

NIDPRODEV

Niger Delta Professionals for Development

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



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Last month Joseph, one of Niger Delta's "vulnerable and restive youth," completed the 3-month, in-residence Mindset Change Programme sponsored by UNDP and implemented by UNOPS and

NIDPRODEV.

Within two weeks of returning home, he asked for help in educating his community about the upcoming elections and citizen's rights

and responsibilities in a democracy. "If they do not get the education, they will sell their votes." At present, political candidates often show up before an election to purchase votes and never again. In other cases, individuals hear the results of their community's election returns and are too fearful to mention that no one in their community had an opportunity to vote. And politicians who win by fraud are too afraid to enter the communities that they are to serve, thus guaranteeing that the community and its needs will be ignored for four more years.

Without civic education, rural and riverine community people cannot comprehend the processes that affect their lives, and actors with political and personal interests are able to commit with impunity blatant violations of human rights and rule of law. Potential channels for change are strategically

blocked: Community radio licenses are prohibitively difficult to obtain; there is no independent media; ethnic tension is capitalised upon by political entrepreneurs; and a lack of qualified teachers cripples whole communities' reading and writing ability, thereby undermining their confidence in advocating on their own behalf. Without civic education, no one knows whom to complain to, where to find justice, and how to mobilize. Apathy sets in, and free money or rice during election season is better than nothing at all.

In its partnerships with the U.S. Institute of Peace, Oxfam Novib, and EU Inside, NIDPRODEV is developing civic education and voting material specifically for Niger Delta rural and riverine communities. The first draft of the materials was written by Joseph and the other 149 vulnerable and restive youths of the Mindset Change Programme as their first act of political participation. Joseph's call for help to NIDPRODEV was his second act. Clearly, civic education works.

3 Water Projects and only the Hand Pump Works

Only one of the 34 communities that NIDPRODEV has assessed over the last three months has drinkable water; its water is a by-product of the nearby oil company's cooling system. [cont'd on page 2]

**My vote
is not
for sale.**

[cont'd from page 1] Clean drinking water eludes all



the other communities. In one village, three government-sponsored water projects were approved, yet none produces water. The first project was destroyed during a crisis, the second

project was completed but the contractor did not drill down deep enough to produce water, and the third project was never completed beyond placing four posts in the ground, even though the contractor--a government official--was fully paid. Only the hand pump produces water, and it is not drinkable without adding alum or boiling it. Often people simply drink it "as is" and hope for the best. Several other communities recently have benefited from new "solar powered" water projects, but

all comment that the water is still not drinkable--water treatment is needed in all water projects. In roughly ten percent of the communities, the government has tested the water, yet none of the communities has received results from the tests or treatment of the water. Through its Citizen Report Card process, NIDPRODEV has collected project profiles of these incomplete and substandard water projects from the communities and distributed them to the government agencies and oil companies that sponsored them. In addition, each community is kept informed of projects (and project amounts) identified in past and present state budgets so that communities have hard facts with which to hold government more accountable.

NIDPRODEV will be conducting Citizen Report Card surveys in 120 Niger Delta communities over the next ten months, thanks to a grant from the European Union.

LIVELIHOODS

Findings from recent sustainable livelihood assessments conducted by NIDPRODEV in Niger Delta communities demonstrate a strong relationship between chronic food insecurity and seemingly unrecoverable financial indebtedness, both of which have the potential to ignite conflict. Food insecurity peaks in May and June when neither farming nor fishing yields sufficient sustenance. The farm produce has not matured, and few fish can be found due to water stagnation. During such times, hunger can lead to harvesting immature produce, borrowing from money lenders at high interest rates, or stealing. The same "coping" mechanisms are adopted during a period of extreme flooding during the rainy season, which also

dampens income from other livelihoods, such as motorbike transportation services, laundry services, and brick moulding. In addition, market access is severely limited due to the impassable nature of roads that are barely



passable during the dry season. Amelioration of this cycle of food insecurity and financial indebtedness requires the availability of alternative livelihoods and credit, which are

key elements of a NIDPRODEV project sponsored by Oxfam Novib. Training community people in simple bookkeeping and basic business management forms part of the foundation toward sustainable livelihoods and access to micro-credit. Few of the project's 2,500 livelihoods participants have received prior training related to financial management. Community surveys show that only 9% of the women and 43% of the men have received any training at all.

NIDPRODEV is training community teachers to deliver the bookkeeping training over a 2-month period as a means of boosting the knowledge and income of poorly paid teachers and ensuring the long-term sustainability of bookkeeping education within the community.

Recent Activities

NIDPRODEV adheres to high ethical and professional standards in our activities and relationships. We ground our work and decisions in insights gained from experience, knowledge and data. We are fair and respectful in our interactions and conscientiously steward the resources entrusted to us.

28 MORE PROJECTS COMMISSIONED IN GMOU COMMUNITIES



In 2006, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) initiated agreements (GMOUs) with certain oil producing communities that gave development decision-making power to Community Trusts (CTs). NIDPRODEV was selected as a “mentoring NGO” to the CTs, the responsibilities of which include Sustainable Livelihood Assessments, 5-year Community Development Plans, CT capacity building for transparent and accountable construction bidding processes, and technical monitoring of projects. In the Ekeremore Local Government Area of Bayelsa State over the past 6 months, NIDPRODEV has celebrated the successful commissioning of a total of 28 infrastructure projects and the disbursement of 108 educational scholarships.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUPS INAUGURATED



NIDPRODEV has inaugurated Community Development Committee Advisory Boards in two Local Government Areas (LGAs) to monitor and participate in the activities of a two-year livelihoods and governance project sponsored by Oxfam Novib; to provide critical feedback to NIDPRODEV on participants’ and community needs as they arise; and to strengthen the leadership capacity of women through participation on the Advisory Board. The Advisory Boards are comprised of one community member from each of the five communities and two representatives from the LGA. In one of the LGAs, the representative is the LGA Chairman.

HIV/AIDS WORKPLACE POLICY



NIDPRODEV recognizes the enormity of the HIV/AIDS problem in Africa. It is committed to policy development and implementation of programs in its workplace and areas of intervention to address issues on HIV/AIDS non-discrimination, awareness, prevention, management, mitigation and health support. Although it is not a health NGO, NIDPRODEV now includes HIV/AIDS awareness in all its community-based projects and assists local health-based NGOs in their community outreach efforts. Gratitude is extended to Oxfam-Novib for providing NIDPRODEV with an HIV/AIDS expert to develop its workplace policy.

COMMUNITY WOMEN AND COMMUNITY MONITORING GROUPS WORKING TOGETHER



Illiteracy is high among impoverished rural and riverine community women. Although many are imbued with natural leadership ability, the lack of confidence engendered by their inability to read can contribute to a diminished presence of these women in programmes designed to strengthen their interaction with public officials. In the second phase of a US Institute of Peace project, NIDPRODEV brought together members of Community Monitoring Groups and Community Women's Groups to talk about how they can help each other in monitoring community projects and holding public officials more accountable for community development and public services. A July conference is

scheduled in which the two groups have the opportunity to meet with Ward Representatives, Local Government Chairmen and members of the State Assembly.

150 VULNERABLE AND RESTIVE NIGER DELTA YOUTH HEAD HOME AS MINDSET CHANGE PROGRAMME WRAPS UP



The 3-month, in-residence Mindset Change and Reorientation Programme for 150 vulnerable and restive youth from Delta State concluded the first week of June with participant-led theatre performances, traditional dancing, singing, and celebrations of change. What changed the most? Seventy-six percent (76%) of the youth identified "Anger Management" as the Most Significant Change in their lives as a result of the programme. One respondents writes: "I find myself not only interacting but also shaking hands, eating and

even sleeping together in the same room with the same ethnic group I have sworn to avenge for an undisputable disaster. In fact, I will say this is the most remarkable experience ever in my life, no more anger and malice of any kind."

IN-HOUSE CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH USAID/PACT



NIDPRODEV is a partner in the Participatory Partnerships for Community Development, a project initiated and sponsored by Chevron and backed by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Advocacy, Awareness and Civic Empowerment Program. As a partner, NIDPRODEV assists in promoting sustainable community initiatives that have transparent and accountable processes, while also benefiting itself from USAID-supported organizational capacity assessments and workshops delivered by PACT Nigeria on advocacy, communication strategies, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation, and internal financial management.

For more information on NIDPRODEV's activities, please visit our website at www.nidprodev.org