

Facilitating Community Development through Institutional Engagements: Reflections from 2016 Nigeria IACD Conference

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Abstract

This article reports on recent experiences of the conference/workshop management team and the host (Kwara State University - KWASU) of the fourth meeting of the Nigerian members and potential members of the International Association for Community Development (IACD) and the third National Community Development Consultative Conference/Workshop, held in Malet, Kwara State Nigeria from 11 to 14 October 2016. In reviewing the meeting and conference/workshop, the following sub-topics were used for organizing the contents of the article: community development and institutional engagements in Nigeria; IACD National Association in Nigeria; conference/workshop theme and overview; participations/state representatives and conference streams; keynote addresses; conference mobile learning workshop; conference/workshop assessment; and conclusion. The article also draws out implications of the conference/workshop for community development practice and professionalism in workplace settings within national contexts with mandatory institution supports. Finally, brief perspectives of the next Nigeria IACD conference to be held in Kano State are also provided.

Keywords: Community Development, Institutional Engagements, Nigeria, IACD-Nigeria Conference 2016

1. Introduction

This major conference was held at the Centre for Community Development, Kwara State University Malet, which is located at the ancient city of Ilorin, Kwara State, about 500 kilometres away from the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, the fourth meeting of Nigerian members and potential members of the International Association for Community Development (IACD) was held concurrently with the third National Community Development Practitioner's Consultative Conference/Workshop, the event attracted sixty (60) participants from five geo-political zone in Nigeria including local-foreign delegates. The conference included four (4) keynote addresses and scholarly presentations of more than forty (40) research papers, which were based on the conference theme, 'Facilitating Community Development through Institutional Engagements'. The theme for the conference is designed to explore research and practical ways of enabling development agenda by various sectors and institutional engagements with communities, groups and systems among other objectives.

Beside the pre-conference workshops on the theme "Evolving an effective Tertiary Education Institutions Community Engagement in Nigeria" that were held at the conference venue, a mobile learning workshop through visits to some of the host (Kwara State University - KWASU) Community Development intervention sites were also held as part of the conference sessions. The Centre for Community Development (CCD) intervention sites visited provided a practical and participatory learning opportunity for delegates, in addition to the various activities of the four-day national conference, which ensured interactions and networking among people from various professions and social-cultural settings. Basically, Community Development (CD) issues in Nigeria were the major topics of discussions at this intellectual gathering.

2. Community Development and Institutional Engagements in Nigeria

The issues on sustaining community development and institutional engagements have been given little attention, especially in less developed economies, especially in Nigeria, a fast growing region of the world where support and protection in terms of community development policies and legislation at the national level is limited. We acknowledge that our article context, Nigeria, is different, in many ways, from Western countries with well-structured community development practices and professionalism (Campfens, 1997; Al-Krenawi and Graham, 2001; Hoffman, 2012). Government support at the national level, in terms of policies and legislations required to support institutional engagement in service delivery to the community is extremely challenging in Nigeria, because leaders ideological bias and political parties affiliations limit the facilitation of institutional engagements in community development (Enyi, 2014).

There is no well-articulated community development policy in Nigeria, what exist are the guidelines for implementation of social development projects in the country with a section on community development. There are attempts by some state governments like Kano and Kaduna states to come up with what resembles a community development policy but seems narrow in scope. However, there are community development practitioners in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian nation state. The absence of policy also has implications on the standards of practice. The recognition that Community Development (CD) provides an effective framework for transformational development in the face of austerity calls for an efficient use of the Community Development strategies. This informs the need to appreciate the mechanisms for institutional engagements in a community centred manner. The conference therefore opens the horizon for facilitating institutional engagements using the community development strategy. This explains the diversity of focus in terms of public, private and civil society focused issues and institutions targeted at the conference. Next, it presents the keynote addresses and outcome of the conference which call for Nigerian institutions to engage actively in community development work, especially in those areas which have the greater impact on National development.

3. IACD in Nigeria

The Head office of the International Association for Community Development (IACD) is in Glasgow, Scotland, UK. The organization aimed at facilitating global network links amongst community development practitioners, associations, educators, volunteers, and policy-makers through promotion of sustainable community development practice, education, research and policy analysis; as well as championing community empowerment and creation of an effective laudable voice at the international level in support of community-based community development initiatives (IACD, nd). IACD has its national association partners across the continents. The Institute of Community Development Practitioners (ICDP) is Nigeria's registered and affiliated institute of IACD. The Institute for Community Development Practitioners (ICDP) established in 2014 which as its headquarter in Kano state Nigeria, aimed at promoting community capacity building, community development strategies, undertake research, publish and disseminate information relating to community development and organise meetings, conferences, training and exchanges in the field of community development. The ICDP mandate includes:

1. Advancing community development education and professional practices in Nigeria;
2. Undertaking deserved activities relating to general community development and to initiate, design and implement professional development programmes in Nigeria; and
3. Supporting community development practitioners in Nigeria in securing opportunity for continuing professional development and practice exchange in addition to contacts with similar organizations and associations worldwide.

4. Conference/Workshop Theme and Overview

Call for Kwara State as the choice to host the conference was initially proposed at the third Nigeria IACD meeting and second ICDP conference/workshop, held in Kaduna State (2015). A major reason for the selection of Kwara State, and particularly Kwara State University (KWASU), for the 2016 was the engagement of the institution in promoting Community Development and long-established professional network with the IACD/ICDP as well as active participation of member staff from KWASU-CCD at previous IACD/ICDP conferences. Professional networking and institutional engagements thus paved the way for KWASU to host the 2016 conference.

The theme of the 4th Nigeria chapter of IACD conference, 'Facilitating Community Development through Institutional Engagements' appropriately describes the present challenges facing institutions and community development practice throughout Nigeria. To revive almost every institutions of the Nigerian nation state 'engagement is the only way' today, while it is an accepted fact that the present age of economic liberalization and globalization and other things that accompany it, has brought added management innovation and technology advancement that call for urgency of such engagements. Particularly in Nigeria higher education, engagement in service to the community has been highlighted in the National Education Policy (Fafunwa, 2004; FGN, 2013) as the key mechanism for national development. A sound gratitude of the affects this has on community development is therefore significant to ensure continued accomplishment in all of the nation's undertakings.

The phenomena that limit Nigerian institutions from actively engaging in community development practices include but not limited to: sensitization, political will, policy implementation, and institutional support, among others. Even though Nigeria has the largest institutions in the Sub-Sahara Africa, the documentary evidence of these established institutions involvement in community development activities, specifically in the educational institutions is relatively low (Ifedili & Ifedili, 2015). This development appears very challenging when viewed against the backdrop that, the Nigerian state once served as the centre of higher education in the West-African sub-region. It is clear that people in the community development field, including those in the other fields of study/professions in various institutions, particularly the tertiary educational institutions, are expected to be committed in sensitising the general public and assist in facilitating community engagement activities. With the need to strengthen community development practice and professionalism in Nigerian institutions, the 4th Nigeria IACD meeting and conference was aimed at:

1. Providing opportunity for all IACD members to know each other and for recruitment of new members;
2. Creating a platform for promoting the ideals and goal of the IACD in Nigeria and in Sub-Saharan Africa in general;
3. Discussing ways of promoting community development roles of tertiary education institutions; and
4. Examining ways of facilitating community development by different sectors-institutional engagements with communities.

5. Participations/state representatives and paper streams

The conference attracted individuals from various sectors and levels, from students to community development practitioners. In all, 60 participants from five (5) geo-political zones in Nigeria participated in the conference. A total of 60 authors registered for the conference and presented their research papers in 6 concurrent sessions over the two-day sessions (of the main conference). Authors and presenters came from: Adamawa State, Benue State, Borno State, Delta State, Edo State, Gombe State, Jigawa State, Kaduna State, Kano State, Kwara State, Ogun State, Osun State, Oyo State, Rivers State, Sokoto State and Federal Capital Territory (FCT). In addition to these, 2 students (author) also participated from Malaysia.

In day-one of the conference, potential members participated in sensitization and advocacy rally that happened in Ilorin the capital city of Kwara State as part of the pre-conference activities jointly held with the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA). The remarkable event was held on 11th October, 2016 to commemorate the International day of the Girl Child. Prior to the conference proper, public presentation of maiden edition of Nigerian Journal of Community Learning and Development (NJCLAD) published by the Institute for Community Development Practitioners (ICDP) Nigeria were held at the conference venue. In brief, the journal is a multidisciplinary forum which seeks to promote productive scholarship and aimed at contributing to effective practice of community development in Nigeria. Two plenary sessions, one pre-conference workshop, one mobile learning workshop and special meeting of IACD members and potential members were also held in the course of the event.

The conference theme attracted participants from diverse settings interested in the latest innovative research and practical ways of enabling Community Development (CD) agenda in Nigeria. This was clearly evident by the participation of four (4) both local and foreign undergraduate and graduate students, of which three (3) attended as student (authors) to present their research finding. The conference provided a unique training platform for the students to gain needful experience in presenting their research at the national level and receiving feedback from reputable academic scholars, professional community development practitioners and volunteers. Other remaining conference participants comprised of faculty members, policy makers, researchers, traditional rulers, government officers, private/non-governmental organization personnel, media reporters and unaffiliated individuals. As debated, based on 2015 IACD conference theme 'community is the answer', this suggests that community development represents the best option for sustainable development in Nigeria and beyond (Shitu, 2016); several CD practitioners across the Nigerian institutions are in the conference attendance, not only to gain new experience, ideas and inspiring knowledge, but also to interact and network with government officers, policy makers, traditional rulers, academicians and students from other institutions.

The conference streams, supporting papers and scholarly presentations of various sessions and tracks included: education and community development; peace, conflict and disaster management; health sector, welfare and youth development; policy frameworks, community change and faith based issues; community participation and voluntary sector; and innovations, communications and extension support issues. Most of the research was carried out within the Nigerian states, namely Kwara, Sokoto, Ogun, Kano, Rivers, Kastina, Zamfara, Benue,

Delta, Jigawa, Gombe, Kaduna, Borno and Federal Capital Territory (FCT). A paper based on comparative study conducted in Malaysia and Nigeria was also included in the conference sessions.

Most of the papers presented addressed current debates and practical issues in community development, including new definition and concept of CD, community development assessment, higher education and institutional engagement related issues, community based learning, faith based institutional practices, community development partnership, networking and good governance, inclusive education and self-help, tourism development, ICT resources and community development, volunteerism and teamwork. Debates on minimum academic standards for training community development practitioners and volunteers, and how to integrate legal/statutory, journalism and new media to community development in Nigeria were also covered.

6. Keynote addresses

The event featured four keynote speakers from diverse backgrounds. The themes of the keynote speeches were all related to the overall conference theme of 'Facilitating Community Development through Institutional Engagements'. From university as a mechanism of development of its community, to new values, principles and approaches in facilitating community development through institution engagements, to proposed model in empowering communities through participatory policy development process, and how to employ the role of community development practice to improve agricultural innovation. The four reputed keynote speakers shed light on highly relevant, practical-based issues in community development practice and professionalism in Nigeria. Each conference presentation covered a balance of innovative research topics of interest as well as sessions with practical focus for addressing community development real-world practices, as it relates to the Nigerian community development context and settings. The following are the brief summaries of key points, reflections and questions which are raised by the invited four keynote speakers over the course of the four-day event in Maleta:

University as a Mechanism of Development of its Community

The first keynote address was delivered by Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah, the Chief Executive/Vice Chancellor of the host University. Professor Na'Allah address was presented by Dr. Henry Sawyerr the Dean, School of Allied Health and Environmental Sciences, Kwara State University. Professor Na'Allah in his address discussed about the historical background and roles of the founders of Kwara State University, Maleta. He began with an overview of the present realities and challenges facing institution of higher learning nationally and globally. Professor Na'Allah revealed that, institution of higher learning that are established in remote cases was constitute community, and as those institutions of higher learning begin to work, they establish themselves as more or less citadel of education that has very little or no interface with their communities. In view of this, he outlined the various impacted projects through collaborative community exchange and flow of information based on research conducted by faculty members and students of its university in fulfilling the community needs in Kwara state, being a University with the philosophy of community development.

According to Professor Na'Allah, the drive towards human resource and community development should be among the foremost priority of the Nigerian tertiary institutions. He, however, emphasized that no matter the ranking most of the universities globally working tirelessly for, the ranking of their contributions to their immediate community should be given higher priority. He gave examples of some interventions such as, provision of water boreholes, building of toilets and empowerment of youths and women that were successfully implemented by the University. To him, these interventions are in line with the concept of the United Nation (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that its University stood for, to make global impacts in sustaining the community. In terms of giving back to the communities, he called on Nigerian institutions at various levels not to be more focused on needed area that they can engage community, but to see how they can be able to sustain some of the community they have established and impacted. Finally, Professor Na'Allah address ended with a clarion call of the need for community development facilitators, academics and students to build good rapport with the community in service delivery and to ensure that the institutional engagements it is working towards are realized in various sectors of the nation.

Facilitating Community Development through Institution Engagement

The second keynote address was scholarly presented by Professor Ayo Oni of the University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID) Nigeria, was titled 'Facilitating Community Development through Institution Engagement'. As the theme of the conference was 'Facilitating Community Development through Institutional Engagements',

Professor Oni in his submission provided a framework in enhancing institutional engagement, and also on how such engagement can take place to facilitate effective community development practices and how institutions of the society can emulate same. He mentioned several approaches that institutions can be employed to facilitate effective community development in various domains and call on all the community development officers to be partly generator of community needs. He further expressed that there are things that instigate needs which are inevitable and these include but not limited to: (a) environment and challenges of imposing inhabitant; (b) inhabitant and the challenges they impose on their environment; (c) lack of non-lasting equilibrium level of convenience and economic inhabitants; and (d) locating project for community development. He elaborated on this using practice based examples.

The second part of his presentation is on institutional engagements. He laid emphasis for community development practitioners not to underrate the knowledge of the local people for any developmental projects, particularly the illiterate ones, that the little they know should be appreciated with active collaboration. Professor Oni said officers who are in the community development business, should always educate user of any community projects as this will lead to sustaining what has been implemented. He stressed further that, before embarking on any community development projects, it is advisable that community development officers locate the community leaders, strive to learn the existing culture, identify with them and integrate into the community, and after been accepted, s/he can now introduce the proposed community projects that will bring positive change. Professor Oni in his final remark spoke on the need to sustain the engagement of institutions that are championing community development initiatives. He emphasized on the need to establish symbiotic relationship in sustaining community development and facilitating institutional engagement. In doing this, he mentioned that it should not be one sided approach that, as the community call on Government to come for their aid for developmental project, there should also be pledged and written agreement on the part of the community to watch over what has been put in their care, and contribute to provide service for security.

Empowering Community through participatory Policy Development Process: The PMB Model

The third keynote address of the conference was delivered by Dr. Sulliamon Adediran, the executive Director of the Independent Education Consultant in Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria. Dr. Adediran was a former Senior Lecturer at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State and one term Board Chairman of Oyo State Primary Education Board (OSPEB) at Adogi, Ibadan Nigeria. Dr. Adediran address was presented by Dr. Adejare Adeyemo, a senior lecturer in the department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Kwara State University, Malete. Dr. Adediran address is of two (2) fold; the first session covers definition of community, participation, community empowerment dimensions, and approaches to participatory policy development; while the second session present the Participatory Modified Bottom-up (PMB) Model. He began by clarifying the key concepts that formed the bases of his speech and explained in details PMB and how it could be used for awareness raising for participatory community development using the participatory stakeholders' engagement, process approach, civil society partnership and capacity development in Nigeria.

In facilitating community development through institutional engagement, Dr. Adediran provided examples of best practices of participatory community empowerment in Nigeria using School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) with evident-based pictures. He mentioned that the results for desired change that is expected from any community development projects can be realise when community people (the beneficiaries) are consulted and genuinely involved, particularly in the area of decision making, before embarking on community development projects (and this links with Professor Oni's keynote), and community development practitioners, as well as educators and volunteers must see themselves as being part of the community as change agent. This, according to Dr. Adediran, is the key to the realization of sustainable development. Dr. Adediran in his final remark called for collective responsibility that involves not only the government, but communities, families, and civil society organizations to promote inclusive community engagement that would ensure effective community development participation in Nigeria.

The Role of Agricultural Innovations in Community Development: The Case of Northern Nigeria

Dr. A.Y. Kamara, a Principal Scientist/Savanna Systems Agronomist with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), delivered the final keynote. He started out by outlining eight agroecological zones across the West African sub-region. Seven of these zones traverse Nigeria with the exception of the desert ecosystem. The northern part of the country is characterised by different categories of Savanna stratified by decreasing moisture gradients from the Humid Forest in the south through to the Sahel Savanna at the northernmost end. He outlined eleven production constraints of the Savanna including limiting factors such as soil

fertility, drought as well as cultural practices and farming support systems among others. He noted these as contributors to poverty status of farmers and their households with presented data showing a range of 47.8% to 74.3% of farmer households reviewed in Kano and Katsina living below defined poverty lines. His team sought a linear approach to address this issue by undertaking research into underlying factors and then conducting extension services into target communities in order to engage farmers. The aim was to use innovation platforms to enhance agricultural productivity and income of rural farmers along the value chain without degrading the natural resource base.

In seeking improvement and sustainability of agricultural livelihoods, Dr. Kamara outlined a number of models that actively engage stakeholders through the development of strong partnerships, the use of participatory approaches, strengthening of community based organisations, gender mainstreaming, and utilisation of knowledge for further innovation. These models include: (a) the promoting sustainable agriculture in Borno (PROSAB) development approach that were applied pre-2004 to 2008; (b) Kano-Katsina-Maradi (KKM) approach, applied between 2008 and 2010; and (c) the Participatory Research and Extension Approach (PREA). Both PROSAB and KKM approaches are linear in nature commencing from on-station trials through intermediate trials on research farms and by farmer groups to scaling out to the wider community of farmers. PREA is iterative in nature and integrates community dynamics into the agricultural productivity bottom line from the point of social mobilisation and community entry through to participatory evaluation. These help in empowering stakeholders to build and strengthen their capacity to design and implement further field activities for continual development. He concluded with specific case studies wherein IITA collaborated with farmer communities in utilising these participatory approaches to drive increased crop yields and productivity as well as community development in a wider context.

7. Conference Mobile Learning Workshop

The Centre for Community Development (CCD) coordinates activities aimed at championing the host institution's key mandate as "the University for Community Development" with member of staff working collaboratively with a diverse mix of internal and external stakeholders including KWASU community, community volunteers, relevant government officials, international community and other concerned parties. Two (2) different villages outside of the host university were visited in the course of the conference/workshop, within Moro Local Government Development Area (LGDA), in Kwara State. The Community Development interventions carried out by faculty members and students through KWASU-CCD turned out to be topics of debates among attendees. During the intervention sites visit, observation report reveals the testimony of various Community Development interventions that have been successfully implemented by KWASU-CCD. This session of the conference were actively participated by inquisitive audience, and the KWASU-CCD received commendation on their Community Development interventions.

It is very important to recognize that learning outcomes from mobile learning workshop like this can be so invaluable and immeasurable due to its lingering impact on participants. Budo-Are community and Apo community in Maleté were the two communities visited for the mobile learning workshop in the course of the conference. The Budo-Are community is a cluster of three neighbouring communities; Budo-Are, Kogba and Ajagbe. Their population is put to be around 250, with children taking almost 45% of the entire population. They are bound with ancient ties which make them do virtually everything together. So any meaningful intervention will have to further strengthen these ties to succeed. Some 45 women in these communities had been trained on different vocational skills including nylon cutting, cardigan weaving and beads and wire works. After the training, they were given seed funds in form of soft loans to start up their businesses.

During the visit, the women displayed their works to show that they were actively engaged with the skills acquired and they were so proud to be productive members of their communities. Evidence of prompt and adequate refund of loans collected was also shown to participants. Every beneficiary of the KWASU-CCD women economic empowerment project present shows that, there was a living success story creditable to the centre. Praises of the centre were sung and participants were considered as partners as the women, while acknowledging efforts of CCD, also freely expressed their plights and aspirations; they wanted access roads linking them to the outside world and more loans so as to do more. At the end of the visit, a live cock was gifted to the head of the visiting team as sign of appreciation. Men and women in the community escorted participants while they sang and danced to express undiluted happiness for being remembered and visited.

From Budo-are, participants moved to Apo community where they were welcomed with song and dance. Apo community has population not fewer than 150 and their children are around 75%. KWASU-CCD's interventions were provision of hand pump borehole and community health extension project. The head of the community

reinstated their appreciation to the centre and also confirmed that the community had existed for more than two centuries without safe drinking water source until when CCD came to their aid in 2014. The borehole remains the only source of water for Apo and other neighbouring communities. Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) from the CCD were also at work when participants visited Apo community. Women, men and children gathered as medical check-ups were carried out. While some were given drugs, some got advices and some were referred to hospitals in the state for better care. The head of the community expressed their trust in the project and the CHEWs as he claimed that they rarely fall sick or visit hospitals since the CHEWs are always around. It is some 7 kilometres from Apo to the nearest primary health care facility.

The mobile learning workshop epitomized community development at work. First-hand information was gotten and real community engagement by an institution was visibly and convincingly felt. Away from paper presentations and other useful talks, the workshop presented to participants a true community engagement warmth atmosphere.

8. Conference/workshops Assessment and Conclusion

Immediately after the conference, participants were approached to give feedback comments about their experience over the two-day (of the main conference). Overall, the comments were complimentary and congratulatory. Participants revealed that the conference theme, the quality of research papers presented on diverse community development topics, the standard scholarly presentations, the inspiring keynote addresses, the conference fee/venue, the mobile learning workshop, the logistics supports, the Maleté community hospitality, and the management team met their expectations. Though, disapproving comments worth attention and suggestions to further improve the overall quality of future IACD/ICDP conferences were made. More importantly, potential members are encouraged to attend the forthcoming 2017 IACD conference happening in Auckland, New Zealand, as the conference aim at addressing, the challenge of agenda 2030 community development practitioners, agencies and academics.

Unanimous resolutions were agreed upon, based on opinions and views expressed by the conference participants. The resolutions are: (1) the new IACD (2016) definition of community development were further adopted, (2) there should be minimum academic standard for the training of community development practitioners in Nigeria, (3) higher institutions of learning in Nigeria should be more proactive in community service mandated by active involvement of students and staff in community development practice, (4) communities must be actively involved in policy formulation and implementation stages of community development programmes, (5) lessons learnt from the implementation of the MDGs should be explored for improved and sustainable community development, (6) appraisal of community needs and assets should be encouraged at all levels of community engagements including the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, (7) community development clubs should be introduced at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, (8) Information Communication Technology (ICT) potentials and skills should be explored in the trainings of community development practitioners, (9) community development Practitioners should encourage preservation of community resources for sustainable community development, and (10) the Vice Chancellor of Kwara State University should be commended for taking the lead in making community development an integral part of the university system and goals. In all, the participant feedback comments indicated that the 4th meeting of the Nigerian members and potential members of the International Association for Community Development (IACD) and the 3rd National Community Development Consultative Conference/Workshop 2016 was a resounding and laudable success – many thanks to the organizers, co-sponsors, host institution, presenters, participants, media reporters, traditional rulers, and the volunteers.

9. Implications and the Next Step

This conference has built on the gains made in the course of the previous three meetings of the Nigerian IACD Chapter. It drew attention to the need for a unified standard of community development practice in the country. Various case studies shared from discrete institutional engagements further underscore the importance of community development as a cross cutting endeavour. Therefore, community development should be mainstreamed on a sectorial basis with mandatory institutional supports. Community development practitioners (Academics, fieldworkers, managers, policy developers, volunteers, and students) may champion this by raising awareness and understanding of sustainable community development especially those involving participatory or bottom-up approaches within the national context. The communiqué drafted at the end of the meeting identifies key stakeholders that would be engaged to ensure implementation resolutions of members.

Although there is a lot of interest to know more about Nigerian IACD Chapter, very little information is available so far in scholarly publications. There is a great need for new insightful information gathering and knowledge development in this field. The IACD with its mission of recognising international professional association, supporting members globally in community development and related disciplines through research is continuously working to provide the frameworks for community development practitioners (Academics, fieldworkers, managers, policy developers, volunteers, and students) in this direction through continuing professional development support, research, publications, website resources, and through its global, regional, and national conferences. The Nigeria chapter of the IACD has been spearheading these efforts, and has been able to successfully organize four meetings and three national conferences. Papers presented at the immediate past IACD conference/workshops were compiled into the Nigerian Journal of Community Learning and Development (NJCLAD). However, this conference/workshop brought about discussions on an opportunity to domicile this publication within an academic institution with expanded citation index to ensure wider coverage.

Practitioners also need to institutionalise platforms through which they can share knowledge and experience among themselves within the country and more regularly. The Nigerian members have resolved to take advantage of social media platforms in ensuring real-time internal engagements. Continuing this effort, the Nigeria chapter of IACD is organizing the next Nigerian IACD conference/workshop of 2017 to be held in Kano state. Hopefully, the next Nigerian IACD conference will be able to build on the successes of the past conference/workshops, will further enhance the participation of community development practitioners and scholars, and improve on the quality of research papers and publications.

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