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Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of Development Projects on Peace Dynamics in Gbaramatu Kingdom of Delta State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Development projects in conflict areas are carried out with the expectation that they will help reduce or mitigate conflict. However, studies have shown that development projects may exacerbate existing conflict or trigger new ones. Most studies on development interventions in the Niger Delta region have extensively focused on underperformance due to top-bottom approach, underfunding, corruption and environmental issues but have scanty data on peacebuilding outcomes using peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) framework. This paper, therefore, applied PCIA lens in examining the positive impact of development projects executed in Gbaramatu Kingdom by Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC). Utilizing the theory of change and positive threshold determinant in peace and conflict impact assessment, the paper distinguishes between conventional development activity and development as peacebuilding initiative through the identification of appropriate indicators on the peace dynamics in Gbaramatu Kingdom. The paper concludes that there is significant correlation between the waning infrastructural deficit in Gbaramatu Kingdom and the positive peace dynamics due to DESOPADEC's development intervention deployed to address the root causes of violent confrontation with the state and multinational oil corporation. Therefore, what is required is more of development projects.

Introduction

Awareness has increased on the linkages between conflict, peace and development since the end of the Cold War. This is after an era of aid conditionalities in the realm of economic reform (Ferks and Klem, 2006). The linkage evidence is also pervasive when development appears to contradict matters of conflict and security (Uvin, 2002). The dramatic shift, according to Uvin (2002) and Duffield (2001), is traceable to several reasons which include increased inter-state wars in Third World countries, political hegemony, new research in development field (OECD-DAC guidelines in 1997), and most critically, the Rwanda Genocide in 1994 (Uvin, 2002). Development agencies became conscious that development and humanitarian assistance in conflict zones is not enough to generate peace. This consciousness necessitated strategies which were not only sensitive to the conflict environment but also reckoned with the underlying causes of conflict and how they could best be addressed (World Bank, 2005). Consequently, peace and conflict concerns were integrated into development thinking and activities (Bush, 1998), as well as explore how development activities alongside aid can contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Gaigals and Leonhardt, 2000).

The question of how to evaluate activities aimed at peacebuilding has gained

prominence not only among practitioners, but also researchers and scholars (Fischer and Wils, 2003:3). This is because well-intended activities could have unintended outcomes, considering that development agencies are never neutral (Hoffman, 2003) and unfavourable conditions may further entrench unjust power structures and sustain violent conflict (Fischer and Wils, 2003:3). As a result of the desire to contribute actively to the peace process and overcome structures of violence, many development agencies intensify their efforts to avoid unintended negative impacts by reflecting on the impact of initiatives. One such effort is the interest in improving practices and evaluation methods for assessment of programmes and projects. To this end, a plethora of peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) and conflict sensitive tools and processes have been developed to enhance the interaction between conflict, peace and development, and plan intervention so that the potential for violent conflict and abuses is reduced while the prospect for positive outcome is increased (Gunduz and Klein, 2008:1). PCIA is used to predict and assess the potential or actual impacts of development assistance on the dynamics of peace and conflict (World Bank, 2005). This presupposes that integrating PCIA into development and peacebuilding initiatives will offer all, especially interveners, the opportunity to alter, refine and redesign

programmes from lesson learned to subsequently achieve their goal effectively (Ross, 2003:77). This would be used to assess, monitor and evaluate projects with an explicit and dedicated focus on peacebuilding (Hoffman, 2003:26).

Given the number of conflict zones where development projects are carried out in the Niger Delta, it is vital to take the impact of development projects in such situation into account. Therefore, it is increasingly becoming necessary to imbibe appropriate PCIA culture through practice and as policy option, to mainstream peacebuilding (IPCR, 2002) as well as stimulate the quality and impact of the development projects executed while improving the institutional capacity of development agencies for conflict sensitive approach to do no harm. However, a look at the body of literature on the interaction between development-driven conflict and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region indicates the absence of sufficient data using peacebuilding lens for engagement with peace and conflict impact assessment (Jarikre, 2016). In fact, as it has been observed elsewhere, “there is insufficient academic engagement with PCIA of development initiatives in the various intervention programmes, ... even more lacking is the overarching strategy to evolve a culture of evaluation and assessment criteria

development initiative designed to address root causes of conflicts in the region” (Jarikre, 2016:104)

The objective of this paper is to explore the relationship between development and peacebuilding using the lens of peace and conflict impact assessment to tease out the peace inducing component of DESOPADEC development intervention in Gbaramatu. To achieve the objectives of the study, this paper used positive threshold determinant in peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) to examine DESOPADEC’s development projects in Gbaramatu Kingdom as a peacebuilding initiative. The positive discrimination of development project in areas prone to violent conflict through PCIA process has gained attention not because it is a new concept but because it has been part of peacebuilding. Accordingly, *positive threshold determinant* is a term coined in this research to describe a particular form of positive discrimination that provides a method to distinguish between conventional development activity and development as peacebuilding initiative through appropriate peace indicators. This paper emerges out of several years of interviews and research not only on militancy but on local people who are also victims (of armed violent struggle between militant youths and military) but engaged in analysing and responding to the threats within their

own context. The paper draws upon several focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and participant observations with critical stakeholders (women, youths and community leaders DESOPADEC staff (field and headquarter), project partners/contactors and project staff) with on-the ground experience.

Baseline Conditions and Conflict Profile of Gbaramatu

Gbaramatu Kingdom in Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State is located on the fringes of Western Niger Delta. The population of Gbaramatu, estimated at over 65,000 people (Courson, 2007:3), is unevenly spread across the various settlements. The Kingdom is populated by Ijaw speaking people and is made up of nine major communities which include Oporoza, Kunukunuma, Okerenkoko Kokodiagbene, Benikurukuru, Azama, Inkorogha, Igoba, and Kurutie. Their predominant occupation is fish farming with several fishing ports and hamlets. The field observation provided insights into the development needs of Gbaramatu which is also typical of oil-rich creek communities of the Niger Delta, and revealed huge deficit of infrastructure and basic utilities. For instance, there is no electricity from the national grid, no road network linking communities and, as such, transportation fare is high. There is lack of potable water, which makes inhabitants travel

through the creeks in a journey of 20 kilometres by canoe or boat to get fresh water from fresh water stream. There is also no health centre; the only functional health centre is located in Okerenkoko and operates through a self-help project funded by Tompolo Foundation People. The situation is compounded by open defecation and bathing in polluted rivers and streams. The thatch stilt houses prevalent in creek communities of the Niger Delta are common in Gbaramatu Kingdom. However, some rich household and families who can afford it live in homes made wholly of corrugated iron sheets which are extremely cold in the wet season and extremely hot in the dry season; while other houses are made of plywood. This housing situation is not unconnected with a high cost of construction of brick houses in a naturally-difficult terrain of marshy soil below sea level typical of creek communities of the Niger Delta.

Though these issues are general to the entire creek communities of Delta State, however, they confront Gbaramatu communities much more harshly than others with the intensity of violent conflicts witnessed so far. It was twelve long years of inter-ethnic armed struggle between the Ijaw and Itsekiri especially, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, from 1997 to 2009. There was cessation of hostility in 2009 when

the Federal Government of Nigeria proclaimed amnesty for Niger Delta militants. However, the most dreaded militant group known as Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) emerged in 2016 heralding re-insurgence of militant activities in the Gbaramatu axis (Jarikre, 2017). It echoed the agenda of MEND, as a geopolitical organisation struggling for a greater part of oil revenue for the impoverished region (Holodny, 2016). Suffice it to say that the issues of underdevelopment, youth unemployment, poverty, social deprivation and political marginalisation which have engendered frustration and instability have also served as impediments to development. Evidently, communities in the Niger Delta region have used violent behaviour to draw the attention of government, oil companies, and the international community, to the contentious issues of development. Government response to these violent incidents is almost always reprehensible, and often resulted in displacement of persons and destruction of their sources of livelihood.

Developments Project in the two Study Communities.

One of the limitations of this study is the absence of data or information on the official decision on project appropriation and implementation of DESOPADEC projects, however, the study depended on participant's

observation of projects during fieldwork in the study area. Therefore, this analysis is based only on data gathered during the fieldwork and the number of the commission's projects observed in the study communities, Okerenkoko and Oporoza. DESOPADEC projects observed in Okerenkoko include; air-to-water plant, 6 classroom block, 23 unit of 3 bedroom bungalow, church building, football pitch/ spectators stand, concrete landing jetty, renovation of free health care centre/ doctors' quarters and open Market Stall. Oporoza community has the following projects built by DESOPADEC, they are 6 classroom blocks, public toilets, cold room, 1000 KVA generating plants, teachers quarters, hostel accommodation, 3 km storm wall drainage, Kings palace, mini stadium or sports complex, 2- kilometre internal road, 6 units of 3 Bedroom Bungalow, 5 unit twin bedroom bungalow, skill acquisition centre, solar power street light, civic centre, (Fieldwork 2014).

Positive Impact of DESOPADEC Development Projects on Peace Dynamics in Gbaramatu

Using PCIA lens, the peace inducing component of development initiatives is designed to determine the positive outcomes that support peacebuilding and decrease the likelihood of renewed hostility or continuation of violent conflict. The

underlying assumption is that development projects strengthened the prospects for peace by reducing the individual and community capacity to act in a violent manner. A critical step that usually follows the assumption about change in impact assessment is the choice of indicators. Roche (1999) suggests three broad categories of indicators that reflect the dimension of change: (1) Material wealth (income, occupational status, food security and quality diet); (2) social well-being (health status, education – school attendance rate), and (3) empowerment (ownership and control of assets, quality of life, access to public resources). Therefore, in order to assess how the development projects of DESOPADEC had impacted positively on peacebuilding processes in Gbaramatu, context-specific indicators derived from a broad-based spectrum indicators of material wealth, social well-being and empowerment, that are presumed to characterise impact assessment analysis, were carried out. Among these indicators are: income and occupational status, education – school attendance rate and quality of life and access to public resources.

Economic Space and Opportunities for Peace

The baseline conditions and conflict profile of Gbaramatu largely depicts a state of war

economy. Thus, if development projects must bring about peacebuilding outcomes, it should, apart from the changing landscape of a conflict zone, bring about a substantial change in the material status and social well-being as indicated by the increased economic activities, school attendance and standard of living. The data presented, however, did not only portray window of opportunities for increased legitimate economic activities, social well-being and increased population but ultimately supports the views of Collier et al (2003) that economic growth fosters income that have a direct positive effect on reduction of violence. The correlation between development projects and increased economic activities that suggest peacebuilding outcomes was determined by responses to the questions in Table 1. The responses to the three survey construct attest to the positive impact of DESOPADEC's projects that promote peace and peacebuilding outcomes

Responding to the first question on the table, 61.6% of the respondents claimed that DESOPADEC projects had increased business opportunities in their community, but for 37.4%, no such increase of business activities could be ascribed to the commission's projects. Only 0.8% of respondents did not answer the question. For the second question on the table, 42.5% agreed that the skill acquisition project built by the commission in Oporoza community would had provided opportunities

for employment and economic empowerment for community members, 56% responded negatively to the question while 1.3% abstained. It was observed that the negative response on the issue skill acquisition centre was based on the fact that the centre was not operational because there were no skill instructors. The third question, “DESOPADEC’s project provides opportunities for community members to increase their income”, was not only derived from questions 1 and 2 but also summed up the outcome of the responses to the two questions. The understanding of respondents to question of projects engendering increased income of community members is relative to the two study communities. For instance, the 170 respondents from Okerenkoko community agreed that the market built by the Commission provided space for increased economic activities. While, most of the 196 respondents from Oporoza community believed that the skill acquisition centre (commissioned but not operational due to sundry reasons) did not provide community members opportunity to acquire a skill that could enhance their source of income. This is reflected in their response to the question, as 41.4% of respondents believed that the projects had contributed to the increase in their income while 57% indicated disapproval of the statement and 1.3% gave no answer.

The aggregate responses in the cluster shows that 49% agreed, 50% disagreed while 1% was silent on the questions in relation to increased economic activities. The data presented above indicated a significant negative response that appears to be at variance with the assumption that increased economic activities promote peacebuilding. In all the three survey questions, responses that indicated negative orientation towards DESOPADEC projects and economic activities/income are in the range of 56% – 57%. Interestingly, a comparative look at the spatial differential of community response revealed that majority of negative responses were attributed to Oporoza community respondents as follows: The negative response to Question 1 above is 37% and 98% of the negative responses were from Oporoza while 2% were from Okerenkoko. In question 2, 71% of 56% negative responses were from Oporoza and 29% from Okerenkoko. In question 3, 67% of 57% negative responses were from Oporoza while 33% of 57% were from Okerenkoko. Likewise, the majority of the positive responses to the three survey questions in this cluster were derived from Okerenkoko community (the positive response to questions Q1, Q2 and Q3 indicated as follows: Okereenkoko = Q1 – 75%, Q2 – 70%, Q3 - 66% and Oporoza Q1 - 27%, Q2 - 30% and Q3 – 34%, respectively).

Table 1: Orientation toward Increased Economic/Business Activities

Question/Response Categories	Fq	%
1 DESOPADEC projects have increased business opportunities in my community		
Agree	246	61.6
Disagree	137	37.4
No response	3	0.8
2 DESOPADEC's skill acquisition projects have provided opportunities for employment and economic empowerment for my community members		
Agree	156	42.4
Disagree	205	55.8
No response	5	1.3
3 DESOPADEC's project provides opportunities for community members to increase their income		
Agree	152	41.4
Disagree	209	57
No Response	5	1.3

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

The reflection of the current state of positive trend of market economy which could be attributed to increased business activities in Okerenkoko community was a direct positive consequence of the market built by DESOPADEC. The visible increase of trading activities at the Okerenkoko market was vividly captured by the chairman of Okerenkoko community, Mr Perede Don Preya when he asserted that "since they built the market house, traders from the neighbouring community are coming around

Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict

to sell food items like cassava flour (*garri*), starch, fish and other things, in fact the market space is not enough" (Oral interview, 2014). Bush (1999) contends that peacebuilding means nothing if it is not reflected in positive changes in the lived experiences of those in, or returning to, post-conflict zones. The attestation by the Preya, therefore, illustrates how the DESOPADEC initiative has boosted economic activities for the improvement of lives in the community

The mandate to address the root of structural causes of conflict with the state of

development projects carried out by DESOPADEC in Gbaramatu was determined by responses to questions in Table 2. Given the internal environment of the study location based on the absence of basic amenities, the conflict profile and available projects executed to the people by DESOPADEC, the relevance of the questions to determine the appropriateness of the development projects is quite obvious. According to Hoffman (2003), the relevance and appropriateness of a

project are necessary criteria in assessing whether the project activities are properly tailored to local needs. He concludes that this distinction allows for the identification of windows of opportunities that could or should be pursued as better alternatives. Responses to the three questions attested to the relevance, appropriateness and sustainability of DESOPADEC projects in Gbaramatu.

Table 2: Understanding Development Needs of their Communities by DESOPADEC

	Question/Response Categories	Fq	%
1	DESOPADEC understand the development needs of my community		
	Agree	328	98
	Disagree	5	1.2
	No response	3	0.8
2	DESOPADEC project(s) is/are selected through NEEDS assessments		
	Agree	235	65
	Disagree	123	33
	No response	8	2
3	DESOPADEC project(s) in my community will continue to function after many years of completion.		
	Agree	349	95.3
	Disagree	14	3.9
	No Response	3	0.8

Source: Fieldwork 2014.

Responding to the first question on Table 2, 358 respondents (98%) agreed that the commission understood the development needs of the communities at disaggregated ratio of 266 respondents (73% agreed) and 92 respondents

(25% strongly agreed). However, an insignificant 1.2% (5 respondents) did not agree while only 3 respondents (0.8%) did not respond to the question. In response to the second question, 49% and 16% agreed and

strongly agreed respectively, representing a total of 65% of respondents affirmed that the projects in their communities were selected through needs assessment; whereas 24% and 9% disagreed and strongly disagreed, hence 34% of respondents did not believe that the commission or any of its project partners conducted community needs assessment while 2% declined response respectively. However, in response to the third question in this cluster, an overwhelming 95.3% agreed that the project(s) carried out by DESOPADEC in their community were sustainable and would continue to function properly many years after completion, but 3.9% and 0.8% disagreed and abstained respectively. Though the response to question three affirmed the sustainability of the commission's projects in Gbaramatu, respondents appear to base their judgement on sustainable projects such as the provision of housing units, concrete landing jetties, and storm-wall drainage, but choose to ignore the fact that the air-to-water project in Okerenkoko did not work beyond three months after completion.

The aggregate responses in the cluster show that 86% agreed, 13% disagreed with 1% of silent on the questions. This confirms the appropriateness and relevance of the projects carried out by DESOPADEC in Gbaramatu communities. In all the three survey questions,

responses that portray positive and negative attitudes towards the sustainability, appropriateness and relevance of DESOPADEC's project are on the average of 86% and 14% respectively. Above 11% of 14% negative response claimed that the commission did not select project in their community using NEEDS assessments. From the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), it was glaring that the commission understood the development needs of the communities through town hall meetings or had embarked on projects based on the request by community. For example, the commission held a town hall meeting with the entire Gbaramatu Kingdom and, at that meeting, with the outlook of needs assessment process, community leaders and members articulated the needs of their community. Second, an alternative window of project selection is provided when a community requests for a particular project through written application for a new project or change of ongoing project. According to a former chairman of Oporoza community, Mr Macaulay Elekute "apart from the toilet, all other projects including the palace project were requested by the community (Oral interview, 2014).

Settlement of Internally Displaced

Population

The challenges of returning internally-displaced persons especially to their original

homestead are enormous. The challenges range from reclaiming homestead and property to reconstruction of entire communities destroyed during the conflict, to reactivation of public service, to rebuilding their economic lives and to sustainable livelihood. However, certain environmental conditions usually encourage the return of internally-displaced persons to their homestead. Besides the abatement of violence and reuniting with families and kinsmen, the availability of basic social needs of man and potentials for rebuilding sustainable livelihood will contribute to effective peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. These challenges are protracted in nature because they do not often disappear with the end of violent conflict. Thus, to reduce the specific needs of displacement, there is the profound need for some form of intervention/ assistance from the government, international organisations and civil societies. The state of intervention by government through its interventionist agencies such as DESOPADEC is determined with the questions in Table 3.

Responding to the first question on this table, just a few (24.6%) of the respondents agreed that the commission rebuilt schools that were destroyed during ethnic conflict and the invasion by JTF. A large number (74.2%) disagreed while 1.09% did not know or could not say anything about rebuilding schools in

Gbaramatu Kingdom. Furthermore, the higher percentage (61%) of 74.2% of negative responses was from Okerenkoko. From field observation, there was no doubt that the responses tallied with the reality. The negative responses from Okerenkoko community in respect of the question can be attributed to the understanding that the commission did not build any school project in Okerenkoko after the military invasion in 2009. The minority negative response from Oporoza can be attributed to implicit acknowledgement of the hostel facilities and staff quarters built in Gbaran Grammar School, Oporoza by DESOPADEC. From field observation, there was apparently no need for new school facilities when the commission had completed school project in 2008 just before the invasion and it was also evident that the military did not destroy any facility or building belonging to any school in the study area.

The second question was related to the first as it was aimed at defining the outcome of completing school building by the commission in terms of school enrolment. Responses to “people have moved to my community since the completion of school project by DESOPADEC” show that a significant increase in population was experienced when the displaced members of the community returned. Data revealed also

that 41.7% of the respondents affirmed that there was an increase in school attendance, while 54.4% of the respondents disagreed and 2.7% of the respondents were quiescent. The responses can be attributed to the resettlement of displaced persons during the 2009 military offensive. The resettlement through provision of shelter (housing units), in several ways, explains the responses in relation to increase in school enrolment and attendance.

More importantly, other survey construct such as KIIs and IDIs affirmed that there was significant increase in school population. However, it was evident that much more enrolment would have been recorded if there had been some form of incentives and empowerment for community members especially guardians and parents of indigent students and pupils. The visible increase in school attendance was attributed to school project, which was clearly represented in the assertion of the chairman of Oporoza community, Mr Amami Ebimene and corroborated by Mr. Macaulay Elekute, former chairman of Oporoza community and administrator at Gbaran Grammar School, when she averred that “A lot of people are bringing back their children, as of today, the population of the school has increased. We are now in first term, but before now, in first term to second term, the number of placement

is about 20 to 26 in JSS 1; but now we are having up to 40 or more than in the first term” (Oral interview, 2014).

On the third question in Table 3, 75.4% of the respondents were convinced that the population increase in their respective communities was due to the completion of housing and other important projects in the community by the commission. However, 23.1% were not persuaded, while 2.1% did not attend to the question. The aggregate responses shows that 47% agreed, 51% disagreed while 2% were silent. Majority of the positive orientation towards increased population can be attributed to the housing units for the resettlement of displaced families. According to the Chairman of Okerenkoko community, Mr Perede Don Preya, “DESOPADEC project has increased the number of people living in the community, the reason is because of the housing projects which DESOPADEC has completed” (oral interview, 2014). Most families and persons who flee from the community especially those whose homestead were destroyed during the crisis period returned with the completion and allocation of over 23 housing units to about 100 families and households. Field observation confirmed that housing is one of the most contentious issues in the creek communities of the Niger Delta in general, and Gbaramatu in particular. The data support

this, as response of Okerenkoko community (95.2%) indicates a higher percentage (60%) of positive outcome which can be attributed

to the fact that Okerenkoko had benefitted more than any other community from DESOPADEC's housing projects.

Table 3: Orientation toward increased population

Question/Response Categories	Fq	%
1 DESOPADEC has rebuilt the schools destroyed during ethnic conflict and JTF invasion of my community		
Agree	90	24.5
Disagree	272	74.2
No Response	4	1.09
2 People have moved to my community since the completion of school project by DESOPADEC		
Agree	153	41.7
Disagree	203	55.4
No response	10	2.7
3 The population of my community has increased since the construction of DESOPADEC's project		
Agree	274	75
Disagree	84	23
No Response	8	2

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

The three survey questions (Table 3) were based on effective peacebuilding concerns in terms of providing resettlement assistance to rebuild social public amenities in post-conflict zones in order to resettle internally-displaced persons. Within the Gbaramatu communities, there is an incredible disparity in terms of project locations, which often leads to different assessments and, at times, conflicting attitude towards projects delivered. From the field observation, some

communities were not satisfied with the number or inappropriateness of projects sited in them. For instance, apart from few houses built through individual efforts, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of the Niger Delta were responsible for the transformation of Kurutie, the home community of former MEND leader, Government Ekpemupolo, popularly known as Tompolo. Also, the number of housing units built by DESOPADEC in Okerenkoko

community is higher than any other Gbaramatu community. Perhaps, one reason that explains the huge number of DESOPADEC's projects in Okerenkoko (despite being a victim of ethnic violence and the military invasion), was that Barrister Kingsley Otuaro who hails from Okerenkoko served as Commissioner representing Ijaw ethnic nation on the Board of DESOPADEC from 2011 to 2015.

Social Well-being and Opportunities for Peacebuilding

The post-conflict reconstruction and response to basic infrastructure and human needs increase the capacity of displaced population to overcome the economic and psychological challenges. The study identified several findings on how improved standard of living reduced violence. Singh and Singh (2008:162) reckon that the prevalence of domestic violence decreases substantially as the standard of living increases. The assumption here is that increased standard of living reduces proclivity to react violently to contentious issues of underdevelopment and deprivation as shown in the table below.

Table 4: Orientation towards Standard of living and Violence Reduction

Question/Response Categories	Fq	%
1 DESOPADEC projects have improved the standard of living in my community		
Agree		
Disagree	273	74.5
No Respons	89	24.2
	4	1.09
2 DESOPADEC's projects have reduced the level of people and communities to violence		
Agree	227	61.9
Disagree	129	35.2
No Response	10	2.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Two survey questions were used to elicit respondents' assessment of the relationship between improved standard of living and reduced proclivity in Table 5.11. Responding to the first question, 74.5% of the respondents believed that their standard of living had improved as a result of DESOPADEC's projects located in their community; 24.4%

did not agree while 1.09% did not respond to the question. Concerning the second question, 62% were of the opinion that the proclivity of community members to act violently reduced because of DESOPADEC's projects; 35.2% thought otherwise while 2.7% abstained from answering the question. Reactions to the item (1 and 2) show a positive correlation and

consistency. The preponderance of the “agree” options would equally have shown the

Conclusion

The patterns and potentials of development interventions in the Niger Delta have almost always manifested some inherent challenges and problems. Most DESOPADEC projects, like many other projects in the Niger Delta area, are not preceded by peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA), unlike the environmental impact assessment (EIA), social impact assessment (SIA), cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and social cost-benefit analysis (SCBA). The impact assessments identified above are known to have been used by organisations to “predict the likely environment, social and economic consequences” (Roche, 1998:18). Nevertheless, DESOPADEC interventions have generated enormous peacebuilding outcomes and social stability as Gbaramatu communities have witnessed increase in government development intervention. Thus, DESOPADEC projects have created a new experience and attitude in their assessment of government presence. The commission’s intervention had, in several ways, attempted to address the infrastructural deficit and also created a new sense of inclusion and participation of Gbaramatu people and communities. Therefore, there is increase in community confidence in government with

positive impact of the project at least from the lived experience of the people.

improved Government-community relations. The peace indicators and outcomes of DESOPADEC’s development projects in Gbaramatu are so varied that heteronymous sources of conflict and tension have increasingly reduced. This is crucial to accounting for the current relative peace associated with political inclusion and participation. Applying a peacebuilding lens to DESOPADEC’s development projects in the study location provided the study with insight into the relationship between development and peace. The underlying assumption of using development initiatives is that increased infrastructure development is critical to peacebuilding activities. The findings therefore support some assumptions about this study.

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