

NIGERIA JUBILEE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (NJFP) AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN TARABA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP) on graduate employability and poverty reduction in Nigeria. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with beneficiaries and host organizations, and quantitative surveys to measure changes in skills acquisition, workplace productivity, and employment status. Data were collected from 37 fellows across the 16 LGAs of Taraba states, supplemented with documentary analysis from official NJFP reports. Findings revealed that some of the beneficiaries were recycled, the programme significantly enhanced participants' professional skills, networking capacity, and exposure to career opportunities, with certain fellows reporting improved chances of long-term employment or entrepreneurial engagement. However, challenges such as limited placement opportunities in rural areas, funding constraints, and sustainability concerns were noted. The study recommends: government must be sincere, to avoid recycling of those who benefitted from same policies strengthening private sector participation, expanding coverage to underserved environment, and instituting post-programme tracking mechanisms to ensure long-term impact, the NJFP demonstrates strong potential in addressing youth unemployment and advancing human capital development in the state.

Keywords: NJFP, Poverty Reduction, Graduate employability, Skill development, Human Capital Theory (HCT),

Introduction

Globally, poverty remains one of the most disturbing social problems affecting many societies today. The rate of poverty and its devastating impact across the world has remained substantially high, especially among developing countries where rising cases of unemployment, lack of income to ensure sustainable livelihood, ill-health, hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, lack of inadequate access to quality education and insecurity have become a common occurrence (Ogbe, 2015 cited in Amos et al., 2023). In Nigeria for instance, reports from the National Bureau of Statistics recently released in 2021 on Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria indicates that 40 percent of the total population, or almost 83 million people live below the country's poverty line of 137,430 naira (\$381.75) per year. This is significantly higher than the figures released in 2010 and 2015, which indicated poverty rate of 17.6 and 23.8 million respectively (NBS,2021). Similarly, the World Poverty Clock (2018) stated that Nigeria assumed the shameful position of being the poverty capital of the world after overtaking India, with about 86.9 million of her population living in extreme poverty. This reality has compelled several national governments, international development

agencies and policymakers to formulate and implement policies, programme and projects that would reduce its severity among people in various communities and societies around the world. Concept of Poverty Research into poverty has a long history, exemplified by the seminal work of Booth and Rowntree who studied poverty in England in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Ruggeri et al., 2003 cited in Amos et al., 2023). Both defined poverty as being more than simply lacking financial resources: adverse living conditions were also an important feature. A lack of financial resources was accompanied by poor health and housing, a lack of education and few services (Shucksmith, 2012). Poverty is a widely used term, but one that is given many meanings: the definition of poverty is often contested and the concept has evolved and changed over time (Pantazis et al., 2006). Misturelli and Heffernan's discourse analysis (2010) of 159 documents focusing on poverty in developing countries demonstrated how usage differed over time and between stakeholder groups, and how many different constructions of the problem were to be found under the rubric of 'poverty'. Pragmatically, Van den Bosch claims that 'it cannot be defined in any way one likes' and goes on to propose the 'everyday meaning of the word' as most appropriate (quoted in Veit Wilson 2006: 318 cited in Amos et al., 2023). Veit-Wilson sees this customary meaning as 'the enforced lack of resources demonstrably needed for respect and inclusion' (Veit-Wilson, 2006:318). However, the UN uses a different, but also commonly accepted, definition of poverty as 'a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information' (United Nations, 1995: 57; Madanipour et al., 2015). Poverty within the context of this study refers to a state or circumstance in which individuals, groups, or communities lack the financial means required for a basic quality of life. This study therefore examine Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP) and Poverty Reduction in Taraba State.

Review of Literature on Youth Employment Initiatives and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria with a Focus on Fellowship Programmes

Globally, youth unemployment has been recognized as one of the most significant development challenges of the twenty-first century. The International Labour Organization (ILO) consistently reports that young people are over twice as likely as adults to be unemployed, underemployed, or employed in vulnerable situations. Not just an economic problem, it is one with far-reaching social and political consequences, including deeper poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion from active involvement in development processes. Scholars such as Betcherman and Khan (2015) note that solutions for youth unemployment include innovative strategies that combine education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and access to networks that enable long-term employability. Around the world, fellowship programme have been one such response, not only seeking to generate short-term employment but also aiming to build leadership, innovation, and resilience among young people.

In Africa, the challenge of youth unemployment is even more urgent, given the demographic situation of a rapidly youthful population. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has observed that the continent's "youth bulge" is both a demographic dividend opportunity and a potential source of instability if left unaddressed. Traditional state-led solutions such as vocational training, youth funds, and employment subsidies have been attempted in most African countries, but these are usually beset by issues of sustainability, corruption, and ineffective targeting. Thus, scholars such as Honwana (2012) describe African youth as living in a state of "waithood," caught between the dependency of childhood and the possibilities of adulthood due to poverty and unemployment. In response, fellowship programme such as the Mandela Washington Fellowship and the African Leadership Fellowship have gained traction, providing young Africans with mentorship, professional growth, and social impact opportunities. These initiatives have been commended for shifting focus from short-term employment and to long-term empowerment and leadership training that are necessary for poverty reduction.

Nigeria is a microcosm of these continental and global concerns, having one of the largest youth populations in the world and a chronic unemployment problem. Scholars such as Adebayo (2013) and Oviawe (2015) argue that despite government-sponsored programmes like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), YOUWIN, SURE-P and N-Power, unemployment and poverty continue to be prevalent due to lack of policy continuity, inadequate funding, and weak institutions. The consequences are reflected in high poverty rates, youth restiveness, and insecurity, which compromise national stability. To this end, fellowship programme have emerged as an innovative way of supplementing government-driven interventions. Programme such as the Local Enterprise Assistance Programme (LEAP) Africa Social Innovators Programme, Teach for Nigeria Fellows, and Nigerian youths' participation in the Mandela Washington Fellowship provide not only on-the-job work experience but also training in leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The scholarship of such fellowships highlights their unique position in poverty reduction by empowering young people with transferable skills, building social capital, and motivating them to initiate community-based ventures with ripple effects on employment creation. Akinwale and Arogundade (2019) observe that fellows are more likely to be social entrepreneurs, addressing pending issues in education, health, and governance while creating livelihoods in the process. Compared to conventional work programme, fellowships also provide access to networks, finance, and mentorship that enable long-term sustainability. However, some scholars caution that the impact of fellowships in Nigeria is limited by their urban-centric recruitment, competitive admissions, and relatively modest scale compared to the magnitude of youth unemployment.

Overall, the literature shows that while international and regional efforts at curbing youth unemployment are less effective where they focus on job placement exclusively, fellowship

programme tackle a broader model that includes empowerment, innovation, and leadership. In Nigeria, they offer a realistic channel for youth employment and poverty reduction, with recent interventions such as the NJFP being a strategic response to graduate unemployment and poverty reduction. The NJFP seeks to empower young graduates with opportunities for work experience, mentorship, and employability skills, in addition to developing sustainable channels for poverty reduction. As with the other fellows schemes, its long-term success will depend on institutional buy-in, scaling up successful methods, and mainstreaming fellows outcomes into general national employment and poverty reduction policy.

The Evolution of the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme and Its Role in Empowering Nigerian Graduates

The NJFP was conceived in 2020 in response to rising graduate unemployment in Nigeria, a situation worsened by the economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nigeria has one of the largest youth populations in the world, but many graduates face long delays before finding employment, creating what is often called the “school-to-work transition gap.” To address this, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with support from the European Union (EU), designed the NJFP as a flagship employability initiative (UNDP, 2021; EU Delegation to Nigeria, 2021). The programme was officially launched on 31 August 2021 by President Muhammadu Buhari, with Vice President Yemi Osinbajo as a key proponent. The goal was to place 20,000 while in Taraba state only 293 were recruited into young Nigerian graduates annually into 12-month, fully paid fellowships across public and private institutions (NJFP, 2021). The NJFP stands in a line of Nigerian youth employment programme such as: YOU-WIN (2011, focused on entrepreneurship grants). N-Power (2016, temporary jobs in health, teaching, and agriculture).

The Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP) provides a one-year paid placement for recent graduates to gain work experience in public and private organizations, with the aim of improving employability, entrepreneurship, and long-term income generation (UNDP, 2021).

The following are the objectives of Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme

1. Enhancing Graduate Employability & Job Placement-The NJFP aims to improve the employability of fresh graduates by offering a 12-months paid placement in private or public sector institutions across Nigeria effectively smoothing the transition from education to meaningful work (UNDP 2024).
2. Bridging the Graduate–Labour Market Gap-A core mission of the Programme is to bridge the gap between unemployment (and underemployment) and the demands of the job market, matching graduates with local job opportunities that align with their skills and interests (UNDP 2024).

3. Youth Empowerment and Skill Development-It serves as a talent incubator, equipping young graduates with on-the-job practical skills, coaching, and mentorship, fostering leadership competencies and hands-on experience (UNDP 2024).
4. National Reach & Inclusivity-The Program is structured to serve graduates from all corners of Nigeria, ensuring a merit-based selection process without regional or demographic bias (UNDP 2024).
5. Transparency, Accountability & Financial Integrity-NJFP emphasizes transparency and financial accountability by implementing robust management systems, direct stipend disbursements to fellows, and a formal Monitoring & Evaluation framework (UNDP 2024).

The Impact of NJFP on Youth Employment and Livelihoods in Taraba State

1. **The NJFP is a government-led, UNDP-implemented 12-month paid fellowship** that places recent graduates into public and private host organisations to build on-the-job skills, improve employability, and (if well implemented and scaled) help convert short-term work experience into longer-term employment and sustainable livelihoods (UNDP 2024).
2. **Paid, structured work placements (12 months)**-Fellows receive a one-year paid placement intended to provide practical experience, workplace exposure and a stepping stone into the labour market reducing the “experience gap” many graduates face. This design addresses immediate income needs while building human capital (UNDP 2024)
3. **Skills transfer and employability building**-Through placement in real host organisations, mentoring, coaching and targeted on-the-job training, NJFP aims to improve technical and soft skills that raise graduates’ chances of getting paid jobs afterward. UNDP descriptions and programme materials emphasise skills, mentoring and career coaching as core components (UNDP 2022).
4. **Private-public host network and labour-market linkages:** By routing fellows into private firms, NGOs and government units, the programme creates direct links between employers and entry-level talent improving matching and potentially leading to permanent hires or business creation. The programme design explicitly targets placements across sectors and states to strengthen local labour markets (UNDP 2022).
5. **Scale and targeting to reduce youth unemployment at population level:** The programme target (annually placing tens of thousands of graduates) is intended to have macro effects on graduate unemployment by creating recurring cohorts of employable young people. Official materials cite ambitious placement targets (e.g., 20,000/year as an initial target when launched). (UNDP 2022).

How NJFP contributes to sustainable livelihoods

- **Income smoothing while upskilling:** The stipend and on-the-job experience reduce short-term economic stress and build capabilities that increase lifetime earnings potential (UNDP 2022).
- **Human capital accumulation:** Practical experience, mentoring and workplace competencies make fellows more competitive for better jobs and for entrepreneurship UNDP (2022).
- **Networks and market linkages:** Host placements expose fellows to employer networks and sometimes to clients/customers useful if fellows transition into self-employment or are recommended for jobs UNDP (2022).

Theoretical framework

The paper is anchored on Human Capital Theory (HCT), the theory is one of the most influential frameworks in economics, education, and development studies. It explains how individuals and societies derive economic and social returns from investments in people through education, health, and training. The theory essentially equates people's skills, knowledge, and health with other forms of capital, such as machinery and infrastructure that enhance productivity and growth (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). However the theory provides a useful lens through which to observe the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme and its impact on jobless graduate. McConnell et al. (2009) cited in Patience et al (2025) hold the position that individuals who possess higher levels of training, skills, and education are better placed to make more productive contributions in the labor market. This highlights the basic assumption behind NJFP: investing in the education of Nigeria's future is not just a social good but an economic strategy for development. In the past, Adam Smith (1973) cited in Patience et al (2025) stressed the need to maximize human capabilities for increased production. Subsequently, Theodore W. Schultz (1961) officially brought forward the theory of human capital and underscored the role of education as a means of investment. Gary Becker (1964), who took the theory further, asserted that different levels of training and education result in different wage and career prospects. Becker again asserted that human capital, just like physical capital, could be accumulated through education, training, health improvements, and even migration, all for the aim of enhancing the productivity of the individual. Keeping this theory in mind when applied to NJFP, the project can be understood as a national endeavor to build Nigeria's human capital. By engaging jobless graduate, the government seeks to overcome the financial barriers to higher learning so that more of Nigeria's unemployed graduate who can gain the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed to fuel economic development and innovation. As Ulrich (1998) later argued, human resources can no longer be thought of as costs to be cut back but as essential assets that generate future value. Besides, Davenport (1999) expounded on human capital factors including intelligence, general and specific knowledge, skill, talent, behavior, and effort all of which are enhanced by higher education. Through NJFP

can get exposed to prospects that enhance these factors, readying them for better employment prospects and higher levels of income in the future, as Human Capital Theory anticipates. In essence, NJFP aligns with Human Capital Theory in the sense that it realizes that investment in education will bear long-term economic dividends, not only for immediate individual beneficiaries but also for national economic development. The theory affirms that through increased access to higher education, Nigeria is economically building a better, more creative, and more competitive human force that will lead national development.

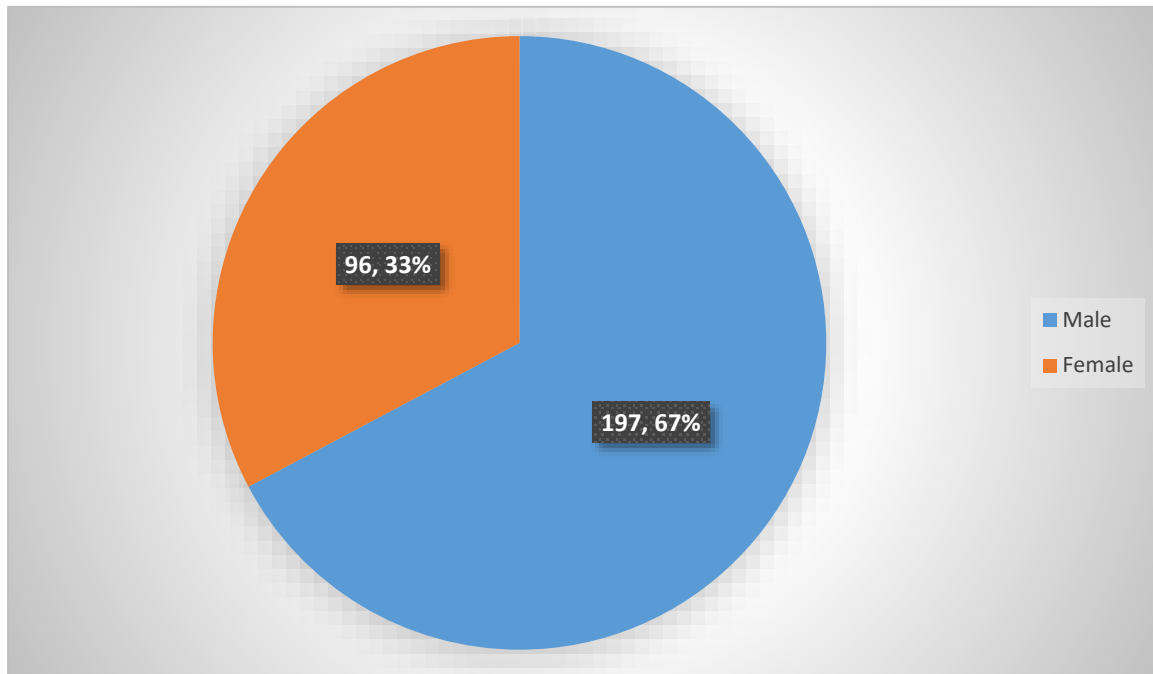
Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to explore the role of the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP) on poverty reduction in Taraba State. This design was chosen for its suitability in capturing and analyzing the current state of poverty reduction programme and their impact in the communities. The population of the study is 293 while the sample size is 37, a simple random sampling technique was recruited, Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including community leaders, beneficiaries, local government officials, health and education personnel. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with the host organizations and university students to gain diverse perspectives and in-depth qualitative insights into the perceived the important of the programme. Personal observations during visits of the host organizations further enriched the data by providing contextual understanding of the programme and their relevance. Secondary data were obtained from relevant academic journals, government publications, institutional reports, and official documents from the NJFP, which provided background context and validated primary findings. Data were thematically analyzed, with emerging patterns categorized host organizations, beneficiaries responses, and sustainability concerns. This methodological approach ensured a balanced and evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness, equity, and social inclusion dimensions of the NJFP.

Data presentation and Analysis

This presentation provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP). The aim is to evaluate the programme's impact on graduate employability, skills development and job placement across various sectors in the state. The data covers key areas such as host organization distributions, placement success rates, skill development and Post-placement outcomes.

However, the pie chart illustrates the proportion of male and female in the fellows programme. The chart provides clear visual representation of the gender distribution, noting the percentage of each gender within the total population.



The chart figure 1: shows that there are 293 beneficiaries of NJFP out of which 96 (33%) are female while 197 (67%) are male this implies that the male benefited more than the female.

Response from those deployed to ICT unit in public sector

"I was posted to a secondary school in Jalingo as an ICT teacher. I taught students the basics of computer operation, Microsoft Office, and internet use. Many of my students had never touched a computer before, but through NJFP, I was able to help bridge that gap. This experience has strengthened my desire to promote digital literacy."(KII September, 2025)"

I was posted to the Taraba State Ministry of Education ICT Department. I helped in digitising school records, training staff in basic ICT tools, and supporting the ministry's online reporting system. NJFP gave me real-world experience in ICT administration and governance."(KII September, 2025)

"I was placed at a vocational and ICT training centre in Wukari. I was involved in teaching basic coding, Microsoft packages, and internet research to young people. NJFP gave me the opportunity to see how ICT can empower communities, especially in entrepreneurship and job creation." (KII September, 2025)

"I was placed at the ICT Hub of Federal University Wukari, where I supported software installation, troubleshooting, and student training on e-learning platforms. This placement exposed me to ICT project management and

improved my confidence in handling real tech challenges.”(KII September, 2025)

“I was deployed to Bali Local Government ICT Centre. I trained secondary school students and local youth in computer appreciation, typing, and internet use. The placement gave me practical teaching skills and also taught me how ICT can change lives in rural areas.” (KII September, 2025)

“I was posted to Takum ICT Resource Centre. I worked as part of a team that organised digital literacy outreach for secondary schools in the LGA. Through NJFP, I developed strong presentation, facilitation, and communication skills. It was rewarding to see students embrace technology.” (KII September, 2025)

“I was placed at the College of Education, Zing ICT Laboratory. I managed the lab facilities, helped students with assignments, and supported lecturers in integrating ICT into their teaching. The programme improved my technical and interpersonal skills, preparing me for a career in ICT education.” (KII September, 2025)

“I was posted to an adult literacy centre in Karim Lamido. I supported adult learners with e-learning tools, showing them how to use smartphones, emails, and educational apps. NJFP gave me the opportunity to help improve digital inclusion in underserved communities.” (KII September, 2025)

“I was placed to support ICT workshops for teachers in Sardauna LGA. I facilitated training sessions on using projectors, e-resources, and online teaching tools. NJFP gave me valuable experience in training adult learners and promoting ICT integration in classrooms.” (KII September, 2025)

These ICT-focused testimonies show how NJFP beneficiaries in Taraba State contributed to digital literacy, ICT administration, and tech training in schools, universities, and ministries. (KII September, 2025)

Response from those deployed to Educational sector in Taraba state

“I was privileged to be selected as a Fellow in the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP), where I was placed in an educational institution in Taraba State. Before joining the programme, I had struggled to gain meaningful employment despite graduating with good grades.” (KII September, 2025)

Through NJFP, I was posted to a secondary school under the Ministry of Education, where I worked as a teaching assistant and administrative support staff. This opportunity gave me the chance to apply my knowledge in real-life situations, improve my teaching skills, and develop competencies in classroom management, research, and student mentoring.” (KII September, 2025)

“Beyond teaching, the programme exposed me to capacity-building workshops, leadership training, and digital skill development, which have strengthened my confidence and employability. I was able to mentor students, assist in

curriculum development, and even participate in community outreach activities that promoted literacy and education awareness." (KII September, 2025)

"The Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme has not only given me practical work experience but also renewed my hope in the Nigerian dream. Today, I feel more prepared for the labor market, and I am confident that the skills and networks I gained through this placement will open doors for me in the future. I sincerely thank the Federal Government, UNDP, and all partners of NJFP for this life-changing opportunity. It has truly bridged the gap between learning and practice in the educational sector." (KII September, 2025)

Response from those deployed to different health sector in Taraba state

"Through NJFP, I was placed in the Jalingo Specialist Hospital where I supported the administrative office. I helped in patient record management and coordination of medical staff schedules. The placement gave me practical health management skills and improved my organisational capacity."(KII September, 2025)

"I was posted to the Taraba State Ministry of Health. I worked with the Disease Control Unit where I participated in awareness campaigns on malaria prevention and vaccination drives. NJFP exposed me to the realities of public health challenges and prepared me for a career in health policy." (KII September, 2025)

"I am a graduate of Nursing Science. I was deployed to Wukari General Hospital as a nursing assistant. I gained hands-on experience in patient care, first aid, and ward management. NJFP gave me confidence to practice what I learned in school."(KII September, 2025)

"I was placed in Takum PHC. My role was to assist in digitising patients' health records and updating reports. NJFP taught me how important health information management is to effective service delivery." (KII September, 2025)

"I am a graduate of Microbiology. Through NJFP, I served in the FMC Jalingo laboratory unit. I assisted in routine tests, sample collection, and result documentation. This gave me practical exposure that no classroom could offer." (KII September, 2025)

"I was placed at a maternal and child health centre in Bali LGA. I helped in antenatal care education, immunisation exercises, and women's health outreach. NJFP gave me the opportunity to touch lives and promote safe motherhood in rural areas." (KII September, 2025)

"I was posted to the Health Education Unit in Sardauna LGA. I participated in health talks in schools and marketplaces on hygiene and disease prevention. NJFP helped me become a confident health educator and communicator."(KII September, 2025).

"I studied Pharmacy, NJFP placed me in Gembu General Hospital Pharmacy Unit where I dispensed medications and educated patients on drug use. The placement sharpened my clinical skills and improved my patient interaction."(KII September, 2025)

"I was posted to a rural community health centre in Karim Lamido. I worked with health officers to conduct malaria testing, distribute mosquito nets, and provide health education. NJFP showed me the value of community health in rural development."(KII September, 2025)

"I read Psychology through NJFP, I was assigned to the mental health unit of Taraba State Specialist Hospital. I supported counselling sessions, patient assessments, and awareness campaigns on mental health. This experience deepened my passion for psychology and counselling."(KII September, 2025)

Response from some of the beneficiaries that were retained after they benefited from NJFP

"I am a Computer Science graduate. I was posted to the ICT Hub at Federal University Wukari, where I assisted with software installation and e-learning support. Because of the skills I demonstrated, the university offered me a permanent position as an ICT officer. NJFP transformed me from a job seeker to a professional with job security." (KII September, 2025)

"I studied Nursing Science. I worked as a nurse assistant under NJFP at Jalingo Specialist Hospital. Due to my dedication and competence, the hospital management retained me as a staff nurse after the programme. This opportunity has changed my career path and given me stability."(KII September, 2025)

"I was placed at the Ministry of Health in Jalingo under the Disease Control Unit. My supervisors were impressed with my data analysis and fieldwork skills during immunisation campaigns. By the end of my fellowship, I was retained as a programme officer. NJFP bridged the gap between my academic training and professional practice." (KII September, 2025).

"I served at a vocational ICT training centre in Wukari. I taught digital literacy, coding basics, and Microsoft packages to students. The centre saw value in my skills and retained me as a digital skills trainer. Thanks to NJFP, I am now helping others build employability through ICT." (KII September, 2025).

"My dream was to work in development and humanitarian services, but I lacked the network and experience. NJFP placed me in a local NGO in Gembu that works with the masses. I gained hands on experience in community mobilization, proposal writing and advocacy. The skills and exposure I received have made me employable and inspired me to pursue a master's degree in development studies. The NJFP gave me both a voice and a platform" (KII September 2025).

"I am a graduate of Educational Management. I was deployed to the College of Education, Zing as a supportive staff administrative officer. Because of my efficiency and dedication, I was offered a permanent role in the administration"

unit after the programme. NJFP has given me both experience and employment.” (KII September, 2025).

“I was posted to a primary health centre in Bali under NJFP. I supported maternal health, immunisation, and community health education. The centre saw my commitment and retained me as a community health worker. NJFP has secured me a livelihood while allowing me to serve my people.” (KII September, 2025).

“I was placed in a secondary school in Jalingo where I taught Mathematics. At the end of the fellowship, the school management decided to retain me as a full-time teacher because of my teaching performance and dedication. NJFP gave me a pathway into my dream profession.” (KII September, 2025).

“The NJFP not only provided me with a monthly stipends but also exposed me to valuable work experience, mentoring and skills development. I contributed to projects that supported local farmers with modern farming techniques. The NJFP changed my life significantly. Today, I have acquired professional experience, built a strong network and even received an offer to continue working with my host organization after the programme” (KII September 2025).

Some of the interviewee that benefited from NJFP and mounted their business

"Before joining the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme, I had only basic tailoring skills but lacked the resources and confidence to run my own fashion business. During my placement, I gained not just monthly stipends but also business management knowledge, customer service skills, and financial discipline. After completing the programme, I invested my savings in sewing machines and rented a small shop. Today, I run a growing fashion brand in Jalingo, employing two apprentices. NJFP gave me the push I needed to turn my passion into a sustainable livelihood." (KII September, 2025).

"The NJFP exposed me to digital tools, office experience, and mentorship that sharpened my ICT skills. With the stipend I received, I was able to purchase a laptop and some basic equipment. After my fellowship ended, I registered a small ICT consultancy where I train youths in computer literacy and website design. The programme transformed me from a job seeker into a job creator, and I am proud that I can now mentor others."(KII September, 2025).

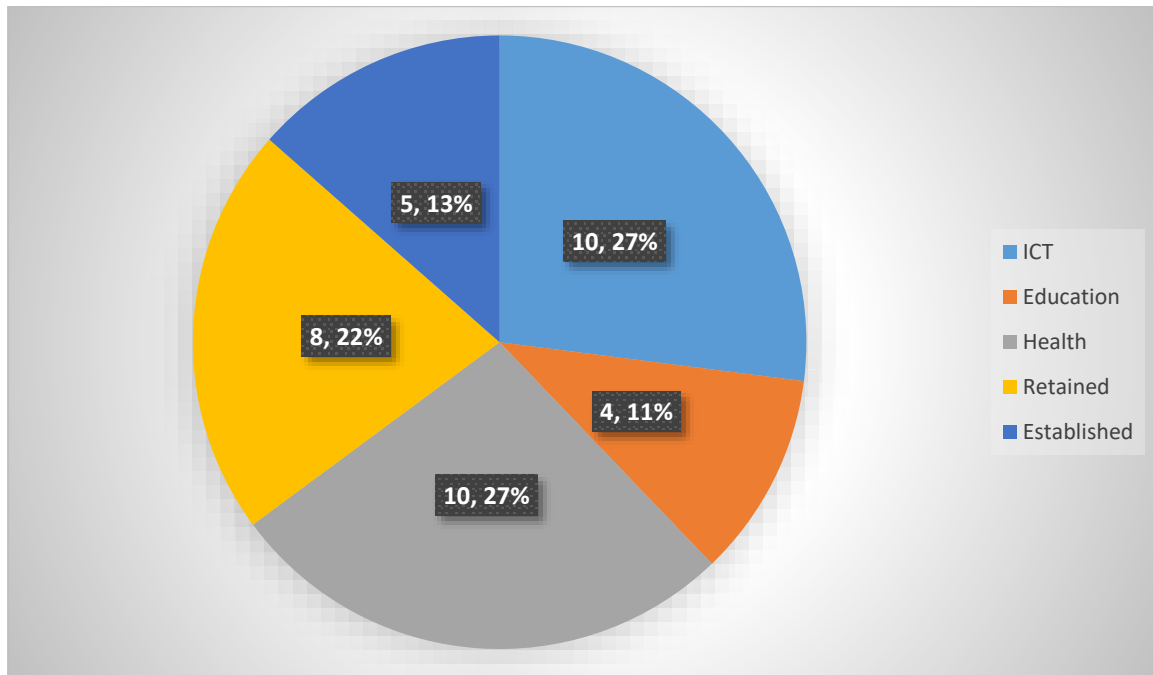
"Coming from an agricultural background, I always dreamed of starting my own poultry business but had no capital. Through NJFP, I gained confidence, networking opportunities, and saved part of my stipend. By the end of the fellowship, I invested in 200 birds, and today, my poultry farm supplies eggs and chicken to local markets. I also employ casual workers during peak seasons. NJFP did not just support me financially; it gave me the foundation to become an entrepreneur." (KII September, 2025).

"The Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme taught me the value of discipline and planning. With the stipend and mentorship, I was able to start a small-scale

groundnut oil processing business. Initially, I started with a manual machine, but my savings allowed me to upgrade gradually. Today, I sell packaged groundnut oil in my community and even supply to local shops. Without NJFP, I would still be searching for jobs instead of creating one." (KII September, 2025).

"Before joining the Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme (NJFP), I had little direction about how to apply my skills in a way that could generate income. Through the mentorship and exposure I received during my one-year placement, I gained practical knowledge in business management, financial literacy, and digital marketing. After completing the fellowship, I decided to establish a small-scale business in Jalingo, Taraba State, and dealing in phone accessories such as chargers, earpieces, screen guards, power banks, and phone casings. The training I got through NJFP on entrepreneurship and networking gave me the confidence to source products from reliable suppliers and create an online sales channel through WhatsApp and Facebook Marketplace. Today, my business has grown to the point where I employ two other youths, thereby contributing to reducing unemployment in my community. The income I earn sustains my family and helps me reinvest into expanding the business. Without NJFP, I doubt I would have developed the courage or skills to venture into phone accessories trade. The programme did not just give me a temporary placement it equipped me with sustainable livelihood skills." (KII September, 2025).

The pie chart below, illustrates the proportion of different categories within a whole, providing a visual representation of how each part contributes to the total. In this chart, the data is presented in percentages, making it easy to compare the relative sizes of each section at a glance.



The chart Figure 2: implies the 37 beneficiaries NJFP that were interview.

Data on the NJFP obtained from the field shows that, Education 4 (11%), ICT10 (27%), Health 10 (27%), Retained 8 (22%), Established 5 (13%).Even though there are 293 beneficiaries of the project in the state but only 37 were reached out.

Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was use as a stepping stone to get the sample size (37) from the 293 population of the beneficiaries which can be seen below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n= sample size

N=Population of the study

e=% level of significance or margin of tolerable error (e.g.0.05)± 5%

A common scientific convention is 95% confidence with 5% margin error

So e=0.05

$$N = \frac{293}{1 + 293 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$0.05^2 = 0.0025$$

$$293 \times 0.0025 = 0.7325$$

$$1 + 0.7325 = 1.7325$$

$$293 \div 1.7325 = 169.1$$

So at 5% error, the recommended sample would be 169 much bigger than 37.

If only 37 beneficiaries were reachable, we can back calculate the implied error tolerance

Set $n=37$ & solve for e

$$37 = \frac{293}{1+293(e)^2}$$

$$\text{Rearrange: } 1+293(e)^2 = \frac{293}{37}$$

$$\frac{293}{37} = 7.918$$

$$293(e)^2 = 7.918 - 1$$

$$= 6.918$$

$$e^2 = \frac{6.918}{293}$$

$$= 0.0236$$

$$e = \sqrt{0.0236} = 0.1536$$

That is about a 15% margin error, equivalent to roughly 85% confidence level.

Interpretation

Using Taro Yamane's scientifically, sample of 37 out of 293 corresponds to:

Margin error=15%

Confidence level=85% (Simple random Sampling).

However, if research is constraints with time, cost and access, it justified a higher allowable error you can state:

Given field limitation, the study recruited 15% precision level ($e=0.15$) to obtain a sample size of 37 respondents from population of 293, as determined by Taro Yamane's formula.

This explain how the figure of 37 is scientifically derived despite a larger population.

NJFP Beneficiaries contributed to digital literacy, ICT administration and using modern techniques in different schools and ministries. The programme has not only reduced the burden of unemployment but also contributed to strengthening the educational sector in Taraba state. NJFP placements contributed to public health, hospital services, record management, maternal care, mental health, and community outreach in Taraba State. It does not only provide temporary placements but also creating long-term employment opportunities for beneficiaries in Taraba State. The beneficiaries turned their experiences and stipends into business opportunities that improved their livelihoods and created jobs for others.

Analysis of NJFP Impact in Taraba State

- i. Employment creation-Beneficiaries from Agricultural sector and Educational sector transitioned from unemployment to full-time roles after their placements, showing how NJFP bridges the school to work gap.
- ii. Skills Development-participants gained professional, digital and leadership skills, enhancing employability in multiple sectors.
- iii. Community Development-projects in agriculture, education health and NGO's extended benefits beyond fellows to communities in Taraba state.
- iv. Retention and sustainability-several host organizations absorbed fellows permanently, ensuring long term impact.

- v. Youth empowerment-Beneficiaries from ICT and NGO sectors now plan entrepreneurial/academic pursuits, multiplying the programme's benefit

Conclusion

The Nigeria Jubilee Fellows Programme plays a crucial role in poverty alleviation but with limited chances and yearly outcome of tertiary education product while the immediate impact is evident in stipend support and reduced temporal poverty, the long-term poverty-reducing potential lies in sustained employability, entrepreneurship and inclusive economic participation. The study concludes as long there is delayed in formulation and implementation of poverty alleviation policies, the issue of poverty shall remain a fundamental threat to the masses.

Recommendations

Arising from the above findings of the study, the study recommends:

Strengthening private sector participation, expanding coverage to underserved environment, and instituting post-programme tracking mechanisms to ensure long-term impact. Overall, the NJFP demonstrates strong potential in addressing youth unemployment and advancing human capital development in the state. for poverty reduction programme to be impactful, government must be sincere, to avoid recycling of those who benefitted from same policies. Also, only jobless unemployed graduate should be participants.

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