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UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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REPORT ON THE 2-DAY PROGRAMME ON “GREEN RISING 9JA ACTIVATION” SUPPORTED BY UNICEF AND ORGANIZED BY THE YOUTH FRIENDLY RESOURCE CENTRE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

Date: 20-21 September, 2024

Venue: Princess Alexandria Auditorium,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka



Tree Planting Procession

Introduction

Effective climate actions such as tree planting and plastic waste collection are relevant for achieving sustainable environment and realizing the entire goals and targets of the sustainable development goals. This programme had both broad and specific objectives. The broad objective was to activate the Green Rising Initiative in University of Nigeria.

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Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



Specifically, this meeting was guided by the objective to sensitize and train the youth on green skills and climate change; empower them to plant trees in the university community by themselves; and enable them to engage in plastic waste cleanup for recycling in the university community. UNICEF purposively selected University of Nigeria for this programme in the South East, Nigeria. The university hosts over 40,000 students, majority of whom are within the age bracket of people UNICEF described as children. Secondary school students were also mobilized for this programme. Over 300 students/children participated in each of the days for the programme. The day 1 programme on 20th September, 2024 started with opening ceremony, where welcome addresses and goodwill messages were rendered. This was followed by sensitization and training sessions by different eco-friendly partners. Questions and answers followed the training session. After the sensitization, members of the university management team and participants proceeded to plant over 140 trees across UNN. The daily activities ended with refreshments and conveying of different secondary school students to their schools. The day 2 programme on 21st September, 2024 started with physical fitness exercises with over 200 staff and students. This was followed by a plastic waste collection drive across the university and over 100 student joined the drive. After the collection of plastic wastes, participants reassembled at the take-off point, where the plastics were weighed and recorded. At the end of each day participants made salient recommendations for future action.

Programme Objectives

This programme had both broad and specific objectives. The broad objective was to activate the Green Rising Initiative in the University of Nigeria. Specifically, this meeting had the objectives to:

- ✓ Sensitize and train the youth on green skills and climate change
- ✓ Empower the youth to plant trees in the university community by themselves
- ✓ Empower the youth to engage in plastic waste cleanup for recycling in the university community

Methodology

UNICEF had purposively selected universities across the geopolitical regions in Nigeria for this programme. University of Nigeria was selected for this programme in the South East, Nigeria, as a leading premier university in the country. The university hosts over 40,000 students, majority of whom

are within the age bracket of people UNICEF describe as children. Secondary school students were also mobilized for this programme. The rallying points for mobilization of students/children for this programme in UNN were the UNICEF team in UNN led by Professor Chikelue Ofuebe, Programme Director, UNICEF-Supported Activities, and the Youth Friendly Resource Centre, UNN led by Professor Christian Ezeibe. The Student Union Government was also very useful in mobilization of the youths in the campus. A total of 310 students participated in the first day while over 350 participated in the clean-up exercise. Over 50 staff of UNN participated in the sanitization, tree planting and clean-up activities.

Setting the Stage: Registration and Opening Ceremony

The programme on 20th September 2024 began with registration of participants.

At exactly 11.00 am, after participants were seated, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics, Professor Johnson Urama and Programme Facilitator and Director of Youth Friendly Resource Centre in the University of Nigeria, Professor Christian Ezeibe, the UNICEF team, the Resource Persons from eco-friendly organizations, and ESWAMA arrived the venue for the programme.

During the opening remarks, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics, Professor Urama, who represented the Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Polycarp E Chigbu, reiterated the purpose of the meeting. The Deputy Vice Chancellor welcomed the participants and thanked UNICEF for partnering with UNN to host the programme. He then enjoined the participants to feel free to enjoy the 2-day programme.

Subsequently, the Director, Youth Friendly Resource Centre, Professor Christian Ezeibe, the Chairman of Environmental Committee of UNN, Professor L Obasi, the UNICEF team, and the representative from ESWAMA addressed the participants to reiterate the programme objectives. The picture below shows a cross-section of participating students/children.



Day 1: Sensitization, Training of Youth for Green Action and Tree Planting Action

The representative of the Vice Chancellor expressed his happiness to participate in the Green Rising 9JA Activation in UNN. He noted that the Green Rising Initiative is a brainchild of the UNICEF, Generation Unlimited and a wide ecosystem of public, private and youth partners to support the global mobilization of millions of young people to take concrete green action steps to protect and adapt to the devastating impact of climate change through de-carbonization, waste recycling, tree planting and biodiversity aiming to protect and restore the natural wealth.

Furthermore, he noted that the programme was aimed at activating the Green Rising 9JA. He encouraged the facilitator (Prof Christian Ezeibe) to optimize the UNICEF supported sensitization and training of youth in UNN on green skills and climate change through sustainable tree planting.

This speech was followed by speed networking programme. The meeting conducted pre-test on climate change policies on participants. Plogging Nigeria attempted an overview of NAPS and NDCs. Goodwill messages were received from Ecocyclers, Morizbo Green Awareness and Plogging Nigeria. The participants subsequently looked at the documentary on taking climate action. Plogging Nigeria led the SDGs trivial/games and discussed economic opportunity in the waste value chain.

In addition, Professor Christian Ezeibe gave the vote of thanks, where he appreciated University Management, UNICEF, partners and participants. He wished the programme will build capacity of students to participate in the global action for climate change. Finally, the Deputy Vice Chancellor led the Director of Youth Friendly Resource Centre and the Chairman of Environment Committee in UNN in a call to action to plant trees.

Day 2: Plastic Waste Collection

The Day 2 programme on 21st September, 2024 started with arrival of participants, registration and exercise drill with over 200 staff and students. This was followed by introduction of partners, announcement of instructions and modalities for the clean-up. The participants then embarked on plastic waste collection drive across the university and over 100 more student joined the drive including children. After the collection, we weighed the plastics and recorded them and took refreshment before closing remarks.

Indeed, these actions within these two days were critical in helping to facilitate the achievement of the SDG as the activities positively affected the children and the people for action on our planet through enhanced partnership to achieve prosperity and peace for all through a better environment.

The picture below shows collected improperly disposed plastics some students and children.



Action Point/Next Step/ Key Recommendations

Participants made several suggestions and/or recommendations. The followings are some of the key recommendations/suggestions by the participants:

- ✓ UNICEF should create a plastic bank to exchange these plastic waste for cash to motivate students in UNN
- ✓ UNICEF should engage more secondary schools for similar future exercises to catch them young.
- ✓ UNICEF should organize similar exercises more regularly to ensure its sustainability

Closing Remarks and Votes of Thanks

The Deputy Vice Chancellor thanked the Programme Facilitator, resource persons and participants for a successful programme and urged UNICEF to continue to make itself available for such collaborations. The Programme Facilitator and Director of Youth Friendly Resource Centre thanked the Acting Vice Chancellor of University of Nigeria Nsukka, Professor P.E Chigbu for providing conducive environment for the programme. He thanked the UNICEF for the two-day activities,

On behalf of the Acting Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Professor Urama officially declared the programme closed. The second stanza of the Nigeria's national anthem was recited and participants took their lunch before departure at 3:07 p.m.

Finally, the University expresses its profound appreciation to UNICEF in general for her active partnership, and the WASH team from UNICEF led by Mrs Rebecca Bola Gabriel, in particular, for supporting that UNICEF funds this programme through the cordial and harmonious working relationship with the Programme Director, UNICEF-Sponsored Activities, Professor Chikelue Ofuebe.



PROFESSOR CHIKELUE OFUEBE

Programme Director, UNICEF-Supported Activities