

Self-help Initiatives in Rural Communities of Ondo East Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study focuses on Ondo East Local Government Area (LGA), a rural area in Nigeria. It examines how community self-help has contributed to rural development in the region. Ondo East LGA is characterized by a predominantly agricultural economy, with farming as the main livelihood activity of the residents. The objectives include identifying the types and number of self-help projects provided in the study area and examining their impact on the development of the area. One hundred and sixty-nine (169) copies of a questionnaire were administered to households using the simple random sampling technique. Findings from the study reveal the successful implementation of various self-help projects in the study area through the Community Development Associations (CDAs). Such projects include the provision of hand-dug wells and maintenance of boreholes, waste management, health care services and affordable housing. The main source of funding for these projects in the area is residents' contributions. Challenges such as members defaulting on the developmental levy and lack of cooperation from some community members were discovered. Recommendations include developing strategies to encourage timely and consistent community contributions and creating incentives for community members to participate in infrastructure maintenance and self-help efforts actively.

Keywords: Community, Ondo East LGA, Rural development, Self-help, Sustainable

1.0 Introduction

Rural areas remain a dominant landscape in most countries, being heavily relied on for food and economic development by the general populace (Lawal-Adebowale, 2022). In Nigeria, rural areas are inhabited by the bulk of the nation's population and serve as the country's principal market for domestic manufacturing (Otonyo, 2012). Mammud (2019) reports that the oil and agricultural wealth in the country derived from the remotest parts of the rural areas, mainly in the Niger-Delta, has been used by successive governments to finance major investments in infrastructure to the detriment and underdevelopment of the rural area and its dwellers. Therefore, rural development plays a vital role in the economic development of Nigeria.

Despite their crucial role, rural areas are unattractive places to live. In terms of the level of economic development, quality of life, access to opportunities, facilities and amenities, the standard of living and general liveability, the gap between the urban and rural areas in Nigeria is vast, leading to a rural-urban dichotomy (Mammud, 2019). Osinubi (2011) noted that Nigeria's previous governments had neglected the rural areas for too long. This neglect brings about significant planning problems such as inadequate infrastructure and limited access to facilities that improve quality of life like clean water, electricity and reliable transportation systems (Stock, 2005). Over time, it has been noted that achieving an all-around, closely interwoven development would require more than just government intervention. Thus, to achieve equitable development, all other societal sectors must work together (Afolayan, 2012). Similarly, the achievement of improved productivity and quality of life in rural areas is dependent on the social supports that are available to residents of such communities and their environment (Lawal-Adebowale, 2022).

To improve the quality of life in rural areas, the Nigerian government came up with initiatives such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP), and the Directorate of Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) (Otonyo, 2012) among others. Despite these initiatives, Mammud (2019) posits that little or nothing is presently felt at the rural level as each policy has often died with the government that initiated it before it started to yield dividends for the rural dwellers, who are at the source of the nation's food production (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2021).

The majority of studies concentrate on how community development affects households. For example, Charlery, Qaim, and Smith-Hall (2016) evaluated the impact of infrastructure on rural household income and inequality in Nepal. By conducting an empirical analysis of how rural road development affects household income and income inequality, the study adds to the body of literature. It was discovered that the mean household income was considerably positively impacted by new roadways. It was a pro-poor development initiative, nonetheless, as the poorest households benefited most from the road construction, defying expectations about lowering inequality. To achieve sustainable rural development and promote both economic growth and human well-being, it is essential to involve entire families in the development process (Otonyo, 2012). The process of people coming together and involving families in community development is what is referred to as community self-help.

Gakenheimer (1995) sees community self-help as a crucial component of physical planning that enables local communities to play an active role in shaping their built environment. Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) explain how communities have, at different times, successfully

organized themselves to construct roads, build bridges, palaces, market stalls and dwelling houses among others. The success of many rural development initiatives across the globe has been attributed to many self-help strategies which entail local groups' engagement in program design, execution, and evaluation. This has led to the promotion of rural development through community self-help programs by both government and NGOs (Tamuno & Iroh, 2012).

However, despite the growing knowledge and use of community self-help programs, there is a lack of comprehensive and systematic assessment of their impact and outcomes (Akinbami & Oladokun, 2019). Kawasaki & and Komatsu (2018) explain that there is a need to understand the factors that contributed to the success or failure of self-help initiatives in promoting sustainable rural development. Also, identifying the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders involved (community members, government and development partners) is crucial to developing effective and sustainable approaches to rural development (Oyedokun, 2019). This study analyses how community self-help initiatives impact rural development in selected communities of Ondo East LGA, Ondo State, Nigeria. It aims to provide insights into strengthening rural communities' capacity for self-driven development. The choice of three communities for the survey is based on the need for a diverse representation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing community self-help initiatives and their effects on rural development.

It emphasizes the importance of rural infrastructure such as schools, boreholes, health centres, markets, roads, and electricity, in promoting the development of rural communities.

2.0 Study Area

Ondo East LGA is one of the 18 LGAs in Ondo State which is situated in Southwest Nigeria. It lies between latitudes 5° 30' to 5° 3' North and longitude 70° 18' to 70° 0' East. The area is an important contributor to neighbouring LGAs in several ways, ranging from the provision of agricultural products to serving as a commercial hub and providing essential services and infrastructure. Figures 1 and 2 show Ondo State in its national setting and Ondo East LGA in its regional setting respectively. Three communities, namely Kajola, Aiyetoro and Apurere were selected for the study and they are shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

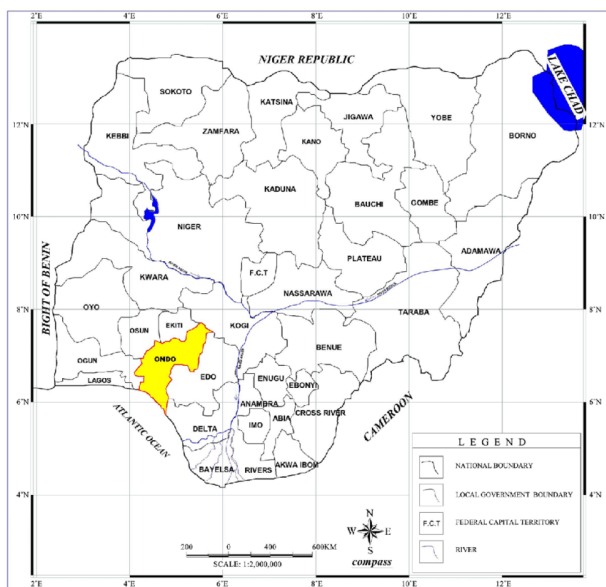


Figure 1: Map of Ondo State in its National setting

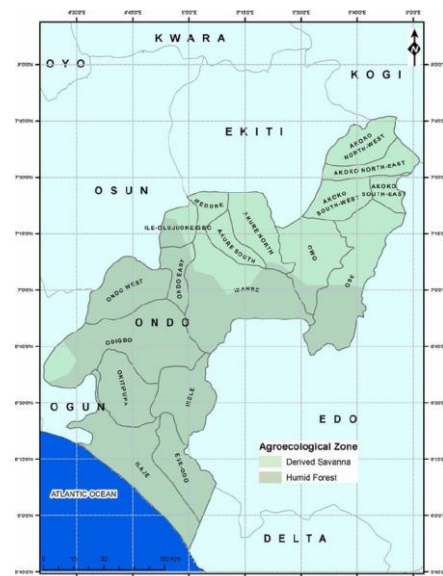


Figure 2: Map of Ondo East LGA in the region

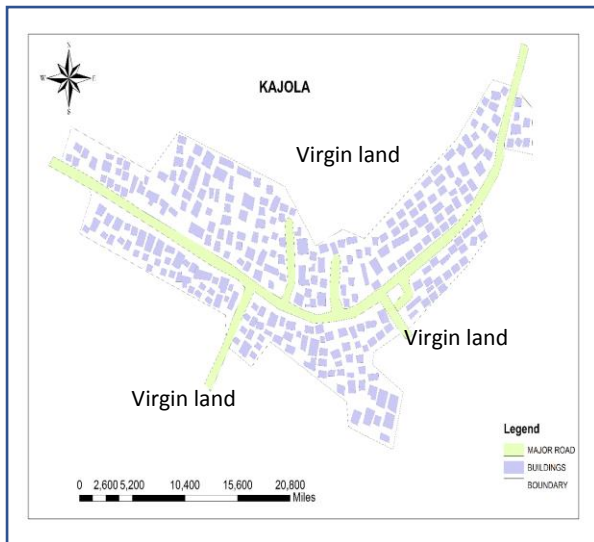


Figure 3: Digitized Map of Kajola

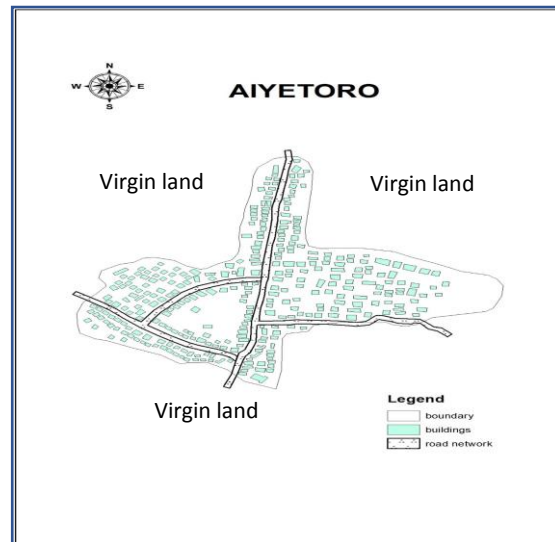


Figure 4: Digitized Map of Aiyetoro

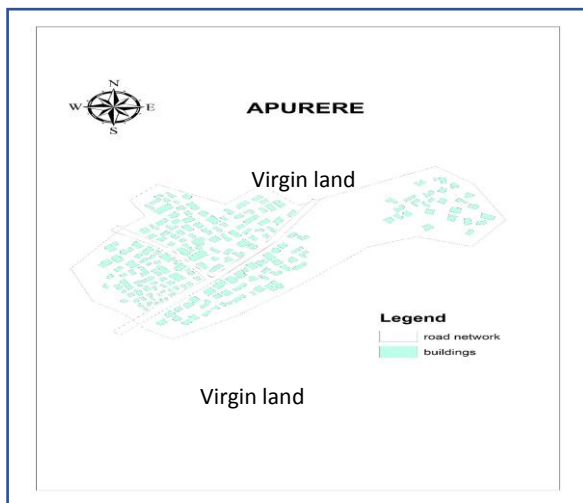


Figure 5: Digitized map of Apurere

3.0 Literature Review

Community self-help is a strategy where individuals or groups within a community come together to address their common problems, needs, and aspirations. The conceptual framework revolves around the concepts of self-help, rural development, community development and diffusion theory. Self-help can be described as providing for oneself or the belief that individuals are responsible for their support and progress in society (Ogunleye-Adetona & Oladeinde, 2013). Moseley (2003) defines Rural development as the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas, often relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. It could also be seen as the process of improving living conditions in rural areas through greater production in agriculture and allied businesses, to improve the economic and social circumstances of the rural poor (Ogunleye-Adetona & Oladeinde, 2013). Such development should include clean water, improved medical facilities, schools, markets, transportation, and opportunities for residents to participate in decisions that affect their lives with a sense of pride and satisfaction in their communities. All plans, actions, or coordinated efforts at the local level that foster social and economic development are categorized as community development (Akpomuvie, 2010).

Community development could be practised in both urban and rural settings since it focuses on local settings which could be in urban or rural areas. According to Ogunleye-Adetona & Oladeinde (2013), earlier studies on the diffusion theory show that the awareness of ideas and innovation by one member of the community has a significant impact on how quickly it spreads to all other members of that community. Thus, this theory shows how the social contract process can be used for rural development through self-help programs by using the spatial range, dimension, and area of influence. Typically, a community member will develop an idea for rural development through a self-help project and then spread it to other community members via community unions and associations. The expansion and diffusion processes are most useful in rural development through self-help projects where ideas, innovation, and communication spread spatially and temporarily until more and more members of the population become aware of the phenomenon.

In the context of rural development, community self-help is an approach that allows rural communities to take charge of their development by identifying and solving their problems. One of the earliest works on community self-help and rural development was Robert Chambers' "Rural Development: Putting the Last First" in 1983. Chambers argued that community self-help is essential for rural development, as it encourages local ownership and participation in development efforts. He emphasized the importance of involving marginalized communities in the planning and implementation of development projects, as this increases their sense of empowerment and helps to address issues such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Ugwu & Aruma (2019) see community participation as a vital tool for promoting sustainable community development and encourage its use in all the stages involved in the community development process.

Ogunleye-Adetona and Oladeinde (2013) looked at how self-help programs affected rural development in Kwara State and discovered that the projects were not distributed equally throughout the study region. They recommended that, for effective self-help projects which influence rural development, governments should shift their attention towards capital and developmental projects and give priority to the population in all rural communities. Thapa and Rasul (2021) explain that community self-help and rural development have significant and diverse economic implications like the creation of employment opportunities, poverty reduction, infrastructure development, improved access to credit, and enhanced food security. The study of Community self-help and rural development can have significant positive environmental implications by promoting sustainable practices and building more environmentally conscious communities (Karim, Weber & Abd Rahman, 2017).

Akpomuvie (2010) submits that communities, all around Nigeria, used cooperative efforts before colonial rule to mobilize resources for physical betterment and practical amenities in their social, political, and economic life; particularly in the Southern part of Nigeria where there has been construction of schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges, among other things through self-help.

Ebong, Otu & Ogwumike (2013) encourage the adoption of self-help strategies which comprise solely developing the community's resources rather than relying on outside initiatives or assistance. He maintains that self-help is an inward-looking strategy for improving oneself or one's organization that primarily serves one's interests and depends entirely on one's efforts. The

whole point of self-help as stated in Odama (2020) is to enable people to make up for lost time by identifying issues and finding solutions to resolving them. Tamuno & Iroh (2012) opined that sustainable rural development, however, is dependent on the extent to which the development contributes to local growth and that rural dwellers can perceive and obtain the resources needed to sustain it. They maintained that if sustainability would be achieved, projects and activities carried out must correspond to priorities that have been expressed at the local level. Moreover, a sustained and gradual improvement in the local population's income sources is essential for a long-term sustainable approach. It is crucial to define the local government's role in coordinating participatory decision-making and effectively utilizing the available resources.

The literature above on community self-help and rural development suggests the effectiveness of the strategy for promoting sustainable development in rural areas. Encouraging homegrown ownership, local participation, and capacity-building, community self-help can help to address the social, economic, and environmental challenges that rural communities face. There is, however, a need for more research to explore the factors that contributed to the success or failure of community self-help initiatives in different contexts as well as the impact they have on rural dwellers. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the level of citizen participation in self-help projects in Ondo East LGA as a means of improving their living conditions and socio-economic lives. Objectives set to achieve this aim include, among other things, the identification and evaluation of the types and numbers of self-help projects implemented, examination of their condition and performance, analysis of their impact on selected communities, funding issues, and identification of associated problems and limitations within the study area.

4.0 Research Methodology

Three communities (Apurere, Aiyetoro, and Kajola) were selected based on the uniqueness of their demographics, the level of development, availability of resources, potential for growth and levels of involvement in self-help and development initiatives when compared with other communities in the LGA. Eight hundred and forty-two (842) buildings were identified using Google imagery; 300 at Kajola, 342 at Aiyetoro and 200 at Apurere communities. Using an average of 4 households per building, as discovered during the reconnaissance survey, the total number of households in the three communities is estimated at 3,368. A five per cent (5%) sample was taken to give a total of 169 questionnaire copies administered to the household heads using the simple random sampling technique. Interview guides were used to acquire data from community development associations. Descriptive statistics involving the use of tables and charts were involved in the presentation of the results while Microsoft Excel 2016 was employed.

5.0 Findings and Discussions

5.1 Types of Self-Help Projects in the Study Area

Findings reveal that water projects were the commonest type of self-help projects implemented in the three selected settlements with 72.46%, 75% and 80% responses for Aiyetoro, Apurere, and Kajola respectively, as shown in Table 1. Sewer/solid waste disposal was the next (though with far lower responses) at the three communities, followed by healthcare facilities and affordable housing. This suggests that the bulk of self-help projects (75.74% responses) in the

area were focused on the provision of clean water. This is an indication that access to potable water is a priority need over other facilities in the area. Housing quality, rather than quantity, is usually the problem of rural areas and this could be responsible for the low response in this respect. These findings suggest that there is a strong emphasis on the need for clean water in the study area, being a major resource for domestic consumption and business needs. Some of the self-help projects embarked upon by the three communities are shown in Figures 6 - 9. Summarily, this data provides valuable insights into the types of self-help projects that are most needed in the study area on a prioritized development initiative.

Table 1: Type of self-help projects in the Study Area

S/ n	Projects	Settlements						Total	
		Aiyetoro		Apurere		Kajola		Freq	%
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Affordable housing	2	2.90	1	2.50	1	1.67	4	2.37
2	Healthcare	5	7.25	3	7.50	5	8.33	13	7.69
3	Sewer/solid waste disposal	12	17.39	6	15.00	6	10.00	24	14.20
4	Water	50	72.46	30	75.00	48	80.00	128	75.74
	Total	69	100.00	40	100.00	60	100.00	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023



Figure 6: Self-help hand-pump bore-hole in Ayetoro
Source: Authors' fieldwork, 2023



Figure 7: Self-help hand-dug well in Ayetoro
Source: Authors' fieldwork, 2023



Figure 8: Self-help water project in Apurere
Source: Authors' fieldwork, 2023



Figure 9: Self-help hand pump bore-hole in Kajola
Source: Authors' fieldwork, 2023

5.2 Condition and Performance of Self-help Projects

5.2.1 Functionality of projects

It was discovered that a very high percentage of the self-help projects in the three settlements (90.53%) were still serving their purpose. This indicated that these projects were still functioning and serving the people, as shown in Table 2. Responses from Aiyetoro, Apurere and Kajola were 85.50%, 95% and 93.33% respectively were in favour of this fact. This is an indication of continuous use and maintenance of the facilities provided by the people. The sense of belonging that is manifested in self-help projects coupled with commitment towards security and maintenance of such facilities will always favour the sustainability of the facilities. Each community has a Community Development Association, which functions as a local governance structure under the leadership of the “Baale”. This structure has facilitated the implementation of self-help projects to improve the community's social and economic infrastructure. Activities also include the upkeep of essential infrastructure such as electricity, roads, and water supply. Community members make monthly contributions towards funding and maintenance of the facilities. The recent repair of electricity poles and transformers in the communities through self-help is noteworthy. Also, members of the community serve as security guards who watch over most of these facilities provided through self-help initiatives.

Table 2: Functionality of self-help project facilities

Serving its purpose	Settlements						Total	
	Aiyetoro		Apurere		Kajola		Freq.	%
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Yes	59	85.51	38	95	56	93.33	153	90.53
No	10	14.49	2	5	4	6.67	16	9.47
Total	69	100	40	100	60	100	169	100

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.2.2 Accessibility of People to the Facilities

It was equally discovered that many of the respondents in the three investigated settlements had access to the provided facilities (Table 3). Findings indicate an absence of restrictions from benefiting from various self-help projects, including the major initiative which is focused on water provision across the three communities investigated. Respondents reported that there was an inclusive nature of access to all the projects covered by the self-help initiatives within the communities. This suggests that various self-help initiatives are open to and utilized by residents, thereby contributing to the overall success and the positive impact of community-driven projects in the studied settlements.

Table 3: Accessibility of Self-Help Project to Everyone

Accessibility of facility	Settlements						Totals	
	Aiyetoro		Apurere		Kajola		Freq.	%
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Yes	62	89.86	38	95	56	93.33	156	92.31
No	7	10.14	2	5	4	6.67	13	7.69
Total	69	100	40	100	60	100	169	100

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.2.3 Effectiveness of self-help in addressing rural development challenges

Results shown in Table 4 revealed that 75.14% of respondents reported that the self-help approach to community development has been very effective in addressing rural development challenges while only 7.10% believed that such an approach has been very ineffective. Since the needs of a certain group might not have been met, it is not a surprise to still have such negative feedback from a section of the residents in the study areas. There is a need to look into the unfavourable feedback from minority groups in a bid to meet the needs of all groups within society.

Table 4: Effectiveness of self-help in addressing rural development challenges.

Effectiveness	Freq.	%
Very ineffective	12	7.10
Ineffective	0	0.00
Effective	30	17.75
Very effective	127	75.15
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.2.4 Degree of contribution of self-help projects to economic development

It was discovered from respondents that the existing self-help projects had contributed immensely to the economic development of residents within the study area (Table 5). Such improvement was indicated by over 95% of the respondents, who indicated “much” and “very much” contribution to their economy. The well water in the communities now supports irrigation, significantly boosting farm produce. Additionally, the community-maintained electricity infrastructure ensures a stable power supply, enabling residents to preserve farm produce using

freezers. Well-kept roads facilitate easy transportation of goods to markets, enhancing economic opportunities. Moreover, access to clean water has not only improved health but also reduced disease-related expenses, leading to an overall upliftment in the standard of living. This should encourage policymakers to drive and encourage the citizen engagement approach to community development in the study area while giving necessary and possible support where needed. This is a principle involved in various approaches to sustainable development in the 21st century.

Table 5: Contribution of self-help project to economic development

Contribution	Freq.	%
Very little	5	2.96
Little	0	0
Much	15	8.88
Very much	149	88.16
Total	169	100

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.2.5 Degree of contribution of self-help projects to infrastructural development

Similar to findings on economic development, over 95 per cent of the respondents affirmed that the self-help projects have contributed immensely to infrastructural development within their settlements (Table 6). Since infrastructure directly improves the economic and social well-being of the people, it is not surprising to find this response in consonance with such findings on economic development. It further affirms the power of self-help projects towards community development especially in rural areas as discovered by previous scholars. It was discovered that the three communities investigated have at least three self-help projects executed in them, with the prevalence of water and electricity facilities. It can be inferred that an average of nine (9) facilities or projects have been provided to support 3,368 households as indicated in the methodology of this study. Despite the difficulty in obtaining the appropriate data on the capacity of these facilities (such as the volume of water supplied by the community borehole), it could be inferred that the response in Table 6 still shows some sufficiency to meet the demand of the community.

Table 6: contribution of self-help project to development of rural infrastructure

Contribution	Freq.	%
Very little	4	2.37
little	0	0.00
Much	11	6.51
Very much	154	91.12
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.3 Impact of self-help projects on liveability factors

5.3.1 Impact of Projects

Factors such as education, healthcare, social infrastructure and services were considered in light of how self-help projects have promoted such liveability factors. Responses are revealed in Table 7. Findings show that for all three factors considered, a very high percentage of 90.14% of the

respondents indicated that self-help projects had a very high impact on the community. Such that an average of 90.14% of the responses were in favour of ‘very high impact’ in the three factors and three settlements investigated while ‘high impact’ also attracted 6.71% which happens to be the second highest percentage of responses. This is to further confirm the earlier responses on the effectiveness of the self-help projects and their contribution to economic and infrastructural development within the study area. The above is a furthermore confirmation of the positive impact of such efforts through water supply, electricity repairs and security initiatives on the lives of the people.

Table 7: The impact of self-help projects on different liveability factors

Impact Level	Education		Health care		Social services		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Very low impact	4	2.37	5	2.96	0	0	9	1.76
Low impact	0	0	4	2.37	3	1.78	7	1.38
High impact	17	10.06	10	5.92	7	4.14	34	6.71
Very high impact	148	87.57	150	88.76	159	94.08	457	90.14
Total	169	100.00	169	100.00	169	100.00	507	100.00

Source: Authors’ Fieldwork, 2023

Furthermore, respondents were able to express their opinion on the possibility of self-help projects’ contribution to the reduction of poverty in rural areas (Table 9). A total of 88.16% and 10.05% responded with ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ respectively in this connection while the very few remaining 1.77% responded with ‘strongly disagree’. This indicates that the respondents generally have a positive perception of the role of self-help projects in poverty reduction in rural areas.

Table 8: Self-help projects can help to reduce poverty in rural areas

Agreement	Freq.	%
Strongly disagree	3	1.77
Disagree	0	0.00
Agree	17	10.06
Strongly agree	149	88.17
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors’ Fieldwork, 2023

5.3.2 Sustainability of projects

It was observed as shown in Figure 10 that 69.23% of respondents believe that self-help projects are sustainable, 24.26% and 2.36% of the respondents rated them as very sustainable and very unsustainable respectively, while 4.14% consider them to be unsustainable. These results indicate that self-help projects are viewed as a viable approach to community development that can be sustained over time. The existence of the CDAs, which sees to the collection of monthly levies or contributions, helps in providing funds for maintenance. The CDA also mobilizes community members for the environmental sanitation exercise to maintain a clean and healthy environment. Furthermore, short-time training equips some community members with skills to

provide quick-fix solutions to problems of malfunctioning or faulty facilities in the communities. These are measures taken to ensure the sustainability of the self-help projects.

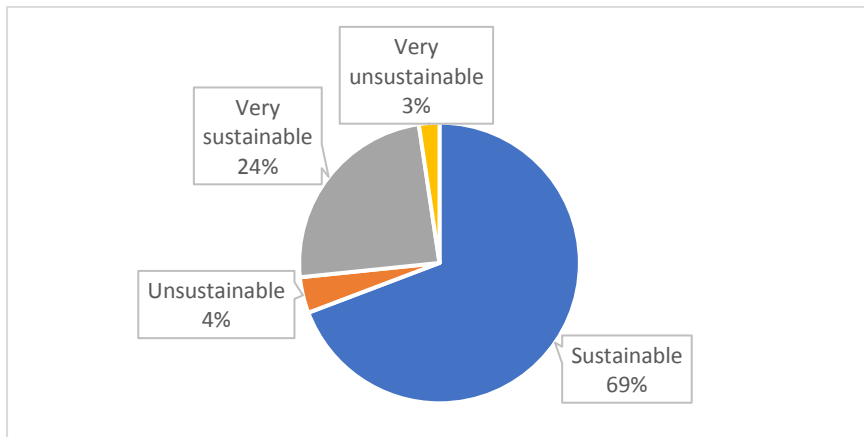


Figure 10: Level of sustainability of self-help projects

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.7 Funding for Self-help infrastructure projects

5.7.1 Appropriate source of funding for maintenance

Based on the findings, 71.59% of the respondents believe that community contributions are the most appropriate source of funding for infrastructure maintenance. Only 8.28% of respondents believe that government funding is appropriate, while 14.20% suggest international aid or donor funding. The result is shown in Table 9. A small proportion of respondents (5.91%) believe that the private sector would be the most appropriate source of funding. This suggests that many respondents feel that the community should be responsible for maintaining their infrastructure, with only a minority looking to external sources for funding.

Table 9: Source of funding appropriate for infrastructure maintenance

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Community contributions	121	71.60
Government funding	14	8.28
International aid or donor funding	24	14.20
Private sector funding	10	5.92
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.7.2 Willingness of community members to make financial contributions

The findings revealed that 56.80% which is the highest number of respondents were very willing to contribute financially to infrastructure maintenance in their communities, while only a small percentage (2.36%) were not willing at all as shown in Table 10. The willingness to contribute financially is an important factor in sustaining rural infrastructure as it can help communities maintain their infrastructure and reduce their reliance on external funding.

Table 10: Willingness of community members to make financial contributions.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all willing	4	2.37
Quite willing	57	33.73
Neutral	9	5.33
Somewhat willing	3	1.77

Very willing	96	56.80
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.7.3 Obtaining and allocating funds – Transparency and improvement measures

The findings show (as seen in Table 11) the level of transparency in obtaining and allocating funds for infrastructure maintenance, as perceived by the respondents. 69.23% perceived it to be quite transparent and 20.12% perceived it to be very transparent. A small percentage (3.55%) perceived it to be not at all transparent and an even smaller percentage were neutral. This indicates that there is a relatively high level of perceived transparency in the administration of funds obtained for infrastructure maintenance among the respondents, which may be a positive sign for the effectiveness and efficiency of the maintenance programs.

Table 11: Transparency in obtaining and allocating funds for infrastructure maintenance.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all transparent	6	3.55
Quite transparent	117	69.23
Neutral	4	2.37
Somewhat transparent	8	4.73
Very transparent	34	20.12
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

Based on the findings, several measures can be used to improve transparency and accountability in obtaining and allocating funds for infrastructure maintenance. The most popular measure is strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks, with 63 respondents (37.27%) selecting this option. Publishing budgets and financial reports was the second most popular option, selected by 49 respondents (28.99%). (See Table 12). Engaging independent auditors or oversight committees and increasing public participation and feedback were selected by 29 (17.15%) and 28 (16.56%) respondents, respectively. Overall, it seems that a combination of legal and regulatory frameworks, financial reporting, and public oversight could be effective in improving transparency and accountability in infrastructure maintenance.

Table 12: Measures used for improving transparency and accountability in obtaining and allocating funds for infrastructure maintenance.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Engaging independent auditors or oversight committees	29	17.16
Increasing public participation and feedback	28	16.57
Publishing budgets and financial reports	49	28.99
Strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks	63	37.28
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2023

5.8 Major problems associated with community self-help projects

Based on the responses from the study participants, the major problems associated with community self-help projects include poor funding, lack of maintenance, technical know-how, lack of support from the government, and lack of cooperation amongst dwellers are shown in Table 14. The highest percentage of respondents (53.84%) reported poor funding as a major challenge facing self-help projects. This could be due to limited financial resources available to the community or a lack of knowledge on how to access funding from external sources. Poor maintenance was also identified as a significant challenge (17.75%), which may lead to the rapid deterioration of community projects, resulting in reduced impact on rural development. Technical know-how (13.60%) could be due to the lack of skilled personnel in the community or limited access to information on how to implement and maintain self-help projects. Lack of support from the government (7.69%) may suggest that government policies and regulations are not supportive of community self-help projects. Finally, lack of cooperation among dwellers (7.10%) may be attributed to conflicts within the community, lack of trust amongst community members, or the absence of an effective leadership structure.

Table 14: Major Problems Associated with community self-help projects in the study area.

Value	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of cooperation amongst dwellers	12	7.10
Lack of support from the Government	13	7.69
Poor funding	91	53.85
Poor maintenance	30	17.75
Technical-know-how	23	13.61
Total	169	100.00

Source: Authors' Fieldwork

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it is a certainty that there will be a need to make relevant recommendations to improve self-help activities and give support to such activities in the study area and within the region.

The poor funding reported as a major challenge implies that there is a need for improved financial resources for self-help projects. Physical planning should involve identifying and securing funding sources, both internal and external, to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of self-help projects. This may include budget allocation, grants, loans, and partnerships with private organizations or developmental agencies. Poor funding associated with members defaulting in community dues may be solved by developing strategies to encourage timely and consistent community contributions,

Challenges such as lack of cooperation from some community members need to be addressed for sustained progress, resolving conflicts or issues that may arise, and creating incentives for community members to actively participate in infrastructure maintenance efforts.

Implementation measures to further improve transparency and accountability in obtaining and allocating funds for infrastructure include engaging independent auditors or oversight committees, regularly publishing budgets and financial reports, and strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure transparency in fund allocation and utilization.

Strengthening collaboration and engagement with government agencies, local authorities, and other stakeholders involved in infrastructure maintenance could include seeking support and partnership from relevant government departments or agencies, leveraging resources and expertise from external stakeholders, and advocating for policy changes or funding support for community-led infrastructure maintenance efforts.

The need for the community to arrange for the security of facilities provided cannot be overemphasized. Many communities involve a 'vigilante' approach to watch over self-help projects through members taking turns to keep vigil within their communities to prevent vandalism or theft of community facilities. This should be adopted with Ondo East LGA to preserve the life of self-help projects.

In conclusion, the data provided reveal that community contributions are critical to funding infrastructure provision and maintenance in the study area, thereby highlighting the importance of community engagement and participation. Self-help projects undertaken by the community development association demonstrate the community's proactive approach towards infrastructure maintenance. However, challenges abound. The initiative taken by the people of Ondo East LGA to band together and participate in self-help projects is commendable. Sustained transparency, continual infrastructural provision and maintenance while addressing possible challenges will go a long way to sustain development in the study area.

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