

International Partnership for Socio-Economic Development: An Appraisal of the European Union-Nigeria Micro Project Programme in Bayelsa State

PULLAH EBIPRE¹ FRANCIS ENIEKEZIMENE² IBANGA ATANYO EDEM³ E. C. ARIYE⁴

1.Department of Economics, School of Social Sciences, Bayelsa State College of Education Okpoama

2.Department of Economics, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce- Island, Bayelsa State

3.Department of Registry, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic

4.Department of History and International Studies, School of Arts and Languages, College of Education, Okpoama

Abstract

This study examines the developmental impact of the European Union (EU) -Nigeria Micro Project programme, implemented in Bayelsa state over the period 2003 to 2006. A survey was conducted in the state. Data were collected and analyzed using descriptive method. On the basis of empirical evidence, it is discovered that the programme has impacted on the lives of the people in the state with the provision of socio-economic infrastructures, employment and income generation, and has reduced poverty through the provision of amenities e.g. the construction of six classroom blocks with furniture at Agudama-Epie, health centre at Odoni, renovation of community hall at Swali, provision of pipe borne water at Angiama etc. Based on the above findings, we proffered a seven point recommendation which if followed-up should improve socio-economic development in Bayelsa state and in Nigeria.

Keywords: Partnership, Europe, Nigeria, Socio-Economic, Development, Appraisal, Project, Bayelsa State.

I.Introduction

Different countries and organizations have severally worked together to achieve a common goal. Such aims differ depending on the group needs for the partnership. Nigeria has formed international partnership with different countries and organization such as the European Union (EU), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), etc. The interest of each member country or organization in any international partnership is aimed at scoring points that benefits her. Nigeria and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are specifically for rural poverty reduction. While that of Nigeria and the European Union at the instance of 2001 is amongst other reasons to achieve socio economic development and reduce tension in the Niger Delta Region as embodied in the memorandum of understanding signed between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the European Union for the micro project programme (MPP3), as an integrated rural development programme. Deliberately targeted at Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states, the micro project programme (MPP3) has specific areas of intervention such as construction/renovation of school buildings, market stalls, wooden bridges, landing jetties, community town halls, provision of pipe borne water through drilling of bore holes, shore protection, footpath (roads), provision of micro credit to trade unions and associations, etc.

Grants were given to communities on lower and upper limits of one hundred thousand naira (N100, 000.00) and two million five hundred thousand naira (N2, 500,000.00) respectively through civil society organizations that worked in partnership with MPP3 as facilitators to the benefiting communities. In this paper, our interest is to examine the activities of the EU-Nigeria partnership on micro projects programme and to evaluate its effectiveness and contributions on socio-economic development in Bayelsa state.

I.I Theoretical Framework

There are different theories of economic development, such as the linear stage of growth model, theories and pattern of structural change, the neoclassical free market counter revolution etc; however this study is based on the international dependency revolution theory of economic development.

The international dependence model came into limelight in the 1970s, though it underwent some modifications in the late 1980s through the 1990s. This theory portrays the developing countries as beset by institutional, political and economic rigidities, both domestic and internationally that, they are trapped in a dependence and dominance relationship with the rich countries. It is widely accepted that aid is more effective when received by countries with better institutions and policies. However, countries with better institutions and policies may do well even without aid (Subhashini Abeysinhe; 2005:1-2). One major stream of this theory is the neo-colonial dependency model, which is an indirect outgrowth of Marxist thinking.

This model attributes the past, present and future existence of underdevelopment primarily to the historical evolution of a highly unequal international capitalist system of rich country/ poor country relationship.

Several factors are adduced to explain this predicament of the developing countries. One of these is that the developed nations are intentionally exploitative of the underdeveloped ones and that the coexistence of the rich and poor nations in an international system dominated by such unequal power relationship between the CENTER and the PERIPHERY reverse the attempt of the poor nations to be self reliant and independent. The model failed not to show that few elites in the developing nation (including Landlords and entrepreneurs, military rulers, merchants) who enjoy high incomes, social status and political power whose principal interest, knowingly or not is in the perpetuation of inequality and conformity by which they are rewarded. These groups of people according to Todaro (2006:158) are themselves dominated and dependent on the international special interest power groups including multinational corporations, national bilateral-aid agencies, and multilateral assistance organizations like the World Bank or international monetary fund (IMF) which is tied by allegiance or funding to the wealthy capitalist countries. The model also depict the fact that the activities and view points of these elites often inhibit the interests of the wider population and in some cases actually lead to even lower levels of living standard and engenders the perpetuation of underdevelopment.

Owing to this established dominance, most developed countries and their agencies for selfish motives or for a variety of political strategic and economic reasons that benefit the donor countries give foreign aid to the developing world as in the case of European Union project tied aid (grant) to the Federal Republic of Nigeria via the micro project programme in three states (MPP3) of the Niger Delta, where it is the formers interests to achieve reduced social tension for her multinational corporations to strive.

2. Literature Review

2.1 International Partnership

Adam Peck (2007) considers international partnership as a relationship of mutual benefit between parties involved in a contract of interests. To illustrate, he cites the international partnership between different universities in different countries and continents and postulates that such partnerships confer on both sides the following:

- i) Increased knowledge through wide coverage
- ii) Improved curricular
- iii) Cultural awareness across countries and continents
- iv) Provision of solid foundation for collaborative beneficial academic cooperation
- v) Improved economic relation among countries.

Similarly Wasim M, Ward D,et al (2004) avers that international partnership is an arrangement of interests between individuals or groups beyond a defined geographical boarder or country. Accordingly, it is geared towards the improvement of society or humanity. According to this assertion, international partnership sought to find solution to existing problems, as it may be health, social, political, economic in society.

2.2 Social Development

The concept of social development has had several perceptions from different authors in the recent past. It is actually a double bottom time concept where the social aspect of human life is considered a gradual unfolding along side with the development of the economic well being of society. Social development is said to be an approach to promoting human welfare to harmonize social policies with measures designed to promote social welfare such as philanthropy, social works and social administration. In this vein, social development is seen as offering a comprehensive and dynamic approach to promoting social well-being. (Ryan, 2004:28) However, social development at any point in time is measured through changes in its indicators such as the state of education, state of health, economic infrastructures like roads, electricity, water and sanitation, housing condition etc and the distribution of economic opportunities (Akpan & Uwat, 2005:32). Social development is therefore the conscious effort of moving each of these indicators including the social life cycle (i.e. norms and culture) of the people to the next positive and appreciable level.

2.3 Economic Development

In discussing Economic development, it will be pertinent to consider the concept of economy and its gradual unfolding which is termed economic development. According to Akpakpan (1999:3), the economy is about the production and distribution of goods and services i.e. the collection of all production activities in the society.

Every economy is in cycle; mostly pictured either in stagnating or recessionary, recovering, boom or peak stages (Falagen et al 1987:242). Different nations at different times therefore, tailor the pace of economic development as is the case with Nigeria. In line with this, Ekpo (2005:219) observed that since independence in 1960, Nigerian leaders and policy makers have attempted to conceptualize, formulate and implement economic policies that will positively transform the economy to the path of development. Rodney (1969:1) noted that development is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

2.4 Integrated Rural Development (IRD)

As a concept, integrated rural development is based on balanced models, which embrace all dimensions of the rural economy and seek to bring about improvement in the ecological, economic, technological, sociological and institutional aspect of the society. It also emphasizes the involvement of the rural population in the realization of developmental programmes. The rural dwellers participate in the initiation, implementation and in the sharing of the cost and benefits of development (Okon, 1981).

Similarly, Williams (1981) in his view, sees integrated rural development as a multi-purpose approach as contrasted with the simple purpose rural extension programme. He emphasizes that the development initiatives should not be conceived in isolation of the respective communities. This approach is integrated in the sense that all of its components are important and appreciated for the part they play both individually and collectively.

A lot of review on integrated rural development has been done in most developed and developing countries. A review of the literature reveals that scholars on the subject matter have placed different emphasis on the focus of IRD to make it operational. Key elements emphasized are productivity (Waitz, 1979), proper design and comprehensive coverage (Kroher, 1974), a unique combination of technical and institutional changes (Ruttan, 1975) simultaneously or synchronization of various integration and promotion of popular participation (Cohen, 1980); Mobilization and allocation of resources, as well as mass participation (Lale, 1974).

2.5 Community Development

According to Chitero (1994:14) community development as it emerged and grew and as was practiced in British colonial Territories in Africa referred to community improvement activities in which local people were actively involved. The improvement was undertaken largely on a self help basis and constituted what has been termed as community development. According to the national planning commission of Nigeria (2003): community development means improving the living condition of your community. Take control of your development process and receive the assistance and support that your community requires. In this sense, collective action defined their common individual needs and problems, which are executed with a maximum of reliance upon community resources, supplement when necessary with services and materials from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community.

2.6 Community Development Workers

Community development workers are the main moving force in community improvement work. They are also termed change agents, field agents or community worker. Chitero (1994:54): observes that community development worker or change agents are the ones who put into practice the community development approach to the betterment of the community as conceived by any programme of enhancement of community or society.

3. Statement of the Problem

The core Niger delta region comprises the present Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states of Nigeria. But in recent years, the definition of the region has taken a political dimension such that the region is now made up of nine states of southern Nigeria viz: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers (UNDP, 2006:19). The region has an estimated population of over thirty (30) million people and it is the foremost economic resource generator for the Nigerian state since 1957, when crude oil was first struck at the historical community of Oloibiri in Bayelsa State. It is also estimated that over three hundred billion US Dollars (\$300b) has accrued to the federal republic of Nigeria from sales of crude oil over the past fifty years of exploration, (Ikpatt, et al 2001).

Today, the Niger delta is characterized by a reputation of hostility, crises and restiveness resulting from gross neglect by both successive federal governments and transnational conglomerates. The people of the region have lived in wide spread poverty and a high rate of infant and maternal mortality with complete absence of socio-economic infrastructures in many places, high crime rate and unemployment coupled with illiteracy, psychological effect of continuous victimization and ethnic strife, unmitigated actions of vandalism, aggression and social rancor and acrimony. The effects of conflicts are not only consequential on the indigenous communities in the region but escalating violence has also threatened optimal exploration activities of petroleum resources. It is not uncommon for staffs of transnational corporations to be victims of murderers, kidnappers and other misdemeanours, using the cover of militancy in the region.

The federal government of Nigeria, as principal beneficiary of petrol dollar has spent a considerable chunk of funds on security in the region as her agents are ceaselessly involved in fatal clashes with militants from the region. Thus, the European Union, an umbrella organization for the mother countries of the transnational conglomerates entered into partnership agreement for socio-economic development in the Niger Delta with the federal government through the implementation of the micro project programme (MPP3), in three states believing it will redress the abnormalities. It is however an open truth that despite the implementation of

EU-Nigeria Micro Project Programme (MPP3), the problem of crises and escalating violence still persist in the region. It is in this context that the question arises; “what has been the effect of the intervention of the EU/FGN on the situation in the region?” The researcher is therefore inspired to undertake this study in Bayelsa state, one of the beneficiary states in the region so as to ascertain the level of success of the programme.

4. Aim of the Study

A critical study of the micro project programme in Bayelsa state is to ascertain its viability and workability as a tool for socio economic development, which should further strengthen integrated rural development programme in Nigerian. The study also examined its achievements and failures and recommended proper development measures to accelerate over all national development.

5. Objective of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study;

- i. To examine the content of MPP3 programme in Bayelsa state
- ii. To analyze the implementation procedure of the MPP3 programme in Bayelsa state.
- iii. To evaluate the impact of the MPP3 programme on the people of Bayelsa state.
- iv. To explore ways of improving the results on socio-economic development in Bayelsa state.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study employed the survey research method. It focuses mainly on the activities of MPP3 in Bayelsa in relation to their intervention activities in the area of socio-economic development and the beneficiaries of these projects. Data is sought using both primary and secondary sources and analyzed using the descriptive and analytical method.

6.2 Population

The population of this study includes all MPP3 (240) projects in Bayelsa state. However, given the largeness of the population in question and for the purpose of this study, a sample is used as a representative of the entire population.

6.3 Sample Size

Eight communities in four local government areas in Bayelsa state were the micro project programme (MPP3) operated were selected as the sample.

6.4 Sampling Techniques

The type of sampling techniques employed in the course of collecting data for this research is the judgment or purposive sampling. Judgment or purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which case the sample is chosen by an expert in the subject matter to be “representative” (cobinna, 1996:1). The method is widely used and chosen because it helps to reduce the enormous cost and inconvenience that would have been associated with a sample of higher magnitude. As Kalton (1983:14) rightly observed, it is important here to ensure that the sample constitute a representative of the entire population. This method was deliberately used in the communities that the state regional office had carried out some of its projects.

7. Data Collection

7.1 Data Required

The information about the programme and project executed in the various communities, such as project location and identification process, implementation strategy, project duration, state of completion, level of community participation, beneficiaries and other related information for analysis.

7.2 Sources of Data Collection

In the course of examining the activities of mpp3 from the time of inception in April 2001 to its winding up in September 2006 and in a bid to access the programme’s contribution in socio-economic development in Bayelsa state, information is sourced from the project communities, mpp3 partner organization, mpp3 staff, mpp3 monthly bulletins and national daily papers.

7.3 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected using structured question, direct observation of state of project, as well as personal discussions with respondents in the project communities.

7.4 Data Analysis

In an attempt to foster simplicity in the interpretation of data and easy understanding of this research work, and based on the judgment or purposive sampling technique, the researchers employed the use of descriptive analysis.

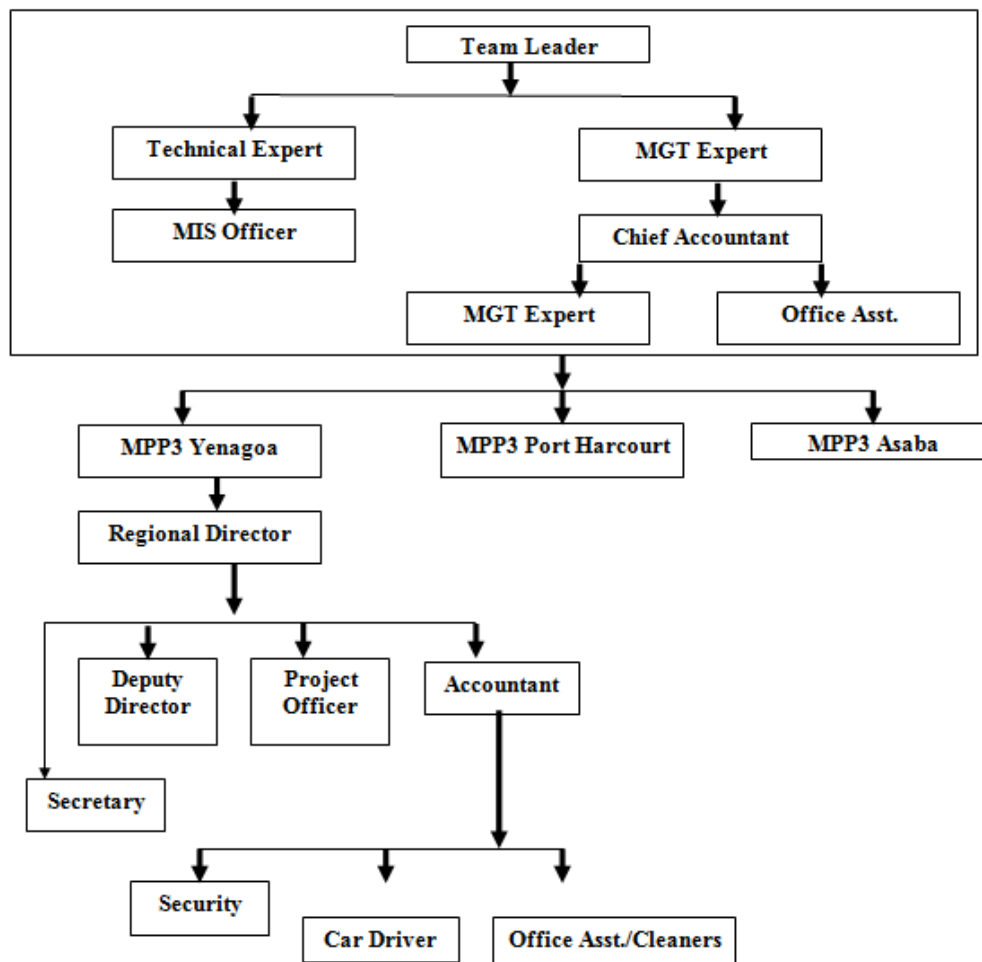
8. The Micro Project Programme Mpp3 in Nigeria: A History

The micro project programme in three states (MPPS) of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states of Nigeria is a European Union funded programme implemented through the National Planning Commission Office at the Presidency in Abuja.

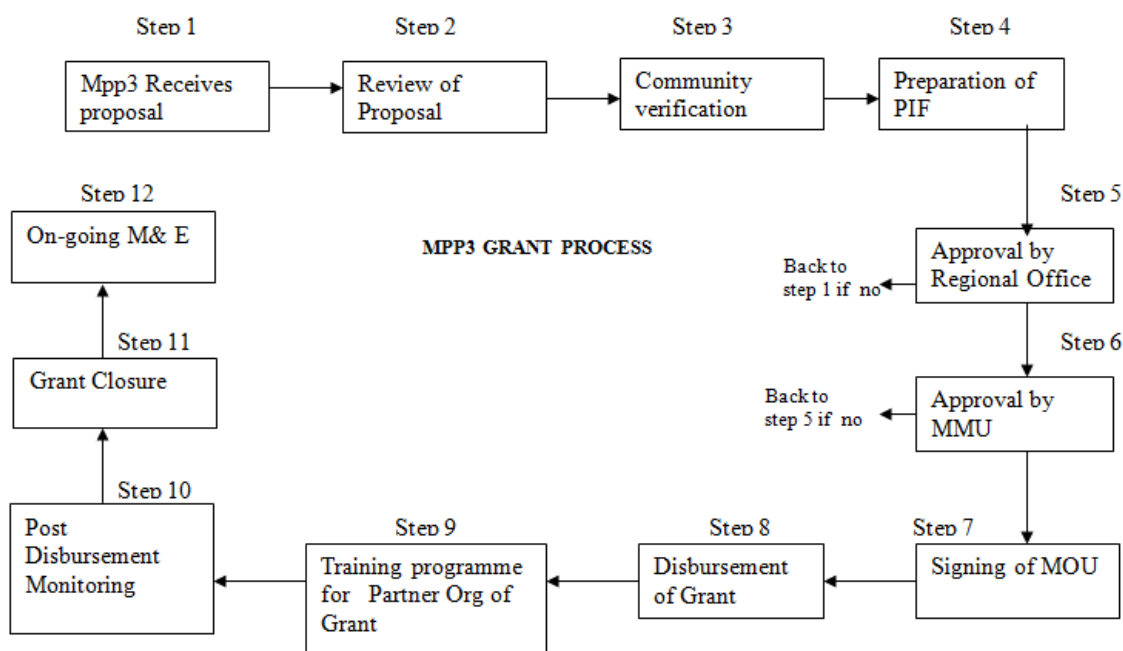
Given the height of violence, hostility, armed conflicts, militancy and other social vices in the core Niger Delta in the late 1990s by the people as a result of long years of abject neglect and deprivation by both the government and transnational corporations, oil exploration and exploitation activities in the region thawed considerably. The rancour threatened the smooth operation of the multinationals as most of their oil installations were left desolate. In 2001, the European Union nations as mother countries to all multinational oil exploration corporations in the Niger delta came through their political agency, the European Union (EU) to reduce the tension and create conducive atmosphere for business.

The programme began as a pilot for three states in the Niger-Delta namely; Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers, with a management head office at Port-Harcourt in addition to regional offices for each state at Yenagoa, Asaba and Port-Harcourt respectively. Below is the line of responsibility in the management organogram of the Programme as it applies to the Head and Regional Offices.

MPP3 Monogram



Given available data every MPP3 funded community based project has a project cycle of twelve steps and each project must not exceed duration of four months from the date of disbursement of grant as shown in the model below.



Source: MPP3 Programme Bulletin

From the foregoing, every proposal received by the MPP3 is formulated by the community and brought to the regional office for approval. Thus, the MPP3 office only reviews such proposal, verify them with the communities where they were initiated and create a project information file, which is approved or disapproved depending on whether it meets their criteria.

Each benefiting community is assisted by MPP3 partner organization – a registered state operational non-governmental organization (NGO), community based organization (CBO) or a local government area council who acts as interface between the host community and the mpp3 office from project identification through implementation as well as provide necessary technical and managerial assistance to the community in respect of the particular project so identified.

It should be emphasized that it is the responsibility of such NGO/CBO who in conjunction with the community identifies specific needs and areas of the local communities requiring micro-projects. They also assist the community in preparing the prescribed format, the project identification formula for project proposal along the lines of such identified needs, monitors the realization of the project during the process of implementation, project monitoring and evaluation as well as provide the community with technical and management assistance required for full realization of the aims and objectives of the project.

Moreover, each project funded by the European Union under the micro project programme (MPP3) which includes rehabilitation of rural water and sanitation systems, rehabilitation of community traffic system, construction of bridges and jetties, installation of boat traffic services, access canals and small community water ways, improvement of basic health service, improvement of the school systems/resource centers, vocational skills training, and revolving fund for micro credit and saving, involving a minimum of one hundred thousand naira (N100,000.00) to two million five hundred naira (N2,500,000.00) project grants covers only seventy five percent in cash. Benefiting communities are made to provide twenty five percent costs either in cash or kind.

The Micro Project Programme (Mpp3) In Bayelsa State

The micro project programme in Bayelsa state executed a total number of two hundred and forty (240) projects in the original eight local government areas in the state. Considering time and huge financial requirement for the statewide assessment, four local government areas (i.e. one, upland and three riverine) were selected for assessment. These are Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, Yenagoa and Ekeremor local government areas. Two projects in each LGA were randomly selected and the project details were obtained from the MPP3 databank for verification and assessment of the projects in the communities.

The researchers carried out a direct observation of project progress, while personal discussion interviews with different interests groups including men, women and youth in the various communities were carried out in order to obtain the following project details;

- i) Project history
- ii) Mode of project initiation

- iii) Project objectives
- iv) Project type (e.g. school, market, town hall etc.
- v) Implementation strategy
- vi) Project (expected) benefit
- vii) Level of community participation
- viii) Level of completion
- ix) Project ownership
- x) Causes of delay in completion (if any)/implementation challenges
- xi) Community contribution (cash or kind)
- xii) EU grant-(Equity contribution)
- xiii) Whether the project is effective and functional
- xiv) Maintenance/sustenance
- xv) Project duration

These information/project details obtained by these researchers directly from the project communities are used to compare with the information in MPP3 office and also to assess the level of socio-economic development and impact of such projects in the communities as well as the state.

8.1 Case 1

Construction of forty units market stalls at Asamabiri community in Sagbama Local Government Area of Bayelsa state

Background

Asamabiri is a riverine community located along the river Niger in Sagbama local government area of Bayelsa state. It has fresh water swamp vegetation. The occupation of the people is predominantly farming and fishing. They have a highly respected and organized traditional institution that contributes immensely to their peaceful co-existence, ensuring the continued practice of traditional beliefs and socio-cultural norms. To ensure proper accountability and, checks and balances in the community, there is an executive council, which runs the day-to-day affairs of the community. The Asamabiri market structures were initially built through community development efforts. The community markets stalls made with sticks and thatches had a lot of deficiencies. During rainy seasons, goods worth hundreds of thousands of naira are usually destroyed due to heavy rainfall in the area. Besides, farm products, the life and health of women and children are made vulnerable as they are unduly exposed to very harsh weather conditions.

Project History

Even though there are ten contiguous sister communities such as Esekniike, Osifo, Abuotor, Awurubia, Warri-Irri, Elemebiri, Ekperi-ware, Biseni, Asaba-Ase and Onitsha traders that always jointly attend the market, the market which is a major source of socio-economic life-wire in the community deteriorated almost to a no market stall condition. This situation caused a great concern to men and women as well as the youth of the community. Therefore, it was unanimously agreed that the construction of market stalls in the community should be a priority; consequently a proposal was forwarded to MPP3 in May 2004.

Project Initiation

The project came first among other community needs in the needs appraisal processes. However, the PRA was conducted by the partner organization to MPP3.

Implementation Strategy

The project implementation committee instituted by the community headed by the Community Development Committee (CDC), in conjunction with partner organization and MPP3 project officer employed skilled and semi-skilled workers from the community directly.

Objectives of the Project

They had the following as objectives of the project:

- i. To boost the socio-economic growth of the community
- ii. To reduce wastage
- iii. To reduce poverty
- iv. Create a common market among the contiguous sister communities
- v. To ensure effective exchange of goods and services.

Ownership

The people of Asamabiri said it is our market. The property is to improve our community. We contributed

towards its completion, cited in our community, therefore it is owned by us.

Community Participation

The community did not only desire the project, but also ensured its completion and put to use. Therefore, the community through the P.I.C mobilized every son and daughter of Asamabiri home and abroad to contribute a certain amount of money or drum of sand. They also carried all construction materials to site. The community never defaulted in the provision of unskilled labour including the molding of blocks for the project.

EU-Equity Contribution

The EU equity contribution in cash for the 40 unit market stalls project at Asamabiri was Two Million, Four Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty Two Naira (N2,421, 222.00), while the community contribution in kind as in budget summary is Six Hundred and Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Naira. Therefore, the total cost of the project amounted to Three Million One Hundred and Ninety One Thousand, Twenty Two Naira (3,191,022.00).

Implementation Challenges

There was no delay in the completion of the project. The Gant chart shows twelve weeks for the completion of the project, which the implementation committee, MPP3 and the partner organizations worked to achieve.

Project Beneficiaries

The expected beneficiaries of the project are numerous as traders and non-traders alike may benefit in the following ways:

- i. The project is also to benefit indigenes and non-indigenes of the community that trade there.
- ii. The construction of 40 units market stalls is to benefit men and women in Asamabiri as they will experience rapid economic growth
- iii. The beneficiaries of the project also include the ten contiguous communities that trade in the market.

Maintenance and Sustainability Plan

It is said that there is maintenance and sustainability plan for the project. The community appointed a market management committee to collect a levy of a hundred naira from every trader in the market. Every maintenance work is to be done with this fund to sustain the project.

8.2 Case 2

The Odoni Community Primary Health Care Center Project

Background

Odoni community has an estimated population of about three thousand nine hundred people. The community is situated along the Nun River, off the river Niger. It has fresh water swamp vegetation, similar to that of Asamabiri. The people of Odoni like their neighbours are predominately fishermen and farmers. They have a good number of elites in the cities. The Odoni community is a rural settlement with no means of transportation except the local boats that could link them to Odi and Kaiama, headquarters of Kolokuma/Opukuma LGA. They have a low per capita income.

There is a minimal presence of government in the community with the existence of a community primary school, a secondary school named after the two sister communities (Agbere-Odoni) secondary school. However there is no hospital, the only existing health facility is community health center accommodated in one room out of the headmasters quarter in the primary schools. There exist no accommodations for the staff of the health center.

Project History

Owing to the above background, when the partner organization that covers for Sagbama local government area (i.e. Environmental Monitors) and MPP3 visited Odoni for participatory learning and rural appraisal (PLA/PRA), two projects were presented as priority. The renovation of three-class room block and fresh construction (new structure) for the primary health centre. The latter was considered by the MPP3, given that, it was the only project that related to primary health which is one of the focal point of MPP3 in the state.

The proposal was developed by the partner organization in accordance with MPP3 guidelines and submitted in October 2002. However, the memorandum of understanding between the community, MPP3 and the partner organization to execute the project was signed in December 2002. Irrespective of the early signing of MOU they said, the project commenced on the 26th of September, 2003, and was completed in February 2004.

Project Initiation

The project like every other European Union funded micro projects was said to have been initiated by members of the community. Although, the partner organization was part of the facilitation process in arriving at the most prioritized need of the community using the various selection techniques with groups such as women, men, youths etc in the community.

Strategy of Implementation

The direct labour strategy was employed. Both skilled and unskilled laborers were sourced from the community. The community constituted a project implementation committee (PIC) of three men, two women in conjunction with the partner organization and negotiated for the cost of the various aspects of the work, such as block work, roofing, plastering etc and monitoring the timely completion in accordance with the MPP3 specification.

Project Objectives

The objectives as envisaged by the community and MPP3 in constructing the health center are as follows:

1. To improve the lives of peoples within Odoni and its neighborhood through adequate primary health care scheme.
2. To reduce the death rate through quality health care service.
3. To improve the quality of life of the people.
4. To reduce the danger of consumption or intake of fake and counterfeit drugs in the hands of the patent medicines.
5. To reduce the financial burden on the part of the community on primary health care through the provision of government assisted health care scheme.
6. To minimize the problem of trial and error means of treatment through the provision of qualitative health care service by qualified health officers.

Project Ownership

The community affirmed the position of MPP3 that the project (structure) belong to the community and that it's the responsibility of the community to maintain and sustain it.

Level of Community Participation

"We fully participated", the chief said, the community as its responsibility provided all unskilled labour. It also provided a level space of 200 by 100 (i.e. 3 plots), provided sand and gravel, carrying of cement and all other Materials to site and clearing of Project site. By estimation, the community contribution amounted to the sum of about Four hundred and seventy Nine thousand, Four Hundred Naira only (N479, 400.00).

EU-Equity Contribution

The total cost of the project amounted to One Million Eight Hundred and Sixty One Thousand, One Hundred and Ninety Nine Naira Only (N1, 861,199.00). The MPP3 grant was One Million Three Hundred and Eighty One Thousand, Seven Hundred Ninety Nine Naira only (1,381, 799.00). Thus, the community contribution that was in kind was worth Four Hundred and Seventy Nine Thousand, Four Hundred Naira only (N479, 400.00).

Delay in Project Implementation

There was no stated or recorded delay in the completion of the project. Considering the enormity of work done, one will give kudos to the community PIC, the partner organization as well as the MPP3 staff having effectively completed the project of constructing a health center in such an interior rural settlement in five months.

In the area of late take-off after signing the MOU the MPP3 said, it was none of the community or of the partner organization's fault but that it was purely a matter of administrative policy not to start all projects at once, due to financial management, project monitoring and evaluation.

Beneficiaries of the Project

The question as who is to benefit from the project was copiously answered. Beneficiaries of the project include members of the community-men, women, youth children and sister communities are all to benefit from the Odoni community primary health care project.

Sustainability Plan

From the project history, it is clear that the health center in Odoni is the only government administered primary health care scheme in the community of about Three Thousand Nine hundred Persons (MPP3 record). Government provided every requirement to run the health scheme including personnel with the exception of a defined building as the health center.

The community's desire to have a standard health care scheme, which was their ultimate interest, was manifested in their contributions in the building of this project and is a pointer strong enough to sustain this project. They will not hesitate to task themselves for fund and repair the structure where the need arises.

9. Socio Economic Impact of the Mpp3 Programme in Bayelsa State Observed Socio Economic Effects

The European Union MPP3 programme has as at the end of September 2006 implemented over 860 micro projects with an average cost of some N2.5 million at a total cost of over N2.6 billion. These projects have assisted over 1,000 communities and have benefited an estimated 2,500,000 people in the three states of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers. According to available statistics over 30% of these projects are water supply projects with the remainder for schools, community town halls and health centers. It is observed that incomes were generated, level of poverty reduced, employment was created and new socio economic infrastructures were provided. For the purpose of this study, eight projects in four local government areas in Bayelsa state are used in this socio economic impact assessment as presented in the table below.

TABLE 1
Tabular Presentation of Socio Economic Impact of the Mpp3 Programme in Bayelsa State using Eight Projects in Four Local Government Areas

S/N	Community	Socio Economic Infrastructure provided	Funds provided	Employment created	Duration of projects	Income generated	Rate of Poverty reduction
1	AGUDAMA-EPIEZ YELGA	Six classrooms block with staff office and supply of office furniture	EUEG: 1,930,779.56 CCF: 657,840.00	Temporary 6 Permanent 6	5 months	6 x 24 x 100=144,000 Monthly (N720,000)	High
2	SWALI YELGA	Community Hall renovation	EUEG: 951,358.75 CCF: 480,000	Temporary 4 Permanent 2	3 months	6 x 24 x 100=N96,000 monthly (N720,000)	Low
3	TEMEKIRI-ZION EKELGA	Six classrooms block with staff office and supply of office furniture	EUEG: 1,955,399.75 CCF:657,140	Temporary 6 Permanent 112	5 months	6x24 x 100 =144,000 Monthly (N 720,000)	Fair
4	TORU-NDORO EKELGA	Completion of youth corper lodge	EUEG: 1,274,894 CCF: 429,000.50	Temporary 4 Permanent 4	4 months	4x 24 x 1000=N96,000 monthly (N384,000)	Fair
5	ASAMABIRI SALGA	Construction of forty unit market stall	EUG: 2,241,222 CCG:609,800	Temporary 10 Permanent 46	2 months	10 x 24 x 100 N240,000 monthly (N720,000)	High
6	ODONI SALGA	Community health center	EUEG: 1,381,799 CCG: 479,400	Temporary 4 Permanent 10	5 months	4 x 24 x 100=N96,000 Monthly (N480,000)	Fair
7	TORUAGOOBIRI III SILGA	Three classrooms block with staff office and furniture	EUEG: 1,581,242.50 CCG: 531,240	Temporary 4 Permanent 5	5 months	4 x 24 x 100=N96,000 monthly (N480,00)	Fair
8	BILOU-AGOBIRI SILGA	3 ring well for the supply of portable water	EUEG: 640 CCG:224,800	Temporary 4 Permanent nil	3 months	4 x 24 x 100=N96,000 monthly (N288,000)	Low
Total		8 projects	EUEG: 11,497,335.56 CCF: 3,589,700.5	Temporary 42 Permanent 185		3,600,000.00	

Source: MPP3 Bayelsa Regional Office

Explaining the observed Effects

The table 1 above consists of seven columns and eight rows. Column I shows the names of communities and their local government areas where the MPP3 projects are sited. Column two indicates the type of socio economic infrastructure provided by the programme in the specific community. Column three is about the sources of funding-community counterpart funding and the European Union Equity Grant. Column four show the temporary and permanent employment created by the MPP3 programme. Column five depicts the duration of each project implemented in the sample cases. Column six and seven clearly depicts income generated and rate

of poverty reduction respectively brought about by the programme.

Effect on socio-economic infrastructure

From the table above it is clear from column two that, out of eight projects in eight communities, three projects are on the area of classroom and one youth Corper's lodge (i.e. four on the educational sector); one project each for water supply, health, market and community town-hall.

Effect on Employment

Column 4 in table 1 considers employment created in the various communities as a result of the MPP3 project. Each project case is treated as temporary and permanent employment. From column four, we can see that there were forty-four (44) cases of temporary employment created as skilled workers during the implementation of the projects.

Majority of the projects were taken by government upon completion who employed permanent staff. The Temekiri Zion community project is now the headquarters of the Ekeremor local Government area rural development center where a total of one hundred and twelve persons are currently employed. A total of one hundred and eighty five persons (185) are currently employed in these eight communities through the MPP3 projects. From column five, we discover that most of the projects were not completed within the MPP3 scheduled time of four months. Four of the projects were completed in five months; while three were completed in three months, only one was completed on schedule.

Effect on Income Generation

Column 6 table I clearly shows the specific amount of income generated on monthly basis besides the permanent employment. A monthly income of one hundred and forty four thousand naira (N144, 000.00) was generated in two communities for a period of five months. Two hundred and forty thousand Naira (N240, 000.00), was generated as monthly income for a period of five months in two communities, four months and three months respectively in two communities.

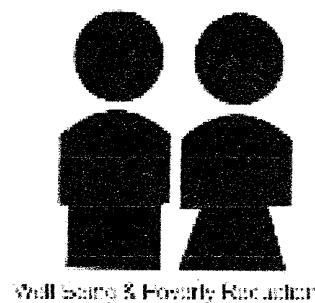
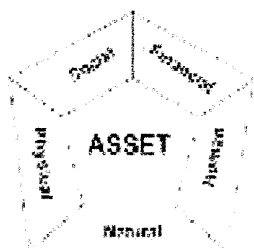
A total of three million six hundred thousand naira (3,600,000.00) was generated within the said period through the micro projects programme in these eight communities beside the salaries of permanent staff employed by government after the completion of the projects.

Effect on Poverty Reduction

Generally the people especially in communities where projects were implemented are poor, disadvantaged and needy, impoverished and are without enough food, education and all the things that are necessary for people to live a happy and comfortable life.

According to the United Nation Millennium Declaration, in September 2000, for poverty to be reduced in the developing world, development agencies need help to transform the broad set of institutions (i.e. the set of formal and informal rules, norms and values that operates within societies that determine the quality of growth, service delivery and human development.

In line with the above, the EU-Nigeria micro project programme established a standard of operation such as the (i) Inclusive institution which ensures and promotes equal access to opportunities, enabling every one to contribute to social and economic progress and share in its reward (ii) cohesive societies that enable women and men to work together to address common needs, overcome constraints and consider diverse interests. They resolve differences in a civil, non-confrontational way, promoting peace and security; and (iii) accountable institutions that were transparent and respond to public interest in an effective, efficient and fair way in the management of estimated grants of over N2.6 billion would have in no doubt brought about well-being and poverty reduction.



Source: Social Cohesion, Institution and growth, DEC, THE WORLD BANK page 4.

However, for the purpose of this analysis, column seven from the table 1 strictly on the rate of poverty reduction based on the level of income generated from the various projects in a given community. Since it is a concept that cannot be measured in absolute terms, we have rated the reduction as high, fair and low based on the level of income generated by the given projects. From the table above, there are three rates of high, three of fair and two low. By this analysis, there are six cases beyond average, high and fair put together, with only two cases of low. We can therefore infer from the analysis that the MPP3 programme has led to reduction of poverty in the state having in mind the multiplier effect for each case.

Improving the Effects

The socio economic effects of these projects could be improved upon if temporary employed cases were to be made permanent. The implementation period is too short, therefore, the level of employment especially the temporary cases were not long enough to impact the people as it would have been if all the cases were permanent.

The European Union Equity Grant (EUEG) needs to be increased as this is tied to the level of income generation in the various project communities. Given the multiplier principle, with the high marginal propensity to consume as saving is almost absent in the various communities, an increased European Union Grant means higher multiplier effect to impact on the people irrespective of whether they have been employed or not by the programme.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Niger delta is the main oil-producing area in Nigeria. It provides most of the 95% of government revenues deriving from crude oil production. However, many communities in the area are amongst the least developed in the country. In December 1999, the European community (EC) adopted a micro programme (MPP3) for the three states of the Niger delta: Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. MPP3 is a form of social integrated rural socio economic development project funded by the commission of European communities in cooperation with the rural communities.

Given that the concept of development stands for a gradual process by which society improves its capacity to produce the goods and services its people want, such improved capacity is usually manifested amongst other things as follows:

- i) A reduction in the level of unemployment.
- ii) Reduction in the level of absolute poverty (i.e. the proportion of the population living below the poverty line).
- iii) A reduction in the level of economic inequalities.
- iv) Greater output of goods and services (i.e. economic growth)
- v) A reduction in the level of illiteracy
- vi) Better services
- vii) Self reliance (i.e. greater technological capability)
- viii) A generally clean environment and
- ix) An improvement in the quality of life, generally measured by access to clean and safe water, access to improved housing conditions (Akpakpan:2006)

Considering the survey conducted in the course of this study, both primary and secondary data as well as direct observation shows that MPP3 has made a positive impact on the lives of their project communities especially in the area of infrastructural development on sustainable basis, income generation, employment creation and poverty reduction. But this is not adequate for assessment as development.

The achievements of MPP3 in Bayelsa state are still a far cry from socio economic development. Secondary data shows that six batches of forty projects were implemented with ninety-six percent success in the state. However, the fact that two hundred and forty communities with new MPP3 project were successfully implemented is an improvement on the initial grossly inadequately poor and slack conditions in over ten thousand (rural) communities. The researchers therefore, conclude that the EU Micro project programme (MPP3) is a success in the Bayelsa state within its confines of definition and objectives but it is not elaborate and encompassing enough to bring about the true development by definition and essence.

Recommendation

International partnership (for socio-economic development) is an indispensable strategy for the development of our rural communities especially in the face of globalization in today's world. But government has not actually put in place development programmes that will give the rural populaces the required grassroots foundation for a self reliant, self confident and self-sustaining development process. It is worth recommending that rural dwellers be abreast with programmes such as MPP3 to involve the people participate fully, effectively and efficiently in all development activities from conceptualization through planning to execution as well as the enjoyment of the benefits of the development process.

From the available secondary data, it is observed by these researchers that there was no visible government presence in both project initiation and MPP3 grant process (which involves twelve different stages). It is therefore, recommended by the researchers that government should take the steering of every development programmes for both urban and rural areas in the country. There should be an effective monitoring team at various levels of government to ensure effective implementation and completion of every project embarked upon by MPP3 or related programmes.

There should be stability and continuity of such programmes in the country for wide coverage. A change of government should not deter an on going rural development programme. However, what is required is a stable and virile system of government whose leadership has the political will and commitment for rural development.

It is also the recommendation of the researchers that every project initiation should be carried out in the rural community and process should involve both men, women and youths from the community i.e., bottom to top and not top to bottom approach. This will not only lead to the approval of irrelevant project but attracts full participation of community members in implementation and encourage sustainability of such projects.

The financial support of MPP3 to development partner organizations should be increased on the per project bases. It is also the recommendation of the researchers that the financial autonomy given to the development partner organization in the management of the community funds be reconsidered in order to avoid fraudulent transactions.

The programme should be made more community centered rather than the development partner organization and the regional offices. This will create more community awareness and participation, sincerity and sustainability of projects. Offices of the development areas partner organizations should be open in all the local government areas of the state, while only community most prioritized and useful projects should be executed and not projects in the best interest of development partner organizations.

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