APPROACHES ADOPTED OR COMMUNITY DYNAMICS? INTERROGATING THE REASONS FOR UNSUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN GHANAIAN SLUMS

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Abstract

Although many community development projects have been undertaken in Ghanaian slums, the slum population continues to face a myriad of problems due to the failure of many projects. This qualitative study was therefore undertaken to investigate the overarching factors for unsuccessful and unsustainable projects. The two key elements in the practice, namely, approaches adopted and the dynamics in the communities were interrogated with emphasis on how they encourage community participation. The study was conducted in Old Fadama, Nima and Ashaiman, all of which are large slums in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Thirty participants comprising of slum dwellers, community developers, assembly members and chiefs in the selected slums were interviewed on issues related to community development projects in their communities. The two approaches (self-help and technical assistance) adopted and the way they are carried out do not suit the communities, due to dynamics such as poverty, high ethnic diversity and insecure land tenure in Ghanaian slums. In order to overcome the emergence of slums and attendant problems in such neighborhoods, rural development should be promoted as a means of limiting rural-urban migration which is the root cause of slum formation. Furthermore, the approaches of community development should be modified to suit the dynamics in the slums, while the dynamics are also resolved.

Keywords: *Community development, community dynamics, resource constraint, self-help, technical assistance.*

KABUL EDİLEN YAKLAŞIMLAR MI, TOPLUM DİNAMİKLERİ Mİ? GANA GARAJLARINDA SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR TOPLULUK GELİŞİMİNİN NEDENLERİNİ SORGULAMAK

Öz

Gana'daki gecekondu mahallelerinde pek çok topluluk geliştirme projesi yürütülmüş olsa da, birçok projenin başarısızlığı nedeniyle gecekondu nüfusu sayısız sorunla karşılaşmaya devam ediyor. Bu nitel çalışma, bu nedenle başarısız ve sürdürülemez projeler için kapsayıcı faktörleri araştırmak için yapılmıştır. Uygulamadaki iki temel unsur, yani benimsenen yaklaşımlar ve topluluklardaki dinamikler, toplum katılımını nasıl teşvik ettiklerine vurgu yapılarak sorgulandı. Çalışma, tümü Gana'nın Büyük Akra bölgesinde büyük gecekondu mahalleleri olan Old Fadama, Nima ve Ashaiman'da gerçekleştirildi. Seçilen gecekondu mahallelerindeki gecekondu sakinleri, topluluk geliştiricileri, meclis üyeleri ve şeflerden oluşan otuz katılımcıyla kendi topluluklarındaki topluluk geliştirme projeleriyle ilgili konularda görüşmeler yapıldı. Gana gecekondu mahallelerindeki yoksulluk, yüksek etnik çeşitlilik ve güvensiz arazi kullanım hakkı gibi dinamikler nedeniyle benimsenen iki yaklaşım (kendi kendine yardım ve teknik yardım) ve bunların gerçekleştirilme şekli topluluklara uygun değildir. Bu tür mahallelerde ortaya çıkan gecekonduların ve buna bağlı sorunların üstesinden gelmek için, gecekondu oluşumunun temel nedeni olan kırdan kente göçü sınırlamanın bir yolu olarak kırsal kalkınmanın teşvik edilmesi gerekmektedir. Dahası, toplumsal kalkınma yaklaşımları, gecekondu mahallelerindeki dinamiklere uyacak şekilde değiştirilmeli ve dinamikler de çözülmelidir.

Anahtar kelimeleri: *Kaynak kısıtlaması, kendi kendine yardım, teknik destek, topluluk dinamikleri, topluluk gelişimi.*

Introduction

Community development has been a viable tool for empowering communities across the globe to engender social and economic development with a level of reliance on community-based resources. Since its introduction in Ghana, the practice has been instrumental in catalyzing development in numerous communities to resolve problems such as poverty, illiteracy and poor water (Bonye, Thaddeus & Owusu-Sekyere, 2013). Although it was originally introduced by the British colonial administration, it has been championed by government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community inhabitants themselves. Regardless of the champions of community development, communities' acceptance of projects and subsequent participation are key determinants of successful efforts. Prior to its introduction into rural Ghana, inhabitants had a working arrangement based on mutual aid, reciprocity and interdependence, with which they worked together to get tasks of communal interest

performed (Salifu, Francesconi & Kolavalli, 2010). For example, among members of the Akan ethnic group, there was an arrangement called "nnoboa" in which farmers formed cooperative groups and took turns to work on each other's farm in the spirit of mutual aid (Afriyie, 2015). The presence of such crucial elements in the rural communities made the practice successful in helping the people execute projects such as the Henderson Water Project, literacy, home economics and income-generating projects (Bonye et al., 2013). The success achieved in community development projects in rural Ghana has led to its introduction in urban communities including informal settlements that have sprung up.

A common trend that has emerged in the urban space of Ghana, like in many developing and less developed countries, is the slum or informal poor settlements (Stacey & Lund, 2016). The emergence of such settlements is as a result of the high rate of rural-urban drift and the incommensurate level of economic and infrastructural development in the urban space (Ishtiaque & Mahmud, 2017). The low level of development in rural Ghana and its accompanied poverty coupled with low limited infrastructural development, continues to serve as motivation for many rural dwellers to migrate into the urban space with the hope of enjoying better conditions of life. The limited investment in the agricultural sector which is the main source of employment and local development in rural communities in Ghana has pushed many rural dwellers to migrate to cities to explore other avenues of employment besides agriculture. However, upon their inability to realize the preconceived conditions in the cities, many migrants have been forced to settle on unauthorized areas in and around the cities. Whiles many problems are faced by the slum dwellers, the key ones are poverty, poor housing, poor sanitation, unclean water and limited economic activities.

Over the years, the increased acknowledgment of the problems faced by slum dwellers in Ghana, has led development-oriented entities such as the Department of Community Development (DCD) and NGOs to execute community development projects in such settlements (Jankowska, Weeks & Engstrom, 2011; Dinye & Acheampong, 2013). Although the slums have benefitted from the practice in ways such as the provision of infrastructure, improved sanitation and execution of income-generating projects, many projects have not been sustainable and hence, the improved conditions have not been sustainable (Gillespie, 2018). Factors that have impeded the development of Ghanaian slums include lack of resources, poor project monitoring and supervision, insecure land tenure and lack of community involvement in project planning. Whiles these are common challenges faced in many projects and campaigns including those undertaken in the rural and organized parts of urban centers; they have been more impactful on projects in the slum. This is due to certain characteristics of the slums such as high ethnic diversity, individualism and the divergence of development

goals held by inhabitants, which distinguishes Ghanaian slums from the rural communities where community development practice in Ghana has been most successful. This, therefore, bears the question: To what extent have the approaches adopted in projects or the dynamics in urban slums impeded the success and sustainability of such efforts?

By and large, community development projects undertaken in Ghanaian slums have been modeled on those undertaken in rural areas, although the dynamics in the two communities are different. For example, there are strong community bonds and networks in rural Ghana than in the slums, and these impact community projects. This paper, therefore, interrogates two broad themes in community development, namely, community development approaches and community dynamics, to understand the role they have played in the unsuccessful nature of projects and campaigns in Ghanaian slums. This study is crucial to the slum development discourse because it provides information, which will guide community developers who intend to work in such informal communities.

Literature review

The emergence of slums has become one of the main problems faced in developing and underdeveloped countries, and this has led to more research into the phenomena. As a developing country, Ghana has seen the upsurge of slums, which are also referred to, as informal settlements. Whiles many factors account for the emergence of slums, the rural-urban drift has been cited as the root cause by many studies (Awumbila, Owusu & Teye, 2014; Danso-Wiredu & Midheme, 2017; King & Amponsah, 2012; King, Amponsah & Quansah, 2012; Stacey & Lund, 2016). Another demographic factor cited to contribute to the emergence of slums in Ghana is rapid population growth in cities (Jankowska et al., 2011).

The emergence of slums in Ghana can be seen in the existence of numerous clusters of informal settlements within and around major cities such as Accra, Kumasi, Tema, Takoradi and Wa. Popular slums in the country include Ashaiman, Ayigya, Agbogbloshie, Nima and Old Fadama, with many of them bounded in the same geographical area with Accra, Ghana's capital city. Poor living conditions such as unsafe water, poor shelter, poor sanitation, poverty and overcrowding have been reported by many studies (Amoako & Cobbinah, 2011; Appiah-Kubi, 2018 Butala, VanRooyen & Patel, 2010; Dako-Gyeke & Kofie, 2015; Dinye & Acheampong, 2013; Jankowska et al., 2011). The existence of these problems has also been exacerbated by the high rate of crimes which impedes development efforts, making life in such settlements more dangerous (Dinye & Acheampong, 2013). Another issue in the slums that have been found to encumber development is the insecure land tenure by inhabitants (Jankowska et al., 2011). With slum dwellers' lack of ownership and control over the land on which

they live, they are discouraged to develop their neighborhoods with their scarce resources. Farouk and Owusu (2012) opined that their apathy to development has been strengthened by the threats of eviction and incidences of actual eviction. The low human capital development in slums in Ghana has also been cited as a reason for the low development (Awumbila et al., 2014). With low skills and knowledge about ways of solving their problem, coupled with poor health in such settlements, the population is not empowered to mobilize themselves for development initiatives.

With the numerous problems in the slums, community development has been a key strategy through which efforts are being made to solve such problems (Appiah-Kubi, 2020). While various approaches have been employed in community development efforts, two approaches that have been dominant over the years in all settings –rural, urban and slums – are the self-help and technical assistance approaches. The self-help approach is based on the inhabitants' ability to collaborate on understanding their problems and collectively overcoming them (Chiangmai, 2017). This approach has been the bedrock of participatory development, as Tamuno and Iroh (2012) argue that members of communities who are bonded by the spirit of mutual aid, reciprocity and interdependence are motivated to collaborate towards the achievement of collectively defined goals. Although some self-help projects have been undertaken in urban spaces, this approach has predominantly been adopted in rural community development due to the strong ties that exist among the inhabitants (Akpomuvie, 2010). Furthermore, whiles the approach is underscored by community initiatives, Laird (2007) asserts that some external assistance in the form of financial support or technical expertise is sought in some self-help projects. The adoption of the self-help approach in community development in Ghana can be seen in the Henderson Box Water Project, in which various rural communities, with the government's assistance executed projects to provide portable water (Bonye et al., 2013). In this water project, the local government upon identifying the need for potable water in some rural communities, worked with the rural dwellers to decide upon the sites of the projects. Implementation of such collectively planned projects was then done with a significant reliance on local resources including labor.

With the self-help approach, inhabitants of communities are empowered to understand their situation and develop their communities with much reliance on their social capital and other resources (Chappell & Funk, 2010; Robinson & Green, 2011). Samah and Ndaeji (2012) also opined that since the approach emphasizes the utilization of local resources, it promotes self-reliance within communities, and promotes community empowerment. Regardless of the advantages associated with its adoption, the execution self-help projects in recent times have reduced as a result of heightened poverty in communities, inhibiting inhabitants' ability to mobilize resources

for projects (Brass, 2011). This has left much of the community development work on external agencies who utilize their resources in the execution of already determined projects, based on their program for the period (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010).

The technical assistance approach involves the execution of projects by community development agencies with the aim of improving the socio-economic conditions within communities. Organizations that drive this approach in Ghana include state agencies such as DCD and the local assembly, who utilize state resources to execute projects. Beside these agencies, NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) also adopt the approach to execute projects which may be based on their program for a stipulated period, or information gathered from target communities about their needs (Bonye et al., 2013). Mugisha (2015) argues that this approach is crucial in supporting and strengthening local people's capacities to develop their communities. Considering that community developers adopting this approach are usually external to the beneficiary communities, the processes employed in projects may be new to the inhabitants, and hence requires time and training for them to understand the projects and their essence to the people (Mugisha, 2015). Bonye et al (2013) accentuate the importance of education and sensitization in technical assistance-based efforts in their assertion that such processes encourage community members to support and participate in projects as a result of the understanding gained.

Unlike the self-help approach, the technical assistance approach is prominent in the urban space, although it has also been adopted in rural communities. Within the urban space especially the slums where there is low collaboration as a result of the weak bonds between many inhabitants coupled with the high level of poverty, the technical assistance approach has been adopted in many projects (Brass, 2011). Although the utilization of external resources underscores the technical assistance approach, Laird (2007) opined that members of beneficiary communities contribute resources such as labor and information about their communities that pertains to the projects. An advantage associated with this approach is that it enables projects that require technical expertise to be executed by community developers who already possess such expertise without placing the stress of acquiring such skills on the community inhabitants. An example of projects in Ghana in which the technical assistance approach has been adopted is the affordable housing project. In this project, NGOs who are funded by international development agencies (IDAs) utilize their resources to build houses with toilet facilities, which are rented out to the slum dwellers at considerably lower rents. However, Ekdale (2014) posits that the sustainability and maintenance of technical assistance projects could be compromised, as the minimal participation of the inhabitants means they are not well informed and equipped with expertise to maintain executed projects.

Another crucial element in community development in slums is the dynamics in the communities. A key element to be considered is the relationship between the slum dwellers. According to Ziblim, Sumeghy and Cartwright (2013), there are fragile relationships between the inhabitants of many slums. This inhibits cooperation between them, and in essence impedes collective actions aimed at developing their communities. A reason for the weak connection between slum dwellers is the high ethnic diversity which is characteristic of many slums across the globe (Srivastava, 2013).

Other dynamics identified in slums are poverty and vulnerability, social stress, inappropriate locations and the illegal and informal status of such settlements (The Housing Development Agency [(HDA), 2012]. The dynamics in slums in developing countries are similar as a result of the similarities in the developmental problems faced in these countries. For example, slum dwellers in Nairobi are threatened by mass poverty, conflicts, contagious diseases and economic, social and ecological hazards, as a result of the high level of unemployment, high crime rates, lack of energy, inadequacy of schooling facilities and lack of proper governance (Mutisya & Yarime, 2011). These problems are also faced in Ghanaian slums as observed by many studies (Abu-Salia, Osmannu & Ahmed, 2015; Cobbinah, Poku-Boansi & Asomani-Boateng, 2016; Tutu, 2013). Commenting on conflicts in slums, Kimani (2017) and Mutisya and Yarime (2011) argue that they are bred by economic hardships, disputes over land and high ethnic diversity. Srivastava (2013) also added that the high ethnic diversity has led to the lack of unitary leadership and common interest in slums, thereby impeding development efforts. While these features have necessitated the execution of projects, their negative nature has hindered community support and participation in many projects, and eventually rendered many unsuccessful (Agarwal, Satyavada, Kaushik & Kumar, 2018; Zulu, Beguy, Ezeh, Bocquier, Madise, Cleland & Falkingham, 2011).

Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by the theory of community participation because much emphasis is placed on community participation in projects. Key proponents of this theory are Sherry Arnstein (1969) and John Abbott (1995). Community participation refers to the engagement of members of a community in activities undertaken in their community to improve their conditions (Samah & Aref 2011). This takes many forms including contributing labor, financial resources and time, and providing information about their communities. While the participation of community inhabitants in projects undertaken in their neighborhoods is crucial to the success of such projects and communities' ability to own the projects, it depends on the approaches adopted in the projects and the conditions that exist in the communities. The ability to design and implement projects according to the prevailing dynamics in a

community encourages the inhabitants to not only support, but also commit their resources into the execution of such projects. Community members' participation in the execution of projects, reinforces their sense of social empowerment (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990) and aids in enhancing human development (Oakley, 1991).

Community participation in projects is in the form of a ladder which ranges from lower participation to higher participation. According to Arnstein (1969), there is high community participation in projects that are initiated and carried out by communities themselves, because they share common knowledge on the processes involved and the essence of such projects. This means that participation is bound to be high in self-help projects. However, projects undertaken by external community developers (thus technical assistance approach) can enjoy high community participation if the dynamics of the community, as well as the viewpoints of the inhabitants, are factored into the projects. On the contrary, there is low community participation in projects that are initiated by external agencies where the inhabitants do not have much insight and requisite skills in some technical projects. However, Okech and Lelegwe (2016) argue that through sensitization about projects, community inhabitants can understand projects and be motivated to participate in both self-help and technical assistance projects.

If the approach adopted in projects and the dynamics of a particular community promotes high community involvement, inhabitants will acquire skills which will be useful in utilizing local resources to initiate, execute and sustain projects on their own as a result of their participation in projects (Abbott, 1995; Brueggemann, 2006). This accentuates the importance of community participation in community development as it is directly linked with the success of efforts. Considering that the empowerment of community inhabitants is one of the goals of community development through which they acquire skills and understand their situation, the participation of slum dwellers in Ghana in community development efforts needs to be engendered. According to the theory adopted in this study, the ability of stakeholders of projects in such informal settlements to approach them in ways that fit the dynamics of slums would empower slum dwellers and make projects more beneficial to the communities.

Methods and materials

This study was conducted in three slums in Ghana, namely, Old Fadama, Nima and Ashaiman. Old Fadama and Nima are located within the enclave of Accra whereas Ashaiman is about 30 kilometers away from Accra Central. These communities were selected for the study because they face a plethora of problems including poverty, poor housing, poor sanitation, lack of potable water, overcrowding and insecure land tenure (Ablo & Yekple, 2018; Paller, 2012). Furthermore, although many projects and campaigns have been undertaken in these communities, many of their problems

persist. They, therefore, suited the study as it sought to interrogate the reasons for the failure of projects with an emphasis on the approaches adopted and community dynamics. The qualitative method of inquiry was adopted for this study. This is because the emphasis was placed on people's views about community development efforts carried out in selected urban slums in Ghana, based on their experience in the practice (Merriam, 2009).

Primary data were used for the study. This was done through interviews and observation of some activities such as group meetings on projects. While the observations aided the researcher to gain insight into the processes in projects, the interviews were conducted on issues related to the suitability of approaches adopted in projects and how the dynamics in the slums have inhibited projects. Data collection took place within 6 months (January – June 2017) during which regular visits were made to the target slums. Upon the researcher's formal introduction to the leadership of the slums and community development agencies, participants were purposively sampled, based on their knowledge and experience gained through active participation in projects undertaken in the slums within the last three years to the date of data collection. Out of the 30 participants recruited, there were 12 slum dwellers, 12 community developers, three assembly members of the communities and three chiefs. The community developers were selected from NGOs and DCDs. The NGOs are entities funded by IDAs to undertake projects which are usually designed according to their program outline. The DCDs are governmental agencies in districts, municipalities and metropolitan areas in the country, responsible for the development of local communities. An equal number of participants were recruited from each of the three slums.

The interviews were conducted in English and Twi (one of the most popular dialects in Ghana) depending on participants' language proficiency. These two languages were used because the researcher is proficient in both and both are popular in the slums, thereby limiting the need for a translator. Data were collected through voice recording with the permission of participants and notetaking. Data were analyzed using Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral. With this framework, data obtained from the interviews were organized through transcription. Interviews conducted in Twi, were translated to English by the researcher during transcription. After this, data were familiarized with by reading the transcripts and making meaning of them. Themes and sub-themes were then developed from the data by grouping similar or related ideas according to the research questions. The data were then interpreted by defining the developed themes and attributing reasons to the definitions given to the themes. Finally, data were presented in accordance with the research questions. Some quotes from the interviews are also presented to buttress some findings.

Ethical issues that were considered are informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and the avoidance of plagiarism. Regarding informed consent, participants' permission was sought before they were engaged in the study. Prior to their consent being sought, the purpose of the study, as well as the benefits and risks they could have been exposed to as a result of their participation in the study, were explained to them. Participants were also not coerced into participating in the study. They were also informed that they were free to recuse themselves from the study whenever they felt uncomfortable to continue. Confidentiality has also been observed in this study by ensuring that the names and other attributes that could reveal the identity of participants have not been used in the findings. Plagiarism has also been avoided by acknowledging all scholarly ideas that have been used in this study.

Table 1: *Socio-demographic characteristics of participants*

Age		Sex		Experience of community developers	
25 – 34 years	7	Male	22	Less than 5 years	7
35 – 44 years	14	Female	8	5 years or more	5
44 – 54 years	9				
Total	**30**	**Total**	**30**	**Total**	**12**

Note: All the inhabitants, chiefs and assembly members had experienced community development projects in their respective communities.

As presented in Table 1 above, the ages of the participants ranged from 25 – 54 years, with seven of them aged 25 – 34 years, 14 aged 35 – 44 years, and the remaining 9 aged 45 – 54 years. Out of the 30 participants, 22 were males whiles 8 were females. Regarding the experience of community developers in the slums, 7 of them had been involved in projects for less than five years whiles the remaining 5 had been in community development for five years or more. All the inhabitants, chiefs and assembly members had also been involved in the implementation of projects in their respective communities for at least three years.

Results and discussions

While community development has been crucial in the efforts to improve upon the conditions in the slums studied, it was revealed that such efforts have not been successful in these communities. The failures encountered in community development efforts in Ghanaian slums were found to have been caused by both the approaches adopted in the projects undertaken and dynamics in such settlements. This means that the challenges encountered cannot be blamed in their entirety on anyone, but the

interplay of both factors. The remaining section of this paper illustrates how the above-stated factors have marred projects undertaken.

Approaches adopted in community development in slums in Ghana and their shortfalls

Community development in Ghanaian slums employs both the self-help (bottom-up) and technical assistance (top-down) approaches, although it is dominated by the latter, due to the limited resources at the disposal of the slum dwellers. In self-help projects, the inhabitants collectively define their problems and execute projects to address them. While the projects come from the people themselves, they sometimes seek assistance from external agencies such as NGOs and DCD – two organizations that have been instrumental in urban slum development in the country. The key issue here is that the projects come from the people themselves based on their needs. An example of self-help projects is the footbridges built in some neighborhoods in Ashaiman. In these projects, the inhabitants upon collectively deciding on the project, make monetary contributions to raise funds with assistance from some NGOs:

> *In the footbridge project which I am sure you have seen, we came up with a plan and made contributions to build it… the constructor at the municipal assembly was also helpful with ideas on how to build it and some materials like wood and cement (Chief).*

While this approach has been successful in some projects, it is less popular in the slums due to the difficulty in acquiring resources and the apathy among some inhabitants due to their low sense of ownership of their communities. This has led to the domination of the technical assistance approach in projects, whereby the responsibility of resource acquisition is not born by inhabitants.

With the technical assistance projects, community developers who are from outside the communities introduce projects and undertake in the communities. The distinguishing element in this approach is that the agencies go to the communities to execute projects, sometimes with already designed programs and requisite resources acquired prior to their entry to the recipient communities, based on the agencies' plan for the period:

> *We are into providing houses, portable water and toilet facilities. So, we met with the municipal assembly and chiefs of those slums, and we were given land and the support we needed to execute the project (NGO community developer).*

In order to clearly understand how projects executed in the various slums in Ghana have been compromised by the approaches adopted in such efforts, an explanation of the activities involved is important. Activities involved in community development in Ghanaian slums are community entry, survey, project design, project

implementation and project implementation. However, the way these processes are carried out and the actors involved depends on the approach adopted in a project. In self-help projects, there is no community entry as they are being undertaken by the inhabitants themselves. The inhabitants undertake the subsequent processes with or without the assistance of external agencies, depending on the availability of resources and expertise required for projects. The same above-listed processes are performed in technical assistance projects. In such projects, the community developers introduce themselves and their intentions to the communities through the local leaders such as chiefs and assembly members. They then seek support and participation from the communities through ways such as providing information about their needs, leasing land for projects and providing labor in the projects.

With the background that some projects have been undertaken by external agencies who have usually planned such efforts with limited input from the slum dwellers, sensitization as a means of educating the recipient communities has been important, to canvas community support and participation. The importance of this activity is captured in the following quote:

Sensitization has helped us in many key projects. Through this means, we can explain the whole project to the inhabitants, who are sometimes threatened that they could lose the land on which they stay. So, it helps as a support garnering tool (DCD official).

Although this has been carried out in some projects, it has not been fruitful in some instances due to the lackluster way they have been undertaken and the limited resources devoted to it. Consequently, there have been many projects in which community participation has been low due to inhabitants' limited understanding of such projects. As a result, the inhabitants are not able to acquire the needed skills to maintain such projects and replicate similar projects on their own, as postulated by the theory of community participation.

The two approaches have yielded some success in solving the problems faced in Ghanaian slums as revealed in the study. However, the way both approaches have been carried out in the face of the many negative dynamics in the slums (which will be looked at later) has rendered many projects unsuccessful. A key reason for the limited success in self-help projects is the high level of poverty which impedes many inhabitants' ability to contribute resources that are required for the projects. As a result of poverty, the slum dwellers have not been able to execute many projects for themselves although they have had the ideas and even initiated some efforts. This finding is captured in the following quote from an assembly member explaining the limited execution of self-help projects in slums under his jurisdiction:

> *Of course, they (slum dwellers) understand their situation, and have even come up with projects… but they are unable to execute many of these projects unless the assembly or some NGOs help them with resources.*

While poverty as a problem constricts all forms of community development endeavors, its impact on self-help efforts is more acute due to the primary responsibility of resource mobilization being shouldered by the poor inhabitants, as revealed in the quote above. The impact of poverty on self-help projects in the urban slums corroborates Campfens' (1997) assertion that income-generating projects in many rural communities in Ghana were impeded by participants' inability to mobilize requisite materials such as beads and solder after gaining vocational skills due to poverty.

Another reason for the unsuccessful self-help projects in Ghanaian slums is the heterogeneous composition of the inhabitants and its attendant weak bonds among them. By virtue of rural-urban migration is one of the main reasons for the emergence of slums, the composition of these informal settlements is much diversified, with inhabitants from different ethnic groups in the country and even beyond. The high ethnic diversity in these communities has led to the existence of different interests, needs and ideas about development in such communities. This has usually inhibited the building of strong ties which is a key prerequisite for self-help projects in such impoverished communities. Another reason for the weak ties in the informal settlements is the low sense of ownership among the inhabitants because they do not consider the slums as their native origins, and hence are not enthused to spare their limited resources to develop them. The absence of strong social and psychological ties among the inhabitants has encumbered collaboration among the inhabitants and its accompanying community participation in bottom-up projects:

> *You can tell some are simply not enthused about the development in the communities…many of them feel they are just journeymen and will leave one day… having people with all the tribal differences to work together has been difficult in many instances (Assembly member).*

Although the technical assistance approach has been useful in many projects, the way it has been carried out where projects are designed and taken to the communities with little or no consultation with the inhabitants has not encouraged inhabitants' participation. Rather, it has alienated many from the implementation of the projects since they do not have much understanding due to their non-involvement in the design phase. The occurrence of this challenge confirms an argument of the theory of community participation that there is limited community participation in projects driven by external agencies due to the limited understanding of inhabitants about such projects, and their role in making them successful and sustainable.

Community dynamics as impediments to community development in Ghanaian slums

Although poverty and ethnic diversity are key dynamics in the informal communities, they have been discussed above to illustrate how their interaction with the approaches of community development affect projects. Beside those two dynamics, other main dynamics found in Ghanaian slums include insecure land tenure, poor demarcation of settlements, low level of human capital, crime and lack of unitary leadership. These situations continue to render many community development efforts unsuccessful, regardless of the approach adopted. The insecure land tenure in the slums is a result of the lack of land ownership by the slum dwellers. This has inhibited many projects, looking at it from both economic and social developmental spectacles. Economically, the lack of land ownership has deprived inhabitants of the opportunity to gain credit facilities as capital for their businesses, with land being a major form of collateral for loans in Ghana. Without capital, many people especially women after acquiring vocational skills through the income-generating training programs, have not been able to establish their businesses. Over time, they lose the unexploited skills they gained through the training programs organized by DCD and some NGOs. Portraying the extent of the economic impact of lack of land ownership, a participant had this to say:

> *I think our training programs in soap and bead making has helped many inhabitants especially women to gain employable skills. But many are unable to make a living out of that because they do not have capital. Considering the high poverty, having collateral such as land would help them to get some loans to start something (DCD official).*

Regarding the effect of their lack of land ownership on social development, many inhabitants are discouraged to participate in projects or develop the land. Slum-dwellers' reluctance to expend their already scarce resources to develop the land on which they live is as a result of their fear of being evacuated from their communities, considering the constant threat of evacuation meted on them. With the limited resources at their disposal, they are not motivated to participate in the development of properties to which they do not have legal ownership. This lackluster attitude to development efforts has intensified in recent years after inhabitants of Old Fadama (one of the major slums in Ghana) in 2016. The study also revealed some projects have been sabotaged by slum dwellers who consider such projects as ploys to evict them from the communities:

> *It took about a year before we were able to build the houses and toilet units in the community. the people opposed the project initially because they thought we were using that to kick them out of the community… it took a lot of sensitization*

> *to get their support, and that affected our budget too (NGO community developer).*

This challenge has stagnated social development in Ghanaian slums, since many projects meant to provide safe houses, toilet facilities, portable water and storm drains have been compromised. The negative impact of insecure land tenure on community development has not been identified only in Ghana but in other countries. It lends credence to assertions made by studies that inhabitants' lack of land ownership has discouraged them from undertaking self-help projects due to their low sense of community ownership (Agbola & Agunbiade, 2009; Sherbiniin, Rahman, Barbieri, Fotso & Zhu, 2009). It also confirms Izugbara, Tikkanen and Barron's (2014) position that insecure land tenure in Kenyan slums has led to inhabitants' negative attitude towards projects in the form of non-participation, sabotage and hostility to development efforts in such settlements.

Another dynamic related to the insecure land tenure system in Ghanaian slums is the poor demarcation of land in the slums. With land in many informal communities not owned by the inhabitants, the demarcation of such plots of land has not been taken seriously in such communities. If the owners of such plots of land were settling on their properties, they could expedite their demarcation and development. However, with these slums being treated as an illegal settlement and hence governments' developmental efforts minimally felt in such communities, attention to the land including its demarcation has not been given much attention. This has inhibited the implementation of projects, as a result of the difficulty in identifying appropriate spaces for projects. The problem posed by the poor land demarcation in such communities is illustrated in a view shared below:

> *The settlement pattern in this area is haphazard. I am sure you can tell it yourself. People erect structures anyhow… and in the long run it has affected development. About two years ago we tried to build a school, but we could not find appropriate space (Assembly member).*

This proves how problematic the poor demarcation of land in such communities is. If this negative dynamic is addressed, spaces of land can be identified for projects which would contribute to the development of these communities.

The low level of education and training attained by many slum dwellers has also negatively affected many projects. Many slum dwellers especially the second and third generation inhabitants who were born in these neighborhoods, have limited formal education and do not have any technical or vocational training. Although this is inimical to development, it is not surprising since there are no schools and training centers in some of these informal communities. Consequently, many inhabitants can only engage in menial jobs that do not require specialized skills. In such situations, these slum

dwellers have had a limited role to play in projects that require technical and vocational skills such as building projects. If many of the slum dwellers were skilled in professions such as masonry, carpentry and plumbing, they could work in such capacities, and effect, cut down the cost incurred in hiring such workers:

> *One of our main problems is unskilled human capital. Our youth are just running around, unable to assist in projects being undertaken...If we had skilled people, we could do many little things for ourselves… And looking at the younger ones who are not in school, our community could be in a lot of trouble even in the future (Slum dweller).*

In the absence or limited presence of technically or vocationally skilled inhabitants, the cost of projects has been high, and this has impeded the completion of some projects, considering that many projects face resource constraints. This confirms Laird's (2007) report that projects undertaken in some communities in Accra by DCD were stifled by the inadequacy of resources. Furthermore, this observation about the low human capital lends credence to Awumbila, Owusu and Teye's (2014) assertion that low human capital in Ghanaian slums has constricted development efforts in such communities.

It was also revealed that crime in many slums has impeded community development in such areas. With minimal to no presence of security forces such as the police in many slums, various forms of crime are committed in these neighborhoods. Examples of criminal activities reported in these communities include theft and vandalism. These problems impede projects during their implementation and compromise the sustenance of projects undertaken through the destruction of properties. Vandalism in these informal settlements is as a result of the multiplicity of interests accompanying the high ethnic diversity and the limited presence of security presence. The inimical nature of these violent transgressions is manifested in the destruction of private properties such as cars and shelter, and state properties like security posts which are already scarce in these communities. About theft, some projects have been delayed as a result of the theft of already scarce resources mobilized:

> *Theft has affected some of the activities we undertake here…I remember a pipe water project we had with help from an NGO… At night some people went to the warehouse and stole bags of cement and some tools like a shovel. Already we face resource constraints…so this affects our ability to finish projects on time when people are stealing the materials (Chief).*

Although theft in Ghana cannot be limited to only the slums, its effect has been more devastating considering the plethora of problems such as poverty and the limited incidence of projects being undertaken there. This means that the failure of these few

projects causes the continued existence of the problems. This supports Dinye and Acheampong's (2013) report that crime in slum communities in Ghana impedes development, and thereby contributes to the deplorable situation in such communities.

The existence of plural leadership and its resultant lack of collectively agreed-upon unitary direction in Ghanaian slums have also stifled the execution of community development projects. As stated earlier, slums in Ghana are made of people from various ethnic groups and these groups are led by various traditional leaders. This has led to instances where there are conflicting directions towed by the people within a community, due to the different interests sought by various leaders and their respective subjects. This issue has delayed the execution of some projects or ruined them in their entirety, as a result of the friction created between tribal leaders and their subjects which is inimical to grassroots development. This is captured in the following quote from a community developer:

> The internal friction between tribes and factions is another problem, and this is as a result of the existence of many traditional chiefs. This problem has delayed many projects, because it is not easy to get the tribal leaders to agree on projects, and get their subjects on board… About two years ago, funding for a storm drain project was diverted to another course as a result of such delays (NGO community developer).

With plural leadership comes different agenda which limit communities' ability to agree on unitary developmental goals. This problem impedes both self-help and technical assistance projects. With self-help projects, it encumbers collective decision making on community problems and collaboration on solving the problems. In technical assistance projects, it ruins optimal community support and participation in projects driven by external agencies. This situation has usually emerged in projects where community developers and other key stakeholders are perceived to have excluded some local leaders in community entry and initial consultation on projects, causing resentment among such leaders and their subjects. This leads to project non-participation or sabotage by the aggrieved group. This shows that although the technical assistance approach suits the slums with its provision of financial resources and technical expertise, plural leadership in many slums has posed as a great challenge to community participation in projects and the optimal success of such initiatives. The negative impact of the lack of unitary leadership on community development projects is not peculiar to projects in Ghanaian slums but in other communities across the globe. This is echoed in Srivastava's (2013) argument that the high ethnic diversity and plural leadership in many slums impedes development efforts implemented in such communities.

The way forward

Considering that the interplay of the approaches adopted in projects and community dynamics have rendered many projects in Ghanaian slums unsuccessful, both elements need some modification. However, the key issues to which attention has to be paid are the influx of many rural dwellers to urban centers due to the poor living conditions in the rural communities in the country, and the emergence of slums some of whose living conditions are even worse than those in the rural communities. Against the background that rural-urban drift in Ghana is predominantly due to the limited economic, social and infrastructural development in the rural communities, there is the need for the various stakeholders of development in the country to resolve the problems in rural communities. With agriculture being the main source of employment in rural Ghana, the government through the Ministry of Agriculture and other associated departments should invest in the sector through measures such as providing seeds and farming tools for farmers and creating markets for agricultural products. This would motivate many rural dwellers to venture into agriculture upon their realization that the sector is lucrative. Furthermore, infrastructures such as schools, health facilities and road networks should be provided in the rural communities. The provision of such social amenities, coupled with development projects in rural Ghana would discourage many rural dwellers' migration into the cities, since the inhabitants would become content with life in their communities.

The slums that have emerged in the cities should also be subjected to efforts aimed at upgrading the conditions in such informal settlements. Considering that community development projects in these communities have not been sustainable due to the interplay of the dynamics of the neighborhoods and the approaches adopted, it is important that other development strategies are adopted. Regarding poverty alleviation in Ghanaian slums, cash transfer to the slum dwellers should be explored. Such a social protection program would be helpful in the slums, as it does not require much community bonding to succeed. The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) which is already operational in selected communities in the country should be championed in these slums whose poverty levels are among the highest in the country. Also, technical and vocational training programs which are also operational but not intensive in some slums should be intensified as a means of equipping the inhabitants with employable skills. These and other top-down infrastructural development efforts should be undertaken to not only ameliorate poverty, but also encourage the inhabitants to work towards developing their communities.

The approaches adopted in projects in Ghanaian slums also scrutinized by community developers and other stakeholders of projects. Considering the success achieved in community development projects in slums in many countries such as India

and Brazil, the practice can be made more feasible and successful in Ghana as well. However, its potency can be enhanced by designing the projects based on the prevailing dynamics in such settlements. About modifications to the approaches, the technical assistance approach is being given attention in this paper. This is because it is the popular approach in the slums as a result of factors such as poverty and weak bonds which have inhibited many self-help projects. If it is strengthened and its impact in the communities is augmented, poverty would be reduced, and networks would be created among the slum dwellers so that they can undertake projects on their own.

In technical assistance projects, the community developers and other key stakeholders should actively involve the slum dwellers for whom the projects are meant, so that the projects will be designed based on their felt needs. They should also be encouraged to support the projects by participating in capacities they can such as providing labor and volunteering information that pertains to the projects being planned. In engaging them, the various groups in the communities should be engaged so that none of the groups would feel alienated from the efforts. This would help in fostering togetherness and cooperation in the slums for subsequent projects.

Additionally, more poverty reduction projects should be undertaken with the slum dwellers. One of the main factors that have inhibited the slum dwellers from executing self-help projects has been resource constraint as a result of poverty. This makes it imperative that much attention is paid to poverty alleviation projects in such neighborhoods. This can be done by engendering more income-generating skills in which the inhabitants would be trained in some trade such as soap making, bead making and ceramics, so that their acquired skills will be utilized to earn them a living. Although such projects are being championed by DCD and other NGOs in Ashaiman, it is on a relatively smaller scale and as such does not impact the lives of many people. Besides the income-generating projects, technical and vocational skills training programs targeting the youth should also be intensified. This could include carpentry, masonry, plumbing, steel works and electricals and electronic apprenticeship. Through this, the youth would be given hope for the future, empowered, and kept occupied so that the incidence of crime and violence can be curtailed. Such skills would be employed to establish trade, earn a living and alleviate poverty.

Continuous education and sensitization on projects should also be intensified prior to their commencement and throughout the various phases so that inhabitants can understand projects and their benefits to them. Through these processes, community support and participation in projects can be gained and promote successful and sustainable community development. Furthermore, community developers and the leadership of the communities should be open and transparent about the projects throughout their sensitization efforts so that inhabitants would understand the actual

goals of projects. This would help clear their suspicion of projects being used as ploys to evict them from their settlements and be willing to support and participate in projects.

Community developers should also involve the traditional leaders in Ghanaian slums in the projects. There are many traditional leaders in many slums in Ghana, depending on the ethnic diversity in the neighborhoods. Their multiplicity, has however, not diminished their authority and influence among their people. This means that traditional leaders some of whom are custodians of lands in the slums, can be useful in community development efforts if their authority and influence are capitalized upon. As leaders of the communities, their overt involvement in projects would motivate the inhabitants as subjects to also support the projects and participate in them. Additionally, getting the leaders to openly work together on projects and campaigns would help build a connection among them. If the leaders can collaborate on projects, then they can get their subjects to work together.

The lack of land ownership by the slum dwellers and improper demarcation of land in the slums should also be resolved. Some projects have been impeded due to the difficulty in obtaining space for implementation as a result of the poor demarcation and disputes over land in such informal settlements. Furthermore, their lack of land ownership has discouraged some inhabitants from developing their communities. This is exacerbated by the constant threat of eviction that has been faced by some slum dwellers in communities such as Old Fadama Agbogbloshie. The government and some traditional leaders who own land in those slums should, therefore, grant the slum dwellers ownership of land and expedite the proper demarcation of land in the Ghanaian slums. This would help them feel settled in their communities as the threat of eviction would be eliminated. They would then be motivated to commit their resources into undertaking self-help projects and participating in projects introduced in their communities by external community development agencies.

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