THE USE OF PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN A NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME: A STUDY OF LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT AGAINST POVERTY (LEAP)

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that, except for references to other people’s work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is a result of my own research conducted at the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. This work was supervised by Mr. Gilbert Tietaah.

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(Student)                                       (Supervisor)

Date......................................               Date....................................
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the glory of the Most High God for His awesome grace and glory upon my life. I further dedicate this work to my parents, Rev. & Mrs Griffiths Doku, my fiancée, Barbara Senu and Kathryn Doku, my big sister for their support throughout my post-graduate studies. I am profoundly grateful and humbled.
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Thank you Lord for the divine opportunity for me to pursue post graduate studies. Your grace in my academic life is awesome and miraculous.

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ABSTRACT

The failure of the conventional theories of economic growth to significantly reduce poverty in Africa has led to a new focus on poverty reduction that emphasises on participatory policies that benefit the poor directly. One outcome of this has been the introduction in Ghana of the social grant scheme, Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP). The LEAP programme is a social cash transfer facility which provides cash and health insurance to extremely poor households across Ghana to alleviate short-term poverty.

This study sought to find out how communication of LEAP compared with the normative principles of participatory development communication, the role participatory communication plays in the implementation of the LEAP project, the communication channels used in promoting the participation of the beneficiaries in LEAP and the challenges, if any, that affect the practical implementation of the participatory communication in the implementation of LEAP.

Through a qualitative research methodology that combined individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the top-down flow of information at LEAP did not satisfy the normative principles of participatory communication. LEAP extensively used indigenous communication channels as the main medium for implementation, depending on the socio-cultural circumstances prevailing in the beneficiary community.

The study recommends among other things the use of experts in participatory development communication and also training on participatory communication for social welfare officers.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

A major development challenge facing developing countries, particularly within the African continent is the endemic nature of poverty and its attendant consequences on the standard of living of its people. Currently, three-quarters of the world’s poor live in developing countries (World Population Report, 2005). Sub-Saharan Africa however remains the world’s poorest region and the one with the highest headcount poverty rate (around 48%).

One of the world’s main priorities is to eradicate poverty and hunger. This is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals for which the target is to reduce by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

There have been several attempts at reducing poverty in Africa by both governments and their international developmental partners. The most recent poverty reduction drive of the international aid community began in the 1990s by the World Bank in response to criticisms of the negative impacts of structural adjustment programs (Whitfield, 2009).

Mefalopulos (2008) has attributed the failure to sustain past development efforts in developing countries to the use of non-participatory communication in development. To change this trend, local and international development agencies have become attentive to

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issues of participation, with participatory communication as the vehicle (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

There have been numerous subsequent programmes that have been targeted at poverty reduction in Ghana. The first from the 1990’s was the report entitled Making People Matter: A Human Development Strategy for Ghana (1991) followed by the National Development Policy Framework (1994), which was a twenty-five-year development perspective and Vision 2020: the First step (1995), a five year policy statement later developed into the First Medium Term Development Plan 1996-2000, (MTDP). In 2000 an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) was produced.

The limited impact of the Ghana Vision 2020 and the MTDP in laying the foundation for sustained poverty reduction led to attempts to formulate more poverty-focused policy initiatives. Consequently, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) for Ghana was prepared in June 2000 for the period 2000 to 2002 and has been used as an outline for growth and poverty reduction. The GPRS for 2003-2005 was prepared afterwards and it built on the I-PRSP.

Adogamhe (2010) acknowledges that, there is a major shift from the conventional wisdom of neoliberal theories of development that the benefits of economic growth would trickle down to the poor and therefore tends to emphasize sustained economic growth as the solution to poverty. The new focus on poverty reduction implies increased emphasis on policies that benefit the poor directly, including expenditure on primary education, health, and rural infrastructure. Naidoo (2010) supports this new strategy to reducing poverty and hence says, in order to address development problems and the
concomitant mass poverty, it becomes necessary to shift the emphasis in dealing with these problems to self-reliant and empowering development.

Hence social protection, which consists of a set of formal and informal mechanisms directed towards the provision of social assistance and capacity enhancement to the vulnerable and excluded in society is the approach being used to reduce poverty in Ghana. In broad terms, such measures cover extremely poor individuals, households and communities, including those that need special care but lack access to basic social services and social insurance to protect themselves from the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks, social inequities, social exclusion and denial of rights. Social protection thus goes beyond income support and includes the strengthening of social cohesion, human development, livelihoods and protection of rights and entitlements (NSPS, 2007).

1.1 The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty Program (LEAP)

The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) programme is a social cash transfer programme which provides cash and health insurance to extremely poor households across Ghana to alleviate short-term poverty and encourage long-term human capital development. The programme is fully funded from general revenues of the Government of Ghana, and is the flagship programme of its National Social Protection Strategy.

The LEAP social grant scheme is a programme of Ghana's Ministry of Gender, Children and Social protection. The LEAP program is one of the main tools for achieving Ghana’s National Social Protection Strategy. Begun in 2008, LEAP supports households living in
extreme poverty by providing conditional cash transfers to extremely poor households (with elderly persons, orphans and vulnerable children, and persons with severe disabilities) who have no alternative means of meeting their subsistence needs and have limited productive capacity. As at October 2013, 72,000 beneficiary households were receiving the LEAP cash grant.

LEAP beneficiary households receive between G48 and G90 every two months, depending on the number of eligible beneficiaries of the family. The cash transfers to the people with disabilities or the old people above 65 are unconditional. However, to get the cash transfers for orphan and vulnerable children, households have to follow conditions as listed: sending children to school; not allowing child labour; enrolment of family members on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and birth registration of all children.

1.2 Problem Statement

Mefalopulos (2008) has attributed the failure to sustain past development efforts in developing countries to the use of non-participatory communication in development. To change this trend, local and international development agencies have become attentive to issues of participation, with participatory communication as the vehicle (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

The process of developing the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), the overarching policy document for LEAP sought to embrace participation through stakeholder consultations. It commenced in February 2004 with the development of a
concept paper and followed by a consultative workshop in August 2004 among Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), local and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), research institutions and development partners. This is relevant because, the proponents of contemporary theory of participatory communication have suggested that communication channels, whether interpersonal, group or mass media, should be used to assist people develop community-based development interventions based on their own assessment of their problems (Quarry & Ramirez, 2009).

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) argue that true participatory communication occurs at the empowerment level where beneficiaries initiate, discuss, conceptualise and plan activities as a group. The role of the development expert is therefore to act as a facilitator and not to take decisions for the beneficiaries (Waisbord, 2000).

In spite of this, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) noted that, despite the increasing number of development projects claiming to embrace participation, only few meet the standards of genuine participation after a critical examination. The question that arises with respect to the LEAP programme is whether and to what extent primary target beneficiary groups were involved in the consultation process leading to the development of the core modalities of this social protection programme. Specifically, this study sought to find out if participatory communication existed in LEAP and to also determine the extent to which the nature, flow and channels of communication were effectively or genuinely participatory in the design and implementation of LEAP. The findings of the study were intended also to provide empirically driven feedback to communication practitioners on
the challenges that militate against the use of participatory communication in the implementation of this national social protection programme.

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study included:

i. How participatory communication was been practiced at LEAP and the extent to which it was been practised.

ii. How does the communication of LEAP compare with the normative principles of participatory development communication.

iii. The roles participatory communication play in the implementation of the LEAP programme.

iv. The media/communication channels used in promoting the participation of the beneficiaries in LEAP.

1.4 Research Questions

The above background information gives rise to the following research questions:

R.Q₁. How does the communication of LEAP compare with the normative principles of participatory development communication?

R.Q₂. What role does participatory communication play in the implementation of the LEAP project?

R.Q₃. Which media/communication channels were/are used in promoting the participation of the beneficiaries in LEAP?
R.Q4. What challenges, if any, affect the practical implementation of the participatory communication in the implementation of LEAP?

1.5 Scope of Study
The research aimed at studying beneficiaries of the programme and held focus group discussions with some beneficiaries and conducted in-depth interviews with LEAP officials. The difficulty in assessing literature initially was a challenge this study faced. Coming across literature related to this study was such a herculean task.

1.6 Significance of Study
Participatory communication is seen as being the vehicle for participation in development. The participatory development model is therefore hinged on a two way/dialogic communication at the beneficiary level; and intrinsic respect for indigenous knowledge and culture. Cooper and Goodsmith (2010) say messages that reflect local context resonate with target audience in ways that cannot be generated by non-participatory methods. “Sustainability of such development would be made possible through communication as well as community participation, in terms of which it should be acknowledged that the participation of the developing community is the greatest contribution which a country may make to its progress and continued existence” (Lombard, 1992: 23).
Being a relatively new field, this study will contribute to:

(i.) Deepening the use of the participatory communication approach in development interventions.

(ii.) It will also contribute to knowledge on how social protection programmes can be implemented using the participatory communication approach. Looking for literature on studies conducted in participatory communication and development communication in general in Ghana was challenging as there was very little, even from the internet. Therefore, this study will become a reference material on development communication practice in Ghana.

1.7 Chapter Summary

The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) programme is a social cash transfer programme which provides cash and health insurance to extremely poor households across Ghana to alleviate short-term poverty and encourage long-term human capital development. However, such interventions in the developing world have failed due to the use of non-participatory communication in the drafting of such policies.

This chapter sought among other things to find out, the usage and extent to which participatory communication approach has been applied in some social development interventions.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The following chapter reviews the relevant literature for this research project. The first part presents the theoretical assumptions underlying models of development communication and defines the concepts of diffusion and participation development communication. This is followed by a review of the literature on models of applying and evaluating participatory development communication. The last part discusses studies that focus on factors influencing the implementation of participatory development communication in practice.

2.1 Theoretical Considerations

Professor Nora Quebral (1975) first used the expression “development communication,” in the Philippines in the 1970s, and she defined it as:

“the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential” (Quebral, 1975, p.198).

Development Communication is further defined as operating “through engaging [the poor] more fully in decision-making processes that affect their lives, giving them a ‘voice’ to influence policy, or persuading them to adopt new practices that will enhance their livelihood, increase their security, advance their education and improve their health” (Rogers, 2006, p.180).

The field of study has its origins in the post-war international aid programmes of the 1950s when methods were sought to transform the newly independent nation-states of Africa, Latin America and Asia into Western-type societies (Akpan, 2003). At the time, development was perceived as the process of transforming Third World countries to
become more like Western developed nations in terms of political system, economic growth, industrialisation, and educational levels. The basic assumption of development was that there was a single form of development, as it pertained in the developed countries, that developing countries had to replicate (Waisbord, 2001).

Since then, varied concepts and approaches have emerged in the development communication field; from modernisation/diffusion to over-dependency and now multiplicity/participation, that have marked development efforts up to now (Bessette, 2004; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Rogers, 2006; Waisbord, 2001). However, these concepts and approaches can be classified into two broad models – the diffusion model and the participatory models (Waisbord, 2001; Bessette, 2004; Morris, 2005; Rogers, 2006; Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009).

2.1.1 Diffusion Development Communication (DDC)

The diffusion model of communication which has its roots in the modernisation paradigm is named after Everett M. Rogers’ (1962) diffusion of innovation theory. Rogers (1995) defined Diffusion as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system” (cited by Opoku-Amankwa, 1998: p.21). The value of diffusion development communication is seen in the dissemination of modern knowledge, education, and awareness-raising through international mass media, and therefore, in a top-down information transfer from the developed to the less developed countries (Rogers, 2003). Thus, development communication in this view is mainly considered as mass media (Bessette, 2004). Waisbord (2001) argues that the goals of diffusion development communication interventions such as social marketing and entertainment-education are highly outcome-
oriented: changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour are indicators for successful development communication.

Later diffusion studies by Rogers (2003) in the mid-1970s departed from ‘magic bullet’ theory of effect that underpinned his 1962 study and is now influenced by the limited effects or media-opinion leader theory. Rogers (2003) concluded that the media only possess a great importance in raising awareness, but the decision to adopt was greatly influenced by interpersonal communication and personal sources (Waisbord, 2008).

An understanding of diffusion development communication and participatory communication enabled this study to draw the conclusion as to which was being applied at LEAP.

2.1.2 Participatory Communication

Bessette (2004) generally defines participatory communication as a:

planned activity, based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports and accompanies this initiative (p.8).

Participatory communication, which emerged in the 1980s, emphasized the need for beneficiaries to be involved in the development programmes that are meant for them. This, in turn, requires the devolution of power and social change interventions in order to reflect the real needs of people (Chitnis, 2005).

Hence, participatory development communication assumes that individuals should be active in development programmes and processes; they could contribute ideas, take the
initiative and articulate their needs and problems while, at the same time, asserting their autonomy (Boafo, 2006). The participatory development communication approach therefore has arisen from the multiplicity paradigm which emerged as a criticism of the modernisation paradigm and its diffusion model (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005).

Within the multiplicity paradigm, modernisation programmes were criticised for promoting modern consciousness without doubting whether it would be sustainable and desirable for people in less developed countries to move from the traditional toward modern life-styles (Servaes, 2001; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005; Tehranian, 1999). The multiplicity approach emphasises cultural identity and multidimensionality. Contrary to the earlier paradigms which centre on national economics, national development is here defined as the fulfilment of local basic needs with the main focus on local culture (Servaes, 2001).

Mefalopulos (2005), a Senior Communications Officer in the Division of Development Communication of the World Bank, concludes that any development intervention needs to be based on a participatory model in order to be sustainable: “Achieving sustainability in rural development depends largely on the way stakeholders perceive the proposed change and the way they are involved in assessing and deciding about how that change should be achieved” (Mefalopulos, 2005: p.248). Mefalopulos (2008) therefore attribute the failure to sustain past development efforts in developing countries to the use of non-participatory communication in development.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has also identified lack of popular participation as the major cause of Africa’s development crisis. Tuft, and Mefalopulos,
(2009) explain that, international development or donor agencies have become more attentive to issues of participation in development interventions. Thomas (1994:p.49) therefore adds that, participation has brought back to discourse the emphasis on a praxis that has emerged from the developing community as a mirror of their aspirations and needs, rather than as one which has been imposed on them by others. Therefore as Boafo (2006) puts it, participation translates into the active involvement at grassroots level of the developing community.

2.1.3 Paulo Freire’s Contribution to Participatory Communication

Participatory development communication is based on the work of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970). It evolved from his work in adult education and encounters with poverty, exploitation and domesticated development in northern Brazil (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Paulo Freire (1970), the Brazilian pedagogist indicates that participation is based on the notion that the historical vocation of human beings is to be free from anything in life that does not provide for the involvement of people in the processes of change. Freire's theory focuses on the premise that, in order for communication to be effective, it is essential that it be participatory, dialogic and reciprocal (Freire, 1970). From this perspective, communication is seen as equal information exchange or dialogue between all stakeholders of the project through horizontal and bottom-up communication structures (Servaes, 2001).

Cohen (1996) states that community participation is a process and it is also a measure of how much is being done by the developing community for themselves with a view to
taking control of their own lives and the environment in a self-reliant effort. Participation is thus also a vital criterion for development communication (Rahim, 1994: p.127).

2.1.4 Guiding Principles of Participatory Communication

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) assert that a number of principles emerge as fundamental to participatory communication. These principles stem from globally influential thinkers and contribute to the framework under which participatory communication has evolved. These guiding principles by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) have been greatly influenced by the works of Paulo Freire and will serve as key indicators for this study. They are:

Dialogue

The free and open dialogue remains the core principle of participatory communication. Paulo Freire (1976: 88) defines dialogue as “the encounter between men in order to name the world. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this act of exclusion.” For Freire, the free and open dialogue whereby people can “name the world” is voice, the principle of action-reflection-action and horizontal communication. In project language, the process of “naming the world” is called problem definition. Rather than just a lack of information, the type of problems defined in such dialogues can be of social or economic nature, issues of inequality or injustice. In defining the problem this way, the communication strategy to be developed will entail a different pathway than if it were one of information, whereby diffusion-oriented solutions would be suggested.
Voice

Central to dialogic communication is a consciousness of power relations contained in any human relationship. Freire’s (1970) concern was a shift in power, giving voice to marginalized groups, time and space to articulate their concerns, to define their problems, to formulate solutions, and to act on them. The role of the media in participatory communication possesses similar concerns. Supporting and strengthening community media can ensure the most marginalized groups have a platform to voice their concerns, engage in public debate and solve problems.

Liberating Pedagogy

For dialogic communication to happen, someone or something has to articulate the process. This catalyst is typically a person either internal to the community or external, acting to facilitate the dialogue. A radio or television programme could also serve as the catalyst. According to Freire (1970), however, the objective of the catalyst is not only to offer relevant solutions to pre-defined problems, thus simply disseminating information from the informed to the uninformed in a non-participatory manner. Rather, the catalyst would articulate a dialogue whereby collective problem identification and solution would take place (Freire, 1970).

Action-Reflection-Action

Despite the emphasis on dialogue and reflection, participatory communication is also strongly action oriented. As a crucial ingredient of participatory communication, the empowerment process is based on reflection on problems, but also on integration of
action—the attempt to act collectively on the problem identified. It grounds the “talk” in real life problems.

Key results of participatory communication are the articulation of awareness raising and commitment to action. First and foremost, it becomes a process of empowerment for involved communities that feel commitment to and ownership of the problem. Issues of leadership lay inherent in the attention given to the catalyst, and the emphasis of the collective nature of the process speaks to the need for mutually reinforcing the commitment to change, as well as speaking to the actual issue of power.

These four principles are fundamental to the practice of participatory communication. And hence, they therefore informed this study directly by helping to broaden the understanding of the prevailing communication environment at LEAP, which either fosters a cordial practice of the principles of participatory communication in the beneficiary communities or otherwise.

2.1.5 Trend of Communication in Participatory Development Communication

The successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors which are; communication and people’s involvement (Fraser & Restrepo, 1998; cited by Servaes, 2003). Nair and White (1994) said that participatory development communication emphasises two way communication processes which favour horizontal approaches. These horizontal approaches encourage both dialogue which is centered on the problem analysis and a search for solutions, as well as bottom-up approaches that aim to raise the awareness of the decision-makers.
Accordingly, the participatory process distinguishes itself from one way and top-down communication approaches that involve disseminating messages, transmitting information, or persuading people to change their behaviour. This is indicative that, participatory communication is inherently 'transactional'. Transactional communication is a dialogue, wherein sender and receiver of messages interact in order to arrive at shared meanings, which results in consensual agreement and is required in participatory development communication (Nair & White 1994:347).

Participatory communication wants to give preference to horizontal approaches that encourage dialogue centered on problem analysis and a search for solutions, as well as bottom-up approaches that aim to raise the awareness of decision-makers (Otsyina & Rosenberg, 1997).

Participatory approaches, however, have given due attention to alternative forms of communication which are culturally and historically attached with the life style of people living in the Third World. These communication systems, which have been called “alternative media”, “group media”, “small media”, “community media”, “traditional media”, “folk media” etc, have been largely acknowledged by the growing body of literature. Ranganath (1980) clearly explained that since the traditional media are part and parcel of the life style of the community, they are credible sources of information. They are typical and apt instruments for generating grassroots participation and dialogue. Also, they are relatively cheap and available in almost all cultures (Melkote, 1991; 213).

Boafo (2006) also stated that traditional media are not only trustworthy channels for information gathering, processing and disseminating but they also address local interests
and concerns using local languages and cultural contexts. Moemeka (1997) argued that good communication in Africa is viewed not in terms of its effect on an individual, but to a great extent, it is viewed in terms of its capacity in building bonds of solidarity and integrating the individual into the group (cited in White, 2008).

One of the major challenges for policy makers and communication specialists, according to Schoen (1996:250), is how to integrate communication into all phases of the policy design process in development initiatives. A systematic approach in the strategy, design and implementation of communication processes is required for active participation to occur, which means a shift from an exclusive focus on communication media and materials, to a close collaboration with the grassroots community.

This informed the study with particular reference to the choice of communication channels that were employed to communicate to the beneficiaries. For such social interventions to be participatory there is the need for traditional media which address local interests and concerns using local languages and cultural contexts to be employed.

2.1.6 Challenges to Participatory Development Communication

Anyaegebunam et al. (2004 cited in Naidoo, 2010) assert that, there are some challenges to the implementation of the participatory development communication. These challenges are outlined below:

i) *Poor planning and programme formulation*: the lack of research activities are some of the many challenges faced by development practitioners. Many development projects fail because the beneficiaries are not given the opportunity to really participate in the assessment of needs and the identification of the problems to be addressed by the projects.
concerned. The perceptions of the communities themselves of the problems and solutions are often overlooked, while their storehouse of information, experience and analysis is often neglected. Such communities are, thus, regarded as mere recipients rather than as the actual creators of change. This, in turn, results in an incomplete and inaccurate analysis of problems, as well as an incomplete and inaccurate identification of solutions, which frequently leads to poor performance planning and formulation.

ii) Misallocation of, or inadequate, project resources: When incomplete and inaccurate information about the community is used in the planning of the development efforts, there is a definite tendency to allocate project resources either to people who are not in the greatest need of these resources or to the very poor. This may, in turn, result in inadequacies in respect of sustaining the magnitude of the effort required for facilitating and achieving participatory development communication.

iii) Disregard of indigenous knowledge: There is a need to recognise and to validate both indigenous and expert knowledge, and to find an effective way of blending the two, but with due care being accorded to existing social and cultural norms. According to Tri (1986:37) participation is a multicultural process which seeks to encompass all the cultural and ethnic components of society. However, it should be noted that this does not mean 'integration' or 'incorporation', but rather involvement on an equal footing.

iv) Communities’ low sense of power: Some communities, especially the oppressed and the very poor, often feel powerless to steer development policies, priorities, technologies, agendas and programmes. They believe that development is controlled and decided almost entirely by outsiders and that it is not possible for them to influence this process.
This sense of powerlessness may be due to the non-inclusion of the developing community in creating the development programmes.

v) Provision of inappropriate technology: Development change agents frequently promote inappropriate solutions which the developing communities then refuse to adopt because these solutions are not perceived as being relevant to the needs of the communities. This refusal stems from the use of ineffective methods when involving members of the developing community in the identification and development of appropriate technology which would address local conditions, needs and problems, and take advantage of local resources and opportunities. In such situations, development agencies commonly blame the communities for being resistant to change and not possessing the appropriate attitudes and values to recognise the usefulness of the proffered solutions.

vi) Inadequate promotion: It stems from the poor identification and packaging of information, ideas and knowledge which are appropriate for the socio-cultural context of communities. This, thus, frequently leads to non-use and non-appreciation on the part of members of the developing community, or even to confusion and misdirection.

vii) Ineffective training methods: The training methods used in development may not appropriately transfer knowledge and skills to disadvantaged communities that are characterised by low levels of literacy and little proficiency in formal education processes. In other words, development initiatives seldom empower disadvantaged communities. Anyaegbunam et al. (2004:9) state that training is as necessary for the policymakers, senior administrators and development bureaucrats as for the development
communication planners, field staff and community workers. Accordingly, training one group while neglecting others may not create a favourable climate for participatory development communication.

viii) *Low level of recognition* of the role of communication and participatory methods in the planning and implementation of development programmes, especially among policymakers and decision-makers in both government and in development agencies is a challenge. Anyaegbunam *et al.* (2004:9) indicate that there are several government officials and development experts who still perceive communication as a media-oriented one-way process of dispatching information, knowledge and skills from the all-knowing project or government ministry to the ignorant communities in order to educate the ignorant community. This lack of appreciation of the two-way nature of communication as both sharing and participation usually leads to inadequate support for the communication and participatory activities in development projects.

Anyaegbunam *et al.* (2004) challenges to participatory development communication were critical to this study. It was primarily used to analyse the factors militating against the practice of participatory communication at LEAP.

### 2.1.7 Typology of Participation

Various typologies of participatory development communication have been developed because, it can be interpreted and applied in various degrees. These typologies rank participation in terms of the level of influence beneficiaries have on development interventions. Pretty (1995) suggested one of the most widely used typologies, dividing participation into seven levels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Characteristics of each type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Passive Participation</td>
<td>People participate by being informed of what will happen or has already happened, without the leaders or project management listening to people’s responses or seeking their opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participation in</td>
<td>People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. The People have no opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Giving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation by</td>
<td>People participate by being consulted for their views by external people. The experts define the problems and solutions but may modify them in light of people’s responses. However, the experts are under no obligation to take on board the people’s views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participation for</td>
<td>People participate by providing resources, e.g. labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. The people have no stake in prolonging the activities when the incentives end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Functional Participation</td>
<td>People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. Such involvement does not tend to occur at the early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Interactive Participation</td>
<td>People participate in dialogue leading to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-Mobilisation</td>
<td>People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilisation and collective action may challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Pretty (1995) Typology of Participation**

The first four levels of Pretty’s (1995) typology can be described as ‘participation as means’ while the last three levels fall under ‘participation as an end’. Some suggest that
the ‘manipulation’, which is often central to types one to four, implies that they should be seen as types of ‘non participation’ (Pretty, 1995). Tesfaye (2011) also believes that true participation, specifically participation communication, begins on the level six of Pretty’s typology, where the participants are seen as integral partners in the bilateral dialogue.

Mefalopulos and Tufte (2009) suggest a similar, but shorter Typology of Participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Characteristics of Each Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive Participation</td>
<td>The least participatory of the four approaches. Beneficiaries of a project participate by being informed about what is going to happen or has already happened. The beneficiaries’ feedback is minimal or non-existent, and their participation is assessed through methods like head counting and contribution to the discussion (It is sometimes referred to as participation by information).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation by Consultation</td>
<td>An extractive process, whereby stakeholders provide answers to questions posed by outside researchers or experts. Input is not limited to meetings but can be provided at different points in time. However, this consultative process keeps all the decision-making power in the hands of external professionals who are under no obligation to incorporate stakeholders’ input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation by Collaboration</td>
<td>Beneficiaries form groups to participate in the discussion and analysis of predetermined objectives set by the project. This level of participation does not usually result in dramatic changes in what should be accomplished, which is often already determined. It does, however, require an active involvement in the decision-making process about how to achieve it. This incorporates a component of horizontal communication and capacity building among all stakeholders. Even if initially dependent on outside facilitators and experts, with time collaborative participation has the potential to evolve into an independent form of participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment Participation</td>
<td>Beneficiaries are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision making about what should be accomplished and how. While outsiders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are primus inter pares, i.e., they are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives. Dialogue identifies and analyzes critical issues and an exchange of knowledge and experiences leads to solutions. Ownership and control of the process rest in the hands of the primary stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Typology of participation (Mefalopulos and Tufte, 2009)*
The relevance of the above mentioned typologies of participation to this study is seen in the study of Botchie (2000), which argues that the use of participatory communication in development in Ghana has still been low, with the involvement of the local community members usually sought at the implementation stage. Therefore a very large segment of the local community does not have a voice in the identification of needs or determination of priorities for action. Moreover, some studies conducted in some districts in Ghana have revealed that many people especially in rural areas do not fully participate in the decision making processes of the district assemblies (Sulemana, 2009).

In terms of communication channels, face-to-face and group communication channels like drama, theatre, songs, gong-gong beater/town criers, meetings, group discussions and durbars have been used to promote participation, particularly in rural communities. With the advent of technology and liberalisation of airwaves, there are a number of community radio platforms which are also promoting the participation of the community members in decision making and development.

Hence, this study will be particularly informed by the level of participation communication allowed in the implementation of the LEAP social protection programme. For the purpose of this study, attention will be given to the Pretty (1995) classification of participation.

2.2 Related Studies

There is an increasing volume of literature on projects and programmes which have apparently embraced participation. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) however, argue that, very few actually meet the standards of genuine participatory development
communication. This literature review section presented a variety of studies which have been conducted to test for participation in development intervention.

2.2.1 The use of Participatory Development Communication (PDC) in rural development

Mbilinyi (2010) studied poverty alleviation strategies and agriculture development in Asutifi District in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. The emphasis of the study was on smallholder farmers who are the majority, and account for more than 60% of the total workforce in the study area and more than 50% at the national level. The group mentioned is the poorest at district level. The study used the qualitative Participatory research methodology to find the information, case study method was employed and the research was carried out in a natural setting.

Mbilinyi (2010) asserts that, the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategies need to involve different stakeholders in a given community including smallholder famers. However, it revealed that there was no strategy that was directly focusing on smallholder famers in the district. Also poor functional institutional and managerial framework at the grass root level were the main cause that hinder the formulation and implementation of strategies that will result in bringing about tangible outcomes at grass root level.

Micro level participation enhanced capacity building and bring about change and diversified micro-economic activities among smallholder farmers. Without stakeholder participation, as Mbilinyi (2010) realized, the needed impact of reducing poverty will be minimal.
Oniekwere’s (1994) studied the use of participatory communication in development by thirty (30) NGOs in Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon provides an insight into how the NGOs used interpersonal, group, traditional and mass media communication channels in implementing participatory development.

The study indicated that interpersonal communication channels such as personal contacts and house to house visits were used in rural communities with small populations and where individuals knew each other. These were used to seek the views of opinion leaders in creating and spreading development messages, and in influencing community opinions and decisions.

The group communication channels used by the 30 NGOs in the three countries included: group discussions, meetings, community networking, group exchange visits, rallies, community dialogues, seminars, workshops, training, role modelling, rural community clubs, and cooperatives. Oniekwere (1994) says the use of group communication made significant impact in the areas of agriculture, training, nutrition and health information.

Applying group dynamics to development communication strategies contributed to project successes and impact through

i. enhancing the visibility of project objectives;

ii. Sensitizing both members and non-members on project principles and objectives;

iii. Providing individual and collective support, and identification with project activities;

iv. Enhancing increased participation of target beneficiaries;
v. Providing psychological and sociological justification to participation in project activities;

vi. Providing channels for the dissemination of development information and the sharing of information and experiences” (Oniekwere, 1994: 1).

The NGO’s also used mass media channels such as radio, television, posters, newsletters, pamphlets, booklets, stickers, banners and bill boards to reach large numbers of people at repeated intervals to increase awareness. However, the study findings revealed that the use of the mass media, among particularly the rural dwellers, was hindered by the difficulty in accessing the mass media and understanding its messages. Another challenge found by the study was the suitability of broadcast time, in the case of radio and television, since it coincided with several other activities such as farming, marketing, festivals and meal time. This prevented many potential beneficiaries from receiving the message (Oniekwere, 1994).

Besides the above mentioned channels for communication, the NGOs also were found by the study to be using a combination of approaches. These included: combined interpersonal/group communication; combined mass media/interpersonal communication where the target beneficiaries were shown on television or heard on radio to discuss specific development interventions under the direction of a facilitator.

Oniekwere (1994) says the NGOs studied had attained remarkable success in their areas of intervention, with multiplier effects in the life of beneficiaries in some cases owing to their partial use of participatory communication approach. However, the study revealed that there were serious problems with sustainability of these NGO activities. A major
cause of these problems was marginalization of actual beneficiaries in the identification, formulation and implementation of project activities; and unproductive collaboration, coordination and harmonization of NGO activities to avoid unnecessary competition and duplication of efforts (Oniekwere, 1994). The study concluded that even though the NGOs are able to achieve some of their objectives, the approaches they have been using have not been participatory enough.

The level of implementation of participatory communication is as crucial as the choice for participation. The multiplier effects in the life of beneficiaries are indicative of the benefits of the use of participatory communication approach. The implication therefore for this study was what specific levels of involving the beneficiary communities in the implementation of participatory communication at LEAP through its set activities.

2.2.2 The use of participatory communication in poverty reduction

Tastan (2005) studied the World Bank’s country agenda in Turkey with particular reference to poverty alleviation as social policy. The aim of the study was to critically elaborate the World Bank’s Social Risk Mitigation Project (SRMP) in Turkey for poverty alleviation.

The study explains that, the Bank uses the ideas of participation of the poor in design and execution of social policy projects and active engagement of civil society to ‘amplify the voices of the poorest people in decisions that affect their lives’ (World Bank, 2000) cited in Tastan, (2005)

Consequently, civil society engagement and the poor’s participation in development and poverty reduction is promoted by the Bank on the ground that it has functions of
providing local knowledge, building consensus and legitimization. It is argued that by means of these functions, participation leads to a more effective implementation of programmes and meaningful results in the structural adjustment (Tastan, 2005).

In all instances where the Bank refers to this participation issue, it argues that it will guarantee the effective functioning of reform process and make the emerging policy changes sustainable. Participation of the poor is alleged to have such an influence on the reform process through three particular functions which it is tacitly assumed to realize. One of them is providing local knowledge which would inform the poverty reduction projects about the local needs of the poor communities, which is qualified as demand driven social assistance by the Bank. Through appropriating this knowledge, the Bank argues innovative ideas and solutions can be developed by the poor at community level to solve local problems. Through designing and executing projects relying on such ideas, local communities will be able to solve their problems on their own. In this respect, the Bank identifies a second particular function that it expects resulting from the poor’s participation, which is legitimization of the reform process.

It is no doubt an ideological function in nature. The Bank also seems to expect a similarly ideological third function in this context: consensus creation. Actually, this is the aspect on which the Bank puts the greatest emphasis in the context of civil society and poor’s engagement. All relations that public authorities involve with civil society are conceived as ‘a consensus-building exercise’ by the Bank (Tastan, 2005).

The study concluded that, against this theoretical background, the Bank articulates its participation discourse in the context of poverty reduction in Turkey through indicating
the need to include the targeting population of the social policies into the policy practices. In this direction, it designs the ongoing social assistance programs in Turkey as social fund type initiatives where social funds rest on the idea that allowing the poor people and communities to become actively involved in their own development (Tastan, 2005).

This active involvement of community persons, otherwise referred to as participatory communication is therefore directly related poverty reduction as shown by the studies of Tastan (2005). This is therefore relevant to this study.

Lazarus (2008) assessed the various accounts put forward to explain the disappointing outcomes thus far of civil society participation in the design and implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in aid receiving countries throughout the world. Lazarus (2008) acknowledged that, the international financial institutions (IFIs) of the World Bank and IMF see participation as a process of national dialogue through which ‘stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policymaking, resource allocations, and/or program implementation’ and from which ‘some level of national consensus’ is formed around policy priorities and hence, the Bank and Fund extended an invitation to representatives of ‘civil society’, and ‘the poor’ in particular, to ‘participate’ alongside government and donors in both the production and implementation of PRSPs.

The study revealed that, nine years on from their introduction case studies from around the world portray a reality of PRSPs and participation that is greatly divergent from that envisaged by its architects. Three such main commonalities observed in the PRSPs produced in poor countries in every continent where:
i. There is no change in macroeconomic policies.

ii. Participation is, at best, consultation: evidence from across the globe suggests that the level and nature of participation in PRSP processes has been largely shallow and narrow. Almost everywhere the process has constituted a public consultation exercise at best and, at worst, participation has taken the form of ‘theatre’ staged by governments to satisfy donor demands in which civil society’s policy input has been largely or entirely ignored. There has been an overwhelming focus on the part of donors on the process rather than the principles of participation.

iii. Donorship: While the primacy of public ownership of the PRSP is proclaimed, negotiations over key concessional loans remain the private domain of ‘a select few representatives of a small set of ministries and donors in a virtually participation-free zone’. Such ‘backstage’ negotiations take place concomitantly behind the on-stage ‘theatre’ of participation. Thus the move towards policy ‘ownership’ for client governments and their citizens has been overwhelmingly rhetorical.

Perhaps the most stark and well documented example of a subversive sociopolitical consequence of PRSP participation in recipient countries is the observation that the international financial institutions (IFIs’) invitation to participate has been taken up not by ‘the poor’, for whom the opportunity cost of participating is proscriptively high, but instead by ‘better off, better organized and more articulate actors’, namely the urban-based, professional middle-classes in recipient countries.
Lazarus (2008) therefore concludes that, if a situation is present in a country where there is a level of broad political mobilisation great enough to pressurise or even defeat incumbent elites, a process of participation may well produce a PRSP that is participatory in its production and implementation and is genuinely reformist and ‘pro-poor’ in its content.

Especially when this study was looking at a national social intervention programme aimed at alleviating the poverty levels of the poor beneficiaries, there was the need for more active participation of the broader society and beneficiaries communities. This formed a part of the basis for the study’s analysis of its findings.

2.2.3 The use of participatory communication in grassroots communities development

Msibi and Penzhorn (2010) examined the role and practical application of participatory communication approach at local government level in the Kungwini Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The findings of the study concluded that participatory communication, being critical for development at local government level, was being successfully applied because, the municipality utilised existing social structures such as representations from women’s associations, youth, disabled persons, traditional leaders and many others in identifying their own problems and making decisions on priority development issues and also recognised existing indigenous knowledge, socio-cultural symbolic forms, and popular and ethnic culture through the ward committees.

Communication between the councilors and the communities were confirmed to be two-way with the community members being conscious of their democratic and constitutional
right to participate in the development process. In turn, the municipality demonstrated commitment to ensuring equal participation for all especially when the community was generally empowered to make decisions regarding their own development (Msibi and Penzhorn, 2010).

The major participatory channels that were used within the municipality included interpersonal and traditional communication channels and methods. These included community meetings – the chief communication method used within the municipality; public/community events that were commonly used to communicate with the people; and door-to-door campaigns were conducted by ward committee members and community development workers on regular basis to mobilize or inform community members on development issues (Msibi and Penzhorn, 2010).

The study also confirmed Santucci’s (2005, cited by Msibi and Penzhorn, 2010) belief that the communication process in development must be led by the needs of the community and not by technology, because the goal was to address real and defined needs of the people based on their values.

The mass media were not the most commonly used communication channels in the Kungwini Municipality. However, the Kangala community radio was regarded as an accessible and effective communication medium because of its huge listenership and because it used the local language. Other mass media channels used to communicate by either community members or the municipality were state-owned radio stations, national newspapers and the municipal website (Msibi and Penzhorn, 2010).
Msibi and Penzhorn (2010) also identified some challenges that impeded further practical implementation of participatory communication. The municipality did not have development communication practitioners even though it had a communication manager who was mainly responsible for corporate communications. Due to the municipality's limited communication budget, no funds were being provided for major communication activities such as translations, publications and other pertinent (communication) resources and processes needed for participation. The study revealed that while the communities were consulted extensively on the identification and prioritization of the development initiatives, they were, however, not always empowered to take full responsibility for driving and evaluating the development process.

In analysing the practice of participatory communication at LEAP, this was helpful since LEAP also encountered the same challenge of lack of participatory communication practitioners or expert training to staff responsible for implementing the social intervention programme. It helped informed this study and help appreciate the challenge of the absence of experts in the implementation of such a national project.

Naidoo (2010) examined the way in which Thusong Service Centres in Tshwane, South Africa facilitated the participation and involvement of communities in their communication with government. The aim of study was to determine how the communication of Thusong Service Centres in Tshwane compared with the normative principles of participatory development communication. The study, however, viewed participation on the part of the community as a mandatory element in development and thus, the study considered participatory development communication to be an invaluable component of the overall betterment of a community.
The study adopted a qualitative research approach to gather data, using purposive sampling and focused on the six Thusong Service Centres in Tshwane. The study comprised document analyses of government policies, semi-structured interviews with senior Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) personnel and personal observations at the six Thusong Service Centres (Naidoo, 2010).

Analyses of the communication of Thusong Service Centres with Tshwane communities showed that there was inadequate alignment with the theoretical underpinnings of participatory development communication. Against the backdrop of Chin Saik Yoon's four ways of observing participation in development projects, namely, participation in implementation, evaluation, benefit and decision-making, the study indicated that Tshwane communities did not partake in participation in evaluation and participation in decision-making. Furthermore, using Freirean dialogue as a benchmark, it was concluded that Thusong Service Centres used linear communication process, which were contrary to the principles of dialogue (Naidoo, 2010).

In essence, the empirical study showed that the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) considered consultation to be an important process in the development communication process. This was clearly demonstrated by their consistent reference to information dissemination and needs identification as part of community participation.

It was evident that only certain groups within the community were included in the development communication discussions, which did not demonstrate any transparency in the process. Additionally, communication methods that were adopted incorporated
diffusion methods, which encompassed a vertical communication mode and not participatory communication where people are given the opportunity for self-expression. It was noted that the use of community media was not always viable for development initiatives because of the lack of budget capacity regarding Thusong Service Centres and as a result messages are not given maximum reach.

Naidoo (2010) concluded that the way in which Thusong Service Centres communicated with community members in Tshwane was generally inadequate and in the main did not follow the guidelines of participatory development communication.

Naidoo’s (2010) research was relevant to this study because the emphasis was on using participatory communication to ensure sustained development is dependent to the extent to which the guidelines of participatory communication are applied.

Tesfaye (2011) explored how the Ethiopian traditional coffee ceremony served women around Merkato, Addis Ababa as a forum for participatory communication to resolve child abuse and exploitation and other problems. The qualitative study used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and observations to gather data from participants, facilitators and the coordinator of the programme, run by Children Aid Ethiopia (CHAD-ET).

The study revealed that, although the initiative gave a chance for some women to discuss some major problems of their area, the overall procedure did not seem to be in a position to give all participants equal opportunity to take part in the discussions. This was mainly because of the formal nature of communications, limited skills of facilitators and large group size.
Tesfaye’s (2011) study also concluded that, the initiative met one of the important considerations regarding participatory communication, which was, “initiatives for development must begin with grassroots communities and organisations” (Servaes, 1999: 93). Tesfaye (2011), therefore concluded that, this demonstrated the exclusion of participants at the early stages of the designing and planning process. The fact that CHAD-ET called the participants after deciding the agenda indicated that participation was mainly used as a means to achieve predetermined objectives.

This findings that showed that there were some encouraging developments in the utilisation of the coffee ceremony for participatory communication. This findings greatly informed this study on how LEAP can utilize such community gatherings in its practice of participatory communication.

2.3 Chapter summary
The chapter provided detailed definition of participatory communication and the foundational basis for the theory of participatory development communication and critically analysed various research findings in the area of implementation of participatory communication in either group-based, community or national programmes.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the method employed in gathering data for this study. It describes the study area, sample size, data collection procedure, analysis and the presentation of the data. The study was designed qualitatively where the focus was not on the numbers but the depth of issues. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions was used to help explore how participatory communication was used at LEAP.

3.1 Overall Approach to Study

A leading scholar in the field of development communication, Servaes (2001) states that generally, qualitative approaches may be better when investigating meaningful phenomena in development communication. The research design for this study made use of qualitative research methodologies which relate to the general aim of the study, which was, to determine how the communication of LEAP in Ghana compared with the normative principles of participatory development communication.

3.1.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are used to understand people’s attitudes and behaviour where between 6 to 12 people are interviewed concurrently, with a moderator who leads the respondents in a fairly unstructured discussion about the investigation topic. This study used FGDs as part of a multi-method approach to collect data on the topic. FGDs were used by this study because of its flexibility in question design and follow-up and the fact that it allowed for more people to be interviewed at a go.
3.1.2 In-depth Interviews

The use of in-depth face-to-face interviews and selection of interviewees were guided by purposive sampling in an attempt to reach the appropriate respondents. A purposive sample is one subjectively selected by the researcher (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Purposive sampling selects subjects on the basis of specific characteristics or qualities. This type of sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose.

According to Boulton and Hammersley (2006:244), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in terms of which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher on the basis of a variety of criteria, including specialist knowledge of the research issue, or the capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

Two in-depth interviews were conducted with two staff of LEAP, including the national coordinator, and the district social officer. The interviewees were chosen according to their importance as sources in the process of applying participatory development communication and according to their willingness to cooperate. As suggested by Mercer (2006), the most useful interviewees for research projects are generally the project beneficiaries and key informants, such as organization staff and project leaders, donor staff, village or settlement leaders, local leaders from government, and business and religious institutions. It was expected that the in-depth interview would help a great deal in complementing the data collected through the FGDs.
3.2 Sampling Method

The non-probability method, specifically purposive sampling was used by this study to determine the subjects. The study was made up of two groups of beneficiaries of LEAP, the national coordinator and district social officer as sources of data for this study.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the twelve beneficiaries, the District Social officer and the LEAP national coordinator for the study.

A district within the Greater Accra region, Madina Abokobi District was selected. The researcher’s familiarity with their culture and values and researcher’s ability to speak and understand their language enabled an efficient communication with them. Two focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries of LEAP in the Abokobi Community of the Madin-Abokobi District within the Greater Accra Region.

The LEAP national coordinator of LEAP was interviewed because he was the head of the entire project and was in a better position to explain the implementation of the development communication component of the project. The district social director was also interviewed, because he was the key implementation agent in the district.

3.3 Data gathering methods

This study adopted two methods for collecting data: in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were conducted to collect data from the beneficiaries using a structure interview guide. Two focus groups made up of six (6) beneficiaries based on how long they have been benefiting from the social grant were involved. Each focus group lasted for about thirty (30) minutes each. The discussions were held in a school building located in the Abokobi Township.
While in-depth interviews were conducted with the National coordinator and district social director, each in their respective offices due to the busy schedule of these officers. Each interview did not last past thirty (30) minutes.

Both focus groups and in-depth interviews were recorded and notes made. Transcribed copies are attached to this research as an appendix.

3.4 Data Analysis

The unit for analysis was LEAP as a national social protection programme. After the fieldwork, all taped discussions and interviews were transcribed to supplement the notes taken during the actual data collection exercise. The data was then categorized into different themes based on the research questions. The research data was thematically coded to give meaning to the study as well as to put the gathered data into perspective.

Based on the extensive literature reviewed and thematic framework on the participatory communication approach and the research questions, the data were analysed based on the following: beneficiaries activity initiation; perception of participation; participatory communication approaches within LEAP, both the national level and district level; forms of participation that occur and who participates; patterns of media use for participation; factors hindering the promotion of participation of the beneficiaries in the programme.

The data that were generated during the empirical study were analysed against the theoretical framework proposed in chapter two (2) and the findings compared with each of the data gathering methods as a cross referencing mechanism for validity and reliability.
The research findings were then analysed descriptively and presented in a narrative form along emergent themes. Conclusions were drawn based on the data collected.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

In respect of the ethical considerations for this study, Gorman and Clayton (2005:43-44) state that the rights of individuals involved in the research study include confidentiality and anonymity, voluntary participation and informed consent.

Approvals from the relevant authorities were also sought and acquired prior to the fieldwork being conducted. Discussions during personal interviews were confidential, and participants in the focus group discussions (FGD) were informed of the nature and purpose of the research verbally prior to the interview.

This study therefore employed the above and other several methods to ensure the requisite confidentiality and anonymity of all participating individuals.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were used in gathering data for this study. The data was then categorized into different themes based on the research questions for the purposes of analysing the data for this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This study generally set out to understand how participatory communication is employed in the implementation of LEAP. Participatory communication was defined as a dynamic, interactional, and transformative process of dialogue between people, groups, and institutions that enables people, both individually and collectively, to realize their full potential and be engaged in their own welfare.

The study looked at the extent to which the characteristics, types and flow of communication in LEAP compared with the normative principles of participatory development communication. The study also sought to ascertain the challenges, if any, that affected the practical implementation of the participatory communication in the implementation of LEAP. The findings of the study as presented here are organised around the main research questions upon which this study was conducted.

4.1 Nature of Communication Flow

One important aspect in determining how the practice of communication at LEAP compared with the normative principles of participatory development communication was to determine the nature of communication flow in implementation of LEAP between the beneficiaries and LEAP officials.

Communication between LEAP officials and the beneficiaries was found by the study to be largely top-down. The district social officer interviewed (2nd October, 2013) mentioned that,
Information usually moves from the LEAP head office to the regional heads, to the district social officers, to the members of Community LEAP Implementing Committee (CLIC) and eventually to the beneficiaries. They were largely information about the dates on which payments of social grants was to be made.

Although the national coordinator believes the flow of information is balanced, almost all the participants of the FGD mentioned that, though they had opportunities to communicate with LEAP, they usually depended more on the information from LEAP officials. A participant of the FGD (Wednesday, 3rd October, 2013) explained:

I depend on LEAP for information, for accurate details of when the next payments are coming, etc. That is how it is, we need information from LEAP, and I don’t think they need from us as much as we do. Even at beneficiaries’ forum, all we do is to be re-informed on what LEAP expects us to do with.

The two FGD participants mentioned that their opportunity to inform LEAP occurs during the community interaction on their selection of next beneficiaries with other community members. They unanimously agreed that, they were encouraged to speak their minds and ask questions on issues discussed at such meetings. A participant of the FGD (Wednesday, 3rd October, 2013) cited this example:

We all make our views known, as the community, together with beneficiaries, have to make an input into those who have to be selected to benefit from LEAP. When they last selected new beneficiaries, they nearly took out my poor neighbour but we all talked about their poor situation and because it was true and everyone agreed, they are now beneficiaries.

Most however, believe that because such inputs come once in a long while, they largely feel they mainly depend on information from LEAP. A participant of the FGD (Wednesday, 3rd October, 2013) mentioned:
The last time such a forum came up was about two years ago. It does not come often. Until LEAP decides to select additional beneficiaries, such a community forum does not come up at all.

4.2 Beneficiary participation in implementation of LEAP

As stated earlier in this study, participatory communication is only a vehicle for promoting the participation of beneficiaries in development interventions. Consequently, this study sought to determine the level of participation of beneficiaries in the implementation of the LEAP. As such, participation in both project design and implementation were separately studied using Tufte and Mefalopulos’ (2009) guiding principles for participatory communication, which are voice, dialogue, liberating pedagogy and action-reflection-action, as well as Pretty’ (1995) typology of participation discussed under the theoretical framework of this study.

The national coordinator mentioned:

We have a communications strategy that was prepared for us by a communications expert. He interacted with me and I made known to him how we want the beneficiaries to participate in the implementation LEAP. He then visited some of the districts and localities to interact with the grassroots beneficiaries to fine tune the document he was preparing.

(Tuesday, 1st October, 2013)

4.3 Communication Channels Used in the Implementation

The findings from both focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews revealed that the communication aspects of the LEAP, was being implemented using a mixture of interpersonal, group and mass media communication channels. However, the specific
types of channels differed depending on the prevailing circumstances in the various communities (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Type of Channels</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Face-to-face discussions</td>
<td>● To summon community members, including beneficiaries to meetings, give information to them and follow-up on selection of beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● To take decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>● To inform members of Community LEAP Implementing Committee (CLIC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● To summon some beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Community Meetings</td>
<td>● To take decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Durbars</td>
<td>● To educate the community on LEAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>● To communicate problems LEAP exist to eradicate to audiences at durbars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass media</td>
<td>Local radio (community public address systems)</td>
<td>To reach beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>To reach beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: A table indicating the various communications channels used by LEAP

4.3.1 Use of indigenous communication channels and methods

Some of the communication channels mentioned by the FGD participants (as indicated in Table 3) could be described as indigenous communication channels. They were meetings, group discussions, durbars, face-to-face interactions and drama. But the most commonly used indigenous communication channels in the communication aspects of LEAP were community meetings and community public address systems.
The national coordinator mentioned that, depending on the locality, LEAP uses even a town crier to inform beneficiaries, a point, FGD participants (Wednesday 3rd October, 2013) collaborated and one mentioned:

The town crier was occasionally used in our area when payments were to be made. I don’t have a phone, it is one of the ways they can reach me. Remember that, this place is a rural area. I do not live close to the community radio, so I depend on the town crier who is more mobile and so can come as far as my house to broadcast the message to us.

4.4 Factors militating against the use of the participatory communication

The national coordinator cited the high level of illiteracy as one of the challenges they faced.

Because of the diverse backgrounds of the beneficiaries we face challenges. They are mostly illiterates, vulnerable, they do not have a voice, they cannot come together collectively to demand what they need to demand, so these are the challenges we face.

The national coordinator mentioned (Monday, 1st October, 2013) that, the absence of a communications expert in the LEAP organisational setup was a challenge.

We do not have a communications person with us. It is one area we are still grappling with. Hence every communication activity is planned for by me, together with my national team and other social officers.

4.5 LEAP officers understanding of participation

The concept of participatory communication was understood differently by LEAP officers interviewed. The national coordinator showed an understanding of the concept of participatory communication, he mentioned:
Participatory communication refers to the active involvement of the beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of the LEAP programme. However, the district social welfare officer interviewed did not have any idea of what participatory communication is. Mr. Nunoo, the Madina Abokobi District social officer mentioned:

This is the first time I am hearing this word. To be frank, I do not know how that concerns LEAP. (Tuesday, 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 2013).

Again, though the national coordinator mentioned that, participatory communication trainings have been offered to the social workers around the country with the aim of ensuring that, beneficiaries are involved in the LEAP project, the social workers did not recollect any such training. Mr. Nunoo, the social district officer remarked:

No such training has been offered to the social workers in relation to this concept. The systems are in place, for instance when we hear from national that their monies are in, we send out information to the beneficiaries to meet us on a specific date for their payments and that is just it for most of the time. So, we do not need beneficiaries to tell us what to do always, or what to improve upon. (Tuesday, 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 2013)

### 4.6 Framework within which participatory communication was practiced

LEAP had prepared a communication strategy document that was informed by leadership at LEAP, with district social welfare and beneficiaries involvement. The national coordinator mentioned:

We had a communications consultant who was brought on board to draft a communications strategy for LEAP. The intent was to put communications at LEAP in the right perspective and to encourage participation by beneficiaries. So he took the opinions of LEAP leadership and also went to the grassroots to include the views and suggestions of beneficiaries. So
I must confess, our communication strategy is duly informed by all key stakeholders. (Monday, 1st October, 2013)

The beneficiaries interviewed however denied any such involvement. A FDG participant (Wednesday, 3rd October, 2013) mentioned:

To the best of my knowledge, I have never been involved in the drafting of any such document. I am yet to know of any other beneficiary in this community who was involved. Maybe, they went elsewhere in the country, but not here.

The national coordinator of LEAP asserted that, because they did not have any person in charge of communication, it was only aspects of this document that is operational.

We do not have a communications expert who works permanently at LEAP, we are now looking for one. Until then, the document is largely not operational. (Monday, 1st October, 2013)

4.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the findings obtained from two in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions with beneficiaries. The data that was gathered where grouped under themes that emerged from the data collected for the purpose of putting the gathered data into right perspective.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study was undertaken to examine how communication at LEAP compared with the normative principles of participatory communication. It also examined the role participatory communication played in the implementation of LEAP programme. The findings reported in the previous chapter are discussed in this chapter in relation to the participatory communication model which guided the study and the related studies reviewed.

5.1 Nature of communication flow

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) mentioned that, any participatory development intervention must promote a two-way communication between communicators and message receivers in their communication process. The results of this study indicated that, though flow of information was both ways, it was largely from LEAP to beneficiaries.

However, since participatory communication “allows for knowledge sharing on an equal basis rather than a top-down transmission of information and persuasion” (Melkote, 1991 as cited in Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010: 232) it can be concluded from the research data that, the practice of communication did not give credence to the normative principles of participatory communication. The results of this study confirms that, generally, communication flow between beneficiaries and LEAP was largely top-down, with few instances of bottom-up decision making.
Additional information on the nature of communication flow is discussed under the beneficiaries’ participation in the implementation of LEAP. The involvement of beneficiaries could best be described under the participation by consultation, according to Pretty’s (1995) typology, which directly compares with participation by consultation, according to the Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) typology.

It is evident from the findings from the previous chapter that, that there was no shared meaning on the need for participation between the social welfare officers and beneficiaries, the primary stakeholders in LEAP especially when both did not have an understanding of the need for participation in project design and implementation.

5.2 Role of participatory communication in implementation of LEAP

The findings indicate a specific role of participatory communication. It indicates that, beneficiaries, together with the community had a voice when it came to selection of new beneficiaries of LEAP.

The beneficiaries indicated that, during the community meetings, they had the opportunity to interact with members of the Community LEAP Implementing Committee (CLIC) together with the LEAP district social welfare officers on only identifying other extremely poor people in their communities. In this instance, LEAP conformed to what Nair and White (1994:347) said about participatory development communication that, it must put emphased on a two-way communication process which favours horizontal approaches.

Accordingly, the participatory process distinguished itself from one-way and top-down communication approaches that involved disseminating messages, transmitting
information, or persuading people to change their behaviour. This is indicative that, participatory communication was inherently transactional. Transactional communication is a dialogue, wherein sender and receiver of messages interact in order to arrive at shared meanings, which results in consensual agreement and is required in participatory development communication (Nair & White 1994:347). But it must be noted that, this happened only in instances when beneficiaries and community members were involved in the selection of new beneficiaries onto the LEAP programme.

5.3 Communication channels used in implementing LEAP

The findings of this study indicate that LEAP used interpersonal communication channels such as personal contacts which in effect were house-to-house visits in rural communities with small populations and where individuals knew each other. These were used to seek the views of opinion leaders in gathering community opinions and decisions, as Oniekwere (1994) also identified in his study.

Hence, the choice for use of indigenous communication was in accordance with Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009: 12-13) prescription that certain media concerns need to be addressed in order to decide whether to use the mass media, group media or interpersonal media and whether to use community based, regional or national media.

5.4 Factors militating against the use of the participatory communication

The five challenges to participatory communication discussed by Anyaegbunam et al. (2004) can be seen to contribute to the challenges at LEAP. For instance, Anyaebunam et al (2004) mentioned that, beneficiaries are not given the opportunity to really participate in the assessment of needs and identification of the problems to be addressed. The
findings here indicated that, beneficiaries were not directly involved in the drafting of the whole LEAP programme though consultations were made with other stakeholders.

Anyaebunam et al (2004) identified a community’s low sense of power as a challenge to participatory communication, the findings indicated that, beneficiaries at the Abokobi had the same challenge. The Abokobi community believed that, development is controlled and decided most entirely by LEAP and that, it was largely impossible for them to influence this process. As Anyaebunam et al (2004), best puts it “this sense of powerlessness may be due to the non-inclusion of the developing community in creating the development programme.”

Again, another challenge to participatory communication identified by Anyaebunam et al (2004) was inadequate promotion, which directly relates to the work of communication experts handling and packaging of information, which are appropriate for the socio-cultural context of communities. Hence, because the findings indicate that, LEAP implementation officers had little knowledge of participatory communication, it led to the non-usage and non-appreciation of the approach by beneficiaries.
5.5 LEAP officers understanding of participation

The poor understanding of the concept of participatory communication among the key implementation agents of LEAP is a disincentive to the effective practice of participatory communication. This general lack of understanding had far reaching effects, (such as the non involvement in decision making) on the involvement of the beneficiaries in the activities of LEAP. Hence, the guiding principles advanced by Freire (1976) namely dialogue, voice, liberating pedagogy and action-reflection-action were not seen in LEAP because the FGD participants clearly indicated that, though they had a voice, it was limited to selection of new beneficiaries. They did not have a voice in deciding among themselves through dialogue on a particular problem to advocate on and the communication channels to use for the advocacy.

5.6 Framework within which participatory communication was practiced

It is likely a section of beneficiaries, outside the subject of this study were involved in drafting the document that regulated the use of participatory communication at LEAP. However, a conclusion that is drawn from data available from this finding is that, the beneficiaries were not effectively involved, clearly defeating what Servaes (1999:93) asserts as an important consideration regarding participatory communication, which is “initiatives for development must begin with grassroots communities”

5.7 Conclusion

The study revealed that, LEAP utilised indigenous communication in its approaches at reaching out to the beneficiaries. However, the flow of information was largely top-down
hence defeating the normative principle of participatory communication which requires a two-way nature and flow of information.

In the views of the beneficiaries, their participation was largely limited to the rare instance of selection of new beneficiaries. Key implementation officers showed little knowledge and understanding of the concept of participatory communication. The study outlined the challenges impeding the true implementation of participatory communication at LEAP and therefore makes some recommendations aimed at correcting them.

5.8 Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made. Participatory development and communication are specialised fields and hence, they require the use of people with the appropriate skills and know-how. It is recommended that:

i. LEAP and other development communication interventions contract experts in participatory development communication on the programme. This will help to improve the use of participatory communication in the implementation of LEAP, thereby giving more voice to the beneficiaries.

ii. Also, in participatory development initiatives such as LEAP, the nature of participatory communication, particularly during interactions between field social welfare workers and the beneficiaries, is important. Hence, the need to offer participatory development communication training to field workers and any other implementation persons, to enable them involve the beneficiaries.
iii. Again, there is the need for a more active participation of the developing community, including beneficiaries at every juncture of the development communication process. This study agrees with Naidoo (2010:203) that, this will promote the adoption of new practices, empower communities, and build networks and capacity among stakeholders, which is essential for successful and sustainable development communication. With such commitment from all key stakeholders, fast-tracking of the development process will be an attainable reality.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The research findings as presented in the previous chapter were analysed. Informed by these analyses, recommendations were made in effectively incorporating effective participatory communication to help such national social interventions to be more effective in the future and achieve its target of alleviating poverty.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the data collection is to learn about how the participatory communication approach is being implemented at LEAP.

The demographics

i. Name of participants; age; marital status; occupation; village or town name; educational level, name of business (if any).

Beneficiary Participation

i. What kind of communication activities did you participate in?

ii. Have you made any recommendations on LEAP’s communication with you?

iii. What is the nature of communication flow between you and the LEAP office?

Communication and Participation

i. Would you prefer other communication channels instead of what was used?

ii. Would you say you have had enough opportunity to speak to the policy makers at both the local and national levels?
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH DISTRICT SOCIAL OFFICER OF LEAP

i. What communication channels are used to engage beneficiaries?

ii. What indigenous media channels have you used in project implementation and why?

iii. Do you know of any communication strategy or plan?

iv. Are you familiar with the concept of participatory communication?

v. Have you been offered any training in participatory communication?

vi. Do you face barriers or constraints in using participatory communication at LEAP?
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF LEAP

i. What is the leadership structure at LEAP

ii. What are the LEAP’s communication objectives?

iii. What is your understanding of participatory communication and how relevant is the approach to the implementation of the LEAP Project?

iv. What was/is the level of involvement/participation of beneficiaries in the design and implementation of the Project at the management level and what reasons would you assign to it?

v. What communication channels are used to engage them?

vi. What is the role of experts (service providers) in your communication activities, from interaction with the Project beneficiaries and the implementation of your activities?

vii. What criteria/indicators did you choose to evaluate your communications?

viii. How were your action plans/communication strategies developed and who participated in them?

ix. What indigenous media channels have you used in project implementation and why?

x. Has the staff of the LEAP and community officers been trained in participatory communication?

xi. Do you face barriers or constraints in using participatory communication at LEAP?
APPENDIX 4: TRANSCRIPTION OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON TUESDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 2014 WITH THE DISTRICT SOCIAL OFFICER – MR. RICHARD NUNOO

QUESTION 1: How is information transferred in LEAP?

ANSWER: Information usually moves from the LEAP head office to the regional heads, to the district social officers, to the members of Community LEAP Implementing Committee (CLIC) and eventually to the beneficiaries. They were largely information about the dates on which payments of social grants was to be made.

QUESTION 2: What communication channels are used to engage beneficiaries?

ANSWER: Information is passed to the district social officers from either the head office or regional social directors, this is then passed on to the social workers through phone calls or text messages who then send it to the respective beneficiaries or community members through the gong beater, community public address system.

QUESTION 3: What indigenous media channels have you used in project implementation and why?

ANSWER: As I said, we usually want a face to face encounter with the community and beneficiaries because not only does that afford us the opportunity to pass on information but also, it is usually the only means. For example, these beneficiaries are very poor and hence do not own a phone to receive a call or text message from us, so you can imagine how important to use durbars, beneficiaries forum, community public address system, gong beater, etc to reach them.

QUESTION 4: Do you know of any communication strategy or plan?
ANSWER: Personally, I do not know directly of any. But I am sure the national executive should have information on this better.

QUESTION 5: Are you familiar with the concept of participatory communication?

ANSWER: this is the first time I am hearing this word. To be frank, I do not know how that concerns LEAP.

QUESTION 6: Have you been offered any training in participatory communication?

ANSWER: No such training has been offered to the social workers in relation to this concept. The systems are in place, for instance when we hear from national that their monies are in, we send out information to the beneficiaries to meet us on a specific date for their payments and that is just it for most of the time. So, we do not need beneficiaries to tell us what to do always, or what to improve upon.

QUESTION 7: Do you face barriers or constraints in using participatory communication at LEAP?

ANSWER: As I told you, we have not been offered any training and so we cannot practice that concept appropriately since I cannot understand it well.
APPENDIX 5: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW HELD ON MONDAY, 1ST OCTOBER, 2013 WITH THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF LEAP - MR. LAWRENCE OFORI-ADDO

QUESTION 1: What is the leadership structure at LEAP

ANSWER: Well, LEAP is part of the main department of Social Welfare functions and therefore is a sub structure within the Social Welfare Unit. Now, the LEAP has a Management team headed by the national coordinator who reports directly to the Director of Social Welfare. The national Coordinator has eight (8) people working under him. The Deputy Coordinator who is responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, a personnel responsible for field operations, another personnel responsible for payments (he has an assistant who helps him) and finally a personnel in charge of LEAP Management Information Systems and he is supported by 2 persons.

Then we have officers at the regional offices. We have Desk officers for LEAP at the regional level. However at the District level, we have the District Social Officers in all the 100 districts we have operations in. There are the officers directly in charge of LEAP at the district.

QUESTION 2: Who handles communications at LEAP

ANSWER: Well that is one area, we are still grappling with. So normally, communication is done through us, talking to the media, Producing IEC materials and stuffs like that. But we do not have a designated officer for communication, we are looking for some. Those at the regional offices do some communications too, they relate to the public and other issues.
QUESTION: What are the LEAP’s communication objectives?

ANSWER: We do have an objective, to inform the public about the programme, so normally we engage the media to explain why the delays, why we have not been paying regularly. They also come to us for information. We have also produced some IEC materials that is basically for the beneficiaries: who takes what, who is supposed to benefit, why people are not selected, what they are supposed to use the monies for, how we support children in homes of beneficiaries, etc. This helps them to know what they are supposed to do once they have been enrolled on the programme.

QUESTION: What is your understanding of participatory communication and how relevant is the approach to the implementation of the LEAP Project?

ANSWER: To me, basically it is to just involve people in what we put across to them. Participatory communication refers to the active involvement of the beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of the LEAP programme.

And one thing we do here in participatory communication is about the selection and identification of beneficiaries. Normally when we are doing the targeting we engage the communities for them to explain to us also, their perception of the targets group we are thinking off. Particularly we are looking at the extremely poor and vulnerable households and so the communities themselves also have their own definition or understanding of who constitute the extremely poor and vulnerable. Hence we match that with what we have on our paper.
QUESTION: Is their involvement the best?

ANSWER: You cannot have a perfect situation. What we do here is that, you know you cannot take away power play, particularly when it comes to selection. People at the community level have their power structures, family connections and some of the things they tell you might not all be objective, right?

So we have a system in place to validate what the community tells us, as a compliment to whatever communications that has taken place in the community. We have various levels of understanding, and therefore we have a system in place (a software) so that after the community has mentioned those that need to be supported, we collect some socio-economic indicators on such households and we have a database in place where we key in such information onto it and the database assist us to truly truly identify those that must be supported. But we don’t not end there we go back to the communities and inform them of what our database helped us to decide on.

QUESTION: What communication channels are used to engage them?

ANSWER: We have various levels of engagement. First of all you need to do a community entry. You need to meet the leadership of the community and also meet certain key groups. So normally, we combine focus group discussions with key informant interviews to get the perception of the community on some of the things we need to do.

It is dependent on the communities, because you do not want to use television when they do not have access to that. Depending on the locality, we may adopt indigenous communication channels like beneficiary forums (some kind of communication and getting feedback on the day of payments, etc). Etc.
QUESTION: What is the role of experts (service providers) in your communication activities, from interaction with the Project beneficiaries and the implementation of your activities?

ANSWER: As I said, we do not have a communication person with us. But whatever we have done, we have sought expert advice from communication experts on how to go about our communications with the communities and people around us.

QUESTION: How was that done?

ANSWER: We had developed a communications strategy and that is something we need to roll out. It was developed for us by a communications expert, I do not want to mention the name and firm, but it is a notable person in communications. He assisted us on how to engage the communities and beneficiaries. The channels include face-to-face interactions, currently there are local language radios which we use to engage the communities, we are also able to use durbars and other programs to educate the public or community on the LEAP programme.

QUESTION: What criteria/indicators did you choose to evaluate your communications?

ANSWER: We have a monitoring and evaluation plan, which includes a section on communication. The plan has external impact evaluation and also we have internal monitoring systems in place and that is how communication is embedded in it. We do not have a separate communications monitoring as at now.

QUESTION: How were your action plans/ communication strategies developed and who participated in them?
ANSWER: At the start of the programme, we had a plan for a communications strategy because we knew we had a need for it. The experts were contacted to draft it for us after the entire LEAP programme had taken off. The experts identified our communication needs.

We had a communications consultant who was brought on board to draft a communications strategy for LEAP. The intent was to put communications at LEAP in the right perspective and to encourage participation by beneficiaries. So he took the opinions of LEAP leadership and also went to the grassroots to include the views and suggestions of beneficiaries. So I must confess, our communication strategy is duly informed by all key stakeholders.

So we have a communications strategy that was prepared for us by a communications expert. He interacted with me and I made known to him how we want the beneficiaries to participate in the implementation LEAP. He then visited some of the districts and localities to interact with the grassroots beneficiaries to fine tune the document he was preparing. However, because we do not have a communications expert who works permanently at LEAP, we are now looking for one. Until then, the document is largely not operational.

QUESTION: Has the staff of the LEAP and community officers been trained in participatory communication?

ANSWER: There was such a training a year ago. But the plans are there to intensify it and make it more often once we get a communications person, we will certainly roll it out.
QUESTION: Do you face barriers or constraints in using participatory communication at LEAP?

ANSWER: Because of the diverse backgrounds of the beneficiaries we face challenges. They are mostly illiterates, vulnerable, they do not have a voice, they cannot come together collectively to demand what they need to demand, so these are the challenges we face.

We do not have a communications person with us. It is one area we are still grappling with. Hence every communication activity is planned for by me, together with my national team and other social officers.
APENDIX 6: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION
HELD ON 3RD OCTOBER, 2014

The group were made up of six (6) beneficiaries who have been enrolled on the program in 2012. It was made up of four males and two women with the following identity created for them with the view to ensuring the confidentiality of the data retrieved from these beneficiaries.

QUESTION: What kind of communication activities did you participate in?

Kwame: If my memory serves me right, there are aside the beneficiary forums, there was also a durbar where the LEAP officials spoke to us about the LEAP programme. It was enlightening, because they educated me on things I did not previously know.

Kodjo: We all make our views known, as the community, together with beneficiaries, have to make an input into those who have to be selected to benefit from LEAP. When they last selected new beneficiaries, they nearly took out my poor neighbour but we all talked about their poor situation and because it was true and everyone agreed, they are now beneficiaries.

Kwabena: what I know of is the beneficiary forum where they talk to us face to face, other than that, I think it’s the officials who will be involved more.

Kofi: beneficiary forum.

Ama: I agree with what Kofi said.

Yaa: I am staying close to where the community public address system is, so that is one medium that informs me most.

QUESTION: Have you made any recommendations on LEAP’s communication with you?
Kwame: Last month, I told one of the community leaders in CLIC to inform us every month, whether or not we are going to be paid. There are instances I do not hear from them in about two months, until maybe they want to pay, that makes me so anxious in the waiting period.

Ama: For me, I think the systems are working. They come to tell us, when payments are to be made and we just have to show up for our money. I do not think they need our inputs. Or do they?

Kwabena: I do sometimes. Bro Sammy, a member of the CLIC is my friend, so once in a while, I tell him to try and find out if we the beneficiaries have any concerns, but as to whether he does it or not, I can’t tell.

Kodjo: All I need is my money. They owe us about 7 months. If I have the opportunity, I will ask them to pay on time.

Yaa: not really.

Kofi: I do not have such opportunities, I believe.

QUESTION: What is the nature of communication flow between you and the LEAP office?

Kodjo: I believe my contact with the LEAP office is through the CLIC members who are people in our community. They give me information I need, and I believe they get the information from the LEAP office.

Kwabena: The LEAP office take advantage of community gatherings such as festivals or durbar. If I remember right, they came to speak to us at the last durbar which was less than six months ago.

Yaa: I agree with Kwabena. That is how we get to contact them directly.
Kofi: usually, the LEAP office pass on information to the CLIC members who communicate that to us.

Ama: yea, the LEAP office communicates to us through CLIC

QUESTION: So what medium does CLIC use in reaching you with the information from LEAP office?

Kwame: That will be by word of mouth because, I am told physically about the next payment date, for instance.

Ama: It depends because, there are time I hear information from the community public address system in the market or through the gong messenger. It depends.

Kwabena: The town crier was occasionally used in our area when payments were to be made. I don’t have a phone, it is one of the ways they can reach me. Remember that, this place is a rural area. I do not live close to the community radio, so I depend on the town crier who is more mobile and so can come as far as my house to broadcast the message to us.

Yaa: the community public address system. It is the most used.

QUESTION: Would you prefer other communication channels instead of what was used?

Kodjo: I don’t have a phone for example, we are poor to afford a phone and credit, so they have no choice than to depend on the gong messenger or public address system, instead of calls.

Kwabena: No, the gong messenger is okay.

Ama: The ones they use are the best. For me for instance, I don’t think any other will be ok because they are community based and meet us as we move about our normal daily duties.
QUESTION: Do you think LEAP office depends on your inputs or information?

Ama: I depend on LEAP for information, for accurate details of when the next payments are coming, etc. That is how it is, we need information from LEAP, and I don’t think they need from us as much as we do. Even at beneficiaries’ forum, all we do is to be re-informed on what LEAP expects us to do with.

Kodjo: Yea, because at the beneficiary forum, they allow us to speak our mind for example in the selection of newer beneficiaries.

Yaa: If they don’t, they won’t encourage us to speak at the forum.

Kwabena: Sometimes, because, if it is always, like my suggestions to them would have been taken long time ago.

QUESTION: What happens at beneficiary forums?

Yaa: At such meetings which are held at the community post office compound, we are encouraged to use the monies giving us for the purpose for which it is given.

Kwabena: they also inquire from any challenges we are facing. Usually, it’s the women who talk plenty at such opportunities.

Ama: That is a lie, you Kwabena, you talk always about the challenges you face.

Kodjo: It is a talk talk programme. People talk and talk, before our monies are given to us. When I am there, all I expect is my money to be given to me, not those talk upon talk.

QUESTION: Have been involved in any document preparation for LEAP?

Kwabena: Since I joined, never have I been involved in any of such a thing.

Ama: Never, the process is we are told of next payments, we go for it, we are selecting new beneficiaries, only those programmes, aside that, there is nothing.

QUESTION: How often do you attend such meetings?
Kwabena: it is supposed to happen at least once, we are told. But I can say that, if they wont pay us in a month, they won’t meet us in that month.

Yaa: I attend most of the meetings. If not something really important to keep me away from it, I do not miss beneficiary meetings,

Ama: I attend all meetings, because if I don’t, I may loose my monthly allowance, that is if they are going to pay us.

Kodjo: I attend all meetings my neighbour is a beneficiary too, so if I don’t hear of impending meetings, she does and she informs me. I do not miss meetings therefore.

QUESTION: Have you been involved in any meeting with an expert from LEAP? A communications expert drafting a communications strategy document?

Kwabena: As I said, no!

Kodjo: To the best of my knowledge, I have never been involved in the drafting of any such document. I am yet to know of any other beneficiary in this community who was involved. Maybe, they went elsewhere in the country, but not here.

Ama: Never has there been such a meeting here in Abokobi, I have gone for all meetings, I have not missed any to say that, someone came and I was not there.

Yaa: There has never been any such meeting. All the people I have come across are familiar people.

QUESTION: Would you say you have had enough opportunity to speak to the policy makers at both the local and national levels?

Kwabena: if the LEAP officers are part of the policy makes, then yes.

Ama: I don’t think so. It’s the big men who make such laws, I do not meet there, they do not care about the poor so why will they meet me?
Kodjo: I am in Abokobi, I do not meet anybody at the national level.

Ama: yes, nobody meets such big men, they are preoccupied with bigger issues.
APPENDIX 7: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE SECOND FOCUS GROUP

DISCUSSION HELD ON 3RD OCTOBER, 2014

The group were made up of six (6) beneficiaries who have been enrolled on the program in 2013, six months before this interview. It was made up of four females and two men with the following identity created for them with the view to ensuring the confidentiality of the data retrieved from these beneficiaries.

QUESTION: How does LEAP communicate with you?

Felicia: they don’t usually do it directly. I get information of next payment dates from the members of CLIC who are neighbours.

Paulina: Yea, the information is broadcasted to us through the CLIC members, they get the information from the LEAP officials.

Richard: I am told of the next payments by the CLIC members or by my colleague beneficiaries. However, on the day of payment, we meet the LEAP officials who talk to us on various topical issues.

Eva: We don’t relate to them directly, except on payment days.

QUESTION: So what medium does CLIC use in reaching you with the information from LEAP office?

Richard: They use several mediums to communicate with us. What they used last month was the community public address system, that is what informed me.
Eva: They do that by word of mouth. for instance, I am told physically about the next payment date.

Paulina: I am familiar with the community public address system. That is how I get information about LEAP.

Felicia: I get information mostly from the gong messenger. The town crier was occasionally used in our area when payments were to be made.

Emma: they try a lot. The always use mediums that are very easy to reach us. I am however close to a member of CLIC, so I get the information from him.

QUESTION: Would you prefer other communication channels instead of what was used?

Richard: no I think these ones are okay. They reach us directly. I don’t want any change.

Eva: I don’t think they can do anything better than what they are doing now. I am told by word of mouth, that is perfect for me.

Emma: How they reach us now is okay. They must however tell us they wont pay in a specific month, rather than keep quiet.

Paulina: I think the current system is okay.

QUESTION: Have you made any recommendations on LEAP’s communication with you?

Felicia: Not really. There are standard ways they communicate to us, I don’t think something is wrong.
Paulina: I think the current system is okay, so I have not made any recommendations.

Eva: There are times they don’t tell if they won’t make payments. That is the only thing I think it’s not right.

Mercy: the system now is okay.

Emma: I agree with what Mercy said.

Richard: No please.

QUESTION: Have you been involved in any meeting with an expert from LEAP? A communications expert drafting a communications strategy document?

Emma: This is the first time I am hearing of such a person. Ever since I joined, I have not met any official from outside this district.

Paulina: I have no met any such personality, maybe others might have.

Mercy: All the people from LEAP I have met are those at the LEAP office.

Richard: Never.

Felicia: Not yet. I have not come across such a person.

Eva: No such meeting please.