



Full Length Research

Agricultural intervention initiative towards zero-hunger: Changing the narratives

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This study is a sociological change effort aimed at achieving zero hunger through sustainable agricultural intervention in mode of farming, instrumentation and seedlings. Sample population was from south-east Nigeria. Findings revealed that as subsistent farming was the mainstay of local communities, there was resistance and an apparent unwillingness to part with arable land, gratis. Furthermore, there was resistance to change from traditional methods of farming to modern mechanized approaches. To effect an appreciable success in the drive to zero hunger, sustainable efforts are required to break the chain of resistance among local farmers.

Key words: Sociological, sustainable agricultural intervention, Nigeria, subsistent farming, change management.

INTRODUCTION

The noble cause of reducing hunger worldwide has been championed by many global organisations and concerns. It predated the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) and the successor Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030). Not much success has been gained in that regard, and the world still has more hungry mouths to feed.

Today, most poor countries in the world are engulfed in socio-political and instability, as well as severe economic challenges, leading to collapse of health and educational facilities, absence of rule of law, shortage of free press, excessive debt overhang, low investment potentials, negative economic balance sheets, among others. In addition, many states are prone to natural and man-made disasters, flooding, global warming, environmental degradation, deforestation and drought. The associated developments of human displacement, losses in lives and property continue to breed more mouths to feed. There are also the resultant rural-urban migration, irregular cross-border migration, overcrowded cities and strain on existing infrastructure which together have led the poor to become poorer; more marginalised women and children, even as there is a spike in disease vulnerability, human trafficking,

sexual exploitation, child labour and child soldiering.

Another concomitant effect is that in most of those countries, cities are getting more overcrowded and insanitary, with crime getting exponentially higher. Thus, the world has become an awful place to live as human rights observance dips to appalling levels.

It is against this background that this study was developed, to identify possible solutions to ameliorate the situation, particularly as it relates to reduction in ravaging effects of global hunger. The essence was to assess the adaptability of the sample to modern methods of food production.

Statement of the problem

There is the paradoxical situation where there is too much hunger in the midst of abundance of natural and human resources. Vulnerable populations are in dire need of means to feed themselves, as well as develop themselves sustainably. However, they do not have the means to do so, largely because they do not have the physical and financial access to basic

agricultural needs. But how willing are they to accept new methods? How adaptable are they to changing trends in food production?

METHODOLOGY

The sample participants were taken from a mixed population of male and female farmers in poor community of Uturu, in Abia State of Nigeria. The study experimented a communal farming through direct intervention with host communities by way of provision of cash for work in community crop production. Participants were supported with suitable domestic animals to produce labour and commodities such as meat, milk, eggs and for personal consumption and were afforded capacity to commercialise their production. In addition, participants were supported with agricultural inputs such as seeds, quick maturing and drought resistant crop varieties, parent stock animals, fertilisers, agricultural tools and implements, as well as mechanized agricultural tools such as use of tractors and improved irrigation schemes.

Execution

Strategies adopted included counselling participants to be optimistic of a better world devoid of hunger, and to seek and adopt more pragmatic ways to improve their destinies. Participants were also introduced to new skills in modern farming and food production, aimed at making them more independent. Then, participants were introduced to modern methods such as release of land to communal efforts as to increase acreage and opportunity for mechanized farming; introduction of high-yield seeds and crops; improved methods of animal husbandry, and the opportunity to farm for a monthly pay.

FINDINGS

Using Chi-square and ANOVA, it was found that females have fewer accesses to farm lands than males, but were more amenable to farming for monthly wages. Arable land was considered an indispensable resource in local communities, and a personal holding, such that could not be battered or surrendered to government *gratis*, or without fair and adequate compensation. Subsistent farming remained the mainstay of local communities, and there was much apathy, even pessimism about large-scale and mechanised farming. Males were more sceptical of improved varieties and opportunities offered by modern animal husbandry, than females. A highly significant percentage of local farmers were not readily adaptable to change from traditional method of farming (including instrumentation and seedling), not minding their perceived benefits. It is evident that to effect an appreciable

success in the drive to zero hunger, sustainable efforts are required to break the chain of resistance among local farmers.

Recommendation

There is pressing need for the global community to embark on a speedy, systematic and strategic response to bail out the suffering members of the international community, who are victims of glaring food deficit. Food production, supply and distribution among troubled communities remain a sore thumb. For the world to inch successfully to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals as relates to zero hunger, concerted and aggressive efforts need to be made to change the attitude of local farmers to modern methods of agriculture that will not only benefit their stomachs, but also push them out of poverty.

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