



YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

SITUATION ANALYSIS

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. RAPID APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY	3
3. CURRENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN NIGERIA.....	4
3.1 LAGOS	4
3.1.1 <i>Overview</i>	4
3.1.2 <i>Characteristics of the Youth Population</i>	4
3.1.3 <i>Youth Groups</i>	5
3.1.4 <i>Understanding Current Socio-Economic and Political Conditions</i>	5
3.2 DELTA	6
3.2.1 <i>Overview</i>	6
3.2.2 <i>Characteristic of the Youth Population</i>	6
3.2.3 <i>Understanding Current Socio-economic-political Conditions</i>	7
3.3. KANO.....	9
3.3.1 <i>Overview</i>	9
3.3.2 <i>Characteristic of the Youth Population</i>	10
3.3.3 <i>Youth Groups</i>	11
3.4. EDO STATE.....	12
4. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT.....	13
4.1 JOB DEVELOPMENT.....	13
5. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE.....	14
5.1 FEDERAL.....	15
5.2 STATE	17
6. DONORS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE	17
6.1 WORLD BANK.....	17
6.2 AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB).....	17
6.3 GTZ.....	17
6.4 UNDP.....	18
6.5 ILO.....	18
6.6 USAID	18
7. PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS AVAILABLE.....	20
8. STATE OF THE ART IN YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS	
21	
8.1 WORLD.....	22
8.2 AFRICA	23

9. GAPS IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY 25

10. RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS..... 26

 10.1 RESULTS 26

 10.2 SUGGESTIONS 28

10.2.1 Skills Training for Employment..... 29

BIBLIOGRAPHY 30

APPENDIX.....

A. Reference Letters from UVWIE: United Development Movement.

B. List of Youth Employment Organizations

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
EQUIP	Educational Quality Improvement Program
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GTZ	German Development Agency
GWIT	Global Workforce in Transition
ILO	International Labor Organization
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Program
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NMB	National Manpower Board
NOIC	Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centers
OICI	Opportunities Industrialization Centers International
OJT	On the Job Training
OPC	Odu'dua Peoples Congress
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SDPC	Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria
TSAP	Technical Skills Acquisition Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
YES	Youth Enterprise Society
YTS	Youth Development Scheme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth unemployment in Nigeria is uncontrolled and intensifying. Large concentrations of youth—trained and untrained, educated and uneducated—are idle and without any hope of securing an occupation, even at the minimum level needed to survive or raise a family. In all cities investigated, it was found that youth population is remarkably similar: an extremely high population below 24 years of age; educated at the secondary level at best, though many are only at the primary level or have no education at all; divided almost evenly between males and females; and unemployed. Youth across the country blame their situation on the traditional leaders and the Government of Nigeria, but they also see government action as the solution to their problems. No one understands—nor does the government—that the private formal sector is obsolete. Their only alternative is the informal sector.

Although they have many points in common, there are also differences in the way young people in different cities of Nigeria respond to the unemployment problem. Youths in Lagos, for example, are not organized for economic gains. In southwestern Nigeria, there is one large group organized for political reasons (OPC—Odu'dua Peoples Congress), but in general young men are idle and are gathered in groups known in Lagos and elsewhere as “area boys.” Area boys are mainly urban groups, and while they are major targets for political organizations, they are not in demand by employers. In Delta State, on the other hand, especially in the large urban concentration of Warri, youth organizations are more focused, with serious grievances against the oil companies, the traditional leaders and the central government. In Kano, youth have been involved in many recent conflicts related to long-standing ethnic problems, although the youth leaders interviewed in Kano for this study pointed to drinking, area boys, poverty and unemployment—not ethnicity—as the main sources of conflict. In Edo State, jobless young women are resorting to prostitution and leaving for Europe in what appears to be large numbers.

Although youth blame the government and the traditional rulers for unemployment, most youth see vocational training as the way out. This is an indication that they are also trying to find their own solution to the problem.

The government of Nigeria, international organizations and the private sector are aware of the seriousness of youth unemployment. At this point, however, only older projects are operating, and at levels that will not make a dent in the problem. The government of Nigeria has the following agencies dealing generally with unemployment, including youth unemployment: the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the National Manpower Board (NMB) and the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP). International organizations such as the UNDP, GTZ, World Bank, and ILO have programs dealing with poverty alleviation, poor urban areas and vocational training, but none of them is specifically targeted at uneducated and unemployed youth. Finally, the private sector, especially oil-sector related companies such as Chevron and Shell, has projects to provide vocational training and micro-finance loans to youth. However, with only a 20 percent repayment rate on their loans and with vocational education trainees unable to find work at the completion of their training, companies see these programs as failures.

Youth unemployment in Nigeria in part results from the shift from a formal to an informal economy. What is wrong with workforce development programs in Nigeria is that they follow the old guidelines for training and placement that were established years ago for the formal sector. Vocational, secondary and tertiary schools have not adapted to the needs of the informal market, the global economy and the new realities of Nigeria. Vocational training programs assume, for example, that the solution relies only on training in traditional fields, regardless of market demands. Training, however, should be demand-driven.

New ideas and approaches are necessary to resolve the problem of youth unemployment. Development programs for youth employment need to be very practical, low-cost and efficient, and they need to use locally available resources. In particular, new youth workforce development programs should make use of government and private vocational training institutions that have adjusted to the new realities of the informal market, or assist in helping them to make this transition.

1. INTRODUCTION

The causes of Nigerian underdevelopment, beyond the general historical legacy of colonialism, result from several factors. They include:

- ❖ heavy dependence on the oil sector;
- ❖ a weak industrial base;
- ❖ unstable macroeconomic policy and environment;
- ❖ unstable prices;
- ❖ inadequate and decayed infrastructure;
- ❖ corruption;
- ❖ a heavy external debt burden; and
- ❖ youth unemployment.

Youth unemployment is only one of the many problems facing Nigeria, but it is a daunting one. However, a shift in the economy, along with the decline of the formal market, is opening the doors to new employment opportunities for appropriately trained and skilled youth.

2. RAPID APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

It was difficult to find the best methodology for conducting this study. The team knew from the outset that there would be difficulties in finding data on youth and youth employment in Nigeria. We expected that the information would be similar to Swiss cheese and that the team would have to fill in the holes. It was much worse than anticipated. With time limitations on the research, the team had to move from one site to another, with little time to find often elusive facts. The problem was less serious in Abuja, with national data in general, and with data for certain areas such as Lagos. However, data is not always available for places like Warri and Kano. Additionally, data that is available is often hard to find, and government officials are not always willing to share information, assuming that they have it.

The team thus opted for a Rapid Appraisal Method because it falls within the continuum of informal and formal modes of data collection used to provide decision-making information in development settings. At one extreme of this model, are highly informal methods that rely on intuition, experience, and common sense and which do not generate verifiable information. At the other extreme are highly formal methods developed and refined by social and economic researchers. Such methods generate quantitative data that can be analyzed to draw conclusions (Kumar, p.8).

Due to the difficulty in obtaining data, the team decided to rely on the material that was located in Abuja and Lagos, on the *Workforce Development and Civil Society Strengthening Initiative: Baseline Survey Report*. Vols. 1-2, OICI/USAID (from this point on it will be referred to as the Baseline Report), completed by OICI in March 2002, and on a selection of interviews with key informants—employers, youth leaders, students, instructors, etc. Since the team did not have a structured agenda before reaching the research areas (although an outline and workplan were prepared), it relied heavily on the people on the ground, local resources and experience to

provide initial input on where to go and who to interview. Once the team had a good understanding of the context and social forces in each region, it made a careful selection of people to be interviewed. One example of this process is the interviews that resulted with the youth leaders in Warri. Youth were selected for interviewing based on their specialized knowledge and experience in the subject under investigation. They provided inside information on their organizational structure, operations, grievances and future plans. The interviews were qualitative and conducted in an informal atmosphere. Questions were prepared in advance and extensive notes were taken during the interviews.

3. CURRENT STATUS OF YOUTH IN NIGERIA

3.1 LAGOS

3.1.1 Overview

Lagos is facing serious problems of overpopulation, concentrated in a small area, with the failures of city management clearly visible in the decaying system of transportation and roads, the chaotic security situation, and the large number of youths without jobs, hope or future. Any solution that hopes to improve the quality of life of the youth of Lagos will require massive investments and a concurrent federal and state intervention in infrastructure rehabilitation, training and job development. Any small-scale effort to deal with the present situation in Lagos will be no more than a drop in the bucket. Unemployed youth, and the unemployed population in general, need a massive input of resources for at least a decade to have an effect on the present condition.

We can only ascertain the conditions, composition, and grievances of youth in Lagos by using general data about the state and the city, and *The Baseline Report*, which consolidated the data for Warri and Lagos into one (since the vast majority of respondents were from Lagos, with a smaller percentage included from Warri, the data should be accepted with some reservations for both regions). The data show that youth in Lagos are not organized in the same way as in Kano (where they are beginning to organize) or Warri (where they are very organized, have well-defined political targets, and a set of grievances shared by both their communities and their leaders). In Lagos, many youth are known to be organized into groups called “area boys.” However, since it was very difficult to secure data on, or to interview, members of these groups, their description, demands and goals could not be clearly defined.

3.1.2 Characteristics of the Youth Population

Age

The population of Lagos is very young. Fifty-nine percent are age 24 or under, with 33 percent under the age of 15. Because of the age of the population, and perhaps because of high unemployment, 60 percent of the population is single, possibly living at home with their parents. These percentages are similar for both males and females (NMB 1995, p. 7).

Gender

Gender is not the important issue in this case: in all categories below 44 years of age, there are only a few percentage points’ difference between males and females. Though as a norm females are the largest group, the aggregate data for people between the ages of 15 and 64 years show a difference of only one percent in favor of females (NMB 1995, p.8).

Education

More than one-third of the population has had secondary education. However, there are more people with little or no education than there are with higher (post-secondary) levels of education. Only 10 percent of males have had higher education, and only 4 percent of women. Numbers are highest for those with only a primary education (26 for males and 29 for females) and those with no formal education at all (11 for men and 17 for women) (NMB 1995, p.10).

Employment/Unemployment

Employed persons are concentrated in the 25 to 44 age bracket. Youths between the ages of 15 and 24 account for 24 percent of the population, but they participate in only 12 percent of the total employment. With a higher population in the 24 and younger bracket, the probability is for the unemployment rate to increase in the near future as the young seek jobs (NMB 1995, p.15).

Eighty-four percent of all unemployed persons are concentrated between the ages of 15 and 34. The highest unemployment rate is in the 15 to 24 group, of which 44.3 percent are jobless. In this group, unemployment is a few percentage points higher for females than males. In terms of education, the highest unemployment rate is for secondary school graduates, at a rate of 58 percent. Job-hunting methods are unsophisticated and unemployed youth are most likely to rely on friends to locate a job. Half of the unemployed population uses this method, while only one percent use some form of labor exchange or employment office (NMB 1995, p.43).

3.1.3 Youth Groups

The most powerful youth group in the country is the Odu'dua People's Congress (OPC). Headquartered in Lagos, it is the largest ethnic organization in Nigeria, with an estimated membership of over four million Yoruba people. According to members interviewed, the principal reason for joining the OPC is the perceived marginalization of the Yoruba within the nation's political system. They argue that the Yoruba, who were quite prominent in the struggle for independence from British colonialism, were denied a commensurate share of political office after independence. OPC activities go beyond Lagos State—covering all the states with indigenous Yoruba populations—mainly in the south and west of the country.

3.1.4 Understanding Current Socio-Economic and Political Conditions Unemployment Reduction

The Baseline Report states that most respondents believe that vocational training for the unemployed should be given priority. Second in importance is training for young women and girls. As for the age groups to be targeted, most respondents agreed that people between the ages of 22 and 30 should benefit the most from training and, by implication, from increased opportunities to secure employment.

Approaches to Micro-Credit

The surveys in Lagos and Delta indicate that 73 percent of the businesses employed fewer than 10 people. Forty-two percent actually employed less than five workers. This information shows that these “small businesses” are small indeed. But it does not change the fact that they have the collective potential to employ thousands of unemployed youth, at least on a piecemeal basis.

Placement

Small businesses do not find a youth's technical skills important in offering employment. *The Baseline Report* shows that this is very low in the order of importance. Most important is work experience, followed by education, personality, age and, finally, vocational skills. Work experience drew a 53.5 percent "very important" response and educational background almost 40 percent. Vocational skills were ranked last in the list, with 20 percent.

3.2 DELTA

3.2.1 Overview

Delta State, and Warri in particular, is where the most acute challenges of youth development in Nigeria are to be found. It has a complex social structure faced with ethnic problems, high population density, extreme unemployment, organized youth groups and gangs, serious grievances against the oil companies and the central government, a collapsing or nonexistent infrastructure, and inefficient transportation and communications. The lawless appear to be in the process of building an efficient, organized crime machine with political and ethnic overtones. By any standard, Warri is a place ready to explode. Political events in the region frequently make the international news, and the outcome could potentially be a local civil war.

Organized youth are initially targeting the perceived opposition: the oil companies in the area and the traditional rulers. Using the oil companies as scapegoats, and seeing the traditional rulers as part of the problem, youth can destroy the political structure supported by the traditional rulers. This may, however, just be an accident in the modernization process in Delta state. The main questions are: what will result from such a movement? What political structure will prevail, and who will control it? The oil companies may simply decide to deal with the emerging political structure and let the new power structure, like the old one, reap the benefits of oil exploration.

The problem with a political movement led by organized groups of youth, without a real political basis or power structure and unaligned with any existing political movement or party, is that it can play a very destructive role without addressing the grievances which led them to organize in the first place. So, it is necessary to try to address the youths' main grievance—unemployment—by finding solutions for their problem through democratization, vocational training, and job placement.

Ethnicity is by far the most important variable in discussing and solving the youth employment situation in Delta State. This focus on ethnicity, which has existed for many years, has been intensified by high unemployment and scarce resources in recent years. To secure a job, wages, and a livelihood, youth are now organizing along ethnic lines, to increase the employment opportunities of their particular group.

3.2.2 Characteristic of the Youth Population

Youth Groups

Youth organizations in Warri are comprised mainly of Urhobo people from the Delta region. They seem to be very flexible in accepting members and their requirements are not very strict. This is a good indication that they are trying to increase their membership to very large numbers so as to form a powerful force to oppose the politically dominant traditional rulers, the oil

companies in the area and, perhaps, the state and federal government, for a share of the oil revenues.

Composition

There are 12 active youth groups in Warri. These groups vary in size from 4,000 to over 15,000. They are organized under the umbrella of the UVWIE United Development Movement. They accept members below 45 years of age, and while each are composed of both men and women, boys and girls, members generally are from the same ethnic background. To be accepted in these organizations, a youth is supposed to have been born to a Delta area family, though they also accept as members those who have lived in the region for more than 10 years. The composition of the groups is mainly Urhobo, as noted above, but they include members of other ethnic groups and even other religions. One has a sense that the youths feel that the problem is the same for all of them and is not specific to one group or another.

3.2.3 Understanding Current Socio-economic-political Conditions

Because of the lack of data about the socio-economic situation in Warri, the team interviewed several youth leaders and discussed the problem with personnel from the Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centers (NOIC) and Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI), community leaders, government officials and businessmen. Youth groups understand that the roots of the socio-economic problems of the Delta area lie in the high unemployment level, the high cost of living, and community underdevelopment. They see these conditions as having been caused by the policies of the federal government in conjunction with the oil companies. Their main grievance is that their “parents,” the traditional rulers, and the federal government have sold or given their ancestral lands to the oil companies, but they are not reaping the benefits of such a lucrative business arrangement. The youth cited Warri’s decaying infrastructure and the lack of employment as the results of these policies. At the same time, though, they also say that they are working under the direct leadership of the traditional rulers. More surprising is the fact that they see the solution for these problems as being in the hands of the federal government in Abuja. They work in coordination with the police, but do not want to have anything to do with politicians.

Main Complaints

The youths’ major complaint is about the oil companies. They believe that the oil companies are making huge profits in the Delta region but do not give anything back. When questioned about the fact that the oil companies are paying the government of Nigeria, they replied that they still feel entitled to something.

Unemployment Reduction

Youth group leaders believe that the best way to reduce unemployment is by acquiring the vocational skills needed to find a job. The most promising areas, in their opinion, are diesel mechanics, welding, marine engineering, farming, computers, fashions and catering. It is important to note that all these occupations have a direct or indirect connection with the oil companies. They expect to be employed as marine engineers, or to receive a contract from the companies for catering, etc. A few of the other occupations they spoke about are related to the informal economy.

The other alternative they see is for youths to obtain credit to create a small enterprise. Youth see the formation of small businesses as a way to more income and to gain some freedom. But it is possible they are also looking at these small businesses as possible venues for oil company service contracts. Gaining access to the oil companies is the major goal, and not necessarily the creation of new business. They believe securing a service contract with an oil company is a guarantee of success. The problem is that youths often give up the business if they do not secure such a contract. This is a good indication that they are in effect still seeking employment rather than aiming to create businesses per se.

Approaches to Micro-Credit

It is possible that a young person's expressed interest in micro-credit may just be a ploy to receive money for free, since the applicant may have no intention of paying it back. The youths interviewed stated that micro-credit cannot be given to just anybody: "It has to be selective." Micro-credit awards, they feel, should be concentrated on farming, trading, and welding enterprises. These are some of the ideas the respondents presented: first, loans should be given to a selected group in the area; they should also be given to small groups of businessmen to hire youths. They should come in the form of capital to facilitate the expansion of business, or the acquisition of tools and supplies to allow expansion of the customer base. The loans should be signed (more like designed) by the leader of the community and/or the provost marshal acting on behalf of the community. Under these conditions, presented as suggestions, youth leaders will support new micro enterprise development. Although their support do guarantee the success of new businesses, the lack of it, as they indicated during the interviews, will prevent it. These are actually excellent ideas. In practical terms, and until a better alternative can be found, they are necessary to give the projects a chance.

Placement

A great deal of emphasis was put on job placement by those interviewed. When questioned about how their members are currently placed, they gave a very concise and practical explanation of the system—a curious mix of an employment agency and organized crime. It is an organized effort that is both practical and efficient, and it can work to locate and secure jobs for unemployed youth in the Delta area. Basically, youth organizations use their positions to secure jobs for their members or those from their communities. They serve as reference boards for people seeking jobs. Then they find a position, or a person finds a position, and they facilitate the placement. Working as an employment agency, they receive a fee for their services. This is a valid patronage operation, very common in many political systems, and is fine, except that the fee, which they call a very small token, is for life, or at least for as long as the person works in that job. Therefore, it is more like organized crime in creating a long-lasting relationship based on a permanent contribution.

The problem with this form of job placement is that it is based on ethnicity and community. In order to get a job, the youth must be from the area and have the "correct" ethnic background. Companies prefer youth from their own communities, communities want youth from local families to get jobs, and on top of all that, the job market is extremely tight. The youth must have the appropriate type of training, the training must be certified, they must be active in a youth organization, and a job must be available. (See Reference letters of the UYWIE – United Development Movement in the **Appendix A**)

In one instance, the team met with the president of the newly formed employers' group working with NOIC. This group is willing to help new vocational graduates secure jobs. As the group is brand-new, we could not secure data on their work. The association is expected to coordinate the employment needs of 18 companies, each employing about 15 persons each. Each company also expects to hire an average of seven youths from NOIC per year. Considering the size of the workforce of each company, this goal seems to be based on the expectation of a substantial expansion of production, which may be a bit unrealistic, given local economic conditions. The interesting part is that these employers regard honesty, hard work and skills as the most important qualifications for getting a job. Two of those qualifications can be ascertained only on the basis of referrals and not objective evidence alone.

Government

Research on government agencies in the Delta area indicated the lack of an appropriate employment agency to help the youth. A visit to the National Directorate of Employment showed that they are ill-equipped, uninterested and reluctant to even talk about employment in the area. Such an office serves no one and reinforces in the youth minds the idea that the government does not care about them.

Training Institutions

Training institutions in the area, such as NOIC, IFESH, Shell, Chevron and the Petroleum Training Institute, are preparing youth for the job market. But none of these institutions offers any guarantee of a job and many students are unemployed after graduation, even though they have all the necessary qualifications. The most sought-after training institutions are those that are seen as more likely to offer the youth a job in an oil company after graduation. Training in the area is not demand driven. At the same time, providing training creates expectations and results in unfulfilled dreams.

3.3. KANO

3.3.1 Overview

At first glance, Kano seems an organized traditional trade center. The markets around the city are thriving with life, a variety of products are offered for sale, and large numbers of people are shopping. But the city has been wrestling with ethnicity-related problems for quite some time, going back to the migration of southern Nigerians (especially Yorubas) to Kano which developed after the 1903 invasion by British colonialists, and the subsequent British policy of "separated development" whereby the colonialists attempted to protect the Yoruba by strictly segregating them from Kano's traditional Hausa and Fulani inhabitants. Most ethnic and inter-religious conflicts experienced in Kano are the result of direct and indirect attempts to check the ascendancy of southern Nigerians in the city. This issue has been discussed by Isaac Olawale Albert in his work "Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Kano," included in his book *Community Conflicts in Nigeria*.

These ethnic conflicts are sharpened by religious differences. Under the economic, social and political disturbances of recent years, protests by local ethnic groups have taken the form of violent attacks on other groups. Most of the conflicts have been between Muslims and Christians, or fundamentalist and orthodox Muslims. These manifestations of violence and aggression have

often resulted in the recruitment of the city's poor, uneducated and unemployed youth by religious organizers (Albert). Poverty is very important to understanding this situation. Lacking jobs or the hope of getting jobs, Kano youths have too much free time on their hands, making it relatively simple for religious organizers to channel the youths' latent energy and grievances into their own pursuits.

Youths responding to *The Baseline Report* survey were asked to describe the causes of conflicts in Kano. While most stated that they participated in political rallies, none of them listed a single reason, such as government or ethnicity, as the cause of the conflicts. Instead, they listed drinking, area boys, poverty and unemployment as the main causes. Although some listed tribal differences, this is not per se a conflict situation but just a difference (Jegade 2001, II, pp. 46–47).

3.3.2 Characteristic of the Youth Population

Age

Kano has a large youth population, with the majority of its residents age 24 and below. Youths under the age of 15 years account for 38.5 percent of the total population. If we add the next group of young people, 15–24 years, the two groups together account for 60 percent of the total population. *

Gender

The gender ratio is slightly in favor of women for the ages of 15 and under, at 55.3 percent. It changes in favor of men for the next age group, that between 15 and 24; women comprise only 45.3 percent of this population. *

Education

Kano's youth are largely uneducated and unemployed. A staggering 93.8 percent are at the secondary education level or below. In fact, those with some secondary education account for only 22.6 percent of the total; 52.7 percent are at primary level, and 18.5 percent lack education entirely. The main reason why youths do not attend, or drop out of, school is lack of money. The total number of people with vocational training is actually below one percent. *

Employment and Unemployment

The employment rate for young people in Kano is very low. Only 18.4 percent of the population between the ages of 15 and 24 is currently employed. This situation improves for those between the ages of 25 and 34, where the percentage increases to a still very unsatisfactory 27.3 percent. For women in these two age groups, 15–24 and 25–34, the numbers increase to 25 and 29.2 percent, while men are employed at a rate of 17.5 and 27.0 percent. Ironically, the percentage of unemployed secondary schools graduates is higher (46.7) than for graduates of primary school (13.3), and for those age 6 and above (26.7), and in general for all age groups. Persons without skills or trade qualifications are also a much greater percentage (91.1) of the unemployed. *

* The National Manpower Board supplied the information for Kano. Unfortunately, the references were lost in Nigeria and could not later be verified to follow standard footnote procedure.

Looking at the self-employed is important, since encouraging self-employment via micro-finance and other measures to promote small businesses is a major part of the remedy proposed for unemployment. Of those who are self-employed, 64.7 percent work in non-agricultural areas. *

3.3.3 Youth Groups

With the help of NOIC staff, the team was able to interview a large number of youth organization members. The youth groups in Kano seem to be weaker in membership and organization than expected. Their low numbers, lack of organization and limited political ability appear to make them unlikely to cause any serious problems in the region. Furthermore, they lack a single target that can galvanize the youth community in their search for a better life. In this context, their desire for a better life has been clearly articulated, but their goals are still unclear, even to them. However, there is always the possibility that youth can be manipulated by organized religious and political groups causing social upheaval in the region.

Composition

The composition of these groups varies by gender and religion. Their memberships are very small; many youth groups consist of fewer than 50 members, with only a few organizations having memberships in the hundreds. As expected, women's groups are small and specialized, focusing on the areas of home economics and "women's skills", as they perceive them. Many groups have their own training programs for youth. The ages of members varies from 16 to 30 years, with some groups having a more restricted and narrow range—from 28 to 30 or from 25 to 27, for example. Some groups work on the environment, cleaning up the trash in the city.

Youths' Understanding of Current Socio-Economic Situation

In general, the youths interviewed understand the socio-economic-political situation which has isolated them from the governments in Kano and Abuja. During the interviews, they indicated their belief that the present cause of unemployment is the economic policies of the federal government. However, at the same time, many youth expect and believe that the solution for their problems is to get a government job. This belief is actually very common with all youth groups interviewed.

Main Complaints

In blaming the government for the present socio-economic situation and the lack of jobs, some youth mention, in particular, institutionalized corruption and nepotism as causes. Others rightly point to the high population in the country vis-à-vis the economic growth rate as a significant factor. During the interviews with several youth groups in Kano, many said that the cause of the present government crisis is the separation of nation and state and the lack of political awareness among the public. The state, in particular the government, designs and implements policies without public input and/or participation. And the public does not know how to organize and influence government decisions. They also cited the high cost of education and the lack of capital as serious concerns.

Unemployment Reduction

When questioned about finding a job in Kano, 50 percent of the respondents stated that it is very difficult. However, 40 percent actually said that it is not difficult. Importantly, 53 percent of the respondents had never heard about the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (Jegede, II,

44). Rather than relying on NDE, they prefer to rely on vocational training. This is a constant remark made by most youth in cities. They are not aware of all of the alternative means of finding employment.

Approaches to Micro-Credit

Significantly, the majority of respondents said they had borrowed money before. However, they have not borrowed money in the market economy for business reasons, but rather from friends and relatives just to survive. This is not necessarily an experience that prepares them to borrow money from the formal financial sector to start a business. Nevertheless, it is an experience with credit and borrowing to build on (Jegede, 2001, II, 50–51).

The youths questioned said that the best way to obtain micro-credit is to form an association. For funding, they have access to the cash and capital of relatives and friends. There was some disagreement, however, on the role to be played by the banks. Many felt that banks are unwilling to lend them money because of their lack of experience and collateral.

Placement

Almost two-thirds of the youth in Kano interviewed by the Team have never held a job (65.5 percent). Of those, only 61 percent had some source of income, while 38.8 percent had no income whatsoever. The ones who have some source of income rely on informal and irregular jobs. They resort to seasonal occupations, parents, and petty trading to earn some cash.

Of the students answering *The Baseline Survey*, only 27.9 percent said that they are able to make some money. In addition, only 13.9 percent earn enough to eat. This is an abysmal situation, with those unable to earn money left wandering around the streets in search of employment. Even the working youth have a high degree of dissatisfaction. But the reasons given are so wide-ranging, with complaints about customers, bad weather, transportation, etc., that one wonders what is behind all the answers—and whether some respondents are just not accustomed to working (Jegede, 2001, II, 37, 40, 42).

Training Institutions

According to information from NOIC in Kano, there are 19 training institutions providing vocational technical education. These vocational technical schools could be crucial to the expansion of any training and placement project in the region. Although some are teaching skills such as soap-making, which is already well known all over Africa, others are dealing with areas necessary for the youth in the region, such as computer skills.

3.4. EDO STATE

USAID and the wife of the governor of Edo State, Mrs. Eki Igbinedion, requested a visit by the team to assess and discuss the problem of trafficking in women in Edo State. Like many cities in Nigeria, the youth of Benin City, lack the appropriate training to secure employment in the informal sector. They are illiterate and idle. Recently, groups searching for young woman to supply the prostitution market of Europe have found Edo State a fertile ground for their “business.” The scheme is to lure young woman with the “blessing” of their families by convincing them that they are going to Europe to study, earn a living, or get married, and then requiring them to pay the costs of papers, passports, visas and processing fees. According to Mrs.

Igbinedion, many of the young women do not suspect that they are getting involved in a prostitution ring until they arrive at their destination and their “sponsors” confiscate their passports. Eventually, many are arrested in Europe and large groups are returned to Nigeria. In July 2002, for instance, 150 were returned from Spain and 100 from Italy during a two-day period.

Edo State government is eager to confront this problem, but does not have even one bus to transport the young women from the Abuja airport to Benin City. Mrs. Igbinedion requested the support of USAID to help with the immediate needs and costs of establishing an operation to receive and train these young women.. However, more research into this situation is necessary before a project dealing with the push-pull factors involved can be designed and the returnees given the training and placement necessary for them to become productive members of their communities.

4. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

4.1 JOB DEVELOPMENT

In the first two decades of Nigeria’s independence, the labor market opportunities facing each university graduate varied. Conservatively, though, it was the case that each recent graduate had at least three jobs from which to choose. Thus, the movement from school to job was virtually automatic. Unfortunately, this easy connection between the world of learning and the world of work is now history. The contemporary experience is the reverse of the era described above. Each job that appears in the labor market is now chased by at least ten new unemployed youth.

There is now an increasingly important debate about the relative capacities of the formal and the informal sectors to generate jobs in Nigeria. Certainly industries in the formal sector, when appropriately energized by government incentives, can create thousands of jobs, not only in factories in such labor-intensive industries as textiles, garments and electronic goods, but also by creating a pole of growth in a region. A few labor-intensive factories in cities like Kano and Warri would ease the burden of unemployment and poverty for many people. In Lagos such an impact would be diluted by the sheer size of the population and social conditions, but it could generate momentum that other companies could follow. The other advantage of the formal sector is its intensification of the division of labor, generating an increase in the production and productivity of specialized personnel, managers and workers. Unfortunately, Nigeria’s formal sector is increasingly unable to compete in the global economy. One example of the plight of the formal sector is the industrial sector in Kano, which is nearing collapse. The chairman of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria in Kano placed the blame for the present economic crisis on a series of conditions that have developed in the last 30 years, including:

- Declining growth;
- Increasing minimum wages;
- Increasing price of petroleum byproducts and inputs;
- Unreliability of electrical power and cost of running generators;
- Aging technology that is at least 30 years old;
- Higher maintenance costs;

- Longer and prolonged downtime;
- Low production and productivity; and
- 35 percent factory capacity utilization.

The industrial sector in Nigeria is not going to generate any new jobs in the near future; indeed, the chairman stated that “there is no future” for the industrial sector in Kano. It seems unlikely that a vibrant economy can be built around the informal sector without an industrial base of some sort. However, in the absence of development based on the horizontal and vertical growth of the formal industrial sector, the burden of carrying the economic and social development of society is left to the informal sector.

The informal sector is a mix of the secondary and tertiary sectors working together in the shops and small factories of many markets across the country. No other place better displays the combination of the two sectors of the informal economy than the Kumi Market of Kano. While many goods are produced in the area, others are supplied from the Niger-Nigerian border. Products from across Africa find their buyers in this market. There is also a sophisticated division of labor. In many cases even the manufacturing of the same products uses different technologies. Pots and pans are made side by side in different shops using both hot and cold technologies, and both compete for buyers. All these different technologies, the division of labor, and the small industries and shops can expand and teach their technology to young people in search of a job, an income and a better life. They are also a potential haven for youth employment as apprentices and interns. The key is to provide the informal market business owners with enough financial incentives to expand and to help their markets to grow and develop.

The Nigerian formal economy stopped growing and developing. At the same time, Nigerian youth population continues to increase, and many are getting educated at the university level, while many others have none or almost no formal education. The absence of a growing formal market, in all three sector of the economy (industrial, commercial, and services) and, as seem in Kano and Warri, the growth of the informal market, makes necessary for the government of Nigeria and international organizations to place more efforts in the growth and development of the informal sector as the major provider of jobs for the youth. The Government of Nigeria seems to be already making some efforts to address this problem. International organizations also need to support and orient the government’s efforts to train and create a sizable productive youth workforce in Nigeria.

5. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Three federal government agencies deal with employment, youth, poverty alleviation and data collecting in the country. They are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the National Manpower Board (NMB), and the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), all headquartered in Abuja. NAPEP is a recent, politically powerful institution; other agencies are being closed or having their budget reduced in its favor.

All three agencies work at the national level, while NDE and NAPEP also work at the state level. The states do not have special offices dealing with workforce development or youth employment.

5.1 Federal

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

Responsibility for employment issues in Nigeria lies with the NDE. This office coordinates programs on the employment of youth. The National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Program has four plans to prepare unemployed youth without marketable skills for jobs. All four involve skills acquisition:

- **The Open Apprenticeship Scheme:** Unemployed urban youth are placed as apprentices for a period ranging from two to three years with companies, ministries, parastatals, and professional craftsmen all over the country.
- **The Waste to Wealth Scheme:** This plan encourages turning discarded materials into marketable products. This is typical of many businesses in Nigeria.
- **The School on Wheels Scheme:** This is an apprenticeship program for the rural sector.
- **The Disabled Workers Scheme:** This plan tries to place unemployed disabled youth into productive jobs.

Other programs are not directly targeted at youth, but are open to all ages. However, youth can and should take advantage of some of these opportunities. These programs are:

- **The Small-Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Programme:** This program is divided into two schemes:
 1. **The Job Creation Loan Guarantee Scheme:** This was designed for the graduates of universities. These involve student loans for a period of five years.
 2. **The Mature People's Scheme:** This is a program for retired people not available to the young.

Another program that can help the youth is:

- **The Agricultural Sector Employment Programme:** This program is designed to help both school dropouts and university graduates find work in the agricultural sector, often through self-employment.

Finally, there is another program to help youth secure employment with local governments.

- **The Special Public Works Programme:** This program hires large number of youth for labor-intensive public works projects, such as tree planting.

Problems have been alleged about several of these programs. The Special Public Works Programme has been under attack for problems with both its implementation and its results. In addition, according to one source, the success of the Open Apprenticeship and Small Scale Industries Schemes has been exaggerated. The programs' reports listed all the people enrolled in

the program and not the actual number of graduates as a sign of success, and the return repayment rate on bank loans is very low.

On the positive side, large numbers of beneficiaries have been employed in the areas for which they were trained. The Small-Scale Industries Scheme had good results with workers seeking self-employment. More importantly, it appears that the employment gained by graduates is not temporary. The overall result of this program is that it has created some positive movement in securing permanent paying occupations for youth (Onah, p. 55).

NDE is now under attack by NAPEP, which has taken a large portion of the NDE budget. The government has reduced some areas of operation of NDE (excluding credit), limiting the institution to training skills acquisition, vocational training and programs to generate employment.

National Manpower Board (NMB)

This agency is responsible for data gathering and analysis in the area of labor and employment. It published many of the studies examined by the evaluation team. See Section 9 for a discussion of some problems with the NMB's statistics.

Globalization has created the need to shift human resource development towards information and communication technology (ICT). This is an area in which Nigeria is deficient. The NMB is calling for curriculum review and development up to the university level in terms of ICT. The NMB has prepared proposals in this area for funding by willing agencies.

National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP)

NAPEP is a multi-sector approach by the Government of Nigeria to eradicate absolute poverty in the country. Its mandate states that "The federal government approved the establishment of structures to primarily oversee, monitor and co-ordinate all relevant programs and projects, particularly of Government at all levels, which are aimed at eradicating absolute poverty." The following structures are part of NAPEP:

- The National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC), a policy formulation body of NAPEP comprising 15 ministries with the President as chairman.
- The National Assessment and Evaluation Committee (NAEC), chaired by the Vice-President to macro-monitor poverty in the country.
- The National Coordination Committee (NCC), to implement and execute the directives of the Council.
- State Coordination Committees (SCC), established in every state in the country to coordinate all poverty eradication operations in the country.
- Local Government Monitoring Committees (LGMC), which is the local equivalent of the SCC.
- The State Poverty Eradication Councils (SPECs), policy advisory boards chaired by the governor of each state to coordinate all operations among all levels of government.

NAPEP is a government agency with enough power and money to attack poverty in Nigeria. It has had a good start, with the support of the president. However, it seems to be over structured, with too many committees and boards. It's top-heavy structure may well delay implementation

of programs, since it is hard to believe that NAPEP employees and managers will make decisions without proper approval by the entire system and its associated dignitaries. NAPEP seems, in fact, to be organized along the lines of a political party. It may, however, work if the government accepts the idea that poverty alleviation and youth employment are more important than politics.

5.2 State

The major workforce development efforts at the state level are based on the policies formulated at the federal level. Hence, in each of the states, the NDE and NAPEP are the two main programs on workforce development. Both have offices in each state with only minor differences in operational logistics and impact, since all states are operating similar mandates. The only exception, perhaps, is Lagos State, where, because of its unique environmental problems, a Waste Management Agency has also been instituted. The Lagos State Waste Management Agency (LAWMAN) has several thousand employees on its payroll engaged in ridding the Lagos metropolis of refuse. This is one alternative of government initiative for workforce development, which can provide thousand of jobs for the youth.

6. DONORS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

6.1 The World Bank

The World Bank (WB) has three projects relevant to youth development. The first is the \$50 million Universal Basic Education program dedicated to primary education. The second is the Community Based Poverty Reduction Alleviation project. This program is funded at \$60 million and has a grassroots-based approach to poverty reduction. The WB plans to implement this as a pilot project in six or seven states. The third is the Community Based Urban Project, a very large project with \$110 million in funding for improvements in slums and unplanned urban areas. In its second phase, this project will also concentrate on poverty alleviation. Basic education programs combined with poverty alleviation initiatives will prepared the youth and the unemployed to enter the labor force as employees or owners of micro enterprises.

6.2 African Development Bank (ADB)

ADB is creating a line of credit for local banks to use for rural development. The focus is on small and medium enterprise (SME) development. They also have a job creation project running in 12 states, including Delta. This project has a community base and a social fund. The project is for a total of \$12 million per state and uses the self-help model typical in Nigeria. They have no programs for education and training.

6.3. GTZ

GTZ is presently conducting a needs analysis is to establish a new approach to vocational education in Nasarawa State. The project aims at improving the economic development of the region using three elements: a market-driven curriculum development method, micro-finance, and business development. It starts with a survey of the training needs of already existing trades in the area. A curriculum will be developed to address training needs and then a training provider will be contacted to conduct the training. According to the GTZ workforce development expert, the novelty of this approach is that they will not run a training center, but will sub-contract the training with existing centers.

6.4 UNDP

UNDP (United Nations Development Program) is implementing several programs for poverty alleviation in the country. It has a job creation project that formally ended last year, but was extended another year because some states were slow to implement the project. They expect to start a new cycle of poverty alleviation funding, but at very modest levels. UNDP expects to finance around \$200,000 per state, pending the states' securing of some funding. To implement this project, UNDP expects to introduce several changes:

- more funding for vocational training centers and strengthening other training centers;
- convincing states to increase funding in their budgets for...;
- working with government and community;
- getting local government to provide materials;
- creating a micro-credit program; and,
- identifying products that can be exported.

Because written material on UNDP's projects was not available to the research team, it is difficult to properly analyze what appears to be the only workforce development project in Nigeria funded by an international organization besides USAID. Also, the current project has had implementation problems and very low funding. Some of the ideas for the "new" project seem feasible, but the funding appears inappropriate for the level of effort and there are foreseeable implementation problems.

6.5 ILO

ILO has some relevant projects in workforce development. One that deals with formal sector development and SMEs is in the pipeline, but the Nigerian government is reluctant to approve it. The second is called Jobs for Africa. In its first phase, it created a network of influential policymakers to emphasize poverty alleviation programs. In the second phase, this project will work in grassroots activities. A third project is a national SME network designed to create a resource database of experienced entrepreneurs to deliver enterprise training. Finally, the Entrepreneurship Education in Vocational, Technical Training and Tertiary Level Institutions project is intended to benefit young men and women, students, potential entrepreneurs, and policymakers.

6.6 USAID

USAID/Washington has several initiatives in place that could help alleviate social problems in Nigeria by redesigning and intensifying youth workforce development strategies. Although some initiatives are very general in scope, and intended to address global problems, they are flexible enough to address some of the more urgent issues in Nigeria. Three initiatives in particular could have a direct impact on workforce development in Nigeria and, at the same time, address major issues negatively affecting youth participation in general. Together, these initiatives may also help USAID/Nigeria design and tailor projects to specific regional needs based on local social structures and market demands.

Most current USAID initiatives are guided by the principles established in **Global Development Alliance (GDA)**. Created just last year by Secretary of State Colin Powell, it places USAID as one of the players, and not the only player, in the international development process.. GDA redirects USAID to not only acknowledge but participate in this larger development process, making use of the entire development community: NGOs, international organizations, private sector companies and local governments. By becoming an integral part of this process, USAID can influence, participate in, and lead workforce development in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, GDA will address the present situation in the Niger Delta, specifically Rivers State, by addressing some of the negative social effects which have resulted from oil exploration in the area. This initiative will concentrate on an accelerated education program with the help of Alliance partners, composed of Chevron, local community leaders, parents, NGOs, and local education officials. It intends to adapt an accelerated program to meet the needs of the youth in Rivers State.. Its target of 1,500 youths has the potential to make a difference to the unemployment and political situation in the region. However, this program addresses only the education element of the problem at the Niger Delta region. It does not resolve the problem of workforce development and employment.

A new initiative at USAID, **GWIT: Global Workforce in Transition**, is designed to address problems of workforce development. This initiative is critical because it can enable USAID missions “to access technical support when forging strategic plans or facilitating the development of sustainable, demand-driven development systems...” It can help to make the transition from education and training to jobs by helping USAID Missions to identify targets, programs and partners in the process of workforce development. This initiative, under the leadership of Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), can be central to making the transition to new models and strategies to develop a workforce for the informal market in Nigerian urban areas.

While GWIT deals with workforce development, another initiative, was designed to address the educational needs of the youth. **EQUIP: Educational Quality Improvement Program** aims to assist and help “build the capacity of organizations to provide relevant skills training for out-of-school children and youth.” This is an excellent initiative for Nigeria because it links “job creation in both rural and urban areas for young women and men to meet the needs of local markets with learning basic (appropriate literacy, numeracy, and IT skills) and life skills (problem solving, decision making, communicating, and generic work skills.)” EQUIP is also expected to:

build skills that are relevant to those needed in the context of community and workplace. It is expected that engaging and collaborating with the private sector can best assure the “relevancy” of such skills and the quality of the learning experience. Internships and apprenticeships with mentoring of the collaborating businesses are illustrative of the type of activities envisioned. (USAID, EQUIP, p. 17)

Combined, these three initiatives—GDA, GWIT, and EQUIP—can be used to help USAID/Nigeria to address the problems of workforce development in urban and rural areas in Nigeria, and to advance the education and training of youth for the informal market.

7. PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Private sector programs are most evident in Warri. Shell and Chevron attract so much attention that the entire population in Delta state appears to believe it has a right to a well-paying oil company job. As mentioned earlier, many people, young and old, men and women, want to set up a micro-enterprise business, but they expect to sustain it via profitable contracts from the oil companies. Students going to vocational schools expect the same.

To learn more about these programs, a meeting with Shell was set up, taking place on a tight schedule. Chevron, citing several reasons, refused to meet with the team. It is important to keep in mind that Chevron was at that time under siege by a group of women and under the microscope of the international media. This report does not discuss the problems faced by the oil companies, nor does it serve as an excuse for them. It is only intended to describe the expectations created in the area and what the oil companies are doing to address the situation.

Shell Corporation

Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SDPC) maintains two youth programs in the Delta region involving development and micro-enterprise. The first is the Youth Development Scheme (YTS) and the second is the Micro-Credit and Business Development Program.

YTS was first implemented in the 1980s “in support of national efforts to reduce growing unemployment among youths.” This program is a vocational skill and training program to prepare youth for jobs or self-employment. In collaboration with NDE, Shell began the program in Bonny. Later, in collaboration with the Community Development Partners (CODEP), it implemented seven more programs to train youth in Bonny/Ibana, Egbema, Oguta, Nembe, Gboran, Ogoni and Soku South. Since 1994, Shell Oil Company has trained 1,469 youths between the ages of 16 and 34 years in welding, catering, computers, secretarial studies, auto mechanics, fashion and design. Students are nominated by their communities and, after graduation, are also placed in private sector jobs through the community. One hundred and three communities are involved in the program and they expect to involve between 100 and 300 youths per community. While this program seems to be working, Shell officials are concerned that many of the youth sell their initial investments[what are these?], financed by Shell, to other people. It is very possible that the students expected to be employed by Shell after the training. When they realize that these dreams are not going to come true, they sell the tools and pocket the money.

In 1998, SPDC launched the Micro-Credit and Business Development Program “for the economic empowerment of host communities and to enhance their contribution to socio-economic development.” From the start, the program was expected to:

- Establish partnerships with host communities, community-based enterprises, or income generating projects;
- Facilitate access to micro-credit; and
- Carry out training and capacity building for communities and groups.

Students are trained in entrepreneurial survival skills for the market economy. The training lasts three months. After this period, the students receive a certificate and begin a three-month internship. The year-long program includes three months of classroom training, six months of practical training, and three more months of internship.

The program has had some bottlenecks, according to Shell. In particular, it is difficult to find good trainers. Although they are using some NGOs in the process, such as IFESH and NOIC, Shell said that they have management problems with NOIC.

The micro-credit program is for youthful Shell YDS graduates in the community. Shell trains them and buys initial equipment for them. SPDC supports over 218 micro-enterprise groups in 36 host communities in the Niger-Delta region for a total of 58 million Nairas. Loans are limited to 500,000 Naira at commercial interest rates. Although the program relies on youth groups and community support, Shell indicated that the return on the loans is only 20 percent. This represents a failure of their model as an employment tool.

Chevron

Although the team did not meet with Chevron, we had the opportunity to visit a program called Impact, which is financed by Chevron! and managed by NOIC in a facility outside the one USAID supports. This program, the Technical Skills Acquisition Program (TSAP), trains students in vocational areas. Graduating students write a business plan in conjunction with NOIC technical personnel and receive a loan with which to start their business. The program has so far trained 68 youths, but has received repayment on the loans from only 23 students. The director of the project indicated that there is a serious problem of attitude and that the “culture” of the trainees needs to change. The chairman and managing director of Chevron, Jay Prior, in a speech to students, cited the lack of discipline among students and the failure of many students to repay their loans as ongoing problems with TSAP.

8. STATE OF THE ART IN YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

In recent years, there has been a lively discussion among international organizations, scholars and practitioners of training and workforce development on modernizing vocational training. In particular, it needs to address the realities of the global economy, the contraction of the formal labor market and the expansion of the informal market, and the participation of business, government and international organizations in the training process as both policymakers and benefactors. The shift caused by the global economy, as well as high unemployment during times of recession, depression, or restructuring in economies, can make it extremely difficult for youth to find employment. Competition with well-seasoned and experienced workers makes the hiring of untrained and unskilled youth nearly impossible. On the other hand, currently there is a period of change in the labor market and employers are beginning to look for newly trained and retrained workers, as well as lower-cost trained youth. This moment of shift in the economy could open the doors to jobs for trained and employable youth. Therefore, the picture is not all that bad, if vocational technical training is adjusted to the demands of the new job market.

New workforce development programs should be directed towards meeting market labor demands. It is well known that training alone does not create jobs. Job creation exists during times of economic expansion, and is caused by a high demand for workers, trained or otherwise. That situation clearly dissipates once market demands shift. Under conditions of low market demand for labor, youth, especially those who are untrained and unskilled as well as those with obsolete skills, find that job offers evaporate quickly. In Africa, as well as in many developed countries, a major shift in the formal economy—caused by technological changes or variations in the market—can make thousands of workers obsolete and substantially change the division of labor. Many occupations, some highly skilled, are lost to these major shifts in the economy.

This is a crucial point for youth workforce development, because a shift in the economy, for whatever reason, creates the opportunity to train youth for new areas, industries, or technologies. For instance, the shift in the United States from traditional industries, like steel and automotive production, to information technology opened the doors for young people to enter the workforce in large numbers and with new skills. The problem with major economic shifts in developing countries in general, and Africa in particular, is that governments do not react quickly enough with new policies and investments. Vocational and technical schools continue to teach obsolete skills and people continue to be trained and educated in areas of low labor demand. In Nigeria, as discussed earlier, the economy has shifted to the informal sector because of the global economy, the importance of oil production, and the collapse of the formal economy. Yet, the government and most vocational schools continue to operate the same way they have for many years. Universities are sending 100,000 graduates per year into unemployment. This is a demonstration of a complete lack of market orientation, and an even worse arrogance of leadership which continues to use taxpayers' money, or oil revenue, to train youth for unemployment. The government must now formulate new policies, and international organizations must finance new projects with new ideas and directions.

Workforce development for today's youth should be market-oriented and competitive. New areas are being introduced, new approaches to secure jobs are emerging, course work is being contracted out to private training institutions, and students are sharing part of the cost. There is also a greater involvement of the business sector, a smaller role for the government as an employer, and an active participation by students in job seeking. Several new models have been introduced in the United States, Latin America, Europe and Africa as they adjust to the changes and shifts in the international division of labor.

8.1 World

There are literally thousand of projects dealing with youth development, poverty alleviation, social mobilization, training and education, and micro-enterprise development in the world. The schemes presented and discussed here are mainly from Africa and Asia, and they address the considerations described above. It is difficult to find a youth workforce development project that deals solely with training. This approach has been undermined by the obvious argument that training alone does not create jobs. This is the conclusion guiding the development of most new models. This section describes some of these new models, which are still tentative at best, and attempts to show how some have been implemented. However, one must be very cautious in assuming that a model that works well in Zambia, Brazil, or South Africa can be transferred to

Nigeria without major adjustments to local realities. In any case, it is wrong to assume the existence of, or to search for, models that only provide training as a solution for youth workforce development. Other variables must be included in any project design to facilitate the placement of youth in the labor markets of Nigeria.

A good overview on the practice of finding resources for building youth employment can be found in a paper written by Ponna Wignaraja, which describes many of the available resources (Wignaraja, 2002). On a more specific level, an increasingly important practice these days is the participation of business leaders in youth training for employment. A description of a successful project in Zambia will add to the discussion. Another general discussion of youth development with a focus on training that includes the private sector, government, schools, youth groups and NGOs is in Claudio de Moura Castro's (2001) article on education and training, including examples from the French system of technical and vocational schools and the German dual system. In another article (2002b), he discusses the policies and practices of youth workforce development for the 21st Century. The World Bank is presently engaged in a major research project in sub-Saharan Africa addressing the issue of vocational training for the formal and informal markets in relation to the new variables created by the global economy and its impact on Africa (Johanson, 2002).

One country whose vocational technical training model is extensively copied is Brazil. This system has worked for decades and has been exported to other Latin American countries as well as to Africa:

The Brazilian SENAI was created in the early forties, ushering a long sequence of similar institutions in just about all countries of the hemisphere. In essence, SENAI-type institutions are funded through a payroll tax of around 1 percent. The SENAI, SENA, SENAC, SENATI, INCE, INA, INACAP, as these independent institutions are known in the various countries... in most cases fall under the responsibility of the ministries of labor, rather than education and are much closer to the productive sector than regular academic schools. They also benefited from a set of very interesting and robust teaching methods, the "methodical series," which provided solid materials to the thousands of vocational schools spread around the continent. Since they were detached from academic schools, these institutions catered to students after they left them. As schooling levels in the region increased, they were able to readjust their offerings to meet the needs of students with more education. They also shifted from pre-employment training to a much larger share of programs offered to improve the skills of those already in the labor force. For that reason, the sharp distinction which is often made between pre-employment and the upgrading of skills is not as important because the training institutions are the same and they tend to adjust their offerings according to market conditions. (Moura Castro, p.3. ND).

The ability to adjust such programs to the conditions of the market—for example, by training youth for the informal sector—to upgrade teaching methods and to put programs on a solid financial footing, all will be crucial to many African programs.

8.2 Africa

In Africa, according to Richard Johanson of the World Bank, the “formal economies have been stagnating due to slow growth in the private sector and contraction in the public sector. Most entrants to the labor markets have no alternative but to seek work in the informal sector” (Johanson, p. 8). In a draft report of his research in sub-Saharan Africa, Johanson has presented some very interesting conclusions:

- Enterprises, especially those in competitive environments, usually provide their own training without government support.
- Private training providers are a vital and growing resource for skills development, and are better at identifying and filling market niches than public training.
- Traditional apprenticeship training is the most important form of structural training in the informal sector . . . more than all other training combined. (pp, 8–10)

These insights are changing youth workforce development projects in search of new directions. Several suggestions to enhance youth workforce development have been made, such as:

In addition to improving and *universalizing* basic education, the educational training systems—not just technical education and vocational training—must be transformed so that young people can acquire relevant and quality skills... This change has to occur at all levels of learning, from primary school up to university. Among others, this will require doing the following:

- Increasing investments in training institutions,
- Re-orienting the curricula to introduce entrepreneurship training,
- Introducing flexible training programmes,
- Decentralizing training to local authorities, including local artisans at the village level, and
- Linking the training institutions to the labour market. (Chiguata, 2002, p. 24)

Several programs for workforce development in Africa will be discussed at the Youth Employment Summit in Egypt in September 2002. Among the projects for youth workforce development to be considered as “good practices” are the Cisco Internet Networking Technology Training for African Women in Ethiopia, The Citi Savings and Loan Ltd project in Ghana, and the YES—Youth Enterprise Society project in South Africa, all supported by the International Labor Organization and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

The Cisco Internet Networking Technology Training for African Women is conducted by ECA in partnership with InfoDev of the World Bank and Cisco Systems Inc. In this project, 20 to 25 African women are trained each year over a two-year period in innovative technology, in particular Internet networking design, maintenance and use. In the first training course, completed in 2002, 28 percent of the women were under 25. The course encourages all age groups, but keeps a special focus on young women, high school, college, university graduates or those whose education has been cut short. These young women benefit from this specialized training where there is current market demand in their specific countries. At the same time they undertake courses in gender and business management. The course gives them skills which they can develop in setting up businesses or working in a competitive environment (ECA 2002, 9).

A second program listed as a best practice is the “Harnessing the Innovative Spirit of Disadvantaged Young Ghanaian Women: Citi Savings and Loans Ltd.” In 1992 Citi was authorized to operate as a non-bank financial institution with the objectives of mobilizing deposits, granting loans and providing financial services to informal sector micro and small businesses. Immediately:

Citi began by setting up branches in peri-urban centers of the capital city and evolving an innovative approach of interfacing the non-formal market place with the formal whereby canvassers at the grassroots market services among women groups and individual sellers; help in

group formation; conduct credit education; and work closely with the “susu” operators. Two specific financial products were designed, namely, “Adom Bosea” (for mostly foodstuff retailers and the kayayoo teenage girl porters in the local markets) and “Mmoa Bosea” (mostly for chopbar or food caterers, and dressmakers). (ECA 2002, p.11)

This project has been a success. As the source notes, by “1997 Citi had a network of about 10,000 graduates, with 2,000 of them being men.” Citi adopted a group concept approach, where savings and loans were mobilized and delivered on the basis of group identification of needy customers, thereby reducing the cost of lending and enhancing the ability to repay the loans. This was done by:

providing vocational training out of its profits for the poor illiterate youth; organizing them into small groups; targeting assistance in the form of credit and enterprise formation to groups demonstrating the potential for enterprise development; and providing basic management training. In addition, Citi gives moral support to these women under its Career Mentoring and Entrepreneurial Development Resources (CMEDR) programme. (ECA 2002, 11)

Another outstanding project is the Youth Enterprise Society (YES) in South Africa:

The YES program was initiated by Ohio State University in 1989 at the insistence of South Africa’s youth and their teachers. It is an extra-mural activity that runs throughout the year. Students in grades 7 and above are enrolled. The mission of YES is ‘to empower young people, through enterprise, to become masters of their own destinies. Or, put another way, to help more and more young people to become business creators rather than simply job seekers’. It thus seeks to help alleviate unemployment by encouraging young people to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. Participants develop business competencies through a range of activities. Schools provide their premises, teachers serve as advisors/facilitators, and young men and women, along with community leaders, educationists, business leaders together contribute to “create awareness and interest in free-market entrepreneurship as a career option amongst young people”, demonstrating the high potential of partnerships between the public education sector and multiple stakeholders for achieving effective education and training. (ECA 2002, 12)

Many more projects can be listed to serve as examples of “best practices” in Africa and elsewhere, but it is important to notice that “best practices” are specific to the country and region where they are working. To transfer those ideas and methodology from other countries to Nigeria without some major adaptations is a very high risk. The needs of Nigeria are very specific and based on its historical socio-economic experience. No other country in Africa combines the variables found in Nigeria: high population, decaying formal economy, large informal economy, developed formal educational system, ethnic conflict, and an extremely high youth population.

9. GAPS IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are two interconnected levels where the dearth of literature on the Nigerian labor markets is revealed. These are at the general and the particular levels. At the general level of workforce development, where the extant literature reflects interest in the specific area of youth employment, there are two observable gaps. One is the absence of a sectoral analysis. In other words, beyond general surveys of the employment/unemployment situation in the country, there appear to be no sector-specific studies on job creation capacity. Studies in this area would be of public relevance by providing theoretical and empirical guides on which economic activities relevant agencies should promote. Only the *National Manpower Board (NMB)* studies have

attempted to identify the services and sectors where future jobs will be created (see a listing of studies consulted in the bibliography). The second weakness is the literally monolithic control of empirical data on labor matters by the NMB. Independent data sources are necessary to subject the Board's measurement criteria to rigorous testing in order to ensure its reliability. This is the kind of weakness that the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) has observed in the ILO's definition of an employed person. Until recently there was little or no coordination between the data gathering and analysis of NMB and the FOS, resulting in conflicting figures on employment and unemployment from the agencies. This undermines confidence in whatever figures are issued and discourages researchers from further investigation, since they are not sure which statistics to use as a baseline.

At the specific level of youth workforce development, the dearth of literature is particularly acute. Web site visits to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labor Office (ILO) give initial hope of robust evidence on Nigeria. Further exploration, however, reveals little but the general surveys of the economy. Worse still, the otherwise rich U.S. Library of Congress Country Studies does not offer any significant information on the topic of workforce development in Nigeria.

Finally, most publications on workforce development in Nigeria are outdated. This is especially true of official publications. For example, the latest comprehensive labor statistics from NMB were published in 1998. This problem is acknowledged by the FOS, which explains its inability to publish as regularly as it would like to shortage of funds.

10. RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

10.1 RESULTS

This youth workforce situational analysis in Nigeria was based on visits to five cities: Abuja, Lagos, Warri, Kano and Benin. Except for Abuja, where the team concentrated on visits to government agencies and international organizations, the visits revealed a youth labor force with diverse organizations, goals, objectives and directions. They also revealed an urgent unemployment situation in Nigeria. In short, the research shows that training programs in vocational education, paralleled with placement services and micro-financing projects, must be implemented as soon as possible.

The results of the findings on the economy, population, youth, poverty, education and training, and formal and informal markets, all point to the fact that the formal economy and its labor demands are declining. Youth without a job, income, or a future are paying the highest price of any group in Nigeria. Worse off by far are the untrained and unprepared youths of large urban areas where unemployment is high, the formal sector non-existent, and the future bleak.

However, these youths are so diverse in their education, training, and organization that no project with a single goal or objective will address their problems as a whole. Projects must be complex and adjust to the local needs of the youth and matched to the needs of the local economy. For instance, a project in Warri has to take youth organizations and their serious grievances against the Nigerian government and the oil companies into consideration. In Lagos, a project must make large investments for a substantial period of time to begin to have an impact. In Kano, a

project must be integrated into the vibrant market economy of the city. In Edo State, one would have to look at the push-pull factors which induce young women to leave the area and seek their futures elsewhere.

More important than analyzing the condition of youths and their qualifications is the need to analyze the conditions of the local economy and its dynamics. With the deterioration of the formal economy and its weak hiring conditions, there is little employment opportunity for trained adult labor and even less for untrained youth labor. The informal market is the only growing labor market in the country. Policy formulation and financing for workforce development by the government and/or international organizations must address the strengths of the informal market rather than the declining formal market. Government can facilitate the creation and expansion of the informal sector with tax incentives, technical support where possible, loan guarantees and even labor training. In addition, the government can acquire loans from the World Bank and the African Development Bank to finance some initiatives in the informal sector.

However, to address the problem of youth employment in the informal sector, more research is necessary to determine the proper markets to target and the youths best suited for training. The new division of labor must be carefully identified and described. The utmost care must also be taken to avoid the creation of more informal enterprises than the economy can sustain. It is equally important to train and place youth in sectors that are productive, growing, diversifying and clearly sustainable. All this will require continued research into the conditions of youth employment in specific areas and cities.

Among the specific areas in need of research are the cities, their informal sector, vocational training, employment placement, and unemployed youth. Lagos has perhaps the most serious problems in Nigeria. The city's infrastructure is deteriorating. High population density, high unemployment, and a high crime level make it nearly impossible for unemployed youth to secure employment. Lagos has a huge informal sector, but it has an even larger pool of educated and unemployed youth and adults. Large numbers of unemployed, uneducated and untrained youth have little chance to secure employment. The problem of youth employment in Lagos is so deep and broad that only a large investment and a continuous training and placement program will be able to improve their conditions. Such a program will also have to take into consideration the informal market's ability to absorb the current unemployed youth population and the increasing number of the young approaching employable age.

In Warri, the population of young unemployed job seekers seems to have come of age. They are organized, know what they want, and are ready to enter the job market as employees or micro-enterprise owners. This has led to a very explosive and urgent situation. Much of their frustration is directed at the traditional leaders, the Nigerian Government and the oil companies. Unless their needs are addressed very soon, the youth in Warri will retaliate against those they believe are to blame for their conditions. This is an area where a youth workforce development project could produce visible results in a short time, as well as help avoid more serious political and economic problems.

In Kano a similar situation exists, but the prospects are much better. Living in a state and region known for its commercial capabilities and its capacity to generate wealth, youth feels frustrated by barriers, but are eager to enter the job market. The formal sector in Kano has lost, for all practical purposes, its capability to adjust to the changing economy. In Kano, as in Warri, the solution to the present economic problem of youth unemployment is with the informal sector. This sector has enough elasticity and capacity to expand both vertically and horizontally to absorb more qualified and trained youth. The political situation is not as serious as in Warri, since youth are not as well organized and do not have a specific target to focus their anger on. They only want work. However, without jobs, they may fall prey to the provocateurs eager to both improve their position and to target other groups in the area for attack.

One common aspect of all youth in Nigeria today is their willingness to do what is necessary to learn a trade or a vocation, to find a job and to earn a living. Any reasonable project that addresses their needs should help to improve their conditions and start them in the right direction. If nothing is done, however, they will have little other choice but to strike at the traditional leaders and oil companies in Warri, to join extremist religious groups in Kano, to leave Edo State to become prostitutes in Europe, or to participate in organized crime in Lagos. These are not difficult predictions to make, but a fact of everyday life in today's Nigeria.

10.2 SUGGESTIONS

There are many possible suggestions for improving youths' job prospects in the country. Many require more serious and constant participation by the federal and state governments. Government does not need to employ the youth. That would create unreasonable expectations on the part of the youth and it would not generate many jobs. Rather, the government can create conditions for the improvement and expansion of both the formal and the informal sectors by formulating development policies that address the new realities of the Nigerian economy.

In the formal sector, the government can be more responsive to enterprise needs and facilitate the re-tooling of the Nigeria economy. Tax breaks may be necessary, and even low interest loans provided, to facilitate the importation or domestic production of appropriate technology.

The government needs to control the importation of low-quality goods that Nigeria's informal sector can produce for itself. Keeping the doors open to any and all products from other countries and, at the same time, ignoring the needs of the formal and informal sectors, is having a negative impact on the nation's economy. Many of the products sold in the informal sector are produced abroad. There is, however, no reason why these products could not be produced and sold in Nigeria. Though protectionism is frowned upon under today's global economic principles, the Government of Nigeria could temporarily impose tariffs on low-quality imports, while offering some financing for expansion of the formal and informal industrial sectors.

It will also be necessary to create jobs for youth. This will not be done by offering vocational training to a couple of hundred youths, but by facilitating the creation of new labor-intensive industries. These industries do not pay high wages, but they employ thousands of young people and create poles of growth in many regions. Textiles in particular would be welcome, since the country has a tradition of production in this area. Again, the government has to attract some

industries from abroad, getting them to open plants in Nigeria, and facilitate the formation of a domestic labor-intensive industry by offering low interest long-term loans to entrepreneurs.

While the government carries out its responsibilities to rebuild Nigeria's formal industrial sector, other projects need to be created by international organizations to train and employ the large masses of youth in the country. It is not feasible to start any nationwide program without first trying it out in some critical areas. Although the country has a large pool of secondary- and tertiary-level graduates, training useful to the formal and informal sectors is necessary before youths can be employed. Without appropriate training, young workers' participation in the retooling of the formal sector, as well as in the expansion and diversification of the informal sector, is highly unlikely to occur.

10.2.1 Skills Training for Employment

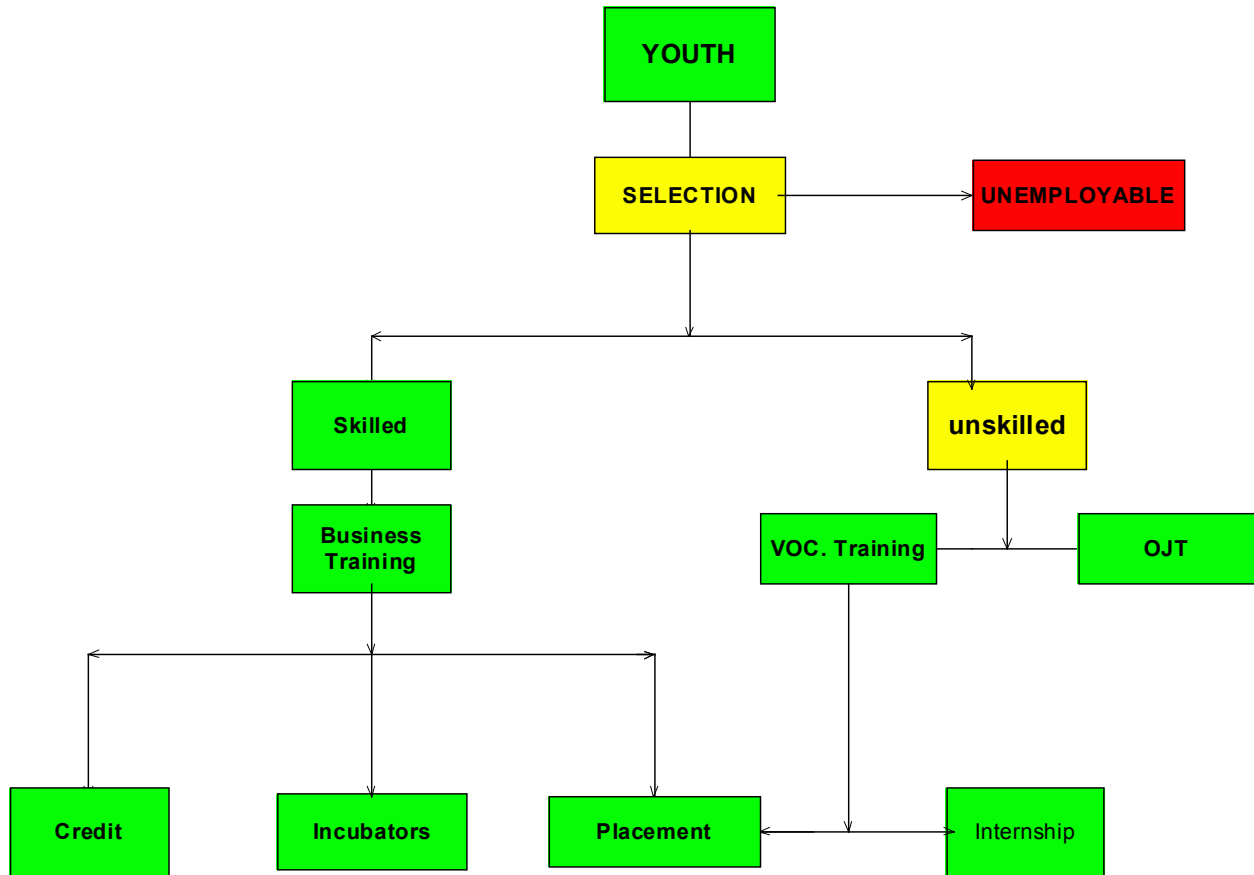
Development projects for youth employment need to be very practical, low-cost and efficient. This should be done by tapping into already existing resources in the communities, not by creating new organizations. Such a project would need to make use of government and private vocational training institutions, government and international organizations, micro-enterprise financing programs, government incubators, business leaders, youth groups, and the informal markets already in existence in the country. It is extremely important that such a project be demand-driven. Training must be provided for the jobs that actually exist and fill real employment demands – it cannot continue to be purely classroom-oriented and formal, and it must make use of all the resources available in the community. Such a project would include several phases and have a more far-reaching influence on youth employment and job placement than anything previously done in Nigeria. The rest of this section describes in some detail the type of project envisioned.

Youths would be referred to such a project by traditional leaders, community and religious organizations, youth groups, business owners, or even on their own initiative. It would be far better for them to have the support of some sort of community organization or leader, but it should not be a requirement. (See flowchart in the next page.) This sort of project would be divided into four stages: application, selection, training, and placement.

Application—In the first stage, the youth applies or is recommended for the program. At this stage an interview is conducted to determine if the candidate is likely to be employable in the community after receiving training and/or credit. The criterion is not the youth's desire or interest, but the demand for labor skills in his/her chosen occupation. There must be a real opportunity for employment, micro-financing or other possible job placement. For those incapable of assimilating the vocational training or are otherwise unemployable, no further action is possible. However, the project makes all efforts possible to place those in greatest need ahead of more privileged youth.

Selection—In the second stage, employable youths are divided into two groups. The first group is composed of youth without skills but employable after training. In coordination with an employment counselor, the youth selects the appropriate or desired training. The second group consists of those already having skills or working experience. Those are assigned only to a business training course (described below).

CHART 1 YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Vocational Training—In the third stage, the youths determined by the project to be employable after receiving training have two choices of training types. The first is on-the-job training (OJT), paid for by the project (some businesses may be paid to do a series of OJT trainings periodically). Youths are assigned to a training program and monitored by the project during the course of their program. The second group of youths undertake a vocational training course in the craft or specialization of their choice, focused on areas where there is a clear demand for labor. This course must include training on locating a job, networking, and other skills necessary to being hired. The type of vocational technical training varies with the area. After completion of the training, some students enter an internship of three months. Other students are placed directly in a job, depending on the type of work and skills involved.

To be more efficient, the project will contract with local technical vocational school to deliver the course work. Project staff will help design the course work and monitor the training. In this way, a larger percentage of project funding will be used to benefit the youth, not to buy equipment or replicate courses and training already available in the community. Training services from schools in the area are purchased through bidding. The project also should hire local businesses and incubators to deliver OJT and internships for students.

Business Training—The second group of candidates are those identified as having craft skills and ready for the labor market. All the youth in this group will undertake a business training course. After the completion of the course, the skilled youth will have a choice of (1) receiving credit to open a micro-business, (2) enrolling in an incubator project, or (3) being placed in a job. Note that micro-credit is the most difficult area for youth because of lack of experience.

Placement—Because youth workforce development must be demand-driven, the placement office of the project plays a very important role. The people hired to manage such an important office should have experience in human resource management and a working knowledge of the area and its economic conditions.

This sort of project would provide training for unskilled youth, business training for skilled youth, and incubator training for the most talented youth. At the same time, the project has a high degree of sustainability as regards staffing and management, because there is capacity building at each level. Project staff will learn how to select youth based on their aspirations and capabilities, determine the range and depth of the job market in an area, help youth design micro-credit projects for the informal sector, design and monitor incubator programs, and design OTJ training and internship programs.

There are other schemes and projects that can increase youth employment. However, most projects must change their concentration from training alone to training and placement. This proposed project is thus not a human development program in the strict sense. It is a workforce development hybrid program that responds to the needs of the youth and the new realities of informal markets in a global economy. Although the project is demand-driven, it is fueled by the learning component as well. Training is the central element of youth workforce development. The market determines the need, but training and education makes it possible for youth to fulfill these demands.

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People Interviewed

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Rev, N.G Ogbemi	National Vice-Chairman	National Secretariat	Lagos
E.O. Martins	National Treasurer	National Secretariat	Lagos
Prince A.O. Adebajo	National Member		Lagos
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A.O Ejumudo	Program Manager	Delta Program	Warri
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Ohwofaraye, Winfred	Youth Leader	UVWIE	Warri
A. Udi	Chairman/ Employers' Forum	Dee Knowledge Steel LTD	Warri
M. Imakhu	Employers' Forum	Sam Seeli Hotel	Warri
M. Akoreh	Employers' Forum	Ishaka Hotel	Warri
Kuyinu, K.A.	Head, Support Programme	Shell	Warri
Okenabirhie, J	Chairman	Delta Manufacturers Association	Warri
Ahamed, Ahamal		AHID	Kano
Garba, Sagir		Directorate of Youth Dev.	Kano
Chinade, Babaye	State Coordinator	National Directorate of Employment	Kano
Bashir, Aboudolia	Chairman	Manufacturers Association of Nigeria	Kano
Souleyman Adam	Program Director	NOIC	Kano
Franscesco Giotta	Technical Advisor	NOIC	Kano
Maryam Abdul-Razak	Peace Builder	NOIC	Kano
Ibrahim Bawa	Training Manager	NOIC	Kano
Musbahu Badawi	Micro-credit Specialist	NOIC	Kano
Amina Dantiye	HIV/AIDS instructor	NOIC	Kano
Nafisa Ado	Counselor	NOIC	Kano
Umar Bala Mohamed	Job Developer	NOIC	Kano
Mahmud Idriss Abdullah	Peace Builder	NOIC	Kano
Garba Ado	HIV/AIDS instructor	NOIC	Kano
Alhadji M. Lamido	Chairman	Program Advisory Board	Kano
Maimuna Sani	Member	Program Advisory Board	Kano
Bolu Omole Ohonsi	Micro-credit Coordinator	NOIC	Kano
Ayuba Ali Baba	Coops Officer	NOIC	Kano
Jennifer E. John	Coops Officer	NOIC	Kano
Salisu Shehu Salihi	Vocational Specialist	NOIC	Kano
Hamzat Mani Yangora	Vice Principal	Government Technical College	Kano
Safiya Datti	Principal	City Women's Center	Kano
Aishato Abdu Barki	Vocational Education	City Women's Center	Kano
A. Murtala Ahmed	Vice Principal	City Women's Center	Kano
T. Hama	Training Officer	City Women's Center	Kano
Sharif, Abbas M.	Director, Bus. Incubation Center	Min. of Science and Technology	Kano
Officials	Business Incubation Center		Kano
Alyu A.	Director	Ministry of Labor	Kano
Kankausa	Women's cooperative		Kano

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