In addition, afforestation campaign simply means deliberate attempts and efforts geared towards desertification control through planting or re-planting the deserted or deforested areas either by individuals, groups, communities, governments or entities whose goal is to see to the restoration of the deserted and/or arid areas or turning them into green bed. Therefore, desertification control (DC), is an activity involving the integrated development of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid zones in a sustainable method, aimed at preventing and/or reducing land degradation, repairing partially degraded land, and at restoring decertified lands<sup>26</sup>.

## II. Necessitating and Contributory Factors to Deforestation in Nigeria

According to Owolabi,<sup>27</sup> as the home of tropical rainforest, Nigeria has experienced a heavy decline in forest cover. The exploitation of the

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Systems (EOLSS) (2004), accessed on March 16, 2021, <https://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/C09/E4-27-08-04.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> For details on this, see The Forestry Management, Evaluation and Coordinating Unit (FORMECU, “Forest resources study of Nigeria”, African Development Bank-funded Project for the FORMECU, prepared by Geomatics Nigeria Limited and Beak Consultants (Abuja, 1999). Cited in Nasiru Idris Medugu, M. Rafee Majid, Foziah Johar and I.D. Choji “The role of afforestation programme in combating desertification in Nigeria”, *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (2010), pp. 35-47.

<sup>27</sup> Owolabi Saka-rasaq, *Forest Loss in Nigeria, the Impact on Climate and People from the perspectives of illegal Forest activities and Government Negligence*. Being a degree thesis for University of Applied Sciences’ Bachelor of Natural Resources Degree programme in Sustainable Coastal Management (Yrkeshögskolan Novia, Finland, 2019), accessed on March 16, 2021. [https://www.thesesus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170981/Forest\\_Loss\\_Nigeria\\_Owolabi\\_2019\\_DSCM\\_Thesis.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y](https://www.thesesus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170981/Forest_Loss_Nigeria_Owolabi_2019_DSCM_Thesis.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y).

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forest belt which accommodates woods, wildlife and other products are subjected to intense intrusion, vegetation degradation, de-reservation for agriculture use, industrialization and urban development. Indeed, deforestation is so massive that, for example, between 1990 and 2005, Nigeria reportedly lost a staggering 79% of its old-growth forests<sup>28</sup>. This figure according to FAO increased exponentially as Nigeria with less than 10% forests coverage and only 20,000hectares of primary forests has lost about 95% of its forest coverage to a high rate of deforestation which is annually recorded at 5% ranging from 2010 and 2015<sup>29</sup>. Although, deforestation remains a major problem occurring in many parts of Nigeria yet, the most adversely affected region is the less endowed Northern part of the country.

Today, Nigeria is not only one of the two largest losers of annual natural forests on the African continent but highest in the world in terms of annual deforestation rate of natural forest<sup>30</sup>.

Thus, while some analysts<sup>31</sup> have classified causes of deforestation into direct and indirect causes, others<sup>32</sup>categorised it into climatic agents (comprising of sunlight, water and wind) and biotic agents (consisting of microbes, animals and other plants). For the sake of this paper, we highlight below some of the leading contributory factors necessitating the occurrence of incidence of deforestation in Nigeria. These factors are by no means exhaustive.

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<sup>28</sup> Philip Mfon (Jr), Oluyemi Ayorinde Akintoye, Glory Mfon, Tokunbo Olorundami, Sammy UkaUkata and Taiwo Adesola Akintoye, "Challenges of Deforestation in Nigeria and the Millennium Development Goals", *International Journal of Environment and Bioenergy*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2014), pp. 81 – 82.

<sup>29</sup> See OwolabiSaka-rasaq, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup>SeeAbdullahi, A. et al, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> See Sumit Chakravarty et al., p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Philip Mfon (Jr) et al, p. 82.

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**(a.) Sunlight:** Although, sunlight is very essential to plant growth and survival especially during the process of photosynthesis when green plants and certain other organisms transform light energy into chemical energy. However, high intensity of sunlight is equally capable of killing plants especially young ones at formative stage thereby deforesting. In view of Nigeria's location in the tropics, high intensity of sunlight has occasioned incidence of deforestation.

**(b.) Water:** Like sunlight, the importance of water to plant survival and growth including those of other organisms in the ecosystem cannot be over-emphasised. Nonetheless, long periods of torrential rainfalls and attendant flooding that follows in some parts of Northern and Southern Nigeria fell many trees that lead to their death. The undergrowth grasses and other species of small plants have been affected in several instances.

**(c.) Wind:** Wind is the air in motion and is very essential for plant pollination as well as seed dispersal creating opportunity for growth of plants and trees. Despite the importance of wind in the pollination and seed dispersal, it is also associated with deforestation as windbreak branches of many trees as well as uprooting of trees. This no doubt, seriously affects forest preservation and/or conservation.

**(d.) Microbes:** The presence and attack of microbial organisms such as fungi, bacteria and viruses in the forest have seriously affect many trees and plants and even killing some thereby leading to deforestation.

**(e.) Activities of Other Plants:** The presence of other plants especially the taller trees provide shade that has tendency to retard or stunt the growth of their own seedlings as well as the seedlings of other plant species. It is noteworthy that certain plants species in the forest area produce toxic chemical substances that are poisonous to other

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species from growing or surviving among them. This obviously leads to deforestation.

**(f.) Animals:** Apart from humans, certain animals, insects, rodents, worms and large herbivores that feed on trees or plants constitute serious nuisance to those trees. Sometimes, they do a lot of damage to these plants and forest conservation. Such animals and insects include locust, elephants and large antelopes etc.

**(g.) Humans:** Humans and their activities in the forest areas are noted to have significant impact on deforestation. In fact, humans, of all agents of deforestation, bring greatest devastation to trees and plants in the forest bed. Without sound policies and their diligent implementations to restrain human interference on trees and forest generally, forest may soon go into extinction. Human activities in the forest and on plants like farming (agricultural production), building and opening up new settlement areas, falling trees for firewood and logging, grazing etc., without deliberate and committed efforts to re-plant them, deforestation continue to be on the increase globally and Nigeria in particular.

**(h.) Agriculture:** Involvement in agricultural activities have tremendously affected the environment generally and the forest areas and plants/tress specifically. While preparing for agricultural activities, the site is prepared by clearing the plants and grass areas as well as falling of trees leading to deforestation. This is usually followed with burning activity before embarking on cultivation leading to permanent destruction and/or disruption of the rainforests. In some cases, species distribution is highly affected leading to a change in vegetation to derived savannah. Also, some weeds and diseases which has now become nuisances in the forests have been introduced by man in his agricultural practices e.g. the introduction of Eupatorium adoratum (Siam weeds) from South East Asia to the West African sub-region

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including Nigeria. Livestock grazing is part of agricultural activities that is causing deforestation in Nigeria. Most forests in the country have constantly witnessed over grazing by the livestock leading to a gradual change in vegetation from derived savannah to Sudan savannah as these animals feed on tree seedlings especially in the dry season when there is little grass to sustain them. These animals also feed on tree seedlings and branches of mature trees, thereby leading to deforestation.

**(i.) Urbanisation and industrialisation:** Undoubtedly, increased urbanisation and human population activities have seriously affected the forest areas. To meet the housing and infrastructural needs of the growing population, large area of forests are affected on daily basis.

**(j.) Logging:** Due to importance of sawn wood and/or timber in building and other construction activities for residential, recreational, transport and industrial development, many trees are felled and sawn without commensurate effort to replant them.

**(k.) Bush Burning and Fire incident:** Constant bush burning especially during the dry/harmattan season remains a major cause of deforestation in the country. Although, compared to the Savanna, the rainforest is relatively more immune to fire and/or bush burning. Nonetheless, continuous burning of the rain forest leads to grasslands destroying most of the trees including their seedlings.

**(l.) Mining and petroleum extraction:** The swamp forest areas of southern part of the country were previously protected from destruction or over exploitation due to their relative inaccessibility because of the swampy nature of the environment. Today, the story is not the same as these forests are being destroyed because of explorative activities of petroleum resources, gas flaring and oil spillage

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including the mining activities of several minerals in Nigeria like coal, tin and columbite, bauxite etc. This no doubt, substantially led to the destruction of the forests and the entire ecosystem.

**(m.) Fuel wood collection:** As it is in most part of Africa and other parts of the underdeveloped world, firewood constitutes the major source of fuel in Nigeria especially among the rural people. This is mainly due to high cost of kerosene and unavailability of gas cooker for many rural dwellers.

### **III. Consequences and Impacts of Deforestation: Why afforesting?**

One of the fundamental ways to rehabilitate a 'dehydrated' land and improve the climatic condition of a place as well as prevent erosion and flooding is through afforestation, the debate on its rationality notwithstanding.<sup>33</sup> No state in Nigeria is totally free from adverse consequences of deforestation but the most affected states are the frontline states of Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Yobe, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi which lie roughly North of latitude 12o N to the boundaries with both Niger and Chad Republics.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the Governor of Gombe state Alhaji Inuwa Yahaya who launched in July 2020 what he called "Greener Gombe for a Greater Gombe" maintained that "available evidence shows that about two-thirds of our entire state is facing various forms of land degradation such as desertification, and

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<sup>33</sup> Some scholars argue has some challenges. See for instance Guy Rotem, Amos Bouskila, Alon Rothschild, "Ecological Effects of Afforestation in the Northern Negev"

[file:///C:/Users/HP%20USER/Downloads/Rotem\\_etal\\_2014\\_EcologicaleffectsofAfforestationintheNorthernNegev.pdf](file:///C:/Users/HP%20USER/Downloads/Rotem_etal_2014_EcologicaleffectsofAfforestationintheNorthernNegev.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Justus Eronmosele Omijeh, "Strategies for the Control of Desertification in Northern Nigeria" *FUTY Journal of the Environment*, Vol. 3 No.1, July 2008, p.75.

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deforestation"<sup>35</sup> Nearly 50% of the earth surface has been transformed through direct human action<sup>36</sup> which in turn, has a lot of consequences like desertification, erosion, increase on the effects of climate change etc. While the consequences of deforestation affect every part of Nigeria, it is more pronounced in the arid and semi-arid and savanna regions. To demonstrate that Nigeria has been greatly affected by deforestation, it is imperative to point out that Nigeria had about 65 million hectares of rich primary forest with attendant flora and fauna in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these forests were attenuated to just about 4 million hectares and still loses an annual average of 350,000 hectares annually.<sup>37</sup>

In Yobe state alone for example, about 50,000 farmers from about 100 villages abandoned their farm work in 2002 as a result of sand dunes which covered their farm land as a result of desert encroachment which is a consequence of deforestation.<sup>38</sup> If this is unchecked, in the next few years, the consequences would be more than they are today. It is the realization of the impending danger of deforestation that moved the NYSC to begin its afforestation campaign which is a desideratum. Afforestation on its own has its consequences which include the mitigation of the adverse effects of the climate change, increase in food production and wild life, employment and so on.

Obviously, in view of its damaging effects on the ecosystem, lives and natural resources, the consequences and impacts of deforestation on

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<sup>35</sup>Uwumarogie Peter, “Gombe Launches 2020 Tree Planting Campaign” <https://nnn.ng/gombe-launches-2020-tree-planting-campaign/>

<sup>36</sup>Kamal Mohammed Ibrahim and Sulaiman Inuwa Muhammad, “A Review of Afforestation Efforts in Nigeria” *International Journal of Advanced Research in ISSN: 2278-6252 Engineering and Applied Sciences*, Vol.4, No.12, 2015, p.25.

<sup>37</sup> For details, see Oloyode in Kamal Mohammed Ibrahim and Sulaiman Inuwa Muhammad, “A Review of Afforestation Efforts...p.25.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

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Nigeria are profound and multidimensional. Hence, what John Wajim<sup>39</sup> regards as “several benefits” accruing from deforestation especially in terms of “aspect of livelihoods, income and employment for the sustenance of indigenous people”, are actually of negative impacts and consequences for the environment and its human, animal, plants and other living organisms dependents. For instance, World Bank<sup>40</sup> estimated that approximately 60 million indigenous people are almost wholly dependent on forests while 350 million people depend on forests for a high degree for subsistence and income, and about 1.2 billion people rely on agro-forestry farming systems. Thus, according to Sahney, Benton and Falconlang<sup>41</sup>, socially, economically and agriculturally deforestation affects the overall quality of life of any nation including but not limited to human health as well as social and economic implications. In this respect, deforestation increases the vulnerability to landslides that are in turn capable of causing loss of lives and property.

For Emeodilichi Mba,<sup>42</sup> deforestation impacts are classified into environmental, social, health and economic impact. However, for the sake of convenience, we identified the following as major consequences and impact of deforestation in Nigeria as it is elsewhere. These are by no means exhaustive.

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<sup>39</sup> See John Wajim, Impacts of Deforestation on Socio-Economic Development and Environment in Nigeria. In: *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2015), pp. 5852 – 5863, accessed on 24 March 2021. doi:10.18535/ijsshi/v7i03.04

<sup>40</sup> See John Wajim, p. 5855.

<sup>41</sup> For details on this, see S. Sahney, M. J. Benton, and H. J. Falcon-Lang, Rainforest collapse triggered Pennsylvanian Tetrapod Diversification in Euramerica. In: *Geology*, Vol. 38, No. 12 (2010), pp.1079 – 1082.

<sup>42</sup> Emeodilichi H. Mba, Assessment of Environmental Impact of Deforestation in Enugu, Nigeria, *Resources and Environment*, Vol. 8, No.4 (2018), pp. 207 – 215. DOI: 10.5923/j.re.20180804.03

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**(a.) Forest and Climate Change:** One area that the consequence and impact of deforestation has been felt is in forest depletion and the attendant consequence of change in climatic condition. In this respect, deforestation disrupts normal weather patterns creating hotter and drier weather thus increasing drought and desertification, crop failures, melting of the polar ice caps, coastal flooding and displacement of major vegetation regimes. This leads to the incidence of global warming. Global warming or global change includes anthropogenic produced climatic and ecological problems such as recent apparent climatic temperature shifts and precipitation regimes in some areas, sea level rise, stratospheric ozone depletion, atmospheric pollution and forest decline. Because of global warming, tropical forests are shrinking at a rate of about five per cent per decade as forests are logged and cleared to supply local, regional, national and global markets for wood products, cattle, agricultural produce and bio fuels<sup>43</sup>. One of the most important ramifications of deforestation is its effect on the global atmosphere. Undoubtedly, deforestation contributes to global warming from increased atmospheric concentrations of GHG leading to net increase in the global mean temperature, as the forests are primary terrestrial sink of carbon. This mostly happens because it disrupts the global carbon cycle increasing the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and store the carbon as wood or in soils. The conversion and burning of forest for farming and the harvest of forest for timber and fuelwood cause a net release of CO<sub>2</sub> from the biota to the atmosphere. As Houghton<sup>44</sup> clearly observes, tropical deforestation is responsible for the emission of roughly two billion tons of carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) to the atmosphere per year. Thus, the

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<sup>43</sup> John Wajim, p. 5857

<sup>44</sup>R. A. Houghton, Tropical deforestation as a source of greenhouse gas emissions. In: P. Moutinho and S. Schwartzman (Eds.), *Tropical Deforestation and Climate Change* (Belem Brazil: Amazon Institute for Environmental Research, 2005), pp. 13 – 20.

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negative consequences of global warming are catastrophic as it increases drought and desertification, crop failures, displacement of major vegetation regimes among others.

**(b.) Soil Damage:** The impact of deforestation on the soil resource can be severe. The slash and burn occasioned on the deforested area exposes the soil to the intensity of the tropical sun thereby affecting the soil by increasing its compaction and reducing its organic material.

**(c.) Shrinkage of Natural Water Sources:** Most deforested areas are exposed to the problem of reduction of natural water sources like rivers, streams, lakes that humans, animals and plants rely on for survival. Due to deforestation water sheds that once provided drinking water and irrigation water have become subject to extreme fluctuations in water flow. That loss of safe water puts the health of the people at risk<sup>45</sup>.

**(d.) Loss of Forest Capital:** Economically speaking, deforestation negatively affects the potential revenues, employment opportunities that forest conservation would have generated to the country concerned, and the affected local communities involved. Thus, the tropical forests destroyed each year represent a loss in forest capital valued at huge amounts of money<sup>46</sup>.

**(e.) Loss of Biodiversity:** Another serious consequence of deforestation is the loss of biodiversity<sup>47</sup>. By loss of biodiversity, we

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<sup>45</sup> S. Maria Packiam, Deforestation: Causes and Consequences. In: *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2015), pp. 1193 – 1200, accessed on 24 march 2021,  
<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=consequances+of+deforestation+pdf>.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid*

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mean to say the likelihood of extinction of thousands of species and varieties of plants and animals through the process of deforestation.

**(f.) Food Insecurity:**Food security is threatened as irrigation water becomes scarcer. The high sedimentation loads carried by the river devastate fresh water and coastal fisheries. It is also one of the principal causes of the decline of coastal coral reefs. Due to non-retention of water in the water shed areas sudden furious flood, occur during the rainy season.

#### IV. The Role of the NYSC in Afforestation

To appreciate the role of the NYSC in afforestation campaign in Nigeria, it is important to understand the philosophy vis-à-vis the mission and vision behind its establishment in the country in 1973 after the end of the Nigerian Civil War. Therefore, according to the NYSC portal,<sup>48</sup>the creation of the scheme by decree No.24 of 22<sup>nd</sup>May 1973 was in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the country in post-Nigerian Civil War period. Hence, its establishment is “with a view to the proper encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and the promotion of national unity.”<sup>49</sup>To Veronica Ehimure<sup>50</sup>, “the scheme was conceived to involve youths in the future of Nigeria and in the process, build leadership skills as well as develop citizenry.”The promulgated Decree 51 of 16<sup>th</sup>June 1993 which repealed

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<sup>48</sup>Available at <https://www.nysc.gov.ng/aboutscheme.html>, accessed on 24 March 2021.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>50</sup>Veronica Ehimure, *Effectiveness of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme Among 2012-2013 Corps Members in Lagos and Oyo States, Nigeria*. Unpublished PhD Thesis in the International Centre for Educational Evaluation (ICEE),Submitted to the Institute of Education, The University of Ibadan (2015), p. 1, accessed on 25 March 2021, [http://80.240.30.238/bitstream/123456789/3580/1/%2811%29%20ui\\_thesis\\_ehemure\\_v.e\\_effectiveness\\_2015\\_full\\_work.pdf](http://80.240.30.238/bitstream/123456789/3580/1/%2811%29%20ui_thesis_ehemure_v.e_effectiveness_2015_full_work.pdf).

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the original decree establishing it specifically identified the objectives of the schemes.

From the stated objectives it can be gathered that beyond promoting national unity and integration, the NYSC is positioned to be actively engaged in the afforestation campaign. This is particularly so because it is a patriotic duty to the nation given the consequences and impacts of deforestation on the Nigerian economy and general wellbeing of citizens and the entire ecosystem. In addition, the scheme afforestation campaign across the length and breadth of Nigeria is in line with President Muhammadu Buhari's promise to the global audience during the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, United States of America, in September 2019 to plant 25 million trees in Nigeria by 2030.<sup>51</sup> It is in view of this and other reasons that this section of the study interrogates the roles of the NYSC in the afforestation exercise.

For the benefit of hindsight, the important role of the youthful population of any nation, Nigeria inclusive, in national development, is not in doubt. Furthermore, the fact that the scheme is a youth-based programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria makes the NYSC one of the key stakeholders in the afforestation programme in Nigeria. Even though afforestation is not specifically mentioned as part of the mission of the scheme, over the years, the corps members through their various Community Development Service (CDS) groups incorporate afforestation as part of their development service to the host communities. According to Abdullahi and Chikaji<sup>52</sup>, the CDS is a

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<sup>51</sup> Vanguard, Climate change: Each NYSC member should plant one tree – NYCN President (March 5, 2020), accessed on March 25 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/03/climate-change-each-nysc-member-should-plant-one-tree-nycn-president/>.

<sup>52</sup> See Muhammad Abdullahi and A. I. Chikaji, Issues in Community Development Service Scheme of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps and Its Relevance to Community Development, *International Journal of Research in Science & Engineering*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (December, 2016), pp. 218 – 224.

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component of NYSC through which the corps members work with the local communities to promote self-reliance by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programmes, which influence positively on the socio-economic development of the host communities.

The NYSC CDS is a year-round affair and is one of the four cardinal programmes of the scheme through which corps members work with the local communities to promote self-reliance. They do this by systematically prospecting and executing development projects and programme that affects the socio-economic development of the host communities positively. To achieve this, each corps member is assigned compulsorily to a particular CDS group as his/her Group CDS. While personal CDS project/programme is optional for interested corps members, group CDS is compulsory for all youth corps members with attendance once in a week and the remaining four days to be spent at the Place of Primary Assignment (PPA). The PA is the attachment of corps members to institutions or places where they are expected to work like members of staff of the organisation.<sup>53</sup>Through the CDS, the NYSC has taken the initiative of tree planting especially in the Northern region of the country that is more prone to deforestation and desertification. While NYSC acknowledges the existence of sixteen (16) CDS Groups within the scheme, the most active in the afforestation campaign are the Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group (Eco-vanguard, NESREA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (now Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs).<sup>54</sup>These two CDS groups are specifically relevant to the afforestation campaign because of their active engagement in advocacy and mentoring of host communities and states in creating awareness on how to actualise sustainable development goals through tree planting, sanitation, drainage and

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<sup>53</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>54</sup>NYSC, ‘ABC’ of Community Development Service (NYSC NDHQ, Abuja:October 2014), pp. 1 – 15.

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erosion control, afforestation and reforestation and landscaping among others.

For example, in the Northwest state of Sokoto, one of the desert prone states in Northern Nigeria, the NYSC Sokoto State Coordinator Alhaji Musa Abubakar<sup>55</sup> disclosed some times in 2017 that all the corps members serving in the 23 Local Government Areas would have planted one million trees before the end of their service year as part of their community development projects. This according to him is because, "trees are very crucial in combatting the menace of desert encroachment, gully erosion and flooding." Beyond the effectiveness of trees in combating desertification and other environmental challenges like erosion and flooding, the Sokoto State NYSC Coordinator specified that trees were also critical in improving the socio-economic statuses of the people due to their medicinal uses, provision of food and aesthetics for the environment. Similarly, the Coordinator of the scheme in Jigawa State, Mr. Michael Amolo<sup>56</sup>, in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Dutse during the NYSC tree planting campaign, stated that members of the NYSC posted to the state would have successfully planted 3,534 trees to boost the fight against desertification. He said that each of the 1,767 corps members who were deployed to the state was expected to plant and nurture two trees during the service year<sup>57</sup>. He explained that the State chapter of the NYSC undertook the initiative in order to checkmate desert encroachment and reduce global warming given the fact that Jigawa was among the 11 frontline states in the country that are facing desert encroachment. This step has attracted wide commendation of Nigerians including Alhaji Idris Umar; Jigawa

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<sup>55</sup>See *The Nation*, NYSC to plant one million trees in Sokoto, (February 27, 2017), accessed on 25 March 2021, <https://thenationonlineng.net/nysc-to-plant-one-million-trees-in-sokoto/>.

<sup>56</sup>*Nigerian Tribune*, Corpers to plant 3,534 trees in Jigawa —NYSC coordinator (August 6, 2017), accessed on 25 March 2021, <https://tribuneonlineng.com/corpers-plant-3534-trees-jigawa-%E2%80%95nysc-coordinator/>.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid*

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State Director of Environment who expressed optimism that before the end of 2020, a large swath of the state would have been covered with vegetation.<sup>58</sup>This same gesture has been replicated in others states, through the Federal Government campaign initiative on Plant One Million Tree in collaboration with the NYSC.<sup>59</sup>

Even though Northern Nigeria is more prone to desertification than the Southern part, the NYSC and its serving corps members have equally extended afforestation campaigns to some parts of the Southern region. For instance, as part of efforts to preserve the Anambra State environment, a Batch 'B' Corps member in the state, Mr. Ekemini Ekong, who served at the Anambra State College of Agriculture, Mgbakwu, has planted 4,200 trees comprising of cocoanut, cashew, Neem and Ghetina within the state capital, Awka, and its environs.<sup>60</sup>

The NYSC, as stated earlier, has different CDS groups in line with the basic needs of the society. Therefore, any of these groups can partner with both the government and non-governmental organisations to achieve its objective. This is in line with the five cross-sectoral developmental pillars of the NYSC that are fundamental to enabling youth to transit to self-fulfilled and productive adulthood with opportunities for full, effective and constructive participation, in line with the policy vision and mission.<sup>61</sup> The purpose of creating the Environmental Protection and Sanitation Group is to promote and sustain healthy environment and to create awareness on sustainable

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<sup>58</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>59</sup> See *The Daily Times*, Afforestation: NYSC Members to Plant 1 Million Trees in Kogi (June 2, 2017), accessed on 25 March 2021, <https://dailytimes.ng/afforestation-nysc-members-plant-1-million-trees-kogi/>.

<sup>60</sup>*Daily Trust*, Erosion: NYSC member plants 4,200 trees in Anambra (September 28, 2016), accessed on 25 March 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/erosion-nysc-member-plants-4200-trees-in-anambra>.

<sup>61</sup>Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, *Federal Republic of Nigeria National Youth Policy Enhancing Youth Development and Participation in the context of Sustainable Development*, Abuja: Author, 2019, p.10.

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environment management and regeneration<sup>62</sup> while its chief activities include tree planting, sanitation, drainage control, erosion control, reforestation and landscaping.<sup>63</sup>

Given the importance of afforestation and the consequences of deforestation, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Acting Director, Department of Forestry, Federal Ministry of Environment, Tiamiyu Oladele, announced in 2017 plans by the federal government to plant 30 million tree seedlings in 2020 to accelerate afforestation in the country.<sup>64</sup>In pursuance of this, in June 2017, the Kogi State Coordinator of the NYSC, Mrs Ngozi Nwatarali encouraged Corps members to plant one million trees in the state that year (2017). The Corps members who volunteered themselves for the three planting activities were required to mobilise others and those who participated in the exercise were known as Tree Planting Ambassadors (TPA).<sup>65</sup>They were also expected to take the campaign to schools, churches, mosques and other places.

In 2019, the SDGs CDS groups in Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State on the 2019 World Environmental Health day celebration organised a seminar for secondary school students so that they can know what environmental health is about and be agents of change in their society. <sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> “ABC” Of Community Development Service”

[https://nysc.gov.ng/downloads/CDS\\_ABC.pdf](https://nysc.gov.ng/downloads/CDS_ABC.pdf) (assessed 21/03/221)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> “Afforestation: Nigeria to plant 300 million trees in 2020”

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/agriculture/agric-news/377722-afforestation-nigeria-to-plant-300-million-trees-in-2020-official.html>

<sup>65</sup> <https://corpr.com.ng/nysc-members-in-sokoto-state-to-plant-one-million-trees/>

<sup>66</sup><https://www.ifeh.org/wehd/>

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**Picture showing the CDS group in Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State**



**Source:** <https://www.ifeh.org/wehd/>

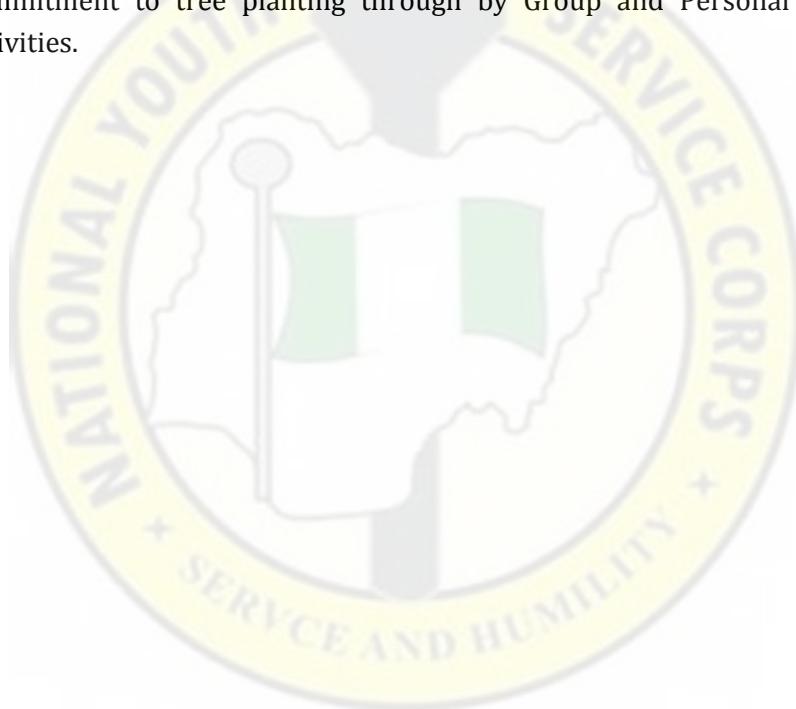
Therefore, among several stakeholders working towards afforesting or reforesting deforested areas in Nigeria, the NYSC has done more in this regard than all others.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the important role of the NYSC, has play in afforestation campaign beyond its traditional mandate of promoting national unity and integration that was part of post-civil war rebuilding plan of the Federal Government of Nigeria. These efforts were aimed at combating the menace of desertification and its associated

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consequences and negative impacts on the country's ecosystem. It is our contention that this additional role taken up by the scheme is in tandem with its avowed commitment to channel the energy, vibrancy and dedication of teeming Nigerian youthful graduates into saving the nation's environment from imminent danger that deforestation and desertification pose. Over the years, the NYSC as an institution and its serving corps members have dutifully and patriotically heeded the clarion call to the afforestation programme through its aggressive commitment to tree planting through Group and Personal CDS activities.



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### Introduction

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999, the promotion of charity has become a focus of increasing interest and to a lesser degree investment among those who believe that charitable work has an important role to play in addressing human challenges and strengthening fundamental rights and social justice.<sup>1</sup> Within that time

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<sup>1</sup>Paula D. Johnson et'al, "Promoting Philanthropy: Global Challenges and Approaches", December, (2014), 4, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)

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frame, the global understanding of charity has evolved considerably, and strategies to promote it have also expanded, though more slowly. Historically efforts to increase charity activities were confined mostly to the world's wealthiest nations and frequently targeted the wealthiest individuals within those societies. Similar efforts are now occurring in countries all around the globe, and strategies are expanding to engage a much larger segment of the population-the youths.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, all over the world, particularly in developing countries, the youths are the most vulnerable group to socio-economic and political crises. These issues of youth vulnerabilities reveal socio-economic impediments connected to unemployment, education and poverty on the one hand, and on the other, the realities of youth exclusion remain underpinned by weaknesses in development policy frameworks that barely focus on problems associated with power relations concerning the position of young people in decision making process that would have huge impact on national development.<sup>3</sup> In the contemporary world, youth development programme seeks to ensure that youth capabilities are central to development planning and policy making processes at all levels of governance.<sup>4</sup> The youths represent the greatest asset of many nations, be it developing or developed. More importantly it is upon the shoulders of the youths that the foundational character of human society and development is anchored.

The notion of development in relation to the emerging nations is regularly viewed in terms of economic development. This is primarily

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<sup>2</sup>Paula D. Johnson et'al, "Promoting Philanthropy, 4

<sup>3</sup>Dereck Osadere Arubayi, "Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development", (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Manchester, 2015), 17, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.research.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.research.manchester.ac.uk)

<sup>4</sup>Dereck Osadere Arubayi, "Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development", (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Manchester, 2015), 17, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.research.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.research.manchester.ac.uk)

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because economic development is regarded as the main, if not the only means by which the developing countries can adequately respond to the needs of their ever increasing population; and also because indicators are at the moment the most clearly defined ones available to social scientists. However, it has become increasingly obvious that the socio-political indicator of countries of Africa and Asia is that, there is much more scene of the development process than economic, that the conditions of social integration and political coherence are equally, if not more, important development goals. Indeed, there is little doubt that institutional deficiencies and unfavorable attitudinal frameworks induce and indirectly negatively affect the conditions of development.<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, many countries in Africa established National Youth Service Programmes during the period of colonial independence. Several of these programmes persist to the present day though often with significant changes since inception as in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Senegal and Ghana.<sup>6</sup> Most of these National Youth Service Programmes focuses on mobilizing young people for national unity, integration and development, thereby providing young Africans the opportunities to become actively involved in the process of nation building. By investing their time, skills and energy, volunteers make a vital contribution to the wellbeing of their communities. As corollary, service programmes provide an opportunity for disenchanted youth to transform relationships within their communal environment, change the policies and values of their nation, and bring hope for the less privileged members of the society. In a lot of places, national service

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<sup>5</sup>Chioma Onwere, “National Youth Service Corps Programme and National Integration in Nigeria, (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University Of London, 1992),16, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.discovery.ulc.ac.uk](http://www.discovery.ulc.ac.uk)

<sup>6</sup>Ron Israel and Sarah Nogueira, “Youth Service Programme: A Study of Promising Models in International Development, (2011),4, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.edu.org](http://www.edu.org)

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programmes have also helped to address needs that could not be met in their countries due to the lack of human and material resources.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme in 1973 was being as a result of General Yakubu Gowon's Post-Civil War intervention measures to foster national integration, unity and advance the course of socio-cultural ties among the teaming youths of the country. Though, almost five decades after its establishment, NYSC has grown quickly into an operational vehicle for harnessing the collective capability of the youths in Nigeria to drive the course of national development through its deployment strategy to key sectors of the economy (mainly education, health, agriculture, etc).<sup>8</sup>

Today, the youths represent the largest age group increasingly making the shift to parenthood. The values, attitudes and skills they acquire and develop will fundamentally shape the future of the societies and nations to which they belong. Hence, acknowledging the impact that today's youth will have on the future, many in government, multilateral lending institutions, international aid agencies, charity groups and civil society organizations are taking a growing interest in the development of the youth. The recognition that youths can have enormous impact (both positive and negative) on the wellbeing of a society is moving youth development from the side-line to the mainstream in the spheres of policy-making, program development and scholarship in different countries.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ron Israel and Sarah Nogueira, "Youth Service Programme: A Study of Promising Models in International Development, (2011), 4, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.edu.org](http://www.edu.org)

<sup>8</sup>DereckOsadereArubayi, "Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development"; (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Manchester, 2015), 18, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.research.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.research.manchester.ac.uk)

<sup>9</sup>Alex Etraet'al, "Youth Development through Civic Engagement: Mapping Assets in South Asia", (2010), 10, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.youthpolicy.org](http://www.youthpolicy.org)

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## Conceptual Clarifications

### Charity Group

A charity group is an organization that helps people in need by way of showing them kindness. It can be described as free will donation, service or empowerment and charity groups are responsible for rendering these services.<sup>10</sup> In other words, charity is a system of giving money, food or help to those who are in need or an organization that has the intention of giving money and assistance to the less privileged.<sup>11</sup> Thus, charity is philanthropic and humanitarian in nature. This makes charitable works quite different from civil society groups. While charity groups are part of civil society groups, civil society groups are not charity groups in the sense that civil society groups are formed to pursue specific issues like the fundamental human rights of citizens and social justice. To put it appropriately, charities are non-profit-organizations while not all non-profit organizations are charities. Though, organizations that are partly just dedicated to charitable purposes are sometimes regarded as or treated as charities, depending on specific regulations at a given jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup> However, they share certain characteristics in that they are both independent of the state and to some extent self-generating and self-reliant.

In another vein, charity is the act of extending love and kindness to others unconditionally, which is a conscious effort but the decision is made from the heart, without expecting any compensation. Hence, when charitable act is carried out selflessly, it is a one-way act where

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<sup>10</sup>Johnbull Mathew, 44 Years, Civic Servant, Kaduna, 5th March, 2021.

<sup>11</sup>OlawiyiwulaLawal, “Importance and Benefits of Charity to Society”, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2016, accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.editorialcdskabba.wordpress](http://www.editorialcdskabba.wordpress)

<sup>12</sup>New World Encyclopedia–“Charity Organisations”, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>

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an individual gives but ask for nothing in return.<sup>13</sup> To this effect, the impoverished, widows, orphans and ailing as well as those injured are properly placed for charitable deeds. It is due to this act of nature that makes it valuable and soulful. Meanwhile, there are individuals who believe that the act of charity should begin at home but others believe that it starts from the heart as a person feels the urge or deep need to give, beginning from home and ultimately extending to others in the larger society.<sup>14</sup> These positions notwithstanding, charity has been a major influence in social, political, religious, moral, economic, scientific and technological affairs. The range of issues promoted by charitable groups extends from efforts to limit air pollution to efforts to define and protect the rights of children. It has been influential in shaping the outcome of issues in religion, education, health, social welfare and human services, including family, children and government.<sup>15</sup>

### **Historicizing charity organizations in Nigeria**

Historically, charity group has existed in a variety of forms in all cultures and civilizations from time immemorial, yet most people know little about it and its distinctive place in human development.<sup>16</sup> Charitable act developed long as part of western civilization as a desirable quality recognized and fostered by religion throughout human history, and has been an integral part of European civilization. In medieval Europe, the Church bore the responsibility for organizing and promoting poor relief and it was not until the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the

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<sup>13</sup>Transparent Hands: “Concept, Purpose and Importance of Charity in our Society”, 19<sup>th</sup> February, (2018), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.transparenthand.org](http://www.transparenthand.org)

<sup>14</sup>Transparent Hands: “Concept, Purpose and Importance of Charity”

<sup>15</sup>Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*, (USA: Indiana University Press, 2008), 20.

<sup>16</sup>Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*, (USA: Indiana University Press, 2008)

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state began to take over this responsibility.<sup>17</sup> But, in contemporary times, charitable organizations exist for a broad range of specific reasons, all within the overarching commitment to benefit, improve or uplift humanity mentally, morally or physically. The relief of poverty, the improvement of government and the advancement of religion, education and health are further examples of common purposes for the establishment of charity groups.<sup>18</sup>

Through the years, charity has progressed from individual charitable works and deeds of helping the poor to more organized philanthropy, such as corporate social responsibility. Individuals, families, wealthy capitalists, film actors in the Nigerian movie industry and church leaders are using foundations and other non-profit organizations to contribute toward addressing social problems in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> As a colony in the British colonial system, charity in Nigeria has historic roots in British charitable practices and common law. Religious teachings and beliefs formed the basis for most charitable acts and philanthropic engagements by groups and associations.<sup>20</sup> This is the case for both Christians and Muslims. In the period after independence, the Nigerian civil war which began in 1967 to 1970 provoked the emergence of international charity organizations with food and relief materials for the poor and those affected severely by the war, especially in war torn 'Biafra' region of Eastern Nigerian. Also, the crises in parts of Northern Nigeria, and the agitations in the Niger-Delta region of the country over environmental degradation by oil exploration, marginalization and resource control were issues that facilitated the drive for the proliferation of philanthropic groups and attraction of more

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<sup>17</sup>New World Encyclopedia–Charity Organisations, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>

<sup>18</sup>New World Encyclopedia,

<sup>19</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, “The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria”, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 [www.learningtogiven.org](http://www.learningtogiven.org)

<sup>20</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, “The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria”,

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international charitable organizations into Nigeria, in the bid to address emerging socio-economic concerns.<sup>21</sup> Because charity groups serve as platform that bridges the gap between destitution and love, it gives hope to the hopeless, a voice to the voiceless and strength to the weakest in society. It serves as a shield against human predators.<sup>22</sup> This led to increased collaboration between indigenous charity groups and international non-governmental organizations to foster effective distribution of aid, wider reach of philanthropic activities in rural communities, and effective management of civil society organizations.<sup>23</sup> However, the era of political disorder and repression that existed during the military dictatorships led to withdrawal of international donor organizations from dealing directly with government. These groups formed new networks through which they carried out charitable functions, channelling most of their funds toward human rights and good governance initiatives, and addressing HIV/AIDS.<sup>24</sup> Through partnership with relevant government establishments like NYSC, charity organizations have been mobilized to impact on the development of our communities in Nigeria in addressing issues such as drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, Girl Child Education, youth volunteerism, as "moral action in response to human problems".<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, with the return of democracy in 1999, charity organizations have become more organized and top indigenous foundations are making generous impact beyond the shores of Nigeria and Africa. Among them are; David

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<sup>21</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, "The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria", accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 [www.learningtogiven.org](http://www.learningtogiven.org)

<sup>22</sup>Stephen Benjamin, 35+, Ex-Corps Member, Kaduna, 3rd March, 2021. Mr. Benjamin participated in many voluntary activities during his youth service days. Up till date, he is still active with United Nations U-Report

<sup>23</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, "The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria",

<sup>24</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, "The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria",

<sup>25</sup>Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*, (USA: Indiana University Press, 2008), 9

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Oyedepo Foundation, Chris Oyakhilome Foundation, Aliko Dangote Foundation, T.Y. Danjuma Foundation, Tony Elumelu Foundation.<sup>26</sup>

### **Purpose and Importance of Charity Groups in Community Development Service**

Charity begins with the innermost recognition of a need to show compassion to others whether knowingly or unknowingly. Some are motivated by deep interest in solving societal problems, especially in alleviating poverty and the provision of free education as well as healthcare. Others are interested in creating a family legacy in philanthropic giving.<sup>27</sup> That each and every one of us has problems, troubles and grief at some point in life is an assertion that cannot be disputed. But charity begins with those who learn to be selfless by downplaying their own problems in order to expand the bond of compassion, kindness and love to help others.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, charity is essential and therefore meant to be carried out for the benefit of humanity, to relief and to offer assistance to communities and people in their times of need in any part of the world, particularly those who are victims of war, natural disaster, catastrophe, hunger, disease, poverty among others by supplying them with food, shelter, medical facilities and other basic needs.<sup>29</sup> Such charitable works are essential tools in our collective attempts to solve public problems.<sup>30</sup> This has gained impetus in advancing the education of young people for the benefit of the good of society by giving scholarships and awards to students in

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<sup>26</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, “The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria”, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 [www.learningtogiven.org](http://www.learningtogiven.org)

<sup>27</sup>AnasteriaOkaomee, “The Non-Profit Sector and Philanthropy in Nigeria”,

<sup>28</sup>Transparent Hands: Concept, Purpose and Importance of Charity in our Society, 19<sup>th</sup> February, (2018), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.transparenthand.org](http://www.transparenthand.org)

<sup>29</sup>Transparent Hands: Concept, Purpose and Importance of Charity in our Society, 19<sup>th</sup> February,

<sup>30</sup>Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*, (USA: Indiana University Press, 2008), 10.

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full-time studies. When considering poverty in developing countries like Nigeria for instance, people feel deep pain and regret but seem to put no commensurate effort to reduce or eradicate the problem. Thus, when everyone is giving to an effective charity, the size of our donation would directly correspond to the number of people such groups are able to help in alleviating the suffering of mankind.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, a charity group intended to benefit society, community or a specific group of people, may have educational, humanitarian or religious intentions. For this reason, charity goes beyond giving relief to the indigent, by extending to the promotion of happiness and the support of many worthwhile reasons.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the greatest gift to the human community would be when we contribute to making lives better in common, when we touch the lives of others by mark of donations to charity, spreading light to the most deprived and enlighten our souls in the process. That is why non-profit, charitable organizations are mostly staffed by volunteers committed and devoted to improving the lives of abandoned, poor children, adults, orphans and destitute in the society, in order to provide children and families with clothing, food, education, shelter and teaching. Through love, motivation and opportunities, charity organizations help people to thrive and become self-reliant and sufficient in life,<sup>33</sup> while serving as gaps in some instances where government cannot cover and with NYSC's large coverage, the reach of these groups is further widened.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Transparent Hands: "Concept, Purpose and Importance of Charity in our Society", 19<sup>th</sup> February, (2018), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.transparenthand.org](http://www.transparenthand.org)

<sup>32</sup> "New World Encyclopedia–Charity Organisations", accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>

<sup>33</sup>Transparent Hands: "Concept, Purpose and Importance,

<sup>34</sup>Mary Usman, 58 Years, Civil Servant, Kaduna, 5th March, 2021.

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### **NYSC, Charity Groups and Strategic Partnerships: A Focus on the ENGINE and NGVP Programme**

The problems facing Nigeria as a developing nation are enormous, ranging from unemployment, poverty, high degree of illiteracy, severe shortage of highly skilled personnel and the uneven distribution of manpower across the country. Against this backdrop, the establishment of NYSC Scheme in 1973 was a response by the Federal Military Government to avert the situation.<sup>35</sup> In this regards, many charity groups have strategically partnered with NYSC such as United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC) on the engagement of corps members as enumerators in the 774 local government areas and selected schools, NYSC/UNICEF partnership on the U-Report to mobilise one million U-Reports by 2015, NYSC/HIV/AIDS Advocacy Programme in partnership with UNICEF, NYSC/Mercy Corps Nigeria partnership in Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE), National Graduate Volunteer Programme (NGVP) in partnership with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Nigeria among others in order to contribute to the development of Nigerian communities and instil the spirit of volunteerism in the youths. However, for the purpose of this paper, concentration will be placed on two case studies: Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) and National Graduate Volunteer Programme (NGVP).

#### **NYSC and Mercy Corps Partnership in Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE)**

Nigeria as a country is diverse in culture, ethnicity, and religion and like most developing nations it confronts significant economic and social challenges. Women and girls in more conservative areas of the country

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<sup>35</sup>Obinna Arigbo et'al, "Community Involvement in The National Youth Service Corps Community Development Service Projects in Abia State, Nigeria", Journal of Agricultural Extension, Vol. 23 (4), October, (2019), 66, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from <http://journal.aesonigeria.org>

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usually face norms that restrict their ability to attend school, engage in paid employment and participate in decision-making at home.<sup>36</sup> At the top of these challenges is high rate of poverty, illiteracy, narrow access to finance and markets for income generation. These are often compounded by other problems such as early marriage and pregnancy, lack of life skills and vocational skills training, distance to school, poor school infrastructure facilities and poorly trained teachers. For instance, where limited opportunities exist, girls experience further constraints ranging from security concerns, lack of guidance and counselling, inadequate reproductive health education and services, lack of community support and a conducive environment to gender inequalities and norms in and out of classrooms which negatively affect their progress.<sup>37</sup> These limitations are further aggravated by systemic weakness and one-size-fits-all approach to resolve challenges that often differ from one state or community to the other, instead of utilizing a variety of solutions. It is against this background that Mercy Corps in partnership with NYSC is implementing Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) programme; to ensure that no girl will be left behind.<sup>38</sup>

Thus the ENGINE programme is about girl child education whose importance to national development cannot be overemphasized. Corps members have been used to preach the importance of the girl child education and it has been successful because of the wide coverage of the NYSC scheme.<sup>39</sup> To this effect, sensitization, recruitment and training for one hundred and thirty one corps members volunteers for

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<sup>36</sup>Jeni Klugman et'al, “Working to Empower Girls in Nigeria: Highlights of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) Programme”, (2018),4, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.giwps.georgetown.edu](http://www.giwps.georgetown.edu)

<sup>37</sup>“Scaling up Interventions for Girls: Lessons Learned from ENGINE II Programme”, 8<sup>th</sup> December, (2020), accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 from <https://www.thecable.ng>

<sup>38</sup>“Scaling up Interventions for Girls

<sup>39</sup>Kutama Jamilu, 42 Years, Civil Servant, Kaduna, 5th March, 2021.

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the Mercy Corps Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Kano and Kaduna was conducted in 2015.<sup>40</sup> Through this strategic partnership, NYSC is able to achieve some of its objectives and accommodate certain percentage of the uneducated fraction of the youth in its programme of building a united Nigeria by giving priority to girls who are the most vulnerable in the society.<sup>41</sup> Not only on the part of NYSC but that of Mercy Corps too as a charity group that fosters young people's resilience by facilitating greater learning, protection and security as well as living opportunities. In addition, ENGINE sought after marginalized girls, identified by such circumstances as being married, pregnant or having a child before the age of eighteen; girls who are divorced or widowed; living in a household who are orphans or come from a single-parent household; having a disability; living in a household with a family member who has disability; or being unable to pay or afford school fees. The programme sought to expand opportunities for girls ages sixteen to nineteen, both those who were in school and those out of school, by building their confidence; increasing their financial management, business and leadership skills, and working to influence gender norms around women and girls' economic empowerment in the society. Key elements of the programme include providing safe spaces for girls and educating them in Mathematics, English and financial management, leadership and life skills. For girls who were out of school or not in school, the programme provided additional support, mentoring girls who were running their own businesses, connecting them to value chains, and providing opportunities to join savings groups. The programme ran in two nine-month cycles, beginning in 2014 and ending in 2016 <sup>42</sup> in the

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<sup>40</sup>National Youth Service Corps Official Website, [www.nysc.gov.ng](http://www.nysc.gov.ng)

<sup>41</sup>Emilia Tanko, 35 Years, Civil Servant, interviewed at Kaduna, 14th February,2021.

<sup>42</sup>Jeni Klugman et'al, "Working to Empower Girls in Nigeria: Highlights of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) Programme", (2018), 6, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.giwps.georgetown.edu](http://www.giwps.georgetown.edu)

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first phrase. This justifies the assertion that NYSC uses charity organizations as a means to enhance its service delivery to its participants and the host communities through their places of primary assignments or community development service.<sup>43</sup>This provides the backdrop for understanding the ideological model of involving the youth in development in relations to global and regional constructions of policy directives that guide gender balance in youth inclusion, participation and empowerment for societal and human development agenda.<sup>44</sup>

In the second phrase, Mercy Corps led Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) II is a three and half year (April 2017 to October 2020) adolescent girls education programme intended to address the barriers that limit marginalized girls' access to education and business opportunities and to create an enabling environment to succeed. Mercy Corps piloted the implementation of ENGINE II in Nigeria, along with four Civil Society Groups including Society for Women Development of Nigeria (SWODEN) in Kano, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) in Lagos, and Kindling Hope across Nations Initiative (KHAN) in Kaduna and Tabitha Cumi Foundation (TCF) in the Federal Capital Territory.<sup>45</sup> This strategic partnership resulted in tremendous achievement in providing support to young women and girls through safe spaces for tens of thousands of adolescent girls across the country to use these spaces to educate in-school and out-of-school girls in their communities, by acquiring the skills they need to earn a living of their own and gain

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<sup>43</sup>Alhaji Taura M. 56 Years, Civil Servant, Kaduna, 5th March, 2021.

<sup>44</sup>Dereck Osadere Arubayi, "Youth in Development: Understanding the Contributions of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to Nigeria's National Development", (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Manchester, 2015), 58, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.research.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.research.manchester.ac.uk)

<sup>45</sup>"Scaling up Interventions for Girls: Lessons Learned from ENGINE II Programme", accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 from <https://www.thecable.ng>

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access to financial services.<sup>46</sup> This validates the statement that NYSC's partnership with charity groups creates an avenue where the core purpose for the establishment of the scheme (socio-cultural and national integration) is feasible. Hence, this partnership creates room for the realization of the goals of the formation of NYSC scheme.<sup>47</sup> More so, ENGINE has been helpful. Studies have shown that some of the things that make the girl child most vulnerable to sexual exploitation are poverty and illiteracy. As such, with programmes like ENGINE, STREET-CHILD NIGERIA, etc, the global vision of providing a danger-free society for the adolescents, teenagers and youths against trafficking in persons, drugs, rape, etc becomes tangible.<sup>48</sup> Through this partnership, the project has gained recognition, wider coverage area as a result of the NYSC posting policy and readily available skilled professionals at its disposal to deliver voluntary services at no cost.<sup>49</sup> As a consequence, the NYSC scheme being a state-run youth organization is well-positioned to help build the capacity of the Nigerian girl-child to become economically relevant and productive in individual and family life.<sup>50</sup> Hence, for Nigeria to re-strategize its youthful population to take its rightful place in national development, consideration must be given to the social demography, economic and political discrepancies that exist in the country. This will serve as a fundamental step towards peace, security and inclusive expansion on a national scale in conjunction with the support of charity groups.

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<sup>46</sup>“Mercy Corps Nigeria: Where We Work”, accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 from <https://mercycorps.org>

<sup>47</sup>Aliyu Ahmed, 26 Years, Corps Member, Kaduna, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021.

<sup>48</sup>Stephen Benjamin, 35+, Ex-Corps Member, Kaduna, 3rd March, 2021. Benjamin participated in many voluntary activities during his youth service days. Up till date, he is still active with United Nations U-Reporter.

<sup>49</sup>Emilia Tanko, 35 Years, Civil Servant, interviewed at Kaduna, 14th February, 2021.

<sup>50</sup>Moses Odinaka Junior, 22 Years, Corps Member, Kaduna, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021.

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The ENGINE II programme witnessed lots of successes in improving learning outcomes and boosting economic opportunities for marginalized and less privileged girls across the states of Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and Federal Capital Territory. It was planned around three core outcomes of Learning, Transition and Sustainability to achieve enhanced learning experience, increase income generation and asset building skills, enhance life skills training opportunities, improve gatekeepers commitment and perception towards girl's education and expand policies and practices beneficial to adolescent girls and young women.<sup>51</sup>

**Table 14.1: Activities and Expected Results of the Engine Programme**

| Group and activities  | Expected results  |
|---|---|
| <b>Out-of-school girls</b>  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe Spaces for girls that included weekly instruction sessions (2 hours a week) in business, financial, leadership, and life skills</li> <li>Connections to value chains (Coca-Cola, Aritel, d.light)</li> <li>Access to savings groups</li> <li>Mentors and support to girls running businesses</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased income</li> <li>Increased business, financial management, and entrepreneurship skills</li> <li>Increased life and leadership skills</li> <li>Small businesses opened</li> <li>Savings groups joined</li> </ul> |
| <b>Students</b>   |   |
| Safe Spaces for girls that included weekly instruction sessions (2 hours a week) on academics and financial, leadership, and life skills  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved learning outcomes in math and reading</li> <li>Better financial management skills,</li> </ul>   |

<sup>51</sup>“Scaling up Interventions for Girls: Lessons Learned from ENGINE II Programme”, accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 from <https://www.thecable.ng>

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|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>including increased savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better life and leadership skills</li><li>• Increased secondary school completion rate</li></ul> |
| <b>Gatekeepers of students</b>   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organized “Champion days” to showcase girls’ activities</li><li>• Worked with School Based Management to implement strategies to keep girls in school</li><li>• Worked with religious leaders to promote girls’ education in sermons and outreach</li><li>• Worked with State Advisory Groups that promoted policies and actions that support girls’ education</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved perceptions of girls</li><li>• Girls empowered to make more decisions about their future</li></ul>                         |

**Source:** Jeni Klugman, Jennifer Parsons and Tatiana Melnikova<sup>52</sup>

The table above is a reflection of the target population of the ENGINE programme and expected outcomes. As stated earlier, to be qualified for a programme, girls had to be between the ages of 16 to 19 years and must fulfilled the outlined conditions for qualification of being married, an orphan, pregnant, divorced, widowed, had a child, has disability, etc.

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<sup>52</sup>Jeni Klugman et al, “Working to Empower Girls in Nigeria: Highlights of the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) Programme”, (2018), 14, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.giwpss.georgetown.edu](http://www.giwpss.georgetown.edu)

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### **NYSC and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Partnership on National Graduate Volunteer Programme (NGVP)**

The noble idea to give or offer any form of help when necessary by an individual or group of individuals; social and corporate groups, religious bodies and professional organizations, etc either to private individuals, communities, schools or institutions and countries, is not a new development. This much recognized trends of voluntary service, either to an individual or group of individuals, nation-states, institutions and comity of nations is generally accepted by national governments as a means by which governments' policies and efforts to maintain national peace, security and development could be complemented. In many developed and developing countries, volunteer service or volunteerism is targeted at offering the opportunities to young people, professional and experts to render voluntary services to the nation. There is no denial that offering young people opportunity to develop essential a, the unique contribution of VSO consisted of a strategic partnership with NYSC to identify work in emergent areas using highly qualified volunteers to tackle poverty and marginalization of youth in a holistic approach.<sup>53</sup> The contribution of national volunteering is in two-fold. Volunteers provide specialized support and competence building for partners, communities and primary actors on the one hand and on the other hand also deliver voice that produce outcomes towards improving people's lives and giving more voice and agency to vulnerable groups in society such as youth and children. It was apparent that volunteers take part in service delivery to primary actors in communities; such as teaching students, extending extension services to rural farming communities, thereby contributing to improving lives for these stakeholders. Volunteers further engage and empower other marginalized groups to have voice and become active citizens. National volunteering also enables marginalized groups such

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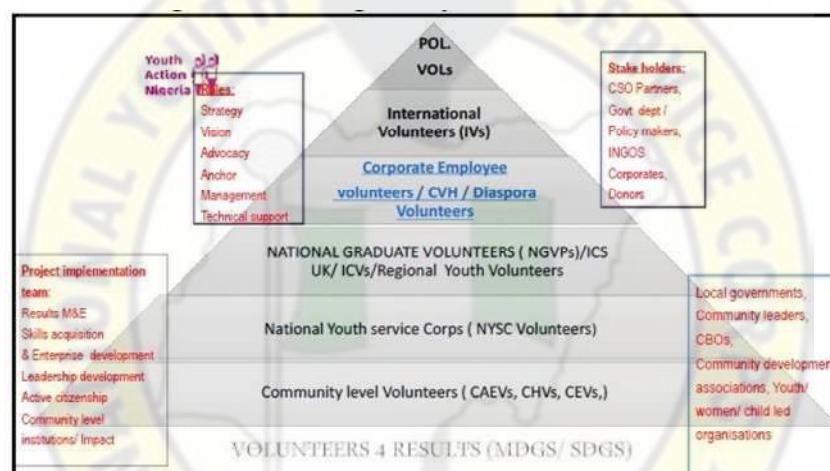
<sup>53</sup>“Volunteering Opportunity with VSO – NYSC for Nigerians”, 5<sup>th</sup> November, (2014), accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.opportunitydesk.org](http://www.opportunitydesk.org)

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as women farmers and young people in communities build skills through the act of volunteerism.<sup>54</sup> In this context, VSO partnership with NYSC on the NGVP involved the deployment of ex and serving corps members who volunteer to work in the areas of education, health and agriculture which has impacted on the lives of youths in many communities and states in Nigeria.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 14.1: VSO Nigeria Pyramid of Volunteers**



**Source:** Alfred Kuma and Janet Clark<sup>56</sup>

The diagram gives detailed analysis of the volunteering approaches. Shown in a pyramid framework, it ensures the effective contribution to

<sup>54</sup>Alfred Kuma and Janet Clark, "Evaluation of Approaches to National Volunteering: VSO Nigeria", (2016), 8, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.vsointernational.org](http://www.vsointernational.org)

<sup>55</sup>"VSO Lauds NYSC for their Support towards its Programmes", 11<sup>th</sup> July, (2017), accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.corpr.com.ng](http://www.corpr.com.ng)

<sup>56</sup>Alfred Kuma and Janet Clark, "Evaluation of Approaches to National Volunteering: VSO Nigeria", (2016), 15, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.vsointernational.org](http://www.vsointernational.org)

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community in conjunction with NYSC members. It encapsulates the stakeholders, strategy and project implementation mechanisms.

In another analysis, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Volunteers in the National Graduate Volunteering Programme (NGVP), National Volunteers in the International Citizen Service Programme (ICS), Skilled and Professional Volunteers Programme, among other models in the history of the country were found to be underutilized. Rather than engaging themselves in promoting efficient community based voluntary services, and in the fight against poverty and inequality, the government officials channel volunteer's programmes toward selfish gains. In real sense, national voluntary Service is understood to contribute to homeland development.<sup>57</sup> The role and contribution of volunteering services to development is enormous from the perspective of sustainable livelihoods and value-based while expressing the wellbeing of a people. Contrary to popular perceptions, the poor income nations are likely to volunteer much more than the rich income nations of the world. In doing so, they are expected to realize their assets which include knowledge, skills and social networks for their benefits and that of their families and communities as well. In addition, volunteering is likely to reduce social exclusion that is often the result of poverty, marginalization and other forms of inequality in the society. Therefore, volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which diminishes violent conflict at all levels and also fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations.<sup>58</sup>To this end, the NYSC and VSO partnership in capacity building and mobilization has offered the youth critical insights as well as improvement through experience gained in making huge input towards national development. Situating the foregoing within the context of Nigerian youth

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<sup>57</sup>Okereka O. Princewell and Oluka N. Lukas, “Understanding Volunteerism and Its Implications for National Development: A Perspective from Nigeria”, Vol.6, No 1, (2020), 32, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2021 from [www.iiardpub.org](http://www.iiardpub.org)

<sup>58</sup>Okereka O. Princewell and Oluka N. Lukas, “Understanding Volunteerism”,32

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development standpoint, it is acknowledged that youth capabilities are limited by lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, an ineffectual educational system and a lack of institutional capacity to sustain human interventions in development. This makes the partnership a worthwhile endeavour and justifies the assertion that volunteerism is the vehicle or avenue that people and groups of like minds uses to make impact and contribute to the development of their community, nation and society at large.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 3: National Volunteering Models of VSO Nigeria**



**Source:** Alfred Kuma and Janet Clark<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> JimohAbdullahi, 25 Years, Corps Member, Kaduna, 26th February, 2021.

<sup>60</sup> Alfred Kuma and Janet Clark, "Evaluation of Approaches to National Volunteering: VSO Nigeria", (2016), accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 from [www.vsointernational.org](http://www.vsointernational.org)

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The table above shows five volunteering approaches adopted by VSO with further explanation along each one. NYSC members engaged in community development services and sent to schools in rural communities to help improve the quality of teaching and learning, while empowering other marginalized groups for impact creation.

### **Conclusion**

From the analysis and findings on NYSC and Charity Groups, it is very clear that there have been significant benefits that accrue to the youth involved in voluntary actions by way of developing their capacity to become productive citizens thereby contributing to national development, especially due to the wider coverage of NYSC. Also, by acquiring skills, their employability chances has increased since they can now do their tasks better. In other words, this kind of partnership paves the way for both organizations to achieve their set goals of impacting on the socio-economic development of the nation and instilling in the youth the spirit of volunteerism.

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Trends, Continuity and Change in the Nigeria's National Youth Service...

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**Trends, Continuity and Change in the Nigeria's  
National Youth Service Scheme**

Olutayo Ajibade  
and  
Emilia Tanko

**Introduction**

Throughout human history, the population of the youth in every society is perceived to be the power house of development. This has made most modern nations to develop various programme for integration and unity, especially in plural societies like modern African states, which were created for western capitalist interest. Sometimes, these kinds of national programs are established in the states after national

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conflicts (civil war) in order to bridge the gaps of integration created by the wars. Similarly, the programmes are established to train the youth of such a given nation on commitment to nationhood and development. The NYSC scheme was established in a bid to reconcile, reconstruct and re-build the country following the Nigerian Civil war (1967 -1970). The hapless antecedents in Nigeria's national history provided momentum for the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps through Decree No.24 of 22nd May, 1973 which declared that the NYSC was being founded "with a view to ensure proper encouragement and development of common ties among Nigerian youths and for the promotion of national unity."<sup>1</sup> Nigeria as a developing country, is plagued by the challenges present in developing state, specifically mass illiteracy, poverty, serious shortage of high skilled workforce (backed up by uneven distribution of the available skilled workforce), inadequate housing and socio-economic infrastructural amenities. As a remedial action, the youth mobilised into the NYSC programme were expected to tackle the serious shortage and unequal distribution of skilled labour throughout the country. Similarly, enlisting youth from different areas of the country to serve together and introducing them to the manner of living in different parts of Nigeria, is designed to "remove ignorance and prejudice and promote national unity."<sup>2</sup>As such, the concentration on tertiary-educated youths recognises their role as future national leaders and influencers, and also their ability to supply skilled labour.

The introduction of NYSC was welcomed with resistance and public protests.<sup>3</sup> The NYSC confronted resistance from the start, even leading

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<sup>1</sup> Nigeria Military Government, Establishment of National Youth Service Corps by Decree No.24 of 22nd May, 1973,

<sup>2</sup>NYSC Act of 1973,

<sup>3</sup>Sanda, A.O. "Problems and prospects of the National Youth Service Corps in Nigeria." Report submitted to the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Ibadan, April, 1976, p. 34.

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to a riot at the University of Lagos.<sup>4</sup> There were massive objections, people and students misunderstood the idea of the scheme for a system of reimbursing the tuition their families had expended in their training, which in the opinion made the basic monthly allowance meager; all these were of serious concern.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Nigeria is equally divided along ethnic and religious lines, with Muslim majority in the north and the bulk of Christians in the south. Due to the regulation that students must serve outside their home state, a lot of graduates are posted to regions with identifiable divergent religious and ethnic structure.

However, the scheme has become accepted generally as a core youth institution in Nigeria. Since then, it has become entrenched in the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria and its influence has spread to every parts of the country due to the meticulous distribution of corps members. Nevertheless, the NYSC scheme has been criticized by few, in several controversial discourses including requests for its discontinuation on grounds of large costs and impact.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, supporters argue that it plays a substantial role in promoting inter-group harmony.<sup>7</sup>

It is on this premise that the article seeks to examine the trends in the National Youth Scheme, assess the need to continue the scheme and to examine if there is need for change. Hence, this chapter examines how the scheme has influenced youth preparation for sustainable productivity and employment benefit as a built-up programme for national development. Equally, the work examines the challenges confronting the scheme. Therefore, the chapter is divided into seven sections with the first section being the introduction. The second

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<sup>4</sup>AkinboA. A, "The tool for Unity: NYSC", assessed March 2, 2021,  
<https://www.tigweb.org/youth-media/panorama/article.html?ContentID=13201>.

<sup>5</sup>AkinboA. A, "The tool for Unity: NYSC".

<sup>6</sup>OyebolaO. "Does Exposure to Other Ethnic Regions Promote National Integration? Evidence from Nigeria" World Bank: Development Policy Research Working Paper8606, 2018, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Interview by Reverend Tiyayo Francis, 50, Catholic Seminary Ilorin. February 23, 2021.

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section covers the conceptual clarification; the third section is the research methodology; the fourth section discusses the trends in Nigeria's national youth service; the fifth section examine the continuity and the need for change in the National Youth Service Scheme; the sixth section explains the effort of NYSC at curbing its Challenges while the seventh section is the conclusion.

### **Definition of terms**

The NYSC was established in 1973. The Scheme was mainly targeted at enhancing national cohesion and bridging the gap of intricate development needs with the expertise of youth graduates.<sup>8</sup> FA Aremu<sup>9</sup> opine that the initiative behind the NYSC was broad and timely in its days of establishment. Thus, with regards to its foundational decree the NYSC was targeted at reconciling, reconstructing and rebuilding the Nigerian state after the civil war. Faced with post-civil war challenges, the government of General Yakubu Gowon established the scheme to advance unity among the divided ethnic groups within the country.<sup>10</sup>

The goals of the Scheme are outlined in Decree No. 51 of 16th June, 1993, which focused on instilling discipline in Nigerian youths by inculcating in them, a culture of industry at work, of loyal and patriotic service to Nigeria in whatever circumstance they find themselves.<sup>11</sup> It was thus a deliberate attempt at stimulating the patriotic spirit of the Nigerian youths by establishing platforms for them to be educated on greater ideals of national unity, cultural and social improvement through re-orientation of behavior/mind, common experience and appropriate training.

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<sup>8</sup>Innovations in Civic Participation 2010d

<sup>9</sup> Femi Aremu, "National Youth Service Corps Programme and the Quest for National Integration: Issues for Policy Consideration," *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, (2018): 5.

<sup>10</sup>Aremu, "Policy Consideration," 4.

<sup>11</sup>Aremu, "Policy Consideration," 6.

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Therefore, NYSC scheme requires all youth graduates to serve for a period of a year in any areas within the country outside their cultural background. It has four basic components: orientation, primary assignment, community development and winding-up/passing out ceremony.

The participant in the scheme starts with a regimented three-week orientation course in the different states. Corps members are well-kitted throughout the camp which is fully regimented. The Orientation exercise features activities like physical training, sports competitions, drills, and lectures on various social issues, social activities and language classes. They are programmed to inculcate the ideals of the programme, and to entrench comradeship spirit and integrate them. At the close of the orientation, corps members collect their posting letters to the "places of primary assignment" in the host state.

Here, corps members are mandated to work for eleven months in a regular job, and carry out community development projects in the host communities. Corps members are allowed to serve in their professional areas. For instance, agricultural science graduates provide expertise to farmers on crops and pesticides, while education graduates teach in high schools. The real impact of the service is felt in schools, hospitals, government offices, private companies and non-profit organisations. Indeed, corps members normally collect a monthly stipend paid by the federal Government.<sup>12</sup>

Trends can be explained as the "general course of prevailing tendency" of an event, scheme or concept.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it connotes the general direction of a subject. Hence, the general direction of the scheme through a period of orientation, deployment, community service and a passing out period will be the concern of this chapter.

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<sup>12</sup> Oral interview with OganijaMutiyat, 43years, NYSC Secretariat Kaduna,  
24/02/2021

<sup>13</sup> "Dictionary.com," Trends. [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).

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'Continuity' can be understood as an "uninterrupted duration or continuation"<sup>14</sup> mainly without massive changes. The idea of continuity in the NYSC centers around its ability to adapt to recent realities without necessarily changing its core value and purpose.

On the other hand, 'Change' means "a general transition of something or phase to another state or condition."<sup>15</sup>This implies a tilting towards a goal, vision, an idealised state or a movement away from present beliefs, attitude or condition.<sup>16</sup>It can also refer to an unending process of adjustment and readaptation to circumstances.<sup>17</sup> The scheme over the years has recorded positive achievements but just like any other system or initiative; challenges are bound to occur. Therefore, with the increasing number of graduates, insecurity and so on, it is essential that the NYSC scheme maintains its purpose (continuity) and address certain sets backs to the objectives it seeks to achieve.

### Trends in Nigeria's National Youth Service

The trends or pattern of the Nigerian National Youth Service is inclined towards four major components: orientation, primary assignment, community development and passing out. The scheme starts with a regimented three-week orientation course in different states. Corps members are expected to wear uniforms throughout the camp without permission to leave the camp. Orientation activities like physical training and sports competitions, drills, lectures on various social issues, social activities and language classes are programmed to inculcate the ideals of the programme, entrench comradery among Corps members and integrate them in to their host state.

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<sup>14</sup>"Merriam-Webster," Continuity. Retrieved 2021, march 17. Assessed March 17, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuity>.

<sup>15</sup>"IGI Global," What is Change. Retrieved 2021, march 17. [www.igi-global.com/dictionary/chaos-and-complexity-approach-in-management/3646](http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/chaos-and-complexity-approach-in-management/3646)

<sup>16</sup>"IGI Global," What is Change.

<sup>17</sup>"IGI Global," What is Change.

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At the close of the orientation, Corps members collect their posting letters to "places of primary assignment" in any local government in the host state. They serve at this position till the end of the service year, majorly as school teachers, staff in hospitals, government offices, private companies and non-profit organisations. Corps members normally collect monthly stipends paid by the federal government, an additional stipend in line of accommodation and transport from their employer for the service duration.<sup>18</sup>

The third component of the scheme is community development service (CDS). Oneday every week, Corps members carry out community service projects in groups. CDS groups serve in a variety of ways such as environmental sanitization and beautification projects, HIV sensitization, extra-moral study session for students in secondary school, and road safety campaigns etc. Finally, at the end of the year, after receiving receipt of clearance letter from participants' primary employers confirming satisfactory completion of their services, NYSC issues a certificate of national service to Corps members at the end of the passing out ceremony.

The pattern of this scheme has brought about both positive changes to the youths and Nigeria in general while also battling certain challenges. The youth service programme has improved and elevated inter-ethnic relationship and marriages among Nigerian youth, which has contributed to bridging the gap among the multiple ethnic groups in Nigeria. The development of family ties across ethnic groups in Nigeria is a strong weapon for promoting unity across the nation.<sup>19</sup> Also, the distribution of manpower across the country has been made possible through the NYSC scheme. Certain parts of the nation that used to lack specialised manpower previously, now enjoy these privileges since the

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<sup>18</sup>Oral interview with OganijaMutiyat, 43, NYSC Secretariat Ilorin, 12/03/2021

<sup>19</sup>Adegboyega,I.A. & David, A.F "The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme in Nigeria, 1973-2012: Retrospective and Prospective Analysis" *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Diplomacy* Volume 2, no. 2 (2012):15.

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NYSC scheme has encouraged free mobility of labour in the nation. This has the tendency of ensuring social and economic growth in different aspects of the nation.

The youth service scheme, has contributed to sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing. The term 'livelihoods' covers a variety of ventures that contribute towards 'making a living,' enhancing quality of life and improving self-reliance. These include education (skills training and capacity building), health and social networks.<sup>20</sup> Youth service volunteerism generally contributes to sustainable livelihood in multiple ways including in education, health and building capability assets (knowledge, skills and social networks).<sup>21</sup> Such benefits accrue to volunteers as well as their families and communities, and are critical in increased access to formal employment.

According to Beatrice Osuala, argues that the as a result of NYSC service, participants posted to the education sector are likely to access additional enlightenment resulting from exposure and linkages, training or employment more their peers that did serve.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, volunteer service such as establishment of day care centers, crèches and child-minding facilities for children, peer educators that reach out to communities across the nation, have created a system of self-help or mutual aid. Another notable area of contribution to national growth by the NYSC are in the likes of community engagement, social inclusion and cohesion.

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<sup>20</sup> R Leigh, D.H Smith, B. J Lough, J.M Mati, C. Giesing, M.J León, D.Haski-Leventhal, Strasburg, "State of the World's volunteerism Report: Universal values for global wellbeing" In Hockenos P (Ed.). Bonn, Germany: United Nations Volunteers (UNV), 2011, p. 24 see also D. Caprara; J. Mwathi; E. Obadara and H. Perold, "Volunteering and Civic Service in three African Regions: Contributions to Regional Integration, Youth Development and Peace" Brookings: Global Economic Development, n.d. p. 7.

<sup>21</sup>Oral interview with Osuala Beatrice, 46, Kaduna, National Youths Service Corps, 24/03/2021.

<sup>22</sup>Oral interview with Osuala Beatrice, 46, Kaduna, National Youths Service Corps, 24/03/2021.

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Despite the achievements of the scheme, it has overtime been affected by growing security crises among other issues. The wanton security crises consistently pose a challenge to participants and staff of the service scheme. Contrary to the mandatory proportional distributive system of corps member, some states are considered hot spots which serve as impediment to the smooth performance of the scheme. Security challenges seek to compromise NYSC's smooth operation, this takes dynamic dimensions of kidnapping, insurgency, farmers/herder's crises, communal conflict, armed banditry, electoral violence, sexual assault from within and outside the scheme. These aforementioned security lapses have continued to release psychological terror on both parent and volunteers (corps members).

### **Continuity and the Need for Change in the NYSC plan**

The need for compulsory service year for youths to continue is unbeatable. Whatever the debates put forward by the critics of the Scheme, its usefulness to national growth, unity, and achievement cannot be quantified in terms of financial expenditure on it. This is actually because no amount of money spent to enhance national unity and integration is too big and can be equated with the massive blood bath arising disunity disputes and conflicts such as the Nigerian civil war.

It was such priceless contributions of the NYSC over four decades that made it exemplary and worthy of emulation all over the world. For example, The Gambia youth service programme was established in January 1996, with technical assistance from the NYSC.<sup>23</sup> As one of the pioneer youth volunteer training schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, it has elicited a lot of positive attentions from the outside world because of the history and attendant qualities of its achievements.

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<sup>23</sup>NYSC Profile Directory, 2001, p. 21.

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The scheme has been successful given its foundational records and improvement on policies of the programme. First, there is a wide fundamental consensus that it has fulfilled a basic institutional objective of facilitating social integration in post-civil war Nigeria.<sup>24</sup> More concretely, since its inception, the scheme has deployed thousands of corps members within the nation to serve in different sectors, including health, agriculture and education, in the public and corporate sectors.

The Scheme is known to deploy youths to essential sector like agriculture, education, health, local government, rural development, including surveying, physical planning, civil engineering and rural industries.<sup>25</sup> With the presidential proclamation stopping postage of Corps members to the banking sector in 2015, the Nigerian educational sector remains the major beneficiary of the Scheme as most Corps members are usually engaged as classroom teachers, support staff of tertiary institutions and first class graduates posted to universities as graduate assistants,<sup>26</sup> One symbol of the programme's success is the way in which the mandatory one-year national service has become a permanent part of the post-graduation calendar in the country.

Nevertheless, despite the positive records, present realities shows that challenges continue to intensify for Nigeria's youth service programme. This might be a consequence of positive influence of mass media and information communication technology which provides for comparative variants of the oldest scheme with what is obtainable globally where social inclusion is wholesome as well as the effect of disintegrating ability to gain employment in the countries. It is an

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<sup>24</sup>Oral interview with Okasanmi James, 56, Abuja, Radio correspondent and public analyst,

12/03/2021

<sup>25</sup>Oral interview with Master BayowaBabalakin, 45, Lagos State University, Academic, 22/02/2021

<sup>26</sup>Oral interview with Master BayowaBabalakin, 45, Lagos State University, Academic, 22/02/2021

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established fact that the NYSC faces several challenges, top on the list are: The question of continuity of national service scheme attracts of mixed feelings. Many Nigerians believe that NYSC has been largely successful but is facing serious challenges currently. To sustain continuity, supervising ministry needs to objectively youth service programme and the modalities for its institutionalization beyond mere national integration core value. As the world is dynamic, so is the need for NYSC to move at a fast phase innovatively.

### **Challenges Facing the NYSC: Way Forward**

To ensure its continuity and effectiveness NYSC has adopted certain methods in curbing its challenges and they include:

- 1. Insecurity:** In the quest to securite the lives of staff and Corps members NYSC is synergising with security agencies in the courtesy to protect Corps members during Orintation exerises and the rest of the service year.
- 2. Inadequate NYSC Camp Facilities:** as Nigeria's population continue to increase, there is relative increase in the number of graduates from the 134 polytechnics and 174 universities. The tertiary institutions in Nigeria are estimated to graduate about 600,000 graduates per year.<sup>27</sup> According to Muhammad Momoh, since inception of the youth service scheme not less than two million graduates have passed through the NYSC.<sup>28</sup> The scheme started with 2,364 graduates in 1973 but now over 250,000 graduates pass through the scheme annually.<sup>29</sup> To address the continued increase in the populate of Corps

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<sup>27</sup>Babalobi, B. Nigeria- Why Graduates are Unemployed and Unemployable. AllAfrica. Retrieved on 2021, march 17 <https://www.allafrica.com/stories/201912240618.html>

<sup>28</sup>Premium Times. Two million graduates pssed through NYSC since Inception- Official. [www.premiuimtimeng.com/news/157214-two-million-graduates-passed-through-nysc-since-inception-official.html](http://www.premiuimtimeng.com/news/157214-two-million-graduates-passed-through-nysc-since-inception-official.html)

<sup>29</sup> Premium Times. Two Million Graduates.

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member, against lack of proportional improvement in the Camp facilities to accommodate them, the scheme has devised a method of dividing them into batches. Hence, we have batches A, B and C and each batch has been sub-divided into stream one (I) and two (II) as the case may be. These batches were introduced in succession as the number of graduates continued to rise.

3. **Post-service unemployment:** The attainment of high growth rates and full employment is top priorities for developed and developing countries. Unfortunately, Nigeria appears to record high unemployment rate and unimpressive growth rate. Most countries face challenges related to unemployment and growth, which can be more devastating for developing countries like Nigeria. Unemployment has been a lingering issue in Nigeria.<sup>30</sup> A large percentage of youths in Nigeria are unemployed. These high unemployment rate was resulted in an increase in social vices including prostitution, human trafficking, child labour, kidnapping, robbery and the recent recruitment of teenagers by the dreaded terrorist groups, Boko Haram and their allies in North Eastern Nigeria. Regrettably, the rising unemployment rate adversely affects economic growth because of the declining aggregate demand/consumption and declining domestic investment, which subsequently re-enforce unemployment problems, which by extension are due to low production. Hence, this implies a cutback in the employment of input factors including labour.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ogbemudia, B.I “Productivity Growth and Unemployment Rate: Nigeria” Focus:*International Journal of Research in Applied, Natural and Social Sciences* Vol. 6, Issue 2, (2001): 2

<sup>31</sup> Oral interview with Odebumi Ali, 48, Economist, Lagos state University, 12/03/2021

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The unprecedented rise in the rate of unemployment was largely traceable to the expansion in number of school graduates with no matching job opportunities, a freeze on employment in many private and public institutions as well as the slow disbursement of the capital budget by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Alerted by the danger of chronic unemployment, the NYSC has shifted from its sole unification objective to training and re-training of youths in skills acquisition and post service plan such as collaboration and linkages with financial institutions such as the Central Bank of Nigeria, African Development Bank and Bank of Agriculture, for easy access to seed capital for micro-investment by corps members after passing out from the scheme.

4. **NYSC Collaborations:** Due to the increasing challenges facing the scheme, debates have continued to emanate on the continued usefulness of the scheme to the Nigeria youths. Hence, NYSC has continued to re-invent itself to meet the expectation of today's reality. Therefore, The National Youth Service Corps Scheme collaborates with international, regional and local agencies in many areas of human and societal developmental necessities in achieving national and global relevance. The catalogue of the distinct tasks and programmes undertaken by corps members is unlimited. These collaborative efforts are known to have created series of events, forums and training meant to furnish participants with skills for personal fulfilment and effective contribution to national growth. Some of the projects executed by the NYSC scheme, through collaborative efforts with other international agencies such as International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) based at the Colorado State University, USA, include coaching the staff of NYSC in the aspect of preliminary process for Sustainable Development. Similarly, John Hopkins University in

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the U.S supported by U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) is in collaboration with Nigeria's NYSC in coaching the staff of NYSC to confront challenges on Reproductive Health and Good Governance using corps members as targets.<sup>32</sup> Also the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is known to collaborate with the NYSC in the aspect of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support and reproductive health project using corps members as Peer Educators in secondary schools, while USAID Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria is in collaboration with the NYSC to providing counselling, testing and awareness on Anti-Retroviral Drugs for victim of HIV/AIDS.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Corps members are often made to serve as independent supervisors during poliomyelitis immunization across the country. They also take part in public awareness campaigns on immunization against deadly diseases like polio, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis and the control of malaria and diarrhea, among other linkage with the World Health Organisation (WHO).<sup>34</sup> NYSC has also taken an international dimension to its community services through strategic collaboration with United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in developing the reading culture of Nigerians, especially in the rural areas through the creation of rural libraries via Corps members.<sup>35</sup>

The British Council/World Bank Institute (BC/WBI) is known to have continued to top the list of international collaborations with the NYSC in the area of creating awareness on the Sustainable Development

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<sup>32</sup>NYSC, “Special Projects and Collaborations with Other Agencies”, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.nysc.gov.ng/programs.html>

<sup>33</sup>Oral interview by BulamaGoni, 52, School Principal, Zaria,22/02/2021

<sup>34</sup><sup>34</sup>Oral interview by BulamaGoni, 52, School Principal, Zaria, 22/02/2021

<sup>35</sup>Oral interview with Capt. Nuhu Yaro, 45, Ogun State NYSC Orientation Camp, 22/02/2021.

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Goals (SDGS) and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) for implementation through the community development service (CDS) projects of corps members.<sup>36</sup> Given the potential of the NYSC youth resources, the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) is also in collaboration with the NYSC in the area of fighting against women trafficking, child labour and HIV/AIDS. It is a programme supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) department of the British High Commission and recently by Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) of the USAID. WOTCLEF works in tandem with National Agency for protection against Trafficking in Persons (NAPТИP); an agency created as a result of the impact and achievements of the WOTCLEF programme to implement the law on trafficking in persons in Nigeria. In the aspect of orientation and national awareness, the United States Embassy is using Corps members to campaign on waste management, environmental regeneration, habitant conservation, controlling pollution, and liter collection in partnership with some selected state government and the Ecological Fund.<sup>37</sup>

NYSC is as well in local collaborations with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Service Compact with All Nigerians (SERVICOM) and LEGAL AID. Corps volunteers form Drug-free clubs organise public awareness campaigns lectures, rallies, seminar etc. in schools, markets, motor parks and public squares in their host communities. To determine the NYSC

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<sup>36</sup>Oral interview with Capt. Nuhu Yaro, 45, Ogun State NYSC Orientation Camp, 22/02/2021.

<sup>37</sup>J. E. Larsen, "Young People in West and Central Africa Trends, Priorities, Investments and Partners," UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office, (2009):34.

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scheme has harnessed wide international and local collaboration and linkages.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of the paper was to examine how the NYSC scheme deals with the need to maintain continuity and change in relation to the ability of the scheme to remain relevant at all times without losing its sense of purpose or its objectives. In the body of the work, it was obvious that the NYSC is highly organized and deliberate in its activities; as they are tailored to develop the Nigerian youth for national unity and development. The effective harnessing of the potentials of Corps participants through its cardinal programmes has led to several identifiable achievements of the scheme overtime. However, the scheme has also experienced challenges in the process of fulfilling its mandate. Therefore, there was need to examine how NYSC will maintain its objectives while addressing its challenges; such inadequate facilities at its orientation camps, issues of security of NYSC staff and Corps members, post service unemployment and so on. These challenges to have been addressed through extensive collaborations with other agencies, through the systematic division of corps members into manageable groups for orientations and securing its personnel through active collaboration with security outfits within the country. Conclusively, the NYSC scheme has been able to adjust to present realities and hopefully more can be done to further accentuate their efforts.

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**Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:  
An Overview of His Achievements as 18th  
NYSC Director-General**

Bem Japhet Audu  
and  
Maryam Hamza

**Introduction**

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has attained tremendous height since the assumption of office by Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim as the Director General (DG) of the Scheme. This is not surprising, given the fact that Gen Ibrahim is a thoroughbred military administrator, who combines scholarship, emotional intelligence and finesse in his administrative duties. His experiences cut across administration in the

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military and civil establishments, which combination have accelerated the pace of the modest service rendered to the NYSC.

Key issues that confronted the Scheme upon his assumption of office include the need to sustain the relevance of the NYSC in a fast-changing world; second, inadequate motivation and welfare for Corps Members and staff of the Scheme. The third was the challenge of unemployment among the youths after the mandatory one year national service.

Gen Ibrahim's track record as a visionary leader readily came to play in tackling these challenges. He initiated a five-point policy thrust to address them. These five-point policy thrust include the following:

- ❖ Sustain effective utilisation of the potentials of Corps Members for optimal benefit;
- ❖ Strengthen existing collaborations with critical stakeholders;
- ❖ Improve on the welfare and security of Corps Members and staff;
- ❖ Pursue a technologically driven organisation to deepen effective service delivery;
- ❖ Reinvigorate the NYSC Ventures and SAED in line with the NYSC Act for greater impact.

It is against this backdrop that this essay examines the achievements of Gen Ibrahim as Director General of the NYSC, using a descriptive approach and evidence -- based study. The paper argues that Gen Ibrahim has not only transformed the NYSC, but has also repositioned it to benefit the Corps Members, members of staff and indeed, the nation at large.

The assumption here is that leadership is a process of galvanising resources to attain group goals. Gen Ibrahim's leadership style has led to the transformation of the NYSC by strengthening the institution, in terms of welfare, security, innovations and technological advancement. Despite these laudable achievements, there have equally been challenges. The Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic threatened to

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derail the activities of the Scheme. As an astute administrator, he rose to the occasion through a robust coordinated response to manage the pandemic that has become a reference point and template for other establishments in the country.

**Towards a Biography of General Ibrahim: Trends in his Academic, Military and Administrative Career**

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim (Associate Professor), was born on the 13th July, 1967 and hails from Nasarawa Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. He attended the famous University of Jos where he obtained Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in History (1989 and 1992 respectively), before proceeding to bag a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education from Tai Solar in University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. Driven by his tenacity to acquire knowledge, he went on to obtain a Ph.D in History from the University of Abuja in 2007.

Since his commissioning into the Nigerian Army, he has served in various capacities in military formations across the country. His appointments and postings include: The Institute of Army Education (Research Officer). Researched and produced Nigerian Army Journals and Briefs for the Nigerian Army in particular, and the Military in general; NYSC (Military Assistant to the Director General) 1997-1999; Nigerian Defence Academy (Taught 100 and 200 Levels 2000-2004; National Defence College (Staff Officer I Military History 2004-2009; Headquarters Nigerian Army School of Education (Senior Instructor) 2009-2011; Commandant Command Secondary School, Suleja 2012-2014; Nigerian Defence Academy (Head of Department, History and War Studies), 2015-2018; and Registrar, Nigerian Army University, Biu, Borno State(2018-2019).

Brigadier General S Ibrahim is a scholar of high repute, who authored, co-authored, edited, co-edited and contributed articles/chapters to numerous books and academic Journals.

Despite his tight schedule, Brig Gen S Ibrahim still devotes time to academic work, including the supervision of students' thesis and dissertations, serving as Internal and External Examiner of Master's

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Students at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and the Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim was appointed 18th Director General of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), and assumed the leadership of the Corps on 10th May, 2019. This ushered in a transformation era for the Scheme which has not only been a source of immense benefit to the Service Corps, but the entire country in general.

The General also had a cluster of completed courses in the military, and excelled in these courses. Brig Gen Ibrahim is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and War Studies, Nigeria Defence Academy, Kaduna. These feats in both military and academic trainings, as well as experience in service are what marked him out as a visionary, seasoned and ingenious administrator.

Since assumption of duty as the Director General of the NYSC, the media has been awash with burgeoning records of his strides. His vision for the Scheme informed his decision to roll out a five-point policy thrust, geared towards utilising the potentials of the Corps Members maximally. Since assumption of duty at the NYSC, his pragmatic leadership skill has set the Scheme on the path of rejuvenation and continuous relevance. Like his predecessors, he came up with robust and ambitious programmes, aimed at repositioning the Scheme as a self-sufficient and revenue -- generating government organisation.

This chapter will attempt an appraisal of the delivery of these specific goals by the administration of Gen S Ibrahim within a short period of two years, in spite of the huge challenges facing the Scheme.

Sustain effective utilisation of the potentials of Corps Members for optimal benefit.

The successful conduct of the 2019 NYSC Sports and Cultural Festivals is a remarkable achievement of the Director General in harnessing the huge potentials of the Corps Members for national development. The NYSC Sports and Cultural Festivals serve as one of the veritable

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avenues through which the Scheme promotes national unity, cultural integration, as well as showcasing the abundant talents of Corps Members in the areas of sports and culture for gainful employment in the sports and film industries. The Festivals were revived by the present management. The grand finale was held in Abuja. Not only that, measures were put in place to ensure that the event holds annually.

Another success of the NYSC Director General is the production of an NYSC movie titled "A Call to Service" currently undergoing post production work. Apart from its entertainment value, the movie is being packaged to create public awareness on the roles of stakeholders to the Scheme. These stakeholders include the three tiers of government, Corps employers, as well as serving and prospective Corps Members. Ultimately, the film will promote better understanding of the Scheme to the public, in addition to sensitising them on their expected roles to the Scheme.

Another noteworthy achievement of the Director General is the establishment of NYSC National Cultural Troupe. This initiative is to provide a veritable platform for Corps Members to develop their talents in drama and cultural dance, while also eliciting public support towards harnessing such talents through private and corporate patronage. Remarkably, the NYSC Cultural Troupe will also shore up the revenue base of the Scheme through its activities which will be commercialised.

In the same vein, the NYSC Director General has successfully organised a National Anti-Corruption Walk. This is in furtherance of the NYSC's contributions to the fight against corruption through the activities of the Corps Anti-Corruption and Integrity CDS Group. The programme involved the participation of thousands of Corps Members in the first ever nationwide rally/road walk organised by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development on 14th February, 2020. The Director-General personally joined the Corps Members and officials in Kano State for the rally, which was tagged "Nigerian Youths March Against Corruption."

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This action further boosted the commitment of the NYSC in eradicating corruption and promotion of good moral and ethical values in the country.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic nearly crippled the global socio-economic activities and did not spare the Scheme. The 2020 Batch "A" Orientation Course was suspended barely eight days into the programme. However, the ever resourceful and proactive Director General challenged the creative ingenuity of Corps Members who responded appropriately to the challenge by producing non-pharmaceutical intervention materials such as face-mask, liquid soap, alcohol - based hand sanitiser and donated same to the indigent populace across the length and breadth of the country.

Under the leadership of Gen Ibrahim, the NYSC has also carried out public awareness campaigns on containment measures for the dreaded virus. The initiative of the Director General was later adopted by some public institutions.

Another innovative contribution of the NYSC in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is the fabrication of foot-operated water, liquid soap and hand sanitizer dispenser by individual Corps Members in several States.

For instance, Babatunde Dolapo Dayo and Sebe Godspower - Abia State; Abdullahi Sani - Kano; Abdulsalam Abubakar and Obiefuna Ebuka - Kwara; Adeyanju Adeyemi, Afolabi Victor, Ogunmoye Victor - Oyo and Onyekwere Chiwotaoke – Zamfara and Ilori Deborah - FCT were among the Corps Members that fabricated and donated the devices.

In addition, Corps Members, acting on the platform of Charity CDS/SDGs Group, have been contributing towards mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 at the grassroots, through the donation of food and other relief items to State and Local Governments, as well as indigent members of the society. These strategies by the Director General paved the way for the Scheme to obtain approval from the National Centre for

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Disease Control (NCDC) to resume full operations, especially the Orientation Course.

Relatedly, several Corps Members on teaching assignment also contributed towards sustaining the educational progress of their students by adopting virtual teaching approach while schools remained closed as a result of the pandemic.

As per the pursuit of a technologically-driven organisation to deepen effective service delivery, the Director-General recently conducted the first ever video conference with the 2021 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Corps Members in all the 37 Orientation Camps. It was an avenue to interface with thousands of Corps Members simultaneously, in line with COVID-19 safety protocols. He has sustained this initiative by periodically holding virtual meetings with serving Corps Members, as well as NYSC State Coordinators across the country.

It is gratifying to disclose that the Director General's interface with National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) has ensured the equipping of the NYSC Rivers Secretariat with computers by the agency. That singular gesture has in no small measure deepened the proficiency of Corps Members and staff members in the area of Information technology.

The Chief Executive introduced the inscription of date of birth on the Certificate of National Service and Exclusion Letter, beginning with the 2019 Batch "A" Corps Members and 2019 Batch "C" respectively. This is in a bid to check the manipulation of date of birth by ineligible persons seeking mobilisation for National Service, and it has had a positive effect in checkmating the falsification of records for employment, visa, political appointments, among others.

Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim conceptualised and designed a state-of-the-art ICT Office for the Scheme. The design had already been forwarded to the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) and Federal Ministry of Works and Housing for approval. The cost of construction was appropriated in the 2021 Budget, and the Scheme is awaiting the release of funds for its commencement.

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Other laudable efforts by Gen Ibrahim to deepen effective service delivery include, the development of a Five-Year Strategic Development Plan for the Scheme, review of the NYSC Composite Policy Document and documentation of the activities of the Scheme, all aimed at positioning the Scheme as a research hub for academics and the general public.

Under his watch, the Federal Government drafted the NYSC into the Presidential Steering Committee on Alternate School Programme. The inclusion of the Corps in the Committee is in recognition of the invaluable contributions of the Scheme to national development, particularly in the sphere of Education.

NYSC is a repository of talents, parading the most enlightened class of Nigerian youths, who in forty - eight years of the Scheme's existence have continued to make varying degrees of multi-sectoral contributions to the growth and well-being of the nation.

Therefore, the inclusion of the Scheme, whose visibility has been top-notch in the last two years as member of the Mambila Hydro Power Project speaks on the high premium the Federal Government places on the Corps.

Undoubtedly, membership of these august bodies have clearly underscored the high pedestal the Director General has taken the Scheme in his two years of his eventful and remarkable administration.

In respect of improving the welfare and security of Corps Members and staff, in a rare demonstration of empathy and commitment to the welfare of Corps Members, the Director General personally visited and encouraged Corps Member Saidu Mohammed Adamu, who was admitted at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ado-Ekiti, as a result of gunshot injuries that he sustained while on election duties during the recent bye-election held in Ekiti East Local Government Area of Ekiti State in March 2021.

Similar visits were also paid to several members of the Service Corps on admission in hospitals in Sokoto, Katsina, Edo, Plateau, Taraba and

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Kwara States, among others, following their involvement in road traffic accidents.

The Director General has also paid condolence and reassuring visits to the families of deceased and missing Corps Members in Plateau, Kaduna and Edo States. Such gestures have increased the confidence of Corps Members and their families in the Scheme, and have also engendered more zeal for patriotic service by the members of the Corps.

The Director General further demonstrated his commitment to Corps welfare by procuring prosthetic limbs for a Corps Member in furtherance of his welfare policy. The sum of Thirty-two Million Naira (N32,000,000.00) was expended to procure the limbs for Corps Member, Nuraddeen Tahir from Kano State, who, along with other Corps Members, was involved in a road traffic accident, while on his way to report for Primary Assignment after the 2019 Batch 'B' Stream 1 Orientation Course in Taraba State. The Corps Member, who had earlier lost an arm at a younger age, had the other one amputated as a result of the accident. The artificial limbs have already been supplied, while Nuraddeen was trained on the effective use of the limbs before he was re-united with his family. With this development, he can now effectively perform normal tasks such as writing with the limbs.

The Director General relentlessly pursued the issue of increment of Corps Members' allowance in the wake of approval of the new National Minimum Wage. His effort paid-off and the allowance of Corps Members was increased from Nineteen thousand, Eight hundred Naira (N19,800.00) to Thirty-three Thousand Naira (N33,000.00). Following the commencement of the payment of the new rate with effect from January 2020, the Director General along with the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports Development and some representatives of Corps Members paid a "Thank-you" visit to His Excellency, the President and Commander-in-Chief, Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari GCFR on 6th February, 2020 at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

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Following improvement in the security situation in the country, the Director General sought for, and got approval from the Federal Government for a return to the earlier suspended ceremonial passing-out of Corps Members. Accordingly, the Passing-Out Ceremony of the 2019 Batch 'A' Corps Members was marked with colorful parades nationwide, thereby increasing the visibility of the NYSC.

The successful conduct of Orientation courses is also another achievement of the Director General as he oversaw the successful conduct of the 2019 Batch 'B' Streams I and II, as well as 2019 Batch 'C' Streams I and II Orientation Courses.

As a proactive measure, NYSC Management suspended the 2020 Batch 'A' Stream 1 Orientation Course just a week into the exercise as a deliberate effort to avert the spread of COVID-19 in the Orientation Camps. The commendable action equally brought to the fore his concern for the health and general well-being of Corps Members and staff.

In recognition of his efforts at curtailing the spread of COVID-19, Victims Support Funds (VSF), an organisation chaired by Lt Gen TY Danjuma donated 60,000 RDT test kits to the Scheme. The kits are used for the screening of prospective Corps Members and camp officials for COVID-19 in NYSC Orientation camps nationwide.

In his quest to expand the administrative structure of the Scheme, the Director General ensured the smooth take - off of the NYSC Area Offices, whose approval had earlier been secured by the immediate past administration of Gen Kazaure, one in each of the six geo-political zones of the country, headed by a Director on salary grade level 17. This feat has opened up more vacancies, allowing for posting of other cadre of staff alongside the Directors to man the Offices. The Area Offices are located in Kaduna (North West), Niger (North Central), Bauchi (North East), Enugu (South East), Osun (South West) and Delta (South South) have since taken off and have in no mean way boosted staff morale and operations of the Scheme.

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In line with one of the cardinal points of his policy thrust, the Director General has been pursuing policies that are geared not only towards motivating staff, but also promoting industrial harmony in the Scheme. This has been aptly demonstrated through prompt payment of entitlements, capacity building programmes, as well as timely and transparent conduct of promotion examinations. During the 2020 Promotion Exercise for instance, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighteen (1,718) out of the Two Thousand One Hundred Fifty-One (2,151) officers that participated in the event were elevated to the next grade level after meeting the requirements stipulated in the Public Service Rules and NYSC Conditions of Service. Additionally, the 2021 Senior Staff Promotion Examination recorded a huge success. The impact of these promotion exercises has reinforced the commitment of staff to work for an enhanced performance.

Meanwhile, as Management strives to enhance the motivation of staff, much premium is laid on the need to have a highly disciplined workforce. In this regard, officers who commit infractions are reprimanded in line with the provisions of the Public Service Rules (PSR).

On strengthening the existing collaboration with critical stakeholders, on assumption of office, the Director General saw the dire need to sustain and strengthen the existing collaboration with critical stakeholders to garner more support and involve them in the management of the Scheme. He therefore embarked on advocacy visits to the stakeholders such as the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, whose administration founded the Scheme. The Director-General has had interface with the 36 State Governors, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, heads of Security and Anti-Corruption Agencies, Federal Road Safety Corps, among other stakeholders. The impact of this initiative is the improvement already being achieved in stakeholders' support to the Scheme which is of great essence.

The Director General also addressed a meeting of the Nigeria Governors' Forum – the first of such engagement by any Chief Executive of the Scheme. He used the occasion of the meeting to

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appreciate the State Governors for their support to the Scheme, through various intervention projects in their respective States. He drew their attention to other areas that needed to be addressed, being part of the obligations of the State Governments to the Corps, as spelt out in the NYSC Act.

Consequently the hosting of the meeting of NYSC top Management with the representatives of State Governments and the Federal Capital Territory Administration, a fallout of the meeting with the Governor's Forum is aimed at strengthening the collaboration with the Scheme, with a particular focus on the discharge of the statutory obligations of the States and FCT to the NYSC, as spelt out in its enabling Act.

The impact of the meeting is profound, as several State Governments have made remarkable gestures in support of the Scheme. Prominent among them is the donation of two NYSC permanent Orientation camps by Edo and Anambra States, plans by the Lagos State Government to build a 14,000 -- capacity Orientation camp and the ongoing upgrading and rehabilitation of camp facilities in twenty five States, while the expansion of camp facilities has commenced in nine States to meet the 5,000 -- Corps Member and 500 -- course official -- capacity camp.

Other notable gains derived from the meeting include, constitution of functional NYSC State Governing Boards in seventeen States, with eighteen States enhancing the regular payment of state allowance to Corps Members, provision and upgrading of transit camps for Corps Members in thirty -- one states, provision of watertight security for Corps Members in all the States and the FCT, issuance of circulars by State Governments against the rejection of Corps Members, increased partnership with the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON), provision of decent accommodation or payment of allowance in lieu of that to Corps Members and provision of office and residential accommodation by the States hosting the Headquarters of the Area Offices.

In Promoting NYSC/Media relations, the Director General has since assumption of duty, strived to strengthen the cordial relations the

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Scheme enjoys with the Media. This, he kick-started with his maiden chat with Editors, Bureau Chiefs and Youth Correspondents of various Media Organisations in the country on 15th August, 2019. Brig Gen S Ibrahim also paid courtesy visits to Media offices in Abuja, including the Headquarters of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Media Trust Limited and Leadership Group Limited. Similar visits with Director-General's directive were also made to Lagos Head Offices of The Punch, Daily Sun, The Nation newspapers, among others. He has consistently maintained his Media-friendly posture, thereby attracting wider publicity for the Scheme's activities.

To deepen and sustain the wide publicity that the Scheme has enjoyed, he has resuscitated the production and airing of the NYSC Half Hour programme on NTA International Channel 251 and Armed Forces Radio FM. So far, plans have reached an advanced stage to establish the first ever NYSC FM Radio that will be useful to adequately drive the publicity efforts of the Scheme and showcase its activities to Nigerians and the entire world.

The Director-General in furtherance of his transparent, inspirational and all-inclusive style of administration paid visits to some former Chief Executives of the Scheme. The gesture was aimed at appreciating their respective contributions to the development of Scheme when they were in the saddle of leadership, and also tap into their vast wealth of experience. The former Chief Executives appreciated the initiative as it was the first ever visit paid simultaneously to them.

The maiden meeting with the Registrars of some Foreign Corps Producing Institutions was also held, having, uncovered the fraudulent activities of some tertiary institutions in Africa, especially in the West Africa sub region which have the penchant to issue questionable academic certificates to unqualified persons, who in turn present same to get mobilised for national service. The Director-General has commenced an aggressive fight against this menace which has earned him the commendation of the President, His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, during his address at the 2018/2019 President's NYSC

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Honours Award Ceremony. Similar commendations were given to him by a broad spectrum of vice chancellors of some indigenous and foreign institutions, including the Honourable Minister of Education.

In addition to hosting the meeting with the Registrars, internal mechanisms have been put in place for easier detection of unqualified persons attempting to present themselves for mobilisation for service. As a result of the stance of Management, some of the foreign institutions are now volunteering to alert NYSC of suspected fraudulent practices by their students. Interestingly, out of over twenty thousand (20,000) persons who registered online as foreign-trained prospective Corps Members of the 2019 Batch 'C' Service Year, only three thousand, four hundred and twenty (3,420) turned up for the pre-mobilisation physical screening of their credentials.

To serve as a deterrent to others, sixty-five (65) unqualified persons arrested during the 2019 Batch 'B' Stream II Orientation Course in camps across the country are being prosecuted with some convictions already secured. These steps taken by Management have helped to create national awareness, especially on the need for parents and guardians to check the accreditation status of the institutions attended by their wards, and also monitor their academic progress.

The bold move by the Director General in sanitising the mobilisation process will also ensure that only well trained and competent persons occupy critical positions that will fast-track the development of the country.

The Director-General has equally hosted a national sensitisation programme on the NYSC Act on 24th July, 2019 in Abuja. Prior to this, it was clear that many Nigerians were not aware of the provisions of the Act – a situation that has led to avoidable infractions. With the sensitisation, which is still on-going, organisations and individuals are now having better understanding of their obligations to the Scheme. In particular, cases of evasion and abscondment from Service, especially by the foreign-trained Nigerian graduates, are expected to reduce drastically.

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Broadly looking at the reinvigoration of the NYSC ventures and skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development programme in line with NYSC Act for greater impact, the Director General has been speaking passionately about his desire to make the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) Programme and NYSC Ventures Management Departments more functional.

To match words with actions, he has taken several steps towards reinvigorating the SAED programme, including, but not limited to the following:

- Renewal of commitment by the NYSC and Bank of Industry towards the resuscitation of empowerment of Corps entrepreneurs with business loans under the BOI-NYSC Graduate Empowerment Fund.
- Intensive monitoring of GEF beneficiaries.
- New collaboration with NIRSAL Microfinance Bank on empowerment of Corps entrepreneurs.
- New partnership with Unity Bank Plc on a programme named 'Allawee' aimed at empowering Corps members.
- Collaboration with British-American Tobacco Foundation on empowerment of Corps Members with agricultural skills and business trainings, farm internship, mentoring and farm input supplies.
- Hosting of the 2020 NYSC SAED Stakeholders meeting aimed at reviewing the programme implementation strategies, as well as strengthening of existing partnerships and exploring new ones for further technical and material support.
- Pursuing the completion of the North West Skill Acquisition Centre in Kazaure, Jigawa State, this is now at advanced stage.
- Commencement of work on the North Central Skill Acquisition Centre in Keffi, Nasarawa State.
- Research-based collaboration with OAU-NACETEM sponsored by a Canadian Agency, International Development Research Centre on evaluation of the impact of SAED and reinvigorating it for greater impact.

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- Resuscitation of NYSC Water Factory and Bakery at NYSC Orientation Camp Kubwa. The NYSC Water Factory and Bakery were revived and revitalised by the Director-General immediately he assumed office, and these two ventures are now producing at full capacity. The water and bread produced in these ventures are being supplied to the FCT, Nasarawa, Kogi, Kaduna and Niger State Orientation camps and the general public. These ventures now generate revenue to the Scheme and help Corps Members acquire skills too.
- Purchase of modern farm equipment for the four NYSC functional farms namely, NYSC Farm Kwali in FCT, Saminaka, Kebbi State, Dungulbi, Bauchi State and Iseyin Oyo State. Each of these farms now has tractors and other basic farm equipment.
- The consistent support in terms of funding and staffing has increased the hectares under cultivation from 60 hectares to 160 hectares during the 2020 farming season.
- Reclaiming of NYSC farmland at Ezillo which hitherto was collected by the Ebonyi State Government. Immediately after the reclaiming, tractor was purchased for farming operations at the Ezillo Farm.
- The structure of Ventures Management Department was expanded which gave room for the promotion of staff, and has in no mean way motivated the staff members.
- Registration of the two NYSC Garment Factories, Water Factory and Bakery with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Arising from the last Meeting of the NYSC Top Management with Representatives of State Governments, the Governors of Edo and Ekiti States announced the donation of land for the sitting of two garment factories which will boost the production of Corps Members' kit items.
- Developing partnership with relevant institutions such as International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA), NCRI, NCAM,

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ARMTI, NCAC etc. to enhance the productivity of NYSC Farms/Ventures among others.

- Resuscitation of moribund NYSC Feedmill, Lagos. The mill is now ready to start production of animal feeds.
- Construction of new poultry pen at NYSC farm Kwali, FCT.
- The Director General has met with the State Governors and other stakeholders with a view to securing land in all the States for agricultural production.

In addition to the above, twelve States have opened up their skills centres for the post camp training of Corps Members to further strengthen the skills and entrepreneurship training acquired in camp.

- The tremendous support given by the Director General has repositioned all the NYSC Ventures for greater revenue generation for the Scheme.

Interestingly, the Scheme paid into the national coffers over Two Hundred and Eighty Million Naira (N280,000,000.00) as internally generated revenue which is unprecedented in the annals of the Scheme.

The Director General who has introduced the use of name tags by every member of staff for easy identification, equally in an unprecedented move sought the help of the Federal Government in tackling the ecological challenges confronting some of the NYSC Orientation camps. Government granted the request through the deployment of Ecological Fund to tackle the menace. Eight camps have been approved as beneficiaries in the first phase of the intervention. Already, work is ongoing in Cross River, Taraba, FCT and Nasarawa Orientation camps.

In recognition of his service to the nation, Brig Gen Shuaibu Ibrahim who has institutionalised Farewell Parade for outgoing NYSC Chief Executives - a novelty, has received numerous commendations and awards which include:

- Chief of Army Staff Award as the Overall Best Participant for 2013 NAEC Executive Management Course.

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- Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) Special Recognition Award 2014.
- Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Public Service/Fellowship (FCAI) by Institute of Corporate Administration.
- Professional National Award (Historical Society of Nigeria HSN) and
- Chief of Army Staff Commendation Letter 2018.

### **Conclusion**

The above discourse has given an insight on the achievements of General Shuaibu Ibrahim since becoming the Director General of the National Youth Service Corps. Within the last two years, the Scheme has made some giant strides owing to the pursuit of strict implementation of the Director General's five-point policy thrust. Therefore, the contributions of Brig Gen Ibrahim to the NYSC since his ascension into office cannot be overemphasised. These contributions are indeed remarkable, and will undoubtedly stand the test of time, having set the Scheme on growth trajectory and continuous relevance.

Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim:

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### **Oral Interview**

Interviews with NYSC Coordinator

Jibril Umar, Head of Ventures Kubwa, 50+, Interviewed at Kubwa Abuja, 15/3/21

Emeka -- Rems Mgbemena, Deputy Director and Head, Publications Division, Press and Public Relations Unit, NYSC National Directorate Headquarters, Abuja, 50+, Interviewed at Abuja, 15/3/21

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

The Community Development Programme (CDS) is one of the core programmes of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) during the mandatory one-year service. The programme channels the energy of youths to national development by being assigned to a CDS group where various issues that challenge the society such as the environment, corruption, sustainable development, and political awareness are managed. The book The National Youth Service Corps and Community Development Service in Nigeria is a collection of articles that focuses on various CDS groups, their achievements, challenges, and prospects.



The articles highlight partnerships, and the efficiency of CDS groups. The CDS channels the more subtle traits of Nigerian youths that demonstrate their collective resolve at national development in form of environmental sanitation, healthcare provisioning, economic development, and other social awareness efforts through different CDS groups. The book highlights the socio-economic impact of NYSC CDS as well as the challenges and prospects of the NYSC programme. Drawing from institutional resources, participant observations, interviews, and personal experience, the authors of the articles have carefully highlighted the contributions of NYSC CDS to community development.

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