The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Community Development: Focus on Edo State–Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Community development entails the provision of infrastructural facilities to the people. The provision of these social amenities can be attained through a number of ways and/or organizations which includes, the government, community development associations, Non-Governmental Organisations . Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are non-governmental, non profit making and self governing, set out to ameliorate the plight of the people in dire need of life sustaining facilities in the society. This paper examines some of the strategies for community development in Nigeria, with a particular emphasis on the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The methods of study include interview, observations, intensive local field studies and extensive travel throughout the state. The beneficiaries of NGOs activities and donor agencies – students, teachers, NGO functionaries, fire burnt victim and head of house holds were interviewed. The findings includes:

1. A number of these NGOs are into various aspects of community development such as: community mobilization, environment, health and sanitation awareness creation, promotion of child's rights law, promotion of sexuality and reproductive health education and fight against child labour and human trafficking etc.
2. Some of the NGOs are self financing – Owen Obaseki foundation, Sir Osunde foundation and Emmanuel Arigbe Osula foundation – while others relies on support from donor agencies.
3. Donor agencies in Edo state includes : World Bank, European Union and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and some individuals.
4. Some of the NGOs whose activities are prominent in Edo state includes: Body Enhancement, Annual Reconstructive Surgery (BEARS) foundation, Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), Girls Power Initiative (GPI) and Pro-Health International. It is suggested that NGOs should as a matter of necessity collaborate with each other, in order to have their efforts fully appreciated by majority of those in need of their services. Also the government should participate in the funding of NGOs activities.

In general, the Non-Governmental Organization is a positive approach to rural development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Provision of social services is a development strategy, while community participation is one of the methods of achieving this objective, thus the two concepts can be conceived together as community development. The United Nations defined “community development as the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress” (United Nation 1956). This complex process therefore, consist of two essential elements.

1. The participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative and

2. The provision of technical and social services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual understanding. (Akinbode and Laogun 1981).

Community development is one of the three strategies which has been adopted for rural development by many developing countries alongside agricultural extension and integrated rural development, (Williams 1978). Thus community's development is aimed at utilizing the rural people to develop themselves through self – initiative and motivation, with minimum assistance from government. It is aimed at social development through self-help projects, health and nutritional improvement projects and other similar projects. It involves community members in planning and implementation of programmes for their own development. It stimulates government and other development agencies to provide

technical advice and materials in planning and implementing the projects, (Gboyega 1992).

A number of approaches or perspective have evolved over the years, geared towards the actualization of community development. One of the most popular approach is the provision of basic social amenities to communities by government. Others include:

Community Development Associations (CDA): that does initiate, mobilize resources and execute community project.

Cooperative Societies: they mobilize credit facilities for members and build small scale industries in the community.

Community Elites: These are individual community members or groups, who support the community in areas of felt needs as well as influence the government and other development agencies in sitting of projects in their communities.

And the most recent in the course of institutionalizing stakeholder participation in community development is the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).

Non Governmental Organisation (NGOs) are non-governmental, non profit creation, self-governing and led by willful volunteers. NGOs are groupings that are outside the domain of government in the areas of formation, funding, management and the processes and procedure in which it carry's out its sets objectives geared towards cultural, socio-economic and political transformation of all facets of the society. NGOs function alongside the government as well as profit base enterprises in delivery of social services for the upliftment and well-being of the society, they are therefore refers to as the third sector, (Ehigiamusoe 1998). NGOs evolves from experiences, interests, idea and innate zeal to respond to or remedy the observed phenomena or desire in the society. NGOs could be international, national, regional, or community based depending on its financial resources and networking capability. Strength and the idea behind its formation (sets goals) NGOs, do focus on a number of areas – skill acquisition, economic empowerment, disease control and management: Adult literacy scheme and capacity building and information driven charity, conflict resolution and peace promotion.

The idea behind the formation of NGO in essence is to effect, desired changes in areas that are felt undesirable in the society. These they do on their own, through collaboration and

partnership with donor organization and/or networking with other NGOs.

However, many NGOs especially those here in Nigeria are being constrained by a number of factors ranging from that of funding to shortage of volunteers.

Many people with interest in community development have drawn attention to the potentials of civil society organizations (Bratton 1986, 1990; Holanquist 1984), and (Briton 1987). Some of these for example, attributed the success of Zimbabwe agriculture in recent years to strong initiative of local farmer's organizations. Similar success story has been told of the Kenyan self-help movement (Holmquist Thomas 1988). In Tanzania, extensive Civil Society Organisation (CSO) lobbying resulted in the abolition of primary school fees at primary school level (Ohiorhenuan 2003). These cases reveal the relevance of partnership in participatory development.

A study conducted by Adebayo (1997) reveal that among NGOs in Nigeria, those focusing on development related issues dominates which is a positive indication to poverty alleviation. He further pointed out that NGOs can help by mobilizing resource beyond the state budget for development purpose. Also he remarked the genuineness of the mission of some NGOs. He concluded that NGOs like Farmers Development Union (FADU) has successfully invested over ninety million naira (₦90,000,000:00) in its various poverty alleviating programmes with an in-built guarantee for sustainability.

This study examines the role of NGO in rural development with special reference to Edo state of Nigeria.

II. STUDY AREA

The focus of this study is Edo State of Nigeria. Edo State is one of the 36 states of the federal republic of Nigeria. Edo State was created on the 27th of August, 1991 as a result of the split of the defunct Bendel State into Edo and Delta States.

Edo state is located in the heart of the tropical rain forest and it lies between longitude 5.15°E and 6°45"E of the Greenwich meridian line and latitude 5°45' and 7°30'N of the Equator.

Edo state has a total land area of 19281.93 square kilometers. Politically, the state is divided into eighteen (18) local government areas (see Fig.1).

Edo state is a low-lying area except in the

Fig. 1. Edo state showing the 18 local government areas, their headquarters and some projects location by EU-MPP6 in partnership with NGOs.

northern part where it is characterized by rolling hills rising to a peak of about 572 metres. Edo state has a tropical climate with two major seasons – the wet and dry seasons. Vegetation is deciduous within the low land rain forest belt of the south and forest savannah in the north.

There are abundant natural resources in the state. Virtually all species of hardwood can be found. Such as iroko, obeche, mahogany etc. The state produces a significant proportion of the country's rubber and crepe. Other resources available include limestone, marble, lignite, clay, crude oil, gold, granite, etc. (Omofonmwan 2007).

Agriculture remains the mainstay of the state's economy, Edo people are mainly farmers, producing cash and food crop as cocoa, rubber, palm trees, vegetables, cotton, rice, etc. There are many small scale industrial undertakings such as carving, saw milling, brewing and flour milling, etc. There are however potentials for high industrial growth.

Edo state is subdivided into eighteen (18) local government areas as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1.

Table 1: Local Government Areas and their headquarters in Edo state of Nigeria.

S. No.	L. G. A	Headquarters
1.	Akoko-Edo	Igarra
2.	Egor	Urelu
3.	Etsako west	Auchi
4.	Etsako central	Fugar
5.	Etsako east	Agenebode
6.	Esan west	Ekpoma
7.	Esan central	Irrua
8.	Esan northeast	Uromi
9.	Esan southeast	Ubiaja
10.	Igueben	Igueben
11.	Oredo	Benin City
12.	Owan west	Sabogidaora
13.	Owan east	Afuze
14.	Ikpoba okha	Idogbo
15.	Ovia south west	Iguobozuwa
16.	Ovia north east	Okada
17.	Orhionmwon	Abudu
18.	Uhunmwode	Ehor

Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey, Benin City 2007.

III. METHOD OF STUDY

The 18 local government areas are organized into 3 senatorial districts as follows – Edo South,

Edo Central and Edo North – Data collected is based on local government and senatorial divisions for analysis and discussion.

Students, teachers, NGO functionaries, beneficiaries of NGO activities, individuals and head of households were interviewed for the purpose of this study. The choice of the heads of house-hold is based on the fact that they most adequately represent the views or perception of their respective families and communities. Data in the study were collected between 2006 and 2007. Since the central objective of this study concern the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in community development, the respondents were asked to identify, the impact of NGO in the socio-economic development of their communities. Secondly the respondents were asked to comment freely on how they will want the NGOs to contribute more towards enhancing their socio-economic well being as well as their expectations from NGOs. Thirdly, they were asked to state the impact of the project executed in their community. The women beneficiaries of micro credit facilities were asked to relate their experiences, before and after the facilities were given to them. The health service seekers were asked to comment on the impact of the health services intervention in their lives. The young girls at the Girl's Power Initiative centre were asked to relate their experiences and gains as students. Finally, discussions were held with some prominent people, elders and leaders in the areas where some of the projects are located. A conscious effort was made to identify the roles of NGOs as it affects women and children in the society.

IV. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the course of this study, it was observed that a good number of NGOs are on ground carrying out different types of developmental projects and programmes. All geared towards the socio-economic upliftment of the people in their various areas of interest in Edo state. The findings also revealed that majority of the NGOs in Edo state have their operational base points in Benin City, which is the state capital.

A number of these NGOs are into various aspects of community development such as

- community mobilization

- environment, health and sanitation awareness creation
- education for all awareness creation
- promotion of child's rights law
- promotion of sexuality and reproductive health education and fight against child labour and human trafficking
- economic empowerment
- development of rural infrastructure
- rescue and resuscitation of accident victims
- capacity building service and so on.

The study equally revealed that, virtually all the NGOs in Edo state with the exemption of about three of them – Owen Obaseki foundation, Sir Osunde foundation – Emmanuel Arigbe Osula foundation- that are individually funded. Most NGOs depends largely on donation and funding from international donor or funding organizations for the execution of their projects and programmes. A sizable number of NGOs were equally found to have their activities stalled, due to lack of support from donors or funders. Donor agencies have found enthusiasm in civil society organizations (CSOs) and described the NGO as more reliable in terms of efficiency, equity and impact (Korten 1980; OECD, 1988; Esman and Uphoff 1984). Donor views are that state bureaucracies are unreliable, inefficient, and inresponsive (Rahmato 1991). And programmes administered through them have less chances of reaching the poor and the needy.

Some previous studies have also drawn attention to institutional capacity building at the grassroots level. Building the managerial capacities of CSOs helps to reinforce them and other existing economic or social institutions for self-managed enterprises (Vanek 1975). Thomas and Logan (1982) suggested that self-management enable the participants to make their own rules with regard to their own empowerment for rapid poverty eradication and economic growth.

Records have shown that in recent times, the activities of NGOs has impacted on a significant number of Edo people, touching on various aspects of life.

For the purpose of this study, emphases shall be placed on the activities of selected NGOs and funding agencies.

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) includes

- Body enhancement annual reconstructive surgery (BEARS) foundation
- Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO)

- Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) and
- Pro-Health International
- The Funding Organizations includes
- World Bank
- European Union and
- Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

(a) Activities of NGOs

In the year 2001, there was kerosene fire explosion in Benin City, causing a number of death and severe injuries to many other people. It was not until the year 2004, (three years later) that an NGO known as the Body Enhancement Annual Reconstructive Surgery (BEARS) foundation with an international recognition in collaboration with Edo state government, carried out a plastic surgical operation on 36 patients who were among severely burnt victims of adulterated kerosene fire explosion in Benin City in 2001, free of charge. Of a remarkable interest in this effort is the involvement of a good number of internationally recognized trained plastic surgeons as well as the quality drugs and equipments used for the operations.

Lift Above Poverty Organization (LAPO), established in 1986 to address the hardship created by the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), is another organization whose activities in Nigeria are also recognized internationally in the area of women socio-economic empowerment programme – through micro credit facilities – cash loans, training, and small income yielding projects – cassava processing mills, soap making shop and cake baking .

As at April 2006, LAPO has empowered a total of 1,483 women across Nigeria, in areas of leadership and capacity building which are organized regularly by LAPO through its subsidiaries – LAPO Development Centre (LADEC), Gender, Environment and Leadership Training (GELT), Community Sensitization Agents (CSA). These efforts are aimed at dismantling archaic structures and processes that promote injustice, socio-political and economic discrimination against women. With the believe that poverty goes beyond the issue of money to include ignorance and retrogressive socio-cultural practices, which are often responsible for the socio-economic woes of women in the society. Economic and social empowerment is part of LAPOs non-credit activities.

It is on record that LAPO disbursed the sum

of six hundred and fifty eight million naira (₦658,000,000.00) as micro loans to their clients in the financial year 2004 and rose to one billion, one hundred and five million naira (₦1,105,000,000.00) in 2005, which represents 67percent over the previous year's disbursement.

Lift Above Poverty Organisation (LAPO) have today empowered (financially) thousands of women, some of whom are now fully independent in their respective businesses. Others who have just joined the LAPO clientele association are singing songs of praise about Non Governmental Organisations with special reference to LAPO.

The Girls' Power Initiative (GPI) have for the past ten years be involved in the training and empowerment of young girls' concerning various aspects of life – child's right, education, leadership and other non-sexist life management skills and information on sexuality, promotion and protection of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of - in and out - of school girls aged 10-18 years in Nigeria. Advocacy and action programmes, Gender mainstreaming as well as organizing capacity building programmes for adults – stake holders, school heads and representatives of other NGOs – through its Gender development institute (GDI). Other activities of GPI includes: Parent-child forum, Media forum, Boy-Girl forum, Youth talents forum and Teachers-Parents forum.

(b) Fund Providers

Among the highly recognized funders of NGOs activities in Edo state, are the

- World Bank,
- European Union,
- Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

and some others whose activities are not highly publicized. Currently, the World Bank is sponsoring activities of twenty eight (28) NGOs for advocacy and action intervention on HIV/AIDS pandemic awareness creation in Edo state. The European Union sponsored, micro-project programme in six states of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. In partnership with NGOs and benefiting communities, E.U. is currently funding the execution of more than three hundred micro-projects, in rural areas across the eighteen (18) local government areas of Edo state. Some of these projects are: water and sanitation (boreholes and sanitation facilities) transport and communication (rural roads) – health, nutrition,

education and vocation training – income generation – environmental management. The term micro project in this context, means project whose bill of quantity (BOQ) financial value do not exceed the sum of five million six hundred thousand naira (₦5,600,000) about thirty five thousand Euro (Euro35,000) while the benefiting community will contribute about 25 percent of the cost of executing the project which is initiated and managed by the community members upon completion.

Some of the projects funded by the European Union (mpp6) and executed in partnership with selected NGOs in the eighteen LGAs of Edo state are tabulated in Table 2.

In March and July 2006, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in collaboration with a Non Governmental Organization – Pro Health International carried out a free general health care service for the people of Edo state at Ehor in Uhunmwode L.G.A. and Fugar in Etsako Central L.G.A. Hundreds of persons with various ailments, that came within the one week each which it lasted were well attended to including the major surgical operations and free drugs and eye glasses that were given.

Response from 8 among the 36 fire victims who received free treatment courtesy Bears foundation and Edo state government reveals that their initial lost hope were rekindled and brought back to life with the effort of Bears foundation.

Response from (i) 50 market women from 4 markets – New Benin, Oba, Ogiso and Uselu markets in Benin City (ii) 20 market women at Ekpoma; Esan west LGA and (iii) 25 women farmers in Uhunmwode LGA revealed that they all have benefited immensely from LAPOs micro credit facilities and its training in both health and social empowerment. Emphasizing the fact that the growth rate attained in their economic activities so far, would have be stalled should they have relied on local money lenders or commercial banks.

Also 15 Alumni of the GPI internship programme, 15 internship programme participants, 50 secondary school girls who have undergone a training programme at the GPI centre in Benin City revealed that their perception of social realities of life, has brightened due to the quality of knowledge gained at the GPI centre. Noting that their gains includes:

- building self-esteem,
- ability to set priorities in life,
- principles of value classification,
- ability to impact positively on others,
- developed negotiating skills and so on.

10 NGOs representatives interviewed revealed that much has been gained through their participation in GPI organized seminal and workshops on Gender issues through its Gender Development Institute (GDI).

Hundreds of people who received treatment for their various ailments interviewed at Ehor and

Table 2: selected development projects by non governmental organisations (NGOs) in partnership with the European Union in Edo state-Nigeria

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Local government area</i>	<i>Benefiting community project</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Name of CSO/NGO</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1	Akoko-Edo	Akuku	Bridge	Found Build	2006	₦4,176,000.00
2	Egor	Esasoyen	Education	Afripride	2006	₦3,845,550.00
3	Esan Central	Ekọ Libhiosa	Civic Centre	KIF	2006	₦2,354,692.00
4	Esan N/E	Afuda	Education	Heruda	2006	₦3,652,950.00
5	Esan S/E	Emu	Health	Willi Johnson Fd	2007	₦4,753,149.00
6	Esan West	Egoro-Amede	Education	Cewood	2007	₦2,778,649.00
7	Etsako Cent	Anegbette	Rice Mill	Univwelfare	2006	₦2,710,451.00
8	Etsako East	Ogiriga	Education	Child Surviv	2007	₦3,652,950.00
9	Etsako West	Idatto	Education	GPI	2006	₦3,728,264.00
10	Igueben	Udoneria	Health	KIF	2006	₦5,551,414.00
11	Ikpoba-Okha	Egun	Cassava Mill	Woyep	2006	₦3,252,066.00
12	Oredo	Ebo	Education	Idomi. Youth	2006	₦3,847,950.00
13	Orhionmwon	Oheze	Health	Lapo	2007	₦4,087,512.00
14	Owan East	Eteye-Emai	Civic Cent	Jace Master	2006	₦2,324,632.00
15	Owan West	Iviekeke	Education	Rufarm	2005	₦4,676,040.00
16	Uhunmwode	Ugha	Water	Aweg	2006	₦3,856,500.00
17	Ovia South	Iguelaiho	Water	WFI	2005	₦3,429,619.00
18	Ovia North	Obagie	Water	Swaan	2006	₦3,856,000.00

Source: MPP6, Edo State Office 2007

Fugar expresses joy and satisfaction for the prompt attention given them, by the medical team of Pro-Health International. Stating that even surgical operations that would have cost them thousands of naira was done free of charge. Also, free eye glasses and quality drugs were given to those who were able to meet up with the one week each, time frame set for the exercise.

Response from 20 persons (10 male and 10 female) from Emuado oil palm settlement, Ekpoma, Esan west LGA, reveals that their economic life has been transformed, with the installation of a palm oil processing mill in their community. Same were also observed at Anegbette community in Etsako Central L.G.A, with the installation of a rice processing mill in their community. Response from 5 teachers, 30 students and 20 head of households in Makeke community in Akoko-Edo LGA, revealed that learning conditions in the community school has improved reasonably with the construction of more classroom block and equipping of the science laboratory. Positive response came from members of Ugha and Ugoneki communities both in Uhunmwode L.G.A, following the installation of a water bore hole at Ugha and a health centre at Ugoneki. The people of Utese and Egun both in Ikpoba-Okha LGA were also full of joy over the installation of a cassava processing mill in each of the communities. These are some of the micro projects financed by European Union micro project programme (EU-MPP6) in association with some NGO's in Edo State.

The findings of this study, in a number of ways equates that of those cited in the literature. The findings by Adebayo 1997 of farmers development union, Ibadan also relates to the benefit gained by women traders and farmers in Edo state, courtesy lift above poverty organization micro credit scheme and social empowerment programme. Similarly, the observation of Korten 1980, Esman and Uphoff 1984 and Rahmato 1991 relates to the willful acceptance of the World Bank, European Union and Niger Delta Development Commission in partnering with Non-Governmental Organisations in the execution of community development projects in the study area.

In carrying out common goals and objectives however, NGO in collaboration with other NGOs, with similar ideas, vision and mission through networking, have come out with commendable results which, ordinarily would have been difficult or practically impossible for a single NGO. Some

of these network or coalitions include – Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (NACATIP), Civil Society Network on HIV/AIDs in Nigeria (CISNHAN), Nigerian Network of NGOs/CSOs for Population and Reproductive Health (NINPREH). Efforts of these coalitions includes mass advocacy programmes and action in the area of education, for all promotion. Especially the first nine (9) years of a child's education, which today forms the bases of the universal basic education (UBE). The sponsorship of the bill on child's right, bill against female genital mutilation and bill against child's trafficking and child's labour which has successfully been passed into law, by a number of State House of Assemblies in Nigeria today, including Edo state House of Assembly.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The observed role of Non Governmental Organizations towards the development of the society in general is enormous and inexhaustible, and its activities cut across all sphere of human endeavours. In this regard, more is expected to be put in place by the growing number of NGOs in Edo state, for the overall well being of the society. These they can do through an effective collaborative programmes and strategies with an effective and efficient leadership structure. To be able to meet up with the millennium development goals (MDGs). Strategizing to ensure sustainable development in Nigerian local communities, through empowerment of the people with knowledge required to participate actively in the process of development. The challenge before the NGOs in Nigeria currently is to fashion out ways to get rid of the increasing challenges posed by poverty, malaria, HIV and AIDs, oppression, political and socio-economic powerlessness of the more than 90 percent of Nigerians. And proffer ways of achieving a healthier, functional and more productive nation.

For example, it is the responsibility of coalitions like civil society network on HIV/AIDs in Nigeria (CISNHAN) to adopt a much more comprehensive approach towards combating the spread of the dreaded disease called HIV/AIDs. An epidemic which has been traced to poverty, sexual networking practices such as polygamy, high prevalence of untreated sexually transmitted

infections, low level literacy, unprotected sex, poor health status, stigmatization, low status of women and other forms of risky behaviour. Because it is the target of the MDGs to halt the spread of the epidemic as well as the incidence of malaria and other major disorders and begin a reversal by 2015. Same is also expected of the newly initiated – Nigerian National Budget monitoring and Transparency Network (NBMTN) – in tracking down all the loopholes in the nations budgetary and policy implementation system, which today is the bane of all the problems in Nigeria among which were identified earlier.

According to the World Bank (1992), many symptoms of poor government include failure to make a clear distinction between what is public and what is private that allows diversion of public resources for private gain; inability to establish a predictable framework of law and government behaviour conducive to development; or arbitrariness in the application of rules and laws; excess rules, regulations, licensing requirements, etc that impede the functioning of market and encourages rent seeking. Priorities inconsistent with development leading to misallocation of resources. Others are excessively narrowly based or non-transparent decision making. All the above and the exclusion of democracy impair our understanding of the political condition of economic development.

Finally, it is the submission of this paper, that operators of NGOs should be more proactive and sensitive towards the goal they have chose to pursue and the welfare of those employed by them well care for. There is a high need for training and research for NGO functionaries as this is observed to be the basis for its sustenance and survival. Equally of great importance is the urgent need for NGOs to look inward, in sourcing funds for its activities internally, rather than waiting for the support of international donors alone, which do rarely come.

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