

# Assessment of Non-Government Organizations' Contribution to Environmental Awareness in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Environmental management challenges have assumed a global scale and attention. However, it is misleading to conclude that the current challenge of sustainable environmental management is fully known to the populace, especially at the grassroots. This paper examined Non-Government Organizations' Contribution to Environmental Awareness in Nigeria using Uyo as a case study. The study collected data using the semi-structured questionnaire on awareness of environmental issues, relationship between people in the study area and ENGOS, activities of ENGOS and benefits from ENGOS. Findings revealed that ENGOS has not significantly created a positive environmental awareness on respondents and has consequently failed to meet global expectations in addressing environmental challenges. Recommendations were made to enhance environmental awareness: improved education and orientation of the people on environmental problems, encouragement of youth participation in environmental management by ENGOS, media houses should increase awareness of environmental problems in the study area, and funding agencies should monitor the implementation of planned environmental awareness programmes.

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**Index terms**— ENGOS, Environmental awareness, Environmental problems, Environmental management, Uyo.

## 1 nvironmental

management is central to sustainable environment. Hence, the continuity of all life on earth relies on human activities in and around the biosphere. As observed by Akpabio (2009), environmental management is much more than the control of nuisance. He contends that it involves an orientation that is philosophical in nature which is deliberately designed to encourage the existence of a congenial environment for healthy life, liberty and industry as well as promoting beauty of the environment.

At the fore of environmental management are the Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS). ENGOS are the most active actors in the environmental arena. In Nigeria, ENGOS are observed to be involved in managing the environment for the last four decades (Oyeshola, 1995). They advocate sustainable development, protest for the environment and engage in all kinds of environmental activities. As Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), ENGOS are known to have a mission to changing people's unsustainable attitudes and behaviours (Ebong and Bassey, 2004). In order to achieve their goals, the ENGOS need to draw attention of the public, business organizations or even politicians to the reality of development and environmental sustainability. Using the media, public awareness could be created on how best to manage the environment for continued existence.

Historically, a number of non-governmental organizations with environmental inclination abound. For example, Table 1 shows the various NGOs over time: Indisputably, NGOs at the local, regional and international levels are the saviour and stewards of environment; they protect the environment from abuse, misuse and damage. However,

## 4 PERCENTAGE (%)

it is the believe of Akpabio (2009) that of the NGOs in Table 1, only few have really made any significant impact in the promotion of environmental awareness, scientific research and protection of endangered species and critical habitats. Since human influences virtually all areas of life, a means of communicating information and innovation on managing the influences becomes crucial. This view is shared by experts in Agricultural Extension (Leeuwis, 2004), Behavioural Scientists (Ikurelong, 2009), Educationists and Environmentalists (Okaba and Obong, 2006) and Ukpog, 2009).

Creating environmental awareness is a complex process that requires meticulous and continuous efforts. It involves people from all classes of life. It also involves government and non-governmental bodies, their behavior and cooperation is highly needed for success in all facets of life. Over time, the need for awareness and management of our environment seems insurmountable. Strides in environmental management has transformed immeasurably from various forms of awareness to mitigation as well orchestrated foray into combating critical environmental issues. Bereft of consummate effort to ensure effective awareness creation, is a life challenge of slow diffusion of information by the populace. This study, however, focuses on the contribution of Non-Government Organizations to Environmental Awareness in Nigeria using Uyo Metropolis as a case study.

Today, the entire world seems to be aware of the ailing environment. Rural environments are fast becoming urban and there are rising concerns over cases of air, land and water pollution. The challenge managing waste materials from anthropogenic activities leave palpable fear in environmentalists and environmental managers and planners of may become of our home shortly.

The concerns above, therefore inform this study which was designed to assess the level of environmental awareness by ENGOS in the study area, identify the pressing environmental issues in the study area, ascertain the impact of ENGOS in the study area and determine the effectiveness of the mechanism, tools and skills adopted by ENGOS on public communication and relation of environmental information. A null hypothesis which states that "Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations have not created significant environmental awareness in the study area" was also tested in the study.

Uyo the study area is the state capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It occupies a landmass of 8,421 square kilometers. The study area is stratified into regions. Four of the regions were randomly sampled for administration of structured questionnaire. 100 persons were selected from each region on the basis of one person in every five adults encountered in selected offices. Also, 20 offices were randomly selected in each region.

40 Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations were selected from among those that registered with the government (Ministry of Environment and Corporate Affairs Commission. A number of 10 in each of the four regions of the study area were also

The structured questionnaire and oral interviews was the major instrument for data collection. Data collected was on the location or contact region of respondents, level of environmental awareness by ENGOS in the study area, awareness and acquaintance with ENGOS activities, relationship with ENGOS in the study area, benefits derived from ENGOS and environmental awareness creation by ENGOS in the study area.

randomly selected which gave a total of four hundred (400) respondents and forty (40) Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations in all.

Collected data was sorted, presented and analyzed using tables and graphs; while the stated hypothesis was statistically tested using the Contingency Chi-Square test statistic technique.

The data for the study was collected from residents in Abak Road 112 (31%), Ikot Ekpene Road 108 (27%), Aka Road 81 (20%) and Oron Road 89 (22%) of the study area (see Table 1). The study assessed the level of respondents' awareness of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) in the study area. Table 2 reveals that only 25 per cent (100 respondents) are aware of ENGOS in their area. On the other hand, as high as 300 respondents, representing 75 per cent are not aware of the group in their area. Source : Fiedwork , 2010 .

Consequently, Table 3 shows that respondents awareness and acquaintance with the activities of the ENGOS. Out of 400 respondents, 50 per cent (200 respondents') awareness was self -created , 100 (25%) per cent was created by by government programme and 100 (25%) per cent awareness was created by the ENGOS. Source : Fiedwork, 2010.

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## 4 Percentage (%)

Percentage (%)

From Table 3 and Figure 1, it implies that individuals in the study area have self awareness of environme ntal issues. Although ENGOS have created a level of awareness, it has a low percentage as well of the government.

The study also identified a number of environmental concerns in the study area. The issues are captured in Table 4 and include waste disposal, erosion, flooding, water pollution, air pollution, gas flaring, noise pollution, oil spillage, and drought.

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## 5 62

As depicted in Table 4 and Figure 2, a list of environmental concerns in the study area shows that waste disposal has the highest percentage of 30 representing 120 respondents, followed by flooding with a total of 100 (25%) respondents, erosion (20%) representing 80 respondents. Others are noise pollution 40 (10%), water pollution 20 (5%), air pollution 16 (4%), while gas flaring, oil spillage and drought has a total of 8 (2%) respectively as pressing environmental issues.

Table 5 shows that 100 (25%) respondents indicate that there exists a good and cordial relationship between NGOs and residents in the study area; while 400 (75%) of respondents maintained that there is a bad and aggressive relationship.

On benefit from NGOs by members of the study area, results show that 40 (10%) respondents have benefited in training, 40 (10%) benefited in financial compensation, 20 (5%) in seminars and a total of 300 (75%) have not had any benefit at all (Table 6).

## 6 62

Source : Fiedwork, 2010.

The creation of environmental awareness by NGOs is carried out through radio, television and other mass media outlets. Percentage distribution as pictured in Table 7. It could be seen that only 100 (25%) of the total respondents have seen, read and heard of the awareness programme embarked upon by the NGOs on environmental issues, while the remaining 300 (75%) of the population have not seen, heard or read anything from the NGOs on environmental issues in the study area.

On occurrence of programme, Table 8 shows that the Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) carry out awareness only once a week representing 100 (25%) of the total percentage and 300 (75%) have not been opportune to know about the programme in the study area.

## 7 Test of Hypothesis

Tables 2-8 were used in testing the stated hypothesis which states that "Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOS) have not created significant environmental awareness in the study area". Cells were represented by different regions using Yes and No of the responses. The computations of Contingency Chi-Square was drawn for the test (Table 10):

## 8 64

Stated hypothesis was tested and results show that Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) have not created significant environmental awareness in the study area. The finding is in agreement with Akpabio (2009) who stated that though there are a number of NGOs, only few have really made any significant impact on the promotion of environmental awareness, scientific research and protection of endangered species and critical habitats.

Organizations (ENGOS) carry out awareness only once a week with a total of 25 per cent in the study area.

To ensure a more effective environmental awareness in the study area, NGOs should improve on environmental awareness in the study area. Measures such as educative programmes, orientation programmes in order to create awareness among the people on environmental problems, encourage youth participation in environmental management, and use media houses to increase awareness of environmental concerns should be employed. Funding agencies should also monitor the planning and implementation of environmental awareness programmes. It is believed that when the measures above are enforced, the desired awareness and proper management of the environment would be achieved. Findings also show a number of environmental concerns in the study area. The concerns include waste disposal, erosion, flooding, water pollution, air pollution, gas flaring, noise pollution, oil spillage, and drought. The list of environmental issues in the study area shows that waste disposal has the highest percentage of 30, followed by flooding with a total of 25 per cent and erosion 20 per cent. Others are noise pollution 10 percent, water pollution 5 percent, air pollution 4 per cent, while gas flaring, oil spillage and drought has a total of 2 per cent respectively as pressing environmental issues.

Other findings of the study indicate that there exists a good and cordial relationship between NGOs and residents in the study area; while 75 per cent of Creation of environmental awareness by NGOs is carried out through radio, television and other mass media outlets. Notwithstanding the efforts in awareness creation, findings reveal that only 25 percent of the population have seen, read and heard of the awareness programme embarked upon by the NGOs on environmental issues, while the remaining 75 per cent of the population have not seen, heard or read anything from the NGOs on environmental issues in the study area.

On occurrence of programme, it was discovered that the Environmental Non-Governmental

The Chi-Square formula is given as:  $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

The calculated  $\chi^2 = 5.5568$  Degree of freedom = 3 Critical value = 7.815 From the calculations above, the Chi-Square value of 5.557 is less than the critical value of 7.815, therefore, the null hypothesis which states that "Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) have not created significant environmental awareness in the study area" is accepted.

Findings of this study show that respondents on awareness of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) as an environmental group in the study area is low with a total of 25 per cent; as high as 75 per cent of respondents are not aware of the group in their area. It is however, observed that respondents' awareness and acquaintance with the activities of the ENGOS is up to 50 per cent awareness self-created, 25 per cent by government programme and 25 per cent awareness of environmental issues.

Although ENGOS have created a level of awareness, it has a low percentage as well of the <sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: Figure 1 :

S/N	NAME OF NGO	ABBREVIATION	FOUNDED
01	FORESTRY Association of Nigeria	FAN	1970
02	Ecological Society of Nigeria	ESN	1973
03	Nature Club of Nigeria	NCN	1980
04	Nigerian Conservation Foundation	NCF	1982
05	Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team	NEST	1987
06	NIGERIAN Society for Environmental Management and Plannin	NSEMP	1987
07	Green Crocodile Foundation	GCF	
08	Environmental Watch Association International	EWAN	
09	Food Basket Foundation International	FBFI	
10	Population Environment and Development Agency	PEDA	
11	Friends of the Environment	FOTE	
12	Foundation of Environmental Development and Education in Nigeria	FEDEN	
13	Green Environment Movement	GEM	
14	Living Earth Nigeria Foundation	LENF	

[Note: Source:Akpabio (2009) andOkaba and Obong (2006).]

Figure 2: Table 1 :

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Contact regio	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abak Road	112	31
Ikot Ekpene Road	108	27
Aka Road	81	20
Oron Road	89	22
Total	400	100

[Note: Source : Fieldwork, 2010.]

Figure 3: Table 1 :

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Figure 4: Table 2 :

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Figure 5: Table 3 :

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Source: Fieldwork, 2010.		
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Figure 6: Table 4 :

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Source : Fiedwork , 2010.		

Figure 7: Table 5 :

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Figure 8: Table 6 :

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[Note: Source : Fiedwork, 2010.]

Figure 9: Table 7 :

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Source : Fiedwork, 2010.

Figure 10: Table 8 :

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Figure 11: Table 9 :

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Figure 12: Table 10 :

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