

Role of Sunrise Club in Strategic Capacity Building for Sustainable Development of Inyi Autonomous Communities

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Abstract

This paper is an evaluation of the role of Sunrise club in strategic capacity building for sustainable development of Inyi autonomous communities. The broad aim of this paper is to examine the strategies for capacity building for sustainable development of the autonomous communities of Inyi, in order to achieve this aim the specific objectives were designed to; assess the steps of strategic interventions in capacity building in Inyi autonomous communities; to evaluate the role of Sunrise Club explain various types in effective capacity building in sustainable development of Inyi communities; to examine the challenges of effective capacity building in Inyi communities; to explore the way forward for improved strategic capacity building for the sustainable development of Inyi. The research method adopted in this work is the descriptive survey design. Data were sourced through interviews. Both the founding fathers and ordinary members of the Sunrise Club were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by face to face through internet and telephone calls and messages. Secondary data were mainly used. Data collected through this method furnished information on the role and activities of Sunrise Club, foundations and philanthropists active in Inyi communities. The paper concluded, that as far as Inyi is concerned, community capacity building is much more than training, it also includes human resources development, it is the process of equipping individual citizens of Inyi with the understanding, skills, and access to information technology, knowledge and training that enable them to perform effectively and sustain a quality of life.

Keywords: Strategic Capacity Building; Sustainable Development; Challenges of Effective Capacity Building.

Introduction

Capacity building is an ongoing process in every quarter of the globe through which individuals, nonprofit making clubs and organizations, groups, communities and societies enhance their ability to identify and meet sustainable development challenges. Capacity building activities are based on three key elements of partnership, organizational development and civil society strengthening. The guiding partnership principles emphasize the importance of building just

relationships with individual local partners and strengthening their training and education to take up meaningful employment and leadership positions in the society.

As written in academic literature on capacity development in the previous decades, the 1990s and subsequent years saw a dramatic increase in references to capacity development. Development organisations, both multilateral and bilateral, emphasise the importance of capacity development in their strategy documents, and for several of these organisations, capacity development is the primary purpose of their development assistance. Importantly, there is recognition in development discourse that sustainable capacity development is an endogenous process driven by those whose capacities are to be developed. This means that while external assistance can play an important role in developing capacities, externally imposed initiatives are less likely to develop sustainable capacities. Developing sustainable capacity, therefore, needs to be demand-driven and focus on outcomes or results, in contrast to technical assistance that tends to be Supply-driven and focus on inputs. Capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system and has appeared in resolutions of the General Assembly for the past two decades.

International calls emphasizing the importance of capacity building for sustainable development has been numerous and a great deal of attention has been drawn to the specific capacity building needs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Capacity building has been embedded in the objectives and programmes of work of many international organizations and they offer a wide range of capacity building activities. While there seems to be an international consensus that capacity building is key to promoting sustainable development, more attention needs to be drawn to the way to go about it. Are the Current approaches to capacity building of international organizations actually effective? Are the right means being used to achieve the objective of capacity building for sustainable development? What needs to be done to actually build a critical mass of people with the right capacity to manage the environment and natural resources in a sustainable manner? Capacity building and development is a virtue and attribute that has been adopted at the local levels, for instance, Inyi autonomous communities have immensely benefitted from the activities of Sunrise club. The examination of the strategic activities of Sunrise club in relation to Capacity building and development has led to this study.

Objectives

The broad aim of this paper is to examine the strategies for capacity building for sustainable development of the autonomous communities of Inyi. In order to achieve this aim the specific objectives are designed;

- (i) To assess the steps of strategic interventions in capacity building in Inyi autonomous communities.
- (ii) To evaluate the role of Sunrise Club explain various types in effective capacity building in sustainable development of Inyi communities.
- (iii) To examine the challenges of effective capacity building in Inyi communities
- (iv) To explore the way forward for improved strategic capacity building for the sustainable development of Inyi

Research Method

The research method adopted in this work is the descriptive survey design. Data were sourced through interviews. Both the founding fathers and ordinary members of the Sunrise Club were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by face to face through internet and telephone calls and messages. Secondary data were mainly used. Data collected through this method furnished information on the role and activities of Sunrise Club, foundations and philanthropists active in Inyi communities.

Cartographic and GIS techniques were also utilized in order to provide information on the spatial dimension of the study area. Secondary data on population figures of the study area were also sourced from the National Population Commission Enugu.

Geographical Background of Inyi

Location, Position and Size

The study area, Inyi, consists of five autonomous communities, namely:

- (i) Enugu-Inyi autonomous communities.
- (ii) Agbada Inyi autonomous community consisting of Umuome, Amankwo, Obune and Nkwere.
- (iii) Ugwu Inyi-Agbalaji and Akwu.
- (iv) Umuagu autonomous community
- (v) Alum autonomous community.

These five autonomous communities are all located within Mmam River Development Centre in Oji River Local Government Area of Enugu State. The study area covers a latitudinal extent of about $6^{\circ}10'$ to $6^{\circ}20'$ north of the equator East and longitude extending from about $7^{\circ}9'$ to about $7^{\circ}23'$ East of the Greenwich meridian. However, the entire Oji-River Local Government Area comparatively is located between latitudes $6^{\circ}5'$ and $6^{\circ}26'$ north of the equator and longitudes $7^{\circ}4'$ and $7^{\circ}28'$ east of the Greenwich meridian.

Inyi is bounded in the North and east by Achi communities Awlaw is her neighbour in the south while Ugwuoba is found in the north-western part. The western part of Inyi is bounded by the Umuogein and Ufuma in Orumba North local government area of Anambra State. It covers a land area of about 40sq. km. Currently, Agbada Inyi autonomous community is the Headquarters of Mmam River Development Centre. The most urbanized and industrialized part of greater Inyi as a whole is Nkwo Market area and its environs. Inyi as a whole had an estimated total population of about 13,698 in 1963. It grew to about 18,839 in 1991. The estimated population census of 1996 put the figure at 21,745. By 2001, the population has exceeded the 25 Thousand mark (25,103).

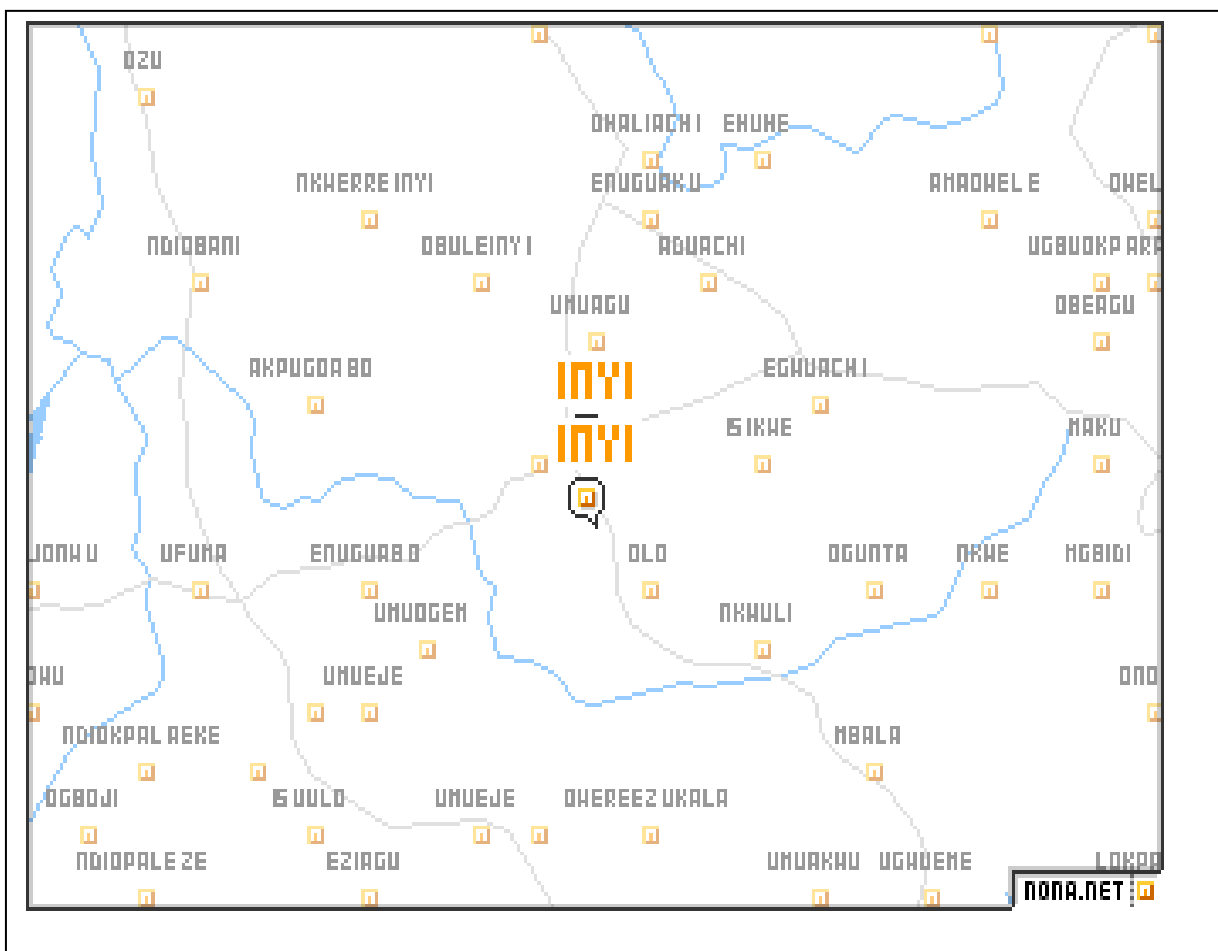
Geology, Relief and Drainage

The geology of Inyi autonomous communities is made up of two major formations, namely: the Ajali sandstone formation underlain by Imo clay shales of the Mmam formation. The friable coarse textured sandstone has high erodibility, for most of its parts, permits high ground water

velocity and also exhibits high water infiltration. The sandstones show varying degree of compactness in places.

The Ajali sandstones have been estimated to vary between 40m and 60m thick by Mozie and Aneke (1992) during a hydro physical survey of Achi area. The sandstones have very rich aquifer (water bearing formation underground). Underlying the sandstones is the impermeable Mmam clay shale formation. Where the clay-shale formation intercepts the porous and friable Ajali sandstone formations springs occur. Such springs include Iyi nwuro, Iyime, Iyi Aguochi and Ngwara, Ngene and Osuyaa to mention a few. These springs form the finger tip tributary streams of Mmam River and Oji River system. The two flows together to give rise to the Ezu River which joins the Anambra River, north of Otuocha.

The relief of the study area reflects the nature of the geology. The shale covered area is dominated by flat fairly drained to poorly drain low lands. They are most extensive in Mmam basin from Inyi to Ugwuoba from where they extend into Ebenebe. The sand stone formations have small domed summit features in several places. The open channel flow especially in Mmam River system has a wide V-shaped valley indicating that the stream is engaged more on lateral oration. The pattern of drainage is characteristically dendritic because of the sedimentary formations in the area.



Sunrise club of Inyi was formed by progressive eminent Inyi citizens resident in Lagos with the specific objectives of spreading the gospel of sustainable development and capacity building to improve and sustain the quality of life of Inyi people. It was established on the 4th November, 2001 with Admiral Dr. Alison Madueke (Rtd) as the patron. Prof. Nick Eze was the first president. The very first idea and letter for the formation of this noble club was initiated by Chief Benedict Nkem Oramalugo (Nkenke Enyi 1 of Inyi). Thus, the club is still a very young one being only about 13 years now. But within so short a time, it has proved to be tangible significant manifestation of Inyi community interest.

Sunrise Club has proved to be the only nonprofit making organization in Inyi which acts as a mechanism by which many good people of Inyi actively participate and become involved in the sustainable development of their communities. It is therefore important conduits for voicing the preferences of Inyi communities. The role of nonprofit organizations in promoting sustainable development was internationally acknowledged in Agenda 21 (the comprehensive plan of action adopted as far back as 1992 in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCE) in Rio de Janeiro Brazil). Specifically Sunrise Club plays the following roles.

- (i) **Shaping and activating a common sense of purpose within all the autonomous communities of Inyi:** Although Sunrise Club over the past decade has frequently been on the frontlines of representing Inyi community interests, it is a community based resource and cannot be taken for granted. The club requires continual renewal to maintain her value relevance and effectiveness.
- (ii) **Training and Mentoring:** Leadership is particularly an important factor in the Club and Inyi as a whole. Each generation of the club must therefore educate, train and mentor the next generation of the club members and Inyi people to understand the important role and mission that Sunrise club play in expressing community interests. In an era of accelerating change and competing demands, this renewal process takes on greater urgency and requires investments and sacrifices of time, finances and energy.
- (iii) **Facilitating trust and interaction:** Sunrise Club facilitates trust in individuals and institutions and interaction by defining mutual obligation and member rights by creating sets of specialized roles internal to the club by establishing internal authority and accountability system. The club promotes norms and behavioral patterns regarded as useful to the group and inhibiting those regarded as detrimental
- (iv) **Accumulating Social Capital:** The Sunrise Club of Inyi incorporates important accumulations of human experience and knowledge which is known as social capital (Cernea, 1994). As the Igwes and leaders in each of the five autonomous communities search for new ways of capacity building to strengthen, enrich and sustain community life, they have increasingly turned their attention to the concepts of civic participation and social cohesion. As Putnam (1993) discovered in his study in Italy, the stronger a community social capital and tradition of civic engagement are, the greater is its potential to grow and thrive. This also applies to Inyi.

- (v) **Building and maintaining social Relations:** Sunrise Club of Inyi play, a critical role in civil society of Inyi by building and maintaining important social relationships. It provides a means by which our local people can interact and work toward common goals. The social capital that is created come through a variety of channels, vis club member volunteers working alongside each other, board members promoting the activities of Sunrise Club in Inyi autonomous communities. Such experiences build ties between people and enhance social capital.
- (vi) **Miscellaneous:** Sunrise Club of Inyi also performs many other functions in our autonomous communities. It is particularly strong because the club is autonomous and not subject to vagaries of market forces and changing priorities of governments and Igwes in Inyi or Oji River L.G.A. The club enjoys a special legitimacy because its existence derives from free association rather than the law or anticipation of monetary profit. Members join out of passionate convictions. Because of their attachment to and reflection of community interests, the club is more likely to put charitable and community preferences before monetary profitability. The club institutes both internal and external strategies to produce greater organizational efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility. Because of legal prohibitions, Sunrise Club is constrained from engaging in direct partisan political activities. Nevertheless, legal restrictions do not entirely strip their members of political options. For instance, the club may play positive role to influence public policy, to attract political appointments, to win elections and offers of employment through political strategies such as lobbying legislators and ministers, mobilizing public opinions and making campaign contributions. The willingness of the club members to embrace change may also be a very critical factor. Because change is difficult risky and uncertain, the club members may often prefer to follow comfortable courses that have worked successfully in the past. Such rigidity and resistance to change can hamper the capacity of Sunrise Club of Inyi to serve the Inyi community especially in our present environments that is undergoing constant socio-economic change.

Components of Effective Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in Inyi.

From the perspectives of this local study, effective capacity building programs designed for sustainable development by foundations is characterized by eight characteristics. They are:

- (1) **Comprehensiveness:** Although narrowly- defined interventions can work, foundations most effective capacity-building activities offer some degree of “One-stop shopping” in which grantees can access a range of assessment services, technical assistance, financial aid, and other kinds of support.
- (2) **Customized:** Effective capacity-building services most especially designed for sustainable development are custom tailored to the types of nonprofit, its community environment and its place in the organizational life cycle. Young, start-up nonprofits are likely to have needs very different from more strongly established older organizations.

- (3) **Competence-based:** The most effective capacity-building services are those that are offered by well- trained providers (both foundation staff and expert service providers.) and requested by knowledgeable, skilled and sophisticated consumers. That is, nonprofit managers and board members.
- (4) **Timely:** The most effective capacity building takes place in the balanced space between action taken too slowly to be of relevance (usually due to funder delays in acting on grant applications) and action taken too fast to permit the flowering of an intervention in a complex context and changing society.
- (5) **Peer-connected:** The most effective capacity-building for sustained development of Inyi community will happen when there are opportunities for peer-to-peer networking, mentoring and information change.
- (6) **Assessment-based:** The most effective capacity-building starts with a strict assessment of the needs and assets of the nonprofit foundations and the Inyi community in which they operate. This in turn propels the types of capacity-building service provided by the funders.
- (7) **Readiness-based and contextualized:** The most effective capacity-building will occur when the nonprofit ‘client’ or beneficiary is ready to receive this specialized service. More so, the most efficient capacity building takes place in the larger context of other strengthening services received and or provided by nonprofit foundations and philanthropists as well as other elements of the present Inyi community environment.

Challenges of Strategic Capacity Building in Inyi.

Very many hurdles against effective strategic building-capacity in Inyi were identified. All these need to be handled in order to increase the positive impacts of strategic capacity-building activities in our community. These challenges can be categorized into five, briefly explained below:

- (i) **Quality and Evaluation:** Service offered by or through the foundation capacity-building programs in Inyi are of various quality, in view of both consumers and independent observers. There has been no rigorous evaluation of these services so that they can be improved upon for more effectiveness.
- (ii) **Nonprofit and community engagement:** Nonprofit (foundations and philanthropists) and the Inyi autonomous community (i.e. the stakeholders) need to be more actively involved in setting the agenda for effective strategic capacity-building and in evaluating its outcomes. Capacity-building programs provide real opportunity for power-sharing.
- (iii) **Insufficient funder education and development:** Some foundation do not have sufficient education and the required technical assistance that will enable them learn state-of-the-art practices in strategic capacity-building, the merit of involvement in such philanthropic activity and how to appraise the payoffs achieved from what they fund.
- (iv) **Shakeout and second generation:** Growing duplication of services and marginally effective providers make a “ shakeout” in the capacity-building field inevitable,

followed by a second generation of more sophisticated(evaluation-based, theory-driven) strategic capacity-building programs.

- (v) **Inadequate infrastructure to support capacity-building:** More infrastructure is required to support capacity-building in philanthropy in order to educate funders, nonprofits, and Inyi indigenes of the five autonomous communities. There is also need for more field building to replicate proven strategic capacity-building, to promote sharing of good practices; and to enhance the relationship of capacity-building to overall aims of philanthropy in Inyi.

Suggestions for A Way Forward

In concluding this paper, six main recommendations for improving strategic capacity-building and the infrastructure supporting these activities can be recognized from the work.

- (i) **Conduct a more detailed study of “good practices” in capacity-building:** This is necessary in order to create a data-base (containing brief descriptions in a standard form of at least the human resources available in Inyi and the capacity-building programs already existing in the community as a whole). This should be made available to people of Inyi both in print (hard copy) and online (soft copy) formats.
- (ii) **Conduct a meta-analysis of capacity-building program in philanthropy:** This is required to synthesise common findings, refine the preliminary definitions of core components presented by the author in this paper and identity methodological problems with this type of evaluations and resolutions attempted for them.
- (iii) **Conduct a series of case studies of capacity-building programs in philanthropy:** This involves identifying key types of philanthropic activities in Inyi and using the case study approach to develop a better comprehension of how these programs were started, what they did and what impacts they produced.
- (iv) **Conduct empirical research on the effectiveness of specific capacity-building interventions.** This suggestion is designed to determine, for example, whether peer consultation approaches may be more effective than experts interventions, at least for certain types of capacity-building.
- (v) **Develop, and pilot test an online capacity-building service:** This would use the internet to deliver information resources, assessment technologies and other technical assistance to nonprofit and foundations in Inyi.
- (vi) **Promote cross-sector dialogue on capacity-building:** This recommendation will help to stimulate sharing of ideas among the nonprofits, foundations, individual philanthropists, and other sectors, especially the corporate world and government both of which have their own distinct in rural interest in capacity-building in rural communities of Nigeria (Nwobodo, 2014).

Conclusion

This research has thrown more light on the significant roles of Sunrise Club of Inyi in the sustainable development of Inyi through strategic capacity-building. It has also explained the need for inevitable collaborative effort by the stakeholder’s nonprofits, foundations and

individual philanthropy). In conclusion, it must be noted that as far as Inyi is concerned, community capacity building is much more than training. It also includes human resources development. That is the process of equipping individual citizens of Inyi with the understanding, skills, and access to information technology, knowledge and training that enable them to perform effectively and sustain a quality of life. Community capacity-building also involves organizational development, elaboration of management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community). Community capacity building also involves institutional and legal framework development, making necessary changes to enable individual philanthropists, organizations, foundations, nonprofits Sunrise Club of Inyi and other agencies at all levels and in all sectors to collaborate and enhance their capacities for effective sustainable development of the five communities of Inyi.

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