

Assessing the Contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations in Improving Farmers' Livelihoods in Katsina State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study evaluates the contributions of non-governmental organizations to improving farmers' livelihoods in Ingawa Local Government Area of Katsina State, Nigeria, with a focus on the efforts of Techno-Serve. Methodologically, the research utilized primary data collected through Key Informant Interviews and secondary data sourced from books, journals, and web-based materials. The primary data obtained from the field survey were qualitatively analysed in alignment with the study's declared objectives. The study employs Performance Failure Theory as its theoretical framework. Findings indicate that respondents reported significant benefits, such as training in best agricultural practices, which enhanced production, reduced post-harvest losses, and increased income. Additional benefits included business skills training, which enabled tomato farmers to form organizations, establish direct market connections with premium buyers, and receive farm input support. However, the study also identified challenges faced by non-governmental organizations, primarily insecurity due to armed banditry. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the state government prioritize the security of lives and property by deploying more security agents equipped with sophisticated weapons to the area. Furthermore, the study suggests that non-governmental organizations should identify and support more farmers to ensure sustainable food production in the state and the country at large.

Keywords: Agricultural practices, farmers' livelihood, insecurity, non-governmental organizations, sustainable food production

Introduction

The preponderance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is not peculiar to Africa or Nigeria alone; they now operate in many developing countries. The prevalence of poverty, diseases, unemployment, and inequality, among other issues, are the defining characteristics of most countries where these organizations exist and operate. Besides these unenviable attributes, the governments of these countries have been found to be corrupt and wasteful, and as such have failed to provide the basic necessities of life for their people. When these needs are provided at all, they are far from sufficient, as most of these countries are either overpopulated, as is the case with Nigeria, or not well-endowed resource-wise.

In Nigeria, there are many NGOs operating in different parts of the country, rendering various services aimed at putting smiles on the faces of the people. Some of these NGOs include the Initiative for Community Development, the Africa Initiative for Education and Economic Development, the Centre for Community Empowerment for the Underprivileged, the Rural Health Initiative, the Society for Community Development, the Poverty Alleviation Trust Foundation, the Poverty Alleviation for the Poor Initiative, and the Center for

Responsive Leadership and Transparency, among others. The proliferation of these NGOs, according to Weishbrod (1975), is due to performance failure on the part of the state. Rather than describing Nigeria as the largest economy in Africa, Maier (2000, p. 28) preferred to describe Nigeria as the largest failed state in the Third World. Thus, rather than engendering development, the government of Nigeria, like most African countries, has reduced public offices to private property and platforms for the primitive accumulation of state wealth for self-aggrandizement. This was probably what Maier (2000, p. 23) had in mind when he said:

Rare is the head of state who acts on behalf of the entire nation. The people are not so much governed as ruled. It is as if they live in a criminally mismanaged corporation where the bosses are armed and have barricaded themselves inside the company safe. Nigeria's leaders, like the colonialists before them, have siphoned off billions of dollars and stashed them in Western banks.

However, according to James (1987), the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria has made the country more conducive to the creation of many NGOs. Whatever or what is the reason for the proliferation of NGOs in the country? The fact remains that NGOs complement the efforts of the government in service delivery.

In Katsina State, there are many NGOs operating in different parts of the state. One such NGO is Techno Serve, which has been providing succour to many rural dwellers, including farmers. Techno-Serve was founded by Ed Bullard in 1968 to help hardworking people in the developing world lift themselves, their families, and their communities out of poverty. Ed Bullard was captivated by the spirit and character of the Ghanaian people but was appalled by the depth of poverty that surrounded him. As a businessman, Ed Bullard understood that the contrast between this poverty and his own prosperity came not from any innate difference between himself and a poor Ghanaian farmer (Techno-Serve, 2022). Instead of prospering, the people he saw struggled because they lacked the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to lift themselves out of poverty. So, in 1968, Ed Bullard launched Techno Serve, short for "technology in the service of mankind." He envisioned Techno-Serve as a different type of non-profit organization, one that would help poor people by connecting them to information and market opportunities (Techno Serve, 2022). Today, Techno Serve works with enterprising people in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries. Now, Techno Serve has worked in more than forty countries across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, assisting thousands of businesses and improving the incomes of millions of people.

It is against this backdrop that this paper assesses the contributions of NGOs in improving farmers' livelihoods in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Techno Serve's Yield-Wise Project in Ingawa Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State, Nigeria. The paper is divided into seven sections. Section one is the introduction, while section two reviews relevant literature both conceptually and empirically. Section three focuses on the theoretical framework of analysis, while section four covers the research methodology. In section five, data generated from the field survey are qualitatively analysed and the results discussed, while section six concludes the paper. The last but not least section is section seven, where the paper makes some useful recommendations based on the findings.

Literature Review

NGOs stand for Non-Governmental Organizations. Abayomi and Mnorom (2020) aver that NGOs have no fixed or formally agreed definition, they may be generally defined as non-profit entities independent of government influence (even though they may receive

government funding). Having a simple definition is difficult because of the diversities of NGOs (Shimawuam 2020). While acknowledging this definitional problem, Lewis (2016, p.3) said:

Precise definitions vary regarding what constitutes an NGO, and analyzing the phenomenon of NGOs remains surprisingly difficult. One reason for this difficulty is that NGOs are a diverse group of organizations that defy generalizations, ranging from small informal groups to large formal agencies. NGOs play different roles and take various shapes within and across different societies. Consequently, NGOs as an analytical category remain complex and unclear. NGOs are therefore quite challenging to pin down analytically. This complexity has generated debates about what qualifies as an NGO and what does not, as well as discussions about the most suitable approaches for analyzing their roles.

According to the World Bank (1995) in Abanyam and Mnorom (2020), an NGO is a private organization that pursues activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, and they protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development. In other words, NGOs are self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared towards improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people (Vakil, 1997). For Shimawua (2020, p.75), an NGO is a non-profit making, voluntary, service-oriented/development-oriented organization, either for the benefit of members (a grassroots organization) or of other members of the population (an agency). NGOs are non-profit making organizations; they are independent from the government, they are not affiliated with the government.

Aall (2015, p.89) broadly defines NGOs in the following words:

NGO means a private, self-governing, not-for-profit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering; and/or promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society.

NGOs are value-based organizations which depend in whole or in part on charitable donations and voluntary service (Emmanuel & Gernah, 2022, p.14). According to Uzuegbunam (2013), NGOs are legally constituted non-state organizations created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government, and even in cases being funded totally or partially by the government; they still maintain the non-governmental status by excluding government representatives from membership. For Ball and Dunn (2013), NGOs are non-profit agencies that serve some public interest voluntarily and autonomously managed, not for personal profit or self-service and other related personal values.

A large number of these NGOs are found in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. NGOs have been contributing to the development of developing countries in no small measure, especially in terms of democracy and good governance, poverty alleviation, women empowerment, primary health care, education and functional literacy, development of the girl child, environmental protection, conflict resolution, control of drug abuse, and human rights among others (Akpanudoedehe, 2006).

NGOs are different from formal government organizations and do not operate like the government. NGOs are not established to compete with the government. However, their activities are expected to complement, supplement, and offer alternatives to government's development efforts (Egyir, 2013). As rightly noted by Dahiru (2017), NGOs constitute a

viable alternative to government as channels of development assistance, particularly in developing countries. According to Collins, Hussaini and Yinalabi (2020), NGOs promote development by raising peoples' awareness, participation, and taking the lead role in micro planning involving the people. They are no longer minor actors on the development stage, in some cases receiving as much or more than their government counterparts (Brass, 2011). At the international level, NGOs are perceived as vehicles for providing democratization and economic growth in the Third World countries (Makoba, 2002). It is for this reason that NGOs have increasingly become good substitute to weak states and markets in the promotion of economic development and the provision of basic services to most people (Collins, Hussaini and Yinalabi, 2020). In other words, NGOs complement the efforts of government agencies by providing innovative approaches to addressing poverty-related challenges in the society (Idowu, 2015). NGOs are crucial agents because they empower individuals, and this enable them to provide more efficient and sustainable local development services compared to government initiatives (Akpanudoedehe, 2016).

Several factors have contributed to rising interest in the activities of NGOs around the World. One of these factors, according to Daniel, Joseph and Lawrencina (2022) is the fact that there has been growing donor distrust and frustrations with states and this has made NGOs to be seen as desirable alternatives. In fact, many people have come to view NGOs for their inclusive representation of beneficiaries and their role as innovators of new technologies and participative approach to working with the poor (Murray & Overton, 2011).

In contemporary development practice, the role of NGOs can be categorized into three, namely service delivery, catalyst, and partnership (Daniel, Joseph & Lawrencina, 2022). NGOs deliver services in many parts of the World where people lack access to several vital basic services or where such services are of poor quality. As catalysts, NGOs bring about change through advocacy, policies, and any other forms of influence they wield. Also, NGOs as catalyst in development services is manifested in how they innovate and creatively apply modern techniques and strategies to solve development problems. Lastly, NGOs form partnership with many organizations in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals'

On the forms or types of NGOs, Lane (1995) identified four types of NGOs, namely welfare and relief, modernization, community development, and institution building. Relief and welfare NGOs channel their efforts to assist people affected by complex humanitarian emergencies that are either natural or man-made. Such emergencies include earth quakes, droughts, and floods among other natural disasters, and conflicts. The remaining three types are categorized as Development NGOs. These NGOs mainly help to promote and improve people's lives through community and institutional development practices and empowerment and capacity building programmes that enable people to fulfil their development aspirations and attain sustainable livelihoods.

For Cousins (1991) NGOs can be grouped into two based on their orientation and level of operation. Based on orientation, Cousins (1991) identified four types of NGOs, namely charitable, service, participatory and empowering. Charitable NGOs are directed towards addressing the needs of the poor. They primarily engage in distributing food stuff, clothing materials; medicines, provision of housing, transport, and schools. The second category engage in services delivery such as provision of health services, family planning, and educational services among others. The third category of NGOs are called the participatory NGOs which are classified based on the self-help projects they provide for the local communities where people are actively involved in the planning and implementation of these

projects. The fourth category, empowering NGOs seek to help poor people better understand the social, political, and economic factors affecting their lives and reinforce their awareness of their capacity to control their own lives.

Adeyeye, Obiegbo Ogu-Egege (2017) examined the impact of the activities of NGOs on poverty alleviation among rural dwellers in selected villages in Bosso LGA of Nigeria state, Nigeria from the perspective of Performance Failure Theory. Three variables, namely electricity supply, borehole provision and humanitarian services were used as determinants of poverty alleviation. Data for the study were collected using self-structured questionnaire administered on 107 respondents selected via quota sampling technique. Descriptive statistics, Pearson-Product Moment correlation and Multiple Regression analysis were used for data analysis. The results of the study showed that electricity supply and humanitarian services are significantly associated to poverty alleviation, but not with provision of borehole. The study therefore recommended that NGOs should pay more attention to the supply of electricity and provision of humanitarian services in seeking to alleviate poverty in the selected villages. The study equally recommended that government should promote friendly policies to encourage NGOs' activities as well as design monitoring measures to deter fake NGOs' activities in Nigeria.

Omofonmwan and Odia (2009) examined some of the strategies adopted by NGOs for community development in Edo state, Nigeria. Data were collected using observations, interviews, and local field studies. Findings showed that NGOs are into various aspects of community development such as community mobilization, environment, health and sanitation awareness creation, promotion of child's rights law, promotion of sexuality and reproductive health education, and fight against child labour and human trafficking among others. The study submitted that operators of NGOs should be more proactive and sensitive towards the goal they have chosen to pursue and the welfare of those employed by them well cared for by these NGOs. The study equally recommended that NGOs need to look inward, in sourcing for funds for their activities internally rather than waiting for support of international donors alone, which do rarely come.

Gisaor (2021) assessed the impact of NGOs in poverty reduction in Makurdi Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue state, Nigeria. Data for the study were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guide. Respondents were drawn from among the staff and officials of selected NGOs in the study area. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. Findings of the study showed that the respondents confirmed benefits in terms of increased income, use of good means of transportation, good accommodation, feeding and sleeping materials. The study equally found that the major challenge confronting NGOs in the study area was inadequate finance to execute all their programmes as well as disburse to the beneficiaries as loans and grants. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that, NGOs should seek for more sources of funding including soliciting financial support from international community to enable them fund diversified economic activities of the vulnerable people in the country.

Oke and Adeyemo (2007) investigated the impact of NGOs on rural poverty alleviation in south western Nigeria. Primary data were collected from 200 clients and 200 non-clients of NGOs in the study area. Linear Multiple Regression (LMR) was used to determine the magnitude of contribution of variables affecting poverty in south western Nigeria. The study revealed that gender and poverty indicators were determinants of poverty among non-clients but not among clients. Socio-cultural spending was a positive and significant variable in the

poverty models. It also showed that belonging to the clients' group alleviated poverty as well as enhanced savings of respondents. The study therefore concluded that micro finance delivery efforts of the NGOs enhanced poverty alleviation among clients in the study area.

Yusuf, Abbas, Husain & Mohammed (2017) assessed the contributions of NGOs in poverty alleviation and community development in Gombe state, Nigeria. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The results indicated that the activities of NGOs spread across many fields of human endeavor such as education, empowerment, health care, environmental sustainability and HIV awareness campaign, seeking social transformation, and improvement in the quality of life of the people of Gombe state. The study recommended that NGOs should seek to explore avenues for funding from donor agencies and improve efforts on advocacy and HIV awareness in the study area.

Kamal (2020) argued that NGO are primarily established to reach the masses with respect to the failure of government or nations to support or provide aid to their citizens. In other words, NGOs are established for the sole purpose of fighting for the interest of the public. The roles played by NGO are usually seen as roles that cannot be played government in some sectors. Because of this it is often referred to as the third sectors that help in resolving problems like combating poverty and inequality According to this scholar, NGOs play vital roles in combating poverty and inequality, giving financial support to small businesses as well as humanitarian support. The scholar stressed that in an attempt to address the social malaise called 'poverty', NGOs came up with different strategies such as providing aid to the poor, establishment of microfinance entities, national development in the areas of democracy and good governance, and bridging the gap of poverty and inequality is promoting girl child education.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Performance Failure Theory (PFT), which was propounded by Burton Weisbrod in 1975 (See Adeyeye, Obiegbo & Ogu-Egege, 2017). According to this theory, NGOs emerged to satisfy residual unsatisfied demand for public goods in society, with their existence attributed to market failures caused by the non-optimal provision of public goods. In other words, NGOs were created when the government or market could not provide public goods for all or serve the general interests of everybody (Thomas, 2015).

For Brown and Korten (1991), the failure of the state to optimally provide public goods creates a situation in which NGOs emerge as innovative responses to various problems. Similarly, Anheier (1990) argues that NGOs can provide services more economically than the government because they do not seek profits for their services and undertake projects at lower labor costs compared to entrepreneurs, relying on voluntary local inputs that do not include transaction costs. This understanding has informed the government's recognition of NGOs as development partners and its reliance on them for executing some projects, alongside government agencies and private profit-seeking entities (Abanyam & Mnorom, 2020).

Applied to the purpose of this study, the failure of the Katsina State government to optimally provide basic public goods such as constant power supply, potable water supply, financial and farm input support for farmers, and certain humanitarian services, which contribute to rural poverty, has motivated NGOs to intervene and improve the living conditions of rural dwellers. Expanding on this perspective, Gisaor (2021) argues that NGOs create close links with grassroots organizations and often serve as intermediaries between the government and communities, providing technical advice or financial support. Some NGOs in Nigeria focus

on agricultural inputs and poverty alleviation, while others emphasize empowerment (Ahemen, 2011). This underscores the operations of TechnoServe in Nigeria, especially in Katsina State.

Research Methodology

The paper specifically assessed the role of Techno Serve's Yield-Wise Project in improving the livelihoods of tomato farmers in Ingawa LGA of Katsina State, Nigeria. The paper collected primary data from Key Informants (KIs) who were selected from among the beneficiaries of the project, staff of Techno Serve, and staff of the Katsina State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority using purposive sampling techniques. Ten (10) key informants were interviewed during this study. The primary data collected from the field survey was qualitatively analysed in line with the declared objectives of the study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents analysis of primary data collected from the field survey using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The section discusses the contributions made by Techno Serve's Yield-Wise Project, aimed at improving the livelihoods of tomato farmers in Katsina State, Nigeria. Additionally, this section examines some of the challenges encountered by the organization during the project implementation in the study area. Strategies employed to ensure the sustainability of the programme are also discussed in this section.

Contributions of Techno Serve's Intervention Programme to Farmers' Livelihoods in Ingawa LGA

One of the benefits of NGOs' project to the farmers is that they were linked with potential buyers who were ready and willing to buy their farm produce at good market price. This links created ample markets for the farmers who made more profit than hitherto was the case. According to a key informant,

The main objective of the project was to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the state. For instance, the Yield-Wise Project was tailored to increase farmers' income by 50% through a 50% reduction in tomato post-harvest losses. After harvesting their farm produce, many tomato farmers are not informed about marketing their produce. Techno Serve helps farmers attract ample buyers for their farm produce, resulting in increased sales and profits for themselves and their families (KII, 2023).

Other benefits which accrued to the farmers was that they were provided with agro-chemicals to help the farmers control tomato pests. These pests have devastated tomato crops in recent years, and this had often affected the quantity of tomato produce. To control these pests, and consequently increase yields, Techno-Serve provided agro-chemicals for farmers. The farmers confirmed that the provision of these chemicals help to reduce pest infestation, thereby increasing their output and income. Aside these chemicals, the organization also supported the target farmers with chemical spraying cans. A key informant disclosed that Techno-Serve bought chemicals such as pesticides for him and they also bought spraying cans to enable him conveniently spray these chemicals on his farmland. This chemical helped him to control weeds and pests that destroy tomatoes. Consequently, his farm business in grew within a short time and he was also able to make for himself and family (KII, 2023)

Also considered beneficial to the farmers is the support they received from the NGO, which included fertilizers, irrigation machines, and plastic crates among others. The fertilizers were meant to increase farm produce while irrigation machines were meant to help farmers to be in production all year round. The crates were meant for the safe packaging and conveyance of tomato produce from the farms to the markets. In support of this finding, a beneficiary had this to say:

Techno Serve provided me with plastic crates to enable me to store my tomatoes after they have been harvested from the farm. The organization also purchased spraying cans that I use for applying chemicals on my farms to control weeds and pests' infestation (KII, 2023).

Similarly, another beneficiary said that farming was very difficult for him before Techno Serve's intervention through the Yield-Wise Project, as things were getting from bad to worse for him and his family. He said he had no knowledge of how to store his farm produce after harvest. However, the organization came and trained them free of charge. They were trained on the best time to plant and harvest tomatoes from farm. Also, he was trained on how best to preserve his farm produce. With this training, the post-harvest losses most of the farmers used to make grossly reduced and this has consequently resulted in increased profit for them

In the same vein, another beneficiary while supporting this finding said before now, farmers in Ingawa used to incur huge post-harvest losses on their tomato produce because these produces used to get rotten before in reaches points of sale (i.e. the markets). Techno-Serve then started training these tomato farmers on the appropriate time to harvest these produces. The harvest time is called "Turning Stage". This is the stage prior to the ripening stage of the tomatoes. The farmers were usually trained and advised to harvest at this stage. With this training, the farmers were able to reduce post-harvest losses they used to incur in the past.

Also, a beneficiary in an interview disclosed that Techno Serve intervention project impacted in his life positively. Through its training programme, he was able to learn and understand what they called 'stager planting', which means that all tomato farmers are expected to plant at different time like one-week interval rather planting at the same time to avoid surplus that might lead to loss of profits. When the crops are in surplus supply without corresponding demand for it, the price will consequently fall. To guard against such losses, the farmers were advised to engage in 'stager planting'. This strategy significantly improved tomatoes production and income for the farmers.

Another benefit of the Project to the farmers was the creation of sustainable market driven solution. The Project helped to reduce post-harvest losses by introducing improved storage technologies and connecting farmers to markets. According to a key informant, the organization facilitated marketing connections for him, which resulted in increased income and improved food security for farmers in his community (KII, 2023).

Techno Serve's partnership with local organizations and government agencies in Nigeria was also immensely beneficial to the farmers. According to a key informant, partnerships are essential for effective poverty alleviation efforts in any society. Partnerships allow organizations to share resources, expertise, and knowledge. This was a key factor that contributed to the success of Techno Serve's Yield-Wise Project. For example, Techno Serve has collaborated with the Nigeria Agricultural Marketing and Development Agency

(NAMDA) to provide training and support for farmers (KII, 2023). Supporting this finding, another key informant disclosed that NAMDA has played a crucial role in ensuring that the intervention project reaches a large number of farmers in Katsina State, with necessary funding and resources at its disposal (KII, 2023).

Challenges Confronting Techno Serve's Intervention Programme in Ingawa LGA

Security challenge has become one of the major issues in Katsina state in particular and Nigeria's north-west in general. The state is riddled with a high-level of armed banditry activities such as cattle rustling, armed robbery, community/market raids and kidnapping of farmers and innocent citizens of the state for ransom among others. Owing to incessant incidences of attacks orchestrated by armed bandits for instance, farming is no longer business as usual as farmers are scared of going back to their farms for fear of being kidnapped for ransom or even killed in the process. This has significantly affected food security in the state. While supporting this finding a key informant noted that, one of the major factors affecting the success or otherwise of the programmes executed by NGOs is insecurity. There is a high-level of insecurity in and around Katsina state. Farmers are kidnapped for ransom on regular basis from their farms, and this affects their ability to engage in farming activities and increase the production of food crops such as tomatoes among others (KII, 2023).

Similarly, another key informant he stated that some of the farmers are scared of going back to farm at times because of attacks by armed bandits. He disclosed that some of his fellow farmers had been kidnapped from their farms in the past by these criminal gangs. Farmers kidnapped are usually asked to pay very huge amount of money as ransom while some of these farmers are killed for inability to pay or even delaying to pay these huge ransoms. Insecurity has adversely affected farming activities in the state, even though the farmers have been trained on how best to grow tomatoes for optimal output. This is why all the farmers are appealing to the state government to provide security for them as they go about their daily business (KII, 2023)

Another challenge confronting NGOs in the study area is undue interference in the activities of NGOs by government officials. Government officials working in collaboration with these NGOs, in some cases use their influence to divert projects to their own areas of personal interest without recourse to due process. This unethical behavior grossly affected the effectiveness of the project, and in a way affected the realization of the objectives of the project in the study area. A key informant in an interview noted that undue interference by government officials was a major challenge to the realization of the objective of Techno Serve's intervention project in the study area. Government officials usually attempt to influence the location of training as well as the manner in which financed farm inputs should be distributed. These government officials make the project look like government project that they can influence anyhow they like. This has really affected Techno Serve's operation as an NGO that is committed to lifting the poor out of poverty in Ingawa LGA, Katsina state in particular and Nigeria in general (KII, 2023)

Strategies for Sustaining Techno Serve's Intervention Programme in Ingawa LGA

The intervention programme was meant be a continuous one, and as such it became imperative to adopt certain strategies to ensure that it does not only achieve the objectives for which it was introduced in the first place, but was also sustained in the long-run. The government had to train some of its agricultural extension officers on how to follow-up with the beneficiaries of the programme. Also, the data-bases of the beneficiaries were collected

by the Katsina state Agricultural and Rural Development Authority for the follow-up of these beneficiaries.

Some Agricultural extension agents from the Katsina State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority were randomly selected and trained. They were trained so that they can take-over from Techno-Serve whenever the programme is terminated. Those trained agricultural extension officers were Katsina state government employees saddled with the responsibility of following up the beneficiaries of Techno-Serve intervention project

Another strategy employed to help sustain the programme was the collection of data base of those farmers who benefited from the intervention programme. The collection of these data base became necessary because of the need to follow-up with them. According to a key informant,

It was imperative to collect the database of farmers who benefited from the program to assist the government in sustaining the Yield-Wise program initiated and implemented by Techno Serve. Without the collection of farmers' data, the program could have been disrupted along the way. This could have resulted in an abandoned project, as has often been the case with many government projects in Nigeria (KII, 2023).

Conclusion

The paper has successfully assessed Techno Serve's contributions to lifting rural farmers out of poverty in Ingawa LGA of Katsina State, Nigeria, using Performance Failure Theory as an analytical framework. The study found that rural farmers in the area benefited significantly from the intervention project known as the 'Yield-Wise Project,' experiencing increased quantity and quality of tomato produce, reduced post-harvest losses, improved market linkages, and increased revenue. However, the programme faced limitations due to security challenges caused by activities of armed bandits and undue interference by government officials. Based on these findings, the study concludes that NGOs will remain crucial stakeholders in poverty alleviation in the country as long as the Nigerian state continues to neglect its responsibility of providing basic needs for the people.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and findings, the study therefore presents the following recommendations:

- a. The government should ensure that more people are lifted out of poverty, as this is a major trigger of armed banditry in the country.
- b. The government should prioritize the provision of adequate security for human lives and property.
- c. NGOs should identify and support more farmers for sustainable food production in the state and across the country.
- d. There is a need for continuous support of the programme and expansion of its reach to other communities in Nigeria.

e. Continuous collaboration with local partners is essential, ensuring that the programme is adapted to meet the specific needs of each community.

f. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme are necessary to ensure optimal achievement of goals. This will help identify areas needing improvement and assess whether the programme is meeting its goals.

g. There is a need for continuous creation of awareness about the challenges faced by farmers in Katsina State and the country as a whole. This should include raising awareness about the importance of reducing food waste, improving access to markets, and addressing the impact of climate change. Raising awareness is crucial for mobilizing support and ensuring that the organization receives the necessary resources for the success of its intervention programmes.

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