

RESEARCH ARTICLE · MARITIME SECURITY

Local Content Development Programme as an Alternative Approach to Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Region

David Nanor

Assistant Professor and PhD Research Scholar, Faculty of Management Studies, Parul Institute of Management Research, Parul University

Victor Eyo Assi

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University

ABSTRACT

The corpus of studies has established that maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is a complicated issue that involves several political unrests, corruption, and youth unemployment. The mismatch between the fundamental problems driving maritime insecurity in the GoG region and the solutions created by regional organisations has received much concern from contemporary literature analysis. Working in the emerging oil and gas sector, especially for the youth in the GoG, is a dream that must come true at all costs. To these teeming youth, such professions come with much prestige and all the noble rewards applicable to other economic sectors. Failure by policymakers to integrate these teeming youth into the oil and gas industry by state and non-state actors is causing a social problem, eventually leading to piracy and armed robbery activities on the region's waterways. This paper makes a case for the need to abandon the current approaches that merely seek to address the symptoms of maritime insecurity in the area in favour of a more comprehensive youth intervention program that will address the high percentage of youth unemployment in the region. Reviewing literature aligned with the stated objectives, the study adopted narrative and expository methods using secondary data. The study's findings revealed, among others, the grave and ongoing threat of piracy, armed robbery, and transnational organised crime in the region, where current approaches cannot adequately address policy outcomes. The study recommends, among others, that it is pertinent to adopt a comprehensive strategy to better integrate young people into the various economic sectors, particularly the oil and gas industry, with an extensive local content development programme to reduce the high unemployment rate, youth restiveness and deter people from engaging in piracy and related maritime crimes.

Keywords: Maritime Security; Gulf of Guinea (GoG); Piracy; Local Content Development

Introduction

The GoG region has abundant natural resources, including crude oil and natural gas. Unfortunately, armed robbery, illegal fishing, piracy and other forms of criminal activity plague the region, resulting in a significant threat to maritime security. Maritime security in the GoG region is becoming a significant security concern for all stakeholders involved in international trade in international waterways around the globe.

Maritime security is a broad concept; thus, no internationally accepted definition exists (Klein, 2011). However, we can regard it as the stable order of the oceans subject to the rule of law at sea (Kraska & Pedrozo, 2013), which is becoming a primary concern for the international community due to the relative importance of the sea route in the conduct of international trade all over the world. Kraska and Pedrozo (2013) further mentioned threats such as maritime piracy and ship hijacking, use of the sea for launching terrorist activities, smuggling of illicit drugs, and human trafficking, which all contribute to the menace of international maritime insecurity. Vreġ (2013) believes that naval security in Africa is increasingly becoming a more prominent agenda in African security debates due to the risk of piracy to international maritime trade. He further suggested the need to eliminate the limited piracy-focused approach to marine security problems in Africa, which should entail more strategies rather than scanty anti-piracy interventions.

The challenges of maritime security in the GoG are no exception to the attacks against merchant shipping in transit, secure access, and exploitation of marine resources (Roach, 2004; Vreġ, 2010), which are increasingly threatening the peaceful conduct of maritime trade in the region. The GoG serves as the central hub for the source of raw materials to sustain production at significant industries around the globe; for that matter, it becomes more relevant to make all efforts to secure these routes for the effective and efficient exchange of goods and services.

Piracy has become the poster child for maritime insecurity in Africa (Vreġ, 2010), and the GoG is one of the continent's piracy hubs. The GoG is now the most dangerous marine region in terms of attack and violence success rates (Kamal-Deen, 2015). What could be the alternative approach to the various interventions failing to curb this menace in the region?

The Statement of Problem

The issue of maritime insecurity in the GoG region cannot be over-emphasised because the area is bedevilled with many challenges, leading to armed robbery at sea. This study addresses youth unemployment as a root cause of piracy in the GoG region (Biziouras, 2013). Moreover, the need to have a local content development program (Heum, 2008) as an alternative approach to the fight against the piracy menace while moving away from the heavy reliance on coordination of logistics, planning, and substantial material resources (Biziouras, 2013) to fight the risk in the region.

Piracy is increasingly becoming the sole means of livelihood and upward mobility for some unemployed youth in the GoG region because it is emerging as a viable economic activity (Dunn, 2009). The region's high and persistent youth unemployment enhances the pool of young recruits for criminal piracy activities (Whiteneck et al., 2011).

The threat of piracy has a high repercussion on the successful conduct of maritime trade in the region and across the globe. Many are intervention programmes meant to eradicate the threat of piracy and armed robbery in the area, but it persists, making it a hotbed of piracy worldwide. Bizioras (2013) proposed the need to deal with poverty and youth unemployment that incentivise potential piracy recruits to become actual pirates and provide alternative livelihoods to reduce individuals who consistently remain poor without alternative options. Against this backdrop, this research argues for an alternative and sustainable approach to fighting this menace with the tried and tested Local Content Development Programme approach in the oil and gas sector.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided this study: i. To identify the causes of piracy in the GoG region, ii. To examine youth unemployment as the root cause of piracy in the GoG region and iii. To examine the Local Content Development Programme as an alternative approach and intervention to tackle youth unemployment in the region.

Literature Review

Piracy and armed robbery at sea are the most dominant threats to the international community, primarily because of the harm they cause to international trade and security (Ali, 2015), notwithstanding the excesses of such incidents in the GoG because of the unique challenges confronting the maritime domain of the region. Maritime piracy resurfaces every few years, particularly with the modernisation of boats and weapons (Ahmad, 2020). The GoG region is not an exception to this new phenomenon of new breeding grounds mushrooming across the globe (Barla & Agarwala, 2020).

While Barla and Argarwala (2020) mentioned the Gulf of Aden, the Mozambique Channel, and the GoG as the three severely affected regions around the globe with their unique dynamics, piracy in the latter region continues unabated becoming a matter of significant concern for the international maritime community. They all have unique and contextual challenges, which may require an exclusive approach to combat them. Fighting piracy using the same recommended method by foreign partners and donors around the globe who may need a more contextual understanding of the situation may not suffice.

Causes of Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Piracy in the GoG has persisted unchecked for the past 20 years (Sobrinho-Heredia, 2022; Ukeje & Mvomo Ela, 2013; Yunusa, 2021). The causes are varied, including corruption, poverty, unemployment, income inequality, political marginalisation, politicisation of institutions and policies, globalisation, lack of an effective justice system, and security architecture (Aboh & Ahmed, 2018). While Graf (2011) attributed it to widespread poverty in the region, further research is required to identify the root causes of poverty and the political unrest breeding the menace in the area. There is also an urgent need to find the root causes associated with this

unprecedented phenomenon of piracy in the region to deal with it effectively and efficiently. With the curb in piracy activity in the area, Bueger (2015), on Somali piracy, argued that such success is not sustainable in the long term. Therefore, there is a need to understand the underlying root causes so that policymakers and stakeholders can approach them with the right interventions. Bueger (2015) further identified six factors that trigger piracy: geography, weak law enforcement and corruption, maritime insecurity, economic dislocation, cultural acceptability, skills, and the prevalence of criminal-minded entrepreneurs.

Taking insight from the dominant approach to curbing piracy in Somalia, Bueger et al. (2011) believe that the intervention (deterrence, prosecution and military intervention) is narrow-minded. Even after identifying the six piracy triggers, they did not see the need to highlight the rampant youth unemployment in Somalia, which serves as an accessible pool of labour for the piracy insurgency. They further emphasise the need to move away from present-day deterrence, a show of force, and military operations, which are not long-term efficient solutions, but to seek better strategic alternatives to resolve the challenge permanently.

Sobrino-Heredia (2022) blamed the exacerbated situation of pirate insurgence in the Gulf of Guinea region on the absence of minimally adequate maritime security in the region in contrast to other parts of the world calling for the coordinated international maritime presence of naval forces in the marine area. However, this solution may also call into question the sustainability of these global forces in the region's maritime domain. This solution always shies away from the need to keep the teeming youth busy with a productive venture instead of scaring them away, making them fall on better, more sophisticated weapons and boats to ply their trade.

Jacobsen (2017) also gave an alternative approach to identifying the root causes of piracy in the GoG, such as legal deficiencies, inadequate military equipment, and challenges such as corruption, political unrest, and youth unemployment. Identifying youth unemployment by Jacobsen provides a new lead and a gap to re-examine all previous interventions considering the rampant youth unemployment in the region and the need for appropriate measures to engage the teeming youth in the area. Poverty and youth unemployment are becoming the breeding ground for pirates and armed sea robberies.

The widespread youth unemployment in the region may compel most youth within the coastal communities to resort to any available means to sustain their livelihood through piracy and armed robbery at sea. According to Nincic (2009), piracy threatens the precarious living conditions of the world's poorest people and originates in unstable economies. She further stated that without considering maritime piracy as a cause of social and economic problems and an outcome of social, political and economic deprivation, it could not be entirely handled and eradicated.

The Centre for Maritime Law and Security (CEMLAWS) briefing (2020) claims that pirates' behaviour has changed regarding attack types and operating styles over the years, making it an elusive dream to halt the menace in the region. If policymakers and relevant stakeholders fail to find an appropriate means of positively engaging our youth, the risk will remain unabated.

Other scholars may attribute the menace in the region to various factors such as illegal fishing, the crisis in the Niger Delta, oil exploration, and toxic waste dumping. For instance, Desai and

Shambaugh (2021) admitted in their research how maritime piracy is becoming a severe threat to worldwide trade and global shipping and how fishers shift to piracy to offset anticipated income losses and discourage foreign illegal fishing fleets. They further stated the pronounced effect unfair, unreported and unregulated fishing has on piracy and the need to move away from the present anti-piracy enforcement to policing fishing practices that are illegal and detrimental to small-scale fishing economies. Despite the recommendation to acknowledge fishers' catch on their expedition, more effort is necessary to promote modern fishing methods among local fisher folks and not let them feel disadvantaged compared to their foreign counterparts. Much empowerment in terms of training and capacity building of the youth in the fishing industry as an alternative intervention so piracy does not become the last alternative to provide fishers with a higher and stable income when fish stocks dwindle. In his own words, Desai said, "The global efforts to fight piracy have focused excessively on interdiction and enforcement efforts and have devoted proportionately less attention to the source of the problem, which is the loss of livelihood and the vulnerability of small-scale fisheries in the developing world," Much effort is needed to delve into the root causes of piracy in the developing world, with serious attention to the Gulf of Guinea region as the prime location for such crimes at sea if much resolves around the livelihood of its people and much of the population being unemployed youth. Even though piracy happens at sea, these crimes start and end on land, which brings to mind the crisis in the hydrocarbon rich province of Niger Delta, which is seen as the brewing point of such crimes in the region. Due to increased incidences of piracy and attacks on marine infrastructure emanating from the Niger Delta, Nigeria has continued to draw attention worldwide as a hotspot of maritime insecurity and piracy. In Nigeria, the waterways of the Niger Delta were the site of more than 80% of the attacks, which were attributed to the growing army of jobless youth in the region (Osinowo, 2015). This calls for youth employment activities to engage the ever-increasing army of unemployed youth in the area and not the suppressive actions by the naval forces.

The sudden growth of oil exploration, development and production activities in the GoG region has become a sweet target for pirate activities. Attacks by pirates on oil field infrastructure and ships have increased in frequency and severity during the past few years (Bouejla et al., 2014). This is likely to show their grievance for not partaking in the generated wealth in the region. The army of unemployed youth in the area expects much from the exploration activities to alleviate them from the abject poverty they are wallowing in.

Toxic waste dumping by organisations involved in oil exploration in the region may also contribute to the rise in piracy activities. For instance, Foster (2016) revealed in his study that depletion in fish stocks as a significant factor contributing to piracy in Somali waters was attributed to the dumping of waste products off the coast of Somalia. Despite rules barring the transboundary disposal of toxic waste, countries in the GoG continue to be targeted by Western garbage brokers (Okafor-Yarwood & Adewumi, 2020), including oil companies operating in the region (Okafor-Yarwood, 2018; Oshwofasa et al., 2012). Such practices of toxic waste dumping at sea could have a diverse effect on fish stock within the r, making it difficult for fishers to make a good catch, resulting in the need to turn to piracy as an affordable means of making ends meet.

Corruption is thriving in Africa and almost becoming a legitimate means of doing business, helping to breed and spread the menace in the region. We cannot fight piracy without dealing

with corruption, which often goes undetected as one of the root causes of piracy in the area. Therefore, it is crucial to combat piracy in the GoG by using an integrated multifaceted strategy that improves maritime security while also addressing the root causes of piracy that are ingrained in the region's social, political and economic conditions, such as bad governance, corruption, unemployment and poverty (Hassan & Hasan, 2017)). Fiorelli (2014) also affirmed that poor management, high levels of crime, and the absence of real economic possibilities in the region, which allows piracy to thrive, hamper the efficiency of international anti-piracy efforts. For example, Nigeria as a bigwig in the area has its challenges, reflecting other neighbouring within the region. Ostensen and Brady (2018) concluded that smuggling, piracy, and oil theft are made easier by the pervasive corruption in Nigeria's maritime security forces. Building capacity while ignoring corruption increases the likelihood of these crimes worsening. They further stated that the Nigerian maritime security sector is plagued by corruption, making it easier for the Navy to commit smuggling, piracy, and oil theft.

Most of these causes can be well managed but not to the extent of eradicating piracy in the region if policymakers fail to address the menace of youth unemployment by getting the youth actively involved and engaged in proactive sectors of the economy. A press release by the International Labour Organisation shows significant differences in young people's prospects in the labour market in Africa. The statistics show 12.7% youth unemployment, hiding the fact that many young people have decided to leave the labour force altogether. The report further states that more than one out of every five young people was unemployed in 2020, and the situation has worsened since then (ILO, 2022a). In the report entitled *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people*, the International Labour Organisation further states that the global youth unemployment rate is estimated at 15.6 percent in 2021, more than three times the adult rate (ILO, 2022b). What can we infer from these statistics and narration regarding piracy in the GoG region? This is to help us identify the root cause of piracy in the area to find the best solutions and remedies to eradicate the menace of piracy in the region.

Youth Unemployment is the Root Cause of Piracy in the Region

Barla and Argarwala (2020), as cited in Assi et al. (2016), observed that piracy at sea happens because of instability on land. Onuoha (2012), in his study of the menace, proposed the need to turn to focus away from the water toward the ground, from whence the actual risks at sea indeed come. This requires the GoG states to use their oil wealth to combat youth unemployment, poverty, and hardship by breeding pirates and sea-armed robbers. Strategies to combat piracy in the region, such as greater law enforcement, the installation of monitoring and surveillance systems, the development of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capabilities, and the purchase of necessary security platforms, are failing to match up with the threat (Vogel, 2011), which is evolving each day to outsmart these strategies meant to catch up with them.

Piracy is a symptom of a more significant problem (Onuoha, 2013), such as youth unemployment and corruption, which requires a new approach or intervention different from the current system that is not sustainable in the long term. The dominant approach to fighting piracy off

the coast of Africa is narrow-minded, with deterrence, surveillance, and military interventions not being effective long-term solutions to the persistent problem (Bueger et al., 2011). Aboh and Ahmed (2018) are also of the view that these criminal activities are symptomatic of state failure and weak administration on land, not only a maritime security issue but also additional variables such as political exclusion, corruption, deprivation, politicisation, income inequality, and the politicisation of institutions and policies. Attacks by pirates in the Gulf of Guinea exacerbate the growing food security crisis among coastal residents (Asua et al., 2021), which can also lead to high unemployment among the coastal young and energetic youth, which may compel them to ply their trade at sea as pirates as an alternative means of putting food on the table. Yunusa (2021) asserts that the causes of maritime insecurity in the study area are porosity of the territorial waterways, globalisation, corruption, unemployment, socioeconomic exclusion, and politics. He further stated that the initial maritime insecurity in the GoG caused by illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing on a fishing boat has evolved into organised maritime crimes committed by pirates.

In addition to having the world's youngest, largest and fastest-growing population, Africa has the most significant youth unemployment rate, with young people accounting for the most substantial part of the population. The youth population is one of Africa's most important resources and, if used wisely, can be vital to the continent's development.

The QUEER LADDER THEORY, as cited by (Assi et al., 2016), offers the most significant explanation for the problem of youth unemployment, which is pushing young people into sea piracy and ultimately contributing to maritime insecurity in the area. This theory was selected to best describe the threat of youth unemployment in the GoG region, particularly among the youth of the coastal settlements along the entire area, among other hypotheses.

Daniel Bell (1919–2011), as cited in Assi et al. (2016), an American sociologist, invented the term “queer ladder” to explain the functional relevance of organised crime as a desperate strategy for socioeconomic empowerment and social ascending. Since then, this analytical tool has developed a widely utilised theoretical framework in modern crime analysis and studies.

The QUEER LADDER THEORY has three assumptions: 1. Organized crime is an instrumental behaviour/practice and a means to an end. 2. It is an instrument of social climbing, fame, and socio-economic advancement. 3. It is a means to accumulate wealth and build power.

With the above assumptions, the theory accepts and opines that crime thrives well when the government fails to control crime and abnormal behaviour in society effectively and efficiently due to public corruption and lack of legitimate livelihood for the populace. In these conditions, there is a strong incentive to engage in criminal activity and to prevent people from doing so, which makes space for criminal impunity and power (Assi et al., 2016).

It is pertinent to state that the predominance of piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other types of criminal activity in the GoG applies this theory to explain the behaviour of the youth in the region. The “ladder” concept, in theory, denotes the need by the youth to make a living and find their place higher in the social status or ladder. The energetic and brave ones will resort to piracy as the last option and legitimate means to put food on the table while being seen by the larger society as an awkward, unconventional (queer) path to survival. The study adopts this

theory due to its analytical utility in providing insights into the cause of unemployment, which can lead to sea piracy, armed robbery, and organized crime in the maritime domain of coastal developing countries.

Anyimadu (2013) opined that suppression of piracy in the region by national, regional, and international military interventions could not be a long-lasting solution; therefore, the need to identify the root cause of piracy in the region to enable policymakers to find a lasting and sustainable solution to this challenge. The unemployment rate among the youth in the region is reoccurring, contributing to the cause of armed robbery and sea piracy, which leads to maritime insecurity in the region.

Manny scholars have made recommendations to curb criminal activities in the region's maritime domain. Yunusa (2021) believes that improving citizens' living conditions and adopting modern technology for crime prevention in the area would help reduce the menace in the region. Improving living conditions may sound good, but it must be well designed and focused on eradicating unemployment among the region's youth and not necessarily seeking political favour from some disgruntled groups within the population. Modern technologies for detecting and preventing crime may have suppressive implications and not necessarily dismantle the root cause of the problem.

Youth empowerment and job creation in the region are always recommended (Assi et al., 2016), but how relevant and lucrative is this solution to the youth engaged in piracy if such empowerment and job creation programmes fail to get the youth rehabilitated and reintegrated into society to become a functional part of it. Youth empowerment and job creation as a better option with a bottom-up approach to redress the grievances of the youth as the nucleus of the solution can go a long way to get the child back into the mainstream economy.

Governments in the region should meet their citizens' developmental aspirations, especially the youth. A clear commitment to sustainable economic growth and development for the citizenry is required to expand opportunities for self-actualisation for the teeming population and serve as a disincentive against criminality at sea.

Ukeje and Mvomo Ela (2013), encourage civil society actors and all stakeholders to bring on a new bottom-up approach to the current agenda of national governments, regional institutions, and international actors and look beyond military and policing matters to open up an entirely new discourse to explore broader perspectives of solving the problem.

Bueger (2013) suggests increasing communication and information-sharing platforms to develop a common stock of knowledge, information, and training centres with convergent maritime security regime complexes to educate and empower new naval forces with the current requisite knowledge to address the challenge. At the same time, Barrios (2013), who is also of the same view, recommended a global approach to tackle the root causes of piracy linked to development cooperation projects, security sector reform, EU civilian and military assistance, training of national coastguard and navy officers, the use of the equipment and the development of information-sharing practices and input from civil society. In this respect, a solution is to empower security forces to fight crime with less focus on misplaced priorities and instead help the youth find an alternative livelihood beyond piracy.

The Yaoundé Code of Conduct and Regional Information Sharing, to promote regional maritime cooperation and a stable maritime environment, can contribute to regional prosperity (Ifesinachi & Nwangwu, 2015) if there is collective effort among the regional states not to capture created capital by some elites at the expense of the youth who need the most help.

Many more solutions and interventions have been recommended that fail to curb the threat of piracy and armed robbery in the region. Yunusa (2021) suggested adopting modern technology for crime prevention in the region, while Assi et al. (2016) called for youth empowerment and job creation. However, these suggestions do not eradicate the risk because of the various disorder and challenges militating against regional states. The lack of a universal definition and appropriate legislation can also be a barrier to successfully eradicating the threat in the region. However, there is a suggestion for a global approach to tackle the root causes by promoting development cooperation projects, security sector reform, EU civilian and military assistance, training of national coastguard and navy officers, the use of equipment, and the development of information-sharing practices and input from civil society (Barrios, 2013). Attempts with a collective effort by the global community to deal with the situation will not suffice without a better understanding of the root causes and addressing it from that standpoint, and not rather suppressing the symptoms emanating from the piracy activities in the region.

Oyewole (2016) and Ahmad (2020) are of the view that dealing with maritime piracy involves coordinated and orchestrated efforts at different levels, coordinated selective intervention, better collaborations, improved target hardening, viable legal regimes, commitment to enhance state capacity, promotion of human development, policy harmonisation and coordination. Hence, the need to move away from the more punitive interventions not yielding the needed results to a more responsive approach that seeks to meet the youth at the point of their socio-economic needs.

Denton and Harris (2022) advocate for institutionally strong and democratic regimes within the region. However, solid and democratic governments that fail to have a proper welfare system to integrate the youth into the mainstream economy cannot end piracy with solid democratic governance structures.

Focusing on ashore economic growth, infrastructural development, providing job opportunities for young people (Fattah, 2017) and leveraging oil affluence to address unemployment, poverty, and deprivation in riverine communities that nurture sea pirates (Ezeozue, 2021) was also

recommended. At the centre of all these scenarios is the troubled youth who need critical attention and appropriate initiatives to get them out of abject poverty while surrounded by the elite making much from the oil finds.

Barla and Argarwala (2020) admitted that most of these recommendations and efforts to resolve the problem by the global community had been concentrated on the skewed thinking of piracy as an issue of the sea, which has resulted in the use of naval power, making it a short-term solution. They further asserted that the long-term solution to the problem is to focus on land, which is the breeding source of pirates. Furthermore, Hansen (2009) indicated that there are better approaches toward a long-term solution in the region than oppressive measures for combating piracy. The oppressive approach may sound laudable but fails to prevent prospective youth from returning to the sea to practice their trade at any opportunity.

Policymakers and implementers must begin to approach the problem of piracy and maritime insecurity from the perspective of putting our teeming, energetic young youth to good use. This is feasible through the Local Content Development Programme, an initiative in the oil and gas sector to promote indigenous participation in the oil and gas sector. This paper advocates that this approach is more holistic and appropriate as the youth can be encouraged to partake in oil and gas and not feel excluded in this economic activity. The search for a long-term solution or approach to fighting piracy in the region is possible with the underlying concept of using local content development programs to promote long-term strategic goals of both the oil-producing country and international oil organisations involved in the joint business of oil exploration, appraisal, development and production in the region.

Local Content Development as an Alternative Approach

The primary objective of local content development programmes is to enhance the capacity and skills of local communities to participate actively in the maritime sector. Through training and capacity-building programmes, local communities are empowered to engage meaningfully in the industry and contribute to its growth. The local content development programme is essential for enhancing maritime security in the GoG. By building the capacity of local communities, it is possible to prevent their involvement in illegal and criminal activities, including piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing.

It has been emphasised repeatedly that the GoG maritime security issue necessitates an all-encompassing, comprehensive approach to curb the threat in the region (Sergeevna, 2017). On the other hand, a well-focused approach to addressing youth unemployment in the region can suffice in this case. This author believes that there must be a conscious and deliberate effort to eradicate youth unemployment in our maritime and offshore sectors. For this reason, this paper proposes that we take the well-tested approach in the oil and gas sector, known as Local Content Development, as an alternative and efficient solution to get the youth engaged in resolving this problem.

The Local Content Development approach introduced by the Norwegians resulted from their eagerness to be part of their country's emerging oil and gas industry. They believe that

fully partaking in the global energy production system is their sovereign right, leading to the establishment of education and research at various levels in Norway's research and development system with the help of the new, cost-effective technologies launched in the 1990s (Engen, 2009).

When they first discovered oil and gas, Heum (2008) referred to Local Content Development in the Norwegian context as the desire to develop local industrial competence and capabilities to operate in the oil and gas industry while oil and gas activities continue to flourish in their country. The ultimate aim was to develop domestically based industrial capacity and competence to march the foreign-based industrial powers within the upstream oil and gas industry so they can integrate the youth automatically into the industry as it becomes a fully fledged industry at which they succeed.

Local Content Development, as a borrowed initiative from the oil and gas sector, should be the recommended alternative intervention to integrate the region's youth into all sectors of the economy. The Local Content Development Programme in the oil and gas sector of the economy varies from country to country, enshrined in their specific national strategic needs. This alternative youth development program of migrating the youth into all sectors of the economy will offer them easy access to all sectors of the national economy to take them off the tempting bait of piracy in the region.

Additionally, local content development programmes create job opportunities and provide a sustainable source of income for local communities. This approach, which encourages local participation in the industry, has successfully transformed the economies of countries such as Norway, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. Implementing local content development programmes in the Gulf of Guinea region would require a collaborative effort between governments, the private sector, and local communities. Governments must create an enabling environment that encourages investment in the sector, while the private sector must commit to providing these communities with the necessary training and resources.

Methodology

The study adopted a narrative and expository method using secondary and qualitative data. Qualitative research with a history and expository approach was used to expose the necessary gap in the literature review in line with the stated study objectives. This paper used the inductive approach to identify patterns, themes, and scenarios through desk-informed findings, analysis, and the interpretation of the issues at stake.

Conclusion

An earlier literature review reveals that the abysmal approach to counteracting piracy in the GoG, with the lack of commitment, will not dismantle the actual cause of the menace in the region. Shying away from rampant youth unemployment while seeking alternative interventions cannot prevail. This study, however, attempted to examine the issues of sea piracy and armed robbery at sea and their threat to maritime security in the GoG region. In addition,

local content development programmes represent a viable alternative approach to enhancing maritime security in the GoG. By empowering local communities, this approach can contribute to the region's sustainable development while reducing the incidence of criminal activities in the maritime sector.

The paper gave the piracy trend, a consistent emphasis on the GoG and a narrative on the responses to fighting crime. It became clear that such a response might be winning the war on piracy today. However, it may not be the long-term solution if policymakers do not find an appropriate means of engaging the teeming unemployed youth in finding lasting solutions. The following are recommended:

i. Youth Unemployment Challenge. Most interventions appear ineffective because the long-term solution is not empowering the youth to help themselves out of the persistent youth unemployment in the region.

ii. Youth-Centred Approach. As argued and discussed in this paper, policymakers and implementers must begin to fight the threat of piracy from a youth-centred approach. They must have the courage and the conviction to get the youth busy with appropriate and productive socio-economic ventures.

iii. Youth Interventions. Policymakers must emphasise the need for mainstream youth interventions that deliberately help them become ambassadors and advocates of discouraging their compatriots from entering the piracy business.

iv. Youth Engagement. The region needs a continental framework on youth stakeholder analysis to engage them in situational analysis to hear their voices and concerns to inform policy formulation and development.

v. Youth Agencies Dialogue. We are mobilising and engaging all youth agencies in various states in the entire region in a regional dialogue to get the youth involved in a participatory approach to policy planning, formulation and implementation so the youth can be part of and own the solution toward resolving the problem.

vi. Youth Content Development. This is a unique proposal in line with the Local Content Development Programme in the oil and gas sector to get all the youth in the region productively and positively engaged in all sectors, not only in the oil and gas sector.

vii. Youth Stakeholder Involvement. We are conducting stakeholder analysis involving the youth to capture the appropriate solution by the youth and for the youth and not those imposed by external forces.

viii. Youth as Strategic Partners. Taking the youth seriously as critical and strategic partners in the fight against piracy helps guide and facilitate the solution-finding mission. Seeing the youth as the cornerstone of economic development in the region rather than perpetrators of crime.

ix. Equity in Sharing Oil Affluence. Learning to manage youth resentment in the region against the state by appropriate distribution of oil affluence and economic development among the entire populace to eliminate social and economic disparities.

x. Political Commitment. Solid political and regional commitment toward youth development and integration to curb cross-border piracy criminality.

xi. External Effort Directed at Youth Engagement. External donors and partners coming on board with their strategic priorities in countering piracy and related crime prevention solutions to protect their strategic interest in the region may not be the best approach if it is not inclusive enough by bringing the youth on board to chart the course to the solution.

xii. Long-term Strategic Solutions. Quick solutions to resolve problems in the region do not deal with the root causes of piracy but instead fight the symptoms leaving the actual piracy situation unattended. Long-term, youth-centred solutions could be the paradigm shift we need to get this problem solved.

xiii. Finding Alternative Livelihood in Alternative Sectors. Youth empowerment and inclusivity in all sectors of the economy by creating alternative livelihood programmes and ventures ashore to redirect their efforts toward positive ventures.

xiv. Youth Enterprise and Start-Ups. External donor support programs from external strategic partners should first integrate the teaming of unemployed youth into the mainstream economy and not just fight off pirates at sea in the region.

xv. Youth Amnesty and Reinvigoration Programmes. Providing amnesty to various youth caught in the act and providing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes can be the best approach to moving away from the piracy prosecution approach.

References

1. Aboh, A. B., & Ahmed, N. (2018). Understanding West Africa Maritime Security Threats: A Critical Appraisal of the Development of Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea in the Gulf of Guinea. *Socialscientia: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2).
2. Aboh, A. B., & Ahmed, N. (2018). Understanding West Africa Maritime Security Threats: A Critical Appraisal of the Development of Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea in the Gulf of Guinea. *Socialscientia: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2).
3. Ahmad, M. (2020). Maritime piracy operations: Some legal issues. *Journal of International Maritime Safety, Environmental Affairs, and Shipping*, 4(3), 62–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25725084.2020.1788200>
4. Ahmad, M. (2020). Maritime piracy operations: Some legal issues. *Journal of International Maritime Safety, Environmental Affairs, and Shipping*, 4(3), 62–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25725084.2020.1788200>
5. Ali, K. (2015). "5 Overview of Maritime Security Challenges in the Gulf of Guinea". In *Maritime Security Cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004301047_006
6. Anyimadu, A. (2013). *Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Lessons from the Indian Ocean*. Chatham House, p. 2.
7. Assi, V. E., Amah, O. I., & Edeke, S. O. (2016). Oil Theft and Corruption: Pathways to Under Development in the Niger Delta. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(3), 70-75.

8. Asua, S. A., Ugwueze, M. I., & Onah, V. C. (2021). Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: a threat to the means of livelihood of artisanal fishers in South-South region, Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy*, 48(169), 452-461.
9. Barla, C., & Agarwala, N. (2020). Comparing maritime piracy along the coasts of Africa: In search of a solution for the Gulf of Guinea. *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 16(2), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2020.1836774>
10. Barla, C., & Agarwala, N. (2020). Comparing maritime piracy along the coasts of Africa: In search of a solution for the Gulf of Guinea. *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India*, 16(2), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2020.1836774>
11. Barrios, C. (2013). *Fighting Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Offshore and onshore* (Brief No. 20). Paris: EUISS.
12. Bizziouras, N. (2013). Piracy, state capacity and root causes: Lessons from the Somali experience and policy choice in the Gulf of Guinea. *African Security Review*, 22(3), 111-122.
13. Bouejla, A., Chaze, X., Guarnieri, F., & Napoli, A. (2014). A Bayesian network to manage risks of maritime piracy against offshore oil fields. *Safety Science*, 68, 222-230.
14. Bueger, C. (2015). Learning from piracy: Future challenges of maritime security governance. *Global Affairs*, 1(1), 33–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2015.960170>
15. Bueger, C., Stockbruegger, J., & Werthes, S. (2011). Pirates, Fishermen and Peacebuilding: Options for Counter-Piracy Strategy in Somalia. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32(2), 356–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2011.590359>
16. Centre for Maritime Law and Security, *Maritime Governance Brief* (2020). *Gulf of Guinea Piracy: The Old, the New and the Dark Shades*
17. Denton, G. L., & Harris, J. R. (2019). Maritime Piracy, Military Capacity, and Institutions in the Gulf of Guinea. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 34(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1659783>
18. Denton, G. L., & Harris, J. R. (2019). The Impact of Illegal Fishing on Maritime Piracy: Evidence from West Africa. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 44(11), 938–957. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1594660>
19. Desai, R.M. Shambaugh, G.E. (2021). Measuring the global impact of destructive and illegal fishing on maritime piracy: A spatial analysis. *PLoS ONE* 16(2): e0246835. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246835>
20. Dunn, H. (2009). *Oil Pirates of the Niger Delta*. Retrieved July 12, 2012.
21. Engen, O. A. (2009). The development of the Norwegian Petroleum Innovation System: A historical overview. *Innovation, path dependency and policy: The Norwegian case*, pp. 179–227.
22. Ezeozue, C. (2021). *Sea Piracy and Maritime Security Challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, 1999-2018*.
23. Fattah, M. M. A. (2017). *Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea causes efforts and solutions—Head of Training Department, Regional Maritime Security Institute, AASTMT*.
24. Fiorelli, M. (2014). *Piracy in Africa: The case of the Gulf of Guinea*.
25. Forster, B. A. (2016). *MODERN MARITIME PIRACY: An Overview of Somali Piracy, Gulf of Guinea Piracy and South East Asian Piracy*. American Historical, 2032.
26. Graf, A. (2011). *Countering piracy and maritime terrorism in South East Asia and off the Horn of Africa: applying the lessons learned from the countermeasures against maritime violence in the Straits of Malacca to the Gulf of Aden*.
27. Hansen, S.J. (2009). *Piracy in the Greater Gulf of Aden: Myths, Misconception and Remedies*, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)
28. Hassan, D., & Hasan, S. (2017). Effectiveness of the current regimes to combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: An evaluation. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 10(1), 35-65.

29. Heum, P. (2008). Local content development: Experiences from oil and gas activities in Norway.
30. Ifesinachi, K., & Nwangwu, C. (2015). Implementation of the Yaounde Code of Conduct and Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. 11.
31. ILO, (2022a). Recovery in youth employment is still lagging, says ILO. A new report, issued ahead of International Youth Day, shows large regional differences in young people's prospects in the labour market.
32. ILO, (2022b). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people. Geneva.
33. Jacobsen, K. (2017). Maritime security and capacity building in the Gulf of Guinea: On comprehensiveness, gaps, and security priorities. *African Security Review*, pp. 26, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1291441>
34. Jacobsen, K. L. (2017). Maritime security and capacity building in the Gulf of Guinea: On comprehensiveness, gaps, and security priorities. *African Security Review*, 26(3), 237–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2017.1291441>
35. Kamal-Deen, A. (2015). The anatomy of Gulf of Guinea piracy. *Naval War College Review*, 68(1), 93–118.
36. Klein, N. (2011). *Maritime Security and the Law of the Sea*. Oxford University Press.
37. Kraska, J., & Pedrozo, R. (2013). *International maritime security law*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
38. Nincic, D. (2009). Maritime Piracy in Africa: The Humanitarian Dimension. *African Security Review*, 18, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2009.9627538>[6] O
39. Okafor-Yarwood, I. (2018). The effects of oil pollution on the marine environment in the Gulf of Guinea—the Bonga Oil Field example. *Transnat Legal Theory* 9 (3–4): 254–271.
40. Okafor-Yarwood, I., & Adewumi, I. J. (2020). Toxic waste dumping in the Global South as a form of environmental racism: evidence from the Gulf of Guinea. *African Studies*, 79(3), 285–304.
41. Onuoha, F. C. (2012). Piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea: Nigeria as a microcosm. Doha: Al Jazeera Center for Studies.
42. Onuoha, F. C. (2013). Piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea: Trends, concerns, and propositions. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 4(3), 267-293.
43. Oshwofasa, B. O., Anuta, D. E., & Aiyedogbon, J. O. (2012). Environmental degradation and oil industry activities in the Niger-Delta region. *African Journal of Scientific Research*, 9(1).
44. Osinowo, A. A. (2015). Combating piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIV FORT MCNAIR DC AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES.
45. Ostensen, G., & Brady, S. (2018). Capacity building for the Nigerian Navy: eyes wide shut on corruption. U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, U4, (2018), 4.
46. Oyewole, S. (2016). Suppressing maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: the prospects and challenges of the regional players. *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 8(2), 132–146.
47. Sergeevna, A.Y. (2017). International Legal Regime Concerning Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 7, 2173-2179.
48. Sobrino-Heredia, J. M. (2022). The European Union as a Maritime Security Actor in the Gulf of Guinea: From Its Strategy and Action Plan to the New Concept of “Coordinated Maritime Presences”. *Ocean Development & International Law*, 53(2–3), 105–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00908320.2022.2071783>
49. Ukeje, C., & Mvomo Ela, W. (2013). African approaches to maritime security: The Gulf of Guinea. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
50. Victor, E. A., Offong, I. A., & Sunday, O. E. (2016). Oil Theft and Corruption: Pathways to Under Development in the Niger Delta. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*.

51. Vogel, A. (2011). Investing in Science and Technology to Meet Africa's Maritime Security Challenges (Africa Security Brief, Number 10, February 2011). OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH GLOBAL ARLINGTON VA.
52. Vreÿ, F. (2013). Turning the tide: revisiting African maritime security. *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies*, 41(2), 1–23.
53. Whiteneck, D. J., Ivancovich, J. S., & Hall, K. (2011). Piracy Enterprises in Africa. CNA.
54. Yunusa, A. (2021). A Sociological Review of the Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. *Dutse International Journal of Social and Economic Research*, 6(3), 10.

CITE THIS ARTICLE

Nanor, D., & Assi, V. E. (2023). Local Content Development Programme as an Alternative Approach to Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea Region. *Gulf Spectrum Journal*, 1(1).

<https://www.gulfspectrumjournal.com/articles/local-content-development-programme-as-an-alternative-approach-to>