

The World Bank-SEEFOR Development Project and Poverty Reduction Strategies in the Niger Delta: The Bayelsa State Experience, 2013-2017

Igbani, Owede Robbins

Department of History and International Studies,
Faculty of Humanities, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa, Nigeria
EMAIL: igbanior@fuotuoke.edu.ng

Josephine Eluan Lloyd, PhD

Dept. of Business Administration
Faculty of Management Science, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa Nigeria
Email: josephineeluan@gmail.com

Abstract

This study takes a critical appraisal of World Bank-SEEFOR development projects and poverty reduction strategies in the Niger Delta but with a focus on Bayelsa state. The study made use of qualitative research design and uses content, discourse and thematic approaches in analyzing the data. The Project Development Objective of SEEFOR is to create and enhance employment opportunities in the participating states of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Rivers and creating access to socioeconomic services as well as improving the efficiency and transparency of public expenditure management system. The finding reveals that in order to reduce poverty and enhance shared prosperity, the Bank uses the Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in project implementation. The study further reveals that between 2014 to 2017 the state SEEFOR expended N3.6 billion, in creating 10,270 direct jobs through the construction of 210, Small public works such as roads, drainage system and refuse collections across the three senatorial districts. To enhance economic sustainability, the Bank trained youths on entrepreneurship skills through a compulsory monthly saving scheme deduction of ₦5,000 on employee's salary to enable them start-up a business after the one-year project cycle. The Bank also promoted skill development and acquisition by giving yearly grants of \$150,000 each to five Craft Development Centers across the state. To enhance financial sustainability practices, the Bank promoted institutional reforms by training Heads of MDAs on fiscal discipline, budget preparation, implementation and evaluation in line with the SEEDS reforms. The study however, observed some challenges bedeviling the SEEFOR project implementation which includes: insecurity, substandard jobs and disregard for environmental sustainability practices in project implementation.

Key Words: *World Bank, SEEFOR, Project, Development, Poverty, Strategy, Bayelsa State*

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Introduction

The World Bank global development initiatives in combating the menace of poverty and the promotion of shared prosperity in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Nigeria and Bayelsa state (Sub-national government), as the case study cannot be overemphasized. It is sad to note that Sub-Saharan African countries are the worst hit-off in terms of poverty index, having one of the worst socioeconomic indicators globally, with life expectancy of 56 years, population growth of 2.7%, Gross National Income per capita of \$1,345, and 5.2 million people living with HIV/Aids.

Significantly, about 3 billion of the world population found in the developing countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Niger, etc. lives below \$2 dollars a day with almost half of that population in Sub-Saharan Africa (48.5%) living less than \$1.25 a day (Abebe & Quaicoe, 2014, p. 122; World Bank, 2015, p. 4).

Over the years the World Bank Group as a multilateral donor agency has remained one of the dominant and largest global sources of official development assistance to the world poorest people in an effort to boost shared inclusive growth and sustainable development. It is worthy of note that annually on the average, the Bank lends about \$18 billion to governments of over 80 developing countries to fund over 225 development projects that can possibly lift them out of extreme poverty. Apart from the loans and credits, the Bank also gives technical support, guarantees, knowledge sharing, and advisory services on government policies and programs across the globe (World Bank, 2005, p. 15).

Historically, the World Bank Group known today as the “Solution Bank” comprises of five pro-development institutions; all metamorphosed from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) established in 1944 along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), when World leaders met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire at a conference known as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. This historic conference was held from July 1st-22nd, 1944 which herald the drafting of the “Articles of Agreement” for IBRD known as the World Bank and the IMF both popularly referred to as the Bretton Wood Institutions due to their shared historical background. The both institutions were set up in order to place the global economy after the World War 11 on a sound and healthy economic footing. The IBRD was primarily set up to aid economic recovery and reconstruct war torn Europe, Asia, after the devastating War that almost consumed her economy and critical infrastructures. While the IMF was set up to promote international monetary stability in order to help provide short term loans to member countries like Nigeria facing balance of payment deficit (Akpan, 2013, p. 120; Gbosi, 2000, p. 228; Jhingan, 2006, p. 493; Ngaire, 2011, p. 248; Rourke, 2001, p. 463).

The other members of the World Bank Group are the International Development Association (IDA) (1960), International Finance Corporation (IFC) (1956), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) (1988) and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (1966) (ICSID). These five Institutions, mentioned above including the IBRD and IDA makes up the World Bank Group. It must be noted that the Bank Group all specializes in different aspect of development but collaborate and synergize towards achieving the overwhelming goal of poverty reduction and promotion of shared prosperity through sustainable development strategies and practices. They provide loans, credit, policy advice, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing services to the government of 188 member countries and subnational governments, and county councils. The World Bank Group known as the “Solution Bank” take advantage of its technical expertise, financial strength, and huge intellectual resources to help member countries and other development partners make huge and real impact by driving inclusive growth and ensuring financial and environmental sustainability (World Bank, 2005a; World Bank, 2015).

Therefore, the objective of this study is to make a critical appraisal of World Bank-SEEFOR development projects and poverty reduction strategies in the Niger Delta but with a focus on Bayelsa state as the case study. The Project Development Objective of SEEFOR interventions is to create and enhance employment opportunities in the participating states of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Rivers and creating access to socioeconomic services as well as improving the efficiency and transparency of public expenditure management system among the benefiting states.

Methods and Data Analysis

The study made use of qualitative research design in data collection and analysis. Thus, in data collection, the study made use of both primary and secondary sources. The primary data method used include: Key Informant Interviews (KIGs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving the state Management of the SEEFOR Coordinating Office such as the State Project Engineer, State Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, State Monitoring and Evaluation Manager of Community and Social Development Project (CSDA), Project Manager, CSDA. Others interviewed were: the SEEFOR site Engineers, Vice, Principal Technical college, Ayakoro, beneficiary youths of SEEFOR and community leaders etc. The study also made use of personal observation method since; the researchers were also members of beneficiary communities of SEEFOR projects. The secondary sources used include: World Bank reports, SEEFOR Project Development Reports, Academic journals on World Banks, published reports, verifiable online sources. The primary data collected through Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was transcribed thematically coded and analyzed using thematic analysis technic. The data from the secondary sources were analyzed using discourse and content analytical method. For clarity of purpose, quantitative comparism of project fund disbursements, and project completion reports, were analyzed and presented using tables. To enhance validity and acceptability of results, data collected through primary sources were subjected to triangulation.

The World Bank-SEEFOR Development And Poverty Reduction Strategy

Consequent upon the rising spate of militant activities and hostilities in the Niger Delta as a result of the perceived political domination, economic marginalization, and alienation of the people from their commonwealth, the Federal government through the World Bank and the European Union as development partners in 2009 initiated State Employment and Expenditure for Results (SEEFOR). Thus, in a bid to implement the 2010-2013 Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), the World Bank and the European Union keyed in to the Federal government Amnesty Program through the provision of intervention fund as a measure to reducing poverty, and unemployment through capacity development, job creation, and public infrastructures in the four core states of the Niger Delta namely; Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and River's state (ESMP, 2016, p. 1; NPCU, 2018, p. 5).

Significantly, the World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA), approved a \$200 million credit facility for the four participating states of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and River's state. The credit agreement was signed by the Federal government and the World Bank on April 6, 2013 and the loan became effective on July, 30 2013. Similarly, the European Union also approved \$84.8 million as grant to the four states at the same period. The two development interventions from the World Bank and the European Union were to run concurrently in the four participating states. The project intervention was supposed to close by June 30, 2017 but during the midterm project review report, it was later extended to December 30, 2019 due to the huge success, already recorded in the four states (NPCU, 2018, p. 4). Thus, out of the \$200 million approved by the Bank for the four states, Bayelsa state government got a share of \$50 million while from the European Union out of the \$84.8 million grant she got \$7 million to be drawn in tranches. The implication is that from the World Bank credit facility (\$200m) the four states got \$50 million each. According to the Bayelsa state SEEFOR Project coordinator, Mr. Ayens Adogu; he stated that the \$50 million credit granted to the state government by the World Bank (IDA) is spread (tenure) for 40 years term with a ten years moratorium at a concessionary interest rate (NPCU, 2018, p. 1).

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the SEEFOR is to create, enhance, and promote employment opportunities in the participating states (Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Rivers) and to create access to socioeconomic services as well as improving the efficiency and transparency of public expenditure management system among the benefiting states of the Niger Delta (ESMP, 2016, p. iv; NPUC, 2018, p. 5). The SEEFOR project has three components and subcomponents attached which will be discussed along with the impacts and achievements made so far in Bayelsa state. It must be noted that the SEEFOR project is been implemented across the eight local government areas of the state with communities as the major beneficiary. The three components:

- 1) **Component A; Providing Youth Employment and creating Access to Socioeconomic Services:** The sub-components in this unit are:
 - i) **Small Public Works to communities:** This subcomponent is aimed at execution of Small Public works like concrete access roads, drainage construction, refuse collection etc. in order to create sustainable jobs among the teeming unemployed youths in the region as well as rural and urban communities. It is also aimed at creating access to socioeconomic services through economic empowerment on income earned from the public works by youths. The state Ministry of works provides supervisory and technical support to the state SEEFOR office in implementing the small public works across the eight LGAs in benefiting communities (NPCU, 2018, p. 8).
 - ii) **Provision of Grants to TVT institutions:** This subcomponent ensures the provision of technical, vocational, and agricultural training through the provision of grants to Technical, and Vocational Training (TVT) institutions, State Ministry of Education, and Agriculture for the implementation. The grants are given directly to the school principals, annually for building new structures, upgrading of facilities, buying stationaries, laboratory equipment etc. in order to increase technical and vocational school enrolment in the state. The essence of it is to expose the youths in the region to technical education as well as creating sustainable jobs through skills development and acquisition. The state SEEFOR Office approved \$150,000 each for the five Craft Development Centers in the state in order to boost technical and vocational education in the state. They are: Government Craft Development Centre, Ayakoro, Government Craft Development Centre, Sagbama, Government Craft Development Centre Polaku, Government Science Technical College Ekowe, and Government Science Technical College Okaka. According Mr. Ogoja Preye the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager of the state SEEFOR office, the intervention for the five Craft Development Centers has led to increase in school enrolment from 500 to over 3000 among the institutions in the state. (NPCU, 2018, p. 11).
 - iii) **Grants for Community Driven Development:** This subcomponent ensures the Provision of grants for participating communities by using the Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in project implementation. Thus, the communities identify areas of priority needs, and mobilize members to execute, monitor, and evaluate the impacts at completion. The CDD subcomponent uses the state FADAMA 111 through the formation of FADAMA Community Associations (FCAs) and Fadama User Groups (FUGs) in implementing Rural Infrastructure projects (RI) among participating communities. The subcomponent also uses the state Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA) through the formation of Community Project Management Committee (CPMC) in implementing micro-projects in participating communities (NPCU, 2018).
- 2) **Component B. Public Financial Management (PFM) Reforms in Bayelsa state:** The subcomponents in this units are:
 - i) Creating legal framework on Public Financial Management system in the state in order to enhance and promote fiscal discipline, budget performance, debt sustainability, boosting IGR, quality audit report, transparency, and accountability in the management of state finances. The State SEEFOR Office collaborates with the Bayelsa State House of Assembly by introducing financial reform

bills aimed at strengthening the Public Financial Management system and promoting financial sustainability public governance.

- ii) **Budget Reforms:** In implementing this subcomponent the State SEEFOR Office collaborates with the Bayelsa state government by introducing reforms and organizing seminars and workshops for the state Budget office in order to aid budget preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Budget cycle). Most states government faces challenges of budget execution including Bayelsa state as budget proposal in most often do not reflect the identified priorities stated in the SEEDS assessment. The reforms are aimed building capacity and enhancing fiscal strategy performance in Bayelsa state (World Bank, 2011, p. iv).

The implementation of the Bayelsa state Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for 2014-2016 as a fiscal strategy document for budget preparation and implementation was part of the SEEFOR reforms in the state. The 2014-2016 MTEF states that its medium-term expenditure shall not exceed 50.76% (2014), 45.80% (2015) and 43.99% for 2016 fiscal year while Capital Expenditures shall be a minimum of 49.24% for 2014; 54.20% for 2015; and 56.01% for 2016 respectively. The fiscal document further recommends that the state budget deficit should not exceed 3% of the state Gross Domestic Product. The reform encourages states to allocate more funds for capital expenditures than recurrent expenditures. As stated earlier the reform is also aimed at boosting the state IGR to support budget implementation. On the average the state non-oil sector only accounts for 3.1% of total revenue receipt which is not sustainable (BSGN, 2013, p. 7).

- iii) **Accounts and Expenditure control:** This component ensures that the state SEEFOR office collaborate with the state government through the state Accounts and Treasury units in ensuring that MDAs maintain Accounting, Expenditure control, and Financial Reporting standard in order to promote accountability, transparency, and fiscal discipline. Based on reports from the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment, cash management in most states of the Federation including Bayelsa state remain very weak and fragmented. Thus, apart from the Federal government that has introduced and implemented the Single Treasury Account (TSA) system to ensure that all MDAs maintain single account with the CBN in other to curb leakages, states governments (Treasuries) like Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, etc. maintains over 100 Bank Accounts with commercial banks (World Bank, 2011, p. 28). However, as a result of the ongoing Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms, states like Bayelsa are beginning to improve their payroll management system by introducing stricter control procedures over payroll data maintenance and continuous update. The state government under Governor Dickson, since 2012, has being making frantic effort in cleaning the payroll through the establishment of an integrated personnel database system as staff audit and verification that captures staff biometrics details is ongoing. The ongoing Bayelsa state, public service reforms are in line with the SEEFOR project development objective of ensuring a transparent and accountable Public financial Management system. Other achievements made in this sector are the Bayelsa state Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2009 and the Bayelsa state Income and Expenditure transparency Law, 2012 which mandate the Governor to declare revenue receipts from both IGR and the Federation Account (Federal transfer).

- iv) **Internal and External Audit system in public Governance:** This component encourages the state government to improve and strengthen their audit process perceived to be weak in its oversight and regulatory responsibilities. The major challenges facing the audit process in most states including Bayelsa state is the lack of follow-up or implementation of audit reports which poses constrain to budget implementation in all the three tiers of government. Thus, the state SEEFOR has organized several capacity buildings workshops through the office of the state Auditor-General for audit staff in the state civil service. The Bayelsa state Due Process Bureau Law 2012 and the Bayelsa state Income and Expenditure Transparency Law, 2012 are aimed at strengthening the audit system.

- v) **Integrated Financial Management Information System in the state (IFMIS):** This component encourages the state government to enhance effective management of human resources and also maintaining integrated payroll system in the civil service. Other inputs in this subcomponent include: Planning and budgeting, transaction processing, accounting, auditing, financial reporting, reliable and unified data base that can be shared by both the Bayelsa state government and the Federal government (NPCU, 2018, p. 13).
 - vi) **Reforms in Public Procurement System in the state:** This component encourages the state government to enact a law through the state House of Assembly on having an efficient, effective, and transparent public procurement system that is based on merit. In most states like Bayelsa the public procurement system is very weak and centralized such that the Governor handpicks his party men and relations as contractors. Though, the Bayelsa state government has enacted the Bayelsa state public procurement law since 2009 and the Bayelsa State Due Process Bureau also in 2009 in order to make the procurement process transparent and effective (NPCU, 2018).
 - vii) **Tax Law Reforms:** This component encourages state government to make reforms that will strengthen their fiscal policies so as to diversify their revenue earnings. The Bayelsa state government relies on federal transfer (Federal allocation) in budget implementation which is not sustainable. In Bayelsa state, Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) accounts for only 3.1% of total revenue thus, once there is oil glut budget implementation and salary payment become a nightmare. Therefore, the state SEEFOR Office encourages the Bayelsa states government through capacity building workshops and articulating legal framework to fully develop her non-oil sector as well as strengthening the tax laws in order to block the leakages associated with revenue collection.
- 3) Component C: Project Management, Monitoring and Reporting Procedure: The subcomponent for this unit are:
- i) **State Level Implementation of SEEFOR Projects:** This subcomponent ensures that staff of the State Project Coordinating Unit (SPCU) in Bayelsa state are trained on human capacity building on areas of procurement process, Financial management system, monitoring and evaluation system, mid-term reviews of projects, quality assurance support, environmental and social safeguard policies, communication and reporting system etc. The subcomponent is aimed at providing capacity for technical, logistical, and advisory support to the state office (NPCU, 2018, p. 14).
 - ii) **Environmental and Social Safeguard policy:** This subcomponent is aimed at preventing and mitigating perceived and undue harm to the participating communities, field workers, people, and their environment in the process of development. The World Bank social safeguard policy encourages field workers and supervisors to adhere strictly to safeguard policies while on project site such as wearing safety boot, jacket, helmet, and Men at work sign etc. In 2014 fiscal year, the implementation of the small public works component in Bayelsa state was suspended as a result of the state SEEFOR office, and contractors not adhering to safeguard policies of the World Bank. The state SEEFOR office in 2015, conducted an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) in the three senatorial district of the state and also in 2016 fiscal year, another ESMP was carried out in the eight local government areas of the state. This was done in order to carry out an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed project and how to mitigate perceived environmental challenges that might occur during the development process (ESMP, 2015; ESMP, 2016).

Implementation and Impacts of Component 1 in Bayelsa State: Public Works and Socioeconomic Services

As stated earlier, the Bayelsa state SEEFOR project is been implemented in different components however, the component 1 on “Public Works” uses the Community Driven Development approach

in implementing micro-projects. The small public works such as concrete roads, drainages, and refuse collections are implemented directly by the Bayelsa state Ministry of works and the Ministry of Environment and Natural resources. The Public works (roads) are fully advertised on both the print and electronic media for qualified contractors to bid. The Community- Driven Development subcomponent as stated earlier are implemented through the Bayelsa state Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA), using the Community Project Management Committee (CPMC) in identifying project priority needs, project design, mobilizing the community members in project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The other CDD subcomponent uses the FADAMA 111 through the formation of FADAMA Community Associations (FCAs) and FADAMA User Groups (FUGs) in its implementation. The FCAs are the project management committee that identifies Rural Infrastructures (RI) that can improve the incomes and socioeconomic status of the FADAMA users and the communities (NPCU, 2018).

The Project Development Objective of this component (Public works and Socioeconomic services) is to create sustainable jobs among the teeming unemployed youths through participation in the small public works in their various communities and at such income will be earn to improve their socioeconomic status. According to the state Project coordinator of SEEFOR Mr. Ayens Adogu in his annual report said “as at March, 2018 the Bayelsa state SEEFOR has already surpassed the Project Development Objective Key Indicator target of creating 6,623 jobs in the state against the 10,270 employment it has created through the small public works translating to 155% performances. The 10,270 jobs were created from the construction and rehabilitation of 253 micro-subprojects mostly concrete roads, spread across the eight local government councils of the state as against the project target indicator of 139 subprojects to be created by the end of the project year, December, 2019 (NPCU, 2018, p. 16).

In an interview, with the Project Engineer of the Bayelsa state SEEFOR, Engr. Idoghoto B. Jonah said that for SEEFOR to achieve quality assurance in job delivery and sustainability the state Ministry of Works supervises the road maintenance and constructions and that each road being supervised attracts 2.5% of the project cost and is paid directly to the Ministry. He equally said that in every road contract awarded, it is compulsory that a civil Engineer is engaged by the contractor to supervise the quality of job delivery based on the job specification. Thus, the state SEEFOR office in collaboration with the state ministry of works takes charge of road construction and rehabilitation through contracts to individuals while the state FADAMA 3 and the Bayelsa state Community and Social Development Agency (CSDA) implement micro projects for the different sectors using the CDD approach. The sectors include: Education, health, roads, agriculture, transportation, socioeconomic, rural electrification, and water etc. (I.B. Jonah, Personal communication, July 5, 2018).

The project Engineer retreated that during the 2014 fiscal year, the state SEEFOR office constructed 15 feeder roads and 11 projects on environmental sanitation through state of Works and Ministry of Environment at the cost of N310.2 million. In a bid to enhance environmental sustainability and mitigating challenges that could occur as a result of the development activities, the state SEEFOR office conducted an Environmental and Social management Plan (ESMP) known as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposed project site. The state SEEFOR office spends N23, 289, 750 (\$141,150) to implement ESMP across the three senatorial districts of the state, on 15 project sites in 2014 alone (I.B. Jonah, Personal communication, July 5, 2018). The essence of the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) is for the SEEFOR to identify perceived and potential environmental threat and social impacts of the project activities on the benefiting community’s economy and the environment (ESMP, 2015).

Thus, in the course of conducting the impact assessment community leaders, opinion leaders, youth leaders, CDCs, environmentalist, and civil society groups etc. were all engaged through town hall meetings and workshops where community members are sensitized on the perceived impacts and the mitigation strategies put in place, cost effective measures and safeguard policies to be adopted during project implementation. Again in 2016 fiscal year the state SEEFOR Coordinating Office carried out another Environmental Management Social Plan (ESMP) across the eight local government councils of the state on 48 project sites at the cost of \$144,400 to also measure the perceived impacts of the projects on the environment and the socioeconomic wellbeing of the communities and mitigation strategies to be put in place which was very successful (ESMP, 2016, p. viii).

According to the Project Engineer, Mr. Idoghotu B. Jonah in 2015 fiscal year, the World Bank suspended the SEEFOR project intervention due to the State SEEFOR office and contractors not adhering to the safeguard policy standard of the Bank. And that based on the 2014 Annual Review Report, the World Bank observed that employees recruited for the small public works such as road maintenance and constructions were not putting on safety jackets, boots, coverall, hand gloves, and warning signs (Men at work) etc. hence the suspension of project fund for the fiscal year, 2015. Also, in 2016 fiscal year, the state SEEFOR Office also suspended the batch B component on Environment sanitation due to lack of legal framework on Environmental sanitation in the state. He explained that based on the ugly experience of the 2014, the Environmental sanitation component lacks sustainability in terms of implementation. A situation where residents dumb refuse indiscriminately without the force of law to sanction defaulting citizens is not sustainable (I.B. Jonah, Personal communication, July 5, 2018).

Significantly, in 2016 fiscal year, the State SEEFOR office in implementing the small public work component executed 45 projects on road maintenance and constructions across the eight local government councils of the state. The 45 small public works were constructed at the cost of N344.6 million, while in 2017 fiscal year, 150 projects on road maintenance were constructed at the cost of N2.9 billion. The table below shows the number of public works executed by the state SEEFOR office and the amount disbursed from 2014-2017 (NPCU, 2017).

Table 15: Small Public Works Implemented from 2014-2017 by the State SEEFOR

S/N	YEAR	NATURE OF SMALL PUBLIC WORKS	PROJECT COST ₦
1	2014	15 Public works on Road Maintenance and Constructions in the 3 Senatorial district, Bayelsa state 11 Projects on Environmental Sanitations within Yenagoa	₦310,208,742
2	2016	45 Public Works on road maintenance and construction across the eight LGAs of the state.	₦344,643,807
3	2017	150 Public works on road maintenance and constructions across the eight LGAs of the state.	₦2,962,862,460.80
		Total	₦3,617,715,009.0

Source: SPCU, SEEFOR Bayelsa, 2018

As stated earlier, in the course of implementing the “Small Public work component” which include: road constructions, maintenance and drainage system over 10,000 jobs had been directly created

through the recruitment of youths in project locations and communities. However, in order to promote social inclusiveness in project activities, both men and women, graduate and non-graduates were all given equal and fair chances of participation. According to Mr. Ogoja Preye, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the state SEEFOR in an interview, explained to the researcher that “Youths engaged for the small public works are employed for 12 months (1 year) and paid N20, 000 as salary on monthly basis. But at the end of the month, the youths are only given N15, 000 while N5, 000 is saved for them as a compulsory scheme to be paid in bulk (N60, 000) at the end of the 12 months when the project comes to an end (P. Ogoja, Personal communication, July 5, 2018).

The essence of the compulsory saving scheme is to enable the employees’ start-up their own business, after formal disengagement from the SEEFOR project. Again, in order to promote financial sustainability of the SEEFOR intervention, youths recruited for the “Small Public Works” are also exposed to entrepreneurship training in courses such as financial management, book-keeping, business strategies, business environment, managing small businesses etc. (P. Ogoja, Personal communication, July 5, 2018). The multiply effect on the economy of Bayelsa state is that poverty was reduced as both direct and indirect jobs were created, youths were economically empowered through income growth, crime rate was reduced as result of the youth’s engagement thereby, improving their socioeconomic status of the rural poor.

Challenges Facing World Bank-SEEFOR Project Implementation in Bayelsa State

Use of Sub-Standard Material and Disregard for Environmental Sustainability

One major challenge facing the implementation of World Bank-SEEFOR intervention in Bayelsa state is the use of substandard materials by greedy and unqualified contractors especially in the construction of concrete walk-ways. As a result of the substandard materials used by some contractors, the concrete roads hardly last. The procurement of substandard materials used in construction of micro projects like roads, drainages, health centers, town halls etc. clearly violate World Bank procurement standard. For example, a concrete walk-way road constructed by SEEFOR in 2016 in Agbura community is already dilapidated as the job was poorly executed with substandard materials. The worst is that the contractor and the project supervisor, who by SEEFOR requirement must be a Civil Engineer, could not even think of the environmental challenges the road could cause if there is no drainage system. The road was constructed without drainage, thereby causing serious collateral damage, whenever it rains to the neighborhood. It is also ironical and surprising to note that before this road was constructed in 2016, SEEFOR conducted an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) on this particular project site in Agbura community (ESMP, 2016, p. viii).

The essence of the ESMP is for the implementing agency and the contractor to take note of the perceived environmental challenges that can threaten the environment, economy and the people and the mitigation strategies to be adopted. The question begging for answer is that does it mean that contractors, executing World Bank projects in the state are not given a copy of the impact assessment or the ESMP report for implementation. Or that they have a copy of the ESMP report but because they want make abnormal profit, they do not take the environment and the people in to consideration? Another question begging for answers is that before this road was commissioned, does the SEEFOR Monitoring and Evaluation team didn’t observe or see this anomaly for the contractor to be queried? At first the road was constructed with substandard materials and then secondly, the environment and the people were not taken in to consideration, thus the question again is where is the environmental

sustainability the World Bank preaches? And who is to be blame? Is it the contractor or the supervising agency; the State Ministry of Works?

SRURITY CHALLENGE: Another serious threat to the implementation of World Bank projects in Bayelsa state is that of security. In an interview, with the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager of World Bank, Community and Social Development Project, Bayelsa (CSDA), Mr. Gunns Hollishead; he lamented that the major threat to World Bank intervention in the state is that of the militants and sea pirates that often harassed, intimidate, and kidnapped their project team; be it LEEMP, CSDA, FADAMA or SEEFOR and demand for ransom. He said the militants and sea pirates often accused them of spying for the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) while at the same time the JTF also accuse them of spying for the militants and that they have become victims of circumstances. He further said that for some time now the militants no longer kidnapped them because they have come to realize that World Bank intervention, is for the good of the rural communities since, they have also seen tangible projects that are economically viable and have improve the living standard of their people. And that their major headache now is the sea pirates who attacked them at free will thereby, causing fear and panic among them and hindering project implementation (H. Gunns, Personal communication, July 8, 2018).



Plate 1: A dilapidated road constructed by SEEFOR just 3 years ago without drainage system, causing environmental challenge in Agbura community

Summary and Recommendations

In summary the successful implementation of the State Employment and Expenditure for Results (SEEFOR) for 2013-2017 interventions using the Community Driven Development (CDD) model in project need identification, project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation cannot be overemphasized. Significantly, the implementation of the SEEFOR-Small Public Works component through road constructions, drainage system, and refuse collection alone, has led to a significant reduction in poverty and crime rate as unemployed youths were economically empowered. It has also promoted shared prosperity among the rural poor through income growth thereby, improving their socioeconomic status. As the small public works alone created 10,270 direct jobs not to talk of the indirect jobs such as sand suppliers, wood suppliers, food sellers on project sites thereby, having a positive multiplier effect on the economy of the state. Though, the project implementation also witnessed some major challenges like insecurity (kidnapping, sea pirates, hostage taking), substandard jobs in roads and drainage constructions and disregard for environmental sustainability

practices in project implementation. However, the state SEEFOR interventions for 2013 to 2017, achieved the Project Development Objectives (PDO) in Bayelsa state.

Based on the outcome of this study, the following recommendations has been made to the following stakeholders such as communities, the Bayelsa state government and the World Bank.

- i) That the World Bank through its implementation agencies like FADAMA 111, CSDA, SEEFOR and contractors adhere strictly to safeguard policies as well as implementing Environment and Social Management Plan (ESMP) mitigation strategies in project site so as to promote environmental sustainability. Contractors who violate ESMP and safeguard policies should be sanction.
- ii) That the World Bank should collaborate with the Federal government through the Ministry of Finance to deduct at source from the state share of its statutory allocations as counterpart fund so as to avoid delays in project execution
- iii) That participating communities in World Bank intervention should elect or nominate credible people as members of the Community Project Management Committee (CPMC) so as to ensure quality service delivery and to avoid project fund being diverted.
- iv) That participating communities identify only projects that are of priority needs and economically viable to them.
- v) That the state Coordinating Office of SEEFOR, FADAMA, CSDA should adhere to the World Bank procurement guidelines so as to deliver quality jobs.
- vi) That only qualified and competent contractors be hired so as to ensure quality delivery of jobs specifications.

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