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Niger Delta Migration: The Trials and Triumph of Rivers Folks in Diaspora

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Abstract

In 1900 Rivers State people were merged with easterners to form Eastern Region. The Rivers State was created in 1967, and it was not until 1996 the state was divided into two states, Rivers State and Bayelsa State. Rivers State Government recognizes the value of diaspora populations in seeking ways to magnify financial resources, contribute to the welfare and development in their local communities. This reflects a common understanding that the investment of Rivers people in diaspora should not only be financial, but should also include knowledge transfer and social relationships. There is a need for Rivers in Diasporas' contribution, thus the Rivers State Government has a bigger responsibility. However, Diasporas trials and triumphs is complicated, confusing, and dynamic, it is a burdened with uneasiness, difficulty, and discomfort. This article briefly discusses the historical overview of Rivers state, methodology, theoretical framework, Diasporas Engagement, and Immigrants, recommendations, and conclusion.

Keywords: Rivers State Immigrants, Rivers Diasporas Engagement, Niger Delta Development Board, Rivers State Associations in United States

Introduction

The trials and triumphs of Rivers state people in diaspora are complicated, confusing, and dynamic, it is a difficult discussion especially for those in the USA without looking at the broader picture of tensions and challenges. Rivers state people in diaspora are folks that come from the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. Niger Delta is a wetland and one of the ten most important coastal marine ecosystems in the world (Aghalino, 2011). The population of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is 31 million people (Report of the Niger Delta Technical Committee, 2008, Pg. 102). The Niger Delta has enormous oil and gas hoards, which have been browbeaten since 1956 (Aghalino, 2011).

Most of the people in the Niger Delta oil-producing region are evidently underprivileged. According to United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2006), the Niger Delta area of Nigeria suffers from the Federal Government of Nigeria neglect, disintegrating community infrastructure, and services, extraordinary unemployment, community dispossession, miserable poverty, and pervasive struggle (UNDP, 2006). The Niger Delta region is one of the peril areas of Nigerian politics and holds Nigeria's predominantly oil reserves and as a result, holds the national wealth. Like other oil-producing countries in the world, the region is also referred to as

the geopolitical significance in the framework of worldwide oil politics and has not been freed from the torment of violent struggles connected with the management of oil resources (Oyefusi, 2007).

Background

In 1960 before Nigeria started seeking independence from Britain, the campaign for the creation of Rivers State movement had existed. In the 60's chiefs in coastal communities were recognized during the colonial period, therefore, the colonial masters had to sign agreements of security with many chiefs around the Atlantic Ocean communities. These chiefs from the Atlantic communities anticipated that the agreements of security they signed would lapse and the communities in the Atlantic communities would become independent states. In 1958, these chiefs were disappointed because the constitutional conference of 1958 confirmed Nigerian nationhood, but agreed on some procedures to alleviate the concerns of the indigenous minorities in the coastal communities (Willink Commission Report, 1958).

In the 40s and early 50's the Ijaw league which later became the Council of Rivers Chiefs in 1953 campaigned for the formation of a separate Rivers Region. In 1954, the Council of Rivers became known as the Rivers Chiefs and Peoples' Congress in 1954, later called the Rivers Chiefs Peoples Conference in 1956. The leaders of the association of Rivers Chiefs Peoples Conference united with the Calabar Ogoja Rivers (COR) State Movement. The Calabar Ogoja Rivers (COR) State Movement was formed in late 1953, and they later separated from Rivers Chiefs Peoples Conference to push for their own situation before the Willink Commission (The Willink Commission Report July 1958).

As Nigeria was campaigning for independence from British colonial rule, three groups were highly favored politically that subjugated the three colonial Provinces - North, East, and West, that the British imperial Government had divided Nigeria. Willink Commission was created by the British Imperial Government because the Hausa ruled the Fulanis' and controlled the affairs of the Northern Province and persecuted the Tiv and numerous other minorities, in the east, the Igbo mistreated the Ibibio and the minorities in the coastal communities. The same in the West, the Yoruba were very hostile towards the Urhobo and Benin especially. Due to the dominance in the North by Hausa, mistreatment in the East by the Igbos and the hostilities in the West by Yorubas, there were widespread worries expressed by political minorities as a concern of the 1954 federal arrangements in Nigeria (The Willink Commission Report July 1958).

The minority group along the coastal communities worried that they would become politically in danger of extinction following Nigerian political independence from Great Britain. As a result, the British Imperial Government appointed a minority's commission the "Willink Commission" in 1957, which was named after the Chairman, to look into the worries by minorities in Northern, Eastern, and Western Regions of Nigeria (The Willink Commission Report July 1958). The Willink Commission goals were to produce some important maps and to recommend procedures for reducing these worries (The Willink Commission Report July 1958). These five maps have historic value. They are the last important maps left behind by the departing British colonial authorities. In 1958, Willink Minorities Commission completed its report, thus at that time Western Cameroon was still part of Nigeria.

To alleviate the worries of the coastal minorities under the dominant Igbo ethnic groups in the eastern Nigerian, the British imperial Government agreed to set up a Commission commanded by Sir Henry Willink to address the concerns of the ethnic minorities in the three provinces. The Willink Commission recommended the formation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) to address the issues of underdevelopment of the minority areas east province (The Willink Commission Report July 1958). This resulted to the development of two cities in the then Eastern Region, which motivated the Rivers people to fight for separation from the Eastern Region.

Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB)

The NDDB were unable to meet the goals of the Rivers Chiefs Peoples Conference therefore, some of their members decided to take the legal route to achieve the organization's goal. Some citizen of the coastal community decided to take the law into their hands. Isaac Boro, Sam Owonaro and Nottingham Dick with their followers declared a "Delta Peoples Republic "in February 1966. The Federal Government of Nigeria under the administration of Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi the Head of State and Eastern Nigeria Governments leaders, led by Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu who was the Military Governor of the Eastern Province, brought this rebellion to an abrupt end and sentenced them to die.

History

Rivers state lies in the tropical rainforest with many mangrove swamps towards the coast of Niger Delta environment. The state was named Rivers state because there are many rivers that border its territory, and it covers 11,077 square kilometers (Nigerian Gallery, 2017). The Rivers State people come from indigenous ethnic groups such as Abua, Andoni, Ekpeye, Engenni, Etche, Ibani, Ikwerre, Kalabari, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Okrika and Ogoni (Rivers State, 2017). Rivers State was one of the 12 states created in 1967, and in 1996 became one of the 36 states of Nigeria when Bayelsa was carved out of Rivers State.

Port Harcourt is the capital of Rivers State. Frederick Lugard founded Port Harcourt in 1912. As the governor of both the Northern Nigeria Protectorate and the Southern Nigeria Protectorate, his goal was to use Port Harcourt to export coal found in Enugu in 1909 (Okafor, 1973). In 1912 the people of Diobu, Oroworukwo, Mkpogua, and Rumuomasi gave up their land to build Port-Town (Okafor, 1973). In 1958, Port Harcourt shipped the first crude oil from Nigeria after the discovery of crude oil in Oloibirin in 1956, which made Port Harcourt the center of the Nigerian economy till today. Port Harcourt is the commercial center and foremost industrial city of the Niger Delta region (Okafor, 1973) because of its position in the Region; and it is the center of social and economic life in Niger Delta area. After the defeat of the Republic of Biafra by the Nigerian army in 1967 Port Harcourt fell to Nigerian forces on the 19th of May 1968. In 1914, Port Harcourt occupied the area of 15.54 km², today Port Harcourt has grown to an area more than 380 km².

Port Harcourt is the deep-water port city-capital of Rivers state, Nigeria and it is bounded on the South by the Atlantic Ocean, to the North by Imo, Abia and Anambra States, to the East by Akwa Ibom State and to the West by Bayelsa and Delta states (Wolpe 1974). It lies along the, 66 kilometers upstream from the Gulf of Guinea, about 40 feet above sea level and a very few degrees above the equator. It is located at the edge of the Niger Delta's mangrove foreshore and swamplands (Wolpe 1974, p. 15). It is the largest and most significant urban center in the Niger Delta and an important industrial and commercial center in Nigeria.

The Rivers State people in diaspora migrated from these areas to become immigrants in the United States of America. In the 21st century, this group has been one of the growing immigrants all over the world through pursuit for education, visa lotteries, chain migration, and assisting family members (Nigerian Gallery, 2017). With the growing population of these group in diaspora, you are more likely to run into a person from these communities in diaspora who lives, works, doing business or in pursuit of education in the USA or UK.

Thousands of these folks live outside their State, and these are immigrants that live in other States in Nigeria, African, the United States, the United Kingdom, and many more nations in the world. The population of Rivers State indigenes in Diaspora is equivalent to or greater than one of its major local government areas in the State (Rivers State, 2017). These group that migrated are seeking to advance themselves in education and career, as a result, migrated from a land filled with natural resources to settle outside their state or overseas. Some took advantage of the opportunity presented to them by their state and the Nigerian government through scholarship to get educated and decided to live and participate in a democratic society to put themselves forward for public service in diaspora in a wide range of areas irrespective of the fact that their homeland was filled with natural

resources. In the late 19th century, Rivers people in diaspora settlement overseas started to increase compared to early 19th century, when they were part of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria.

Rivers State was created May 27th, 1967 under General Yakubu Gowon administration. General Yakubu Gowon, was a Nigerian military leader, who served as Head of State from 1966 to 1975. General Gowon is from now plateau state in the middle belt of Nigeria, educated in England at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Surrey where all officers in the British Army are trained to take on the responsibilities of leading the soldiers under their command (Floud et al. 1990). Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in the 19th century, were primarily of middle and upper-class origin of United Kingdom (Floud et al. 1990).

After the coup of January 1966, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi appointed General Gowon his chief of staff. After a counter-coup by Northern officers in July 1966, the same year, General Gowon emerged as the compromise Head of State of Nigeria. General Gowon tried to resolve the ethnic tensions that threatened to divide Nigeria fatally. On May 27, 1967, General Gowon declared a state of emergency and divided Nigeria's four regions into 12 states to resolve the ethnic conflict. Three days later, after the creation of Rivers State, General Odumegwu Ojukwu emerged as the leader of the Eastern region and declared itself the independent state of Biafra which started an armed conflict in July 1967. The creation of Rivers State in 1967, came with fifteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State and in 1996, additional LGAs were created with a total of twenty-three LGAs.

The author of this article is trusted on his experience, expertise, and knowledge of relevant literature of the creation of Rivers State and his comprehensive knowledge of historical evaluation of Rivers State in preparing this article. This paper gives a synopsis of Rivers state people in Diaspora trials and triumphs in the USA, brief introduction of Niger Delta and history of Rivers State. It interrogates the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), Diaspora and Diaspora at work, Economy of Rivers State, Rivers Diaspora remittance and mobilization, Defining success, and Policy and incentives. It is not solely or even largely about the unraveling of a socio-economic and political order in the state but, about the legitimacy of the Rivers in diaspora triumph and trials. It further shows the Rivers state People in Diaspora Engagement, Self-Development, Educational Quest, Challenges, Professional relations, and Rivers state people in diaspora immigrant. This paper concluded by reviewing the Rivers State people associations in the USA. Rivers state people in diaspora trials and triumphs in the USA cannot be fully understood and revealed unless you are part and parcel of the Diaspora as a whole or confronted with unforeseen circumstance as an immigrant.

Methodology

Trials and triumphs presents major challenges for Rivers state people in diaspora. Rivers state people in Diaspora should not only have the experience but also be ready to deal with the challenge of living outside their homeland and willing to support other cause, other than personal challenges. Within the literature related to Diasporas' trail and triumph, a gap exists. This gap identified in the literature presented the researcher an opportunity to examine Rivers people in Diaspora, their trial, and triumph in the United States. The author used a generic qualitative research approach to describe the Rives State people challenges and success in the United States. This generic qualitative study investigated Rivers people in diaspora in the United States, their trials and triumph and contribution to their local communities in their homeland. The purpose of this generic qualitative research design was to examine how River State people in Diaspora manage challenges and are motivated to support their family, local communities, and encourage State government in their homeland. Literature on Diasporas trial and triumph reveals that Diasporas support and contribute to the family, local community and their Government in their homeland (RAD, 2015)

Research Design

Generic qualitative research was used to collect and analyze data from Rivers State people in diaspora in the United States. Rivers State people in diaspora's personal viewpoint, perspective, reliance, or experiences of issues in trials

and triumphs cannot be measured in the statistical sense, as a result, requires a qualitative approach (Aronson, 1994). Trials and triumphs of Diasporas are complex, thus generic qualitative analysis was an appropriate approach to gather data to determine their trials and triumphs as they work through to manage struggle and challenges they face trying to integrate into a foreign land. Merriam (2014) stated that generic studies seek to understand how Rivers State people in Diaspora interpreted, constructed, or make meaning from their world and their struggle and challenges. The author's theoretically interpretive perspective was to examine; how Rivers State people in diaspora describe their trial and triumph, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their struggle and challenges.

The author used a generic qualitative research approach to interview the Rivers State people in the diaspora to recognize their trial and triumph and how they manage their challenges and still support their family and make a contribution to improve their local community in their homeland. Generic qualitative approach provided opportunities for this author to identify trials and triumphs in the participants' interpretive and descriptive responses with the most logical platform to examine the people of Rivers State, Nigeria and also examine the subjective opinions of the Rivers state people in diaspora's challenges and success (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Generic qualitative approach enabled this author to gain a deeper knowledge about how the Rivers state people in diaspora managed their challenges and also contributed to improve their local community and support their family in their homeland.

The author used generic qualitative approach because the focus of this article is on understanding Rivers state people in diaspora, their trials and triumphs and what motivates them to contribute and support their community in their homeland. According to Cooper and Endacott, (2007) generic qualitative research is used more frequently than in the past and about an in-depth understanding of Rivers state people in diaspora, their trial and triumph through the eyes of participants in this study (Merriam, 2011). The author used generic qualitative research design to describe participants' trials and triumphs and how they contributed and supported their family and the local community in their homeland. Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) asserted that generic qualitative inquiry has no adherence to a particular methodology or philosophical viewpoint.

Sample

The sample for this study were Rivers State people in Diaspora who live and work in the United States. Rivers State people in Diaspora are the participants in this study who migrated from Rivers State, Nigeria and are members of one or two Rivers state people associations in the United States. Rivers State people in Diaspora participants were chosen from Rivers State Foundation Inc. members, who have lived in the United States for at least ten years and must be a Rivers State Foundation Inc. member that belong to one other Rivers state people in diaspora's association in the United States. The sample size was determined on the response received by the author. In a qualitative research, the standard sample size ranges from 10 to 12 respondents (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2000); participants were selected from Rivers State Foundation Inc. that have experienced challenges.

The sample size for this article depended on the study, interview questions and the author's knowledge and exploration were necessary (Merriam, 2011) to describe efforts made by Rivers state people in the diaspora to improve their local community in their country of origin. It is important to note that generic qualitative research involves this author's desire to affect understanding and relate knowledge to action (Goldkuhl, 2012). The author terminated data collection when the information obtained was the same, thus reaching saturation. According to Percy et al., (2015), the collection of data for a generic qualitative research has to focus on real events and issues. Percy et al., (2015), asserted that information is sought from representative samples of people around real-world events and about their experiences. The author chooses this approach to explore and describe the experiences of Rivers state people in diaspora in the United States. The idea was to explore rivers State people trial and triumph, as regards to their understanding of transformational, transitional, or developmental changes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this research was based on governmental change (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; 2011). Rivers State people in Diaspora go through various types of challenge and change (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; 2011). The theoretical framework that was used by the author of this study was governmental change. The reviewed literature makes known the common types of governmental changes are developmental, transitional, and transformational change (Anderson & Anderson, 2010) that occurs with Rivers State people in Diaspora. The acceptance of the governmental change has been a concept that Rivers State people in diaspora have had a constant struggle within times past, even though it's occurrence has been in operation for ages (Rothwell, Stavros, Sullivan, & Sullivan, 2010). However, Rivers State people in Diaspora are still interested in the management of challenges to improve and advance their community in their homeland (RAD, 2015). Notwithstanding this interest, there is little or no study on how the Rivers State people in Diaspora deal with their challenges and still contribute to improving the lives of their family, and the local community in their State.

Diaspora

The word Diaspora is the migration of people from their country away to another country to settle. Others may describe it as people that left their homeland to other locations outside their birth home for various reasons and having the desire to return back to their homeland to contribute and be part of economic activities. There is an understanding that once a 'Diaspora' always a 'Diaspora.' The irony about this is that no one wants to remain a 'Diaspora' for the rest of his/her life but for lack of interest or a clear understanding of returning back to their homeland they decided to accept the term 'Diaspora.'

Today, many Rivers state people are living outside of their indigenous homes or place of origin. Many Rivers people in diaspora fear that their offspring will conform to the culture in their new home and lose the family ties and connection to their parents' cultural identity. It is difficult for parents to teach an offspring to learn the history and the culture of the indigenous homeland when that offspring are spread around the world. Simulation of rituals, memories, and stories from parents, community conventions, and short visits from family member cannot take the place of living in a physical community.

Diaspora at Work

In the United States, Rivers state people in diaspora express renewed interest in their family, local Government, State as well as their Nation. This includes development benefits, education, health care, and security. Most ethnic associations of the Rivers state people in the diaspora send resources home to assist their local communities. For example, their website promotes medical missions, mobile clinic to combat common health issues, and face the problem of the epidemic in local government and States. In 2016, the Rivers State foundation Inc. of the United States, co-sponsored by other Rivers State community associations went on a medical mission to combat common issues that need immediate attention for Rivers state people. Recently, in late 2018, Usama Ekpeye USA Inc. completed a humanitarian responsibility by donating food items and other household materials to flood victims in Ekpeye land to help the underprivileged and people displaced by the flood.

Similarly, it is the assumption of the Rivers state people in Diaspora and their various associations that most of the elementary, secondary and higher institutions in Rivers State are universally faced with the shortage of books and basic learning materials. These associations in the diaspora, USA raised money to pay school fees for the underprivileged family and provide basic learning materials to the pupils in their local government areas, which is an indicator of their beginning journey back home with development. Some started with the construction of sinking boreholes and boiler tanks, building schools, health centers, and supporting churches in their community.

These acts validate the fact that there is a crucial relationship that needs to be maintained between the Rivers state people in the diaspora and their Government. It is upon the Government of the Rivers State to see that the efforts

made by the Rivers state people in the diaspora succeed. These efforts and success will only help redirect fund and attention of our government for other purposes in whose areas the aids will be mostly needed.

Economy

Rivers State has one of the largest economies in Nigeria, crude oil being the main resource. The State has two major refineries, two major seaports, International airports, and various industrial estates spread across the state, particularly in Port Harcourt the State capital. Port Harcourt is accessible by road, rail, air, and sea. Port Harcourt has two seaports, railway terminus, and one of the busiest international airports in Nigeria (Rivers State, 2017). The capital, Port Harcourt was named "Garden City," because of its beautiful layout and peculiar landscape. It is the nerve center of all the famous Nigerian Oil industry and accommodates over ninety industrial concerns, including the Shell Petroleum Development Company of (Nigeria) Limited, AGIP, Texaco, Elf, NPRC, Michelin, West African Glass Industry, Alcan Aluminum, Metaloplastica, Risonpalm, NAFCON, Pabod Breweries, to mention a few.

The contributions of the Rivers State people in the diaspora to their local communities and the State Government for development have long been recognized (International diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). Studies have documented the importance of funds sent from the United States by Nigerians in Diaspora to their homelands in the 20th and 21st centuries to be in Billions of Naira (International diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). Rivers State people of Nigeria in Diaspora, particularly those in the United States, recognize their dream is to finance projects and impact their local community, just as the role of the Jewish people in diaspora financing construction of the state of Israel (Hispanics In Philanthropy, 2011, Modern Diasporas in International Politics, 1986). It is expected that the growth of Rivers state people in Diasporas, will stimulate expectations that their descendants will continue to finance the development of their communities and State of origin.

Rivers State Government increasingly recognizes the value that diaspora populations bring to development efforts and are seeking ways to magnify the financial resources this group contribute to the welfare and development in their state and local government areas. Other than sending money to relatives, which boost the state economy, the Rivers state people in diaspora fulfill a key development role in Rivers State. Rivers State needs the Diasporas in terms of investment in critical areas such as health, infrastructure, security, importation, tourism, and in the development of human resources.

Diasporas Remittances

Remittances to Rivers State, perhaps the most widely recognized form of Rivers state people in diaspora engagement, have increased intensely and are expected to continue to rise in the 21st century (International diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). According to the Hudson Institute, money remitted from the United States to developing countries in 2009 were about Ninety-six billion dollars (\$95.8 billion), which triples what the U.S government spent on official development assistance (Hudson Institute Center for Global Prosperity, 2009).

There is no doubt that the Rivers people are maximizing and channeling the large amount of remittance that flows from the United States (Hudson Institute Center for Global Prosperity, 2009) into Rivers State as an important objective of the Diasporas. Remittances have an impact in the inflow of funds to Rivers State, and represents a substantial portion of uncultivated local item for consumption (Hudson Institute Center for Global Prosperity, 2009) in Rivers State. Additionally, Western Union, new cell phone money transfer technology combined with increased mobile phone infiltration in Nigeria has improved the remittance process and made it much easier to send and receive money in the homeland state capital, Port Harcourt.

The individuals that receive this transferred money use it to fill their instantaneous needs, including food and medicine purchases, and other healthcare expenses, consequently these remittances have an impact on household and extends to local and the State Government. The Rivers state people in Diaspora love their communities and

are committed to their people, culture, and heritage, these are undoubtedly the vital elements to encouraging profitable, long-term, and lasting transformation in Rivers State.

Defining Success

There has been a misconception about what constitutes successful Diasporas and their investment in their homeland. The Rivers state people in diaspora, particularly in the United States want their success to include their non-economic influences such as their ties to the community, their participation in their homeland concerns and not limited to investments, when evaluating their service. This may include the progression of professional services that have transferred and can transfer to the forthcoming relationship. It is clear that the social cohesion and identity between the diaspora and the people in the homeland has an impact that cannot be measured in monetary terms.

This reflects a common understanding that Rivers people in diaspora's success and investment should not just be financial, but should also include knowledge transfer and social relationships. There should be a dialogue with the people in diaspora and the people in the homeland participants to establish "social cohesion" that measure and create accountability around the non-economic goals of both parties. We can all agree that the Diasporas' investments in their local areas are intended to address long-term economic development that must be sustained.

The Policy and Incentive

Some of the policy and incentives of Rivers State Government have not had an impact in encouraging the Diasporas to plan to return home to enjoy the rich natural resources and privileges in their State. Most of them want to go back to their homeland to contribute or payback to their community that has given them so much. Also, most Diasporas recognize that their education was sponsored and funded by the Rivers State Government through scholarship in the 70's and early 80's. Considering the feedback from most Rivers people in diaspora that migrated in the 70s and early 80s, confirmed that their education was paid by the Rivers State government. The most pressing question with them is what policies and incentives are being implemented by the State Government that will enhance their lives to want to make them return back home while the society creates a new group. According to Lewin's (1997) model of the change process, motivate your followers to change by helping them understand the importance of change, offer incentives, and guide them to identify the attitudes, behaviors, and values that will support new vision (Armenakis & Bedeian,1999; Burnes & Cooke, 2013).

It is important to point out that these groups are not looking for any special privileges, over their counterpart in the homeland to return home. However, the State Government needs to understand that these Rivers state people in diaspora have acquired a wide range of experience and exposure that will be beneficial to Rivers State government. It is natural as human nature that once this experience and knowledge have been acquired, people are encouraged and would want to use that knowledge and experience to make an impact in their various communities. It is clear that these Rivers state people will be returning from a very comfortable environment with good healthcare, easy access to basic needs, and excellent kids' education, regardless of their current situation.

Where and when incentives are provided, the respondents in this study noted that the Rivers State people in diaspora would be attracted and willing to give up comfort to return to their homeland for the development of their community. In the 60's and early 70's, for example, The Military Governor of Rivers State, Nigeria Alfred Diète-Spiff, a member of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) under General Yakubu Gowon's administration offered good incentives to Rivers state people in Diaspora, and most Diasporas returned back to their homeland to support the State.

It is understood that there are negative inferences, and discernments, that are connected with the Rivers state people in diaspora and the focus bestowed to them, just like any Diasporas. It may be comfortable to assume that the present administration are moving towards creating incentives to bring back the Rivers state people in diaspora

back home, so that their knowledge, the experience can be tapped, technology transfer, local capacity building in their area of expertise in the State and their local areas.

Rivers State Government extending investment incentive schemes to attract Rivers state people in Diaspora is a starting point. Research has shown that the Rivers state people love their State (Rivers State, 2017) and would prefer to return to their oil-rich homeland than be labeled Diasporas. As a result, any effort to bring the Rivers state people in the diaspora back to their homeland will be worthwhile, and the community can be rest assured that they are back home for good, because it's home for them. It will be accurate to say that every investment made by Rivers State people in diaspora to the State has an impact in local capacity creation, impact on knowledge transfer, and impact on creating a home-grown business.

Rivers People in Diaspora Engagement

According to respondents in this study, the Rivers State people in diaspora associations in the USA play an important role when it comes to addressing issues concerning their communities. With the understanding of their community economy, culture, and their deep commitment to seeing their local government areas flourish, the Diasporas investors tend to be more committed than the average outside investors.

There is so much unexploited knowledge, experience, and skills in Rivers state people in diaspora. This Diasporas, particularly those in the USA, want to return back home and be part of the growth planning of oil-rich Rivers State and believe that their impact will be enormous. They feel the pressure to return home, engage, and help their community, and if they don't who would? Most of the Rivers state people in diaspora, particularly in the United States of America have three major objectives: development; make money and make an impact in their homeland. As a result, the respondents in the study wish the Rivers state government creates incentives to attract the untapped knowledge, skill, experience, wealth, and do everything possible to attract them to return home.

Self Development

All the respondents in the study agreed that the Rivers State people associations in the diaspora should plead with every member of their association to be the best on whatever they do, wherever they are. One of the participants stated that "Our success begins with us, as a result, we are effectively confronting our trials, which leads to our triumphs."

Educational Quest

According to the Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD) analysis (2015), Nigerians in the diaspora are the best educated of the 15 groups in their study. The Rivers people in diaspora are part of these Nigerians in the United States that are highly educated (RAD analysis, 2015). Large proportion of Rivers people in diaspora hold bachelor's or advanced degrees thus, Rivers state people in diaspora value and cherish education. All the respondents believed that the Rivers State people's associations in diaspora support education and are strategically searching for ways to advance education in their homeland. Education is the search for knowledge and wisdom that helps youths to survive and succeed economically, as a result, minimize insecurity and reduces violence in every community.

Rivers state have over 2,805 Government primary schools and 243 secondary schools. Other institutions are the University of Port Harcourt, the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, the School of Health Technology, Port Harcourt, the federally-owned polytechnic at Omoku and the state-owned Rivers State Polytechnic at Bori, the Rivers State University of Education (Ignatius Ajulu University) at Rumuolumeni, Nkpolu Oroworukwo and Ndele and the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Rumueme, Port Harcourt (Rivers, 2017).

Challenges

All the participants in the study agreed that survival is one of the major challenge every Rivers state person in diaspora worldwide deals with. The challenges come from personal, family to the national to global. Rivers state people in the diaspora, also individually grapple with daily issues of life, mowing your lawns, baby sitting, wash cars, run errand, and work almost every day. Some deal with health issues, others fight diseases, educational frustrations, family issues, and others. These are all challenges which we as human face. Rivers people in diaspora like people in the homeland address the same exact issues as everyone anywhere in the world.

Professional Relation

All the respondents agreed that the Rivers people in Diaspora are capable and competent professionals in multitudes of careers as their equals at home and appreciate the importance of professionalism. They are doctors, engineers, educators, lawyers, businessmen, accountants, environmentalist, agriculturalist and lot more informal profession. Therefore, the Rivers State people in diaspora need to be mobilized and organized for community good. The participants suggested that the professional relationship between the Rivers state people in diaspora and those at homeland become a critical and an essential component to break new frontiers and capitalize on the professional connection.

Rivers in Diaspora Immigrant

According to RAD analysis (2015), the largest numbers of Nigeria immigrants in the United States reside in Texas, Maryland, and New York, and this reflects the settlement of the Rivers People in Diaspora. By metropolitan areas, New York, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Washington DC, and Miami has the largest Rivers State immigrant population. Rivers people in Diaspora have built and are building a network of organization through North America. These Rivers people in diaspora groups are all volunteer-led organizations with unique and one common objective to give back, encourage the development of Rivers State, the arts and culture, homeland, women and youth empowerment, or the provision of health and other social services to Rivers' most underprivileged populations.

Rivers State Associations in Diaspora Mobilization

The main goal of all Rivers state people in diaspora associations are to mobilized those from the same tribe and culture, to raise awareness and fund in a time of crisis and coordinate relief efforts to save lives back in their homeland. Rivers State foundation Inc. proved this during their medical mission in May 2017. The primary message from these associations was that Rivers in diaspora communities need help, and they need to come together to affect change. Once these associations are unified around a goal and their desire to make a difference in diaspora, the impact of their efforts are dramatic, even when addressing a crisis in their homeland, which is thousands of miles away. Understanding the historical account of Rivers State people in the United State of America is essential to appreciate their trial and triumph, this article discusses the goals of few of the Associations that constitutes the Rivers People in Diaspora. These Rivers state groups identify themselves by their shared dialect and cultural tradition.

Goal for Excellence

The purpose and objectives of Rivers State's associations are to focus on environmental degradation, public health and economic development of the State; to promote peace and stability in the region; to promote understanding between the Diasporas and the people in homeland, Rivers State Nigeria on matters of social-cultural significance to both entities; to create a forum for exchange of professional ideas and mobilization of resources among Rivers State indigenes in the United States, and to assist in the creation of a forum for responsible advocacy of the problems of the Rivers People

Rivers State foundation in the United States go back to the nineties. The current Rivers State Foundation, Inc. (RSF, Inc.) was founded in 2010 at the Houston Convention coordinated by a Court-appointed Care Taker Committee established to resuscitate its predecessor, the Rivers State Foundation. Its predecessor was established in 1991 as an umbrella organization for Rivers State indigenes now residing in the Americas. Initially called the "National Association of Rivers State People," the name was changed to The Rivers State Foundation at the association's Chicago Conference of 1992. Since its formation in 1991, the Foundation has organized itself around regional chapters. At its peak, the foundation had representatives and chapters in all regions of the United States. Its membership base consisted of highly respected professionals from diverse academic and vocational backgrounds - medicine, engineering, banking, state and federal government employees, education, accounting, entrepreneurship, to name a few. Fourteen years after the formation of the foundation, conflict within the Board of Directors led to its dissolution.

The mission of Rivers State Foundation Inc. is the advancement of education, economic development, cultural and environmental issues in the Oil Delta Region of Nigeria. The Region is the richest oil and gas producing area in Sub-Sahara Africa. It includes 23 oil-producing Local Government Areas; namely: Abua/Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku-Toru, Andoni, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema, Eleme, Emohua, Etche, Gokana, Ikwerre, Khana, Obio/Akpor, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Ogu/Bolo, Okrika, Omuma, Opobo/Nkoro, Oyigbo, Port Harcourt, and Tai.

This paper list few of the Rivers State local government/ethnic association in the United States America and their goals are on their website. The local government/ethnic association included AbuaOdual USA, Corp; Kalabari National Association an umbrella organization for the Abonnema Foundation; Kalabari Association of Washington; Houston Kalabari Community Inc; Buguma Community USA; Obama (Bakana) Development Association; Kula Community; Obuama Community USA Inc; Kalabari Belema – Awo of North Carolina; **Ndoni National Association USA Inc.**; Ogbakor Ikwerre USA (OIUSA) Inc.; **Ogoni Charities, Inc.**; Usama Ekpeye USA Inc. and more, all are non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations. These organizations serve as a platform for all sons and daughters of Rivers people residing in North America to combine their resources to address and solve common problems effectively and efficiently here and in their homeland. Their goals are to foster unity, enhance the growth, promote education, culture, human services, and Healthcare among all people of their heritage. The members of these associations are volunteers that represent a group of like-minded people who saw the need for combining their individual strengths, diverse profession and educational backgrounds to embark on charitable and philanthropic causes for the underprivileged in their homeland and displaced Diasporas in the United States.

Recommendation

The advancement of technology makes the world shrink, however, skills and growth are increasingly becoming more comprehensive. The Rivers state people in diaspora community's organizations and their members play a significant role in promoting stronger desire to make a difference, development, deeper interest is addressing crisis, women and youth empowerment, the provision of health and other social services, as a result, are looking for more effective bilateral collaboration with the Rivers State government. A partnerships that will build on existing linkages to Rivers State and draw on the talents, creativity, resources, and networks of Rivers state people in diaspora communities.

One way to do this and be effective is to start a Diaspora office in the United State to coordinate other Diasporas in other continents to carry out the mission of the Rivers in diaspora and collaborate with the state government to assure that the Rivers state people in the diaspora's concerns are addressed, and their safety when they visit homeland is assured. The Diaspora office should be able to collaborate with policy formulation for Rivers state people in Diaspora and those in the homeland to enable intercultural skill initiative to be developed and so much more. It is important to clarify that the Rivers people in Diaspora concerns and contributions to their local governments are personal and a moral obligation by individuals to assist their local community in their homeland.

Conclusion

About a hundred thousand or more Rivers state immigrants and their children live in the United States, and are the lowest source of Nigeria immigration. The size of the Rivers states people population that migrated from Rivers State had grown from the 80's, when the Rivers State Government was awarding scholarship for educational purpose to the United States, United Kingdom and other parts of the world. According, Rockefeller Foundation Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (2015), Nigerian immigrants account for about 0.6 percent of the United States' overall foreign-born population, and less than 0.1 percent are Rivers state immigrants.

Through partnerships of Rivers State Government and the diaspora associations, diaspora communities in the USA can strategically invest in their indigenous ethnic groups, supporting innovative projects that are scalable and sustainable and greatly improve quality of life in their local government (International diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). Conversely, to promoting scalable and sustainable development in Rivers State economies, the state will need people with knowledge, skills, and commitment, because remittances alone will not suffice (International diaspora Engagement Alliance, 2012). These commitment to help their people's civil society groups strengthens transfers of knowledge, money remittance to improve and foster growth.

An employer that may want to invest overseas often turns to their diaspora member employees to identify new market opportunities and understand the cultural preferences of their diaspora communities and culture (International diaspora Engagement Alliance (2012). The Rivers in diaspora in the U.S. have saved tens of thousands of lives through Community association conventions providing a platform for most Diasporas and Americans to contribute to the creative and productive project. The Rivers in Diaspora communities serve as an "ambassadorial association," helping to reaffirm and strengthen diplomatic relations during political mayhem and change.

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