

CANADIAN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH JOURNAL

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Critical Synthesis of Community Economic Development and Social Economy Case of Nigeria, West Africa.

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Introduction

In view of the varying trend of events and global perspective to getting things done as scheduled or planned, nowadays, it is very imperative to meet the demand of Prime Sponsors (Donors) worldwide to ensure constant funding for developmental projects in Africa, it is extremely tough to come by donors' funds, and adequate funding is the bloodline of any successful project or development, the funds spent on a project must be well justified with the scope of work covered in a reasonable time to guarantee another project fund from the same donor and to get another phase to the project (cyclical fund flow without this the project life will be terminated). Line budget is the keyword for project cost which is a major constraint that must be tackled at the early stage of a project to achieve success. Horizon to be less dependent on donors, agencies and government for grants (to be self-reliant). Although, I was thoroughly drilled by her to read more than ever before through her humble guidance through the grey areas of the course which adhere me to the course. The knowledge of CED will help me to forestall project's failure in Africa and would provide me with full insight on how to be a successful advisor to African genuine leaders and African-Scientists on developmental project execution; consequently, sustaining hitherto failed project in Africa which otherwise had been a clog on the continent's wheel of development. CED had taught me that as a community, we cannot continue to be dependent on donors for funding or on the government to develop our communities as a people. We must put our destinies in our hands! Not in the hands of Donors, Government or Capitalists. We must be able to take the bull by the horn, the earlier we know this

the better equipped we can begin to take actions that will positively affect our future and that of our children. Immediate action must be channeled towards self-sustainability of our development, contrary to what we believed that an investor or donors would help in making our development happen. "A person's most useful asset is not a head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen and a hand willing to help others" (Kotaku Wamura)

A lot of people don't exercise their right because they have lost faith in the system of capitalism and system of government, the system in which people are be-clouded with selfish interest, not for the common good of their neighbors and people have become withdrawn over time. This call for the people to develop their own economy themselves, which will cater for their needs and wants. A community cannot be built with individualism as "dog eat dog", it is very hard for privileged people to know what it is to be underprivileged. Consequently, in a way, we must find people's involvement and get people's commitment to what is happening in the community (especially on community welfare information sharing). The community needs to make use of both internal and external resources to achieve the change that they desire. CD is analyzed to be all-inclusive with the inclusion of the locals in CD planning and implementing ideas to improve their standard of living believing that they originate the idea. When Capitalism failed in the 1930s to meet the needs of the idle, marginalized, and poor people, CD was used as official policy, and as self-help by the Colonial officer on a case by case basis to meet the needs of the people. Because of CD, the people

became more self-reliant, the more they became self-reliant the fewer demands they made on the government. In Nigeria, people continue to make more demands on the government and they are less self-reliant as they euphorically believed that the government and foreign investors would build the community, they want for them. In 1966, few nations of the world that are people-centered e.g. Canada, adopted CD after the 2nd World War to resolve the problem of the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded people. Nigeria can also adopt CD principles to combat the long-lingering problem of poverty and to solve the problem of poverty with hunger. Reason being that CD is a tool for resolving issues of inequality, like neglect, discrimination, poverty with other issues that bother the less privileged. CD is critically interesting if the community members could participate to geographically identify the issue that affects their community for them to collectively underpin their required needs for education, sustainability and development as such, they will be able to achieve meeting those needs collectively. Attribution is made to education as a critical element of CD (AONTAS, 2000).

Irrespective of the drive for CD, marginalization, poverty, and inequality persist in the world and in Nigeria, therefore, inserting the word 'economic' between Community and Development changes the nature of how we can empower locals. The earlier our communities in Nigeria begin to realize this the better, CD creates a community based on fairness, values, impartialities, and self-esteem for every participant addressing issues that bother their collective lives. These are my reasons for appreciating CD against globalization which takes value away from the people. It teaches how individuals and communities must devise ways to retain their integrity and humanity under worse possible conditions. If communities can organize themselves, identify their assets, find resources outside their boundaries and develop partnerships with anyone genuinely concerned about them, they can start on a hard, tough path to a better life for all. This in a way leads to the idea of Community Economic Development (CED). The advent of CED is action by locals to create economic opportunities that improve social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged. CED acknowledges that environmental, economic, and social problems, which are mutually inclusive problems, although, these problems are complicated and mutable. CED answers questions to unevenness of economic development as some communities, regions, and

neighborhood prosper at the expense of the other. Capitalism created negative externalities, like health and environmental problems. CED is an action of the people, by the people and for the people to create economic opportunities that improve social conditions especially for the underprivileged. In the year 2000 the World Bank (the bank) championed the community-based development with the inclusion of the locals' participation in decision-making, planning, and project implementation. Basically, because the poor complained to the bank about their exclusion to participate in the decision-making, planning, and project implementation of the CED's project. See illustration 1 below:

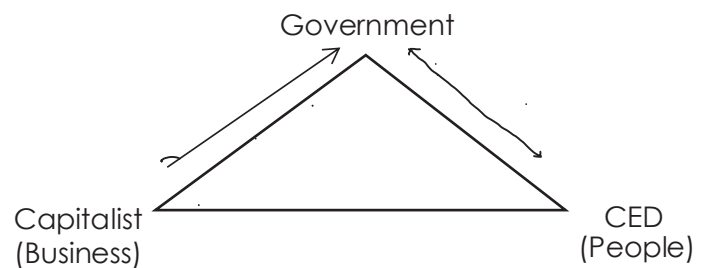


Illustration 1

In the illustration 1 above, the focus of the government is on the business (Capitalist). The government is closer to the business but far from the people, CED is close to the people and it is flat, no top-down approach like illustration 1. Therefore, the bank decided that their funds would be used for projects that promoted economic opportunities that facilitated empowerment and enhanced security.

Defining CED

- Community development (CD) is a child of a difficult time and great financial depression.
- CD was first adopted in 1948 by the British Colonial Officers to resolve people's needs during the period of great uncertainty.
- Features of CD include: holistic, involvement of the locals in the planning and implementation of organizations to people's living standard.
- CED efforts must concentrate on wealth and job creation but must be done so that people feel that benefits are being distributed.
- Economics deals with the allocation of scarce resources. Economics also states that 'a scarce good has many alternative uses. The efficient allocation of resources, tight budgeting,

attention to detail and a clear set of goals embodied in a workable business plan, as well as creativity, vision, calculated risk, hard work and hard thought, are as vital to the operation of a CED venture as they are to the operation of a business venture. CED is a people-focused, paying attention to the bottom line, but also encouraging communities and individuals to go beyond it.

Development

- Development implies positive change, improvement, some sort of movement in society that makes life better for all.
- All development is not sustainable, but development efforts and outcomes must be sustainable.
- According to Peter Boothroyd and H. Craig Davis, kinds of skills needed for ECD are in three categories, networking, dealing and facilitating, generating information and finding funding, diversifying markets, products, and ownership of locally controlled ventures, and encouraging community reflection on quality-of-life concerns.

Major recurring issues that bothers economic development in Nigeria are:

- Depleted educational standard and health care system
- Infrastructures are becoming obsolete and dwindling
- Lack of electricity that will drive technology (especially the Internet)
- Bad political structures which allow the imbeciles like Abacha to continue to become the country's president and instability in the polity
- Brain drain to USA, Canada, and Europe
- In the 1981-82 recession, CED was used in Canada to stimulate the economy to generate jobs, wealth, and making relegated people to have a say on how the country was operated.
- CED is about planning, pragmatism not about theories alone, collective participation, the power to the people, people minded policies, collaboration, partnership, and creating a track record for poverty decline, maintenance of solidarity values, democracy, social responsibility, and pure autonomy. CED is about reaching

towards Utopia through the creation of "fair relations among human beings and between human beings and Nature". Neamtan put it that "CED is not about helping the government in managing poverty problems." However, people going into government can adopt some of the CED principles if they are people centered in their perceptions, unfortunately, the majority that go into government in Nigeria are not people-centered but self-centered.

The Sustainable People text book defines Community to me in a new light as: - "A place where everyone knew who they were, had good relationship with their neighbors and knew their duties and responsibilities to themselves. Community offers warmth, acceptance, belonging, and an escape from alienation and loneliness". This community picture is the opposite of the community which I grew up to know, this explains why we don't do well in my community because a true community should be instituted on TRUST. My Nigeria community lack trust which is the foundation of a true community. From the word 'Community,' I can clearly see and come up with a meaning of COMMUNITY to be (where there is an existence of freedom to communicate in unity with sustainable minds and sustainable people). When there is unity there will be trust to freely express an opinion that will move our society forward for development and people will be selfless in their thinking toward each other. This is the ideal community I wish to build in my country Nigeria.

- Members of the community could be Conservative, Progressive, and be indifferent.
- Communities are formed based on geographical proximity and based on common interests.

All types of community-based development require a sustainable effort and special kind of leadership e.g., Father Greg of Antigonish Movement, leadership successor is also crucial to community-based development. All development is not sustainable. Oil, gas, and minerals, once exploited, are gone forever. But many resources can be developed on a sustainable basis if effectively managed.

CED Ventures

CED Ventures are vast in diversity which include the following: -Community Economic Development Corporations, Enterprises centers, Small business

development agencies, Venture centers, Information and Technology networks, Workers Co-ops, Regional development authorities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), Business incubators Community-supported agriculture, worker-owned businesses, Credit unions, Retails Co-ops, Community investment funds, Community gardens.

My approach when adapting CED Ventures in Nigeria would be thus: -

- Involve and inform the people in the decision-making process
- Seek to generate jobs and wealth by encouraging self-reliance
- Enhance the sense of community by tapping into local resources

I will use the model of New Dawn (Sydney, NS) which was set up as not-for-profit corporation under the Companies Act in June 1976 to establish my idea of setting up CED Venture in my country. Although, there are other examples of CED Ventures in Nova Scotia e.g., HRDA Enterprises Ltd (Halifax), Rounded Wood Co-operative Products Ltd (Truro), Development Isle Madame (Richmond County), Cumberland Regional Economic Development Agency (Amherst).

- It will not rely on government fund
- Creating a sound product and a solid business plan that will factor in the human aspect.
- It will be responsible, flexible, transparent and accountable

Ten Things Nigeria CED venture will embrace for success are: -

- Not dispensing cash or loans in a traditional way
- Taking the politics out of the development process, using objective business criteria to determine the viability of proposals
- Encouraging efforts in local development built on pride, identity, quality of life and social capital
- Ensuring access to what the organization offers is open to all, not restricting to certain groups.

- Placing emphasis on community assets and strength, not problems
- Offering neutral ground, spaces, and places where people can talk about their business problems and find some ideas on how to solve them.
- Nurturing good ideas for business and local development with the right amount of money and support at the right time while everyone is moving up the learning curve
- Helping governments getting in the CED bandwagon.
- Bringing together business, social, economic, cultural, environmental and human concerns in a coherent manner
- Gaining acceptance and respect through local leadership.

How to Navigate the Government to Successfully organize CED Ventures in Nigeria.

- CED venture practitioners (CED-VPs) must seek to transcend limits and operate 'outside the box' and believe people can operate peacefully and productively without government presence in their lives.
- CED-VPs must endlessly seek new opportunities to generate job and wealth ensuring communities stabilization for smooth operation.
- CED-VPs must encourage their staff to generate ideas and take initiatives that will move the venture forward (Down to Top directives must be encouraged).
- CED-VPs must encourage skill specialization, make use of people where they can best perform.
- CED-VPs must be smarter than the capitalist, government and large bureaucracies to generate new possibilities for jobs and wealth creation from almost impossible business areas and arenas.
- CED-VPs must allow free flow of information and all-inclusive participation in the decision-making process.
- CED-VPs must be aware that it takes time for

CED Venture to find its feet in the business world; therefore, must not be discouraged; however, after, successfully spring up. They must spread themselves as a seed to other areas and other communities like a scattered seed to germinate in other areas.

- CED ventures produce an enabling environment for sustainable people and CED-VPs must encourage cooperation, competition, boundaryless, open entries, welcoming ideas from the community to create opportunities, jobs, and wealth.
- Effective CED-VPs must have these three skills; the ability to decipher messages about the world inside and outside the community, excellent management skills and knowledge of ways to encourage and motivate people individually and collectively, ability to try new approaches to job creation and wealth generation.
- CED-VPs must understand how the government works, must know how to develop mutually beneficial relationships with the governments, the politicians and bureaucratic level to achieve CED objectives and fulfill his mission.

CED-VPs and CED Ventures Financing

Cyclical fund flow for CED Venture could be a challenging task if not effectively managed and well planned, this can be approached with these itemized concepts at the back of the mind of CED-VPs: -

- Always remember that the first freedom is economic freedom (finding the money you need to do the things you want to do).
- Traditional sources of business finance are not disposed to CED ventures; therefore, it can be tough to source funds in the traditional way.
- CED ventures can be very highly risky because it is seeking out development opportunities that neither the state nor the private sector considers worthy of their attention.
- All banks become panicky when met with loan requests from untested collectively-based ventures.
- Funding agencies that attract investors by offering lower rates of interest if their funds will

be channeled into community ventures must be targeted e.g. Oikos Credit in Netherlands.

- Credit unions in Canada could be another source, we have a cooperative bank in Nigeria which promote borrowing to the type of CED Ventures in agriculture.
- It can be very challenging to find a viable, long term, profitable business venture which will employ locals.
- CED-VPs must start small and continue to plow back your profit until you achieve your objectives
- CED-VPs must have a 'business mind' bigger than the public and private sector when they are looking for funds, this will give them a competitive edge crucial for survival in the business environment.

Although, to survive as CED-VPs in Nigeria require much more than what is listed above, you must be very determined and form a very determine sustainable team because of corruption and the terrible business environment where people are not always taken business seriously. I quite agree with my tutor and Sustainable People textbook that settling for external funds is not advisable, including the government's grants. Because economic freedom and financial self-sustainability is key to CED's business success.

Community Entrepreneurs

- Community entrepreneurs is a new role that has emerged in CED. It shows individuals and groups how to create better lives for themselves and more prosperous and caring communities. They seek to serve others and are interested in what they achieve, not their own ego needs.
- Community entrepreneurs mobilize resources to meet collective needs, generating consensus among individuals collectively whilst not seeking personal wealth, power and unnecessary recognition for doing all these.
- Strong moral and spiritual feelings, desire for a more open, inclusive and democratic society, these are their motivations.
- They initiate innovative and social economic processes, setting up and running locally controlled and owned ventures.

- Willingness to cooperate, competence, and sharing of their gifts to ensure the smooth running of collective ventures.
- The task in community development is not about egos but building a strong intermediating structure. CD in all its manifestations depends on skilled, enlightened leadership of Community or Social Entrepreneurs.
- CD calls for awareness of one's strength and weaknesses. Three key skills;
 - o Visionary ability to see beyond the obvious and be able to identify future movement of events
 - o Good management skill with inventive abilities
 - o Drive to motivate others\ group of people to start solving their own problems.
- The goal of mediating structures in CD is to animate, enable and stimulate people to solve their own problems, using all available resources.
- Most of the time Community entrepreneurs come from margins of society, not the centers of power, they can think outside and inside the box. All these seem very impossible, however, people that are purpose driven will achieve these with pleasure.
- Always seek an opportunity to reflect on all your CD learning and experience.
- The CD teacher serves as the main resource person in the group of formal learners responsible for quality control of the information and knowledge being acquired by learners.
- Two priorities emerge for courses in community-driven development, those tailored to the needs of policy makers and planners in development, and those directed at enhancing the ability of the grassroots leaders.
- These are the 'how' topics that grassroots leaders must learn;
 - o How to find assets in their communities
 - o The role of information in development
 - o Identify what is and is not sustainable in development
 - o The best forms of organizations to meet the needs of those they serve
 - o The nature of government and bureaucracy
 - o Problem-solving skill is key
 - o Community analysis and organization
 - o Value of traditional knowledge.

It is worthwhile to note that any meaningful development is standing on a moral, ethical and spiritual foundation with lasting human efforts.

Learning to do Community Development

- Community development professionals must take CD training to be grounded on the job.
- Formal education in the US and Britain started in the 1960s.
- Emphasis is placed on continuous learning from people who practice, and not just teaching CD.
- Much learning in CED takes place on the job, for it is an ongoing process.
- Effective CD learning is based on the perception of how individuals relate their personal goals to those of others in communities facing rapid change and uncertainty.
- Despite best performance with untiring efforts, CD practitioners get burn out (self-motivation is key)

The Moral Basis of Community Development

- At the root of all efforts in CD lies a desire to encourage democratic approaches to daily living and efforts at sustaining individuals in their quest for a better life.
- Greed, fraud, corruption, fear and naked egotism ran rampant through the private sector and the corridors of state power.
- CD is a response to system failure and explicit condemnation of traditional ways of doing things.
- CD is about mutuality and reciprocity in human relationships, based on sharing freely the gifts that people possess. Ethical behavior lies at the root of all meaningful and lasting human interactions.

- Ethics are the norms that a community defines and institutionalizes to prevent individuals from pursuing self-interest at the expense of others.
- Ethics concerns the choices that people make and the consequences of these choices.
- Ethics has two aspects, normative and applied.
- Ethics are not a fixed set of rules and regulations to be applied to any and every situation, they have consequences of actions and personal responsibility.
- Individuals and communities must have credibility, otherwise, they will soon falter and fade.
- The central concerns of any institution revolve around power and money, how to get more of them and how to use them. CD does recognize what money and power can achieve for the benefit of the people if effectively managed, they can be used to meet the needs of the people through self-help, mutual aid, and cooperation.
- The foundation of the moral basis of CD is that all humans have real worth.

Leaders and practitioners must preach and practice ethics and morality. Let me use Nigeria CED leadership example, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was morally upright and he used some of the CED principles e.g. self-help in the western part of Nigeria (now called south west), although, he was a Politian, he used the Israeli Kibbutz system of agricultural collective, he started with organization of farmers' co-operatives movement, Agriculture for him was (tapping into local resources) to create wealth and job for the locals . He was able to successfully organize farmers into functional cooperative movements, especially around the coffee, palm oil, kola nuts, rubber, timber and cocoa farmers' marketing cooperatives (Dutch disease took all these produces away after the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria in the 1970s). Which leads to the establishment of cooperative banks in the region, the bank was predisposed to lending to the farmers at a lower rate than the traditional banks and later develop the Ewekoro Cement Factory for his people to be able to buy cement cheaply to enable them to build warehouse for their produces and to be able to build cheap homes and to do away with mud homes which were not befitting then, he built Cocoa House (First Skyscraper in Tropical

Africa see figure 1. below), when he noticed that government officials were stealing money through exorbitant hotel claims, he built big hotels, he then establish Odu'a Investment Company Ltd. (Odua group of companies) which take over other establishments like building of secondary schools and primary schools which was free for the locals, this is the reason why western Nigeria is the foremost in education till date, he made us realize the value of education. Establishment of these corporations boosted the socioeconomic fortune of the Western Region significantly. Chief Obafemi Awolowo was the backbone of our success story in the western region. Power was not an end in itself to him; he used his governance position as a responsibility to empower his community and his people. Awolowo's transformational leadership demonstrably transformed the Southwest into an infrastructural paradise that resonated even till now. It is just unfortunate that Awolowo's followers failed woefully to carry on with his legacy and vision for his people.

Figure 1. First Skyscraper in Tropical Africa



Source: medium.com/@EnrouteNigeria

The building formerly called "Ile Awon Agbe" (i.e. "Farmers' House") also called Cocoa House. In the 1960s, this was the tallest building in Africa. (proceeds from commodities such as Cocoa, Rubber, Timber, and so on were used to build it). (Impressive what can happen when a process is engaged.)

Community education has been created to be the most dynamic process for generating knowledge by action and reflection. CED was fashioned through folks who wanted one of a kind

method for taking their rightful place on the earth. Literacy initiatives are also key for the Community development. (CED is certain to erase gross poverty) CED is not a rationale for maintenance of the status quo but a tool for changing the economic situation of our community. CED was birth because the state had failed, people no longer believed in the state for their well-being. Therefore, CED is about people looking after each other sharing with each other; everybody in CED should be involved in the production of goods and services. CED create the connection between the economy and the society of people, it is about value creation\ sustainability and building a healthy economy with a human face for the people. CED is hard-work not for the laid back! CED is an ideal economy cycle because the producers are also the consumers and it is called the "Economy of Inclusiveness." Sara Wray Enn, (2018).

CED is about people, human beings, with dreams, aspirations, and desires who want a better life for themselves and others but need direction in achieving it. CED seeks to encourage the creation of 'sustainable people' people who can live a good life, however, they define it, in their own communities or anywhere in the world. People who can learn how to adopt, change, develop skills, and acquire knowledge and experience so that they can earn their own living, rather than being dependent on others, and in doing so, they can contribute more to the collective good.

Reflections and Conclusion:

Capitalism economy creates gaps, needs, holes but CED fills the gaps\holes and meets the needs of the people. CED is being envisaged to be a system that will be a viable alternative to capitalism as time goes on, as more people realize the difference between the two systems. CED is a community-based approach which is more equitable and more democratic in its approach to meet the needs of the people. Outstandingly, CED principles are not about replacing capitalism with CED. Application of CED study in Nigeria and African communities would be tiny light during big darkness which could be the way forward for Nigeria and African people to be less dependent on government and capitalism. Everyone should be encouraged to contribute to building a better world and a better economy that serves the people, not the economy that the people serve. The Community must get control back from capitalism and globalization; therefore, it will be wise to mobilize, identify, and connect the asset

that exists in the community for us to be a partaker in our community building. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, the Harvard academic, said, "when we do change people, they experience it as violence, but when people do change themselves, they experience it as liberation." We should change to imbibe the ideology of CED.

My mission will be to first scale-up many agricultural researches of IITA that had ended up on the shelves, to start rural co-operatives development, to mitigate the devastation caused by lack of enough funding to economic development programs by developing community businesses through community cooperatives and to disabuse the mind of the youths from corruptions, fast businesses, fraud, and joblessness; for these are anti-development agents. I am willing to make an improved contribution in eliminating pains, bringing hope to the African youths and to also contribute my quota to the frontier of knowledge in the field of CED and Social Economy Development Studies, considering my empathy for our scientists, youths who are mostly women and people who are suffering excruciating pains from the scourge of poverty and joblessness. To be able to get the Nigerian elites' buy-in (those who have same belief with me) to draw the roadmap that will enhance community development projects in Nigeria as this should be a new area of focus for the country to boost social well-being and to improve the quality of life for an average citizen. To be able to advise the policymakers on the adverse effect of developmental policies summersault on the economy. In view of my above mission and purpose, I felt very strongly that the Community Economic Development (CED) is a great one for me to be able to be well equipped with my future community development planning\strategy and to network with like minds.

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