

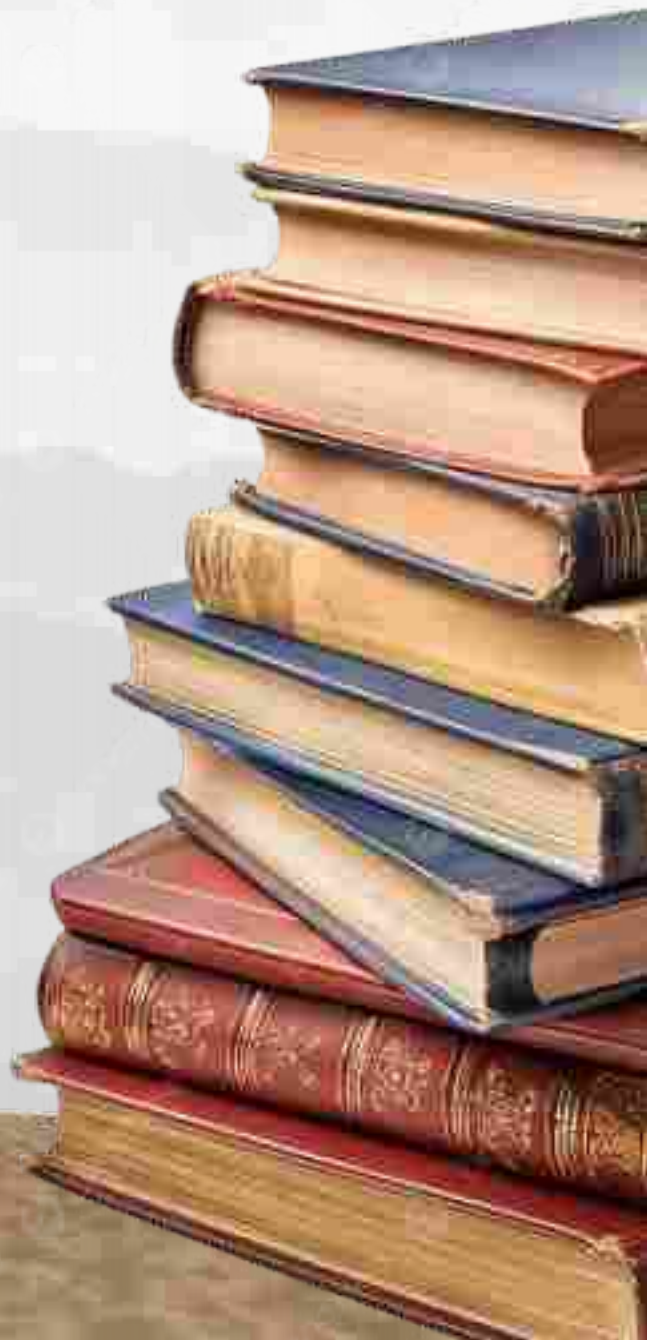


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# PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

VOLUME TWO



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**BOOK CHAPTER**

# PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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## CHAPTER TEN

# TERTIARY EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA.

By

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## ABSTRACT

Community service is a core mandate of Nigerian tertiary institutions, alongside teaching and research. This chapter examines how universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education engage with their host communities through programmes such as public health campaigns, environmental sanitation, skill acquisition, agricultural extension, and public lectures. It explores the objectives and importance of community service—student experiential learning, social impact, bridging town-gown gaps, and reinforcing institutional relevance. The chapter also identifies key challenges inhibiting effective implementation: insufficient funding, weak infrastructure, limited staff motivation, low community engagement, logistical difficulties, and lack of awareness (Ogunode, Iyabode & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022; Bidunni, 2013). Drawing on Nigerian case studies, many of which show that well-designed community service programmes generate tangible benefits for both communities and institutions, the chapter proposes sustainable strategies: strengthen institutional–community partnerships; embed community service into curricula; provide dedicated funding and infrastructure; enhance staff and student incentives; and implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks. By adopting these strategies, tertiary institutions in Nigeria can maximise social relevance, foster civic responsibility among students, and contribute more effectively to national development.

**Keywords:** community service; tertiary education; social impact; host community; sustainable development; Nigeria; experiential learning

### 10.1.Introduction

Tertiary education in Nigeria is not only concerned with producing academically qualified graduates but also with forming responsible citizens who can meaningfully contribute to societal growth and development (Ogunode, Iyabode & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). Beyond teaching and research, one of the core mandates of higher institutions is community service — a vital channel through which universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education extend their knowledge, skills, and resources to address social, economic, and developmental challenges in the society (FRN, 2013).

Community service provision by tertiary institutions in Nigeria takes many forms. These include health awareness campaigns, skill acquisition programs, agricultural extension services, environmental sanitation initiatives, public lectures, and collaborations with local industries and government agencies. Such activities bridge the gap between “town and gown,” ensuring that education does not remain confined within classrooms and lecture halls but becomes a tool for societal transformation.

However, while the role of tertiary institutions in community service is widely recognized, its implementation in Nigeria faces certain limitations such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, limited staff motivation, and weak partnerships with communities. Despite these challenges, community service remains a critical function of higher education, as it fosters national development, strengthens town-gown relationships, and ensures that institutions remain socially relevant.

This chapter examines the importance of providing community service by Nigerian tertiary education in Nigeria. The chapter is discussed under the following subhead: concept of tertiary education, concept of community services, importance of providing community services, challenges militating against community service implementation and solution.

### 10.2.Clarification of concepts

#### i. Concept of Tertiary Education

Tertiary education or higher education covers a wider range of higher institutions of learning which include the university and other institutions such as polytechnics, mono-technics, colleges of education, technical training institutes, (Idowu 2020). Ibrahim (2017) stated that higher institutions are very important tools in meeting the socio-cultural and developmental needs of a country. Tertiary education was defined Federal Republic of Nigeria in her national Policy on Education (2013) as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language

Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI) (FRN, 2013). Tertiary education are higher education enterprises that advances knowledge production and community development through teaching, research and community service provision. Tertiary education whole responsible is production of knowledge and problem solving (Ogunode, Offia, Walakan 2024c).

The goals on higher education in Nigeria Education according to the National Policy on Education (NPE) are to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

Tertiary institutions are mandated to implement teaching, research and community service programme. The community service programme is the last cardinal programme of the tertiary institutions with much implication to the development of host communities and the nation at large. It has appear that some tertiary institutions are not given maximum attention to the development of community service programme (Ogunode, et al 2024c).

## **ii. Concept of Community service**

Community service programme is the third cardinal programme of the tertiary institutions. Community service programme is an organized and planned service programme of higher institutions for the benefit and betterment of their host community. Community service programme of higher institutions are community inclined services initiated by the institutions to develop the communities. Community service of higher institution are services provided by institutions to benefits the community people. Community services programme are done near the area where the institutions are located so that the host community can enjoys the benefits of the institutions. Community service of higher institution include all kinds of services that is meant to improve the wellbeing of the people and the society at general. Community service are essential service designed by institutions to provide socio-economic development to the community (Ojelade, Aiyedun & Aregbesola). Community service programme should helped the host community solve their community problem. Community service of higher institutions should include services that will impact positively to the community. Community service programme of tertiary institutions is often planned and organized through the involvement of a host community. However, ineffective

supervision of the implementation of community service programmes by Universities has affected the development of the programme (Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2021a).

Community service programme of tertiary institutions are social and economic projects that are designed to serve community purposely in the fields such as health, social service, environmental protection, education, urban and rural redevelopment, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, and child care. Community service programmes are organized projects, supervised activities that are a direct benefit to the community and are designed to improve the welfares of the whole communities (Lawinside, 2024). Community service programme refer to structured programm undertakes to improve the social, economic of host communities. Communities service programme are geared towards solving community problems. Community service programme are designed to promote positive development in the communities and improve social changes.

The objective of community services programme includes; community development, community empowerment, community engagement, community sensitization on national health or social issues, information libraries services, training programme, charity, participation in environmental protection, feeding of homeless, donation to community, provision of scholarship for community underprivileged people, provision of empowerment programme for people with disabilities, holds workshop on peacebuilding and peacemaking, holds conferences on gender equality programme, special health programme, climate change awereness and youth employment.

### **10.3.Importance of Providing Community services**

The provision of community services by tertiary institutions in Nigeria is crucial for the development and progress of the country. These services not only benefit the local communities, but also provide valuable hands-on experience for students. The impact of community services in tertiary institutions goes beyond simply fulfilling corporate social responsibility; they contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of Nigerian society (Ogunode, Edinoh, & Okolie, 2023).

One of the key benefits of community services by tertiary institutions is the tangible impact it has on the local communities. By engaging in activities such as community clean-up, healthcare outreach programs, and educational support, these institutions are directly addressing the needs of their surrounding neighborhoods. This not only improves the quality of life for community members, but also fosters a sense of unity and partnership between the institution and the community (Ogunode, Iyabode, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022).

In addition, community services also serve as a valuable learning opportunity for students. By being involved in these activities, students can apply their theoretical knowledge to real-life situations, enhance their critical thinking skills, and develop a sense of empathy and social responsibility. This not only prepares them for their future careers, but also instills important values that will make them responsible and compassionate citizens.

The provision of community services by tertiary institutions can also have a positive impact on the institution itself. It enhances the institution's reputation and credibility, as it is seen as actively contributing to the development of the society. This can also attract potential students and donors who are looking for an institution that values community engagement and social impact.

On the importance of community services programme, Ogunode, et al (2022) asserted that the implementation of community service programme by tertiary institutions has impacted positively on the development of host communities. Community service programme of higher institutions have brought socio-economic and technological development to the host communities and the country at large. A study was conducted by Ogunode and Iroegbu (2018) and the result disclosed that Federal University Wukari is achieving its objectives in the areas of teaching, researching and community services. This study also revealed that the impact of Federal University Wukari on the Wukari community includes employment generation for the people, expansion of social infrastructural facilities, aiding the social economic development of the people, attraction of Federal presence into Wukari, production of manpower for the community, the state and the country at large, encouraging the indigenes to appreciate university education, attract international donors and provision of community services into the community.

The sustainability of institutions, organizations or any society depends largely on the creative capacity of the institution to be capable of effectively performing its functions by offering the required services for the sustenance of the system. Services performed are those that can significantly contribute within the context of a sound macro-economic and political environment to the growth of Nigerian educational institutions and the society (Ekpo & Aiyedun, 2019; Aiyedun, Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ogunode 2021). Also, Academic librarians according to Emezie, et al (2017) already accustomed to delivering information literacy programs are uniquely positioned to contribute to the physical and economic-well-being of members of the host community through the provision of CIS as corporate social responsibility.

#### **10.4. Problems Militating against Provision of Providing Community services**

##### **i. Lack of Funding:**

One of the major challenges facing the implementation of community service by tertiary institutions in Nigeria is the lack of adequate funding. Many institutions struggle to allocate funds towards community service initiatives, resulting in limited resources and hindering the success of such programs. Poor funding is a significant barrier in the effective implementation of community services provision in Nigeria (Oluwuo, 2021).. Due to inadequate financial resources, the government and non-governmental organizations are unable to provide necessary support and infrastructure for community services such as healthcare, education, and social welfare. As a result, the quality and accessibility of these services are greatly compromised, leading to negative impacts on the overall well-being of communities (Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2021; Ogunode, & Onyekachi,

2023). This lack of funding also hinders the ability of professionals and volunteers to effectively carry out their duties and make a meaningful impact in their communities. Therefore, addressing the issue of poor funding is crucial in improving the implementation of community services provision in Nigeria (Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu, & Ajape, 2021).

## **ii. Inadequate Infrastructure:**

Another challenge is the lack of proper infrastructure to support community service initiatives. Tertiary institutions often do not have the necessary equipment or facilities to effectively implement and sustain community service programs (Ali, 2017). The shortage of infrastructure facilities in Nigeria has a direct impact on the implementation of community services provision. This shortage affects the accessibility and availability of essential services for communities, such as healthcare, education, and transportation. Without proper infrastructure, it becomes difficult for these services to reach remote or rural areas, hindering the overall delivery and effectiveness of community services. This also leads to inadequate resources and equipment for these services, further diminishing their impact on the community (Mathew, 2020). Additionally, the lack of infrastructure facilities can result in delays and disruptions in the implementation of community services, creating a domino effect on the overall success of these initiatives.

## **iii. Limited Collaboration:**

Community service initiatives require collaboration between various stakeholders such as the government, NGOs, and the local community. However, in Nigeria, there is often a lack of collaboration and coordination, making it difficult to effectively implement community service programs. Limited collaboration has been found to have a significant impact on the implementation of community services provision in Nigeria. The lack of collaboration or coordination among various stakeholders has resulted in inadequate service delivery and ineffective utilization of resources (Echono, 2023). This has hindered the development and growth of community services in Nigeria, negatively impacting the overall well-being of the community. One of the major consequences of limited collaboration is the duplication of efforts and resources. When different organizations or agencies work towards the same goal without coordination, it leads to wastage of resources and delays in the implementation of services. This not only affects the quality and efficiency of the services provided but also creates a sense of competition rather than cooperation among stakeholders (Eid, Altamimi, & Shaheen, 2016). Moreover, limited collaboration has been linked to inconsistent and unequal service provision in different communities. Due to the lack of coordination, some communities may receive better services while others are left behind. This creates disparities and further marginalizes already vulnerable communities. It also hinders the development of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to community services provision. Another way in which limited collaboration affects the implementation of community services in Nigeria is through the lack of accountability (Ogunode,



Jegade & Musa, 2021). When different organizations or agencies work independently, there is no oversight or accountability, leading to a lack of transparency and potential misuse of resources. This ultimately erodes trust in the community and can hinder the success of future community service projects

#### **iv. Lack of Awareness and Support:**

Community service is still a relatively new concept in Nigeria, and many people are not aware of its importance. This lack of awareness leads to a lack of support and participation, hindering the success of community service initiatives. The lack of awareness and support is a major concern in the implementation of community services provision in Nigeria. This issue has greatly hindered the progress and effectiveness of community services in the country. The lack of awareness often leads to a lack of understanding and importance of community services, resulting in a low demand for such services. This, in turn, hinders the implementation of community services as there is not enough demand to provide these services. The lack of support, both from the government and the community, is also a significant factor that affects the implementation of community services in Nigeria. Without proper support and funding from the government, community service providers struggle to meet the needs and demands of the community effectively. Additionally, without support from the community, it becomes challenging to mobilize and engage individuals in community service initiatives. Moreover, lack of awareness and support also leads to a lack of resources and skilled personnel to carry out the services. This further hinders the implementation of community services as there is a shortage of trained individuals and resources to effectively provide these services to the community. As a result, many community service initiatives are unable to reach their full potential and make a significant impact on the lives of the people they aim to serve.

#### **v. Challenges with Logistics:**

Implementation of community service by tertiary institutions also faces challenges with logistics. Transporting students and resources to remote communities can be difficult and costly, making it challenging to reach underserved areas. The implementation of community services provision in Nigeria faces several challenges related to logistics. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and transportation issues. Due to these challenges, the distribution of resources and services to different communities becomes hindered, leading to delays and inefficiencies in service delivery. Additionally, the lack of proper logistics management and planning can also result in disruptions and inconsistencies in the delivery of community services. Inadequate infrastructure, such as poor roads and limited storage facilities, makes it difficult to transport resources and materials to different communities (Adewusi, 2013). This impacts the timely delivery of services and can also lead to spoilage or damage of resources. Furthermore, limited resources such as funding and staffing can also hinder the implementation of community

services. Without sufficient resources, it becomes challenging to provide necessary services to all communities, leading to unequal access and quality of services provided. Transportation issues also play a significant role in the challenges faced in implementing community services in Nigeria. Due to the vast size of the country and its diverse terrain, it can be difficult to transport resources and personnel to remote areas. This can result in delays in service delivery or even make it impossible to reach certain communities. Furthermore, the high cost of transportation can also limit the resources available for community services, affecting the quality and quantity of services provided.

**v. Social and Cultural Barriers:**

In some communities in Nigeria, there may be social and cultural barriers that hinder the successful implementation of community service programs. These barriers may include gender roles, religious beliefs, and cultural practices that may not align with community service initiatives. The implementation of community services provision in Nigeria is hindered by several social and cultural barriers. These barriers have a significant impact on the effectiveness and success of community services in the country (Bidunni, 2013). One of the main barriers is the cultural beliefs and norms that may prevent individuals from seeking or accepting help from outside sources. This can lead to a lack of participation in community services and a reluctance to engage with service providers. The lack of social support and networks within communities can also be a barrier to the implementation of community services (Olatunde-Aiyedun, Olatunde, & Ogunode, 2022). Without a strong support system, individuals may not feel comfortable or motivated to engage in services, leading to a lower uptake and participation rate. Furthermore, there are often language barriers between service providers and community members, making it difficult for effective communication and understanding of the services provided. This can also lead to a lack of trust and confidence in the services. Another significant barrier is the stigma surrounding mental health and seeking help for such issues. Many communities in Nigeria view mental health issues as a personal weakness and may discourage individuals from seeking help. This can greatly impact the implementation of community services, especially in the mental health sector.

**10.5. Sustainable Strategies to improve Provision of Providing Community services**

There are many strategies available to support development of community service in Nigeria by the tertiary institutions. Peter, R. (2015); recommended the following as the strategies:

**i. Collaboration with Local Communities:**

Tertiary institutions can collaborate with local communities to identify their needs and design community service programs accordingly. This will ensure that the services provided are tailored to the specific needs of the community and will have a greater impact.



ii. **Incorporation of Sustainability:**

Community service programs should incorporate sustainability principles to ensure that they are able to continue providing services in the long term. This could include using environmentally-friendly practices, promoting local sourcing, and implementing sustainable funding models.

iii. **Engaging Student Volunteers:**

Tertiary institutions can engage their students in community service programs as volunteers. This provides students with hands-on experience and a sense of responsibility towards their community. It also allows for a larger reach and impact of the community services.

iv. **Partnership with NGOs:**

Partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have a strong presence in the local community can help tertiary institutions in providing community services more efficiently. These NGOs can provide resources, expertise, and local connections, making the implementation of community service programs more effective.

v. **Implementation of Technology:**

The use of technology can greatly improve the provision of community services by tertiary institutions. This could include using social media for outreach, implementing online systems for service requests, and utilizing data analytics for better resource allocation.

vi. **Continuous Assessment and Improvement:**

It is important for tertiary institutions to continuously assess the impact of their community service programs and make improvements accordingly. This could include collecting feedback from the community, analyzing data, and making necessary changes to ensure the programs are meeting the needs of the community.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of community service by tertiary institutions in Nigeria underscores the broader role of higher education beyond teaching and research. By engaging in community development projects, health campaigns, skill acquisition programs, agricultural extension services, and environmental initiatives, these institutions contribute significantly to national growth and social transformation. Community service not only enhances the relevance of tertiary education but also strengthens the bond between institutions and the communities they serve, creating mutual benefits for both parties.

However, challenges such as inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, cultural barriers, logistics problems, poor institutional support, insecurity and weak institutional-community partnerships continue to hinder the full potential of these services. Despite these obstacles, the continued commitment of tertiary institutions to community service reflects a recognition that education must be practical, people-centered, and solution-driven. Moving forward, greater investment, stronger collaborations, and supportive policies will be critical in ensuring that community service provision remains a sustainable and impactful pillar of Nigeria's tertiary education system.

### Revise Questions

1. Define Tertiary Education
2. What is Community service?
3. Discuss the five importance of Providing Community services
4. Discuss Four Problems Militating against Provision of Providing Community services
5. List four Sustainable Strategies to improve Provision of Providing Community services

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