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Review

Thinking globally and acting locally: Re-thinking MDGs strategies in the rural communities of Anambra State

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This paper examines Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its attainment in the specific context of Nigeria. Taking a common man's view of development as a holistic variable understood only in terms of concrete impact on the lives of the individual citizens, it focused on the target audience in Anambra State, one of the federating states in Nigeria most of whom are found in the rural communities. It hypothesizes that despite the efforts of the government and the enormous resources pumped in through the MDGs programme, there is no evidence to show that these programmes have been contributory in rural communities of Anambra State. Data was collected to test this hypothesis and came to the conclusion that rather develop, it has underdeveloped the people. The paper then interrogates MDGs implementation process in the State and identifies the fault lines in the implementation strategy that work singly or in combination with others to affect/ inhibit impact of the programme. Noting that any successful implementation of the MDGs must be organically built upon the constituent communities' own resources as they seek their own path to social and economic fulfilment, enlargement of the capacity of the individual and the community as a whole to create and innovate, it recommends specific direction in the process re-thinking and re-planning strategies that can sustainably guarantee the attainment of the goals.

Keywords: MDGs, rural communities, organic edification.

INTRODUCTION

From Health and Housing and indeed all the goodies by the year 2000 which never inched to any success, Nigeria is today spouting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a new catchphrase which targets the year 2015 when heaven in development indices will at the least inch its way to earth. Ironically, it was in the same year 2000 precisely on September the 8th, 2000 that the new catchphrase was conceived. We quickly recall how the then Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihar Vajpayee took the stage at the United Nations General Assembly in New York and talked about starting the new millennium. In his words,

> *"Giant strides in science and technology marking the conquest of new frontiers of knowledge have helped us grow more food, produce life saving drugs and send satellites into space. Yet, millions still go hungry, die of easily curable diseases and are deprived of the enlightenment and empowerment that education ensures."*

It was in response to the inhospitable circumstances in most Third World Countries, that 189 UN member States in the summit signed on to reach a set of eight targets by

2015 (the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
- achievement of universal primary education,
- promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women
- reduction in child mortality
- improvement of maternal healthcare,
- combating of HIV/AIDS,
- ensuring environmental sustainability and
- development of a global partnership for development.

In sum, these goals are all geared toward reducing abject poverty.

Development is about improving people's lives and this is what MDGs stand for: improving the lives of its target audience most of whom in the case of Nigeria nay Anambra State are found in the rural communities . The place of the 8th in the entire framework can not be ignored. It is generally believed that the present state of development in Africa would require greater input of resource and skill that will outstretch by far the current capacity of the continent. Herein is the importance of the commitment of the developed nations to the MDGs. Thus, the program commits rich countries to help the poor ones achieve the set target by the said timeline. The Governments of poor countries, albeit Nigerian Government, however, have to commit themselves also in clearly defined terms to locally implement. Discussions on the level of commitment shown by the various international agencies and States towards achieving the goals in the third world nations does not interest us in this paper. Of interest to us is the level of impact of the level of commitment already shown! We look at this with specific reference to Nigeria where the various local authorities, the federating states have the same option to implement or not.

Ten years after the declaration and barely five years to the goal post the question as to whether millions still go hungry, die of easily curable diseases, are deprived of the enlightenment and empowerment that education ensures are becoming increasingly interesting to discuss. Manipulable statistics abound as usual as to indicate that enormous progress is being made. Indeed, accurate, reliable, credible and believable statistics is one of the problems facing evaluation of impact of the MDGs. Without following this same statistical trap configured especially by the international organisations, we take the common man's view of development as a holistic variable understood only in terms of concrete impact on the life of the individual citizens: water to drink, food to eat, clothing, shelter and all such variables within the lowest rung of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Within the framework of the MDGs, it is reduction of abject poverty.

Between the Past and Present Development Efforts in Nigeria

It will be wrong to think that the MDGs which target the poor in the societies are new, even to Nigeria. Indeed all the post war development efforts of Nigeria have all targeted these goals.

- the 1972 National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank, entirely devoted to funding agriculture lunched by Gen. Yakubu Gowon's Administration;
- the Operation Feed the Nation lunched in 1976 by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration;
- the Green Revolution Programme of Shehu Shagari
- the Go Back to Land Programme of Buhari;
- the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) of Babangida and his wife's Better Life Programme
- the Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme of Abacha and his wife
- the National Poverty Eradication Programme of Obasanjo II, (NAPEP),
- National Resources Development Conservation Scheme (NRDCS),
- Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS);
- Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS). etc.

Even the 1999 constitution of Nigeria recognizes the goals as contract entered into between the people and the government. Section 14.2(b) stated boldly: "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government".

What could be new with the MDGs are the articulation and the awakening of enthusiasm among all stake holders to appreciate the interconnectedness between underdevelopment in the poor countries and the sustenance of development in the developed parts of the world. Civil Society Consultative Forum on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided three further reasons that recommend the MDGs to include:

- Provision of additional entry point to engage government on development issues
- Serving as the link between government and the grassroots
- Providing the link between local and international actions towards human centred development.

What again could be new from international perspective is the apparent realisation of the fact that development understood as the welfare of the people, "the improvement of life for the entire population of a nation" is not the same thing and in fact much more than economic

growth which was pursued though the now moribund Structural Adjustment Programme. Economic growth is a "principal performance test" of development. With the possible exception of the 8th goal, all the goals are aimed at human Security. Although both aspects constitute integral part of development, empirical data indicate no rigid link between them. The operative word here is "rigid link" since both are relevant to each other. As was experienced during the SAP era, economic performance in terms of growth can diverge widely from human development while relative changes in human development may not automatically lead to better economic performance. It is, however, not part of this research to investigate the empirical and logical relationship between them. It suffices for our purpose, to note that both are central to development and vital for its sustainability.

However, despite billions of Naira expended on each of the above programmes, despite the euphoria that greeted each, they all in the end ran parallel to the Nigerian poor expectations. Maduagwu (2000) counted the politics of personal rule, the master and servant relationships associated with the programmes to alleviate poverty, among the factors accounting for the failure of all past efforts. Others include lack of project continuity on the part of incumbent Government (Oyoze,2003), political and policy instability (Adamu, 2006), neo-colonial influence and the millennium economic policies of liberalization (Mojubaolu, 2000), policy reversals, non-transparent programme administration, (Nwafor, 2005), programme inconsistency, poor implementation, corruption of government officials and public servants, poor targeting mechanisms and failure to focus directly on the poor (Ogwumike, 1998; Egware, 1997), high import content of most of the operations, inappropriate technology, politicization, personalization, and the non involvement of the people for whom the programmes are designed, and the erroneous assumption that the poor generally constituted a homogenous group (Tokumbo, 2003), etc. According to Tokumbo many of the programmes were politically motivated, designed more to buy legitimacy for the government rather than being primary in function and genuine in their intention to help the poor. He noted those who benefited from these various programmes as being the rich and powerful. What verdict awaits the MDGs in 2015?

The Thesis and the Objective of the Paper

Using Anambra, one of the federating states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we hypothesise that despite the efforts of the government and the enormous resources pumped in through the MDGs programme, there is no evidence to show that these programmes have been contributory in rural communities of Anambra State. In other words, we argue the thesis that measured in terms of key indices of the quality of life and the degree of freedom available to the individual and compared to the quantum of resources available to the country alone through the MDGs instrument, Anambra State has been *underdeveloped* through the instrument. Underdevelopment is not the same as non-development. According to Nwankwo, (2010) it is negative development defined in terms of ongoing utilisation of resources to the disadvantage of the beneficiaries. Or how else may one define a situation where Government spends purportedly a billion Naira in a project while barely 10% of it actually profits the people. We argue that the key to understanding this underdevelopment by an otherwise well intentioned instrument is in the politics: the interface between policy and polity.

The paper interrogates MDGs implementation process in the State and identifies the fault lines in the implementation strategy that work singly or in combination with others to affect/ inhibit impact of the programme. Working on the assumption that MDGs are globally-enunciated development benchmarks, but that country-level achievement of the 2015 targets depends on appropriate and effective strategies, it explores the relevance and impact of communities in Anambra State in the progress towards the MDGs by 2015. Accordingly, it shows how things would have been much more different if something different in terms of approach had been done with the enormous resources available through the MDGs. More specifically, the paper

- examines the present state of affairs of MDGs and its impact in Anambra State
- interrogates the implementation process
- identifies the fault lines in the process
- examines the people's ways of doing things and achieving results even for government programmes
- develops alternative MDGs' implementation strategy based on the beneficiaries' ways of doing things.

The Context of the MDGs in Anambra State

With a total of 177 communities, only three in four local government areas of the state: Onitsha North and South, Awka South and Nnewi North can really stand as Cities or Urban communities. Over 75% of the population of the state live in the rural environments which go to solidify the assertion that Anambra is a *rural state*. (Nwankwo, 1998). Because Anambra state is a rural state, the failure of rural development can be equated to the failure of the state as a whole to develop.

Socio-culturally, the state is one of the states housing the Ibo ethnic unit – a very enterprising ethnic group. Each of the local communities is genealogically defined in a web of patriarchal descent. This is the foundation of the social network where every one knows every one with its control and development implications. Any one not rooted in the genealogy of a particular community is a stranger,

even if he is from the next community. Of great importance to this paper is that over four million indigenes of the state, not usually captured in the official census live in various parts of the country and beyond. In terms of land use, financial resources and consequent development of the local communities and indeed of the state in general, these absentee members of the communities are of great importance. Wherever they may live they organise themselves as branch of the home community and make significant contributions to its development. The city can cease to exist any day but not the village: the true home. The importance of the home community appears to have assumed greater importance after the experience of the civil war so that most villages look like cities in terms of housing facilities as each person including city-dwellers are self obligated to build their own residence - even when s/he only stays there for a few days in a year. He knows that when the sun begins to set, he must return (Nwankwo, 1998).

We have taken time to describe this socio-cultural setting as it provides basis for understanding the interest every member of a community has, including those in the Diaspora in the planning and development of their communities. The first civilian administration of the state rightly wanted to exploit this singular resource in the now moribund "think-home philosophy". The genesis of these organisations predates the failure of government to provide basic services and infrastructure. It is natural to the people of the state in their efforts not just to make things better for themselves in terms of material provisions, but also to have a sense of self-fulfilment: the psychological function of community development. They energise and persuade themselves to co-operate, make voluntary sacrifices in the interest of the greater good. That they constitute significant socio-economic force that must be harnessed for the attainment of the MDGs is a fundamental thesis of this paper.

The State has one of Nigeria's lowest poverty rates, estimated at about 32.1% in 2007 and a gini index of 48%. This, however, is not attributable to Government and Governance, but to the spirit of self reliance very high among them. It has HIV/AIDS prevalence of 4.23% in 2005, infant mortality rate estimated at about 88 per 1000 and under-5 mortality rate of 142 per 1000. Internally generated revenue constituted about 15% of total State revenue in 2007, while the rest (85%) come from the Federation Allocation. Net primary school completion rate is 52% while 88% of women between 15-24 years are literate (Ebo, 2009).

As in the social sector, so it is in the economic sector. To date the economy of the state is standing on an unbalanced tripod: the public sector that has almost completely collapsed under the heavy weight of prebendalism, and the organised private sector which is the second pod. It is these two sectors that constitute the so called formal sector of the economy (Nwankwo, 2010). It is well known that the coexistence of the two sectors is normal in any mixed economy which, allow the coexistence of both public and private sectors of the economy. While the public has the task of providing infrastructure and social services or even basic industries alone through its public corporations or in partnership with the private sector as is currently the vogue in the wake of the mad rush to privatisation, the private sector enjoys the freedom of production and distribution in all sectors of the economy, subject of course to public regulation.

One salient fact is that both the public and organised private sectors constitute very small percentage of the economic activities in the state. If the state is surviving and is capable of surviving even without allocation from the Federation account, it is because of the third pod of the economy: the "people's sector. Malhotra (1980) used this expression to refer to the informal/"unorganised" sector of the economy of third world countries. The concept of the people's sector is much preferable to the concept of "unorganised" sector. The people's sector is the vast decentralised sector of the economy in which the majority of the people in Anambra state participate. In this category, farming (mainly subsistence) craft, cottage industries and above all trading are the principal economic engagement of the people. They are accountable to no one, hardly pay their taxes so that, as I stated elsewhere (Nwankwo, 1998) any contribution they make in the development of their communities constitutes indirect taxation.

Anambra state is a state of buyers and sellers, with Onitsha, Nnewi, and Awka (the only real Urban areas), as the main trading centres. Indeed the backbone of the economy of the state is trading. There are of course a number of small and medium industries in the areas of brewing, paper and printing, plastic and textile, machine and motor parts, metal and wood industries, service industries – especially transportation, etc. However, most of these belong to the category of "Okeke and Sons", i.e., one man and his family business that usually disappear as soon as the founder dies. This dominance of the economy of the state by the people's sector who hardly pay tax has implication for the income generating capacity of the state. The reality is that most of the fund available to the state comes from the federation account. But what differentiates a poor from a rich state is basically its internally generated revenue which for Anambra state is low because of failure of Government to enforce laws.

Institutional Framework for MDGs in Anambra State

In the context of Nigeria's federalist structure, Anambra State has constitutional autonomy to adopt measures relevant to progress towards the MDGs by 2015. She enjoys, at least theoretically, constitutional autonomy for public spending, economic planning and sector policies.

By the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the responsibility for MDGs-related public services is arguably shared among the Federal, State and Local Governments. Notable among them are economic planning/management, agriculture, education, health and social welfare all of which belong in the concurrent legislative list. Indeed, given the centre's concern with the more universal issues in the exclusive list, achieving the MDGs in education, health and poverty reduction will largely depend on the efforts of state and local governments. Yet the overarching influence of the centre not in terms of coordinating but meddling in the affairs of the State, at times impinging on their capacity to work in accordance with their local conditions, is a problem of the Nigeria's federal system and of development.

While Ebo (2009) would think and in fact argued that the State compared to the Federal Centre has weak technical capacities to improve human resources and public service institutions necessary for the attainment of these goals, he forgot to note that the essence of Federalism is to take into account the basic local conditions which the federal level cannot dictate. On that assumption, every people have their local ways of doing things including planning and development. The attempt to universalise planning and development is at the background of failed development efforts. If there is considerable variability of MDGs performance across the states and regions of the country, it is more due to socio-cultural differences than economic and institutional conditions. Following a straightjacket planning approach that uniformly plans development as a factory, most often to suit the ideas of the development partners is responsible for the inefficient use of public resources which is vital for the attainment of MDGs by 2015. Ironically, it is such inefficient wastages that spend $100 where ordinarily $10 should have been spent that is approved by the so called development partners.

The State's institutional framework is underpinned by the creation of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President (OSSAP) on the MDGs to coordinate and monitor MDGs policies and programmes in the Nigeria. In Anambra State, the policy frameworks for MDGs programme design and implementation are the Anambra State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS). It was within the context of SEEDS, that the present administration of Mr Obi established the Anambra State Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS). Even though ANIDS was not specifically designed for the MDGs it is anchored on the achievement of the same goals and continues to shape the design and implementation of programmes for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development coordinates Economic planning and carries out other development functions. Accordingly, it is in this ministry that the MDGs' coordinating and liaison functions have been located. The State's MDGs programme is managed by a 12 member executive committee headed by the Commissioner for Finance and Budget. Members of this committee are drawn from key ministries and departments that have to do with variables of the MDGs. They include representatives of Government House, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, health, education, local governments, public utilities (Ebo, 2009) and above all party chieftains who must be "settled"

For effective implementation and monitoring, the State is divided into three areas corresponding to the three Senatorial districts of the State. Each zone has its own physical monitoring (inspection) teams. Each of the monitoring teams includes at least one representative of civil society. It is important to note, according to Ebo (2009) that this creation and assigning of this function is in line with the guidelines of the OSSAP-MDGs regarding the Conditional Grant Schemes. This conditional granting is equally the practice of international agencies and other development partners. Indeed it is these external actors that decide for the nation how best to plan and implement with a very high percentage of their funding going to their experts. Thus the MDGs office in the State is but a subunit of the federal one and only an Agent of international bodies. Apparently it does not enjoy the autonomy to think and act as long as specifically named MDGs programme that will be funded through the conditional grant are concerned. The ministry must thus plan for ANIDS and for MDGs even when both are geared towards the same goals. There appears to be little collaboration and synergy between both monitoring functions.

The Implementation of the MDGs in the State

In September of 2005, the UN World Summit endorsed the MDGs and urged all developing countries by 2006, to "prepare bold national strategies" to achieve them. In response, various program and projects were designed and implemented that aim, at least theoretically towards reduction of poverty by Nigeria. Compulsory free basic education, conditional cash transfers to the vulnerable for social protection, and federal grants to support investment by state and local governments, etc were floated. Already since 2004, the federal Government has been promoting the MDGs through its National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Even when it was not developed exclusively for MDGs, its goals are aligned to those of the MDGs. In 2006, the federal government decided to set aside $1bn, which had hitherto been used to service the Paris Club debt annually, as 'seed money'. Government's thinking was to deploy the debt relief gains (DRGs) to ameliorate the sufferings of the millions of Nigerians in both the cities and rural areas through sustainable projects (The *News*, 2010). On the paper, this can be regarded as a decisive mile stone in the determination of Federal Government to

Table 1. Outlook of MDGs-related Expenditures in Anambra State, 2005-2007

Expenditure type/ratio	2005	2006	2007
Capital expenditure as % of total expenditure	56.5	56.3	43.3
Recurrent expenditure as % of total expenditure	43.5	43.7	56.7
Actual capital expenditure on health as % of total capital expenditure	0.19	0.22	0.19
Actual recurrent expenditure on health as % of total expenditure	-	-	-
Actual capital expenditure on education as % of total capital expenditure	0.54	0.15	0.39
Actual recurrent expenditure on education as % of total recurrent expenditure	-	-	-
Actual capital expenditure on agriculture + rural development + water resources as % of total capital expenditure	0.45	0.13	0.19
Actual recurrent expenditure on agriculture + rural development + water resources as % of total recurrent expenditure	-	-	-
Actual capital expenditure on women and social development as % of total capital expenditure		0.01	0.46
Actual women and social development recurrent expenditure in as % of total recurrent expenditure	-	-	-
Actual capital expenditure on environment as % of total capital expenditure	0.16	0.18	0.54
Actual recurrent expenditure on environment as % of total recurrent expenditure	-		-

Source: Ebo, 2009

key into the MDGs. In Anambra State it could be argued that though the policy frameworks for MDGs programme design and implementation began in 2005 through the State's Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), it was not until 2007 that the State began formally designing and implementing programmes for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. It was in this year that the State received its first grant from the Federal Centre for MDGs projects covering health, education, energy, and sanitation in different parts of the state. This initial grant totalling ₦1.7952 billion (Ebo, 2009) rose to 1.81billion by 2009 and has continued to rise.

Table one (1) summarises the level of direct State funding of MDGs' related programme between 2005 and 2007. This is in addition to several related funding from international organizations which like the Federal Grant work on the basis of firm commitment by the State to pay her counterpart fund. We were unable to access the exact figure but were reliably informed that it runs into several billions of Naira. We are not asking questions on the adequacy of the State's funding of poverty reduction related programmes but the extent to which these in their relative measures have impacted the target population?

The Impact of the MDGs in Anambra State

In all the statistical indices presented on the MDGs by various international agencies, Sub-Saharan Africa, nay Nigeria with all her wealth occupied unenviable bottom position. However, Abani, et al (2005) documented the acute limitations of the MDGs and its objectives. Chief among these is the limitation of development to measurable variables even when many aspects of development can not be easily quantified. While we are usually sceptical of statistics of these international bodies which often draw glib analogies without regard to context variables which would ordinarily make such analogies unacceptable, we admit that much impact has not been made in most of the sectors in Nigeria. Yet the point has again and again been made especially by Nigerian public officials that the MDGs programs are making a lot of difference in thousands of communities all over the country. This came out most explicitly in July 2010, ten years after inception, in a public hearing convened by the House of Representatives on the Millennium Development Goals to assess the impact of the programme (*The News*, 2010).

Controversies abound over the impact of MDGs in Nigeria. The 2009 United Nations Human Poverty Index put Nigeria in the same category of poor countries as Burundi, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Czech Republic and Mauritania. Nigerians were said to be suffering from high illiteracy rate, poor health delivery and low life expectancy. Some observers of Nigeria's growth and development pattern have been using the UN HP index to discuss the impact, or lack of it, of the MDGs in the fight against poverty. Table 2 adapted from the Data base of World Development Indicators shows how Nigeria has fared ten years before and after the MDGs declarations and implementation. The diachronic comparison indicates that not much impact has been made. Yet the 2010 MDGs report of Nigeria contends that Nigeria is making real progress and that recently implemented policies are accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development

Based on the 2009 reported claim of the State government that between 2007and then MDG related projects executed included 380 VIP toilets, 120 solar

powered boreholes and supply of anti-malaria drugs to 138 Primary Health Centres, we sampled randomly three hundred persons from hundred out of the 177 communities in Anambra State making sure that all the 21 local government areas are represented. We elicited answers from them on the key questions of the instrument which included awareness of the MDGs and its projects, its impact, and options for improvements. While the knowledge of the MDGs varied extensively from 68% of the urban population to near zero among the rural communities, the most significant target sector of the population, most agree especially in the rural sector on the need to encouraging community organizations as viable options to improve impact. From the urban sector of the population emphasis is on leadership and proper accountability. They see the programme as one of the avenues through which government service its clienteles noting that near to 90% of the available fund on MDGs are siphoned away. They pointed at the billions received by the state from the MDGs-CGS centre in Abuja and other Development partners, the State's counterpart contributions purportedly expended on the above projects for which there is no parity.

Over 60% of development projects predicated on the MDGs which included improved ventilated pit toilets, solar powered boreholes which we visited were either non functional or not available for use to the people for whom they have been provided. Classroom blocks built for over a year are still not in use because they are still waiting for official "commissioning" and handover, while some have remained uncompleted for upwards of three years. Information on the supply of anti-malaria drugs was scanty but what was found out was that the people pay for these drugs that would have been provided free by government. MDGs target of providing universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment can not work where the hospitals have been on strike for months. This makes coping with existing and new infections unsustainable undertaking. Since the declaration of the MDGs in 2000, Anambra State of Nigeria, has hosted in its various communities series of negative conflicts. A number of them developed into full-blown crises situations. Okafor and Nwankwo in a Study conducted for the UNDP in 2010 found that within the various communities in Anambra plagued by open conflicts and crises the causes are linked to conditions of antimonies: poverty, disease, versus wasteful affluence, inequality and other structurally determined social, economic and political exclusions which are perceived by actors as undesirable or unsatisfactory. These exist despite the much orchestrated efforts of the government in providing a number of development programmes especially through the MDGs. Truth however, is that there is no evidence to show that these programmes have been contributory in rural communities of Anambra State.

A number of factors may be considered as earlier done that work singly or in combination to impinge impact, but we focus on strategy as critical variable. There is a general belief that the programmes failed to achieve set objectives because in their designing and implementation, the beneficiaries were hardly considered. They all crumbled under the domineering and indeed paralysing bureaucratic influence of government powers, paralysing their capacity for self-government, for thinking, feeling and acting for themselves and rendered the people ever more dependent on that power. The belief that through this and that programme or project quantitative accumulation and transfer of goods, services and know-how will automatically deliver better future to the socio-economically disadvantaged populace is ill founded. Fact is that all of them are part and parcel of "the gradual but unrelenting process through which ... a people's sense of being responsible for their own future is obliterated by the alienating images and servile thought patterns of a dependence that denies development" (Carmen, 1996, x). Thus any time that 'that power' was not forthcoming with more "manna" in form of direct intervention, the result was stagnation.

Planning and implementation of MDGs have more often than not failed to address people's priorities, have not been implementable in many cases and have been poorly integrated. Yet the people of the Southeast are very enterprising both individually and collectively in their various local communities. In terms of comparative degrees, and if we understand development as evolutionary process in the direction of self-determination, no significant achievement can be said to have been made by MDGs in the Southeast. Indeed, most of what exist and are accessible to the target communities especially in the rural settings of the State are results of the self-initiated efforts of the people themselves or with the communities being in the forefront. Unfortunately most of these efforts remain uncoordinated. Even in the so called cities which are nothing but slums for traders, the Markets are essentially outcome of the collective will of the people. Sometimes instead of encouragement from the government of the day they are frustrated by overarching bureaucracies that plan and implement without basic knowledge of the real situation of the people.

In sum, the process of developing policies aimed at impacting on the MDGs target population in the State is over weightily elitist and substantially neglects the great indigenous capacities or better still organic potentials of the people for planning and development most available and active within the local communities. The result is that the people are gradually losing their original quality of thinking and acting for themselves and becoming more and more dependent on all the more impotent Government and her corrupt officials.

Re-thinking and Re-planning Strategies of MDGs

Greater involvement of the people in their affairs is a

recurring decimal in any sustainable development in the third world. The beginning of the rethinking and re-planning process of MDGs strategies is re-evaluating the role of governments as agent of development. Just as the market-based paradigm came to encourage individual initiative and enterprise by giving private individuals greater control over their lives and rewarding them directly for their efforts has worked out successfully, so it has been argued that decentralisation of governance in such a manner as to empower the local communities to assume greater control over their affairs and be rewarded for their efforts (Nwankwo, 2009) can be very apt in the context of the MDGs in Anambra state. As Carmen (1996) puts it, development is not what happens around people or what is done for people or in the name of the people. But this is exactly what the current strategy of MDGs does. People cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves. All they need is support. Omer, (1980), puts more directly: it is the people who must determine what development is, its parameters and the trade-offs they wish to make in achieving what they deem fit and desirable.

Successful implementation of the MDGs must build upon the constituent communities' own resources as they seek their own path to social and economic fulfilment, enlargement of the capacity of the individual and the community as a whole to create and innovate. The present top-down approach in designing and implementing the MDGs is too bureaucratic in nature. Being too bureaucratic connotes the process by which policy makers decide what is good for the people, package same and impose on them. It is the political office holders and their bureaucrats that develop guidelines for resource utilisation and allocation. They prepare programmes and projects as typified in the MDGs without consulting the people, and which consequently in most cases do not reflect priority issues. Apart from the fact that such packages rarely succeeded in the past, they also rarely really got to the people. I have used the expression rarely and really because under the framework of top-down approach without the people, only fractional residue of government inputs gets to the communities. The results are all over the state to see: poorly executed, abandoned/uncompleted MDGs projects and without any sense of ownership neither by the Government and its agents nor by the beneficiaries. Simply put, the problem is that the MDGs programme continues to be planned like a factory and imposed on the people. It has not engendered enthusiastic response from the people. They accept what is given them as part of the crumb falling from the table of the masters in Abuja and Awka without any single sense of ownership. Above all, such rationally designed packages "often go beyond the understanding of the rural actors, inhibit their indigenous creativity and thereby make them more confused and dependent. Anambra state must get away from the mentality of administering development to the people and instead give voice to mass of the people by increasing their levels of ownership of what truly belong to them. If the targets of the MDGs are to be met, they must get away from the technocratic notion of development to people-centred approach whereby the people and their "traditional" institutions are at the centre and in fact the basis of development thinking. They ought to be organically grafted on the people's planning and development resources.

The organic edification approach insists on building on the natural potentials of the people at the smallest unit of association. Indeed, it is sound principle of social order that social tasks should be left at the simplest and most human level at which it can be adequately performed – beginning with the family (Ward, 1966). Yves Simon put it more succinctly when he wrote: "every function, which can be assured by the inferior, must be exercised by the later, under pain of damage to the entire whole. For there is more perfection in a whole all of whose parts are full of life than in a whole some of whose parts are but instrument conveying the initiative of the superior organs" (cited in Maritain 1951, 68). When the people at whom much development is aimed (as is currently the case with MDGs) become part of planning and implementation, viable strategies for social and economic development will emerge and vital energy will arise from the people. Call it local level based planning, it envisages a small community making decisions about its own affairs, like its own resources, how to exploit them as well as the best way to tackle their problems; it envisages a face-to-face assembly very characteristic of the communities in Anambra state.

Omer (1980) noted that if this type of the people's resource is properly organised it can give the people greater voice in decisions that affect their immediate environment (social, economic and political) and progressively upwards; create more leadership of various kinds and at various levels; enlarge the centres of power and authority, lead to greater social justice, achieve holistic and integrated development. These are in addition to the fact that it reduces the hold of distant bureaucracy, enable people's determination of the parameters of development that reflect their felt needs. Apart from its socio-economic import for the state, especially in terms of effectiveness and sustainability of development, the approach will spill over into the politics of the state and the nation. Firstly, the people in their gatherings learn to listen, discuss and compromise: they learn democracy as a way of life. At such level, planning, implementation and control is most successful and sustainable, as people are more accountable to one another, and thereby to the society at large. The aspect of control invokes the idea of government role. In fact the last phase of this paper will be directed to the development of interfaces between the people and the government for such un-imposed control consequent upon grafting the 'formal' on the 'informal'. It is the informal that is the root which provides the requisite nutrients which are then synthesised by the 'formal'.

Institutional Implications

Organic edification in this context implies the grafting of formal development activities of government as represented in the MDGs on that which is most natural to the people. All that the people would require is institutional support but which must not be onerous to them. The bottom line is that the state has the responsibility to develop broad policy decisions in all areas in which the communities are usually engaged or can engage. Within the set framework, much of the problem solving activities take place in the local communities. If the State handed the 380 VIP toilets to the town unions to undertake, most of them will not do them because they do not really need them. The 120 solar powered boreholes were done without adequate consideration of sustainability. The supply of anti-malaria drugs to 138 Primary Health Centres outside the direct control of the communities is as good as not supplied as they are easily carted away by same Government officials that supply them or are supposed to administer them. In such direct government intervention in these communities, the State must take the people and their leaders into confidence through an institutional mechanism for consultation. In fact it is the leadership of each community, who are usually not paid for their services that provide the delicate balance between the necessary supervision (without imposition) from Government and the people's participation from below. The leadership because it is drawn from the community and by the community remains accountable to the community. In this way, development priorities are set by the communities and move forward in the strong light of community surveillance.

The need for community surveillance of MDGs projects in their areas whether undertaken by them or government cannot be over emphasised. Acting through or in partnership with the beneficiaries will also eliminate the situation in which multiple organs of government at the state and federal levels, including international donor agencies do the same work in a locality using different criteria and procedure with its attendant waste of resources and under utilisation of facilities. The State Government in appreciation of this need has gone some steps in involving the town unions but it has remained more of political rhetoric than real. The organic edification approach requires less but better government, less intervention and more facilitation, more enabling than controlling. It advocates for a more people centred institutional framework. Such institutional interfaces to link people development efforts and the Government are sketched below:

1. Basic to organic edification is the existence of community unions. Indeed the 1986 bye-law no 22 of the state expressly demanded the establishment of such community unions. The membership includes the leadership and the general assembly. It is the leadership which manages the central tasks of development and acts as the real link between local initiative and the state. But this leadership is surveilled from below

2. Without prejudice to the present local government system, a local council/committee on MDGs is a necessary adjunct in linking the people and the government. The local council on MDGs is a federation of the community unions in a local government. Membership of this body would include the chairman and secretary of the local government area, and representatives of the community unions (president and secretary). Leadership of the council rotates among the encompassed communities.

3. The next level is the level of integration: the state-wide level. At the level of the state, the MDGs committee is retained and takes full responsibility for the MDGs in the wide State. The only modification should be that membership of this body should include representatives of each local MDGs council. The decisions of the various communities already harmonised at the local levels are presented and processed by the body.

The institutions are so organised that their compositions reflect representatives of the people. If we must get out of the cyclic failures in attempts to benefit the majority of the people, then something different need be done at least experimentally

CONCLUSION

The existing institutional arrangement for MDGs in the State has not aided impact of the programme. It does not give the people the opportunity for active involvement and ownership. Whether it is projects like rollback malaria, emergency obstetric care, agriculture, conditional cash transfers and skills, literacy and economic empowerment it is the state and her agencies that select for the people, implement for the people and evaluate success even without the very end users. We argued that MDGs programmes demand organisational change. They require the reconfiguration of existing structures to facilitate efficient utilisation of resources and ensure sustainable local delivery of the global vision. The organic edification approach – an approach that builds on the people's way of doing things in the Southeast, is aimed at remedying the deficiencies. To them, the notion of development by the people is not alien. Despite their individualism, they exhibit community consciousness that has been a veritable instrument in socio-economic strides in the area. If they have never let down anything they do through their self effort, they will not let down any project of in which they are involved. This includes the MDGs projects.

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