

The Challenges and Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria: A Study of Bayelsa State Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF)

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ABSTRACT

The Bayelsa State government established the Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF) on 29 March 2017 with the mandate to “sensitize and mobilize all indigenes of the state, other Nigerians and relevant organizations (i.e. publics) to contribute to the Fund...”. Implicit in the mandate are two-dimensions of corporate social responsibilities (CSR) (i.e., to and by the publics). Unfortunately, 62.5 percent of its publics argue that the Fund has not been able to implement them and are threatening to stop remittance and pressuring government to repeal the EDTF law. Thus, the study assessed the Fund’s level of implementation of its CSR, and examined the challenges/benefits thereof. It adopted ‘political economy’ framework popularized by Gray, et al (1995), and applied secondary method of data collection; complemented by ‘participant-observation’ and focused group discussions (FGD) technique. The study found that the Fund has not implemented, as well as, enforced its CSR; and recommended the adaptation of the Etekpe’s model of CSR measurement index to monitor and enforce compliance. The implication is that there is an urgent need for specific legislation on the practice of CSR to enhance corporate governance in the state and country.

Keywords: Corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, European Commission, measurement index, and publics.

INTRODUCTION

The Bayelsa state government established the EDTF to address the educational disadvantaged status of the state on 29 March 2017. According to the Chairman of the Board, Isoun, a renowned scientist and educationist of international repute (2018: ii-iii), the Fund is to “sensitize and mobilize all indigenes, other Nigerians and international organizations (i.e. publics) to contribute to the Fund... for the development of education in the state...” Implicit in the mandate is the implementation of two dimensions of CSR i.e., to and by the publics), and a Board was then constituted for it on 30 June 2017.

The evolution of the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), started amongst some large scale and

multinational corporations in 1960s but became a formal/ integral part of companies and organizations through the Sullivan Principles in 1977. The principles, which started as an anti-apartheid pledge by Rev. Leon Sullivan – a Philadelphia, Baptist Church Minister and Director of General Motors in the United State of America (USA) as:

a list of operational goals for companies and organizations that do business in South Africa ... It was a code of conduct particularly for USA businesses that operated in South Africa to adhere to internationally acceptable practices in dealing with fair employment practice; payment of living wages, well-defined staff (employee) schemes, including granting trade unions rights for black workers; limiting corporate support to apartheid

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Received date: August 2, 2020; **Accepted date:** August 25, 2021; **Published date:** September 6, 2021

Citation: Dan-Woniowei FD (2021) The Challenges and Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria:

A Study of Bayelsa State Education Development Trust Fund (EDTF). J Pol Sci Pub Aff Vol.9.No.p480.

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(employee) schemes, including granting trade unions rights for black workers; limiting corporate support to apartheid government, and provision of social infrastructure for the host communities ...; (Etekpe, 1982/2019:174).

According to Etekpe (1982/2019: 174 - 175), "between 1977 and June 1982, over 100 corporations from 9 states, 2 major cities and 1 county in USA that operated in South Africa signed the principles (pledge) for commitment to promoting CSR". Thus, the code (Sullivan principles) became a criterion for investment in communities, and was applied at varying degrees by international corporations. The practice has been extended to Nigeria, and applied particularly by multinational oil companies (MNOCs) - Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd (SPDC), Nigerian Agip Oil Company Ltd (NAOP), Chevron Nigeria Unlimited, etc.

Today, it has expanded the scope to companies, organization, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), institutions (universities) and trade unions, etc. for the provision of not only social infrastructures such as primary/secondary health care delivery centers, electricity, building of classroom blocks for primary and secondary schools, road, etc. but to embrace scholarships/bursaries, human capacity building, rights of workers, etc. to the critical stakeholders and host communities. Accordingly, CSR has now been equally referred to as 'corporate citizenship, responsible business or corporate conscience' and an integral part of corporate governance. Corporate governance is referred to as:

The system or framework of rules and standards by which a company (or Education Development Trust Fund - EDTF) generally managed, controlled, and held accountable, especially as regards the integrity, transparency, and responsibility achieved by management and more specially, the board of directors (Garner, 2004:415).

Having evolved over the years, the concept has also been defined in several ways, but this study adopted Geetamani's (2017:372) definition that appeals to the Niger Delta region: a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates companies express this responsibility through their waste and pollution reduction, contribution to educational and social programs and important of returns on the employed resources.

By this definitions, CSR programmes, policies and projects (PPPs) functions as a self-regulatory process whereby a company or organization like EDTF monitors and ensures its active compliance with the tenets of the laws of Bayelsa state or Nigeria, ethical standards or norms of the state and country. Today, we expect a company or organization's implementation of CSR to go beyond compliance to engage in processes and actions that would cover more social infrastructure to human capacity building, award "of scholarships and payment of bursary, health care delivery system, girl-child education, etc. The underlying aim is for the company or organization to be making long-term profits and at the same time making positive impact on the host communities through cordial public relations and maintenance of high ethical standard; and it is not easy to achieve them. Thus, CSR implementation has generated several problems.

There is no doubt that implementation of CSR in Nigeria has encountered several problems; and Ugwunanyi and Ekene (2016: 65-66) have summarized them to include: absence of enabling laws to ensure CSR practice, corruption, lack of interest in implementing CSR, negligence or non-existent benefits, and political and social instability. They contended that since the emergence of CSR in Nigeria, there has been no specific law put in place by the federal government to enforce it. Thus, CSR is implemented at the discretion of the companies/ organizations, which pick what it considers as its social responsibilities, and is basically MNOCs in the region and country that seemingly implement it through MoUs and GMoUs. The absence of specific laws has limited the practice of CSR, and the federal government should provide the legal framework to design, measure and implement CSR (Ijaiya, 2014) so that some local and international companies operating in Nigeria shall not be lukewarm in implementing CSR. Presently, the companies, see CSR not as a responsibility or obligatory, but merely do it at its volition.

The second problem is the difficulty to see the results or outcome of CSR, especially, on the communities as the results often favour the companies, in form of, promotion of their brand, and gaining of access to new markets. In the absence of such tangible (visible) benefits, the communities do not feel the impact and as such often resort to violent actions against the perceived companies, and where the violence is not properly managed as the case in the Niger Delta Region, it results to political and social insecurity.

Azman and Mustapha (2018:215) went further to elaborate on the problems of CSR implementation through the study on 'top management of manufacturing companies registered with Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers' (FMM)'. The top management was selected because they, like EDTF, have powers to make decisions relating to CSR activities in the company/ organization. The study found that the activities of companies/ organizations, especially, those in extractive and manufacturing sectors have the possibility of producing detrimental features on ecology and social systems. This is where legislation comes in, and how business needs to maintain and create corporate social advocacies throughout the supply chain. The study also identified the problem of high cost in conducting CSR. As a consequence, companies/ organizations tend to pay more attention to short-term programmes rather than those programmes with long - term benefits that would provide profits in the long run. Thus, companies/ organizations tend to avoid CSR that would adversely affect their profit.

The third problem is cultural diversity. This factor has negatively affected the success of CSR and there is the need for a change in organizational culture. The problem is associated with different beliefs and values of top management or board members, and should not be glossed away because where it is not properly handled, it may lead to perennial conflicts in the implementation process. This shall eventually affect productivity, outcome or result, as well as, the effectiveness of board members working together as a team (Setthasakko, 2009; 188-200).

In spite of the problems, there is not much research done in the area that specifically point out how to design, develop and measure the implementation of CSR activities, as well as, assess the level of implementation of CSR by public sector service delivery organizations such as EDTF. Most of the research done are on enumerating challenges and benefits of implementation of CSR by the MNOCS, especially SPDC and NAOC, and selected companies in the private sector where the focus was mainly on provision of social infrastructure. This study is a departure as it shall address the gap in the following ways:

Bringing in the public sector that are in service delivery as existing literature on CSR have literally ignored this sector;

Development of measurement index that goes beyond financial performance to cover non-financial activities as to guide compliance; and

Downgrading the effect of high cost in favour of benefits, especially, reputation, community-acceptance, and enhancement of corporate governance.

The foregoing problems and the effort to address the gap have raised several questions, such as:

- a) What are the challenges and benefit of EDTF implementing CSR in Bayelsa state and Nigeria?
- b) What are the similarities and differences in implementing CSR activities in private and public organizations, with emphasis on service delivery sub-sector?
- c) What are the pressures faced by organizations, especially EDTF, in implementing CSR to achieve its goals and objectives; and
- d) What is the role of legislation in enhancing the implementation of CSR activities in Bayelsa state and Nigeria?

The study, therefore, aimed at assessing the Fund's level of implementation of its two dimensional CSR, examined the challenges and benefits thereof, as well as, developed a model for measuring the implementation of CSR activities. The specific objectives were:

- (i) Identifying the prevailing challenges and benefits in implementation of CSR in Bayelsa State and Nigeria, with emphasis on EDTF;
- (ii) Examining and analyzing the EDTF's two dimensions of CSR, and the level of implementation to achieve the quantitative and qualitative goals and objectives of the board;
- (iii) Developing the CSR measurement index to enforce compliance;
- (iv) Examining the pressures faced by the EDTF from critical stakeholders; and
- (v) Analyzing the effect of 'absence' of specific legislation on the practice of CSR in the state and country.

The study was divided into four broad parts, beginning with this introduction, and progressed to review related literature in part two. The review covered CSR activities in private and public organizations, challenges and benefits, and measurement; and

was followed by ethical analysis of prevailing theoretical issues and methodology. The theoretical framework was based on 'political economy' and applies secondary data collection method. The method was complemented by 'participants-observation', and focused group discussions (FGD), discussed the findings in part three; and recommendations in part four.

We wish to state that the 'initial study report' was presented to members of the board of directors (BOD) of EDTF for validation at its retreat on 'corporate governance' at Warri in Delta State on 16 October 2019 and was elaborately discussed; and the inputs have been incorporated into this final report. (As discussed later, members of the board became part of the focused group discussions that enriched the data).

In reviewing the literature, we noticed that the primary function of EDTF is to "generate funds from its publics for the general upgrading of education in the state, as well as, implementation of an effective CSR. The specific objectives include: provision of adequate teaching/learning materials for schools; provision of adequate infrastructure; and provision of bursary/scholarship. The Chairman stated that the Fund's vision is "...becoming a world class education intervention agency driven by stakeholder's participation and contribution for sustainable and enhanced standard of education employing best practice" (Isoun, 2018 2-3). Going forward, the Fund's major sources of revenue, are: subventions from state and local government areas (LGAs), 5 percent of internally generated revenue (IGR) of the state/LGAs, 2 percent of salary of political office holders, 0.5 percent of the consolidated basic salaries of civil/public servants of state/LGAs, and levies on corporate bodies.

The Fund is managed by a board established on 30 June 2018, with a ceremonial Chairman, and an Executive Secretary (ES). The ES serves as the secretary of the board and is also the accounting officer. The other members of the 16-member board were:

- One from each of the 8 local government areas (LGAs);
- A representative of the Ministry of Education not below the rank of a director;
- A representative of the Ministry of Finance not below the rank of assistant director;
- Two members representing Labour Unions (NLC & TUC);
- A member representing the organized private sector (OPS);
- A member representing the oil producing/servicing companies; and
- A member to serve as International liaison.

The board functions through two departments, namely: Administration, Finance and Planning; and Project management, information and legal departments. Each of the department is headed by a director and a complement of relevant staff.

The board has setup four (4) standing committees - sensitization/mobilization, fund generation/investment, project monitoring/evaluation, and scientific research/technology development support committees for the following areas of intervention (Isoun 2018: 8-9): procurement of teaching/research materials, provision of educational infrastructure, award of scholarship and payment of bursary, funding state's

model schools/research in state owned tertiary educational institution, and endowment of professional chairs/fellowships programmes. The eligible beneficiary institutions are public schools, college, polytechnic, and university, while that of CSR are indigenes of the state, host community, other Nigerians, civil/public servants, and organization.

Going forward, we noticed that the practice or the implementation of CSR is carried out predominantly in the private sector by medium and large scale enterprises (MLSEs). This, according to Ugwunwanyi and Ekene (2016: 60), was due to the private sector's emphasis on:

maximizing profits and annexing natural resources... as a result of impacting positively and negatively in the environment where it exists. In order to remedy the problem brought about by the operations of these companies to the people and environment where they operate, the management of these businesses through rendering of some social services in turn pay back to the community, hence the concept of CSR.

Experience has shown that implementation by the companies faced pressures from different stakeholders, namely: staff (employees) in form of pressure to recognize their rights in the work place, pressures of consumers for the business to withhold price increase and to produce safe products, pressures from community and environmental groups that the business operation does not threaten the safety of the local community. For public organizations, the pressures from parents and civil servants that the education levy to sustain EDTF is utilized 'judiciously, pressure from the pupils/students that they are paid bursary and awarded scholarship, pressures from companies that the levy results to quality graduates from the school system, etc. The pressures are everywhere both in private and public organizations, especially in an era of dwindling resources. Thus, the top management or board members have to be creative and proactive to attract additional funding outside the statutory sources.

For Ugwunwanyi, Ananaba and Ekene (2016: 61), "... all these pressures have contributed to the concept of CSR more popular in the (local and) international business communities". Accordingly, it (CSR) is generally referred to as "business practical that are based on ethical values, compliance with legal regulation, and respect for people and the environment" (Etekepe, 2009; 232-240).

We noticed that the literature does not have consensus on the concept of CSR. Thus, while the world Bank defined CSR as the "commitment of businesses to continue to sustainable economic development by working with employees, local community, and the society at large to improve their lives in ways that are good for business for development" (Lantos, 2001); the European Commission termed it as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society" (Geethamani, 2017). Here, CSR is considered as a corporate citizenship, which essentially means that a company should be a good neighbour within its host community.

It is probably for this reason, Carroll (2000) proposed a four-part definition of CSR to embrace the four primary responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities -

making it to be considered as a good corporate citizen. As corporate citizen, it is expected to pay attention to the economic, environmental and social impacts of its activities (Etekepe, 2009; 239-40).

Milton Friedman (cited in Kaplan, 2012) took a fairly different position in the debate on private sector implementation of CSR when he argued "that companies have only one social responsibility, which is to use resources for maximum profit for the shareholders; and to solve the social problems that exist..., and if it couldn't, then it falls on the government and not upon companies to do so in form of CSR". The adherents to the perspective believe that CSR dilutes the primary objective of companies as it requires them to sacrifice a reasonable (i.e., 5-10 percent of their gross profits) to social responsibilities that are meant to be addressed by the government. He contended that payment of tax is sufficient CSR, and the additional burden or costs (i.e., education levy) can make business less competitive. This shall, in turn, impair businesses to expand operations to stimulate socio-economic development.

Kurucz et al (2008) disagreed with Friedman and pointed out that if businesses are to have a healthy climate in which to operate, it is for their long-term self-interest to be socially responsible. They concluded by enumerating the benefits, that companies practicing CSR can "win new business, increase customer retention, develop relationships with suppliers, make an organization an employer of labour, improve funding opportunities". These benefits outweigh the costs, and should downgrade the 'high-cost-syndrome' in implementation of CSR. Thus, CSR is a balancing mechanism that should be pursued by companies.

Grigoris (2016:40-41) expanded the scope of the debate to public sector organizations, such as institutions (universities), public corporations, ministries - departments - agencies (MDAs), trade union and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc.; and asserted that, "CSR has been successful concept for companies and organizations and NGOs in order to ensure their capacity for long-term value and gain competitive advantages" He went further to state that "it is an effective means to mitigate the new type of risk that has emerged, known as social risk....".

Be that as it may, while public organizations (i.e. MDAs, etc.) are aware of the concept, it is rarely practiced due mainly to the intangible nature of their services. This is compounded by inconsistency in measurement of the benefits / outcome. The issue of measurement cannot be over emphasized, and Mitchell (1996), and Aravossis, et al (2006) have "suggested guidelines for developing CSR framework..." In critiquing it, we noticed that it is generally based on single best approach and subjective as the emphasis was on financial performance. We wish to argue that the measurement indicators have to increase to include 'non-financial and non-tangible' indicators.

Igalens and Gond (2005) suggested 5 different indicators or indices of measurement, namely:

- Analysis of the content of annual reports;
- Pollution and other environmental indices;
- Perceptual derived from questionnaire-based surveys;
- Corporate reputation indicators; and

- Data produced by measurement organizations

These are also inadequate and as such we have developed, what is referred to as the Etekepe model of CSR measurement (EMCM). The model measures specific and general criteria, and covers financial and non-financial indicators as the emphasis on public sector organizations is not so much on finances but service delivery (Table 1 - 1). Thus, the need for measurement indicators to reflect the mood of public organizations cannot be over emphasized.

Bitifci, et al (2002) gave 5 reasons why measurement is important. They are: monitoring and controlling, driving improvement, maximizing efficiency and effectiveness, achieving alignment with organizational goals, and rewards and discipline. He then concluded that the ‘trickle down’ benefits from the 5 reasons, outweighs the cost of implementing CSR activities.

Going forward, Justice (2017) took the debate to trade union and NGOs, and stated that trade Unions (i.e. Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), NGOs and governments (i.e. MDAs, and inter-governmental organizations), institutions (i.e., Universities), etc. have developed work plans and created special units to promote CSR. In Table 1-1, we have highlighted public sector organizations implementing CSR.

Table 1: Public Sector Organizations Implementing CSR in Nigeria.

S/N	Name	Nature of CSR
1	Institution (universities, Armed Forces, Polices).	Awarding scholarship, medical outreach, recruitment and peace building.
2	Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).	Provision of borehole waters, drug, public education, peace-building, humanitarian services.
3	Ministry Department- Agency (MDAs).	- Recruitment, public education/enlightenment programmes, interventions.
4	Trade Union	Provision of relief materials, community service and protection of human/ workers’ rights.
5	Inter - governmental organizations	Coordination of public programmes to prevent waste, humanitarian services, advocacy

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019.

He urged trade unions to continue to implementing CSR so that it can help to shape it and its employers. This role is important as it has challenges and opportunities for workers. The major challenges and opportunities in implementation of CSR are in the following areas:

- The challenges and opportunities of resisting pressures;
- The challenges and opportunities of stakeholder’s idea/input;
- The challenges and opportunities of standards and standard settings;
- The challenges and opportunities of reporting and verification;
- The challenges and opportunities of socially responsible investments;
- The challenges and opportunities of sustaining reputation; and
- The challenges and opportunities of engaging employers.

Aseghehey (2008) examined the challenges in implementation of CSR in the public organizations, using a single case study method on Karlstad bus, Sweden and found that the biggest challenge faced by the organization was cost. This agrees with earlier arguments, including that of Witte (2006) that the implementation process is expensive and often times become a barrier as it diverts limited funds from the core objectives. He then, suggested two ways of downgrading high cost syndrome by exploring other ways of raising additional funds from charitable organizations and foundations, and addressing the prevailing negative mindsets. It then concluded that in spite of the challenges, public sector organizations should continue to “fulfill the needs and requirements of the organizations environment and society” to remain relevant. The conclusion has, however, raised theoretical and methodological issues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are several theories that explain why companies and organizations embark on CSR activities, namely, from the stakeholder and legitimacy theories to political economy theory (Gray, Kouchy and Lavers, 1995). The stakeholders’ theory argues that, companies and organization (CAOs) practice CSR activities because of ethical demand on them, as well as, the need to manage the perception of powerful stakeholders that could influence the publics to protest against the company/organization. The legitimacy theory, on the other hand, contends that CAOs practice CSR to show that they are conforming to the expectations and values of their host community and society within which they operate (Ugwunwanyi, Ananaba and Ekene, 2016; 61). Going forward, the political economy theory posits that CAOs implement CSR because they want to create a political arrangement that would in the long run suits their corporate interest. KPMG (2008) studied the world largest 250 organizations and their reason(s) for practicing CSR; and found that ethical consideration ranked highest, followed by economic consideration that CSR shall enhance the long term financial performance of organizations.

Having examined the prevailing theories, the study adopted the ‘political economy’ framework where political arrangement over production, distribution and monitoring activities would make

the host communities and stakeholders received the CAOs as socially responsible. This position has been supported by studies conducted by Price-water-house & Coopers, (an accounting firm, in 2003). It surveyed 105 top business executives in the world, and 73 percent of them (respondents) stated that cost savings and public perception of their activities accounted for their reasons in implementing CSR.

The study applied secondary method of data collection-analysis of reports, periodicals, technical journals, conference proceedings, and government gazettes related to the topic. It was complimented by FGDs and participant- observation’ methods as the author has been involved in managing several reputable CAOs for over 34 years. The CAOs ranges from banking, manufacturing, import-exports, consultancy to public services. He has brought to bear these experiences on formation, measurements, and actionable programmes on CSR that shall help EDTF enforce compliance from its corporate clientele, as well as, executing its CSR to the stakeholders.

We requested for the list of the Fund’s publics (i.e., contributors) but were referred to the State’s Ministry of Finance which also did not avail us with the data. We then resorted to ‘intelligence sources’ to obtain it. The data was, however, not clear, as such, we could not determine the actual number of contributors to form the population. The list, for example, consolidated the civil/public servants, political executives and chairmen of LGAs into one composite heading-civil/public servants, and further listed 30 private/public organizations-making it appear as if the total contributors were 31. As it was the best available data, we then applied ‘purposive sampling’ technique (Bailey, 1982) to carefully select two respondents each from 3 of the 7 groups of the Fund’s 2 dimensions of CSRs in Table 1-3. By this, the total target population was 18 (a+c) in Table 1-2. As shown further in Table 1-2, the sampled size and population increased from 18 to 28 (b +d+c), following feedbacks and inputs received from the initial presentation of this report for validation at the board’s retreat at Warri in Delta State on 16 October 2019. By this revision, members of the board also became part of the FGD (Table 1-2) that enriched the data.

It is worth stating that the Fund does not seem to be bordered about the list and break-down of the contributors; instead, it relied on the monthly remittances from the Ministry of Finance. Under such circumstance, we believe, the sampled population of 28, out of the 31, was reasonable for analysis and presentation at part 4.

Table 2: Revised Target Population for Focused Group Discussion (FGD).

S/No	1. CSR to EDTF	2. CSR by EDTF	3. Board of Directors
	Publics (contr	Publics (contr	Members of
	Sample	Sample	Sample

	ibutors)	ibutors)		Board		15 members	1
		1st	2nd	1st	2nd		
1	Public/Civil Servants	2	3	Public Servants	2	3	
2	Organizations: NLC	2	3	Organizations: NLC	2	3	
	TUC	2	3	TUC	2	3	
				NUJ	2	3	
3	NGOs	2	3	Students Union Government	2	3	
	Total Population	8 (a)	12 (b)		10 (c)	15 (d)	1 (e)

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019.

Key: NLC- Nigerian Labour Congress TUC- Trade Union Congress

NUJ- Nigerian Union of Journalists NGO- Non-governmental organization

The entire FGD took 10 weeks, i.e.; 01 September - 05 October 2019; and thereafter, 20 October - 29 November 2019 to accommodate the additional sampled population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The different inputs of the FGDs have been aggregated, synthesized and presented as follows: The position of organizations were that the Fund has neither executed its statutory duties and responsibilities effectively nor performed its CSR efficiently since inception in 2017. They, especially, the NGO’s under the auspice of Bayelsa Non-Governmental Organizations Forum (BANGOF), therefore threatened to mobilize the other contributors to lobby members of the Bayelsa State House of Assembly (BSHA) to repeal the law establishing EDTF. The pressure is increasing.

The students group, which are supposedly the primary beneficiaries of the fund, were also not satisfied and asserted that the CSR programmes and projects be directed to issues of human capacity building, scholarship/bursary, health care services, and girl-child education, etc, instead of what they described as ‘old fashioned approach’ of providing social

infrastructures. Accordingly, they urged the BSHA and National Assembly (NA) to enact specific legislations to compel public and private organizations like EDTF to perform CSR. The laws should also specify how such CSRs shall be measured for compliance.

The board of directors (BODs) argued that they were not aware that EDTF as a public organization with responsibility to provide service (intangible product) should perform CSR. They felt CSR was meant for companies and big organizations; thus, they have not evolved or developed measurement index, not until the initial presentation of this study report at the retreat. The board was, therefore, enthused and adapted the Etekepe’s model of CSR measurement to guide them. It then resolved to resist pressures from its public’s to abandon its dual CSR.

The discussion is basically focused on the two dimensions of EDTF’s CSR, development of measurements index (indicators), and challenges and benefits of implementing it, as well as, the implications of the findings for public policy.

There are two dimensions of CSR available to the board. They are:

(i) Seeking for CSR compliance from companies and civil servants in payment of education levy to the board, and

(ii) Board’s social responsibilities to its stakeholders, such as the target indigenes or other Nigerians, civil/public servants, host communities and the society. In enforcing compliance, or responding to its social responsibilities, the board should be mindful that the manner of compliance varies from organization to organization as CSR is a broad concept that addresses several issues relating to the student matters, bursary and work place, and the board’s checklist should include human rights, corporate governance, health and safety, environmental effects, working conditions and contribution to sustainable economic development.

1). In the first dimension, the board has to establish cordial working relationship with its corporate publics, i.e., medium and large-scale enterprises (MLSEs) and organizations, especially, civil / public servants and political appointees who pay the education levy; and high -net-worth individuals (HINWI) to ensure implementation of their responsibilities to the board. This category of publics or clientele includes:

a). MNOCs and MLSEs (i.e. banks, hotels, super markets, filing stations), transporters (i.e. Peace Mass Transit (PMT), Sunny Eru Motors (SEM), Bob-Izua Motors (BIM), Bayelsa Transport Company (BTC), etc that funds the board’s activities; and

b). HINWI-political executives (i.e. members of State and National Assemblies, to direct their constituency projects to building social infrastructures for secondary and tertiary institutions in the state, award of scholarships and payments of bursaries, etc.

c). Chairpersons of local government councils (LGC) for rehabilitating school structures, payments of WAEC, NECO and JAMB fees for prospective candidates.

d). NGOs (through Bayelsa Non-Governmental Organizations Forum-BANGOF) for embarking on public enlightenment

programmes in value re-orientation, human capacity building, conflict resolution and peace – building strategies to forestall the on-going violence – mentality (i.e.; violence pays) syndrome.

In pursuing the above publics, stakeholders or clientele, the board has to be careful to avoid over reliance on the prevailing practice that emphasizes on:

i). Building of social infrastructures, school buildings, health centers, feeder roads and provision of teaching aids, etc. While these are good, the current trend has moved towards capacity building programmes.

ii). Human capacity building programmes should embrace human rights issue, gender mainstreaming, efficient corporate governance, payment of scholarships and bursaries and examinations fees for WAEC, NECO and JAMB, moral re-orientation (value re-orientation) programmes. These should form an integral part of the measurement index for CSR compliance. In essence, the board should not unduly rely on the physical characteristics, but to include ‘intangible social goods’ that impact on the pupils/students. It is probably for this reason the European Commission as earlier stated, defined CSR as “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts society”

2). the second dimension involves the board’s CSR to the target audience (i.e., students), stakeholders (contributory publics, i.e., CAOs civil/public servants, alumni, employers of labour (i.e. students) and society). We have in Table 1-3 outlined the constituents of the two dimensions.

Table 3: The Two Dimensions of CSR Implementation and the Constituents of EDTF.

S/No.	CSR to EDTF	CSR by EDTF
1	Medium and Large Scale Enterprises (MLSEs)	Students
2	Public/Civil Servants	Public/Civil Servants
3	Organizations	Organizations
4	High-net-worth individuals (HINWI)	Contributors
5	Political Executives	Tertiary institutions
6	Chairpersons of local government Councils	Host-communities
7	Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Society

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019.

In essence, while the board is pursuing the publics (clientele) for compliance with CSR to the board, it is important for the board to evolve and implement its own CSR to the publics (clientele) stated in Table 1-3 because the publics is watching and

evaluating the impacts of the board’s CSR on the following 9 checklists:

- The number of student’s enrolment;
- The rate of students passing public examinations, such as WAEC, NECO, JAMB;
- The rate of examinations malpractices;
- The rate of cultism on campuses;
- The number of out of –school children in the communities;
- The level of girl-child education;
- The level of ethical standards;
- The level of accountability and transparency; and
- The efficiency of corporate governance.

These and similar checklist have to be developed to become measurement index to guide the board, as well as, its publics, i.e. target audience and stakeholders at Table 1-3. It is important that the board’s communication channels with its publics be effective because its adherence to implementation of the CSR shall go a long way to determine the level of compliance by its publics. The points are also emphasized by the International Institutes for Sustainable Development(USD) that “CSR policies needs to be considered as a core and inseparable components of the overall or products offerings” (Geethamani, 2017:373). In essence, the more the publics perceives that the board is making a positive impact by applying the levies paid to it to improving the quantity and quality of education in the states, the more they will continue to comply. This has downgraded the notion that high cost has adversely affected the CSR implantation. Instead, there is cost savings.

3) The two dimensions of the board’s CSR are to help pave the way for partnership between businesses and civil society based on common goals and shared actions to deliver impact-driven outcomes.

It is worth stating at this point that to establish CSR programme, the board has to carry out several activities, especially, planning. The plan has to involve several engagements with the publics, and access the CSR Implementation Guide of IISD. The IISD has outlined 6 key components of CSR to enhance the plan. They are:

- CSR assessment;
- CSR strategy;
- CSR commitment;
- Implementation plan and actions;
- Verification and evaluation of results; and
- Refinement.

The plan shall not be successful without measurement index; and as earlier highlighted, the prevailing measurement index do not fit into public sector service delivery organizations. Thus, we have developed what is referred to as, the Etekpe’s model on CSR measurement in public organizations at Table 4. The model covers financial and non-financial indicators meant to address the criticisms of over-reliance on financial indicators.

Table 4: Etekpe’s Model on CSR Measurement of Public Organizations in Nigeria.

S/No.	Index(Indicator)	Number (target population)	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
1.	Financial performance (receipts, reinvestment, expansion)						
2.	Content of annual reports						
3.	Environmental (i.e., pollution, degradation)						
4.	Corporate reputation						
5.	Perception (through survey)						
6.	Innovation						
7.	Relationship with host communities						
8.	Relationship with publics (stakeholders)						
9.	Efficiency of corporate governance						

10.	Staff recruitment, retention
11.	Responsiveness to public's demand
12.	No. enrolment
13.	No. out-of-school children
14.	Level of girl-child education

Source: Author's design, 2019.

What the Model (Table 1-4) implies is that no CAOs should have the discretion to select which index(indicator) it wish to apply or shall be responsible for thereby ignoring the rest; and to avoid subjectivity, each indicator shall be tested mathematically, using the chi-square. Accordingly, the data starts with the number of subscribers, clientele or target population. This record should be available to the board from the ministry of finance or relevant agencies. The list has to be updated on regular basis not to leave out eligible contributors. As the list of the target audience may be unwieldy, the board may decide on the minimum and maximum sample population on quarterly basis for purpose of trend analysis. Thereafter, the mean and standard deviation be calculated, and the results are ranked to determine the level of response or interest shown on each index (indicator) by the publics for each of the dimensions in Table 1-3. It should be stated that whereas the Etekepe's model (Table 1-4) is essential for the two dimensions, it is developed specially for the board's second dimension, that is, EDTF's CSR to stakeholders and communities (publics). It can be slightly modified to fit into the first dimension.

In spite of the model, we foresee the board facing several challenges in the implementation of CSR activities; namely

- 1). It shall create additional bureaucracy with its associated high costs.
- 2). The cost of operation would adversely affect fund meant for execution of the board's core mandates.

3). The instability in the tenure of board members, coupled with the lack of political will of the supervisory ministry may negatively affect the sustainability of CSR activities in EDTF.

4). The implementation of the measurement model (Table 1-4) may face resistance by the publics (stakeholders).

5). It may require regular evaluation for purpose of fine-tuning and it may result into undue stress of the board members and staff;

6). The absence of specific legislations on CSR may hinder the practice of CSR in the state and country, and urged the BSHA and NA to enact specific legislations on CSR.

Notwithstanding the challenges, there are benefits of CSR to companies and organizations, namely:

a). CSR activities are capable of enhancing the reputation of the board amongst the target population, publics, host community and the society.

b). It shall lead organizations to honouring ethical values and respect for people and communities, natural environment thereby bringing about sustainable peace.

c). The host community and society would benefit as through CSR, the board shall address the key issues of under development, i.e., falling standard of education, high rate of out-of-school and school-drop out children, and level of girl-child education.

d). Greater ability to attract talents and retain staff.

e). Organizational growth, effectiveness and efficiency;

f). Easier access to capital.

Based on the literature and discussion, the study found that:

1) The EDTF has not implemented its CSR, as well as, enforced the CSR compliance of its publics. Thus, about 62.5 percent of its publics are defaulting in their contributions/remittances, and are at the same time pressuring the government to repeal the Fund's law.

2) There is a shift of emphasis in the content of CSR from provision of physical (social) infrastructure to human capacity building and empowerment. This is important because of the changing times in the state and country where building of classroom blocks, supply of electricity generator and supporting traditional festivals are no longer as important as addressing environmental issues, respect for human rights and peace building described as old and emerging patterns in Table 5.

Table 5: Trend in CSR Implementation in Nigeria.

S/No.	Old Approach (Physical infrastructure)	Emerging Approach (Human building empowerment).
1.	Building of classroom blocks, lock up stores, town halls, etc.	Award of scholarship / payment of bursary allowance

2.	Building of health centers.	Corporate governance.
3.	Supply of electricity generator.	Connecting communities to gas turbine.
4	Supporting cultural festival	Support (payment) of examination fees (WAEC, NECO, Jamb)
5	Rehabilitation of feeder road	Construction of feeder road
6	Sinking of borehole (water)	Provision of neighbourhood water scheme
7	Appointment/offer of minor contractors/ contract	Respect for human rights
8	-	Adherence to tenets of GMoUs
9	-	Improvements of working conditions
10	-	Environmental Issues

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2019

3) CSR attracts several challenges and benefits, and where they are well managed, the benefits shall outweigh the challenges, especially, that of high cost. Thus, the argument that high cost of CSR implementation has made several CAOs to pull out is not correct. Instead, the study found that the high cost has been downgraded by the numerous benefits.

4) Whereas the detail content and implementation of CSR may slightly differ between private and public sector organizations, the rationale is basically the same. Thus, the earlier outlined challenges and benefits are applicable to both companies and organizations (CAOs)

5) The Eteke’s model on CSR measurement shall improve the relationship of EDTF with stakeholders. While CAOs outside EDTF can apply with slight modification, it is specifically developed for service organizations in the public sector.

6) The absence of specific legislations on CSR has adversely affected the practice of CSR in the state and country. This has made unpatriotic CAOs to abandon their social responsibilities; and has, in turn, led to perennial conflicts in communities in Bayelsa State and the region.

7) CAOs face several pressures from the publics (stakeholders), host communities, and society. The experience so far is that such organizations are protected by the law enforcement agencies at the detriment of ‘aggrieved’ host communities. This is where the need for specific legislations that are justiciable

becomes important as aggrieved community can enforce their (human) rights in the court.

The findings are similar to an earlier study by Arevalo and Aravind (2011:400-405), using Indian data where the study also found that CSR implementation improves relationship with stakeholders, thereby, diluting the undue emphasis on high cost: it also listed benefits, and concluded that they outweigh the challenges.

CONCLUSION

The study was on the level, challenges and benefits of CSR implementation in Nigeria, with emphasis on EDTF in Bayelsa state; and discussed the two dominant dimensions of CSR available to the board to pave way for partnerships between businesses, organizations, target population, stakeholders and the society. This partnership is based on common goals and shared actions to deliver impact-driven outcomes. It should, however, be stated that there are no hard and fast rules governing CSR. Instead, the more companies and organizations (CAOs), such as, the board of EDTF understands the growing resilience, reputation and risks faced for not adhering to the tenets of CSR, the more opportunities our globalized and inter-dependent world has to offer.

The study argued that CSR is more of cost savings and improvement of public perception of the organization. Thus, it should be implemented by private and public sector companies and organizations (CAOs) in the state and country. Accordingly, the study advocated that the state and federal governments should enact specific legislations on it.

In all, the study provides insight about the background, problems, challenges and benefits in implementation of CSR activities in Nigeria and was presented at the board’s retreat at Warri in Delta State for validation on 16 October 2019. The feedbacks and inputs have been incorporated to produce this final report. It found that CSR activities infer positive characteristics of CAOs by creating good image and reputation. It is believed that CSR implementation would improve public perception of EDTF activities. Interestingly, at post-study visit to EDTF on 18 December 2019, we observed that the Fund had commenced ‘public enlightenment campaign’ through radio jingles and commentaries, as well as, handbills on its functions and CSR.

Based on the results and findings, the study has made the following recommendations, that:

- 1). CAOs, especially, EDTF should commence implementation of CSR as the benefits outweighs the challenges.
- 2). The Eteke’s model on measurement of CSR be adapted for implementation by EDTF and other public sector organizations.
- 3). The state and federal governments should enact specific laws to enhance the practice of CSR, and
- 4). CAOs should develop strategies and skills in handling pressures on implementation of CSR activities.

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