

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Community development often emanates from a sense of ownership, citizens' participation, and empowerment in any society. However, the administrative interventions of previous and present governments to encourage transformation within the communities in Nigeria, have not yielded the needed social amenities and infrastructural development. This paper argued that participatory budgeting affects community development in Nigeria. Cross sectional design was adopted and the population consisted of 5,641 community people and members of registered association in the six local governments in Anambra and Kaduna States. Simple sampling random technique was adopted to determine the sample size of 916. The questionnaire used was validated and reliability established before data collection. While descriptive statistics was used to analyse the respondents' biographical data, regression analytical tool was employed to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that participatory budgeting had a significant effect on community development in selected states in Nigeria ( $R^2 = 0.128$ ;  $F(1,809) = 118.311$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that participatory budgeting is a best-fit approach to community development in Nigeria. Hence, this study recommended that government should encourage participatory budgeting in the allocation and monitoring of community development in order to achieve developmental projects that are citizen-centric.*

**Key words:** Community development, Participatory budgeting, People-centered development

### **Introduction**

Community development is a derivative of people's sense of ownership and empowerment that instigates proper utilization of community resources for the transformation of the general public and the good of all. The knowledge and application of this mechanism by government cum citizens and stakeholders engender the development of people and their communities in a way that arouses their natural inclinations and connections to governance (Jim, 2015). Nations like United Kingdom, Netherland, Brazil and other developed countries that have attained this feat. Observation revealed that they have appropriated some preconditions such as community participation and activation through deliberative and aggregative approaches into governance in order to promote socio-political and equitable development of communities (Harkins & Escobar 2016).

Community development as a construct refers to the cooperation of community members and local governments in the identification of needs and execution of plans to accomplish those needs that raise the standard of living of the citizens (Bappah, 2014). As such, it has been explored by different authors from varied perspectives; scholars such as Akinsorotan and Olujide (2007) studied it from the perspective of community members providing for the needs of the community, Fraser (2012) addressed it from the perspective of government providing all community needs, and Bappah (2014) and Mallik (2013) have

approached it from the cooperating dimension of both government and community members working together to develop communities. Interestingly, the government and community members' cooperation dimension of community development has been perceived to produce citizens' oriented benefits in greater proportion than other models. This is based on the fact that whenever community members are involved in the decision and use of community resources, prudent use of the resources to achieve community needs and preferences is engendered (Sobanjo, 2018).

In addition, it has been observed that it eliminates all forms of corruption and prebendalism that are prevalent when government is left alone to undertake development issues in the communities (Arisi-Nwugballa et al., 2016; Dauda, 2017; Danaan, 2018; Githaka, Gachahi & Mwaruvie, 2018). Though the benefits associated with community development at the community level seem to be well understood and known to government officials and community members, achievements of community development have been elusive. As a result, basic infrastructures and social amenities like electricity, potable water, motorable roads, functional health facilities and educational facilities are still very scarce in most communities in Nigeria even after several interventions (Ndace and Musa, 2024).

This lingering challenge has not only adversely affected the citizens' opportunity for employment, satisfactory living and increased life expectancy, it has equally emptied the entire country of its contents and left it with no political and economic hegemony within and outside its boundaries (Ojatorotu & Adeleke, 2017; Olanrewaju, 2015; Ugoani, 2017 and Stallings, (2024)). In addition, it has also orchestrated a massive drift of Nigerians from rural areas to urban centers and even beyond the shores of Nigeria to foreign countries in search of supportive environment for meaningful survival. Previous studies have attributed government's clueless strategies and management of both human and material resources (Jack, Nkwocha & Odubo, 2016; Ugoani, 2017 and Ikonne, 2024 ) to be the bane of community development. Nevertheless, participatory budgeting that stimulates citizens' involvement in allocation of resources, implementation, and prevention of resources diversion to private pockets has been explored sparingly. Consequently, this study investigated the kind of influence that participatory budgeting yields on community development in Nigeria. The paper is divided as follows: introduction, review of literature, methodology, analysis and presentation of findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendation.

## **Review of Literature**

Community development, like other concepts in social sciences, has pluralistic conceptualizations based on different perceptions of scholars. It's been perceived as a mechanism that allows people to contribute their quota and decide their preferred future as they engaged in the development of their community (Udu & Onwe, 2016; Thelma, 2024). This means that the community does not only identify a problem or need, but also become part of the change agent that solves the problem or meets the need (Abugu, 2014). In another dimension, community development has also been perceived as a change that equitably improves and sustains the lives of community members (Akinsorotan & Olujide, 2007). Adelesi (2015) and Sabet, & Khaksar, (2024).perceived community development as a process that allows community members to gain self-confidence as they participate in community activities with the common goal to change their situation.

Interestingly, Elekwa and Eme (2013); & Tchida, , and Stout, (2024) observed that when community members are involved in their own development, the demand for effective local governance does not only increase, but also opens an avenue whereby the citizens are able to build capacity and requisite skills for effective community participation. In the same way, Green and Haines (2012) explained that community development is a process that engages the cooperation of all stakeholders within a community who work together to ensure the wellbeing and happiness of the citizens through the provision of good education, health, social infrastructures and security. Elekwa and Eme (2013) and Green and Haines (2012) added that the practice of community development avails the citizens to develop capacity that can further strengthen them to improve their wellbeing. In addition, Green and Haines (2012) identified that community development that involves the collaboration of both the citizens and the local government facilitates the provision of citizens' capital needs that are economically, physically and socially beneficial to them. Based on the forgoing, it is explicit that community development is a process that facilitates the cooperation of

government and stakeholders in the community to take action and monitor their programmes together to ensure the actualization of the goal of the community. By this synergetic association of both the government officials and the community stakeholders, effective community participation is not only engendered, but also enhances community empowerment and capacity building of the citizens within the community.

### **Participatory budgeting**

Participatory budgeting (PB) is an element of citizen participation that transcends beyond consultative level to citizens' involvement in the allocation of resources in their community (Muriu, 2013; and Sinervo, et al, 2024). Budget itself means a plan designed for allocating resources. Budget is a detailed document that clearly shows how resources, including money will be allocated or spent within a specific period (Mustafa, 2013 and Enendu and Fadeyi, 2024). Budget encompasses the goals and projections of the government (Obi & Obi, 2014). As perceived by Oseni (2012) and Ardini (2024), budget can be a formidable measuring tool by which the goals, aspirations and resources of the local government are been monitored. So, budgeting helps the authorities to know the expenditures and investment it will make for the common good of the people in relation to the expected revenues. Budgets which are projections of the governments are made with the purpose to develop communities. As a result, the provisions for education, health, road maintenance, security, and basic amenities such as water, housing and primary school are incorporated in the budget.

Hence, participatory budgeting is a process that enables citizens to get involved in the distribution of a defined public budget (Mustafa, 2013; and Pardo-Beneyto, & Abellán-López, 2023). This means that when citizens participate in the allocation and division of resources, it boosts their morale and impetus to support the implementation at the community level. In addition, participatory budgeting equally denotes the meeting of citizens with government official to agree on preferences and needs in the development of government budget for their community (Cabannes, 2015). The involvement of citizens in the budgeting process is a medium of citizens' empowerment to engage with the local government not only to help in the allocation of resources, but also to assist in the areas of implementation and monitory of projects in the community (Del Prado, 2015).

### **Participating Budgeting and Community Development**

Participatory budgeting has been observed to promote transparent and accountable democratic process that stimulates citizens and groups in community to deliberate and impact positively in the decision making process (Creighton, 2014; Harkins & Escobar, 2016). World Bank (2007), observed that participatory budgeting is not only instrumental to the education and engagement of citizens to strengthen demand for good governance, but also helps to minimise government inefficiency and corruption. Relating to this is the observation of Umo (2014) that the involvement of citizens in making and implementing community decisions boosts community effectiveness, and produces preferable results that help to curb corruption in the community. Muse and Narsiah (2015) studied participatory budgeting in relation to community development and discovered that it avails the citizens of the opportunity to be empowered with the requisite skills that enhance cooperative relationship between the citizens and government that stimulates service good delivery in the community. In line with this thought, Cretu and Cretu (2014) observed that this concept of participatory budgeting triggers the memory of the kind of participatory governance that was practiced in Athens where citizens and community convoked and allocated their resources of the community equitably.

Bowers and Blunt (2016) and Legón, and Pérez, (2023) also added that participatory budgeting has been used to achieve social goals even through limited availability of resources. In areas where it has been successfully done, perception of citizens concerning accountability and quality of governance of government has positively changed (Sguelo, 2016). An exemplification of this has been captured by Herzberg et al (2011), Sintomer et al (2013), Sguelo (2016) that the practice of participatory budgeting in Portio Alegre in Brazil brought transformation upon the entire city. These scholars (Herzberg et al., 2011; Sintomer et al., 2013; Sguelo, 2016) observed that the introduction of participatory budgeting in 1988 in Portio Alegre city did not only mitigate the level of disparity between the rich and poor but also curb the corruption that was palpable at all levels of decision making institution. Sguelo (2016) added that areas that were earlier on marginalized

were given more resources to improve their social and physical amenities like schools, roads, sanitation and healthcare through participatory budgeting. Study carried out by Sintomer et al. (2013); Zhu, et al (2023) revealed that participatory budgeting does not only improve services that are based on citizens' proposals, but also elicits cooperation between citizens and government for greater responsiveness.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

The theory that this study is anchored is the people-centered development theory. The proponents of this theory are Schenck and Louw (1995). It advocates that development should have a contact with the real world of the people in the areas of needs, aspirations, preferences, priorities and potentials (De Weijer, 2013; Schenck & Louw, 1995 Scolobig et al., 2015; Simonsen et al., 2014); Janssen, (2024) or hence, development will not be real and sustainable. This theory is culture-relative, location specific, ecologically conditioned and social setting ingrained concept (Schenck & Louw, 1995; Santha, 2024)). Beside, people-centered development theory also stresses that any process that brings about social change should be flexible, contextual and innovative and adaptable in a way that the people, not a section of them become the focus (Maly, 2014).

This theory is applied in the study because it perceives community development as a process that enables the members to become empowered and build capacities and skills that promotes their ability to mobilize, allocate and manage available resources for the wellbeing of the community. This process does not only enable the citizens to look at development as the delivery of goods and services to the people, but also the mobilization and empowerment mechanisms that enable the people to participate actively over their issues. This means that for any development to be genuine, valid and meaningful, the process must be determined, shaped, and driven by the people themselves. So, any development that is delivered with the exclusion and non-participation of the people is viewed as disempowering the socio-political device of the people. In alignment with the tenets of this theory, participatory budgeting is a mechanism that allows organic development in which the people make attempt to define their own development through the identification of needs and allocation of resources and provision of information that is needed to transform the lives of community members.

### **Methodology**

A cross sectional research design was adopted which involves a selected sample from a population. The population of the study was the thirty-six states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Out of these states, Anambra and Kaduna were purposively selected in light of the development activities of all the 5,641 total membership of community associations that are registered in the local government areas of the selected States. The two States and their local governments were selected based on the development agencies' activities in the area of enlightenment programme of citizen participation.

Sampling random technique was adopted to determine the sample size of 916 which was established based on longevity of the community associations as registered in the local government. Six local governments from the states were selected purposively having been enlightened by some development agencies on citizens' participation for good governance. The research instrument which was self-developed was subjected to validity and reliability test before the instrument was self-administered. Out of the 916 copies of the instrument administered, 811 copies (85%) were retrieved. While descriptive statistics was employed to analyse the characteristics of the respondents, regression analytical tool was used to test the hypothesis.

### **Results and Analysis**

**Table 1: Biographical data of the Respondents**

Variables	Categories	Frequency (811)	Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	635	78.2
	Female	176	21.8
Age	20-29	139	17.13
	30-39	179	22.07
	40-49	256	31.56
	50-59	141	17.38
	60 and above	116	14.30
Educational Qualification	Religion studies	103	12.70
	Sch. Cert.	143	17.63
	WAEC/Grade II	198	24.41
	OND/NCE	182	22.44
	HND/Degree	177	21.82
	PG Education	8	0.98
Occupation Distribution	Farmer	314	38.71
	Trader/Artisan	228	28.11
	Public/Civil ser.	269	33.16
	Unemployed	-	

Majority of the respondents in Anambra and Kaduna States, as revealed in *Table 1*, were males and females with 78.2% and 21.8% respectively. Based on the statistical results revealed above, it is clear that the male respondents were in the majority while the females constitute the minority group. Also, the results equally indicated that 17.13%, 22.07%, 31.56%, 17.38%, and 14.30% of the respondents constituted the respondents' ages that ranged from 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and above 60 respectively. Again, the statistics showed that 31.56% of the respondents constituted the majority of them whose ages were within the age bracket of 40-49, while 22.07%, 17.38, 17.13%, and 14.30% constituted the minority of the respondents that fell within the categories of 30-39, 50-59, 20-29 and above 60 in the studied States. By this, the agility, experience and maturity of the respondents as regards to their participation in this study is exemplified.

In addition, the respondents were required to indicate on the instrument their educational qualifications. As a result, 12.70%, 17.63%, 24.41%, 22.44%, 21.82% and 0.98 of the respondents demonstrated that they possessed Religion Knowledge, Primary school, WAEC/Grade II, OND/NCE, HND/Degree, and postgraduate certificates. These educational backgrounds of the respondents showed that they were well equipped to understand the questions on the instrument before they responded. Furthermore, the respondents were equally required to indicate their occupational engagement on the questionnaire. Hence, 38.71%, 28.11% and 33.16% pointed out that they were farmers, traders, and public/civil servants. Interestingly, this statistics revealed that the respondents were actively engaged in the above recognised occupations in their various communities at the time when this study was conducted.

**Table 2: Linear Regression Result of the Effect of Participating Budgeting on Community Development.**

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.357 <sup>a</sup>	0.128	0.127	4.17949		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Participating Budgeting						
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	2066.682	1	2066.682	118.311	0.00 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	14131.750	809	17.468		
	Total	16198.432	810			
a. Dependent Variable: Community Development						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Participating Budgeting						
Coefficient						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	74.760	0.401			186.286	0.000
Participating Budgeting	0.110	0.010	0.357		10.877	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Community Development						

Table 2 presented the summary results that show there was a positive relationship between participatory budgeting and community development in Nigeria ( $R = 0.357$ ). The results also showed that participatory budgeting has significant effect on community development ( $R^2 = 0.128$ ;  $F(1, 809) = 118.311$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value was 0.128 and it is significant at  $P$ -value 0.000. This implies that participatory budgeting explained 12.8% of the variations in community development in Nigeria. The other variables that were not captured in this model explained the remaining 87.2%. The overall test of significance of the fitted regression model was provided by the F test statistics. The model had the F value of 118.311 with  $p$ -value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. Hence, these findings were sufficient to support the idea that participatory budgeting has positive effect on community development because of its statistical significance.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective that this study was set to accomplish was to determine the kind of effect that participatory budgeting has on community development. The findings revealed that participatory budgeting had positive and significant effect on community development in Nigeria. This implies that the development of communities that has a positive and beneficial influence on the community members is premised on the involvement of the citizens in the allocation and monitoring of their projects and resources. This goes further to explain the fact that when community members determine their preferences and get involved in the identification of needs and allocation of resources in those areas, it equally motivate them to participate in community projects which lead to developments that accomplish the preferences of the community members.

The findings align with that of Akinsorotan and Olujide (2007), Agu-Aguiyi, Onyia, Anigbogu and Umebali (2018), Bappah (2014), Badran (2013), Olaleye's (2010) and Sabet, S., Khaksar, (2024) that equally revealed that the involvement of community members in the allocation of community resources leads to community development. The meaning of this is that when citizens are practically involved in the allocation and monitoring of resources through participatory budgeting, fraudulent activities and diversion of resources to non-priority projects are not only minimized, but community preferences are met. Hence, this development is people-centric, because the people are able to define and champion their own ways

without any opportunity for the self-interest seeking elements to hijack the process for their benefits to the detriment of the people. This study concluded that participatory budgeting is a best-fit driver of community development in Nigeria. Hence, the study recommended that government and other service providers should encourage participatory budgeting in the allocation and monitoring of community resources in order to achieve developmental projects that are citizen-centric.

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