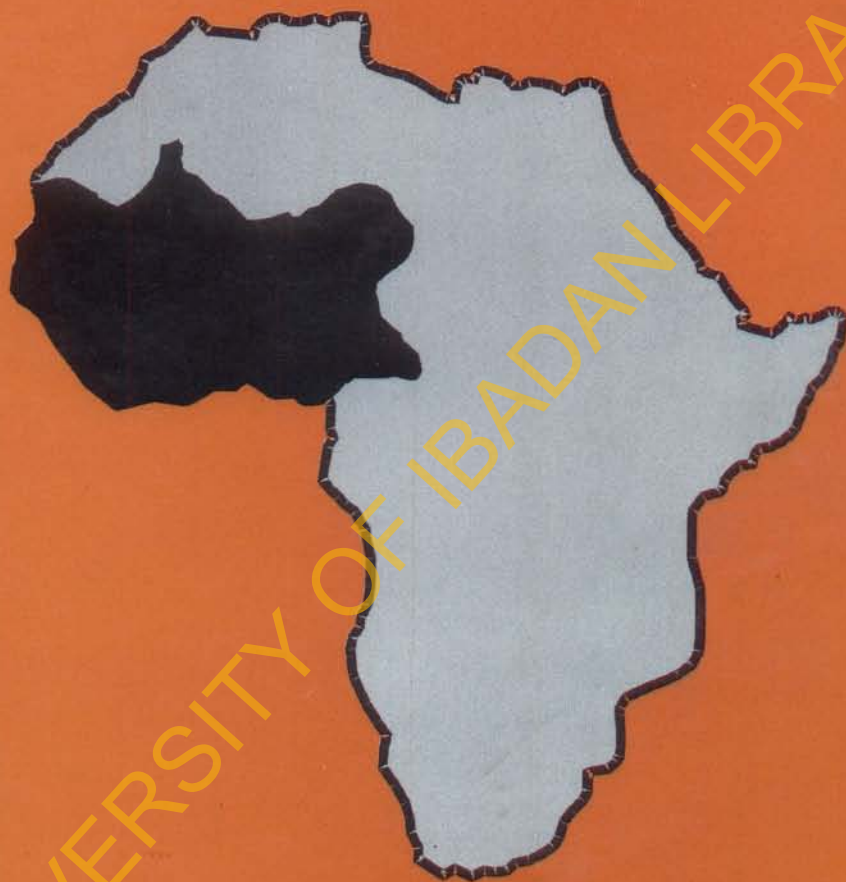


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Institutionalizing Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation Process: Experiences From Nigeria.

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Abstract

Over the years, Community Development seems to have treated social relations and responsibilities using Top-Bottom approach. Due to the problems associated with the approach over time, a refined participatory approach emerged to by-pass problems such as project abandonment, corruption, alienation and non-sustainability of projects under the Top-Bottom Policy and Practice.

In this new approach of Community Driven Development (CCD), stakeholders, especially at the grassroots, are called upon to take their destiny in their own hands beginning from needs assessment to that of project implementation, launching, utilization and sustenance of project. In addition, its Community Empowerment orientation has a built-in internally driven and Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation. This is to ensure full-scale empowerment and total ownership of the development process by the grassroots.

Following this approach several questions emerge. Specifically, how feasible is the Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation (CBM&E) process under the ongoing Community Based Poverty Reduction Projects in Nigeria within the backdrop of the failed top-bottom practice which developed the attitude of apathy to development projects amongst the grassroots especially in Nigeria? Drawing from the pilot experiences in some communities currently drawing from the social fund of the World Bank under the CBPRP in Nigeria, this paper sees hope in the process and suggests a greater investment in it. This is not only based on the empowerment process in itself, but also that, in the process' is the capability to banish the culture of silence and its ability to engender higher involvement and ultimate sustainability of projects especially by the poorest of the poor.

Résumé

Au fil des années, le développement communautaire semble avoir traité des relations sociales et les responsabilités en

utilisant l'approche Top-Bottom. En raison des problèmes associés à l'approche au fil du temps, une approche raffinée participative a émergé au by-pass des problèmes tels que l'abandon du projet, la corruption, l'aliénation et la non-viabilité des projets conformément à la Politique Haut-Bas et la pratique.

Dans cette nouvelle approche du Community Driven Development (CCD), les intervenants, surtout à la base, sont appelés à prendre leur destin en mains en commençant par l'évaluation des besoins de The d'exécution du projet, le lancement, l'utilisation et la subsistance de projet. En outre, son orientation d'autonomisation communautaire a intégré une dynamique interne et de surveillance communautaire et de l'évaluation. C'est pour assurer la pleine échelle de propriété et de l'autonomisation totale du processus de développement par la base.

Suite à cette approche à plusieurs questions émergent. Plus précisément, dans quelle mesure est la surveillance communautaire et d'évaluation (CBM&E) sous le cours à base communautaire des projets de réduction de la pauvreté au Nigeria dans le contexte de l'échec du haut vers le bas la pratique qui s'est développée à l'apathie des projets de développement parmi les populaires en particulier au Nigeria? S'inspirant des expériences pilotes dans certaines communautés actuellement à l'élaboration au fonds social de la Banque mondiale sous la CBPRP au Nigeria, ce document voit espoir dans le processus et suggère un plus grand investissement en elle. Ce n'est pas seulement basée sur le processus d'empowerment en soi, mais aussi que, dans le processus »est la capacité à bannir la culture du silence et de sa capacité à engendrer plus grande participation et la durabilité ultime des projets en particulier par les plus pauvres des pauvres.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Within the backdrop of colonial intervention and experience, development in the so-called developing nations became interpreted from the viewpoint of the Europeans. In this regard, whatever effort the developing nations might have done to ensure their survival prior to the contact was swept under the ground. "Development" became a comparative word without taking the different environmental circumstances which nations experience (or had experienced) into cognizance. Here, the 'backward' and 'uncivilized' nations have to arrange in the ways of the Europeans who were (are) 'modern', 'civil' and 'enlighten'. To 'modernise' the developing world, a need was felt to direct all energies to transpose western structures through modernization by design (Morse et al., 1969). However, modernization as a development strategy fostered continued alliance between the colonies and their colonial masters (Webster 1984) and created inequality not only between the North and South of the world but also complicated inequality within each nations created especially those of developing nations (Hammes, 1994). Sociologically, the strategy created social conditions that manifested in social disintegration, poor health conditions, drug, crime and violence in each developing countries (Onoge 1995).

In the ensuing development crisis, corruption and bad leadership featured prominently. Specifically, leaders especially in government were found to have grossly enriched themselves, while the trickle-down effect of the top-bottom approach of modernization strategy failed to take place. In the center-periphery relationship inherent in the strategy, leaders especially political became more responsible to their western mentors than they were to their citizens. Poverty and

social disintegration soared and the various strategies so defined for poverty alleviation and employment have continued to fail. This has been traced in part to the conscious relegation of old institutions and traditional structures in such developing nations. Political instability itself, a product of ethnic rivalry/acrimony and sometimes of civil wars, have jointly with political corruption created failed experiences in development. The political alienation and the consequent culture of silence has left the grassroots worse off in terms of development as poverty continue to grow in lips and bounds.

Various corrective development strategies emerged that sought to correct what Kaplan (1999) summarized as the **delivery of resources** orientation to development, which has alienated the people and subordinated initiatives. One of such efforts is the phenomenon of sustainable development and the empowerment buzzword. Here the community becomes the center of attraction for any meaningful progress and citizens are expected to effectively participate in the social, economic and political advancement of their countries. This is premised on the idea that people can work themselves out of their traditional orientation to life improved community. In this emerging praxis, development practitioners and or except are called to see development not as something that can be created or engineered but a geared 'towards' helping people to gain an understanding of themselves such that, in time they are better able to take control of their own future and to themselves questions problems and concerns, including economic and political marginalization (Kaplan 1999;15). Development in this emerging praxis is about **facilitating resourcefulness**. It is

within this emerging praxis that the community Driven Development Approach and the social fund of the World Bank become meaningful.

COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT/ COMMUNITY BASED M&E.

Community-driven development is seen as a strategy that:

Given control of decisions and resources to community groups (which) work in partnership with demand responsive support organizations and service providers including elected local government the private sector non-governmental organization (NGOs) and central government agencies.

Embracing a range of projects, methodologies and rules, CDD is a way of providing social and infrastructure services, to organize economic activity and resource management, to empower poor people, improve governance and enhance security of the poorest.

This initiation has been pioneered and tested in same significant countries in the developing world.

Given the Bottom-up approach of the strategy and the need of judge whether development efforts have succeeded or failed, a participatory monitoring and evaluation system has been into it. Named Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation process under the CDD approach it can be defined as:

A process of collaborative problem solving through the generation and use of knowledge. It is a process to corrective action by involving all levels of stakeholders in shared decision-making.

The four Broad Principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation is shown in Box 1.

Box 1

The four Broad Principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation.

- Information Access
- Accountability
- Inclusion or Participation
 - Participation – including those directly affected (communities).
 - Negotiation – to reach agreement about what will be monitored or evaluation, how and when data will be collected and analysed, what the data actually means, and how findings will be shared, an action taken.
- Local Level capacity
 - 'Learning' - which becomes the basis for subsequent improvement and corrective action.
 - 'Flexibility' - to reflect changes in overtime in the number, role, and skills of stakeholders, the external environment, and other factors that may change over time.

Deriving from the above principles are a wide range of methods and tools which include home-made questionnaires and scientific measurement techniques adapted for use by local people, as well as more innovative methods such as oral histories, and the use of photos, video and theatre. The participatory techniques allow for immediately of feedback. This ensures that decisions can be taken quickly and effectively.

Although it's early examples date back to the 1970s, its currency emerges from the lessons learnt from the unsuccessful experiences and consequent search for alternatives to the top-down strategy to grassroots developments (IDC, 1998).

While the project cycle differs among social funds, locations, environments and components activities, the PME as

introduced into the sub-project cycle in Nigeria involved the following steps.

(a) Pre-Feasibility or Canvassing Phase

This is to set the stage and build awareness:

- Have villagers conduct their own quick map and resources assessment.
- Have discussions about successes and problems with projects in the past, to help residents gauge capacity to proceed with a new scheme.
- Engage communities in their own self-assessment of willingness to contribute to micro project schemes in broad terms.
- Help communities analyse their potentials for meeting social fund criteria should they propose a project.
- Carry out wealth ranking or other poverty assessments with villagers as part of pre-feasibility.

(b) Action Planning State with Communities.

- Train intermediate (NGOs or other change agents) in participatory methods and techniques.
- Brainstorm and select indicators for PME with community.
- Carry out participatory investigation activities using methods to help establish a baseline, e.g. resource mapping, discovery of social conditions, conflicts, and any appropriate investigations. Ensure wide involvement of the community and integration of women, minorities. Flag issues for analysis.
- On some aspects, which can be immediately addressed (e.g. domestic and environmental hygiene and sanitation practices), carry out repeat monitoring of local conditions as they change during this phase.

- Document previous achievements and any progress made during this phase, such as formation of local groups, conflict resolution, and defining of O & M responsibilities.

- Help communities to visualize goals and plans in measurable ways. E.g. with posters which show iterative progress.
- Carry out lateral capacity building activities, which enable more effective PME (such as women's literacy classes).

(c) Implementation Phase

- Help villagers document their own progress using simple monitoring formats, visuals and charts.
- Carry out activities such as mapping, wealth ranking, costs of construction, etc. after construction, which illustrate changes after the completion of the micro project.
- Help villagers measure immediate impacts where they occur, such as reduced times for collecting water in drinking water projects, changes in the environment with proper drainage, increased access to markets with new roads and culverts, increased school attendance, etc.
- The intermediary helps the community hold regular meetings to review ongoing progress in implementation, take corrective actions as necessary.

(d) Post Implementation Phase

- Help communities carry out simple monitoring systems, which result in better operations and maintenance, e.g. device visual systems for tracking status of water resources.
- Engage communities in collecting information on longer terms impacts of the projects, drawing out lessons, and helping them plan for the future, identify

new projects, and make linkages with other groups.

NIGERIA'S POVERTY PROFILE: THE IMPERATIVE OF CBPRP

The Nigeria's poverty profile is scaring and presents a paradox. It is the sadder if it is realized in the wards of World Bank Report on (Report No. 14733-UM, May 31, 1996), that it 'poverty in the midst of plenty'. Nigeria is a country that is rich but the people are poor. A pip into Nigeria's poverty profile will point to the imperative of a developmental alternative.

The World Bank Poverty Assessment Studies of 1996 indicated that although the proportion of the population below the poverty line had declined between 1985 and 1992, the condition of the bottom 20% of households had actually worsened during the period of growth and had further deteriorated since then. As at 1999 about 67.1m of Nigerians were believed to live below the poverty line and the rate of increase was the major concern (Afonja et al; 2001:2).

The Poverty Alleviation efforts of successive governments (Federal, State and Local), have not had far reaching impact on the generality of the citizenry largely because they were not properly focused and targeted. In few places where government established social infrastructures, such facilities had been wasted due to lack of maintenance. The traditional method of social service delivery (the Top-down approach) has been identified as the main reason why community level projects are not maintained and sustained by the beneficiaries. The situation has been further compounded by the political elites pervasive complain.

Within the backdrop of the above and the need to achieve growth with poverty reduction, a series of consultations

between the World Bank and the Federal Government gave rise to the adoption of the Community Based Poverty Reduction initiative as a likely remedy to poor service delivery in Nigeria. This programme was modeled after the social fund concept and it emphasizes the participation of communities and the civil societies in the planning, execution and management of community level projects. Here it is envisaged that the arrangements will give communities a feeling of belonging and ensure sustainability of projects. Federal government selected six States, one each from the six geopolitical zones to pilot the programme. The States are Abia, Cross River, Ekiti, Kebbi, Kogi and Yobe. The programme, it expected, will be extended to other States, depending on the success recorded in the piloted States.

Food Basket Foundation International was contracted in 2002 to organize a Community Based Monitoring and Evaluation System methodology workshop by the World Bank Institute, Washington for stakeholders in the CBPRP project in Nigeria. The workshop participants included officials from the CBPRP agencies, NGOs and CBOs from the six pilot States. In addition, it also had representatives from the National Planning Commission (NPC) and National Agency Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

As a follow-up to the workshop, which held in June 2002, a decision was taken to pilot the institutionalization of the CBME process in some selected communities in the pilot States of the CBPRP in Nigeria. Building upon the pre-feasibility or canvassing phase conducted by respective State CBPRP Agencies, FBFI participatory selected two communities per State and implemented the Action Planning stage.

Aside from the various consultations of the State and Local government levels each team spent 7 days for the action

planning with the community phase in the selected communities. Using participatory techniques tools and methodologies each team comprising of FBFI staff, a desk officer from the State CBPRP Agency, a community development officer and two facilitators (who were resident in the community) – the following:

- Collection of baseline data
- Identification of priority need
- Identification of project to meet the identified need
- Development of indicators to monitor project chosen
- Identification of people to be involved in the CBM&E
- Logical framework for project implementation.
- M&E plan for project
- Identification of training needs for CBMEC.
- Project proposal to State CBPRA for funding.

Based on the outcome of this process, each community submitted a proposal to respective State's CBPRP Agency for possible funding of the identified projects. As a follow-up to the institutionalization process, FBFI regularly contacted each State CBPRP Agency to ascertain the status of the submitted proposal while communication line was kept open with not only the community but also other stakeholders in the process.

Under the CBM&E process, the community, it is expected will conduct own's M&E based on the agreed indicators and using members of the CBM&E committee members. The M&E plan developed locally will be used as guide by the CBMEC. The CBME data will be linked up with a local NGO which will in turn link same with a national database independent of Federal and State structure. The data from this process will

give a non-government perspective of poverty reduction activities in Nigeria. Results from the process will in turn be available to the members of the community in order to make far the much-needed learning and take corrective actions where necessary. This internal M&E CBPRP Agency in each State and will be implemented by a national umbrella NGO to be supervised by FBFI.

A follow-up visit was undertaken to the communities 6 months after with the objective of dialoguing on the degree of success of the institutionalization process with all relevant stakeholders. In addition, the follow-up visits afforded the opportunity to dialogue with available CBOs and NGOs that will become part of a planned national NGO database on poverty eradication in Nigeria.

Experiences with the CBME System in Nigeria

The degree of success of pilot communities has not been even. While some communities have had problems with their proposals, some have been approved but work on the projects have not commenced. Thus, the CBMEC members in these two groups have not yet commenced work. However, the participatory process initiated at the action planning phase was found to have positively affected the interest of community members and increased their levels or participation. The initiative of involving the people in information generation as primary participation was fully embraced by community members. The negotiation involved in the process has also increased the confidence of the people and that willingness to participate in the process. Even where the application was not successful community members were eager and ready to re-submit in order to benefit from the social fund. Executives

of Community Development Associations readily visit State CBPRP Agency to inquire into the status of their applications. On return from such visits community meetings are held to brief the people and hold discussions on the way forward. This helped to keep the Community's vision of development alive.

The second category comprise of those communities whose proposals were successful and construction of projects have commenced. The positive experiences here can be discussed at four levels.

(a) Contribution to work planning at all levels.

Community members readily contribute to work at all levels. First, from the level of planning, to site mobilization and daily chores at construction sites. Enthusiasm were seen and documented. The people saw the projects as theirs and were ready to see to their successful completion. In the case of Araromi Ekiti(Ekiti State). The Secretary of the CBMEC submitted:

I have never seen something like this at the public work level in this community. People were willing to assist at site to help move construction items. They were willing and indeed asked for less payment for services rendered.

(b) Emerging Practices Documented and Shared.

The communities through the Project Implementation Committee and particularly the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee now have records of the activities and information of the development activities at the community level.

(c) Timely Response to emerging project requirements.

The involvement of the local people and the communities, as primary participants enabled a first hand experience of project requirements and quick citation of problems. Key actors on project implementation as well as community members were found to be familiar with project requirements and therefore in a position to respond to likely problems. (see Box 2).

Box 2

Timely Response to Emerging Project Requirements. Two cell bridge of Araromi-Ekiti, Nigeria.

When we started the project, we had planned to use ordinary gravel for the concrete...when the Engineer from the Local Government came and discussed with us, we had to change to granite and this affected out budget.... But when the work was completed, we realized that our plan to use ordinary gravel would not have worked.

Group Level Vision Development facilitated.

The Community's vision of development was found to have been facilitated by the process. As the community implements the present project, their visions are fired and they are already making arrangements to apply for other projects that will build-up on the gains of the ongoing project. (See Box 3).

Box 3

**Community Development Vision:
Araromi Ekiti**

After the final completion of this project, we will proceed to embark on a general drainage work of the community. You know that we are located in a valley. Erosion is one of our major problems. We will then link the drainages towards the river... we are already putting the costing together and are planning to send it to the Agency.

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