

SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE, A STUDY OF ARISE/ DAKKADA INITIATIVE PROGRAMMES

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ABSTRACT

Despite the commendable efforts of the Arise/ Dakkada initiative and its associated Social Investment Programs (SIPs), Akwa Ibom State continues to grapple with several socioeconomic development challenges including education, Growth Of Small Scale Enterprises and Skill Acquisition Training, with this, the study developed 3 research objectives which were: to examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on educational support, to examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on the growth of small scale enterprises and to examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on skill acquisition training in Akwa Ibom State, the study adopted the human capital development theory as the theoretical framework. Survey and descriptive research was adopted in this study with a population of about 120,424 with simple percentage analysis as method of data analysis. From the findings of the study, it was revealed that the DAKKADA and the ARISE programme has brought about educational support and empowerment to the citizens of Akwa Ibom State as over 4,778 (four thousand seven hundred and seventy eight) Akwa Ibom students have benefited from the educational support. findings, also reveals that the between 2018 and 2024 about 38,390 persons were trained under the Tailoring/ Shoe, the Furniture Making empowerment programme, the iron welding category, the catering category, the ICT category who have benefited from the skill acquisition training programme embark upon by DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative. based on the findings, the study recommends among others that the ARISE Initiative Should Expand Scholarship Offerings and increase the number of scholarships available to cover tuition fees, accommodation, and living expenses for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and that the ARISE Initiative should Provide more Microfinance Loans and Offer affordable loans to entrepreneurs, especially women and youth, to help them start or expand their businesses.

KEYWORDS: **Social Investment, Socio-Economic Development,**
Arise/Dakkada/Initiative Programmes

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Arise/ Dakkada initiative, launched in 2015, is a comprehensive development plan aimed at transforming Akwa Ibom State into a standard of sustainable evolution and development. The programme, was put up to address some major serious socio-economic challenges, empower citizens, and foster inclusive development. Agwu, et al., (2014).

The paramount Social Investment Programs under the Arise/ Dakkada initiative include: Youth Empowerment Programs, Women Empowerment Programs, Education Initiatives, and Healthcare Initiatives, and Infrastructural Development, Ajibola, et al., (2018).

Akwa Ibom state like every other states in the country seeks to have a strong economic base in thriving the socio-economic development of the state. This understanding has been playing out in Akwa Ibom State where, in the last six years, Governor Udom Emmanuel has been busy developing the Arise/ Dakkada initiative by empowering and training of youths in different skills, supporting small businesses and encouraging the setting up of new ones through various interventions that are aimed at supporting the state's industrialization efforts. (Thisday 2024)

Different administration have been encouraging the people of the state, especially the youths, to demonstrate the Dakkada spirit by taking their destiny in their hands to chart the course that would change their socio-economic circumstances and, in so doing, contribute to the economic development of the state and Nigeria as a whole.

The current administration of pastor Umoh Eno came up to add value and modernized the social investment programme as the administration introduced the ARISE Initiative. The youths are designing their destinies by taking advantage of the numerous opportunities that abound in the state to seek to become business owners in diverse areas such as hospitality for which the state is well known, fashion, agriculture, furniture making, ICT, etc. Government's efforts at supporting the growth of the education, small scale enterprises sector is aimed at enabling it to contribute to the gradual changing status of Akwa Ibom from a public service to a private sector-driven state that would be Nigeria's industrial hub and a major player in the economy of the West African sub-region, Ajibola, et al., (2018).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the commendable efforts of the Arise/ Dakkada initiative and its associated Social Investment Programs (SIPs), Akwa Ibom State continues to grapple with several socio-economic challenges that hinder its overall development. These challenges being broadly categorized into: Educational, growth of small scale enterprise and skill acquisition training.

Many children and young adults lack access to quality education, particularly in rural areas as high dropout rates contribute to a loss of human capital and perpetuate the cycle of poverty of which the education system may not adequately prepare students for the demands of the modern job market. The state faces a particularly acute youth unemployment crisis, with many young people unable to find suitable employment as many individuals are forced to accept low-paying or part-time jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and potential in the courses of this, the state's economy has not generated sufficient jobs to meet the growing labor force. It is against this background that this paper examines the impact of social investment programmes and socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State, with particular focus on arise/Dakkada initiative programmes

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the impacts of social investment programmes and socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State; a study of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes. The specific objectives of the study were to

- To examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on educational support in Akwa Ibom State.
- To examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on the growth of small scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State.

- To examine the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on skill acquisition training in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were postulated to help guide the research;

- What is the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on educational support in Akwa Ibom State?
- How does ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes enhance the growth of small scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State?
- What is the impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes on skill acquisition training in Akwa Ibom State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following Research Hypotheses were set on Null format to help guide the research:

H₀: ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes does not enhance educational support in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀: There is no significant impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes in enhancing the growth of small scale enterprises in Akwa Ibom State.

H₀: There is no significant impact of ARISE and DAKKADA Programmes in the enhancement of skill acquisition training in Akwa Ibom State.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES

The Social Investment Programs in Akwa Ibom State, under the Arise/ Dakkada initiative, represent a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing the state's socio-economic challenges and promoting sustainable development. These programs are established to invest in human capital, improve infrastructure, and enhance the overall well-being of the population (Ogbonna, 2017).

In essence, the social investment programmes in Akwa Ibom State aim to create a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable society through targeted investments in human capital, infrastructure, and poverty reduction. By addressing the root causes of socio-economic challenges, these programs seek to improve the quality of life for all citizens and build a stronger foundation for the state's future development (Ogbonna, 2017).

SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

By investing in education, societies equip their citizens with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary to contribute to economic growth, social progress, and innovation. Aiyede, et al. (2015).

Social investment and educational support are two interconnected concepts that play pivotal roles in fostering sustainable development and improving the quality of life for individuals and communities. Educational support provides individuals with the necessary skills to participate effectively in the labor market and contribute to economic growth as Education fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation, which are essential for driving economic and social progress. Social investment in education promotes lifelong learning, enabling individuals to adapt to changing job markets and technological advancements. As observed above by Aiyede, et al., (2015), social investment in education is a strategic approach that yields significant benefits for individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. By providing access to quality education and supporting lifelong learning, governments and organizations can invest in the future and create a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous world.

SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND SKILL ACQUISITION TRAINING

Skill acquisition training plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable development and improving the quality of life for individuals and communities. By investing in skill acquisition training, societies equip their citizens with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to participate effectively in the labor market and contribute to economic growth, Badru, (2002). Skill acquisition training help create new jobs and improve employment prospects for individuals, especially in developing economies. Training in entrepreneurship skills empowers individuals to start their own businesses and create jobs for others.

Skill acquisition training can empower communities to develop their own sustainable projects and improve their quality of life. As observed above by Badru, (2002), social investment in skill acquisition training is a strategic approach that can yield significant benefits for individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. By providing access to relevant skills and training, governments and organizations can empower individuals to participate fully in the labor market, reduce poverty, and contribute to sustainable development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Human Capital Theory was propounded by Gary Becker in 1979

This study adopted the Human Capital Theory as propounded by Gary Becker in 1979. The theory considers Investment in Skills and Knowledge as it emphasizes the importance of human capital (skills, knowledge, and experience) for economic growth. Social investment programmes is seen as investments in human capital. By equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge to launch and run successful businesses, these programs contribute to a more skilled workforce, increased innovation, and ultimately, economic development. These are just a few of the theoretical frameworks used to understand the relationship between entrepreneurial programs and socioeconomic development. The most effective programs will likely incorporate elements from several of these frameworks, tailoring their approach to the specific needs and context of their target audience.

Human capital theory, developed by economists like Gary Becker, focuses on the idea that a person's knowledge, skills, and experience can be viewed as an investment that increases their economic value. In simpler terms, it suggests that people can improve their earning potential by investing in themselves through education, training, and on-the-job experiences, thereby leading to socio-economic development. (Agboola 2008).

Ekwekwewa theory propounded by Eyo, U. E (2023)

The theory was propounded by Eyo, Uforo Etim in 2022, but published in 2024 and reviewed in the works of Una and Eyo (2024), the researcher while conducting a research to examine the socio-economic development variables of tricycle operation policy in Akwa Ibom State, The proponent observed and linked development of nations, states, local governments, organizations, ministries, agencies, department and individual to input oriented factors such as funding, monitoring/ assessment and evaluation. He opined that an organization, individuals and countries will be developed as a result of advance idiosyncratic components emanating from human capital development. To him he was of the opinion that more funding and training of workers in an organization and citizens of a country will bring and offer more opportunities to individuals who would have remained unemployed, Eyo (2023). he, observed that Urban development was possible through the policy formulation and implementation strategy embark upon by the Akwa Ibom State Government in 2012 in finding solution to the problem of employment opportunities and frequent Accident within Uyo metropolis. The theory is a development theory, as discovered by Una, & Eyo, (2024), while carrying out a research on

ethnic politics and governance in Akwa Ibom State, applying the Ekwewekwea theory discovered that there is need for much input factors in terms of Road Infrastructure, political appointments and empowerment programmes as it will bring much developments. The application of this theory is given much consideration as emphasis is placed upon the much input oriented factor Educational support, growth of small businesses and skill acquisition training. Again, the theory stresses the need and factors of development and underdevelopment as Government policies should pay more priority to Educational support, growth of small businesses and skill acquisition training as it will bring about socio-economic development in the state.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey and descriptive analysis design in explaining how social investment programme like ARISE Initiative and DAKKADA programmes brings about socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State. The study population for the research was 120,424 being the total number of beneficiaries of ARISE Initiative and DAKKADA programmes between 2015- 2024. This research adopted Taro Yamani formula to determines the sample size (n) Sample size = 400, as the simple random sampling procedure was adopted in this research. The research instrument used in collecting data for this study was survey and interview method. In presentation of the data, the researcher choose tabular format presentation and simple percentage analysis was used in interpreting the collected data.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Table 4.1. Showing estimated Number of Beneficiaries of Educational Support from DAKKAD/ARISE Programmes (2018-2024)

S/N	Years	Uyo Senatorial District	Eket Senatorial District	Ikot Senatorial District	Ekp. Senatorial District	Scholarship/ Bursary Support fund N
1	2018	74	87	70		12mil.
2	2019	131	99	123		17mil.
3	2020	89	79	81		15mil.
4	2021	221	127	134		21mil.
5	2022	91	110	121		17.mil
6	2023	79	453	450		16mil.
7	2024	621	631	620		49mil.
Total		1,727	1,586	1,465		147mil.

Source: ARISE DESK, 2025

The table above shows the level of educational support made available to Akwa Ibomite through the DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative programme from 2018-2024.

Table 4.2 Showing estimated provision of Exercise Books made available for Educational Support to primary schools in Akwa Ibom State from DAKKAD/ARISE Programme; (2018-2024)

S/N	Years	Uyo Senatorial District	Eket Senatorial District	Ikot Ekp. Senatorial District
1	2018	500,000	520,000	502,000
2	2019	430,880	389,000	375,000
3	2020	220,000	190,000	191,000
4	2021	358,000	290,000	289,000
5	2022	520,000	494,000	491,000
6	2023	670,000	657,000	661,000
7	2024	871,000	853,000	821,000
Total		3,569,880mil	3,393,000mil	3,397,000mil

Source: ARISE DESK, 2025

The table above shows the total number of exercise books provided to primary school pupils from the DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative programme from 2018 till 2024.

Table 4.2. Showing estimated Number of Beneficiaries from Support to Small Scale Businesses in Akwa Ibom State. (2018-2024)

Year;	Market Women	Sachet Water Business;	Tailoring/ Shoe making	Provision; Dealers;	Catering	Estimated Amount/support Million/Billion
2018	1,131	732	1,122	879	1,119	45.Mil
2019	743	890	943	1,121	937	27.Mil
2020	1,450	980	840	1,212	900	31Mil
2021	1,211	1000	1,00	901	571	39.Mil
2022	1,050	979	860	979	689	31.Mil
2023	1,700	1,440	1,220	1,098	909	52.Mil
2024	2,970	1,606	1,391	1,651	1,651	55.Mil
Total	10,255	7,627	6,985	7,841	6,776	2.Bil

Source: ARISE H/R Desk 2025.

The table above shows the total number and category of Small scale businesses support from 2018-2024, about 10,255 market women were given financial support while about 7,627 sachet water businesses were given a financial support and over 6,685 tailors were supported from the programme, also, between 2018-2024, about 7,841 provision dealers were given a financial support as about 6,776 from the catering category were given a boast of financial support all from the DAKKADA/ARISE empowerment programme.

Table 4.3. Showing estimated number of persons who were trained under the DAKKADA/ARISE acquisition training Programmes in Akwa Ibom State. (2018-2024)

Year	Tailoring/ Shoe making	Furniture Making	Iron Welding	Catering	ICT Training
2018	623	871	764	1,121	900
2019	751	1,031	908	1,221	990
2020	890	1,000	679	1,250	1,311
2021	1,221	995	1000	1,130	1000
2022	908	1,000	990	1,000	1,100
2023	1,311	1,163	1,190	1,458	1,500
2024	1,420	1,231	1,223	1,569	1,671
Total	7,124	7,291	6754	8749	8472

Source: Survey Work/ Dakhada H/R Desk 2025.

The table above shows the different kind of training provide by the DAKKADA/ARISE program between 2018 and 2024 of which about 7,124 were trained under the Tailoring/ Shoe making category while 7291 benefited from the Furniture Making empowerment programme and under the iron welding category about 6,754 were trained while about 8749 persons were trained under the catering category as those who benefited from the ICT category were about 8,472.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

• Educational Support

From the findings of the study, it was revealed that the DAKKADA and the ARISE programme has brought about educational support and empowerment to the citizens of Akwa Ibom State as over 4,778 (four thousand seven hundred and seventy eight) Akwa Ibom students have benefited from the educational support

• Small Scale Business support

From the findings, it was also revealed that the DAKKADA and the ARISE programme has really boasted the small business industries as support was given to different category of small scale businesses in Akwa Ibom State as about 10,255 market women were given financial support while about 7,627 sachet water business person were given a financial support and over 6,685 tailors were supported from the programme, also, between 2018-2024, about 7,841 provision dealers were given a financial support as about 6,776 from the catering category were given a boast of financial support all from the DAKKADA/ARISE empowerment programme.

- **Skill Acquisition Training**

from the findings, it was also revealed that between 2018 and 2024 about 7,124 were trained under the Tailoring/ Shoe making category while 7,291 benefited from the Furniture Making empowerment programme and under the iron welding category about 6,754 were trained while about 8,749 persons were trained under the catering category as those who benefited from the ICT category were about 8,472, bringing a total of about 38,390 Akwa Ibomites who have benefited from the skill acquisition training programme embarked upon by DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative.

CONCLUSION

The DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative programs, focusing on educational support, small-scale business support, and skill acquisition training, have demonstrated significant potential in addressing socio-economic challenges in Akwa Ibom State. By providing targeted interventions, these programs have empowered individuals and communities, leading to improved livelihoods and overall development.

The educational support component has played a crucial role in enhancing access to quality education, particularly for marginalized groups. By providing scholarships, tuition fees, and learning materials, the programs have enabled individuals to acquire essential knowledge and skills, opening doors to better opportunities.

The small-scale business support component has fostered entrepreneurship and economic growth in Akwa Ibom State. By providing financial assistance, business training, and mentorship, the programs have helped individuals establish and grow their own businesses, contributing to job creation and poverty reduction.

The skill acquisition training component has equipped individuals with practical skills that are in demand in the labor market. By offering courses in various trades and professions, the programs have enabled participants to acquire the necessary competencies to secure employment or become self-employed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To further enhance the impact and sustainability of the DAKKADA and ARISE Initiative programs, the following recommendations are offered:

- The ARISE Initiative Should Expand Scholarship Offerings and increase the number of scholarships available to cover tuition fees, accommodation, and living expenses for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and also focus on promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to equip Akwa Ibom students with in-demand skills for the future.
- The ARISE Initiative should Provide more Microfinance Loans and Offer affordable loans to entrepreneurs, especially women and youth, to help them start or expand their businesses while conduct regular training sessions on topics such as business planning, marketing, financial management, and customer service.
- The ARISE Initiative Partner with Employers and collaborate with businesses to provide more and on-the-job training and internship opportunities for participant.

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