

Assessing the Effective Management of Financial Resources among Community Based Organizations in Metropolitan Lagos.

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Abstract

The paper examines the effective management of financial resources among community based organization (CBOs) in metropolitan Lagos. Using the community action model as its theoretical leaning, 40 in-depth interviews and 16 key informants were selected for the study. The findings show that majority of the respondents affirmed that CBOs provide the platform for organizing, planning and executing plans with community resources for developmental projects for the wellbeing of its members. Also, the study established that the issue of financial management has been the bane of most of the CBOs in the communities. It was observed that there is high level of financial mismanagement by executives, high-handedness, executives holding on to power, cover up, favouritism and corruption. The paper conclude that there is the need to establish a strong supervisory and regulatory authority that will be backed by law consisting of various stakeholders in various fields of human endeavours.

Key Word: Effective Management, Community Based Organization, Mismanagement,

Background to the Study

Community based organizations (CBOs) are public or private non-profit organizations that represent a community or specific part of a larger community and targets meeting a specific need in that community (Caldwell, Reyes, Rowe, Weinert & Isreal, 2015; Glik et al., 2014). Formation of Community-based organizations (CBOs) is as old as human society itself and it is universally found and practiced globally in every human society (Barr et al., 2015). Early CBOs formation revolve around communities with different groups of people, with diverse socio-economic background, uniting together without prejudice in order to address a variety of socio-economic, political, cultural, and security purposes (Abegunde, 2009; Barr et al., 2015). CBOs have been seen as an alternative to formal organizations or government institutions. CBOs serve as organizations, which play important roles, in providing community-based development such as in providing public goods, resolving collective action problems in situations where there are deficiencies in formal organizations or government inability to provide needed social services in rural areas, and poor countries (Adejumobi, 1991; Adeyemo, 2002; Barr et al., 2015).

Also, CBOs facilitate community sustainability and resilience to hazards (Drennan & Morrissey 2019; Partelow, 2021; Roaf, et. al., 2010) and promote local governance through the collective actions of organized individuals within the community (Patterson et.al. 2017). Thus, these organizations depend largely on the voluntary donations and contributions of the members (Kasmad et al, 2019). The development and effectiveness of CBOs depends largely on its formation, composition and origin. Formation of CBOs can emanate from local elites, gender and ethnic lines, and socio-economic cleavages, which reflects their preferences and interests (Barr et al., 2015) and in recent times based on providing adequate security to its members as a result of security challenges globally.

Membership and co-membership of CBOs are likely to be from prosperous individuals who belong to high socio-economic cleavages based on wealth, class, status, and power (Arcand and Fafchamps, 2012). By

extension, co-membership under CBOs tends to be stronger and valuable.

The establishment of CBOs does not follow kinship lines but on mutable characteristics and selection effects (Barr et al., 2015). Members are well informed and skilled in the core areas of community interventions such as development of goals and objectives, problem identification, planning, implementation and execution (Ali & Khan, 2015). One of the several factors responsible for the proliferation of CBOs is the poor performance of government to provide solution to a number of socio-economic problems, failure of government's top down approaches, lack of involvement of the people at the grass root level (Abegunde, 2003; Abegunde, 2009), and low membership due to high cost of living (Dill, 2010).

CBOs are formed for different purposes. Hence the various types of CBOs include funeral societies, income generating cooperatives aiming to maintain collective structures and harness economies of scale, skilled organizations, choirs, dance groups, sports groups, religious groups (Barr et al., 2015), savings group (Patel, 2019), health sectors (Wilson, Lavis, & Guta, 2012). The formation is based on specific population and they get funds and aid from international development associations too (Dill, 2010). CBOs can take many form and their services ranges from visiting, parenting or early child education, social support, counselling services, financial assistance, and healthcare. The finding from the work of Ali and Khan (2015) on the benefits of CBOs for community development revealed that, there is a strong relationship between communities based organizations and community development. This is based on the progress report of the various CBOs in the study area who worked in different areas like education, public health, water and sanitation, public awareness, sustainable livelihood and social welfare of the community. The study highlighted visible changes between the two communities having and lacking these organizations. According to Dinbabo (2014), CBOs also provide social control mechanisms and spiritual satisfaction. Such impact has been witnessed in areas of policy issues and matters, physical development, economic development, environmental development, cultural development, security development, infrastructure and several others (Abegunde, 2009). An effective community based organization is based on the active participation of its initiators, supporters and beneficiaries towards the achievement of development. Therefore, CBOs focus on community engagement and learning from other case studies with similar situations (Patel, 2019).

In Nigeria, there has been increasing involvement of CBOs in development activities. However, in recent years, it has been observed that, certain factors limit their performance in contributing to urban and rural development (Edigan, Aleakhue, & Segiru, 2018). According to Edigan et al., (2018) several challenges facing CBOs in Nigeria include, leadership crisis, financial constraint, corruption, tribalism, and insecurity. CBOs are faced with several factors which inhibits its development. This ranges from governmental neglect, conflict of interest among co-members, low and poor public acceptance, inadequate government support, poor economic status of members, ineffective organization and performance, waste of limited resources, made isolated decisions, irregular attendance at meetings (Adejumobi, 1991; Olomola, 2001; Karimanzira, 2018) and the problem of poor information dissemination, and high cost of membership fee (Patel, 2019).

Studies have shown that the activities of CBOs in project development have been seen as an important element and a sure way to the speedy development in Nigeria (Abegunde, 2008). The impact of CBOs have been felt in the areas of social and economic development, policy matters, health, infrastructure, environmental and physical development among others (Adeokun, Adisa and Oladoja, 2006). It has been argued that financial management and sustainability is critical to CBOs stability and growth. In harnessing grant and donations from rich countries, however, since the outbreak of Covid 19 pandemic such grants and donations have stopped coming due to financial mismanagement and sustainability of those projects. There have been many reported cases of financial mismanagement of resources that could have been effectively managed due to lack of transparency, corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the effective management of financial resources among CBOs in

metropolitan Lagos.

Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical orientation is anchored on community action model. The community action model is a theoretical model, which was propounded by Paulo Friere in 2007. He argued that there is disparity between poor and prosperous residents, that CBOs or labourers can be a bridge through self-determination from those in the low socio-economic status. Accordingly, awakening the people's conscience to have self-confidence assist them to attain desired goal collectively (Freire, 2007). In other words, enlightenment of the mind through education empowers the poor to collectively strive towards common goal and confront the oppressors. When this is achieved, the poor can easily develop their community to catch up with the rich class. These according to Paulo, will give ability to dialogue with the ruling class and overtime, bridge the socio-economic gap that separates residents or organizations at grassroots from those in prosperous region (Raphael et al, 1999; Kulig, 2000, & Abegunde, 2009).

The assumption of this theory posits that residents in poor communities can team together to attain socio-economic development (Abegunde, 2009). Community action model involves participatory action research approaches and is asset based. That is, it builds on the strengths of a community to create changes from within (Abegunde, 2009). Its intent is to create changes by building community capacity, working in collaboration with communities and providing a framework for residents to acquire skills and resources necessary to assess their socio-economic conditions (Lavery, 2005; Abegunde, 2009). When they have done this, they can then plan, implement and evaluate actions designed to improve those conditions (Abegunde, 2009).

Community action model as a theory is based on these assumptions. First, it recognizes inequality in the distribution of regional resources. It also considers that inequality can be bridged through awakening of mind and self-confidence (Ryan-Nicolls, & Racher, 2004; Abegunde, 2009). Third, it emphasizes on changing individual's lifestyle and behaviour to mobilizing community members and agencies to reduce undesired conditions (Lavery, 2005; Abegunde, 2009). Yet it places the onus on the individual and does not challenge the social structure that shapes residents' choices and decisions (Caira, 2003; Abegunde, 2009).

This means that the model is designed to increase the capacity of communities and organisations to address the social and economic determinants that will certainly influence their community (Anderson & McFarlane, 2004; Abegunde, 2009). In this study, CBOs is seen as a means to fulfilling the assumptions of the community action model among residents in Lagos Metropolis communities.

Methods

Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria until 1991, is the economic hub of Nigeria and is its largest city with a population of 17.5 million (projected figure). It is currently among the top 15 largest cities in the world, but with current annual growth rates of about 6%-8% (i.e. up to 600,000 persons per annum or 1,644 people daily) it is projected to be among the top 5 largest cities by 2020 (US Census Bureau). It is one of the states in the south-west region of Nigeria. It was created on 27 May 1967 by virtue of Decree No. 14, which restructured Nigeria's Federation into 12 States.

The state is surrounded by water lagoons which make up about 22% of the land mass. Metropolitan Lagos itself accounts for only 37% of the state's land area but is occupied by more than 80% of the state population, such that population densities in the metropolis reaches up to 20,000 persons per sq. km (Lagos State Government, 2014). Such high densities combined with inadequate funding and poor management has led to infrastructure decay on massive scales. The city simply is trying to work on major improvements in its infrastructure given its current budget of about N1.168 trillion proposed to cater for its approximately 18

million people in 2020 (Lagos State Government, 2019). Lagos state is among the five cities in Africa with the highest and best economy (Punch Newspaper, 2015).

Lagos state is the most prosperous city in Nigeria. Much of the wealth of the state is derived from the economic activities that are concentrated in the state. It has the highest standard of living as compared to other cities in Nigeria as well as Africa (National Population Commission, 2007). It occupies an area of 358, 861 hectares that represent 0.4 percent of Nigeria’s land mass. This makes the state the smallest in Nigeria (Lagos State Centre for Rural Development, 2006). It is divided into twenty local government areas and thirty-seven local council development areas (LCDAs) (Lagos State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 2009). There are 57 local community development areas in Lagos each headed by a democratically elected council chairman under the coordination of the state governor. Since the metropolis spans across many councils, municipal services are carried out by central bodies e.g. the Lagos State Water Corporation (LSWC), the Lagos State Transport Management Agency (LASTMA) and the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA).

The research design was purely qualitative methods employing in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The respondents are randomly chosen in metropolitan Lagos consisting of the eight governments of Lagos Island, Lagos mainland, Surulere, Apapa, Mushin, Shomolu, Agege and Ikeja and two CBOs were selected in each of the selected local governments for the study. The study included all the stakeholders in selected communities, and the population consists of CBOs executives, residents of the communities, community leaders, youths, women leaders, elders in the communities and community development officials in selected local governments. For the IDIs, 40 in-depth interviews were conducted among the various stakeholders in the sixteen selected communities. The IDIs allowed the respondents to narrate their experiences as they relate to the roles and duties of CBOs and financial management. This method created face-to-face interaction for observing the attitude, behaviours and mood of the respondents on questions raised. Also, 16 Key Informants Interviews were conducted with informed participants such as community leaders, opinion leaders and community development officers

Table 1: Methodological tools

Methods of data collection	Instruments	Sources of data	Tools
In-depth interviews	Structured Interview guide	Different stakeholders	40 (Randomly selected respondents to share their experience of effective management of financial resources by CBOs
Key Informant Interviews(KII)	Structured/ semi-structured	Community leaders, opinion leaders and community development officers	16 (Among selected stakeholders

For the in-depth interviews and KII, the data were analyzed using Nvivo 20 software. The data collected were stored in separate files and coded according to the nature, types and characteristics of the information obtained from the field. The data were transcribed and quoted verbatim from the recording from the field. Ethical consideration was strictly adhered to; consent forms were administered for respondents to read and sign while those who could not read have the consent interpreted for them in local languages and Pidgin

English. Their confidentiality, participation and withdrawal were also ensured.

Result and Discussion of findings

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables			
Age	Below 30 years (20%)	31-59years (45%)	60 years above (35%)
Sex	Male (75%)	Female (25%)	–
Marital Status	Single (26%)	Married (64%)	Widowed (10%)
Educational qualification	No formal (10%)	First degree B.Sc. HND OND NCE (55%)	Second Degree and professional qualifications (35%)
Employment Status	Self Employed (35%)	Employed (53%)	Retired (12%)
No of children	1-4(45%)	5-8(48)	Above 8(7%)
Religion	Christianity (52%)	Islam (41%)	ATR (7%)
Monthly income	Less than N100,000 (35%)	N100,000-N400,000 (51%)	Above N400,000(14%)

Source: Field Research, 2022

The respondents' socio-demographic profile showed the age composition of the majority as 31-59 years (45%) and the respondents below 30 years (20%) in the minority. The indication is that the communities have more active persons in CBOs. The sex distribution of the respondents affirmed that majority (75%) were males and 25% were females. On educational qualification, majority of the respondents (55%) had school first degree such as B.Sc. HND, OND and NCE, 35% obtained second degree and professional qualifications and 10% did not have formal education. Also, the employment status distribution showed that the majority of the respondents 53% were employed. Also, majority of the respondents (48%) had between 5-8 children, and 45% were blessed with 1-4 children. In terms of religious beliefs, majority of the respondents (52%) were Christians, 41% practiced Islam and 7% were African Traditional Adherents. The monthly income showed that majority of the participants (51%) earned between N100,000-N400,000, 35% of the respondents' income were below N100,000 and 14% received above N400,000 monthly.

Roles and Duties of CBOs

Community Based organizations play a critical role in creating the needed avenue for individuals to share their problems and resources in a manner that improve the community (Wanjohi, 2010) CBOs are

established through the collective efforts of community residents or indigenous people that possess homogenous and heterogeneous attributes within the same environment. Their aim is to come together and bring about development in their various communities to improve on social wellbeing and security. It is a voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental and exceedingly limited to a small area or neighbourhood institutions whose membership is placed on equal level and whose main goal is the improvement of the social and economic wellbeing of every member (Abegunde, 2004). The aim of CBOs is to plan, implement, and monitor social and economic development programs and provide technical and financial help to the communities. CBOs positively affect the process of rural change i.e. increase in income, improvement in health, nutrition and literacy status of the population. CBOs are known to have the ability to influence ideas and actions of others and as a result of this; they are regarded as effective change agents.

One of the respondents in Lagos Island explained the roles of CBOs thus:

The main role of CBOs is to improve the welfare and wellbeing of its members through community development projects. We can no longer rely on government at the grassroots or even state to come and develop our community for us. So we embark on community joint efforts to provide some of those infrastructures that we lack in our various communities by ourselves through contributions and donations from members within and outside the communities to assist us on any project (Male/57/IDI/CBO Executive/Epetedo Community Lagos Island/2022).

Another respondent in Mushin also gave his voice too

It is also the duty of CBOs to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities. For example, we do not only embark on developmental project, but also assist our members to access loans from banks by way of recommending them for such facilities in banks. We also assist in payment of members hospital bills, contribute towards burial ceremony of a member, and we also participate in cultural activities that unite us together (Male/48/ IDI/CBO Executive Mushin Ojuwoye Community Mushin/2022)

Majority of the respondents affirmed that CBOs provide avenue for people to organize themselves for planning action and define their common and individual needs and problems, execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources and supplement these resources when necessary with services and materials from government and non-governmental agencies outside their communities.

As explained by a former executive of a CBOs in Lagos Mainland

CBOs serve as a means of coming together for individual and common needs and problems and look at ways of alleviating those problems that is affecting the community. For example, if there is flooding in a community, it is not only an individual problem. Even if it starts as an individual problem, if care is not taken, it will soon affect the whole community. Another example is that of insecurity. If an armed robber attacks a house today and the community did not show concern to the victim, the next time it will be the turn of another member of the community. So what usually start as an individual problem or need gradually turn to common problems and needs. That is why we come together to address what we consider as a common problem through the formation of CBOs (Male/65/IDI/CBO Former Executive Alagomeji Hughes Avenue Community Lagos Mainland/2022)

A Community Development officer in Surulere Local Government explained further

Over the years, various community development associations have spring up as a result of paucity of fund of government to develop communities in the rural areas and improve on those in urban centre (Female/32/KII/Community Development Officer/Surulere/2022)

A community leader in Shomolu explained thus

Much of the roles of CBOs have been in the areas of social health, political and economic well-being of the communities in Shomolu. Through the efforts of the CBOs, we have been able to provide employment for the youth in the communities as vigilantes, security men and youth vanguard corps. Also, the CBOs through collaborations with NGOs and government have been able to screen people for HIV/AIDS, eye test, blood sugar level etc. They are also helping the communities to participate in politics and also provide political education on the coming election among others. (Male/65/KII/Community Leader/Shomolu/2022)

It is evident that CBOs open ways for community participation at grassroots level, it allows for local and indigenous people to come together and identify their local needs, formulate and implement any project in order to develop the necessary self-reliance and self –confidence in their various communities

Financial Management by CBOs

Management connotes a set of duties such as planning, organizing, leading and coordinating activities. It is not done in isolation because it involves that group of people are included in these activities. Central to management issue is leadership skills, such as establishing the vision of the organization and its goals, effective communication of this and guiding others to accomplish them. Sequel to this is the issue of accountability of resources used in the deployment of the task. One area that has generated issue among community based organizations is the issue of how money is spent and not given proper account of money.

Majority of the respondents affirmed that the issue of financial management has been the bane of most of the CBOs as some executives connive with some of the regulatory officials of government and some members in the communities to misappropriate funds meant for developmental projects. They also confirmed that the some of the executives also hold on to power just to cover up for such financial mismanagement, high-handedness, cases of cover up, favouritism and corruption.

Some of the respondents remarked that while some of the CBOs have done creditably well in terms of performance, some have been found wanting and have further slowdown the level of development in such communities

As explained by one of the respondents in Ikeja on the issue of financial mismanagement,

The issue of mismanagement is not new in our system both in private and public organizations. I think it is inherent in our system to mismanagement fund just because we have opportunity to manage those funds. Some of the executives will just decide and approve fund without getting approval from the members that have contributed those funds. We also have scenario where, the president and the treasurer will approve fund without the knowledge of other executive members just because they are signatories to the account of the CBOs. The disheartening thing is that the so called supervisory or regulatory officials are also part of this financial scandal(Male/60/KII/Opinion Leader/Ikeja/2022)

A youth leader in Agege shed more light on issue of financial mismanagement

Cases of mismanagement of funds do come up at community meetings from time to time. I think what is responsible for this is that capable and highly qualified members in the community have abandoned their responsibilities to those who are incompetent but readily available to fill the vacuum created by the neglect of this category of people. It is also a reflection of what is happening in society now. People who are qualified do not come out to contest. I think we will continue to have cases of mismanagement until we put the right pegs in the right holes. (Male/40/KII/Youth leader/Agege/2022)

A resident in one of the communities in Lagos Island explained that:

Cases of mismanagement of community funds abound. That is why some of the executive members hold on to power just to cover up for their incompetence and mismanagement. I see no reason why some people will want to hold on to power and violate the constitution. I think what should be done to those set of people should be that they are prosecuted to serve as deterrent to others. It is about service and not for some few individuals to embezzle or mismanage fund meant for the development of the community (Female/52/IDI/Resident/Lagos Island/2022)

An elder man in Ikeja gave an insight into issue of mismanagement thus:

I remember that some researchers came to our community in 2010 to ask us if we would like to collaborate with ICPC on issue of corruption in our community. While some of us in the community supported the collaboration, some of our executives in CDAs vehemently opposed it. What I am saying is that, because some people benefits for occupying positions, they will always want to ensure that they protect their interest. But communities are getting wiser now as there are cases of community members facing charges of mismanagement. It is no longer business as usual in Ikeja. If you can embezzle fund, you should be able to spend the time in prison. (Male/77/Elder/Ikeja/2022)

A women leader in Mushin attributed the mismanagement of fund to connivance with government officials

I think the issue of corruption and embezzlement has continued to thrive because those who have been delegated to monitor and supervise those CBOs are not doing what they are supposed to do. There have been reported cases of the connivance of these government officials who are meant to regulate and supervise the activities of CBOs also partaking in the mismanagement of funds. How can some few people embezzle the sweat of the whole community with impunity?

(Female/67/women leader/ Mushin/2022)

Discussion of findings

The paper adopts the community action model which posits that there is disparity between poor and prosperous residents, that CBOs or labourers can be a bridge through self-determination from those in the low socio-economic status. Community action model stress more on awakening the people's conscience to have self-confidence which assist them to attain desired goal collectively.

The study found that the critical role of CBOs is creating the avenue for individuals to share their problems and resources to improve the community. This they do by influencing the ideas and actions of others. This is why they are regarded as change agents. Majority of the respondents affirmed that CBOs provide the platform for people to organize themselves for planning action, define their common and individual needs and problems by executing plans with community resources and assistance from government and Non-governmental agencies outside their communities. Also, the study found that CBOs improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of its members in the communities by assisting their members to access loans from banks by recommending them for such facilities and also assisting sick members to upset their bills and contributing financial during burial of their members.

The study revealed that the increase in the number of CBOs is attributed to the need for the opportunity for urban and rural communities to provide for themselves those services and amenities they need but which the state governments nor the local governments can provide for them

Furthermore, the study established that the issue of financial management has been the bane of most of the CBOs in the communities. It was observed that there is high level of financial mismanagement by executives, high-handedness, executives holding on to power, cover up, favouritism and corruption. The findings corroborated previous studies that identified conflict of interest among co-members, ineffective organization and performance and waste of limited resources (Adejumobi 1991; Olomola 2001; Karimanzira 2018)

Conclusion

The paucity of fund by the state and local governments to provide the needed infrastructural projects in communities within their jurisdiction has led to the upsurge of CBOs who have taken it upon themselves to provide such public goods, through collective actions in situations where there are deficiencies or government inability to create the needed social services. In spite of the efforts of CBOs in bringing about developments to their various communities, there have been various challenges recording over the years in Nigeria, ranging from leadership crisis, financial constraints to execute those projects, allegation of corruption, tribalism, poor economic status of members, ineffective organization, poor information dissemination waste of limited resources, irregular attendance at meeting, financial mismanagement, nepotism and autocracy

The study shows that financial mismanagement is a critical issue among CBOs in most communities and there is the urgent need to address this issue by establishing a strong supervisory and regulatory authority that will be backed by law consisting of various stakeholders in the various fields of human endeavours. All CBOs accounts must be regulated and must pass through internal and external audit procedure regularly to curb the issue of financial mismanagement. There should be collaboration with Independent Corrupt Practices and other offences Agency to reduce this impunity of the executives of the various CBOs. This finding can be a good spring board to a very satisfactory level of effective management to maintain financial capacity of CBOs.

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