

European Union (EU) Counterpart Projects and Low-income Workers' Wellbeing in Cross River State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined European Union counterpart projects and low-income workers' wellbeing in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study specifically identified water supply, educational infrastructure, and employment creation activities as relating to wellbeing. Three null hypotheses were formulated based on the identified variables. The study was sustained on human capital and participatory developmental approach. The research design adopted was survey. Data for testing the hypotheses were generated using both qualitative and quantitative instruments. Data were collected from 495 respondents through multi-stage sampling techniques from five local government areas in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The generated data were statistically tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Results arrived at revealed that European Union counterpart projects in the area of provision of borehole to boost water supply significantly enhance the low-income workers' wellbeing through safe drinking water. Secondly, educational infrastructural projects significantly enhance low-income workers' wellbeing through improved literacy. Thirdly, income generating opportunity significantly enhance low-income workers' wellbeing through self-employment. It was concluded that European Union counterpart projects are significant predictors to enhancing low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of improved literacy, safe-drinking water, and self-employment. The study recommended among others that European Union water projects and infrastructural development programmes should be extended to cover more communities in the Senatorial District.

Keywords: European Union, Counterpart projects, low-income workers, wellbeing,

INTRODUCTION

Low-income workers have daily expenses to meet up family budgets. In most cases, transportation, enrolling children in school, good water supply and sanitation are some of the daily needs. These needs over the years have been squeezed by high cost of commodities. In rural areas, many low-income workers travel long distances to look for well paid jobs (Mark, 2004). Many low-income workers are employed often in jobs that require working long hours and on nights or weekends, creating significant challenges to their wellbeing (Ushie, Agba, Agba, & Best, 2010; Roberts, Povich, & Mather, 2013). In Nigeria, some of the low-income workers are farmers, cooks, maids, retail salespersons, waiters and waitresses, or drivers. Some of these occupations especially those involving salespersons are among the fastest-growing occupations in the country. With this challenge, decent accommodation, access to portable water and good sanitation, and other basic social amenities including formal education remains a great challenge in rural areas.

The European Union (EU) is an international organization made up of twenty-seven countries. The European Union maintains diplomatic, trade and bilateral relations with nearly all countries in the world. It has strategic partnership with emerging key international players and deeply engaged with emerging powers around the globe and has signed bilateral agreements with a number of states in its vicinity. In developed countries, the Union is represented by a network of 140 EU delegations, which have similar functions to those of an embassy (Esema, 2007). In recent time, the

concern of global development and the need for all people to have access to the basic amenities of life have dominated most national and international discuss (Nnadi, Nnadi, Aja, Chikaire & Okafor, 2012). Since the reintroduction of democracy in 1999, Nigeria has employed different strategic development plans initiated by its government at all levels to stimulate and accelerate good living standards in rural areas. Surprisingly however, records according to Ochiama (2008), Agba and Ushie (2009^a), continue to show that, vital infrastructures such as roads, power, water, school, physical infrastructure, health facilities, etcetera, are in comatose state. Accordingly, Agba, et al. (2009^b) and Batogun (2010), posit that over 70 percent of the country's population live below poverty line, and this is not without negative consequence. It counts for high mortality rate, low life expectancy, and general low standard of living in society.

However, the country has enjoyed improved bilateral relations with other countries and international organizations, including the European Union. The targets of EU-Nigeria Cooperation are to improve peace and security, foster good governance and human rights; at the same time boost trade and regional integration. Nigeria has always been an aid-dependent country, in spite of the fact that its own financial resources from oil and gas exports far outweigh those that can be provided by some donors. As with other West African Countries, Nigeria depends on foreign aids from European Union, World Bank, United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), etc., to achieve its

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of universal primary education, greater gender and women empowerment, sustainable environmental management, poverty reduction, child mortality and maternal health (Nnadi, Nnadi, Aja, Chikaire & Okafor, 2012).

The importance of obtaining reliable means of livelihood cannot be over emphasised. According to Scoones (1999), the ability to pursue different livelihood is dependent on the basic materials and social, tangible, and intangible assets that people have in their possession. He further noted that any efforts aimed at improving the livelihood of people should be directed towards empowering them to increase their productive output, or increase their ability to take up income earning activities. In recent past, the concern of the government of Cross River State and global development partners is to create wealth and enhance standard of living through enhancing people's access to the basic amenities. With this, Cross River State has not been left out of the European Union Agenda of human and economic development.

The state is geographically divided into the Northern, Central and Southern Senatorial Districts. The European Union socio-economic counterpart projects are carried out evenly across the three senatorial districts of the state. Some of the prime counterpart projects embarked upon in the state includes infrastructural projects such as provision of bore hole to boost water supply and sanitation, agricultural development projects, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) projects, and sustainable environmental management projects.

The rationale for executing these European Union counterpart projects is to stimulate income generation among low income earners, rural development, encourage industrialization and check rural-urban migration in the State. However, despite the successful completion of these projects across communities in the state, there seems to be no improvement in the people's socio-economic lives.

The rate of poverty among the people especially low income earners is relatively high and the living condition is worrisome. It is possible that the involvement of the European Union counterpart projects may have impacted positively on the low-income workers' wellbeing.

However, empirical evidence of its efforts in Cross River State is scanty. The European Union counterpart projects may have provided socio-economic strengthening of communities that enable them improve their means of livelihood. This study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap and expand existing literature on the effect of counterpart projects on the wellbeing of low income workers in Cross River State. Furthermore, the question the researcher bears in mind are: to what extent has European Union counterpart projects (such as income generation, provision of borehole to boost water supply, and provision of educational infrastructure) enhanced the low-income workers' wellbeing in Cross River State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study sought to investigate the effect of European Union counterpart projects on the low-income workers' wellbeing in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Investigate whether European Union counterpart project on income generation relates with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of enhanced household income.
- Determine whether European Union counterpart project on water supply relates with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of supplying safe drinking water.
- Examine whether European Union counterpart projects on educational infrastructure relates with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of enhanced literacy.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- European Union counterpart project on job creation has no significant relationship with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of enhanced household income.
- European Union counterpart project on water supply has no significant relationship with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of supplying safe-drinking water.
- European Union counterpart project on educational infrastructure does not significantly relate with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of enhanced literacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Objectives of European Union Counterpart Projects

The development objective of community development project (CDP) of European Union is to domiciliate active, effective, and viable mechanism to boost the living standard and economic posture of deprived rural communities (Tamuno, 1999). There are two main project components. The first focuses on social and infrastructural development and provide sub-project grants for carrying out social evaluation and designing programmes of sub-projects and implementing sub-projects consisting of:

- Improving access to basic education, health, and social services by rehabilitating and upgrading schools and health, youth, cultural and recreation centres and facilities in poor areas.
- Carrying out programmes for revolving schools, textbooks, literacy, and primary healthcare.
- Improving access to specialised social services to satisfy the needs of vulnerable groups at risk.
- Developing basic rural infrastructure activities such as portable water and small-drainage and irrigation schemes; and

- Enhancing environmental protection initiatives such as reforestation and natural resource, and cultural heritage (UNDP, 2006).

The second component focuses on income enhancement by funding capacity building activities to support the following:

- Micro and small entrepreneurs and non-governmental organisation providing credit to target beneficiary groups;
- Women, youth, and disabled people to provide them with demand driven specialised skills that will help them increase income and business opportunities (Cornea, 2001).

European Union counterpart projects on water supply and low-income workers' wellbeing

Water and sanitation are two significant components in the overall development of a nation. Water as a finite natural resource, is necessary for sustenance of life and ecological system (Esrey, *et al.* 1991). In recognition of the harmful effect of inadequate water supply and sanitation services could cause to quality of life, the international community and Nigeria respectively have continued to make efforts to address these needs. According to United Nations (2001), notable efforts at the international level include among others, development of water management strategies at regional, national, and local levels that seek to promote both equitable access and adequate supplies. At the national level, the federal government of Nigeria in 2000 launched its national policy on water and sanitation; with the aim of providing sufficient potable water and adequate sanitation to all Nigerians (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2000; FMWR 2000). At the local level, many state governments and their Local Government Authority (LGAs) have complemented efforts of the federal government by creating different authorities (Water Board, Rural Water Development agencies, etc.) to provide water for the masses. Despite these efforts, many studies have revealed that the levels of water and sanitation services within the country still remain generally unsatisfactory (On yenechere, 2004; Okereke, 2000; Uzoma, 1996), and highly unpatronised (Igwe, *et al.*, 2007).

According to Oludimu (1984), the provision of adequate and suitable infrastructural facilities is a *sin-qua-non* for rapid economic development. Facilities such as water supply and sanitation (refuse and sewage disposal services), housing and electricity greatly affect the health, wellbeing and general quality of life of the individuals in society. As a result, factors influencing the health status of rural populace include the source of drinking water, house type, environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and nutritional status and literacy levels. Globally, about one billion people have no access to safe drinking water. The Nigerian society, like other developing countries, has a large rural sector and small urban components that have no access to portable drinking water as well sanitation is a well-known fact. One out of every five death of children under the age of five is due to a water related diseases

and close to 80% of illness in developing nations is connected to poor water and sanitation issues (Juma, 2013). According to Ofuoku (2011), various communities of the world see water as a very important requirement for the sustenance and accessibility of a good life and will do anything to have it. Although water supply in rural areas are used for domestic consumption, watering livestock and in some cases for irrigation, the major source of water are open, thus, making them susceptible to all sort of contamination. Ironically, the international water requirements are not applicable to rural communities, due to extreme water scarcity.

In Ekiti State, Nigeria, Fekayode, Omotesho, Tsoho and Ajayi (2008) carried out an economic survey of rural infrastructures and socio-economic development of rural dwellers. The study specifically surveyed eight infrastructures: roads, health centres, market centres, water supply, electricity supply, banks, communication gadgets, and education, and their influence on economic development in the study area. Data from the study were gathered from one hundred household and fifteen discussed groups selected across the study area. The analysed data revealed that prior to the European Union, the World Bank, and the UNDP sponsored rural roads and water projects from 2002 to 2006, there were inadequate roads and access to potable water in the rural areas of the state, and the few available ones were in a bad state of disrepairs. Nevertheless, following the intervention by the European Union, the World Bank, and the UNDP, an impact assessment, the rural infrastructure indices were shown to significantly improve upon standard of living of the people. The study therefore calls for the state and federal governments to partner with international organization in order to implement a robust rural infrastructural development programme and the rehabilitation of existing roads, health centres, market centres, water supply and sanitation, etc. in the rural areas, in order to eradicate poverty and significantly improve people's standard of living.

European Union counterpart projects on educational infrastructure and wellbeing of low income workers

European Union counterpart projects' aim to develop human beings. It is assumed that with adequate human development all over the world, countries will be socially and economically independent, thereby reducing the burden of over dependency on European Union countries. One of the European Union counterpart projects that targets human development is the "investing in people" programme. The programme aims to support actions in the area of human and social development.

The investment in people programme aims at promoting universal access to quality primary education and access to vocational skills training among others. The programme covers all developing countries, giving priority to those in most need of EU assistance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Igwe, *et al.*, 2007).

In rural areas where primary (or even secondary) schools exist and are attended by pupils, the conditions of the schools are highly deplorable, congested and without materials to teach and learn. The condition of teachers is in fact worse than the condition of the materials to work with. This is because materials could be obtained, structure of the schools could be improved or renovated overnight but resuscitate the condition and change the psychic of the teacher would be a Herculean task. However, the teacher-pupil ratio is so large that teaching and learning are constrained if not impossible (Esrey, 1991). In Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State particularly rural communities, it is not uncommon to assemble the children under tree shades and pretend to teach and learn. Even in urban areas, bare floored and over blown roof classes are noticeable with some classes held in traditional "Zauruka" (Zaure Sig). It should be recognized that education is prime in people's wellbeing. The European Union counterpart project in the area of educational infrastructure covers the building and renovation of classrooms in rural communities especially in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The local government areas that the European Union counterpart project in education impacted include Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Biase, and others. In Akamkpa local government area, the European Union constructed six (6) classroom blocks in Uwem, while in Akpabuyo, six (6) classroom blocks were constructed in Agor Ekpo in Ayanganse, in Biase, six (6) classroom blocks were also constructed in Ugbem.

According to Arrow (1973), the overall objective of European Union counterpart project in education and training systems has become a world-wide quality reference in accordance to the Lisbon strategy, while contributing to the socio-economic development of Cross River State, with particular reference to the Southern Senatorial Districts, more and more jobs and social cohesion has been achieved. The beneficiaries of the EU counterpart project on education are pupils, students, trainees, and adult learners, and all categories of education personnel, etc. The programme emphasizes the importance of cooperation to build high quality education through networking, mobility of students and scholars, and serve as an instrument for socio-economic development.

European Union counterpart projects on job creation and wellbeing of low income workers

In developing areas such as Cross River State, emphasis should be placed on the development of small and medium enterprises as a means of reducing poverty and inequality because of the increase in the demand for unskilled labour. In the state, there is redundant labour or disguised unemployment. The only employer is the government and this is why they are termed civil service state. The only solution to this problem is development of small-scale enterprises because they offer much more employment than larger firms for any given investment (Little, 1997). As a way of reducing the escalating scourge of

unemployment in the Nigeria, the World Bank and the European Union (EU), in partnership with the Federal Government, have introduced a job creation strategy called State Employment and Expenditure for Result (SEEFOR) project in the Niger Deltan states. Supervising Minister of National Planning, Ambassador Bashir Yuguda, the former supervising Minister of National Planning, the SEEFOR project was initiated two years ago by the World Bank as part of its contribution to the amnesty programme of the Federal Government but that the project came into full effect on July 31, 2013. He made this statement during a 3-day stakeholders' workshop on the project, said the project in Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort, Cross River State. According to Yuguda, the SEEFOR project has attracted additional support of \$100 million from European Union, adding that the support is laudable and in tandem with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Ubong, 2013). The additional financing from the EU and the World Bank has culminate in the creation of more jobs for the youth, more financial prudence and greater access to socio-economic services. The SEEFOR project would map out various opportunities, strategies, and options at improving the governance system as well as creating conducive environment for sustainable job creation.

At the event, the Secretary of the National Planning Commission, Ntufam Fidelis Ugbo, said the project is "consistent with the aspiration of federal government's transformation agenda and Nigeria's Vision 20: 2020." Ugbo said at the moment, government has established institutional framework to ensure effective execution of the project in the four pilot states. Ugbo said the National Project Coordinating Unit (NPCU) would work with States' Project Coordinating Units while the World Bank would coordinate the actual implementation of the project in the four states (Bassey, 2013).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory was propounded by Theodore Schultz, Gary Becker, and Jacob Mincer among others in the sixties (Bernardo, 2007). The theory was propounded by Theodore William Schultz in 1961 and developed by Gary Stanley Becker in 1964. Becker explained that human capital theory was developed in the sixties due to the realization that the growth of physical capital has only small part of growth income. Relatively, the emergence of education and skills training in military technology also played an important part in the discovery and displacement of the theory. Anubama (2003) explained human capital theory as human roots from the branch of economics. Labour economics study is on workforce but the major difference is that it focuses on quantitative terms, thus, has the most accurate predictability than other social sciences. Economist Theodore Schultz introduced return-on-investment, which highlights the cost benefit analysis of training and education. Gary Stanley Becker developed the human capital theory based on Schultz's research on return-on-investment.

Becker also introduced the concept of general purpose human capital and firm resource development practitioners worldwide.

Human capital theory suggests that investment in humans, through education or training raises the productivity of humans by imparting useful earnings (Becker, 1994). It postulates that expenditure on training and education is costly, and should be considered as investment since it is undertaken with a view to increasing personal incomes. In Becker's (1994) views, human capital is similar to "physical means of production", e.g. factories and machines: one can invest in human capital (via education, training, skill acquisition programmes, medical treatment, etc.). Thus, human capital is means of production, into which additional investment yields additional output. Human capital is sustainable, but not transferable like land, labour, or fixed capital. Human capital can be viewed in general terms, such as the ability to read and write, or in specific terms, such as the acquisition of a particular skill with a limited industrial application. The human capital theory is very relevant to this study on European Union Counterpart Projects and socio-economic development of rural dwellers. The European Union invests in human resource development in the form of intellectual, financial and material aid. These forms of aid contribute significantly towards educational, agricultural, healthcare and infrastructural development, as well as income generation. Thus, the relevance of the human capital theory to this study cannot be underestimated. The drawback of this theory is that it does not explicitly specify the strategies through which the capacity building of rural dwellers can be effectively done and by what agency. The approach does not take cognisance of the politics of the rural community in environmental resources allocation and management. Resources could be misallocated for investment in human resources and this could exacerbate rural inequality.

Participatory rural development theory

This is an approach used by non-governmental organizations and other agencies involved in international development. The approach aims to incorporate the knowledge and opinions of rural people in the planning and management of development projects and programmes. The roots of participatory rural appraisal techniques can be traced to the activist adult education methods of Paulo Freire and the study clubs of the Antigonish movement. In his view, an actively involved and empowered local population is essential to successful rural development. Robert Chambers (1983), one of the key exponents of participatory rural development appraisal argues that the approach owes much to "the Freirian theme, that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to analyse their own reality". By the early 1980s, there was growing dissatisfaction among development experts with both the reductionism of formal surveys, and the biases of typical field visits. In 1983, Robert Chambers, a fellow at the institute of development studies (UK), used the term "Rapid Rural Appraisal" to describe

techniques that could bring about a reversal of learning. Two years later, the first international conference to share experiences relating to rapid rural development was held in Thailand.

Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions and to adapt to rapid change". To be an external agent of change within this discipline implies two-way learning. Development agents learn to both appreciate and lever the power of oral culture and the transformations that are possible within it. Walter J. Ong has argued that "many of the contrasts often made between 'Western' and other views seem reducible to contrasts between deeply interiorized literacy and more or less residually oral state of consciousness". The approach discussed by Shah (1997) relates to 'consensus-building'. The role of participatory approach was to "find a meeting ground to negotiate terms of collaboration". For Shah, the development agency must be flexible "not in its basic objectives, but in its systems and procedures", so the goals are circumscribed from the outset. This implies that the participatory rural appraisal can be used to get an understanding of the villagers' resources and needs. Participatory rural development approach is very important to this study to European Union counterpart projects and socio-economic development. The European Union cannot carry out any projects without involving the citizens in the affected communities. In addition, the counterpart projects can function effectively when there is citizenship participation.

This approach has been criticised because of its inherent challenges. According to Ozumba (1992), the problem ranges from being too utopian, limited resources, existence of bureaucratic bottlenecks, community culture, technological backwardness, poor information flow, lack of competent development agents, corruption to external agents or government's lack of zeal to vigorously pursue socio-economic development in an authentic participatory manner.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey design. Survey according to Agba and Ushie (2013) allows for the investigation of events to determine the nature and direction of a given phenomenon. It permits for the objective and rational description of existing event. The merit of this research design is that it helps to gather data from research participant at relatively low cost. The design also permits generalization to be made to the wider population.

This study was carried out in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. For administrative convince, the District is divided into seven (7) local government areas. These include – Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Odukpani, Calabar Municipality and Calabar South. The Senatorial District is bordered in the North by Yakurr Local Government Area, in the east by Republic of Cameroon, in the south by Calabar Sea, in the west by Akwa Ibom and Eboyi States. Apart from the local government headquarters, in the Senatorial District, other

towns and villages are rural areas. European Union Counterpart Projects helps promote rural transformation in the District. The inhabitants are mostly farmers, traders and fishermen. Most foodstuff consumed in urban areas in Cross River and other neighbouring states are produced in rural areas in the Senatorial District. Their production capacity in this respect is affected by a number of factors including lack of access to infrastructural facilities, educational support, skill acquisition, inadequate potable drinking water and good sanitation, etc.

Southern Senatorial District is one of the largest Senatorial Districts in Cross River State and the Niger Delta Region. The people of the Southern Senatorial District like other Cross Riverians are of the Bantu Stock who migrated from Central Africa. The District is blessed with tourist site such as Tinapa in Calabar, Kwa Waterfalls, Calabar Botanical Garden and Zoo garden, Old Residency Museum, Marina Resort etc. Despite the tourism potentials of the District, majority of the people in the region are farmers and some engaged in petty trading; over 70% of the people dwell in rural communities and these constitutes the sample for the study. The population of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State is one million, one hundred and ninety thousand, three hundred and fifty-four (1,190,354) persons (NPC, 2006). The spread of the population across the seven local government areas reveals that Akpabuyo Local Government Area is the most populated local government area with 271,395 inhabitants, Odukpani, Calabar South and Calabar Municipality have 192,884, 191,515, 183,631 respectively, while Biase, Akamkpa, and Bakassi have 168,113, 161,125, and 31,641 respectively.

The research involved both male and females in the study area. Categorically, the study centred on men, women, and young people who are believed to have sufficient understanding of European Union Counterpart Projects and its implication on the low-income workers' well being in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted purposive sampling technique. Five local government areas were purposively

selected from the existing seven that make-up the Southern Senatorial District. These includes – Akpabuyo, Akamkpa, Biase, Bakassi, and Odukpani Local Government Area. Among these five local government, two rural communities were selected for the study. Thus, ten (10) rural communities namely; Akpabuyo – Ikot Ene Etim and Ikot Adiaha Eneyo, Biase – Ehom and Biakpan, Odukpani – Ito and Eniong, Akamkpa – Aning-eje and Awi, Bakassi – Ikot Okon Ekpri-Iwong and Ikot Nkoho-Anie, were selected for the study. In each of the ten (10) rural communities, two streets were purposively selected from the enumerated streets. A total of twenty (20) streets were covered in the ten selected rural communities. Twenty-seven (27) respondents were selected from each street given a total of 495 respondents selected for the study. The main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire and a Focus Group Discussion Guide (FGDG).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between European Union counterpart projects on job creation and low-income workers' well being through enhance household income. The independent variable is European Union counterpart projects on job the creation while the dependent variable was income level. Pearson product moment correlation was adopted to test this hypothesis and reported in Table 1. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the relationship between European Union Counterpart project on educational infrastructure and access to quality education. The result in Table 1 reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.635* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at .05 level of significance with 493 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, European Union counterpart project on job creation has a significant relationship with low-income workers' well being in terms of enhanced household income.

Table 1. Pearson product moment correlation of European Union counterpart projects on job creation and income level of household (N=495)

Variables	N	M	SD	r.value	Sig.
European Union counterpart projects on job creation	495	16.58	3.40	0.635*	0.00
Income level of household	495	16.51	4.40		

**significant at 0.05 level, df = 493, critical r 0.195

Table 2. Pearson product moment correlation of European Union counterpart water projects and access to portable water (N=495)

Variables	N	M	SD	r.value	Sig.
European Union counterpart water projects	495	18.08	3.28	0.678*	0.00
Access to portable water	495	16.51	4.40		

**significant at 0.05 level, df = 493, critical r 0.195

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of European Union Counterpart water project and low-income workers' well being through access to safe drinking water. In this hypothesis, the independent variable is European Union Counterpart water project while the dependent variable is portable

water. To test the hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyse the data. The result is presented in Table 2. Pearson product moment correlation (r) was used to test the relationship between European Union Counterpart water projects and access to portable water. The result in Table 2 reveals that the calculated r – value of 0.678* is greater than the

critical r-value of 0.195 at .05 level of significance with 493 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of European Union Counterpart water projects and low-income

Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between European Union Counterpart project on education infrastructure and low-income workers' wellbeing through enhanced literacy. In this hypothesis, the independent variable is European Union Counterpart projects on education infrastructure while the dependent variable is access to quality education. To test the hypothesis Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyse the data. The result is presented in Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation of European Union counterpart projects on education infrastructure and access to quality education (N=495)

Variables	N	M	SD	r.value	Sig.
European Union Counterpart projects on education infrastructure	495	16.08	3.10	0.354*	0.00
Access to quality education	495	16.51	4.40		

**significant at 0.05 level, df = 493, critical r 0.195

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This first finding of this study reveals that EU projects on income generation has significantly enhanced the income level of household. This implies that the construction of markets and other skill acquisition centres by EU has significantly improved the wellbeing of low income workers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The results are in consonance with UNICEF (2009) report, which commended that EU project on job creation is geared towards poverty alleviation through the building of markets and empowering the jobless through skills acquisition programmes. This finding also support Olujide (2006), who agreed that EU project on job creation consist of building market, establishment of skill acquisition centres and investments in small and medium scale enterprises. Olujide stated that these socio-economic empowerment measures have enormous potential to check low life in rural communities.

Data from focus group discussion on income generation and level of household income revealed that the construction of lockup stores and establishment of skill acquisition centres has enhanced the socio-economic status of low income workers. In Calabar South and Akpabuyo, discussants revealed that the building of lockup stores in the community has reduced the rate of unemployment. They observed that unemployed youths engaged in selling various items in the market. This has reduced the rate of poverty and crime in the community. In Biase, Odukpani and Akpamkpa respectively, participants summited that the establishment of skills acquisition centres has helped in manpower development as well as creating avenue to generate income for the unemployed. They maintained that EU has supported some of the small and medium enterprises through micro-credit scheme.

The findings in respect to hypothesis two showed that EU water project has enhanced rural

workers' well being is rejected. This implies that, European Union Counterpart project on water has significant relationship low-income workers' well being in terms of supplying safe-drinking water.

relationship between European Union Counterpart project on educational infrastructure and access to quality education. The result in Table 3 reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.354* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at .05 level of significance with 493 degree of freedom with this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, European Union counterpart project on educational infrastructure significantly relate with low-income workers' wellbeing in terms of enhanced literacy.

community's access to portable water. It was discovered that the provision of clean drinking water by EU has significantly alleviate the suffering of the rural populace in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State in accessing portable water. The study further shows that the hygiene situation is relatively high where clean and portable water is in high supply. This implies that environmental hygiene in rural community is dependent on access to good water supply. This is in agreement with Oscar (2002) who posits that water supply especially clean water is a basic necessity of human being. This finding is also in line with Adebayo (2008) who asserts that the place of water in enhancing the wellbeing of rural dwellers as well as the general population cannot be overemphasised. He noted that water is a source of life and a means of livelihood. The provision of portable water therefore plays a crucial role in enhancing the health and socio-economic wellbeing of rural populace in terms of enhanced hygiene. The study observed that portable water is an essential need of all human irrespective of their political class, religious belief, social class, age, and academic qualification.

Focus group discussion on EU water project and access to portable water held revealed that water related diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, etc, has drastically reduced courtesy of EU water project. Beneficiaries of the water project highlighted that trekking long distance and climbing mountains to access clean drinking water is a thing of the past. In Biase Local Government Area, participants revealed that the provision of fresh, neat, and accessible water has improved the living standard of the people tremendously. They added that access to safe drinking water courtesy of EU counterpart project has shorten the time and distance their wards trek to fetch water each day. In the same vein, some beneficiaries reported that the burden of getting clean drinking water has been made easy since the intervention of

European Union water project. Discussants in Akpabuyo Local Government Area unanimously stated that EU water project in their community is one of the best thing EU has done for the community. They concur that the availability of EU water project has helped to salvage members of the community from travelling long distances to streams to fetch water. Participants assert that the drilling of borehole has ended water scarcity in the community and help in checking water borne diseases.

The result of statistical analysis of hypothesis three showed that a significant relationship between EU projects on educational infrastructure and access to quality education. This implies that through EU project on educational infrastructure affords low income workers access to quality education. According to Tinubu (2007), education is the key to increasing economic efficiency in the rural economy, promoting social consistency and reducing illiteracy and poverty. Tinubu noted that education increases the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the labour force; consequently, ensuring that a country is competitive in world markets. This assertion is supported by Kneke, Ogbonna, and Ezeoha (2001), who reported that no country can achieve any meaningful development in any sphere without investing in the education that raises the people's productivity and creativity level, and further acts as an instrument for securing economic advancement of any society. Nyong (2012) observed that EU projects supports and promotes education and training in rural areas. He noted that EU has contributed significantly to the development of educational infrastructure in terms of book supply, provision of desks, and award of scholarship to students in secondary and tertiary institutions. The finding of this hypothesis is validated by Etokebe (2008) who reported that EU projects has helped to improve the standard of education in rural communities through award of scholarships in partnership with community groups, provision of stationary and school uniforms and bags. The finding further agrees with Ukpong (2010) who noted that some primary and secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, which has remained dilapidated for years, have been renovated by EU projects on education.

Focus group discussion of EU projects on educational infrastructure and rural communities' access to quality education was held in Akpabuyo, Biase and Odukpani. Participants generally averred that the intervention of EU counterpart projects in the provision of educational facilities has enhanced the standard of education in the communities. In Akpabuyo, discussants submitted that EU has invested much in educational service such as building six classroom block, provision of stationaries and desks to students.

Discussants in Odukpani agreed that EU has made education affordable and convenient by providing textbooks, pen, pencil, eraser, as well as construction of classroom blocks and staff quarters. In Biase Local Government, beneficiaries reported that EU has assisted the

community in providing functional educational services. They added that through EU counterpart projects, schools have been renovated, classrooms furniture and infrastructure upgraded. Participants also noted that teachers are trained through workshops, lectures, and seminar courtesy of EU counterpart project on education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the researcher concluded in the following manner. European Union Counterpart water projects has significantly enhanced low-income workers' access to potable water. The provision of clean portable water in rural communities in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State by European Union counterpart project has reduced the distance rural dwellers trek to access clean water.

It has also helped in the control of diarrhoea, cholera and other water borne diseases. There is a significant relationship between European Union Counterpart projects on education infrastructure and low-income workers' access to quality education.

Through the provision of educational infrastructures by European Union counterpart projects, access to education and human development has been enhanced in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

The deplorable and congested condition of schools has been upgraded courtesy of EU projects. The study discovered further that European Union Counterpart Projects on income generation has significantly improved the income level of households in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State cannot be over emphasised. Based on the research problems, the aims and results of the study, the following recommendations is considered necessary:

- EU should strengthen the project management, monitoring and maintenance unit in order to effectively access the quality of materials, ensure adequate completion and maintenance of projects. This initiative will help reduce the use of substantial materials in project execution, as well as check the incessant abandonment of projects. The team should consist of experts with relevant skills in project monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance.
- EU should focus on the provision and promotion of healthcare services in rural communities. This development will reduce maternal death and improve the general health conditions of rural communities.
- EU should sustain and improve access to rural education as a means of securing the socio-economic development of rural communities.
- There should be improved access to clean drinking water in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State as a way of improving health.
- Provision of more job creation ventures as well as financial assistance to boost the socio-economic status of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

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