

NIDPRODEV

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE FOR TRANSFORMATION AND EMPOWERMENT (LITE-AFRICA)

FORMERLY NIGER DELTA PROFESSIONALS FOR DEVELOPMENT

MAY 2012

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EDITION

Community development, taken broadly, encompasses strengthening existing community structures and resources, promoting policy reform and creating an enabling environment for community residents to drive development. This edition of the newsletter is the last in this volume and explores community development in the Niger Delta using case studies of LITE-Africa's programmes. The community development needs in the Niger Delta are striking and we have documented many of them in our Citizen Report Card, funded by the EU and published in 2010. Voices from over 9,000 residents of 120 Niger Delta communities were recorded and the results revealed that 78% of surveyed communities

do not have access to safe drinking water. 3 of the 6 states surveyed stated that on average they get 0 hours per day of electricity. Finally, in 5 of 6 states, less than 30% of communities reported that their primary school had desks and chairs for each child. The CRC also revealed severe administrative neglect, 10% of the 478 focus groups stated that they were visited in the past year by their Ward Councilor, who is responsible for bringing community concerns to the local government. 84% of respondents rated their relationship with local government as poor. This poor relationship further reveals that local government budgets truly, do not reflect community needs. These fac-

tors considered, we see the importance of providing Niger Delta communities with structures, tools, resources and skills to enhance their own development, many of which are explored in this newsletter. A CRC from 20 communities will



be published this year. To access the full report [click here](#).

*A primary school without desks and chairs for students uncovered during our Citizen Report Card (2010).*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Part of LITE-Africa's mission is to facilitate community and human development and we have done this in over 300 communities. LITE-Africa has assessed community needs throughout Niger Delta communities by carrying out sustainable livelihood assessments, community development plans

and comprehensive citizen report cards. These resources provide quantitative representations of community needs. LITE-Africa is working on a second CRC as part of our [Oxfam Novib Livelihood and Governance Programme \(ONLAG\)](#) LITE-Africa programme staff is currently traveling to 20 communities to

share and validate findings from the CRC and sustainable livelihood assessments. In doing this, they will also highlight how our current interventions fill some of the identified gaps. Once community residents approve the contents of the reports they will be published and made available to the public.

## AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Livelihood and Governance in the Niger Delta (ONLAG) funded by Oxfam Novib is currently in its third year of implementation, the livelihood skills of 2,500 participants have been enhanced including the introduction of new livelihood skills to beneficiaries. To magnify the impact of the project our Business Development Specialist (BDS) is in talks with the Agricultural Development Pro-

gramme (ADP), the Delta Agricultural Procurement Agency (DAPA) to get access to agricultural inputs, high yielding seedlings, cassava cuttings, fishing materials and linkages to agricultural credit schemes. Through these linkages we will support individual farmers and farmers in our agro-based cooperative groups to increase their productivity and incomes. ONLAG will estab-

lish [4 sector based cooperatives](#) in each of the project communities. Existing cooperatives are integrated in the project and strengthened. Our BDS is currently carrying out assessments of all ONLAG cooperatives identifying challenges and opportunities while developing action plans for each. By the end of the intervention 6,480 individuals will benefit from livelihood skills enhancement.



LITE-Africa Programme Officer, facilitating a consultative meetings in Ogbinbiri community, Warri North LGA.

## ACCESS TO CREDIT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A recurring theme in our discussions with community residents is the need for credit. They cite credit as a useful tool in sustaining and expanding their businesses. Microfinance in Nigeria, as it currently operates, is not designed for the poor. It operates as conventional banking, with high interest rates and lack of accessibility for rural dwellers. In a recent survey carried out in 20 com-

munities we found that 100% of community residents sought access to microcredit for business expansion, however 63% revealed that they had not received loans or did not reap the intended benefits. LITE- Africa provides access to credit for beneficiaries, by linking them to groups that provide loans at lower interest rates. We also provide financial services that enhance the businesses

and incomes of the small scale entrepreneurs who benefit from our interventions. Through our Business Development Services, we provide market access, bookkeeping and business management training, cooperative formation and development to promote savings and access to resources. Next year, we will introduce business incubation funds to our livelihood beneficiaries.

**“We provide financial services that enhance the businesses and incomes of small scale entrepreneurs .”**

## GENDER AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

One cannot understate the importance of applying a gender lens in community development. We highlight gender because it is devalued, and viewed as a periphery issue. Our work has revealed the tremendous impact where women are engaged and centralized in the development process. As an organization, one of our core objectives is

to advocate for gender equity and mainstreaming. Through our programmes we encourage women’s participation where resistance exists, increase women’s access to tools that reap greater gains from their productivity and amplify their voices in decision making. We established Women Solidarity Networks (WSN) in 20 project communi-

ties, the efforts of these groups has resulted in significant infrastructure development including the renovation of a primary school, road construction and electrification. In another intervention, we trained women to be part of budget tracking and monitoring in oil producing communities, their efforts helped to improve on accountability.



A drama being performed at a gender sensitization workshop for Isoko South and Yenagoa LGAs.

## COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBO)

Many of our projects build and strengthen existing community structures. Where these do not exist, we create them. This is to ensure that there is a greater sense of community ownership and that the activities we are implementing are in line with community needs. CBOs are significant because they provide goods and solve issues of common concern where formal institutions fail to deliver. Generally, the CBOs we form and support have

diverse membership to ensure that they meet diverse community needs. CBOs established by LITE-Africa include, [Community Monitoring Groups \(CMG\)](#) In Tsekelewu community, the established CMG advocated for electricity supply, through visits to Shell and engagement with print media, the CMG gained regular electricity supply for the community, The CMGs also kept track, and shared infor-

mation, on women's participation in Local Government positions. Another CBO we established is the [Community Development Council Advisory Committee \(CDCAC\)](#). The CDCAC gathers information about the development needs of community residents and serves as an advisor to LITE-Africa and local government, finally the CDCAC anchors community advocacy efforts.



*Inauguration of the Southern Ijaw CDCAC, established to represent Angiama, Ezetu 1, Ekeni, Ekowe and Oporoma Communities.*

## GMOU HIGHLIGHTS

Through our technical and mentoring support we have assisted both [CNL and SPDC](#) sponsored community based organizations in using oil revenue to enhance community development. This year SPDC sponsored NCDF has completed 9 projects that are ready for commissioning, including the renovation of the Nembe General Hospital with medical equipment and a Central Library. Iduwini Dev.

Foundation has 9 projects including Women Development Centers and renovated classroom blocks. Finally Bassan West has 3 projects, including classrooms and teachers quarters. Our Chevron sponsored RDCs have also recorded some successes this year. The Egbema Gbramatu Community Development Council (EGCDC) is preparing to graduate 192 youth that benefitted from

vocational skills training including, networking and web design, crane operation, electrical wiring, fashion, marine technology, and mechanical technology among others. All RDC/CDB projects are selected in consultation with community residents, and commissioning does not occur without consultation with community residents who select the commissioning date and activities.



*Nembe Central Library a project of the SPDC sponsored Nembe City Development Foundation.*

## TOMORROW IS A NEW DAY

With funding from the European Commission, Search for Common Ground is implementing a project entitled "Tomorrow is A New Day"; aimed at supporting community-level conflict resolution and reintegration of ex-militants to promote stability in the Niger Delta. The project is being implemented in

six communities in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. LITE-Africa is implementing project activities in Koko and Oporoza communities of Delta State. LITE-Africa programme staff traveled to both communities to establish Local Project Committees (LPC) to serve as a community level project oversight groups. LITE

-Africa inaugurated this eight-person committee and facilitated their orientation workshops. Throughout the life of the project, we will work with the LPC's to carry out advocacy visits, solidarity events, trauma healing activities and conflict and advocacy trainings for community residents.



*Oporoza community youth participating in a focus group discussion being facilitated by LITE-Africa programme staff.*

## AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICES

The crux of community development lies in ensuring that community residents have ownership over the process and are engaged at all stages. There are a range of mechanisms that encourage participatory development processes, one of which is advocacy. Advocacy not only enhances citizens participation, but it also redistributes power, allowing citizens who are generally excluded from

political processes to be included. Earlier this month, LITE-Africa programme officers, accompanied community representatives from Warri North and Yenagoa LGAs to meet with government officials in Asaba; including the Commissioner of Women Affairs, the House of Representatives member representing Isoko South and the Ministry of Education. Through these visits they

were able to articulate specific community concerns that relate to the various ministries and seek responses from the officials. This was the first set of visits for these groups and significant follow-up will be required before change is seen. LITE-Africa assisted these community groups in developing advocacy work plans and accompanying budgets to inform their activities.



Residents of Aghoro I community participating in an assessment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The development needs of Niger Delta residents in rural and riverine communities are largely being addressed by NGOs and CBOs operating in the region. While these groups make a significant impact, they occur at the micro level and can only be scaled up where an enabling policy environment exists. The Nigerian government introduced a reform agenda in 2003 the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). State and Local government level equivalents were developed, State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and in 2006 the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (LEEDS). These medium term strategies are designed to address poverty, create jobs and promote key economic sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, oil and gas and private sector investment.

The success of these strategies hinges on not only exploring and improving upon key drivers of

growth, but also in encompassing a participatory approach at all stages. Investments and improvements in the areas below can improve community development and promote economic empowerment while fostering citizens participation:

**Governance and Service Delivery:** Good governance has the potential to drive or derail community development efforts. Failure of elected officials to communicate and engage with citizens does not provide them with a clear understanding of specific community development needs. For example our research revealed that 95% of respondents in 20 communities stated that their local government chairman had not visited their community in the past year. With the responsibility of responding to community needs through local government budgets, the failure of the chairman to visit the community will reflect in a misallocation of funding for needed development projects in these communities such as

health facilities and schools.

Service delivery includes **Infrastructure Development:** Lack of infrastructure and electricity hampers the success of small business owners. It limits their access to larger markets for business expansion.

**Agriculture:** As the oil producing region of Nigeria, significant investments have been made in oil exploration to the neglect of other areas. Agriculture is labor intensive thereby it can create numerous jobs, toward poverty reduction, while contributing to food security as many Niger Delta residents farm on a subsistence level. Access to agricultural inputs, resources and information is key in economic empowerment in this area.

LITE-Africa works to improve upon all of these areas in our various interventions. Please visit our website or contact us for information on our current and past projects. Contact information is found on Page 5.

**“The success of these strategies hinges on not only exploring and improving upon key drivers of growth, but also in encompassing a participatory approach at all stages.”**



An image of an abandoned project uncovered during our recent Citizen Report Card exercise (2012).

**We are on the Web!**

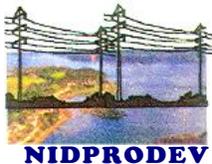
<http://nidprodev.org/>

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<http://www.facebook.com/#!/LITEAfrica>

<http://twitter.com/#!/NIDPRODEV>

LITE-Africa is a Nigerian non-profit organization founded in 1999. It currently operates in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria on the thematic areas of Community Development, Democracy and Governance and Human Security. It produces programming, conducts research and development and engages in networking and collaboration at the national, regional and international levels. LITE-Africa as an organisation continues to reinvent itself, retooling and repositioning itself to enable it to deliver high impact projects.

**...creating a safe space for peace and development action**

### **LITE-AFRICA STAFF HIGHLIGHTS**

NIDPRODEV is beginning its formal transition into LITE-Africa. LITE-Africa has been formally registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria. As we continue this transition, we will begin to expand our programmes and activities beyond the Niger Delta throughout Nigeria. LITE-Africa will assume the vision and mission of NIDPRODEV and continue to be community centered.

LITE-Africa programme officers recently traveled to 20 Niger Delta communities to record and assess community residents views on public service delivery, governance, infrastructure and development. Programme officers carried out focus group dis-

cussions in each community and recorded both qualitative and quantitative data. LITE-Africa is currently in the process of analyzing and compiling this data into a comprehensive report. We look forward to sharing and discussing our findings.

In March 2012, LITE-Africa published its 2011 Annual Report, the report is being circulated to partners, donors and individuals interested in our work. The report outlines our projects, major accomplishments and milestones achieved in 2011.

LITE-Africa recently secured funding from the National Endowment of Democracy (NED) to carry out a pro-

gramme aimed at strengthening civil-military relations in the Niger Delta. This marks our first donor-grantee relationship with NED. Details of this intervention will be provided on our website in the near future.

In June 2012, LITE-Africa will be welcoming a summer intern to join its team for a period of 3 months. LITE-Africa began its summer internship program in 2009 and has welcomed a series of interns completing their graduate studies at various universities in the United States. Through this program the intern gains a wealth of knowledge on the Niger Delta while contributing to fulfilling the organizations mission.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **LITE-Africa to publish Citizen Report Card from 20 Niger Delta Communities.**
- **LITE-Africa to reveal new logo in the coming weeks!**
- **LITE-Africa would like to extend an invitation for you to join our social media outlets and engage with us on a variety of topics of interest. Please visit the links above to join.**