



**INFLUENCE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION ON SUSTAINABILITY OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN OGBA/EBGEMA/NDONI LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA AND AHOADA EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN  
RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study examined influence of youth participation on sustainability of community development projects in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Three specific purposes, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design with population of 1,476 youth was adopted for the study. Sample size of 311 youth drawn using stratified proportional sampling technique and consisting of 166 youth from Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local government area and 145 from Ahoada East local government area were used for the study. Self-structured questionnaire titled “Perceived Influence of Youth Participation on Sustainability of Community Development Projects Questionnaires (PIYOPSCDPQ)” was used for the study and subjected to test retest reliability. The relationship between the two tests was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to obtain r value of 0.76. Data collected for the study were analysed using mean to answer the research questions and independent t-test to test the hypotheses formulated with the aid of SPSS version 20.0. The results show that youths from ONELGA and Ahoada East opined that to a very high extent their involvement in planning projects enhances sustainability of community development projects. The results also showed that youths from ONELGA and Ahoada East opined that to a low extent their involvement in needs identification and executing projects enhances sustainability of community development projects. The results also show that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths are involved in community needs identification and planning projects for sustainable community development projects. However, there is significant difference in the mean rating of youth in both groups on the extent to which youths are involved in executing community development projects for sustainability. It was recommended among others that: youth should be given the opportunities to participate in community needs identification and community leaders should give the youth the opportunities to collaborate with adult and experience members of the society especially professionals during their participation in community projects so that they can serve as mentors to them.*

**KEYWORDS:** Community Development, Sustainability, Project, Youth Participation, Socio-Economic Development, Rivers State, Nigeria



## INTRODUCTION

Every nation is made up of communities that directly or indirectly drive its growth and development. Community has been defined and described using various variables such as: geographical location, common interest, cultural heritage and/or belief system. Supporting this fact, Flo and Smith (2017) noted that community may be defined either through physical location, cultural heritage, language and belief system or through shared interest. Hence, community when defined from its traditional sense describes people living in same geographical area while from its modern sense describes people sharing common interest. It is for this reason, that Charles (2016) described community from both senses as group of people living together or working together on same goal(s) aimed at solving their common problems. It can be deduced from the discourse so far, that every community is made up of a range of stakeholders. Barnett and Brennan (2006) supported this assertion when they stated that, all communities are made up of numerous distinct stakeholders working individually and collectively towards the attainment of predetermined goals. These stakeholders are defined mostly by age, roles, qualifications, gender and status such as: adults, youth, children, male, females, professionals, and so on. Of all these stakeholders, the youth occupies a central place in the development and sustainability of any community.

Youth (male and female) are defined relatively based on the socio-economic development of the environment. This means that there is no universally acceptable definition of those that can be categorized as youth. However, organizations and nations have given their respective definitions to suit their context. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019) described those beyond the age of dependency (childhood) and not yet up to the age of independency (adulthood) as youth. In Nigeria, youth are defined in the National Youth Policy (NYP) as citizens that fall within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2019). This means that youth are mostly the younger members of any community who grow up to ensure the continuous survival of the community. Little wonder they are referred to as the future leaders and builders of their respective community (Dokubo and Igwe, 2018). The youth forms the large chunk of the population of every community. Hence, have the numerical strength to influence any aspect of their community development through the proper utilization of their energy, skills and knowledge.

Consequently, one can assert that without full participation of youths, community development effort may not be successful and sustainable. Barnett and Brennan (2006) supported this fact when they noted that community development requires that all distinct stakeholders, youth inclusive, make concerted efforts individually and collectively towards predetermined goals. This is due to the fact that community development as a dynamic process requires the participation of all stakeholders in the locality, especially youth who have been said to have the required energy, time and skills for driving positive change (Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee, 2013) cannot be achieved without utilizing every resource at the disposal of the community. Flo and Smith (2017) in their words noted that community development ranges from small initiative aimed at solving problems within smaller group to larger initiative aimed at solving problems affecting the entire community stakeholders. Community development projects according to Charles (2016) include: developing youth skill and knowledge for better adult roles, participating in reconstruction of community based infrastructures; leading an agenda for the betterment of all; maintaining the peace and



security of the community and engaging in collaborative efforts for food sustenance. Frances (2017) opined that community development projects help to solve problems such as: poverty, high crime rates, abandoned building, outdated infrastructure, unemployment and poor economy. Youth concerted efforts to sustainability of these community development projects are paramount because of their numerical strength, the energy, knowledge, skills and experiences they possess. Nseneri and Nsirim (2015) noted that the success or failure of any community development activity depends largely on the participation of the members of the community such as: youth, women, men and elders of same age grades.

The idea of sustainable community development projects is anchored on the idea of sustainable development which is seen as the process of harnessing of community resources in meeting the present and future community development project needs. Supporting this fact, Esene, Olumese and Ovbiagele (2018) opined that sustainable development is a pattern of resources utilization aimed at meeting the present human needs of any established institutions while preserving the environment for generations to come. The concept of sustainable community development therefore centres on the utilization of community resources for the realization of the present and future needs of the people. Consequently paramount to the actualization of sustainability of community development projects are the capabilities of the human resources of the community. This means that if the continuous development needs of communities must be met, relevant stakeholders such as youth and adults with the requisite capacity to harness the available community resources for the good of all must take charge of driving their communities' development agenda. Supporting this, Osang and Napoleon (2014) noted that citizens' participation in community development projects is necessary if the projects are to be meaningful and sustainable.

Youth's participation in the development of their host community is driven by the efforts of youth bodies to pull the youths together for a greater purpose. Their efforts are seen according to Njoku (2015), in mobilization of youth to participate in self-help activities aimed at meeting their needs and the needs of other members of their communities. It is in line with the recognition of the importance of the members of youth bodies as assets of community development projects that Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee (2013) in their assessment of youth associations' participation in community development focused on indices such as: their mobilization of finance for funding community development projects, collaboration with private sectors to bring development to community, self-help activities towards the development of community, provision of food during physical works aimed at community development and involving government to sponsor community based projects. According to Njoku (2015) youth's participation means to take decisions about how to attained goals and objectives by deciding on what should be done, how and by whom. Hence, in this study, the indices of youth participation are therefore viewed: as their involvement in identifying community needs, planning to address the community needs, and executing their plans to promote sustainability of community development projects.

Youth participation in community needs identification according to Wanja (2014) involves engaging the youth in decisions relating to the kind or nature of community projects to be executed in order to give them ownership and control of project execution. Matsela (2015) noted that youth participation in the development of their communities through the identification of areas where there is need for intervention for the benefit of all members of the community enable them to monitor the actualization of the projects. Youth participation



in planning projects is concerned with their involvement in the preparation of what needs to be done and how they are to be done. Akandinda, Kankya, and Peter (2016) opined that the involvement of the younger members of any community in planning stages of developmental projects enable them to take ownership of such projects and ensure their success. Youth participation in execution of projects has to do with their involvement in physical activities aimed at the successful implementation of the community projects' plans. Udensi, Daasi, Emah, and Zukbee (2013) noted that community development can be achieved through active mobilization and engagement of youth in executing meaningful projects that affects their life and that of others.

Many researchers have conducted studies that focused on youth participation in community development projects in Nigeria and in many parts of the world. The results of the earlier studies showed conflicting findings. For instance, Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee (2013) discovered youth participation in decision making, planning the project, monitoring/evaluating the project, raising funds for the project, and organizing skilled and unskilled labour for the project. Njoku (2015) also assessed youth body's participation in the planning and implementation of community development projects in Abia State and the findings revealed that to a great extent youth bodies participate in identification, implementation of needed community projects, supervision of community development projects, allocating responsibilities for projects execution and others. Mbagwu, Mannir, Ewelum and Ezema (2016) discovered in their study that the youth agreed they are involved in executing farm road construction plans but disagreed that they participate in determining the resources needed for the project. Radhika (2018) noted that many rural youth provide support during the execution of construction and repairs of rural roads. Ezeh, Nwibo, Umeh and Eze (2018) also discovered very high rate of youth involvement in project implementation when their youth organizations are embarking on community development projects. However, contrary to the above findings, in a study conducted by Olujide (2008) on the attitude of youth towards rural development, it was discovered that only few youth participated in the execution of rural community roads plans. Ezeh, Nwibo, Umeh & Eze (2018) also discovered low rate of youth participation in planning stage of community development projects. It is worth noting that all these researches with focus on youth participation or youth body's participation in community development where done outside Rivers State. In addition, each covers different indices of youth's participation. Hence the need for continuous study on youth's participation in influencing sustainability of community development projects cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, it is in order to fill this gap in literature that the present study was conceived.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Rivers State according to the Ministry of Youth Development (2018) has about 4.5 million youths. Majority of these youths are found in communities that make up the local government areas in the State. The population strength of the youth can be an asset to the development of each community in the State when mobilized and harnessed positively through their various youth bodies. To ensure participation of youth in community development, various youth bodies in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East local government areas have from time to time conceived and embarked on community projects such as: school building and renovation, marketing building and renovation, farm roads marking, construction and renovation, and providing security support. However, to successfully execute their conceived



projects which are capital intensive, youth bodies mostly approach donors or financiers such as: local government authority, political representatives, oil companies and other private establishments within their area to assist financially. Unfortunately, many of the conceived projects are executed without the participation of the members of the various youth bodies. This is because the agents of the financiers of the projects take over the plans, mobilize their own contractors and execute the projects without further participation of the youth bodies' members. This undermines the self-reliance of the members of the various youth bodies and makes them look like parasites or aliens to the conceived projects within their own community. Consequently, the executed projects end up not meeting the youths' conceived standards but serving only the interest of few. This situation hinders the youth from taking ownership of the projects and sustaining them as it spurs division among the youth bodies' members especially when there are obvious traces of dependence and grasping of opportunity between the financiers and youth bodies' leadership. The spillover effects are seen in the increasing number of competitions and resentment amongst the youth within Omoku, Egi, Egbema and Ahoada East which promotes rivalry conflicts and obstruct sustainable community development. However, as part of the renaissance of youth movements within these areas, there is need to find out whether youth participation in community projects can ensure sustainable community development. It is in order to fulfill this need that the researcher deems it fit to examine the influence of youth participation on community projects for sustainable community development in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East local government areas.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine influence of youth participation on sustainability of community development projects in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government Area in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East.
2. Determine the extent to which youths involvement in planning projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East.
3. Determine the extent to which youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in the study area.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent do youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East?
2. To what extent do youths involvement in planning projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East?





3. To what extent do youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in the study area?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in planning projects enhance sustainability of community development projects.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in the study area.

### **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

#### **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Theory by McKnight, J. L. and Kretzmann, J. P. (1993)**

Asset based theory of community development states that communities can drive the development they desired themselves through the identification and mobilization of the existing but often unrecognised assets in their midst. These assets they can utilize to respond to challenges confronting them socio-economically. Their ability to use these assets can improve their standard of living and solve many of their socio-economic woes (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993).

This approach to community development is aimed at identifying assets from individual and matching them with people or groups who have an interest in or need for their strengths in order to improve on their own current situations. The main aim is to use what is readily available in the community for the improvement of the community. According to Bright (1998) the involvement of people in projects which affects them will engenders solidarity and unity. Brohman (1996) in propounding participatory theory which laid down the premises for Asset based theory of community development, noted that most times government at the national and international level conceived and designed developmental projects from the outside without consideration given to the people whom the projects are meant to serve. Hence making the people disassociate themselves to the continuous sustainability of the projects which they see as alien to their needs.

The peoples' asset in community development is derived through the mobilization of individuals, associations and institutions within the community to the advantage of improving the community (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993). According to Idris (2015), this model to



community development is an alternative to needs-based model because rather than focus on the community needs; it focuses on the community assets as strength for the community to achieve its needs. It is for this reason that the propounded of this theory (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993) hold on to the belief that if community must development, the development must begin by recognizing the various assets that can be uncovered in the community rather than waiting for intervention from outside the community. The theory sees communities as webs with diverse capable gifts and assets. In this view, each community has some unique assets in knowledge, skills and capacities it can utilize to drive its own development. The theory categorized community assets into five groups. These are: individuals, associations, institutions, place based and connections. Any of these assets can individually and collectively be used to contribute successfully towards the development of host communities in a sustainable manner. Supporting this fact, Idris (2015) noted that the ABCD theory places less importance on the utilization of outside professionals, experts and even in some cases natural resources to drive community development.

The above theory is relevant to the present study based on the fact that it recognizes the use of asset such as: youth to drive sustainable community development projects. This means that local youth should be critical asset for driving and sustaining community development through mobilization of their age-grades, local resources within and outside their community and voluntarily participation in meaningful community development projects. If this is the case, it is expected that youth bodies formed in local community should be able to mobilize their members to participate fully in community projects and sustain them which will in turn engenders sustainable community development. It is this claim that the present study intends to investigate.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This research design is employed because; the study is designed to solicit respondents' opinion through providing answers to researcher's designed instrument on the variables under investigation. This research design is deemed appropriate because according to Ezekiel, Oguzor, Onyeukwu, Onwuchekwa and China (2017), descriptive survey research is the most appropriate research design when it comes to assessing opinion of respondents on the characteristics of phenomena under investigation.

This study was conducted in two local government areas of Rivers-West Senatorial Zone of Rivers State. The zone as one of the three senatorial districts in Rivers State is a host to eight local government areas namely: Abua-Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku-Toru, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema and Ogaba/Egbema/Ndoni local government areas. However, this study was only carried out in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East local government areas.

The population of the study consists of 1,476 youths who are members of respective youth bodies in Ahoada East LGA and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA. To be precise, this population was drawn from eight youth bodies in the respective local government areas.

**Table 1: The population distribution of the members of the youth bodies:**

S/N	L.G.A	Organization	Population
1	Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni	Omoku youth Association	224
		Egbema youth forum	210
		Egi Youth Association	142
		Ndoni youth body	216
		<b>Total</b>	<b>792</b>
2.	Ahoada East	Upata youth assembly	207
		Ugbobi Ehuda youth council	211
		Igbu Ehuda Youth Organ.	98
		Ogbo youth assembly	168
		<b>Total</b>	<b>684</b>

*Source: Ministry of Youth Development, Rivers State.*

The sample size based on Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) for a population of approximately 1,500 at 0.05 level of significance is 311 which is approximately 21% of the population (See appendix 3). This sample was selected using stratified proportional sampling techniques in order to take care of all the groups in each of the Local Government Areas used. However, based on the local governments' distributions, the sample is made up of 166 youths from Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and 145 youth from Ahoada East Local Government Areas.

The data for this research was collected using a questionnaire tagged "Perceived Influence of Youth Participation on Community Projects for Sustainable Community Development Questionnaires (PIYOPPCODQ)". The instrument was made up of 18 items, six to each of the research questions posed. The response options to items were designed based on 4 points rating scales of Very High Extent (VHE - 4 points), High Extent (HE - 3 points), Low Extent (LE - 2 points) and Very Low Extent (VLE - 1 point). The instrument is divided into three clusters.

The designed instrument for data collection was subjected to assessment by three experts in order to determine its validity. Two of the experts were selected from the Department of Adult Education and Community Development (the researcher's supervisor inclusive) and one expert of the Field of Measurement and Evaluation, all from Rivers State University. The experts were requested to assess the clarity of items, simplicity of vocabulary and relevance of items in providing the appropriate data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using test-retest method based on data obtained from 20 members of Ahoada west youth forum in Ahoada West local government area, Rivers State. The choice of this area for the reliability testing is based on the similar characteristics it has with that of the areas used for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to correlate the two scores obtained from the two tests in order to obtain the  $r$  value. The correlation between the two administrations was computed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to obtain  $r$  – value of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) of 0.76 which is a high positive correlation, hence the instrument is deemed reliable.





The data obtained for this study were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level computed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science version 20.0. For the purpose of decision making, the following were used as guide:

- (a) Mean or Grand mean of 3.5 – 4.00 was regarded as Very High Extent (VHE), 2.5 to 3.49 was regarded as High Extent (HE), and 1.5 to 2.49 was regarded as Low Extent (LE) and 1 to 1.49 was regarded as Very Low Extent (VLE).
- (b) In testing the null hypotheses, the decision rule of computation with SPSS was used to draw conclusion regarding the results obtained. The rule states that where the p value obtained is equal to or less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis be rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld. However, where the p-value obtained from the computation is greater than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis be accepted (Kpolovie, 2011).

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East?

**Table 2: Summary of Mean Scores on the Extent of Youth Involvement in Community Needs Identification to Enhance Sustainability of Community Development Projects**

s/n	Items	ONELGA			AHOADA EAST		
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Involved in conducting survey to identify areas of needs in the community.	2.09	.96	LE	1.70	.82	LE
2	Sourced for relevant information relating to community projects during needs assessment.	1.80	.76	LE	1.67	.69	LE
3	Involved in deciding critical area of need in the community.	1.96	.87	LE	1.90	.85	LE
4	Involved in engaging relevant community stakeholders to assess collective area of needs.	1.98	.88	LE	2.05	.92	LE
5	Engaged with government agencies during the determination of community needs.	1.98	.87	LE	2.08	.74	LE
<b>Grand Mean &amp; Std Deviation</b>		<b>1.96</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>1.88</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>LE</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*



Table 2 shows that the respondents from both ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a low extent they are involved in conducting survey to identify areas of needs in the community, sourced for relevant information relating to community projects during needs assessment, are involved in deciding critical area of need in the community with mean scores, engaging relevant community stakeholders to assess collective area of needs, and engaged with government agencies during the determination of community needs with mean scores of 2.09, 1.70, 1.80, 1.67, 1.96, 1.90, 1.98, 2.05, 2.08 and standard deviation of 0.96, 0.82, 0.76, 0.69, 0.87, 0.85, 0.88, 0.92, and 0.74 respectively. However, when the grand mean scores of 1.96, 1.88 and standard deviation scores 0.91 and 0.80 are considered, it can be concluded that youth from both ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a low extent they are involved in community needs identification to enhance sustainability of community development projects.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do youths involvement in planning projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in ONELGA and Ahoada East?

**Table 3: Summary of Mean Scores on the Extent of Youth Involvement in Planning Projects to Enhance Sustainability of Community Development Projects**

s/n	Items	ONELGA			AHOADA EAST		
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
6	Involved in setting goals/objectives to be achieved with community projects.	3.78	.46	VHE	3.72	.54	VHE
7	Involved decide the specific community projects to be carried out for sustainable community development projects	3.71	.54	VHE	3.66	.59	VHE
8	Involved in deciding how to allocate available resources for the actualization of community projects.	3.35	.54	HE	3.44	.56	HE
9	Involved in formulating strategies for achieving set objectives of community projects.	3.52	0.61	VHE	3.41	.66	HE
10	Involved in determining alternative course of action in achieving set objectives of community projects.	3.63	0.58	VHE	3.57	.60	VHE
<b>Grand Mean &amp; Std Deviation</b>		<b>3.60</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>VHE</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>VHE</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*



Table 3 shows that the respondents from both ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that they are involved to a very high extent in setting goals/objectives to be achieved with community projects, deciding the specific community projects to be carried out for sustainable community development projects, and determining alternative course of action in achieving set objectives of community projects with mean scores of 3.78, 3.72, 3.71, 3.66, 3.63, 3.57 and standard deviation scores of 0.46, 0.54, 0.59, 0.58 and 0.60 respectively. The respondents from ONELGA and Ahoada East are also of the opinion that to a high extent they are involved in deciding how to allocate available resources for the actualization of community projects with mean scores of 3.35, 3.44 and standard deviation scores of 0.54 and 0.56 respectively. In addition, while the respondents from ONELGA are of the opinion that to a very high extent they are involved in formulating strategies for achieving set objectives of community projects with mean score of 3.52 and standard deviation of 0.61, their counterparts from Ahoada East are of the opinion that they are involved in to a high extent in same task with mean score of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.66. Nevertheless, when the grand mean scores of 3.60, 3.56 and standard deviation scores of 0.55 and 0.59 for both youth from ONELGA and Ahoada East are considered, it can be concluded that both groups are of the opinion that they are involved to a very high extent in planning projects to enhance sustainability of community development projects.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent do youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects?

**Table 4: Summary of Mean Scores on the Extent of Youth Involvement in Executing Projects to Enhance Sustainability of Community Development Projects.**

s/n	Items	ONELGA			AHOADA EAST		
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
16	Involved in physical construction/innovation of community projects for sustainability.	2.54	1.19	HE	2.45	1.17	LE
17	Involved in efficient utilization of available resources to actualize community projects for sustainability.	2.89	1.20	HE	2.18	0.79	LE
18	Involved in community projects' supervision during execution to ensure compliance with standard.	2.24	0.73	LE	2.22	0.84	LE
19	Involved in monitoring community projects to ensure maintenance for sustainability.	2.39	0.75	LE	2.08	0.92	LE
20	Involved in evaluating implementation of community development plans for sustainability.	2.34	1.27	LE	2.17	0.97	LE
<b>Grand Mean &amp; Std Deviation</b>		<b>2.48</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>LE</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2020



Table 4 shows that the respondents from ONELGA are of the opinion that to a high extent their involvement drive physical construction/innovation of community projects for sustainability and efficient utilization of available resources to actualize community projects for sustainability with mean scores of 2.54, 2.89 and standard deviation scores of 1.19 and 1.20, while their counterparts from Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a low extent their involvement in same tasks drive community project sustainability with mean scores of 2.45, 2.18 and standard deviation scores of 1.17 and 0.79 respectively. The respondents from both ONELGA and Ahoada East are also of the opinion that their involvement to a low extent ensure community projects' supervision during execution to ensure compliance with standard, the monitoring of community projects to ensure maintenance for sustainability, and ensure the evaluating of implementation of community development plans for sustainability with mean scores of 2.24, 2.22, 2.39, 2.08, 2.34, 2.17 and standard deviation scores of 0.73, 0.84, 0.75, 0.92, and 0.97 respectively. However, when the grand mean scores of 2.48, 2.22 and standard deviation scores of 1.01 and 0.94 for both groups are considered, it can be concluded that youth from ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a low extent their involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects.

**Table 5: Summary of independent t-test on the difference in the Mean Rating of Youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ONELG A/AHO ADA EAST	Equal variances assumed	.58	.45	1.03	309	.30	.20	.19	-.18	.57
	Equal variances not assumed			1.03	292.19	.31	.20	.19	-.18	.57

Source: Field Survey, 2020



Table 5 shows  $t = 1.03$ ,  $df = 309$   $p > 0.05$  at 0.30 with confidence interval difference at -0.18 and 0.57 for lower and upper level respectively. Therefore, since  $p$  value calculated at 2-tailed test of 0.30 is greater than the  $p$ -value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in planning projects enhance sustainability of community development projects.

**Table 6: Summary of independent t-test on the difference in the Mean Rating of Youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in planning enhance sustainability community development projects.**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ONELGA /AHOAD A EAST	Equal variances assumed	3.62	.06	1.93	309	.06	.41	.21	-.01	.82
	Equal variances not assumed			1.94	308.94	.05	.41	.21	-.01	.82

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 shows  $t = 1.93$ ,  $df = 309$   $p > 0.05$  at 0.06 with confidence interval difference at -0.01 and 0.82 for lower and upper level respectively. Therefore, since  $p$  value calculated at 2-tailed test of 0.06 is greater than the  $p$ -value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it means that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in planning enhance community development projects.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects in the study area.





**Table 7: Summary of independent t-test on the difference in the Mean Rating of Youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ONELG A/AHOADA EAST	Equal variances assumed	.14	.71	4.99	309	.00	1.30	.26	.79	1.81
	Equal variances not assumed			5.00	304.02	.00	1.30	.26	.79	1.81

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 7 shows  $t = 4.99$ ,  $df = 309$ ,  $p < 0.05$  at 0.001 with confidence interval difference at 0.79 and 1.81 for lower and upper level respectively. Therefore, since p value calculated at 2-tailed test of 0.001 is less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it means that there is significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in executing project enhance sustainability of community development projects.

## DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The results of the study related to specific objective one show that youth from ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a low extent their involvement in needs identification enhances sustainability of community development projects. This finding emanated from the fact that the respondents' opinion on most of the items related to community needs identification examined indicated that youths from both local government areas opined that they were to a low extent involved in needs identification. The findings also indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in community needs identification enhance sustainability of community development projects. These findings are in agreement with the discovery of Matsela (2015) who discovered that youth were able to identified unmet needs and social problems in their communities and made a choice to act and bring about change. The findings are also in line



with the discovery of Akandinda, Kankya & Peter (2016) when they discovered that there is limited participation of youth in community development programs at the needs assessment level. The findings are also in line with the discovery of Ezech, Nwibo, Umeh & Eze (2018) who discovered low rate of youth participation in the conception of projects that their organizations execute in immediate communities. However, the findings are contrary to the findings of Njoku (2015) who discovered that youth bodies to a great extent participate in identification and implementation of needed community projects. The findings are also contrary to the discovery of Mbagwu, Mannir, Ewelum and Ezema (2016) when they discovered in their study that youth were not involved in determining what type of community project should be carried out.

The results of the study related to specific objective two show that youths from ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that their involvement to a very high extent in planning projects enhances sustainability of community development projects. The results of the test of hypothesis also show that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in planning enhance sustainability of community development projects. These results are based on the fact that the respondents from both local governments are of the opinion that they are involved to a very high extent in setting goals/objectives to be achieved with community projects, deciding the specific community projects to be carried out for sustainable community development projects, deciding how to allocate available resources for the actualization of community projects, formulating strategies for achieving set objectives of community projects, and determining alternative course of action in achieving set objectives of community projects. The findings are supported by the discovery of Njoku (2015) who discovered that youth through their organizations to a great extent participate in setting out goals and objectives, source information for improving their community development project, and set time frame of the projects, and others. However, the findings are contrary to the findings of Akandinda, Kankya, and Peter (2016) when they discovered youth were not given the opportunity to participate at the planning stages of community development projects especially as it relates to taking independent decision on what project needs to be carried out. The findings were also contrary to the findings of Ezech, Nwibo, Umeh and Eze (2018) when they discovered low rate of youth participation in planning stage of community development projects.

The results of the study related to specific objective four show that youths from ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a high extent their involvement in executing projects enhance sustainability of community development projects. The result of the test of hypothesis show that there is significant difference in the mean rating of youth in Ogba/Ebgbema/Ndoni Local Government Area and Ahoada East Local Government on the extent to which youths involvement in executing project enhance sustainability of community development projects. These findings emanated from the fact that the respondents from both ONELGA and Ahoada East are of the opinion that to a high extent they are involved in physical construction/innovation of community projects for sustainability, involved in efficient utilization of available resources to actualize community projects for sustainability, involved in community projects' supervision during execution to ensure compliance with standard, involved in monitoring community projects to ensure maintenance for sustainability, and involved in evaluating implementation of community development plans for sustainability. However, it is worth noting that despite the sameness of opinion between



the youths from Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada east local government area, there was significant difference in their opinion which can be to the difference in variability scores. The findings are supported by the discovery of Njoku (2015) who discovered that youth in their organizations to a great extent participated in executing community development projects.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that youths involvement in planning projects, and executing projects to a high extent influence sustainability of community development projects. It can also be concluded that youths involvement in community needs identification to a low extent influences sustainability of community development projects. It can be concluded therefore that although youth from the two local governments are involved in planning and executing stages of community projects, they are not mostly involved in identifying community needs that need to be addressed which may affect their ownership of the projects.

It can also be concluded that there is no significant difference between the opinion of youth from Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and youth from Ahoada on the extent to which they are involved in planning to influence sustainability of community development projects. This means that youth from both local government areas are of the opinion that their involvement in community development projects planning lead to their sustainability. This should be seen as good development since the youth's involvement in this aspect of community projects can promote rapid inclusive development of community development projects as they would take ownership of the projects for sustainability which is so much desired across Nigeria today considering the number of youths in almost all communities. Consequently, it can be concluded that the extent to which the youths are involved in execution of community projects to drive their sustainability for sustainable community development differ in the two local government areas.

## Implications of Findings

**Mentorship implications:** the participation of youth in community projects through youth bodies provides the opportunity of meeting and interacting with peers and other stakeholders within the community especially elders and leaders of different kinds. Hence, this opportunity can be utilized for the purpose of mentoring the youth into productive members and future leaders of the community.

**Community policy implications:** youth active participation in community projects from the stages of planning projects and execution as discovered in this study has the implication of driving community development policy that recognized youth bodies and set agenda for their participation in critical areas of community projects for the sustainable transformation of the community. This is to avoid a situation where the youth through their youth bodies operate in parallel lines with the entire community's developmental agenda.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are put forward for implementation:

1. Youth should be given the opportunities to participate at the community needs identification stage of community development projects in order to give them ownership of the entire community development project process for sustainability.
2. Community leaders should give the youth the opportunities to collaborate with adult and experience members of the society especially professionals during their participation in community projects so that they can serve as mentors to them.
3. Community development experts and lecturers should organize mentoring programme and seminars from time to time to enlighten youth on how to identify areas they can fit in and contribute meaningfully in community projects for sustainable community development.

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