

# SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

## ISSUES AND FACTS

### (SHARING INITIATIVE OF TOTAL EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION NIGERIA LIMITED)

**Emma Ifeanyi Ogueri<sup>a, b</sup>, Vincent Nnadi<sup>c</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

<sup>c</sup> Sustainable Development & Public Affairs, Total Exploration and Production, Nigeria Limited

<sup>b</sup> Fresh Impact Rural Development Initiative, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>a</sup> Corresponding author: emma\_ogueri@yahoo.com

© Ontario International Development Agency. ISSN 1923-6654 (print)  
ISSN 1923-6662 (online). Available at <http://www.ssrn.com/link/OIDA-Intl-Journal-Sustainable-Dev.html>

**Abstract:** Nigeria is blessed with natural resources especially hydrocarbons. Managing proceeds of resources to develop rural communities had created several conflicts.

International communities had long been contributing to development in Nigeria. International NGOs, Bilateral organizations, Multinational corporations have demonstrated sufficient interest in development issues of Nigeria. Surprisingly, more assistance in Nigeria means higher poverty and conflict levels. The population is at geometrical increase without corresponding increase in social amenities. Known cities are congested due to high rural-urban migration. Most Nigerians who could no longer bear the congestion associated discomforts had either legally migrated to developed countries or sought asylum.

Frequently asked questions included “what had happened to resources generated from oil and gas productions, what of the aid programmes of international organizations and the rural development initiatives of the multinational oil and gas industries. *How come most communities are still very rural and basic amenities lacking*”?

To address above questions, *Fresh Development Rural Development Initiative*, a Non Governmental Organization decided to x-ray challenges, issues and facts against sustainable rural development in Nigeria. Of particular concern was the participation of multinational oil and gas industries in rural development in Nigeria with a view to sharing any best practice.

Methodology adopted was social research using Participatory Rural Appraisal, Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning and Action. Sampling techniques were purposive, random. Data collection

tools included Interviews, Focused group discussions and Practitioner’s experience.

Summarily, results pointed to mismanagement of project funds, low execution capacity, lack of political will, insecurity and insincerity on the part of project beneficiaries (the rural people). Equal accusing fingers were pointed to beneficiaries and Nigerian governance system. Rural development project funds were embezzled while strategies employed created conflicts among rural communities.

Suggested ways forward for conflict free sustainable rural development included organization of national rural development strategy summit, de-emphasizing contractocracy, execution capacity development, realistic costing and improved monitoring.

**Keywords:** Illegal immigrants or asylum seekers, Niger Delta, Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited “best practice strategy”, Poverty stricken rural communities.

Acronyms:

SPDC: Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Limited

TEPNG: Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited

NAOC: Nigerian Agip Oil Company

PRA : Participatory Rural Appraisal

RRA: Rapid Rural Appraisal

PLA: Participatory Learning and Action

CAP: Community Action Plan

FGD: Focused Group Discussion

RACI: Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation, Information

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

JV : Joint venture

AFOD: Acceptability, Functionality,

JOA: Joint Operating Agreement

NNPC: Nigerian National Petroleum Commission  
 NDDC: Niger Delta Development Commission  
 CPMC: Community Projects Management Committee  
 CDC: Community Development Committee

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is blessed with natural resources that are in high demand. These included the oil and gas deposit in addition to solid minerals among others. The country's annual budget is usually based on oil and gas production and associated prices at the international market; hence oil and gas became the major source of foreign revenue. The proceeds from these resources would have resulted to rapid development of the communities. Unfortunately, reverse is the case. There are very few urban or semi-urban cities that are currently under serious pressure. The population of Nigeria was estimated at 150 million which is still at the increase without corresponding increase in amenities. Rural-Urban migration had been the order of the day and had placed much pressure on few available facilities. Most Nigerians have left the shores of their father land as illegal immigrants to developed countries. One reason for this seems to be poor state of development in Nigeria in general and the rural areas in particular.

It appears therefore that the solution lies on commitment to sustainable rural development through the provision of basic social amenities.

However, Ijere and Okorie (published) [1] and Idachaba (published) [2] reiterated that rural development is synonymous with agricultural development since agriculture is the mainstay of the rural people.

Merrill-Sands and Kaimowitz (published) [3] revealed that there are linkage mechanisms that strengthen Research – Farmer linkage system thereby making it sustainable.

Rural communities in Nigeria in this paper were viewed from the developmental perspective devoid of socio-political imperatives. However, social proponents that affect development were incorporated in the discussion without political undertones.

Most rural communities in Nigeria have not provided safe environment for development. Conflicts in the communities occasioned by clash for autonomy and personal interests had affected rural development initiatives of the multinational oil and gas industries. Criminalities had been at the increase.

A review of the present rural development situation in Nigeria revealed the following; (a) Adoption of wrong intervention(s) identification process ( most

communities still submit wish list of projects) (b) Presence of uncompleted / abandoned development projects (c) Lack of ownership demonstrated by rural people themselves (d) Poor / Un-realistic project execution costs (e) Contracting strategy favoured with kick-backs due to political loyalty (f) Lack of execution capacity in various fields (g) Indigenous syndrome. Community youths demand all sorts of levies before development programmes are executed (h) Personal interests overriding community interests (i) High illiteracy and poverty rates

Nigerian government since independence had been investing in rural development. The multinational oil and gas industries The Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (TEPNG), Nigerian Agip Oil Company, among others) had also sunk in huge sum of dollars in attempt to executing rural development programmes in Nigeria. Ogueri (unpublished) [4] noted that industrialization of the rural communities will provide employment for the rural teeming population especially, the youths.

There seem to be an inverse relationship between rural development expenditure and rural development executed programmes. Most Nigerians seek both legal and illegal (asylum / refugees) immigration to Canada, America, and Europe, to mention a few. Some have lost their lives in the process while some successful ones indulge in crimes that affect the image of Nigeria abroad. The question therefore is what had gone wrong? Is there any rural development lesson that could be learnt even from the multinational oil and gas industries operating in Nigeria? Above were the questions that guided this exploratory social research.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Scope and sampling

#### Scope

The scope of the study was Nigerian Rural Communities. In this case, the rural communities were defined as communities that were remote and lack basic essential amenities for good living. The scope considered the original 4 cardinal groupings of Nigeria namely – The East, West, North and South.

However, finance and time limited the scope of the study to the North and South.

#### Sampling techniques

There were purposive, random and stratified / clustered sampling techniques.

There were 36 states in Nigeria that are stratified into geo-political zones. Purposively, the Niger Delta region and the Birom tribe were selected to represent the South and the North respectively.

These two zones were selected because the rural poverty exemplified in the oil rich Niger Delta and Biroms tribe had reached alarming proportion. It is un-imaginable that a region which is the bed-rock of Nigerian economy should be so impoverished with lack of essential amenities while poverty is written on the faces of rural dwellers. Crisis and threats to multinational companies were on the increase as a result of underdevelopment of the region (as claimed) among other needs.

Recently, there had been conflicts that had bedeviled Birom rural communities in the North.

Randomly, 15 rural communities were selected in the South (Niger Delta). These were Obagi, Obite, Ogbogu, Akabuka, Oboburu, Akaibiri, Agoro, Bonny, Kalaibiana, Finima, Okotieama, Okwuzi, Omoku, Ologama and Obirikom.

In the Birom tribe, 5 communities were also randomly selected. These included Foron, Giu, Ranqya-gel, Dogonahawa and Dom.

## 2.2 Data Collection and Instrument

Participatory approach was adopted in data collection. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for communities of about 2,000 household and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) for communities of about 300 households.

The Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) was used as a feedback mechanism to develop Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP was a development document supposedly owned by the community. It contains prioritized needs of the said communities as interventions and possible time line for execution.

Communities usually use the document to shop for sponsors to execute rural development projects. The sponsors included Oil and Gas industries, government agencies, International Non Governmental Organisations and local Non governmental organizations. This process had worked well in the Niger Delta region that is dominated by the activities of the multinational oil and gas industries.

However, the Birom rural communities received development packages from the government and International Non governmental organizations.

The instrument used for data collection was the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with age and

gender as major criteria.

Personal experience of working in the Niger Delta for over 20 years assisted in facilitating and reconciliation of the emerging issues of the FGD. As stated earlier, after the FGD, the PLA was used as feedback mechanism. Experience showed that the feedback could be turbulent as accusations and counter-accusations raged among community members. Development as a process, Patience was needed by practitioners to organize community members to work towards a common goal. The youths will accuse the older men of derailing planned development of the communities by embezzling development funds. A total of 22 FGDs were held. 15 FGDs were held for rural communities in the South while 7 were held for rural communities in the North.

Informal semi structured interviews were held with a total of 50 persons over a period of 60 days. This was apparently to corroborate the deductions of the focused group discussions. Interactions were held with some key personnel of the oil and gas industries and the employees of the relevant government agencies responsible for rural development in Nigeria at Federal and State levels.

Their views were descriptive and represent opinions of well meaning and concerned citizens of the federal republic of Nigeria.

Finally, personal experience of the authors in various capacities as Nigerians that lived in the rural communities and employees of the leading multinational oil and gas industries in Nigeria also contributed in drawing inferences on views expressed by the respondents on numerous challenges, issues and facts. In addition, having been opportuned to visit most developed countries with admirable development programmes for her citizenry, the authors were concerned and needed to explore ways of developing rural communities in Nigeria.

## III. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 3.1 REASONS FOR INEFFECTIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

The summary of the surveys as in Tables 1 and 2 below showed that various reasons were adduced for poor or ineffective rural development in Nigeria regardless huge investments. The FGDs were facilitated for randomly selected rural communities from the Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Reasons for poor rural development programmes in Nigeria as perceived by Southern respondents.

FGD criteria for selecting gps	major choice for distribution	No of groups	Major highlights on reasons for ineffective rural development in Nigeria
Age	15 – 30 yrs	3	- Corruption - No commitment on the part of govt - Bad leadership - Use of unqualified contractors
	Above 30 yrs	3	- Too many groups in the communities - Greed - No formal plan - Political favouritism
Sex	Male	2	- Lack of rural people participation - Personal interests against national interest - No monitoring or proper supervision
	Female	2	- Lack of awareness - Neglect of women - Rural poverty
Occupational status	Employed	2	- Unemployment - No devt and evaluation research - Insecurity - Lack of execution capacity
	Unemployed	2	- Lack of skills - Indigene syndrome (man know man) - Low remuneration
Sponsors	Govt agencies /Multinational oil & gas	1	- Insecurity - Conflicts / crisis - Un-necessary demands by the youths - Unwillingness to learn skills - Regulatory and legislative issues that limit multinational oil and gas industries involved in rural development
	Total	15	

Source: Field survey, 2009

From the FGDs, the reasons advanced for poor development of Nigerian rural communities were summarized as; High level corruption, Absence of genuine commitment from the government, Poor leadership and management, Unqualified contractors executing development projects, Too many community groups with personal hidden interest, Greed, No formal development plan (not agenda) for the country, Rural development contracts awarded to party loyalists and faithful, Absence of rural people participation in their development, Personal interests above national interests, Poor monitoring and evaluation and lack of proper supervision, Lack of awareness or enlightenment, Neglect of women, High level of poverty, High level of unemployment, Absence of research-based development, Insecurity, No policy framework, Lack of execution capacity, Absence of skills, High premium to indigenes, Low remuneration, Conflicts and crisis, Un-necessary

demands by the youths, Unwillingness to learn, Regulatory and legislative issues that limited multinational oil and gas industries from directly championing rural development (Joint Venture Agreement)

### 3.2 Rural Development Planning

Generally in Nigeria, there is no structured procedure or policy framework on rural development programmes planning to ensure sustainability. Rural development programmes were chosen using Top-Down approach. In most cases, personal interests override national interests. Development projects were distributed based on party loyalty and faithfulness. Some rural communities can boast of littered development projects (like generators, potable water and town halls) while the neighbouring communities were being extinct as a result of water borne diseases.

**Table 2:** Reasons for poor rural development programmes in Nigeria as perceived by Northern respondents.

FGD criteria for selecting gps	major for distribution	Specific choice	No of groups	Major highlights on reasons for ineffective rural development in Nigeria
Age		15 – 30 yrs	1	- Corruption - No commitment on the part of govt - Bad leadership Neglect of rural people and knowledge
		Above 30 yrs	1	- Too many groups in the communities - Greed - No formal development plan - Political favouritism
Sex		Male	1	- Lack of rural people participation - Personal interests against national interest - No supervision so poor quality work
		Female	1	- Lack of awareness and capacity development - Embezzlement - Rural poverty
Occupational status		Employed	1	- Unemployment - No devt and evaluation research - No policy frame work - Lack of execution capacity
		Unemployed	1	- Lack of skills - Man know man) - Low remuneration
Sponsors		Govt agencies	1	- Lack of skills - Conflicts / crisis - High illiteracy level - Unwillingness to learn skills
		Total	7	

Source: field survey 2009

No development plan was in place and where it existed, no succession plan for sustainability. There was no policy directive that mandates rural development interventions to be a product of participatory planning process of PRA, RRA and PLA. Absence of this had caused wastage of scarce resources. Nigeria as a country had gone a borrowing while asking for debt write-off. State governors sold bonds and still indebted their states as a result of corruption in high places. Those suspected in the act of corrupt practices protect and prevent themselves from arrest with heavily paid militants. They sometimes escape from the country while being trailed by the commission in charge of corrupt practices.

However, the Multinational Oil and Gas industries had seemingly introduced rural development planning process. This has not made significant difference because of their limited locations of operations and the national politicking syndrome. The following deductions were made from the result in the area of planning rural development programmes; Rural development programmes were not planned using the participatory approach, Projects

were sited using Top-Down approach but most importantly to satisfy one personal interest or the other, Rural development consciousness through awareness was often slaughtered on alter of haste in delivery projects to satisfy local curiosity, Too much time to develop a plan and where it is so developed ends up in the shelf, Rural women that were usually the direct beneficiaries of rural development programmes were totally excluded and neglected, The beneficiaries of rural development programmes were not consulted before emergence of development programmes in their various communities, Conflicts distort rural development planning process and make rural development illusive.

It was concluded that one key factor that angered rural people and also affected significant progress in rural development initiatives in Nigeria was lack of participation. Rural people felt being used to achieve personal and hidden interests. This claim may be erroneous but since transparency and openness were lacking, rural people felt delineated hence

acceptability of development programmes became an issue.

### 3.3 Sustainability and Participation

The major issue confronting rural development programmes in Nigeria was absence of sustainability that is driven by participation of programme beneficiaries.

Ogueri (unpublished) [5] opined that a very strong positive relationship between participation and sustainability exists. The more rural people were involved to address their own development (from inception to completion / evaluation), the more the confidence and success level associated with such programmes. The rural people claimed of non participation especially women in programmes meant for their development. They accused government and multinational oil and gas corporations of deliberate plans not to involve them.

The Multinational oil and gas corporations had made conscious efforts to involve rural people in development. The Multinationals stressed that rural communities form various groups with personal interests that make development practically difficult. These groups claim autonomy and were ready to create conflict in the rural areas. The proliferation of groups at the rural communities had made participation of rural people in development very difficult. Involvement of one group could trigger conflict as there will be accusation of sidelining. Thus, the Multinationals consciously manage communities' participation in their rural development programmes. According to Ogueri (unpublished) [6], there are various participation levels of the rural

people in the multinationals rural development programmes. The major difference lies with the depth of participation anchored in certain participatory indices.

Ogueri (unpublished) [7] in table 3 below unveiled participatory indices being used in the Niger Delta of Nigeria by leading multinational oil and gas industries.

The government assisted rural development programmes were not conscious about participation of rural dwellers. The rural people on their own could not flex muscles as government machineries will be used to clamp them down.

According to Ogueri (unpublished) [8], in what he called RACI model, participation can be measured using 4 key elements. These elements were; Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation and Information.

This model infers that in rural development programmes execution, participation of the rural people should take either or all of the 4 key elements mentioned above. Where there was proliferation of groups like in the Nigerian Niger Delta, responsibility towards executing development programmes was a form of participation as accountability to ensure execution, consultation to seek approval as well as information to create awareness of the rural development programmes.

Application of this model will help to reduce if not eliminate conflict and crisis associated with non-participation of rural people in the development of their communities especially when the Multinational oil and gas corporations are involved.

Table 3: Rural groups participation level based on identified indices

S/No	Participatory indices	TEPNG utilization	%	SPDC utilization	%	NAOC utilization	%	Pooled utilization	%
1	Information source through appropriate rural devt agents	41		34		25		39	
2	Community consultation	33		26		41		69	
3	Responsibility through CPMC	10		57		33		7	
4	Community Advocacy group	29		45		26		50	
5	Availability of Devt committee	29		37		34		75	
6	Sustainability Effectiveness /	39		32		29		41	

Source: Ogueri (Field survey 2006)

This model had been effectively deployed in development consultancy for the Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited and had significantly improved stakeholders' relationships. A typical example was successful signing of over eight Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with various groups in the rural communities without any known issues due to full participation in the process. This stood as great achievement for multinational oil and gas industry operating in the Niger Delta environment.

TEPNG holds sacred the engagements of her host communities, including pipeline and non-producing communities close to their facilities. MOUs had been entered into with non-producing communities that are contiguous to TEPNG facilities, an initiative revealed in Ogueri (unpublished) [9] as a practice that shielded TEPNG's vulnerability to attacks in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It is note worthy that TEPNG stands out as the only Joint Venture (JV) Partner in the Niger Delta that executes rural development programmes to communities that indirectly had potentials that could affect oil and gas production.

### 3.4 Rural Development Projects Execution

The type of strategy deployed in the delivery of rural development programmes was deduced as impediment to sustainable rural development in Nigeria. There were four commonly used strategies in the execution of rural development programmes namely; Contracting, Community Projects Management Committee (CPMC), Direct labour services through government, Combination of contracting and community empowerment strategy. The percentage deployment of various rural development projects' execution strategies by major multinational oil and gas industries in Nigeria are shown in the table 4 below.

The implication of table 4 is that the concentration on contracting strategy definitely affected sustainability of development programmes in Nigeria in general and Niger Delta in particular. There was no linkage

with economic empowerment programmes that encouraged self reliance. Joblessness became the order of the day and invariably, disruption of multinational oil and gas operations was on geometric increase as a result of high unemployment rate among hungry youths.

SPDC noticed the trend and quickly embraced community based project management committee (12%) followed by NAOC (7%) and TEPNG (2%). Community conflicts and crisis became uncontrollable among community groups. Show of strength became obvious and ammunitions were smuggled into the rural communities in the Niger Delta. The community groups started accusing the Multinational Oil and Gas industries to have engineered crisis.

Fortunately, TEPNG through participatory (people-oriented) approach studied the adopted strategy of using a single community group before evolving a new strategy that is hereby considered "best practice" in stakeholders' management in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### 3.5 TEPNG Rural Development Strategy – The Best Practice.

The new strategy was the combination of contracting and transparent community empowerment that tends to distribute economic empowerment programmes based on transparent indices among community groups. The community members were structured under workable groups to reduce and or eliminate individual empowerment projects that build few Lords while others remained impoverished. The TEPNG encouraged groups included the oil and gas producing families, youth welfare association, women welfare association, oil producing communities and Community Development Foundations among others. Conflicts and crisis were reduced as a result of economic empowerment sharing formula hence exposure of TEPNG facilities to sabotage attacks were minimal.

Table 4: Rural Development Projects Execution Strategies in Nigeria

S/No	Rural Devt Proj Execution Strategies	TEPNG	SPDC	NAOC
1	Contracting	75%	76%	78%
2	Community based project Mgt committee (CPMAC)	2%	12%	7%
3	Labour services via govt	0%	1%	0%
4	Combination of contracting and Community empowerment strategy	24%	7%	13%

Source: Field survey 2005

Survey showed that perfect combination of rural development strategies of TEPNG that other competitors are struggling to emulate (TEPNG – 24%, SPDC – 7% and NAOC – 13%) as shown in table 4 above, made TEPNG outstanding in stakeholders' management through rural development programmes execution in Nigeria. In the words of Ogueri (unpublished) [10], it was in line with sustainability indices of Acceptability, Functionality, Operability and Durability (AFOD).

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1 The Missing Link – Issues and Facts (Challenges)

The study showed that there were numerous issues affecting sustainable rural development in Nigeria. These issues had imposed challenges that were as numerous as the number of communities/settlements and their environmental (ecological/social) conditions in Nigeria especially, the Niger Delta. Attempt will be made to stuff these challenges in the following sack bags; Absence of systematic gap analysis (social research) to identify possible rural development interventions. Rural development programmes were identified using Top-down approach instead of participatory approach, hence sustainability was lacking, Low execution capacity especially at rural communities. Absence of execution capacity sometimes prompt rural communities to demand for “cash awards” in place of development programmes while neglecting adoption of agricultural production technology for food security as noted in Ogueri (unpublished) [11], Unwillingness to learn relevant skills especially among the youths due to “get-rich quick syndrome”. Starter packs meant for graduates of skills acquisition programmes for self reliance were sold to make quick money, Corruption caused high costs of development project's execution and sometimes abandoned projects, Demand for settlement(s) or incentives by the YOUTHS that act as “Ghost workers” especially in the Niger Delta region, Indigenization syndrome where one cannot execute a rural development project except he is an indigene of such community, Sub-letting of rural development programmes execution contracts and associated cost implications, Unquantifiable Urban-Rural re-migration. Sudden surge in the rural communities not because there are available essential amenities but due to employment opportunities, Rural poverty and urban poverty (The missing link). Poverty syndrome had spread like a wild fire in Nigeria; hence everyone is struggling to make ends meet, High level of Insecurity. Militant groups attack innocent citizens including security operatives. Teenagers are recruited into cult groups that carry arms even in colleges. They impose serious

threats to genuine rural development initiatives, Rural politics and power syndrome. The few Community Lords pitch camps against each other and recruit poverty-stricken rural dwellers (youths) as tugs to achieve selfish political ambitions. Political thuggery, killings, arsons, kidnapping and other forms of harassment were at the increase, hence most rural communities were dreaded for habitation, Duration of Rural Community Administrative organisations (CDCs, Youths, etc). Rural communities' administrative executives spend 2 – 3yrs before another election is conducted. They had scarcely settled down hence most community elections were characterized with violence, High delivery cost for rural development programmes. The associated costs as a result of rural groups' personal interests (homage payment, marching ground, defiling of sacred places, youth settlement, etc) make rural development programmes expensive, Political loyalists. Rural development programmes executions were usually awarded to Party loyalists that do not possess the technical know-how. The projects could be abandoned or delivered poorly hence no sustainability regardless of associated high costs, Political instability. After elections, funds meant for development were spent on litigation that could last as far as four (4) years, the tenure of the position. The judiciary delayed delivery of judgment for no known reasons. Public office holders were changed in a manner that overheated the system and diverted attention from sustainable rural development, Finally associated Regulatory and Legislative issues. The rural development activities of the Multinational oil and gas industries that play complementary roles in rural development and also setting enviable stakeholders' management initiative like the TEPNG initiative were regulated by the senior partner in the Joint Venture Agreement (JOA) of Nigerian National Petroleum Commission (NNPC). This obviously affected willingness to influence rural development in Nigeria.

The consequences of above situations were summarized as follows; *Most Nigerians seek illegal immigration or asylum to Canada, America & UK, Nigeria's image abroad continuously dwindling and battered as mass arrests and sometimes killing of innocent Nigerians had been a common occurrence. Examples are Poland, China, South Africa, Libya, among others (not in Canada anyway), Shortage of manpower in Nigeria as even genuine Nigerians seek for legal immigration and naturalization with their families abroad like Prof Wole Soyinka, Poorly executed rural development projects, Poverty stricken rural communities with high unemployment level, Vandalised development projects because they were not in consonance with peoples' felt needs,*



Abandoned projects in most rural communities in Nigeria, No appreciable and systematic development in rural communities of Nigeria, Un-coordinated development agenda as a result of no policy framework, Subsistence agricultural practice with low yield, hence food importation, Dozens of illiterate, unemployable youths, High rate of crimes and gangsterism, No systematic development pattern. Instead of developing new cities with modern facilities and gardens, houses and shops are been demolished in the old cities to expand access, Dirty environments with poor waste management practice, Wastage of resources (Money, time, etc), Delayed development of the rural areas and indeed Nigeria. So till when???, *Insecurity overseas. Most illegal immigrants put pressure on available facilities abroad and sometimes create insecurity for the citizens of those countries by indulging in crimes. The developed countries; Canada, America, Europe and others should demonstrate genuine interests in tackling rural development issues in Nigeria at least to discourage illegal immigrants with attendant numerous negative consequences. This clarion call is the crux of this paper.*

#### 4.2 Way Forward

As a development practitioner who is committed to sustainable rural development in Nigeria, this paper will be incomplete without proffering suggestions for a way forward. The question could be asked, why these suggestions have not been cascaded to appropriate quarters in Nigeria. The answer is simple. In Nigeria, if you are not connected to the political class, your ideas, no matter how brilliant will not be heard. This is yet another serious issue of rural development in Nigeria.

The following suggestions were itemized for accelerated rural development in Nigeria. (a) Organisation of National Rural Development Strategy summit to produce a policy framework for co-ordinated rural development in Nigeria (b) Systemic analysis and process evaluation of rural development in Nigeria. Start gap-analysis surveys to identify connects and disconnects of rural development programmes execution in Nigeria (c) Adoption of participatory approach. Interventions must be product of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Planning and Action (PLA) to ensure ownership and sustainability (d) Execution capacity must be built where lacking (no pretence about it) (e) De-emphasising contractocracy and emphasizing community-led participatory approach devoid of empowering a single group. Community Empowerment packages must be transparent – using

the TEPNG best practice strategy (e) De-regulate Multinational oil and gas participation (expenditure) in rural development in Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta. (f) Monitoring of rural development programmes by transparently-chosen independent knowledgeable consultants. (g) Realistic costing/approval of rural development projects / programmes (h) Knowledge sharing and periodic Evaluations to cascade lessons learnt. International Rural Development Conferences like this summer congress of Ontario International Development Agency should pool professionals together to brainstorm and contribute to rural development issues in Nigeria. (i) Conscious linkage of all rural development agencies (NDDC, Ministry of Agric Natural resources and rural development, Ministry of Niger Delta, River Basins development authority, National Poverty Alleviation Strategy, etc, etc) to ensure single point responsibility and avoid duplication of functions. (j) Commitment by the ruling government and political class to develop Nigerian rural communities. (k) Political will devoid of corruption targeted at development of the rural communities in Nigeria (l) Commissioning of studies and the use of research finding to address emerging rural development issues and challenges in Nigeria. (m) Finally adoption of Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (TEPNG) rural development strategy as pilot for the Niger Delta communities and possibly as a blue print for Nigeria.

#### 4.3. Conclusion

Before a final conclusion, it is important to drawn inspiration from an art piece developed by a Niger Delta youth, Kabari Agara during Nigerian's 47<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary; *In conclusion, a rural development policy framework and stratification of Nigeria based on indices of sustainable rural development will re-position the country and chart a course for emergence of sustainable rural communities, hence it is strongly advocated.*

*Therefore, as one of the dividends of democracy, Mr. President should task the 37 state governors (including Abuja) on the number of rural communities that should be transformed to sustainable urban and semi urban cities in a given period based on available budget allocation.*

*Similarly, the governors should set same targets for the Local Government Chairmen.*

*This approach will automatically reverse the current trend of sharing budget allocations meant for development of Nigeria among political godfathers and loyalists.*



The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation should allow the multinational oil and gas companies with workable initiatives to develop rural communities like TEPNG to fast-track such initiatives for accelerated rural development in Nigeria. *Indeed, the Federal government should study the TEPNG strategy with a view to making it a "blue print"*.

Nigerians should stop imposing problems to Canada, Europe and United States of America by seeking asylum or illegal immigration. *The developed countries should demonstrate practical interest in the development issues of Nigeria. This will ensure peace in their borders and less pressure in their country facilities.*

Sincerely, Nigerians are entitled to better living conditions even in the rural areas. *Yearly fat budget envelops approved for rural development in Nigeria had not achieved much and this trend needs to be changed. The time to do that is NOW!!!*

## REFERENCES

- [1] Ijere, M and A. Okorie (1998). Readings in Agricultural Finance. Longman Nigeria Plc. Lagos. Nigeria.
- [2] Idachaba, Francis (1984). Elements of Rural Sociology. University Press. University of Ife, Ile Ife, Nigeria.
- [3] Merril-Sands and Kaimowitz (1989). The Technology Triangle. Linking Farmers, Technology Transfer Agents and Agricultural Researchers. Summary Report of an International workshop held at ISNAR. The Hague. 20thth to 25th November 1989. The Romans Press. United Kingdom.
- [4] Ogueri, E.I. (2006). Evaluation of Sustainable Community Development Programmes of Odidi – Forcados Gaslink Pipeline Project. Unpublished study by Fresh Impact Rural Development Initiative and Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Limited.

- [5] Ogueri, E.I. (2006). Evaluation of Rural Development Programmes of Multinational Oil Corporations in Niger Delta: The Case of Bayelsa and Rivers States of Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation of the Department of Rural Sociology and Extension, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.
- [6] Ogueri, E.I. (2006) ibid
- [7] Ogueri, E.I. (2006) ibid
- [8] Ogueri, E.I. (2006) ibid
- [9] Ogueri, E.I. (2008). Impact Assessment of Egi Power Generation Project on the
- [10] Socio-Economic Activities in Egi. Unpublished study by Fresh Impact Rural Development Initiative and Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited.
- [11] Ogueri, E.I. (2006) ibid
- [12] Ogueri, E.I. (1997) Public and Private sector Extension Services: A case study of the Adoption of Improved Cassava Production Technologies in Rivers State. Unpublished M.Sc Thesis of Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria.

Engr. Vincent Nnadi (FDA)

General Manager, Sustainable Development & Public Affairs, Total Exploration and Production, Nigeria Limited.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We thank the Almighty God for His grace to put this paper together.

Our sincere thanks go to Total Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited for encouraging knowledge sharing and above all the development of rural communities in Nigeria.

To Kabari Agara, we share your inspirational dream and vision for Nigeria. We are committed to making it work, hence we say big thanks and God bless.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOURS:**

Emma Ifeanyi Ogueri (FDA)  
Development Consultant, Lecturer, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria and former Head, Sustainable Community Development, Major Pipeline projects of The Shell Petroleum Development Company Nigeria Limited  
Fresh Impact Rural Development Initiative  
(Adding Meaning to Living)  
Plot 3, Block 33  
P.O. Box 343  
Federal Housing Estate, Woji,  
Port Harcourt, Rivers State  
Nigeria  
e-mail: freshimpactdev@yahoo.com  
Website: www.freshimpactng.org

