

Full Length Research Paper

Factors impeding the progress of community development efforts in Ilesa

Toyobo A. Emmanuel¹ and Muili A. B.²

^{1,2}Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, P.M.B. 4000, Ogbomosho Oyo State.

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The rapid growth of urban population in developing countries led to a corresponding increase in the demand for basic urban services. Community members generally participate in development projects because of the realization that contemporary governments can no longer single handedly meet most of these community needs. In view of the above, this study was aimed to examine the efforts of Community Base Organisations (CBOs) in urban development projects using Ilesa as a case study. The study also identified and classified the different projects embarked upon by the CBOs, the cost of projects and their mode of financing and problems. The list of CBOs was collected from the Community Development Officer of Ilesa Local Government, the Senior Cooperative Officer of Ministry of Trades and Cooperatives Secretary, Council of Ilesa society's and field observation. Primary data were collected from questionnaire survey of ninety-seven CBOs selected randomly and another questionnaire directed to key officials of Ilesa Local Government to determine the level of involvement of the private sector in the provision and maintenance of some services, which are exclusive functions of the Local Government. The data were analysed using simple statistical techniques in form of frequency tables. The study shows that CBOs actually financed and executed development projects based on the financial capabilities of the organizations. CBOs were also faced with certain constraints such as inadequate of fund, lack of man power, absence of favoured government policies. The study further shows that CBOs do not embark on capital-intensive ventures and they do not finance and/or execute any project in partnership with Ilesa Local Government. In view of the findings, recommendations were proffered on how the constraints militating against the effectiveness of community projects can be solved. These include the financial base of CBOs, co- ordination in the location of projects, research and feasibility studies, orientation programme, coupled with cordial relationship between the CBOs and Ilesa Local Government.

Key words: Community, projects, evaluation, constraints and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

In most developing countries, increase level of income, social and educational awareness have created new standard of living, which have led to enhanced level of social standard of living. As these nations grow in size, the provision of houses has become more costly; there are new problems of health, safety and communications, which create the needs for sewer, drainage, water pipes, roads, etc. The pressure on community infrastructures have been accentuated by the parallel modernization of urban economics and the marginalization of rural economy. These have often led to the concentration of rural

migrants into urban areas without facilities for survival (Masoni, 1985). In response to these pressures, urban communities have sought relief by providing certain facilities/infrastructures for themselves through self -help programmes. Usually, a community is defined as a geographic unit; that is, a group of people living in the same area, such as a village, a town or an urban neighborhood. In most cases, however, communities articulate their needs, seek finances and execute their projects through the assistance of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and especially those of the Community-Based Organization (CBOs) or their affiliates. Ilesa is a town in Osun State of Nigeria. Most parts of the town lack adequate basic infrastructural facilities due to the

*Corresponding author. E-mail: muyatpc@yahoo.com.

inability of government to cope with the rapidly growing population.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to examine the constraints militating against community developmental projects in Ilesa with a view to making some possible recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources, field observations, oral interviews, focus group discussion and intensive literature search.

The primary data were collected through the use of two sets of questionnaire. The first set was directed to officials of selected CBOs. This was to obtain information on project selection, the process of identifying projects to finance, the mode of financing, the estimated cost of each project, reasons for projects that were abandoned, problems encountered during implementation of projects to mention but a few. It was observed that there are three hundred and twenty four (324) Community Based Organization such as Community Development Associations, International Organization, Social Clubs, Town Unions Co-operative Societies among others. Since it is impossible to achieve a full coverage of all the organizations due to time constraint, ninety seven (97) of the CBOs were interviewed using random sampling method.

The second set of questionnaires was directed at key officials of Ilesa Local Governments with a view to determining the level of involvement of the private sector in the provision and maintenance of facilities in the study area.

The data obtained were subjected to descriptive statistics. This includes the use of tabulation, as well as percentages to describe the projects, finance and constraints militating against the efforts of community based organization in Ilesa.

Literature review

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are private, voluntary, non-profit organizations independent of any government, and funded through individual and corporate donations, levy imposition on members, grants from international agencies and governments (Agbola, 1988), (Fowler, 1987). Community based organizations are also voluntary organizations. They are voluntary because membership is dependent on individual choice; though a times membership may be compulsory as in the case of certain trades or professions such as the market women unions. The three terms most commonly used in the literature, often interchangeably are Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The first term is the most widely used in the umbrella organization within which the latter two can be subsumed depending on their scale of operation (USAID, 1984). Within these categories or NGOs According to SINA (1986) for example, NGOs may be indigenous or international, they might be donor agencies, coalitions, church organizations and others operating at national or sub-national levels or they may be CBOs such as women's groups, co-operatives working collectives, neighbourhood branches of national political parties and others.

Most of these organizations and movements are formed to solve the most pressing problems facing man in the urban environment. Perhaps, the most common and more documented of these urban social movements are those found in slum and squatter areas whose residents, through their common problems come together, find a basis for common action and form an organization (Aina, 1990).

According to Ndekwu (1992), the financing of development projects is often the principal constraint to a developer, whether public or private and whether individual or corporate. The constraint appears to be more predominant on the public sector at local level than private, since in many cases, according to him, the public physical developer primarily engages in the activities to produce services for which prices may not be paid. Even when prices are paid for the services resulting from the physical development, these may be lower than market prices (Fatimehin, 1992).

Aiyenigba (1992) and Okoye (1987) studies focused essentially on rural areas and rural development. Their studies indicated that there was complete absence of social service infrastructure in the development schemes of NGOs, which touch directly on the welfare of the rural dwellers. The reasons for this were as a result of the NGOs' conception of rural development as the provision of recreational services solely for comfort of rural based weekenders, the lack of guidance offered by the government to the organizations in the most rational use of their resources and the non realization that the welfare of the permanent resident population of rural areas is central to the concept and process of rural development (Okoye, 1987). A study was also conducted by the center for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD, 1992) to evaluate the potentials of NGOs as vehicles for social and economic development in Abeokuta, Ibadan and Port Harcourt all of which are state capitals. The study made a comparison on the characteristics, structure and mode of operation of identified NGOs in the three cities. Some variables such as mode of selection of offices, keeping of records of the association, the democratic process of decision making, membership involvement in organizational activities, regularity at meetings, resource level of the organization, projects of the associations, impact assessment on members and the community at large among other attributes were scored and ranked. The total score and ranking of each association under typology were used in the evaluation of each NGO as regards to its suitability for development. The findings may not be applicable to all the different Local Government Areas in Nigeria. Further studies should expand the scope, according to Onibokun (1992) to include rural-based and intermediate cities Local Government Areas.

In Nigeria, the provision of basic infrastructural facilities has not kept pace with the rapidly growing urban population (Agbola, 2004). The inadequacy of government to

make provision in respect to the growing population has led to the adoption of self – governing techniques by the .people through collective action known as Community – based organization or Non – Governmental Organization, which arises as a result of the need of the people to be met. Here, people organize themselves based on appropriate institutional arrangement, mutual agreement and shared understanding to plan and execute public goods and services that directly touch their lives (Ostrom, 1990). Participation is seen as developmental, educative and integrative and as a means of protecting freedom (Robert, 2004). Since the main assumptions of community participation is that local residents will be more supportive of the projects and therefore increase the likelihood of its success.

Hence, this study evaluated the roles of community based organization in terms of existing projects and the constraints militating against its effectiveness in Ilesa.

Study area at a glance

The location

Ilesa is located in the western region of Nigeria, which lies south west of the Nigeria valley. The geographical location of the city is Latitude: 7° 37' 0 N, Longitude: 4° 43' 60 E at longitude 41° 78' 1 east of the Greenwich and 7° 31' 1 north of the equator. The population of Ilesa is estimated to be 138, 321 according to 1991 population census. There are two local governments in the Area. Ilesa Local Government is an urban Local Government, which has experienced considerable rural-urban migration as a result of utility services and facilities available there. It serves as the zonal headquarters for the Ilesa people who are found in Ilesa and four other Local Governments. These are Oriade, Obokun, Atakunmosa east and Atakunmosa west Local Government. Ilesa is 119 km from Ibadan the capital of Oyo State, 32 km from Osogbo the Osun State capital and 85 km from Akure the capital of Ondo State (Oyo State Government, 1978). It lies within the rainforest belt north east of Yourba land.

Data analysis (discussion of data)

The analyses of data collected begin by examining the different type of CBOs in Ilesa, the cost and types of projects embarked upon by the CBOs and further goes a head to examine sources of funds and also the factors and problems militating effective implementation of projects by CBOs in Ilesa.

Classification of CBOs by functions

The survey revealed that nearly all of them were established for assisting their members (94.85%). About 17% of the organizations interviewed enlighten their own

members and other community members through adult literacy and other community enlightenment programmes. 15% of the organizations render assistances to the less privileged members of the society while only 5% embarked on health related activities.

Financial resources and management by CBOs in Ilesa

Information on finance and its management is also very crucial for the determination of the effectiveness and potentiality of organization.

CBOs were funded almost exclusively from internal sources, that is levies on members, voluntary donations, aids, grants, launching and or appeal fund, organization of bazaar, fines, investment of the particular CBOs as well as loans from well-to-do members. All these financial resources are harnessed toward an effective implementation of physical development projects.

Assessment of the roles and potentialities of the CBO's in Ilesa

Completed project

The projects handled by the CBOs vary in terms of their cost, scope of relevance and importance. All these projects have aided to improve the welfare of the people.

The various types of the completed projects by CBOs are grouped under six categories. Public Building (23.1%) comprises construction of community Hall, secretariat for the CBOs and multipurpose centers. Transport (7.7%) are those projects concerning feeder road construction, road rehabilitation and construction of culverts, bridges etc. Public utilities (19.2%) and this include provision, maintenance and renovation of public toilets, water taps streets lights, street guides, construction and sinking of bore holes. Programmes that involve organization of coaching classes, provision, maintenance of Nursery and primary schools were about 7.7% while the recreation includes provision of facilities and rehabilitation of mini-stadium. The social welfare programmes (30.81%) entails building of community health and dispensary centres as well as the environmental improvement.

The total cost of all past project as shown in Table 2 was about ₦20.3 million.

The estimated value of all on-going projects is about ₦51.2 million.

Problems of community based organisations in the study area

Finance as constraint

The costs of executing CBOS' projects are borne by the members in form of contributions, membership dues,

Table 2. Developed projects completed by the CBOs in Ilesa.

Type value	Number	Percentage	Duration estimated	(N)Million
Building	6	23.1	2-5 yrs	12,250,000:00
Transport	2	7.7	6 month –1yr	3,000,000:00
Social welfare	8	30.8	6 month –1yr	3,000,000:00
Utilities	5	19.2	6 month –1yr	380,000:00
Education	2	7.7	1yr	820,000:00
Recreation	3	11.5	1 yr	820,000:00
Total	26	100		20,270,000:00

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

Table 4. Responses on the problem of manpower.

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Involvement by members	12	12.4
Project committee	55	56.7
Professional services	20	20.6
Community development unit of the Local Govt.	10	10.3
Total	97	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

levies, fines and donations. None of the CBOs interviewed receive subventions and donations from statutory bodies or funding agencies. All the CBOs interviewed spent less than N260, 000 on their various projects. With the exception of members of International Organizations some religious organizations that are relatively rich, other CBOS have weak financial base.

Manpower as a constraint

CBOs are also faced with problem of manpower during the actual implementation of projects. Most club members are reluctant to be members of project committee. Some members of CBOs such as Ilesa Social Clubs, Town Unions and International Organizations do not reside within Ilesa town. This makes the task of project committee members more difficult. Project committee members found it difficult to meet and discuss, procure the materials necessary to the project site and supervise the project. The work of a five- man committee is, therefore, left for one or two persons to shoulder. The problem of manpower has been one of the factors constituting hindrance of effective execution of projects. Only few members of the project committee were left to implement the projects and also do not seek for the services of professionals as indicated in the Table 4.

Government Policies

Agbola (1992) remarked that Non-Governmental Organi-

zation often proliferate where governmental policies and favour them. Most CBOS cherish their independence. A situation where Ilesa CBOS are at the mercy of officials of the Local Government to approve their project proposal and the bureaucratic process within Ilesa Local Government, hamper speedy execution of projects. This approval may take up to weeks (even when such proposals are approved) before the authorities of the Local Government consent to the proposal and write the CBOs officially.

Many controls are being imposed by officials of Ilesa Local Government. CBOs must first seek clearance and approval before they could embark on any project. Unfortunately, the Local Government lacks the capacity to monitor and evaluate development units within the various departments of the Local Government.

These controls coupled with non-encouragement and supports from the government are some of the reasons why CBOs do not finance and execute any development project in partnership with Ilesa Local Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sustainable measures are put forward to minimize the problems of CBOs.

Improving the financial base of CBOS

The cost of executing CBOs projects are borne by the

members, therefore there is a limit to which CBOs could finance meaningful development projects. In order to improve the financial base of CBOs, there should be an assistance from UNICEF, the Dutch, British and American Foundations. This would make the objective of the CBOs to be actualized on time.

Improving the relationship between CBOs and Ilesa Local Government

Due to strained relationships between the Local Government and CBOs, it is therefore necessary to suggest ways of enhancing public-private sector cooperation. Project Planning Units must be established within the Department of Community Development of the Local Government. These Units should be headed by a Project Coordinator, who must be a qualified Urban and Regional Planner. The project planning units will therefore serve as a link between the CBOs and Local Government officials, so that both private and public resources could be coordinated and applied to produce maximum results for the benefit of all.

Re-education and Re-orientation Programmes:

In order to solve the problem of manpower confronting some CBOs, it is recommended that re-education and re-orientation programmes for members of these organizations be undertaken. These enlightenment programmes will aid in training, community development, self-help programmes and strategies, entrepreneurship, management and accounting.

Need for greater community participation

There is the need for greater community participation in all CBOs and projects embarked upon by the Local Government. The practice where each CBO sees itself as an independent and separate entity which does not finance and execute projects in partnership with one another does not accelerate the desired community development. When two or three private voluntary organizations could not finance a joint project together, it then becomes practically impossible for the CBOs to execute any project in partnership with a public agency such as the Local Government.

Need for Co-ordination in the location of projects

CBOs projects are generally located in different parts of the town, but not all citizens have access to such facilities. Local Government officials do not consider the issue of maximum distribution of available facilities in order to benefit the highest possible proportion of the people. Local Government officials just give approval to

CBOs projects without due regards to their most appropriate locations. It is advisable that target population should be given consideration in the location of projects.

Embarking on research and feasibility study

Community Based Organizations must conduct a socio-economic survey on the intended beneficiaries before embarking on any project. Citizens must also be given the opportunity to offer suggestions and make decisions as regards the location and eventual execution of the projects.

Community Based Organisations must prepare feasibility reports to determine the technical feasibility and financial/economic viability of projects before implementation.

-Projects of CBOs are conceived and executed in isolation of one another. This approach is devoid of any physical planning framework. A development project plan is, therefore, suggested for Ilesa Local Government. Such plans will identify problems of the community, prioritize them, set goals and objectives, draw out alternative proposals, set out implementation strategies and develop a monitoring and evaluation steps.

-The physical manifestation of all projects takes place on land. Land is a joint resource of any given society being a free gift of nature for the benefit of all. As a fixed and exhaustible resource, the use of land, whether by individuals or by organizations must be rational and in the best interest of the members of the society.

-CBOs projects have been of immense benefits to community members. Economically, projects have provided job opportunities to artisans and crafts men, thus improving their standard of living. The projects have also enhanced the beautification of the town and promoted a clean and healthy environment. The numerous road signs sheltered bus stops and statues of CBOs have created a better image for Ilesa. Generally, there has been improvement in provision of infrastructural facilities and in the overall development of the town.

Conclusion

The research has revealed that CBOs do not participate in the financing and execution of Local Government projects because of the strained relationship that exists between these two sectors. The costs of financing CBOs' projects are borne by the members in form of levies, dues and donations. CBOs do not receive any grant from International Agencies and the cost of executing development projects ranged between N10, 000 - N250, 000.

The problems of most CBOs have been highlighted. However, based on the constraints, policy measures, which could promote grass route development through self-help development, are suggested. It is hoped that if

Table 1 . Functions of CBOs in Ilesa.

Function	NO	% of Total
Assisting members	92	94.85
Self help projects	89	91.75
Adult Literacy/community enlightenment	16	16.49
Assistance to less privileged	15	15.46
Mobilization of Community for Community projects	38	39.18
Health related activities	5	5.15

Source: Field work, 2007.

Table 3. Source of fund for CBOs in Ilesa.

Source	Number of CBOs	Percentage (%)
Dues or levies	30	30.93
Donations	25	25.77
Aids	5	5.16
Grants	20	20.62
Loan from members	17	17.52
Subventions and donations from statutory bodies	0	0
Total	97	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

Table 5. Responses on existing government policies.

Responses	Number of CBOs	Percentage (%)
Satisfactory	10	10.3
Non – satisfactory	82	84.5
No Response	5	5.2
Total	97	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2007.

the recommendations are implemented, they will go a long way in assisting CBOs to provide supplementary services, which will complement the provision of governments' mandatory social and infrastructural services. The task of community development is an enduring one, which should not be left to the government alone. Community leaders must therefore join hands with themselves and with relevant Non-Governmental Agencies.

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