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EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL FADAMA  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT APPROACH TO RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
COUNCILS IN NIGERIA

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Paper prepared for presentation at the Farm Management Association of  
Nigeria Conference, Asaba, Nigeria, October 18-20, 2005

## EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL FADAMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT: LESSONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The development of rural areas impacts positively on per capita income and food production. The tier of government entrusted with the responsibility in Nigeria of developing the rural areas has not lived up to expectation in spite of the huge capital investment. This paper identified the root causes behind the failings of the local governments, reviews the performance of the fadama programme and draw on the reasons behind the successes of the latter as a basis for suggestions on how the local government system can be improved. Capacity building at the local level, increased demand for accountability, involvement of private and research bodies in local government activities should be encouraged to enhance rural development.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of rural areas impacts positively on per capita income and food production. Rural development leads to decrease in the disparity between rural and urban incomes thereby reducing rural-urban migration. It would also bring about an increase in the level of employment; improvement in the balance of payment position; increase in both foreign and domestic private investment, and an improvement in infrastructural facilities available in the hinterlands. In essence, the economy is transformed from one which is preponderantly agro-rural based.

Rural development can be defined as the outcome of a series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate, in time, a rise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people concerned. Olatunbosun (1976), Williams (1978), Lele (1979), Idachaba (1980) and Ogunfiditimi (2000) viewed rural development from various perspectives. They all pointed to the need for improvement in rural living conditions and standard of living of the rural populace. Olatunbosun (1976) stated that rural development is based on the need to balance the pattern and direction of government for the benefit of both the urban and rural sectors and provide technical requirements for speeding up economic growth in the development.

Despite the realisation of the above facts and the huge resources committed to rural development in Nigeria, rural development still remains a mirage simply because the local government authorities which are saddled with the responsibilities have not been able to perform up to expectation. The local government councils in Nigeria came into existence upon the Local Government Reform of 1976 and later became the third tier of government under the democratic dispensation. At its inception in 1976, 301 LGs were created and the number has since risen steadily to 774. The functions of the local governments relative to the other tiers of government as highlighted in the constitution are as seen in Table 1.

The expectation was that the third tier of government would act as a catalyst to rapid and sustained development at the grassroots level. Yet, the hope for rapid and sustained development has been a mirage as successive councils have grossly underperformed in almost all the areas of their mandate. Apart from the palpable mismanagement and misapplication of funds currently witnessed in most LGs in the country, the resources available which otherwise should be used for development programmes at the grass-roots are being used to service bloated elected officials and unproductive bureaucracies (Obasanjo, 2003).

Programmes embarked upon by the Federal Government with the aim of addressing agriculture and rural development related problems in Nigeria are numerous. These programmes include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution and the establishment of the National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA). The programmes set up specifically for rural development were the Farm Settlement Scheme, the River Basin and Rural Development Authorities (RBRDA), the Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and the Family Economic Advancement Programmed (FEAP). Financial institutions like the community and Peoples banks were also established.

Table 1: Assignment of Expenditure Responsibilities between Different Tiers of Government in Nigeria

Tiers of Government	Expenditure Category
Federal only	Defense; shipping, Federal trunk roads; Aviation; Railways; Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones; Police and other security services; Regulation of labor interstate commerce, telecommunications; Mines and Minerals; Social Security; Insurance; National statistical system; National Parks; Guidelines for minimum education standards at all levels; Water resources affecting more than one state;
Federal-State (shared)	Antiquities and monuments; Electricity; Industrial, commercial and Agricultural development; Scientific and Technological research; Statistics and Surveys; University, Technological and post-primary education; Health and Social Welfare;
State-Local (shared)	Primary, Adult and Vocational Education; Health Services; Development of Agriculture and non-mineral natural resources;
Local Government	Economic planning and development; Cemeteries, burial grounds; Homes for the destitute and infirm; Markets; Sewage and refuse disposal; Roads, Streets, street lighting, drains, other public facilities;

Source: 1999 Constitution and various sector policy reports.

These past efforts all contributed to growth in agricultural output. In spite of these achievements, however, pockets of low agricultural production persist in many areas. Such areas remain largely underdeveloped and unintegrated into the mainstream of national development. It is against this background that the National Fadama Development Project, a joint project of the ADB and the World Bank in collaboration with the FGN was conceptualised. The strategy for the transformation programme recognises that income generating and welfare-enhancing activities must be tackled in tandem with agriculture in a multi-faceted but well-coordinated manner through integrated agricultural and rural development.

The strategy aims at widely-shared and sustainable growth in non-agricultural output and productivity, integrated with non-agricultural activities in the rural areas and emphasising rural infrastructure and social sciences, with strong rural stakeholder participation. The low and stagnant incomes and productivity in the rural areas coupled with the high percentage of the countries labour force engaged in the sector, declining contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and about 5 percent of total export generated by the rural sector make a good case for this effort directed at examining the rural development approaches of the Local Government Authorities in the country, after considering the impact of the National Fadama Development Project on the rural dwellers. The objectives of this paper are thus to determine, broadly, the reasons responsible for the non-performance of LGs and to determine the means by which the NFDP approach can be used to speed up rural development in the country and bring about the realisation of the benefits and objectives of the economic reforms of the present administration.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study used secondary data. The sources of data are the records of the Project Coordinating Unit, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and interim implementation reports of the Fadama II project. The means of analysing the data is through the use of simple descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages.

#### REASONS FOR POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

Many factors are responsible for the non-performance of the LG councils. Listed below are some of the more important ones.

**Corruption:** This is a strong ‘monster’ ravaging the Nigerian economy. Though the LGs are not the only culprits when corruption is mentioned in Nigeria, it is expected that a government that is the closest to the grassroots should demonstrate low tendency to corrupt practices. On the contrary, resources for development programmes at the local level are mostly siphoned into private pockets. It is common to have roads appear on the LG record as tarred when the contrary is the case. Yet it is a known fact that bad roads are inimical to the rural economy.

**Top-down Approach to Development:** Rural people most of the time have little say in major decisions affecting their lives. They are rarely consulted on policy issues and investment decisions. In those instances when completed projects are handed over to them by the LGs, they derive little utility from them because it is a perceived need of the

people by the LG and not the actual. In other instances, projects are not initiated transparently to solve rural problems but rather as a vehicle for siphoning money from the council account.

**Lack of Monitoring Mechanism:** LG staff are not transparent as they are not accountable to any one. Moreover, their activities are neither monitored nor evaluated. The absence of very strong monitoring mechanism or process is a way of giving room for adequate mismanagement and misappropriation of resources which is what is witnessed in most LG activities in Nigeria.

**Lack of Sound Strategic Planning:** Most LG chairmen came into office with the ulterior motive of obtaining what they could obtain from the public coffer. They are therefore at most times devoid of good plans and ideas with which to better the lives of their citizens.

**Lack of Collaboration between the LGs/Research Institutes:** LGs do not involve researchers and their research findings in programme formulation. They also do not seek the help of specialists for advice or instruction on developmental and sundry issues.

**Lack of Clarity of Assignments:** This leaves room for duplication of efforts across the three tiers of governments. The creation of several parallel institutions carrying out similar functions across different levels of government has led to severe fragmentation of the policy executing and delivery system.

**Weak Local Government Capacity:** LG authorities are responsible for rural water supplies and sanitation facilities in their areas. However, only a few actually have the resources and the skills to address these problems. Most LG councils do not have rural water divisions that are able to construct small impoundments of surface water. In several instances, uncollected domestic refuse fills already inadequate surface water drainage systems and flooding occurs.

#### FADAMA DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NIGERIA

The word fadama means flood plains and low-lying areas underlined by shallow aquifers. It is an Hausa word meaning valley-bottom, floodplain or lowland around a river that floods or becomes wet when the river is high. The initial National Fadama Development Project (NFDP I) was initiated to address some of the factors that militated against the full realisation of the potential benefits of agricultural production activities in rural areas. Some of these factors were poor development of rural infrastructure, low investment in irrigation technology, poor organisation of farmers and limited access to foreign exchange for the importation of irrigation equipment. NFDP I was operational from 1993 to 1999 in six states. The programme built on some of the success of the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) in spreading pump and washbore-based farming. This was generally successful as it went with a general trend towards irrigated agriculture that had been building up through the 1980s. The implementation results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation Results of NFDP I

S/No.	Key Indicator	Estimated	Actual	%
1.	Washbores	22,500	33,528	149
2.	Tubewells	50,000	27,500	58.8
3.	Pumps procured	50,000	54,177	108
4.	Pumps distributed	50,000	30,277	60.6
5.	Access Road Constructed	810	716	88
6.	FUA go down and storage shed	138	130	94
7.	Cooling Facilities	5	4	80
8.	FUA formed	6,693	9,052	135
9.	Loan Recovery	100%	89%	89
10.	ERR	24%	40%	167
11.	Project rating		Satisfactory	

Source: PCU, 2005.

Despite these successes, however, some lapses were observed through which some lessons were learnt which helped in the proper packaging and implementation of NFDP II. The lessons are as follows:

**Supporting the provision of marketing infrastructure:** The Fadama I project helped producers increase output but not to store, preserve and market their surpluses. As a result, much of the output was sold at either low prices or not at all.

Empowering key stakeholders: There was limited participation of producers' organisations, local governments, the private sector and the civil society, including NGOs, in the design and implementation of projects and in the provision of advisory services. The limited involvement of these bodies raised concerns about project sustainability. Improving mechanisms of conflict resolution: The Fadama I project failed to adequately consider the needs of other users of fadama resources other than the farmers. As a result, conflict sometimes broke out between the farmers and pastoralists.

Supporting establishment of rural non-farm enterprises: The Fadama I project narrowly focused on crop production, neglecting opportunities to add value through processing and other activities.

Focusing on the contribution that can be made by women: The Fadama I project failed to fully recognise and enhance the contribution of women to the rural economy.

Emphasising improved management of natural resources: The Fadama I project promoted agriculture without paying adequate attention to the sound management of natural resources (Oredipe, 2005)

The components of NFDPII centred basically on the welfare and income of rural people. These components are given thus:

Capacity Building: This component supports measures to build the capacity of Fadama project beneficiaries so that they are equipped to access project advisory services and financing. The training also gives them the skills and know-how to carry out participatory planning as well as to implement, operate and maintain subprojects. Using trained facilitators in social mobilisation, beneficiaries are able to carry out needs assessments, prepare local development plans and to implement, operate and maintain subprojects.

Rural Infrastructure Investment: This is to support the creation of economic infrastructure and local public goods to improve the productivity of the beneficiaries. Through this component, the construction or rehabilitation of small-scale, infrastructure subprojects which are considered priorities by the community are financed.

Pilot Productive Asset Acquisition Support: The overall objective of this component is to enhance the improvement in fadama users' productivity and income by facilitating the acquisition of productive assets by individuals or fadama associations. Under this, support is given to the clients' enterprise management skills, their capacity to mobilise own funds and through the provision of matching grants for income-generating activities to fadama user groups or associations. A matching grant of 50 percent as supplement by the beneficiaries financing of 50 percent of the cost of the asset.

Demand-Responsive Advisory Service: This supports advisory services that enable fadama users to adopt output-enhancing techniques and more profitable marketing practices in their fadama enterprises. The project finances advisory services that accompany new investment activities in fadama areas on request by the user groups and advisory services that support on-going activities by fadama users.

Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation: This sub-component finances the establishment of M & E mechanisms and consultant services to develop and implement studies. These studies would evaluate the impact of the sub-projects and provide feedback to improve project implementation performance, including an impact assessment for mid-term review and another at the end of the project.

All the components are backed with substantial funds and implemented in 18 states. Out of the eighteen states, the World Bank supports twelve while the African Development Bank supports six states.

#### PROGRESS REPORT ON NFDPII

As at June 2005, a total of 766 Local Government Plans were reviewed and approved by the World Bank for financing in the first phase of the project. The number of IDPs prepared indicates that about 187,350 community associations have benefited and a total of 5,635 projects were supported. The distribution of the FCAs and the associated Fadama Users' Groups (FUGs) are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of LDPs and Sub-project Proposals by State

S/No	State	LDP (FCA)	Sub-Projects (FUG)	No of FUG used
1	Adamawa	90	392	13720
2	Bauchi	42	408	14280
3	FCT	47	317	11095
4	Gombe	75	428	16264
5	Imo	72	513	20520
6	Kaduna	38	260	9100
7	Kebbi	61	423	14805
8	Lagos	46	376	15792
9	Niger	102	1130	29380
10	Ogun	70	453	14,045
11	Oyo	51	373	13055
12	Taraba	105	562	14736
Total		766	5,655	187350

Source: Extracted from FCA LDPs submitted to the PCU,2005.

With respect to social inclusiveness, the extent of social inclusiveness of the FCAs/FUG, could be ascertained from the number of vulnerable groups, youth and women that participated in the identification and preparation of sub-project investment proposals. Though the vulnerable groups and women are not adequately represented in many FCAs LDP/FUGs subproject proposals, efforts have already been directed at correcting it. The composition is shown in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4: Social Inclusiveness of FUGs

S/No	State	Number of FCAs	Number of FUGs	in per cent			
				Widows	Youth	Disabled	Aged
1	Adamawa	90	392	1.0	2.0	-	
2	Bauchi	42	408	2	2	-	
3	FCT	47	317	3.5	0.6	1.0	2.2
4	Gombe	75	428	1.9	2.95	-	
5	Imo	72	513	0.4	1.1	-	
6	Kaduna	38	260	1.4	1.5	-	
7	Kebbi	61	423	-	-	-	
8	Lagos	46	376	-	0.8	2	0.5
9	Niger	102	1130	-	-	-	
10	Ogun	70	453	-	2.1	-	
11	Oyo	51	373	3.0	-	1.1	51
12	Taraba	105	562	-	2.4	-	
Total		766	5,655				

Source: Extracted from the FCA LDPs, 2005.

Assistance was also given based on economic interest groups. The various sub-project proposals of the FUGs are shown in Table 6. Crop farming dominates as the major economic activity but other activities are also represented. This shows that all enterprises in the fadama areas are supported. In summary, 361 LDPs and 2,681 sub-projects have been approved. The programme is gender sensitive. In other words, it is, socially inclusive as it incorporates various interest groups and enterprises in the development process.

#### LESSONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Fadama project has been able to record this much success because of the approach adopted in the process of the implementation of the project. Some of these are discussed below and are fit to form a template for development programmes which the LGs could embark on. The following approaches are attributed to be responsible for the success of the Fadama programme.

**Participatory Approach:** This is a community-driven development approach in agricultural and rural development. The fadama development represents a pioneering effort at practically demonstrating bottom-up approach to planning and development in Nigeria. The approach has to do with giving control of decisions and resources to community

groups. It is a way to provide social and infrastructural services; organise economic activity and resource management; empower poor people; improve governance and enhance common security. It also links participation, community management of resources, good governance and decentralisation. The participatory process elicits community commitment for sustainability of local projects. This is worthy of emulation by the LGs as it is a necessary precursor to sustainable rural development.

Table 5: FUGs Sub-project Investment Proposals by Gender

S/No	State	Number of FCAs	Number of FUGs	in per cent		
				Male	Female	Mixed
1	Adamawa	90	392	76.5	23.5	-
2	Bauchi	42	408	67.0	33.0	-
3	FCT	47	317	80.7	19.3	-
4	Gombe	75	428	42.0	58.0	-
5	Imo	72	513	53.0	28.0	19.0
6	Kaduna	38	260	61.0	27.0	12.0
7	Kebbi	61	423	69.0	31.0	-
8	Lagos	46	376	53.5	27.0	19.5
9	Niger	102	1130	69.0	31.0	-
10	Ogun	70	453	28.0	8.0	64.0
11	Oyo	51	373	50.0	17.0	33.0
12	Taraba	20	84	81.0	19.0	-
Total		766	5635			

Source: Extracted from FCA LDPs submitted to the PCU, 2005.

**Social Inclusiveness:** This is also vital for sustainable rural development. It disallows programs concentrating on one group of stakeholders to the detriment of others. When a programme is socially exclusive, it may result in conflicts or make the project non-responsive to the entire community and the excluded groups will not be able to contribute their talents, skills or resources. Also, excluded groups will not take part in protecting the investments and some may even attempt to sabotage the scheme. To this end, LG development interventions should not be based on political party membership in order to enhance sustainability. Social isolation is detrimental to interventions for rural development.

**Partnership with the private sector:** LGs alone cannot accomplish rural development efforts. There is the need to consider other elements around and in the community with whom they can develop partnerships. Partnerships are becoming the means by which organisations can increase their ability to realise opportunities quickly and perhaps at reduced cost. By aligning themselves with technical colleges or research institutions in their areas, it is also possible for LGs to obtain ideas and advisory service at low cost. Such partnership is a process. It takes a long period of time to build one yet it is an ideal to aspire unto.

**Organise farmers:** The farmers or rural people should be encouraged to form associations by the LGs. This would give them common voice and direction. They should also be able to constitute themselves into sub-groups for investment in a project. When they are in groups, they are easily mobilised and are able to request for financing and other assistance from the LGs. They will also be able to implement and manage development activities and monitor and evaluate projects.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a strong mechanism developed by the NFDP for the sustainability of projects. Series of evaluation and monitoring activities are carried out both at the LG and state levels. This enables the stakeholders to quickly identify grey areas and provide timely solutions. All LG programmes and projects should be properly monitored and evaluated to prevent hijack of the project by unintended beneficiaries.

**Procurement Methods:** Procurement process of goods and materials for NFDP II are left in the hands of the community. Establishing clear guidelines regarding what the community will be awarding contracts for, election of members who will manage procurement and payments are among key issues that the community should consider. This will prevent misappropriation of resources by LG officials. The direct labour approach could also be used by the community whereby the community uses its own resources (skilled and unskilled labour, materials, equipment), and may sub-contract part of the sub-project. This approach injects funds into the community. Local shopping



enables greater savings at the community level because it could be used as a bargaining tool with suppliers to get a better price. Local shopping may also be used for hiring skilled labour such as carpenters, bricklayers, painters, electricians, and plumbers for a development project in an LG. This method also strengthens the capacity of the rural poor. Efforts should however be made at correcting the major drawback which is the difficulty of estimating and controlling costs.

Table 6: Composition of FUGs by Economic Interest Groups

S/No	State	Number of FCAs	Number of FUGs	Crop Farming	Live-stock	Fishing Enterprise	Processing	Marketing Trading	Pastoralists	Hun-ting	Apiculture	Gathering	Non-farming
1	Adamawa	90	392	50	15.4	10.4	9.3	7.1	1.1	0.5	-	-	6.0
2	Bauchi	42	408	37.3	37.3	29.2	3.8	18.2	4.5	0.4	1	-	5.5
3	FCT	47	317	40.3	40.3	7.3	4.7	33.1	4.1	-	2.8	-	5.7
4	Gombe	75	428	45.2	12.9	-	26.7	8.3	2.8	-	-	-	2.8
5	Imo	72	513	46.5	17.4	5.8	19.0	2.3	-	-	-	-	8.9
6	Kaduna	38	260	48.5	11.9	1.2	26.5	11.9	2.7	-	-	1.2	2.7
7	Kebbi	61	423	62.8	40.4	2.6	20.1	0.9	1.7	-	0.9	-	0.7
8	Lagos	46	376	25.3	16.3	32.4	10.2	10.7	-	-	-	0.5	4.6
9	Niger	102	1130	46.4	11.1	9.0	25.7	3.7	-	0.8	-	0.5	3.2
10	Ogun	70	453	39.9	19.8	14.1	17.9	3.9	-	3.4	-	-	4.9
11	Oyo	51	373	42.4	25.0	15.4	7.5	1.9	-	2.4	65	1.6	54.2
12	Taraba	105	562	71.4	56.0	56.0	56.0	78.3	-	1.2	-	1.2	-
Total		766	5635	1135	393	292	518	164	15	39	1	9	115
% Composition			100	42	16	9.5	19.5	6	0.6	1.5	0.03	0.3	4.5

Source: Extracted from the FCA LDPs.. submitted to the PCU, 2005.

## CONCLUSION

The following recommendations are made:

- There is need for a strong demand by the community people for better budgeting and improved effectiveness of spending by the LGs. This would address the problems of weak public expenditure effectiveness and accountability. There should be increased information and education on public expenditure management and outcomes.
- The role of each tier of government should be properly defined. The current constitutional assignment of responsibilities between the different tiers seems at variance with revenue assignments and capacity particularly at the level of local government to effectively deliver services. This process should help reduce duplication of efforts across the three tiers and the institutional fragmentation that severely affects service delivery in all the sectors of the economy.
- Capacity building of individual, community and service providers should be a primary focus to all investment operations. This involves maximising the participation of men, women and other relevant stakeholder groups in the community in project planning, implementation and monitoring. It would also involve recognising the value of existing local capabilities and resources and building upon them.
- Appropriate implementation mechanisms need to be put in place so that projects are viewed less as ways to achieve preconceived outputs, and more as frameworks for communication and mutual learning among stakeholders, in the search for better ways to address problems faced by the rural community.

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