



An Appraisal of Community Development Efforts in Ikot Ekpene and Ikono Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State

EKANEM, Immaculata Mathias

Department of Agricultural Economics and Resources Management, Akwa Ibom State University,
Obio Akpa campus

Abstract. This paper focuses on the appraisal of community development projects in Ikot Ekpene and Ikono Local Government Areas. It identifies the self-help developmental projects in Ikot Ekpene and Ikono LGAs. Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area is an Urban Centre in Annang tribe while Ikono Local Government Area is a rural area in Ibibio tribe. Five projects from each LGA were purposively selected. Thirty opinion leaders of the community members from each Local Government Area were selected. Structured sets of questionnaire and oral interview were used to collect the data. Cross tabulation, simple percentages and ratios were used to analyze the data. The result revealed that, 100% of the projects with socio-economic and educational benefits are based in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area; and 60% of the projects with socio-cultural benefits are located in Ikono Local Government Area. Ikot Ekpene LGA contributed a matching grant of 32% while Ikono LGA contributed 64%. Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Supported Ikot Ekpene LGA financially and otherwise more than Ikono LGA. The ratio of completed projects to the uncompleted ones in Ikot Ekpene LGA was 3:2 and that of Ikono LGA was 2:3. Communities with completed project all agreed that they benefited from their projects. All communities agreed at 100% that finance was their major obstacle to project completion at the stipulated time. Apart from contributions, launching and donations, assistance from Government, Non-Governmental Organization and Philanthropist were good financial sources of fund for project implementation and completion. Among other recommendations given in the body of the paper, communities who require supports from Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should embark on projects with Socio-economic/Educational benefits than Socio-cultural since such projects tends to interest such sponsors for the benefits of the communities, the tenants and those of neighbouring communities. They should also contribute their required amount to meet their matching grants. All on-going projects should be completed to avoid wastage of resources.

Keyword: Self-help, On-going, Completion, Community, Development, Project.

INTRODUCTION

In the previous years, most communities were very primitive and undeveloped socially, economically intellectually, physically and in many other aspects of life. Experiences suggest that, a community can hardly be developed without the efforts of the members of that community. According to (Kenny, 1994) a community can develop if members of that community come together to discover their needs and work towards its achievement.

A community development might be initiated by the owners of the community; and this will involve the efforts of the entire community.(Obibuaku,1983). He added that, the development of a community arises as a result of the imbalance in social amenities or unavailability of certain valuable assets to make life meaningful, comfortable and interesting for the people of the community. Community development therefore focuses on both agricultural and non-agricultural strategies of solving the problems of the community. The non-agricultural means of community development include, health Centre, roads, building of town halls, electricity .and water supplies etc.

The agricultural methods of community development involve agricultural co-operatives, agricultural extension services etc. Obibuaku also emphasized that .the community people are likely to respond to the programmes and projects which are group oriented and which will meet their needs.

Berker(1997) in his view of participation declares that, there will be greater public spirit; better maintained physical environment, more user satisfaction and significant financial changes if the residents and the management are actively involved in the development process of community development.

Sanoff (1990) considered the main aim of participation as involving the citizen in design planning and other governmental processes to increase their trust and confidence to accept decisions and solutions to their problems. Also, to make chance

for the citizen for design and to plan decision making that will improve plans, decisions and service delivery. Hester (1990) says that, involving the users' group makes them to be aware of the consequences of the decision made.

Ojoko (2000) identified mismanagement role of community development agent as a serious obstacle to community projects. He added that, other obstacles include limited good model, relations in the city, external proposal forced on the people, village syndrome to change, special values and attitudes vested interest and beliefs. Ojoko therefore, suggested that the development agent should adopt persons at the top prestige scale first, identify familiar cultural elements, anticipate where he expects to realize , and remember that, a change agent is not always appreciated. Ojoko (1994) views historical observation, interview and questionnaire as techniques for effective social change in self and community development projects. Hunter(1940) recommended that decision made for community development should be less expensive in terms of energy and money.

To promote the good health of the workers, Davies and Davies (1993) said that preventive medicine is the best method of providing effective health and social services for solving difficult health problems.

According to Yaffey and tride,(1992) Project appraisal simply entails the evaluation of community development efforts. It is the last stage in the process of community development projects. Evaluation process is what sustains a project. This helps to detect faults and identifies areas of the project that are not properly handled. The basic objective of the economic appraisal of projects is to allow a judgment on whether economic resources are being used as effectively as possible in those projects selected for implementation.

In project appraisal, the quality and standard of a project is the main focus. The project is evaluated to discover whether it has been executed according to the specifications. Evaluation therefore, considers the efficiency of the whole system from the first stage of planning through implementation to completion of the

projects. Zuofa (2001) The following guide has been outlined by Zuofa (2001) for project appraisal. The need for project location, Location of the project, Nature of the project, Sponsorship of the project, Time of completion, Function/Non-functional, Achievements, Constraints, Comments or Recommendation based on observation.

According to Agumagu (2004) many community self-help projects fail to attain its completion due to inefficiency in monitoring and supervision. It is therefore, imperative to evaluate community self-help projects adequately in order to identify those factors that may hinder their completion and thus preventing resource wastages. In community development efforts, percentage contribution by the community is as important as the matching grant to be provided by the Government; if the project is to be implemented and completed at the planned stipulated time. According to Lt. Governor Ellspermann, planning grants are important first step as communities look for ways to improve their basic infrastructure. The communities must take this step first and then Government will then do its own parts by providing the matching grant for the proposed project.

STUDY AREA

The study area of the research is Ikot Ekpene and Ikono Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. The people of Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area are made up of the Annangs, and they speak Annang dialect. Ikot Ekpene is popularly known as the Raffia City because of her endowment in Crafts and Culture. The people are actively involved in trading and community development. Ikono is a cradle of Ibibio land. The people of Ikono speak Ibibio dialect. Ikono people, although very close to the Annangs in Ikot Ekpene are known for their cultural heritage which bear strict similarities with those of other communities in the Ibibio land. Ikono soil is very rich in mineral and natural resources, such as, limestone clay, silicon, gravel, etc. Rice and other crops are produced in the area.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study used was five projects from each Local Government Areas purposively selected. Thirty of the community members preferably the opinion leaders from each Local Government Area were sampled, making a total of three hundred respondents from the two Local Government Areas. A face to face validation was employed and simple descriptive statistics such as cross tabulations and percentages to ascertain the reliability of the data. In the sampling procedure and size, both purposive and the simple random sampling technique were used to select both the physical areas of the study and the respondents.

Purposive sampling method was used to select communities involved in the study. The criterion variable was on communities that had self-help community project between 1997 and 2007. Within each community, however, the simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents and the opinion leaders were also interviewed. Structured sets of questionnaires were administered to respondents and oral interview was used to cross check the information from the questionnaire. The data from the field questionnaire were extracted and collated. The data covered many questions on the projects before and after the execution. Simple descriptive statistics such as cross –tabulation and percentages were used for data analysis.

The result of the study revealed that 100% of the projects with socio-economic and educational benefits are based in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area; and such projects include market construction, water project, health Centre and primary school construction project. 60% of the projects with socio –cultural benefits are located in Ikono Local Government Area. Such projects include town halls and rural electrification. The projects executed by the communities involved, were most acceptable by community members and were the most needed projects for those communities.

STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The ratio of completed projects to the uncompleted projects in Ikot Ekpene and Ikono Local Government Areas were 3:2 and 2:3 respectively.

STATUS OF SELF-HELP PROJECTS IN IKOT EKPENE AND IKONO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN 2005

S/N	TYPE OF PROJECT	COMMUNITY	L .G.A.	LEVEL OF PROJECT
1	MARKET	UTU IKOT ESSIEN	IKOT EKPENE	ON-GOING
2	WATER	IBONG IKOT AKAN	IKOTEKPENE	COMPLETED
3	MARKET	IFUHO	IKOTEKPENE	COMPLETED
4	HEALTH CENTRE	ABIA AKPO IKOT ESSIEN	IK. EKPENE	COMPLETED
5	PRIMARY SCHOOL	IKOT UDO OBORO	IKOT EKPENE	ON-GOING
6	TOWN	AKA EKPEME		
		IKOT AYA EDIENE	IKONO	ON-GOING
7	TOWN HALL	ETIP EDIENE		
		USUNG ITU	IKONO	ON-GOING
8	TOWN HALL	USUK OBIO EDIENE	IKONO	COMPLETED
9	RURAL ELECTRI- -FICATION	IKOT UDO ENANG	IKONO	ON-GOING
10	RURAL ELECTRI- FICATION	UYO AFAHA NKAN	IKONO	COMPLETED

IMPACT OF THE PROJECTS

Communities with completed projects agreed at 100% that the projects have improved their qualities of live. In Ifuho community, the members occupied the sheds built for their marketing business. Also, other people from the neighbouring communities and the tenants of the community benefit from the daily market operations. In the same vein, the people of Ibong Ikot Akan community enjoy their bore-hole water free. The health Centre in Abiaokpo Ikot Essien is operated for the treatment of patients with minor cases and for ante-natal lessons while major cases and child delivery are referred to General Hospital Ikot Ekpene for careful treatment by experts. The treatment received here, especially by the elderly people and the pregnant women has helped to serve the transport fare of the patients to other hospitals and in emergency cases.

OBSTACLES TO PROJECT COMPLETION

All the communities at a 100% accepted the fact that the major obstacle to project implementation and completion was inadequate finance. Other obstacles identified were conflict among community members, failure to make payment of charges when due, inadequate monitoring and supervision of the projects.

STRATEGIES TO COMPLETED PROJECTS

The strategies adopted by communities whose projects were completed were levies on the community members, launching and donations .Soliciting for government supports, non-governmental supports, seeking supports from philanthropists, use of experienced labour, as well as close supervision and monitoring of the projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All on –going projects should not be abandoned and communities should try to see that the projects are completed so that their resources would not be wasted.

For effective planning, funding, implementation and monitoring of projects, a project committee should be set for the purpose of ensuring that all payments are made on or before the dead line of payment.

Communities who require support from Government and Non-Governmental Organizations should embark on projects with Socio-economic/Educational benefits and should also contribute the required amount to meet their matching grants, since such projects tend to interest such sponsors for the benefits of the community and those outside the community.

Since inadequate fund was the major obstacle to project implementation and completion, communities should strenuously seek financial assistance from Government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Philanthropists and other Agencies so as to complete their projects at the set time.

Donations and launching are good ways of obtaining funds for project completion; therefore, such strategies should be pursued vigorously until the time of donor fatigue is reached. Communities should be made to know about credit facilities so that they can make use of them. Projects should be well planned, supervised monitored and executed to meet the stipulated period of completion so as to prevent increase in the cost of project execution in general.

CONCLUSION

Communities in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area were supported more by the Government and Non- Governmental Organizations than those of Ikono Local Government Area even though Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area contributed a

lower percentage of the total required cost for support than that of Ikono Local Government Area. Hence, Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area contributed 32% and Ikono Local Government Area contributed 64%. This implies that Government and Non-Governmental Organizations tends to support projects that are beneficial to members of a community, tenants and neighboring communities than those that will only benefit members of a particular community.

References

- [1] Agumagu, A C. (2004): *Agricultural Extension Programs in Nigeria*. Unpublished Seminar UNITECH Port Harcourt.
- [2] Berker, F. (1997): *Housing Messages*. Stroudsburg: Peoples Environment Perspective, London.
- [3] Davies, B. M. and Davies T.(1993): *Community Health, Preventive Medicine and Social Services*, London; Bailliere Tindal p, viii.
- [4] Hester, R. (1990): *Community Design* Pniner C.A.Ridge Time Press.London.
- [5] Hunter Floyd (1953): *Community Power Structure*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina press
- [6] Kenny, S (1994): *Community Development in Australia* AIJ p.25 Australia.
- [7] Obibuaku, L.O (1983): *Agricultural Extension as a Strategy for Agricultural Transportation*. Nsukka. University of Nigeria Press.
- [8] Ojoko, S. (1994): *Agricultural Extension: Theory and Practice*, Rivers State University of Science and Technology Springfield Publisher, Port Harcourrt.
- [9] Sanoff, H.(1990): *Participatory Design: Theory and Techniques*. Releigh NC Press, Sanoff.
- [10] Yaffey, M. and Teribe M.A.(1992): *Project Rehabilitation in Adverse Environments*, Reat Britain Avebury p .100 Britain.
- [11] Zuofa, C.C .(2001): *Internship for Adult and Community Education Students*. A practicalGuide,
- [12] Pre –Joe Publishers pp2-4: 68-69.Port Harcourt.