PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY OF CONSTRAINTS TO YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN COCOA PRODUCTION IN CROSS RIVER STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract: Youth’s roles in cocoa production cannot be undermined considering the need to ensure succession plan, industry success, and guaranteed future. The study diagnosed constraints hindering youth involvement in cocoa production in Cross River State, Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 20% of cocoa producing Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Cross River State resulting in three LGAs. To obtain a sample for the study, snowball techniques were used to select 45 youths, who are cocoa farmers, per LGA to give sample size of 135 cocoa farmers. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (95%) were male, and between ages 21 and 40 years (82.5%). Regarding educational status, the majority of respondents (66.7%) have secondary school education while few (5%) realized above 2,500USD/ha from cocoa farm annually. The study revealed that respondents agreed that there are numerous constraints militating against youth involvement in cocoa farming. Eight major constraints identified among these constraints are youth rural-urban migration, high cost of cocoa production due to incidence of pests and diseases and youth interest in commercial motorcycle ‘Okada’ business. Respondents ranked non-availability of basic amenities, rigorous nature of cocoa farming and youth interest in commercial motorcycle business first, second and third respectively. Stakeholders identified during Focus Group Discussion (FGD) included STCP/IITA, SOCCODEVI and ADP. STCP/IITA and ADP were however the closest to the cocoa farming community. The study concluded that there are constraints discouraging youth involvement in cocoa farming. Hence, to ensure good succession plans, the study recommended that all stakeholders must make effort to address the various constraints identified by respondents.

Key words: cocoa, farmers, diagnostic survey, youth, constraints, participatory tools, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Introduction

In Nigeria, agricultural production is still being carried out using physical strength, which declines with age. This has therefore been observed as one of the major constraints to agricultural production in Nigeria (Okeowo et al., 1999). Youths constitute an important segment of the society, and if given necessary support, their contributions cannot be undermined. Youths are an important and vital segment of human resources which not only today but in future will have to shoulder the responsibility for development including agriculture and rural sectors (Skuza, 2005). Dauda et al. (2009) quoted by Okwoche et al. (2012) posited that one of the major setbacks of agricultural development programmes is attributed to the inability of the Federal Government to integrate youths into the mainstream of the numerous agriculture development programmes implemented over the years. In Nigerian cocoa sector, the farmers are already ageing, and this agrees with Adeogun (2008) who reported that average age of cocoa farmers in five cocoa producing states in Nigeria was 53.4 years. Also, Adetunji et al. (2007), stated that, among others, factors responsible for the declining production of cocoa in Nigeria are the vacuum created by the abolition of the Nigerian cocoa marketing board, old age of the farmers, massive migration from rural areas, scarcity and high cost of agricultural labour, incidence of pests and diseases, lack of credit facilities to cocoa farmers and indiscriminate bush burning that affect cocoa plantation. In addition, youth willingness in cocoa production is dwindling year after year. This was supported by Oboh and Sani (2009) and NBS (2008) who posited that available evidence suggests ageing farming population in Nigeria, with an average age of 47 years and life expectancy at 47–50 years in 2008.

Youth contribution to agricultural development is significant to national development. Nations, that refuse to engage the youths in development despite their unassuming ability to transform situations if given the enabling environment, will continually dwell in abject poverty. As opined by Ugwoke et al. (2005), youth have been noted to play a vital role in agricultural production especially in developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, where their contribution is paramount. According to them, the study has shown that children and youth contribute significantly in agricultural activities. Youths in developing nations of the world including Nigeria are facing many constraints which militate against their active involvement in agricultural development.

According to Akpan et al. (2011), Nigeria’s government has attempted to stimulate youth interest in agricultural production and processing since the late 1980s and to encourage youths’ participation in agricultural development. The Nigerian government attempted to stimulate youth interest in agricultural production and processing since the late 1980s (Akpan, 2010). In 1986, according to him, the federal government established the National Directorate of Employment
(NDE) to provide vocational training to the youth, and in 1987, the Better Life Programme was created to empower women, especially female youths in the rural areas through skills acquisition and healthcare training. Akpan (2010) further posited that the People’s Bank and the Community Banks were established in 1989 and 1990 respectively, to provide credit facilities to low income earners embarking on agricultural production and other micro enterprises, with special consideration for youth engaged in agricultural production. In 1992, the Fadama programme was initiated to enhance food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty, and create opportunities for employment for youths in the rural areas (Akpan, 2010).

Countries vary considerably in their definitions of youth and childhood, from as low as age 7 and ranging up to age 39. In Uganda, for example, youth is from 12 to 30 years, while in Nigeria and Bangladesh, it is between 18 and 35 years (International Labour Organization, ILO, 2005). When viewed as a concept, Onuekwusi and Effiong (2002) defined it as the period in an individual’s life, which runs between the end of childhood and entry into the world of work. In addition, Olaniyi et al. (2011) opined that people in this age bracket definitely constitute a sizeable chunk of a nation’s population on which the burden of nation building falls. In general terms, youth can be defined as the stage in the life cycle before adult life begins. This is affected by factors such as the average age at which young people complete their formal education and initial training and the average age at which they are expected to start playing adult roles in the community.

The legal status of youth can vary within a country for reasons such as marriage, voting rights, land rights, criminal offences, and eligibility for military service or consent for medical services. Because these characteristics differ from country to country and vary within countries, they need to be taken into account in developing specific contextual policy measures. Adebayo (2014) posited that the age delimitation for youth all over the world has no agreed formula. Thus, the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 while in certain African countries like South Africa, youth are classified as those between the ages of 14 and 35 and Ghana adopts the UNESCO definition. However, the Nigerian youth policy defines the youth as all young persons of the ages 18–35 years. African Union (2006) opined that the age categories of youths lie between 15 years and 35 years. For the purpose of this study, the Nigerian youth policy definition of youth as age difference between 18 and 35 years was adopted. In essence, youth cocoa farmers are those individuals between age of 18 and 35 years. According to Chikezie et al. (2012), with fewer youths into agriculture, the long-term future of the agricultural sector is in question. The development of the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy therefore depends on the young people, more especially the rural youths; hence, constraints militating against their participation in agricultural production deserve to be investigated. It is on this basis that the study investigated
the constraints hindering youth participation in cocoa production in Cross River State in Nigeria.

The general objective of the study was to diagnose the constraints hindering youth involvement in cocoa production in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specific objectives of the study were to:
- describe the personal characteristics of the respondents of the study;
- determine the constraints militating against youth involvement in cocoa production;
- determine the constraints mostly affecting the respondents; and
- identify the stakeholders involved in cocoa production in the study areas.

Material and Methods

A simple random sampling technique was used to select 20% of cocoa producing Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Cross River State resulting in three LGAs. To obtain sample for the study, a snowball technique was used to select 45 youths, who are cocoa farmers, per LGA to give 135 youth cocoa farmers. A structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents, out of the 135 questionnaires administered, only 120 questionnaires representing 88.9% of the instrument were found useful for the analysis. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was organized to elicit detailed information on the constraints affecting youths’ involvement in cocoa production using tools such as Metaplan, Stakeholders’ analysis, Venn diagram and Pair wise ranking in one of the selected local government areas. The FGD was carried out in Etung Local Government Area being one of the highest cocoa producing local government areas in the state.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 reveals that 82.5% of the respondents are 21–30 years of age, while 2.5% are between ages 30 and 35 years, the remaining 15% are between ages 18 and 20 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were already in their productive age. The young age of the respondents could be traced to the fact that youths were purposively selected for this study. This study agreed with the finding of Nkang et al. (2009), who reported that the age distribution of the cocoa farmers showed that 61.3% of them were among the active farming population falling within the age range of 21 to 40 years. The 15% of youths between ages 18 and 20 years are significant because they show that there is hope for cocoa production if necessary basic amenities that will make youths be attracted to the rural areas are made available by key players in cocoa industry.

In addition, Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents (95%) are male while the remaining (5%) are female. This could be linked with the tedious nature
of cocoa farming and the land tenure system in the study area that favour men. This finding is supported by the finding of Muhammad-Lawal et al. (2008), when they reported that 83% of the beneficiaries of Youth In Agricultural Programme in Ondo State are males while about 17% are females. They posited that sex of an individual can influence the type and quality of work carried out by the individual, consequently, there are more males involved in the Youth-In-Agriculture Programme than females. This is most likely due to the fact that men are capable of doing more tedious work which is usually associated with farming than the females. In addition, women are known to be effective in farming production in Nigeria, hence, their participation in cocoa farming may affect the involvement of the male counterpart since they are involved in farm family decision making and can therefore encourage their husbands’ involvement in cocoa farming.

Table 1. Frequency distribution showing the personal characteristics of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>21–25</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>26–30</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>


Finally, Table 1 also revealed that many of the respondents (66.7%) have secondary education while (15%) and (11.6%) have acquired primary and tertiary education respectively. The remaining respondents (6.7%) reported not to have had any form of formal education. The moderately high level of literacy could be traced to the age categories of the respondents, since most elderly people in rural areas have little or no formal education.

Figure 1 reveals that many of the respondents (41.7%) realized between 612.1USD and 1,250USD annually from their cocoa farms, while only (5%) made 2,500USD and above from their cocoa farms annually. This finding shows that the income made from cocoa farms by most of the respondents is meager. This could
be attributed to the problems of pests and diseases, price fluctuation and the roles of the middlemen in the cocoa value chain, which most of the respondents perceived to be negative because of the low price offered by the middlemen for the processed cocoa. This finding was supported by Vos and Krauus (2004) and Ojo (2005) when they reported that Nigeria is characterized by the presence of old cocoa trees having very low yield, hence, low income. Income plays a significant role in the involvement of farmers in farming production; low income from a particular enterprise could affect involvement negatively. For example, youths with very high income will have financial strength to reduce the effects of the constraints on their involvement. For example, having high income could encourage farmers to source his/her input (e.g. chemical) from government approved sources. This will affect production and income level positively and promote youth involvement in cocoa production.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 1.** Respondents’ average annual income/hectare from cocoa farm.

Figure 2 shows the average size of respondents’ cocoa farm size in the study areas. The majority (70%) of the respondents reported that their cocoa farm size was between 1 and 5 ha, 12.5% indicated that their cocoa farm size was between 6 and 10 ha while very few (4.6%) reported that their cocoa farm size was above 20 ha. This finding agrees with the position of Adeogun and Agbonghiarhuoyi (2009) that many of the respondents (53.3%) of a study carried out in Ondo State of Nigeria had 1–5 ha of cocoa farm, while only 10% had more than 15 ha of cocoa farm. The study showed generally that the farm size the respondents have access to was small. This could be attributed to the age categories of these respondents which might have an effect on the size of the farm they can access.
Participatory diagnostic survey of youth constraints in Nigerian cocoa production

Regarding respondents’ farm size, the farm size will determine the level of production and income and the extent to which the farmers will be affected if some of the variables they considered to be factors affecting their involvement in cocoa production are available or inadequate. For example, if basic amenities are not available, it will have more effect on youth having 20 ha than the one with two hectares. So, it also applies in the case of a variable such as availability of genuine chemicals. In addition, a youth having more land will have enough land to keep him/her busy on the farm than the one with just 2 ha having time for commercial motorcycle.

![Bar chart showing the average size of respondents' cocoa farm.
Source: Field survey, 2012.](image)

Figure 2. Average size of respondents’ cocoa farm.

Figure 3 shows the constraints militating against cocoa production identified by youth cocoa farmers in Cross River State. The finding shows that many (57.5%) of the respondents identified youths’ rural-urban migration and low price of processed cocoa as the most important constraints responsible for the low yield in cocoa production. Those who indicated non-availability of basic amenities were 54.1%, rigorous nature of cocoa (45%), high production cost (42%), youth interest in commercial motorcycle (40.8%), inadequate access to land (40%) and high chemical adulteration (32.5%). These findings are supported by Adekunle et al. (2009) when it was opined that there are economic, social and environmental factors reducing rural youth involvement in agricultural production in Nigeria. The findings from Figure 3 imply that for youth involvement to be encouraged in cocoa production, adequate arrangements have to be made by relevant stakeholders to strategize how best to discourage youth rural-urban migration and make provision for facilities that will encourage youths’ involvement in cocoa production and agriculture generally. In support of these findings, while reporting situation in Ondo State cocoa production, the PM News (2012), posited that there is the fear
that cocoa farming in Idanre town may soon peter out as many of the young men engaged in it are increasingly taking to the commercial motorcycle venture or gunning for menial jobs in the cities. The young people still staying on the farms were found to be predominantly teenagers who are compelled by their parents’ control to do so.

Figure 3. Pie chart showing constraints identified by the respondents of the study. Source: Field survey, 2012.

During the FGD, four different participatory tools, namely, Metaplan, Pairwise ranking, Venn diagram and Stakeholders analysis were used to elicit information from the participants selected to form part of the group to provide information on the constraints militating against youth involvement in cocoa production in Nigeria. Each group in the Local Government selected for the study was made up of ten participants. The small number of participants in each group was to encourage participation of every member of the group in the discussion. The outcome of the discussion based on the tool used is as recorded below.

The tool helped the participants to list, not necessarily in the order of importance, some of the factors militating against youth involvement in cocoa production in Cross River State. The identified constraints included:

1. Youths’ rural-urban migration;
2. Youths’ interest in commercial motorcycle ‘Okada’ business;
3. High cost of cocoa production due to incidence of pests and diseases;
4. Non-availability of basic amenities in the rural areas;
5. Rigorous nature of cocoa farming;
6. Land ownership pattern;
7. Low price of cocoa; and;
8. Inadequate access to inputs.
Table 2 shows that youths involved during the FGD ranked all the constraints identified using the metaplan, based on the effects all the constraints have on their cocoa farming activities. According to the youths, in Table 2, the ranking is as follows: non-availability of basic amenities (NABA) first, rigorous nature of cocoa (RNC) second, youth interest in ‘Okada (commercial motorcycle)’ third, youth rural-urban migration (YRUM) fourth, land ownership pattern problem (LOPP) fifth, high production cost due to pest and diseases (HPDD) sixth, while inadequate access to inputs (IAI) and low cocoa price (LPC) were ranked seventh, and eighth, respectively. The ranking shows that the constraints identified and ranked by the youths are interrelated. For example, non-availability of basic amenities will encourage rural-urban migration and also make cocoa farming more tedious. The situation will also encourage youths to seek after commercial motorcycle business (‘Okada’) which provides them with daily income unlike in farming where they have to wait for a long time before realizing income from the business. The constraints identified show that government and other stakeholders have roles to play to salvage the situation threatening cocoa farmers and cocoa farming in Nigeria.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Constraints</th>
<th>YRUM</th>
<th>YIOB</th>
<th>HPDD</th>
<th>NABA</th>
<th>RNC</th>
<th>LOPP</th>
<th>LPC</th>
<th>IAI</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>LOPP</td>
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Source: Field survey, 2012. YRUM = Youth rural-urban migration; YIOB = Youth interest in ‘Okada business’; HPDD = High production cost due to pests and diseases; NABA = Non-availability of basic amenities; RNC = Rigorous nature of cocoa; LOPP = Land ownership pattern problem; LPC = Low price of cocoa; IAI = Inadequate access to inputs.

The Venn diagram helps to show the closeness between the various stakeholders working with cocoa farmers within the cocoa communities and the cocoa farmers. The stakeholders identified by the respondents included: Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), Sustainable Tree Crop Programme of International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA/STCP), SOCCODEVI, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN), Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN), License Buying Agents (LBAs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Financial Institutions (FIs) and Agro Chemical Dealers (ACDs). The diagram showing the closeness of all the
stakeholders identified by the respondents is shown on Figure 4. The knowledge of these stakeholders will assist in the effort to address the various constraints identified by the respondents. It will also help to identify stakeholders along cocoa value chain having a significant impact on cocoa farming activities in Cross River State. The Venn diagram could also assist to identify various stakeholders whose activities could be integrated to ensure maximum impact on cocoa farmers’ activities in the state.

Figure 4. Venn diagram showing the closeness of stakeholders with the youth cocoa community.


The stakeholders’ analysis helps to identify the relationship between the stakeholders existing in a given value chain. The stakeholders’ analysis also assists to identify the strength of relationship between the identified stakeholders. The stakeholders’ analysis of the relationship existing between youths and other stakeholders supporting them in cocoa production is presented in Figure 5. The youth cocoa farmers’ community is located in the centre of the chain. The stakeholders identified by the youths during the FGD included Community Based Organizations (CBOs), SOCOCODEVI, Sustainable Tree Crop Programme of International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (STCP/IITA), Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN), Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN), Financial Organisations (FOs) and Licensed Buying Agents (LBAs). The colour of the arrows shows the reasons for the interaction while the thickness of the arrows depicts the strength of association between the stakeholder and youth cocoa farmers’ community.
Figure 5. Stakeholder analysis showing the working relationship between youths and stakeholders involved in cocoa production in the study area.

The analysis indicates a very strong relationship between IITA/STCP in terms of technical advice and information transfer on good agricultural maintenance practices through the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach. The analysis also shows a strong feedback to IITA/STCP from the respondents. The other stakeholders providing technical information to the youths included: SOCCODEVI, LBAs, and ADPs. The analysis showed that STCP/IITA provided more of this type of information to the youths compared to other stakeholders. The LBAs and SOCCODEVI provided marketing information to the respondents while CRIN provided inputs such as seedlings and information to respondents. Concerning input supply, the stakeholders providing inputs to respondents included: CRIN, ADPs, and CFAN. This analysis reveals which stakeholder should be involved in the provision of enabling environment that could encourage youths to be committed to cocoa production.

**Conclusion**

In this study, it was revealed that many constraints were responsible for youths’ reluctance to be involved in cocoa production. Notable among them were non-availability of basic amenities, rigorous nature of cocoa, youth rural-urban migration and youths’ involvement in Okada ‘motorcycle business’. This suggests that attention should be given to these constraints to enhance youth involvement in cocoa production in Nigeria. The study found out that many stakeholders were supporting cocoa production among the youths, providing different types of services at varying degree. Notable among them were: STCP/IITA, SOCCODEVI, CRIN, ADPs and LBAs. It was also revealed that stakeholders such as IITA/STCP, CBOs, CFAN and LBAs were the closest to the farmers’ community. These stakeholders provided finance, technical and market information and input supports to cocoa farmers at varying degrees.

In view of the recent trend of old age of many cocoa farmers involved in Nigeria cocoa production, there is therefore, the need to encourage youth involvement in cocoa production to revive cocoa industry and other sectors of agriculture in Nigeria. The tedious nature of cocoa was identified by the youths as a key constraint to their involvement, it will therefore be imperative to get simple machines that could assist to reduce hardship in cocoa farming. In addition, necessary basic amenities that can encourage youths to stay in rural areas should be provided by key players in Nigerian cocoa production. Finally, the stakeholders working closely to cocoa farmers should be encouraged to be involved in the development of research agenda for cocoa improvement in Nigeria. The extension arm of the governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in cocoa production should come up with advocacy campaign among youths to encourage their involvement in cocoa production and agriculture generally.
References


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**PARTICIPATIVNO DIJAGNOSTIČKO ISTRAŽIVANJE O UGRANIČENJIMA UČEŠĆA MLADIH U PROIZVODNJI KAKAOA U DRŽAVI CROSS RIVER U NIGERIJI**

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**Rezime**

Ulaga mladih u proizvodnji kakaao ne sme biti dovedena u pitanje i pored potrebe da se osigura izvršenje razvojnog plana, razvoj industrije i sigurna budućnost. Studijom su utvrđena ograničenja, koja sprečavaju učešće mladih u proizvodnji kakaaoa u državi Cross River u Nigeriji. Korišćena je jednostavna tehnika slučajnog uzorka, kako bi se izabralo 20% lokalnih zajednica u kojima se proizvodi kakaao u državi Cross River, što je rezultiralo izborom tri oblasti. U cilju dobijanja uzorka za ispitivanje, primenjen je tehnik "grudve snega" na 45 mladih osoba, koje su proizvođači kakaaoa (po lokalnoj zajednici), čime je dobijen uzorak od 135 poljoprivrednika, koji se bave proizvodnjom kakaaoa. Rezultati su pokazali da većinu ispitanika (95%) čine muškarci starosti između 21 i 40 godina (82,5%). Većina ispitanika (66,7%) ima završeno srednjoškolsko obrazovanje. Udeo gazdinstava koja su ostvarila više od 2500 USD/ha godišnje je 5%. Istraživanje je pokazalo da se ispitanici slažu da postoje brojne prepreke koje sprečavaju učešće mladih osoba u uzgajanju kakaaoa. Osim glavnih prepreka identifikovanih među ovim ograničenjima su ruralno-urbana migracija mladih osoba, visoka cena proizvodnje kakaoa usled pojave štetoćina i bolesti i interesovanje mladih za komercijalni motociklistički posao "Okada". Ispitanici su rangirali nedostupnost osnovnih pogodnosti, tešku prirodu proizvodnje kakaoa i interesovanje mladih za komercijalni motociklistički posao kao prvu, drugu odnosno treću prepreku. Zainteresovane strane, identifikovane tokom diskusije fokus-grupe (FGD) su uključivale STCP/IITA, SOCCODEVI i ADP. STCP/IITA i ADP su međutim najbliže zajednici koja se bave uzgajanjem kakaoa. Studijom se zaključuje da postoje ograničenja, koja obeshrabruju uključivanje mladih osoba u proces uzgajanja kakaoa. Stoga, da bi se osigurali dobi planovi o nasleđivanju, studija preporučuje da sve zainteresovane strane moraju uložiti napor, kako bi se rešila različita ograničenja, koja su ispitanici identifikovali.

**Ključnici:** kakaao, poljoprivrednici, diagnostičko istraživanje, mlade osobe, ograničenja, participativne metode, država Cross River, Nigerija.


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