



## Literacy education and mobilization of resources in community development projects in the Niger Delta Region

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### Abstract

The study looked at how much literacy instruction has helped young people in Bayelsa and Rivers States raise financial capability for community development initiatives. 2,550 and 6,926 adult learners enrolled in adult education programs in Bayelsa and Rivers States, respectively, made up the study's population. Using the snowball sampling technique, samples of 245 and 924 students were chosen from these numbers. The Literacy Education and the Mobilization of Resources for Project Initiation in Community Development Projects Questionnaire (LEMRPICDPQ), a tool created by the researcher, was used to gather data. When the Cronbach Alpha technique was used to examine the instrument's reliability, the results showed a good degree of internal consistency with a coefficient of 0.87. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the study questions, with a criterion mean of 2.50. According to the report, literacy instruction has significantly improved young people's ability to raise funds for community development initiatives in both states. In order to improve functional skills and boost young participation in community development projects, it was advised that adult education providers step up their efforts to raise awareness among learners about the value of taking part in literacy training programs.

**Keywords:** Literacy, mobilization, community development

### Introduction

Over the years, the concept of community development has sparked a great deal of scholarly debate with a wide range of applications and interpretations (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005). Similar ideas like community organization, community action, and community education inline with this idea . According to Cavaye (2015), it is commonly associated with concepts such as empowerment, rural development, self-reliance, community vitality, and community capacity building. Notwithstanding the diversity of forms, these viewpoints have several things in common, such as the desire for better living conditions, shared ownership, and group action.

According to Oyebamiji (2012) and Oyebamiji & Adekola (2008), community development is the process by which people of a community come together to take joint action to address common issues. In order to promote equality, improve social inclusion, create social transformation, and lessen poverty, it places a strong emphasis on inclusive decision-making and collaborative action. Beyond observable results, it represents a mindset that places an emphasis on power balance and participatory processes. Community development, according to the United Nations (2016), is a broad concept that includes activities that help local communities improve their quality of life through programs like social welfare, healthcare, education, agricultural development, and small business support.

Despite these well-established viewpoints, there are still many challenges facing community development initiatives in the Niger Delta. Although the goal of community development is to promote socioeconomic advancement and the expansion of infrastructure, there are questions over how much literacy has improved human capital and made it easier to effectively mobilize support for development projects.

According to Akande (2016), community development is a dynamic process that combines action and knowledge to change the circumstances that cause communities to be

marginalized. It is based on the ideas of group self-reliance and self-help. Practically speaking, this means that community members work to create jobs, increase revenue, build infrastructure, and strengthen their ability to adapt to change. When people have the capacity to engage in meaningful participation, the concrete advantages of community development become apparent. Widespread literacy, which improves employability, cultivates good attitudes, fortifies social networks, stimulates creative problem-solving, and maximizes the use of community resources, is frequently necessary to achieve this.

Encouraging literacy among community people improves their willingness to participate in development activities and their functional capabilities. A major factor in human growth and the reduction of poverty, literacy is a potent tool for social and economic engagement. It stands for a continuum of education that enables people to reach their own objectives, increase their knowledge, and take an active role in society. Literacy is essential in today's knowledge-driven cultures. According to Ojo and Abu (2018), literacy programs give adults and children the fundamental communication and numeracy skills they need to end illiteracy. The foundation of communication and lifelong learning is literacy, which offers the skills needed to function in a world that is changing quickly.

Literacy is the capacity to recognize, comprehend, interpret, produce, communicate, and compute using written and printed materials in a variety of circumstances, according to UNESCO (2003) and UNESCO & UIL (2016). Its significance in mobilizing material, financial, and cognitive (social capital) resources for community development initiatives is highlighted by this definition. Being literate gives people the tools they need to fight poverty and enhance their quality of life. According to UNESCO and UIL (2016), literacy improves people's knowledge and skills, empowering them to adapt to social, cultural, and economic shifts. Accordingly, it is an essential tool for promoting

gender equality, reducing poverty, creating jobs, empowering people, improving health outcomes, protecting the environment, and promoting democratic participation (United Nations, 2005; UNESCO, 2015).

Because of its strategic value, literacy is essential to the development of society. It is versatile, anchored in sociocultural theory, and appropriate in a range of settings. According to UNESCO (2015), literacy is crucial for giving people the tools they need to deal with the complexities of society. As a result, learning the fundamentals of literacy can be seen as a catalyst for liberation and as a first step in raising funds for community development.

People can increase their resilience and standard of living by being exposed to literacy-based competencies. It improves their ability to take part in group activities to raise living standards and fortifies their ability to make significant contributions to development projects. As a result, teaching basic literacy skills becomes essential for enabling adults and children to contribute to sustainable societal growth and to operate successfully in their communities.

Furthermore, literacy includes the development of the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities required to handle social and economic difficulties in addition to the acquisition of reading and writing skills. According to the Hamburg Declaration, literacy serves as a basis for lifelong learning and as a stimulant for engagement in social, cultural, political, and economic life. In a similar vein, the UN General Assembly's declaration of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2002) confirms that literacy is crucial for giving kids, teens, and adults the life skills they need to face today's issues and contribute productively to societies and economies in the twenty-first century.

Given these viewpoints, it is possible to view basic literacy as a necessary talent for the modern world. It stands for gaining the skills, information, and dispositions that allow people to improve their quality of life and actively participate in raising funds for community development initiatives.

### **Theoretical Framework**

According to human capital theory, ongoing education, training, and skill development can increase a person's capacity for production. The notion was seen to be pertinent to this study since literacy is seen as an essential instrument for enhancing young people's human capital, which in turn enhances their civic engagement, productivity, and involvement in raising funds for community development initiatives. Young people are better equipped to acquire information and communication technology (ICT) skills, health knowledge, creativity, political awareness, entrepreneurial competence, and communication talents when they are literate. They are able to recognize, make use of, and optimize resources for the benefit of their communities because to their competences. Without reading skills, young people would not be able to identify opportunities in their surroundings or efficiently use local resources for development.

Similar to this, Freire's Theory of Conscientization asserts that education ought to be a tool for emancipation, enabling students to take revolutionary action and develop a critical awareness of their social, political, and economic realities. The "banking" or knowledge-dumping paradigm of education, which treats students as passive consumers of knowledge, was something that Freire rejected. The current study is supported by this approach, which emphasizes that

literacy should encompass more than only the dissemination of knowledge. Rather, it ought to arouse students' critical consciousness so they may take an active role in changing society. According to this concept, literacy gives young people the understanding and agency they need to become proactive mobilizers in the process of community development, in addition to providing them with fundamental skills.

### **Problem Statement**

In recent years, it has been noted that many young people in Bayelsa and Rivers States are involved in a variety of social vices, including advance fee fraud, crimes related to rituals, drug misuse, and human trafficking, instead of developing their skills and strengthening their communities. Despite the fact that both states' governments have put in place literacy programs designed to improve young people's abilities and build human capital, it is unclear how much of these efforts have resulted in significant involvement in community development, especially when it comes to resource mobilization.

As far as the researcher is aware, there isn't much empirical data on this topic. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how much literacy initiatives have helped young people in Bayelsa and Rivers States raise funds for community development initiatives.

### **Objectives of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the extent which literacy education programmes have helped youth in the mobilisation of resources for the mobilisation of resources in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers states. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to that literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources for project initiation by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa State.
2. Ascertain the extent that literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources for project initiation by youth in community development projects in Rivers State.
3. Determine if there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used for the study

1. To what extent has literacy education contributed to the mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa State?
2. To what extent has literacy education contributed to the mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Rivers State?

### **Hypothesis**

To further determine if a relationship exist between both groups, the following hypothesis was used for the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

Bayelsa and Rivers state was purposively selected for the study because they occupy a central location in the region. The population of the study was 2550 and 6,926 registered adult learners in government and private adult education programmes in Bayelsa and Rivers states. A sample of 255 and 924 respondents which represents 10 (%) of the population of both states was used for the study. The sample was derived using the snowball sampling technique. This is in line with Ting et. al, (2025) who stated that a researcher can determine the size of a given research group as well as use participants social network when conducting a research. This was used because participants for the study were scattered across different locations in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

**Instrument**

The Literacy Education and the Mobilization of Resources by Youth in Community Development Projects Questionnaire (LEMRYCDPQ), created by the researcher, served as the data gathering tool. Three specialists from Niger Delta University's Faculty of Education's Department of Educational Foundations validated the tool. To guarantee the validity of the questionnaire, their comments, errors, and recommendations were included in the final draft. There were two sections in the questionnaire. While Section B covered topics pertaining to the research questions, Section A collected demographic data from the respondents. Very High Extent (VHE) (3.50–4.00), High Extent (HE) (2.50–3.49), Low Extent (LE) (1.50–2.49), and Very Low Extent (VLE) (1.00–1.49) were the four-point scales used to frame the response alternatives. A pilot research including registered adult learners enrolled in adult education programs was carried out outside the Obunagha community's

primary study region. The Cronbach Alpha technique was used to assess the instrument's internal consistency dependability; the results showed a good level of reliability with a coefficient of 0.87.

**Research Design**

To methodically characterize the traits, viewpoints, and reactions of the target group, the study used a descriptive survey research approach. The demographic information shown in Section A was analyzed using straightforward percentages. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were employed for the analysis of Section B, which included the study questions and important variables. The criteria mean was fixed at 2.50.

As explained in the appendices, a direct distribution approach was used to administer and retrieve the questionnaires throughout the chosen areas. The questionnaire was distributed in 693 copies in Rivers State and 255 copies in Bayelsa State. Although some of them were either incorrectly filled out or handled inappropriately, 245 and 679 genuine copies were recovered, yielding a total of 924 useable surveys.

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

The response rates for this question can be found in Table 1. This indicates that respondents from Bayelsa state had the following mean scores as 2.91, 2.70, 2.69, 2.54, 2.69, 2.89, 2.85 and 2.93 as high extent, while the standard deviations are .69, .73, .73, .70, .73, .71, .73 and .68. The table also had the SD of .90, which is an indication that literacy education to a high extent has contributed to mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa State.

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to mobilization of resources for project initiation by Youth in community development projects in Bayelsa state

S/N	Items	Bayelsa = 245		
			SD	Rmk
1	I acquire creativity skills for increased participation in small scale business projects	2.91	.69	HE
2	I acquire functional skills for active participation in development projects	2.70	.73	HE
3	I acquire ICT skills for effective participation in community development projects	2.69	.73	HE
4	I acquire political skills for participation in project design	2.54	.70	HE
5	I acquire knowledge on creativity skills for participation in planning of community projects	2.69	.73	HE
6	I acquire knowledge on business tips for enhancing participation in construction of markets	2.89	.71	HE
7	I acquire knowledge on health tips for participation constructing cottage hospitals	2.85	.73	HE
8	I acquire political skills for enhanced participation in political projects	2.93	.68	HE
	Cluster mean	2.78	.90	High extent

Cut-off Mean =2.50; N =245

**Research Question 2**

Table 2 displays the results pertaining to this query. According to the table, Rivers State respondents had mean scores of 2.60, 2.51, 2.52, 2.47, 2.86, 2.93, 2.74, and 2.93, demonstrating a high degree of proficiency across the majority of items. With an overall standard deviation of 0.91, the corresponding standard deviation values were 0.71, 0.70, 0.70, 0.72, 0.74, 0.71, 0.72, and 0.72. These findings imply that literacy instruction has significantly improved young

people's ability to raise funds for community development initiatives in Rivers State.

Additionally, all mean scores were higher than the 2.50 threshold, according to the pooled data from the two states. A minimal degree of response variability was indicated by the standard deviation values for the two states, which were tightly aligned and stayed below 1.00. This suggests that respondents generally agree that literacy instruction has greatly aided young people's participation in raising funds for community development projects in both states.

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to mobilization of resources for project initiation by Youth in c ommunity development projects in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Rivers = 679		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Rmk
1	I acquire creativity skills for increased participation in small scale business projects	2.60	.71	High extent
2	I acquire functional skills for active participation in development projects	2.51	.70	High extent
3	I acquire ICT skills for effective participation in community development projects	2.52	.70	High extent
4	I acquire political skills for participation in project design	2.47	.72	Low extent
5	I acquire knowledge on creativity skills for participation in planning of community projects	2.86	.74	High extent
6	I acquire knowledge on business tips for enhancing participation in construction of markets	2.93	.71	High extent
7	I acquire knowledge on health tips for participation constructing cottage hospitals	2.74	.72	High extent
8	I acquire political skills for enhanced participation in political projects	2.83	.72	High extent
	Cluster mean	2.68	.91	High extent

Cut-off Mean =2.50; N =924

### Test of Hypothesis 1

Table 3 showed that significant difference was found on item 1 with p-value less than .05 level of significance. However, significant difference was not found in items 2, 3, 4,5, 6, 7 and 8 since the p-values were greater than .05 level of significance. The cluster t-cal (2.69) had an associated p-

value (.40) greater than .05 level of significance, hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This implied that significant difference was not found in the mean ratings of youth from Bayelsa and Rivers on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects.

**Table 3:** T-test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of youths from Bayelsa and Rivers States on the extent to which literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources in community development projects

S/N	Statement	Bayelsa = 254		Rivers = 679		T <sub>cal</sub>	P <sub>value</sub>	Decision
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD			
1	I acquire creativity skills for increased participation in small scale business projects	2.91	.69	2.60	.71	5.74	.00	S
2	I acquire functional skills for active participation in development projects	2.70	.73	2.51	.70	3.46	.92	NS
3	I acquire ICT skills for effective participation in community development projects	2.69	.73	2.52	.70	3.13	.97	NS
4	I acquire political skills for participation in project design	2.54	.70	2.47	.72	1.26	.50	NS
5	I acquire knowledge on creativity skills for participation in planning of community projects	2.69	.73	2.86	.74	3.11	.15	NS
6	I acquire knowledge on business tips for enhancing participation in construction of markets	2.89	.71	2.93	.71	1.01	.36	NS
7	I acquire knowledge on health tips for participation constructing cottage hospitals	2.85	.73	2.74	.72	2.08	.19	NS
8	I acquire political skills for enhanced participation in political projects	2.93	.68	2.83	.72	1.70	.08	NS
	Cluster mean	2.78	.90	2.68	.91	2.69	.40	NS

### Discussion of Findings

#### Literacy education and Mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in the Niger Delta Region.

Findings revealed that the degree to which literacy education has added to mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers States was high. The results show that respondents who participated in the study to a large extent agree that their acquiring literacy training in adult literacy programmes have equipped them with competencies with respect to literacy skill for mobilization of resources. This consistency reveals that adult education literacy training programmes positively influences community agencies and that adult literacy training programmes in the region do not only equip youth with reading, writing and computing skills but with other functional skills that correlates with the mobilization of resources. It also suggests that when the youths become literate, the knowledge acquired boost their capacities and directly enhance their participation in the mobilization of resources in community development projects. This further means that the knowledge acquired helped them to communicate, develop creativity skills, political skills, knowledge in business and skills for ICT.

Also, respondents noted that the acquisition of literacy skills affords the participants the opportunity for effective mobilization of resources for community development initiatives. The provision of resources for development projects stem from the fact that the individual is engaged in economic activities. This aligns with the study of Ateniola & Dada (2024) <sup>[4]</sup> who revealed in their findings that entrepreneurship skills are essential to start or run a business operation. It also aligns with scholars like Atakpa (2024) <sup>[2]</sup> who reiterates that literacy in business education helps in advancing business operations and Adeyanju *et al.*, (2021) <sup>[1]</sup> who believe that literacy in entrepreneurial skill helps in the managing of an enterprise. These outcomes obviously suggest that literacy education is broad, cutting across several skills such as ICT, vocational, political and entrepreneurial among others. By providing participants with knowledge of ICT skills, it is believed that the involvement of youth to development projects could be manifested in the application of technological prowess to projects.

The mobilization of resources by youth encapsulates the provision of material, financial and human resources by youth for the execution of community development initiatives. The release of these resources is predicated on the fact that youth are provided with the knowledge on knowing their place in the development of the society and equipped to

be meaningfully engaged in activities that generate income so as to make their contribution in terms of mobilizing for development projects. This probably may have informed the Hamburg Declaration that literacy is a reagent for partaking in cultural, social, economic and political activities and for learning throughout life. The contribution of literacy education is further assented following the approval of the null speculation by respondents from both states on the extent to which it has contributed to mobilization of resources by youth.

### Implications for Adult Education Theory and Practice

The findings of the study reveal significant implications for educators and learners in adult education. Results validate the need for community members and youth within and outside the study area to know that literacy is not a means to an end but a means of conscientization because when learners become literate, they become more competent and capable to communicate and participate in the mobilization process of community development. This eliminates any oppression and reduces alienation experienced but non-literate youths giving them power to reshape their realities. Adult educators and policy makers should sustain functional literacy curricular while improving on existing ones. Literacy education curricula should be improved further from reading, writing and computing to include budgeting

skills, minutes writings and understudying of complex documents with emphasis that there be a practical connection and liaison between the classroom and community projects.

### Appendices

#### Scale: Literacy Education

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	
.852	.858	8	
Item Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
D1	2.5000	1.22474	30
D2	2.3667	1.27261	30
D3	2.7000	1.41787	30
D4	2.5333	1.16658	30
D5	2.3000	1.36836	30
D6	2.9000	1.12495	30
D7	2.7000	1.17884	30
D8	2.7667	1.25075	30

### Descriptive Analysis

#### a. Bayelsa state.

Descriptive

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I acquire creativity skills for increased participation in small scale business projects	245	1.00	4.00	2.9061	.68605
I acquire functional skills for active participation in development projects	245	1.00	4.00	2.6980	.72894
I acquire ICT skills for effective participation in community development projects	245	1.00	4.00	2.6857	.72655
I acquire political skills for participation in project design	245	1.00	4.00	2.5429	.69777
I acquire knowledge on creativity skills for participation in planning of community projects	245	1.00	4.00	2.6898	.73111
I acquire knowledge on business tips for enhancing participation in construction of markets	245	1.00	4.00	2.8776	.71382
I acquire knowledge on health tips for participation constructing cottage hospitals	245	1.00	4.00	2.8490	.72827
I acquire political skills for enhanced participation in political projects	245	1.00	4.00	2.9265	.68556

#### b. Rivers state

I acquire creativity skills for increased participation in small scale business projects	679	1.00	4.00	2.6038	.71068
I acquire functional skills for active participation in development projects	679	1.00	4.00	2.5140	.69936
I acquire ICT skills for effective participation in community development projects	679	1.00	4.00	2.5199	.69711
I acquire political skills for participation in project design	679	1.00	4.00	2.4742	.71777
I acquire knowledge on creativity skills for participation in planning of community projects	679	1.00	4.00	2.8601	.74043
I acquire knowledge on business tips for enhancing participation in construction of markets	679	1.00	4.00	2.9308	.70997
I acquire knowledge on health tips for participation constructing cottage hospitals	679	1.00	4.00	2.7364	.71624
I acquire political skills for enhanced participation in political projects	679	1.00	4.00	2.8321	.71937

### Conclusion

Literacy education has contributed to the mobilization of resources by youth in community development projects in Bayelsa and Rivers states, to a high extent. The educational policy with respect to adult education in Nigeria should be updated. The present curriculum should be upgraded with respect to the scope of literacy to include modules that will equip learners with skill on how to identify local resources and mobilize for community development. Adult education should also be given more priority and should be fully funded as a pillar for development at the local, state and national levels. Policy makers can through further researches seek solutions on how to sustain youth engagement in the mobilization of resources in community development projects in communities.

Literacy education is more than acquiring skills for personal development but as an instrument for infrastructural development and survival of communities especially in the region. When youth becomes literate, it helps them align with community needs and transforms them into active participants in their development at the grass root. This serves as a non-violent pathway for empowerment when compared to agitation and acquiring through illegal means.

### Recommendation

1. Efforts should be made by the providers of adult literacy training programmes to expose learners on the value of literacy programme to promote functionality and more participation of youths.
2. Adult education literacy curriculum should be upgraded to accommodate and promote a synergy between the

- classroom and community projects so as to make it more practical.
3. Collaboration and partnerships between the government, cooperate organizations and stakeholder should be promoted.
  4. Community members and leaders should be sensitized on the value of literacy and its connection between it and the mobilization of resources for community development

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