

A Survey of UNDP Activities Promoting Community Development in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

¹**Bella Charles Olabisi, Ph.D**
bellaolabisi7@gmail.com

¹**Glory Emmanuel Edoho, Ph.D**
gloryedoho80@gmail.com

¹**Esther Bassey Arikpo, Ph.D**
estherarikpo136@gmail.com

¹*Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies
University of Calabar, Calabar*



Abstract

This study, guided by two research questions, examined the activities of UNDP promoting community development in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population is estimated at 12,098 people in 94 autonomous communities in the study area. The sample for this study consisted of 700 community members from 53 communities in the area. The multi-stage sampling procedure (purposive, simple random, proportional, and accidental sampling techniques) was adopted for the study. A questionnaire tagged "Activities of UNDP and Community Development Questionnaire" (AUCDQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated and tested for reliability estimate which ranged from .75 to .83. Data analysis was done using simple percentage analysis and pie charts. The result showed that empowerment programmes such as agriculture and fashion design have received huge attention; while on provision of educational services, it shows that UNDP has equipped laboratories, stocked libraries, erected classroom blocks, and provided computers for quality education. Based on the results of the data analysis, recommendations were made, including that governmental and non-governmental organizations should create a synergy to work together in order to promote community development.

Keywords: empowerment, educational, undp, community, development

Introduction

The overall goal of community development has always been the improvement of life in the local area. Ering et al. (2006) stressed that community development seeks the satisfaction of basic needs such as food, shelter (housing), portable water, light, good health, basic education, a clean environment as well as access to good cultural, spiritual, social and political life, increase in the utilization of the resource of the community and increase in the productive capacity of the population. Nkpoyen (2008) asserted that community development has to do with an increase in per capita income, improvement in

the standard of living, and mobilization of people to ensure deep-rooted and self-sustaining development. Olabisi and Tawo (2017) stated that community development encourages sharing and creates structures that give genuine participation and involvement. Community development involves the conscious efforts of members of the community working individually or collectively to make the rural environment better for the people. Members of the community believe they can also be involved in activities that foster the development of their rural areas. Rural people constitute a huge population and a visible majority of the poor. Community members, either solely or collectively, support an increasing number of families in rural areas. Community development activities that aim at improving the living conditions of the community cannot, therefore, be effective unless community members participate maximally through activities and programmes provided by the government and non-governmental organizations to enhance community development (Ajayi & Ekpo-Udom, 2020). Community-Based Organizations' major activities are geared towards poverty reduction through donations, levies, and fundraising to embark on community infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, health care centres, public toilets, and constructions of pipe-borne water (Olabisi & Asor, 2022).

Elaborating further, Oruwan (2016) stated that community members are involved in the development process through empowerment programmes, the provision of educational services, and the provision of healthcare/hygiene facilities. As evidence of the failure of current development strategies mounts, it is becoming increasingly obvious that community members' talents and capacities are under-utilized. If educated community members were fully involved in decision-making and policy-making at every level, development dividends would have been more visible in communities. However, it is increasingly understood in community development circles today that the participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations has assumed an important place in community development. Through community-based UNDP-oriented initiatives, they have been able to reduce poverty in rural communities, ensure equal opportunity for all, provide social services at affordable cost and raise the standard of living of community dwellers. It is common knowledge in development circles that rural communities have not been able to achieve meaningful development. Mobilizing and sensitizing rural communities for development purposes have not succeeded in transforming rural areas. In this direction, the Federal, State, and Local governments; international and non-governmental organizations have done a lot to foster development in rural communities through community development initiatives that would enhance poverty alleviation and other social welfare schemes or programmes to scale up activities that will enhance economic, social, cultural and political development.

Today, development experts believe that community development is promoted through the conscious collaborative efforts of community members, since efforts made to improve community development resources through interventions by external agents such as United Nations Environmental Protection Agency (UNEPA), USAid Projects, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), World Bank Assisted Projects, and Panama Projects have yielded little or no positive results. Regrettably, observations revealed that several communities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State lack

sustainable development. It seems that communities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State are lagging behind in community development activities/programmes such as empowerment programmes, educational services, and healthcare/hygiene facilities. This has attracted the attention of the community development experts, rural sociologists, and non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These concerned groups have cried out about the absence of a strong and committed desire to enhance the quality of living standard by rural dwellers through the community development process. These stakeholders understand the need for economic empowerment, the provision of educational services, and the provision of healthcare/hygiene facilities for community members. This research is therefore carried out to examine the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in promoting community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study surveyed the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in terms of empowerment programmes and the provision of educational services aimed at promoting community development in the study area.

UNDP is based on the merging of the United Nations Expanded Programme on Technical Assistance, created in 1949, and the United Nations Special Fund, established in 1958. UNDP, as it is now known, was established in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco on 26th June 1945, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24th October 1945. Its purposes and principles are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations based on equal rights and self-determination, and achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian challenges without distinction for race, sex, language, or religion. UNDP's mandate is to end poverty and build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions. It advocates for change and connect countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build better lives.

As the United Nations' lead agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. It helps countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, and institutional capabilities, and to build resilience to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The work of the agency is concentrated in three focus areas; sustainable development, democratic governance and peace building, and climate and disaster resilience. The experience in micro-credit administration and documented experience on micro-credit administration under various donor-assisted programmes gave birth and led to policy guidelines for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria.

As a trusted multilateral partner serving 166 developing countries around the world, UNDP is uniquely positioned to help advocate for change, connect countries to the knowledge and resources they need, and coordinate the efforts of the UN at the country level. UNDP invests nearly US \$1 billion every year in fighting poverty and advancing progress toward the millennium development goals (MDGs). The lack of adequate and

appropriate agricultural credit is one of the constraints on agricultural growth and development in the country. Costs of improved inputs have been unstable, the cost of farm investments in small-scale irrigation for example have gone beyond the reach of small-scale farmers to pay for them in cash in rural areas.

Oruwan (2001) confirmed the existence of a correlation between the enhancement of rural farmers' status and poverty alleviation. The social development programme has the potential to reduce poverty through the socioeconomic emancipation of poor men, women, and the disadvantaged segments of the population. Hussain (2018) argued that as a result of the economic improvement of the farmers' status due to their participation in the programme, revenue derived from their farm is spent on training their children, which is a very important development that could enhance socio-economic well-being. Dedhich (2020) found out from farmers who participated in UNDP microfinance operation that 7.4% of them used their income in marrying more wives while 15% of the farmers used theirs to build houses and 22.3% of the farmers used their income on consumption by buying items such as bicycles, motorcycles, and vehicle which also aid transportation of their farm inputs and produce and 14.9% of the farmers spent theirs on clothing, feeding, celebration of festival and re-investment in the next farming season. According to Narayan and Stern (2012), the micro-finance programme of UNDP has aided in poverty alleviation. It has brought about health support to farmers for improved productivity through (i) improving the nutritional status of farmers and others (ii) preventing and controlling the spread of diseases (iii) increasing the proportion of income budgeted to healthcare services in households.

Shekari (2011) stated that most community members such as farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoemakers, hairdressers, beauty salon owners, and soap/cream makers' income have increased with accessibility to micro-finance services. Literature indicates that there is a great improvement in income after their participation in the micro-finance programme provided by UNDP compared with when they had not participated in such a scheme. In a study carried out by Makombe et al. (2021), 82% of the farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoemakers, hairdressers, beauty salon owners, and soap/cream makers indicated that they had just little improvement in their income before their participation in the UNDP micro-finance programme, while 7.4% of the farmers, have little improvement in their income after participation and 19% of the farmers had much increase in income before participation compared with 26% who had much improvement in their income after participation. Ndubi (2018) concluded from his study that farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoemakers, hairdressers, beauty salon owners, and soap/cream makers who have access to UNDP microfinance services have great improvement in their income after participating in the programme.

Education is an indispensable tool for the improvement of quality of life. Education is used to prepare man for social, civil, and economic roles that go beyond the limit of rudimentary literacy training of community members. It helps to add value to the life of an individual, the community as well as society. When education is inculcated into rural community development programmes, its aim is always to produce people who can

choose for themselves what kind of development and activities they want to pursue (Ibekwe, 2019).

In a survey on UNDP projects in education and rural development in Ondo State, Nigeria, Oril (2016) found out that government's participation in community development cannot achieve meaningful educational development except with the participation of non-governmental organizations like the UNDP. The researcher stated that one of the primary goals of the UNDP projects in education is to help sensitize the rural dwellers on the advantages of being educated and assisting community members to have access to quality education by providing facilities and services that would facilitate effective teaching and learning. The assumption is that an educated rural dweller is bound to contribute positively to rural development. This helps them to embrace new visions, learn to respond to new initiatives, agree to existing institutions, and help create new ones to serve economic, social, and political ends. Nelson's (2017) study showed that women carry out enlightenment campaigns as part of their community development projects. The aim of such campaigns is to help community members interact more meaningfully and sustainably with the environment.

Ngwu and Etimbuk (2021) conducted a study on the influence of UNDP projects in education on rural development and discovered that women organize participatory adult education classes that involve productive activities. This helps to restructure the needs and goals of the people to foster development efforts. For instance, such participatory classes created opportunities for illiterate farmers to engage in sustainable farming practices. Ibezim (2018) in his study on the relationship between women's educational projects and rural community development discovered that women's UNDP projects involve (a) fostering the need for young girls and women to play major roles in their community development through the acquisition of necessary skills (b) providing scholarships and funds to deserving students in the community (c) equipping community schools with books and furniture (d) establishing and maintaining day care centres and nursery schools in order to assist working mothers (e) making donations in kind such as desks, office furniture, books, pen, and so forth to boost the interest of both pupils and staff in the schools. Ibezim (2018) concluded that the overall impact of the UNDP project on education is an improved standard of living for community members. Onuha's (2016) study indicated that UNDP educational projects also involve organizing income-generating activities to enable them to raise capital for schools in their communities.

Purpose of the study

This study examined the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promoting community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Find out the various empowerment programmes floated by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.
2. Find out the various educational services provided by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

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Research questions

The following research questions are posed to direct this study;

1. What are the various empowerment programmes floated by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?
2. What are the various educational services provided by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

Methodology

The design adopted for this study is a survey research design. This design is adopted as the study sought to examine the situation as it exists in the study area. The study area is the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study area is bound in the north by Yakurr Local Government Area, in the south by the Calabar River; in the East, it is bounded by the Republic of Cameroun, and in the West by Itu Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The people in the study area are mostly farmers cultivating cassava, plantain, potatoes, cocoyam, yam, melon, water yam, and so on. The study area has seven local government areas viz: Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, and Odukpani Local Government Areas. The population of the study comprised all inhabitants of the seven local government areas. The population of the people is 1,406,706 in 94 autonomous communities in the study area. The sample for this study consisted of 700 community members from 53 communities in the area. The multi-stage sampling procedure (purposive, simple random sampling proportional simple random sampling, and accidental sampling techniques) was adopted for the study.

Purposive sampling was adopted to select all the local government areas that make up the Southern Senatorial District for the study. To select the communities used for the study, a simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 50% of the total number of communities in the study area for use. In selecting the sample used for the study, the researchers adopted the proportional simple random sampling technique to select 40% of community members used for the study. An accidental sampling technique was used to administer a questionnaire to the respondents in the communities selected for the study. Only those willing to participate were allowed to participate in the study.

To obtain data used for this study, a questionnaire tagged Activities of UNDP and Community Development Questionnaire (AUCDQ) was designed by the researchers and given to three lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation for face and content validity before it was used for the study. The reliability test of the instrument was done using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test with coefficients that ranged from .75 to .83 which is high to ascertain that the instrument is reliable to measure what it was meant for. The instrument was divided into two parts. Part A contained information on respondents' personal data while part B had nine (9) items measuring empowerment programmes and educational programmes undertaken by UNDP in the communities in the study area. The research questions were answered using simple percentage analysis with pie charts designed to further the illustration of responses obtained from the respondents in the study area.

Presentation of results

The research questions are answered using simple percentage analysis with pie charts as follows:

Research question one: What are the various empowerment programmes floated by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

A table of items and responses obtained is presented in table 1.

Table 1: A table showing the various empowerment programmes and responses from respondents

Question	Empowerment programmes					
	Agriculture	Fashion design	Shoemaking	Hairdressing	Beauty salon	Soap/cream making
What are the various empowerment programmes provided by UNDP to promote community development?	206 (29.4%)	102 (14.6%)	142 (20.3%)	100 (14.3%)	50 (7.1%)	100 (14.3%)

Result presented on table 1 shows that 206 respondents which is equivalent to 29.4% agreed that UNDP has empowered them in Agriculture, 102 (14.6%) respondents said they have been empowered in fashion design and 142 respondents which is equivalent to 20.3% respondents were empowered in shoemaking. In the same way, data obtained from respondents on UNDP empowerment on hairdressing revealed that 100 respondents representing 14.3% of community members have been empowered. In the beauty salon programme, 50 (7.1%) respondents have been empowered while 100 respondents representing 14.3% have been empowered in the soap/cream-making programme. The results are further represented in pie a chart.

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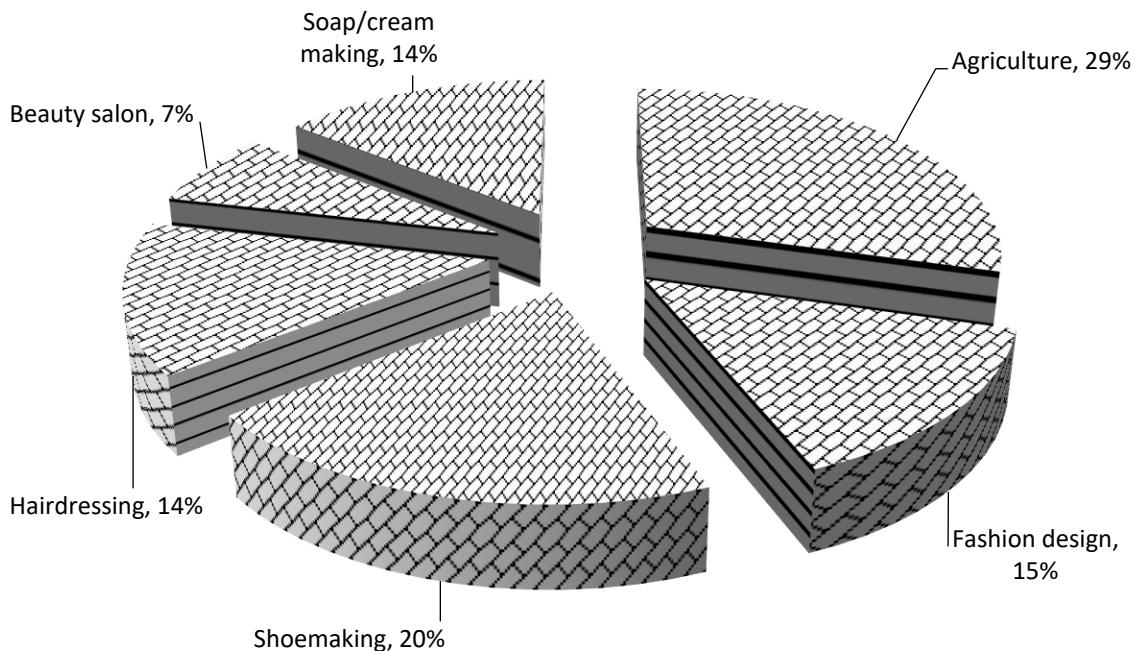


Figure 1: Pie chart of the various empowerment programmes and the percentage of beneficiaries

Research question two: What are the various educational services provided by UNDP to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?

A table of items and responses obtained from respondents in the study area with percentages is presented in table 2

Table 2: A table showing the various educational services and responses from respondents

Question	Educational Services				
	Equipping Lab	Stocking Library	Reading/writing materials	Classroom blocks	Computers
What are the various educational services provided by UNDP to promote community development in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State?	200 (28.6%)	150 (21.4%)	80 (11.4%)	120 (17.1%)	150 (21.4%)

Table 2 shows results on the various educational services provided by UNDP to promote community development in the study area. The results revealed that 200(28.6%) respondents accepted that UNDP has equipped laboratories in the study area, and 150 respondents representing 21.4% said UNDP has stock libraries in their communities. On the provision of reading and writing materials, 80 respondents representing 11.4% agreed that they have benefited from UNDP in this area. Data obtained from respondents on provision of classroom blocks by UNDP revealed that 120 (17.1%) respondents accepted that their communities have benefitted. Finally, 150 respondents which is equivalent to 21.4% agreed that they have benefited from UNDP educational services in terms of provision of computers. A pie chart representing the information contained in Table 2 is presented on figure 2.

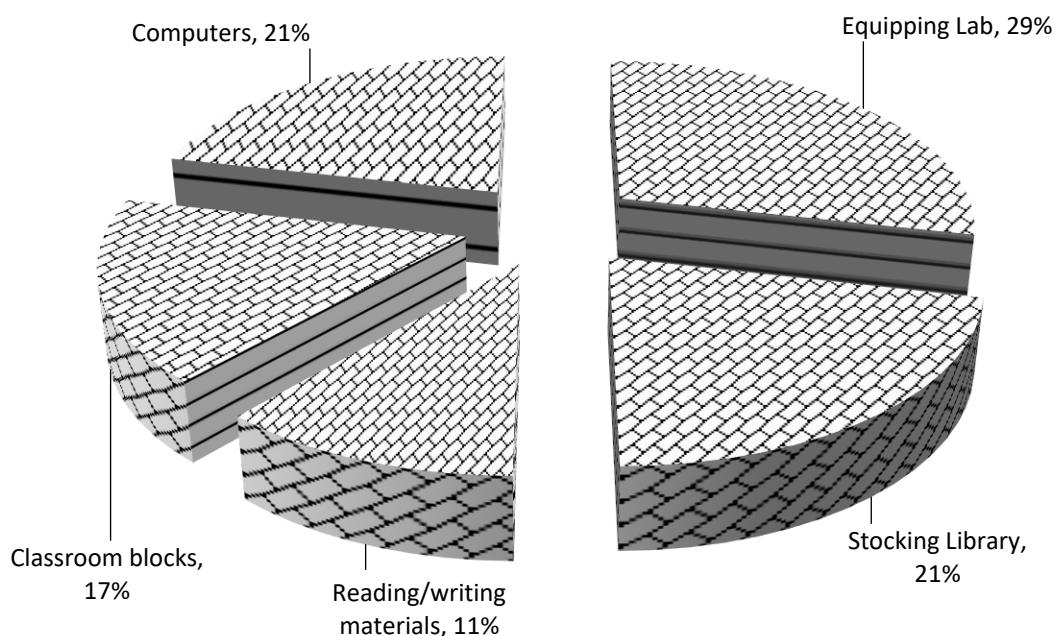


Figure 2: Pie chart of various educational services and the percentages of beneficiaries

Discussion of the findings

Result from analysis of research question one shows that UNDP has empowered the rural people in different communities in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State in various self-help programmes like agriculture, fashion design, shoe making, hair dressing and soap/cream making. It was also found that not much has been done in the area of beauty salon based on the number of beneficiaries. This is in line with Shekari (2011) who stated that most community members such as farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoe makers, hair dressers, beauty salon owners and soap/cream makers' income have increased with accessibility to micro-finance service. Literature indicates that there is a great improvement in income after their participation in the micro-finance programme provided by UNDP compared with when they had not participated in such scheme. In a study carried out by Makombe et al. (2021), 82% of the farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoe makers, hair dressers, beauty salon owners and soap/cream makers indicated

that they had just little improvement in their income before their participation in the UNDP micro-finance programme; while 7.4% of the farmers had little improvement in their income after participation and 19% of the farmers had much increase in income before participation compared with 26% who had much improvement in their income after participation. Ndubi (2018) concluded from his study that farmers, fashion designers, traders, shoe makers, hair dressers, beauty salon owners and soap/cream makers who have access to UNDP micro finance services have great improvement in their income after participating in the programme.

Result obtained from analysis of research question two also revealed that UNDP has done well in providing educational services for quality education for the people of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Areas the body has affected in the educational needs of the people in the area include equipping of science laboratories, stocking of libraries, erection of classroom blocks and provision of computers to facilitate quality teaching and learning. This result is in support of Ngwu and Etimbuk (2021) who conducted a study on the influence of UNDP project in education on rural development and discovered that women organize participatory adult education classes that involve productive activities. This helps to restructure the needs and goals of the people to foster development efforts. For instance, such participatory classes created opportunity for illiterate farmers to engage in sustainable farming practices. Ibezim (2018) in his study on the relationship between women educational projects and rural community development discovered that women's UNDP projects involve (a) fostering the need for young girls and women to play major roles in their community development through acquisition of necessary skills (b) providing scholarship and funds to deserving students in the community (c) equipping community schools with books and furniture (d) establishing and maintaining day care centres and nursery schools in order to assist working mothers (e) making donations in kind such as desks, office furniture, books, pen and so forth to boost the interest of both pupils and staff in the schools.

Conclusion

Results obtained from this study have shown that UNDP has given a lot of attention to empowerment programmes such as agriculture, fashion design, shoe making, hairdressing, and soap/cream making programmes in the study area. Adequate attention is required for beauty salon programmes and other forms of empowerment programmes. On the other hand, UNDP has assisted communities in the area by providing educational services such as equipping laboratories, stocking school libraries, erecting classroom blocks, and providing computers for schools for quality education and community development. However, more is required to be done in the area of providing reading/writing materials to boost quality education that would bring about community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the results obtained from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Governmental and non-governmental organizations within the country should create a synergy to work together in order to promote community development in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.
2. Adequate data of community members that have been empowered should be obtained and documented to enable more beneficiaries from the programmes.
3. Well-meaning individuals and communities should pull their resources together to address educational challenges, especially at the grassroots for quality education that would guarantee community development.
4. Activities of international governmental and non-governmental organizations directed towards community development should be monitored and supervised to avoid sharp practices.
5. Sustainable development should form part of the formal and non-formal education curriculum to reduce the problems facing the earth.

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