

# Impact of NGO in Community Development: Focus on the Association of People Living with Sickle Cell Disorder (APLSCD) in Anambra State

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**Abstract:** *The focus of the study was the examination of the impact of NGO (APLSCD) in community development in Anambra State. The rise of NGOs in Nigeria was as a result of government's inability to cope with the huge development needs of the people. APLSCD is a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) that caters for the medical and welfare needs of persons living with sickle cell disorder/anaemia. The paper is descriptive and quantitative in typology. Methods and sources of data collections focused on Questionnaire. Participatory development theory served as the framework for explanation. Findings divulged that NGO (APLSCD) has significantly empowered the lives of people living with sickle cell disorder in Anambra State. Insufficient fund and Shortage of volunteers are major constraints limiting APLSCD developmental strides in Anambra State. The study recommends that government, public and private institutions, churches, and privileged Nigerians should render helping hand to the Association.*

**Keywords:** NGO, Community Development, Association of People Living with Sickle Cell Disorder (APLSCD)

## I. INTRODUCTION

Poor performance of government in meeting with the socio-economic quests of its citizens has been identified as one of the reasons behind the proliferation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the present millennium. The concept of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) came into use in 1945 following the establishment of the United Nation Organisations which recognized the need to give a consultative role to organisations which were not classified as neither government nor member states (Willets, 2002). In Nigeria, the establishment of NGOs dates back to the pre-independence period (Elumilade et al., 2006). However, the impacts of NGOs became noteworthy in the post-independence era with the inability of the post-colonial state to cope with the huge development needs of the Nigerian populace. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), NGOs are generally registered organizations, community groups, professional associations, trade unions, cooperate charity organizations whose aim is to improve the well-being of their members and of those areas in which they exists. World Bank (2001) sees NGOs as private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and/or undertake community development. Asamoah (2003) identifies NGOs target populations to include specific categories of the poor and disenfranchised; age and gender groups; selected occupational groups; and persons adversely affected by diseases, natural and man-made disasters, ethnic strife and forced migration. Globally, there are well known NGOs such as, Amnesty International, Green Peace, Red Cross, Save the Children, CARE, and Oxfarm.

At present, quite a number of NGOs operate at different levels and maintain different orientations in Nigeria. These are community-based organizations, city-wide organizations, national and international NGOs. Also, they have acquired different orientations focusing on service, charity, participation and empowerment (Igwe, 2006; Pamnet, 2008). They operate independently from any government, although it may and often receive both government and corporate funds. NGOs, like the state seek to serve community needs such as health, education, water and sanitation. They contribute in specific activities such as serving as medium or agent of change most especially in the diffusion of agricultural information, mutual aid, sympathy support, offering technical assistance and training, advocacy for and with the poor and financial assistance to community developments. Ranging from poverty reduction initiative through the establishment of community based enterprises like creation of oil mill centres, provision of pipe borne water, community health centres, schools etc. They also act as human right activist in protecting the interest of the people especially the rural dwellers and enhancing good governance in the state (World Bank 1996). Optimal development requires the harnessing of a country's assets, its capital, human and natural resources to meet the demand from its population as comprehensibly as possible. Besides Nigeria's plentiful agricultural resources and oil wealth, poverty is still a challenge in the country especially in the rural communities, where up to 80% of the population lives below the poverty line and social services and infrastructure are limited (United Nation, 2007).

Association of People Living with Sickle Cell Disorder (APLSCD) is an NGO that caters for the medical and welfare needs of persons living with sickle cell disorder, and it is registered with Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission with the registration number CAC/IT/86143 in 2015. APLSCD was founded in June 2015 by the National coordinator Aisha Edwards Maduagwu, after witnessing

the neglect and stigmatization meted on persons living with sickle cell disorder. Being a victim of this neglect and stigmatization from government and the society, it became pertinent to have an association where all members are victims of this disorder, to cater for their needs, and create a loud voice for these persons in the society.

APLSCD has begun a wide outreach and sensitization campaign covering all the local government areas in Anambra State and spanning through Enugu, Rivers, Adamawa and Ebonyi states, evident from the attendance of sickle cell persons from these states during the World Sickle Cell Day (June 19th, 2019) which was organized by APLSCD at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. Provision of rural infrastructure in Nigeria and specifically in Anambra State has long been neglected. Investments in health, education, transport and power supply have been focused largely on the cities and this invariably affects the profitability of agricultural production and the entire economy. The apparent difficulties of the government to meet the challenges of creating a more sustainable and equitable pattern of development has led policy makers and social activists to promote new institutional actors and configurations designed to achieve these. One of these actors is non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (United Nation, 2007). The major concern of NGOs is focused on rural development. This means how to give to the average community the basic satisfaction necessary for the improvement of socio – economic and cultural life of people who feel neglected by their government in the field of development programmes. In view of these expected roles of the NGOs, the study was designed to ascertain the impact of the Association of People Living with Sickle Cell Disorder (APLSCD) as an NGO to rural community development in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study assessed participation of rural people in APLSCD activities, ascertained APLSCD contributions to rural community development and constraints limiting their contributions to rural community development in Anambra State.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive and quantitative in nature. It relied on primary data sourced from questionnaire and key informant interview. Presentation of data was tabular and textual based on the nature of the data. Data generated in the course of the study was carefully analysed using tables and simple percentage to answer the key questions of the study. Participatory Development theory was developed in the 1970s, as a model to explain the basic needs to development, particularly community development.

The major proponents of participatory development theory include Roodt, Penders, Rahman, Chambers, Conyers & Hills, Dodds. The theory emerged as a critics against modernisation paradigm on the ground that it promoted a top-down ethnocentric and paternalistic view of development. The participatory development argued that the strategic model proposed a conception of development associated with the western vision of progress. Dissatisfaction with the traditional development theory necessitated the need for a new approach that will encourage the participation of citizens in the development of their community, thus, brought about Participatory development theory.

Participatory development theory posits that for development to take place, the hearts, minds, will, and energy of the people must be involved in the process of their own development. This theory is used interchangeably by development theorists and practitioners as people-centred approach, bottom-up approach and evolutionary approach. It is the most effective way of achieving equitable social and human development. Sillitoe (2002) submits that its emergence was to bring development practice nearer to the people as a result of dissatisfaction with an expert-led, top-down approach.

Situated within the present study, the participatory development theory has relevant application in studying, understanding and explaining the impact of NGO (APLSCD) in Community development in Nigeria. NGO are usually formed by people who are equally members of a community, with the aim of improving the living standard of their people and developing their communities

## III. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO)

Precise definitions vary as to what constitutes an NGO, and the challenge of analysing the phenomenon of NGOs remains surprisingly difficult. One reason for this is that NGOs are diverse group of organizations that defy generalization, ranging from small informal groups to large formal agencies. NGOs play different roles and take different shapes within and across different societies. As a result, NGO as an analytical category remains complex and unclear. For example, despite the fact that NGOs are neither run by government, nor driven by the profit motive, there are nevertheless some NGOs that receive high levels of government funding, and others that seek to generate profits to plough back into their work. Boundaries are unclear, and as one might expect from a classification that emphasizes what they are not rather than what they are, NGOs therefore turn out to be quite difficult to pin down analytically. This has generated complex debates about what is and what is not an NGO, and about the most suitable approaches for analysing their roles.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are non-governmental, non-profit creation, self-governing and led by wilful volunteers – NGOs are groupings that are outside the domain of government in the areas of formation, funding, management and the processes

and procedure in which it carries out its set objectives geared towards cultural, socio-economic and political transformation of all facets of the society. NGOs function alongside the government as well as profit base enterprises in delivery of social services for the upliftment and well-being of the society. They are therefore referred to as the third sector, (Ehigiamusoe, 1998). NGOs evolve from experiences, interests, idea and innate zeal to respond to or remedy the observed phenomena or desire in the society. NGOs could be international, national, regional, or community based depending on its financial resources and networking capacity. They have become increasingly important agents of the development process in the countries of the south, in all of their main areas of work such as humanitarian relief, long-term development, policy formation and political advocacy (Attack, 1999). On the other hand there is a current view that NGOs constitute a viable alternative to government as channels of development assistance, particularly in developing countries, some of the NGOs functions and advantages, according to Streeten (1997) are (1) they are good at reaching and mobilizing the poor and remote communities, (2) they help empower poor people to gain control of their lives, and they work with and strengthen local institutions; (3) they carry out projects at lower costs and more efficiently than the government agencies and, (4) they promote sustainable development.

The idea behind the formation of NGO in essence is to effect desired changes in areas that are felt undesirable in the society. These they do on their own, through collaboration and partnership with donor organization and networking with other NGOs. However many NGOs especially those here in Nigeria are been constrained by a number of factors ranging from that of funding to shortage of volunteers.

In relation to structure, NGOs may be large or small, formal or informal, bureaucratic or flexible. In terms of funding, many are externally-funded, while others depend on locally mobilized resources. While there are many NGOs which receive funds from government and form a part of the “development industry” (which consists of the world of bilateral and multilateral aid donors, the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions), there are also NGOs which choose to work outside the world of aid as far as possible. One basic distinction common in the literature is that between “Northern NGO” (NNGO) which refers to organizations whose origins lie in the industrialized countries, while “Southern NGO” (SNGO) refers to organizations from the less developed areas of the world. Another key distinction is between membership forms of NGO, such as community-based organizations or people’s organizations, and intermediary forms of NGO that works from outside with communities, sometimes termed grassroots support organizations (GSOs). There are also numerous examples of bogus NGOs, such as those established as fronts by government (GONGOs – government-organized NGOs) or “briefcase” NGOs set up by individuals for purely personal gain. Some NGOs are well-resourced and affluent, while others lead a fragile “hand to mouth” existence, struggling to survive from 1 year to the next. There are NGOs with highly professionalized staff, while others rely heavily on volunteers and supporters. NGOs are driven by a range of motivations and values. There are both secular and “faith-based” organizations. Some NGOs may be charitable and paternalistic, while others seek to pursue radical or “empowerment”-based approaches. Some NGOs aim to meet only people’s immediate needs, while others take a longer-term view and seek to develop alternative ideas and approaches to problems. A single NGO might combine several of these different elements at any one time. Morris-Suzuki (2000, p. 68) notes that “NGOs may pursue change, but they can equally work to maintain existing social and political systems.” For example, for radicals who seek to explore alternative visions of development and change, NGOs may be seen as progressive vehicles for change. For conservative thinkers seeking private alternatives to the state, NGOs may be regarded as part of market-based solutions to policy problems. A key point to note here is that NGOs can be seen as a kind of tabula rasa, onto which a range of current ideas, expectations, and anxieties about social transformation are projected (Lewis, 2005). It is partly because of this high degree of flexibility of the NGO as an institutional form, and the wide spectrum of different values that NGOs may contain, that the rise to prominence of NGOs since the late 1980s has taken place against the back-drop of the ascendancy of neoliberal policy agendas.

NGOs are professionally-staffed organizations aiming at contributing to the reduction of human suffering and to the development of poor countries (Streeten, 1997). They do this in various ways, e.g. by funding projects, engaging in service provision and capacity building, contributing to awareness, and promoting the self-organization of various groups (Baccaro, 2001). Meanwhile, Desai (2005) has mentioned that NGOs have an important role to play in supporting women, men and households, and expected that they can meet the welfare. She accounted some role and functions for NGOs, such as counselling and support service, awareness raising and advocacy, legal aid and microfinance. These services help the people to achieve their ability, skill and knowledge, and take control over their own lives and finally become empowered. On the other hand, Stromquist (2002) has noted three major functions for NGOs such as (1) service delivery (e.g. relief, welfare, basic skills); (2) educational provision (e.g. basic skills and often critical analysis of social environments); and (3) public policy advocacy. Baccaro (2001) shows how particular NGOs can promote the organization and “empowerment” of the poor, particularly poor women, through a combination of micro-credit, awareness-raising, training for group members, and other social services. Empowerment is the ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically and psychologically through (1) access to information, knowledge and skills; (2) decision making; and (3) individual self-efficacy, community participation, and perceived control (Rappaport 1987; Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988).

In the long term, the aim of NGOs is to promote sustainable community development through activities that promote capacity building and self-reliance. Langran (2002) has mentioned that NGOs through capacity building help to sustain community development. NGOs are often created in order to expand the capacities of people (Korten 1990). Furthermore, NGOs are praised for promoting community self-reliance and empowerment through supporting community-based groups and relying on participatory processes (Korten 1990). These dimensions were originally introduced with the aim of identifying areas in which social, economic and environmental goals are interrelated (Holmberg and Sandbrook 1992).

Hibbard and Tang (2004) in their study in Vietnam have noted the importance of NGOs' roles in sustainable community development. One of the roles was that NGOs balance the social, economic and environmental factors in promoting sustainable development. Another important role of NGO that they discovered was decentralisation which helps the local communities to acquire more power in order to make their own decisions. But, sometimes the local communities lack specialists to do professional work and resources that are important for the particular projects. In this situation, NGO assists local staff with drafting sustainable development plans that are functional under the umbrella of a central government policy. Finally, they concluded that sustainable community development is process-oriented, and it requires extensive community participation and relies on network to share resources, knowledge and expertise.

From the literatures, it could be summarized that NGOs play an important function in promoting sustainable community development. Sustainable community development emphasizes on a balance between environmental concerns and development objectives, while simultaneously enhancing local social relationships. Sustainable communities meet the economic needs of their residents, enhance and protect the environment, and promote more humane local societies (Bridger and Luloff 1997). Through the functions of providing microfinance, initiating capacity building and self-reliance, NGOs could promote empowerment among community members, and eventually community sustainable development.

#### IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The term community development was first used in 1948 at the Cambridge Conference on African Administration organized by the British Colonial Office (Omoruyi, 2001). Then it was taken to mean the same thing as mass education and was defined as a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation of citizens. Since then, the concept has been used in different context and for different purpose by different scholars. Community development aimed at securing the active participation and co-operation of the people in every community programme is designed to raise their standard of living and promote their development in all its forms. It is also described by O'Mara-Eves, Brunton, McDavid, Oliver, Kavanagh, Samal, Matosevic, Harden and Thomas (2013) as a way of working underpinned by a commitment to equity, social justice and participation that enables people to strengthen networks and to identify common concerns and supports people in taking action related to the networks.

Community development is both an occupation (such as a community development worker in a local authority) and a way of working with communities. Community Development Exchange (2010) affirmed that the key purpose of community development is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect. It involves changing the relationship between ordinary people in positions of power, so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which if used in creative ways can be channelled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. The essence of community development is well captured in the Budapest Declaration (2004) which emphasized on strengthening civil society, empowerment and an agenda of social change. In this context, community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritizing the action of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and communities organizing around specific themes or policy initiatives.

It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. American Heritage Dictionary Internet (2014, p.72) asserted that community development includes: activities that increase the positive outcomes possible within a community by linking individuals and organizations working towards common goals; a long-term process whereby people who are marginalized or living in poverty work together to identify their needs, create change, exert more influence in the decision which affect their lives and work together to improve the quality of their and community in which they live and the society of which they are part of; the process of improving the social, economic and cultural conditions of a village or small town, and a variety of activities done within or on behalf of a community to add to or enhance it in some ways. It may include housing, construction, developing cooperation or rehabilitation of structure.

In summary, community development aimed at the improvement of persons either as individual, group or society at large and their living situation. It deals with both material and non-material living for the whole community relying on their resources, initiative

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and participation. Community development is aimed at bringing about improvements in the life of people through changes in the condition of their community. In this process, Omoruyi (2001) stated that the people must be free to achieve their own objectives. Such objectives include:

- To educate and motivate people for self-reliance or self-help. This involves an attitudinal orientation which will make the people know that they need to and can improve on their present standard of living;
- To develop a responsible leadership. This means that community development provides a forum for leadership training which enables the leader to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and character to handle such task;
- To inculcate in the people or members of a community a sense of citizenship and a spirit of civic consciousness. This enables people to learn how to achieve their goals of development through their own efforts supplemented by external or governmental assistance,
- To introduce and strengthen democracy at the grassroots level. Anyanwu (1999) noted that it can be done through the creation of institutions designed to serve as instruments of local participation, and
- To initiate in the people a self-generative, self-sustaining and enduring process of growth.

This means that the community has to be able to find out its own problems through constant practice and find solutions to such problems.

Community development creates opportunities to guarantee the people their basic human rights such as right to earn a living, the right to receive the rewards of one’s efforts through its objectives. These objectives include:

- To promote and develop socio-cultural and economic conditions of a particular community.
- To bring about an all-round development in the field of industry, agriculture, among others.
- To develop the sense of self-dependence and self-reliance among the people.
- To make the villages self-sufficient and to bring them to the main stream of national life by fostering the spirit of nationalism (Preserve Article, 2011, p. 32).

In this context, all these objectives are to be achieved by specific activities like developing the village and cottage industries, motivation of available mineral resources, forestry and water among others, giving guidance and assistance to the people by trained personnel, organizing co-operatives and making infrastructural arrangement like road, electrification and so on. Therefore, community development gives people new hopes and aspirations for better and peaceful living.

**Table 1: APLSCD takes medical care of those living with sickle cell anaemia**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	180	47.4
	Agree	100	26.3
	Undecided	80	21.1
	Disagree	10	2.6
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.8
	Total	373	98.2
Missing	999.00	7	1.8
Total		380	100.0

Table 1 shows that one hundred and eighty respondents strongly agree that APLSCD takes medical care of those living with sickle anaemia, one hundred agree, ten disagree, three strongly disagrees, and eighty are uncertain while seven withheld their answer to the question. From the field survey, it’s clear that APLSCD takes medical care of those living with sickle cell anaemia in Anambra State.

**Table 2: APLSCD offers scholarship to those living with sickle cell anaemia**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	170	44.7
	Disagree	110	28.9
	Undecided	80	21.1
	Disagree	10	2.6
	Strongly Disagree	3	0.8
	Total	373	98.2

Missing	999.00	7	1.8
Total		380	100.0

Table 2 shows that one hundred and seventy respondents strongly agree that APLSCD offers scholarship to those living with sickle cell anaemia, one hundred and ten agree, ten disagree, three strongly disagrees, and eighty are undecided while seven withheld their answer to the question. The implication of this is that APLSCD offers scholarship to those living with sickle cell anaemia in Anambra State.

**Table 3: APLSCD has begun a wide outreach and sensitization campaign**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	210	55.3
	Agree	130	34.2
	Undecided	20	5.3
	Disagree	11	2.9
	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
	Total	376	98.9
Missing	999.0	4	1.1
Total		380	100.0

Table 3 shows that two hundred and ten respondents strongly agree that APLSCD has begun a wide outreach and sensitization campaign, one hundred and thirty agree, eleven disagree, five strongly disagrees, twenty are undecided, while four withheld their answers to the question. From the data generated from the field, it is evident that APLSCD has begun a wide outreach and sensitization campaign.

**Table 4: Insufficient Fund and Shortage of volunteers affect APLSCD developmental strides**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	180	47.4
	Agree	110	28.9
	Undecided	60	15.8
	Disagree	20	5.3
	Strongly Disagree	8	2.1
	Total	378	99.9
Missing	999.0	2	0.5
Total		380	100.0

Table 4 shows that one hundred and eighty respondents strongly agree that insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers affect APLSCD developmental strides, one hundred and ten agree, twenty disagree, eight strongly disagree and sixty are undecided while two withheld their answers to the question. From the field survey, it is evident that insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers affect APLSCD developmental strides.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis of data generated from questionnaire in table 1, 2 and 3 we found out that APLSCD has been instrumental in shaping the lives of people living with sickle cell anaemia in Anambra State through its empowerment programmes.

From the result gathered in table 4, the information indicated that insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers are factors limiting APLSCD developmental strides.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The fundamental essence of NGOs is to do for the people what the government couldn't do for the people and what the people cannot effectively and efficiently do for themselves. Community development is very vital for national development. Therefore, it should

not be seen as government responsibilities alone but a joint effort of government, the community people themselves, individuals and NGOs.

The aim of the study was to ascertain the impact of NGO (APLSCD) in community development of Anambra State, as well as determine whether insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers affected the developmental strides of APLSCD. The outcome of the study indicated that APLSCD has been instrumental in shaping the lives of people living with sickle cell anaemia and enabling them to make ends meet in Anambra State through its empowerment programme and there is significant effect of insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers on APLSCD developmental strides. This assertion is supported by the quantitative data from the study.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Given that the study found out that insufficient fund and shortage of volunteers are constraints limiting APLSCD developmental strides, we recommend that government, public and private institutions, churches and privileged Nigerians should render helping hand to this NGO (APLSCD).

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