



Report of On-the-Spot Assessment of Oil and Gas Exploration Activities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

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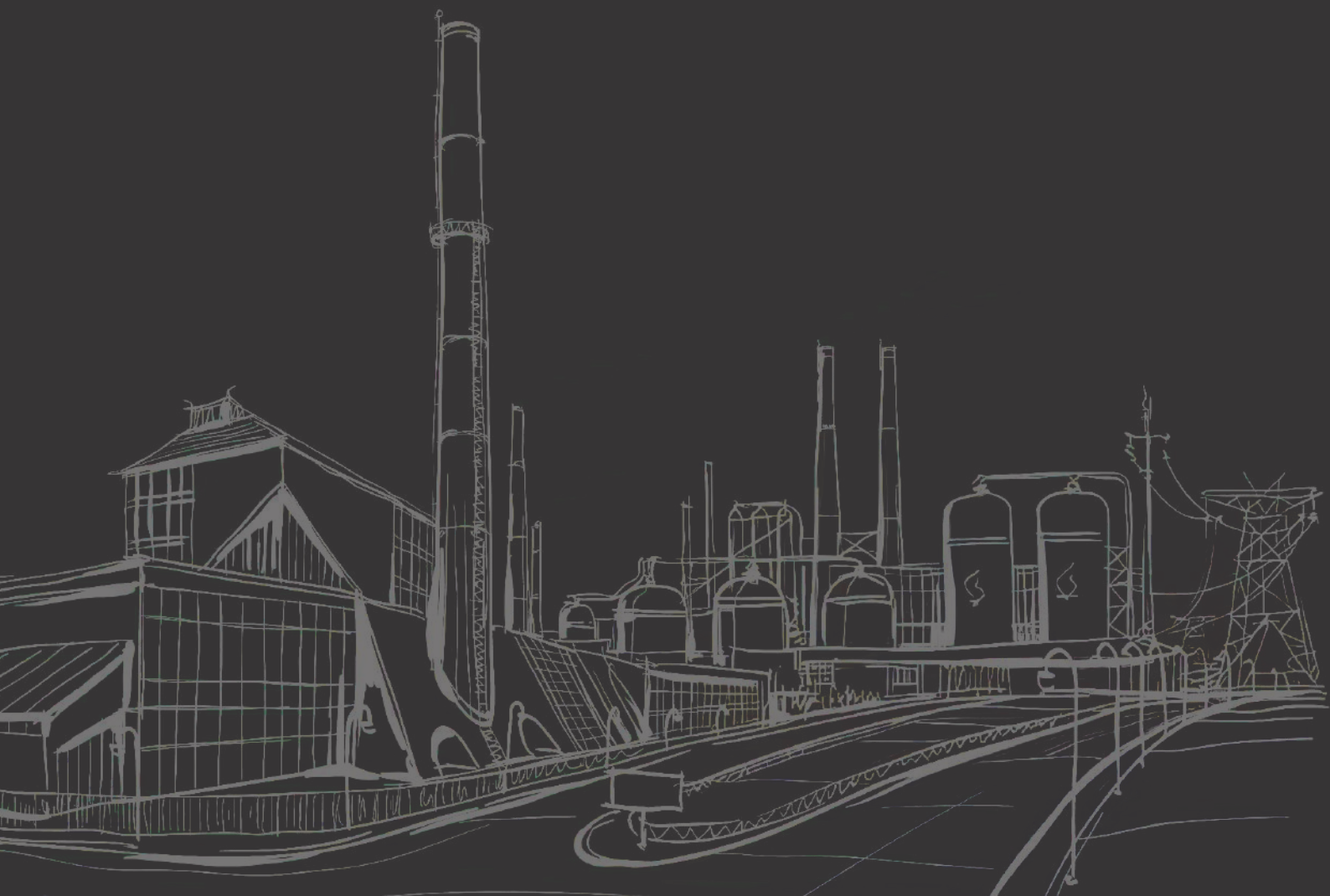
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bayelsa State in Nigeria's Niger Delta is crucial to the nation's oil production, hosting numerous International Oil Companies (IOCs). Despite its economic significance, the region faces severe environmental degradation, socio-economic issues, human rights abuses, and corruption due to oil exploitation. This report analyzes these challenges and provides recommendations for policy changes, improved regulatory practices, and enhanced community support.

Frequent oil spills in Bayelsa have contaminated soil and water, reduced biodiversity, and negatively impacted agriculture and fishing. Remediation efforts by the Federal Government and IOCs have been insufficient and inconsistent. These oil operations have led to violence, displacement, migration, and neglect of the local communities. Corruption within the oil industry has weakened regulatory practices, further harming environmental and community welfare. The report investigates these issues, focusing on IOCs' compliance with Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) regulations.

Insights have identified that these frequent oil spills and pollution have reduced agricultural productivity, contaminated water sources, and diminished biodiversity causing long-term ecosystem damage and loss of traditional medicinal plants. Continuous exposure of indigenes to harmful chemicals and inadequate healthcare facilities has exacerbated pollution-related health impacts. This pollution has drastically disrupted traditional livelihoods like fishing and farming, causing economic hardship and limiting market opportunities. Aging pipelines and inadequate spill responses also contribute to ongoing environmental damage. Conflicts over surveillance contracts, poor government oversight, and community exclusion from decision-making worsen the situation.

To address these challenges, the report recommends strengthening NUPRC oversight and enforcing environmental regulations with stricter penalties for non-compliant IOCs. Increasing funding and ensuring transparency in remediation efforts are essential. Regular engagement between IOCs, government agencies, and communities should be mandated, along with developing community-led monitoring initiatives. Launching comprehensive health programs and conducting long-term health studies are vital. Sustainable livelihood programs and fair compensation for affected communities should be prioritized. Strengthening anti-corruption frameworks with technology for transparency is necessary. Investing in educational programs for environmental awareness and providing training for effective environmental management and advocacy are crucial. Establishing mandatory environmental monitoring and a robust post-decommissioning framework for IOCs will ensure long-term accountability and sustainability.



BACKGROUND

Bayelsa State, located in the heart of Nigeria's Niger Delta, is home to some of the most extensive oil reserves in the country. It plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's oil production, hosting numerous International Oil Companies (IOCs) and contributing significantly to the nation's economy. However, this wealth of resources comes with profound challenges. The exploitation of oil in Bayelsa has led to a myriad of environmental and socio-economic issues that have affected the lives of local communities and the health of the region's ecosystems.

The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of environmental degradation, remediation efforts, human rights conditions, and corruption in the oil industry in Bayelsa State. It will offer recommendations for policy changes, improved regulatory practices, and enhanced support mechanisms for affected communities.

Over the years, Bayelsa State has experienced significant oil spillage, resulting in severe environmental degradation. These spills have devastating effects on local ecosystems, contaminating soil and water, and leading to the loss of biodiversity. The degradation of land and waterways has adversely impacted agriculture and fishing, which are vital to the livelihoods of the local communities. Assessing the extent and severity of this environmental degradation is crucial for understanding the broader impacts on the region.

The response to the environmental challenges posed by oil exploitation includes remediation efforts by both the Federal Government and International Oil Companies. These efforts aim to restore affected areas and mitigate the impacts of pollution. However, questions remain about the effectiveness and sufficiency of these interventions. This report will investigate the level of remediation undertaken, document ongoing or completed projects, and evaluate their outcomes.

The presence of oil operations in Bayelsa has also led to allegations of human rights abuses. Local communities have reported instances of violence, displacement, and neglect as a consequence of oil exploitation activities. Documenting and analysing these abuses is essential to understand the social implications of the oil industry and the responses from both the government and the IOCs.

Similarly, corruption within the oil industry has been a persistent issue, affecting regulatory practices and enforcement. This report will examine instances of corruption involving IOCs and their interactions with industry regulators. The analysis will explore how these corrupt practices have influenced regulatory outcomes, compromising environmental and community welfare. As IOCs reassess their operations in Nigeria, divestment activities have become more prevalent. This shift brings into question the compliance of these companies with the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) regulations, particularly concerning the abandonment and decommissioning of oil facilities. Assessing adherence to these regulations is vital to ensure that divestment does not exacerbate existing environmental and social issues.

To properly understand the issues of human right abuses and state of the environment, HEDA Resource Centre on 19th April 2024, led a team of both international and local partners on a fact finding visitation to the Bayelsa State Government and was received by the government officials, led by the Deputy Governor of the State, Hon. Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo. Our findings from stakeholders and State government officials led to this research work.



Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State,
Hon. Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo and the Chairman
of HEDA Resource Centre, Olanrewaju Suraju



Delegation of HEDA Resource Centre and officials of Bayelsa State Government

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this project, a structured approach was undertaken across four phases. Phase 1 involved comprehensive field assessments and data collection, gathering essential information on the extent of environmental degradation, human rights issues, and regulatory compliance. This phase was crucial for building a solid foundation of evidence and understanding the on-the-ground realities. Phase 2 consisted of Focus Group Sessions and Key Informant Interviews, which aimed to capture diverse perspectives from stakeholders, including community members, government officials, and representatives from environmental and human rights organizations. These discussions provided qualitative insights that were critical for contextualizing the quantitative data collected.

In Phase 3, the project team analyzed the data and drafted a detailed report that synthesized the findings from the field assessments and interviews. This phase focused on identifying trends, drawing conclusions, and formulating recommendations for policy changes and improved regulatory practices. Finally, Phase 4 involved the review and finalization of the report, ensuring that the conclusions were well-supported and that the recommendations were actionable and relevant to stakeholders.

The project focused on Bayelsa State, covering all its Local Government Areas: Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw, and Yenagoa. This geographical scope ensured that the study reflected the varied experiences and challenges faced throughout the region. The involvement of local communities, the Federal Government, and environmental and human rights organizations as stakeholders was essential for the report's success, providing diverse viewpoints and ensuring that the findings and recommendations were both comprehensive and applicable to real-world conditions.

Data Analysis and Insights

The research examined the consequences of oil spills in Bayelsa State, including frequent incidents leading to environmental degradation, health problems, economic challenges, and inadequate infrastructure and mitigation responses. The respondents show that oil spills cause persistent pollution, loss of biodiversity, and negatively impact traditional livelihoods and the health and economic welfare of people living in Bayelsa State’s oil-producing communities.

Age of Respondents

Analysis of the age spread of the respondents across the 8 LGAs in Bayelsa revealed persons aged 26-40 had the highest response with a percentage of 50%, followed closely by 41-60 years at 33%. Persons aged 18 - 25 were 12% of all respondents while persons aged 60+ had the lowest responses at 5% (Figure 1).

Age	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
18-25	7	22	19	23	25	10	19	20
40-60	15	11	11	8	8	17	13	4
41-60		12	2		12	1	7	2
60+		3		3	4	2	1	

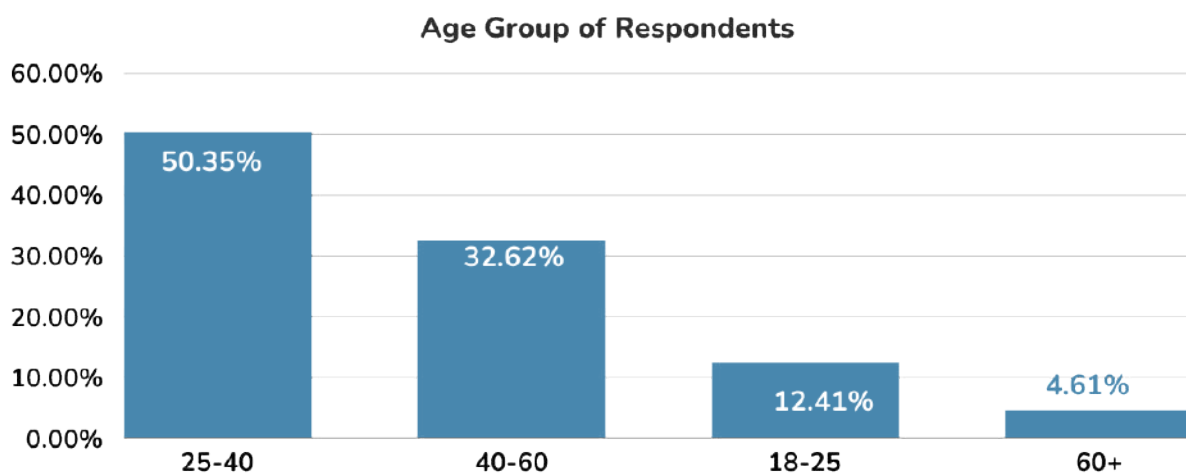


Figure 1: Age group of respondents

For the local governments, Ekeremor LGA had the highest percentage of respondents aged 18 - 25, at 25%. Respondents aged 26 - 40 were the majority in all the local governments except in Brass and Sagbama which had 68% and 57% of respondents aged 41 - 60. Respondents aged 60+ were the least and below 10% in all the local governments (Figure 2).

Age	Brass	Ekeremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
18-25		25%	7%		23%	3%	18%	8%
26-40	32%	46%	57%	58%	52%	33%	48%	77%
41-60	68%	23%	37%	34%	17%	57%	33%	15%
60+		6%		8%	8%	7%	3%	

Figure 2: Analysis of age distribution of respondents across 8 LGA's

Gender of Respondents

The majority of respondents were males, who made up 72% of the 289 respondents, while 28% were females.

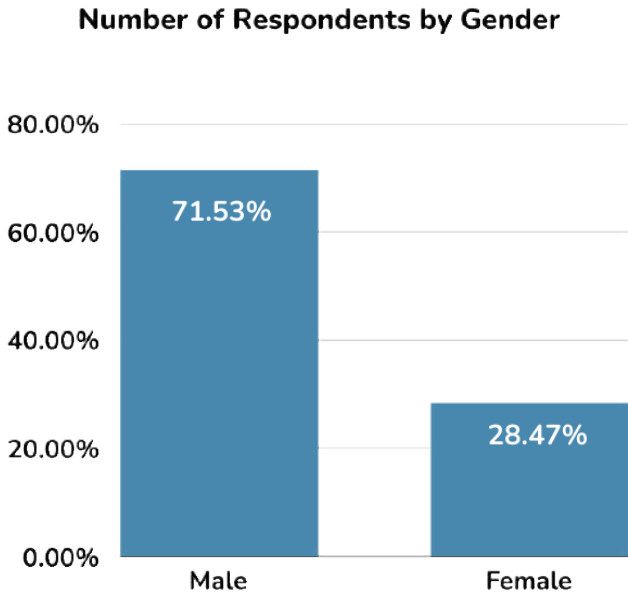


Figure 3: Gender Representation

Further analysis of gender representation across the LGAs shows only Yenagoa LGA had more female respondents at 54%. The other LGAs had more male respondents than female (Figure 4).

Gender	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Male	27%	10%	19%	5%	41%	33%	46%	54%
Female	73%	90%	81%	95%	59%	67%	54%	46%

Figure 4: Breakdown of gender spread by LGA

Occupation of Respondents

An analysis of the respondents' occupation showed 41% were self-employed, about a quarter of the respondents, 26% were unemployed. 21% of the respondents are employed by another, 10% engaged in vocational jobs, while 1% of the responses were not clear about their occupation. In total, a large number of respondents had some form of employment, about 73% of the total respondents.

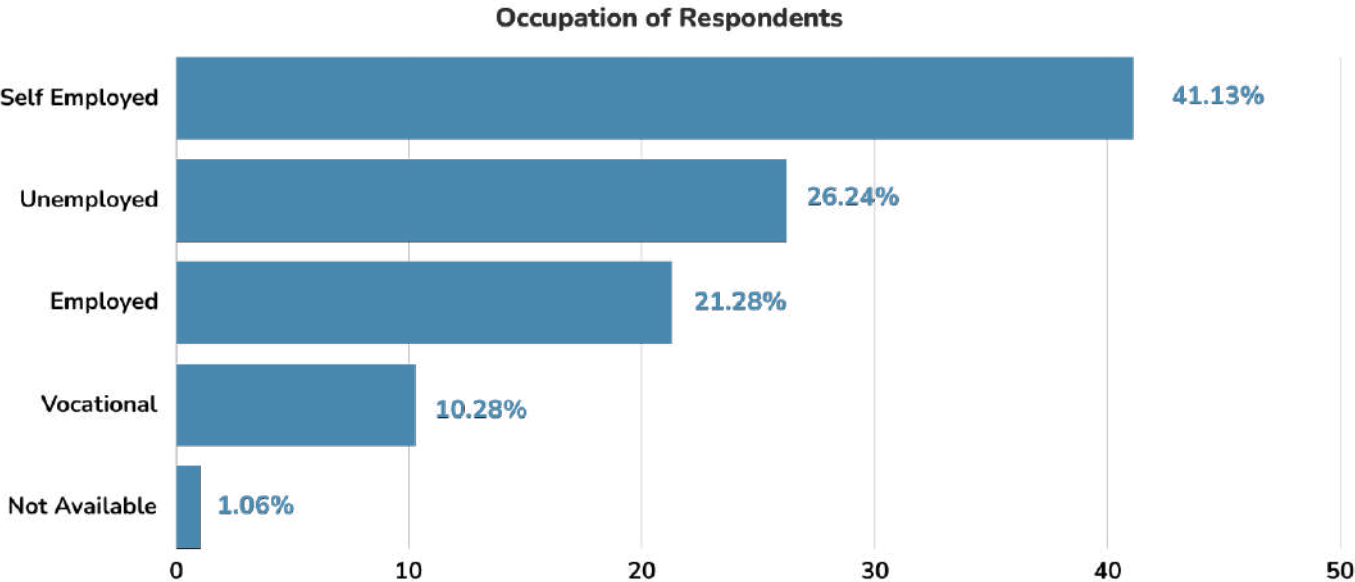


Figure 5: Occupation of Respondents

Further analysis reveals that most of the respondents in each of the LGAs were employed, either by another person, self-employed, or in a vocational field.

Unemployed respondents were below 20% in each of the local governments except in Ogbia and Southern Ijaw, where unemployed respondents were as high as 44% and 40% respectively.

Occupation	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw
Employed	55%	19%	23%	13%	25%	30%	12%
Self-employed	18%	50%	23%	68%	25%	67%	38%
Unemployed	18%	31%	10%	20%	44%	3%	40%
Vocational	9%		43%		6%		10%

Figure 6: Occupation spread across LGA's

Education of Respondents

Analysis of the educational level of the respondents reveals that 56% of them had a secondary education, 33% had a tertiary education, 8% had a primary education, while 2% had no formal education. Approximately 1% of the responses were unclear about their education level.

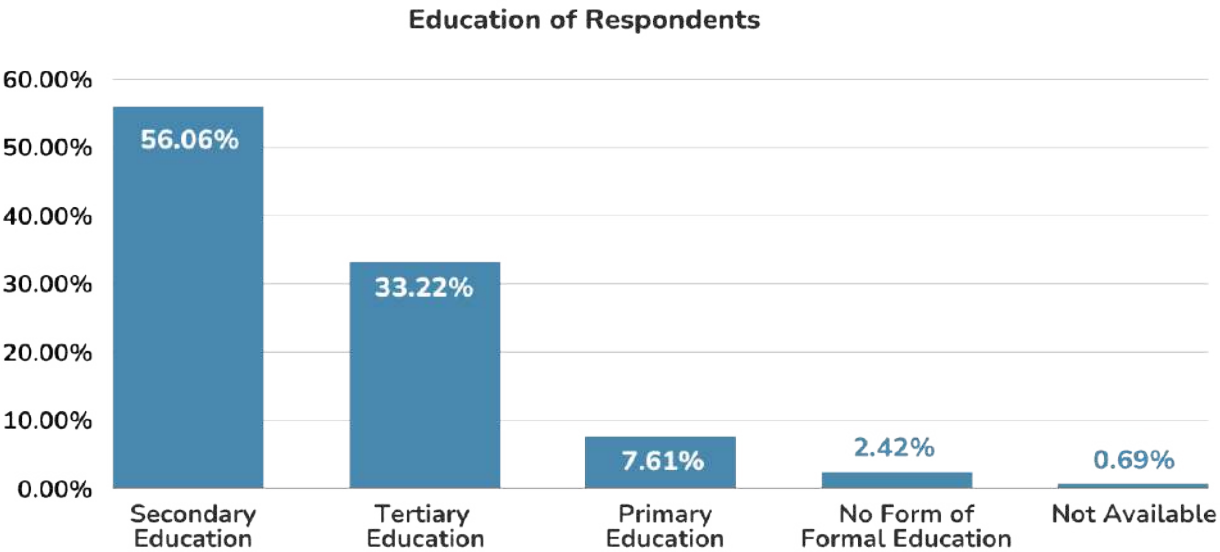


Figure 7: Education Spread of Respondents

Assessment of the highest educational attainment of respondents across the LGAs reveals that only Brass LGA had more respondents with tertiary education than other levels of education, at 86%.

In each of the remaining local governments, persons with secondary education were more among the respondents than others of lesser or higher education.

Educational Background	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No form of formal Education			3%		2%		12%	
Not available			3%		2%			
Primary Education	5%	2%	3%		18%		24%	
Secondary Education	9%	69%	59%	63%	53%	67%	48%	65%
Tertiary Education	86%	29%	31%	38%	24%	33%	17%	35%

Figure 8: Education spread across LGA's

Oil Spills and Water Pollution in Bayelsa State

Communities in the different LGAs in Bayelsa State have constantly raised an alarm on the environmental pollution caused by oil and gas activities. This is further consolidated by the 70.2% response of significant contribution of oil and gas activities to environmental pollution (Figure 9).

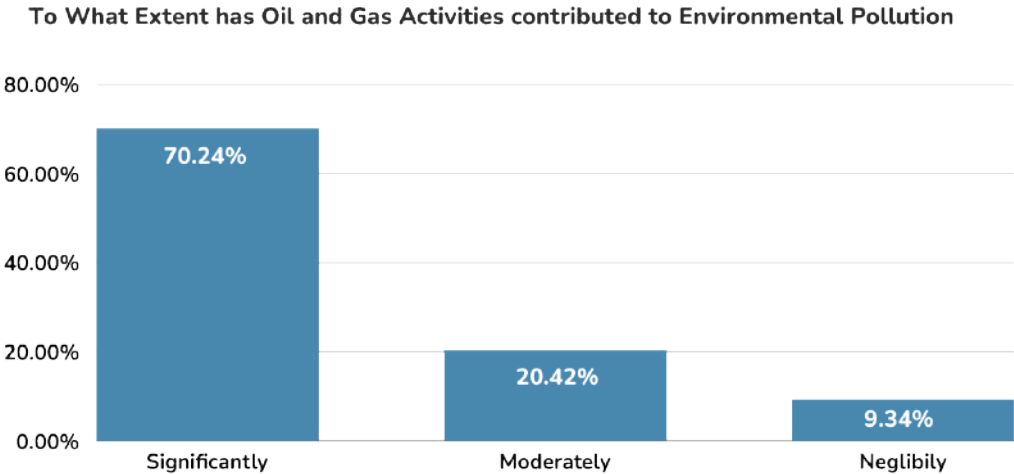
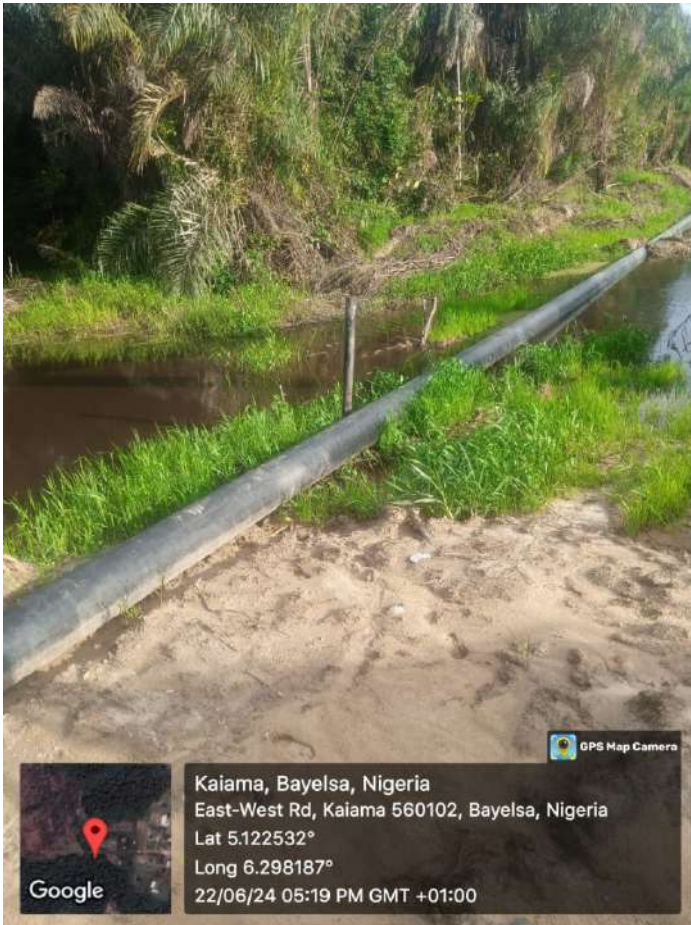


Figure 9: Assessing Extent of Oil and Gas Pollution on the Environment



Kaiama, Bayelsa State
Nigeria

Evaluating their own environment, 24% of respondents in Southern Ijaw believe oil and gas activities had negligible effect on them. This is the highest proportion of respondents in any local government to dismiss the claim that oil and gas activities had any moderate or significant effect on their environment (Figure 10).

Apart from Southern Ijaw LGA, from 59% - 96% of respondents in each of the other local government areas believe oil and gas activities significantly contributed to environmental pollution in their respective communities.

To what extent have gas and oil activities in your State contributed to the environmental pollution?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Significantly	23%	27%	16%	5%	31%	17%	31%	4%
Moderately	18%	13%		13%		7%	24%	
Negligibly	59%	60%	84%	83%	69%	77%	45%	96%

Figure 10: Assessing the Level of Oil and Gas Spill across the LGAs

While there has been an established relationship between oil and gas activities and environmental pollution in the communities, to provide effective and tailored solutions, it is pertinent to understand the kinds of environmental pollution observed. The most significant being water pollution with a 56% response, air pollution comes next with 23%, while soil pollution is 16%. There are other types of pollution that pose concerns to community members as seen with a 5% value, however, further probe is required to identify these.

Respondents highlighted the effects of oil and water pollution in their communities. One respondent in Yenagoa LGA stated "The pollution affects our fishes and farms, leaving us unsure of how to sustain ourselves. As women, we don't have access to basic healthcare, and our reproductive health is often ignored, making our situation even more difficult."

Similarly, another respondent in Brass LGA highlighted that "Oil pollution has messed up the water's biodiversity. We used to have water snails and other sea creatures, but now it's hard to even find any fish. Everything is just gone."

What types of Pollution have you Witnessed?

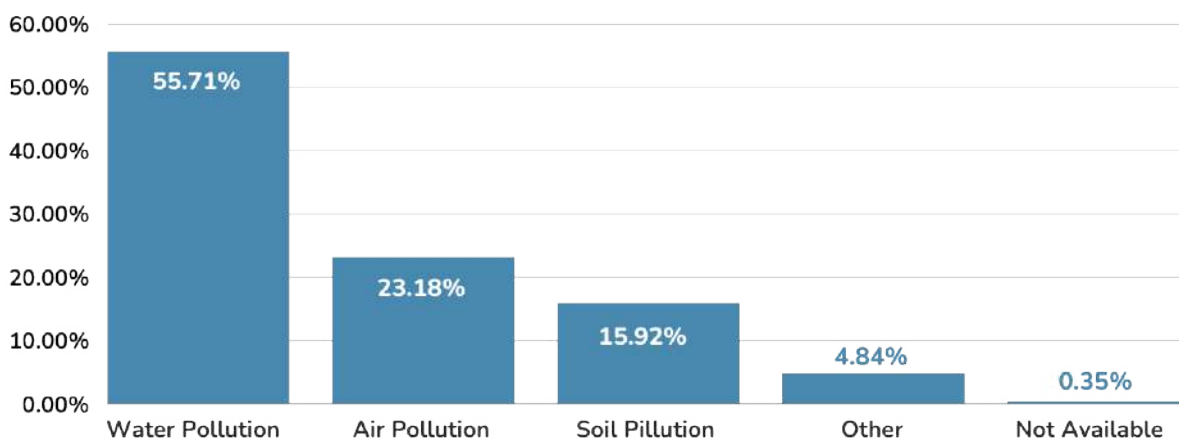


Figure 11: Assessing the types of Environmental Pollution Experienced

The effect of oil and gas activities on the environment varies from one area to another. Water pollution is felt more in Nembe, Brass, Southern Ijaw, and Ekeremor LGAs, with 93%, 86%, 76% and 56% of respondents respectively in each of those communities claiming they felt water pollution more than the other forms of pollution (Figure 12).

Sagbama respondents have witnessed more air pollution than other forms of pollution, with 60% of them choosing air pollution as what they have witnessed.

Responses from Ogbia respondents are near evenly spread across the three forms of pollution posed to them. Respondents in this LGA also speak of witnessing other forms of pollution besides air, soil and water pollution, with 24% of respondents, the highest proportion in any local government. Further investigations can help identify the other forms of pollution witnessed in Ogbia, besides air, water and soil pollution.

Next to water pollution, the highest proportion of respondents have witnessed soil pollution (28%) in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA, and air pollution (31%) in Yenagoa.

What is evident however, is that most communities are affected by a combination of different forms of pollution, as highlighted by a respondent in Sagbama LGA: Our waterways are being washed out. Then pollution everywhere because of all these

boats, machines that are pulling the areas. The atmosphere sometimes is not friendly. Even the water we are breathing is not clean”.

The granularity of this data ultimately provides a guide for the advocacies and policies needed to provide support that are tailored to the specific needs of these communities.

What types of pollution have you witnessed?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Air pollution	9%	27%	22%	5%	29%	60%	7%	31%
Not available					2%			
Other			3%		24%		2%	
Soil Pollution	5%	17%	28%	3%	20%	17%	14%	23%
Water pollution	86%	56%	47%	93%	24%	23%	76%	46%

Figure 12: Assessing the types of environmental pollution experienced

Understanding Health Related issues due to Oil and Gas Activities

Apart from environmental effects caused by activities related to oil and gas exploration, statistics have shown that the health conditions of workers and members of communities who play host to these IOC’s have deteriorated over time.

This is further confirmed by the data collected with 79% of respondents affirming health related issues as a result of the activities of these firms. Although, 21% responded to not having any health related experience, this does not negate the fact that these activities have been implicated in some worsening health conditions in these community members (Figure 13). Some of such conditions include an increased amount of Polycyclic hydrocarbons (PAH) in the breast milk and bloodstream of people living in oil producing communities.

In Nembe community, a respondent spoke on the effects of oil spillage on the health of community members: “Sometimes our children get stomach pain from this air pollution. All those things. A lot of sickness where this air pollution comes to us. We



Yenegroa,
Bayelsa State, Nigeria

don't have access to buy drugs to treat the sickness . We do not know if we are getting sick through the water or through the fish”

Have you and your Family Experienced Health Related Issues?

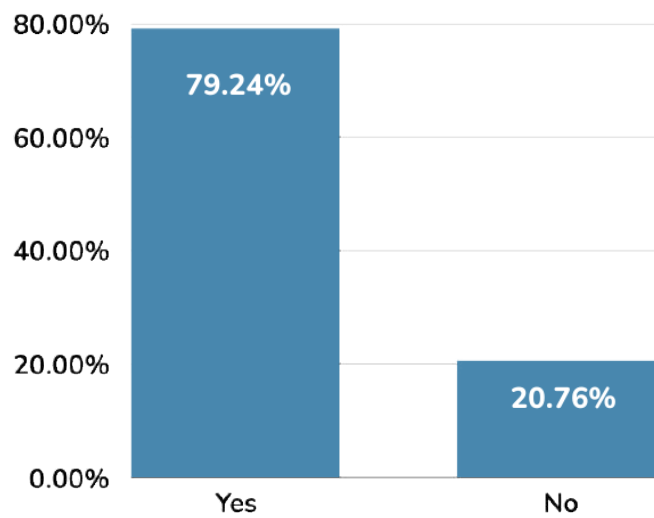


Figure 13: Environmental Pollution Induced Health Challenges

Further analysis shows the majority of respondents and their families in each of the local government areas experience negative or ill health because of oil pollution in their community (figure 14).

The only exception is Ogbia LGA where the majority (53%) said they or their families had not experienced these adverse effects of oil pollution on their health.

All respondents in Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, and Yenagoa LGAs have experienced negative effects or ill health because of oil and gas pollution. These LGAs have a high number of oil installations.

Have you and your family members experienced negative/ill health effects due to the oil pollution in your community?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Yes	7.27%	9.69%	11.07%	13.84%	7.96%	8.65%	11.76%	9.00%
No	0.35%	6.92%			9.00%	1.73%	2.77%	

Figure 14: LGA's with the most oil and gas activities related health issues

To understand the extent of this health related issues, data was collected on the observation of deformities as a result of these activities in the communities, a good percentage affirmed the presence of these deformities with a high value of 68%, while 32% responded to not having experienced or observed deformities associated with activities in the oil and gas field. (Figure 15).

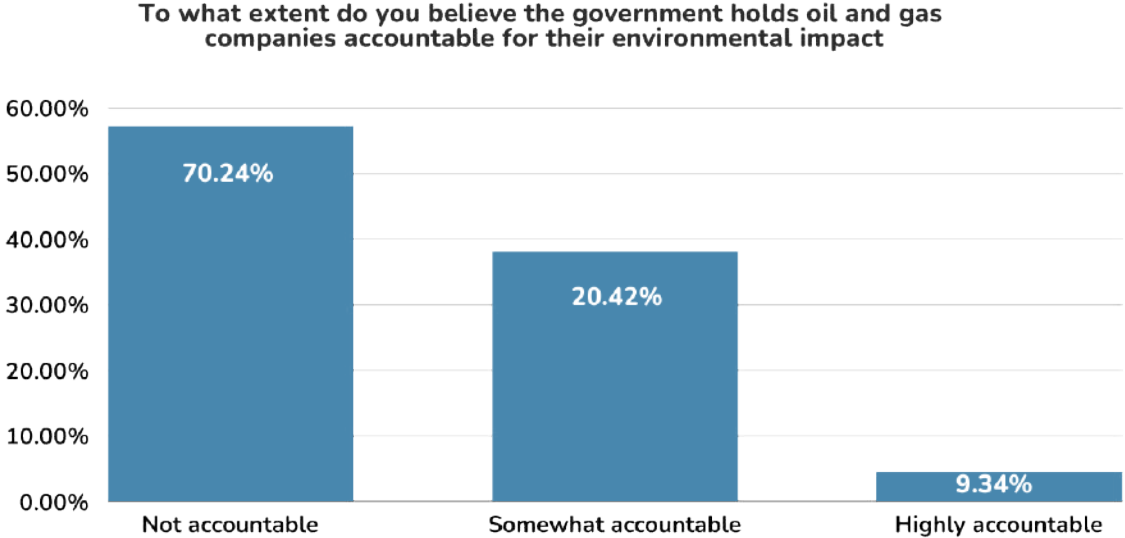


Figure 15: Assessment of ill-health and deformities due to oil exploration activities

Community wide analysis reveals a high presence of the observation of these deformities in all LGAs.

The only exception was Ogbia LGA where the majority of respondents (84%) said they had observed no deformity related to oil and gas pollution (Figure 16).

Further evaluation of these deformities in what form and the extent of their effect on the members of the community is encouraged to ensure advocacy and appropriate interventions are developed.

Have you observed any ill-health and deformities in your community as a result of the pollutants and degradations from the oil exploration exercise?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No, no noticeable impact	18%	21%	22%	26%	84%	13%	33%	4%
Yes	82%	79%	78%	74%	16%	87%	67%	96%

Figure 16: Assessment of ill-health and deformities due to oil exploration activities

Corporate and Government Responsibility

Assessing government and corporate responsibility in oil and gas exploration involves evaluating regulatory compliance, environmental stewardship, and community impact. Entities must adhere to stringent safety and environmental standards, transparently report their activities and associated risks, and prioritize sustainable practices. They should address the social and economic concerns of affected communities by fostering accountability and ensuring long-term benefits through rigorous oversight, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to mitigating negative consequences. This approach balances energy needs with environmental protection and social equity.

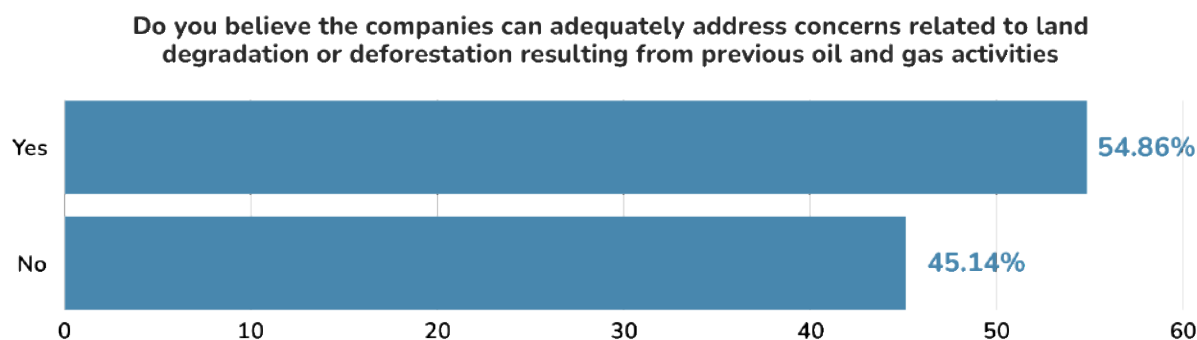


Figure 17: Assessing Government's Role in Accountability

Indigenous communities have played host to these IOC's for a number of years and have been forced to continuously hold the government and IOC's accountable for the impacts of the exploration practices on their communities ranging from oil spill cleanup, provision of alternative sources of water, land and other basic amenities.

Little wonder the high percentage of responses observed where more respondents, 57% reacted to the government not holding these IOC's accountable for the environmental impact of their activities. Although 38% believed the government holds the IOC's 'somewhat accountable', a smaller percentage, 5% of respondents, believes they hold them highly accountable. These values are still lower when compared to those who believe the government does not hold these IOCs accountable, thus, more advocacy is required on ensuring the enforcement of the rules and regulations of engagements (Figure 17).

Understanding the level of accountability across the different LGAs would help provide guidance to the level of advocacy needed by each area. Less than 8% of respondents feel the government has held the companies accountable for the environmental impact of their exploration on communities.

The majority of respondents in 6 of the 8 local governments say the government does not hold the oil companies to account for the impact of their business on their respective environments. (Figure 18).

In the remaining 2 LGAs, Kolokuma and Ogbia, 100% and 67% of respondents respectively believe the government somewhat holds the oil companies accountable for the devastation their activities have caused the environment.

A stakeholder discussion held with key stakeholders in these 2 LGAs can uncover the strategies they employed to ensure the state government holds the companies to some level of accountability there.

To what extent do you believe the government of your State holds oil and gas companies accountable for their environmental impact?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Not accountable	5%	8%		5%	2%	3%	7%	4%
Somewhat accountable	68%	56%		90%	31%	87%	87%	92%
Highly accountable	27%	35%	100%	5%	67%	10%	10%	4%

Figure 18: Assessing the Government's Role in Accountability

The Government’s responsiveness to community concerns lies within the purview of the Ministries and Departments and Agencies set up to oversee such projects. These agencies do not provide satisfactory responsiveness when concerns are raised by the community, according to 82% of respondents. Only 1% of respondents are very satisfied, while 17% are somewhat satisfied with the federal government's regulation of the oil companies by its agencies (Figure 19).

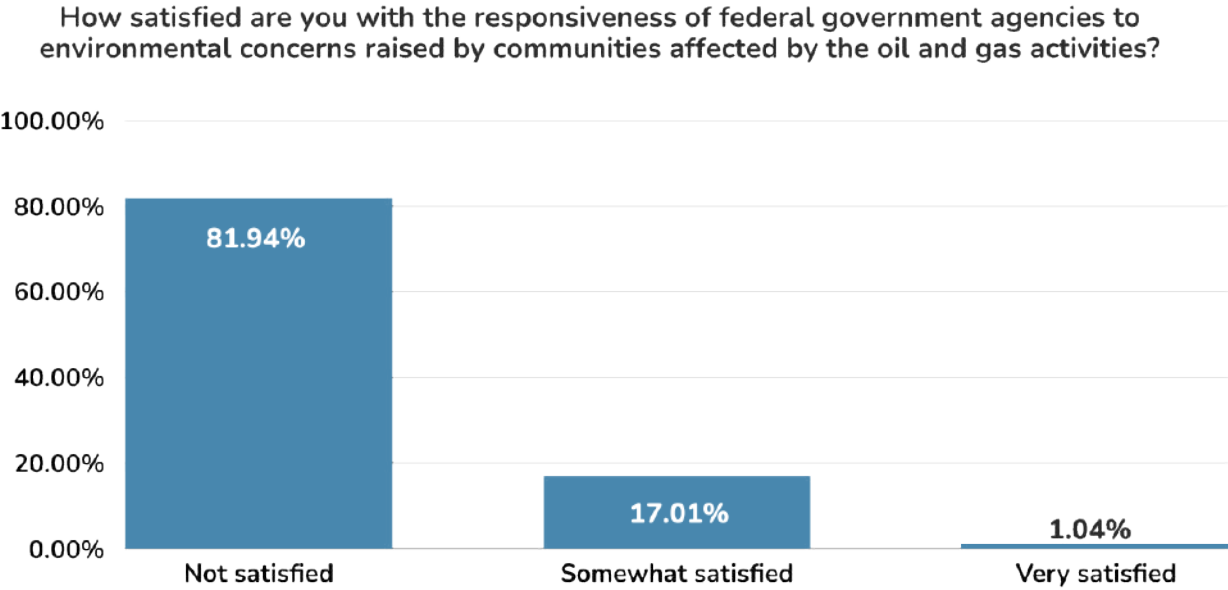


Figure 19: Assessing Federal Government Agencies Responsiveness to Concerns

From individual community members’ perspective, the majority of respondents in 7 of the 8 LGAs are not satisfied with the responsiveness of federal government’s agencies to their concerns (Figure 20).

However, in Ogbia LGA, more of the respondents (53%) are somewhat satisfied, and data further implies 1 in every 50 persons in Ogbia are very satisfied with the responsiveness of the federal agencies to their concerns.

How satisfied are you with the responsiveness of federal government agencies to environmental concerns raised by communities affected by the oil and gas activities?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Not satisfied	86%	83%	84%	100%	45%	100%	81%	96%
Somewhat satisfied	14%	15%	16%		53%		19%	
Very satisfied		2%			2%			4%

Figure 20: Assessing Federal Government Agencies Responsiveness to Concerns

While there are regulatory frameworks and policies set to govern the practices of the IOC's, the real bother falls on the enforcement of these regulations. Respondents have shown that the government agencies have not effectively carried out the oversight function of enforcement by the value associated with 'No', 74%. Although 17% believed the enforcement was/is being done, 9% of respondents had no answer. (Figure 21)

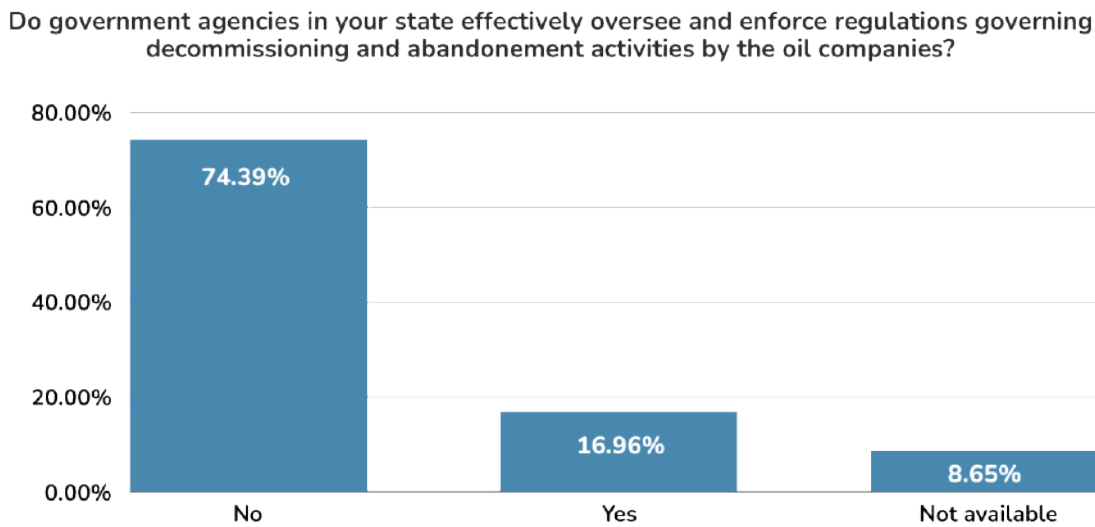


Figure 21: Assessing Regulations on Decommissioning and Abandonment

According to the responses collected from the indigenes in the local government areas, Ekeremor, Nembe and Southern Ijaw have had the highest difficulties with the issues of government agencies carrying out their oversight function of enforcing these laws and regulations as seen by the high percentage of a 'No' response 14.24%, 12.15%, and 11.81% respectively (Figure 22).

In your opinion, do government agencies in your state effectively oversee and enforce regulations governing decommissioning and abandonment activities by oil companies?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	95%	85%	69%	88%	61%	93%	81%	16%
Not available					4%	7%		80%
Yes	5%	15%	31%	13%	35%		19%	4%

Figure 22: Assessing regulations on decommissioning and abandonment

The protection of the interest of the citizenry is one of the functions of the government, however, indigenes of the communities do not believe the government works in their best interest. 75.26% of the respondents believe the government agencies are not interested in the concerns of the host communities, while 24.74% believe the agencies are fighting to protect their rights (Figure 23).

This point is explained clearly by a respondent: “ We really need the government to help us by giving our children free care, medical care, then supporting us in schools because the oil split is affecting us both farm boat fishing and we don't know what to do. Again, we really need help from the government to support us in all programs, both in education, in health and farming.”

Do you believe that government agencies effectively oversee and enforce regulations to protect the rights of the community?

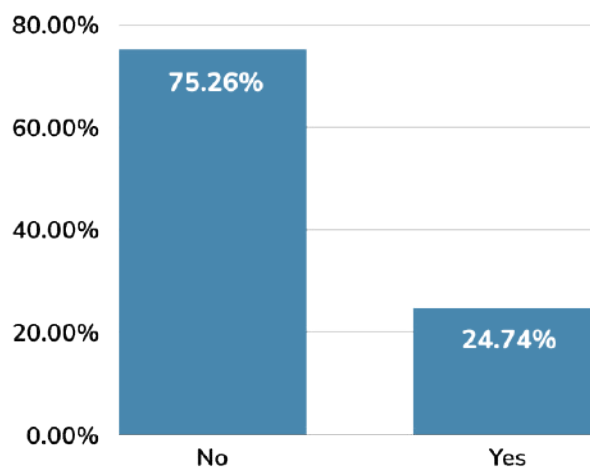


Figure 23: Assessing government's ability to protect the rights of the community

The high values of ‘No’ response across the local governments further affirms the similarity in issues faced by the indigenes when holding the government accountable (Figure 24).

Do you believe that government agencies effectively oversee and enforce regulations to protect the rights of the community?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	77%	67%	59%	85%	61%	100%	74%	8.01%
Not available							2%	4%
Yes	23%	33%	41%	15%	39%		24%	8%

Figure 24: Assessing government's ability to protect the rights of the community

The Environmental Remediation Fund contribution for communities in Bayelsa is a critical initiative aimed at addressing the severe environmental degradation caused by years of oil exploration and exploitation. This fund, sourced from both government allocations and corporate contributions, is dedicated to the cleanup and restoration of contaminated land and water, ensuring the health and sustainability of local ecosystems. By financing comprehensive remediation projects, the fund was set aside to mitigate pollution, restore biodiversity, and improve the quality of life for affected communities. However, when respondents were asked if the impact of this fund is felt in their communities, 90.28% answered ‘No’ (Figure 25).

Have you seen the impact of the environmental remediation fund contribution for the remediation of environmental damage in your community

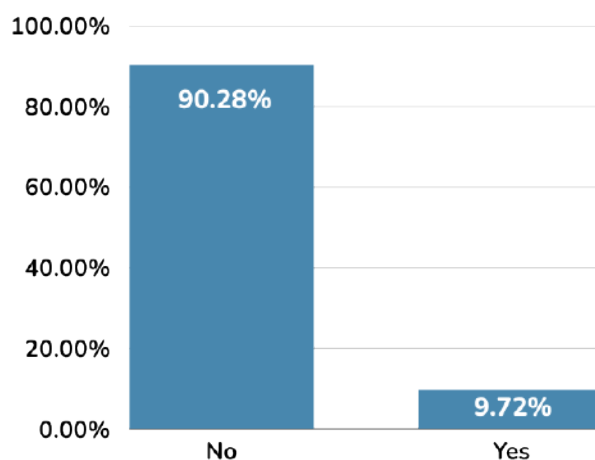


Figure 25: Assessing the awareness of community members on the impact of the environmental remediation fund

Further assessment needs to be carried out to ascertain whether the indigenes have knowledge of this remediation fund and also to uncover if these remediation exercises have been embarked on.

Preliminary to understanding the awareness of indigenes, analysis of the spread of the respondents answers shows high values of ‘No’ across the eight local government areas. (Figure 26). With this, advocacy plans should be focused on creating awareness and adopting tools to measure impact.

Have you seen the impact of the Environmental Remediation Fund contribution for the remediation of environmental damage in your community?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	100%	92%	100%	95%	63%	100%	90%	100%
Yes		8%		5%	38%		10%	

Figure 26 : Assessing the awareness of community members on the impact of the environmental remediation fund

Assessing International Oil Companies’ (IOC) handling of asset divestment involves examining the transparency and fairness of the process, the environmental and social responsibilities upheld, and the long-term impacts on affected communities. This has been the major target of this project and the analysis of the data gathered shows that the SPDC and NAOC have not handled their asset divestments properly as seen by the high percentage of respondents who picked ‘poor’ handling by the SPDC and NAOC at 67.13%. Only 18.34% believe they have been fair in their dealings, while 8.65% do not have a direct answer.

It is rather interesting to see that 5.19% think their handling has been ‘Good’ and 0.69% say it's excellent (Figure 27).

How would you rate the current SPDC and NAOC handling of the divestment of oil and gas assets in Bayelsa State

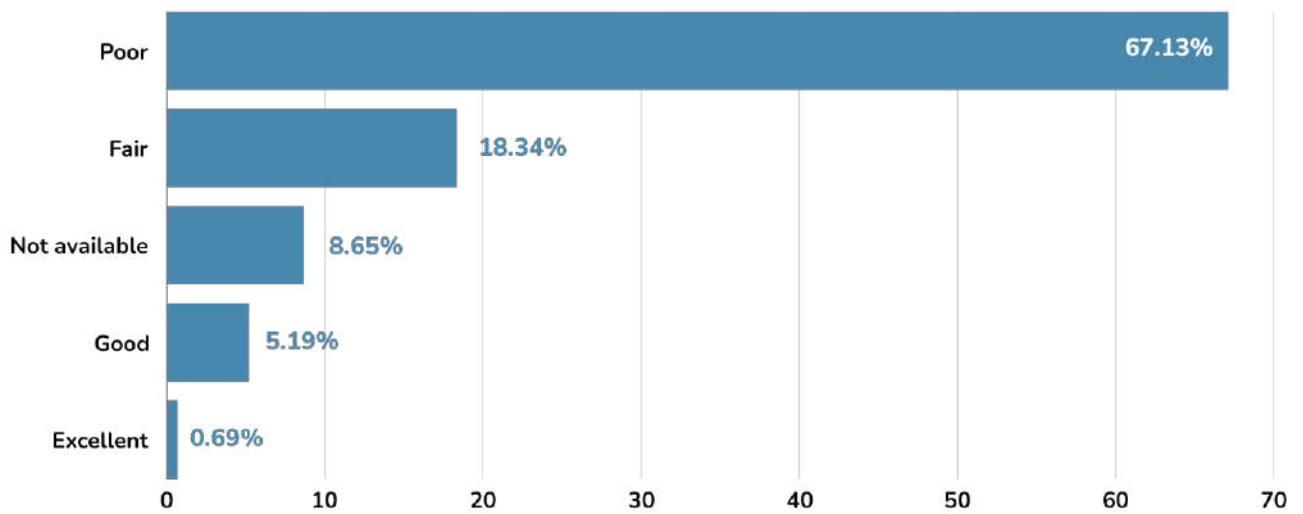
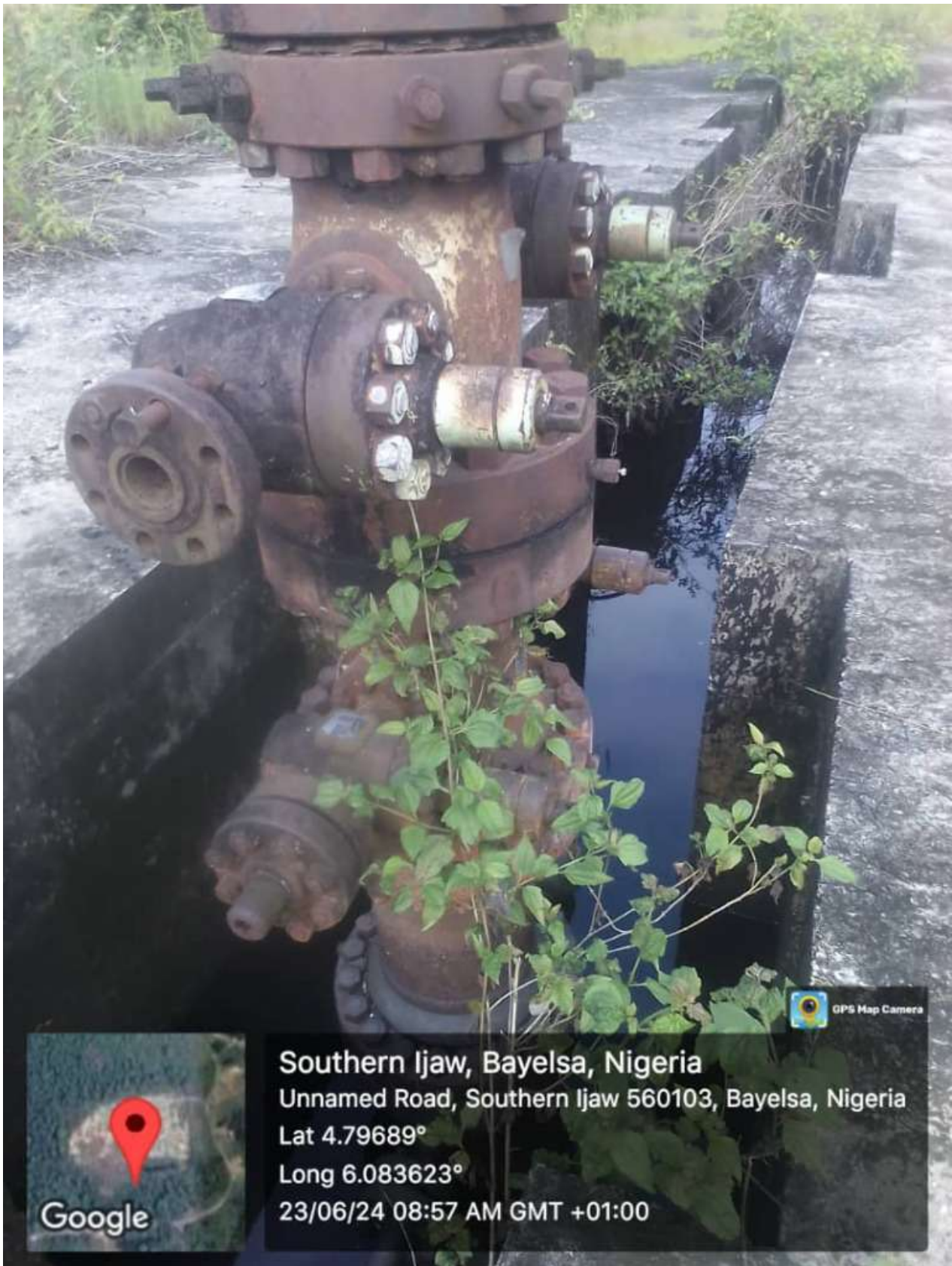


Figure 27: Assessing IOC’s handling of divestment of Assets

In 6 of the 8 LGAs, a majority of respondents (ranging from 64% to 100%) rated the SPDC and NAOC’s handling of the divestment of oil and gas assets “poor”. The exception is Ogbia LGA where the majority (43%) think the organisations have performed fairly, and at Yenagoa, where 81% of the responses was not available (Figure 28).

How would you rate the current SPDC and NAOC handling of the divestment of oil and gas assets in Bayelsa State	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Excellent		2%					2%	
Fair	36%	21%		8%	48%		14%	8%
Good		4%			23%		5%	
Not available						13%		81%
Poor	64%	73%	100%	93%	29%	87%	79%	12%

Figure 28: Assessing IOC’s handling of divestment of Assets



Southern Ijaw, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Assessing the communication strategies of International Oil Companies (IOCs) during the divestment of assets is crucial for maintaining transparency, building trust, and ensuring smooth transitions. An effective communication ensures that all stakeholders, including employees, local communities, government bodies, and potential buyers, are well-informed about the intentions, processes, and implications of the divestment. This helps mitigate uncertainties, reduces potential conflicts, and promotes a sense of stability and continuity. By evaluating how the IOCs convey their divestment plans, policy agencies can better understand their commitment to responsible business practices, stakeholder engagement, and the upholding of ethical standards throughout the transition period.

While this is the golden rule of practice, respondents from the communities provided a different perspective as they have largely shown that the IOC's are not transparent in communicating the processes of these divestments. This response is shown by 72.32% of respondents reporting a poor communication process. (Figure 29).

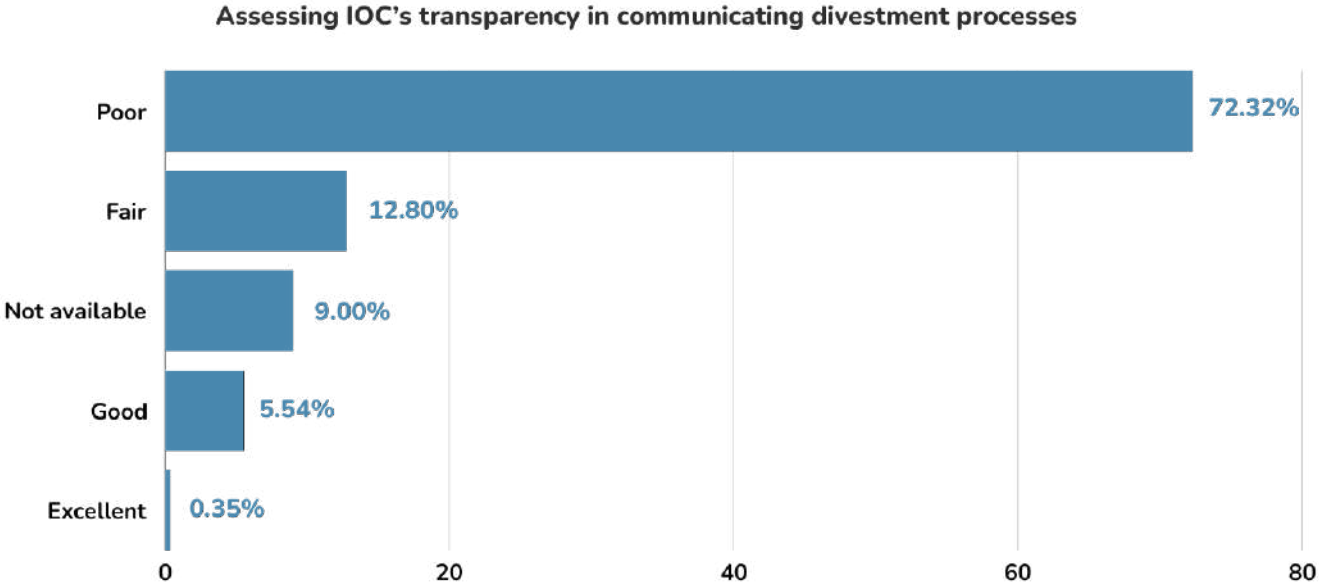


Figure 29: Assessing IOC's transparency in communicating divestment processes

At the community level, the majority of respondents (ranging from 81% to 100%) from 6 of the 8 local governments rate the IOC's transparency as "poor". The only exception is Ogbia LGA, where the majority of respondents (37%) think the IOCs were "fair" in their transparency with the divestment process. Respondents here also have the highest proportion of respondents (31%) who feel the IOC's transparency is "good" enough (Figure 30)

How would you rate the transparency of the companies in communicating the process and outcomes of the divestment of oil and gas assets in your state to your local community?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Excellent							2%	
Fair	14%	8%		8%	37%	3%	17%	4%
Good		2%			31%			
Not available	5%					13%		81%
Poor	82%	90%	100%	93%	33%	83%	81%	15%

Figure 30: Assessing IOC's transparency in communicating divestment processes

Due to the poor transparency in communication of the divestment processes by the IOC's, it is no wonder that the local communities are 'not at all involved' in the divestment processes or 'not very involved' as seen by the respondents values, 42% and 40% respectively (Figure 31).

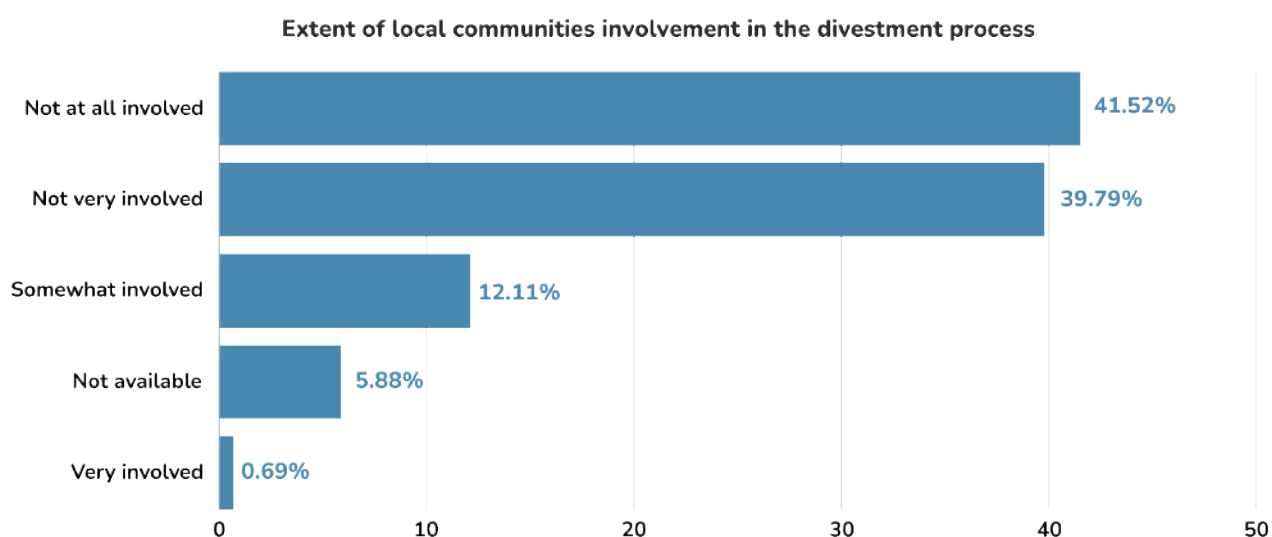


Figure 31: Assessing the extent of local communities' involvement in the divestment process

Looking at the community level, most respondents in all local government believe their respective communities are not involved at all or not very involved. (Figure 32).

The only exception again is Ogbia Local Government Area, where 4 in 10 respondents say the oil companies somewhat involved their community members. Data from this local government also implies only here do we have people (4 in every 100) who believe their community members are very involved with oil companies regarding the divestment process.

To what extent do you believe the companies have involved local communities in decision-making regarding the divestment process?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
Not at all involved	2.77%	6.92%	4.84%	4.50%	4.50%	6.23%	9.00%	2.77%
Not very involved	4.50%	7.27%	6.23%	8.30%	5.19%	3.11%	4.84%	0.35%
Somewhat involved	0.35%			1.04%	6.57%	0.69%	0.69%	0.35%
Not available		2.42%				0.35%		5.54%
Very involved					0.69%			

Figure 32: Assessing the extent of local communities involvement in the divestment process

The perception of companies' responsiveness to citizens' concerns and feedback regarding divestment plays a pivotal role in shaping public trust and corporate reputation. When companies actively listen to and address the worries of local communities, they demonstrate a commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility.

However, the citizens in Bayelsa do not receive this treatment from the IOC's as seen by the high percentage of responses to 'Not at all responsive', at 43%, and responses to 'not very responsive', at 25%. A very few members of the community believe the ICO's are somewhat responsive, 9%. This reveals that some concerns and feedback are being attended to. It is thus important to understand the kind of responses.

As one respondent explained, "Oil companies don't take us seriously—they ruin our environment, forcing us to travel long distances to fish, and there's no source of

employment for us. The headquarters of these companies are in Abuja and Lagos, far from our communities. Our local leaders, who engage with these companies, aren't helping us; they only give job opportunities to their own children”

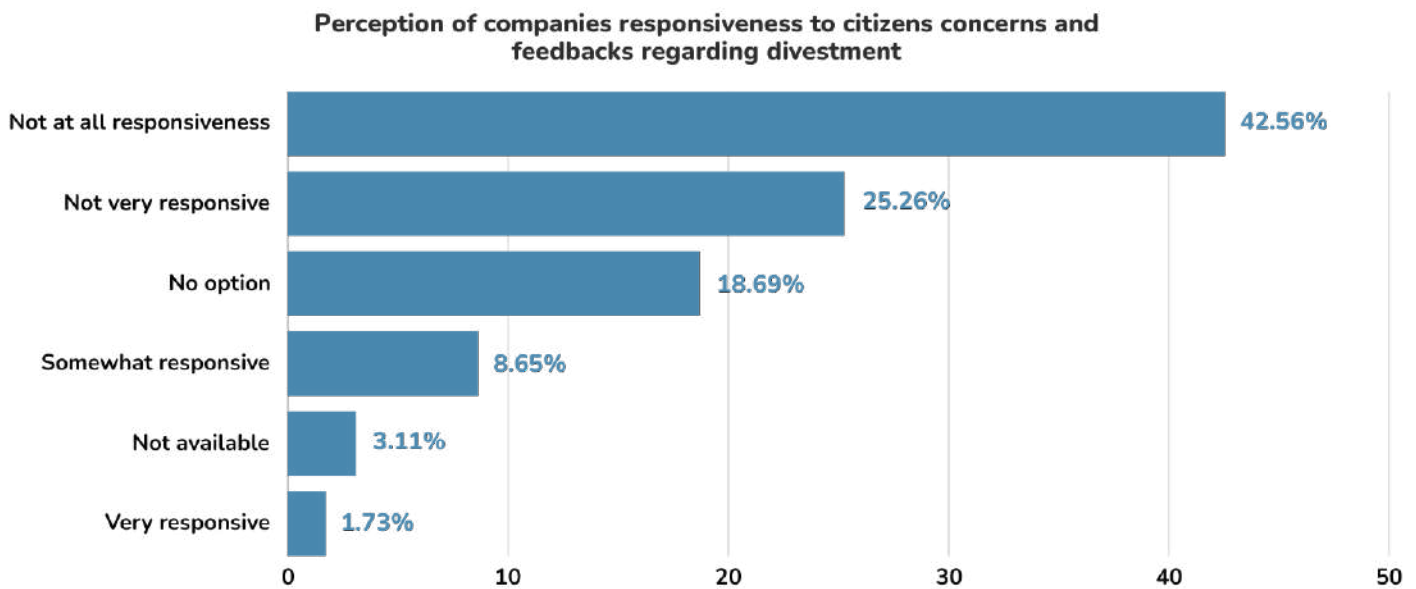


Figure 33: Perception of companies' responsiveness to citizens' concerns and feedbacks regarding divestment

At the community level, majority of respondents in 3 local governments, Sagbama, Kolokuma/Opokuma, and Ekeremor believe the companies are not responsive at all to their concerns about divestment of oil and gas assets. Just half (50%) of the respondents in Nembe lean this way (Figure 34).

The majority (45%) of respondents in Brass LGA believe the companies are not very responsive in this regard.

In Ogbia LGA, the majority (35%) of respondents believe the companies are somewhat responsive in this regard.

The majority of respondents in 2 LGAs, Southern Ijaw (50%) and Yenagoa (42%) do not have an opinion on this.

Do you perceive the companies as being responsive to the concerns and feedback of citizens regarding the divestment of oil and gas assets?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No opinion	18%			5%	27%	10%	50%	42%
Not at all responsive	32%	54%	69%	50%	10%	73%	33%	27%
Not available						3%		31%
Not very responsive	4%	35%	31%	38%	27%	10%	12%	
Somewhat responsive		6%		5%	35%	3%	5%	
Very responsive	5%	4%		3%	2%			

Figure 34: Perception of companies responsiveness to citizens concerns and feedbacks regarding divestment

Infrastructure and Maintenance

During divestment and abandonment, the approach taken by International Oil Companies (IOCs) towards infrastructure and maintenance is crucial in determining the long-term impacts on the environment and local communities. Properly maintained infrastructure ensures that the transfer of assets to new operators or the safe decommissioning of facilities does not result in environmental degradation or safety hazards. IOCs are expected to adhere to stringent regulatory standards, performing thorough maintenance and necessary upgrades before divestment. Additionally, they must ensure that any abandoned infrastructure is safely decommissioned, leaving no legacy of pollution or danger.

Community members, when asked on the availability and implementation of measures to protect the environment during decommissioning and abandonment, echoed the absence of these measures. This is seen by the percentage of respondents who answered 'No', 78.89%, while 8.65% had no opinion, 12.46% suggested the availability of these measures. (Figure 35)



This is echoed by respondents who were interviewed "Although we have benefited from electricity provided by Shell and our inner roads were constructed by the government, unemployment and lack of water supply are major issues. This has led to increased insecurity and agbero behaviour in our community."

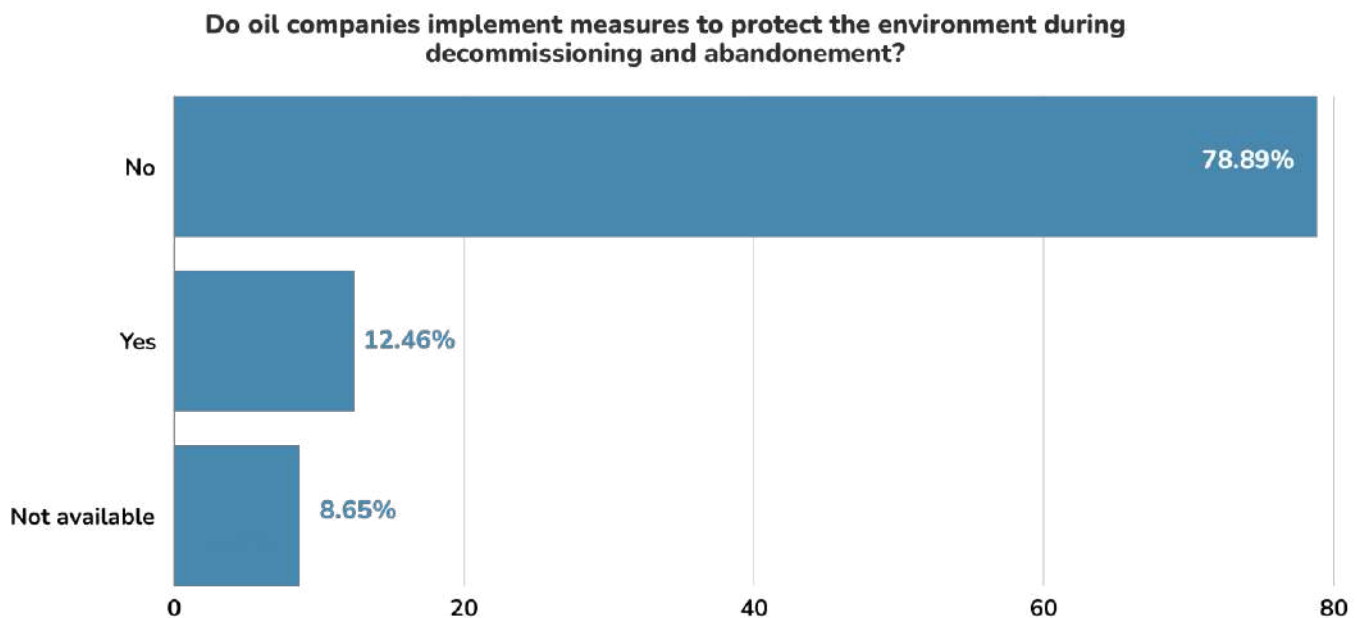


Figure 35: Assessing availability of measures to protect the environment

Analysing the spread of these responses, 7 of the 8 local government areas have a high number (ranging from 67% to 100%) of negative responses from the respondents, except in Yenagoa where the responses of most respondents (81%) were not available (Figure 36).

Do oil companies implement measures to protect the environment during decommissioning and abandonment activities?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	86%	85%	100%	98%	67%	93%	79%	12%
Not available					2%	7%	2%	81%
Yes	14%	15%		3%	31%		19%	8%

Figure 36: Assessing availability of measures to protect the environment

The host communities have consistently shown how they have been left out regarding the divestment and abandonment plans. The inputs of the LGAs are not sought out and this is seen in the responses in figure 37, where 79% of the respondents said 'No', the companies do not engage with them, while just 12% of the respondents replied 'Yes'.

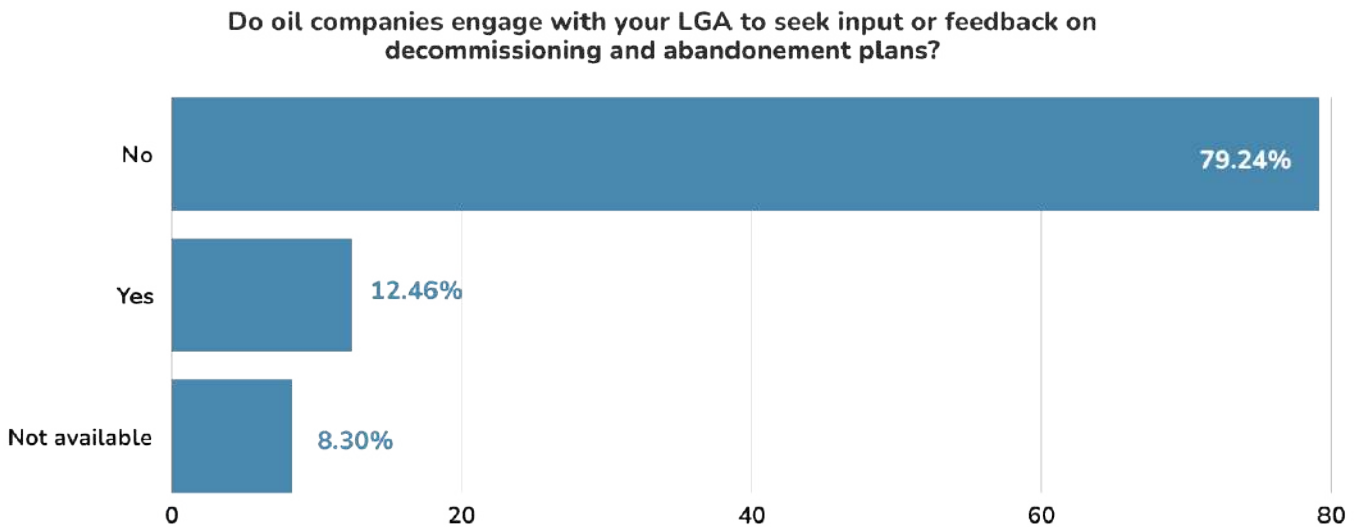


Figure 37: Understanding the level of engagement of the host communities during decommissioning and abandonment

Comparing these responses at the community level shows a vast gap between the Yes and No answers given across the communities. More information is required, especially for those who responded 'Yes', to determine the level of engagement done to which they answered Yes (Figure 38).

Those who say "No" range from 61% and 100% in all the 8 communities, with the exception of respondents in Yenagoa whose comment was not available. Of all the 8 LGAs, Ogbia has the highest proportion of respondents (39%) who affirmed oil companies engage with their community on decommissioning and abandonment plans.

Do oil companies engage with your LGA to seek input or feedback on decommissioning and abandonment plans?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	91%	85%	100%	98%	61%	83%	90%	15%
Not available						10%		81%
Yes	9%	15%		3%	39%	7%	10%	4%

Figure 38: Understanding the level of engagement of the host communities during decommissioning and abandonment

Post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions are essential to ensure the long-term safety and sustainability of areas previously affected by the oil and gas industrial activities. This ongoing process involves regular assessments of soil, water, and air quality to detect any residual contamination or ecological changes.

Transparent reporting mechanisms are critical, providing stakeholders, including local communities, regulatory bodies, and environmental organisations, with up-to-date information on the state of the environment.

However, when community members were asked if they were aware of the oil companies being mandated to conduct post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting, 64% of respondents said 'No', when compared with the values of 'Yes' responses, 33% (Figure 39).

This is a knowledge gap and requires more awareness and information transfer to enable the community members track these processes for effectiveness.

Assessing awareness of oil companies conducting post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions

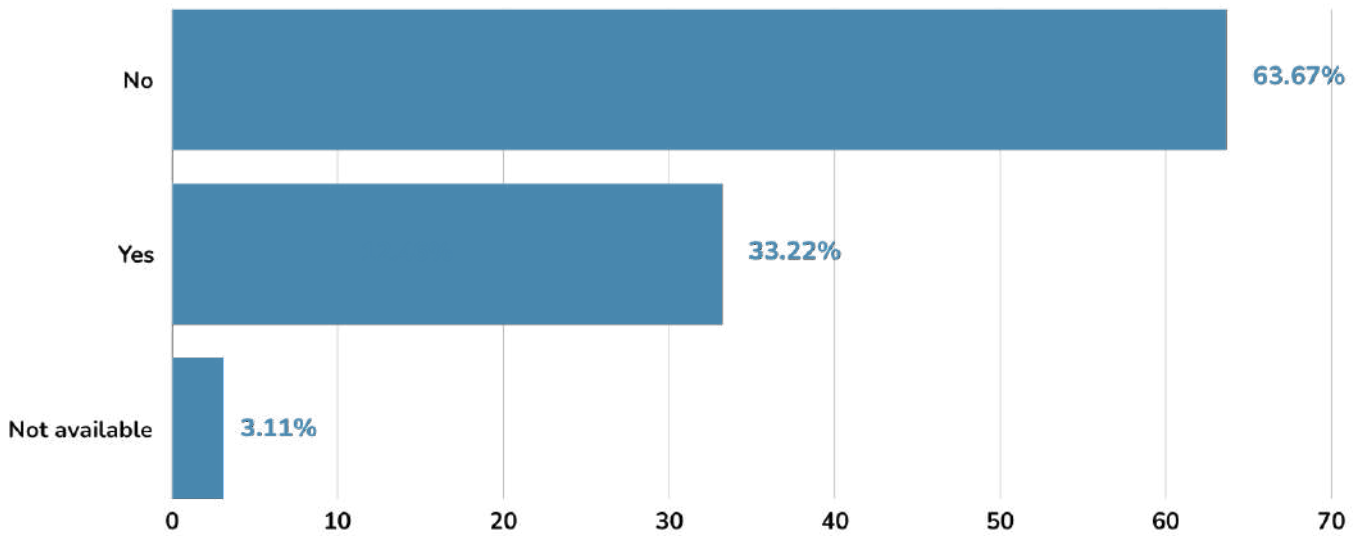


Figure 39: Assessing awareness of oil companies conducting post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions

This knowledge gap is most prominent in 6 of the 8 LGAs, Yenagoa, Ogbia, Ekeremor, Brass, Sagbama, and Southern Ijaw, in ascending order, where 58% - 81% of respondents are not aware of the post-decommissioning procedure (Figure 40).

The knowledge gap is moderate in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA where those who are not aware are as much as those who are aware.

Things are different in Nembe Local Government Area, where more respondents (58%) are aware of the decommissioning procedure.

Are you aware oil companies in your state are required to conduct post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions in your area?	Brass	Ekeremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	71%	69%	50%	43%	61%	77%	81%	58%
Not available					2%			31%
Yes	27%	31%	50%	58%	37%	23%	19%	12%

Figure 40: Assessing awareness of oil companies conducting post-decommissioning monitoring and reporting on environmental conditions



Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) checklist serves as a comprehensive guide for operators, detailing the necessary procedures, safety measures, and environmental protections required for various stages of exploration, production, and decommissioning.

By thoroughly evaluating adherence to this checklist, stakeholders can identify potential gaps in compliance, enhance operational safety, and mitigate environmental risks. Stakeholders including regulatory bodies, local communities, and investors, need to understand and have a thorough assessment of this checklist to ensure that companies operate responsibly and transparently.

When respondents were asked, 73% of respondents said they do not know about this NUPRC checklist, while 27% said they know and have access to this NUPRC checklist (Figure 41).

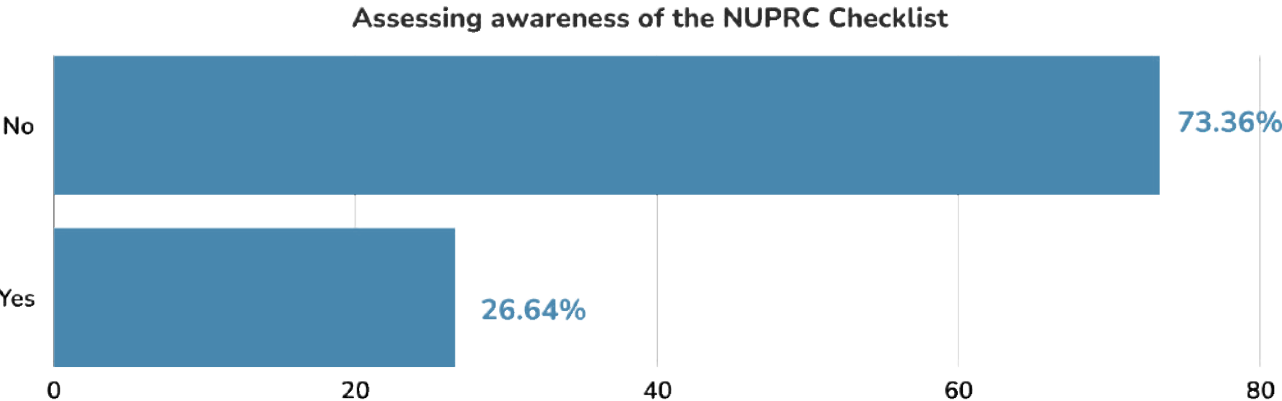


Figure 41: Assessing the awareness of the NUPRC Checklist

Looking at the responses from each LGA, the knowledge gap can be identified and this would inform the level of capacity building and training to be delivered to the community members (Figure 42).

The prevalence of the knowledge gap spans 7 of the 8 LGAs, ranging from 66% - 97%. The only exception is again at Nembe where more respondents (60%) have access to the NUPRC Checklist containing the decommissioning procedures.

Are you aware of a Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission Checklist for oil companies who are exiting a local community?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	86%	81%	66%	40%	65%	97%	79%	88%
Yes	14%	19%	34%	60%	35%	3%	21%	12%

Figure 42: Assessing the awareness of the NUPRC Checklist

The Environmental remediation fund is designed to address the environmental damage caused by oil exploration activities, providing necessary resources for the cleanup and restoration of affected areas. Most community members are not aware of this fund, nor do they understand its importance in environmental stewardship, as it seen in the number of 'No' responses, 74% as compared with the number of respondents who are aware of the fund. 26% (Figure 43).

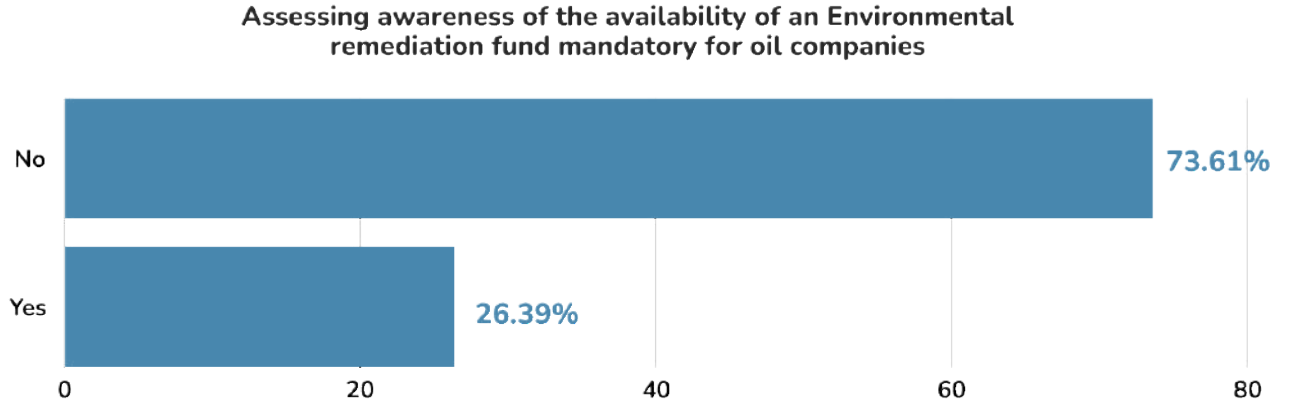


Figure 43: Assessing the awareness of the availability of an Environmental Remediation fund mandatory for oil companies

More respondents in 6 of the 8 LGAs (65% - 95%) are not aware of the remediation fund. The 2 exceptions are Nembe and Kolokuma/Opokuma LGAs, where 53% and

59% of the respondents are aware of the fund (Figure 44).

Are you aware of the Environmental Remediation Fund contribution for remediation of environmental damage that oil companies are required by law to contribute to?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	95%	83%	41%	48%	65%	97%	95%	73%
Yes	5%	17%	59%	53%	35%	3%	5%	27%

Figure 44: Assessing the awareness of the availability of an Environmental Remediation fund mandatory for oil companies

Assessing companies' abilities to adequately address concerns related to land degradation or deforestation involves evaluating their environmental policies, operational practices, and commitment to sustainable development.

Companies are expected to ensure their operations are in line with the regulatory framework of the host. Respondents were interviewed to understand if they believe these companies have the ability to adequately address their concerns. Of the total respondents, 55% responded 'Yes', while 45% responded 'No' (Figure 45).

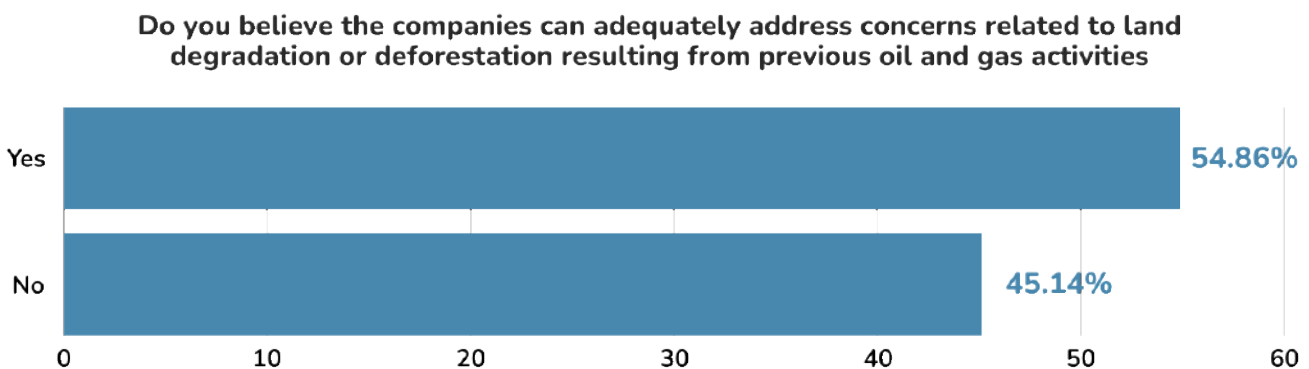


Figure 45: Assessing Companies Abilities to Adequately Address Concerns Related to Land Degradation or Deforestation

Differing opinions exist on this across communities in the 8 LGAs. In 3 LGAs, Southern Ijaw, Ogbia, and Yenagoa, most respondents, 59%, 63%, and 92%, respectively, feel

the companies cannot address concerns related to land degradation or deforestation (Figure 46).

In another 4 LGAs, Brass, Nembe, Kolokuma/Opokuma, and Sagbama LGAs, most respondents believe the oil companies have the capacity to fulfil these responsibilities.

It is a tie between the “Yes” and “No” responses from respondents in Ekeremor.

Do you believe the companies can adequately address concerns related to land degradation or deforestation resulting from previous oil and gas activities?	Brass	Ekeremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No	32%	8.33%	16%	30%	63%	10%	59%	92%
Yes	68%	50%	84%	70%	37%	90%	41%	8%

Figure 46: Assessing companies efforts to mitigate legacy and potential negative impacts of the divestment on local communities

Socio-Economic Challenges

When asked if the companies have made efforts to mitigate legacy and potential negative impacts of the divestment, 50.52% responded 'No', 30.10% were not sure while 15.22% believe the companies have made some efforts in mitigating these issues (Figure 47).

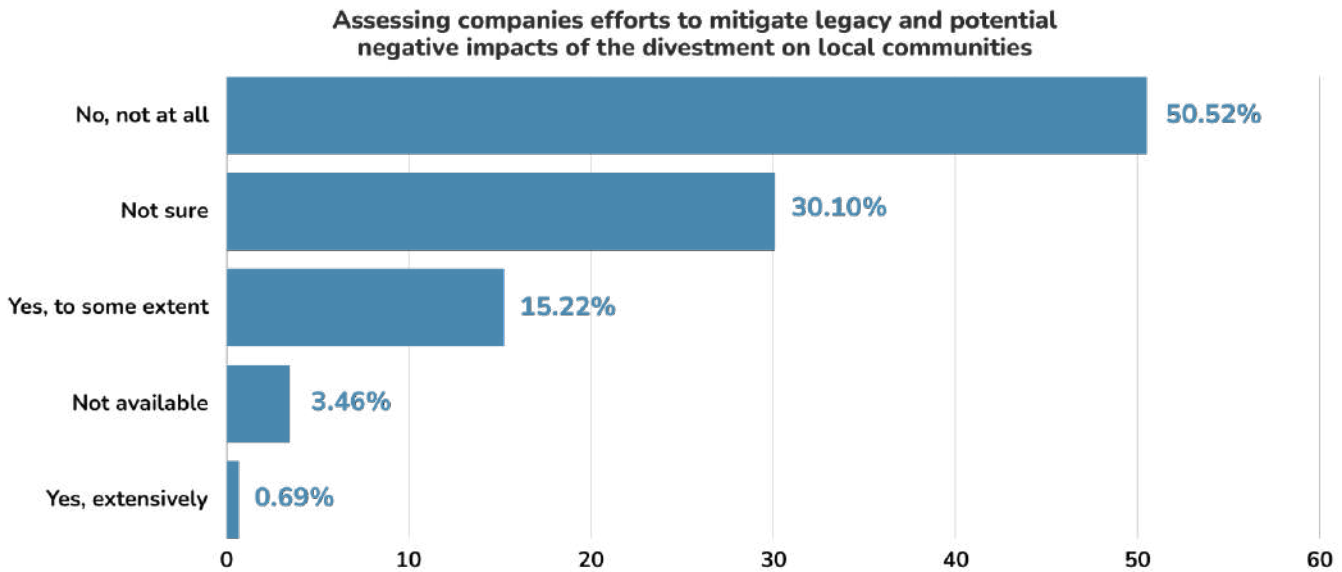


Figure 47: Assessing companies efforts to mitigate legacy and potential negative impacts of the divestment on local communities

Only in Ogbia LGA is there a majority of respondents (57%) who noticed any effort made by the oil companies to mitigate the negative impact of divestment in their community (Figure 48).

In Yenagoa and Southern Ijaw, a majority (54% and 71% respectively) are “not sure” they had witnessed this or not.

In 4 other LGAs, Sagbama, Nembe, Kolokuma/Opokuma, and Ekeremor, most of the respondents (63%, 73%, 88%, and 88%, respectively) have not witnessed the oil companies' efforts at all.

In Brass LGA, 90% of respondents either have not seen any effort made by the oil companies or are not sure they made any effort.

Have you noticed any efforts by the companies to mitigate legacy and potential negative impacts of the divestment on local communities such as job losses or economic disruptions?	Brass	Ekremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No, not at all	45%	88%	88%	73%	12%	63%	19%	15%
Not available						7%		31%
not sure	45%	2%	13%	15%	29%	27%	71%	54%
Yes, extensively		2%			2%			
Yes, to smoe extent	9%	8%		13%	57%	3%	10%	

Figure 48: Assessing the availability of remediation initiatives addressing specific social issues

Assessing the availability of remediation initiatives addressing specific social issues is crucial for understanding how effectively companies and governments are mitigating the social impacts of industrial activities. 57% of the respondents believe there are no initiatives, 36% believe there is an extent to which these remediation initiatives are available, 3% believe there is a comprehensive remediation plan available, while another 3% believe there is none. (Figure 49)

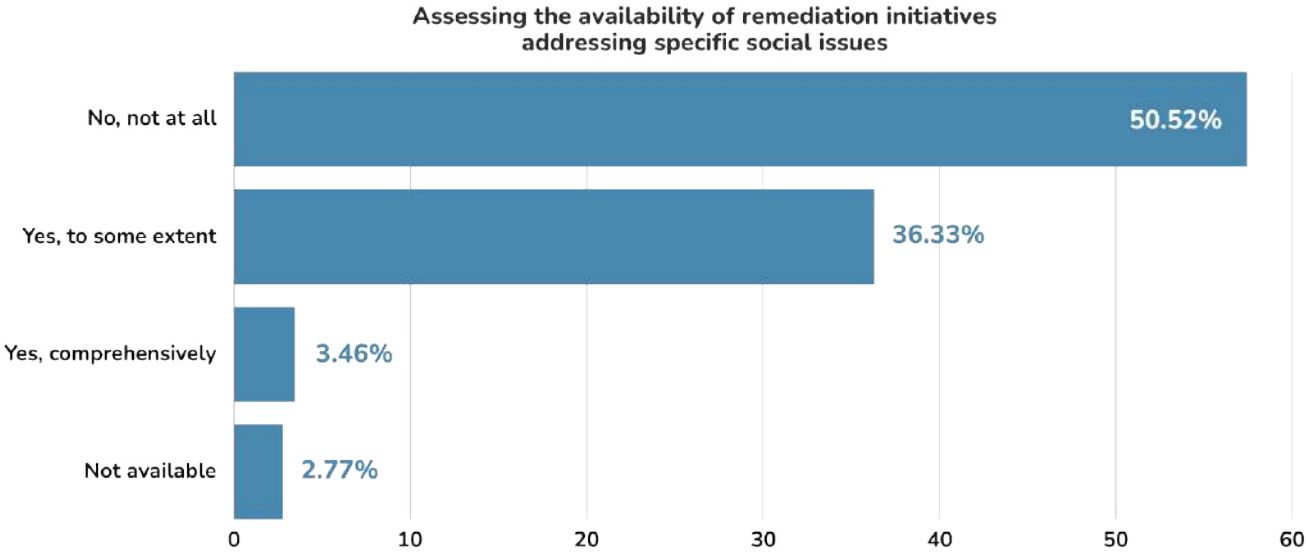


Figure 49: Assessing the availability of remediation initiatives addressing specific social issues

At the community level, the majority of respondents (58%, 79%, 85%, and 93%) in 4 LGAs, Ekeremor, Southern Ijaw, Yenagoa, and Sagbama, respectively, share the view that comprehensive remediation initiatives have not addressed specific socioeconomic issues at all (Figure 50).

In 2 other LGAs, Brass and Ogbia, most of the respondents (55% and 67%, respectively) believe remediation initiatives have addressed these social issues to some extent.

In Nembe, it is a sort of tie between “No, not at all” responses and “Yes, to some extent or completely.” In Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA, responses tend more (60%) towards the “Yes, to some extent or completely” than towards “No, not at all”.

Have any remediation initiatives addressed specific social issues in Bayelsa state, such as farming, healthcare, education, or infrastructure development?	Brass	Ekeremor	Lolokuma/Opokuma	Nembe	Ogbia	Sagbama	Southern Ijaw	Yenagoa
No, not at all	41%	58%	41%	50%	27%	93%	79%	85%
Not available	5%				6%	3%		12%
Yes, to some extent	55%	40%	47%	45%	67%		17%	45%
Yes, comprehensively		2%	13%	5%		3%	5%	

Figure 50: Assessing the availability of remediation initiatives addressing specific social issues

Analysis of the Focus Group Discussions

The focus group discussion centred on the impact of international oil companies in Bayelsa State, aiming to gather data for policy creation. Stakeholders such as Community leaders, Civic society organisations, head of communities, media organisations and journalists were invited to discuss the challenges faced by the state as a result of the activities of the international oil companies. The discussion emphasised the importance of comprehensive data collection, the expansion of questionnaires to include oil spills, health impacts, environmental regulations, community education, and the formulation of actionable plans. continued flaring of gas without adequate regulation poses an ongoing threat to public health.



Group Picture/Pictures showing participants engaging in discussion.

Environmental Catastrophes

The environmental degradation in Bayelsa has reached alarming levels, with oil spills contaminating water sources, soil, and air. These spills have a devastating impact on local biodiversity and agricultural productivity. One participant described the situation as “most times, this thing is equipment failure... when there is corrosion, there is crude oil... it will impact the community.” This highlights the urgent need for infrastructure maintenance to prevent such failures.

Moreover, the pollution has led to the contamination of aquatic life. As one speaker pointed out, “fish caught in our rivers are now tainted with crude oil... when you eat, it’s like we are eating kerosene.” This contamination not only threatens food security but also poses significant health risks to the population.

Impact on Livelihoods

Oil exploration has severely disrupted traditional livelihoods in the Niger Delta, particularly in farming and fishing. A participant lamented, “Before oil came... our lands were very fertile, agricultural produce was abundant... now, production is very low” This decline in agricultural productivity has forced many to abandon farming, contributing to rising poverty levels.

Fishing, once a reliable source of income and food, has also been decimated. “Crabs, crayfish, and fish traps are destroyed by crude oil... the entire swamp is polluted”, said another participant. The loss of these resources has driven some community members into illegal activities, such as artisanal refining, as a means of survival.

Human Rights Violations

The human rights abuses faced by communities in the Bayelsa Are a direct result of oil exploration. Residents are often subjected to harassment and intimidation by security forces employed by oil companies. One speaker recounted a harrowing experience: “We were locked in a van trying to monitor an oil spill site... it was the ugliest level of human rights abuse”

The militarization of the region has also led to frequent clashes between community members and security forces, often resulting in violence. “There is a rise in the level of harassment... community boys are regularly confronted by surveillance personnel” These confrontations have only exacerbated the sense of insecurity in the region.

Health Crisis

The health implications of oil pollution are profound and widespread. One speaker revealed alarming statistics: “A report showed that traces of hydrocarbons were found in the blood of residents... up to 15 times the recommended limit” This contamination is linked to rising cancer rates and other chronic illnesses in the region, further diminishing the quality of life for residents. Gas flaring, a common practice in oil extraction, has been identified as a major contributor to respiratory diseases. “Life expectancy in Bayelsa is lower than in any other region... gas flaring is a major problem” said one participant. The continued flaring of gas without adequate regulation poses an ongoing threat to public health.

Socio-Cultural Degradation

The socio-cultural fabric of the Bayelsais also under threat due to oil exploration. Traditional values and community cohesion have been eroded, replaced by a culture of violence and corruption. “The peaceful disposition we enjoyed before is gone... Now, youth presidencies and CDC chairmanships are driven by the oil industry’s influence” This shift has led to internal conflicts and a breakdown of trust within communities.

Recommendations

1. Immediate Remediation and Compensation: Oil companies must undertake comprehensive clean-up efforts in affected areas and provide adequate compensation to the impacted communities. As emphasised, “no matter the cause of the spill... it is incumbent on the owner of the facility to clean up”

2. **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** There is a critical need for stronger legal protections for the rights of Bayelsa residents. Laws that enforce environmental standards and protect community rights must be rigorously enforced.
3. **Community Empowerment Programs:** Initiatives to restore traditional livelihoods and provide alternative employment opportunities are essential. Training programs in clean energy, such as solar panel production, can offer sustainable options for economic empowerment.
4. **Healthcare Initiatives:** Addressing the health crisis in the Bayelsa Requires a multifaceted approach, including the establishment of health facilities in affected areas and the provision of medical care for those suffering from pollution-related illnesses.
5. **Human Rights Monitoring:** Independent monitoring of human rights violations related to oil exploration is necessary to hold perpetrators accountable and protect community members from abuse.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement:

Strengthen the oversight and enforcement of environmental regulations by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) to ensure compliance with decommissioning and abandonment standards.

Implement stricter penalties for International Oil Companies (IOCs) that fail to adhere to environmental and safety regulations.

Improved Remediation Efforts:

Increase funding and resources for remediation projects to address the extensive environmental degradation caused by oil spills.

Establish transparent and accountable mechanisms for the management and utilization of the Environmental Remediation Fund, ensuring that affected communities benefit directly from these resources.

Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Mandate regular and meaningful engagement between IOCs, government agencies, and local communities to foster transparency and build trust.

Develop community-led monitoring initiatives to provide real-time data on environmental conditions and hold IOCs accountable for their impact.

Health and Safety Interventions:

Launch comprehensive health programs to address the adverse health effects of oil pollution on local communities, including regular medical check-ups and the provision of necessary healthcare services.

Conduct in-depth studies on the long-term health impacts of oil and gas activities, particularly focusing on vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly.

Economic and Social Support:

Create sustainable livelihood programs to support communities affected by oil-related environmental degradation, focusing on alternative income-generating activities.

Ensure fair compensation and support for those displaced or adversely impacted by oil exploration and production activities.

Anti-Corruption Measures:

Strengthen anti-corruption frameworks within the oil industry, ensuring transparency in the dealings between IOCs and regulatory bodies.

Promote the use of technology, such as blockchain, to track and verify the compliance and integrity of oil industry operations.

Capacity Building and Education:

Invest in educational and capacity-building programs for local communities to increase awareness and understanding of environmental rights and responsibilities.

Provide training for local government officials and community leaders on effective environmental management and advocacy.

Regular Monitoring and Reporting:

Establish mandatory, regular environmental monitoring and reporting requirements for IOCs, with results made publicly accessible.

Develop a robust post-decommissioning monitoring framework to ensure ongoing assessment of environmental conditions and the effectiveness of remediation efforts.

Conclusions

The exploitation of oil resources has brought significant economic benefits to Bayelsa State. However, it has resulted in severe environmental degradation, health issues, and socio-economic challenges for local communities. The findings of this research highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and effective remediation efforts, stronger regulatory enforcement, and greater accountability from both IOCs and government bodies.

The current remediation initiatives are insufficient, often poorly managed, and lack the necessary transparency and community involvement. The health impacts on local populations are profound, with many suffering from conditions directly linked to oil pollution. Moreover, the socio-economic fabric of the communities is under threat due to the loss of traditional livelihoods and inadequate infrastructure.

To address these challenges, a multi-faceted approach is required, involving stronger regulatory frameworks, increased community engagement, and targeted health and economic support programs. Anti-corruption measures must be reinforced to ensure that regulatory practices are fair and effective. Capacity building and education initiatives are essential to empower local communities and improve their ability to advocate for their rights and monitor environmental conditions.

In conclusion, the future of Bayelsa State's oil-producing communities depends on the concerted efforts of all stakeholders to implement sustainable practices, enforce regulations, and prioritize the well-being of the environment and its people. Only through collaborative and transparent actions can the adverse impacts of oil and gas activities be mitigated, ensuring a healthier and more prosperous future for Bayelsa State.



⬆ Picture showing the effects of damaged soil in Egwema Poggi village, Brass LGA



⬆ Picture showing the effects of flooding in Sourthern Ijaw local Government Area



⬆ Picture showing the effects of refuse dumping in Yenogoa LGA



⬆ Picture showing land erosion and damaged soil in Sagbama Local Government Area

⬇️ Picture showing land erosion in Brass Local Government



⬆️ Picture showing the effects of flooding in Bassambiri, Nembe Local Government Area



⬅️ Picture showing land erosion and damaged soil in Sagbama Local Government Area



Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resources Centre) is a non-governmental organisation and non-partisan human rights and development league. The Centre conducts research, policy advocacy, training, as well as citizens' awareness and mobilization on core human development issues, including agriculture, food security, climate change, human rights, public sector accountability and electoral reform processes.

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