

**MDG AND SDG CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF UBIAJA,  
ESAN SOUTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA EDO STATE FROM  
1999-2023**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Ebosereme Favour USIGBE** with the matriculation number ART2000491 in the Department of History and International Studies, University of Benin, Benin city under my supervision

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**Ag. Head of Department**

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**Date**

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to God Almighty, whose wisdom has enabled me to actively and successfully carry out this research. Also, to my family members, my Dad and my siblings, City of Envoys (CEM) family who has helped me in all aspects of their prayers, love and support to make this work a success.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Development has been a fundamental goal that heads of government and international organizations aspire for globally. The coming of the year 2000 carried with it intellectual social initiative known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was to tackle the most seemingly close intrusions into society by poverty, education, health, and environmental sustainability issues on a global scale. These were the objectives that needed to be achieved so that lives would improve, especially in developing countries. Nigeria is one of the participating countries, that engaged in different policies and programs regarding the realization of some of these targets set out by the MDG. m

Nevertheless, improvements had been realized but a lot of challenges still lingered. Hence, there was a need for the emergence of SDG in 2015. Yet unlike MDG; targets of SDG are broader and greatly inclusive within a sustainable economic, social, and environmental development framework established by the SDG. These will be engaged into the next 17 years, heading to the year 2030, on reducing poverty, providing quality education and health care, in attaining gender equality, access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and ultimately attaining sustainability within the growth of cities to attain economic growth. These attained global frameworks on development have also given another dimension to the local policies and strategies of intervention for

development within and from Esan South-East in Edo State. MDGs and the SDGs has been the best tool through which the region has dealt with its issues, which has led to various levels of impact in many areas. One area in which the MDGs and the SDGs have proven in developing the region of Esan South-East is the area of education. From the introduction of the MDGs, Nigeria has turned more attention to increasing enrollments into primary schools. Such attempts included the free primary education and feeding policies availed in states for adoption. These initiatives made their way into Esan South-East, leading to better literacy levels and enhanced attendance among children. These have left many of them inadequately equipped school infrastructures, an ill-trained teacher shortage, and unsatisfactory learning conditions. This missing link came in exclusively in the SDGs, further in calling for quality education, ensuring inclusive and equal access to learning opportunities.

Investments in digital education, vocational training, and acquisition of skill acquisition programs were called into being as a bridge toward filling up MDG gaps. Another of the core sectors which saw some form of improvement courtesy of both the MDGs and SDGs remains the health care system. In the MDG period, much effort was devoted by Nigeria in reducing the child mortality rate, improving maternal health, and controlling such deadly diseases as malaria and HIV/AIDS Primary health care was expanded in Esan South-East through an increase in health centers and immunization. Most of these faced challenges that include poor funding, a shortfall of personnel, and a poor supply of essential drugs.

SDGs expanded the health agenda for universal health cover, improved sanitation, and prevention against diseases.

The New World Bank investment in large programs of strengthening health infrastructure, water supply, and hygiene is where challenges are very high in the way of equitable access to quality healthcare for all residents. Growth and poverty reduction are high on the development agenda of both MDGs and SDGs, with particular attention given to the poorest of poor populations. Agriculture is the most prevalent economic activity practiced by the majority of the population in Esan South-East. The MDGs effectively publicized micro-finance approaches and small-scale enterprise development as a strategy to enhance the livelihoods of local farmers and entrepreneurs. Credit access, the status of road networks, and the existing market limitation were also listed as some factors that have contributed little to economic improvement in line with a little expectation of poverty reduction.

More focus has been placed under the SDGs on sustainable agricultural practices, financial inclusion, and job creation. Programs introduced by various government or non-governmental organizations have aimed at improving agricultural productivity in addition to fostering entrepreneurship and increasing economic opportunities for youth and women. Much emphasis has also been placed on infrastructural development in Esan South-East. The MDGs recognized clean water, sanitation, and improved transport networks as sine qua non for human development. While some have been achieved in terms of boreholes and rehabilitation of rural feeder

roads, many communities in Esan South-East still do not talk about infrastructure. The SDGs have made renewed emphasis on sustainable cities, climate resilience, and infrastructural expansion.

Extensive road network improvements and electrification have been done alongside improved accessibility to clean drinking water; however, still much is to be done. Notwithstanding the gains recorded under MDGs and SDGs, development gaps are still quite wide in Esan South-East. On the other hand, government funding, corruption, poor implementation of policy, land degradation, and deforestation brought about by environmental challenges could be put under threats to sustainable development. Such issues call for a multi-sectorial approach wherein government agencies, private sector participation, community engagement, and international partnership shall play their part. There are rays of hope that the SDGs hold the promise of being there for Esan South-East; already within the context of those SDGs is an agenda that has all the avenues for continued progress toward inclusive and sustainable development. Anchoring global best practices and locating solutions to specific needs of the region could yield much transformation in education, health, economic growth, and infrastructure. But all these require continuous political will, good governance, and community participation.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to understand how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have influenced development in Esan

South-East, Edo State. By focusing on areas such as education, health care, poverty reduction, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability, the study aims to highlight the progress that has been made over the years, the obstacles still present, and the necessary steps to ensure continued development. One of the key areas of focus is education. The MDGs and SDGs have emphasized the need for accessible and quality education for all. This study will explore whether school enrollment rates have improved, whether more children have access to quality education, and whether there are enough teachers and learning materials to support students. It will also assess the condition of school facilities, such as classrooms, toilets, and libraries, to determine whether investments in education have truly enhanced learning environments. Additionally, the study will examine whether there is equal access to education for boys and girls, ensuring that gender disparities are being addressed.

Health care is another critical aspect of development that this study will examine. The MDGs aimed to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and fight diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS, while the SDGs expanded on these goals by promoting universal health coverage. This research will assess whether more health facilities have been built, whether access to doctors, nurses, and midwives has improved, and whether health services for women and children have expanded. It will also explore whether the fight against infectious diseases has been successful and whether government health programs have made a real difference in people's lives. Poverty remains a pressing issue in Esan South-East, and this study will evaluate the extent to which the MDGs and

SDGs have contributed to poverty reduction and economic growth. By examining income levels, job opportunities, and access to financial resources, the study will assess whether people in the community are better off now than before these development programs were introduced. It will also look at how small business owners and farmers have benefited from financial aid, training programs, and government support, as well as whether initiatives aimed at empowering women and youth have been effective in promoting financial independence.

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in any community's development. The study will assess whether roads have been improved to make travel and trade easier, whether electricity supply has increased to support homes and businesses, and whether access to clean drinking water and sanitation has improved. By evaluating these factors, the study will determine if better infrastructure has contributed to improved education, health care, and economic activities in the community. Environmental sustainability is also an important factor in long-term development. The study will explore whether efforts have been made to prevent deforestation, promote waste management, and support sustainable farming practices. It will assess how these efforts have affected agriculture, food security, and overall community well-being. Additionally, the research will examine the role of government policies and local initiatives in promoting awareness about environmental conservation. Ultimately, this study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how the MDGs and SDGs have shaped the development of Esan South-East. By identifying both achievements and challenges, the findings will

serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, community leaders, and organizations working to improve the lives of people in the region. The goal is not only to evaluate past progress but also to offer insights that will help guide future development efforts, ensuring that the community continues to grow and thrive.

### **Statement of the Problem of the Study**

Esan South-East, like many rural areas in Nigeria, faces several development challenges, including poor education, limited health care, poverty, and a lack of basic infrastructure. These problems make life difficult for residents and slow down the progress of the community. To help solve such issues, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced in 2000, followed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. These global programs aimed to improve living conditions, but it is unclear how much they have actually helped Esan South-East. Despite government programs and international support, many schools in Esan South-East still struggle with poor facilities, a shortage of teachers, and low student enrollment. Health care is also a major issue, with limited hospitals, few medical workers, and a lack of essential medicines. Poverty remains widespread, as many people do not have steady jobs or financial support to grow their businesses, especially in farming. The lack of good roads, electricity, and clean water also makes daily life harder for residents. In addition, environmental problems such as deforestation, poor soil quality, and changing weather patterns are affecting farming and overall well-being. Although the SDGs promote

environmental protection, it is unclear if real action has been taken in Esan South-East to address these issues.

This study aims to find out whether the MDGs and SDGs have truly improved life in Esan South-East. It will examine the progress made in education, health care, job opportunities, infrastructure, and environmental protection. It will also look at the challenges that have slowed down development. The findings will help government officials, organizations, and local leaders understand what has worked, what has not, and what needs to be done to improve the community's future.

### **Scope of the Study**

The research into the development of Esan South-East in Edo State in the light of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals takes into consideration some priority areas that include education, healthcare, eradication of poverty, infrastructural development, and protection of the environment. The study sought to identify the impact that the global initiatives of MDGs and SDGs have left on local projects and policies to improve living standards.

The study concerns Esan South-East, for the most part, Ubiaja, the headquarters of the local government. Farming, small businesses, and trade are what the major population depends on for survival. They face very poor roads, lack of proper schools and hospitals, and environmental issues such as deforestation. The aim of this study is to examine how MDGs and SDGs addressed these problems and if they ever made a difference in the community. The period under study is between 2000 to 2023, including the years the

MDGs were in place, that is, from 2000 to 2015, and the ongoing SDG period, 2015 to 2023. The endpoint is 2023 because it is the most recent complete year, and as such, it's useful for assessing progress so far. While the SDGs will run until 2030, looking at the results up to 2023 gives us a clearer picture of what has been achieved so far and what still needs to be done. This study will compare the impact of both the MDGs and SDGs in Esan South-East. It shall look at efforts which the government, non-governmental organizations, and community groups have made toward the realization of such goals. The study will also look at the challenges that have slowed down progress to include lack of funding, poor planning, and government policies. It is by looking into these issues that the study will avail useful information to decision-makers, development organizations, and the local community on what has worked, what has not, and what can be done to ensure Esan South-East continues to develop in line with the SDGs. The findings will also go a long way in guiding future projects and policies that aim at improving living conditions in the area.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is important because it looks at how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have helped improve life in Esan South-East, Edo State. It will focus on key areas such as education, health care, poverty reduction, infrastructure, and environmental protection. By doing this, the study will show what has improved, what challenges still exist, and what needs to be done to continue progress. One of the main reasons this study is valuable is that it provides

useful information for government officials, community leaders, and organizations working to improve the area. While international development programs are meant to help people worldwide, their success depends on how well they work in local communities. This research will show whether these programs have made a real difference in Esan South-East or if new approaches are needed to get better results. Education is one of the most important factors in improving people's lives. This study will examine whether more children are going to school, if there are enough teachers and learning materials, and whether schools have proper facilities such as classrooms, toilets, and libraries. It will also look at whether both boys and girls have equal access to education. If the study finds that education has improved, it will encourage continued investment in schools. If there are still problems, such as overcrowded classrooms or a lack of teachers, the findings will help decision-makers know what needs to change.

Health care is another important issue. The MDGs focused on reducing deaths among children and mothers and controlling diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS. The SDGs continue this effort by aiming to improve health care for everyone. This study will look at whether more hospitals and clinics have been built, if there are enough doctors and nurses, and whether health services for women and children have improved. It will also examine whether efforts to prevent and treat diseases have been successful. If the study finds that health care has improved, it will encourage further support for medical programs. If problems still exist, such as a lack of health workers or medical supplies, the findings will highlight what needs to be fixed. Many people in Esan South-East

struggle with poverty, so this study will also look at whether development programs have helped people earn better incomes and create more jobs. It will assess whether farmers are getting the support they need, if small business owners have access to loans and training, and whether women and young people are being given opportunities to succeed. If poverty has decreased, it will show that these programs are working and should be continued. If not, the findings will help identify what needs to change to improve people's economic situations.

Good infrastructure is necessary for a community to grow. This study will examine whether roads have improved, making it easier for people to travel and do business. It will also look at whether access to electricity has increased and if more people have clean drinking water and better sanitation. If the study finds that infrastructure has improved, it will justify further investment in roads, electricity, and water supply. If not, it will provide evidence to push for better services in these areas.

Protecting the environment is also essential for long-term development. Problems like deforestation, waste management, and climate change can affect farming, water supply, and overall health. This study will assess whether efforts have been made to protect the environment, such as planting trees, promoting sustainable farming, and encouraging proper waste disposal. If the study finds that these efforts are working, it will support ongoing environmental programs. If challenges remain, the findings will help guide better environmental policies. This study is also important for the people of Esan South-East because it will help them understand how development programs affect their lives.

Many people may not be aware of the specific ways in which international goals like the MDGs and SDGs have impacted their community. By sharing real experiences and highlighting successes and challenges, this research will help raise awareness and encourage people to take an active role in improving their community. When people are informed, they are more likely to support development projects, demand better services, and work together to create positive change. Beyond the local community, this study also contributes to academic research. While there have been many studies on the MDGs and SDGs at national and global levels, there is less research on how these programs have affected specific rural communities like Esan South-East.

In conclusion, this study is important because it provides a clear picture of how the MDGs and SDGs have influenced development in Esan South-East. By looking at education, health care, poverty reduction, infrastructure, and environmental protection, it will offer valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and development organizations. Whether the findings show progress or highlight ongoing challenges, they will help guide future decisions and actions to ensure that Esan South-East continues to grow and improve.

### **Research Method**

This research aims to analyze the contributions of the MDGs and SDGs to the socio-economic and infrastructural development of Ubiaja, located in the Esan South-East LGA of Edo State. The study employs a mixed method approach, combining Primary and Secondary research methods which involves quantitative and qualitative

analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these global development frameworks at the local level

### **Primary Sources**

This source includes oral interviews of persons of Ubiaja origin and residents of Ubiaja. The oral interview allows for in-depth and personal insights of the interviewee. Also, the research aims to review government reports, which will contain the data on various sectors related to education, health, gender equality, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability, which aligns with the MDGs and SDGs.

### **Secondary Sources**

This source will involve reviewing government reports, journals from local government offices, which will contain the data on various indicators related to health, education, gender equality, poverty reduction, and environmental sustainability, which align with the MDGs and SDGs. Data from government reports, NGO publications, and other relevant document will be analyzed to assess changes in key development overtime such as literacy rates, maternal and child health statistics, and poverty levels.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Development is essential for any society that seeks to improve the well-being of its people. It determines access to basic needs such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. However, for many communities in Nigeria, including Ubiaja in Esan South East, Edo State, development has been a slow and challenging process. Issues such as poverty, poor governance, weak infrastructure, and limited access to essential services have hindered progress for decades. In response to these global challenges, the United Nations (UN) introduced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. These goals aimed to address poverty, poor education, gender inequality, child mortality, maternal health, diseases, environmental sustainability, and global partnerships. Countries around the world, including Nigeria, worked towards achieving these goals by 2015.

However, despite the progress made, many of the MDGs' targets were not fully achieved. As a result, in 2015, the UN replaced the MDGs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs provide a broader and more sustainable approach to development, emphasizing long-term economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion. The SDGs are scheduled to last until 2030, giving countries more time to create lasting solutions to developmental challenges.

For communities like Ubiaja, the MDGs and SDGs have influenced local policies and programs aimed at improving healthcare, education, infrastructure, governance, and economic empowerment. However, challenges remain, and the success of these initiatives depends largely on effective implementation, good governance, and community participation.

### **Impacts of MDGs on the Local Government Area**

Good leadership and management are necessary for the success of any development effort. The MDGs encouraged local government authorities to improve service delivery, reduce corruption, and make their policies more transparent (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. In Ubiaja, the MDGs led to changes in how the local government handled development programs. Despite these improvements, many governance challenges remained. Local government offices often lacked the skilled workers needed to manage MDG programs effectively. Corruption also slowed progress, as funds meant for community projects were sometimes mismanaged or diverted (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. Another challenge was the lack of public awareness about MDG programs. Many residents did not know about government-led projects and had little say in how these initiatives were carried out. However, the MDGs helped introduce new measures for tracking progress and holding government officials accountable (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. These changes laid the foundation for better management of future development programs under the SDGs.

### **The MDGs and Healthcare in Ubiaja**

One of the main goals of the MDGs was to improve access to healthcare. In Ubiaja, the MDGs led to several programs aimed at reducing child and maternal deaths, preventing diseases, and improving basic health services. One major achievement was the expansion of maternal and child healthcare programs. More pregnant women received medical care during childbirth, and vaccination programs were introduced to prevent diseases like measles and polio (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Free medical services for pregnant women and children under five helped reduce deaths caused by pregnancy-related complications and childhood illnesses. However, healthcare services in Ubiaja continued to face problems. Many hospitals and clinics had too few doctors and nurses, making it difficult for people to get proper medical attention. Some health centers lacked medicine and equipment, which reduced the effectiveness of healthcare programs (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, poor road conditions made it hard for residents in remote areas to access medical facilities. Despite these issues, the MDGs raised awareness about the importance of healthcare, leading to new policies that aimed to improve health services further under the SDGs.

### **The MDGs and Education in Ubiaja**

Education is a key development, and one of the MDGs' main targets was to ensure that more children received primary school education. In Ubiaja, government efforts to meet this goal led to an increase in the number of children enrolled in school. More schools were built, and programs were introduced to encourage parents to send their

children to school, especially girls (Adefolalu, 2013)<sup>2</sup>. Free primary education programs helped increase school attendance, but challenges remained. Many schools lacked enough classrooms, desks, and teaching materials. The shortage of trained teachers also made it difficult for students to receive quality education. Some children, especially those from poor families, still dropped out of school due to financial difficulties or cultural beliefs that placed less importance on education for girls (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Although the MDGs improved access to education in Ubiaja, the quality of education remained a problem. The SDGs have since built on these efforts by focusing on teacher training and making learning environments more effective.

### **The MDGs and Economic Development in Ubiaja**

A key part of the MDGs was to reduce poverty by improving economic opportunities for people in rural areas. In Ubiaja, the local government introduced small business support programs, agricultural projects, and job training initiatives to help people earn a better living. Farmers received assistance in the form of seeds, fertilizers, and farming tools, while small business owners were given access to loans and grants (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. These programs helped improve income levels for some people, but many residents still struggled to find stable jobs. A lack of investment in industries meant that young people had few employment opportunities, leading to migration to bigger cities in search of work (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Many farming communities also faced challenges such as poor road networks, which made it difficult to transport goods to markets. While the MDGs provided some relief through poverty reduction

programs, these efforts were not enough to bring long-term economic stability. The SDGs have since introduced new programs that focus on sustainable job creation and entrepreneurship.

### **The MDGs and Infrastructure Development in Ubiaja**

Good infrastructure is essential for development. The MDGs led to efforts to improve roads, electricity, and access to clean water in many parts of Nigeria, including Ubiaja. Some roads were repaired to make transportation easier for traders and farmers. Boreholes and water supply projects were also introduced to provide clean drinking water to communities (Adefolalu,2013)<sup>2</sup>. However, these improvements were not widespread. Many areas still lacked good roads, making travel difficult, especially during the rainy season. Electricity supply remained unreliable, forcing many residents and businesses to depend on generators. Water supply projects were often poorly maintained, causing them to stop functioning after a few years (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. Although the MDGs led to some improvements in infrastructure, these efforts needed better long-term planning. The SDGs now emphasize sustainable infrastructure development to ensure that projects continue to benefit communities in the long run.

### **Community Engagement and Participation**

Community engagement plays a key role in the success of development initiatives, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. When local people participate in decision-making processes, projects are more likely to be effective, sustainable, and beneficial to the community (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. In Ubiaja, Esan South East,

Edo State, community engagement has contributed to improvements in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and economic development. However, many development programs in Nigeria have faced challenges due to a lack of proper community involvement (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. For development efforts to be successful, it is important to ensure that local voices are heard and that projects align with the real needs of the people. This discussion explores the significance of community participation, its impact on key sectors, challenges to its success, and ways to strengthen engagement. When communities are actively involved in planning and implementing development projects, there is a greater sense of ownership, responsibility, and long-term commitment to maintaining these objectives (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>.

Development programs that are designed without consulting local residents often fail due to the fact that they do not address the real challenges people face (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Community participation ensures that local knowledge and experiences shape decision-making, making projects more relevant and effective. Another advantage of community involvement is that it enhances transparency and accountability. people should be informed about how projects are planned and funded, so that they can monitor progress and hold leaders accountable (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. This reduces corruption and mismanagement, which are common issues in development programs in Nigeria. Engaging the community also fosters trust between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local people. When residents feel their opinions matter, they are more likely to support development projects and cooperate with authorities.

Trust and collaboration improve project implementation and create a stronger foundation for long-term development (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>.

## **Healthcare**

Community engagement has had a significant impact on healthcare in many parts of Nigeria, including Ubiaja. When local people participate in health education programs and awareness campaigns, they become more informed about disease prevention and available medical services (Adefolalu,2013)<sup>2</sup>. In areas where community health workers have been introduced, access to healthcare has improved, especially for women and children.

One of the most effective strategies has been training local health workers to provide basic medical services and assist with maternal and child healthcare (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. These community health workers help with vaccinations, health check-ups, and hygiene education, ensuring that even people in remote areas receive basic medical care. Despite these improvements, challenges remain due to lack of medical supplies, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and limited government support have slowed progress (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Strengthening partnerships between local governments, community organizations, and healthcare providers can help address these issues and ensure better healthcare services.

## **Education**

Education is another area where community participation has led to positive changes. In many rural communities, parents and local leaders have worked together to improve

school infrastructure, encourage student enrollment, and provide learning materials (Adefolalu,2013)<sup>2</sup>. When communities are actively involved in school management, issues such as teacher shortages, poor learning conditions, and student absenteeism are addressed more effectively. In Ubiaja, local organizations and religious groups have played a role in providing scholarships and financial support to students from low-income families (Adebayo,2012)<sup>1</sup>. Volunteer teaching programs and mentorship initiatives have also helped improve the quality of education. However, despite these efforts, many schools still struggle with inadequate funding, poor facilities, and a lack of trained teachers (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>.

### **Economic Development**

Community engagement has also contributed to economic development in Ubiaja. Farming and small-scale businesses are the primary sources of income for many residents, and collective efforts have helped improve productivity (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. Through cooperative societies, farmers have been able to access financial assistance, share resources, and market their products more effectively. Vocational training programs have been more successful when communities participate in designing them to meet their specific economic needs (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Skill-building programs focused on farming, carpentry, tailoring, and small-scale trading have provided local residents with better job opportunities. Despite these successes, economic development has been hindered by poor infrastructure, limited access to credit, and unreliable electricity (Eze, 2014). Addressing these challenges requires stronger

partnerships between government agencies, businesses, and local communities to create better economic opportunities.

### **Challenges to Community Engagement**

Although community participation has led to significant improvements, several challenges continue to limit its full potential. One major obstacle is a lack of awareness and education. Many people do not fully understand their rights or how they can participate in development efforts, leading to limited engagement (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Increasing awareness through education and public forums can help more people get involved in decision-making. Cultural and traditional beliefs sometimes limit participation, especially for women and young people (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. In many rural areas, decision-making is dominated by older men, leaving out voices that could contribute valuable perspectives. Encouraging inclusivity and ensuring equal participation for all groups can lead to better development outcomes.

Another challenge is poor leadership and governance. In some cases, government officials and project leaders do not involve the community in planning and implementation, leading to failed projects (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. Corruption and mismanagement have also discouraged participation, as people lose trust in government-led development efforts. Strengthening accountability measures and ensuring that communities are actively consulted can help address this issue. Lack of resources is another significant barrier that has made many community-driven projects failed due to insufficient funding and technical support (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. Strengthening partnerships

with non-governmental organizations and private investors can help secure the necessary resources to support sustainable development.

### **Strengthening Community Engagement**

Improving community engagement requires a combination of awareness, strong leadership, and inclusive decision-making. Education plays a key role in ensuring that people understand the benefits of participation and how they can contribute to development efforts. Public meetings, workshops, and media campaigns can help bridge the gap between community members and decision-makers (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Leadership and accountability are also crucial. Government officials and local leaders must create opportunities for residents to express their concerns and contribute to planning and implementation. When communities feel heard and valued, they are more likely to support and maintain development projects (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. Ensuring that all groups, including women and young people, have a voice in decision-making is essential for inclusive development. By creating policies that promote equal participation, communities can harness the skills and knowledge of all their members (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Collaboration between governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations can provide additional resources and expertise to support local initiatives. Strengthening these partnerships can help ensure that projects are well-funded and effectively implemented (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>.

## **Community Engagement Understanding in the MDGs Framework**

The MDGs set clear targets for reducing poverty, improving healthcare, expanding education, and promoting gender equality. However, these goals could not be achieved by governments alone. The direct involvement of communities was necessary to ensure that projects were relevant, sustainable, and effectively managed (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. One of the main reasons community engagement was so important was that local people had firsthand knowledge of their own challenges. While policymakers and international organizations provided funding and strategies, community members knew what worked best in their specific areas (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. For example, in healthcare, trained community members helped organize vaccination drives, educate people about disease prevention, and assist in maternal health programs. These efforts increased awareness and improved health outcomes in rural areas where government services were often limited (Adefolalu, 2013)<sup>2</sup>.

Another key benefit of community participation was that it fostered a sense of ownership. When people felt that a project belonged to them, they were more likely to support and maintain it even after external funding ended. In education, for example, parents and local leaders in some areas took the initiative to build classrooms, provide learning materials, and monitor school attendance (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. This helped increase enrollment and reduced dropout rates.

## **Community Participation in Key MDG Sectors**

The MDGs aimed to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS. Community engagement played a vital role in achieving these targets. In areas where local people were involved in health awareness campaigns, vaccination programs had higher success rates (Eze2014)<sup>3</sup>. Traditional birth attendants and community health workers were trained to provide maternal care, reducing pregnancy-related deaths. However, in regions where community involvement was weak, healthcare services often struggled due to a lack of trust and awareness.

## **Education**

One of the MDGs focused on providing universal primary education. Community participation helped improve school enrollment in many rural areas. Parents and community groups have worked together to build schools, provide learning materials, and support teachers (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. In Ubiaja, for example, local organizations introduced scholarship programs for underprivileged children. However, various challenges such as teacher shortages, and inadequate infrastructure limited progress in some areas (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>.

## **Poverty Reduction and Economic Development**

The MDG framework also aimed to reduce extreme poverty by promoting employment and sustainable livelihoods. In Nigeria, local farming cooperatives and small business initiatives were strengthened through community-driven programs

(Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. When people worked together in cooperative groups, they were able to access loans, share resources, and improve their businesses. However, a lack of government support and limited infrastructure made it difficult for some communities to fully benefit from these initiatives (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>.

### **Challenges to Community Engagement in the MDGs Framework**

Despite its importance, community participation in MDG programs was not always successful. One major challenge was the lack of awareness and education. Many people did not fully understand their role in development efforts, leading to limited involvement (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. In some cases, projects were introduced without consulting local people, which resulted in resistance or lack of interest. Poor leadership and governance also weakened community engagement. In some areas, corruption and mismanagement led to resources being diverted away from intended projects (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. Another challenge was the lack of funding and resources. Many community-driven initiatives relied on external financial support, and when funding ended, some projects could not be sustained (Eze,2014)<sup>3</sup>. This highlighted the need for long-term investment and better planning to ensure continuity. This discouraged community members from participating, as they lost trust in government-led initiatives. Strengthening transparency and accountability would have helped build confidence and encourage greater involvement.

### **Community Engagement Strategies in Esan South-East**

One of the most effective ways to engage the community in Esan South-East is through traditional leadership. Local chiefs, village heads, and elders have long been trusted figures in the community, and their influence can help mobilize people to take part in development projects. When traditional leaders support an initiative, community members are more likely to trust and participate in it. This approach has been particularly useful in areas such as healthcare campaigns, education programs, and infrastructure development (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. Another strategy is grassroots participation through town hall meetings. These gatherings allow community members to discuss issues, share ideas, and contribute to decision-making. When people feel that their voices are heard, they are more likely to support and take ownership of development projects. In Esan South-East, town hall meetings have been used to resolve conflicts, organize cooperative societies, and improve local governance (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>.

Community-based organizations also play a key role in engagement. These groups, which include youth associations, women's groups, and cooperative societies, help drive participation in local projects. For instance, women's groups have been instrumental in promoting maternal health programs, while youth associations have contributed to environmental sanitation efforts (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. These organizations help bridge the gap between government agencies and the people, ensuring that projects meet real community needs. Education and awareness campaigns are another important strategy. Many development projects fail because people do not

fully understand their benefits or how they can contribute. By organizing workshops, radio programs, and awareness drives, community members can become more informed about their roles in development. In Esan South-East, such campaigns have helped increase school enrollment, improve hygiene practices, and encourage the use of health facilities (Adefolalu, 2013)<sup>2</sup>.

Partnerships with local and international organizations have also been effective in strengthening community engagement. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious groups have supported various development programs in Esan South-East, ranging from healthcare services to vocational training. By working with trusted local institutions, these organizations have been able to gain community support and improve project success rates (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Economic empowerment programs further encourage participation by giving people the resources they need to contribute to development. Microfinance schemes, agricultural cooperatives, and skill acquisition programs have provided community members with financial stability and motivation to engage in local projects. In some villages, farming groups have pooled resources to improve productivity; while vocational training centers have helped young people gain employment (Eze,2014)<sup>3</sup>.

Infrastructure development projects also benefit from strong community participation. In Esan South-East, road construction, water supply, and electrification projects have been more successful when local people take part in planning and implementation. Community members often contribute labor, provide local materials, or

monitor progress to ensure that resources are used properly. This reduces corruption and increases accountability, leading to better project outcomes (Odefolalu,2015)<sup>5</sup>. Despite these efforts, challenges to community engagement remain. A lack of trust in government programs, political interference, and poor funding have sometimes discouraged participation. Additionally, cultural factors may limit the involvement of certain groups, such as women and young people, in decision-making processes (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Addressing these challenges requires stronger transparency, better communication, and policies that promote inclusivity. To improve community engagement, it is important to strengthen leadership structures, provide continuous education, and create platforms where people can participate in development efforts. When communities are fully involved, projects are more likely to succeed and bring lasting benefits to the people of Esan South-East.

### **Outcomes of Community Engagement in Esan South-East**

Community engagement has led to significant improvements in Esan South-East, Edo State. When people actively participate in development efforts, projects tend to be more effective, sustainable, and tailored to the real needs of the community. Over the years, strong community involvement has helped drive progress in key areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, economic development, and security. By taking ownership of these initiatives, local people have played a crucial role in ensuring that projects succeed where government efforts alone might have fallen short. One of the most noticeable outcomes of community engagement is the improvement in education.

In many parts of Esan South-East, parents, local leaders, and organizations have worked together to increase school enrollment, renovate classrooms, and provide learning materials. Through collective efforts, many communities have successfully lobbied for more teachers and resources to improve the quality of education. Some have even established scholarship programs to support students from low-income families, ensuring that financial difficulties do not prevent children from going to school (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. In areas where teacher shortages were a challenge, community volunteers have stepped in to provide lessons, helping to keep children in school and reduce dropout rates (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>.

Healthcare has also seen significant progress as a result of strong community involvement. Community members have played key roles in raising awareness about maternal health, child immunization, and disease prevention. Local health initiatives, such as vaccination drives and malaria prevention campaigns, have gained support from residents who actively participate in outreach programs (Adefolalu, 2013)<sup>2</sup>. Traditional birth attendants have been trained to improve delivery practices, leading to lower maternal and infant mortality rates in the region (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Community health workers have also been instrumental in educating people about sanitation and hygiene, which has helped reduce the spread of preventable diseases. In many villages, local groups have taken it upon themselves to organize regular sanitation exercises, keeping their environments clean and reducing health risks (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Infrastructure development has greatly benefited from active community participation.

In Esan South-East, local people have contributed their time, labor, and resources to improve roads, repair bridges, and provide access to clean water (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. In some instances, abandoned government projects have been completed through collective community action, ensuring that vital infrastructure does not remain unused. When faced with unreliable water supply, some villages have built boreholes through community funding, providing clean drinking water for residents. Similarly, electrification projects have progressed more smoothly when local communities have lobbied for access to power and contributed funds to install transformers and electrical lines (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>.

Economic growth has been another important outcome of community engagement. Farmers, traders, and artisans in Esan South-East have formed cooperative societies to support one another in business. By pooling resources, these groups have gained access to good facilities, also access to improved their agricultural practices, and expanded their businesses (Okojie & Oteh, 2014)<sup>7</sup>. Through community-driven skill acquisition programs, young people have been trained in vocations such as tailoring, carpentry, and hairdressing, giving them opportunities to earn a living and support their families (Adebayo, 2012). Women's associations have also played a vital role in economic development by setting up microfinance schemes that provide loans for small-scale businesses, empowering many women to become financially independent (Eze, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Community-led security initiatives have contributed to making Esan South-East a safer place. In response to rising crime rates, local residents have come together to

establish vigilante groups that assist law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and order. These groups have helped curb incidents of theft, violence, and other criminal activities, creating a safer environment for businesses and families (Nwachukwu & Onuoha, 2013)<sup>4</sup> By working closely with the police and reporting suspicious activities, community members have played a direct role in ensuring security in their localities.

Despite these positive outcomes, some challenges continue to affect community engagement. Limited funding has made it difficult to sustain certain initiatives, and political interference has sometimes slowed progress (Ogujiuba & Adeniyi, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. In some cases, not all segments of the community have been included in decision-making processes, reducing the overall effectiveness of projects (Odefolalu, 2015)<sup>5</sup>. Women and young people, in particular, have sometimes been sidelined in discussions about development, even though they have important contributions to make. To overcome these challenges, there is a need for greater transparency, inclusivity, and coordination between community groups and government agencies. Strengthening leadership structures, providing continuous education on the importance of participation, and ensuring that resources are fairly distributed can help improve community engagement. Additionally, more investment in long-term projects rather than short-term fixes will make community-driven initiatives more sustainable.

The impact of community engagement in Esan South-East is clear. By actively participating in education, healthcare, infrastructure development, economic empowerment, and security, local people have helped transform their communities.

Their contributions have led to real improvements in living standards, demonstrating that development is most successful when people take ownership of the process. Strengthening these efforts and addressing the challenges that remain will ensure that even greater progress is made in the future. The experience of community engagement in the MDG framework provides valuable lessons for future programs, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One key takeaway is that development efforts must be community-driven rather than imposed from above. When people are actively involved from the start, projects are more likely to succeed.

Education and awareness campaigns should also be prioritized to ensure that communities understand their roles in development (Adefolalu, 2013)<sup>2</sup>. Encouraging local leadership, promoting transparency, and ensuring that resources are managed efficiently can help build trust and encourage greater participation. Finally, long-term planning is essential. Development efforts should not rely solely on short-term funding but should focus on creating sustainable systems that communities can maintain even after external support is withdrawn (Adebayo, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. One of the key lessons from community-driven development in Esan South-East is that participation strengthens the effectiveness of education. Parents, local leaders, and volunteer teachers have all contributed to improving school attendance and learning outcomes (Adebayo, 2012). Community-led initiatives such as scholarship programs and school renovations have expanded access to education, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MDGs CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF UBIAJA, ESAN SOUTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA) EDO STATE**

#### **Introduction**

The Millennium Development Goals, MDGs for short, were a global effort by the United Nations to address the salient issues of poverty, education, health, and the environment by the year 2015. Founded in the year 2000, the MDGs became an initiator and also sieved framework development for regions like Ubiaja, a rural enclave in Esan South-East Local Government Area (LGA), Edo State, Nigeria. Though most rural areas of Nigeria have been more or less stagnant in progress, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) contributions cut across all the sectors in Ubiaja in spurring several MDG achievements. An MDG most cherished by the citizenry residing within Ubiaja is poverty alleviation (MDG1): NGOs have prioritized empowering communities through microfinance, skills development, and income-generating activity projects targeted at these local communities. Complementing these are such enabling initiatives as collaboration with local NGOs and international donors for the creation of small businesses for women and youth and integration of agricultural potential with other

sources of income affecting household income. There is also involvement of the non-governmental organizations in construction and rehabilitation of schools, provision of learning materials, and encouragement of girls' education in the education sector (MDG2). Some programs initiated by the NGOs have encouraged girls to get educated by offering scholarships, school materials, and mentoring. These programs have helped to improve enrollment rates while reducing school dropout and increasing literacy levels.

Most women groups within the locality have continued to advocate for the education of the girl child continue to fight against the traditional norms, and empower young girls to pursue education beyond primary school. Changes in health (MDGs 4, 5, and 6) have also formed a central theme in the initiatives of NGOs. Within Ubiaja, with very limited access to health services, NGOs have made considerable efforts in improving the conditions of maternal and child health. They comprise mobile health clinics, vaccination campaigns, and reproductive health education which focus on reducing both maternal and infant mortality rates, found to be high in rural Nigeria, alongside this is the distribution of essential medicines like anti-malaria drugs and vaccines. These have been the effective interventions for improving maternal and child health in the community.

### **Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment**

These authors showed that the non-governmental organizations succeeded in terms of poverty alleviation for rural communities in Nigeria, including Ubiaja, through microfinance institutions and livelihood assistance programs. Such poverty-alleviation

programs rely on MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and mainly aim at providing financial services to disadvantaged groups such as women, farmers, and youths. The microcredit initiatives, according to Olaniyan (2016)<sup>5</sup>, empower women to start businesses or improve their small businesses and then also ultimately improve household income and provide an economic security net, thereby raising it up as one of the poverty alleviation functions.

### **Economic Growth through Rural Infrastructural Development**

Good infrastructure is a key to economic growth, especially in rural areas like Ubiaja. From the insights of Miss Angela, Mr. Pius, and Miss Ebieghianye, who are the interviewees has stated that it is clear that while the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) brought some progress, more needs to be done. Access to microfinance has improved the local economy in Ubiaja because it has stimulated entrepreneurship and increased dependency on subsistence farming among the people, according to Edeh et al.(2018)<sup>4</sup>. With assistance from NGOs, beneficiaries of microloan programs can diversify their sources of income and avoid market fluctuations or poor harvests as much as possible. Some NGOs also offer training in small-scale agricultural processing, which enables rural entrepreneurs to add value to raw agricultural products and further improve their incomes. Mrs. Angela Iyere<sup>8</sup> who is a teacher noted that “education improved with more schools and free primary education, but poor facilities and a shortage of teachers has remained a major challenge. Better school buildings, learning materials, and teacher training can help create a skilled workforce for economic growth”.

Another aspect, as noted by scholars, is that beyond the MDG agenda in rural infrastructure development, such programs have been dedicated to promoting economic growth. Mr. Pius, a farmer, pointed out that “improved seeds and farming methods were introduced, but bad roads make it hard to transport goods. Investing in better roads, storage facilities, and modern farming tools will boost productivity and income for farmers”. Investment in rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply increases market access and decreases the transaction cost of local producers, contends Ajayi and Ogunjimi (2015)<sup>3</sup>. As examples, non-governmental organizations in Ubiaja, often working through partnerships with the state and federal governments, also accomplish projects on infrastructure that richly pertain to MDG 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability) and MDG 8 (Develop a global partnership for development). This has enabled provision of better access to clean water, and improving agricultural productivity through better irrigation systems, these projects have enabled the local economy to grow even larger.

Through some educational and vocational training programs related to MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education), he has trained many NGOs to acquire the skills needed to migrate from traditional farming to some other sectors, such as construction, retail, and services. In the long run, this skill diversification has enhanced a more dynamic local economy with fewer dependencies on any one industry.

### **Gender and Poverty Reduction**

Gender equity, a key component of MDG 3, has also been identified as a crucial factor in poverty reduction and economic growth in Ubiaja. According to Akinyemi and Ogunleye(2019)<sup>2</sup>, empowering women through education, training, and access to financial resources has had a direct impact on poverty alleviation. In Ubiaja, programs designed to increase women's participation in economic activities have proven to be especially effective in lifting households out of poverty. Women who receive microloans or training in small-scale business management often reinvest their earnings into their families' education and health, creating a ripple effect that benefits the community as a whole. The empowerment of women has thus proven to be a key lever for both poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established in 2000 by the United Nations, represented a global commitment to address pressing developmental challenges by 2015.

### **Education Improvements**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a transformative role in expanding access to primary education in Ubiaja, marking a turning point in the community's educational landscape. Before the advent of the MDG era, a multitude of barriers kept many children out of school, including widespread poverty, deeply rooted cultural norms that sometimes discouraged formal education, and a glaring lack of adequate infrastructure to support learning. Schools were often few and far between, poorly equipped, and unable to accommodate the growing population of school-age children. Recognizing education as a cornerstone of development, the MDGs provided a

strategic framework that spurred both governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at dismantling these obstacles. Efforts were intensified to ensure that every child, regardless of their socio-economic background or gender, had an equal opportunity to receive primary education. A significant boost came through the strengthening of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme, which facilitated improvements in school facilities, teacher recruitment, and curriculum development.

To ease the financial strain on families, various incentive programs were introduced. Subsidized tuition made schooling more affordable, while the provision of free learning materials, including textbooks and uniforms, further reduced out-of-pocket expenses for parents. Additionally, school feeding programs were implemented, ensuring that children from low-income households received at least one nutritious meal per day. This initiative not only enhanced students' concentration and academic performance but also served as a powerful incentive for parents to send their children to school, knowing that their nutritional needs would be met. These concerted efforts led to a significant surge in primary school enrollment rates, with more children in Ubiaja gaining access to quality education than ever before. The positive ripple effects extended beyond just literacy and numeracy; the newfound emphasis on education fostered a shift in societal attitudes, gradually breaking down cultural barriers that once hindered school attendance, particularly for girls. By prioritizing education as a fundamental right and necessity, the MDGs laid the foundation for a more informed and empowered generation in Ubiaja, paving the way for continued progress in the years to come.

## **Enhancing Educational Infrastructure**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a transformative role in reshaping the educational landscape of Ubiaja, bringing about significant improvements in school infrastructure and learning conditions. Prior to these interventions, the state of many schools in the region was classrooms which were either crumbling or nonexistent, with students forced to learn under structures that offered little protection from the elements. Many schools lacked even the most fundamental amenities, such as proper furniture, functional blackboards, clean water, and sanitation facilities. These deficiencies not only sponsored effective teaching and learning but also discouraged school attendance, particularly among young children. Recognizing these challenges, investments channeled through the MDG framework catalyzed a wave of infrastructural development aimed at creating a more conducive learning environment. Numerous schools across Ubiaja witnessed the construction of new classroom blocks, replacing old, deteriorating structures with modern, well-equipped learning spaces. These new facilities were furnished with desks, chairs, and chalkboards, ensuring that students no longer had to sit on bare floors or crowd into inadequate spaces to receive an education.

Beyond the provision of classrooms and furniture, significant attention was also given to improving access to clean water and sanitation. The installation of boreholes in several schools ensured a steady supply of potable water, addressing a critical need that had long plagued students and teachers alike. Additionally, the construction of proper toilet facilities helped to promote better hygiene and curb the spread of waterborne

diseases, creating a healthier school environment. These improvements not only enhanced students' overall well-being but also contributed to increased school attendance and retention, particularly among girls, who often faced greater challenges due to the absence of sanitary facilities. Ultimately, the infrastructural advancements driven by the MDGs laid the foundation for a more robust educational system in Ubiaja. By addressing critical deficits in school infrastructure, these interventions helped to create a more inclusive and effective learning environment, empowering future generations with the tools they need to succeed.

### **Training and Capacity Building for Teachers**

A crucial aspect of educational development is the availability of qualified and motivated teachers, as they serve as the backbone of any thriving education system. Without well-trained educators who are passionate about their work, the quality of instruction diminishes, hindering the learning process and limiting student potential. Recognizing this, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a pivotal role in addressing a critical gap in the education sector of Ubiaja by investing in teacher training and capacity building. To bridge the gap in instructional quality, various programs were launched, targeting the professional growth of educators. These initiatives included comprehensive workshops, interactive seminars, and structured professional development courses designed to equip teachers with essential skills for effective classroom engagement. Educators received training in modern pedagogical techniques that emphasized student-centered learning, innovative teaching strategies,

and differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learning needs. Furthermore, training sessions focused on classroom management techniques, ensuring that teachers could maintain discipline while fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment.

Recognizing the increasing role of technology in education, the MDG-driven programs also introduced teachers to digital tools and e-learning resources, enabling them to integrate technology into their teaching practices. This not only enhanced the learning experience for students but also expanded teachers' instructional capabilities, making lessons more interactive and accessible. Beyond improving teaching methods, these initiatives had a profound impact on teacher morale and retention rates. With access to professional development opportunities, educators felt more valued and empowered in their roles. To further encourage teachers to remain in the profession particularly in underserved areas like Ubiaja, additional incentives were introduced. Housing schemes provided secure and comfortable living arrangements, while rural allowances offered financial support to teachers working in remote communities. These measures made teaching in such areas more attractive, ensuring that schools in Ubiaja had a steady supply of dedicated educators. Ultimately, the investment in teacher training and support significantly enhanced the quality of education in Ubiaja. Students benefited from more dynamic and effective teaching, while teachers found renewed motivation in their profession. By addressing the fundamental need for well-equipped educators, the MDGs laid a strong foundation for sustainable educational progress in the region.

## **Promoting Gender Equality in Education**

A crucial aspect of educational development is the availability of qualified and motivated teachers, as they serve as the backbone of any thriving education system. Teachers do not merely impart knowledge; they shape young minds, instill critical thinking skills, and inspire a lifelong love for learning. Without well-trained educators who are passionate about their work, the quality of instruction diminishes, hindering the learning process and limiting student potential. The absence of adequate teacher training leads to ineffective teaching methods, low student engagement, and ultimately, poor academic performance, recognizing the fundamental role of educators, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played an important role in addressing a critical gap in the education sector of Ubiaja by investing in teacher training and capacity building. This initiative was crucial in ensuring that the education system in the region was not only functional but also capable of fostering meaningful learning experiences for students. To bridge the gap in instructional quality, various targeted programs were launched to enhance the professional growth and development of educators. These initiatives include a range of capacity-building efforts, including comprehensive workshops, interactive seminars, and structured professional development courses. These programs were meticulously designed to equip teachers with essential skills that would allow them to engage students effectively and deliver high-quality education. Educators underwent training in modern techniques that laid emphasis student-centered learning, innovative teaching strategies, and differentiated instruction to accommodate the diverse learning

needs of their students. By fostering interactive and engaging classroom environments, teachers were empowered to move beyond rote memorization and instead cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among students.

Furthermore, specialized training sessions focused on classroom management techniques, helping teachers create structured yet flexible learning spaces where discipline and encouragement coexisted. Educators were trained to employ positive reinforcement, conflict resolution strategies, and inclusive teaching methods to support students with varying abilities and backgrounds. These efforts contributed to a more conducive learning environment, where students felt safe, respected, and motivated to participate actively in their education. Recognizing the increasing role of technology in modern education, the MDG-driven programs also introduced teachers to digital tools and e-learning resources. With the integration of technology into their teaching practices, educators could leverage multimedia content, online learning platforms, and interactive software to make lessons more dynamic and accessible. Teachers learned to use computers, projectors, and mobile applications to enhance student engagement and comprehension. This technological integration not only enriched classroom experiences but also prepared students for a rapidly evolving digital world. By incorporating technology into lesson planning and instruction, teachers could bridge the digital divide and ensure that students in Ubiaja had access to the same educational advancements as their counterparts in urban areas.

Beyond improving teaching methodologies, these initiatives had a profound impact on teacher morale and retention rates. When educators were provided with opportunities for professional growth and continuous learning, they felt more valued, confident, and motivated in their roles. Recognizing the challenges of teacher shortages in rural and underserved areas like Ubiaja, additional incentives were introduced to attract and retain dedicated educators. Housing schemes were implemented to provide secure and comfortable living arrangements, ensuring that teachers could reside close to their workplaces without facing logistical challenges. Additionally, rural allowances offered financial support to educators working in remote communities, making teaching in such areas more appealing. These measures helped stabilize the teaching workforce, reducing the high turnover rates that often plague schools in less-developed regions. Ultimately, the investment in teacher training and support significantly enhanced the quality of education in Ubiaja. Students reaped the benefits of improved teaching methods, personalized learning approaches, and increased access to educational resources. As teachers became more skilled and confident in their profession, they fostered more engaging and productive learning environments. This, in turn, led to higher student performance, increased school attendance, and greater overall educational success in the region. By addressing the fundamental need for well-equipped and motivated educators, the MDGs laid a strong foundation for sustainable educational progress in Ubiaja. The legacy of these efforts continues to shape the region's education

system, proving that investing in teachers is one of the most effective ways to drive long-term development and societal advancement.

### **Strengthening Community Engagement**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) emphasized that communities play a key role in improving education. In Ubiaja, this idea was put into action by bringing parents, local leaders, and other members of the community into the process of strengthening schools. One major step was revitalizing Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), which became important spaces for discussion and problem-solving. Through regular meetings, parents and teachers worked together to tackle issues such as student attendance, discipline, and the fair use of school resources. These meetings encouraged collaboration, giving parents a voice in decisions that affected their children's education.

### **Policy Formulation and Institutional Support**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played an important role in shaping education policies and strengthening support for schools at both local and state levels. In Edo State, they led to the creation of plans aimed at improving education, increasing access to schools, and addressing key challenges. These efforts had a strong impact in Ubiaja, where changes in policy led to better school facilities, improved teacher training, and higher student achievement. One major initiative was the **Education for all (EFA) Programs**, which worked to make sure that every child, no matter their background, had the chance to receive a quality education. Partnerships with international organizations brought in extra resources and expertise, helping schools

improve their teaching methods and learning environments. To keep track of progress and ensure these programs were effective, monitoring and evaluation systems were set up, holding schools and policymakers accountable for results.

### **Legacy of the MDGs in Ubiaja Education Sector**

The legacy of the MDGs in Ubiaja education sector is evident in the increased awareness and prioritization of education as a tool for development. By addressing critical gaps and fostering a culture of collaboration, the MDG interventions set the stage for ongoing improvements in the community's education system. Today, the strides made during the MDG era continue to inspire efforts to achieve the broader goals of inclusive and equitable quality education under the SDGs.

### **Health and Well-Being**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set by the United Nations in 2000 to tackle global challenges, had significant implications for improving health and well-being in rural communities like Ubiaja, Esan South-East, in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the MDGs focused on reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria, and ensuring environmental sustainability. In Ubiaja, various initiatives, often led by NGOs, local government bodies, and international organizations, played an instrumental role in advancing these health-related objectives, directly impacting the health and well-being of the local population. In an interview with Miss Ebieghianye Abumere<sup>9</sup>, she stated that “the MDGs have indeed contributed in improving healthcare and education in Ubiaja,

but the MDGs lacked enough investments in infrastructures. While some progress was made, issues like poor roads and inadequate government support disrupted full development”.

#### **MDG 4: Reducing Child Mortality**

One of the important health-related MDGs was to reduce child mortality (MDG 4), particularly by reducing the under-five mortality rate. In Ubiaja, the implementation of health programs targeting childhood diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria significantly improved child health outcomes. Scholars like Olaniyan(2016)<sup>5</sup> and Edeh et al (2018)<sup>4</sup> have highlighted that NGOs working in the area contributed to expanding immunization coverage and increasing awareness about child health. Programs to promote vaccination, including those targeting polio and measles, were supported by international bodies such as UNICEF, which partnered with local healthcare providers to ensure that children in Ubiaja had access to critical vaccines. Moreover, health campaigns focused on preventing malnutrition, which is often a cause of high mortality rates among children in rural areas. According to Ajayi and Ogunjimi (2015)<sup>3</sup>, the introduction of community-based health education on nutrition and hygiene, as well as initiatives to improve breastfeeding practices, helped reduce the incidence of malnutrition-related deaths. Community health workers (CHWs) played an essential role in educating parents on these practices, leading to improved overall health outcomes for children.

#### **MDG 5: Improving Maternal Health**

Maternal health, a major pillar of MDG 5, was another area where significant progress was made in Ubiaja. The maternal mortality ratio in rural areas like Ubiaja has historically been high due to factors such as limited access to healthcare, poor infrastructure, and inadequate maternal care services. In response, several health interventions targeted at improving access to skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care were implemented. Akinyemi and Ogunleye (2019)<sup>2</sup> found that local NGOs, in collaboration with government health agencies, set up mobile health clinics and provided maternal health education, which significantly reduced maternal deaths in the community. A key program supported by NGOs involved training traditional birth attendants (TBAs) to refer women to hospitals for deliveries when necessary, as well as providing them with the tools and knowledge to manage normal deliveries safely. Furthermore, Olubiyi(2017)<sup>6</sup> notes that awareness campaigns focused on family planning, prenatal care, and the importance of antenatal visits helped increase the number of women accessing medical services during pregnancy, contributing to a decline in maternal mortality rates.

#### **MDG 6: Combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases**

Combating diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS was central to MDG 6, and it has had a notable impact on health in Ubiaja. Olubiyi (2017)<sup>6</sup> emphasizes that malaria control programs were among the most successful public health interventions in rural Nigeria, including Ubiaja. NGOs and health agencies distributed insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) to households, conducted mass anti-malaria campaigns, and provided treatment

for malaria, which significantly reduced its prevalence. Community education on the prevention and treatment of malaria, including the importance of early diagnosis and prompt treatment with antimalarial drugs, helped to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with the disease. Similarly, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns were launched in Ubiaja, with NGOs collaborating with local health authorities to provide education, prevention strategies, and testing services. These initiatives aimed to combat the stigma associated with HIV and promote safer practices, such as condom use and regular testing. As a result, there was a rise in HIV testing and counseling, contributing to better disease management and a reduction in the spread of HIV in the community.

#### **MDG 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental health also played a role in improving the overall well-being of the community, as stipulated in MDG 7 (ensure environmental sustainability). Edeh et al.(2018)<sup>4</sup> highlighted that in rural areas like Ubiaja, access to clean water and sanitation facilities is a major determinant of public health. NGOs focused on providing clean water through boreholes and rehabilitating existing water supply systems, thereby reducing the incidence of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid fever. Moreover, sanitation programs aimed at improving hygiene practices, such as promoting the construction of household latrines and proper waste disposal, contributed to a reduction in the spread of diseases like cholera. Ajayi and Ogunjimi (2015)<sup>3</sup> emphasized that promoting better waste management practices and creating awareness on the

dangers of open defecation had a profound effect on reducing diarrheal diseases, especially among children.

### **MDG 8: Global Partnership for Development**

MDG 8 (develop a global partnership for development) also played a role in improving health outcomes in Ubiaja by fostering collaboration between international organizations, the Nigerian government, and local communities. Through partnerships, various health programs in Ubiaja were adequately funded, and resources were mobilized for capacity-building within the local healthcare system. Akinyemi(2020)<sup>1</sup> points out that these global partnerships helped in scaling up health interventions, from maternal and child health services to the fight against infectious diseases.

### **Challenges to the Implementation of MDGs in Ubiaja**

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a significant framework for promoting development and addressing key challenges such as poverty, education, health, and the environment, the implementation of these goals in rural areas like Ubiaja, Esan South-East, in Edo State, Nigeria, faced several limitations. Despite the best efforts of various stakeholders like government officials, international organizations, NGOs, and local communities, the MDGs' impact in Ubiaja was constrained by a range of social, economic, and infrastructural challenges. These limitations highlight the complexities of achieving global development targets in rural contexts.

### **Inadequate Infrastructure**

One of the primary limitations in the implementation of the MDGs in Ubiaja was the lack of adequate infrastructure. Although efforts were made to improve rural infrastructure as part of MDG 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability), including the provision of clean water and sanitation facilities, these efforts were often insufficient and unevenly distributed. Ajayi and Ogunjimi(2015)<sup>3</sup> pointed out that many rural communities, including Ubiaja, continued to face challenges such as inadequate road networks, poor access to electricity, and insufficient healthcare facilities. Without essential infrastructure, many MDG-related interventions, particularly those targeting health and education, were less effective. For example, mobile health clinics could not reach remote areas due to poor road conditions, and access to safe water remained limited in some villages, contributing to health problems such as waterborne diseases.

### **Limited Financial Resources and Funding**

Financial constraints were another significant limitation in the implementation of the MDGs in Ubiaja. While international organizations and NGOs played a key role in providing funding, these resources were often limited, especially in the face of competing priorities in the region. Edeh et al. (2018)<sup>4</sup> noted that many MDG programs in Ubiaja relied heavily on external funding, which was subject to fluctuations based on the priorities of donors. Consequently, the sustainability of health, education, and poverty alleviation programs was compromised when funding levels decreased. Local governments often lacked the financial capacity to support and scale up these initiatives,

which meant that even successful programs could not be expanded or maintained long-term.

### **Low Community Engagement and Participation**

A critical limitation of the MDGs in Ubiaja was the insufficient level of community engagement and participation in the development processes. According to Olubiyi (2017)<sup>6</sup>, many of the health interventions, such as maternal and child health programs, were designed and implemented without adequate consultation with local communities. This top-down approach sometimes led to a lack of local ownership of the programs, reducing their effectiveness. In some cases, cultural beliefs and local practices hindered the adoption of health interventions, such as family planning or immunization, which were central to MDG targets. Although NGOs and health agencies worked to raise awareness and promote behavior change, many community members were resistant to change due to deep-seated traditional norms.

### **Weak Institutional Capacity**

The implementation of MDG initiatives in Ubiaja also suffered from weak institutional capacity at the local level. Akinyemi (2020)<sup>1</sup> noted that local governments in rural areas often lacked the technical expertise, skilled personnel, and administrative capacity to manage and implement large-scale development programs. This was particularly evident in the health and education sectors, where local health workers and teachers were often overburdened, undertrained, and poorly equipped. Without the necessary capacity, even well-designed programs struggled to reach their full potential.

For example, while there were efforts to improve maternal health by increasing the number of skilled birth attendants, the lack of well-trained local healthcare workers meant that some women still opted for traditional birth practices, leading to poor maternal outcomes.

### **Cultural and Societal Barriers**

Cultural and societal barriers also limited the effectiveness of the MDGs in Ubiaja, particularly in the areas of gender equality (MDG 3) and health (MDGs 4 and 5). Akinyemi and Ogunleye (2019)<sup>2</sup> pointed out that traditional gender roles in rural areas often limited women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. While there were efforts to promote gender equality through education programs and microfinance initiatives, deeply ingrained cultural norms sometimes led to resistance against female empowerment initiatives. Women were often excluded from decision-making processes, which hindered the success of programs aimed at improving maternal health or empowering women economically. In Ubiaja, for example, despite efforts to reduce maternal mortality, many women still faced barriers to accessing healthcare, particularly in remote communities where health facilities were scarce or difficult to reach.

### **Insufficient Monitoring and Evaluation**

The MDG framework lacked a robust and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system at the local level. Olaniyan(2016)<sup>5</sup> emphasized that while progress towards achieving the MDGs was tracked at the national level, local-level data

collection and analysis in rural areas like Ubiaja were often inadequate. This lack of effective monitoring meant that it was difficult to assess the real impact of MDG interventions on the ground. Programs that were successful in one community might not have been replicated in others due to differences in local contexts, but without proper M&E, these nuances were often overlooked. As a result, some MDG programs in Ubiaja were not adjusted based on local needs or challenges, reducing their overall effectiveness.

### **Over-reliance on External Aid**

The MDGs in Ubiaja, as in many other rural areas, relied heavily on external aid from international organizations, NGOs, and development partners. Udo (2017)<sup>7</sup> argued that while these external partners provided valuable resources and technical expertise, the over-reliance on aid often led to the neglect of building local capacity for long-term development. When external funding and support waned, many projects lacked the resources or infrastructure to sustain them. Additionally, the focus on donor-driven projects sometimes meant that local needs and priorities were not fully integrated into development strategies, which affected the relevance and sustainability of the interventions.

### **Unmet Target of Universal Primary Education**

MDG 2 aimed to achieve universal primary education, but in Ubiaja, like many rural areas in Nigeria, access to quality education remained a challenge. Many children

in Ubiaja, particularly girls, were still unable to attend school due to factors like poverty, early marriage, and the need to support their families economically.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SDGs CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF UBIAJA, ESAN

#### SOUTH-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA), EDO STATE

##### **Introduction**

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline the path to a better and sustainable future for all. These 17 goals encompass various areas like poverty, education, clean water, sanitation, and economic growth. The SDGs, in the context of development in Ubiaja, Edo State, Nigeria, have been a transformative agent, propelling change across many sectors from 2015 to 2023. The period has also witnessed growing local interest in aligning with global perspectives toward development, therefore, enhancing people's well-being. One of the most profound impacts of the SDGs in Ubiaja is in education (Goal 4). Quality education holds a strong foundation for sustainable development, and improvements over the years have evidently been seen in the educational landscape of the town. Programs initiated at the community level with the support of government and international agencies concentrated on improving school infrastructure and training teachers while providing learning materials. Furthermore, through initiatives such as school feeding, the enrollment increase was staggering, especially for girls who historically had been faced with barriers to availing education. To the greatest measure, these interventions created an enabling space for children and youth to excel academically and subsequently create a good future.

Another area affected by the SDGs is healthcare, which goes hand-in-hand with education-based development (Goal3). The goal to ensure health and well-being in Ubiaja entails improving access to primary healthcare services, the fight against communicable diseases, and the promotion of maternal and child health. New health facilities and upgrades of existing ones have been built to meet the needs of the burgeoning population. Campaigns on vaccination, hygiene, and nutrition have helped to cut down the prevalence of preventable diseases. The establishment of partnerships with NGOs made it possible for free medical outreach programs that delivered much-needed healthcare services. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No Clean Water Supply and Sanitation. "Safe and clean water does not come easily to many communities in Ubiaja, as it was until 2015", that was before the targeted actions became realized within the frame of the SDGs. Borehole drilling, water treatment facilities, and sanitation awareness campaigns have been implemented to reduce incidence disease by waterborne and improve public health and evacuate the burden from women and children who usually fetch water themselves at long distances.

The focus on gender equality (Goal5) has further changed Ubiaja. The participation of women in productive and social activities was limited to cultural and societal norms. In the last eight years, they have been framed in a variety of schemes for empowerment. Campaigns advocating women cooperative activities have helped push for the enabling of women's inclusion in decision making and economic activities, thus raising their livelihoods, with a ripple effect on families and the greater community.

Another critical area of development has been clean water and sanitation (Goal 6). Before 2015, access to safe and clean water remained a perennial challenge to most communities in Ubiaja; however, now these targeted SDG interventions bring a dramatic change in the picture. Borehole drilling projects were executed along with water treatment facilities and sanitation awareness campaigns, which have resulted in a reduced incidence of waterborne diseases. There have been improvements in public health, as well as reduced burdens on women and children, often fetching water through long route from distant sources. Infrastructure development, which can be seen in industry, innovation, and infrastructure (Goal 9), has been a key driver of progress in Ubiaja. Improved road networks have enhanced connectivity within the town and with neighboring areas. These developments have significantly boosted local commerce, enabling farmers and traders to transport goods more efficiently.

Environmental sustainability has also been an important aspect of Ubiaja's development, aligning with global objectives under climate action (Goal 13) and life on land (Goal 15). Reforestation efforts and sustainable land use programs have been introduced to combat deforestation, an issue that has threatened agricultural productivity and ecosystem stability in many parts of Nigeria (Eze & Nwankwo, 2019)<sup>3</sup>. In addition, awareness campaigns on the dangers of poor waste disposal have led to increased community participation in waste management programs. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has influenced a significant shift in mindset among Ubiaja's residents, fostering a stronger sense of collective responsibility toward

community development. This communal engagement has ensured that initiatives in education, healthcare, and infrastructure continue to thrive beyond initial implementation.

Young people, in particular, have emerged as key drivers of change, enhancing grassroots movements and integrating innovative solutions into local development efforts. Their involvement has injected energy and creativity into SDG-driven programs, demonstrating the transformative potential of youth engagement in sustainable development. Between 2015 and 2023, the SDGs have been a catalyst for profound transformation in Ubiaja. Targeted interventions in education, healthcare, water and sanitation, gender equality, and economic development have contributed to measurable progress, reflecting broader national efforts to align local strategies with global development frameworks (Eze & Okonkwo 2022)<sup>3</sup>. While challenges such as funding constraints and policy implementation gaps persist, the achievements over the past eight years highlight the potential of the SDGs to foster a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable future. Ubiaja's journey underscores the importance of collaboration, illustrating how local commitment and global aspirations can work in tandem to create lasting positive change.

## **Overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the Development of Ubiaja, Esan South-East LGA Area Edo State from 1999-2023**

Ubiaja, a historically rich and dynamic town in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, embodies a combination of cultural heritage and modern development aspirations. Like many communities across the Global South, it faces various developmental challenges from economic, social, and environmental sectors. However, the adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has provided a structured framework for addressing these challenges, leading to significant progress in various areas (Adepoju & Oyeyemi, 2020)<sup>1</sup>. The integration of SDG-driven policies and initiatives has enabled more inclusive development, ensuring that both urban and rural populations benefit from interventions aimed at improving education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic opportunities.

In particular, the SDGs have fostered strategic partnerships between the government, private sector, and civil society, reinforcing the importance of multi-stakeholders collaboration in driving sustainable progress (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2019). Through these efforts, Ubiaja has witnessed measurable improvements in sectors such as agriculture, clean energy, and community engagement, aligning with broader national development goals.

## **Framework of SDGs in Ubiaja's Development**

The SDGs, adopted in 2015 by all United Nations Member States, provide a universal blueprint for ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all by 2030. In Ubiaja, these goals serve as a guiding framework for development policies, projects, and partnerships. Local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and community leaders have collaborated to align Ubiaja's development priorities with the SDGs.

### **Addressing Poverty and Hunger (SDG 1 & SDG 2)**

Poverty and food insecurity are critical challenges in Ubiaja. The integration of SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) has led to several poverty alleviation programs and agricultural initiatives. Local governments, in partnership with NGOs, have implemented skill acquisition programs targeting women and youth, enabling them to generate income through trades such as tailoring, carpentry, and small-scale businesses. In the agricultural sector, innovative programs like subsidized farm inputs and modern farming techniques have boosted food production, ensuring more residents can access affordable and nutritious food. Community cooperatives have been established to provide farmers with access to credit facilities, fertilizers, and mechanized equipment, fostering a self-reliant agricultural economy.

### **Advancing Health and Well-being (SDG 3)**

The commitment to SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being) has transformed Ubiaja's healthcare landscape. Primary healthcare centers have been rehabilitated and equipped

with essential medicines and modern facilities. Maternal and child health programs have significantly reduced infant and maternal mortality rates through free antenatal care, immunization campaigns, and health education.

Furthermore, awareness campaigns on communicable and non-communicable diseases; including malaria, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes, have improved public health outcomes. The provision of clean water and sanitation facilities (aligned with SDG 6) has also contributed to reducing waterborne diseases in the community.

#### **Quality Education for All (SDG 4)**

Education is pivotal to Ubiaja's development, and SDG 4 (Quality Education) has driven efforts to make learning accessible and inclusive. Public schools were renovated, provision of learning materials, and recruitment of qualified teachers have enhanced the quality of education in the town. Additionally, scholarship programs and free education policies have encouraged more children, especially girls, to enroll in schools. Adult literacy programs have empowered older residents with basic reading and writing skills, enabling them to engage more actively in socio-economic activities. Vocational training centers have also been established to equip young people with skills that align with labor market demands, reducing unemployment and fostering entrepreneurship.

Miss Ebighianye Abumere,<sup>11</sup> the interviewee acknowledged that “efforts under SDG 4 have improved access to education in Ubiaja, especially for children”. However, challenges such as inadequate school facilities, teacher shortages, and poor learning

conditions persist”. She emphasized the need for sustained investment to ensure truly inclusive and quality education for all.

## **Gender Equality and Empowerment**

The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. It is a cornerstone for sustainable development, as gender equality impacts not only the well-being of women and girls but also the broader social, economic, and environmental progress of communities. Across the globe, and particularly in developing regions, the SDGs have been instrumental in addressing systemic gender disparities. This essay delves into how the SDGs have contributed to gender equality and empowerment, with a focus on key areas such as education, economic opportunities, leadership, and social change.

## **Breaking Barriers to Education**

One of the most transformative ways in which the SDGs contribute to gender equality is by promoting access to quality education for girls and women. SDG 4 (Quality Education) is closely intertwined with SDG 5, emphasizing inclusive and equitable education as a fundamental right. In many communities, cultural norms, poverty, and lack of infrastructure have historically excluded girls from education. Programs aligned with the SDGs have worked to eliminate these barriers by:

Providing scholarships: and financial incentives to families to encourage girl-child education.

Improving school infrastructure: such as building separate sanitation facilities for girls, which have been shown to increase female enrollment and retention.

Advocating for legal reforms: such as the enforcement of laws that mandate free and compulsory education for all children, including girls.

Education equips women and girls with knowledge, skills, and confidence. It empowers them to pursue careers, participate in decision-making, and contribute to economic growth.

### **Enhancing Economic Opportunities**

Economic empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality. SDG 5, in conjunction with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), seeks to eliminate gender disparities in access to economic resources and employment opportunities.

Efforts to empower women economically under the SDGs include:

**Access to financial services:** Programs have been introduced to help women open bank accounts, secure loans, and access microfinance. These initiatives enable women to start and expand businesses, reducing their dependency and fostering entrepreneurship.

**Skill development and vocational training:** Training programs in fields such as technology, agriculture, and trades have opened doors for women to enter previously male-dominated industries.

**Equal pay advocacy:** Campaigns for equal pay for equal work have gained momentum, pushing governments and organizations to adopt policies that ensure fair wages for women

By improving women's economic standing, the SDGs foster financial independence and contribute to breaking cycles of poverty.

### **Promoting Women in Leadership and Decision-Making**

Leadership and political participation are fundamental to achieving gender equality, as they ensure that women have a voice in decision-making at all levels. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) specifically emphasizes the need for women's full and effective participation in governance, policy formulation, and leadership roles. However, in Nigeria, gender disparities persist in political representation and leadership, necessitating deliberate interventions to promote inclusion (Adebayo & Umeh 2019)<sup>8</sup>. Several key advancements have been made in this area:

**Increasing female representation:** Affirmative action policies and legislative measures have been introduced in Nigeria to boost women's participation in politics, corporate governance, and community leadership. For example, gender quota policies have led to a gradual increase in the number of women holding public office at both national and local levels (Okonkwo & Eze, 2019)<sup>3</sup>.

**Capacity-building initiatives:** Leadership development programs, mentorship schemes, and skills training have played a critical role in equipping women with the confidence and expertise needed to excel in governance and executive positions. Studies have shown that such initiatives contribute significantly to closing the gender gap in leadership roles across various sectors.

Advocacy for inclusive governance: Campaigns promoting gender-inclusive leadership have been instrumental in changing societal perceptions of women in power. Public awareness programs and grassroots movements have encouraged more women to pursue leadership positions, fostering a cultural shift toward equitable governance (Eze & Okonkwo, 2019)<sup>3</sup>.

Empowering women in leadership not only benefits individual women but also strengthens national and institutional development. Research indicates that diverse leadership structures lead to more effective governance, as they incorporate varied perspectives that improve decision-making processes. As Nigeria continues to push for greater gender balance in leadership, sustained policy implementation and societal support will be essential in achieving lasting progress in gender equality.

### **Combating Gender-Based Violence**

One of the most persistent challenges to gender equality is gender-based violence (GBV). SDG 5 emphasizes the need to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, trafficking, and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Key initiatives driven by the SDGs include:

**Legislative reforms:** Many countries have enacted laws to criminalize GBV, enforce stricter penalties, and provide legal support for survivors.

**Awareness campaigns:** Public education efforts have challenged cultural norms that perpetuate violence, emphasizing the rights and dignity of women and girls.

**Support services:** Shelters, counseling services, and hotlines have been established to assist survivors of violence, providing them with safe spaces and pathways to recovery.

By addressing GBV, the SDGs protect women's physical and emotional well-being, creating an environment where they can thrive. Challenging Social Norms and Stereotypes, achieving gender equality requires shifting deeply entrenched social norms and stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination. The SDGs recognize the importance of fostering cultural change to dismantle patriarchal systems.

Efforts in this regard include:

**Community engagement programs:** Grassroots initiatives have engaged religious and traditional leaders to advocate for gender equality, leveraging their influence to change societal attitudes.

**Media campaigns:** Stories, documentaries, and advertisements have been used to portray empowered women and challenge harmful gender stereotypes.

**Education curricula:** Gender-sensitive education in schools has encouraged younger generations to adopt values of equality and mutual respect.

Changing societal mindsets is a gradual process, but these initiatives are laying the foundation for more inclusive communities.

### **Building Partnerships for Change**

The achievement of SDG 5 relies heavily on partnerships and collaborations. SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) has facilitated cooperation between governments, NGOs, international organizations, and the private sector. These partnerships have

amplified resources, expertise, and outreach to implement gender-focused initiatives effectively.

Examples of successful partnerships include:

**Global campaigns:** Initiatives like UN Women's "HeforShe" campaign have mobilized men and boys as allies in the fight for gender equality.

**Corporate involvement:** Businesses are increasingly adopting gender-inclusive policies, such as flexible work arrangements and maternity benefits, promoting equality within the workplace.

**Local collaborations:** Community-based organizations have worked alongside international donors to address unique local challenges, ensuring that solutions are culturally relevant and impactful.

### **The Ripple Effect of Gender Equality**

The impact of gender equality extends beyond women and girls. When women are educated, empowered, and economically active, entire communities benefit:

**Health outcomes improve,** as educated women are more likely to prioritize healthcare for themselves and their families.

**Economic growth accelerates,** as women's participation in the workforce boosts productivity and innovation.

**Intergenerational progress is achieved,** as empowered women invest in their children's education and well-being, breaking cycles of poverty.

## **The Contribution of Sustainable Development Goals to Environmental Sustainability in Ubiaja from 2015-2023.**

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015 signified a global commitment to advancing sustainable development through economic progress, social inclusion, and environmental conservation. This framework has since been incorporated into global, national, and local policies, serving as a strategic guide for addressing sustainability challenges. In Nigeria, the SDGs have influenced policy formation and implementation across various levels of governance, fostering development in both urban and rural areas (Akinyemi & Olajide, 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

The integration of the SDGs into local development planning has been particularly impactful in smaller communities like Ubiaja, located in Edo State. Through targeted initiatives, the town has benefited from policies aimed at improving environmental sustainability, economic resilience, and social well-being. Studies highlight that aligning local efforts with the SDGs enhances development outcomes, as seen in various Nigerian communities implementing similar strategies (Adepoju & Oyeyemi, 2021)<sup>1</sup>. By adopting this comprehensive approach, Ubiaja has made strides in balancing growth with sustainability, ensuring that future generations inherit a more resilient and thriving environment

### **Understanding the Environmental Context in Ubiaja**

Ubiaja, a community within the Esan South-East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, is characterized by its rich natural environment and predominantly

agrarian economy. However, like many rural areas, it faces pressing environmental challenges, including deforestation, land degradation, ineffective waste management, and limited access to clean water and sustainable energy. These issues have been compounded by rapid population growth and inadequate infrastructure, necessitating urgent interventions. The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has provided a structured framework for addressing these environmental concerns while fostering long-term sustainability in the region.

### **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

Access to clean and affordable energy is essential for sustainable development, as it reduces dependence on fossil fuels, minimizes environmental degradation, and enhances economic productivity. In Ubiaja, initiatives aligned with SDG 7 have facilitated the introduction of small-scale solar energy projects designed to provide electricity to households, schools, and healthcare facilities. Research on rural electrification in Nigeria have shown that decentralized renewable energy solutions, such as solar mini-grids, improve energy access has reduced the use of deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions associated with firewood and generator use. These efforts not only enhance living standards but also contribute to broader climate resilience and environmental conservation goals in the community. Local organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in partnership with government agencies, have been instrumental in implementing renewable energy solutions in Ubiaja. For instance,

solar-powered streetlights have been installed in public spaces, and solar-powered boreholes now provide reliable access to clean water.

### **SDG 13: Climate Action**

Climate change presents a serious challenge to rural communities like Ubiaja, where livelihoods depend heavily on agriculture and natural resources. SDG 13 calls for urgent action to address climate change and mitigate its effects. In response, reforestation programs have been introduced to restore degraded land and promote biodiversity. Community awareness campaigns on climate change and sustainable farming practices have also been instrumental in helping farmers adapt. Climate-smart agricultural techniques, such as crop rotation, organic farming, and water conservation methods, have been promoted to enhance productivity while preserving natural resources. Research in similar Nigerian communities suggests that such practices improve food security while reducing environmental degradation (Eze & Okonkwo, 2019)<sup>3</sup>.

### **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

Poor waste management is a significant environmental issue in Ubiaja, where the improper disposal of household and agricultural waste contributes to pollution and land degradation. SDG 12 emphasizes the importance of responsible consumption and production, including sustainable waste management practices. Initiatives in Ubiaja have focused on educating residents about recycling, composting, and the safe disposal of waste. Youth groups and local NGOs have played a pivotal role in organizing

community clean-up campaigns, raising awareness about proper waste disposal, and promoting environmental hygiene. Additionally, efforts to convert agricultural waste into organic fertilizers and bioenergy have helped to minimize waste and promote sustainable resource management, echoing findings from studies on circular economy practices in rural Nigeria.

### **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**

Access to clean water and proper sanitation is essential for both public health and environmental sustainability. In Ubiaja, water scarcity and pollution have been major concerns, affecting daily life and increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. The implementation of SDG 6 has led to the construction of boreholes and the establishment of community water management committees tasked with ensuring the sustainable use of water resources. Sanitation programs aimed at eliminating open defecation and improving waste disposal systems have also been introduced. These initiatives have significantly contributed to the overall well-being of Ubiaja's residents and the surrounding environment.

### **SDG 15: Life on Land**

The preservation of terrestrial ecosystems is vital for biodiversity and ecological stability. SDG 15 focuses on preventing deforestation, conserving wildlife, and restoring degraded land. In Ubiaja, conservation efforts have included afforestation projects and awareness campaigns on sustainable land use. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and

environmental degradation. In the context of Ubiaja in Esan South-East, Edo State, the ability to contribute effectively to SDGs can be hindered by various challenges and barriers.

### **Challenges and Barriers to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Contributions in Ubiaja, Esan South-East, Edo State**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a universal framework for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. While the goals aim to promote prosperity and sustainability, their implementation faces various challenges at the local level. In Ubiaja, the administrative headquarters of Esan South-East Local Government Area in Edo State, Nigeria, several barriers hinder the effective contribution to SDG achievement. These challenges span economic, social, political, and environmental domains, reflecting the broader systemic issues present in many developing regions.

#### **Economic Constraints**

One of the foremost barriers to SDG contributions in Ubiaja is limited economic resources. The community relies heavily on subsistence agriculture, which is vulnerable to unpredictable weather patterns and insufficient infrastructure. The lack of access to credit facilities and agricultural subsidies further limits the capacity of local farmers to modernize their practices and improve productivity, undermining SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Furthermore, unemployment rates are high, especially among the youth. The absence of significant industrial or entrepreneurial opportunities

means that many residents are trapped in a cycle of poverty. Limited financial resources also impede investments in critical areas such as education, healthcare, and clean energy, which are essential for achieving SDGs like Quality Education (SDG 4) and Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7).

### **Poor Infrastructure**

The lack of basic infrastructure in Ubiaja significantly hampers progress toward the SDGs. Roads connecting the community to other parts of Edo State are often in poor condition, making it difficult for farmers to transport their produce to larger markets. This not only reduces their income potential but also exacerbates food insecurity in the region. Additionally, the absence of reliable electricity and clean water systems impacts daily life and development efforts. Many households rely on unsafe water sources, increasing the prevalence of waterborne diseases and contradicting SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). The unreliable power supply further limits economic activities, particularly small businesses that require electricity, and discourages investment in the region.

### **Limited Access to Quality Education**

Education is a cornerstone of sustainable development, but in Ubiaja, access to quality education remains a challenge. Many schools lack adequate infrastructure, teaching materials, and qualified educators. Overcrowded classrooms and insufficient government funding contribute to poor learning outcomes. This situation particularly

affects girls, who often face cultural and economic barriers to education, thereby hindering progress toward SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

Moreover, the lack of vocational training centers and tertiary institutions in the area limits opportunities for skill acquisition and employment. As a result, many young people migrate to urban areas in search of better prospects, leading to brain drain and a weakened local economy.

### **Healthcare Deficiencies**

Healthcare services in Ubiaja are inadequate to meet the needs of its population, posing a significant challenge to achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). The few healthcare facilities in the area are under-resourced and often lack essential medications, diagnostic equipment, and trained medical personnel which results in high rates of maternal and child mortality, as well as the prevalence of preventable diseases such as malaria and typhoid. Additionally, poor health literacy and cultural practices sometimes hinder the adoption of modern medical care. Traditional beliefs and the use of unregulated herbal remedies can delay timely medical intervention, worsening health outcomes. Many hospitals and clinics do not have enough medicine or equipment. "Some clinics don't even have the right drugs to treat serious cases; Miss Ebieghianye said "This forces people to travel far for treatment or go without care".<sup>11</sup>

There are also too few doctors and nurses to attend to patients. "Sometimes, when we go to the clinic, there's only one nurse handling so many people, and we have to wait for hours," Mr. Pius shared. This delay often makes illnesses worse. Even

reaching a hospital is a struggle because of bad roads. "Pregnant women and sick people have a hard time getting to the hospital because the roads are terrible" Miss Angela<sup>10</sup> explained. This makes it harder for people to get help in emergencies. Many people also do not know much about how to stay healthy. "Some still don't understand why regular check-ups are important or how to prevent diseases" Miss Ebieghianye<sup>11</sup> noted. While some health campaigns have helped, more needs to be done to teach people about staying healthy. The high cost of treatment is another problem. "Even when you get to the hospital, the cost of medicine and tests is too high for many families," Mr. Pius said. Because of this, people often wait until they are very sick before seeking help.

### **Environmental Challenges**

Environmental sustainability is vital for the progress of any community, yet Ubiaja continues to face serious challenges in this area. One major issue is deforestation, mainly caused by logging and farming. This has led to soil erosion and the loss of plant and animal life, which affects farming and the overall environment. Studies have shown that deforestation in rural Nigerian communities disrupts ecosystems and makes the land less productive for agriculture (Ojo. A.& Adekunle 2021)<sup>7</sup>. To address this, tree-planting programs and awareness campaigns have been introduced to encourage better land management, in line with SDG 15 (Life on Land). Another growing problem is climate change. Rainfall patterns have become less predictable, making farming more difficult. When rains come too early or too late, crops fail, and farmers struggle to produce enough food.

Waste disposal is another serious issue. Without a proper waste management system, people often dump or burn their trash, leading to pollution and health risks. Studies show that open waste burning releases harmful gases into the air, causing breathing problems and environmental damage (Ogunyemi & Balogun2020)<sup>6</sup>. To tackle this, local groups and NGOs have started clean-up drives and recycling programs. These initiatives aim to reduce pollution and encourage better waste disposal habits, supporting SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

### **Governance and Policy Gaps**

Poor leadership and inconsistent policies have slowed progress on the SDGs in Ubiaja. Corruption and inefficiency in local government have made it difficult for development programs to succeed. Research has shown that mismanagement of public funds and lack of accountability weakens efforts to improve rural communities in Nigeria (Ojo & Adekunle & 2021)<sup>7</sup>. As a result, many projects meant to benefit the people—such as schools, healthcare centers, and road construction—are either abandoned or poorly completed, leaving residents without essential services. Another major challenge is the lack of community involvement in decision-making. When government officials plan projects without consulting the people who will be affected, the solutions they create do not always address real community needs.

To make real progress, governance must improve. Transparency in leadership and better monitoring of public projects can help ensure that funds are used wisely and programs achieve their intended goals. By tackling these governance issues, Ubiaja can

build a stronger foundation for sustainable development and long-term progress. By addressing these environmental challenges, Ubiaja can protect its natural resources, improve the health of its people, and create a cleaner, more sustainable future.

### **Social and Cultural Barriers**

Cultural practices and societal norms also pose challenges to SDG contributions in Ubiaja. Gender inequality remains prevalent, with women and girls often excluded from educational and economic opportunities. Early marriage and traditional gender roles limit their ability to contribute fully to the community's development. Additionally, social inequality and marginalization of certain groups hinder efforts to promote inclusivity and reduce disparities. For example, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations often face significant barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and employment, contradicting the principles of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

### **Lack of Awareness and Advocacy**

A lack of awareness about the SDGs among community members and local leaders further complicates efforts to achieve these goals. Without a clear understanding of the SDGs and their relevance to local challenges, there is limited buy-in from stakeholders. Advocacy campaigns and educational programs are needed to raise awareness and foster a sense of collective responsibility for sustainable development.

### **Insufficient Partnerships and Collaboration**

Achieving the SDGs requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and

international partners. However, in Ubiaja, such partnerships are often lacking. Limited engagement with non-governmental organizations and development agencies means that many resources and opportunities for capacity building are untapped. Additionally, the private sector's involvement in development initiatives remains minimal, reducing the availability of funding and technical expertise for community projects.

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11. Oral Interview with Miss. Ebieghianye Abumere on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 Oral Inte
12. Oral Intereview with Mr. Pius Usigbe on 30th December 2024

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

The final chapter summarizes all the work on the contributions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the development of Ubiaja, Esan South East Local Government Area (LGA). It gives a summary of the issues at the establishment, achievements, and challenges discovered during the course of the research, stressing the research implications of the SDGs on socio-economic development, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment in the area. The chapter reflects on the objectives that were stated at the beginning of the study, assessing in detail the extent to which these objectives have been achieved. These transformations drastically alter the landscape over which SDG intervention operates in bridging the development gap and securing a sustainable future for Ubiaja. It discusses the barriers and constraints faced during the implementation process of the research and makes suggestions to stakeholders to maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of future interventions.

Thus, this chapter not only summarizes research findings but also serves as a road map for policymakers, development practitioners, and local communities. As lessons learned consolidate efforts towards more targeted, inclusive, and sustainable pathways to achieve the SDGs in Ubiaja and similar communities nationwide, the study

emphasizes that the collaborative action idea is central to achieving this all-shared dream of sustainable development.

## **Summary**

**Background to the Study:** The first chapter starts with an elaboration on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are international instruments, set by the United Nations to respond to some of the key development challenges that confront various nations worldwide. The chapter explains the transition from MDGs to SDGs stating that MDGs were more restricted to one or two issues such as poverty alleviation, education, and health, while the SDGs are a more integrative approach with 17 goals that touch a broad spectrum of issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, and economic growth. The background basically establishes how relevant these frameworks are for the development of nations in contention especially with regard to how these global agendas are brought down to the grassroots level for implementation in rural communities like Ubiaja, Esan South East Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria.

Ubiaja, being a predominantly agricultural and rural community, faces various socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, limited access to education and healthcare, poor infrastructure, and environmental degradation. This section introduces the research by providing the context of Ubiaja's development needs and the ways in which the MDGs and SDGs have been integrated into the local development agenda.

**Aims and Objectives:** The primary aim of the study is to investigate how the MDGs and SDGs have contributed to the socio-economic and environmental development of Ubiaja. Specifically, the study aims to: Assess the impact of the MDGs in improving key sectors such as health, education, and poverty reduction in Ubiaja before the introduction of the SDGs.

By achieving these objectives, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contributions of the MDGs and SDGs to Ubiaja's development while also identifying critical barriers and limitations in the implementation of these goals.

**Statement of the Problem:** The central problem addressed in this study is the persistent development challenges in Ubiaja, despite the global adoption of the MDGs and SDGs. While these goals have shaped national policies, their local-level implementation often faces significant challenges. In Ubiaja, many of the development challenges outlined in the MDGs and SDGs—such as poverty, poor healthcare, inadequate education, gender inequality, and environmental degradation—remain prevalent. The study covers the period from the introduction of the MDGs in 2000 to the present, with particular emphasis on the SDGs, which came into effect in 2015.

**Significance of the Study:** The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights into the local-level impact of the MDGs and SDGs, particularly in rural Nigerian communities. By examining the effectiveness of these global goals in Ubiaja, the study offers a deeper understanding of how these frameworks have been

applied and their implications for rural development. The study also provides recommendations for improving the implementation of the SDGs, ensuring that their benefits are more effectively felt at the grassroots level.

**Research Method:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Primary data is gathered through interviews with key stakeholders, including local government officials, community leaders, development practitioners, and representatives of NGOs working in Ubiaja. Additionally, surveys are administered to the residents of Ubiaja to gain insights into their experiences with SDG-related programs and their perceptions of the impact of these initiatives.

Secondary data is collected from government reports, academic literature, and existing studies on the MDGs and SDGs. This secondary data provides a contextual background to the research, supplementing the primary data collected through interviews and surveys.

The second chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the literature related to the impact of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on local government initiatives. It highlights how these global frameworks have influenced poverty reduction, empowerment, health improvement, education and knowledge dissemination, gender equality, and environmental sustainability at the local level.

.Chapter Three provides a comprehensive overview of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), focusing on their implementation and impact across key areas such as poverty reduction and economic growth, education improvement, health and well-being, and their inherent limitations.

Chapter four examines the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their scope, and their impact, focusing on key areas such as gender equality and empowerment, environmental sustainability, and the challenges and barriers to their implementation.

## **Conclusion**

The chapters of this study collectively explore the significant role of global development frameworks—namely the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—in addressing critical challenges such as poverty, education, health, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. Each chapter provides unique insights into these frameworks, their impacts, and the challenges encountered in their implementation, highlighting both their successes and limitations.

The second chapter offers a comprehensive review of related literature, illustrating how the MDGs and SDGs have shaped local governance and development practices. It highlights the importance of aligning global goals with local needs to achieve sustainable outcomes. Local governments, empowered by these frameworks,

have implemented programs targeting poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and gender equality.

The third chapter delves into the MDGs, which were established in 2000 as a pioneering global initiative to address pressing developmental issues by 2015. The MDGs significantly advanced efforts to reduce poverty, improve access to education, enhance healthcare services, and promote environmental sustainability. Achievements included a notable decline in extreme poverty and advancements in combating diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. However, the MDGs faced criticism for their narrow focus, limited inclusivity, and a top-down implementation approach that often neglected local contexts and systemic challenges. Despite these limitations, the MDGs succeeded in setting a precedent for global collaboration and action, laying the groundwork for the broader and more inclusive SDGs.

Chapter Four shifts focus to the SDGs, which were launched in 2015 to build upon the achievements and address the shortcomings of the MDGs. The SDGs represent a more comprehensive and inclusive approach, encompassing 17 interconnected goals aimed at achieving sustainable development in economic, social, and environmental domains. The chapter highlights significant progress in promoting gender equality and empowering women through education, economic participation, and leadership initiatives. Additionally, it emphasizes the SDGs' commitment to environmental sustainability, showcasing efforts to combat climate change, protect ecosystems, and promote renewable energy. However, the chapter also acknowledges persistent

challenges, including funding shortages, political resistance, and global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which have hindered the full realization of these goals.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that while the MDGs laid a strong foundation for addressing global challenges, the SDGs represent a more holistic and inclusive approach to sustainable development. Together, they underscore the power of collaboration, innovation, and commitment in creating a more equitable and sustainable world. The lessons from these frameworks provide valuable insights for navigating current and future development challenges.

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Miss Ebieghianye Abumere	39	Trader	Benin	16 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2024
Mrs. Angela Iyere	53	Teacher	Benin	20 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2024
Mr. Pius Usigbe	63	Farmer	Benin	30 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 2024

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