

**ASSESSMENT OF CORPORATE ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE COMMUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
OGUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Development efforts are facilitated in the community by both the internal and external forces. It is only when both partners work as a team that the development efforts will see the light of the day and then the assurance of sustainability of projects. It is in line with this philosophy that this study assesses the corporate organization partnership for sustainable community development projects in Ogun State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design of ex-post-facto was adopted for the study. A total of 400 respondents were selected for the study using purposive sampling technique. A structured questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.79 was the instrument used for data collection. The research questions and hypotheses were answered and tested at 0.05 alpha levels using percentages for research questions and Chi-square for the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that: a positive significant influence exists between the activities of cement factory and socio-economic development of host communities ($X^2 = 312.22$, critical value = 16.919, $P < 0.05$). Also a significant relationship exists between development projects of WAPCO and the expectations of the local communities ($X^2 = 1092.69$, critical value = 24.996, $P < 0.05$). Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that: involvement of the direct beneficiaries must be sought before project initiation, workable policies should be put in place by the government, better commitment of the cement factory and that of the community members through the leaders should be adequately mobilized for community development programmes.

Introduction

A major issue that has remained prominent in the agenda of development is the need for widespread involvement of the people in the process of community development. This is borne out of the fact that community development as a movement demands the active and full involvement of all, both indigenes and non-indigenes resident in the area. The essence of stressing on the involvement of all and sundry in community development is to facilitate and quicken the process of transforming the area socially, economically, politically, educationally and otherwise. Both human material resources are therefore mustered and mobilized to promote developmental activities within the area.

It has been argued that sustainable development requires joint movement and collaborative action of several actors from different sectors and social spheres to be realized (Bernard, 1986,). As a result, partnership, in terms of voluntary collaboration of two or more organizations with a jointly-defined agenda focused on a discrete, attainable and potentially measurable goal. This has been suggested as a path to sustainability. A similar mechanism would be to form inter-organizational networks which establish the conditions for joint working and promote the potential for learning and innovation (Brenda, 1997). Collaborative approaches are central in the dominant theoretical paradigms shaping community transformation and sustainability.

Development is facilitated in communities by the interaction of internal and external factors. Such enabling factors help to transform communities through the adoption and operation of new ideas and technologies. For example, new ideas and technologies in mass media, modern transportation, new roads, housing, education, commerce and new commodity transaction, have the potential of stimulating people and accelerating their community development.

Community development or change has been a dominant feature of human life. This observation has been made by many authorities in community development. For example, Anyanwu (1992) argues that community development is as old as human group life and has been undergoing changes. He argues further that whereas community development was once thought of as belonging to the domains of history, arts and adult education, it is now properly and equally regarded as belonging to the field of the social sciences. Rural community development is an aspect of rural development, which is of concern to many academic and professional fields of learning.

In order to achieve the maximum benefits from rural community development, the interaction of both the internal and external factors and agents need to be harmonized and harnessed. It is on this note that cooperate organizations such as banks, industries, companies etc. established in a certain community should partner the community in community development activities. Landmark achievement seems to be recorded in some communities. However, it is observed that some communities where these cooperate organizations are in operation are said not to be enjoying the collaboration of these organizations in community development.

It is important to observe that both rural and urban people have been interacting for centuries. This social phenomenon has been accelerated in contemporary world through such events as modernization and globalization, which have reduced the world to one "global village". However, although there is an ongoing universalization of social life, yet communities and their development maintain their special clusters of characteristics. Factors that are responsible for the development of each community are not all endemic. Some of the factors for the development of each community are also external to it. It is more or less compelling

for both internal and external agents and factors to act together in a co-production in order to promote community development maximally.

Furthermore, development activities in Ewekoro Local Government Area have shown that co-operative bodies, industries and other external agents have made visible and viable landmark in the Nigerian community landscape development. It does follow that these external agents, industries or companies are helping to facilitate the planned process of growth in their host communities. Nevertheless, their contributions to development vary from one community to another. However, the level of progress made has been greatly influenced by the strategies adopted by the external bodies and the seemingly apparent local pressure from within the socio-economic milieu in which they operate. Ajayi (1990) reports that apart from the physical development of the factory, there have been developments in social welfare areas, particularly for its staff and also in Nigerianization. Besides, it has been widely reported that the external agents have been contributing to the development of their host communities, community members may have been offered employment, it is not too clear what the people perceive the activities of the West African Portland Cement Plc (WAPCO) factory to be in terms of partnering in pursuing the original mandate given to it for sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

Ewekoro communities may be affected by cement explorations and government activities. The people in the area are farmers, hunters, petty traders. From ancient times, the communities have used their environmental assets and local technology to develop themselves without assistance from outside. However, the advent of cement exploration in the area in the stead of raising the standard of living of the people, it has reduced the quality and usefulness of land through industrial pollution, destruction of manure life, generational conflict and internal disharmony. This study is therefore interested in investigating ways by which the

community and the West African Portland Cement Factory (WAPCO) partner to foster sustainable community development projects in Ewekoro community, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study sets out to assess the activities of West African Portland Cement Factory Plc (WAPCO) in promoting and facilitating the development of the community in which it is in operation.

The specific objectives of the study include:

- i. assess if the cement factory encourages local initiative in its self-sponsored community development programmes;
- ii. find out the perceptions of the community members on the usefulness of projects initiated and executed by WAPCO;
- iii. examine the influence of WAPCO's activities on the socio-economic development of the host community members;
- iv. assess the relationship between community development projects of WAPCO and the expectations of the local communities.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions

1. Does the cement factory utilize local initiative in its self-sponsored community development programmes at the initiation and execution stages?
2. What measures in the opinions of the community members that can be employed to enhance effective contributions by both the factory and communities for sustainable community development?
3. What is community's perception on the usefulness of projects initiated and executed by the WAPCO?

Research Hypotheses

1. The developmental activities provided by the cement factory will have no significant influence on the socio-economic development of the community.
2. There will be no significant relationship between community development projects of the cement factory and the expectations of local communities about their development.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design of ex-post-facto was employed for the study. Population of the study covers towns and villages where West African Portland Cement Factory Plc (WAPCO) had undertaken or currently embarking on community development projects/ programmes. Eighty respondents each were purposively selected from five towns and villages in Ewekoro Local Government Area. The respondents were stratified into five categories (educational elites, political elites, traditional rulers, peasant farmers and market women). This was guided by the categories of towns and villages which were selected using the hat and ballot paper method of simple randomization.

The table below shows the distribution of the sampled respondents.

| S/N | Communities | Educational Elites | Political Elites | Traditional Rulers | Farmers | Market Women |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Ewekoro | 18 | 20 | 2 | 20 | 20 |
| 2 | Itori | 18 | 10 | 2 | 20 | 30 |
| 3 | Papalanto | 10 | 8 | 2 | 30 | 30 |
| 4 | Onigbedu | 6 | 12 | 2 | 30 | 30 |
| 5 | Akinbo | 18 | 20 | 2 | 20 | 20 |
| Total | | 70 | 70 | 10 | 120 | 130 |

This was selected using a simple random technique and it was done by proportionately stratifying the sub-groups that reflect the heterogeneity of the population.

The structured questionnaire was tagged: Cement Factory Activities Assessment Questionnaire (CFAAQ). The study used a self-constructed and validated set of questions on activities of West African Portland Cement Factory PLC (WAPCO). Section 'A' concentrated on the profile of the respondents (see graph 1) while the Section 'B' contained questions on the activities of the cement factory for sustainable development.

The instrument was divided into two sections "A and B". Section 'A' contained the bio-data of the respondents such as age, sex, educational attainment level, while Section 'B' contained the statements measuring the assessment of cooperate organization partnership for sustainable community development projects. The questionnaire contained 33 items. The modified Likert four-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was adopted for the study.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was sought for by consulting with the experts in community development, donor agencies, sociology and evaluation. Twenty copies of the questionnaire were given to the experts for scrutiny and criticism. The experts' suggestions, criticisms and advice led to modification of some items in the questionnaire.

A pilot study was conducted and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained for the instrument.

Method of Data Administration

The researchers administered the questionnaire to the respondents with the assistance of 5 trained research assistants. The researchers consulted with the respondents for cooperation and explained the rationale for the study. Thus, 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the

respondents. Out of 400 administered copies of the questionnaire, 350 copies adequately filled were used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were collated and analyzed. Simple percentages and frequency counts were used to analyze the bio-data of the respondents. In the same vein, percentages were used to analyze the research questions while Chi-square (X^2) was used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of the Results

The results of the data analyzed for the study are presented based on the research questions and hypotheses generated for the study.

The result shows that 69.5% of the respondents are male and 30.5% are female. This implies that there are more male respondents than the female respondents. The age range is between 18 and 46 years, the respondents are mostly middle age adults. 38% of the respondents are within the 36 – 45 years age bracket while 37% are within the 26 – 35 years age bracket. 15% respondents fall within 46 and above age bracket. 8.5% remaining respondents are in the 18 – 25 years bracket. The highest percentage of the respondents are farmers which is 30%, 25% are civil servants, 20% are traders, 15% are involved in any kind of occupation and 10% are politicians. This implies that majority of the respondents are in the category of low income earners. From the graph, it shows that 57.5% of the respondents have been staying in the communities since they were born. This presupposes that they are familiar with the activities in their communities. Also, a higher percentage of the respondents 55.75% are married.

Research Question 1

Does the cement factory utilize local initiative in its self-sponsored community development projects at the initiation and execution stages?

Table 1: Utilization of local initiative by WAPCO in its self-sponsored community development programmes

| Distributions | Agree % | Disagree % | Indifferent % |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Active participation of community members during initiation and execution of WAPCO self-sponsored community development programme | 8.5 | 85 | 6.5 |
| Community leaders involvement in WAPCO community development programmes | 62.5 | 27.5 | 10 |
| Youth active participation | 25 | 62.5 | 12.5 |
| Effective partnering between WAPCO and community | 12.5 | 79 | 8.5 |

Source: Field Work 2011

Table 1 shows the utilization of local initiatives by WAPCO in its self-sponsored community development programmes at the initiation and execution stages. From the table, 8.5% of respondents agreed that the community members actively participated during the initiation and execution stages while 85% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion leaving only 6.5% indifferent.

Concerning community leaders' involvement, 62.5% of the respondents agreed that community leaders are actively involved in WAPCO community development programmes while 27.5% of the respondents disagreed to this assertion leaving 10% indifferent. 25% of the respondents admitted that youths in the area are active participants in the initiation and execution stages of WAPCO's community development programmes while 62.5% of the respondents are indifferent. Concerning effective collaboration between WAPCO and communities, 12.5% of the respondents are of the opinion that there is effective collaboration while 79% of the respondents disagreed and 8.5% of the respondents are indifferent.

Research Question 2

What measures in the opinions of the community members that can be employed to enhance effective contributions by both the factory and communities for sustainable community development?

Table 2: Community members’ opinion on measures to enhance effective contributions by both WAPSO and communities

| Distributions | Adequate | Not Adequate | Indifferent |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| High level of respect for local ideas by the WAPCO | 20 | 75 | 5 |
| Effective and efficient policies during conflict resolution | 30 | 68 | 2 |
| Effective implementation of the Safety, Health and Environmental Scheme (SHE) | 12 | 80 | 8 |
| Enactment of laws mandating WAPCO to contribute towards developing its host community | 20 | 76 | 4 |
| Organization of women empowerment programmes | 30 | 70 | -- |

Source: Field Work 2011

The table 2 above indicates that in respect of WAPCO exhibiting high level of respect of local ideas, 20% of the respondents admitted that it is adequate while 75% of the respondents are of the opinion that it is not adequate and 5% of the respondents are indifferent. Concerning effective and efficient policies during conflict resolution, it was observed that 30% of the respondents are of the opinion that the policies are adequate while 68% of the respondents admitted that they (policies) are not adequate and 2% of the respondents are however indifferent to this assertion. 12% of the respondents believed that the implementation of the Safety, Health and Environmental Scheme (SHE) is adequate while 80% of the respondents are of the opinion that it is not adequate and 8% of the respondents are indifferent. In respect of the enactment of laws mandating WAPCO to contribute towards developing its host community and environ, 20% of the respondents believed it is adequate while 76% of the respondents admitted that it is not adequate and 4% of the respondents are indifferent. 30% of the respondents are of the opinion that the women empowerment programmes organized by WAPCO are

adequate while 70% of the respondents believed that the programmes are not adequate.

Research Question 3

What is community's perception on the usefulness of projects initiated and executed by WAPCO?

Table 3: Perceptions of community on the usefulness of projects initiated and executed by WAPCO

| Distributions | Agree % | Disagree % | Indifferent % |
|--|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Community members are aware of projects initiated and executed by WAPCO in their communities | 85 | 15 | -- |
| Scholarships are meant for the entire community members | 25 | 65 | 10 |
| Community members have access to the literacy centres established by WAPCO | 42 | 58 | -- |
| Youth programmes initiated by the factory can reduce/stop youth restiveness | 25 | 74 | 1 |
| The social amenities provided by WAPCO (e.g. rural electrification, recreation centres, sinking of bore holes, construction of roads etc.) met the felt needs of the communities | 45 | 55 | -- |

Source: Field Work 2011

Table 3 shows the perceptions of community on the usefulness of projects initiated and executed by WAPCO according to the respondents. The results above revealed that 85% of the respondents are aware of the factory initiated and executed one project or the other in their communities while 15% of the respondents disagreed. Concerning awards/scholarship, 25% of the respondents agreed that the awards/scholarship are meant for the entire community members while 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that awards/ scholarships are

for specific categories of people in their communities and 10% of the respondents are indifferent. 42% of the respondents agreed that they have access to the literacy centres established by WAPCO while 58% of the respondents disagreed. Concerning youth programmes initiated by the factory, 25% of the respondents agreed that youth programmes initiated are capable of reducing/stopping youth-restiveness while 74% of the respondents have contrary opinion and 1% of the respondents is indifferent. Furthermore, 45% of the respondents agreed that the social amenities provided by WAPCO met the felt needs of the communities while 55% of the respondents disagreed.

Hypothesis One

The developmental activities provided by the cement factory will have no significant influence on the socio-economic development of the community.

Table 4: Chi-square contingency table of analysis on the influence of developmental activities provided by WAPCO and socio-economic development of the community

| N | DF | X²Critical Value | Critical Value | P | Sig. P. |
|----------|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| 350 | 9 | 312.22 | 16.919 | <0.05 | 0.00 |

Source: Field Work 2011

The result of data analysis as portrayed in Table 4 above indicated that the Chi-square calculated value of 312.22 is greater than the critical value 16.919 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. The finding revealed that a significant influence exists between developmental activities provided by WAPCO and socio-economic development of the community. These findings indicate that the null hypothesis which states that the developmental activities provided by WAPCO will have no significant influence on the socio-economic development of the community is rejected.

Hypothesis Two

There will be no significant relationship between community development projects of the cement factory and the expectations of local communities about their development.

Table 5: Chi-square table of analysis on the relationship between community development projects of WAPCO and the expectations of the local community about their development

| N | DF | X²Critical Value | Critical Value | P | Sig. P. |
|----------|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| 350 | 15 | 1092.69 | 24.996 | <0.05 | 0.00 |

Source: Field Work 2011

From the above result, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between community development projects of WAPCO and the expectations of the local community about their development. This is because the calculated value of 1092.69 is greater than the X² critical value of 24.996 tested at 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings shows that the respondents admitted that the community members are not actively involved during the initiation and execution of WAPCO's self-sponsored community programmes. The study also revealed that community leaders are involved in WAPCO community development programmes but youths are not actively involved and that there is no effective collaboration between WAPCO and community.

The developmental activities of the factory had influenced the socio-economic development of the communities in many ways. This finding is in conformity with the report published by WAPCO in June 2005

about programmes/projects carried out by the cement factory which is also in conformity with the opinions of the local people. They confirm that WAPCO had provided scholarship for their children in secondary and tertiary institutions. Also youths in the local communities had been provided "okada" motorcycles and "keke NAPEP" tricycle for transportation which has enriched them economically. However, the local people frowned at the means/strategies of selecting beneficiaries of these gestures by the factory. This could be traced to the fact that the factory did not involve the local people in its plans.

The findings also revealed after juxtaposing the claims of the factory and opinions of the local communities that the factory had really tried in improving the local people by providing social amenities such as electrification project at Akinbo village, building of blocks of shops at Ewekoro, donations of about one hundred (100) okada at Onigbedu, Arigbajo and Itori. Specifically, the factory has provided boreholes in several communities.

The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between community development projects of WAPCO and the expectations of the local community about their development. It is evident from the findings that human factor is virtually important in the planning and implementation stages of any fundamental development. This implies that community members' involvement in the planning and implementation of community development programme is very low. However, the community members' level of commitment to any activity that will bring about improvement of their living standard had induced their level of performance vis-à-vis their commitment to community development programmes (Oyelami, 2009).

For any development to be effective and to bring about sustainable development, it must have met the expectations of the people both the initiators and the beneficiaries. This finding conforms with Saunder's (1968) assertion which states thus:

"Partnering entails participating approach to comprehensive community development. That is, partnering enables community members in their different positions to take part at one time or the other in activities associated with their community. They collaborate with officials and organs of external development agents in accomplishing their needs in various aspects. This goal can be accelerated when all internal factors work together peacefully with mutual respect and understanding towards the same goal".

From the findings, it is evident that community members are not always involved in programmes or project initiated for them by the cement factory. This action made the factory embark on projects that are meeting the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the local people; hence low sustainability of the development projects.

The finding reveals different opinions by the local people about community development projects initiated and executed by the factory. Some of the communities are of the opinion that scholarships are not evenly given and that they are meant for particular categories of people in the community (especially children and families of cement factory workers).

It was also revealed that some of the purported money spent on community development activities by the factory has been largely misappropriated in actual practice. According to Putman (2004), much community development spending get diverted into the pocket of cement

factory employees or local contractors, community leaders or is spent to pay off those who might otherwise be trouble makers.

Conclusion

Sustainable community development requires the active participation of all the stakeholders of community development activities. This implies that the communities and WAPCO must work closely to actualize this goal. It also presupposes that there should be effective and efficient partnership between cooperative organizations and their host communities.

However, research has shown that: most of the developmental activities embarked by these corporate organizations have been done without active involvement/participation of their host communities.

The cement factory's developmental activities influenced the socio-economic development of the community. The factory's contributions to community development projects did not meet the expectations of the local people; this made it difficult to meet the felt needs, yearnings and aspirations of the local people. The policies and strategies put in place by WAPCO for sustainable community development are not effectively implemented and constituted and that youth centred-projects in the community will reduce youth restiveness and crisis in the communities. Research also showed that community leaders/representatives were always fighting for their personal interests instead of the interest of the community.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are made: The developmental activities in the communities should cut across all round development of the local people. The development activities should not be on the provisions of social amenities programmes only, but more

on the areas of human development activities (Adult Education programmes and environmental oriented projects).

The factory should actively involve the local people in the initiation and execution stages of community development programmes; this will enable such programmes to meet the felt needs, yearnings and aspirations of the local people and this will always meet the expectations of the local people.

There should be effective and efficient policies and strategies put in place that will improve the contribution of the factory towards community development. Also, there should be a monitoring and evaluation team set up to include WAPCO, Government and community representatives to evaluate and oversee the activities of the factory.

The community members, leaders and representatives should be sensitized/re-orientated to act decisively as partners in progressive move of attaining not only community development but development that can be sustained which is otherwise known as sustainable development. This will make the concept of partnering in community development effective and efficient.

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