

Nigeria's Rural Economic Development Strategy: Community Driven Development Approach

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Abstract

Starting with an assumption of what appears to be true - that the so-called economic crisis in the rural areas of Nigeria is now pretty well established as a fact of our age. The problems, poor sanitation, disease and hunger may still be ignored or scoffed at, but they cannot be denied. The interest and aspiration of the communities till today remain largely unfulfilled in spite of the millions spent by the Federal and State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The concept of Community Driven Development (CDD) appears significant to be defined as having dwelt with the word Community Development connotes the gradual growth, which becomes more advanced and stronger when we plan, which is something that you intend to do or achieve over a particular period of time while Drives- to operate a vehicles so that it goes in a particular direction desired by the concerned group of individuals within the society. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is based on the assumption that community members are the best "experts" about their own health and social situations.

Keywords: *Economic crisis, rural area, participatory learning and action approach.*

Introduction

Starting with an assumption of what appears to be true: that the so-called economic crisis in the rural areas of Nigeria is now pretty well established as a fact of our age. The problems, poor sanitation, disease and hunger may still be ignored or scoffed at, but they cannot be denied. Concern for these problems has acquired a certain standing, a measure of discussing ability in the media and in some socio-economic, political, academic and religious institutions, this is good of course, obviously, we can't dodge to solve these problems without an increase in public awareness and concern. But in an age burdened with excessive publicity, we have to be aware also that as rise into popularity, they equally rise into the danger of over simplification. To speak of this danger is especially necessary in confronting the economic downturn in the rural areas of Nigeria, which is the result, in the first instance, of gross over simplification.

According to Economic Research Service (ERS 1991), the United State Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service listed out the following objectives as their rural development priorities; Reduction of the rural/urban gap in material living standard, Reduction of persistent high rural poverty rates, Improved socio- economic viability of vulnerable rural communities, Presentation of rural area's unique culture and natural character, Survival of family-based farming, fishing and other natural resource-based enterprises, Enhanced rural contributions to the national "well being", and Resource conservation and environmental protection.

According to the Rural Development Strategy (1995) of the government of national unity, the South African government set out a vision for the next twenty-five years (25), envisaging that by the years 2020 in the South African countryside; it would like to see freedom from poverty, much access by rural

people to government support and information, and to commercial services, with a more logical spatial network of towns, services and roads and transport system, close availability to water and sanitation and fuel sources, giving everyone more time and more health for economic productivity, Local Government structures to which everyone has easy access, and within which women play an equal and active role, close links of local government with organs of civil society and business through which express the needs and priorities of different group of rural people, dignity, safety and security of access for all, including women to useful employment, housing, and land, with people able to have control over their society, community and personal lives, and to plan for the future, fewer, healthier, safe, well-nourished children, with access to well-resourced schools and a healthy and productive environment capable of sustaining the biological components upon which the many agricultural, social and cultural activities depend.

In Nigeria, successive government have come forth with various rural development strategies, for example, the establishment of the Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank, the various State Agricultural Development Projects, River Basin Development Authority, Development of Local Government administrative systems are among similar rural development initiatives embarked upon by the government to facilitate the development of rural economy.

Most recent of these is the foreign loan secured by the government for the development of rural/agrarian areas of the country. The funds are expected to be particularly used for the downstream value addition activities of processing, storage and marketing. The Fadama Development Project as this new initiative is known, seeks to integrate the aspirations of all Fadama resources users such as pastoralists, crop farmer, hunters, gatherers, fishermen, fish breeders, women, youth, marginalized and other vulnerable groups. To achieve this aim, the project is designed with a focus on a community-driven development with maximum participation of stakeholders at every stage of their project cycle.

This approach is in line with the oft-touted national goals of poverty reduction programme (improving living condition of the poor), contributing to food security and increased access to relevant infrastructural facilities.

However, the particular concern to all in Nigeria as at today is to foster rural economic development that is sustainable over the long term. Simultaneous achievements of the national goals definitely qualify as sustainable development.

Materials and Methodology

Community is defined according to Webster dictionary as a group of people residing in the same region and under the same government. It is also defined as a class or group with common interests. Needless to say, the interests of the community pertaining to their means of livelihood, health, education, infrastructures and national resources are at their disposal.

The interest and aspiration of the communities till today remain largely unfulfilled in spite of the millions spent by the Federal and State Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development. This situation is brought about by the prevailing attitude of policy makers, planners and researchers to that significant segment of the population- who work on the land and interact directly with and control all Nigerians natural resources except petroleum and other minerals. These are (farmers, fishermen, and women, pastoralists, hunters) small dwellers that constitute about 75% of the Nigerian population. The outcome of this attitude is that planning is done and policy decision taken with little regard to the problem needs and feelings of these people which now is being researched in Universities and research institute conducted on an agenda fashioned from peoples needs? With respect to our educational background and various positions in government and parastatal, we assume to know the problem of these people, how to solve these problems and try to bring about "development" that we see fit for the people. At national, state and local government levels, very few officers make planning or

policy decisions on the basis of what they have seen from the field about the conditions of people of the effect of the previous decision.

These concepts of Community Driven Development (CDD) appear significant to be defined as having dwelt with the word Community Development which connotes the gradual growth becoming more advanced and stronger when we plan (something that you intend to do or achieve over a particular period of time) while Drive is to operate a vehicle so that it goes in a particular direction desired by the concerned group of individuals within the society. To this, a Community Development Plan (CDP) implies operating a gradual plan on an achievable thing in the last three decades; however, significant development has taken place in the attitude of scientist, planner, donor agencies and other development professionals. The development has been towards the recognition of the facts that local communities have a tremendous amount of knowledge and information about their environments that can form the baseline of sound and sustainable development.

People have a right to partake in actions and plans which affect their lives as nonparticipation approaches to development have failed to significantly alter the quality of life and resources of the poor people world-

wide (World Bank 1999). This development was first noted in farming system resources and led researchers to start involving farmers in their research and development programme through farmer’s participation in resources. This later advanced to farmer designed and managed on farm research. Other branches of research and development soon took up the approach. By the end of the 1980s, participation of the target group in the planning process from research through project identification planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation was seen as desired (Olukosi 1989), see Appendixes A to F on the preparation of a Community Development Plan (CDP).

Participatory Programme Development (PPD) Process

The two main concepts in Participatory Programme Development (PPD) are “participation” and “community”. Participation can take forms within a development programme, and some types of participation are more “participatory” than others.

Participatory continuum was depicted by de Negri *et al.* (1989) as shown in Table 1 below. This table was then developed to suit the type of participation which best matches the various types of development programme.

Table 1. Relationship of research and action to local people.

Mode of participation	Involvement of local people	Relationship of research and action to local people
Co-option	Token representatives are chosen, but have no real input or power	No
Compliance	Tasks are assigned with incentives; outsiders decide agenda and direct the process.	For
Consultancy	Local opinions are asked; outsiders analyze and decide on a course of action.	For/With
Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities, responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process.	With
Collective action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilize to carry it out in the absence of outside initiator and facilitator.	

The above Table 1 led to development of the table that was used to access the basic needs of various groups of individual/cooperatives and communities. The goal of Participatory Programme Development

(PPD) is to enable communities to engage in collective action, which is the common form of participation. Participatory Programme Development (PPD) is therefore defined as the process of working in partnership with

communities to develop feasible, desirable and sustainable programme. Participatory Programme Development (PPD) uses approach known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is a process that enables community members to: (a) analyze their needs; (b) identify possible solutions to meet those needs; and (c) develop, implement, and evaluate a plan of action. [Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)].

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is based on the assumption that community members are the best “experts” about their own health and social situations. The role of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) facilitators is to help the community members tap their own knowledge and resources and use them effectively.

The Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) process and techniques as described here for Participatory Program Development (PPD) process are heavily based on Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Rapid Rural appraisal (RRA) emerged in the late 1970s in the agriculture and environment sectors as a reaction against “rural development tourism” where urban based development officials were taken on specially arranged tours of rural area and given a very biased view of successful development projects PRA was used to gather information more quickly and with a higher level of community involvement. After the information is collected, it is taken out of the community and brought back to the development agencies to be analyzed by “experts”.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) evolved out of Rapid Rural appraisal (RRA) in the in the 1980s mainly through experimentation by small Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). It focused more on the appreciation of local people’s capabilities to plan and implement their own project (as opposed to RRA, which stopped at an appreciation of local people’s knowledge). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) took many ownerships of the information generated through participatory techniques. The term Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), which has been used in recent years to

designate the whole family of participatory approaches above, emphasized the ACTION phase of the process, that is, the phase when the community implements its solution. PLA can be conducted in all types of communities (e.g., rural, pre-urban). Although originally conceived for use in agriculture, environment and natural resources sectors including health, gender, education and violence prevention within the health sector PLA has been used in project dealing with woman’s reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition, child survival, health care financing and water sanitation.

Foundation of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). Participatory Learning and Action has the following foundations:

i. Behaviors and attitudes. Many PLA practitioners believe that these elements are the successfully facilitating participation. The kinds of behaviors and attitudes, which are necessary for the successful facilitation of PLA, includes respect for local knowledge and capabilities (reversal of learning), rapid and progressive learning, “handling over the sticks” or exchanging of baton, flexibility and informality, offsetting bases, seeking diversity and self-critical awareness.

ii. Methods Used To Gather And Analyze Information During The Planning Process.

Following are some examples of this method, mapping and diagramming, semi-structured interviews, sorting and ranking, transect walks and observation, time-line charts, schedules and seasonal calendars and matrices.

Many of these methods are visual and they can therefore be use by those who are illiterate or semi-literate, which encourages the participation of all members of the community.

Results and Discussion

Rural activities in the evolving economic judging by the Nigeria experience is still largely characterized by small holder farm units, low output, low income, low savings and inadequate inflow investment capital. Though,

efforts were made by successive government to address this abysmal situation, yet little has been achieved against high level of poverty in the rural areas of Nigeria (Fayinka 2004). Two seasoned experts on rural development have identified the frequency of policy variation due to government instability as learning impediments to effective rural economic development. Other specific hindrances were also identified to be technical deficiencies, lack of natural resources, inadequate government policies, limited availability of basic physical infrastructures (roads, ports, telecommunication, electricity, energy, water supply, sanitation etc), ineffective management system, non-availability agriculture reasons and socio-political agricultural reasons (Oyelude 2002; and Fayinka 2004).

Donor agencies such as the Department For International Development (DFID) and International Labor Organization (ILO) had been actively supporting participatory development through their activities worldwide. Even the World Bank, home of neo-liberalism in economics, is now beginning to acknowledge the role of participation in development. The work of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) in the United Kingdom, South America and India has greatly advanced the course of participatory approaches. India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines (Asian Region) perhaps more than any other region, have incorporated this approach into local level development planning. The work of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (SKRSP) MYRADA and ACTION AID in India testify to this fact. In Nigeria a few institutions such as International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Farming Systems Research Network, Institute Of Agricultural Research and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Rural Development Arm of the Catholic Church are now actively incorporating participation and participatory techniques in their work.

However, sadly the pre-1980 approaches to development still represent the dominant view of Nigeria today. But time has come for a change in the positive direction to use participatory approach to development which is

currently yielding the desired results under the National Fadama Development Programme as practiced in eighteen states of the federation. As Atte (1995) notes, "the path to development is not to ignore these systems (as we have done in the past) but to recognize them, and strengthen them through injections which will trigger a self-defining, self-sustaining and self-reliant development". This is only possible, however, when the decision makers, policy makers, planners and researchers on the one hand and the farmers and rural communities on the other hands, thoroughly understand each other. Yet such understanding is not possible without direct interaction in the environment in which the people live. It means that policy makers and planners must go to the village, to talk to them about their systems problems, needs and priorities.

Community-Driven Development (CDD)

Here we need to involve communities in development of projects in a Bottom-Top method which approach has now become paramount by empowering the communities to initiate projects based on their felt needs and priorities, plan by themselves, implement by themselves, monitor and conduct evaluation by themselves with outsiders as facilitators and not as dictators. When the community provides impetus for any development effort, the members can identify proudly with it and say, "This is our own", ownership of the development process by the community makes it sustainable.

There are few scattered successful examples of CCD in Nigeria today and these examples are largely donor supported such as the World Bank/African Development Bank Fadama sponsored programme. Other examples include the Bamaka initiative which was implemented using community-driven approach, have, a district development committee was formed to manage drug revolving fund scheme. Others are the Organizational development of NGOs which focused on participatory organization. Self-assessment and development in order to identify critical areas affecting performance and viability to NGOs towards providing

services to beneficiaries, the Ijero/Oderele farming community was involved in identifying this project. The community members were involved in identifying interventions and monitoring indicators. Selected community members were involved in sensitization, training and monitoring exercises.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) promoted Kastina and Sokoto States agricultural and community development projects. These projects were Community-Based Rural Development Programme sponsored by IFAD and focused on working with community groups to achieve sustainable development objectives. The two projects served as the forerunners of the wider IFAD promoted Community-Based Agriculture And Rural Development Programme (CBARDP) which is about to begin in eight northern states.

Conclusion and Recommendations

a. Clear and Realistic National Goals. It was observed about sixty years ago that “whenever the timber trade is good, there will be permanent famine in the Ogowe region, because the villagers will abandon their farms to fall as many trees as possible”, it can be observed “these people could achieve true wealth if they develop their agriculture and to meet their own needs”. This scenario, commented Wendell Berry (1996), “made the local people more dependent upon imported goods that they bought with money earned from export of timber to “the world economy”. They, he continued, “gave up their local means of sustainability, and imposed false standard of a foreign demand (‘as many trees as possible’) upon their forests. ‘They thus become helplessly (hopelessly) dependent on an economy over which they had no control’. Therefore, if a sustainable rural economics development agenda is to be achieved, then the States and Federal government of Nigeria must generate clear and realistic, national goals for rural economy development. They are in a position to fully appreciate the history, values, and aspiration of the citizens and to know what motivates and de-motivate them. Though, they

could be with services of foreign experience and “experts”, yet they ought to know the ultimate beneficiaries of a wrong policy thrust are the local people who have to carry out the tasks and live with the decisions and policies.

In addition, there is always also a tendency by most of Nigerian rural stakeholders to attribute the low pace of rural/agricultural development to natural occurrences like pest diseases and natural disasters. While it can be appreciated that the rural folks might have an axe to grind regarding these hindrances, yet one is convinced that the main factors limiting local economic development in Nigeria are man-made, mainly due to political, administrative and other human inadequacies rather than to pests, diseases and natural disasters. The fact remains man-made problems can only yield to human remedies and nothing more.

b. Focus on Next Generation. The Fadama programme is geared towards increasing agricultural production with a view of increasing the relative income of rural dwellers. One noticeable feature of the scheme is that, it has tried to capture the youth by engaging them proactively at both the planning and the implementation stages of the projects, if Nigeria were therefore to stimulate increased economic activities in this rural economy areas, then it would concentrate on established farmers. Students should be taught about the quality of life and the values and dignity of working on the lands, not in the cities.

c. Establish Farmers Cooperatives and Involvement of Rural Folks in Decision Making Process. Farmers and villagers need not to be told what to do, they should be involved and allowed to have a say in policies and regulations, which affect them personally. The current World Bank/African Development Bank Assisted Federal/States Government Approach is no doubt a welcome development.

d. Develop Markets Infrastructures. There is the need to organize markets so that the rural folks can get honest returns on their products. Through networking and the establishment of linking chains, a standard community price system can be established. Farmers can thereby predict their incomes and plan accordingly.

e. Availability of Credit Facilities. Credit institutions should be further encouraged with low interest rates so that funds would be available for use by the rural dwellers particularly the farmers to assist them purchase seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. The credit facility, if given at appropriate time could also assist in the area of offsetting operational costs as well.

f. Provision of Storage and Processing Facilities. The emphasis of the Second National Fadama Development Project on the downstream sector of agricultural production is to increase the rural economy communities. Increased funding of activities in the rural sector would help guarantee protection of farmers' output till a time when sale price becomes attractive. The development of cottage industries would equally no doubt generate additional incomes.

g. Accessibility to the Twin Component of Capacity Building/Advisory Services. Finally, the prevalence of several small farm holders should not be mistaken for a sign of a vibrant local economy in Nigeria. In my interaction, working with the rural folks in Kwara, Niger, Kogi and Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, it was observed that a large proportion of rural farmers and entrepreneurs are poorly informed about new technologies. Therefore, good training centers where rural men and women alike learn new farming methods and handcraft and also how to generate additional incomes from cottage industries needs to be established. The marginal economic existence of the rural dwellers in Nigeria reflects the fact that they are chronically behind the curve of change. Transforming this situation would be a no mean feat. Even for the little number of educated elites in these local communities, only a few of these little, find good local aside from the perennial activity of crop farming, hence continual migration of the youthful population to the urban centers. One is therefore skeptical whether the nation's steadily aging rural population is a promising source of vigorous rural economic enterprise.

Though there exist pockets of evidence here and prove that the rural economy can be brought out of the woods.

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Appendixes

A. Preparation of a Community Development Plan (CDP)

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important assumptions
Goal Project purpose Output Activities			

B. Logical Framework of a Community Development Plan (CDP) of Afenifere Marketing Fadama Resource Users Groups (FRUGs)

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Overall Goal - Sustainable increase in income and standard of living	40% of marketers can purchase motorbikes after one year of project implementation. 50% of marketers can send their children to private schools within two years of project implementation.	- Planning, Res. & Stat. Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. - Federal office of Statistics	Govt. continues to support Fadama development.
Project purpose - Better pricing of product	50% increase in farm gate price	Market price survey by ADP, PME Unit	Demand of product will not exceed supply.
Output - Improved access to market - Additional income generated	*20% increase in patronage within 1 year *20% increase in personal asset within 1 year	Participatory monitoring and evaluation through interview and questioning of (Client, SFDO, LFDO, facilitators)	More people will come as a result of better roads.
- Increase in level of patronage	*50% increase in the volume of farm produce within 1 year		
- Increase in haulage cost	LDP Component Cost - Capacity Building 100,000 - Advisory service 100,000 - Rural infrastructure 760,000 - Total 960,000		Programme interrelationship *L.D. women empowerment Programme Agreed mechanism for sustaining sub-project
Activities - Rehabilitation of road	Total beneficiary contributions: - Advisory service 10,000 - Rural infrastructure 96,000 Total 86,000 Cash contribution 26,000 Contribution in kind 60,000		- User fees - Levies - Mouthy dues - Registration fees
- Provision of market stalls or sales point			

C. Sample Community Development Plan (CDP)

Narrative summary	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Important Assumptions
Goal(Direct Ends) To increase income	Increase harvest by 20 tones above baseline within a years.	1. Local govt. revenue chart 2. Planning monitoring and evaluation unit of FADP	1. FRUGs are ready to contribute. 2. Fadama remains a natural priority. 3. Disbursement of fund is guaranteed. 4. Market does not fluctuate significantly.

C. Sample Community Development Plan (CDP) (continued)

Purpose(Direct Means) 1. to improve market accessibility 2. provision of portable water	1. 70% increase in number of farmers conveying their product to market 2. 50% reduction of water borne disease in 3 years. 3. 2 sources has been reduced by 2Km.	1. Local govt. state produce chart 2. Planning monitoring and statistics unit of health dept. 3. M&E, SFDO. Planning monitoring and evaluation unit of FADP	Service providers are readily available. Pre-conditions 1. FRUGs drawn up sub-projects proposal. 2. Communities are trained by a service provider on technical know-how.
Output (Direct Means) 1. improve transportation 2. quality farm animal production system 3. improve production system 4. improve availability of water supply	1. 70% of farm product reach to 60% state market in two day tome after harvest 2. market availability 3. 20% increase in production of rice above baseline 4. less than 2 days of water shortage in each mouth within 6 months of project implementation		

D. Causes, Effect, Solutions, Activities and Action

Causes:	What is the cause of this problem? What is the root cause? Which of our actions cause this problem?
Effect:	What will happen if this problem continues? What can we expect if this problem persists? What are the consequences of this problem?
Solutions:	Do we want to do something to solve this problem?
Activities:	If yes what can we do? What solution have we already tried but haven't worked? Why haven't they worked? What can we do now to solve this problem?
Action:	If we think we've found the solutions, how can we implement them?

this, it is better to look for an objective that will reduce the consequences of limited rainfall.

Questions for Guiding the Analysis of Action and Objectives

- ❖ Does action A logically lead to objective B?
- ❖ What conditions must be met and what proposals should be made so that action A leads to objective B? To verify: action A only leads to B... (Thus, a list of conditions and proposals are made.)
- ❖ Are these conditions and proposals feasible? If so, what must be done to reach the objective? If not, the action should not be carried out because there is little chance that it will succeed.

E. Sample Problem Tree

Effect	Conflicts
	Destruction of Crops
	Animal mortality due to bad gracing
	Decrease in quality of Cotton
Core problem	Stray animals
Causes	Difficulties in mastering herds
	Cattle guarded by children
	Absence of pasture areas
	Search for fodder

F. Sample Objective Tree

Direct Ends	Increase in the quality of cotton
	High crop yield
	Reduction of animal mortality due to improved graving
Core objective	Reduce the straying of animals
Direct Means	Demarcate pasture areas
	Increase surveillance of children by parents
	Manage herds better
	Produce fodder

Objective Tree

If the problem has not been well formulated, it will often be difficult to translate the problem into an objective tree bearing in mind that certain causes cannot be translated into objective tree. For example, the cause of lack of rain cannot be translated into sufficient rain for the obvious reason that this is an unrealistic objective. In a case such as