THE EFFECT OF SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SKILL ACQUISITION AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN RIVERS STATE.
THE EFFECT OF SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SKILL ACQUISITION AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN RIVERS STATE.

BY
AMADI-ERIC, C.
joesac2000@yahoo.com

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
NKPOLU-OROWORUKWO, PORT HARCOURT.

&

OWAKA, NDIDI IKECHI
ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION OPTION
RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
PORT HARCOURT

ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study titled “The effect of Shell petroleum Development Company’s Vocational Education Skills Acquisition as a Community Development Project in Rivers State” was to explore the medium through which vocational education can improve community development in that area. It is a survey study which attempts at viewing the issues of underdevelopment of the area from the perspective of Shell Petroleum Development Company. Findings revealed few attempts by the company in trying to equip school leavers and dropouts to earn a living, provision of employment opportunities, lack of necessary tools and availability of funds. However, lack of concerted efforts at proper developmental drive is observed. Government departments, ministries and agencies responsible for community development are, as a matter of urgency recommended to float skill training programmes in tandem with the oil giants in order to reduce poverty. Vocational skill training courses should be taught in secondary schools, and also unemployed youths who are idle should engage themselves in skill training in order to be self reliant and self employed.

INTRODUCTION
In recent times, it has come to be accepted that the co-operation of social responsibility is a form of social investment, which firms make in the area of operation (Nwokedi 1992:27). In the Niger Delta region, due to reasons bordering mainly on community agitation, most companies are now embarking on community development programmes in order to assuage incessant unrests and protests that threaten their operations. Ezeh (1999)
defined community development as an effort geared towards achieving the solution of community problems, in raising their standard of living as well as in their promoting social welfare, justice, community cohesion and the development of their materials and human resources to the fullest extent. He also went further to explain that the term "community development" denotes various strategies and interpositions through co-ordinated actions of the community members in order to usher in for the people social and economic development. Okafor (2000) defined vocational education as that segment of education in-charge of preparing people for work. It is the backbone of the nation’s development. This implies that one is directly involved in a skill which will enable him/her earn a living. John (2005) reported that until recently, the provision of infrastructural facilities by Shell Petroleum Development Company and other oil companies have dominated community assistance efforts in the communities hosting crude oil exploration and production activities. These efforts include provision of safe water facilities, roads, electricity, schools, classroom blocks, jetties and agricultural activities etc. Shell Petroleum Development Company and other major oil production companies like Chevron Nigeria Limited, Mobil Oil Producing, Agip Nigeria etc have shifted the thrust of their community development or assistance initiatives on investment on scholarship awards and vocational skill training schemes. However, major development for firm sponsored vocational training dated from the opening of the United African Company (U.A.C) and first training school with a total enrolment of almost five hundred students for five-year apprenticeship (Ozuzu, 1994). In 1958, the Shell B.P Petroleum development company established a trade school at Port Harcourt with places for 130 apprenticeships. Also, in order to rehabilitate those who were found in the 2nd world war, the colonial government established trade centres where veterans were trained in various skills as artisans and craftsmen.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.
Stressing further on the need for the local community to be given a higher degree of participation, Warmer (1996) thus stated "rural people are encouraged to set their own development objectives to use these as the basis for a participative analysis of collected data and to realize their objectives through ownership of a plan of strategic action (p.330). Community development as a process also stresses the development of positive social relationship among the people and also helps them develop the behavioural skills and aptitude that will help to promote such social relationship. It also helps them not only to become more effective in their participation in solving problems of their community, but also aids them to develop the skills to assess the relative importance of the problems and to select appropriate options open to them (Anyawu, 1992). Murray (1991) define community development as the utilization under one single programme of approach and which rely upon local communities as units of actions which attempt to
combine outside assistance with organized local self-determination and effort, and which correspondingly seek to stimulate local initiative and leadership as a primary instrument of change. Arthur (1999) gives a rather comprehensive definition of the term; a method of helping local communities to become aware of their needs, to assess their resources more realistically; to organize themselves and their resources in such a way as to satisfy some of their needs and in so doing acquire the attitude, experiences and co-operative skills for repeating this process again and gain on their own initiatives. By this definition, community development is a process in the sense that it is a dynamic sequence which, when set in motion, supplies its own motion power so that people in the community through their own effects are enabled to move steadily towards the goal of self improvement.

For the purpose of this research, we will define community development as: 
*A process of social action in which people of a community organize themselves for identification of their needs, for planning and for action to meet those needs with maximum reliance on their own initiative and resources, supplemented with assistance in any form of government and non-governmental organizations.*

**The Concept of Vocational Education**

Education in general is an exercise that engages everyone as an individual, one either goes through liberal, general or vocational education. The adults who did not have an opportunity for formal education in their youth are directly or indirectly involved in education because education means more than going to school. Ozuzu (1994) sees vocational education as vocational or technical training or retraining, which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control or under contract with a state board or local education agency. Okoro (1999) defined vocational education as any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare person for employment in recognized occupations. Vocational education provides the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for effective employment in specific occupation. Considering vocational education for development activities, Udeagwe (1990) says that national development activities aim at such goals as provision of gainful employment, increase in food supplies, eradication of diseases, provision of shelter, improving the capacity of the management of available resources etc of which vocational education stands for. He noted that the federal government has rightly identified massive unemployment as one of the main factors hindering the economic growth of the country and it is interesting to note that the majority of the registered unemployment is of the products of secondary school sectors. The envisaged solution to the problem is for the Directorate of Employment, Federal Ministry of Labour, Employment and productivity to place these registered unemployed Nigerians in various...

Vocational education as a social process should be primarily with people and their part in doing the work that society needs done. It is concerned with preparing people for work and improving the work potential of the labour force. For people, this means economic independence, self realization and dignity. Their work results in the production of goods and services needed by a dynamic society.

Vocational education is a comprehensive term to the educational process when it involves, in addition to general education process, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

The major occupation areas of vocational education:

- Vocational agriculture;
- Business and office education;
- Distributive education;
- Home economics, education;
- Traditional industrial education;
- Health occupations; and
- Technical education

We give definition of the relevant vocational skill acquired by youths in the Shell Training programme in Rivers State.

a) **Trade and Industrial Education**

This is an instruction that is planned to develop basic manipulative skills, safety judgment, technical knowledge, and related occupational information for the purpose of fitting persons for initial employment in industrial occupation and upgrading or retraining workers employed in industries e.g. auto mechanics, computer services, carpentry.

b) **Home Economics Education**

This is a programme of instruction which is planned for the purpose of assisting youths and adults to understand and solve problems in home and family living and/or to prepare for employment and upgrading in occupations involving knowledge and skills in home economics subject e.g. fashion/Designing, Catering.

c) **Technical Education**

This is education to earn a living in an occupation in which success is dependent largely on technical information and understanding. It is the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life e.g. refrigeration, air-conditioning, soft furnishing.

d) **Business and Office Education**

This is a vocational education programme for office careers through initial refresher and upgrading which lead to employability and advancement in office occupation and to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs in using services of the business world e.g. computer science.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Vocational education includes all forms of education that relate to the development of practical, useable and saleable skills. The key words here are useable and saleable. A trader is in business only when he/she has the commodities to sell. Vocational education arms individuals with saleable commodities in the form of different kinds of functional skills-agricultural, business, commercial, industrial and so forth (Bulabari, 2002). There is no question about the fact that vocational education in our communities needs boost to improve its programme (relevance, efficiency, skills, etc). Many avenues exist for community involvement in improving vocational education programme in our communities. Such avenues include the provision of funds, facilities, land, tools, educational services, expertise advice for long term programme planning and so on. Such improvements are designed to meet the felt needs of vocational technical institutions as well as a more reliable and systematic means of improving vocational education programmes. Indeed, some progress have been made in this direction especially with regards to the continuing support given by urban communities to well established vocational technical education institutions.

THE ROLE OF SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Shell Petroleum Development Company’s support community development is guided by two interrelating objectives. First, as a member of the Shell Group, they adhere to the group’s principles of social responsibility. In Niger Delta, this is expressed through a series of direct social investments, which they select together with participating communities to meet the needs they feel to be most important (John, 2005). Secondly, to underpin the long-term sustainability of business operations, they continue to work with government and others towards the development of enabling social and economic environment. Shell Petroleum Development Company’s approach to community development draws on the best global practices. Their policies, plans and programmes have increasingly involved the full participation of beneficiary groups, especially women and youths. They are also forging strategic partnerships with communities, Non-Government Organization (NOGS), government and international organizations to ensure equity, community ownership and sustainability of project. Both the communities and the company have much to gain from this participatory approach.
communities increase their access to improved socio-economic services and the company gains in terms of a more peaceful and stable operating environment. In the process, the capacities of both community members and Shell Petroleum Development Company staff are strengthened, helping to further transform and strengthen the implementation of the programme.

SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (SKILL ACQUISITION) IN RIVERS STATE.
Generally, the Rivers are said to have settled in the area well before the 15th century and established themselves in various tribes, Ikwerres Okrikas Ogonis Ekpeyes, Kalabari, Omoku, Opobo (Igbanis), Etche Andoni, Ahoada, Eleme, Obigbo, etc. The history which is behind this is very interesting, but of little value here. Rivers State which is one of the states in Nigeria, is in the rain forest area with most of the shores being washed by blackish water (Salt Water). Oil was first struck in Rivers State in the whole of Niger Delta, in Ogoni land in 1950’s. Shell had three major drilling wells in Rivers State. They were in Ogoni, Okrika and Omuoku respectively. The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited established its youth training scheme (YTS) in Rivers State in the 1980’s in support of the national efforts to reduce the growing unemployment among the youths. Their objectives were to:

Reduce unemployment in Rivers State
Help the people of Rivers State develop the right attitude to work and the habits of mind conductive to the proper use of technology;
Equip school leavers and dropouts with skills to earn a living; and
Stimulate and encourage creativity.

Concerned as the company was, it was constrained by the capital-intensive nature of the oil and gas industry to employ, more youths from its host communities then it launched the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The Scheme is a vocational skill-training programme through which participants acquire necessary skills for self employment of eligibility for employment. Shell Petroleum Development Company started the scheme in collaboration with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Rivers State in 1995. Between 1995 and 1997, five schemes were implemented and 1,469 youths were trained in various occupations. Community development partner (CODEP), Banailk Nigeria Ltd and International Foundations executed these schemes for education and self-help. The schemes are:
Bonny/Ibani Youth Training Scheme;
Egbeme Youth Training Scheme;
Nembe Youth Training Scheme;
Ogoni Youth Training Scheme; and
Soku Youth Training Scheme.
These schemes were implemented through the “mobile workshop Model” of training popularly known in Nigeria as “School of Wheels”. Arising from the inherent inefficiencies associated with the ‘model of training’, the Youth Training Scheme was reviewed in 1999 and the training model replaced with the “Institutionalized training Model” in conformity with the National Policy on Vocational Education. The duration of the scheme was increased and a two-month “on-the-job” training session was conducted at the following centres-Bori and Bodo City all in Gokana L.G.A of Rivers State. In the same year 2006, youths were trained in welding/fabrication, electrical, electronics, carpentry, auto mechanic, fashion design and hair dressing by Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centre (NOPIC) and the Rivers State Technological Skills Acquisition Centre (TESAC). In addition to acquiring core skills, youths in Rivers state undergoing Shell Petroleum Development Company’s skill training are exposed to enterprise management, peace-education, training, feeder courses and On-the-job-training (OJT), To prepare them for future challenges of self employment.

From the stages, graduates would proceed to establish their own workshops with the tools and take-off grant provided by Shell Petroleum Development Company at graduation. For far, five trainees from the first batch (1998/1999) have secured employment in Shell Petroleum Development Company after the completion of the Shell Internship Training Programme (SITP/2). In addition three (3) ex-trainees have gained admission into higher institutions. Currently, 41 graduate trainees from the youth oil and gas training scheme in Rivers state are attending the Shell Intensive Training Programme (SITP) (2) designed to train technicians for the oil industry. Since then, other youth development programmes have been introduced. They are:

1. **Youth Oil and Gas Training:** The Scheme is a special technical conversion training for secondary school leavers designed to address the poor enrolment youths from Bayelsa and Rivers State into Shell Petroleum Development Company’s Special Intensive Training Programme (SITP/2) for technicians. The Government Craft Development Centre, Port Harcourt handles the training.

2. **Peace Education Programme (Youth Leaders Forum)**

This programme brings together executive officers of community youth associations and student union executives from tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta and equips them with conflict transformation skills and Alternative Dispute Resolution processes, especially mediation and peace advocacy to bring about non-violent social and economic changes in the communities. The youths are later deployed as peace ambassadors in host communities.

3. **Citizenship Education (School Prefect Leadership Training Scheme)**
This was introduced to build managerial capacities and leadership potentials of selected school prefects in order to meet the development needs of the youths.

**Youth Training Scheme in Rivers State**

Breakdown of Training Schemes, from 1995-2000 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Scheme</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welding and Fabrication</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry and Joinery</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Mechanics</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Dressing</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap making</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing and Filtering</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle making</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream/Powder making</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outboard</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm oil processing</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,447</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shell Petroleum Development Company collaborates with specialist organization of government, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to deliver this laudable programme to the people of Rivers State they include:

- Gesellshaft for technical Zusemenarbel (GTZ)
- International Foundation for Self-Help
- Government Craft Development Centre, Port Harcourt
- Strategic Empowerment and Mediation Agency (SEMA)
- Citizenship and Leadership Training (C/LTC)
- State Ministries of Education

In view of all these the Shell Intensive Training Programme has the following effects or contributions to the youths in Rivers state and they include:

- The graduates of the programmes can fit into different occupations
- The programme has helped in the production of the required manpower in Rivers State.
- The programme has helped in reducing the high rate of unemployment among its graduates.
- The graduates of the programme are being employed more than
others and some of them occupy high services in both government and private firms.

Graduates of the programme have been able to establish on their own and offer job opportunities to others.

The programme has contributed to the economic development of Rivers State in different directions.

The programme offers the right type of skills to their enrollees needed in the world of work.

PROBLEMS

From the foregoing, the following have been identified as factors militating against vocational technical education (skill acquisition) in effort to contribute to development of Rivers State.

1. Finance: According to John (2005) who is a staff of Gessellschaft for Technical Zusammenarbeit, (GTZ), the first thing that comes to mind is finance. This is because without finance it is impossible to execute any project. Lack of fund and improper funding of vocational technical education have greatly hindered the project and have brought about the slow pace of development on Rivers State. The idea of government to fund technical colleges side by side with Shell Development company without special grants and attention is a cloy in the wheel of realizing the objectives for which the project or programme was established in Rivers State.

2. Lack of tools, equipment and machines

Improper funding has made it almost impossible for the beneficiaries to have access to all the necessary and modern tools, equipments and machines for effective take off. Most of the tools and machines presently in the community are scraps and where they are functional they are out dated.

3. Lack of consumable training material

Lack of training materials and graded steel are another problem that militates against the programme in Rivers State. Training materials are used for practical training and development skills and technical know how in various centres in Rivers State. If these training materials are not available, how would the beneficiaries develop the necessary skills to work? Without training materials the implementation of the programme will be producing half baked graduates.

4. Lack of technical textbooks

A student denied of textbooks and other learning materials is like a farmer without farm implements. Lack of books and other instructional materials have made beneficiaries wholly dependable on the materials supplied by their instructors. When there are enough textbooks and other journals, the beneficiaries of the programme may also learn from other sources and develop widely and deeply.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:
Nigeria has been having a growing need for development since her independence in 1960. There has been a great demand for increase in the industrial economy of the country. The result has been the demand for skilled manpower, peopled with intellectual perceptiveness, technical understanding and manipulative skills which can cope with the problems generated by this scientific and technological age. Whether or no, how we can develop our communities will depend on how well we continue to provide the kind of manpower that have the capabilities to conceive original ideas and to translate creative concepts into useable products, machines and structures. Good enough our vocational and technical institutions today are training out graduates who think creatively and can initiate action to keep community development and technological development forging ahead. But at the same time, technical education must establish an educational environment in various communities where students can achieve learning experiences in design and development, production, operation or control, installation, maintenance and sales. The programme must provide practical laboratory manufacturing, techniques, so that students can readily themselves to assume specific responsibilities in a variety of industrial jobs. The problems of vocational technical education so identified by the Gesellshaft for Technical Zusemmenarhelt (GTZ) staff must be tackled to remove all bottlenecks so that vocational technical education will effectively organize its programme toward efficient and adequate manpower development.

REFERENCES


