

**AN APPRAISAL OF WORLD BANK ASSISTED
COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Evidences of failure of many development programmes in developing nations are innumerable. The catastrophe behind these programmes are attributed largely to the approach used in implementation. The top-down approach used in the implementation of projects is said to have not achieved the target goal of poverty reduction, food insecurity and improved livelihood of the citizens. This study appraised World Bank Assisted Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the nature of CDD approach and ascertained the level of involvement of beneficiaries of CDD approach in Benue State. A sample of 384 respondents were drawn for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure. Structured interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were instruments used for data collection. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics to address the research objectives. Findings revealed that the nature of CDD approach in Benue State was bottom-up approach which involved decision-making, community participation in funding projects, demand driven needs of the community and ownership and sustainability of projects. The beneficiaries of CDD approach were fully involved in all stages of project initiation, implementation, control/management and evaluation. The study therefore recommends that the Benue State Government should improve on security in

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the state to ensure that the Community and Social Development Projects (CSDPs) are not destroyed. The CSDA should ensure constant capacity building of community members involved in projects implementation for project sustainability, amongst others.

Keywords: Appraisal, World Bank, Community Driven Development Approach, Bottom-up Approach, Community and Social Development Project

Introduction

World Bank is an international financial institution that provides technical and financial assistance to many developing countries through partnership, for the advancement of their economy with the primary goal of reducing poverty, increase economic growth, working towards achieving sustainable growth in developing nations (Edwards et al., 2021). For the last five decades, World Bank has intensified its support in providing financial aids to developing nations of the world. Many developing countries in Asia and Africa received more than 15% of development support from World Bank to implement development projects that aim to reduce poverty and improve livelihood of these nations (Clemens & Kremer, 2016).

Since the World Bank ventured into development of low-income countries, the top-down approach and strategy was adopted and utilised in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects and programmes in target countries. This strategy was characterised with centrally initiation, planned and implemented programmes by the state elites and bureaucrats which treated poor beneficiaries as passive recipients of aid, thereby alienating them from these processes (Ikwuba 2013; Parfitt & Craven, 2018). Due to the poor outcomes of the top-bottom approach in projects and programmes execution recorded, by the turn of the 20th century, the World Bank adopted another approach of project management known as Community Driven Development (CDD). The World Bank (2010) defines CDD as a development initiative that provides control of the development process, resources and decision-making authority directly to community groups.

The CDD approach operate on the premises of local empowerment, participatory governance, demand responsiveness, administrative autonomy, a greater downward accountability and enhanced local capacity building (Anietem & Abiodun, 2015). It gives clear access to information and appropriate capacity and financial support that enables poor men and women to effectively organise themselves in order to identify community priorities and address local problems, by working in partnership with supportive institutions

(Anietem&Abiodun, 2015). Experience has shown that, the use of CDD approach has enhanced the achievement of project/programmes goals and objectives of poverty reduction, accessible social and infrastructural facilities, etc across communities in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Irungu, 2015; Kishindo, 2018).

In Nigeria, CDD approach was used by World Bank sponsored programmes such as the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in states like Ondo, Kwara, Katsina North, Taraba, Delta, Edo and Benue in 2004 and 2009. However, after the introduction of this approach in states in Nigeria particularly Benue State, it is pertinent to know whether the approach has achieved the target goal of poverty reduction, food security and improved livelihood of the citizens. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- i. Examine the nature of CDD approach in Benue State, and
- ii. Ascertain the level of involvement of beneficiaries of CDD approach in Benue State.

Methods

The study adopts cross-sectional research design. This is because the study used several methods of data collection. The setting for this study was Benue State of Nigeria. Benue State is specifically chosen as the study area because of the impacts from the World Bank assisted CDD approach through its affiliated agency, Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA). The population of this study comprised all beneficiaries of World Bank assisted CDD approach which were executed and delivered through its allied intercessor, CSDA. The population is not definite; however, it consists of both adult male and female, mostly married, had attended secondary and primary schools as highest educational attainment, and in some cases had no formal education and are predominantly farmers. Thus, the study resolved to using Cochran's formula for unknown population and arrived at 384 as the sample size.

A multistage sampling procedure was employed for the study. In the first stage, cluster sampling technique was used where Benue State was grouped into three (3) already existing geo-political zones, namely; Zone A (Benue North-East), Zone B (Benue North-West) and Zone C (Benue South). Purposive sampling technique was used to select Logo LGA from Zone A, Buruku LGA from Zone B and Apa LGA from Zone C in the second stage. In the third stage, purposive sampling technique was also used to select Yonov Council Ward from Logo LGA, Mbaatirkyaa Council Ward from Buruku LGA and Edikwu II Council Ward from Apa LGA. In the next stage, seven (7) communities, namely; Akpajir, Apan,

Mbakanyam, Mbaalom, Kakule, Kpav and Ikyoyar were selected from Yonov Council Ward, six (6) communities of Dajo, Dyegh, Gbeji, Mbaajinga, Mbaav and Vongu were selected from Mbaatirkyaa Council Ward, while three (3) communities, viz; Ijaha-Ibele, Odugbo and Oladu were selected from Edikwu II Council Ward. This amounted to sixteen (16) communities selected for the study. Simple random sampling technique was then used to select 24 beneficiaries from each of the 16 sampled communities, thus bringing total respondents to 384. Three methods were employed in the course of data collection. These include; structured interview, focus group discussion and key informant interview. Data collected from the field was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Results and discussion of findings

Nature of Community Driven Development (CDD) Approach in Benue State

Table 1: The Nature of CDD Approach

Nature of CDD approach (bottom-up approach)	Frequency	Percentage
Community involvement in decision-making	125	32.6
Demand-driven needs of community	90	23.4
Community participation in funding projects	112	29.2
Ownership and sustainability of projects	57	14.8
Total	384	100.0

Source: **Field Survey, 2023.**

Community involvement in decision-making: Table 1 shows that, majority of the respondents (32.6%), indicated that the donors in their communities involved them in decision-making. The respondents explained that donors delegated some vital decision-making powers to them. By so doing, the community members stated that they were allowed to identify their project needs which is an important requirement for bottom-up approach. The respondents stated that they were also actively involved in identifying projects and areas where the projects like health clinic, school and borehole were to be sited. The respondents also posited that the decision on how to implement the various projects such as health clinic, school and borehole was solely their responsibility. They revealed that decisions like the choice of masons to work and where to buy materials for projects was decided by community members. The respondents noted that after the installation of the borehole they make decisions on whom to repair it when it breaks down and not the agency. Data generated further revealed that off-days for construction work on projects were decided by the community. For example, the respondents in Vongu community stated that Wednesdays were market days, and chosen by them as

off-days. On this day, CSDP halted construction to enable the community members buy and sell in their local markets.

The above views on decision-making power of the community members were corroborated by focus group discussants and key informants as stated below:

...as heads of our various families, we took active part in deciding the type of projects that will be sited in our community. We specifically decided that since accessing health care has been a lingering challenge in our community, we suggested that a healthcare centre should be built to address health issues of our people and CSDP built health clinic in our community and we are happy because that is what we actually wanted... (FGD, Vongu, Mbaatirkyaa Council Ward, Buruku LGA, 2023).

A key informant noted:

...in this community the World Bank CSDP gives freedom to community to make decisions on the projects they want to execute and we don't impose project on them rather they make their decisions.... (A Male Key Informant, from Community and Social Development Agency, Makurdi, Benue State, 2023).

It can be deduced from what the respondents said that, community involvement in decision-making is an important feature of CDD approach that increases the visibility and understanding of the beneficiaries on issues that centers on the intervention. It can also be construed that decision-making empowers the beneficiaries to have a say over major decisions that affect their lives particularly and community in general. It further promotes sense of belongingness amongst them, gives purpose and sense of contribution, acceptance and recognition and increases social networks. The responses from the participants are therefore in-line with one of the requirements of bottom-top approach which indicate that community members should be actively involved in decision-making. This further corroborates findings from Anietem and Abiodun (2015) who stressed that the inclusiveness and participatory approach of the CDD approach enable communities to be involved in decision-making to achieve sustainable outcomes. Decisions on the project are based on accurate information about the costs and benefits of various options, and communities have some of their own resources invested.

Community participation in funding projects: The data presented in Table 1 above revealed that community participation in funding projects was also one

of the community driven-development intervention across communities in Benue State as represented by 29.2% (112) of the respondents. The respondents stated that all priority projects executed by CSDA through CDD intervention were partly funded by the communities to which these projects were situated, while major part of the funding was made by CSDA through its funding agency (World Bank). The respondents explained that they took 10 per cent of the sum that was required for execution of the projects, while the funding agency provided Ten Million (N10,000,000) in funding the projects in three tranches. They explained that after the first tranche was given, the agency assessed the level of work that commensurate the amount involved in the tranche before the second tranche was assessed and the procedure continued until the last tranche was released. The respondents noted that counterpart fund of N50,000,000 was provided by the Benue State Government in a year. The respondents further stated that, 5 per cent out of the 10 per cent was in cash, while the remaining 5 per cent funding was in kind. However, for water projects, the 10 per cent was contributed in cash by communities. The respondents noted that they were requested to open bank accounts where these funds were deposited and subsequently used by them in implementing projects.

The above views were not different from the focus group discussants and key informant. According to one of the discussants:

...when our proposal was accepted by CSDA, we were required to pay one million (N1,000,000) which they said is 10 per cent of what was expected from us into an account they requested us to open, it was really difficult to raise such an amount within the short time notice given to us, so we solicited for funds from our children who we knew have the capacity, we were able to augment the funds we asked for assistance with what was initially raised, then we deposited into the account... (FGD, Kakule, Yonov Council Wards, Logo LGA, 2023).

According to one of the informants:

...before our agency accept a proposal for rural project implementation from any community in Benue State, we first and foremost alert them of the need to contribute a counterpart of 10 per cent, we request them to open an account in their name and deposit the amount, the 10 per cent is determined by the amount that is released from the Bank World, but at most N10,000,000, so we ensure that is comply by the benefiting communities, we also

handed to the communities for ownership and sustainability... (A Male Key Informant from CSDA, Makurdi, Benue State, 2023).

The above findings implied that it is statutorily communities contribute counterparts in funding projects implemented by CSDA through the initiation and funding of the World Bank. This finding corresponds with Wongpit et al. (2021) who assessed the sustainability of CDD projects in Lao PDR with the specific objectives to investigate whether the degree of community contribution does matter for the current existence of CDD projects and to assess whether the community's contribution could enhance the current performance of CDD projects. The result suggests that community participation in labour and finance are key factors for the sustainability of CDD projects.

The findings also showed that the counterpart fund by benefiting communities is 10 per cent. This amount is expected to be paid before commencement of the project implementation process. This finding coincides with Obar and Adekoya (2022) who investigated the gender and generational involvement of community members on the sustainability likelihood of the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) in Oyo and Ekiti states, Nigeria. The respondents indicated their involvement in funding (2:23). The ratio the counterpart fund of ten per cent (10%) which was paid by communities within Oyo and Ekiti States.

Demand-driven needs of community: The nature of CDD approach was also identified as demand-driven needs of community. This data was indicated by 23.4% (90) of the respondents. The respondents stated that community needs were not just identified, there were chosen based on the demand and priority needs of the community. The respondents explained that there were projects they were desiring to have in their communities to address certain challenges they were facing. These projects were majorly boreholes, clinics and schools. They noted that water was a major source of concern as their women and children trek long distances in search of water, and such sources they got from were not pure and safe for drinking. They further explained that this resulted to most of the disease outbreaks that affected them especially the children. The respondents also specified that there were no health clinics within the communities, therefore it became a serious challenge to them. They stated that they sought medical treatments from far places for those who could afford such expenses. They noted that some of them that could not afford resorted to traditional or self-medication. The respondents further noted that some deaths were recorded due to the absence of health facility. They also prioritised schools

as their children trek long distances on daily basis to attend school. The respondents explained that schools within the communities lack personnel and inadequate infrastructural, and which calls for CDD intervention for improvement.

Level of Involvement of Beneficiaries of CDD Approach in Benue State

Table 2: Stages of Involvement of Beneficiaries of CDD Approach in Benue State

Stages of Involvement	Frequency (N=384)	Percentage (%=100)
Initiation	362	94.3
Implementation	337	87.8
Control/management	358	93.2
Evaluation	301	78.4

Source: **Field Survey, 2023.**

Table2 presented multiple choice response data on the stages of involvement of beneficiaries of Community and Social Development Projects of CDD approach in Benue State. The data showed that 94.3% (362) of the respondents were involved in the initiation stage of the CSDPs, 93.2% (358) of the respondents indicated that they were involved during the control/management stage. The data further showed that 87.8% (337) of the respondents were part of project implementation, while 78.4% or 301 of the respondents participated in evaluation stage of the CSDPs using CDD approach in Benue State.

The above data showed that beneficiaries of CSDPs using the CDD approach were involved in all the stages of the CDD approach. However, majority of them were involved in the project initiation stage. This is probably because it was a new intervention that came to the community and members were overzealous to know what the initiative was all about. Therefore, they team-up in their numbers to further prove to the facilitating agency that they were in full support and willing to assist in project implementation. Involvement of beneficiaries during project control/management showed their resilience to ensure that projects implemented were sustained. This involved delegating members to oversee the smooth operations and permanence of the projects for the benefit of the entire community. The data also proved that the number of people involved during project implementation were those who have undergone and acquire essential skills required for the execution of CSDPs and have availed themselves to assess in project implementation.

Table 3: Level of Beneficiaries' Involvement at Different Project Stages of CDD Approach in Benue State

Stages of Involvement	Level of Involvement		Total
	Fully involved	Not fully involved	
Initiation	362 (94.3)	22 (5.7)	384 (100.0)
Implementation	337 (87.8)	47 (12.2)	384 (100.0)
Control/management	358 (93.2)	26 (6.8)	384 (100.0)
Evaluation	301 (78.4)	83 (21.6)	384 (100.0)

Source: **Field Survey, 2023** (*Figures in parenthesis are percentages*)

Table 3 presented a cross-tabulation of data on the stages and level of involvement of beneficiaries of CSDPs using the CDD approach in Benue State. As seen in the data, out of 384 respondents that participated in the study, 94.3% (362) of them were fully involved in the project initiation stage, while 5.7% (22) of the respondents were not fully involved. The data also showed that, during project implementation, 87.8% (337) of the respondents were copiously involved, while 12.2% (47) of the respondents were not fully involved. The data further indicated that, 93.2% (358) of the respondents were completely involved in the control/management stage, while 6.8% (26) of them were not fully involved in the control or management stage. Lastly, 78.4% (301) of the respondents were wholly involved in the project evaluation stage, while 21.6% (83) of the respondents were not fully involved.

Qualitative data from focus group discussions also showed that community members who were beneficiaries of CSDPs using the CDD approach were actively involved in all the project stages. The discussants however noted that community members were involved more in some stages than others, noting that there were different stages with diverse expectations and responsibilities. Therefore, some of the stages required participation of every adult member of the community, while some only needed a limited number of people that were going to handle assigned responsibilities.

It can be inferred from the above data that beneficiaries of CSDPs using the CDD approach are enthusiastically involved in all the stages of project implementation. Their high level of participation is a necessity since the project approach bottom-up. This finding corresponds with Oduor (2009), who studied Programme National d'infrastructures Rurales in Senegal and reported adequate level of community participation in projects sponsored by World Bank in Eastern Province of Senegal. Community participation gives impetus for groups that are typically excluded from the development process (e.g. women, ethnic minorities) to gain representation from development process. It ensures that these groups are actively involved in the development process as they are well represented into the various groups.

Table 4: The Nature of Beneficiaries' Involvement at Different Project Stages of CDD Approach in Benue State

Stages of Involvement	Nature of Involvement	Frequency (N=384)	Percentage (%=100)
Initiation	Identification and selection of projects	362	94.3
Implementation	Provision of monetary and material assistance	337	87.8
Control/management	Collection of levies and maintenance of projects	358	93.2
Evaluation	Project monitoring and evaluation	301	78.4

Source: **Field Survey, 2023.**

Table 4 presented data on the nature of beneficiaries' involvement at different stages of project implementation of the CDD approach in Benue State. The data shows that the nature of involvement of beneficiaries during project initiation stage was basically by identifying and selecting projects. This data was constituted by 94.3% (362) of the respondents.

According to one of the focus group discussants:

...during the selection of projects in our community, we were asked to rise our hands for or against the projects that our community proposed, the reason the head count was conducted was to ensure that every member of the community agreed before the projects were implemented, the projects we earlier identified were the wishes of our people because we had since deliberated on them before we even send our proposal to CSDA for consideration, our needs were that of classrooms, desks, borehole and health clinic... (FGD, Vongu, Mbaatirkyaa Council Ward, Buruku LGA, 2023).

According to one of the key informants:

...when a community whose proposal has been accepted by us identify a project, our agency must conduct an election to ensure that the projects proposed to be implemented are the wishes of every community member; this is done to avoid situations of certain group of individuals claiming ownership of the projects, because projects implemented by CSDA using CDD approach are solely community projects, and every member of the community has ownership right and usage... (A Male Key Informant from CSDA, Makurdi, Benue State, 2023).

It can be presumed from the above findings that project initiation stage is one of the most important stages of project implementation. This is because it starts from project identification where community members are at liberty to identify

priority projects for implementation, which is subsequently followed with project selection process where the facilitating agency conduct an election to ensure that such projects are identified based on the priority needs of every member of the community. This initiative encourages community participation in project implementation which gives its member the assurance that they own, and therefore they must sustain it.

The above table also presented data on the nature of involvement of beneficiaries using CDD approach during implementation stage as provision of both monetary and materials assistance. This data was indicated by 94.3% (337) of the respondents.

One of the focus group discussants stated:

...by the time we started building our secondary school, some members of the community particularly women were responsible for fetching water to the site, the men clear bushes around the site and cut down trees, excavated the foundation, some experts who were block layers moulded the blocks, which enable some of our community members who were masons to build, then those who were carpenters amongst us roofed, so everything on the site was handled at the level of our community, we used our counterpart fund as well as money released to us by CSDA... (FGD, Vongu, Mbaatirkyaa Council Ward, Buruku LGA, 2023).

The above findings implied that implementation stage is a major stage in the project implementation procedure. This is where the project starts properly. It is also at this stage that all the funds voted for the project are expended. This stage could be involving or tasking than any other stage of the project.

The above data also showed that during control/management of projects, communities levies and maintain the projects. This data was indicated by 93.2% (358) of the respondents. Also, the data showed that during evaluation stage, project were monitor and appraised. This data was represented by 78.4% (301) of the respondents. The above data implied that control/management is about competence on the side of community members in handling community projects, while the evaluation is appraisal of how the projects are been managed and sustained.

Conclusion

Based on the above results and discussion, the study concluded that the nature of Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in Benue State was

bottom-up approach which included beneficiaries in decision-making. The beneficiaries also participated in funding projects, projects were identified and selected based on the priority needs of the communities. They had absolute right of projects ownership and which helped them in sustaining the projects. The study equally established that the beneficiaries of CDD approach were fully involved in all stages of project initiation, implementation, control/management and evaluation.

Recommendations

1. The Benue State Government should improve on security in the state to ensure that CSDPs are not destroyed.
2. The Benue State Government and other stakeholders should adopt the CDD approach involved in the implementation of CSDPs.
3. The CSDA should ensure constant capacity building of community members involved in projects implementation for project sustainability.
4. Members of project benefiting communities should ensure transparency and accountability in order to sustain CSDPs in the state.
5. All critical stakeholders in CSDPs using CDD should ensure prompt payment of counterpart funds in order to avoid delay in projects implementation.

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