

TOWN UNION GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN IGBOLAND: A STUDY OF NROBO COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The town union government has been seen to be a major player in rural community development efforts in Igboland. As a major or principal agent or element of positive change in the Socio-Political organization of the people, introduced by colonialism, town union government turns out to be a very important and unavoidable instrument of self-help approach to community development in the post-colonial period, and by the end of the Nigeria Biafra War, its effect became very visible. In 1991, the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) was formed. Its formation and foundation moved quickly, development in Nrobo community. However, like most town unions across Igboland, the development activities of the town union government have not received the academic attention as deserved or supposed. This paper deems it fit and goes on to provide the basis for self-help approach of town union in Igboland. A major reason for self-help approach adopted is the general negligence or ineptitude of governments of different levels. The study further finds that the NPU, through broad-based sources of funds covered appreciable and numerous developmental gaps in Nrobo through the provisions of basic social and economic infrastructures and fostering of the cultural and traditional heritage of the community. This study employs the eclectic method of analysis by selecting the most relevant data from different sources for interpretation. The discourse is presented chronologically and thematically.

Keywords: Community, Development, Government, Self-help, Grassroots.

Introduction

Community is described to be a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. It could also be explained to mean a group of people sharing or having certain attitude and interest in common. Communities exist in so many regions and zones to include Igbo region or zone. Igbo region is an area known as South-East of Nigeria. South-East of Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones in the country. The region consists of five states which are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. These states situate and cover the places known as and referred to as Igboland. Communities in Igboland are well-known for their self-help efforts towards provision and maintenance of basic infrastructural facilities for the development of the community. The self-help approach to community development across Igboland is of considerable antiquity and is an innate practice of the people over the years. It has been established that the average Igbo person is basically community development conscious. This is seen to be of the primordial communalism that exists in the Igbo society. The Igbo communalism is seen in the practice of elaborate extended family system. This system has survived and sustained, and it is still strong socio-political organization in Igboland, even after the shake-ups of colonialism. The community

development efforts of the average Igbo man as embedded in his communalist nature is explicated by B. I Owuamalam when he avers that in efforts towards community development, financial contributions by the majority of the people of rural development projects have been increasing since the 1970s and early 1980s. Owuamalam further pointed out that the Igbo in the diaspora had generally sent money home either in payment for their levies for the successful implementation of developmental projects or in payment for their less fortunate parents or other relatives at home. Of course, the forgone is only possible because of the extended family system practiced in the South-Eastern enclave over the years. Therefore, the cooperation received by the town union bodies towards community development could be linked to the Igbo communal and generous spirit. Nrobo, as an ancient independent community located in the present Igbo-Ano Development Area of Uzo-Uwani Local Government in Enugu State of Nigeria, with a town union known as Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) is not left out in self-help efforts and community development. Through individual, political, religious and social organization such as Umunna, town union, Age grade, village general meetings Inyom Di, CMO, CWO, Association of Ozor title holders, different women groups among others, Nrobo has been able to achieve a good measure of community development, especially since the inception of NPU in the year 1991.

Community development depicts the patriotic passion and love of the indigenous people of a community to enhance their livelihood and that of the generations yet unborn. The United Nations defines community development to mean a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. In Nrobo, there have been a good number of times when the community members, sometimes the both home and abroad, depending on period and space, had to converge in emergency meetings to brainstorm on the challenges and progress of their community. This shows that the activities of community development do not truly lie within the established organizations above mentioned. Nonetheless, community development efforts are basically seen and recognized through the activities of the town union in the contemporary times. The politics and governance of the town unions normally reflect on the development strides of the community. The Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU), which is the principal political organization that pilots the development efforts in Nrobo, has had its share of ups and downs. The personality of the individuals at the helm of affairs always makes a way of reflections on the general performance of the town union government. Moreover, there are other factors which either aid the stultification or enhancement of growth and development in Nrobo. These factors are explicated in this study.

Therefore, this paper aims at the assessment of the value of development activities in Nrobo. Also, in the paper, the origin of the town union, functions and impacts as well as the federal, state and local government development contributions and activities in Nrobo will be highlighted.

Literature Review

Many authors and scholars of Nigerian origin have in many times made various and numerous attempts to examine the variables that inform the process of community development. The attention on community development in Nigeria may be attributed to the developmental status of the country generally. In a situation where grassroots development

seems to be receiving undesirable attention and where per capital productivity in the rural areas is infinitesimal, observers and analysts tend to engage in academic enquires.

Enyi John Egbe (2014) explicates the efforts of different governmental bodies at different levels towards the development of the rural areas in Nigeria. Egbe shows that responsibility of rural development is not only with government at the grassroots level in Nigeria when heavers thus, "Nigeria gained independence in 1960 from the British colonial government. Ever since then, rural or community development has been declared a priority by the successive governments, be it civilian or military. In essence, the different tiers of government in the federation are expected to contribute to rural community development. Nonetheless, as N.G. Akhimien et al (2021) observe the federal government of the country has not lived up to the responsibility of rural community development.

N.G Akhimien et al look at rural community development through economic activities when they posit thus, "Rural development is a means of bringing about enduring changes in the structure of the rural sector in a manner that productivity and output are increased, the technology and techniques of production are radically revolutionized with enhanced standard of living". This description of rural development is not all-encompassing as it obviously involves the socio-political milieu of a society. An apt description of rural community development is rendered by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as quoted in Akhimien *et al* thus, "The outcome of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes occurring among rural population". In other words, rural community development does not involve only economic activities but ensures the general improvement in living conditions of the people.

An agency-based assessment of rural community development is made by L.E Udu and S.O Onwe (2019). The duo assess the activities of Ebonyi State Community Based Social Development Agency (EB-CSDA), particularly on poverty reduction in rural communities of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Udu and Onwe show the effects of agencies' partnership in community development of rural areas as they observe that the agency is rated high in the provision of micro-projects to the rural communities. Nonetheless, despite the efforts of the EB-CSDA, poverty remained a chronic scourge in the community studied. This may be attributed to group approach employed by the agency instead of targeting the individual poor.

Paul Francis *et al* (1996) observe that community-based organizations are more efficient in grassroots community development than government programmes. The efficiency of community-based organizations such as traditional and kinship institutions, community associations, occupational associations, cooperatives, women's groups, immigrant welfare associations and religious organizations, is attributed by Francis *et al* to local decision-making and participation. Empirical investigations have shown that government approaches to community development generally neglect local inputs and participation.

B.I. Owuamalam (1981) explores the changing trends in community development in Eastern Nigeria. He avers that the colonial administration engaged in rural community development through the instrument of the Indirect Rule system. He goes further to explicate how the newly introduced social institutions such as the churches and schools laid

the foundation for modern patterns of community development. By independence, the government became effectively involved in assisting community development in the First Republic Eastern Nigeria. According to Owuamalam, in Eastern Nigeria before the Nigeria-Biafra war i.e 1962-1967, government realized the need for assisting communities to attain their aspirations in implementing rural development projects. At the outbreak of the war, many charity organizations and aid bodies contributed towards community development in the region and largely continued in the immediate post-war years.

There are certain conclusions and assertions which the reviewed studies and even many others have in common. One of such is the fact that the Nigerian government has largely failed to bring development to rural communities in the country. The failure is mostly attributed to the sustained rot in the different levels of government since independence. It is equally noted that most of the literature ignore the contributions of town union governments towards rural community development. Such oversight is done regardless of the fact that most self-help approach in the absence of sincere government execution of rural development programmes, were initiated and executed by the town union bodies. The present study goes on to fill this gap in literature by adopting the Nrobo Progressive Union for detailed analysis.

Community Development Efforts in Nrobo

Community development efforts in Nrobo dates back to the early 20th century. During this period, the affairs in Nrobo were piloted by the age-grade (Ogbo Osha), Okomanyi, Okokpo-Isi among others which had their primary objectives, committing themselves to the enhancement of the people's security, welfare, rapid growth, cultural, social and political development in the country. Age grade (Ogbo Osha, Okomanyi, Okokpo-Isi) were people born within a specific period of time; it could be within three to five years. Some of the roles of the age grades played in Nrobo include ensuring the security of lives and property, enforcement of law and order, developing/execution of community initiatives and projects and crime control which was a growing area of need in Nrobo.

Private individuals also contributed their quota to community development in Nrobo. Individual efforts, such as clearing and expansion of pathways (Roads) leading to farms, stream, markets, village arena (Otobo), sinking of boreholes, lacerating of roads, donation of electricity transformers, building houses for less-privileged ones were done by wealthy and illustrious sons of Nrobo. These factors mentioned above helped in the improvement on the welfare of people. Electricity became available in Nrobo, precisely in the year 2000, and that was with the help of Late Chief Bar. Vincent Obi Ogbogu from Umu-Ajadu, Umuduesue Nrobo. Some years after that, Okpara youths deemed it wise to have a transformer in order to have a stable and uninterrupted electricity supply in their village. Chief Emeka Ayogu (Nwa Chinaemere I) took it upon himself and donated a brand-new transformer in Nrobo. Electricity poles, wires and other electrical materials and services needed for its installation were also made available by some members of the village for rural electrification covering from Orie Nrobo, Okpara-Oda, Ama-Egu, Ifu-Otobo and Usokwe. Some of the philanthropists and illustrious sons who made those materials and services available include Hon. Ozor Godwin Ejike Oke, Ozor Charles Onunze (Mayor n' Ghana), Chief Michael Ayogu (Akudi n' Nwa I), Chief NonsoOke (UkwaAchi n' Aka), Chief Oliver Ama-Oke, Chief Simon Eze (Ossai Compressor) Chief Tony Ezema, Agaba Samson Okechukwu, Chief Thaddeus Okechukwu

Nnadozie, Chief Innocent Onyishi, to mention but a few. Pipe born water was also provided in the community to evert the people walking long distance to get water as water is available in the towns and villages. These boreholes and pipe born water were made available by some individuals such as Chief Paul Ugwu (Paul Hill), Ugwu Umuiya Unity Forum, Chief Ozor (ASP) Christopher Obochi and others. Town hall/Civic center was also built by NPU.

Formation of Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU)

Igbos are in social or welfare group what water is to fish. They always form and make groups for the purpose of promoting unity and understanding, for the benefit of members and others around them. According to Kenneth Little (1971), the Igbos were the originators of welfare union in Nigeria. A publication in 1964 by the Igbo State Union had shown that during the 1920s, the Igbos residing outside their homeland originally formed family unions which later metamorphosed into village, town and district unions. This later developed into an organization known as the Igbo Federated Union (IFU). The aim for forming these unions was to serve as a tool for social mobilization and development of rural communities. One may therefore infer that these organizations were created to solve the social and economic problems of the people who migrated to the urban centres. Although, mutual aid was the primary function of all the unions, there were also wider interests. In addition to assisting their own members financially, many associations set out to improve their home towns and villages. The Nrobo people were not left out of this wave of welfare unions sweeping across Nigeria.

Consequently, in the year 1991, the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) was formed by some concerned indigenes of Nrobo, with branches in Onitsha, Enugu, Jos and other urban cities. Most of the pioneer members and organizers were urban based civil servants and business men who deemed it necessary to rally the people of Nrobo together for a meaningful development of the area. The NPU was thus founded to foster unity among the people of Nrobo and to enable the good people of Nrobo tackle the problems in the area, to initiate and carryout meaningful developmental project in the community, to encourage, inspire and harness developmental efforts within the various associations/age grades in Nrobo, to promote and uphold the customs and traditions of the people, and above all to foster the progress and development of the area. It is noteworthy that the emergence of the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) was necessitated by the prevailing needs to solve the developmental problems facing Nrobo community. The Nrobo people were therefore forced to identify the limitations of the government in providing the resources which are needed for their development. They embarked on self-help development programmes and decided to find collective solution to their development problem. Active campaigns and sensitization programmes were pursued in Nrobo, making the people know and believe that their advancement and development strategy lie very much in what they can do to improve their living standard. As a result of this, the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) launched different self-help projects with emphasis on educational development, provision of pipe-born water, rural electrification, as well as building and grading new roads.

Those who played important role in the formation of Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) were Chief (Hon.) Benjamin Paul Obeta Idiga (JP), HRH Igwe J. I. Ugwu, Chief B. C. Nwabueze, Chief Martin Ugwu, Chief Charles Eze, Chief Josephat Eze Ikeogu, Chief Barr. Melitus I. Nwabueze, Chief Alfred Eze, Chief Dom Onyishi, Chief Emmanuel Nnadi, Mr. John Ugwu,

Late Chief Ozor Okeidu Attama, Late Chief Okoro-Ahor Otibo, Late Barr. Vincent Obi Ogbogu, Late Mr. Patrick Ajibo, Late Mr. Eric Ezeaku, Late Chief Vincent Nsude, among others. In 1991, some elites of Nrobo drafted the maiden constitution of the union. This, according to the union is significant because it serves as the year the union was formally inaugurated. Membership of the union is open and automatic to all eligible indigene of Nrobo, which could be by birth, marriage, parental origin or those who have resided in Nrobo for 10 years and above and accepted its cultural heritage.

Organs of the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU)

For equitable distribution of labour and service for equity, justice and governance of all-inclusiveness, and authority delegation, the NPU, according to its written constitution 2018 as amended, has three organs. These organs are: the General Assembly, the Executive Committee and branch unions. The General Assembly is made up of all adult members of the community; that is all persons of Nrobo who are up to eighteen years of age. The Executive Committee (EC) comprises all the elected officers of the union.

Executive Officers of the Union

It will look and sound inconclusive and difficult if not impossible to have an effective and smooth running of any union without leaders or officials. In consideration of the above, the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) has an executive committee whose primary duties are to lead in piloting the affairs of the union and community in general. According to Article Seven of the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) written constitution of 2018 as amended, the General Assembly of the union shall be administered by an executive committee, which shall be made up of the following officers:

- a. Office of the President General
- b. Office of the Vice President
- c. Office of the Secretary General
- d. Office of the Assistant Secretary
- e. Office of the Financial Secretary
- f. Office of the Treasurer
- g. Office of the Public Relations Officer
- h. Office of the Assistant Public Relations Officer
- i. Office of the Director of Social
- j. Office of the Provost I
- k. Office of the Provost II
- l. Office of the Provost III
- m. Office of the Legal Adviser

The Executive Committee meets three times in a year, ordinary and or emergency meetings could be summoned when necessary. The meeting is to be summoned by the President General. In the meeting of the Executive Committee, two third of the members shall form a quorum and all decisions of the committee shall be valid, provided that three quarter of those present are in favour of the decision.

The Executive officers of the union are elected by an open ballot system. The tenure of an officer shall expire after every three (3) years. However, an officer's tenure in office may

elapse before the three yearterm if he or she dies or is incapacitated. He could also be removed from office if found guilty of inefficiency or gross misconduct.

The President General is the chief executive of the NPU. He presides over the executive and general meetings and such other meetings as may be convened through the Secretary General from time to time. It is the duty of the President General to sign the minute book of the NPU, counter-sign all vouchers of approved expenditure prepared by the financial secretary. The duty of the Vice President is to assist the president in the performance of his duties at meetings, and to perform such duties as the president might direct. The vice President also acts for the president in his absence and carryout any other duty that may be assigned to him by the union.

The Secretary General is the principal administrative officer of the union's secretariat. He is the chief scribe, image maker and backbone of the union. He convenes all meetings of the union as may be directed by the President General from time to time. He shall be a member of all official and social delegations representing the union. His other duties include to record the proceedings of the meetings, read the minutes at meetings, keep custody of all documents of the union, be in-charge of all correspondence of the union, sign minutes of all the union proceedings, prepare and present to the union at the last general meeting of every year an annual report of the activities of the union. The Assistant Secretary is just as the name implies, "Assistant" as he helps the Secretary General in recording proceedings at meetings and perform all other duties of the secretary general especially in his absence.

The financial secretary is responsible for keeping records of all the financial reports. He receives money for the union by which he issues official stamped receipts, and transmits such money to the treasurer, before expenses within 72 hours from the time of receipt of such money. He also prepares payment vouchers and made periodic statements of account to the General Assembly.

The Treasurer is responsible for the safe keeping of the union's money. He keeps an accurate record of the union's finances. He is obligated to release money when demanded by the General Assembly on the endorsement of the President and the Financial Secretary. He keeps an imprest account of not more than five thousand Naira (N5, 000. 00).

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) is in charge of the union's official publicity. He publicizes the activities of the union as may be directed by the Executive Committee/General Assembly. Assistant PRO has his duties by helping the PRO in discharge of his duties. The Director of Social co-ordinates the social activities of the union, and is the chairman of any ad-hoc committee set in connections with social functions of the union. The Provosts, I, II and III are another active officers of the union. They arrange venues of meeting before the commencement. They maintain law and order, collect fines from defaulters and remit whatever according to the stipulations of the NPU constitution.

For the efficient running of the association, there is an annual general meeting which is the supreme authority of the union as all branches and their members are present and in active participation. The General Assembly is usually held on the 30th day of December annually,

commencing from 12:00 noon, at Nrobo Town Hall/Civic Centre. At this point, different branches of the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) present reports on how they are faring.

The Branches of the Union

Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) shall have branches at cities and towns in Nigeria and Diaspora where Nrobo citizens are domiciled. A branch of the union can be formed in an area where there are ten or more citizens of Nrobo resident outside Nrobo. These people shall form a branch of the union and notify the union's executives accordingly. Each branch has the sole authority and responsibility to organize elections to choose their representative candidates. The aims and objectives of the branches shall be the same with that of the General Assembly of Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU). The union branches participate in the formulation of policies, tendering of proposals and reports for the attention of the General Assembly.

Assessment of Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU)

In this research work, it is observed that the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) lays more emphasis on the welfare of its members and infrastructural development. This is observed as achieved developmental activities have been enumerated. It could also be seen that emphasis are also placed and concentrated on fostering peace, unity, love, mutual understanding, co-operation, social interaction and discipline among the populace of Nrobo.

However, not much attention has been given by the union towards the improvement of Agricultural production. There is need to adequately train the local farmers on mechanized agriculture and the use of new techniques of farming, also rural farmers need to be provided with mechanized tools and farm implements such as Tractors, Planters, Trucks, Combined harvesters, Disk plough, Disk harrows, Ridgers, irrigation systems, fertilizers and pest control chemical at subsidized rates so as to enable peasant farmers increase their agricultural produce.

Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) is faced with the problem of manpower in the implementation of some programmes and activities; this is as a result of rural-urban migration. It is crystal clear and obviously noticed that the rural-urban drift of youths in search for white collar jobs and greener pastures in the cities resulted in the shortage of the much-needed able-bodied unskilled manpower to execute certain aspect of some projects such as the provision of water, sand and stone for construction work through direct labour. It also affects agriculture and its products as farm clearing, planting and harvesting and other agricultural activities are being done by contractors rather than direct labour of the members of the community. This, in the other way round, elevated the cost of farm work and projects.

On the issues of education, for instance, some primary and secondary schools in Nrobo such as Hill Top Primary School, Central School, Community Primary School, and Community High School, Nrobo are not adequately maintained, as the community development union, if left alone, could not maintain them, the union usually calls on the state and local governments to come to the aid of these schools to reconstruct, renovate and re-equip them

with classroom desks and lockers, textbooks and exercise books, updating the school library, writing material as well as laboratory equipment.

Sources of Fund

Time and experience have made it very clear and overt that it takes unions or organizations what it takes elephant to pass through the eye of a needle, to effectively and or adequately exist and operate without money and sufficient fund. Money and sufficient fund are needed in every union for it to smoothly run its activities. It is in the consideration of this that the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU), in her quest and wishes to be able to meet up with her aims and objectives, made out about six major sources of fund. According to the NPU written constitution, 2018 as amended, income can be generated from the following sources: Levies, proceeds from the various standing committees, Fines, Launching and fund raising, donations and any other lawful means. The union obtains funds by levies which the union members impose upon themselves. According to Chief Hon. Benjamin Paul Obeta Idiga, in the early years of the union, no allowance was made for a person's ability to pay. A flat rate levy was the general practice. However, as time went by, a graded levy system was adopted. Under this arrangement therefore, an individual's ability to pay levies was taken into consideration and the members were taxed accordingly.

The levy system of raising funds has no element of compulsion to it. Consequently, it is not always that members gracefully co-operate to pay their levies promptly. When a member failed to pay his or her levy as expected, the officials of the union would go to his or her residence to persuade him or her to pay up. An appropriate levy structure and mode or terms of payment are always agreed upon by a simple majority of the union members at the general meeting.

Another source of generating funds is by donations from members. Although this method is newly introduced and adopted, it is now recognized and popularized as a very effective means of raising funds. The Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) tested and confirmed it. They applied it in launching their Almanacs and other development projects costing several thousands of naira, and challenging the members particularly, the wealthier ones to show their love for their towns and villages by donating generously to ensure the success of the development projects at hand. However, willful donation has its own challenges as a member is under no obligation to make donations and if he is magnanimous enough to do so, any amount donated is accepted and applauded.

Owing to its competitive character, the launching method of generating revenue had proven a very effective means of raising considerable sum of money for the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) since 1999. This is so because it created an easier means of making members of the union contribute large sums of money in cash or kind per head. The money an individual paid through this means is not levies and therefore involves no element of compulsion. Members make their contributions willingly and voluntarily.

Other source of fund such as fines on erring members is effective and profitable. Fine is given to members when misbehaved or gone contrary to the stipulated and acceptable norms and routine. It is also applied or executed if a member refuses to carry out an official

instruction. A misbehaved member will be required to pay a fine of an amount depending on the gravity of the offence.

Men based at home pay less than those in the city, same is applicable to women. In the process of levy, each branch is expected to grade their members because they know their financial abilities. Another source of revenue is through the government intervention funding.

From the oral interviews carried out, it is clear that the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) has various ways of raising money for their developmental projects, and with good management, the union would continue to raise funds comfortably for their development programmes. After the money had been collected, there remained the question of safe keeping.

The treasurer is responsible for depositing all money collected from the financial secretary or his nominee, to the bank with-in 72 hours of receipt.

Educational Development

From the Platonic periods, attempts had been made to define or explain the concept of education. Plato himself defined education as “that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children...” the particular training in respect of pleasure and pain. We have often heard of some expressions like: “Education is life” “Education is what happens to us from the day of our birth to the day of our death. “Education is a way of making people fit to live and fit to live with”. According to Okafor (1984), the term education can be applied in a broad compass, as well as in a restricted sense. In the broad sense, the term embraces all those experiences of the individual through which knowledge is acquired, the intellect enlightened, or the will strengthened. Here, experiences imply all the data acquired by the individual through the sense. This can be referred to as informal education. Informal education is the type of education in practice before the coming of the white men and their systematic arrangement or plan of teaching and learning. In the strict sense, education is employed to designate the consciously planned and systematically applied formal education or training carried out through an agency known as school. Formal education involves a systematic approach and arrangement or plan of transmission of what is worthwhile to those that are in need of it. Education in a more interesting definition is the process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to sustain the development of his potentialities and maximum activation when necessary and thereby achieve self-fulfillment.

For the sake of this study, our focus is on formal education otherwise known as western education. This is because formal education involves modernization of culture and traditions. And modernization of a traditional society is not possible without the effective development of an adequate educational system. This is because western education is looked upon as an important civilizing factor and therefore an essential instrument for social transformation and community development. To this end, Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) as a union and individual persons have in different ways, means and times, made immense contributions to the growth of school education in Nrobo. Nrobo Progressive

Union (NPU) built, registered and handed over to the government, three primary schools and one secondary school in Nrobo. Some benevolent and generous persons like Chief Michael Ayogu (Aku di N' Nwa I), Chief Paul Ugwu (Paul Hill), Chief Hon. Cosmas Ik. Otaba, Chief Ozor ASP Christopher Obochi, Prof. Fabian Ajogwu among others have made so many contributions in promotion of education in Nrobo by paying school fees for students and provision of teaching and learning materials and as well as giving incentives to teachers and bursary to pupils and students. More still, Rev. Fr. Dennis Chibuzo Attah, the Parish Priest of St. Paul's Catholic Church, Nrobo, sometimes around the year 2017, established a mission primary and secondary school; St. Paul's Academy, Nrobo. The school is well equipped and has a conducive learning environment with qualified and diligent teachers. St. Paul's Academy is open to all natives of Nrobo and their fees are highly subsidized. In fact, the establishment of St. Paul's Academy created and maintains conducive learning environment for Nrobo citizens in their fatherland. This is observed as the school lays more emphasis on teaching and discipline.

Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU), in an attempt at promoting education in the community continues to call for help from in and outside the community. It was in this regard and response that Chief Michael Ayogu (Aku di N' Nwa I), with the desire and love for education, apart from other contributions made, promised to establish a secondary school in Ugwu-Nrobo in order to ensure that education is made available to every child. Ugwu-Nrobo is a part of Nrobo residing on top of hill. It covers three large villages such as Okpara, Ofumu and Owa-Ugwu. This area is somehow far from the other two secondary schools in Nrobo. NPU, since its inception has rendered numerous services to the sons and daughters of Nrobo that wish to further their studies but lacked sponsors.

Promotion of Nrobo Cultural Heritage

Culture, they say is the way people do their things. Nrobo, as a people, is not left out in this. They have acceptable ways of doing their things. Nrobo people is a group of people that have high regards for culture and traditions. The saying that kola-nut lasts long in the mouth of those that value it is exemplified in Nrobo community. This is because Nrobo people, no matter where and when do not take their tradition and culture for granted. They keep and maintain the tradition and culture to the letter. The Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) through its social and cultural programme exhibits some Igbo traditional cultures, like the Onwa-Ise Festival and Onwa-Asato festival. The Onwa-Ise festival which lasts for three days is a period when people gather together and make sacrifice in honour of their past heroes and ancestors. These three days cover Eke-ngwusi ji, Orie-Echi and Ahor Ikwereke Ogwu. Onwa-Ise festival is open to every member of the community, men, women and children and even visitors or guests. It is also the period when ladies, especially are made to know their age mates in different villages of the community and newly married wives pack to their husbands' houses. This festival usually comes up in the month of October, while Onwa-Asato festival is around December. Onwa-Asato festival is the period when married women, from their husbands' houses, cook and carry food to their respective clans in honour and celebration of their deceased fathers and or grand-fathers. It is also open to both men and women in the community, as men especially youths initiate and present Nwa-Ada Nnaa Okwokwo and Egwu-gwu masquerades and women watch them and prepare food to their clans. These festivals and celebration are widely recognized by the union to have the potential of delivering socio-cultural benefit to the community and

also a vehicle to facilitate capacity building, self-determination, and cultural preservation. The town union provides quality program with an eye on revenue generation as they strived to promote and publicize community festivities. The festival usually attracts many from neighbouring villages far and near and also boosted community resources. The Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU) supports and supervise special events such as Orie Manwu, which comes up four days before Eke-Uke; the last day of the masquerade festival. Other festivals and ceremonies that promote culture and generate income to the union are the new yam festival (Iba-Ubi), Ozor title taking, Lolo title taking, Igba-Nkwu, Iti-Agidigbo and Nrobo Day also known as general return which comes up at the end of the year. The general return is one of the contributions of the town union as it provides an opportunity for the citizens of the community who live in different parts of the country and in diaspora to interact and unite together.

Nrobo Progressive Union, annually, prepares calendar of events for the year activities. For instance, from 1st down to 31st December every year, no funeral ceremonies are carried out to enable the returnees stay in and participate fully in union activities. Also, Orie-Manwu is celebrated as masquerade day, during this period, masquerade of different types dance and parade the town in a peaceful manner and are not allowed to flog or harass anybody. There is also codification of traditional marriage ceremony law as well as funeral ceremony laws. For instance, today, in Nrobo, funeral ceremonies do not last and or cost like it was before. This is a welcome development because in the past it has been very strenuous for the bereaved to organize ceremonies for their loved ones. The union is indeed the cement used to unite the people.

Conclusion

It is of the love and quest for community development that this research is made to be embarked on community development. Embarking on community development is very important, considering the fact that more than two-third of the Nigerian's population is living in rural areas, and they experience a lot of misery, poverty, morbidity and under-development. It is clear that community participation in project development is an important element and a sure way to the speed up development of the rural areas in Nigeria. Hence, with the contributions of the town unions particularly Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU), have become the focus of considerable attention in many communities as they are in the forefront of development activities.

Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU), since its inception has served as a veritable instrument for human and material development. It is a very arduous task and demands a lot including money, time, co-operation, endurance and honesty. In Nrobo, the task of developing the area has been carried out by its citizens. The people of Nrobo have not relented in their efforts to develop the community through the organ called town union. They have not been deterred by huge levies they had to pay for execution of projects, rather it has to be subsidized by the wealthy citizens through official launchings.

Nrobo community can boast of a number of development projects achieved through community efforts. Children of school age do not need to walk long distances to attend primary and post primary school education since the schools in Nrobo are equipped and

staffed for their daily learning. Receptions and other formal or informal gatherings involving the community or its citizens are hosted conformably in the town hall/civic centre. There is also provision of water bore-hole and good network of feeder roads that connects Nrobo and her neighbours.

From this study, it is observed that there is no rigid partnership between local government officials and the Nrobo Progressive Union (NPU). The government's failures in the various community developments emanated from lack of national philosophical base, community participation and lack of cohesive identity, lack of planning and inability of the government to optimize local resources. In other words, the government at all level should encourage communities to partake fully in all issues concerning their development, morally, financially and otherwise. Community development depends largely on the existence of committed local leaders as well as the extent to which government encourage local planning and participation. Thus, the local government should provide an enabling environment for communities to initiate, plan and execute project that will be beneficial to them.

There are other facilities that need to be put in place in the community, to achieve these, the good people of Nrobo must be willing to make sacrifices such as selfless services, humanitarian services and redemption of pledges. Moreover, the Enugu State Government should remember that Nrobo is part of the state and is an autonomous community in Uzo-Uwani L.G.A. They should not only have them remembered during political campaign and votes seeking and begging, but also in project installation and development. If the government should do this the lives of the people in the community would improve tremendously and also in their level of development.

It is my profound belief that if all these measures are taken into consideration, the union shall gain more weight and substance to achieving its goal. The activities of the town union can only become success when there is transparency, accountability, and commitment of leaders and project officials in the bid to facilitate self-help in community development.

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