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# A REPORT ON SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTED BY ROTARY PEACE FELLOW –OLANIYAN OLANIYI (COHORT)

**Registration Number: 2022/HD03/028X Student No: 2200700028**

# SECTIONS

**Title:**

**Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State Nigeria.**

**Location:** Afam Ukwu and Komkom of Rivers State, Nigeria

**Start and Completion Date:** January 2023 to September 2023(10 words)

**Abstract:** (250 words)

This social change initiative focused on strengthening inclusive and participatory communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in two oil-producing communities of Afam-Ukwu and Komkom in Rivers State, Nigeria. This study examined the limitations to communication and how this has impacted negatively on sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in the target communities. The specific objective is to understand causal factors of communication deficit in the target communities while also identifying threats associated with the situation. The study used attribution theory of communication and the stakeholder’s theory of public relations to examine underlying issues and provided better explanation of the context of the intervention. Data was collected using focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The study revealed that poor communication with oil-producing communities and deficient communication framework within communities have resulted in distrust, mistrust and conflicts in the study area, with indications of potential recurrence of violent conflicts. This study recommended that collective action by relevant stakeholders including: CSOs/CBOs, community stakeholders, media, oil and gas companies working in the communities targeted, as well as oil and gas policy institutions among others to address issues of communication deficit.

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# CHAPTER ONE

**Introduction and Background:** (800words)

At the root of the major conflicts in oil-producing communities of Rivers State is the communication deficit (Hamilton, 2011). Hamilton, 2011 (Oil Companies, Community Crises in the Niger Delta Many communities) observe that many oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have been thrown into chaos as a result of a breach in the flow of communication/information dissemination to community stakeholders, particularly in the area of opportunities and compensation available for host communities which are provided by oil and gas companies operating in such communities, government and other entities.

With communication deficit as a major driver of conflict and violence, it is important to understand the major challenges associated with external and internal communication mechanisms within oil-producing communities, such as: Afam Ukwu and Komkom Communities as well as the roles played by stakeholders in communication/information management.

Afam Ukwu and Komkom are oil-producing communities within Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) operates oil and gas wells within the local government with pipelines conveying oil and gas passing through different local communities within the LGA.

As observed by Okoko (1996), oil-bearing communities are exploited and neglected by oil prospecting companies as visibly shown in their attitude of unequal relations arising from productive system which made conflicts intense, incessant and violent. Afam Ukwu and Komkom communities present of with evidence of poor development within oil-producing communities of Rivers State.

Also noted were issues around inadequate compensation for environmental hazards and damages which often emanate from oil exploration activities in host communities, regular poor maintenance of oil and gas facilities, prompt action in cleaning up of oil spills which causes destruction of environment and livelihood of the people in oil-producing and oil-impacted communities.

In response to the reactions of host communities which often end up in violence agitations, International Oil Companies (IOC) and government have also used force to quell such reactions; these leading to continuous violent reactions. Anikpo (1998) lists a number of oil-producing communities’ violent responses to what is perceived as negligence. These include: road blockage/protest demonstrations in host communities, disruption/stoppage of operations of oil companies’ facilities, closure of flow station and rig/molestation of oil company staff, vandalism/destruction of facilities amongst others.

Host communities have complained that they were shut out of meaningful communication with duty bearers when they have pressing issues and concerns. This is why they consider violent reactions which they believe will forcefully draw the attention of Government and International Oil Companies to their plight.

Also noted was the exploitation accusation against IOCs and government. The general perception of host communities is that resources from their neglected communities are used to build cities elsewhere, while communities affected by oil exploration and its problems have continued to experience all forms of challenges including destruction of farmland and water bodies, air pollution, fire outbreak from failed oil and gas facilities and community crises which they have accused oil companies of fuelling.

Okoko (1996), maintains that oil-bearing communities are exploited and neglected by oil companies as visibly shown in their attitude of unequal relations arising from productive system which made conflicts intense, incessant and violent. Afam Ukwu and Komkom communities present us with evidence of poor development within oil-producing communities of Rivers State.

In his review of the fall and rise of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry Governance, Ene (2018) notes that since 2008, Nigeria has been working to improve transparency and accountability in the oil and gas sector. He further observes that insufficient governance, weak sector regulation, and inefficiencies in oil

operations among other challenges have resulted in declining investment and returns in the industry as a result of uncertainty in the investment climate, violent conflicts and insecurity.

Core to the problems is deficit in communication. Hence, the need for Policy Stakeholders to address communication gaps in their policy frameworks, particularly at the community level to achieve inclusion and participation in policy development, a better understanding of policies by critical stakeholders and the generality of the people in affected oil-producing and oil impacted communities.

This Social Change Initiative (SCI) uses the Petroleum Host Community (Commission) Regulations 2022 under Section 235 of the Petroleum Industry Act (2021) as a context of policy stakeholders’ engagement to address communication and information flow gaps both in policy formulation and policy implementation in oil-producing/oil-impacted communities will be addressed. This will further strengthen communities’ frameworks for both internal and external communication.

**Problem Statement:** (250 words)

Communication deficit has been identified as the root of the major conflicts in oil-producing communities of Rivers State (Hamilton, 2011). Over the years, the poor management of the relationship by the oil companies has escalated into community violence marked by destruction of property and shutdown of oil production activities often covered by local and international media as citizens demonstrate against their exploitation in places such Afam Ukwu and Komkom in Rivers State of Nigeria (Udoh, 2020; Boele, 2002, Ojakorotu, 2011; Okoko, 1996). However, most previous studies have not given adequate attention to poor communication as a major trigger of violent conflicts in oil-producing communities of Rivers State. This study identifies the limitations to inclusive and participatory communication, its negative impacts on two oil-producing communities and suggests ways of strengthening inclusive frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in the two oil-producing communities.

**Goals and Objectives:** (400 words)

**Goal**

To engage relevant stakeholders in jointly strengthening inclusive and participatory communication frameworks in the two oil-producing communities of Rivers State.

**Objectives**

1. To identify the internal and external stakeholders in the stated oil-producing areas of Rivers State
2. To identify the challenges to inclusive communication in the oil producing communities of Rivers State

3. To develop an inclusive, participatory and conflict sensitive communication guidelines for targeted oil-

producing communities as a pilot for communities in a similar situation.

**Research questions**

1. Who are the internal and external stakeholders associated with oil-production in Rivers State?
2. What are the challenges to inclusive communication in the oil-producing communities of Rivers State?
3. How can an inclusive, participatory and conflict sensitive framework be developed for the concerned communities?

**Challenges and Mitigation Strategies:** (400 words)

## Challenges:

Implementation of this social change initiative came with a number of challenges which were carefully managed to ensure success in implementation.

The Niger Delta area, particularly Rivers State oil-producing communities are very sensitive when it comes to any form of engagement. Every member of the community is conscious and careful of letting out information and relating with external parties. With this challenge, it becomes very hectic getting relevant information and access to targeted community stakeholders.

Another challenge is the wrong perception of community members that people come to their community to get information with the aim of using and dumping them, while they use the information received to make money for themselves. In view of this, instant financial reward or gain is often expected of requested before participating in any engagement.

Also identified as challenge is the issue of getting the right persons or stakeholders to participate in any engagement. Gatekeepers and contacts to communities are always look for ways of protecting certain information they consider classified about the community. They make them avoid bringing on board perceived critics of inequality in the community and aggrieved parties, even when such people are very important and crucial to the engagement.

Furthermore, it was also discovered that personal interests are often considered first above community interest, and as such information about engagements are restricted to a few people and particularly those who have no understanding of issues to be engaged.

It is also good to note the implementation of social change initiative requires many logistics which requires finances to accomplish. The current economic situation in Nigeria made the situation more challenging, particularly when the researcher rely on self-funding of initiative without any external support.

Getting attention of relevant stakeholders particularly policy stakeholders and government agencies was so challenging, and causing a slow-down of processes engaged in the SCI implementation.

## Mitigation Strategy:

One of the major steps taken is to understand community sensitivity. This determines the appropriate engagement strategy to adopt. This is done to ensure that while trying to address a challenge, another conflict or threat is not created in the target communities. Semi-formal engagement approach and information gathering were used in the two communities during a baseline study conducted. Questions were presented carefully to ensure that stakeholders feel safe in their responses, while also ensuring that focus of interaction was not lost.

To correct the impression that every engagement comes with financial benefits, a clear explanation was made at the opening of interaction to community stakeholders that the engagement was purely a scholarly process which will be used strictly for the purpose. This brought clarity that no financial gain should be expected within the exercise.

The baseline study process has no control over community stakeholders’ representation. Observations were made on issues of inclusive representation, while information was carefully extracted. For other activities, stakeholders were carefully selected to provide opportunity for a cross-sectional perspective to the thematic focus of discussion. It is important to also not that personal opinion of the researcher was removed from every process, as all facts and information presented were from verifiable sources and careful observations which were cross-examined.

To address challenges with funding of the initiative, methodology and approach of were reviewed and communicated to the Rotary Peace Centre and assigned mentor. The initiative adopted virtual engagements to replace physical engagements.

Where there is a challenge getting attention of relevant government agencies and policy stakeholders, the study identifies partners such as civil society organisations, influential stakeholders and Rotary affiliates who could provide connecting support. Again the practice of government agencies of avoiding public discussions should be addressed through collective effort of stakeholders

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# CHAPTER TWO

**Literature Review**: (1000 words)

For so many years, causes of conflicts and violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria have been attributed to environmental pollution, resource allocation, poor compensation to communities who have been affected in one way or the other by oil exploration activities, as well as poor development of the region amongst others (Oyefusi 2007). These issues have attracted many interventions by government and its agencies, international donor organisations through civil society organisation at different levels and other Stakeholders; with all these efforts producing very minimal results.

It is interesting to note that not so much attention has given to actions towards addressing challenges around community communication frameworks which seems so small, but in most cases underscores violent agitations within Oil-Producing and Oil-Impacted Communities, as well as responsible for crises with external stakeholders such as: International and national oil companies, government and its agencies. The resultant effects of communication deficit in Oil-Producing Communities of Rivers State is community distrust, particularly in leadership, and external stakeholders which in most cases end up in violence.

Kalio (2016) observes that lack of community trust is pervasive and must be well addressed. Rogers, 1995 describes communication as a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding. Also, Unoh (1987, pp.35-36) defines communication as “the process of mutual sharing of information, ideas thought and emotions between a source and a receiver for mutual understanding, the reduction of uncertainties or for appropriate action”.

According to Heider (1958) and Jones et al (1972), a person can make two attributions: 1) internal attribution, the inference that a person is behaving in a certain way because of something about the person, such as attitude, character or personality. 2) external attribution, the inference that a person is behaving a certain way because of something about the situation he or she is in. Drawing lessons from Attribution theory of communication which is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behaviour, one can relate this to why oil producing communities relate with their predicaments vis-a-vis their perception of attitude of government, agencies of government and oil companies working in their community.

Ikelegbe (2001), notes that attempts by the oil companies and Nigerian government to use force to resolve community violence had always ended fatality, as some soldiers, innocent citizens, and community members lost their lives to clashes between soldiers. Attribution theory assumes that people try to determine why people do what they do.

This situation refers to the reactive stand point of people in Oil-Producing communities, particularly in the two communities target by this intervention. Instead of using inclusive and participatory communication to resolve difference and encourage mutual understand, Obi, C. (2010) noted that the Nigerian government and international oil companies (IOCs) have used violence in their engagement of host communities’ agitations and continued with oil operations

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Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto (2010) suggest that communication helps in understanding the “needs and realities of the people and mobilize them towards development goals”. With this background information, one should understand why a good number of interventions have not produced expected result, as they lack the proper direction and checks required to understand issues around community communication frameworks, which provides information on the level of inclusion and participation in target communities communications and relations with external Stakeholders.

Insights from Search Common Ground's work on communication and peace building provides a tangible lead to how communications have historically played a critical role in shaping the views of policy-makers and influencing popular opinion on conflicts. The Petroleum Industry Act 2021 is an attempt made by government to address issues in oil and gas governance in Nigeria, which has within its mandate addressing conflict issues using best practices.

With this in view, it is essential to draw Stakeholders' attention to issues around community communication frameworks to provide for a collective action towards ensuring that Oil-Producing Communities such as Afam Ukwu and Komkom in Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State become more aware of the need to develop a well-structured Communication framework that will help improve inclusive and participatory communication within their community and with external stakeholders. This will provide them the required tool to engage issues and concerns of their community.

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## Theoretical Underpinnings for the Social Change Initiative: (1000words)

This social change initiative focused on strengthening inclusive and participatory communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in two oil- producing communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, Nigeria is inspired by two theories.

The first is the ***attribution theory of communication*** and the second is the ***stakeholder’s theory of public relations.*** These two theories are of relevance to the study and provide better explanation of the context of the intervention.

Fritz Heider, a Gestalt psychologist is often described as the early-20th-century “father of Attribution theory”. The attribution theory of communication underlines the fact that humans tend to look for cause-and- effect relationships as explanation for their actions. Using this theory within the framework of this study, the position maintained by Coombs (2012) practically explains the reactions of oil-producing communities to perceived negative actions; negligence of government and oil companies operating in host communities.

Also, the stakeholders' theory of public relations propounded by Edward Freeman in his Landmark book, “Strategic Management” in 1984 suggests that shareholders are merely one of many stakeholders in a company. Among other stakeholders are the communities where an organisation is located. Freeman further explained that an organisation’s effectiveness will be measured by its ability to satisfy not only the shareholders, but also others who have a stake in the organisation.

The theory sees all affected parties in the operation of an organisation as equals. Therefore, we can comfortably say that the communities where the oil companies are operating from are stakeholders in the organisation’s operation and essentially entitled to inclusive and participatory communication, which should be an integral part of corporate social responsibility of such an organisation.

## Conceptual Clarification:

There are clear indications that both the attribution theory and the concept of community relations are pointers to the need for deliberate action in managing relationships, particular through inclusive and participatory communication will host communities. This in practice will erode all forms of distrust and structural barriers to information flow among stakeholders.

Ezirim et. al. (2006) opine that community relations is the way organisations relate with its host communities since the business of a company depends upon the community and its residents. They further state that community relations do not end when the company succeeds fulfilling its obligation; it starts when the organisations become aware of their role in contributing to community welfare. It was further noted that objectives of community relations will include the following among others are:

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1. Assist and participate in the civic programmes of the community
2. Contribute to local institutions and civic organizations
3. Support local programmes/initiatives
4. Contribute to the upliftment of the community by helping to provide infrastructure development.

Alikor (2015) clarify that community relations is a deliberate action which sustains efforts of an organisation towards creating goodwill and mutual understanding between such an organisation and its host community in order to have a hostility free operation.

Center and Jackson (2007) argue that community relations is an institutions planned, active and continuing participation within a community to maintain and enhances its environment to the benefit of both the institution and the community. Community relations can be proactive, reactive, defensive, laissez-faire, gunboat-deploring, divide and rule and defensive in nature.

## How Communication Deficit Impacts Negatively on Two Oil-producing Communities Target:

Among other negative impacts of communication deficit in the two oil-producing targeted by this social change initiative include the following:

* + Inadequate inclusion and participation of key stakeholders in community decision making
  + Lack of transparency and accountability in community governance
  + Mistrust and suspicion of community leadership and processes
  + Perceived exclusion leading to division of the community and translating into violent conflicts
  + Breakdown of mechanisms for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation
  + Poor understanding of government policies and processes of engagement
  + Community developments is hindered
  + Avenue for imposters to hijack community opportunity is created

It is on the strength of these implications that the intervention derives its direction in engaging relevant stakeholders to address identified limitations to inclusive and participatory communication frameworks in the targeted oil-producing communities.

## Objective of Social Change Initiative:

As earlier stated, the intervention seeks to strengthen inclusive and participatory communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in two oil-producing communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, Nigeria.

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## Problem:

Many attempts have been made to address triggers of conflict in oil-producing communities of Rivers State, but it has been observed that adequate attention has not been given to issues around communication deficit which underscores a good number of violent conflicts.

## Research Questions:

1. What negative impact has absence of inclusive and participatory communication frameworks had on promoting sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in the two target communities used as pilot for this intervention?
2. Why were community communication frameworks not given much priority attention in earlier interventions?
3. What processes are required to strengthen inclusive and participatory communication frameworks in the identified oil-producing communities?
4. Who are the duty bearers essential to driving the change process to fruition?

**Change theory and how it was applied:** (700 words)

Oil-producing communities in Rivers State have been thrown into series of violent conflicts as a result of oil and gas exploration which came with a good number of environmental challenges. The communities have tried to express their dissatisfaction with the way their challenges and concerns were treated by the

government and its agencies, as well as oil companies’ attitude to their host community.

Many interventions have been carried out by government, international donors, oil companies, policy institutions and other relevant authorities to address concerns of host communities, but there seems to be very limited positive results from the actions.

Baseline study and interactions with critical stakeholders indicate a huge gap in the area of community communication frameworks, and as such there is need to address this salient gap through collective responsibility and action.

According to Alikor (2015), community relations will sustain efforts of organisations towards creating goodwill and mutual understanding between organisations and host communities in order to have a hostility free operation.

Ezirim et al (2006) reiterated that community relations do not end when the company succeeds fulfilling its obligation; it starts when the organisations become aware of their role in contributing to community welfare. In our context, these relations can be improved substantially through a viable communication framework.

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In a bid to achieve a result oriented action, it is important to ask salient questions which help us to address issues of communication deficit in oil-producing communities of Rivers State, particularly in the two target communities captured in this social change initiative.

The theory of change provided below will direct the path of this intervention to get the envisioned results which will address the problem identified.

## Simulations of Theory of Change:

* If all limitations to effective communication in the targeted oil-producing communities are removed, then communication frameworks will be strengthened.
* If communication frameworks are strengthened in the targeted oil producing communities, then mechanisms for sustainable peace, conflict prevention and conflict transformation will become more effective and efficient
* If communities have a well-defined inclusive and participatory communication guideline, then there will be improved governance, transparent and accountable leadership that respects the rights of community people. This will further enhance mutual relationships and trust within the community, thereby promoting peace and development.

## Figure 1:

**Theory of Change for Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Transformation in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, Nigeria.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main Goal/Specific Objective(s)** | **Inputs** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Impact** |
| **Main Goal**  Strengthened Oil- Producing Communities inclusive Participation in Oil and Gas Industry Governance for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention, Conflict | * Relevant steps are taken to understanding Issues and Limitations through   Stakeholders’ Engagements   * Actions are taken to gather information | * Research on the limitations to inclusive and participator y communicat ion in two oil- producing communitie s targeted   by the social | * Relevant information is available and documented inclusion * Relevant stakeholders to engage are identified * Engagement direction is properly defined * Stakeholders’ | * Target communities have better understanding of issues beyond their perspective * There is information in public domain to engage government and institutions of government and | * Target   Communities Equipped to engage their issues and concerns with relevant stakeholder   * Inclusive and Participatory Communication is strengthened in target communities * Duty bearers are |

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Transformation and Development  **Objective (s)** Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks Strengthened in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of River State Nigeria | for engagement of duty bearers identified in addressing issues and concerns   * Stakeholders participate in engagements towards address issues and concerns identified | change initiative   * Organsing Stakeholder s’ discussion to further identify underlying issues * Engagement of Oil and Gas Industry Policy Issues | provide tangible information on issues and concerns   * Stakeholders come up with recommendatio ns which are documented and used for further engagements * Direction is provided for next step of action | other relevant stakeholders   * Policy issues are jointly addressed through collective responsibility of committed stakeholders | committed to taking appropriate action   * Public knowledge on issues and concerns is widened and intervention is expanded * Public and community enlightenment is improved * Policy   Institutions in oil and gas governance improve frameworks to encourage inclusion and  participation |

**Methods and Design:** (800 words)

Observational and Descriptive design were used in this study, while qualitative approach was used for data gathering from both primary and secondary sources.

The baseline study carried out involved two F*ocus Group Discussions (FGDs)* and *key informant interviews (KII)* in the two pilot target communities - Afam Ukwu and Komkom in Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Given the high volatile nature of targeted oil-producing communities, method of information gathering gave considerations to sensitivity of community stakeholders and as such observations were carefully drawn during focus group discussions and key informant interview. Additional information required to cross- examine key observations and information were drawn from interviews with relevant external stakeholders, particularly civil society organisations. These information were carefully interpreted and documented for further engagements with other identified relevant Stakeholders.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) provides a study sample of opinions members of the Afam Ukwu and Komkom Communities leadership, Women and youth representatives using a semi-structured questionnaire as a research instrument in data gathering. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed and used during the

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in line with the phenomenon under investigation and the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was engaged to get respondents perspectives which were documented as qualitative information.

**Significance of the Study and Social Change:**

This research identifies issues and limitations to inclusive and participatory communication frameworks in two oil-producing communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) within Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. It also tries to analyse issues from different stakeholders’ perspectives to give in-depth understanding and provide the key elements that strengthen communication frameworks in the target communities for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation.

This social change initiative is expected to drive:

1. Better stakeholders’ engagement towards addressing identified issues and limitations to viable communication frameworks in oil-producing communities
2. Encourage active participation of relevant stakeholders in advancing inclusive and participatory communication frameworks for targeted communities
3. Provides avenue for stakeholders to engage on oil and gas governance policy issues from the perspective of actual community
4. Drive actions to improve enlightenment, public awareness on provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (2021), particularly on Host Community Trust Fund and better community relations.
5. Information documented from engagements will add to the body of academic knowledge

Frynas (2000) observes that host community conflicts with the IOCs are important outside academic interest it acknowledged that the Nigerian government is facing a major challenge of resolving community violence in Nigeria.

# CHAPTER THREE

**Interventions and Activities:** (1200 words)

Activities under this social change initiative with the theme: Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation include:

* Baseline Study (Done)
* Stakeholders Discussion (Done)
* Policy Issues Engagement (Done)
* Joint Action for Development of Inclusive and Participatory Communication Guidelines for targeted Oil-Producing Communities (This activity has not been done given its technical requirements, it will be done within the framework of the intervention’s sustainability plan)

* Production of Public Sensitisation and Enlightenment Podcast of Issues and Concerns of Targeted Oil- Producing Communities in Rivers state (Two podcasts have been produced and more will be produced within the framework of the intervention’s sustainability plan)

# SCI ACTIVITY 1:

**BASELINE STUDY REPORT**

**Date(s):** Monday, January 23, 2023

**Location(s):** Komkom and Afam Ukwu Communities of Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State

## Participants:

Participants of the Baseline Studies in Komkom and Afam Ukwu Communities of Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State.

1. CSO representative
2. Members of Community Traditional Leadership Council
3. Members of Community Development Committee
4. Community Youth Leaders
5. Rotary Peace Fellow - Olaniyi Olaniyan

## Objectives of the activity:

The baseline study sought to understand the current communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and transformation in two oil -producing communities (Komkom and Afam Ukwu) of Rivers State, assess the information management processes in the target communities and identify stakeholders to work with in developing a communication framework for inclusive participation.

## Methodology:

Focus Group Discussion (1) and Key Informant Interview (1) Summary of Content of the Engagement:

## Content of Interaction:

1. Introduction of the Researcher by the facilitating Organisation

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1. Insights into the objective of the academic research
2. Extracting information Gathering of relevant information from community stakeholders on communication dynamics and information management process
3. Joint identifying of community concerns in relation to free flow of information
4. Understanding the need to strengthen communication framework towards strengthening peace building and conflict transformation

## Introduction/Background:

As part of measures undertaken towards strengthening inclusive and participatory communication frameworks in two oil-producing communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, it was crucial engage community stakeholders to have a common understanding of issues/concerns and develop a more viable communication model which will enhance transparency, accountability and mutual trust within local communities targeted, thereby reducing to the minimum violent conflicts and improving mechanism for peace building and conflict transformation.

Community stakeholders engaged within the framework of this baseline study include - community leaders such as; traditional heads and council of chiefs, members of the community development committee (CDC), opinion leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, religious leaders, civil society organisations working within the target communities.

The initial plan was to also engage oil companies operating in communities, policy institutions and other relevant actors, but this was not achieved as a result of come unforeseen challenges.

## Baseline Study in Komkom and Afam Ukwu Communities of Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Oyigbo Local Government Area which has its headquarters in Afam. Created in 1991, the Local Government is 30 Kilometers from the state capital. It consists of several towns and villages among which are: Oyigbo central, Asa, Komkom, Afam-Ukwu, Umuagbai, and Obete among others.

The local government area has been selected as a case study for this research given its importance as one of the major oil-producing local government areas in Rivers State with a several oil-producing communities having prolonged conflict issues till date bordering of resource and opportunity share amongt community members. The selection was also informed by availability of viable contacts that could provide support for the research currently undertaken, easy accessibility, as well as relevance of the communities to the situation focused on by the study.

The baseline study in Komkom and Afam Ukwu communities located within Oyigbo Local Government Area is part of the activities listed under the social change initiative with the theme: Strengthening

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Communication Framework in Two Oil-Producing Communities within Rivers State towards sustainable conflict prevention, Peace Building and Conflict Transformation.

The two communities: Afam Ukwu and Komkom were considered appropriate for the academic research given their fit into the context of the Social Change Initiative being implemented. Initial findings showed that Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN), an international non-governmental organisation operating in the Niger Delta, has been involved in facilitating community development, particularly in oil-producing communities. This has been engaged from a rights-based perspective. To this end, it became necessary to use existing intervention which is related to the focused issues of the social change initiative.

Stakeholder Democracy Network currently has an intervention in the target communities which focuses on providing support and guide for oil-producing communities to have a better understanding of the Community Development Trust Fund, a new provision under the Petroleum Industry Act (2021), which replaces the existing General Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) model used by oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The idea is to help community understand the Petroleum Industry Act provisions and all its process targeted at promoting local economic development and other associated issues.

This engagement presented an opportunity for this social change initiative to leverage on to rely identify community communication dynamics in external engagements.

## Community Engagement and Lessons Learnt:

Experience from the preparatory process for the baseline research engagement clearly revealed that any external communication with the community has to be initiated through a contact person who understands community engagement dynamics and is able to identify the appropriate community stakeholder(s) who will help in facilitating entry into the community.

Initial interactions with contacts persons did not produce a tangible result, as there were signs of unwillingness by contacts to meet with an individual on the ground of academic research which does not have financial gratification. Hence, it became imperative to change the approach of community entry from an individual approach to an organisational collaborative approach, which provided a wider platform for community engagement.

## Findings from the Baseline Study:

* More insights were provided into community communication dynamics and provided direction for the study
* Women and youths stakeholders rarely participate in initial discussions about key issues in which community is being engaged by external stakeholders not clear; articulate
* The youth leaders represented by community to take part in engagements are mostly older people who may not be acceptable by the real youth fold (18-40)

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* Community governance is still largely dominated by men as women are not adequately integrated
* First engagement information with external stakeholders is restricted to a set of stakeholders depending on the nature of the information as adjudged by community leadership
* Information shared are not detailed, and as such community members with lesser or no education may not understand the implications clearly
* Influential community members not living within the community having overriding impact on community issues and policies use their advantage for selfish interest and creating seeds of conflict in their community.
* Any engagement with communities that will produce meaningful results requires financial gratifications directly or indirectly; this has become a commonly accepted practice in oil-producing communities in Rivers State
* There are unhealthy community politics which mostly affect information dissemination and the good interest of the larger community. Some influential members of the community form strong cartel to appoint incompetent members of the community to lead process in other to protect their influence and also hide information from community members, particularly when such information have monetary benefits.

## Implications of Observation on Community Communication:

Key observations made during the baseline studies carried out have helped to further provide a better understanding of the present communication framework in communities.

In spite of the fact that the organisation worked with sent information to the communities ahead of the meeting, there were clear indications that participation at the meeting was deliberately selective. This indeed is raising a number of questions around the possibility of secrecy and deliberate negative information gate- keeping.

Given the important decision making roles which women and youths are expected to play in community governance, information and communication should involve them adequately; in such a way that no one is excluded from having detailed understanding of community issues. This will help create a true sense of belonging by community stakeholders and also abate suspicion and mistrust of community leadership.

It is also of concern that representation for youth is questionable, as older people beyond the youth age category were presented. The implication is that the information provided may not be properly interpreted contextually, as the person presented to represent youths may not have a clear understanding of issues presented in the right perspective of a true youth.

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Another area of concern is that community governance is still largely dominated by men. This according to most key informants engaged has serious implications for the community. As women are grossly affected in most cases by decisions poorly taken without considering the implications on women and others who could be adversely affected.

Undue restrictions and deliberate side-lining of some stakeholders from initial discussions during community engagements also have a lot of negative implications for decision-making, as this action often deprives some community stakeholders of first-hand information and participation in decision-making. This practice may prompt excluded stakeholders to reject any decision or information disseminated, as such are often suspected to be taken outside the community's good interest.

The role played by influential community stakeholders living outside the community cannot be underestimated. Key informants engaged during the baseline studies explained that roles played by such stakeholders are often not in the good interest of the community, as those living in the community are largely affected when decisions are taken without their active participation. They noted that a lot of times, decisions have been taken for selfish interests which later adversely affect the larger community.

It was also discovered that giving community members incentives during engagements has become a normal practice and if such monetary gratifications are not available, most community members may not participate in discussions. Again, key informants engaged expressed concern that most people or non-governmental organisations that come to engage them on different issues are always using them for their organisational self-benefits, and in most cases community will later discover that the engagements were fully funded, but nothing was given to the community. This has made members of the community vowed not to participate in any engagement except incentives are provided.

Also observed was the issue of unhealthy community politics and segregation which deprives some segments of the community perceived to be in opposition of benefits. This mostly results in a deliberate action to deprive others of the necessary information.

This baseline studies carried out was truly an eye-opener to the changing dynamics of community communications and community governance structure which has so many implications for information sharing in communities.

In view of findings derived from these baseline studies, there is need for broader engagement with other relevant stakeholders. This will help create an opportunity for a joint action.

Activity Output(s)

* + Community engagement provided an overview of communication dynamics within the Two targeted Oil- Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State
  + Issue limiting inclusive and participatory communication in communities targeted were identified
  + Information is available to engage identified stakeholders

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# SCI ACTIVITY 2:

**Date of Activity:** Wednesday, August 16, 2023

## Activity Platform: Zoom

**Objective(s) of the activity:**

* + The activity sought to engage identified stakeholders in a bid to strengthen communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation
  + Engage identified stakeholders on observations/findings of a baseline study on issues around communication frameworks in two oil -producing communities (Komkom and Afam Ukwu) of Rivers State, get stakeholders perspectives on issues presented with a view of addressing such issues jointly.
  + Get recommendations needed to jointly develop a communication guideline that will strengthen inclusive and participatory communication in target communities.

## Methodology:

Discussion by identified Stakeholders

## Participants:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Participants of the stakeholders’ Discussion** |
| 1. | CSO representative |
| 2. | Stakeholders form Target Communities |
| 3. | Peace and Conflict Scholars/Academia |
| 4. | Rotary Clubs under District 9141, Port Harcourt, Peace Fellows and Peace Activators  Rotary Peace Centre, Makarere University, Uganda |
| 5. | Security Agencies |
| 6. | Media Institutions/Practitioners |

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## Content of the Stakeholders’ Discussion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Stakeholders’ Discussion Content** |
| **1** | About Rotary, Rotary Peace Fellowship and the Social Change Initiative |
| **2** | * Presentation of finding from Baseline Studies on: Community Communication Framework in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State. * Implications for Positive Peace |
| **3.** | Issues affecting inclusive and participatory community communication in Oil Producing communities and its implications on conflict prevention, peace building and conflict transformation   * CSOs/CBO * Peace and Conflict Scholar/Academia * Community stakeholders * Rotary Peace Fellow * Media |
| **4.** | Participants’ Responses/Critical steps to addressing issues identified and Working toward inclusive and participatory communication in oil-producing communities |
| **5.** | Developing a Guideline for Inclusive and Participatory Communication Framework for target Oil- Producing Communities |

**Introduction/Background:**

The Stakeholders’ Discussion on: Strengthening Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation was part of a Social Change Initiative (SCI) being implemented.

The stakeholder’ discussion which was a follow-up activity to the baseline study in two target project communities sought to engage identified stakeholders on observations/findings on issues around communication frameworks in two oil -producing communities (Komkom and Afam Ukwu) of Rivers State, with a view of getting stakeholders perspectives on issues presented, address such issues collectively and develop a viable communication guideline that will strengthen inclusive and participatory communication in target communities.

## Stakeholders’ identification of issues affecting inclusive and participatory communication in Oil Producing communities and its implications on conflict prevention, peace building and conflict transformation:

In their contributions to discussion on issues affecting inclusive and participatory communication in oil producing communities; participants drawn from the civil society organisations, media, community

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stakeholders, peace and conflict scholars/academia, Rotary Club, Peace Fellows and Peace Activators observed the following limitations:

* Leadership challenges faced by communities
* Poor information flow and feedback from oil-bearing communities
* Inadequate participation of the right stakeholders in community discussions
* Inadequate understanding of issues by community members as a result of low level of community awareness
* Negative portrayal of oil-bearing communities by the media
* Inadequate media coverage/reportage of issues affecting oil/gas bearing communities
* Poor community relations on the part of oil companies operating in host communities
* Wrong communication channels used by oil companies to relay information to host communities
* Perceived negligence on the path of government to community concerns
* Few well-placed individuals in the communities conniving with oil companies to deprive host communities of accrued benefits
* Too much interference by external forces in the choice of community representation
* Insufficient interventions by civil society organisations to address community issues and defective community representation in discussions
* Community representatives not answerable to the people
* Misinformation and disinformation in the communities
* Low level of inclusivity in policy drive
* Inadequate community engagements by government, IOCs and other relevant institutions

## Participants’ Responses/Critical Steps Towards Addressing Issues Identified As Limitations to Inclusive and Participatory Communication in Oil-Producing Communities of Rivers State:

Responding to critical steps towards addressing issues identified as limitations to inclusive and participatory communication in oil-producing communities in Rivers State, stakeholders noted the following as necessary actions to take by different key actors and stakeholders across: Community Stakeholders, Governments and Policy Institutions of Government, International Oil Companies and their proxies, Civil Society Organisations and Community Based Organisations, Media, Regulatory Institutions, Security Agencies, Academia, Rotary Club District 9141(Port Harcourt), Rotary Peace Fellows, Peace Activators and Rotary Peace Centre.

The following are action required from different stakeholders identified:

## Community Stakeholders:

* Community stakeholders including: Traditional Heads, Religious Leader, Opinion Leaders, Community Development Committee, Women Leaders, Youth Leaders, PWD Leaders, Community Based Organisations must work together to identify and address all structural issues impediments to free flow of information and communication in their community
* Information on issues affecting the community must be shared with stakeholders timely, in a very simple language and implications of such information on every stakeholder identified

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* Participation of all stakeholders in community governance must be given top priority to make room for transparency, accountability and viable communication/information flow
* Community stakeholders must make effort to jointly identify credible people to represent the community at all times and feedback on engagements presented to the community timely
* Community stakeholders should work together to ensure that community members acquire quality education to make them eligible for participation at higher levels
* Oil-producing communities must develop a peaceful means of communicating their concerns and grievances to identified institutions of government and use appropriate laid down procedures recognised by law
* Community good should be a collective responsible and must be held in high esteem above selfish interests

## Government at all levels and Policy Institutions of Government:

* Acceptable channel of community communication must be identified and used by government and policy institutions of government to engage stakeholders in oil-producing and oil impacted communities
* Government at all level and policy institutions must be intentional in identifying community concerns through direct interface with oil-producing and oil impacted communities
* Inclusive and participatory community engagements must be a top priority
* Government and policy institutions of government must be intentional about investing in the media to create community targeted sensitisation and awareness on key policies put in place and use same media to have feedback
* Government and policy institutions of government must desist from undue interference in the appointment of community representatives
* Government policies must be people oriented with participation of all stakeholders and regularly review of such policies must be engaged in line with true community feedbacks
* Measure must be put in place to encourage true community representation in policy development and review
* Development of oil-producing communities must be intentional and monitored adequately
* Increased and improved communication and community awareness must be a top priority

## International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and Proxies:

* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must be aware of existing communication framework in their host communities (oil- producing/oil impacted communities) and also comply with the guideline

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* The right community stakeholders must be identified and put in all communication, as well as having in place a viable community feedback mechanism that strengthens free flow of information and balanced communication
* Divide and rule tactics must be avoided in host community communication
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies must be mindful of environmental implications of their operations and make effort to be proactive in dealing with concerns of host communities
* The use of force and intimidating actions must be avoided in host communities
* Existing laws and regulations of operations must be respected and used
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must take responsibility of any accident or hazards caused by the operations and take urgent steps to address the situation
* In the event of any conflict caused by breach of agreement, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as dialogue must be considered first before any other approach recognised by law, which includes litigation
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must be intentional in performing their corporate social responsibility which is derived from community stakeholders’ participation

## Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs):

* Civil Society Organisations and Community Based Organisations must understand issues and limitations peculiar to their target communities of action and identify appropriate community stakeholders to work with
* CSOs and CBOs must widen their programming to be able to address issues identified
* CSOs and CBOs must be intentional in working with the target communities to develop a viable communication framework which will strengthen inclusivity and participation for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation
* CSOs and CBOs should work in synergy with identified stakeholders in developing interventions that will speak to community concerns from the perspective of all stakeholders identified in their target locations
* Communication and feedback mechanisms must be strengthened by CSOs and CBOs to ensure that community actions have the targeted impact
* In the design of all interventions, CSOs and CBOs must build in community stakeholders’ inclusive participation which must be verified through intelligence engagements
* CSOs and CBOs must work with the media to create the much needed awareness on the intervention

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## Media Institutions/Practitioners:

* Media should strive to understand issues affecting oil-producing/oil-impacted communities in Rivers State
* As part of their corporate social responsibility, media institutions and practitioners should be intentional in the coverage and reportage of issues in oil-producing/ oil-impacted community in Rivers State from the stand-point of the communities in question.
* Media institutions should offer adequate support by giving space for community engagement on their platforms, as well as regular media advocacy engagements with government and policy institutions engagements
* Media should make effort to increase its programming on issues affecting oil-producing / oil-impacted communities

## Security Agencies:

* Security agencies should make understand community issues and try as much as possible to be civil in their community intervention
* Security agencies should engage the right stakeholders and be professional in their approach, and avoid being used by anyone to intimidate the people from oil-producing/oil-impacted communities
* In line with community policing, security agencies must work with appropriate stakeholders within communities to create a peaceful environment, particularly when there are expressions of grievances by member of communities

## Regulatory Agencies/ Institutions:

* Regulatory agencies should work with community stakeholders to understand their concerns and issues that could trigger violent conflicts
* Regulatory agencies should be intentional about ensuring that International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) comply with existing laws governing their operations and seek feedback using appropriate mechanisms
* Regulatory agencies/institution should develop viable communication approaches and strategies that works in the interest of oil-producing /oil-impacted communities
* Regulatory agencies/institution should work with relevant stakeholders, particularly the Media, CSOs/CBOs to transmit information to communities using a clear simple language
* Engagements with communities should cut across every section of stakeholders making up communities with the use of appropriate locations and language that will ensure proper understanding of issues discussed

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## Academia:

* Scholars in the fields of peace building and development communication should work with other stakeholders to identify possible intervention, document results of interventions and use lessons learnt to develop viable intervention frameworks
* Share lessons learnt with other scholars to add to the body of knowledge
* Serve in advisory capacity in policy development and direction

## Rotary Club District 9141(Port Harcourt), Rotary Peace Fellows, Peace Activators and Rotary Peace Centre:

Going by the philosophy of Rotary International in the area of attaining a peaceful society, it is important that all affiliates of Rotary work together in synergy to address issues affecting sustainable peace building conflict prevention and conflict transformation. One of the many ways to collaborate in actions is to support the social change initiative of Rotary Peace Fellows by:

* Provide funding support for project implementation
* Participation in discussion with a view of strengthening actions and review of strategy
* Participation in physical activities organised by peace fellows
* Facilitating links to key stakeholders for the purpose of advocacy
* Expanding the scope of interventions

## Developing a Guideline for Inclusive and Participatory Communication Framework for target Oil- Producing Communities:

In line with stakeholders’ suggestions and recommendations on the appropriate measures to be taken towards addressing limitation to inclusive and participatory communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention, and conflict transformation, this social change initiative (SCI) will further engage a cross-section of stakeholders to develop an inclusive and participatory communication guideline (framework), which will be handy for communities to strengthen their communication.

Using Petroleum Industry Act and Management of Community Trust Fund as leverage for the pilot communication guideline to be developed; stakeholders are expected to provide ample recommendations which will help target communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) to adequately engage existing and emerging issues.

## Activity Output:

* Stakeholders identified salient issues affecting information/communication flow in oil-producing communities
* Critical steps to be taken by stakeholders towards strengthening communication frameworks in oil producing communities were identified
* Recommendations were provided by stakeholders in preparation for developing an inclusive and participatory *Communication Guidelines* for oil-producing and oil-impacted communities
* Bye-in of stakeholders was secured to work in synergy in developing inclusive and participatory community communication guideline

# SCI ACTIVITY 3:

## Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement on Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of River State, Nigeria

**Date(s):** Wednesday, September 13, 2023

**Location(s):** Komkom and Afam Ukwu Communities of Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State

## Activity Platform: Zoom

**Objective(s) of the activity:**

* The activity sought to engage oil and gas policy issues in a bid to strengthen communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation
* Engage stakeholders’ observations on issues around communication frameworks in oil and gas policies
* Get recommendations needed to contribute development of communication guideline that will strengthen inclusive and participatory communication in target communities.

## Methodology:

Discussion by identified Stakeholders

## Participants:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Participants of the stakeholders’ Discussion** |
| 1. | Representatives of Oil and Gas Policy Institutions |
|  | CSOs working on issues around oil and gas policies |
| 2. | Stakeholders form Target Communities |
| 3. | Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) |
| 4. | Peace and Conflict Scholars/Academia |
| 5. | Rotary Clubs under District 9141, Port Harcourt, Rotary Peace Centre, Makarere University, Uganda |

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 6. | Peace Fellows and Peace Activators |
| 7. | Media Institutions/Practitioners |

## Content of the Stakeholders’ Discussion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement Content** |
| **1.** | About Rotary, Rotary Peace Fellowship and the Social Change Initiative |
| **2.** | Contributions of Rotary Clubs and Affiliates to Social Change Initiative Implementation of Rotary Peace Fellows |
| **3.** | Lessons learnt from Baseline Study and Stakeholders’ Perspectives on Limitations to Inclusive and Participatory Communication in Oil-Producing and Oil-Impacted Communities of Rivers State. (A case study of Afam-Ukwu and Komkom Communities, Oyigbo LGA, Rivers State) |
| **4.** | Critical Gaps in Policy Development, Communication, and Implications for Positive Peace |
| **5.** | Perspectives on issues around inclusive policy development and communication with Oil- Producing and Oil-Impacted communities: Implications on conflict prevention, peace building, conflict transformation and development |
| **6.** | Reflection on Media Oil/Gas Policy Engagement and Community Focused coverage |
| **7.** | CSOs/CBOs Response to Oil and Gas Policy Issues and Community Enlightenment |
| **8.** | Response of Scholars to Issues in Inclusive Oil/Gas Policy Development and Community Communication |
| **9.** | Rotary Club and Engagement of Policy Issues in Oil/Gas Governance Towards Sustainable Peace |
| **10.** | Roles of Policy Institutions in Developing Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks that Builds Good Relationships in Host Communities |
| **11.** | Roles of Policy Institutions in Developing Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks that Builds Good Relationships in Host Communities |
| **12.** | Working Together in Developing an Inclusive and Participatory Communication Framework Guideline for target Oil-Producing Communities |

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## Introduction/Background:

The Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement on Strengthening Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation is part of a Social Change Initiative (SCI) being implemented under a post graduate study in peace building and conflict transformation.

The activity was a follow-up activity to stakeholder discussion where observations/findings from a baseline study on issues and limitations to communication frameworks in two oil -producing communities (Komkom and Afam Ukwu) of Rivers State was presented to relevant, with further inputs made to cross-examine and validate information from the baseline study, while recommendation were also generated towards the development a viable communication guideline that will strengthen inclusive and participatory communication in target communities.

The roles of policy institutions were identified in the previous discussion towards strengthening communication frameworks in oil-producing communities, hence the need to bring together stakeholders to engage policy issues.

**Contributions of Rotary Clubs and Affiliates to Social Change Initiative Implementation of Rotary Peace Fellows:**

Rotary clubs and affiliates have continued to play significant roles in supporting the social change initiative of Peace Fellows. The areas of support include: providing links with Rotary clubs for participation in SCI activities as well as identifying critical stakeholders that Peace Fellows can engage to enrich their work.

It is expected that Rotary Clubs will continue to support fellows at all times in their need areas, thereby making the implementation of social change initiative seamless.

**Lessons learnt from Baseline Study and Stakeholders’ Perspectives on Limitations to Inclusive and Participatory Communication in tarOil-Producing Communities of Rivers State. (A case study of Afam- Ukwu and Komkom Communities, Oyigbo LGA, Rivers, State).**

Lesson learnt from the baseline study and the initial stakeholders’ discussion includes:

* Women and youths stakeholders’ active participation is key in dealing with issues in the community and must be improved on
* Youth leadership age needs to be reviewed to reflect through participation
* Community governance structure is still largely dominated by men
* Communication with external stakeholders still needs to be more inclusive and participatory
* Community communication/Information shared needs to be detailed and simplified for a cross section of community members to understand
* Insufficient interventions by civil society organisations to address community issues and defective community representation in discussions
* Community representatives not answerable to the people as their selection is politically motivated

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* Misinformation and disinformation in the communities
* Low level of inclusivity in policy drive
* Inadequate community engagements by government, IOCs and other relevant institutions

**Critical Gaps in Policy Development, Communication, and Implications for Positive Peace**

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in its presentation shared perspective on how positive peace can be applied in developing viable communication frameworks for targeted oil producing communities. The emphasis was on building a transparent and accountable system with relates with the eight (8) pillars of positive peace, which include: a well-functioning government, free flow of information, acceptance of the rights of neighbours, high level of human capital and equitable distribution of resources and low level of corruption, just to mention a few.

The Instituted noted that inclusive participation of community stakeholders such as women, youths and other critical stakeholders will provide more opportunity to create a sense of belonging in the community, which will help strengthening structures and systems that will promote peace in the communities.

It was also noted that policies must be people focused, while policies must be communicated in a very simple manner which will allow every member of the community to have adequate knowledge of information disseminated. Implementation of positive peace will help change the system.

More investment in the 8 pillars of positive peace was reiterated. This is expected to be engaged through first carrying out a research on the state of positive peace to have evidence based data to be able to define direction of positive peace engagements.

**Perspectives on Issues Around Inclusive Policy Development and Communication with Oil- Producing and Oil-Impacted communities: Implications on Conflict Prevention, Peace Building, Conflict Transformation and Development:**

Perspectives on issues around inclusive policy development and communication with oil-producing were expected to be engaged by policy institutions identified and invited for the virtual activity, but none of the institutions contacted responded to the invitations sent.

However, stakeholders noted that communication issues in oil and gas policies must be adequately dealt with by policy institutions and relevant. Using the Petroleum Industry Act as a case study, stakeholders identified gaps which are related to communication and already creating conflicts within host communities.

According to stakeholders, the question of inclusion of critical stakeholders remains salient in strengthening community communication frameworks. Members of the community expressed dissatisfaction over communication issue which has allowed intrusion of imposters who have hijacked processes and pushing away the true community stakeholders. They are hopeful that the PIA 2021 will better address salient communication gaps have been a source of concern for oil-producing communities.

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This social change initiative made an observation in the area of communication gap in the Petroleum Industry Act 2021. It is disturbing to notice that communication strategy is not given so much attention in this very important legislation. Stakeholders must deal with this salient issue.

**Reflection on Media Oil/Gas Policy Engagement and Community Focused Coverage**

Prior to the policy stakeholders’ engagement, a number of questions have been posed on the level of media attention to issues and concerns of oil producing communities. Media is expected to renew its commitment to the coverage of community concerns and give adequate coverage to these issues from community perspective.

Again, media attention should be drawn to the Petroleum Industry Act which focuses its attention more on profits to the government while very little space is given to host community issues. Media therefore must continue to bring into the front burner critical salient concerns of stakeholders from local communities.

Efforts must be made by the media to enlighten oil-producing communities on issues that may affect them, and this has to be done in a very simple and clear language. Community feedbacks on the Petroleum Industry must also be presented to the public, while duty bearers are also engaged through dedicated reportage.

**CSOs/CBOs Response to Oil and Gas Policy Issues and Community Enlightenment:**

Stakeholders are of the view that civil society organisations particularly those working on human rights and oil and gas policy issues are critical to the process of engaging issues and concerns around policy development, policy implementation and communication.

It is expected that the CSO community will expand their policy engagement while using different approaches to engage different stakeholders including direct duty bearers such as policy institution in oil and gas governance. These increased and improved engagements will further mount pressure on government to address community concerns. Inclusive and participatory communication is also considered very essential to every engagement undertaken.

**Response of Scholars to Issues in Inclusive Oil/Gas Policy Development and Community Communication:**

Beyond documenting information on academic research undertaken on issues, scholars should use data and information gathered to engage critical stakeholders by working in collaboration with identified entities.

Effort must be committed towards ensuring that all duty bearers are engaged in discussions, with their attention called to possible implications of their actions. They should be made to understand that proactive measures are better than curative measures.

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**Rotary Club and Engagement of Policy Issues in Oil/Gas Governance towards Sustainable Peace:**

It is expected that Rotary Club will strengthen its efforts in the area of engagement of policy issues which are main triggers of violent conflicts. More attention should be directed at interventions which will engage the policy environment.

Rotarians in the oil and gas industry can be engaged to activate avenue for discussions with relevant authorities, with this the voice of the communities will be heard in high places, while all actions are tailored towards improving communication with host communities.

**Roles of Policy Institutions in Developing Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks that Builds Good Relationships in Host Communities:**

Stakeholders were of the view that policy institution must first understand that their first priority is to protect the interest of the people affected by oil and gas exploration. Communities been waiting for a time when their suffering will come to an end, they are waiting for a positive change that will ensure their inclusion and participation.

They also made it clear that implementation of the PIA must be done in a transparent manner which will re- assure host communities that the system and structure of oil and gas governance has them in mind.

Communication should be directed at an average community member who is directly affected by oil and gas exploration. Action must also produce positive results in the interest of the collective good of the host communities.

With this in place good relationship will be built with oil-producing communities and they will be willing to follow a trusted process which is created by a viable communication framework. For the entire system to be trusted, it is important for policy communication to be more transparent than ever before.

## Working Together in Developing an Inclusive and Participatory Communication Framework Guideline for target Oil-Producing Communities:

Stakeholders believe that working together to engage issues around inclusive policy development and communication will further help to remove all elements of mistrust and distrust in host communities. In view of this, actions must be aligned to engage critical stakeholders with the feedback message of the community.

Meaning that, all engagements must be inclusive and transparent to reflect the wish of the people whose voice seems not to be heard. These collective actions will strengthen efforts towards creating the desired change.

## Outputs of the Activity:

* Stakeholders identify communication gaps in policy development and implementation
* Salient issues and draw backs were identified in the engagement of oil and gas policy institutions

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* Stakeholders identified collective responsibility in addressing issues and concerns around communication deficit in oil-producing communities targeted by the social change initiative
* A platform for further engagement is created to strengthen communication frameworks in oil-producing communities

## SCI ACTIVITY 4: Production of Public Sensitisation and Enlightenment Podcast of Issues and Concerns of Targeted Oil-Producing Communities in Rivers state

**Date(s):** Friday, September 8, 2023

**Location(s):** Online

**Activity Platform:** Whatsapp

## Objective(s) of the activity:

* The activity sought to give a general overview of history of conflicts in the Niger-Delta and attention to communication deficit as a driver of conflict which must be addressed to achieve sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation

## Stakeholders Targeted

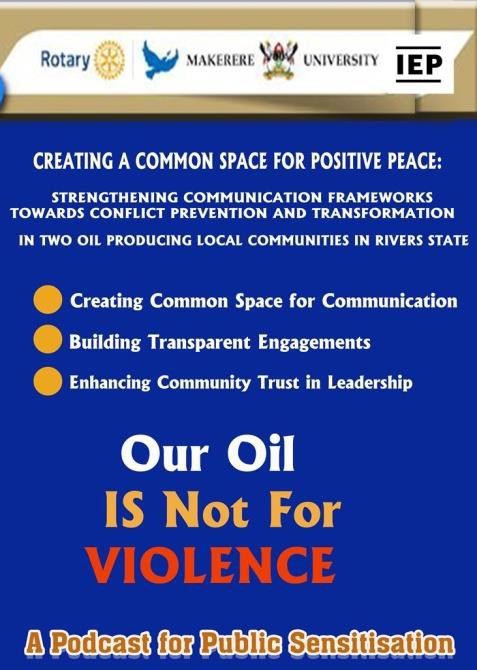
**Media, CSOs, Academia, Oil-Producing Communities, Policy Institution in Oil and Gas Governance Podcast Produced:**

Production of podcast is one of the approaches to be adopted in public sensitization and awareness on issues and concerns of oil-producing communities targeted by this social change initiative. This will further contribute to the strengthening of communication frameworks for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in the target communities.

It is expected that series of podcasts will be produced to target different stakeholders and duty bearer while community members will also be enlightened through the same podcast which will be deployed via different media and in a simple language which is conflict sensitive. The podcast which provides information for the community of interest will be translated to Pidgin English, so that an average community member will understand the content.

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One podcast titled: ***Our Oil is Not for Violence*** is already produced with the focus on the general overview of history of conflict in the Niger Delta and the need for communication frameworks to be strengthened.



## Output of Activity:

* Content developed for podcast production
* One Podcast produced on Strengthening Communication Frameworks in the Niger Delta Region with Focus Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State Nigeria
* Collective response and action by stakeholders is initiated through the podcast content

**Key findings / impact:** (800words)

From all indications, the social change initiative in its entirety has helped to understand different limitations to community communication frameworks, not only in the two targeted oil-producing communities, but in general experience of communities who are either oil-producing of oil-impacted.

In addition to understanding peculiarity of issues in Rivers State, the study has further drawn our attention for the need to engage oil and gas policy development and implementation concerns, as they affect oil- producing communities.

Key findings documented in the course of this study include the following:

* Communication in the targeted oil-producing communities is unstructured and as such there are gaps which impacts on inclusivity and participation of relevant stakeholders within the communities
* Community leader is still male dominated, while important community information revolves round selected few stakeholders
* There are external factors which infringe on free flow of information in the target communities
* There are indications that community leadership selection and appointment is still influenced external factors which works against the interest of the community
* Community members have very little information on issues affecting them as revealed during the baseline studies
* Community voice is still limited when it comes to communication with policy institutions, government and oil companies
* Media coverage of oil-producing communities is most times not from the angle of issues affecting the people, but around government, policy institutions and oil companies
* Civil Society organisations interventions still has the gap of giving priority attention to community communication frameworks
* Policy Institutions in the oil and gas industry are mostly concerned about economic gains, while they pay very little attention to communicating challenges of communities to government
* Inclusive participation in oil and gas policy development and community awareness in its implementation still reflects communication gaps

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# CHAPTER FOUR

**General Conclusion** (300words)

Based on submissions and analysis of community stakeholders, and other relevant external stakeholders, communication deficit enabled by structural inefficiencies is a major conflict trigger in oil-producing communities. This challenge according to stakeholders has negative implications for internal and external relationships.

In view of this, the following important conclusions were drawn:

* Communication gaps in oil-producing communities and with external stakeholders can generate violent conflicts if not addressed in a holistic manner.
* Eradication of all communication related conflict triggers will help build sustainable peace that will encourage development in the targeted oil –producing communities.
* The situation requires urgent attention and collective responsibility of all stakeholders to address structural and policy gaps which negatively impacts on community communication frameworks
* Duty bearers in the oil and gas policy environment have a lot to do to improve on the community relations and communication strategy

Meomeka (1991) made it clear that development effort cannot be successful without planned communication, as its flow determines the direction and pace of dynamic social development. This implies that structural and policy issues militating against effective communication frameworks must be dealt with by ensuring that all barriers and limitations are removed.

**Recommendations / implications for Policy:** (500 words)

Stakeholder engaged during this social change initiative showed concern that there is truly a communication deficit which affects positive peace in oil-producing communities. In their reflections, violent conflict might not have happened in the targeted communities covered by this study, but there are several indices available is the communities that can trigger violent conflicts.

They observed that strengthening communication framework is essential to the targeted oil-producing communities, especially for community leadership to coordinate all activities in a manner that shows transparency and accountability.

Therefore, for positive peace to be achieved, efforts must be made to create an inclusive and

participatory communication guideline that will help promote sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation in the targeted oil-producing communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State.

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In addressing the problems associated with communication deficit, this study has drawn lessons from stakeholders' inputs and put forwarded their recommendations as follows:

## Community Stakeholders:

* Community stakeholders including: Traditional Heads, Religious Leader, Opinion Leaders, Community Development Committee, Women Leaders, Youth Leaders, PWD Leaders, Community Based Organisations must work together to identify and address all structural issues impediments to free flow of information and communication in their community
* Information on issues affecting the community must be shared with stakeholders timely, in a very simple language and implications of such information on every stakeholder identified
* Participation of all stakeholders in community governance must be given top priority to make room for transparency, accountability and viable communication/information flow
* Community stakeholders must make effort to jointly identify credible people to represent the community at all times and feedback on engagements presented to the community timely
* Community stakeholders should work together to ensure that community members acquire quality education to make them eligible for participation at higher levels
* Oil-producing communities must develop a peaceful means of communicating their concerns and grievances to identified institutions of government and use appropriate laid down procedures recognised by law
* Community good should be a collective responsible and must be held in high esteem above selfish interests

## Government at all levels and Policy Institutions of Government:

* Policy frameworks in oil and gas governance must include a viable communication strategy with host communities
* Acceptable channel of community communication must be identified and used by government and policy institutions of government to engage stakeholders in oil-producing and oil impacted communities
* Government at all level and policy institutions must be intentional in identifying community concerns through direct interface with oil-producing and oil impacted communities
* Inclusive and participatory community engagements must be a top priority
* Government and policy institutions of government must be intentional about investing in the media to create community targeted sensitisation and awareness on key policies put in place and use same media to have feedback
* Government and policy institutions of government must desist from undue interference in the appointment of community representatives

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* Government policies must be people oriented with participation of all stakeholders and regularly review of such policies must be engaged in line with true community feedbacks
* Measure must be put in place to encourage true community representation in policy development and review
* Development of oil-producing communities must be intentional and monitored adequately
* Increased and improved communication and community awareness must be a top priority

## International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and Proxies:

* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must be aware of existing communication framework in their host communities (oil- producing/oil impacted communities) and also comply with the guideline
* The right community stakeholders must be identified and put in all communication, as well as having in place a viable community feedback mechanism that strengthens free flow of information and balanced communication
* Divide and rule tactics must be avoided in host community communication
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies must be mindful of environmental implications of their operations and make effort to be proactive in dealing with concerns of host communities
* The use of force and intimidating actions must be avoided in host communities
* Existing laws and regulations of operations must be respected and used
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must take responsibility of any accident or hazards caused by the operations and take urgent steps to communicate their actions towards addressing the situation to communities in a clear and transparent manner
* In the event of any conflict caused by breach of agreement, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as dialogue must be considered first before any other approach recognised by law, which includes litigation
* International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) must be intentional in performing their corporate social responsibility which is derived from community stakeholders’ participation

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## Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs):

* Civil Society Organisations and Community Based Organisations must understand issues and limitations peculiar to their target communities of action and identify appropriate community stakeholders to work with
* CSOs and CBOs must widen their programming to be able to address issues identified
* CSOs and CBOs must be intentional in working with the target communities to develop a viable communication framework which will strengthen inclusivity and participation for sustainable peace building, conflict prevention and conflict transformation
* CSOs and CBOs should work in synergy with identified stakeholders in developing interventions that will speak to community concerns from the perspective of all stakeholders identified in their target locations
* Communication and feedback mechanisms must be strengthened by CSOs and CBOs to ensure that community actions have the targeted impact
* In the design of all interventions, CSOs and CBOs must build in community stakeholders’ inclusive participation which must be verified through intelligence engagements
* CSOs and CBOs must work with the media to create the much needed awareness on the intervention

## Media Institutions/Practitioners:

* Media should strive to understand issues affecting oil-producing/oil-impacted communities in Rivers State
* As part of their corporate social responsibility, media institutions and practitioners should be intentional in the coverage and reportage of issues in oil-producing/ oil-impacted community in Rivers State from the stand-point of the communities in question.
* Media institutions should offer adequate support by giving space for community engagement on their platforms, as well as regular media advocacy engagements with government and policy institutions engagements
* Media should make effort to increase its programming on issues affecting oil-producing / oil-impacted communities

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## Regulatory Agencies/ Institutions:

* Regulatory agencies should work with community stakeholders to understand their concerns and issues that could trigger violent conflicts
* Regulatory agencies should be intentional about ensuring that International Oil Companies, National Oil Companies and their proxies (organisation acting on their behalf) comply with existing laws governing their operations and seek feedback using appropriate mechanisms
* Regulatory agencies/institution should develop viable communication approaches and strategies that works in the interest of oil-producing /oil-impacted communities
* Regulatory agencies/institution should work with relevant stakeholders, particularly the Media, CSOs/CBOs to transmit information to communities using a clear simple language
* Engagements with communities should cut across every section of stakeholders making up communities with the use of appropriate locations and language that will ensure proper understanding of issues discussed

## Academia:

* Scholars in the fields of peace building and development communication should work with other stakeholders to identify possible intervention, document results of interventions and use lessons learnt to develop viable intervention frameworks
* Share lessons learnt with other scholars to add to the body of knowledge
* Serve in advisory capacity in policy development and direction

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**Sustainability plan:** (800words)

Sustainability plan is very crucial to this social change initiative. It is evident that there is no way the initiative can achieve all its objectives within a short period of time allotted for the implementation of the exercise.

Further engagements will continue after the SCI. There will be series of stakeholders’ engagements p drive the process of strengthening communication frameworks in two targeted oil producing communities. This requires time, energy, resources and interactions with relevant stakeholders.

This follow up will be engaged through the following approaches:

Regular communication with relevant Rotary Club and relevant stakeholders to engage critical issues yet unresolved and emerging concerns of the two targeted oil-producing communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State

The Petroleum Industry Act will be used as avenue to further engage CSOs and Policy Institutions of government on issues around communication with oil-producing communities, particularly in the implementation of Community Trust Fund

The process of commencement of the development of inclusive and participatory communication guideline for the two targeted communities has been initiated; this will be followed through to completion stage. This requires support from Rotary Club of Port Harcourt Central, Rotary International and Makarere University Uganda Rotary Peace Centre.

The success of the guideline in the targeted communities will inform the replication of the guideline development for other oil-producing communities in Rivers State, the Niger Delta and other places using their peculiarities as guide.

In furtherance to this initiative, podcasts will be produced for community, stakeholders, and general public awareness to widen the scope of public knowledge, thereby bringing duty bearers into attention on the need for inclusive and participatory communication with oil-producing communities.

If funding is available, it will become easy to move faster with engagements which are all designed to provide direction on how to strengthen community communication frameworks in oil-producing communities.

In all engagements, the importance of positive peace will be given priority attention. This will be a clarion call to all stakeholders to note that the absence of physical violence does not indicate that the society is in peace, and as such all key indices to positive peace must be put into consideration and entrenched.

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This SCI will also be sustained through media engagements. Interested media will be used for advocacy to reach out to the policy institutions in a bid to address existing and emerging issues of concern around community communication. It is expected that framework of engagement will be drawn to articulate and strengthen partnership for public sensitization and media advocacy.

SCI Activities within the Framework of Sustainability Plan:

Joint Action for Development of Inclusive and Participatory Communication Guidelines for targeted Oil- Producing Communities

# APPENDICES:

## Baseline Study Questionnaire:

**STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE BUILDING, CONFLICT PREVENTION, AND CONFLICT RANSFORMATION IN TWO OIL PRODUCING COMMUNITIES (AFAM-UKWU AND KOMKOM) OF RIVERS STATE**

## Objective of the Baseline Study in Afam-Ukwu and Komkom Communities under Oyigbo LGA:

The baseline study seeks to understand limitations to communication and free flow of information in two target communities targeted under the social change initiative with a view of using data gathered to engage relevant stakeholders on issues and concerns identified.

Identified stakeholders in the target community to be engaged during this baseline study include: community leaders, opinion leaders, religious leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, civil society organisations and community based organisations working in the target communities.

Given the sensitivity of oil-producing communities, the questionnaire will be engaged in a semi-formal focus group discussion in the communities and will also provide a guide for key informant interviews to be conducted under this baseline study.

## Questions;

1. What do you understand by information and information sharing?
2. In your view, of what benefit(s) is information sharing to your community?
3. Who are the people responsible for sharing information about issues or opportunities available for your community?
4. What method is used in sharing important information in your community?
5. How often do you receive important information on issues related to your community?
6. How clear is information made available to your community and how do you ensure clarity of information

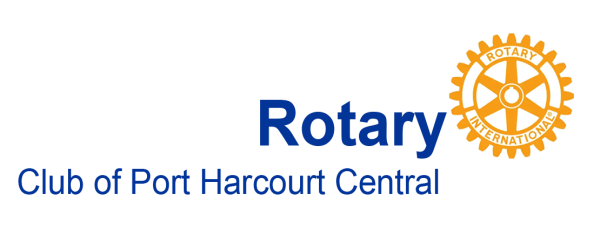
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shared?

1. Can you identify any important issues and opportunities in your community in the last 2 years on which you received timely and clear information?
2. What mechanism(s) are put in place to receive feedback from members of your community?
3. Can you identify any issue(s) of concern in your community on which you want tangible information?
4. How do you think information sharing in your community can be improved on?

## Invitation Letters for Activities under the SCI:

1. **Invitation to Stakeholders Discussion:**



9th August, 2023 Dear Stakeholder,

## Invitation to an Academic Research Discussion on: Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil -Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State.

I am Olaniyan T. Olaniyi, a Rotary Peace Fellow currently running a Post Graduate Diploma in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation at the Rotary Peace Centre, Makarere University, Uganda.

The Post Graduate Diploma in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation which also doubles as a Peace Fellowship is funded by Rotary International. My profound appreciation goes to the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt (Rotary Club District 9141) for endorsing my application for the Cohort 4 Rotary Peace Fellowship 2022-2023. The one year study programme includes: onsite academic activity, field learning in Uganda and home country Social Change Initiative (SCI).

I am currently implementing my home country Social Change Initiative which is focused on Strengthening Community Communication Framework in Two-Oil Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State. As part of the activities listed for the SCI, a baseline study was earlier carried out in the target communities to understand issues/challenges around communication dynamics/information management and how this could impact negatively on positive peace. The baseline study has provided vital information which is being used to engage identified stakeholders.

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Furtherance to the work, I am engaging discussions with identified stakeholders, such as: Rotary Club of Port Harcourt, Rotary Peace Fellows and Peace Activators, Community Stakeholders, representatives of CSOs and CBOs, Academia, Media Practitioners and others to share my observations/findings from the baseline study and to also learn more from stakeholders’ experience on different issues and how to strengthen communication framework in oil producing communities for sustainable peace, conflict prevention and transformation.

The discussion with the theme: Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil -Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State will help identify salient issues limiting inclusive and participatory communication within oil-producing communities, provide perspectives on how to deal with such issues, thereby giving useful directions on the way forward to strengthen community communication framework.

The event will hold on Wednesday August 16, 2023 on Zoom Platform. The link will be shared with you shortly.

Your participation at this online event will provide me the required support and will be most appreciated. Warm regards,

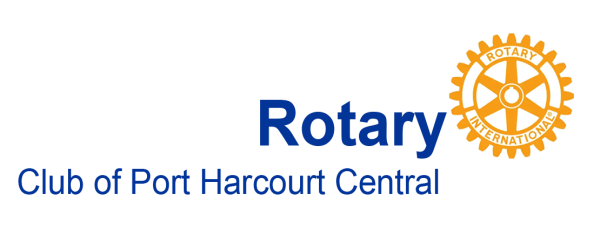
Olaniyan T. Olaniyi

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## Invitation to Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement





**29th August, 2023**

Dear Sir/Madam,

***Invitation to a Policy stakeholders' Engagement towards Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Policy Development and Communication Frameworks with Oil-Producing and Oil-Impacted Communities in Rivers State for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation.***

I am Olaniyan T. Olaniyi, a Rotary Peace Fellow and a Post Graduate Student in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation at **Makarere University, Uganda, Rotary Peace Centre.**

Currently, I am implementing a home country ***Social Change Initiative (SCI)*** which is focused on Strengthening Community Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation in Two-Oil Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State.

As part of the SCI, a baseline study and a stakeholder discussion were held earlier to understand issues and challenges limiting inclusive and participatory communication /information management in oil-producing communities and how this could impact negatively on ***Positive Peace.***

Furtherance to the work, the SCI is currently working with Rotary Club of Port Harcourt Central, Makarere University Uganda Rotary Peace Centre and Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) to engage Policy Stakeholders in Oil/Gas governance in Nigeria on issues around inclusive participation in policy development and communication frameworks with Oil- Producing and Oil-Impacted communities in Rivers State.

Participants expected at this policy engagement include: Policy Institutions in Oil/Gas Governance in Nigeria, Rotary Club of Port Harcourt Central and Rotary Clubs under District 9141, Makarere University Uganda Rotary Peace Centre Team, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) Team, Rotary Peace Fellows and Peace Activators, Community Stakeholders, Representatives of CSOs and CBOs, Scholars in Peace, Conflict and Security Studies, Media Practitioners and others relevant stakeholders.

The Policy Stakeholders Engagement will help identify salient issues limiting inclusive participation in policy development and communication frameworks with oil-producing and oil-impacted communities; provide perspectives on how to deal with such issues, thereby giving useful directions on the way forward to strengthen community external and internal communication frameworks.

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The event will hold on ***Wednesday September 13, 2023 on Zoom Platform.*** The link will be shared with you shortly.

Your participation at this online event will provide the required support for the success of this social change initiative and will be most appreciated.

Warm regards,

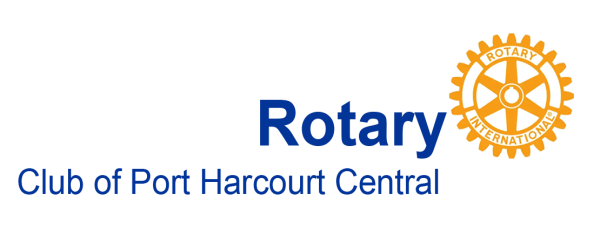
**Olaniyan T. Olaniyi**

**Rotary Peace Fellow** (Rotary Peace Centre, Makarere University, Uganda)

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## Call/Invitation for Partnership and Support for Policy Stakeholders Engagement

**August 24, 2023**

Dear Stakeholder,

***Soliciting Your Partnership to Organise a Virtual Stakeholders’ Interaction with the theme:***

***Policy stakeholders' Engagement towards Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks with Oil-Producing and Oil-Impacted Communities in Rivers State for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation.***

I am Olaniyan T. Olaniyi, a Rotary Peace Fellow and a Post Graduate Student in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation at **Makarere University, Uganda, Rotary Peace Centre.**

I am currently implementing my home country ***Social Change Initiative (SCI)*** which is focused on Strengthening Community Communication Framework in Two-Oil Producing Communities (Afam Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State.

Part of activities listed under my SCI is a ***Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement.*** This activity is a follow-up to other activities earlier implemented which included: a baseline study and a stakeholders’ discussion which were meant to understand issues/challenges around communication dynamics/information management from community perspective and how this could impact negatively on positive peace.

The upcoming ***Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement*** will provide opportunity to interact with ***Policy Stakeholders*** to have their perspectives on issues around communication frameworks and procedures with oil-producing and oil-impacted communities in Rivers State, while documented inputs and findings will be used for further engagement with a view to strengthen community communication frameworks at different fronts.

Expected at this virtual engagement are representatives of policy institutions in oil and gas administration in Rivers State, Rotary Club of Port Harcourt, Rotary Peace Fellows and Peace Activators, Makarere University

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Rotary Peace Centre Team, Community Stakeholders, Representatives of CSOs and CBOs, Academia, Media Practitioners and other relevant stakeholders.

The virtual event is themed: ***Policy Stakeholders Engagement towards strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil –Producing and Oil-Impacted Communities in Rivers State.***

I use this opportunity to humbly solicit your partnership and support in organising this virtual engagement. The tentative date for the event is ***Wednesday September 13, 2023 on Zoom Platform.***

I preparation for this event, I will be glad to interact with you via a zoom meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, 2023 by 11:00am. Your support will be most appreciated.

Warm regards,

**Olaniyan T. Olaniyi**

**Rotary Peace Fellow** (Rotary Peace Centre, Makarere University, Uganda)

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1. **Presentation at the Stakeholders’ Discussion on Strengthening Inclusive Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, Nigeria.**
2. **Presentation at the Policy Stakeholders Engagement on Strengthening Inclusive Communication Frameworks for Sustainable Peace Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Transformation in Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State, Nigeria.**

**Pictorials Max 5pgs with descriptions**

**Photographs from the Baseline Study held on January 23, 2023**



**Discussion with the leadership of Komkom Community, Oyigbo Local Government Area.**

Plot 146, Pool Road. Makerere Kampala-Uganda, Email: [info.rpc@mak.ac.ug](mailto:info.rpc@mak.ac.ug) Website: [www.rpc.mak.ac.ug,](http://www.rpc.mak.ac.ug/) Tel: +256 779 406333 +256 708 844640



## Discussion with the leadership of Afam-Ukwu Community, Oyigbo Local Government Area. Digital Flier for the Stakeholders’ Discussion held on Wednesday August 16, 2023



**Digital Flier for the Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement held on Wednesday September 13, 2023.**

Plot 146, Pool Road. Makerere Kampala-Uganda, Email: [info.rpc@mak.ac.ug](mailto:info.rpc@mak.ac.ug) Website: [www.rpc.mak.ac.ug,](http://www.rpc.mak.ac.ug/) Tel: +256 779 406333 +256 708 844640

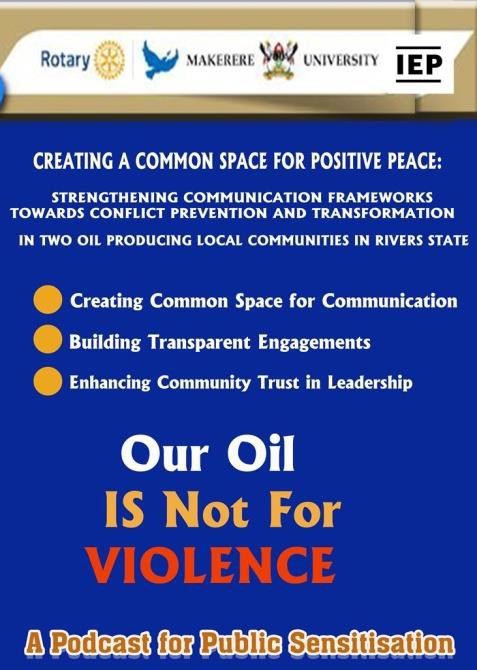


## Digital Flier for the Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement held on Wednesday September 13, 2023.



**Activity Reminder for the Policy Stakeholders’ Engagement held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023**

Plot 146, Pool Road. Makerere Kampala-Uganda, Email: [info.rpc@mak.ac.ug](mailto:info.rpc@mak.ac.ug) Website: [www.rpc.mak.ac.ug,](http://www.rpc.mak.ac.ug/) Tel: +256 779 406333 +256 708 844640



**A Public Sensitisation Podcast towards Strengthening Communication Frameworks in the Niger Delta Region with Focus Two Oil-Producing Communities (Afam-Ukwu and Komkom) of Rivers State Nigeria**

## Participant Testimonies:

The following are testimonies from participants engaged in all activities implemented under the social change initiative:

* CSOs and other participants invited for the virtual engagements are of the view that engaging communication issues in oil-producing communities will help address concerns of real community members.
* Scholars in peace, conflict and communication studies have also identified the need to engage beyond academic documentation
* Community members are counting on this social change initiative to contribute towards addressing their concerns. They want a communication framework their will strengthen their participation in community issues

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