

Identification and Solution to Challenges of Fadama III Development Programmes in Benue State

Emmanuel Igbalumun Ukaa¹, John Egbe Enyi² and Tabitha Agishi³

¹Ivemy Int'l Ltd

^{2,3}Department of Political Science, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria.

Received 21 June 2024; Acceptance 1 July 2024; Published 18 July 2024.

Abstract

Poverty reduction programmes have to a large extent, failed to achieve set targets in Nigeria. A review of massive literature on poverty reduction revealed that the spate of failure of the poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria has strong linkages with the conventional top-bottom approach adopted in the process of implementation. The World Bank assisted Third Fadama Development Programme, also called Fadama III has adopted the widely recommended bottom-top approach to address the problem of poverty in Nigeria. This study assessed the poverty level of Fadama III participants in Benue State. The cohort survey design was adopted to select 400 participants of Fadama III programme from six Local Government Areas of Benue State. Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion, interviews and personal observation were the instrument used for data collection. Findings showed that Fadama III adopted a unique approach in engaging with participants individually and the host communities. Specifically, the successful strategies employed by the programme in Benue State were the Community-Driven Development (CDD) or Bottom-Top approach, as well as the soft terms and conditions. Additionally, results showed that capacity building is the most profound impact of the Fadama III programme in Benue State. However, three challenges were encountered in the Fadama III programme in Benue State and include delay in payment of counterpart funds by Benue State Government, non participation of members in policy discussions and conflicts among members of user groups. Based on these results, it was therefore recommended among others that development and poverty reduction programmes in developing countries should borrow a leaf from the World Bank's Community Development or Bottom-Top approach as well as the soft terms and conditions used in the implementation of Fadama III Development Programme in Benue State.

Keywords: Poverty level, Fadama III, Participants, Bottom-Top approach.

Introduction

The current statistics on poverty in Nigeria in general and Benue state in particular are still a source of worry to stakeholders and the citizenry in general. Statistics from the [1] shows the multi-dimensional poverty results of people living in Nigeria at 65% which translates to 133 million people (which is above the 26% threshold required as minimum for a decent standard of living),

Correspondence to: Emmanuel Igbalumun Ukaa, e-mail: emmaukaa@gmail.com

Copyright: © 2024 The authors. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

How to Cite: Ukaa et al., (2024). Identification and Solution to Challenges of Fadama III Development Programmes in Benue State, *Journal of Economy*, **1**(6). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14236232

out of which 72% live in the rural areas as compared to 42% who live in the urban areas. States with the highest incidents of poverty are Sokoto, Bayelsa, Gobe, Jigawa and Plateau. Benue State with poverty rate of 31.2% [1] is still characterized by high incidence of poverty. In spite of the much orchestrated demonstration of commitment to poverty reduction in Nigeria, the evidence on ground points to the fact that poverty is getting more entrenched and spreading wider among the citizenry, as the inequality gap keeps widening between the poor and the rich. In Benue State where the programme was thought to have been successfully implemented [2], the socio-economic indices are still very disturbing, as poverty has been on the increase. With only 1% extremely poor and 21% moderately poor in 1980, these figures rose to 25% extremely poor and 39% moderately poor in 1996. In 2003, 65% of Benue people were living below the poverty line (US \$1 per day) while in 2013, Benue poverty rose to 80% [3]. The life of a Benue child, the hope of tomorrow is quite distressed. As at 2005, 31% of the children under five were stunted, 11% wasted and 17% underweight with an extremely high mortality rate of 84.4 per thousand for the under-five. Within the same period, the HIV/AIDS prevalent rate for the State at 21% was the highest in Nigeria (the National average was 5.4%) [4]. Today, Benue state is ranked the 8th poorest of the 36 States of the Federation. The above statistics show that the Nigerian populace is getting increasingly impoverished.

The World Bank therefore came up with what it termed “National *Fadama* Development Programme” to overcome the persistent challenges of poverty in Nigeria. The first programme tagged *Fadama* I was implemented in Nigeria covering the period 1991 to 2009. Following what was regarded as the success of *Fadama* I, the World Bank went ahead and launched *Fadama* II programme in 2000 which lasted till 2007. Again, consequent upon the achievements of *Fadama* I and II, the third phase, *Fadama* III or the Third National *Fadama* Development Project was approved by the Bank in 2008 and became disbursement-effective on March 23rd, 2009. Benue State *Fadama* III Project was formally launched in the State in October 2010 [3]. The first *Fadama* Project (*Fadama* I) focused exclusively on irrigation farming while both *Fadama* II and *Fadama* III are more of agricultural diversification programs, providing finances for the diverse livelihood activities which the beneficiaries themselves identify and design, with appropriate facilitation support (PIM No I, 2009, P.I). However, the design of *Fadama* II did not take into cognizance the need for spatial integration of the markets (creating of physical and market infrastructure). It also failed to take into consideration other *Fadama* resource users such as livestock producers, fishing folks, pastoralists, hunters etc. The project did not also support post-harvest technology, which manifested in reduced crop prices and increased storage losses during the period [5-6]. To overcome this shortfall, *Fadama* III beneficiaries were encouraged to organize themselves into Economic Interest Groups, named *Fadama* User Groups (FUGs) each having an average of 10 to 25 members. In addition, they were facilitated to establish *Fadama* Community Associations (FCAs) which are apex organizations of 15 FUGs on average at the community level (PIM No 1). Based on

information contained in Benue State *Fadama III* project diary published in 2010, *Fadama I* and *II* projects successfully refined approaches for improved utilization of these lands, *Fadama II* implemented an innovative Local Development Plan (LDP) tool, and building on the success of the Community Driven Development mechanisms, the cumulative impact of this earlier successful World Bank-assisted projects attests to the robustness of the small scale and community based approach to *Fadama* development in an environmentally sensitive manner. *Fadama III* was implemented over a five-year period from March 2009 to December 2013. The project according to the *Fadama* Implementation Manual, was developed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (FMAWR) in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment (FME) and other Federal and State Government Ministries, Local Governments and key stakeholders (donors, private operators, NGOs). According to the implementation manual of the project (PIM No 1, p. 5), the project was expected to anchor on the Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach in which case, community organizations will decide on how the resources will be allocated among the priorities that they themselves identify and they will manage the funds. However, *Fadama* documents and the media have enunciated the gains and successes of the *Fadama* projects, implying that the programme has good potentials to curb the sparingly rising levels of poverty in areas where it has been implemented. The *Fadama* programme *III* was implemented in 20 Local Government Areas in Benue State covering 192 benefitting communities. However, it seemed the objectives of the Programme could not be achieved in some States, including Benue, possibly as a result of some challenges including delay in payment of counterpart funds by the State Government. Consequently, the World Bank extended the implementation period to 2017 to accommodate these States through a strategy tagged “*Fadama III* (Additional Financing)” or “*Fadama III* AF”. Benue State declared interest to participate in *Fadama III* AF and hence the State Government paid counterpart funds arrears of N217, 000, 000.00 for the take-off of the project. At the end of the *Fadama* AF implementation period, the World Bank embarked on what is called *Fadama* Peer Review (PR) programme to take stock of the entire exercise and make recommendation on the way forward. In view of this, identification and solution to challenges of *Fadama III* development programmes in Benue State is investigated.

Research Question

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the problems militating against the success of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State?
2. What is the solution to the challenges militating against the success of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State?

Materials and Method

The cohort survey research design was used in conducting the research in this study. This survey method is conducted using field work whereby the researcher collects data either through the administration of questionnaires, use of interviews, personal observations or Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) among others by presenting himself directly or by proxy to the respondents. A total of 400 respondents were selected from six Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benue State to form the study sample. This was drawn from two LGAs that were selected from each of Zones A, B and C. It is believed that findings derived from this population can be applied to the entire Nigeria. A pre-survey study shows that there are 7,351 beneficiaries of *Fadama III* in the study area. Hence, the study population consist of 7,351 beneficiaries of the *Fadama III* programme. Moreover, where necessary the questionnaire administration was complemented by oral interviews to help elicit relevant information from respondents which may not be captured in the questionnaire. This is because the study area comprised some illiterate individuals who were not be able to fill the questionnaires accurately, thereby, necessitating the use of interviews. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) helped bring out more facts about the performance of *Fadama III* Project and its effect on the poverty level of beneficiaries in Benue State. Descriptive statistical tools such as tables, charts, pictures, and frequency count simple percentages were used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion

Challenges of *Fadama III* Programme in Benue State

In Table 1, the challenges that militate against the success of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State were identified.

Table 1. Challenges of *Fadama III* in Benue State

Challenges of <i>Fadama III</i> Programme					Frequency	Percentage (%)
Counterpart Government	Fund	delayed	by	State	334	92.3
Counterpart Government	Fund	delayed	by	Local	21	5.8
Inability to pay counterpart Fund by FUGs					155	42.8
Untimely disbursement of funds to beneficiaries					127	35.1
Conflict among members of user groups					286	79.0

Non-participation of members in policy discussion	301	83.1
Inadequate training of beneficiaries	54	14.9

Source: Field Survey, 2022, Multiple Responses.

As can be inferred from the table, it follows that the top most challenges of the programme are delay in payment of counterpart funds by Benue State Government (92.3%), non participation of members in policy discussions (83.1%), and conflicts among members of user groups (79.0%).

Additionally, the discussions of the focus group with respondents revealed other key challenges including lack of transparency and corrupt practices by the programme's facilitators, lack of transparency from the traditional rulers involved in the selection of beneficiaries, corrupt practices by the *Fadama* Associations (FCAs) officials, high in prices of input from the *Fadama* office, late supply of farm inputs by *Fadama*, inadequate supervision of programme facilitators and lack of harmonious relationship between the *Fadama* Unions and *Fadama* Project Coordinator (FPC) at the Local Government level.

Answering the Research Questions

What are the problems militating against the success of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State?

The three top challenges of the programme are delay in payment of counterpart funds by Benue State Government, non participation of members in policy discussions and conflicts among members of user groups. Others include lack of transparency and corrupt practices by the programme's facilitators, lack of transparency from the traditional rulers involved in the selection of beneficiaries, corrupt practices by the *Fadama* Associations (FCAs) officials and hike in prices of input from the *Fadama* office.

What is the solution to the challenges militating against the success of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State?

The solutions include review of the input component of the programme to focus on group and individual projects whereby, some larger businesses are funded as group projects to attract support from other sponsors and at the same time, achieve individual empowerment, ensuring inclusive participation of members in policy discussions while penalizing corrupt officials, and timely payment of counterpart funds.

Discussion of Findings

The study identified that the three top challenges of the programme are delay in payment of counterpart funds by Benue State Government, non participation of members in policy discussions and conflicts among members of user groups. Others include lack of transparency and corrupt practices by the programme's facilitators, lack of transparency from the traditional rulers involved in the selection of beneficiaries, corrupt practices by the *Fadama* Associations (FCAs) officials and hike in prices of input from the *Fadama* office, officials of the FCAs and FUGs members while in group discussions, indicated that while the sum of N1.8 million and N600, 000 were given to FCAs and GUGs, respectively in other States

in Nigeria, the total sum were N1.3 million and N85, 000 respectively in Benue State. This was attributed to corrupt practices by programme handlers in the State.

Moreover, the challenges also include late supply of farm inputs by *Fadama*, inadequate supervision of programme facilitators and lack of harmonious relationship between the *Fadama* Unions and *Fadama* Project Coordinator (FPC) at the Local Government level. This finding is in congruence with that of [7] whose evaluation the Third National *Fadama* Development Programme (*Fadama III*) and poverty reduction in rural communities of Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State identified corrupt practices such as embezzlements and mismanagement of funds by both rural and State management officials of *Fadama III* programme, untimely and inadequate supply of inputs and difficulty of member communities to pay counterpart funds as major constraints to the effective implementation of the programme. These results agree with those of [8] who investigated Gender-Based Evaluation of World Bank Assisted *Fadama III* Farm Input Distribution Programme among User Groups in Benue State. The study identified conflict among the user group members and inadequate fund as main challenges.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the main challenges of *Fadama III* programme in Benue State include delay in payment of counterpart funds by Benue State Government, non participation of members in policy discussions, conflicts among members of user groups, lack of transparency and corrupt practices by the programme's facilitators, lack of transparency from the traditional rulers involved in the selection of beneficiaries, corrupt practices by the *Fadama* Associations (FCAs) officials, hike in prices of farm input from the *Fadama* office, late supply of farm input by *Fadama*, inadequate supervision of programme facilitators and lack of harmonious relationship between the *Fadama* Unions and *Fadama* Project Coordinator (FPC) at the Local Government level. The study posits the solution to these challenges to include review of the input component of the programme to focus on group and individual projects such that some larger businesses are funded as group projects to attract support from other sponsors and at the same time, achieve individual empowerment, ensuring inclusive participation of members in policy discussions while penalizing corrupt officials, and timely payment of counterpart funds. Based on these results, it was recommended among others that Benue State Government should ensure that counterpart funds are released on time to help farmers produce on time and achieve high productivity. Local Government Areas and FCAs should also endeavour to pay up their counterpart funds to facilitate early release of funds to them. *Fadama III* and other poverty reduction programmes implemented in Benue State such as Benue Care programme should invest more on livestock and crop production ventures like chicken, catfish, rice and cassava. Participants have performed better in these ventures and thus, there is high potential for poverty reduction when these ventures are sustainably promoted.

References

1. World Bank (2022) World Bank to Help Nigeria Boost Agriculture and Improve Food Security Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/06/28/world-bank-help-nigeria-boostagriculture-improve-foo-security>
2. Ukaa, E.I (2016). Effect of *Fadama III* programme on rural development in Benue North-East GeoPolitical Zone, Benue State. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, Postgraduate School, Benue State

University, Makurdi.

3. Onov, P.A. (2014). Rice Production and Poverty Reduction in Benue State: A Value-Chain Analysis. M.Sc Dissertation, Department of Economics, Benue State University Makurdi.
4. Kyarem, R. (2006). Cassava production and poverty reduction in Benue state. An M.Sc dissertation, Department of economic, Benue State University Makurdi.
5. Ukaa, E. I., Enyi, J.E. and Agishi, T. (2024). Assessment of Poverty Level Fadama III Participants in Benue State, *Annals of Environment*, **1(6)**. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12542486
6. Ukaa, E. I. (2024). Impact of Fadama III Development Programmes on the Income and Agricultural Outputs of Farmers in Benue State. *Scholar J Food and Environment*, **1(6)**. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1140611
7. Achiv, A.D., Kim, I., Masin, A.G, Abdullahi, I.U. (2014). Evaluation of Third National Fadama Development Programme (Fadama III) on Poverty Reduction in Rural Communities of Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. *Economy*, Vol.1, No.3, 79-88.

Publisher's Note Scholar J remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.