

## Success and Constraints of LEEMP Community Development Projection in Benue State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study was conducted to evaluate the success and constraints of local empowerment and environmental management project (LEEMP) community development project in Benue state, Nigeria. The study focused on the socio economic characteristics of the beneficiaries in the target communities, compare the standard of living of LEEMP communities before and after LEEMP project, and identify the constraints in the implementation of LEEMP. Primary information was collected from 225 beneficiaries through a multistage sampling technique. Primary data was used for the study which was garnered through a well structured questionnaire and interview sections with LEEMP beneficiaries. The socioeconomic characteristics of respondents were analyzed descriptively, impact of LEEMP on target communities were presented in a tabular form, while five point likert type scales was used to analyze the awareness and participation level respectively. It was found that education, income, sex and household size influenced respondents level of participation and subsequently the success of the project. LEEMP used a strategy that enabled community members to participate and established projects that were prioritized by them which led to national and community development, contributing greatly to improvement in the standard of living of the targeted rural communities.

**KEY WORDS:** Success, Constraints, LEEMP, Community, Development, Project

### INTRODUCTION

Most community development programme of the government in the past were not successful due largely to the approaches which failed to address the actual needs of the target beneficiaries, these programmes were sectoral in nature and poorly targeted and were imposed from above without consultation with the target beneficiaries (Federal Project Support Unit, 2006). Kiwanuka (1994) stated that unless there is full participation of the rural people in the whole process of rural development, there will not be any sustainable development. Participation should be coupled with democratization of the rural masses and transfer of power to the grassroots level. Fear of transparency and other vested self-interests on the part of government officials are some of the reasons responsible for low participation of the targeted beneficiaries (Kiwanuka, 1994).

The beneficiaries of projects or programme should be involved in the decision making process. Community-Driven Development, which is the approach adopted by Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP), empowers communities to take responsibility for needs identification, prioritization and implementation. Furthermore, responsibility for mobilizing and managing entire resources is vested with the community. This has stimulated good governance, transparency and accountability at the community level. The Community-Driven Development is anchored on a vision of prosperity through empowerment of local communities and seeks to put communities in the driver's seat, recognizing their powers, rights and obligations. The multiple aim of Community-Driven Development is geared toward empowerment, improved governance, improved service delivery and ultimately poverty reduction. To achieve these, community-driven development is premised on five pillars, viz: community empowerment, realigning the centre, improving accountability and transparency and capacity building.

Rural communities have witnessed neglect for a long time in Nigeria and many Third World countries (Agama, 2007). This is attributed to sectoral approaches employed by Government and other development agencies as reflected in inadequate funding of projects, corruption, lack of accountability, inarticulate development and policies (Omenka, 1991). As a consequence, the gap between the rural and urban communities is widening continually (Omenka, 1991).

Historically, demographic, economic and ecological dynamics have acted in combination to produce intense activities in community-based programmes or projects to improve the living conditions of the people (Awua, 2007). It is important that planning and implementation of social development programmes at the community level should be a global venture with multiple but interrelated dimensions encompassing partnership among the people of the community and other stakeholders. In order for social development to succeed, Ihejiamaizu (2002) observed that it must be people-centered with focus on the fulfillment of the human potentials at the grassroots, poverty alleviation and making the community level human capital more productive to overall national development. To this effect the Nigerian government in partnership with World Bank established LEEMP. However, it cannot be said with precision that level in the social status of the people has transformed as expected.

Since the inception of LEEMP in Benue State in 2004, no in-depth study has been carried out to evaluate LEEMP as a community development programme in the State. It is necessary to ascertain the extent to which the programme has been used to achieve the objectives of LEEMP. Therefore, a critical evaluation of LEEMP in Benue State as far as community development, poverty alleviation is concerned is intended in this study: determine the socio economic characteristics of the respondents in the target communities, compare the standard of living of LEEMP communities before and after LEEMP project, determine the effect of the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiaries on the success of implementation of the project, identify the constraints in the implementation of LEEMP.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted in Benue State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of all LEEMP beneficiaries in Benue State. A total of 225 respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. In stage one, three local government areas were selected from the nine participating local government areas in the state through simple random sampling. Stage two involved the selection of five communities from each of the three local government areas,

giving a total of 15 communities. Stage three involved the selection of 2% of the population of the communities, giving a total number of 225 respondents as shown in the table below.

Zone	LGA	Targeted Community	Population of Community	Sample Size 2% of Population
A	Tarka	Twar	756	15
		Uyoarako	1021	20
		Salem	503	10
		Anchiha	1018	20
		Konkyar	762	15
B	Katsina-Ala	Aba Mbahav	766	15
		Ushosambe	1021	20
		Achough	516	10
		Virgir	500	10
		Turan	751	15
C	Apa	Alifeti	767	15
		Akpete	753	15
		Oladoga	761	15
		Auke	773	15
		Oiji-Jos	755	15
		Total		

Primary data was used for the study which was garnered through a well structured questionnaire and interview sections with LEEMP beneficiaries. The socioeconomic characteristics of respondents were analyzed descriptively, impact of LEEMP on target communities where presented in a tabular form, while five point likert type scales was used to analyze the awareness and participation level respectively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study are as presented below;

### Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

The results in Table 1 shows that 72.9 percent of the respondents were males and the other 28 percent were females. Large proportions of the respondents (65.6%) were within the age bracket of 31-50 and were mainly farmers (62%). Majority of the respondents (61% above) were educated which shows that the people in the study area are quite young and expected to be productive.

The finding in this study agrees with that of Nwachukwu and Ezeh (2007) who reported that people within this age group formed the bulk of the productive work force. The relatively youthful age composition of the people in the study area suggests a high tendency for dynamism and innovativeness and 76% of the respondents were married, with about 56% having a household size of 8-10 persons per household.

### Standard of Living of Beneficiaries

The results in Table 4 indicate that respondents strongly agreed that they had access to education (about 43.7%), there had been increase in girl-child education (57.2%), increased number of teachers employed in the various schools (50.9%), and increase in the number of people attending the P.T.A meetings (49.1%). The respondents attributed this to the provision of school buildings, furniture and the VIP toilets that were provided by LEEMP. This finding corroborates with that of Okopi (2007) who reported that there has been an improvement in the educational sector in Benue State as a result of renovation and building of new structures in rural areas .

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	163	72.9
Female	62	27.9
Total	225	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
20-29	29	13.1
30-39	93	41.9
40-49	97	43.7
50-59	6	1.4
Total	225	100.00
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	160	72.1
Female	62	27.9
Total	222	100.0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	52	23.4
Married	169	76.1
Divorced	4	.5
Total	225	100.00
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	108	48.6
Civil servant	69	31.1
Self employed	43	19.4
Others	5	.9
Total	225	100%
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Non-formal education	19	7.2
Primary	61	27.5
Secondary	73	32.9
Tertiary	72	32.4
Total	225	100%
<b>Household size</b>		
2-4	8	23.1
5-7	48	21.6
8-10	84	38.0
11 above	39	17.3
Total	225	100%
<b>Social organization</b>		
0	14	6.3
1-2	125	56.3
3-4	36	16.2
5 and above	47	21.2
Total	225	100%

The result in Table 4 also showed that there had been an increase in the social events such as community meetings in the LEEMP target communities as 51.8 percent of the respondents had attested to this fact. This finding is in agreement with Agwu (2005) who reported that 56.9% of the respondents, claimed to have attended meetings where issues concerning the community including community projects, were being discussed. About 46 percent (45.9%) of the respondents agreed that there has been improvement in economic activities followed by 50.9

percent of the respondents who agreed that they have acquired various skills (carpentry, masonry) as a result of the project.

Indicator/change	Effects Of Leemp On Standard Of Living Indicators					Total
	members of target community Assessment					
	SA	A	D	SD	U	
<b>Education</b>						
- Increase access to Education.	<sup>2</sup> 97	60	25	39	1	222
	<sup>3</sup> 43.70	27.0	11.3	17.6	.5	100
- Increased in Girl-child education.	127	48	12	35	-	222
	57.2	21.6	5.4	15.8	-	100
- Increase in employment of teachers.	113	50	23	36	-	222
	50.9	22.5	10.4	16.2	-	100
- Increase in attendance of P.T.A meeting	109	57	19	37	-	22
	49.1	25.7	18.6	16.7	-	100
<b>Socio-economic Sector</b>						
- Increase in Social events e.g meeting.	115	90	6	8	3	222
	51.8	40.5	2.7	3.6	1.4	100
- Increase in economic activities.	102	86	31	-	7	222
	45.9	38.7	14.0	-	3.2	100
- Increase in acquisition of skills.	11.3	67	35	-	7	222
	50.9	30.2	15.8	-	3.2	100
- Reduction in rural-urban migration.	100	69	45	-	8	222
	45.0	31.1	20.3	-	3.6	100
- Increase in Income	100	73	45	2	2	222
	45.0	32.9	20.3	.9	.9	100
- Cleaner environment	94	98	18	7	4	222
	42.3	44.1	8.1	3.2	1.8	100
<b>Health Sector</b>						
- Reduction in child mortality.	125	31	28	36	2	222
	56.3	14.0	12.6	15.2	.9	100
- Increase in safe deliveries	132	29	27	33	1	222
	59.3	13.1	12.2	14.9	1.5	100
- Access to immunization	149	27	13	32	1	222
	67.1	12.2	5.9	14.4	.5	100
- Reduction in childhood diseases	124	53	14	31	-	222
	55.9	23.9	6.3	14.0	-	100
- Reduction in time/distance to Health facilities.	109	54	26	32	1	222
	41.1	24.3	11.7	14.4	.5	100
- Access to antenatal & post-natal care.	103	54	26	38	1	222
	46.4	24.3	11.7	17.1	.5	100
<b>Transport Sector</b>						
- Increase in numbers of vehicles plying the road.	76	20	14	90	22	222
	34.23	9.01	6.31	40.54	9.91	100
- Reduction in time to reach the communities.	58	41	20	81	22	222
	26.1	18.5	9.0	36.5	9.91	100
- Reduction in average cost of transport.	42	33	31	94	22	222
	18.92	14.86	13.96	42.34	9.91	100
<b>Water Sector</b>						
- Access to safe drinking water	94	29	39	52	8	222
	42.34	13.06	17.57	23.42	3.60	100
- Reduction in time/distance to access safe drinking water.	86	29	44	55	8	222
	38.74	13.06	19.82	24.77	3.60	100
- Reduction in average cost of portable water.	67	40	46	60	9	222
	30.18	18.02	20.72	27.03	4.05	100
- Average time taken to access water.	> 1hr	1- 2 hrs	2.1 – 3hrs	3.1 – 4hrs	<4 hrs	
	138	36	42	-	.6	222
	62.15	16.23	18.92	-	2.7	100
- Source of drinking water.	Stream/ well	Stream /river	Well	Borehole	Rain	
	44	79	3	96	-	222
	19.82	35.59	1.3	43.24	-	100

**NOTE**

1. Assessment criteria mean: SA = strongly agree, A = agree; D = Disagree SD = strongly disagree U = Undecided
2. Number represents: frequencies
3. Number represents: percentages.

The result also shows that 45.0% agreed that there have been reduction in the number of youths migrating to the urban areas, and 45.0% agreed that there have been increase in annual income after LEEMP intervention. The result of this study agrees with that of Nwachukwu and Ezeh (2007) who reported an improvement in the area of productivity and income as a result of poverty alleviation program.

The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Okafor (2000) who reported that there is a need to identify and encourage the various factors that enhance citizen's participation in community projects so as to ensure the citizen continuous participation in community development projects. This will aid the development of our various communities which will consequently reduce the rural-urban migration to the barest minimum in Nigeria. The report of the study further collaborated with Olaleye (2010) who reported that there was a significant relationship between the community's ability to develop income strategies and their participation in community development projects. According to the result 44.1 percent agreed that the LEEMP intervention had resulted in a cleaner environment. The respondents attributed this to the provision of VIP toilets, incinerator at the health clinics, landscaping of all projects and the general awareness that was created by LEEMP staff on environmental issues.

The results in Table 4 show that majority (56.3%) strongly agreed that there was a reduction in child mortality since the LEEMP intervention thus fulfilling the millennium development goals; 55.9 percent of the respondents agreed that there has been reduction in childhood diseases, whereas 67.1% agreed that they now have access to immunization. Similarly 49.1 percent agreed that there has been reduction in time and distance to access health care followed by 59.5 percent of the respondents who agreed that there have been an increase in the number of safe delivery since LEEMP intervention and 46.4 percent agreeing that they now have access to antenatal and post-natal care. This agrees with Okopi (2007) who reported that there has been a considerable improvement in the health sector in Benue State.

The results in Table 4 show that about 58 percent of the people still do not have access to safe drinking water. This underscores the need for more effort to be geared towards the provision of portable water in the rural areas. The finding in this study disagrees with that of Okopi (2007) in his study of the Appraisal of the Benue Advance plan 1999 – 2003; he reported that the Akume regime had not done anything to improve the water situation in the state. Results in Table 4 show that the majority (62.15%) takes less than one hour to access water, this could be because majority uses well which is located within the community. Table 4 shows a negative response in improvement in the transport sector with about 60 percent agreed that there have been no improvement in the transport sector.

The results of the survey revealed that 72.97 percent of the respondents were always able to satisfy their food needs. This is a great improvement over the 12.89 percent recorded in the baseline survey (LEEMP, 2006). The results further indicate that only 9.91 percent never could satisfy their food needs. This is an improvement over the 22.19 percent recorded in the baseline survey, (LEEMP 2006).

LEEMP intervention has resulted in the provision of school buildings, health facilities, generated employment through the provision of income-generating activities and about 73 percent of the respondents were always able to satisfy their food needs. This findings agrees with that of Okopi(2007) who reported that availability and quality of certain indices such as health, education, employment and food security determines the living standard of the people.

### Factors that Affected the Successful Implementation of the LEEMP Programme

The results in Table 6 showed that at 5 percent level of significance, the hypothesis that the selected socio-economic characteristics variables have no significant influence on the probability of successful implementation of the project is rejected by wald test of joint significance of parameter. This implies that there is a significant causal relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable that is between successful implementation and the selected socio-economic characterized variables.

#### Factors Affecting The Probability Of Participation Among The Respondents

Variables	Maximum likelihood estimate	Standard error	Wald Statistics	eβ
Age	-0.01	0.04	0.06	-101
Income	0.00	0.00	0.58	1.00
Education	0.09	0.04	4.93*	1.10
Sex	0.94	0.41	5.29*	2.56
Family Size	0.12	0.05	5.34*	1.12
Constant	0.90	1.45	0.00	-2.45
Log likelihood:	-86.49			
Wald test of joint significance of coefficients	: $\chi^2_{cal} = 11.58$ ; $\chi^2_{5\%cv} = 11.07$			

Specifically, the results revealed that income of the participants as well as their level of education influence the probability of successful implementation of the programme. However, age, family size, and sex of the participant had no influence on the probability of successful implementation of the programme. Participant's increase in income marginally increases the probability of successful implementation of the program. On the other hand increase in level of education of the participant significantly and positively increases the probability of successful implementation of the programme.

The finding here is consistent with that of Ekong (1988) who reported that the higher the income level, the higher the capacity for adoption decisions. Community driven development strategy are innovations that require adoption by the respondents and consequently their participation and eventual success of the programme for which income is a key determining factor. Todaro et al., (2003) further reported that individual's desire for change is greatly affected by the level of income of that individual higher income status can instill courage on the individuals' when faced with the decision as to which type and or how programmes can be run to obtain optimum result. Experience of formal education can give an unparallel advantage to the people of an area in terms of quick understanding of new strategies (Ejembi, 2005). This finding corroborates UNDP (1997) report that level of education may be able to positively modify people's behaviour, therefore in this case their level of education helped in the understanding of the program and therefore it's successful implementation.

### Level of Participation of Beneficiaries and Success of LEEMP

The correlation analysis of participation and success of LEEMP programme shows that there is significant relationship between participation and successful implementation at 5% level of significance ( $r = 0.95$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Consequently the null hypothesis that there is no significance relationship between the beneficiaries' level of participation and the success of the project is therefore rejected. This result indicates that the more the people participate in the programme the greater the success of the programme. The success of the programme increases with increase in the participation of the beneficiaries in the programme. This findings is in agreement with Idachaba (1985) who reported that in a country like Nigeria where over 70 percent of its citizens are rural based, no meaningful development can take place without involving the silent majority who have long suffered neglect and deprivation by successive government. Olaleye (2010) reported that participation implies that the workers have to supply the necessary and needed stimulus needed for the project's success. Olaleye (2010) further reported that there is a significant relationship between participation and community development. The result also conforms with Anyanwu's (1999) view that participation implies that the workers have to supply the necessary and needed stimulus needed for project's success.

### Factors Affecting The Probability Of Successful Implementation Of The Programme Among The Respondents.

Variables	Maximum likelihood estimate	Standard error	Wald Statistics	$e\beta$
Age	0.06	0.10	0.31	1.06
Income	0.06	0.00	8.29*	1.00
Education	0.25	0.12	4.75*	1.28
Sex	0.63	1.04	0.3	1.88
Family Size	0.01	0.11	0.00	1.01
Constant	-0.62	3.95	-0.03	-1.85
Log likelihood value	-17.93			
Wald test of joint significance of coefficients	$X^2_{cal} = 11.76$ ; $X^2_{5\%cv} = 11.07$			

### Constrains to Effective Performance of LEEMP

Table 7 shows factors that constrained LEEMP projects in the communities; paramount among these was bad terrain ( $x = 3.8507$ ) which made it impossible to assess most of the communities especially during the raining season. Others include delay in disbursement ( $x = 3.5766$ ) this is as a result of the World Bank's requirement that expects communities' counterpart fund of 5% cash of the total cost of project which the communities found it difficult to raise. Retirement process ( $x = 3.4279$ ) sometimes the items bought by communities could not be receipted for but World Bank insists that every money must be retired before further fund can be given. Lack of technical staff ( $x = 3.3694$ ). Illiteracy level ( $x = 2.9459$ ); despite their level of education they needed training and retraining on procurement and book keeping. Those that were not regarded as major constraints include poor supervision ( $x = 2.9685$ ); inadequate funding ( $x = 3.0766$ ); lack of incentive ( $x = 2.1306$ ); social influence ( $x = 2.6486$ ); elite capture; level of conflict ( $x = 1.8694$ ); lack of interest ( $x = 2.8108$ ) and lack of cooperation ( $x = 2.7568$ ).



**Means And Standard Deviation Responses Of Beneficiaries Perceived Constraints In The Implementation Of Leemp Programme.**

Variable constraints	Means	Standard deviation
Bad terrain	3.85*	0.99
Delay in disbursement	3.58*	0.96
Retirement process of funds	3.43*	0.99
Lack of technical staff	3.37*	0.90
Poor supervision	2.97	0.75
Inadequate funding	3.08*	0.89
Lack of interest by Communities members	2.81	0.82
Lack of cooperation	2.76	0.83
Illiteracy level	2.95	0.96
Lack of incentive	2.13	0.62
Social influence	2.65	0.95
Elite capture	2.52	0.91
Level conflict	1.87	0.38

> 3.05 = significant; 2.95 not significant ' significant\* major constraints

**CONCLUSION**

It was found that education, income, sex and household size influenced respondents level of participation and subsequently the success of the project. LEEMP used a strategy that enabled community members to participate and established projects that were prioritized by themselves which lead to national and community development, contributing greatly to improvement in the standard of living of the targeted rural communities.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that for every government programme targeted at community development, there is a need to embark on intensive awareness creation of the existence of the programme through the use of the staff, town criers, village meetings, radio and televisions jingles in local dialects. Policy makers should de-emphasize the top-down flow of information. This approach has the great disadvantage of reducing interaction between policy makers and the rural dwellers as well as participation. Community Driven Development Approach (CDD) should rather be used as this medium offers the rural people the opportunity to be actively involved in the entire process of conception, identification, and execution of any poverty alleviation programme that will benefit them.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study;

- i. Considering the project's good achievements, the evaluation supports the second phase, but with greater involvement in project supervision and implementation support.
- ii. To ensure that the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable among the active rural population fully participate in project interventions and derive benefits from the next phase, it would be useful to:
  1. improve the project's understanding of the mechanisms of social and economic exclusion affecting the most vulnerable social groups
  2. develop approaches for local planning and monitoring and evaluation that ensure full participation by vulnerable or marginalized groups and assign unequivocal priority to reducing vulnerability among such groups; and
  3. provide incentives and earmark resources for specific subprojects aimed at reducing the vulnerability and exclusion of the rural poor
- iii. To ensure wider sustainability of project investments, the next project phase should contribute to:

- iv. developing appropriate and equitable mechanisms for cost-sharing in the construction and O&M costs of community infrastructure; and
- v. promoting rural people's access to the means (inputs, technical advice, etc.) of maximizing returns on investments. The community driven development approach should be adjusted to accommodate community natural resource management subprojects at go beyond the geographic boundaries of one village or one rural commune, and take longer than one year to implement.

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