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FORMING CROSS-SECTORIAL ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FROM THE SPDC/USAID/IITA CASSAVA ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CEDP) IN NIGERIA'S NIGER DELTA

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ABSTRACT: *The question of development especially in Third World countries like Nigeria has generated very strong debate among scholars from different disciplines. Globally, there is the realization that single sectors acting alone cannot solve the multidimensional development challenges in society. The emphasis on Cross Sector Partnerships (CSPs) as a model for addressing development challenges notwithstanding, studies are lacking in terms of the sustainability of such efforts at the community level. The aim of this study is to evaluate cross-sector partnership and sustainable development projects in the Niger Delta region, focusing on the USD11.7 million Cassava Enterprise Development Project (CEDP) partnership between Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Relying on the actor-network theory, Chi-Square Statistical Test ($\chi 2$) and Sustainability Assessment Model indicator (SAMi), the study reveals that even though CSPs more than single sector approach to community development are meant to provide effective knowledge and technology transfer to local people, the CEDP partnership failed to achieve this within a five year life-cycle. This is attributed to insufficient actor-networking between the partnership's social structure and the project beneficiaries. This singular challenge created the necessary condition for progressive reduction in employment and income thereby constraining sustainability of the project. The study concludes that the CEDP is not sustainable since local people have insufficient capacity to manage the process after the project lifecycle. It is recommended that proper actor networking and expansive knowledge cum technology transfer should be considered in similar projects in the future.*

KEYWORDS*:* Actor Networking**,** Cross Sector Partnerships, Sustainable Community Development, Cassava Enterprise Development Programme, Niger Delta Region

INTRODUCTION

Background/Problem Statement

The question of development especially in Third World countries like Nigeria has generated very strong debate among scholars from different disciplines as well as policy analysts. As would be expected, the development debate has attracted multifaceted theoretical models seeking to explain the link between development and underdevelopment (Ekpenyong, Raimi and Ekpenyong, 2009). Whatever the direction of the theory, the fact still remains that traditional capitalist development has generated serious crisis that undermines sustainability in the most deleterious way. Chapter one of Agenda 21 (1992:1) succinctly captures the

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global development crisis when it adduced that *"*Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being*"*

As a result, it becomes easy to see that capitalist expansion garnished by modernization philosophy and the need for profit maximisation at the peril of human, social, economic and ecological capitals has remained a great source of unequal distribution of resources for most part of the globe. Andreasson (2010), draws our attention to the fact that economic development under capitalist system of production has succeeded in creating massive poverty, unemployment and environmental crisis far outweighing its benefits especially in Third World countries. Corroborating this view, Omoweh (2010) drawing from the Nigerian experience argues that the activities of oil multinationals who are the most visible agents of capitalism in the Niger Delta have led to a pathetic underdevelopment of the region.

The adverse effects of the capitalist mode of production on humanity has generated so much stir as to become a very topical issue in the global political and economic agenda for some time now. It has prompted an unholy convergence of policy makers, state governments, Presidents of different countries, the academia, Non-governmental organizations, and human rights activists under the umbrella of environmentally friendly organizations to discuss ways of charting a development philosophy that would reduce the damage already done to the environment. Consequently, at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, global concern started to enter debates on economic development as the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) popularized the concept of sustainable development.

The touting of sustainability as the new route to development has been seen as a mere joke given the magnitude of socio-economic decay in developing nations of the world (Garcia, 2007) and the obvious fact that single sectors acting on their own cannot address the magnitude of underdevelopment in countries like Nigeria. This has led to the growing relevance of cross sector partnerships as a model for achieving sustainable development in poor countries. Justifying this approach, Tennyson (2004) asserts that *"*Only with comprehensive and widespread cross sector collaborations can we ensure that sustainable development initiatives are imaginative, coherent and integrated enough to tackle the most intractable problems associated with society*"*

Studies have shown that cross-sector partnerships are increasingly popular in community development practice as a means of addressing global issues as diverse as health, environment, agriculture, finance, and governance (see for instance: Odulari, 2008 and Webster, 2009). Based on this reality and the pressing need for huge oil multinational corporations like the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) to redeem their reputation in Nigeria, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Nigeria and SPDC in association with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) embarked on an integrated $11.7 million, 5-year cross sector partnership (Cassava Enterprise Development Project-CEDP) to revamp cassava production in the Niger Delta region. Despite the popularity of cross sector partnerships in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, empirical works on their role in sustainable development is almost non-existent. This is why Uwadiogun (2009) described the field of study as an empirical desert. It is therefore against this background, that the study examined the SPDC-USAID (Nigeria)-IITA Cassava Enterprise Development Programme (CEDP) initiative in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

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Objectives of the study

1. Find out if the new technologies introduced by the partnership were effectively transferred to local farmers
2. Determine if local farmers can sustain the technologies that were introduced and the project in general post the partnership lifecycle.

Hypotheses

The following hypothetical statements were tested in this study:

H_1: The SPDC/USAID/IITA partnership is likely to have led to sustainable technology transfer to local farmers in the area of cassava production in the Niger Delta

H_2: The SPDC/USAID/IITA cassava enterprise development project is likely to be better sustained by local farmers after decommissioning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The shift towards a more sustainable society presents a major challenge for single actors in society (Mette, 2006). In particular, many point to decreasing capacities of national governments to fulfil their role in the implementation of sustainable development (OECD, 2004; Mette, 2006 and Adeyinka, 2009). This is often justified when we consider that the institutional fabric of governmental actors toward sustainable development remains rather thin especially in Third World countries. Governments of Africa for instance are historically noted for high level corruption and personal aggrandizement of national resources that has generated accumulated development challenges needing the galvanization of sectorial efforts to manage.

Actively inviting private actors into policy making is based on the assumption that, though market failures evidently exist, market-based governance structures develop that help to improve change toward sustainable development and increase the adaptation flexibility of existing social environments. Accordingly, because government failures in society exists, private sector actors need to take a controlling function in the transition process towards sustainable development by constraining the bad and enabling the good (John, 2009).

Cross-sector partnerships are collaborative arrangements that emerged as a response to the growing pressures to improve the implementation of solutions to the issues of sustainable development, based on the assumption that these problems cannot be addressed effectively by single actors and organisations alone. A partnering approach was therefore initiated by the UN (United Nations), together with leading actors from the three sectors. The fact that these partnerships potentially involve three societal sectors broadens the strategic scope of actors when considering cross-sector collaboration and distinguishes the partnership approach, as defined by the UN, from other concepts of cross-sector collaborations that by definition exclude one sector. Further definitions that try to capture the manifold occurrences of the phenomenon focus on the social purpose of these collaborations, calling them ―social partnerships (John, 2009), ― new social partnerships (Yahaya, 2008), or cross-sectoral collaborative alliances. Whereas the purpose of collaboration referred to as sustainable development applies to almost all definitions, concepts like ―global public policy

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networks‖, ―global action networks‖ or ―global issues networks‖ point toward the global aspect of the concept.

Other partnerships, such as The Global Reporting Initiative (Vijh, 2007) not only involve global partners but also focus on developing global standards and guidelines for sustainable development. In their effort, these partnerships represent a new dimension of global governance (John, 2009). Vijh describes the output of these initiatives as ―providing public goods and services, setting industry standards, and obtaining private benefits‖. Sustainable development as a societal goal has clearly passed the stage of raising awareness and the need for action among organizational actors but has not yet reached the stage of becoming so intrinsically anchored in people's mind that it is taken-for-granted in the sense of a common good for all actors involved in the change process. It has rather opened new space for actors to engage in new strategies and particularly use cross-sector collaborations as a strategic means.

Choosing cross-sector collaboration as a strategic means in order to initiate change in governance structures can, improve the credibility and reputation of those involved (as for example open, transparent, reliable, etc.), legitimise change strategies (by showing inclusiveness), increase the effectiveness of agreements (in their definition as well as in their implementation), and thereby stabilize or change the power relations between actors (within and between sectors). In this sense we do not see partnerships as ends in themselves but as a strategic means for actors to achieve change in the governance structures of organizational fields. In this sense, cross-sector collaboration for sustainable development becomes "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (Logsdon, 2009).

Although cross-sector partnerships are called the new orthodoxy in the drive to attain sustainable development, the concept evoked controversial discussions around many of its aspects. The focus of the concept lies in the relationships between actors (OECD, 2004), pre-structured due to power balances (Rosenau, 2005). Substantial differences in power between potential partners raise concerns about their willingness to eventually conform to agreements (Kara and Quarless, 2002) and their role as legitimated political actors. These discussions reveal the lack of knowledge we have about how organizations form strategies for change and how they make use of these partnerships as a strategic sustainable development tool. Apart from a few exceptions there are few data about sustainable development acted upon in cross-sector partnerships. Rusenau (2005) allude to the need for more systematic research on these partnerships in order to set the many results of case-studies into a comprehensive framework. They call for a better understanding of how these partnerships actually work and what their contribution is to the societal transition toward sustainable development.

Changing governance structures, defined as ―all those arrangements by which field level power and authority are exercised involving, variously, formal and informal systems, public and private auspices, regulative and normative mechanisms‖ (John, 2009), for sustainable development goes well beyond traditional, state-centred policy-making because it requires pro-active organizational behaviour at different levels (Vijh, 2007:26). We use an institutional perspective to gain a deeper understanding of the formation of collaborative strategies of organizations. We consider two levels of analysis that are essential to our theoretical framework.

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Theoretical Framework: Actor Network Theory

Developed by Callon and Bruno (1982), Actor Network Theory, in particular the collaboration perspective emphasizes the need to analyze cross sector partnerships as occurring in social networks. Studies drawing upon this perspective have focused on how these actor-networks, including the project embarked upon, get transformed through the incremental steps of the social processes. This involves analyzing several networks and relations of variable, and following them from where the partnership was initially developed to where it is being implemented. The success (or not) of the cross sector partnership process is dependent on the capacity to create and support a stable network in which actors translate the interests of others including that of the partnership.

In the context of this study, the collaboration perspective is seen in relation to the notion of sustainability; as the process of cultivating sustainable networks. Sustainability represents an important concept for this study, since it suggests the capacity of the partnership structure, the project itself and the surrounding network to endure over time and space. In the context of cross sector partnerships for community development programs and projects, sustainability is conceptualized as the continuation of benefits after such projects have been completed (Danjuma, 2009) and sustaining the flow of benefits into the future. For example, at the community level, projects may assist in the reduction of poverty and unemployment, however, sustainability does not necessarily mean that the activities required to develop new structures be sustained but rather that the new structures are appropriate, owned by the stakeholders and supported on an ongoing basis with locally available resources (Young and Hampshire, 2000).

Sustainability is therefore measured in terms of the ability to identify and manage risks threatening the long-term viability of cross sector partnership in community development projects. In this study, we attempt to prove that it is the character of the interactive network between the partners, partnership implementers and the beneficiaries of the initiative that accounts for whether sustainability is embedded in the CEDP project.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts the survey method. It was carried out in three States of the Niger Delta region namely; Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. The study targeted three categories of beneficiaries of the CEDP in these states. These are cassava farmers, graters and cassava processors. A total of 300 respondents (100 each from the three states) were selected using simple random sampling method. To gather relevant data, a self-designed instrument (questionnaire) was prepared considering the objectives and hypotheses of the study. For the purpose of analysis, the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical method was used to test hypothesis one, while a modified Sustainability Assessment Model indicator (SAM*i*) (Baxter, 2008) was applied to test hypotheses two in order to appropriately determine sustainability of the CEDP.

The SAM*i* is a tool specifically designed to measure sustainable development within a definite project lifecycle (three to five years). Its key indicators and parameters are economic (income) social (employment) environmental (pollution impact) and resource use (technology or natural resources). For this study, a modified logic was developed for the traditional SAM*i* derived from money for all key indicators during the project lifecycle and a clear

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calculation of percentage variations of the monies between the years of the project lifecycle. For the SAM*i* therefore, percentage variance is calculated as yr2-yr1/yr1=%*v*.

RESULTS

The presentation and discussion is based on a collated questionnaire of 286 out of 300 representing 95% response rate.

Table 1: H_1: The SPDC/USAID/IITA partnership is likely to have led to sustainable technology transfer to local farmers in the area of cassava production in the Niger Delta

Respondents	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	TOTAL
Rivers	18	63	13	94
Delta	10	72	16	98
Bayelsa	20	62	12	94
TOTAL	48	197	41	286

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 1 above shows data with regard to hypothesis one. From the table it is easy to see that a total of 48 respondents from the three states agreed that the SPDC/USAID/IITA CEDP partnership led to sustainable technology transfer to farmers in the area of cassava production, 197 of the respondents disagreed, while 41 were undecided. The data is further subjected to a chi-square test in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Chi-Square computation for hypothesis 1

States	O	E	O-E	(O-E)2	(o-e/e)2
Rivers	18	15.78	2.22	4.95	0.31
	63	64.75	-1.75	3.06	0.05
	13	13.48	-0.48	0.23	0.02
Delta	10	16.45	-6.45	41.57	2.53
	72	67.50	4.50	20.22	0.30
	16	14.05	1.95	3.81	0.27
Bayelsa	20	15.78	4.22	17.84	1.13
	62	64.75	-2.75	7.55	0.12
	12	14.05	-2.05	4.20	0.30
Chi-Square	$\chi 2$=				***5.02***

**Degree of freedom =4; Chi-Square Table value =7.97; Chi-Square Calculated Value=5.02*

Decision rule: Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value.

Interpretation

In this study, since calculated value for $\chi 2$ is 5.02 and table value is 9.49, the hypothesis which states that ―the SPDC/USAID/IITA partnership is likely to have led to sustainable technology transfer to local farmers in the area of cassava production in the Niger Delta‖ is

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hereby rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted. As a result, it is the submission in this study that 'there is no relationship between the SPDC/USAID/IITA partnership and sustainable technology transfer to local farmers in the area of cassava production'.

It is important to note here that respondents agree with the fact that the CEDP project failed to provide the necessary network between farmers and implementers from project inception. This actually negates the actor-network theory which stressed integration of beneficiaries from the stage of technology production to actual technology transfer phase of projects. The CEDP Rasper technology training exercise was conducted for only a day in each of the states as the Shell Sustainable Community Development Management Information System (SCDMIS[1]) data shows below:

Table 3: Rasper Technology Transfer Training for CEDP Beneficiaries by States State

State	**Training Centre**	**No. of Persons**	**Category of Trainees**	**Date**
Rivers	Ego Farm, Rukpokwu	45	Graters & Cassava processors	20/02/2009
Bayelsa	Izonebi Farm, Elebele	42	Graters & Cassava processors	17/02/2009
Delta	Isu Farms, Warri	45	Graters & Cassava processors	15/03/2009

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 3 shows details of the technology transfer training for the CEDP beneficiaries in the three states. Beneficiaries were trained for one day alone at different times in the various states. The one day Rasper training for each state proved insufficient as field observations showed that almost 60% of machines introduced by the CEDP project is now grounded. Most importantly, the number of persons trained in the various states does not reflect the actual number of technology beneficiaries in the project. This explains why well over 30% of beneficiaries (especially those who benefited from the grating machines) have already sold or dumped their machines.

H_2: The SPDC/USAID/IITA cassava enterprise development project is likely to be better sustained by local farmers after decommissioning.

Table 4: *Sustainable Assessment Model indicator (SAMi)* for the CEDP

Year	**Social (Employment)[2]**	**Environmental (Pollution)**	**Resources (Technology)**	**Economics (Income)**	**SAMi**
	%	%	%	%	**%**
2006	50	50	50	50	**50**
2007	0.36	12.95	-2.98	3.81	**14.14**
2008	0	-1.82	-1.5	-1.06	**-4.38**
2009	-0.72	-1	-1.14	-1.08	**-3.94**
2010	-1.67	-0.9	-1.45	-0.72	**-4.74**
Total	**-2.03**	**9.23**	**-7.07**	**0.95**	**1.08**

Source: Computed by from SPDC CDMIS, 2015

[1] *SCDMIS: This represents a one-stop data management system for SPDC community development project in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.*
[2] *It should be noted that due to the absence of cost documents for the number of employees in the CEDP partnership year, we relied on the percentage variation of the number of employees per year.*

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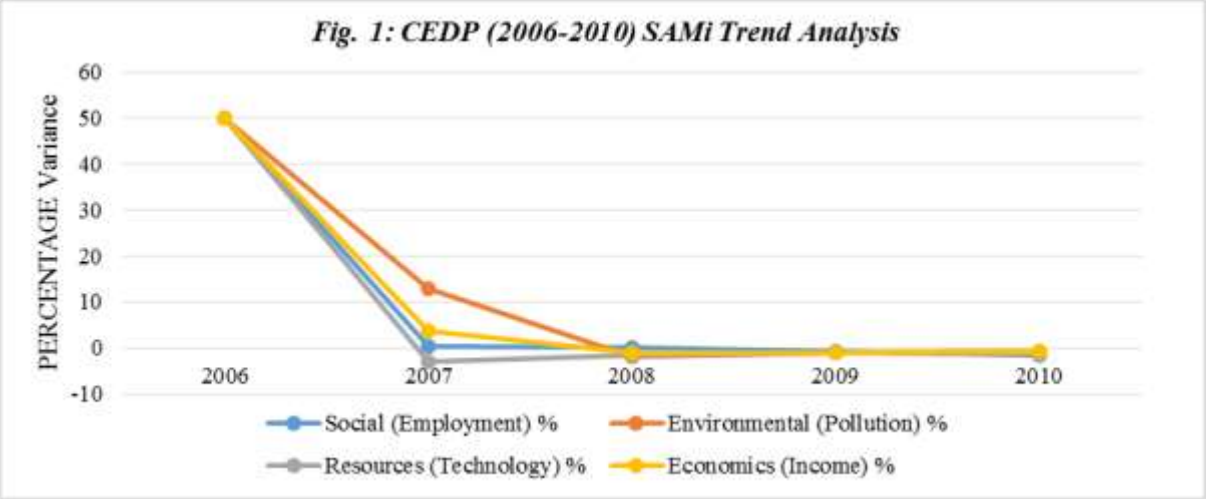
The table above represents the sustainable assessment model *indicator* as developed by the University of Aberdeen, Scotland to take account of quantifiable project externalities and hence assist progress towards measuring sustainable development based on data derived during and after a project's lifecycle. Relying on the *SAMi,* it is easy to see that all the key performance indicators in the model continued to decline after the first year (2006) marked by a 50% benchmark value. This decline in all indicators of the *SAMi* from 2007 to 2010 only provides justification to the fact that the CEDP project cannot be sustained by local people.

The data used for the *SAMi* was derived from the Shell SCDMIS and the percentage variation was calculated using the Microsoft Excel 2010 package. The trend analysis of the *SAMi* is provided below to show a graphical understanding of the decline in sustainability of the CEDP within the five years of the partnership.



Source: Based on data from Table 4 above

Figure 1 above shows a trend versions of the SAM*i* table above. From the trend analysis, it is easy to see that employment within the CEDP life cycle began to drop from 0.36% in 2006 to -1.67% in 2010. With regards to the environmental indicator, we had secondary data on the cost of clean-ups within the project life cycle as documented by the Shell SCDMIS database. It can be seen that clean-ups also declined from 12.95% in 2007 to -0.9% in 2010. Same goes for resources or technology which also witnessed a decline in money used for technology maintenance. Thus, as the figure showed, percentage value of money used for technology maintenance within the CEDP project lifecycle declined from -2.98 in 2006 to -1.45 in 2010. This is attributed to the non-functioning of a large number of the CEDP processing centres. The last indicator of the SAM*i* which is income also reduced from 3.81% to -0.74% between 2006 and 2010. It is important to note however, that the decline in environmental externalities was necessitated by the decline in the functional state of the CEDP project. This is because as most processing centres began to pack-up, the amount of waste generated by the CEDP also started declining resulting to a drop in the amount spent on cleaning such waste during the project life-cycle.

***SAMi* Decision Rule:** For a development project to be deemed sustainable either at the community or national level, the project must function at 50% level after the percentage variations of each performance indicator for the project life-cycle has been summed up. From the SAM*i* analysis of the CEDP project as shown above, after the computation of all

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performance indicators, the total percentage value arrived at was 1.08%. This result shows clearly that the CEDP project cannot be sustained by local people.

DISCUSSION

It is no longer in doubt that all partnership efforts at community development projects tend to transfer either knowledge or technology or both to local people in related project area (Vijh, 2007). In this study, we concentrated on technology transfer to local people since the CEDP project was marked by the introduction of new technologies in the area of agronomy and post-harvest production of cassava. In doing this, we attempted to find out using the actor-network theoretical model, the extent to which beneficiaries of the CEDP project where integrated into the technology process as a function of technology transfer. It was discovered however, that the technology transfer process for the CEDP project was low given the fact that over 60% of the respondents pointed out that the new machines were not properly transferred to them. This goes a long way again to show the lack of proper networking between actors or stakeholders in the CEDP project. In other words, technology beneficiaries were not part of the crystallization of the CEDP and the building of the technology hence the technologies confronted them like alien work tools. One troubling outcome of this in terms of project sustainability was that a lot of the beneficiaries sold their machines and quite a lot of the machines became grounded.

Regarding the issue of local people sustaining the CEDP project after its partnership life-cycle, findings from the study revealed clearly that local people will not be able to sustain the project after the partnership. During the partnership life-cycle, the project was basically kept running by members of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) who made sure the technologies introduced were functional. However, with the decommissioning of the project, local farmers and other operators of the machines increasingly began to find it quite difficult to manage or maintain them. Thus, in the absence of local capacity in terms of repairs and maintenance of the machines, the project is beginning to die gradually and one can predict that in the next five years or less, the CEDP project will be history. The issue of whether local people can sustain the project or not was further clarified by the SAM*i* analysis above, much as this is the case, it is clear from the percentage value (1.8%) arrived at in the model that local people lack the technical competency to manage the CEDP project.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a general understanding among respondents who took part in the study concerning insufficient actor networking in the CEDP project from its inception in 2006. Most of the farmers who were beneficiaries of the huge cassava processing and drying machines have packed them up basically due to weak technical expertise in terms of managing such a delicate machines. The same goes for those who benefited from the mobile graters. What is even worse, the absence of proper actor networking led to the problem of not targeting the real population for the project. For instance, in Uzere, Delta State, 80% of the beneficiaries have sold their graters to farmers who were not part of the one day Rasper training leading to the grounding of the machines.

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It is easy to conclude from the above observation, that the CEDP project which was largely driven by the introduction of new knowledge and technology in the area of cassava production, processing and marketing lacked the basic foundation for collaboration or partnership which is a proper actor mapping and networking amongst would be partners from its inception. This leads us to also argue that the project lacked sustainability from the beginning and would likely be none existent in another five years.

Following the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following suggestions to improve future cross sector partnerships were proffered:

1. For every cross sector partnership (CSP) project aimed at community development, there should be a preliminary actor-networking involving all social groups in the community. This will ensure that all interests are imbued into the project.

2. There is also the need to ensure effective technology or knowledge transfer in the project area if it is to be sustainable after the partnership. For instance, technical trainings aimed at building the capacity of beneficiaries should be expansive enough to enable them manage the new technology and knowledge outside the partnership structure.

3. It is imperative also for CSPs in community development projects to design sustainability plans with the communities or beneficiaries. This will ensure that the community or beneficiaries know where the project is going and actually understand how to sustain it after the project life-cycle.

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