

would have his/her opinion on how a particular project should be handled. The following excerpts from the In-depth interviews are summarized views of the respondents:

“... there are a lot of people when we talk of community participation they feel it’s others responsibility but they don’t form part of them. So such person has not made up his/her mind to contribute something better to the community and the little progress the community has too he/she is spoiling it...”(Male, Unit Committee Member Ayikuma area council).

“... some says it prolongs the work because some may want it done this way and others want it done that way and too many opinions rather delay the process...”(Female FGD, Dodowa town council).

“... partly it’s a problem. Because just like we are sitting here they don’t know our views will be useful so they don’t involve us. So if the person doesn’t invite you, you can’t go there and contribute...” (Male, FGD, Ayikuma area council).

These challenges identified as findings from the study is supported by a study by Khwaja (2004) where it was realized that participation becomes a challenge in the cases where participants have conflicting stands and ideas and each wants their interest represented. This dilemma requires that a good facilitation approach be adopted to benefit the minority and disadvantaged groups.

Also findings corroborates with Takyi et al. (2014) that district assembly stakeholders talk about the apathy amongst community stakeholders as a barrier to effective community participation in the planning and implementation of the District Education Strategic Planning. The causal factor attributed was stakeholders not deriving the needed benefits from participating in the projects and programmes of the district.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This section summarizes the findings of the research based on the analysis of the data in previous chapters and its implication for community participation within the Shai-Osudoku district assembly. The outcome of findings will determine recommendations to be made to improve the participatory process in the delivery of social infrastructure.

The study's main focus was to understand community participation in delivery social infrastructural projects in Shai-Osudoku district assembly. The qualitative research method, design, techniques and tools were employed in the study. The interview guide was used to solicit responses from the focus group and one on one interview with the district assembly officials and some community stakeholders with the objectives to identify the principal stakeholders in the local assembly and communities and their roles, explore the planning process through needs assessment, examine the engagement of various stakeholders in the implementation of plans in the delivery of social infrastructure within the Shai-Osudoku district.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study identified the principal stakeholders involved in assessing the social infrastructural needs of the community. Prominent among these stakeholders identified by respondents were chiefs, chief executive officers, assemblymen, opinion leaders and interest groups. The stakeholders who were easily identified within the community by respondents were the chiefs and assembly members probably because of the influence and respect and also their frequent interaction with local communities to address their basic needs.

The study identified key roles played by the aforementioned stakeholders. The Assembly member's role was to supervise and monitor projects undertaken in their electoral area or community and also act as the representative for the community at the district assembly.

Also, the opinion leader's role is the collection of information from community members which are the concerns and problems of the community and delivers it to the appropriate quarters for action to be taken. The opinion leader is seen to liaise with the assemblyman or chief concerning the problems of the community. The role of interest groups is to assist in the developmental and environmental programs of the communities and this is in the form of communal labour or mobilizing efforts. The role of Chief Executives is to develop the district and for that matter the communities. The chief executive officers role is seen to present the problems or needs of a particular district to the government for solution to be proffered.

The planning process is initiated by the district assembly and this is done through the development of the District Medium Term Development Plan. Social infrastructure projects are imbedded in the District Medium Term Development Plan. The study found that the planning process begins with a request for the district medium-term plan preparation guidelines from the National Development Planning Commission then follows a plan preparation team or taskforce comprising of the twenty-one (21) members is formed. Normally, a core team or a smaller team referred to as Plan Preparation Team or taskforce are used in the preparation of the plan. After meeting the District Planning Coordinating Unit (DPCU), the plan preparation taskforce which is a core team is constituted and inaugurated. After the inauguration the plan preparation taskforce is tasked to draw or prepare a work plan for the plan preparation process. The next step is the drawing of a work plan. After the inauguration the plan preparation taskforce is tasked to draw or prepare a work plan for the plan preparation process. A memo is written to the stakeholders of decentralised department and area and town councils to inform them about the plan preparation process of which the decentralised department work plans are

requested. The council is then informed of the type of people who are to attend the meeting as part of the plan preparation process of a community needs assessment. The problems are identified, the data collected and analysed. The communities are assisted to prioritize their problems and their problems are turned into programs and projects. The next stage is data validation which is normally done through public hearing. After the data validation, the taskforce meets with the budget committee and the development planning subcommittee to also validate the data. The final stage is costing. From there it goes to the executive committee of the assembly who look at it and validate it. Then finally, it is sent to the general assembly for endorsement and when it's okay a draft plan is sent to the regional coordinating council, that is the regional minister's office and to the NDPC.

The study revealed that Chiefs, Assemblymen, District Chief Executives and sometimes the Member of Parliament influences the location of a project. Most of the responses pointed to the chief as a key stakeholder who influences the location of social infrastructure projects. The study also found that public meetings are hardly organised by the district and the few ones organised are not announced and the respondents are not invited. The needs of the communities are accessed through the area and town council meetings where these needs are identified and prioritized by the stakeholders invited by the assembly. Through the effort of the District Assembly, GETFund and the Millennium Challenge Account and NGOs, the district had over the last two years built a district hospital, CHP compound, schools, boreholes, public toilets, portable water, disability centre, roads among others.

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusions of the study revealed that a representation of the substructure of the Assembly and a handful of community stakeholders are involved in determining the social infrastructure needs of the communities through the development of the District Medium Term Development Plan of the district. The understanding of what social infrastructural projects is assumed to be

more of physical or hard structures but the soft social infrastructure which is services provided through the hard infrastructure is hardly talk about as social infrastructure.

The planning process is formally initiated by the district assembly where stakeholders within the community are only invited to participate in the process. The planning process has been formalised and the mandate given to the district assembly to initiate the process. The stakeholders within the community cannot initiate the planning process because the Local governance Act (Act 462) does not give them such authority.

The process of assessing the needs of the community is representative where stakeholders represent the interest of their constituents but there is no guarantee that their interest is effectively pushed through by the representative. Also, the means of invitation is not inclusive enough leading to the exclusion of significant number of community members. The community stakeholders particularly interest groups have high interest but low influence therefore are not able do much in the participatory process. Findings also revealed that language is a barrier amongst the district assembly officials and this make communication and interaction with the local community a challenging task.

Fewer meetings are organised by the district assembly through the area and town councils and this is usually done every four years. The conclusion of findings also revealed that when public hearings or meetings are organised by the assembly, ordinary members of the community are not invited and are barely informed about such meetings.

There is limited education for community members on the process of planning and assessing the needs of the community because it is open to a few stakeholders from the community. This has resulted in apathy amongst community members in the participating process.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations can be proffered

- Considering the complex nature of participation of stakeholders in the determining the social infrastructural needs of the community, measures must be put in place to expand scope from town/area councils meeting to community meetings where participation can absorb the views of each member of the community.
- Also considering that the assembly structure is responsible for planning the development of the District Medium Term Development Plan which is recognised in the local government system, there must also be a Local Project Management Team (LPMT) constituted by key stakeholders in the community responsible for planning the needs of the community and responsible for management and coordinating the delivery of social infrastructure within the communities.
- When planning the delivery of social infrastructure what comes on the table for consideration by the district and communities is hard or physical infrastructure but consideration must also look at soft infrastructure such as the social services accessed by the community for which the hard infrastructure was constructed. These services provided to the community is what improves their well-being.
- Measures must be put in place for targeted and timely sensitization of programmes to educate members of the community on the relevance on participating in the planning process.
- There is also the need to consider the language and communication gap that exists between the Assembly officials and local communities. Strategies must be put in place for assembly officials to breach the language gap especially the officials from the District Planning Coordinating Unit who are in direct touch with community stakeholders to enhance effective communication and consensus.

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Community Participation in delivery of Social Infrastructure

Interview Guide for District Assembly Officials

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Position:

Number of Years in Position:

How many plan development processes have you been involved in MTDP development process?

Which interested groups within the community do you consider in the decision making process of a social infrastructure

What are the major steps/activities of the planning process?

What are your roles in this process?

What are the ways of assessing/identifying the needs of communities under your assembly and planning for it?

What are the various avenues created through which communities participate in the planning of social infrastructure?

Which is commonly used and most effective

Which types of social infrastructure do you encourage community participation and why

What are the benefits derived by the assembly in engaging communities to participate in the determining and planning their infrastructure needs

What challenges/difficulties do you encounter in community participation at your assembly?