Received: 20th July, 2024 Revised: 3rd August, 2024 Accepted: 17th September, 2024

CARITAS UNIVERSITY AMORJI-NIKE, EMENE, ENUGU STATE

Caritas Journal of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities

CJMSSH, Volume 3, Issue 1 (2024)

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN ENUGU STATE NIGERIA EROSION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT (ENS-NEWMAP) SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY

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Keywords:

Communication,

Environment,

Erosion,

Stakeholder

Sensitization.

ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at x-raying the roles of communication in development project delivery with special focus on Enugu State Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (ENS-NEWMAP) sustainable delivery. This is a multi-sectorial project financed by the World Bank, Global Environment Facility, Special Climate Change Fund, and the Government of Nigeria. The project was designed to reduce vulnerability to soil erosion in targeted sub-watersheds. This was targeted initially at improving environment and living conditions of people in seven states; namely Anambra, Abia, Cross River, Edo, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo. However, following the successful story of NEWMAP, the project has been replicated to many other states bringing them to a total of 23 States. The benefits that accrued to majority of the populations of the participating states include reconnected transport corridors, cisterns and structures for community rainwater harvesting, support for improved storm water planning, reduced flooding, improved disaster risk preparedness and enhanced agricultural activities especially in Enugu State. Data utilized in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The results were presented in planning communication forms such as maps, photographs and qualitative analysis facts of the project delivery. In achieving the success story, the communication officer worked closely with the environmental/social livelihood and complementarities of the civil works constructions and livelihood options especially those that would ensure the sustainability of the project. In other words, success of the integrated watershed approach relied so much on effective communication.

INTRODUCTION

Communication skill has been found essential in accelerating the success rate of every process of project delivery particularly in this World Bank assisted environmental restoration project. In a bid to sustain this paradigm shift, community involvement is a prerequisite in any service provision for which they are the frontline beneficiaries , and more so important is that the recipients play key role in the process. Communication has been defined as an instrument for partnership and participation based on a two-way dialogue, where a sender and receivers of information interact on an equal footing leading to interchange and mutual discovery. This implies that communication is pivotal in the development process because it caters to the human dimension (NEWMAP, 2013). Therefore, the process adopted became participatory, and all embracing techniques that focused on recipients being the major role players in solving their problems (Enugu NEWMAP, 2015). Thus, the project's success story lies on the community understanding of the project, inclusion and ownership made possible through effective communication.

Overview of NEWMAP

- The Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project is a multi-sectoral, multi-level Project aimed at addressing the menace of gully erosion and other forms of land degradation in targeted watersheds in Nigeria;
- Effectiveness date of the project take off is 16th September, 2013;
- The Project Development Objective is to reduce vulnerability to soil erosion in targeted sub-watersheds.
- Four (4) Components of the project:
  - Erosion and Watershed Management Infrastructure Investments;
  - Erosion and Watershed Management Institutions and Information Services;
  - Climate Change; and
  - Project Management.
- A total of twenty-three (23) States were involved in the project; and
- The Project was billed to close on 30th June, 2022, with activities more focused on completing the planned.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Good communication skill in project development is so important that poor communication has been recognized as being a common factor in the failure of many planning projects and illustrate the importance of high-quality communication whether verbal on non-verbal (Munodawafa, 2008 and Yahaya, 2023). Communication can simply be explained as the transmission of a message, whether information, ideas or emotions from one person, group or place to another.

This is basically made up of three parts, namely: a message, a sender and recipient. It occurs in various forms like verbal, non-verbal, written or through visualization. Verbal communication involves the application of face-to-face, telephone, radio, or television /media. Non-verbal communication transmits information through gesture, body language, dress appearance, standing or sitting posture or acting, and even perceived scent from somebody's body. Written communication on the other hand is conveyed through letters and memos; while communication by visualization involves charts, maps, and graphics.

Furthermore, communication according to NEWMAP PIM (2013) is an instrument for partnership and participation based on a two-way dialogue, where senders and receivers of information interact on an equal footing leading to interchange and mutual discovery. Thus, communication is pivotal in the development of process because it caters to the human dimension. In fact, communication is a complex process that is synonymous with life because it maintains life and human existence (Obasi, 2022).

Elements of Communication - Communication has a process, which involves the steps taken in order to convey the intended message or information. These elements of communication process include idea formation, encoding of a message, selection of channel of communication, receipt of the message by

the intended audience, decoding the message, and feedback.

Effective Communication - This border on exchanging of opinions, ideas and knowledge in such a way that message given is received and understood with clarity. Effective communication accomplishes satisfaction for both the sender and receiver. In order to achieve effective communication, messages must be clear, correct, concise, compassionate, and complete – the 5Cs of communication (Yahaya, 2023).

NEMAP Channels of Communication - The Communication Specialists/Officers were made to apply effective communication tools and channels (NEWMAP, 2013) which include, drama; traditional rulers; face-to-face interaction; radio; town criers; farmers associations; youth organizations; churches; mosques; ADP extension agents; handbills; field visits; community meetings, age groups; television; picture exhibitions; schools; and women associations. Other are family heads; internet(social, websites); publications; workshops; local newspapers; conferences; retreats; national newspapers; House Committee on Environment; Environmental Journalists Association; and Ministers and Commissioners for Works.

Stakeholders in Development Project - A Stakeholder is a person, group or organization with vested interest or stake, in the decision-making and activities of a business, organization or project. One could, instead of using the cumbersome term "person who has a vested interest in a project outcome", stakeholders could simply be called interested parties or interest groups. The stakeholders of a project include the project team, the sponsors, but also customers or other employees of the company. According to International Association of Project Managers (IAPM, Undated), stakeholders are characterized by the fact that they have an influence on a project but are also affected by the project results. Both stakeholders and project participants are aware that they can influence the project positively or negatively. For this reason, the interests of the stakeholders must be identified and taken into account. However, the first step is to identify the stakeholders in order to deduce which interests they pursue. Since the interested party can have a great influence on the project, the project managers should not lose sight of their interests and needs. If a project's stakeholder is properly involved, the project can benefit. They either become supporters or at least pose less risk to the project, “as appropriate communication can minimize the threat they pose”.

Key Application of Communication Skills in the NEWMAP Development Delivery

Communication skills contributed greatly to the success story of NEWMAP which were outstandingly found useful in the project’s stakeholders’ engagement approach. Stakeholders Engagement (SE) approach was found very essential in achieving the overreaching objectives of the project implementation of sustainable development. Participatory approaches have been found to enhance project policy, ownership and sustainability and to empower targeted beneficiaries in particular, women, children and other vulnerable groups (Enugu NEWMAP, 2015).

The approach of SE in the World Bank Group (WBG) – supported operations like this guided by the following principles:

- it is results focused;
- this involves engaging throughout the operational cycle;
- it seeks to strengthen country systems;
- it is context-specific; and
- also gradual.

Stakeholder Engagement Objectives - Following desk reviews, field visits and consultation, these objectives were identified as useful communication based essentials:

- creating general public awareness and understanding of the project, and ensuring its acceptance;
- developing and maintaining avenues of communication between the project proponent, stakeholders and Project Affected

Persons(PAPs) in order to ensure that their views and concerns were captured into the project design and implementation with the objectives of reducing, mitigating or offsetting negative impacts and enhancing benefits from the project;

- informing and discussing the nature and scale of adverse impacts and identifying and prioritizing the mitigation measures for the impacts in a more transparent and direct manner;
- sensitizing other Ministries, Departments and Agencies(MDAs), local authorities, Non-governmental Organizations(NGOs) and Community Based Organist ions(CBOs) about the project and soliciting their views and discussing their share of responsibilities for the smooth implementation of the overall project operations; and
- documenting the concerns raised by stakeholders and PAPs such that their views and proposals were mainstreamed in formulating mitigation and benefit enhancement measures.

Stakeholder Engagement/Consultation Plan - Through a review of the project Terms of Reference (TOR) and other relevant documents by the team of consultants and the assigned project staff of Enugu State NEWMAP, existing channel of Stakeholders Engagement in the local area was explored**.** This involved the use of phone contacts of the traditional rulers of the project towns/villages who in turn passed the information to their various secretaries and cabinet members. The use of site committee members was equally explored. These groups were able to dispatch information and organize meetings through various groups within the community. It involved the use of churches, market associations, youth associations and others. This method was facilitated by the site committee members, consultants and assigned project staff.

Fundamentals of Stakeholders Engagement Approach in the Project Implementation - Numerous fundamentals involving consultations, collaboration, reporting, grievance redress mechanism, stakeholder-led monitoring, social inclusion and empowerment, and capacity building were applied.

Consultations - Reasonable consultations contributed to improved design, implementation, and sustainability of the development intervention. The objectives of the consultation included receiving input for improved decision-making about the design and implementation arrangements of the project which contributed to improved results and sustainability. Through this means, consultation gave voice to the needs of different population groups, including vulnerable and marginalized groups; improved risk management by identifying opportunities and risks from and to the project(Word Bank,2012); as well as increase transparency, public understanding and stakeholder involvement in development decision -making (World Bank, 2004). The consultation methods included public hearing or meetings, focus group discussions, household surveys and interviews, electronic consultations, and advisory/expert groups. Also included were informal structures at the local level such as village councils and women's groups.

Collaboration – Collaboration with stakeholders in decision-making process and events made decisions more responsive to stakeholders' needs and improve sustainability of program and project outcomes through increased ownership by stakeholders. Mechanisms for collaboration include stakeholder/user membership in decision-making bodies, integrity pacts, participatory planning and budgeting, and stakeholders' juries.

Collecting, Recording, and Reporting Inputs from Stakeholders - Feedbacks from stakeholders were collected periodically on various dimensions of public services such as effectiveness, inclusiveness, quality, delivery time, transaction costs, and targeting as well as resource utilization or engagement processes. Tools applied include satisfaction survey, focus group discussions, hotlines, community scorecards, stakeholder report cards, or SMS/online feedback.

Capacity Building for Stakeholder Engagement - Capacity building for stakeholders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), communities, government officials, and national accountability institutions to engage and participate in service delivery, natural resources management, and public financial management contributed to improved project outcomes. A focus on building government capacity is also important to ensure the sustainability of engagement process beyond the life of the project intervention.

Stakeholder-led Monitoring - Stakeholders' involvement in monitoring service delivery, revenues, budget execution, procurement, contract awards, and reform policies usually contribute a lot in increasing transparency, improving efficiency of service delivery or budget execution, and reducing opportunities for corruption. Some notable mechanisms for stakeholder-led monitoring include public expenditure tracking surveys, social audits, or stakeholders' report cards.

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) – The World Bank funded projects that trigger involuntary resettlement policy require grievance redress mechanism. Also, any project involving resettlement needs to prepare a Resettlement Action Plan (RAP). This includes grievance procedures (i.e. affordable and accessible procedures for third-party settlement of disputes arising from resettlement). The GRMs of this nature usually take into account the availability of judicial recourse and community and traditional dispute settlement mechanisms, which are particularly relevant in investment projects. Usually, the GRMs succeed when the client and the task team are both committed to using a right mechanism and follow good practice principles – providing multiple channels for soliciting complaints; registering complaints in a log; publishing timely and service standards for acknowledgement, response, and resolution; and ensuring transparency about the grievance procedure as well as option for mediation and appeal.

METHODOLOGY

This study is informed by the need to objectively assess outstanding contributions of communication in successful and sustainable implementation of international best practice model project which is World Bank assisted. Communication skills as applied in the project delivery include through stakeholders' participatory approach, consultation, capacity building, monitoring, grievance redress mechanism and numerous communication channels backed up by bottom-up approach.

Data utilized in this study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were captured majorly through the corresponding author's project experience as environmental and social safeguard specialist who worked closely with the communication expert and other various stakeholders. Secondary data were acquired from its published and unpublished project documents including reports (needs assessment, environmental and social management plans, resettlement action plans), manuals, and direct observations during the project implementation.

The results were presented through the success story and comparative study of the existing conditions of the gully erosion sites and their improved conditions after the project interventions. These were displayed in planning communication forms such as maps, photographs and qualitative analysis facts in the project delivery.

ENUGU STATE NEWMAP: THE STUDY AREA AND ITS SUCCESS STORY

The Government of Nigeria implemented the multi-sectoral and multi-level Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP), which was financed by the World Bank (WB), Global Environment Facility (JEF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Government of Nigeria. NEWMAP financed activities implemented by States and activities implemented by the Federal Government. The project's effectiveness was September 16, 2013; while it was eventually brought to closure on June 30, 2022. It started with 7 states,

namely Anambra, Abia, Cross River, Edo, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo. The number increased to a total of 23 states by the close of the programme. It was programme designed to address very complex gullies and related soil degradation that obviously out-weighed the capacities of the concerned communities. It is an intervention of sustainable modeled international best practices meant not only to handle the degradation but also to build capacities of the stakeholders and improve the livelihood of the affected persons.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the NEWMAP is to reducing vulnerability to soil erosion in targeted sub-catchments. It aims to improve erosion management and gully rehabilitation; increase incomes for rural households from improved agricultural and forest practices through the use of conservation agriculture, agro-forestry, natural regeneration, etc.; and gain efficiency in public administration and public spending through improved knowledge base, analytical tools, multi-sectoral coordination and stakeholder dialogue. The project includes four main components, namely: Component1: Investment in Targeted Areas to support on-the-ground interventions that address, prevent and reverse land degradation. Component2: Institutional Development and Information Systems for Erosion Management and Watershed Planning to address longer term sustainability by strengthening the enabling federal and states MDAs on environment with a view to addressing erosion and watershed degradation problems in a comprehensive manner across sectors and states. Component 3: Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness Component 4: Project management to support the government at federal and state levels to implement this project. Enugu State is in Southeast of Nigeria.

Background Information on Enugu State - Enugu State was established on August 27, 1991, with Enugu as its capital. The state takes its name from the capital city, which began as a modest coal mining town in 1912 and developed to become the capital of Nigeria's erstwhile Eastern Region. The state has seventeen (17) local government areas (LGAs), five of which are mostly urban. Enugu State had a population of 3,267,837 people in the 2006 national census, with 1,596,042 men and 1,671,795 females (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010) with a total area of 7,638km2. Figure 4.1 depicts an administrative map of Enugu State; while Figure 4.2 shows the State Project sites including Umuavulu- Abor gully site.

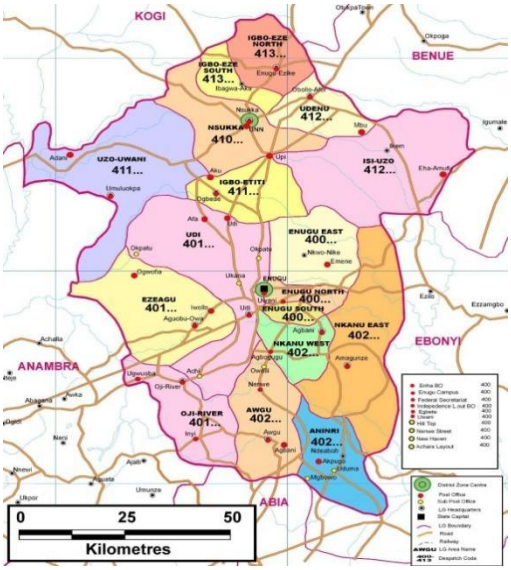


Fig. 4.1: Administrative Map of Enugu State
Source: Eze (2023) Mapping and Controlling Gully

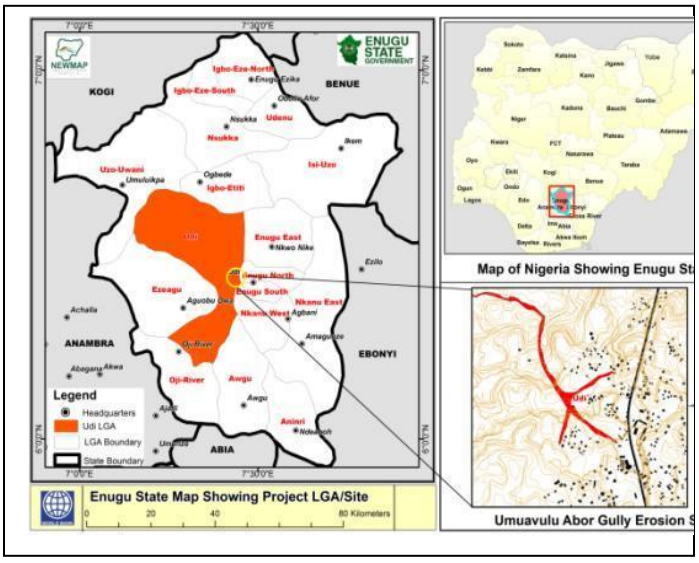


Fig. 4.2: Map of the Project Sites / Umuavulu-Abor
Source: Enugu Final Report at Closure; June, 2022

Relief and Drainage - All of the formations have a basic north-south direction, and several noteworthy landforms and associated features have been fashioned out of them. The Nsukka-Okigwe cuesta, located in Enugu State, is distinguished by two main features: the Enugu and Awgu escarpments and the Udi-Nsukka Plateau. The scarp face of the cuesta landforms is created by tough sandstones of the Lower Coal Measures, while the softer upper slopes and crest are produced by less resistant false-bedded sandstones. The escarpments in the area exhibit significant indentations caused by deep river valleys, while intense gully erosion is prominent at the upper reaches of most streams. The Nsukka Plateau gently slopes towards the lowlands along the Niger and Imo rivers. The plateau is expansive, measuring approximately 48km in width in the Nsukka region and 16km in the Udi and Awgu areas.

In addition to residual hills, the plateau features a low density of drainage and wide, flat-bottomed dry valleys. These dry valleys are believed to be former river valleys that have since dried up due to infiltration into the false-bedded sandstones. Climate change can also contribute to the presence of dry valleys. However, in the case of the progressive migration of the Enugu escarpment, the migration of the water table caused by gullying and ravination may be an alternative explanation. Enugu State is primarily drained by the Anambra-Mamu River System, which flows westward. This river system covers extensive areas of the Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area in the northwest and Awgu in the southwest. During the majority of the rainy season, the Uzo-Uwani lowlands, in particular, experience complete flooding. The hindered drainage of the soil in these flooded areas creates a favourable environment for specialized agricultural practices.

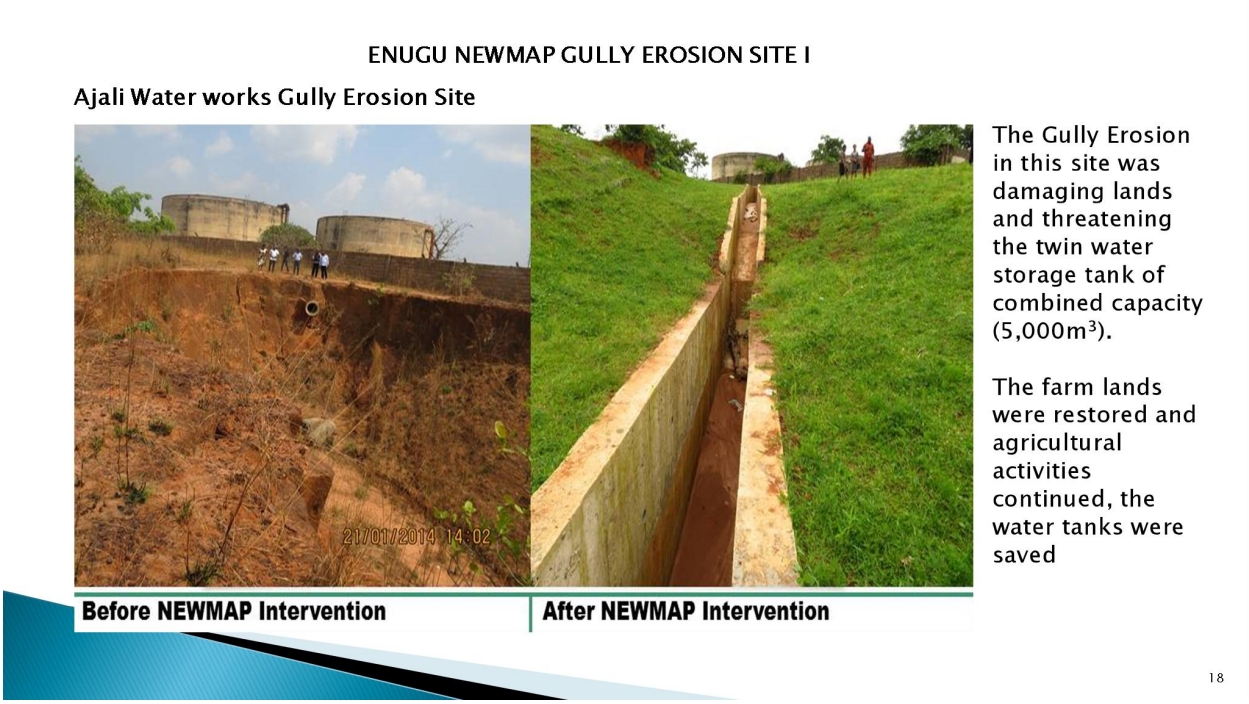
The soils are composed of shallow and rocky lithosols found on the steep slopes of the cuesta and often left uncultivated, ferrallitic soils (also known as red earth or acid sands) located on the plateau, and flood plain hydromorphic soils.Soil erosion, caused by both natural and man-made factors, is widespread in many sections of the state. It can be seen as rills along roadside embankments, sheet wash through complexes and farmlands, and gullying in distinct channels and zones, sometimes rather spectacular. The biggest gullies are centred on the borders of extremely friable sandstones that erode readily and produce gullying even on slopes as low as 5°. Vegetation of the State The vegetation atop Awgu's highlands and extending through its rocky promontories to connect with Udi's undulating hills is of the semitropical rainforest kind. It is generally green, and in the Nsukka region, it is supplemented with typical grassland vegetation. The Niger-Anambra Basin has fresh water swamp forests.

Climate of the Area In the mountainous and environmentally transitional region of Nsukka, the climate is fairly pleasant and especially equable. The average monthly temperature from February to April is around 33°C, while the yearly rainfall fluctuates between 152 and 203cm. Rainfall is nearly exclusively seasonal, with the majority of it occurring between May and October. Ecological Problems There are several environmental issues. Aside from soil degradation, there is the risk of extreme sandiness in the Ezeagu-Udi corridor, as well as rain-fed major flooding in the Uzo-Uwani area. Deforestation is a man-made danger that has harmed the state's ecological balance and agricultural potential. Figures 1 and 2 depict erosion incidences in Ajali, Udi, and Ezeagu LGAs, respectively.

Ajali Water Works and 9th Mile Corner Gully Erosion Sites: Sample Demonstration of NEWMAP Success Story in Enugu State

The success story of NEWMAP in Enugu State is expressed in this study with the first two gully erosion sites of the project namely, Ajali Water works and 9th Mile Corner Sites (ENS-NEWMAP ESMP 2014; ENS-NEWMAP RAP 2014; ENS-NEWMAP 2022). However, there were other sites of intervention which include: Umuavlu-Abor, Enugwu-Ngwo, Agbaja-Ngwo, Udi-Ozalla, Onuiyi Nsukka, Anyazuru Ohom-Orba, Imilike-Etiti, Obollo-Ikem Road, Adukwu Ebe, Ngele Owele Ohaja, and Obinagu Abia. The two typical sites' existing

pictorial conditions before and after the interventions are shown below:



Source: Enugu State NEWMAP Final Report at the Project Closure; June, 2022

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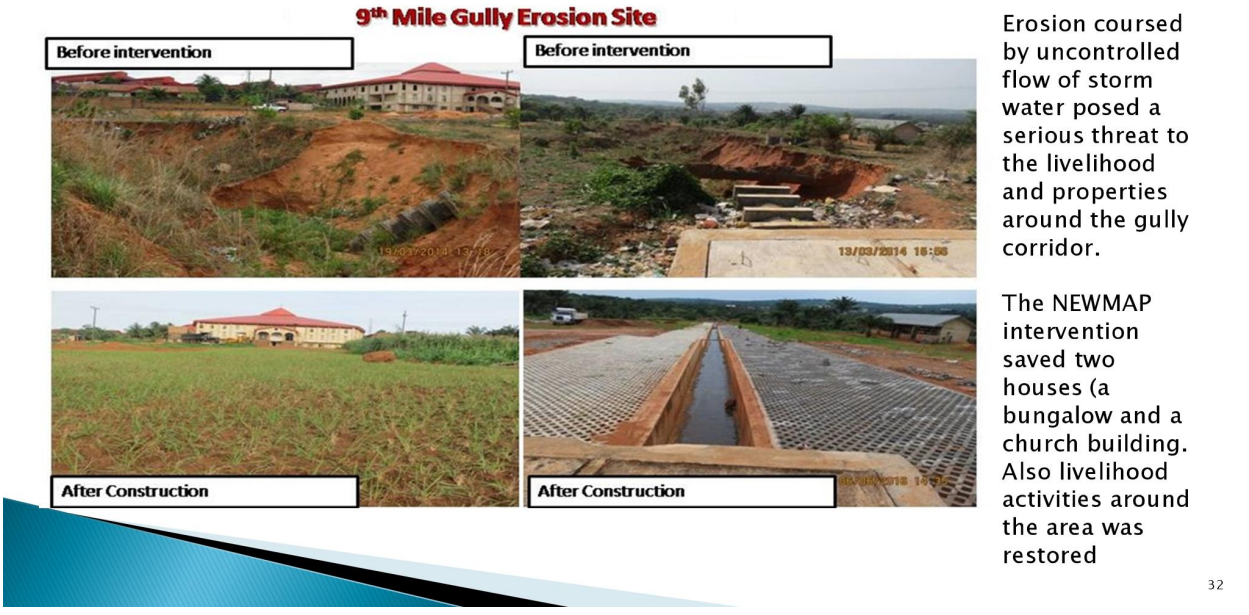

Source: Enugu State NEWMAP Final Report at the Project Closure; June, 2022

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In concluding this study, it is crystal clear that communication skills were highly applied in the project implementation which contributed immensely to the success story of the Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP). These followed international best practices model worthy of emulation in all major development projects. As such, this makes the need for recommendation very imperative in this study. In fact, the project operated in line with Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) Process of Sustainable Cities Programme of UN-Habitat. The special attributes of the EPM process include Bottom-up planning approach, anchored on participation and commitment of stakeholders and powerful tool for communication and information sharing((SCP, Undated).

Recommendation – The following recommendations are made for the purpose of replication as well as institutionalizing the process:

i. There is need to involve communication experts in development projects' implementation at all levels in the country;

ii. The complementary services of environmental and social safeguards with communication expert in construction and other development projects should be adopted as a standard;

iii. It is important that replication of this model is demonstrated at all levels of the national, state and local levels of development projects;

iv. The inclusion of the attributes of this model in the curriculums of institutions of higher l earning in Nigeria especially at the catchment zones that are prone to these environmental degradation; and

v. There is need for adoption/institutionalizing of bottom-up approach process and its active involvement of stakeholders participatory and project ownership before, during and after projects' implementation.

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