

**ENABLING SUSTAINABLE SECURITY THROUGH CORPORATE EDUCATION  
INVESTMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: LESSONS FROM THE SHELL  
PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY'S (SPDC) CRADLE TO CAREER SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAMME**

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**Abstract**

*The problem of insecurity in the Niger Delta region has continued to attract widespread concerns both from policy commentators and academics alike. In fact, an attempt to cluster the literature on insecurity alone can amount to a whole institutional library given credence to the volume of work done in this regard. This notwithstanding, very little has been done to examine how corporate investment in education can contribute to the security of the region in a sustained manner. It is against this foregoing that this paper examined how corporate organizations are enabling sustainable security through investment in education in the Niger Delta region using the SPDC Cradle to Career (C2C) secondary school scholarship programme as a reference point. To achieve this broad objective, data were elicited from a sample of 302 respondents comprising of 240 Cradle to Career Scholars, 50 External Relations Staff of SPDC and 12 in-depth interview participants made up of chiefs of beneficiary communities and management staff of SPDC. The instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire and in-depth interview. A combination of stratified random, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select the respondents. The data gathered through the use of questionnaire were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and chi square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical techniques, while interview related information were analyzed using the thematic method. The findings of the study revealed that given its target population, the SPDC Cradle to Career scholarship investment has significant potential to reduce insecurity in the Niger Delta region. However, the challenge with the programme is its choice of elite schools that are too expensive and this clearly undermines sustainability. In light of this, the paper recommends that SPDC should scale down on cost and consider a partnership option as a way of sustaining the programme.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable security, corporate education investment, SPDC, Cradle to Career, Niger Delta.

## **Introduction**

Since the emergence of sustainable development as a global template of action, it has become increasingly imperative that all human endeavours carry the seal of sustainability not just as a mere insignia for public praise, but as a key ingredient that ensures the viability of human life on earth. This is because of the incremental adverse socioeconomic feedbacks that the physical environment has progressively meted on man who has been rightly indicted for the deleterious condition that the environment is now facing. Interestingly, the progressive degradation of the human environment has been strongly blamed on the predatory character of the capitalist production system which in no small measure has succeeded in destroying the balance of the world's ecosystem. At the heart of the deadly equation of global environmental destruction, is the unenviable role of Multinational Oil and Gas Corporations (MNOGCs) that have historically served as the forbearers of capital. This is perhaps why MNOGCs bear the brunt of the social eruptions that have emerged over the years as a result of the widespread discontent in host communities where they operate.

For instance, in Nigeria, MNOGCs continue to face significant social confrontations due mostly to the long history of discontent amongst the people especially communities that play host to their oil and gas facilities in the Niger Delta region. Hence, as Onaolapo (2012), rightly observed, in Nigeria, the business activities of MNOGCs are nested on a socio-political context that has adopted an antagonistic orientation. According to him, this is due on the one hand to a long history of discontent that necessitated the emergence of warlords, cult gangs and militia groups across oil bearing communities and the successive fragility of governance which continues to undermine human development realities in the region on the other hand. These two reasons dovetailed to create a socioeconomic scenario that different scholars have attempted to conceptualize in several ways such as; economy of conflict (Ikelegbe, 2005), volatile society (Onaolapo, 2012), Conflict hotspot (World Bank, 2010) and cycle of violence scenario (Raimi, 2017).

Whatever concept we come to associate with, the truth is that Nigeria's volatile security situation and political complexity renders it imperative for foreign investors like the MNOGCs working in the country to keep ahead of the risks that may impede their commercial activity and undermine the security of their personnel and assets (Menas Nigeria Focus, 2012). Thus, the Niger Delta region which is home to oil and gas resources in Nigeria presents a unique example of where business impacts have provided the impetus for multi-stakeholders' aggression as well as corporate innovation to stay ahead of obvious social risks that have been precipitated by a complex interplay of issues. For instance, the delicate social dynamics and discouraging human development realities (UNDP, 2006; Afinotan & Ojakorotu, 2009) in the region exacerbates poor living conditions as the Government of Nigeria has not been able to sufficiently extend social infrastructure such as hospitals, potable water and electricity to communities impacted by oil production. In addition to this, there is also poverty of infrastructure in the region. This dismal conditions in the region only serves to show that the source of the oil revenue has been deliberately neglected over the years by the successive governments in the country.

Consequently, amidst widespread outcry concerning the relative neglect of the Niger Delta with regards to human and infrastructural development, a number of MNOGCs operating within the region have been involved in social investment interventions through various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks. However, these interventions have not attracted favourable commendation from stakeholders as local activists and community members maintain that some of these interventions are too ad hoc, short term and unsustainable in addition to being substandard and of little use to the communities. In fact, Lassonde (2003), describes these pockets of social investment interventions as directed at short term gains aimed at gaining License to Operate (LTO). Despite the numerous MNOGCs operating in the region, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is by far the most accused of the complicity and negligence that generates social risks. Critics of the company point to several factors that undermine the long term viability of their investments. These factors are internal weakness, insufficient or incoherent social investment strategy,

reactive and short-term frameworks that are rather unsustainable, and small-scale programmes (Platform, 2011).

Despite long years of investing in physical and social infrastructure in its areas of operation, widespread insecurity mostly involving youths continue to undermine the company's capacity to sustain productive balance in the region. As a result, the SPDC Cradle to Career (C2C) secondary school scholarship programme was launched in 2010 as a strategic social investment plan with the objective of building capacity of indigent children in the Niger Delta region as a way of keeping them away from getting involved in youth enabled militia activities in the near future. However, despite the lofty objectives, there is practically no existing empirical study that has examined the viability of the programme in terms of being a sustained investment approach that could address the youth enabled insecurity in the region. Based on this, the study is an empirical step to examine how sustainable peace can be enabled through corporate education investment, drawing lessons from the Shell Petroleum Development Company's (SPDC) Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship Programme in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Find out the designated lifespan of the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme.
- ii. Determine the sustainability of the SPDC Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme in light of its funding and the need to expand its outreach.
- iii. Examine the possibility of achieving sustainable security if the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship is expanded beyond its current outreach.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the data collection process in the course of this study:

- i. What is the designated lifespan of the SPDC Cradle to Career Secondary School Scholarship programme?
- ii. Can SPDC sustain the cradle to career scholarship programme alone, in light of the funding and the need to expand its outreach?
- iii. Is there a possibility of achieving sustainable security if the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme is expanded beyond its current outreach?

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between scaling up investment in the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme and sustainable security in the Niger Delta region.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The literature on the security situation in the Niger Delta is quite robust. However, it is easy to also sieve those that are related to the role of MNOGCs in defining the nature and character of insecurity in most parts of the region. For example, a good number of scholars have focused on the actions or inactions of MNOGCs in terms of the degradation of the environment of the people as a major enabler of insecurity in the region (see; Okaba, 2005; Ikelegbe, 2005; Adeyemi, 2010; Raimi, 2017). All of these scholars share a common view that the activities of multinational oil and gas corporations in the Niger Delta is at the heart of environmental degradation and this singular adverse scenario is responsible for the socioeconomic woes of the people who have been progressively impoverished due to the negative impact that this has on their indigenous livelihood systems. In other words, the mostly subsistence agricultural activities such as fishing and farming that drives the traditional economy of the region have been severely undermined as a result of oil and gas induced environmental degradation.

In the same vein, there are others who, who despite aligning with the views of the above scholars, tend to blame the economic highhandedness of the MNOGCs on the porous nature of the environmental policies

and laws in the country. Among this group of scholars are people like Fagade (2011), Onaolapo (2012) and Haleru (2015), who are united in agreement on the fact that MNOGCs may be at fault in terms of their direct involvement in polluting the environment of the region, but they are only able to do this as a result of the porousness of the environmental laws of the country. This school of thought took the debate further by simply nesting their argument on the premise that MNOGCs operate within a policy environment that encourages unhealthy environmental practices with deleterious consequences on the livelihood of the people.

As a result, a good number of the literature on the insecurity in the Niger Delta region draw their analytical energy from the thesis established by different scholars highlighted above. In this regard, the works of Ogadi, Raimi and Nwachukwu (2012), Nwankwo, (2015), and Makinde, (2018), resonates with the idea that environmental degradation occasioned by long years of popular discontent concerning the obvious destruction of the indigenous livelihood of the people have dovetailed to incentivize insecurity in the Niger Delta region. This insecurity, is mostly fueled by the massive number of unemployed youths who seemingly have no hope of survival but to resort to the barrel of the gun as their last hope.

With regard to the massive eruption of corporate social investment in the region, Onaolapo (2012), holds the opinion that the upsurge of the riot amongst MNOGCs in terms of investments in programmes and projects could be seen as a strategy to ameliorate the sufferings of the people. In this sense, corporate social investment or what has been largely termed as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the literature, is viewed as a response to widespread insecurity that poses significant risk to business operations. Hence, several MNOGCs have ventured into social investment activities such as road construction, market buildings, health interventions, socioeconomic skills acquisition and education investment among others. However, by far the most aggressive investment domain for these corporations is the education sector which is mostly dominated by scholarship awards. For instance, SPDC alone is known to have scholarship intervention programmes covering secondary and tertiary education in the Niger Delta region (Fakunle, 2018).

Historically, SPDCs education intervention dates back to 1960 when it first existed as ‘Overseas scholarship programme, then as the ‘Nigerian Colleges of Technology scholarship programme and now as NNPC/Shell Joint Venture Nigeria University and Secondary School Scholarship Award schemes (Fakunle, 2018). According to available records, the JV awards about 1,356 secondary school and 850 tertiary scholarships annually (SPDC Bulletin, 2017). However, despite this long history of investment in the education sector, it became obvious that SPDC scholarship programmes were aimed at outreach and or quantity rather than quality. This is because more youths still remain without quality education and by extension are unable to make healthy progress in the labour market. The end result is that a significant number of the youths still end up in the unemployment divide of the economic subsector with potentials for channeling their energy into illicit socioeconomic activities that undermine security. According to Fakunle (2018), this challenge and many others led to the introduction of SPDC Cradle to Career (C2C) scholarship programme. The programme became the major hub of SPDC’s social investment in the education sector especially because of its emphasis on targeting indigent pupils from hard to reach rural areas in the core states (Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta) of the Niger Delta region where the company’s activities are mostly carried out. Since its inception in 2010, the Cradle to Career scholarship programme has turned out to be SPDC’s flagship Secondary School Scholarship Scheme primarily aimed at providing access to quality education for brilliant and indigent pupils selected from public schools. As a result, 60 beneficiaries are chosen annually from community primary schools in selected SPDC host communities and awarded full scholarship to carefully selected but top-rated private secondary schools in designated cities (Fakunle, 2018).

While the provision of scholarship to brilliant and indigent children in the Niger Delta region is not exclusive to SPDC alone, it is noteworthy to mention that the cradle to career programme due to its objectives, quality and long term vision has been largely applauded by the former United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki

Moon (Makinde, 2018). In acknowledging the fact that education is critical to the realization of all the sustainable development goals, Mazden (2019), has argued that investing in the education of mostly poor rural children is very key to the actualization of the 2030 target for the sustainable development goals. However, what has not been sufficiently done in the literature is to provide empirical insight into how pockets of educational investment activities are providing the much desired direction to sustainable security in the near future. This is the focus of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework: Shared Value Theory**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the shared value theory developed by Porter and Kramer (2006). As a fundamental approach to deriving the assumptions of the theory, the proponents started by pointing out the gap associated with existing social investment perspectives. In doing this, they argued that scholars who dominate corporate policies and research across sectors in society have tended to focus more on the contradictions that arise between stakeholders and not enough on the point of intersection (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

The fact that the activities of corporations or businesses have significant relationship with the society in which they operate means that the former have to engage in such a way that there is mutual benefit between them and their host communities. Hence, there is need to take advantage of this mutual benefit by engaging in activities and or social investment projects and programmes that have significant value for society and business at the same time. According to Porter and Kramer (2006), shared value theory is built on the foundation that business choices must benefit both sides and otherwise. In other words, they contend that “if either business or society pursues policies and goals at the expense of the other, it will find itself in a dangerous path. Consequently, a temporary gain for one will undermine the long-term prosperity of both. Therefore, to put these broad principles into practice, a company must integrate a social perspective into the core frameworks it already uses to understand competition and guide its business strategy” (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p. 7).

Drawing from the above, it is easy to see that the theory advocates the need to create strategic relationship between the economic and social aspects of business for corporations in order to promote long term viability of business operations. Hence, the focus is to ensure that social investment interventions are good enough to eliminate discontents in society on the one hand, and also significant enough to benefit business growth on the other hand. It suggests an investment in social aspects or contexts that strengthen a company’s competitiveness, which is believed, has the potential for creating a symbiotic relationship between business and society. This scenario is what Yunus (2005) captured as social business.

Applied to this paper, the shared value theory enables business and society to intersect in such a way that a win-win situation is realized. As a result, when businesses function under the shared value ideology, chances are that their social investment interventions in their host communities will change significantly from having a quantity to a quality outlook. This is because, such investments are believed to have, long term effects on the business, and hence, companies would want to pursue quality interventions. For instance, SPDC has been involved in education social investment for years now, awarding scholarships to a large number of people every year with little sum of money and without any concern for the kind of schools they attend. This approach changed when the Cradle to Career scholarship programme was conceived. It is the belief that this scholarship represents a qualitative shift from the previous schemes especially because of the titanic leap in terms of funding, structure and outlook. The philosophy of building scholars that underpins the scheme gives it an outlook where outstanding beneficiaries could become staff of the company in the near future as a justification for the shared value perspective. Hence, apart from benefiting from the long term effect of reducing insecurity in the region, the programme is also pregnant with potential quality manpower that can drive the next level of the business in the future.

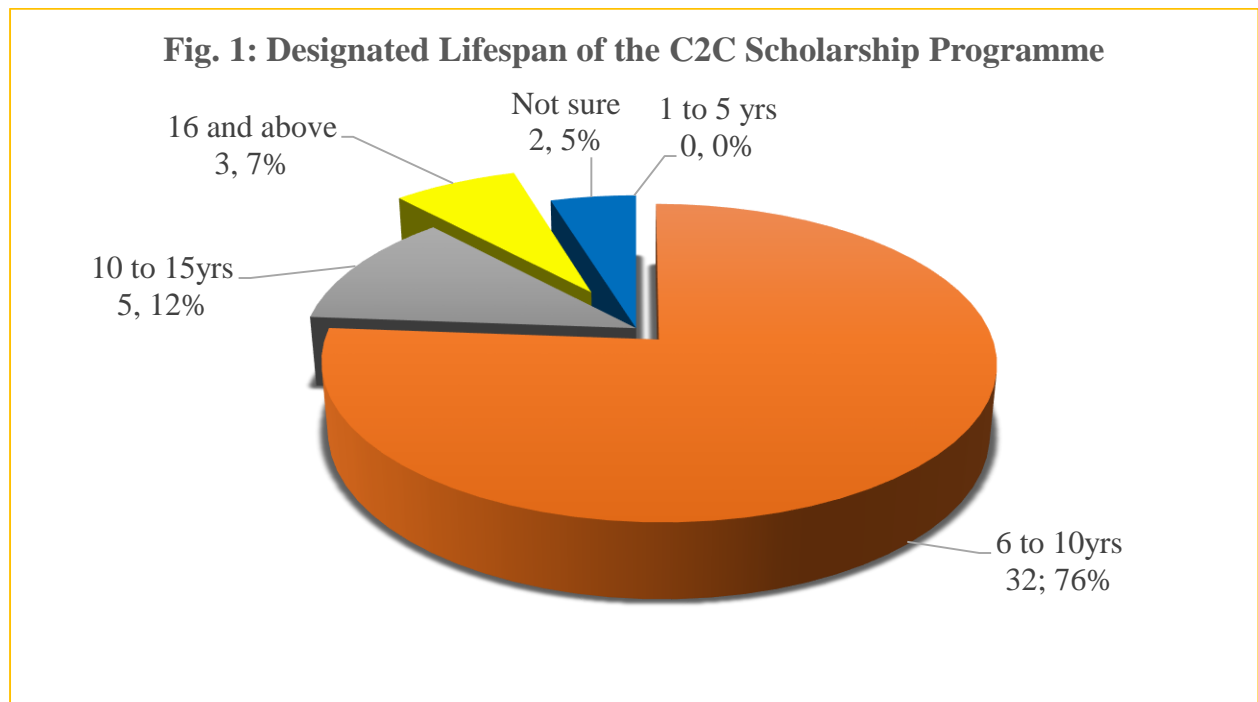
### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The research setting was the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) of Nigeria, a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell. The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study include 600 beneficiaries of the SPDC Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme, 89 SPDC External Relations Staff and the Chiefs in selected host communities. A sample of 302 respondents comprising of 240 beneficiaries, 50 staff and 12 In-depth Interview participants (which include, chiefs and SPDC management staff was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula and convenience technique respectively. The respondents were selected using stratified random, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The stratified random sampling technique was used to divide the first two population (beneficiaries and staff) based on gender for inclusion sake. The second sampling method was used to randomly selected respondents via a ballot system from the different strata. The purposive sampling technique was used to target SPDC management and some Chiefs from selected communities that have benefited from the scholarship scheme. Primary data were collected using self-designed questionnaire and In-depth Interviews. The quantitative data collected were analysed using percentages, frequencies and the chi-square statistical technique. However, the qualitative data were analysed using the thematic approach (Yin, 2007) to enable careful categorization of information as conceptual level.

### **Results and Discussion**

The results are presented in this section in line with the research questions as well as the hypothesis that guided the data collection process. Hence, data associated with the research questions and the objectives are first presented. This is followed by the test of hypothesis and the thematic presentation of the outcome of the in-depth interview. Out of the total of 240 questionnaire distributed to the cradle to career beneficiaries, 203 were correctly filled and returned, while out of the 50 administered on the SPDC staff, 42 were duly filled and returned. As a result, the analysis and discussion of the findings of this study was based on the number of questionnaire returned which is 245. On the other hand, despite targeting 12 interviewees, only 10 interviews held, hence, the qualitative discussion is based on this number of interviews.

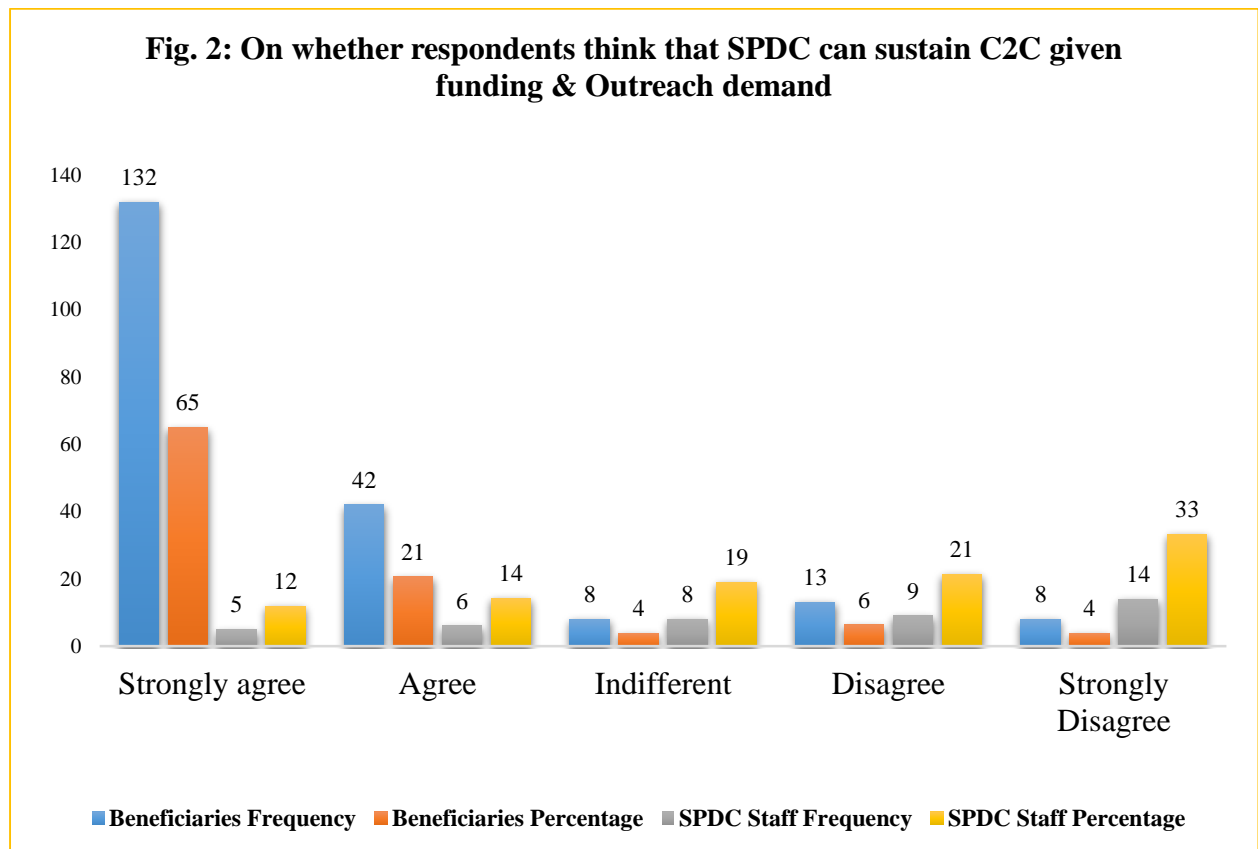
**RQ1:** What is the expected lifespan of the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme?



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure 1 above shows response from only SPDC staff on the designated lifespan of the Cradle to Career Programme. From the data, it is easily seen that 32(76%) of the respondents believe that it would last for 6 to 10 years, 5(12%) of the respondents are of the opinion that it would last between 10 and 15 years, 3(7%) of them think it would go above 16 years, while 2(5%) of the respondents are not sure of the lifespan of the C2C scholarship programme. It should be noted that the 7% of the staff who said 16 years and above, are members of the management team. However, the caveat for this opinion is dependent on the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) approval of budget for the continuation of the scholarship scheme. Therefore, there is a chance that in the long run, the burden of funding the programme may act as impediment to the sustainability of the C2C scheme. The annual budget for the scheme is presented in Figure 3 below.

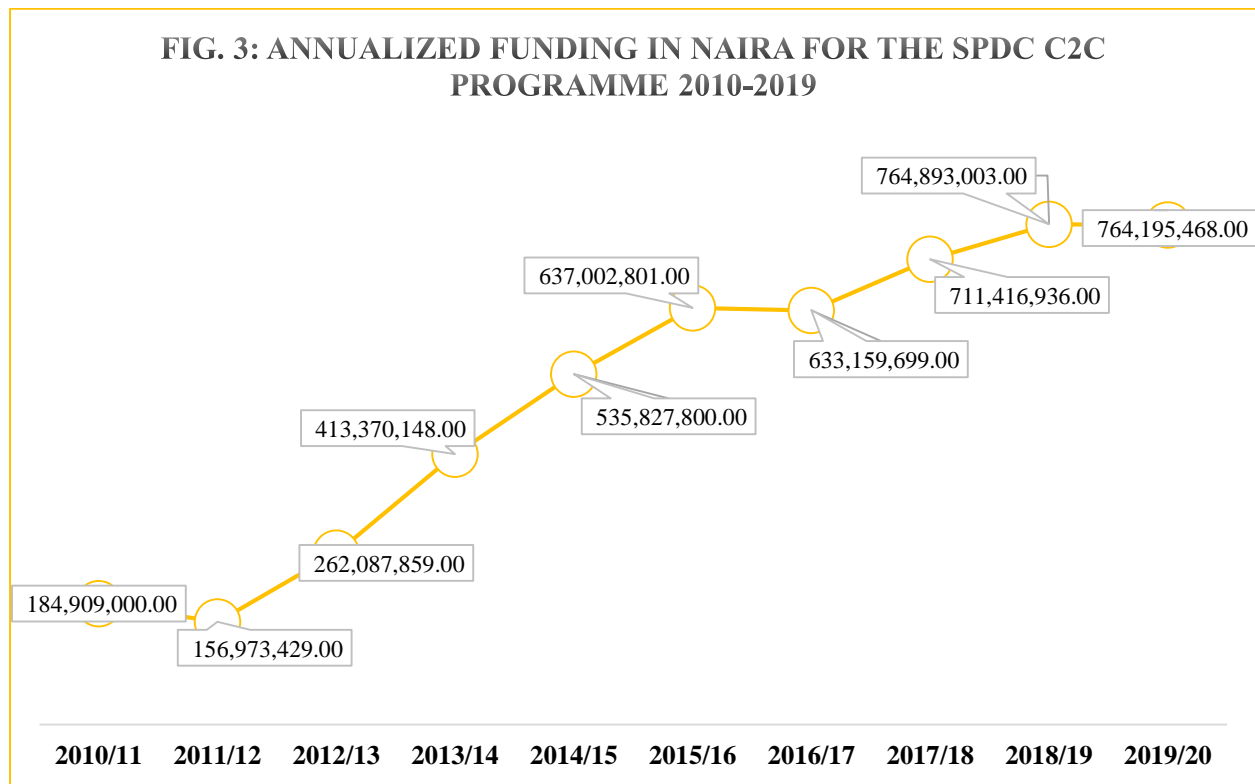
**RQ2:** Can SPDC sustain the cradle to career scholarship programme alone, in light of funding and the need to expand its outreach?



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure 2 above provides information from the two category of questionnaire respondents on whether they think that SPDC can sustain the C2C scholarship programme in the light of its huge funding demand and the need to spread its gains to other states in the Niger Delta region. The data shows that a significant percent (86%) of the beneficiaries strongly agree and agree respectively to the fact that SPDC can sustain the programme, while on the other hand, 54% of the SPDC respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. It is necessary to state, that the difference in the response reflects the interest of both category of respondents. While the beneficiaries maintain a perspective of benefit mentality, the funding agency which is SPDC may be considering the significant impact of sustaining the funding of such a programme given the huge amount that the company puts into the scholarship scheme annually. Fig. 3 below shows the annual funding of the C2C scholarship scheme from 2010 to 2019.



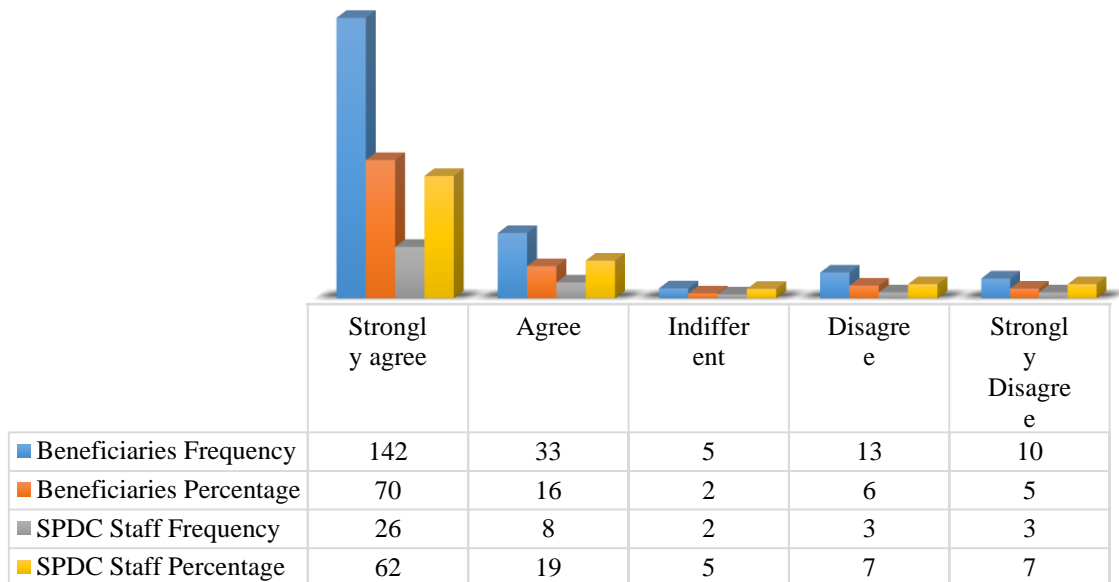


Source: SPDC External Relations Department, 2019

The figure above shows the annual funding of the SPDC Cradle to Career Secondary School Scholarship Programme. For the period between 2010 and 2019, the programme has gulped a whopping sum of 5.063 billion naira. This clearly shows how expensive the C2C programme is and the fact that there is the likelihood that SPDC standing alone may not sustain the programme in the long run. Besides, there is already the challenge of how to sustain the aspiration of sending the beneficiaries to elite universities around the world in order to justify the quality secondary school education that the beneficiaries have been exposed to. This also poses a different challenge of sustainability even though it is not within the immediate purview of this study. Nevertheless, the massive weight of funding the cradle to career programme by SPDC alone has the potential of limiting the programme to just four beneficiary states (Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta and Abia). It should be noted that on inception in 2010, the programme started with three states and in 2017, Abia was added making it four states. However, the number of beneficiaries (60 annually) did not change despite the addition of Abia State. This is a clear signal that the company is not willing to scale up the numbers and this is as a result of the burden of additional funding.

**RQ3:** Is there a possibility of achieving sustainable security if the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme is expanded beyond its current outreach?

**Fig. 4: Respondents' Opinion on Whether the C2C has the Potential of Enabling Sustainable Security if Expanded**



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure 4 above shows data collected from the two categories of questionnaire respondents on whether the C2C has the potential of enabling sustainable security if expanded to cover other parts of the Niger Delta region. Based on the data presented in the figure, the two categories of respondents are united in agreement as 86% of the beneficiaries and 81% of SPDC staff strongly agree and agree respectively on the fact that the C2C secondary school scholarship programme has the potential of enabling sustainable security in the region. This response is based on the understanding that quality education for young children in the region, if sustained, could serve as the much needed disincentive for engaging in illicit socioeconomic activities by youths in the near future.

#### Test Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between scaling up investment in the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme and sustainable security in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 1: Expanding investment in the C2C could enable sustainable security in the Niger Delta region**

Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
C2C Beneficiaries	105	78	11	9	203
SPDC Staff	23	11	6	2	42
Total	128	89	17	11	245

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 above shows data on whether the expansion of the C2C programme in terms of outreach can enable sustainable security in the Niger Delta region in the long run. 128 of the respondents strongly agreed that it

could, 89 of them agree, 17 of them disagree, while 11 of them strongly disagree. This information is further subjected to a chi square test as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Chi Square Test of Hypothesis**

<i>Category</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>o-e</i>	<i>(o-e)<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>(o-e)<sup>2</sup>/e</i>
<i>C2C Beneficiaries</i>	105	106.06	-1.06	1.12	0.01
	78	73.74	4.26	18.12	0.25
	11	14.09	-3.09	9.52	0.68
	9	9.11	-0.11	0.01	0.00
<i>SPDC Staff</i>	23	21.94	1.06	1.12	0.05
	11	15.26	-4.26	18.12	1.19
	6	2.91	3.09	9.52	3.27
	9	1.89	7.11	50.61	26.84
<i>Chi-Square</i>	$\chi^2 =$				32.28

*\*Degree of freedom =3; Chi-Square Table value =7.81.; Chi-Square Calculated Value=32.28*

**Decision rule:** Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value.

**Interpretation:** Since calculated value for  $\chi^2$  is 32.28 and table value is 7.81, the hypothesis which states that “There is no significant relationship between scaling up investment in the Cradle to Career secondary school scholarship programme and sustainable security in the Niger Delta region.” is hereby rejected. As a result, the alternate hypothesis which is that “there is a significant relationship between scaling up investment in the C2C secondary school scholarship programme and sustainable security in the Niger Delta region” is accepted and upheld. Hence, since the margin between the computed  $\chi^2$  value is significantly higher than the table value, it is safe to make the submission that increasing the outreach of the cradle to career programme will have a significant effect on the security in the near future and this certainly a more sustainable way disincentivizing insecurity with the Niger Delta region.

**In-depth Interview Result**

Following the In-depth Interviews with some members of SPDC management staff and selected chiefs from five different communities where the awardees were drawn from, two major themes emerged strongly. Hence, the results of the interviews are presented under the two themes below:

**Theme 1: Sustainability of the C2C Scheme**

Based on the responses from the different interviewees, it became clear that the current approach to the deployment of the C2C programme will likely face setbacks that could threaten its sustainability in the long run. For instance, while the Chiefs agree that the programme is good, they nevertheless express their concern for the future of the children since the company does not have a solid plan to sustain the scholarship up to tertiary level of education. One of the chiefs pointed out that “for him, the scholarship scheme is laudable but his worry is that most of the beneficiaries come from very poor parental background and as such do not have the means of furthering their education to the university level and that if SPDC does not see them through, they are likely to end up as secondary school leavers” (*male Chief, aged 61 years*). This position resonated with a good number of the community chiefs who took part in the interview sessions and this is

considered a major worry because the beneficiaries are made to attend very highly placed secondary schools in the city of Port Harcourt without a strong plan of sending them to commensurate equally elite universities.

On the other hand, the SPDC management staff who took part in the interview expressed their concern over the funding challenges that the C2C poses. According to one of them “the programme takes a lot of money and when this is placed side by side other social investment interventions of the company, it really puts pressure on the financial purse of the company” (*female SPDC staff aged 47 years*). However, they all agree that the company is committed to sustaining the C2C programme as long as NAPIMS approves the spending or budget for it in the coming years. One of them pointed out that the programme would have stopped in 2016 due to funding challenges but that the widespread accolade that it has received even from the United Nations helped in ensuring its continuity. The point therefore, is that as long as funding is available, the company is strongly committed to sustaining the cradle to career scholarship scheme.

### ***Theme 2: Sustainable Security through Education Investment***

In the course of the interview, it was discovered that almost all the interviewees shared the similar views on the issue of enabling sustainable security through investment in education. This consensus is built on the understanding that investing in education like the SPDC cradle to career scholarship scheme can go a long way to empower young people in the Niger Delta region by increasing their potentials for healthy socioeconomic livelihood. In fact, almost all the ten (10) interviews agreed on the fact that the C2C programme is a strong incentive for young children in the Niger Delta to channel their youthful energies into productive activities. In the words of one of the chiefs “through corporate investment in education, more youths will become educated as well as empowered and this will go a long way to deter them from involving in illicit activities that are detrimental to their lives and society in general” (*community Chief, aged 64 years old*). In support of this, one of the management staff of SPDC shared the view that “over the past ten (10) years that the cradle to career programme had been on, the company has witnessed widespread brand acceptability by a good number of the host communities” (*male SPDC management staff, aged 50 years*). This according to him means that the cradle to career scholarship programme is yielding positive effect on the people and the business of the company. This is a strong justification for the shared value theory adopted in this study.

### **Conclusion**

The paper examined how sustainable security can be enabled through corporate investment in education focusing on the SPDC cradle to career secondary school scholarship programme. The central argument of the paper is that given the nature of education investment and the long term value it has for people, it stands out as one of the best ways of reducing unemployment induced insecurity. As a result, the study concludes that the SPDC cradle to career scholarship programme which started since 2010 given its emphasis on providing access to quality education for indigent children from hard to reach rural communities in selected states of the Niger Delta can enable sustainable security in the long run, but funding is a major threat to this. This is perhaps why the attempt to have the national variant of the programme by the Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo) could not go beyond the first year.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following two recommendations have been preferred:

- i. *Partnership with other MNOGCs*: Although SPDC has done a good job of starting one of the best scholarship schemes in the country as acknowledged by the United Nations, but in order to sustain it and expand the outreach to other parts of the Niger Delta, it is time to consider brokering partnerships with other MNOGCs operating in the region. Getting more companies to partake in the C2C will provide assurance of its sustainability in the long run as well as assist in scaling up the number and outreach of the programme to accommodate more beneficiaries from other states in the region.

- ii. *Reduce investment in other areas:* SPDC can buyback funds by reducing its investment in other areas. For instance, the company is still involved in other scholarship programmes that can be channeled into the C2C to make it stronger and sustainable. For instance, its investment in the regular scholarship scheme is really not as impactful as the C2C. Hence, if funds from that programme is channeled to the C2C scheme, it will help in scaling up scheme instead of adding more states and still awarding the same number of scholarships each year as is the current practice.

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