

THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONALLY FUNDED PROJECTS IN AKOKO SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines how internationally funded projects are identified as the needs of the communities. The primary data source for this study was through the administration of questionnaires. Seven communities were selected and a total of 250 structured questionnaires were administered. The study shows that projects were identified as felt needs by the communities. The rural people were consulted before the implementation of the projects was commenced. It was observed however, that projects were not carried out directly by international organizations but through the local government officials. It was also observed that the projects were not evenly distributed within the local government area. Most of the projects were found to be functional with the exception of a few. Our study further shows that projects were effectively utilized. It is recommended that the communities should be involved in the maintenance of the projects.

Introduction

Prior to the mid 1980s, with the exception of oil, Nigeria demonstrated similar economic and institutional characteristics like other developing countries. Exports depended heavily on a small number of commodities and export taxes represented a significant portion of government revenues. Consequently, the Nigeria economy was in distress and poverty was wide-spread. In response, the Nigerian government like many African countries sought relief from creditors and donors such as the Breton-Woods Institutions (BWI), namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; and the European Union (EU), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United National Development Programme, World Health Organization etc.

For example, the European Union funded Micro Projects Programme in six states of the Niger Delta (MPP6) successfully. Over the life span of the Programme from April 2003 until April 2008, MPP6 implemented over 1,900 micro-projects in the six beneficiary states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Imo, Edo, Ondo and Cross River. With a total budget of 42 million Euros, or some 7 billion naira, MPP6 micro projects have benefited over 5 million people.

The MPP6 Programme worked directly with disadvantaged communities who decided on the type of micro projects with the highest priority. Project Implementation Committees formed by the communities implemented the micro-projects, with assistance from local Non-Governmental Organisations. To ensure

that micro-projects reflect their felt needs and for the community to maintain the micro-projects, communities had to contribute 25% of the cost of the micro-project (i.e. counterpart fund).

Research Problem

Rural development is considered as the process by which the majority of the people living in the rural areas are assisted in solving their problems and improving their living standard. Since the government alone is not able to solve these problems, NGO's and the international organizations have taken it upon themselves to provide some of these basic amenities in order to raise the living standard of the grass-root people. Oftentimes sponsored projects are not accepted or utilized because they are not the needs of the people. Once completed the donor agencies and the government never border to get feed back if the objectives of their projects are realized.

However, considering the execution of these projects by international organizations the questions bordering our minds are how effective are these projects in solving the identified problems and improving the living standard of the people in rural area? How are these projects identified as the needs of the communities? Are they centrally located within the communities? Are they evenly distributed among the communities within the local government area? These are some of the questions this paper seeks to answer.

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follow:

- (1) To examine how these projects were identified as felt needs within the communities,
- (2) to examine the distribution of these projects within the local government area and
- (3) to examine the functionality of these projects with a view to making appropriate recommendations for improvement of project implementation.

Study Area

Akoko South-West Local Government Area lies roughly between latitude 7° 20'N and 7° 30'N and longitude 5° 30'E and 5° 50'E (see fig 1). It is located on a dissected plateau and is made up of many undulating hills and valleys. It covers an area of about 30 square kilometers. The local government has a mean annual rainfall of 1,270mm and mean annual temperature of 21.1°C, which results in a very humid condition. Because of the favorable climatic condition, there is abundant vegetation cover. The local government is not blessed with enough fertile land because of the various hills and plateau that cover the whole area and this has generally affected the productive capacity of the people in agriculture. With a population of about 22, 9486 according to 2006

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population census, the study area is made up of more than 10 villages. About two third of the population is engaged in farming and most of the farmers are illiterate with very low income.

Because of the rural nature of the local government, Akoko South-West is one of the three (3) focal local government areas that UNICEF chose to sponsor projects in. In addition, Ondo state is one of the six states of the Niger Delta chosen by European Union (EU) for the micro-projects programme in rural areas and the local government is also one of the beneficiaries of these programmes. It becomes relevant then to examine the impact of these projects on the people.

Methodology

The primary data source for this study included data generated through the administration of questionnaires, field observation, and structured interviews. The target population of the research is made up of all the communities in Akoko South-West Local Government Area where these sponsored projects are available.

Akoko South-West Local Government Area is one of the focal Local Government of UNICEF. Two communities were chosen as their focal communities. These are Uba and Akowonjo.

The following are the projects sponsored by UNICEF from September 2005 to date.

- Establishment of early child care centers at both focal communities.
- Establishment of Health center at each of the focal communities.
- Provision of Hospital equipment and drugs to the Health centre.
- 28 furniture chairs, 7 round – table and snooze mat donated to the local government area.
- Drilling of three (3) boreholes at Uba and Abulenla/Akowonjo.
- Construction of VIP latrine projects in each of the focal communities.
- Establishment of model snailery projects in the two (2) focal communities.
- Sitting of Garri processing industry at Abulenla in Akowonjo (one of the focal communities).

While the notable projects embarked upon by European Union (MPP6) in Akoko South-West Local Government Area include the followings:

- Building of community Hall at Ikese-Oka.
- Building and equipping of Health Centre at Ikanmu, Oka – Akoko.
- Building and equipping of Health Center at Okia-Oka-Akoko.
- Building of Community Hall at Uba Oka.

- Siting of bore-holes at Simerin-Oka, Owalusi, Akungba etc
- Siting of palm oil processing industry at Ayegunle-Oka.

A total of 250 structured questionnaires were administered to both the stake holders and the officials of these organizations. Seven communities were selected and questionnaires were administered proportionally according to their population.

Conceptual Framework

Among the relevant concepts pertinent to this study are the concepts of development (Sada, 1988; Mabogunje, 1980; Todaro, 1985) sustainable development (Elliot, 1999) human development (Sen,1989), human development index (Sen, 1989), standard of living, the Millennium Development Goals (Lotse, 2006), quality of life (Nwagbara ,2003) concept of poverty (Okafor2005), concept of education (Okafor and Onokerhoraye, 1994) concept of empowerment (Sachs, 2005) the concept of infrastructure (Klugman, 2002), the concept of evaluation (Osamwonyi, 2006) etc.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. shows the 250 public respondents of which 30 reside in Ikese – Oka, 44 in Uba –Oka, 26 in Simerin, 30 in Akowonjo, 60 in Akusa (Akungba), 30 in Okia. and 30 in Owalusi.

TABLE 1: Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Ikese	30	12.0	12.0	12.0
UBA	44	17.6	17.6	29.6
Simerim	26	10.4	10.4	40.0
Akwowonjo	30	12.0	12.0	52.0
Akusa/Akungba	60	24.0	24.0	76.0
Okia	30	12.0	12.0	88.0
Owalusi	30	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2009

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Table 2 reveals that of the 250 respondents, 154 are males 74 are females and 22 respondents did not respond to the question.

Table 2 Ages of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under 25yrs	22	8.8	8.8	8.8
25-34yrs	47	18.8	18.8	27.6
35-44yrs	98	39.2	39.2	66.8
45-54yrs	41	16.4	16.4	83.2
55yrs and Above	19	7.6	7.6	90.8
No response	23	9.2	9.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2009

Table 2 shows that 8.8% of the respondents are under 25yrs, 18.8% are between the ages of 25-34yrs, 39.2% are between the ages of 35-44yrs, 16.4% are between the ages of 45 -54yrs, 7.6% are 55yrs and above; and 9.2% did not respond to the question.

Table 3: Occupation of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students	23	9.2	9.2	9.2
Farmer	114	45.6	45.6	54.8
Trader	41	16.4	16.4	71.2
Civil servant	33	13.2	13.2	84.4
Others	16	6.4	6.4	90.8
No response	23	9.2	9.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2009

Table 3 shows that 32 (9.2%) respondents are students, 114 (45.6%) farmers 41 (16.4%) are traders, 33 (13.2%) civil servants, 16 (6.4%) others were tailors, mechanics among others; and 23 (9.2%) did not respond to the question.

Table 4: Identification of Project as Needs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
By individual	8	3.2	3.2	3.2
Community collectively	223	89.2	89.2	92.4
By International organization	15	6.0	6.0	98.4
No response	4	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2009

Table 4 reveals that 3.2% of the total percentages of projects were identified by individual, 89.2% projects are identified by community collectively, 6.0% by international organization and 1.6% did not respond to the question.

Table 5: Project Finance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Jointly	231	92.4	92.4	92.4
Solely by international organizations	19	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2009

Table 5 shows that 92.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that the projects were jointly financed while 7.6% said the projects are solely financed by international organizations.

Table 6: Impacts of Projects

	Health care centres	Boreholes	VIP Latrine	Model snailery	Garri processing industry	Community hall	Primary school
Income generation	.2	0.3	0.6	45.9	10.6	6.9	0.8
Improved welfare	27.6	11.1	24.3	-----	-----	28.5	48.0
Improved standard of living	16.5	19.7	31.4	-----	-----	22.2	27.6
Improved health	27.8	20.0	42.0	-----	-----	-----	-----

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Create employment	27.6	-----	0.6	33.3	33.3	32.6	22.8
No impact	.2	48.9	1.2	20.7	20.7	9.7	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field survey, 2009

Table 6 above shows the various impacts of the internationally funded projects on the host communities. It can be said that healthcare centres have impacted highly on the communities. The low impact of the borehole project is attributable to three reasons:

(a) Some of the boreholes are not functional; (b) those that are functional are too far from homes (c) poor quality of water of some of the boreholes. The V.I.P toilets have been socially relevant to the communities, while the Model Snailery project has created job opportunities and avenue for income generation for the people. A major project that has impacted positively on the communities is the garri processing industry. It has created jobs, and served as a source of income generation for the peasant farmers. The primary school and the community hall project jointly have impacted positively on the communities in terms of employment creation, income generation and improving the general standard of living of the people

Test of Hypothesis

Table 7: Impact of Projects on Socio-Economic Life

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	228	125.0	103.0
No	22	125.0	-103.0
Total	250		

Source: field survey, 2009

$$X^2 \text{ tab} = 3.814$$

$$X^2 \text{ cal} = 169.744$$

It was hypothesized that projects have no positive impact on the socio economic life of the people. The chi square result shows that the calculated x^2 (169.744) is greater than the table value (3.814). We therefore reject the null hypothesis. This therefore implies that there is a significant positive impact ($\alpha=0.05$) of projects on socio economic life of the people. This is basically due to the fact that the people were fully (89.2%) involved in identifying the projects as felt need.

In assessing the utility of projects it was hypothesized that there is no effective utilization of projects across study area.

Table 8: Effective Utilization of Projects

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	105	125.0	-20.0
No	145	125.0	20.0
Total	250		

Source: field survey, 2009

$X^2_{cal} = 6.400$

$X^2_{tab} = 3.814$

The result of chi square test shows that the calculated X^2 (6.400) is greater than the table value (3.814), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is effective utilization of the projects across study area. This result corresponds with the findings of Nigeria’s Community Development Program (CDP, 2001). In their findings, they pointed out that if only the rural people are consulted and carried along in the projects that will affect them; they will do all in their power to utilize effectively the facilities in their localities.

t-test was used to test the functionality of the projects across the study area. It was hypothesized that projects are not functional cross study area.

Table 9 T-Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
HEALTH CARE CENTRE	136.000	134	.000	1.007	.99	1.02
BOREHOLE	85.058	363	.000	1.797	1.76	1.84
VIP LATRINE MODEL	39.827	73	.000	1.054	1.00	1.11
SNAILERY PROJECT	36.340	73	.000	1.068	1.01	1.13
GARRI PROCESSING INDUSTRY	24.884	43	.000	1.091	1.00	1.18

Source: field survey, 2009

Since the value is less than 0.05 it means that projects are functional across the study area.

Accessibility of projects was tested using t-test. It was hypothesized that projects are not accessible across the study area.

Table 10: t-test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
HEALTH CARE CENTRE	39.652	129	.000	1.115	1.06	1.17
BOREHOLE	58.083	388	.000	1.219	1.18	1.26
VIP LATRINE	75.000	73	.000	1.014	.99	1.04
MODEL SNAILERY PROJECT	75.000	73	.000	1.014	.99	1.04
GARRI PROCESSING INDUSTRY	46.000	44	.000	1.022	.98	1.07
BUILDING OF COMMUNITY HALL	67.000	65	.000	1.015	.98	1.05
OTHER	3.000	1	.205	1.500	-4.85	7.85

The value of the t-test result is less than 0.05, it therefore means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The implication is that the projects are accessible across the study area.

Summary

The study shows that projects were identified as needs within the communities. The rural people were consulted before the projects were commenced. This could be the reason for the effectiveness of the projects. The study also shows that one of the conditions attached to the projects is joint sponsorship. This implies that for any project to take place, the communities must also contribute their quota. This strategy made the community to see the project as theirs and hence, ensured the success. It was observed however that projects were not carried out directly by international organizations but through the local government officials with the attendant delays in execution.

In terms of distribution of projects within the local government area, the study shows that project were not evenly distributed within the local government area. This may be due to differences in the population across the local government area.

The study shows that projects are functional in general but individually some are not. For example 20.3% of boreholes are functional compared with the 79.7% of non functional boreholes. This shows a very low functionality ratio of the borehole projects across the local government area.

The result also shows that projects were effectively utilized. It was however observed that the level of utilization would have been higher were it not for poor maintenance culture on the part of the officials at the local government.

Conclusion

Evidences from this study have shown that considerable amount of resources have been invested in the provision of social amenities by the international organizations in the rural area of Akoko South Local Government Area with positive results. More of these projects are required in our rural areas in order to improve the standard of living of the people. However, there is the need for pragmatic approach to the establishment of projects and this can only be achieved if the people are involved i.e. community participation should be encouraged to ensure accessibility, functionality and effectiveness of the projects. Given the tremendous social impacts of these internationally sponsored projects, government should partner with international organizations for the funding of more people oriented projects or programmes in the rural areas and in the country as a whole.

Recommendations

Based on the findings drawn from this research the following recommendations are made in order to improve the impacts of sponsored projects in Akoko South-West Local Government Area.

- 1) More facilities should be provided to improve the lot of the rural people using the strategies of consultation and joint sponsorship. These strategies will make the people accept the project as theirs and so, give it maximum support.
- 2) Communities should report to local government officials when there are problems with projects. The communities should also be properly involved in the maintenance of these projects.
- 3) The local government should also put machinery in place to monitor projects from time to time. Government should also take it upon itself to repair non functional projects and make sure that they are in good condition.
- 4) The donor agencies should on their own, be involved in projects monitoring from time to time.

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