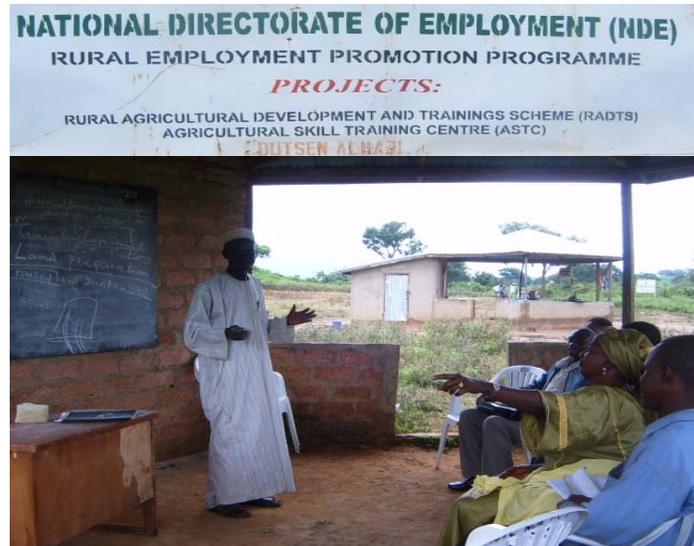


Strengthening Rural Agricultural Training program through Participation and Training Needs Assessment

*'The case of National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
Trainees in Karsana Bwari Area Council Abuja Nigeria.'*



A Research Project Submitted to
Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences
(Part of Wageningen University and Research Centre)

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of
Masters Management of Development
Specialization: Training, Rural Extension and Transformation (TREAT)

By
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September, 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks to the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (Nuffic), for granting me fellowship for the Master degree program (Management of Development) in Training, Rural Extension and Transformation (TREAT) and my employer- National Directorate of Employment (NDE) for given me permission to undertake this course.

My sincere thanks and appreciation goes to my supervisor, Sonja Scheffers for her guidance and constructive criticisms in writing this report. Her encouragement and support during this period are just not quantifiable.

I wish to also express my heart felt gratitude to my course coordinator, Loes Witteveen for her professional advice and support throughout the course duration. Many thanks, to all the teaching and non –teaching staff of Van Hall Larenstein University of Professional Education for their support during my stay.

My profound appreciation equally goes to Engr. Fagbemi,(Director of Rural Employment Promotion Department of the NDE), Hajiya Hadiza Bulama,(State Coordinator of NDE Abuja office), Mallam Waziri (Head of Department- Rural Employment Promotion Abuja office) and Mr. Joshua Fabgemi for their immeasurable support during my field work in Nigeria.

I would want to really acknowledge the effort and support of my family in taking very good care of my dear son Kikachukwu, in my absence.

Thanks again to the family of Redeemed Christian Church of God, Amazing Grace Parish, Wageningen, for your love and affection.

Finally I want to thank the Almighty God, for seeing me through this program.

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ACRONYMS

REP	Rural Employment Promotion
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
RADTS	Rural Agricultural Development and Training Scheme
NACRDB	Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural -Development Bank
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
ASTC	Agricultural Skills Training Center
ADP	Agricultural Development Project

ABSTRACT

Agricultural development in sub Sahara countries is faced with a lot of problems. One of such problems is inadequate innovative agricultural skills and knowledge.

Development organizations in Nigeria intervene in tackling the problem through the provision of training to build the capacity of either the farmers or unemployed persons interested to take up agriculture as a means of improving their livelihood in the informal sector. Training in innovative rural agricultural development offer improved knowledge and skills to the trainees; it helps to improve their quality of life, by enabling such individuals to become self-employed through engaging in income – generating activities. Skills development could also support individuals in rural communities with better knowledge for protecting the environment.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Nigeria is an intervention agency that has been building the capacity of rural unemployed persons through the Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS). The program aim to support interested unemployed persons with agricultural skills abound for economic growth in the rural areas and eventually become self employed. The program is currently faced with a number of challenges that includes trainees' low participation in the program amongst others. This low participation hinders the organization from achieving its goals, and made the program unsustainable, hence the study.

This study explored the factors affecting participation, prioritized training needs and methods of training in the Rural Agricultural Training Scheme (RADTS) and made recommendation that will contribute to the strengthening of the program. Also the insights gained will be useful for other development organization involved in planning education and training program in supporting their training program so as to achieve their goals.

A qualitative research was carried out. This involved a desk study with a review of literature, articles and journals on concepts of participation and training. Also a case study of the current trainees of the Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS), program at Karsana farm Abuja, and some graduated trainees in Bwari local government area were conducted with some staff of the organization involved in the implementation of the program at the NDE Abuja office. Also a focus group discussion was carried out as well. A total of twenty- five key informants made up of twenty trainees and five staff of the NDE were interviewed using semi- structured interview questions. The focus group discussion was made of eight trainees (seven males and one female).

The case study was chosen and it gave an in-depth knowledge of the factors causing low participation, identification of prioritized trainees' needs and methods. The findings of the research revealed that the trainees' level of participation was passive. The research findings also revealed that the major causes of low participation of the trainees were lack of fund and the inability of trainees to access credit from micro finance institutions after training in order to apply the skills and knowledge learnt into enterprise creation. However the prioritized training needs and the income – generating needs of the trainees were found to be appropriate and relevant to the training content or subjects the organizers of the training the- NDE offers at the training venue. As regards the preferred training method, majority of the respondents opted for lectures combined with group discussion and practical demonstration; they believed this would enhance learning by doing and better understanding. In addition, gender balance which was initially considered in choosing the number of male to female trainees' ratio was not achieved as there was gender bias with less number of female trainees to male in attendance at the project area.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the strongest reasons for a focus on skills development for rural people is that 70 percent of the world poor is rural. Skills development is essential to consolidate agriculture, and by strengthening the agriculture sector, progress will be made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Avila, et.al. 2005).

Skills development may be seen, first, as part of a group of concepts linked to the challenges of developing rural areas in the sphere of employment and self-employment. This includes a focus both on the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. It may lead to attention of the rural areas or to rural target groups. All of this is done in order to contribute to poverty reduction (Grunwald, 2005). In addition skills development may also be seen as the outcome-oriented provision of skills and knowledge through which individuals learn things that are related to their specific livelihood needs.

For the rural economy, developments in the agricultural system provide food, jobs, incomes and services for rural people. For the national economy, such improvements bring food for urban people, public revenue, and skilled labour for other sectors, foreign exchange, jobs, income and investment.

Agriculture remains the dominant sector in the rural areas of Nigeria. It provides employment for about 60% of the work force and contributes 32.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and export revenue earnings (Africa Economic Outlook 2007). The diversity of climatic conditions, the richness of soil types and water sources, and the high population provide great workforce for the sector. Agricultural production comprises crop farming, fishing, livestock and forestry. In the 1960s and up to the early 1970s, Nigeria's agriculture flourished. The country was one of the world's highest producers of palm oil, cocoa, and groundnut. Over time, agriculture declined in importance due to the advent of the oil boom (Manyong, et. al 2005).

This circumstance led to a dramatic increase in the incidence and severity of poverty in Nigeria, arising in part from the dwindling performance of the agricultural sector. The country witnessed a worsening economic recession during the second half of the 80s due to its overdependence on oil, consequently urban and rural unemployment rates were relatively high. Nigeria unemployment problem is most serious among secondary school leavers and graduates of territory institutions, as a result this has become a national socio-economic concern. Oil and gas generates about 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings, 75 percent of government revenues and contributes about 30 percent of GDP but employs only about 3 percent of the labour force (Akpobasah, 2004). For several years therefore, the development challenge for Nigeria became the diversification of the productive base away from the oil sector.

Following the collapse of the oil market in the early 80s the country was forced to embark on a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986. The emphasis of SAP was on deregulation, market liberalization, demand management through appropriate pricing, floating of the exchange rate and the promotion of agriculture and other rural based export oriented economic activities.

The government therefore set up major sectoral policies for agricultural development which were in operation in the SAP period. This included those on agricultural research, agricultural extension and technology transfer, input pricing and subsidy, water resources and irrigation, land development, employment and privatization. (Manyong. et. al 2005)

It was in pursuance of its employment policy that the government established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, to promote employment programs all over the country as a strategy for ameliorating Nigeria's increasingly severe unemployment problem. The Directorate through its Rural Employment Promotion department (REP) oversees various school leavers' and graduate agricultural programs now in operation in all states of the Federation.

The organization conducts the Rural Agricultural Development training Scheme (RADTS) for the rural unemployed persons in all the states of the federation including Abuja. The Abuja training center of the RADTS is located at the Agricultural Skills Training centre (ASTC) Karsana Bwari area council of Abuja. The program is informal skills acquisition training in agriculture. It has a complete training cycle of four months duration including one month of practical attachment. The aim of the training is to build the capacity of the interested trainees in integrated farming activities i.e. crop and livestock production activities abound for economic growth in the rural areas. Secondly to arrest the declining interest of youths in the agricultural sector which had traditionally provided the bulk of employment particularly in the rural areas. The trainees are given the opportunity to learn skills that include poultry management, Bee keeping, crop production management, livestock rearing, crop processing. The other skills learnt are fishery production, mushroom production and vegetable gardening to piggery production. The beneficiaries of the RADTS training are thereafter recommended to financial institutions like Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) and other micro credit agencies for start up support or credit (NDE, 2006).

Observations by the researcher indicated that the training program has recorded minimal impact with a lot of challenges. These challenges limited the organization from achieving the desired goal and positive atitudinal change needed for the rural unemployed persons. It equally makes the sustainability of the training programme unattainable. Avila et. al. (2005) revealed that most public sector training is criticized for being inaccessible, with lack of consideration for new skill areas, such as environment and natural resource management, biotechnology, and agribusiness.

Public sector training are also characterized by poor quality and relevance of training or the inability of trainees to utilize the skills and knowledge they have acquired due to a variety of economic and social constraints. The other concerns focuses on the alleged failure of training institute to reorient themselves to meeting the skills needs of the participants, fragmented delivery with insufficient clear learning pathways. Consequently, there has been a growing lack of relationship between providers and the labour market as the latter diversifies.

1.2. Justification of the Study

Rural people are the most disadvantaged group in terms of access to services, including education and training, and are the worst served by infrastructure of various

kinds. With agriculture being their main occupation, it is important to support them with innovative agricultural knowledge and skills that will spur them to increase productivity. It will equally help to arouse the interest of the rural unemployed persons more into agricultural diversification activities. This will eventually enable them to set up their own agricultural business enterprise for self-employment.

Involving the trainees' actively in identifying their specific agricultural skills training needs is an issue of concern for most development organizations. This active involvement is described as a higher level of participation, in which the beneficiaries of an intervention are invited to contribute actively to the planning process by discussing issues and suggesting appropriate solutions. Research indicates that effective participation of beneficiaries of development programs at all stages contributes greatly to their success and sustainability of the program (Pretty, et al, 1995).

The aim of the RADTS program is to implement a demand – driven agricultural training that will enable unemployed persons become self- employed. However the trainees' seem not to be encouraged. The need to identify factors actively limiting the trainees' involvement in the rural agricultural development training scheme becomes significant.

1.3. Problem Statement

The Rural Employment Promotion department (REP) of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is concerned that its capacity building program, Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS) is not achieving its desired goal of supporting the unemployed persons to become self-employed. Investigations and observations by the researcher revealed that there is a decline in the number of trainees' participation. It was equally observed that only a few of the one hundred and twenty expected participants actually registered and attended the training program. Also very few graduated trainees were able to apply the skills learnt into enterprise creation for self-employment after training. With this most trainees felt their expectations were not met; hence the sustainability of the program becomes a challenge.

The low participation of trainees, the inability of the graduated trainees to apply the skills learnt into enterprise creation for self –employed. The non - involvement of trainees in the identification of relevant innovative agricultural needs and preferred training methods and the non sustainability of the program only exposed the minimal impact of the intervention in solving the unemployment problem and reduction of poverty . Despite the NDE claim of mass job creation. Identifying their training needs by themselves is away of encouraging their participation in the planning of the training program intended for them Thus exploring the factors of low participation and identification of relevant trainees' needs and methods becomes a necessity as its assumed it will help to support the RADTS, hence the study.

1.4 Research Objective

The objective of the study is to make recommendation that will contribute to the effective strengthening of the Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme by exploring the factors of low participation of the trainees, their preferred training needs and methods.

1.5. Research Questions

1.5.1 Main Research Questions

- 1) What are the factors causing low participation of the trainees in Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme?
- 2) What are the prioritized training needs and methods that could enhance the trainees' skills for self employment?

1.5.2 Sub- questions

- 1.1. How were the trainees of the rural agricultural development training scheme involved in the training program?
- 1.2. What are the economic factors limiting trainees' access to information in the Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme?
- 1.3. What are the socio- cultural factors limiting the trainees' involvement in the training program?
- 1.4 What are the institutional factors limiting trainees' from applying their learnt skills and knowledge after training?
- 2.1 What training do the trainees need to enhance their skills for self- employment and which among these are priorities?
- 2.2 What income generating activities do trainees need to embark upon to improve their socio-economic status?
- 2.3 What training methods do the trainees prefer for the training program?

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The research report is organized into six chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This part gives the background of the study, justification problem statement, objective, main and sub research questions.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature. This deals with definition of concepts- participation perspectives, reason for pursuing participation, Importance of training Needs identification and assessment and Selection of appropriate training methods/instructional techniques

Chapter 3: Methodology: It covers the area of study, description of the research area, methods of data collection and sample size, method of data analysis, limitation of the study, background information, country profile and brief description of the NDE.

Chapter 4: Results: This deals with research findings arranged according to the themes generated from the research objective.

Chapter 5: Discussion: covers the analysis and discussion of the research findings

Chapter 6: Conclusion/ Recommendation

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Participation in perspective

Literately, participation means to be involved in. Actors engaged in development are increasingly interested in promoting the institutionalization and spread of participation in society (Stackpool-Moore, et al. 2006). From grass root projects to voluntary organizations and to government, participation has been embraced as a way to build greater voice, accountability and trust into relationship between people and institutions.

A review of literature on participation revealed that despite the five decades of practicing participation, there is still no common understanding of what participation really means. Several definitions of participation concepts have varying interpretations.

Participation enables people to realize their rights to participate in, and access information relating to, the decision-making processes which affect their lives. (Chambers, 2005). This is akin to the ability of people to make use of resources and derive benefit from social, public services provided by the state such as education, roads and so on. From the above definition, it can be argued that a process cannot be labeled to be participatory if people do not have rights and access information relating to decision making. Access to information in the RADTS program could be described as the ability of the trainees to participate in the training program, from the planning process, receive all the benefits of active participation and be empowered to become self-employed. This also means that their ideas, experiences and knowledge will be valued in making contributions to the planning process.

There is a long history of participation in agricultural development, and a wide range of development agencies. Both national and international, have attempted to involve people in some aspect of planning and implementation. Two overlapping schools of thought and practice evolved. First participation is viewed as a means to increase efficiency. The central notion being that if people are involved, they are more likely to agree, and support the new development or service. The other sees participation as a fundamental right, in which the main aim is to initiate mobilization for collective action, empowerment and institution building. (Pretty, 1995)

The analysis of development projects by (Pretty,1995) showed that participation is one of the critical components of success. The analysis also revealed that when people's ideas and knowledge are valued, and power is given to them to make decisions independently of external agencies, the outcome is seen as participation.

Kinyashi.et.al (2006) argued that diverse nature of participation definition has perhaps caused participation process to achieve what most of the development intervention were not expected to achieve. Kinyashi.et.al (2006) further added that political scientists tend to conceptualize participation in terms of involvement of rural people in decision making, economist often in terms of rural people sharing in benefits, development administrators concentrate on rural people assuming roles in implementation when they make reference for participation.

Leeuwis (2004) is of the view that participation can be defined normatively, descriptively and literally and observed that the gap between participatory rhetoric and participatory practice hardly ever matches the criteria formulated by definitions of participation. .

Participatory development is defined as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them. (World Bank 1994 in Chambers, 2005). Likewise (Hart 1992 in Tsegaye, et.al 2006) explained participation as the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. This also goes to show that people must be allowed to contribute to decisions that affects their well being. However (Wilson 2000 in Tsegaye et.al 2006) classifies participation in two main categories as superficial or tokenistic participation which is symbolic gesture towards participation and deep participation which encompasses active, authentic and meaningful participation.

There are different levels of participation as explained with Pretty's (1995) typology of participations which is described as a flow from minimum to maximum as indicated below:

- Manipulative participation: Participation is simply a ruse and it does not constitute participation at all.
- Passive participation: people participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened.
- Participation in information Giving: people participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire survey or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
- Participation by Consultation: people participate by being consulted, external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision – making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
- Participation for Material Incentives: people participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or material incentives.
- Functional Participation: people participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization.
- Interactive Participation: people participate in joint analysis which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. Participation is seen as a fundamental right, not just the means to achieve project goals.
- Self- Mobilization: people participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

The continuum of public participation approaches (adapted from SAIEA, 2004 and based on IAP2 2005) identified four major level of participation in its matrix. This include inform, consult, collaborate and decision making.

Other authors equally described the level of involvement in decision making as a basis for classifying different types and degree of participation, these include (adapted from Pretty, 1994 and Biggs, 1989):

Receiving information: Participants are informed or told what a project will do after it has been decided by others.

Passive information giving: Participants can respond to questions and issues that interventionists deem relevant for making decision about projects.

Consultation: Participants are asked about their views and opinion openly and without restrictions, but the interventionists unilaterally decide what they will do with the information.

Collaboration: Participants are partners in a project and jointly decide about issues with project staff.

Self-mobilization: Participants initiate, work on and decide on projects independently, with interventionists in a supportive role only.

From the above definitions, this research emphasized on the concept of interactive participation in which relevant stakeholders jointly participate in the analysis of a process that would benefit them. From the perception of interactive participation, the trainees and organizers of the education and training must be actively involved in the planning of the development program if the program is to be efficient, successful and sustainable. Also in the context of this study participation is defined as the trainees' level of quality involvement and ability to access information in relation to their livelihood in the rural agricultural development training scheme.

2.2 Reasons for pursuing interactive participation

The pragmatic reasons for pursuing interactive participation are discussed below:

Interactive participation of stakeholders in development programs gives them right and access to benefit from development programs. It ensures the effectiveness of the program. It also enables program planners to gain access to all sorts of relevant knowledge, insights, and experiences that trainees may have regarding their problems in the program implementation, training needs and methods, possible solutions and changing circumstances. Proper information and feedback can only be obtained through interactive participation and required involvement of relevant stakeholders. Interactive participation provides the opportunity for trainees to understand how they will benefit from their participation and the changes to be induced by the project. The questions of what kind of participation, who participates and how do that participate clearly defines the different roles actors in the participatory process will play to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

With interactive participatory training the focus is more on the development of the human capacities to assess, choose, plan, create, organize and take initiative. The emphasis is on helping learners take greater control of their lives and their environment by developing their skills in problem-solving and resource management. The move from a teaching to a learning style implies that the focus is on how we learn and with whom we learn and less on what we learn. It also implies a shift from the blueprint approach to the learning process approach for development (Michelsen, 2002).

In addition, the new development paradigm, under the normative interacting level indicates that development should be people –centered, people come before things and poorer people come before the less poor. It is right to give priority to those who are deprived- poor, vulnerable, isolated and powerless to help them change those conditions (Chambers, 2005). Through interactive participation disadvantaged groups or unemployed persons who are poor can build up necessary skills, insights and resources that can help them to strengthen their position in relation to others (Leeuwis, 2005). Interactive processes can help to emancipate a particular group, so that they can determine their own future. In determining their future, the disadvantaged group gets the power to be involved in diverse rural livelihood activities, become self-employed and contribute to their household income.

Likewise in planning education and training program for adult, the process should be interactive in approach. According to (Caffarella,2002), the interactive model of program planning differs in design from other models. It is interactive and comprehensive, people's background, experience, knowledge and place are acknowledged as important in the planning process, differences among cultures are taken into account in the planning process and practitioners find the model useful and a very practical tool for planning. The model describes what needs to be done through specific practical suggestions.

Finally to ensure the success of a training program, right from the designing stage of the training program, the planning process should be interactive, the users' requirements and learning preferences should be considered as program planning is rarely a linear, step-by-step process.

2.3 Importance of training Needs identification and assessment

Identifying relevant ideas and needs or program content called needs assessment is one major task of people involved with planning education and training program. It is equally one of the 12 -components of the interactive model of program planning.

Caffarella (2002) affirmed that program planners are fervently seeking to respond to what they and the people, organization and communities they work with perceive as important topics, skills and belief or value system adults should examine or know more about. The training needs are described as discrepancy or gap between what presently is and what should be or expected outcomes. This gap in knowledge and skill could be recognized from an individual, organization or community. Strong opposition to specific programs being planned or currently offered by organization and community may arise, if the organizational ideas and needs are at odds with what individuals or trainees in the organization believe they need or want to know more about.

Though ideas, needs, problem or opportunity for education and training programs are gathered through informal to highly structured processes which originate from four primary sources: people, responsibilities and tasks of adult life, organizations and communities and society in general.

Likewise participatory needs assessment is important to identify the information and training requirements of the local population or participants, as it is necessary to uncover local skills and knowledge. This is congruent with Haan, (2002) statement that important ingredients of successful training interventions were found to include: clear purpose, favourable environment, participation of beneficiaries at all stages,

need assessment, training methods, good trainers and financial issues. Also interventions designed to improve existing circumstances of the people should start and end with target of change, reduce dependence on external interventions by involving people in poverty alleviation right from needs assessment, prioritizing needs, identifying solutions, adequate planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of programs (Yahaya, 2003)

For effective needs assessment to be conducted the program planners must take into account the background, characteristics and experiences of the particular group of learners who are to attend the program.

Needs assessment should address not only training needs resulting from the economic opportunity assessment, but also social needs, technical capability and commitment to undergo training and undertake post-training economic activities, as well as an exploration of the social acceptability of proposed business ideas.

From the definitions above, and in the context of this study, effective participatory training can be defined as the intervention in which the planning process involve trainees from needs assessment to adequate planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of training programs.

Like wise in the education sector a fundamental rationale for increased participation is to improve the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of projects by ensuring that learning programs match the needs of the populations they are serving. This must also be built on participants' existing knowledge base.

2.4 Selection of appropriate training methods/instructional techniques

Caffarella (2002) in selecting instructional techniques explained that there is no one best way of assisting people to learn, rather there are ten major factors instructors take into consideration when choosing instructional techniques.

The ten major factors are: learning objectives, instructors' capability, background and characteristics of learners, learning context, transfer of – learning process, training content, technique characteristics, variety of techniques, logistical constraints and time.

Out of the ten major factors above, Caffarella, mentioned that only four are key factors to consider in chosen instructional techniques

The first key factor is a focus on the learning objectives with a variety of instructional techniques appropriate for each category of learning outcomes. This learning outcomes include acquiring knowledge, enhancing cognitive skills, developing psychomotor skills, strengthening problem-solving and finding capabilities, and changing attitudes, values and feelings. The categorization of techniques though offers a good representation of how each instructional techniques fits with a type of learning outcome, but they are not clear cut. One technique may be appropriate for two or three categories of learning outcomes.

The capability of the instructor to use the chosen technique is the second key factor to consider in choosing instructional techniques. It is important that an instructor have the knowledge, skill and confidence to handle a particular technique. It's equally important that the instructor feel comfortable using the chosen technique if not, the instructor's discomfort may be distracting and may result in participates being unable to use the introduced techniques well. However instructors could request that participants join them in experimenting with the new techniques and ask for feedback whether they worked and how effective were they.

The third key factor to consider in choosing instructional techniques is the learner characteristics. In instructing adults, thoughtful teachers have been challenged by the differences learners bring with them to the learning activities and what these differences mean for choosing instructional techniques. Instructors have recognized that adults bring with them rich but divergent experiences to learning activities. In which they are immersed in various life roles, have preferred ways of learning and want practical solution to problems and issues. However instructors are advised to always to first acknowledge their own biases, both the obvious and hidden for addressing issues of diversity when teaching adults.

Instructors who take into account the many differences among learners adopt three key norms for practice: the multiplicity of ways people learn and respond to learning situation is a given. Instructors have the responsibility for designing instruction so these differences are acknowledged and used to enhance the what, when, where, and how of learning situations. Instructors and learners together work to form learning communities that encompass an awareness and feeling of connection among adults and respect for all involved in the instructional process.

The learning context is the fourth key factor that influences the choice of an instructional technique. The learning context refers to the setting where the learning takes place. Adults learn in a variety of settings, from formal class and training rooms to their homes and workplaces to great outdoors. Though, some learning situations are more conducive to using certain techniques than others. In all some learning contexts can enhance the use of techniques that are used, while other settings can inhibit the use of the same techniques.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Bwari, area council of Abuja, which is one of the six area councils of Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria. The location of the area council is given on the FCT Abuja map (Annex 1). The Agricultural skills training center Karsana, Bwari was purposely chosen as the venue of the interview. This is because it is at this venue that the REP department of the NDE conducts its Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme program since 2005.

3.2 Description of the Research Area

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria, with an estimated population of 5 million (est 2005). The city is bordered to the north by Kaduna State, to the east by Nassarawa State, to the south-west by Kogi State and to the west by Niger State. It is divided into six area councils namely: Abuja Municipal, Gwagwalada, Abaji, Kuje, Bwari and Kwali

Ecologically, the FCT is a transition area between the grassland zone to the north and the forest zone to the south. The area shares some of the characteristics of both the forest and savannah (grassland) zones.

The high agricultural potential in the FCT is exemplified not only by the current level of food crop production even with rudimentary methods, but also by the great variety of crops which can be sustained. This includes such crops as roots and tubers (yam), legumes (groundnut and cowpea), grains (maize, sorghum and rice), seeds and nuts (melon seeds and benniseed), animal products (goats, cattle, and sheep), fruits and vegetables. Many of these crops can provide the needed raw materials for several agro-based and agro-allied industries in the territory.

Agriculture still remained the major occupation of majority of its residents, especially the indigenous ones. The territory has an advantage of being able to sustain virtually any cropping practice. In fact, the FCT's master plan allocated about sixty per cent of the territory's land to agriculture and forestry. The Abuja ADP, through its network of research and liaison offices, is in the fore front of accelerating agricultural development within the territory. Thus, several pilot, adaptive and experimental schemes have been established. (Maman, et al 2000)

3.3 Methods of Data Collection and Sample Size

The research strategy was of a qualitative approach, very exploratory and based on primary data gathered through a semi-structured interview scheduled for the trainees of the RADTS program. Twenty trainees made up of twelve current and eight graduated trainees were randomly selected as respondents. The twelve trainees were selected from the estimated population of thirty-five trainees present at the project area. While the eight graduated trainees were selected from the estimated population of fifty graduated trainees who are presently living within the Bwari Local government area. Also a focus group discussion made up of eight members was conducted to capture additional information and corroborate the research findings.

The members of the group were randomly selected from current trainees at the project venue. Required information was equally obtained through key informant interview of five purposely selected Rural Employment Promotion officers of the NDE Abuja office to get their divergent views on the causes of low participation and their possible consequences for the organization.

During the semi-structured interview session's open-ended questions were used to conduct the interview with the respondents' and a checklist was prepared as a guide for the researcher. Questions used in the actual interview are presented in Annex 1. The data collected contained information on trainees' involvement levels, socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors limiting trainees' participation in the RADTS program. The information equally contained the prioritized trainees' needs to enhance their skills for self-employment and preferred training methods.

Also in assessing their training needs, the respondents were asked to identify training needs related to their productive skills for self-employment and income – generating activities.

Information from desk study was carried out through the review of literature, books, articles, scientific journals, internet sites and annual report of NDE on related topics of the subject in Larenstein, Wageningen University library and NDE resource centre in Nigeria.

3.4 Methods of Data analysis

The method of analysis was based on the research issue. The data collected were summarized and analyzed through the description of the sample population in relation to sampling procedure, ordering and coding of data, categorization of data, and interpretation of data. Also descriptive statistic frequency counts and percentage were used in the analysis. This is further discussed together with result of existing literature. The participation continuum described by Pretty (1995), was used to analyze trainees participation level in the program. Conclusion and recommendation were then formulated based on the findings.

3.5 Limitation of the Study

The major limitation of the study is the time constraint allowed for the research in totality. Also some of the respondents' opinion were influenced by the perception that the more problems they present the higher their likelihood of securing credit or financial assistance from the government.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS- RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the information gathered from the case study of NDE trainees. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, their involvement level in the RADTS program planning and implementation, as well as their economic, social-cultural and institutional factors limiting participation were presented. Also presented are their prioritized training needs for productive and income- generating agricultural activities and their preferred training methods in order to get a brief description on them which might be use in the discussion. The sequence in the presentation of the results is in accordance to the research questions.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The study population was composed of twenty five respondents. They comprised 12 current and 8 graduated trainees with 5 NDE field staff. The average age of the trainees' respondents was 39 years old and the field staff was 43 years old. 16 of the trainees' respondents were married and 4 were single. And all the 5 field staff are married.

With regards to the gender status of the respondents 16 were male and 4 were female. The field staffs were 3 males and 2 females

The educational level of the respondents revealed that 4 had primary level of education. While majority had over secondary education with 9 having secondary level of education and 7 had tertiary level of education. And all the five field staff had tertiary level of education.

With regards to occupational status of the respondents 11 were farmers, 6 were non-farmers, and 3 were unemployed.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Current trainees frequency	Graduated trainees frequency	NDE field Staff frequency
Gender Status			
• Male	8	8	3
• Female	4	-	2
Total	12	8	5
Civil Status:			
• Married	10	6	5
• Single	2	2	-
Total	12	8	5
Level of Education:			
• Primary	2	2	-
• Secondary	4	5	-
• Tertiary	6	1	5
Total	12	8	5
Occupation:			
• Farmers	5	6	
• Non farmers	3	2	
• Unemployed	4	-	
• Agricultural officers			5
Total	12	8	5

Source: Own Study

4.2 Trainees' level of involvement in the RADTS program

The involvement level of the trainees' respondents in the RADTS program showed that all the 20 respondents both the (12 current and 8 graduated trainees) were only involved in the training program during the implementation stage. This was done through the information they received from friends or relatives mostly. Thereafter they approached the NDE for more information, and they were advised to collect application forms and return the completed application forms to the NDE Abuja state office handling the program. The group discussion also shared these views.

All the 5 NDE field staffs indicated that the trainees were only involved in the training program during the implementation stage. This is in line with the policy of the organization.

4.3 Types of media used by the NDE for awareness creation

Information about the training program was disseminated to the public through various communication media. These advertisements were sponsored by the NDE-the organizers of the program. Figure 1 shows that majority of the interviewed trainees revealed they received information about the training program through their friends and relatives. Few of the respondents, were informed through advertisement in the local radio, television and personal enquiry.

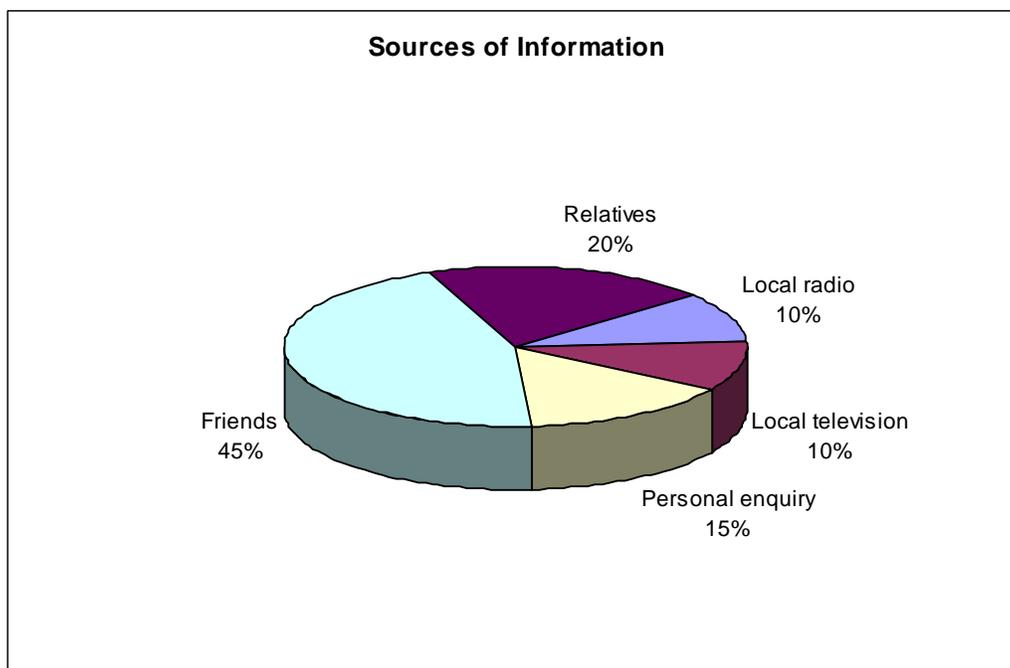


Figure 1: Sources of information: Source: Own Study

The field staff also revealed that the guideline of the training program stipulated that information about the training program is disseminated through paid advertisement on local radio, television and newspaper. Other sources of publicity used at the commencement of the training program included sending information to nearby mosques' and churches. Staffs of the organization were encouraged to inform their wards or relative about the program.

4.4 Economic factors limiting trainees access to information in the RADTS program.

All the 20 respondents mentioned that the major factors limiting their access to information in the training program were lack of funds to start up business after training and low motivation of trainees by the organization. The focus group discussion also agreed with the findings. 6 out of the 12 current trainees were of the opinion that lack of timely support in the form of transport allowance to and fro the training site was a serious constraint as a lot of them were unemployed and under employed. While 5 out of 8 of the graduated trainees indicated that the NDE is not honoring its promise of providing funds for resettlement after training.

All the field staff revealed that the RADTS program is faced with the problem of limited fund and this has affected the training program performance negatively. It has made the organization:

- Not to give timely support in form of transport allowance to the trainees until after the end of the program.
- To hire less number of resource persons
- To provide resettlement package to few beneficiaries of the program after training

4.5 Socio-cultural factors limiting trainees' involvement in the RADTS program

During the interview it was discovered that socio-cultural factors limited women participation in the program. Going by the views of the respondents, 6 out of 12 current trainees, 3 out of 8 of graduated trainees and 2 of the field officers revealed that the dual roles of women as wives and mothers gave them less time than men to attend agricultural training program. Likewise 4 of the current trainees and 2 field staffs indicated that women prefer trading (buying and selling) to attending training. 2 current trainees and a field staff revealed that men prefer training as they perform hard task on the farm that will provide income to sustain their family and livelihood. The group discussion also revealed that more men preferred the training program as it will enable them to make a choice of business enterprise for self-employment. While few of the graduated trainees were of the view that demolition and displacement problem in the FCT Abuja may have contributed to low participation of trainees.

4.6 Institutional factors limiting trainees from applying their skills and knowledge after training

One of the institutional factors limiting trainees from utilizing their skills and knowledge after training is the inability of trainees to access credit from the few available micro finance institutions. During the research, 7 current trainees revealed that they would not be able to access credit individually to start business ventures after the completion of the training. 2 out of 8 graduated trainees indicated that they did not have access to credit even after training

They attributed this to the fact that they were informed that micro-finance institutions and the NDE prefer to give credit to cooperatives rather than individuals. While the remaining 5 current trainees and the group discussion believed they could source own credit after completion of training through self effort and anticipated assistance from relatives.

With regards to belonging to cooperatives, 6 current and 7 graduated trainees mentioned that they have joined cooperatives, so as to be able to access credit as a group. 4 current trainees intended to join cooperatives before the expiration of the training program. While 2 of the current and 1 of the graduated trainees do not believe, in the idea of joining cooperatives.

4.6.1 NDE assistance to trainees in accessing credit

All the field staff revealed that the NDE policy allows the organization to assist graduated trainees through:

- A. Recommendation to NACRDB and micro credit agencies for start up support.
- B. Giving of loan to few cooperatives formed by the trainees after completion of the training program.

4.7 Training needs of the trainees

During the interview, the trainees were asked to identify their preferred training needs pertaining to their productive activities.

4.7.1 Training needs pertaining to productive activities.

Figure 2 shows the prioritized agricultural training needs participated by trainees to enhance their skills for self-employment.

Majority of the graduated trainees prioritized crop production (75%), poultry (63%), fishery management (50%) and crop processing (38%) as their agricultural training needs. These are the agricultural activities they participated in to enhance their skills for self-employment. While few graduated trainees participated in rabbitary production (25%), animal fattening (13%), and snailry management (25%) as skills required for self-employment.

On the other hand, majority of the current trainees revealed that their prioritized agricultural training needs to enhance their skills for self employment included poultry production (67%), marketing information (67%), fishery management (42%), snailry management (42%) and crop processing (33%). This is due to the reasons that the above mentioned skills have better business opportunity for their livelihood within their localities

Few of the current trainees mentioned crop production (25%), animal fattening (17%), Rabbitary (17%) and Basic business training (8%) as their prioritized training needs for self employment.

Majority of focus group members prioritized fishery, poultry, crop production rabbitary, snailry, crop-processing, piggery and animal fattening sheep and goat as their training needs.

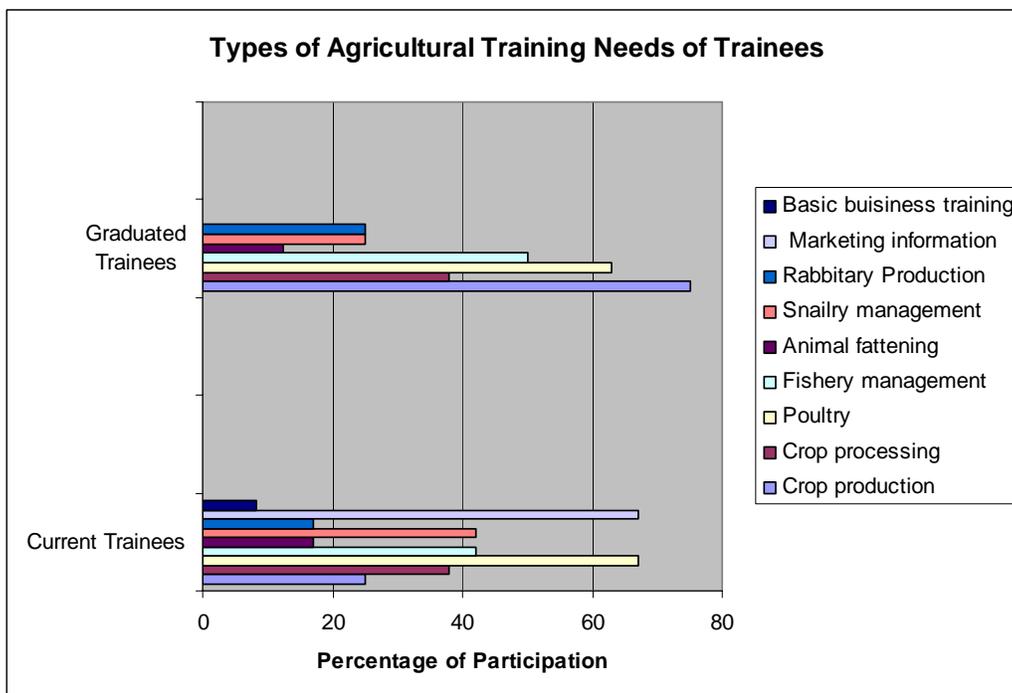


Figure 2: Types of Agricultural Training Needs of Trainees. Source: Own Study

4.8 Trainees Prioritized Income- Generating Activities

As shown in Figure 3. The income – generating activities prioritized by trainees to improve their socio- economic status through self- employment included crop production(vegetable, cowpea, maize, millet, sorghum and cassava), crop processing, poultry, fishery, Animal fattening (sheep & goat). Others were integration of crop and poultry, Snailry and fishery, fishery and poultry.

Majority of the graduated trainees 4 out of 8 are participating in the crop production activity. They gave the reason that as they are farming on small scale of less than five hectares of land, only small amount of fund is needed to start cultivating crops like vegetables, cowpea, maize millet, sorghum and cassava. While the remaining few graduated trainees were involved in crop processing, poultry, fishery, Animal fattening (sheep & goat), integration of crop and poultry, Snailry and fishery, fishery and poultry. Also majority of the current trainees 3 out of 12 expressed the interest of participating in poultry production, 2 in fishery and 2 in crop production activities after the completion of the training. This group based their choice on the fact that some of them are already practicing such agricultural activities on their own at subsistence level. Few of the current trainees hope to participate in crop processing, Animal fattening (sheep & goat), integration of crop and poultry, Snailry and fishery, fishery and poultry.

The group discussion indicated the preference of fishery, poultry and crop production as the major income –generating activities they wish to participate in for self-employment.

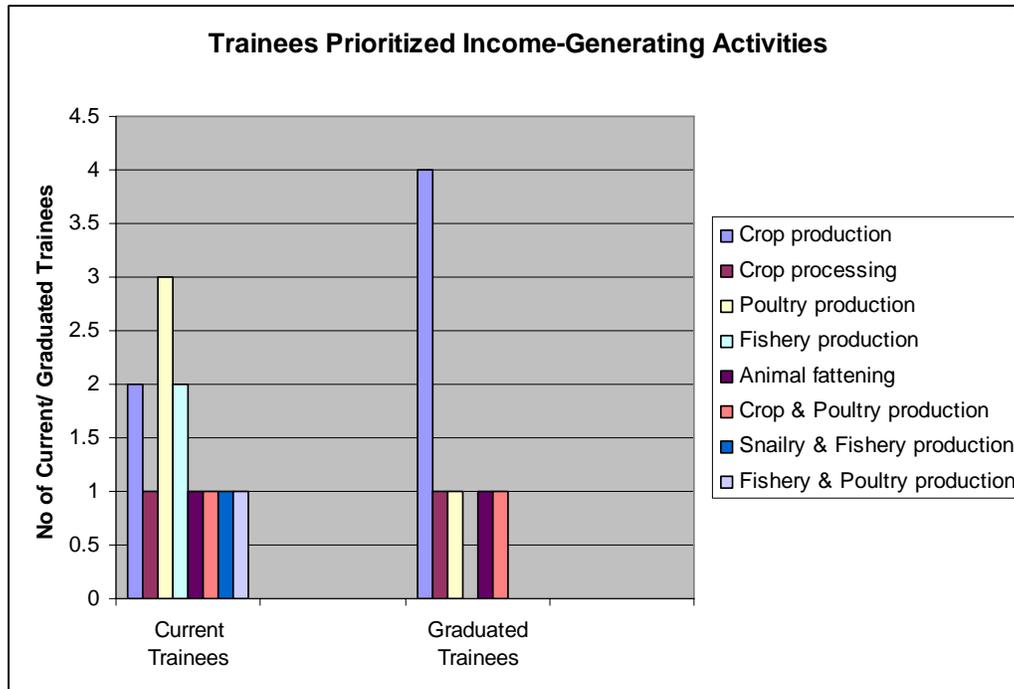


Figure 3: Trainees Prioritized Income- Generating Activities. Source: Own Study

4.9 Preference of the RADTS trainees on the training methods

4.9.1 The respondents were asked to choose their preferred training methods they perceived as effective and their reasons for their choice.

Figure 4 shows that majority of the respondents 9 out of the 12 current trainees and 4 out of the 8 graduated trainees preferred lectures, group discussion followed by practical demonstration. They reasoned that it would enhance learning by doing and better understanding.

Likewise some of the respondents 2 current and 2 of the graduated trainees preferred lectures, practical demonstration and giving of handouts. Their reason was that it would enhance trainees understanding of the topic better and they could later refer to what has been taught in the handout incase of any doubt.

The focus group members preferred combination of lecturing, practical demonstration and giving of handout with the same reasons.

Very few of the respondents one of the current and 2 of the graduated preferred lectures with visual aids and practical demonstration. Their reason was that trainees could see what they are been taught clearly in pictures.

All the field staff respondents revealed that the trainees were given lectures, to be followed by practical demonstration of what they were taught on the farm, but limitation of funds made this impossible for now. However the training implementation guideline states trainees should be sent to reputable farms after theoretical training for industrial attachment for four weeks. It is at these reputable farms that the trainees will be exposed to practical farming.

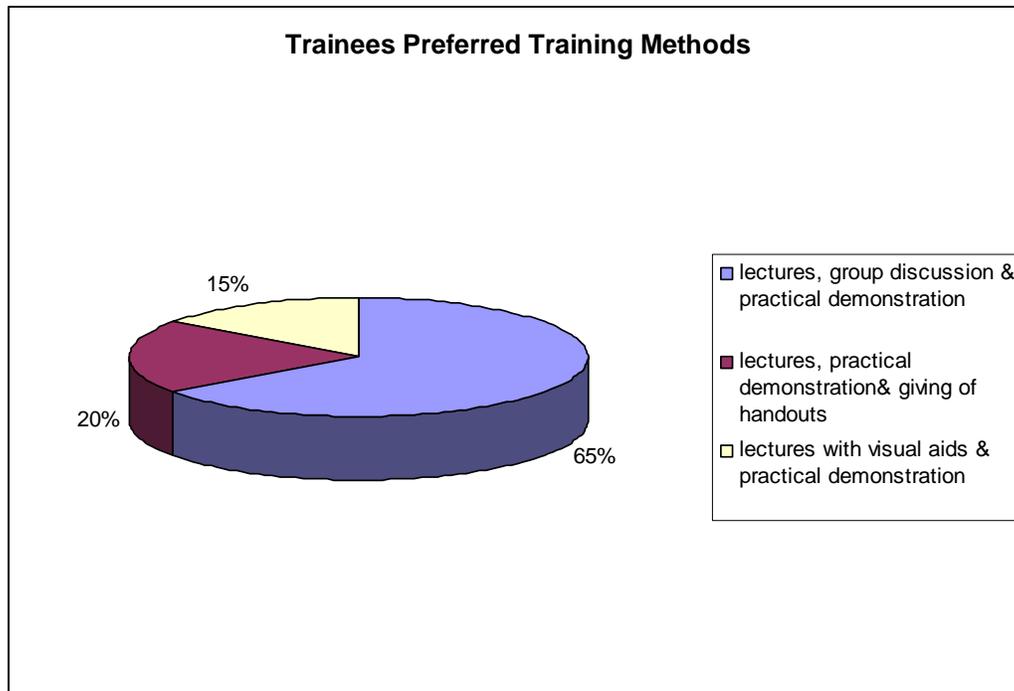


Figure 4: Trainees preferred Training methods **Source: Own Study**

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the discussion of the findings from the case study of RADTS trainees. Reference is also made to relevant literature concerning the points of discussion.

5.1 Trainees' level of involvement in the RADTS program

The research revealed that the trainees' level of participation in the RADTS is limited to the implementation stage. This is when the trainees receive information about the program through advertisement in the local radio, television, personal enquiry, relatives and friends. They are allowed to participate in the training program, after they have been recruited into the program. Prior to this, they are to collect the application form and return the completed form to the NDE office. The trainees' level of participation can be described under the passive and receiving information level of participation which are not regarded as participation by many researchers on participation because they are at the lowest level of participation.

Pretty's (1995) typology of participations described passive participation as situation where people participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. In this case the trainees were told what will happen and what they should expect after they had enrolled for the training program. This is equally similar to what happens in receiving information level of participation, where the participants are informed or told what a project will do after it has been decided by others.

Development program with top-down initiatives hardly reach the people which the programs are meant for. Leeuwis (2004) indicated that top-down planning is an obstacle to change and innovation, while new developments and insights called for the adaption of goals and plans, project planning procedures that are rather participatory.

For a development program like RADTS to be effective and efficient, the planning process must be participatory and should be beyond passive participation. The RADTS trainees must have access to the planning, implementation and monitoring stages of the program. The process must be interactive and collaborative for all the relevant stakeholders to be involved in joint analysis of the program. Interactive Participation occurs when people participate in joint analysis which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. This makes participation to be seen as a fundamental right, not just the means to achieve project goals.

5.2 Types of media used by the NDE for awareness creation

Contrary to the NDE guideline of the training program which stipulates that information about the training program be communicated to the audiences through paid advertisement on local radio, television and newspapers. While other sources of publicity used included sending information to nearby mosques' and churches. Majority of the trainees got to know about the program through interpersonal

communication as shown in figure 1. The possibility of reaching large audiences with interpersonal communication is limited and this may have contributed in making more potential trainees in the nearby area councils not to have access to the training program. One of the characteristics of using conventional mass media like newspapers, radio and television is that a sender can reach many people while remaining at a distance without the possibility of engaging in direct interaction with the audience. Leeuwis (2005). This was actually the intention of the NDE with regards to the use of conventional media to reach as many audiences as possible with information about the training program.

5.3 Economic factors limiting trainees access to information in the RADTS program.

The research findings indicated that the major economic factors limiting trainees' access to information in the RADTS are lack of funds to start up business after training and low motivation of trainees by the organization. Access to information in the RADTS program is described as the ability of the trainees to participate in the training program, from the planning process, receive all the benefits of active participation and be empowered to become self-employed.

Majority of the trainees are in the disadvantaged group because they are either unemployed or under employed as revealed by their background. They want to be supported with some productive skills that will assist them to improve their socio-economic status. The reality of the challenge of lack of funds makes even some of the current trainees to feel as if they are investing their precious time acquiring knowledge that they may not be able to apply into business ventures. Some of the trainees eventually drop out of the training solely because of this factor. Capt (2005) assented that development training program is an important intervention but not sufficient in itself. The ease of access to micro-finance is often crucial.

The issue of low motivation by the organization is another serious factor hindering trainees' participation in the training program. As people will only participate in a particular learning challenge if there is a motivation to do so. Participation is like learning which is a scarce resource that requires time, energy and other resources. One of the motivating factors that makes people to invest in learning or participate in a training program is self-efficacy and environmental efficacy. (Leeuwis 2005)

Trainees will only want to be involved in the training program if they have confidence that they can solve their problem or will be supported effectively by other actors in finding solution to their problem. If this is lacking trainees will not be motivated to participate in any development program. Adults are not likely to willingly engage in learning unless the learning is meaningful to them because they are pragmatic in their learning; they want to apply their learning to present situations (Caffarella, 2002). Lack of timely support in the form of transport allowance to and from the training site is another factor limiting trainees' access to the RADTS program. Rural areas are synonymous with poor infrastructures, like bad road, poor electricity and high transaction costs.

The NDE training policy allows trainees are to be paid transport allowance of one hundred per day and stipend of one thousand naira per month for the four months training duration. The transport allowance ought to be paid during the training program to facilitate trainees' movement. But these allowances are only paid by the organization at the end of the training program. More so they are usually paid through the NACRDB to assist the trainees to open account with the Bank.

Some of the respondents felt that this untimely support has indeed caused some of them to drop out of the training. They complained that a number of them join more than two buses including climbing okada (motor bike) to get to the training venue. They said they spend an average of three hundred naira daily which in a month translates to six thousand naira. The location of the training site is about five kilometers from the main road of Dutse/ Bwari junction in Abuja.

Another factor limiting trainees' participation in the program is the trainees' perception that the NDE is not honoring its promise of providing funds for resettlement of trainees after the training. Majority of the graduated trainees accused the NDE of this as a result of their high unmet expectations. They further revealed this as the reason for not having the confidence to inform others about the program. This just indicated that the trainees were not well informed about the program. The program guideline stated that the graduated trainees will be assisted to practice the skills and knowledge learnt through recommendation to micro credit institutions for credit facilities to start businesses after training.

5.4 Socio-cultural factors limiting trainees' involvement in the RADTS program

The respondents identified that socio-cultural factors limited women participation in the training program. The gender status of the respondents also showed that the training was gender bias with gender differences emphasized. Majority of the respondents' assertion that the dual roles of women as wives and mothers gave them less time than men to attend agricultural training program can be alluded to sex roles and gender stereotypes manifested in the day-to-day life of an average Nigerian. Certain vocations and professions have traditionally been regarded as men's (medicine, engineering, architecture), and others as women's (nursing, catering, typing, arts). The World Bank Participation Sourcebook (2007) revealed that in Nigeria, women play a dominant role in agricultural production and they make up 60-80 percent of the agricultural labor force in Nigeria yet they are deprived of the opportunity of optimizing their performance. Fabiyi, et al (2007) also indicated that women take part actively in farming activities and in processing farm products, in addition to their domestic and reproductive responsibilities and even women in seclusion (Purdah) generate substantial income through food crop processing.

The other socio- cultural factor limiting women participation in the training program can be perceived from the views expressed by few of the respondents that women prefer trading (buying and selling) to attending training. This view can be explained on the premise that women tend to diversify their livelihood activities in order to meet their daily needs and contribute to the household income.

The views that more men preferred the training program as it would enable them to make a choice of business enterprise for self- employment, shows again the issue of sex roles. Men see agriculture as hard task to be performed by them and not women. Nigeria is a patrilineal society where men make decisions on behalf of their families. And the women are seen and not heard. These views expressed by the respondents indicated that more men would have made the decision to attend the training on behalf of their immediate families.

While few of the graduated trainees were of the opinion that demolition and displacement problem in the FCT Abuja may have contributed to low participation of trainees. This issue of demolition and displacement rendered many rural

communities homeless in Abuja. With such confused state of minds attending a training problem will not be an immediate issue.

5.5 Institutional factors limiting trainees from applying their skills and knowledge after training

One of the institutional factors limiting trainees from applying their skills and knowledge after training is the inability of trainees to access credit from the few micro finance institutions available. During the research majority of the respondents indicated that, they would not be able to access credit individually to start business enterprises after the completion of the training. They based their views on the information they received that micro finance institutions only give credits to cooperatives rather than individuals. Also they gave reasons that as a disadvantaged group that do not have "god fathers," to provide them with needed funds. Accessing credit individual for agricultural enterprise might be like the biblical saying that "it is difficult for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle"

The access status of an individual or households with respect to loans or other forms of finance makes a big difference to the livelihood choice that is open to them. (Ellis 2000)

This reality made majority of them to join cooperatives to improve their social networks as a way of getting over the problem. It must be mentioned that the inability to access credit contradicts the principles of good participation. Decreases the participation of the trainees in the training program and reduces the empowerment of the disadvantaged group into becoming self- employed. According to Pretty, (1995) participation is a fundamental right, in which the main aim is to initiate mobilization for collective action, empowerment and institution building (Pretty, 1995). Also Participation enables people to realize their rights to participate in, and access information relating to, the decision-making processes which affect their lives. (Chambers, 2005). Good practice of participation as seen from the above definitions is a right that enables people to access not only information but resources and the benefits attached to it.

The remaining few respondents are of the opinion that they could source their own credit after completion of training through self effort and anticipated assistance from relatives. This may be their reason for not believing in cooperatives.

5.5.1 NDE assistance to trainees in accessing credit

All the field staff revealed that the NDE assist trainees through recommendation to NACRDB and micro credit agencies for start up support despite the mandate of the organization which is basically training. The numbers of graduated trainees that eventually got assisted were very few. The NDE has a memorandum of understanding with the NACRDB. The MOU is to facilitate trainees' access to micro credit loans from the Bank after the completion of the training program. The process of securing such loans is expected to be less cumbersome as a result of this arrangement. However this is not so, as some of the graduated trainees were still awaiting responses from the Bank after the submission of their feasibility studies through the NDE to them.

The second type of assistance is the disbursement of loan to few cooperatives formed by the trainees after completion of the training program. The beneficiaries were few because the NDE is faced with the challenge of underfunding as their activities are tied to government funding as expressed through annual budgets. The high competition for funding among agencies makes it difficult for the NDE to have

enough funds to reasonably run its program (NDE, 2006). However some of the beneficiaries of the loan expressed displeasure with this type of assistance by saying “ *How can they disburse loan of that small amount to a cooperative made of twenty to twenty-eight members, how do they want us to utilize the loan and pay back within a reasonable time.*” The beneficiaries of the loan felt that the amount they received was not enough to engage in meaningful income-generating activities that would alleviate their poverty collectively as a group.

5.6 Training needs of the trainees

During the course of the research, the trainees were asked to identify their preferred training needs or gaps pertaining to their productive activities.

5.6.1 Training needs pertaining to productive activities

With crop production, poultry, fishery management, marketing information and crop processing being the major activities participated by trainees as their productive activities. No wonder they were participating in the course for more innovative knowledge sharing and better skills.

Figure 2 shows the prioritized agricultural activities participated by trainees to enhance their skills for self-employment.

Majority of the graduated trainees identified their prioritized training needs or gaps that they considered important in increasing their productivity to include in descending order: crop production, poultry, fishery management, crop processing, rabbitary production, animal fattening and snailry management.

Likewise, majority of the current trainees identified their prioritized training needs in the descending order: poultry production, marketing information, fishery management, crop processing, animal fattening, rabbitary, and basic business training.

The identified training needs indicated the interest of the trainees and how important some agricultural activities like crop production, poultry and fishery management skills were preferred to others. It equally shows that they needed more information on both technical knowledge and skills development on the above agricultural activities for them to be competent to apply the knowledge after training.

Caffarella (2002) acknowledged that program planners should seek to respond to what they and the people, organization and communities they work with perceive as important topics, skills and belief or value system adults should examine or what know more about. Training needs assessment conducted to identify training needs of the trainees should be carried out in a participatory approach in order for it to be effective. Participatory needs assessment is important to identify the information and training requirements of the local population or participants, as it is necessary to uncover local skills and knowledge. However the RADTS trainees prioritized needs are relevant and current in content. They are part of what the NDE offers at the training center. This is show in Annex 3. The NDE carried out its planning of the

program independent of the trainees in a non participatory approach. The organization assumed they know what the trainees needs without involving them in conducting the needs assessment. Haan, (2002) states that important ingredients for successful training interventions were found to include: clear purpose, favourable environment, participation of beneficiaries at all stages, need assessment, training methods, good trainers and financial issues.

5.7 Trainees Income- generating activities

As shown in Figure 3. The respondents prioritized and identified the income generating activities they would want to participate in after the completion of the training to include the following list in descending order: crop production (vegetable, cowpea, maize, millet, sorghum and cassava), poultry management, fishery, crop processing, animal fattening (sheep & goat), snailry, integration of crop and poultry, snailry and fishery, fishery and poultry.

The findings revealed that trainees' participation in the income generating activities will help to improve their socio-economic status, by being self-employed after the completion of the training. The choice of the activities and the integration of some of them will allow the graduated trainees to diversify their income sources and improve their livelihood. Also the choice of activities are in congruent with the training needs identified by the trainees as well as the courses offered by the training organization except for bee keeping, piggery and mushroom production. A good understanding of the trainees need is therefore fundamental to successful training (Farinde et. al.2005). There was less participation of trainees for bee keeping, piggery and mushroom production courses. The reasons could either be that there are no competent resource persons or trainers to handle the subjects or the trainees perceived that the course would require a lot of resources to apply the skills into enterprise creation.

Another reason adjudged for selecting the above income- generating activities is that that some of the trainees are already practicing similar agricultural practices on a small scale or subsistence level on their own. This has enabled them to discover the opportunities and potentials inherent in such agricultural activities. It also has made them to consider scaling –up their activities for more income sources.

5.8 Preference of the RADTS trainees on the training methods

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to decide on their preferred training or instructional methods which they perceived as important. Figure 4 indicates that majority of the trainees preferred the following instructional methods in groups. The descending order of the groups are: (lectures, group discussion followed by practical demonstration), (lectures, practical demonstration and giving of handout) and (lectures with visual aids and practical demonstration).

The choice of the majority of the respondents in opting for lectures combined with group and practical demonstration would mean that the trainees preferred to be informed first about the subject matter with necessary background information which would guide them in understanding the subject matter better. The group discussion will allow for the exchange and sharing of ideas and information about the subject matter. Trainees could equally share and compare experiences and knowledge about their various agricultural activities. The practical demonstration would help to clarify the vague concepts about the subject matter delivered during the lectures. As the trainees practice the skills learnt during the practical demonstration they become better informed as they learn by action or doing and observation. With repeated demonstrations from trainees, this would assist them in having good retention and knowledge of what they have practiced for a long time to come. (Caffarella ,2002)

stated that instructors must recognize that adults bring with them rich but divergent experiences to learning activities. In which they are immersed in various life roles, have preferred ways of learning and want practical solution to issues.

Few of the respondents preferred lectures with handout or visuals aids. The use of handout as a training method will allow them to have relevance materials they could refer to for more information on their own about the subject matter. The handout will help to clear grey areas and doubts trainees might find difficult to understand the course of lectures.

With visuals aids as a learning method, trainees will be able to observe pictures of what the subject matter is all about and this could leave a very lasting memory in their thought. It also helps to generate enthusiasm and interest and keep the trainees learning.

The various training methods preferred by the trainees with different degrees of preference show that they differ in their ways of learning. This can be attributed to their different background, experiences and capacities. (Pretty, et al, 1995) elucidated that it is best to use a combination of learning methods to alter the tempo of the training. As regular change of methods will keep trainees interested and be ready to learn and participate. This also agrees with Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, which indicate that different people learn in different ways. This happens from continuous interaction and iteration between thinking and action. The process describes learning as concrete actions which results in certain experiences that are reflected upon and later generate cognitive changes from which new actions can emerge (Leeuwis, 2004).

(Caffarella ,2002) has undoubtedly noted that there are no best way of assisting people to learn, but rather training and education planners should consider factors like learning objectives, instructors' capability, background and characteristics of learners and learning context when choosing training methods for training program.

In addition the content and method of delivery should be developed in collaboration with the learners. It will be necessary to ensure that the training methods and the content of the training sessions are current and appropriate. (Anderson, et.al. 2000).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the conclusion of the outcome of the case study carried out during the research. Recommendations are suggested to contribute to the strengthening of the RADTS program.

6.1 Conclusions

The RADTS trainees' level of participation was passive; the trainees were only involved in the program during the implementation stage of the program. At that stage the trainees received information about the program after they have been decided by the organizers and encouraged to collect the application forms to fill. The completed application forms were returned to the NDE Abuja office – the organization handling the program. The planning process was not participatory at all. The trainees' non participation in the planning process of the training program presents them with little or no access to information. This could be one of the reasons for the unabated level of unemployment especially in the rural areas

In addition, the organization made use of various communication media to reach the audience, majority of the trainees indicated that they received the information about the program from their friends and relatives.

The economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors explored during research greatly contributed to limiting trainees' participation in the program.

The issue of lack of fund to apply learnt skills for enterprise creation was one major hindrance to trainees' participation as they perceived that embarking on a training program without applying skills learnt for enterprise creation does not take them out of the unemployment market. Untimely support in form of transportation allowance to facilitate trainees' movement to and fro the training location daily was another concern raised by the trainees as contributing to their low participation of the program.

Despite the fact that women are noted to be very much involved in agricultural activities, the socio-cultural issues explored shows low participation of women in the training program. The women were more interested in engaging in income diversification activities like trading to contribute to their households' income and improve their livelihood. More men participated in the training because they saw agricultural as a hard task that could be undertaking by men to help them earn income to support their households'. The training participation was gender biased.

Poor institutional support and low motivation of trainees by the NDE were issues that attributed to the low participation of trainees in the training program. The NDE could only recommend trainees to NARCDB after the completion of their training for start up assistance which takes quite a period to materialize. In addition participation of the poor without being accompanied with institutional support will yield more or less the result as that of non participation. The poor remain poor because the institutional arrangements rendered them poor before the development intervention (Kinyashi, 2006).

The problem of lack of fund as well as the NDE policy of only training without adequately assisting trainees to apply learnt skills for enterprise creation portrays the NDE as not doing enough to meet the high expectation of the trainees and adequately support them.

However, development organizations like the NDE is faced with the problem of institutional autonomy as their activities are tied to government funding expressed

through annual budgets. The high competition for funding among agencies makes it difficult for the NDE to have enough funds to reasonably run its program.

The training needs prioritized by trainees to enhance their skills for self-employment in descending order were: crop production, poultry, fishery management, crop processing, rabbitary production, animal fattening and snailry management. Also the trainees' prioritized income –generating activities in descending order were: crop production (vegetable, cowpea, maize, millet, sorghum and cassava), poultry management, fishery, crop processing, animal fattening (sheep & goat), snailry, integration of crop and poultry, snailry and fishery, fishery and poultry.

Auspiciously, the prioritized training needs indicated the skills the trainees wanted more information and knowledge about. While the prioritized income –generating activities only explained the agricultural activities' the trainees wish to undertake as livelihood activities after their training to improve their socio- economic status. The prioritized income –generating activities are relevant and appropriate with the prioritized training needs identified by the trainees. This is equally appropriate with the subjects offered by the training organizer.

With regards to the preferred training methods, majority of the trainees choose combination of methods which allowed them to participate, observe and reflect personally on the subject of interest. These preferred training methods assisted them to have a better understanding and retention of the knowledge and skills being taught and seen. However for the trainees to be exposed to more practical aspects of the training, the organization will send the trainees on practical attachment for four weeks to nearby farms for more learning and skill development as indicated in the training guideline.

6.2 Recommendations

In strengthening RADTS, for better efficiency and increased participation of trainees. The following recommendations are therefore suggested:

The NDE should incorporate the interactive model of program planning for adults in the planning of RADTS program in order to ensure the success of the program.

The model is interactive and comprehensive, people and place are acknowledged as important in the planning process, differences among cultures are taken into account and practitioners find the model useful and a very practical tool for planning as program planning is rarely a linear, step-by-step process (Caffarella ,2002).

High participation of the trainees means high involvement of the trainees in the planning process of the training program. For the RADTS program to be efficient, the trainees should be consulted to know their views and expectations about the program. Likewise they should be seen as collaborators or partners in ensuring the success of the intervention, so that they can agree and support it.

The trainees should be well informed about the training program from the onset and benefits derivable from such participation should be explained in details through sensitization or orientation exercise to be conducted before the actual commencement of the training program. Through the sensitization or orientation exercise, trainees can be allowed to ask questions to clear their doubts about the training program. Questionnaires can be administered to them to obtain information about their training needs and expectations. Feedback received from such an

exercise can either be positive (supportive) or negative (confrontational). However there should be a balance between the two at all times to avoid making people feel rejected. The confrontational feedback will stimulate participation of trainees, as it will point to some inconsistencies between trainees' aspiration and the NDE achievement and between what people say and what people do, between what people believe and what others believe (Leeuwis, 2005).

Also the training program should be evaluated at the end of each training cycle to assess the performance of the training program. The outcome or feedback of the evaluation will assist the organizers to adjust the program to meet expected changes.

The management style of the NDE should embrace the learning organization style and encourage the individual in the organization to be creative, take responsibility for their actions, share experiences and play active roles in solving organizational problems. Also the management should learn to adopt a less bureaucratic style and be more responsive to changes.

The training content should continually be improved to reflect the current and appropriate needs and aspiration of trainees at all times. This should be conducted through participatory needs assessments of trainees. In addition, technical skills are not always sufficient, matching training to economic demand is most important. Social and communication skills, including self-organization, bargaining, and, of course, entrepreneurial skills are also required. It is important to be able to offer flexible training delivery in the proximity of rural households. Better training methods like use of visual should be incorporated in the facilitation of the training program to encourage trainees' participation and improved understanding of training content.

The NDE should strengthen its networking or partner with more private or government agencies involved in micro finance lending and poverty reduction programs in the country. This way they can increase their prospect of helping the graduated trainees to find solution to the problem of loans to start up enterprise creation. This is because the NDE have their activities tied to government funding as expressed through annual budgets. The high competition for funding among agencies makes it difficult for the NDE to have enough funds to reasonably run its program.

Due to the location of the training, timely support should be provided for the trainees to facilitate their movement to and fro the training site. This support will lessen their burdens and encourage their participation in the program as rural roads in Nigeria are generally in poor state.

Finally, the NDE should imbibe the culture of maintaining the established training center where the RADTS program is conducted. The center has demonstration space for experimentation, but it should be sustained and environmentally kept clean so as to the make the place a good training site. The center should be supported with some basic equipment like physical facilities like learning materials, better teaching aids (flip charts), agro processing equipment for practical, provision of good drinking water, electricity and sanitary conditions. It must be remembered that adults are more receptive to the learning process in situations that are both physically and psychologically comfortable.

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ANNEX 1: MAP SHOWING THE AREA COUNCILS OF ABUJA



Source: Abuja Summary, 2006

KEY:

Research area is located in Bwari area council.

ANNEX 2. CHECKLIST FOR INFORMANTS

A) Trainees

1. Background information of the respondents
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Marital status single--- married ---- widow----- Divorce-----
 - Educational background of respondent
 - Major occupation, if farming what are you cultivating
 - Number of years without job

2. How were you involved in the rural agricultural development training scheme program?

3. How were you informed about the training program?

4. What are economic factors limiting your access to information in the Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme?

5. What are the socio- cultural factors limiting your involvement in the training program?
 - Are male and women allowed to attend the training together in the same class?
 - Do the dual roles of women as wives and mothers affect their participation in the RADTS program? if yes, how?

6. What are the institutional factors limiting you from applying your skills and knowledge after training?
 - Do trainees have access to credit after completion of training?

 - Do trainees belong to any community based organization?
 - How do the NDE assist trainees to access credit?

7. What training do you need to enhance your skills for self- employment and which among these are priorities?

8. What income generating activities do you wish to embark upon to improve your socio-economic status?

9. What training methods do you prefer for the training program? And why?

B) Field staff

1. How did you involve the trainees in the training program?
2. How did you inform the trainees about the training program?
3. What limitations do you experience with respect RADTS program?
4. What courses do you offer in the RADTS program?
5. How do you assist the trainees to access credit?

ANNEX 3: AGRICULTURAL SUBJECTS OFFERED BY THE NDE DURING THE TRAINING

Crop production management

- General principles of field crop production
- Legumes, root tubers, cereal and irrigation practices
- Weed and pest control
- Fertilizer usage application
- Storage and marketing of farm produce

Poultry management

- Breeding
- Housing
- Feeds and formulation
- Diseases and their cure
- Vaccination schedule
- Routine check
- Record keeping
- Processing and marketing

Crop processing

- Types of equipment
- Storage
- Preservation
- Post harvest handling and packaging

Fishery production

- Breeding
- Housing
- Water requirements/ control
- Feeds and formulation
- Diseases and their cure
- Routine check
- Record keeping
- marketing

Livestock rearing: animal fattening (Cattle/ sheep production)

Bee keeping

Piggery

Mushroom production