

# Assessment of Well-Being of Youth Project Results' of State Employment and Expenditure in Delta State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effects of the State Employment and Expenditure for Results (SEEFOR) project on the well-being of youth in Delta State. The study Identified beneficiaries 'attitude towards the SEEFOR project, assessed beneficiaries' levels of constraints in their involvement with SEEFOR project, found out the effects of the project on beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 274 respondents (137 beneficiaries and 137 non-beneficiaries) for the study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire on beneficiaries' attitudes towards the SEEFOR project, beneficiaries' constraints to involvement in the SEEFOR project and the level of well-being of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the study area. Data obtained were analysed using percentages, mean and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings revealed that the SEEFOR beneficiaries (93.4%) had a favourable attitude towards the project, while the delay in payment of salaries (1.98) was the main constraint faced by beneficiaries in the study area. Also, 77.5% of beneficiaries had better well-being while 68.4% of non-beneficiaries had worse-off well-being. A significant difference exists ( $F=11.300$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) in the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the study area. This study concluded that SEEFOR project had positive effects on the well-being of its beneficiaries. Therefore, policy makers should endeavour to put in consideration the well-being (both objective and subjective) of its beneficiaries as one of the objectives when formulating programme intervention.

**Keywords:** SEEFOR project, well-being of youth, expenditure, constraints, beneficiaries

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, like most developing countries globally, suffers from a multitude of problems, including unemployment, political unrest, terrorism, and poverty (Saidu, 2022). The recent increase in unemployment has had an impact on many young school dropouts who are of working age. In a research conducted by the World Bank in 2018, Nigeria was classified as one of the countries with the highest levels of poverty due to the country's apparent job losses (Gertz and Kharaset.al, 2018). According to Kharas and Dookey (2021), the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria were projected to endure gradual recovery and low growth over the ensuing ten years.

One of the primary goals of the first developmental plan of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria was to create employment through training individuals in skills necessary to address the challenges of an ever-changing economy (World Bank 2022). The aforementioned did catalyze the creation of several employment programs, including the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic and Advancement Programme (FEAP), Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP), National Poverty Eradication

Program (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Scheme (NEEDS). Delta State Government, (2017) and Daniels (2022) reported that Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), N-Power, Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP), Skill Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP), Youth Agricultural Entrepreneur Programme, State Employment and Expenditure for Results (SEEFOR), among others, are some of the empowerment programs that have been launched in Delta State, Nigeria

State Employment and Expenditure for Results (SEEFOR) Project was a World Bank intervention initiative that was implemented in 2014 and funded by participating States of (Delta, Edo, Rivers, and Bayelsa) as well as credit from the International Development Association (IDA), a grant from the European Union (EU). Delta State, aims to provide youths with employment through small-scale public works projects like road upkeep and waste disposal. It also provides financial grants to six technical and vocational institutions to for improving the environment to facilitate accreditation of some courses that prepare for self-employment. Finally, it offers communities financial support for Community Driven Development (CDD) sub-projects. The SEEFOR initiative also helps the Fadama III Agricultural Project to build on its current successes (Delta SEEFOR Project, 2017).

Nigeria is not an exception to the problem of unemployment that plagues many nations, both established and developing, as well as regions and provinces of the world. Over 721 million people globally are unemployed, which is a worrisome rate of unemployment (Schlein, 2019). Nigeria has a total youth unemployment rate of 62%, and this is worsened by the fact that the labour market only offers a tiny number of jobs to the millions of young people who leave the National Youth Service each year (Next Generation, 2020). Some have called this situation a “ticking time bomb, sure to erupt in no distant time,”. (ILO, 2020). To implement the state employment and expenditure for result initiative, the government of Nigeria considered working with the World Bank to reduce the country’s unemployment rate (SEEFOR). Since the program’s implementation has been done, they have not taken into account how the program will affect the level of well-being of the youth. Instead, they have only looked at how the program would help young people find jobs and how it will drive community development. This study assessed the well-being of youth project results’ of state employment and expenditure in Delta state, Nigeria

### **Specifically, the study**

1. identified beneficiaries’ attitude towards the SEEFOR project,
2. assessed beneficiaries’ levels of constraints in their involvement with SEEFOR project, and;
3. found out the the effects of the project on beneficiaries and non- beneficiaries level of well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in Delta State, Nigeria, located between longitude 5<sup>00</sup>’ and 6<sup>45</sup>’ East and latitude 5<sup>00</sup>’ and 6<sup>30</sup>’ North. It covers a total land area of 16,842 square kilometers. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of SEEFOR project constituted the population for the study. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select both the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries for the study. In the first stage, two out of the nine local government areas (LGAs) that were beneficiaries were purposively selected,

In Delta state, there are 25 local government areas. Only nine LGAs have benefited from the SEEFOR project in terms of beneficiaries (Burutu, Ethiope-east, Ika-north, Oshimilli-south, Ndokwa-east, Ughelli-south, Ukwuani, Uvwie and Warri-south). Two LGAs, Ughelli-South and Oshimilli-South, were chosen at random from 20% of the LGAs beneficiaries. From the 131 and 142 youths from Ughelli-South and Oshimilli-South regions who enrolled in the SEEFOR project, only 50% of the youths were randomly selected, resulting in 66 and 71 youths respectively, which gave a total of 137 beneficiaries.

In addition, there were sixteen non-beneficiary LGAs (Ethiophe-west, Sapele, Ughelli-north, Udu, Warri south-west, Warri-north, Bomadi, Isoko-south, Isoko-north, Patani, Aniocha-north, Ika-south, Aniocha-south, Oshimili-north, Ndokwa-west). To select, non-beneficiaries, first, two LGAs, Bomadi and Uvwie, were chosen at random from 10% of the non-benefitted LGAs. In the second stage, 137 respondents for non-beneficiaries and 50% of the registered youth in Bomadi (140 youths) and Udu (133 youths) were randomly chosen to be 70 and 67 youths, respectively, giving a total of 274 non beneficiaries sample size for the study.

The study used the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) scale, of subjective domains as a to measure the well-being level of respondents.

Seven indicators of emotional, satisfying life domain, vitality and health, resilience and self-esteem, positive functioning, social well-being, and environment and security were subjected to respondents self-rating on a four-point Likert-type scale. These scales corresponded with scores of 3, 2, 1, and 0 for always true, “most times true,” “occasionally true,” and “never true.” Utilizing the mean value as the benchmark, the well-being scores were tallied, and beneficiary well-being was divided into two levels: worse off (range from 110 to 123) and better off (range from 123 to 127), respectively. The non-beneficiary well-being was also divided into two levels: worse off (range from 109 to 127) better off (range 127 to 135).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Attitude of Beneficiaries towards the SEEFOR Project

Table 1 shows that the majority (98.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that SEEFOR project activities were below youth expectations. Similarly, (94.1%) indicated that SEEFOR project activities were less strenuous while 92.7% indicated that SEEFOR projects provide a lot of benefits. SEEFOR project can help to alleviate poverty among youths (91.9%) and poor funding of the SEEFOR project discourages people (63.9%). However, the majority of the respondents were in disagreement that SEEFOR project is a one-year project which makes it discouraging and becoming a beneficiary of SEEFOR involves a lot of bribery and corruption (98.5%), there is little or no delay in payment of monthly allowance (98.5%), lack of job make me join SEEFOR (97.8%) and SEEFOR project does not address the felt need of the youth (94.8%). This implies that the programme did deliver its objective by creating job opportunities for youth and presented beneficiaries with benefits which had a positive impact on their well-being.

Table 1: Respondents’ attitude towards SEEFOR Project

Statements	Mean
Does not address the felt need of the youth	3.82
The Lack of a job made me join SEEFOR	1.13
Activities are less strenuous	2.97
Becoming a beneficiary of SEEFOR involves a lot of bribery and Corruption	3.05
Is a one-year project which makes it discouraging	3.04
There is little or no delay in payment of the monthly allowance	1.96
Can help to alleviate poverty among youths	2.1
Poor funding of the SEEFOR project discourages people	2.37
Activities are below youth expectation	1.99
Provides a lot of benefits	2.93

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Categorisation of beneficiaries' attitude towards the SEEFOR project

Table 2 shows that the majority of the beneficiaries (93.4%) had a favourable attitude towards the SEEFOR project while 6.6% of the beneficiaries had an unfavourable attitude towards the project. Data collected using Likert-type scale were analysed using the mean score and standard deviation. The maximum score was 31 while the minimum score was 21 and the mean score of  $25.4 \pm 1.25$ . Respondents above the mean were categorised as those with favourable attitudes while those below the mean were regarded as having unfavourable attitudes. This implies that beneficiaries had a favourable attitude towards the SEEFOR project. According to Roy (2022), the higher percentage of beneficiaries with favourable attitudes towards the SEEFOR project is an indication that the project is successful and the beneficiaries will not hesitate to participate in future.

Table 2: Level of attitude towards the SEEFOR project

Level of attitude/Score Range	%	Min	Max	Mean Score	S D
Unfavourable (21-25)	6.6	21	31	25.4	1.25
Favourable (26-31)	93.4				
Total	100				

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Constraints Faced in various SEEFOR Project Activities

Results in Table 3 present the constraints faced by beneficiaries on their various activities in SEEFOR project. It reveals that untimely payment of wages (1.98), low wages (1.95), poor learning processes (1.24), inadequate access to information (1.18) and unavailability of working equipment (1.17) were the major constraints faced by the respondents in the various SEEFOR project activities in the study area. This implies that the beneficiaries faced some challenges in participating in various activities in the SEEFOR project. This is confirmed by Kabiri *et.al.* (2021) who observed that young people were challenged by some forms of cultural, psychological and physical factors in their participation in developmental projects. It is through participation that beneficiaries of any development programme have input into priority setting, planning, implementation and evaluation of such development programmes designed to improve their standard of living (Oyewole, 2017).

Table 3: Constraints faced in various SEEFOR project activities

S/No	Constraints	Mean
1	Untimely payment of wages	1.98
2	Low wages	1.95
3	Poor Learning Processes	1.24
4	Inadequate access to information	1.18
5	Unavailability of working equipment	1.17
6	Poor Supervision	1.16
7	Transportation cost	1.16
8	Long distance from my location	1.16
9	Work load not shared equally	1.14

10	Lack of feedback from an instructor	1.09
11	Long working hour	1.09
12	Gender imbalance in the Population	1.07
13	Non-safety Measures	1.07
14	Low participation	1.07

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Effects of the project on beneficiaries and non- beneficiaries level of well-being

The well-being scale measured subjectively the following domains: emotional disposition, life satisfaction, vitality and health, resilience and self-esteem, positive functioning, social disposition, and sense of environmental safety and security of the respondents. Table 4 shows the analysis of responses by the respondents accordingly:

Results in Table 4 show that on emotional well-being, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries indicated that the state employment and expenditure for results project made others happy with highest mean of  $3.97 \pm 0.18$  and  $3.98 \pm 0.12$  respectively. This result suggests that the respondents were emotionally stable. According to Donald and Jackson (2022), emotional stability is associated with positive well-being. Also, on satisfying life, beneficiaries indicated that they are satisfied with their overall life at highest mean of  $3.88 \pm 0.41$  while non-beneficiaries were satisfied with the attention given to their health and available health facilities at highest mean of  $3.98 \pm 0.12$ . This points to the fact that the respondents were mostly satisfied with the easy needs of life which we critical to well-being (Roggeret.al, 2020). In addition, on vitality and health, beneficiaries perceived that they are felt physically active at highest mean of  $3.94 \pm 0.23$  while non-beneficiaries, had sufficient energy at highest mean of  $3.98 \pm 0.12$ . This corroborates the findings that good physical health can work with mental health to improve a person’s well-being (Medical News Today, 2021). Furthermore, on resilience and self-esteem, beneficiaries indicated that they were feeling optimistic about the future at highest mean of  $3.93 \pm 0.24$  while non-beneficiaries were able to deal with life’s difficulties at the highest mean of  $3.97 \pm 0.16$ . The result shows that on positive functioning, beneficiaries were satisfied that what they didI was valuable and worthwhile at a highest mean of  $3.98 \pm 0.11$  while non-beneficiaries at highest mean of  $3.98 \pm 0.12$ . This is in Tandem with the findings of Steinmayret.al. (2019) also reported the satisfaction of respondents with what they do in a similar study carried out. On social well-being, beneficiaries indicated that they were satisfied with the support they received from friends in times of need at the highest mean of  $3.94 \pm 0.29$  while non-beneficiaries, were satisfied that they participated actively in their community meetings and activities at the highest mean of  $3.82 \pm 0.38$ . On environmental and security, beneficiaries opined that they were satisfied with friendly and accommodative e environment at highest mean of  $3.99 \pm 0.08$  and non-beneficiaries, at highest mean of  $3.99 \pm 0.08$  in the study area. This was the findings of Summers, et.al. (2018) who opined that the environment plays a proven role in the quality of well-being.

Table 4: Effects of the project on beneficiaries and non- beneficiaries level of well-being of respondents

Well-being statements	Beneficiary		Non-beneficiary	
	Mean± SD	Rank	Mean± SD	Rank
<b>Emotional Well-being</b>				
I am a happy person	$3.71 \pm 0.87$	3 <sup>rd</sup>	$3.90 \pm 0.29$	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am usually afraid	$1.21 \pm 0.69$	5 <sup>th</sup>	$1.08 \pm 0.38$	6 <sup>th</sup>
I am usually angry	$1.04 \pm 0.20$	6 <sup>th</sup>	$1.09 \pm 0.45$	5 <sup>th</sup>



I do feel unhappy occasionally	2.00±0.49	4 <sup>th</sup>	1.45±0.60	4 <sup>th</sup>
I have good feelings towards people around me	3.85±0.50	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.94±0.30	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I like to make others happy	3.97±0.18	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.98±0.12	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Satisfying life</b>				
I am satisfied with my life overall	3.88±0.41	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.96±0.28	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I am satisfied with the accommodation i have	3.10±0.47	5 <sup>th</sup>	3.63±0.52	6 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with physical, financial and human assets i possess	3.03±0.38	6 <sup>th</sup>	3.69±0.50	4 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with the income i make from my job/SEEFOR project	2.80±0.75	7 <sup>th</sup>	3.66±0.55	5 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with access to communication	3.81±0.47	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.96±0.18	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I am satisfied with the rural environment and the conditions i live and work	3.30±0.59	4 <sup>th</sup>	3.65±0.53	6 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with the attention to my health and available health facilities	3.78±0.50	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.98±0.12	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Vitality and Health</b>				
I am having sufficient energy	3.93±0.24	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.98±0.12	1 <sup>st</sup>
I am feeling physically active	3.94±0.23	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.90±0.29	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am feeling well-rested and healthy	3.92±0.27	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.97±0.14	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Resilience and Self-esteem</b>				
I am feeling good about myself and my involvement in SEEFOR project/ my job	3.25±0.43	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.76±0.42	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am feeling optimistic about my future	3.93±0.24	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.91±0.27	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I am being able to deal with life's difficulties	3.81±0.38	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.97±0.16	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Positive Functioning</b>				
I am satisfied with my accomplishment from what i do	3.07±0.35	5 <sup>th</sup>	3.62±0.48	7 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied that i am able to make use of my abilities to get engaged	3.03±0.22	6 <sup>th</sup>	3.75±0.46	5 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with the opportunities that i have to learn from my involvement	3.02±0.18	8 <sup>th</sup>	3.72±0.47	6 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied that i am fully absorbed in what i am doing	3.03±0.18	6 <sup>th</sup>	3.62±0.51	7 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied that I have time to do what I want to do	3.86±0.33	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.86±0.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am satisfied that what I do is valuable and worthwhile to me	3.98±0.11	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.95±0.20	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I am satisfied that what I do is valued by others	3.96±0.22	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.98±0.12	1 <sup>st</sup>
I am satisfied that I pay tax and vote in elections	3.18±0.40	4 <sup>th</sup>	3.76±0.47	4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Social Well-being</b>				
I am satisfied that I participate actively in my community meetings and activities	3.78±0.42	4 <sup>th</sup>	3.82±0.38	1 <sup>st</sup>
I am satisfied with the level of trust I have for other people	0.37±0.42	5 <sup>th</sup>	3.27±0.44	5 <sup>th</sup>
I am satisfied with the amount of fair treatment and respect I receive from others	3.86±0.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.33±0.47	4 <sup>th</sup>

I am satisfied with the support I receive from friends and others in time of needs	3.94±0.29	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.35±0.47	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am satisfied with the level of my interactions in social groups and family	3.93±0.24	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.38±0.48	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Environment and Security</b>				
I am satisfied with the physical environment in terms of roads, and other physical structures	3.11±0.32	4 <sup>th</sup>	3.03±0.18	4 <sup>th</sup>
I feel safe with the level of policing and crime rate.	3.32±0.47	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3.06±0.24	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am satisfied that the environment is clean and healthy	3.93±0.24	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3.99±0.08	1 <sup>st</sup>
I am satisfied that the environment is friendly and accommodating	3.99±0.08	1 <sup>st</sup>	3.98±0.12	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Source: Field Survey, 2021

### Categorization of the level of Well-being

A mean score (123±2.71) for beneficiaries and (123±2.71) for non-beneficiaries was obtained and used to categorise the well-being as either better off or worse off. Respondents above the mean score were regarded as having better off well-being while those below the mean score were regarded as having worse off well-being. Table 5 shows that 77.5% of beneficiaries fell into the category of better off and 22.4% fell into the category of worse off, while 31.6% and 68.4% of non-beneficiaries fell into the category of better off and worse off respectively. This implies that beneficiaries had a better off well-being than non-beneficiaries which could be a result of beneficiaries’ involvement in different opportunities which would yield an improvement of their income and also affect their well-being status.

Table 5: Respondents’ level of well-being

Level of well-being	Beneficiary	Percentage	Non-beneficiary	Percentage
				<b>Percentage</b>
Worse-off		22.5		68.4
Better-off		77.5		31.6
Min=	110	109		
Max=	127	135		
Mean ± SD	123.2±2.71	127.1±3.40		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

### Relationship between the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of SEEFOR project

#### Difference in the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

The result of the T-test of significant difference in the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Table 6 shows that a significant difference exists (F=11.300, p=0.001) in the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries’ of SEEFOR project in the study area. This implies that the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries varies in the study area. This may be influenced by the fact that beneficiaries of the project benefited more than non-beneficiaries and this could influence the status of their well-being to higher levels .

Table 6: Difference in the well-being status of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F
Beneficiaries	137	127.1103	3.40299	11.300
Non-beneficiaries	137	123.2029	2.71024	

Source: Field survey, 2021

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the beneficiaries of SEEFOR project had better well-being status than non-beneficiaries though were faced with major constraints of untimely payment of wages. Beneficiaries of the SEEFOR project benefited more than non-beneficiaries in the study area. The majority of the respondents had a favourable attitude towards SEEFOR project in the study area. Intervention programmes should be evenly distributed across all local governments of the State: since the beneficiaries had favourable attitudes towards the project. The organization of any projects that involve wages should endeavour to pay the beneficiaries promptly to improve the status of their well-being status

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