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Effectiveness of foreign aid in agricultural development in the Adaklu District of Ghana: a case study of the Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Fund

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ABSTRACT

The debate on the effectiveness foreign aid in Africa continues to take center stage in the development literature. To contribute to this debate, this research sought to investigate the effectiveness of the Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Fund, a 135 million Canadian dollar foreign aid received by the Government of Ghana for agricultural development. The study employed the qualitative research approach in assessing the utilization effectiveness of the Fund in the Adaklu District of the Republic of Ghana. The researchers purposively selected sixteen (16) informants from the study population and interviewed, using an interview guide. The informants selected for the study consist of technical staff of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, key staff of the Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District, core staff of the Adaklu District Assembly, and farmers. The study revealed poor and ineffective utilization of the Fund resulting from cumbersome bureaucratic processes in accessing the Fund, weak institutional collaboration and partnerships, inadequate resource allocation by the Assembly to the Department of Agriculture for Agricultural Development in the district. Consequently, agricultural development in the District is characterized by poor agriculture extension service delivery, poor technological deployment, high cost of inputs and low agricultural production. The study recommends strengthening the institutional and personal capacities of those in charge of the utilization of foreign aid to ensure that funds are applied for their intended purposes. Additionally, the institutionalization of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress of fund to ensure that they meet their objectives is recommended.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Developing countries across the globe, including Ghana, are continuous recipients of overseas development assistance/foreign aid from developed countries and international development donors for development support. In line with this, Global Affairs Canada supported the government of Ghana with 135 million Canadian dollars for agricultural development support in 2017. The fund was dubbed the Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Fund, and was expected to support the development of Ghana's agriculture sector through the implementation of national and local level agricultural development policies. Thus, the fund was disbursed to the various metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in Ghana including the Adaklu District for the implementation of local-level agricultural development policies. This study examined the effectiveness of the fund in agricultural development in Ghana with a focus on the Adaklu District. The study found the application of the Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana Fund in agricultural development in Ghana, especially in the Adaklu District fraught with a myriad of challenges including weak governance, ineffective policies, institutional and human capacity.

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1. Introduction

Ensuring a global sustainable agricultural growth is a major concern for countries across the globe (Erokhin, 2017; United Nations, 2016). This is due to the continuous pivotal role played by the agriculture sector in both micro and macroeconomic development of countries. The agricultural sector remains the major source of income and employment to large proportions of the rural population across the globe. It is also the source of food security and a contributor to poverty eradication (Essegbey & MacCarthy, 2020; Ssozi et al., 2019). Despite these immense contributions to the economic development of countries, little attention is accorded it by most countries (Gicharu, 2021; Ngambeki, 2003). For instance, Africa's agriculture sector is challenged by persistent conventional and traditional farm practices, resulting in the low productivity of the sector, with corresponding low household income for farmers, and low economic growth (Sikandar et al., 2021). Ghana is not an exception to this situation. In order to shift from traditional and conventional practices dominating the agriculture sector, there is a call for investment into the sector in the form of foreign aid (Sikandar et al., 2021; Ssozi et al., 2019).

Despite numerous calls for increased foreign aid for agricultural development, debates continue to dominate the development literature on the effectiveness of aid in recipient countries, especially those within the African continent (Kindornay & Morton, 2020). Much evidence has been presented in the literature on ineffectiveness of foreign aid in both underdeveloped and developing countries including Ghana (He et al., 2022; Svensson, 2000). Due to this, platforms including the OECD-Development Assistance, 1995, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness of 2005, and the Accra Agenda for Action were proposed and charged with providing frameworks, for ensuring effectiveness of foreign aid in developing countries (Kindornay & Morton, 2020; Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development, 1985).

The Government of Ghana continues to benefit from foreign aid provided by donors, developed countries and international organizations for development interventions including agricultural development. For instance, Ghana benefited from the Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP) from the World Bank and United States Agency for International Development in 2012. The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Project I&II (FASDEP I&II) under the Global Agriculture & Food Security Program, the Savannah Investment Program (SIP) and the Agricultural Sub-Sector Investment Programme (AgSSIP), and recently, the Modernization of Agriculture in Ghana fund have all benefited from foreign aid. The focus of this study is the Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Fund. The MAG is a five- (5) year 125-million Canadian Dollar financial support from the Canadian government in support of Ghana's agricultural development. Its general objective is to ensure a sustainable and equitable development of the agriculture sector, and make it capable of:

- ensuring food security,
- providing improved agricultural extension service delivery,
- effectively implementing national and local agriculture development policies at subnational level, and
- strengthening institutions for effective service delivery for agricultural development.

In addition, the fund supports the implementation of the devolution of Ghana's agriculture sector to subnational government authorities: Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) across the country.

In spite of these foreign aid inflows to Ghana, the debate and controversies continue to dominate the literature on their effectiveness in promoting development (Bonfiglioli, 2008; Juselius et al., 2014; Stojanov & Strielkowski, 2013; Tefera & Odhiambo, 2022; Verter, 2017). Two debates currently dominate the literature and development discourse. The pro-aid scholars argue that foreign aid to developing countries augment the scarce resources at their disposal for propelling growth and development. On the contrary, anti-aid scholars posit that aid inflows to most developing nations are ineffectively utilised through ways such as misapplication and misappropriation for personal gains (Juselius et al., 2014; Stojanov & Strielkowski, 2013; Verter, 2017). Adedokun et al. (2017) present mixed empirical evidence on the impact of foreign aid on development in most developing countries. Studies conducted by Dreher and Langlotz (2020) and Rajan and Subramanian (2008) revealed an insignificant correlation between foreign aid and

development of most countries in Africa. In addition, the literature is replete with general measures to ensure effectiveness in the use of foreign aid at the country level, normally based on a sweeping assessment of financial inflows to developing countries and the impact of such inflows on economic growth. However, assessments of specific aid projects are lacking. This study sought to fill this gap in literature by focusing on and examining the application of the Modernization of Agriculture in Ghana Fund in the Adaklu District of Ghana. In the light of the lack of a consensus on the impact of foreign aid on the growth of developing countries, especially those within African continent, it is prudent to assess effectiveness, or otherwise, of specific foreign aid in recipient countries. This approach encourages a full understanding of each aid project and its impact in order to help in decision making regarding the promotion of the effectiveness aid.

Specifically, this study assessed the effectiveness of the MAG Fund to agricultural development in the Adaklu District of Ghana. Firstly, the study investigated agricultural development policies and project implementation techniques by examining the application of the Modernization of Agriculture in Ghana Fund in the Adaklu District. In addition, the study analyzed the challenges associated with the utilization of the MAG Fund. Finally, the study examined the effects emanating from the challenges with the utilization of the MAG Fund in the study area. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: first, there is an explanation of the concept of foreign aid; next, is a description of the agriculture sector of Ghana; and then, there is the theoretical framework and the methodology employed in the conduct of the study. Subsequently, the findings and discussions are presented, and these are followed by the conclusion drawn and recommendations made.

2. Literature review

2.1. Foreign aid

Historically, foreign aid to Africa dates back to colonial regimes of the 1920s by the colonial masters targeted at strengthening the economic relations with their colonies (Ali & Zeb, 2016). Brett (2020) posit that the foreign financial inflows to Africa during the colonial regimes were to ensure the construction of facilities to stimulate the exportation of raw materials from Africa to developed countries. This implies that the overall goal of aid to Africa is to ensure development of crucial sectors of the economy. The overarching aim of foreign financial inflows from developed nations such as the United States of America, and the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) in the 1940s were aimed at post-war reconstruction of nations affected by the Second World War. In addition, aid for post-colonial transformation, targeted promoting the shift from state-led to market-led development within the African continent. Foreign aid refers to grants by developed countries and international financial organizations to developing or underdeveloped countries for development (Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development, 1985). The essence of foreign aid in underdeveloped countries is supported by the theories of economic development, identifying financial investments into crucial sectors of the economy as most important factors of growth (Pankaj, 2005).

The position of Odhiambo (2007) suggest that external financial assistance to Africa constituted a significant proportion of the available resources for development, especially in agricultural and rural development. Aid and foreign capital inflows for agricultural development through provision of financial resources to farmers, deployment advanced technologies across the sector, provision of machinery and advanced farming skills were measures for the rapid growth of the sector (Santangelo, 2018; Ssozi et al., 2019). Advocacies continue to increase for financial investments into agricultural development due to its contribution to ensuring food security and zero hunger outlined in the 2030 sustainable goals document (Sauvant & Hamdani, 2015). Christiaensen et al. (2011) links poverty eradication among households below the poverty line to the growth of agriculture.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (2013) and World Bank (2007) reports suggest that after decades of the Maputo Declaration in 2003, only 9 (20%) of the then 44 African countries achieved the 10% government budgetary allocation to agricultural and rural development. It is reported that there has been little success in the 10% government budgetary allocation to agricultural and rural development expected by African Union countries as agreed during the 2003 Maputo Declaration (Essegbey &

MacCarthy, 2020; Ssozi et al., 2019). This was perhaps due to the low interest of governments across the African countries to attach prominence to agriculture development. Subsequently, the late 2000s saw a renewed interest of donors shifting their attention to agricultural development in African, leading to an incredible surge in foreign aid to countries in Africa, especially those within the sub-Saharan Africa (Ssozi et al., 2019). According McCloskey (2019) and Ogundipe et al. (2014) foreign aid to countries in the sub-Saharan region increased from \$80 billion in 2008 to \$125 billion in 2010. As aid for agricultural development to Africa increased, Umbadda and Elgizouli (2013) stated that foreign aid for agricultural development within the continent targeted ensuring a market and private-sector-led agricultural development, improving governance and political systems for effective formulation and implementation of agricultural development policies.

2.2. Agriculture sector of Ghana

Agriculture remains the mainstay and a key driver of the growth of most economies and a central component of foreign exchange earnings of most countries in Africa (Essegbey & MacCarthy, 2020; USAID, 2022; World Bank, 2017). In African, the agriculture sector is predominantly smallholder, contributing approximately 80% of the food produced in the region, and capable of transitioning of the region's traditional and underdeveloped agriculture sector to a sustainable status (Oxford Business Group, 2022). In similar vein, Ghana's agriculture remains predominantly smallholder, relying on rain fed and traditional methods, and had an average household farm size of 1.2ha. (Essegbey & MacCarthy, 2020). Ghana's agriculture sector has four major subsectors: food crops, livestock, forestry/logging and aquaculture/fishing (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019; World Bank, 2019). The study area is dominated by the food crop subsector. According to Essegbey and MacCarthy (2020), the food-crop subsector serves as Ghana's largest agriculture subsector, and employer of significant proportion of the rural populace. The subsector is the producer of staple crops such as maize, cassava, yam, plantain, sorghum and rice, and cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, and cashew (Ghana Statistical Service, 2019).

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization-United Nations (2022), Ghana's agriculture sector contributed 54% to the country's GDP growth, accounted for 40% of export earnings, and provided over 90% of the country's food needs. The essence of smallholder agriculture in the economic development cannot be underestimated, hence the attempt by the Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP) to enhance the capacity of the sector by supporting the commercialization of smallholder farming through partnership with the private sector and large agricultural investors (World Bank, 2017). Currently, over 60% of Ghana's population live in rural areas, a poverty concentrated area, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood (Essegbey & MacCarthy, 2020; Morrissey et al., 2005).

Ghana's territorial land area is approximately 238,540km², out of which 136,000km² representing 57% is considered agricultural/arable land area. Currently about 58,000km² representing 24.4% of the country's agriculture land is cultivated, 11,000 hectares used for irrigation purposes (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020a; Ministry of Food & Agriculture, 2019a). Ghana's agriculture sector is faced with numerous challenges including policy failures, weak linkages among public institutions, aging farmers, low youth-interest in agriculture, dysfunctional markets, post-harvest losses due to unavailable storage facilities, and inadequate financial investment into the sector for development. These challenges accounted for the underdevelopment of the agriculture sector including low agriculture productivity and yields of major food crops (Essegbey & MacCarthy, 2020; World Bank, 2016, 2017).

2.3. The modernization theory of development

Various definitions exist in the development literature on modernization. According to Eisenstadt (1966), modernization refers to the process of change by traditional societies to modern social, economic, and political systems of the Western and European countries. Rostow (1960) and Lewis (2013) suggest that rapid economic and social development of developing and underdeveloped nations depend on their ability to imitate western models of modernity, progress and development. Further assertions by Rostow (1960) suggest that the continuous traditional and underdeveloped nature of non-Western societies

especially nations in Africa are due to their failure to follow the development pathways and concepts of Western and European nations. Huntington (1971) supported this position by stating that the prominence of modernization theory after the Second World War was premised on the notion that the achievement of modernity by underdeveloped nations is based on ability to shift from traditional approaches to development, to technological, intellectual, and economic trajectories of developing countries. There is some universality in the literature to believe that development through the adoption of modernization theory is in line with the position of Rostow (1960) is currently premised on technological adoption (Willis, 2023). Technological innovation and implementation, encouraged by market forces are considered the bedrock for rapid development (Burrier & Hultquist, 2019).

Mbaku (2004) asserted that, as a summation of the propositions of the modernization theory, rapid economic development of developing countries is dependent on the incorporation of modern methods of development in technology and science with much more concentration on agricultural productivity for trade and export, and industrialization with cheaper labor force. As demonstrated in the assertions of Mbaku (2004), investment in, and incorporation of technology and science for agricultural development and productivity is crucial for rapid economic development across developing countries. Within the framework of the sustainable development goals, the theory of modernization influences policies of developing and underdeveloped countries towards achieving the sustainable development and socio-economic development and growth (Dent, 2018). The arguments of Sachs (2005) suggest that much greater foreign assistance in the form of aid is needed by underdeveloped and developing countries if they are to exit the poverty trap. In addition, foreign development aid for African countries is premised on the ability to restructure their poor governance architecture and structures. Even though Sachs (2005) acknowledged bad governance as a factor for economic underdevelopment, his argument further suggests that good governance is not a guarantee for growth and prosperity.

Burnside and Dollar (2000) emphasized that, in the absence of adequate funding through aid for underdeveloped and developing countries, the 'so-called' well governed countries cannot develop. According to Verter (2017), the effectiveness of those foreign financial inflows in the form of aid remained unestablished. The concept of effectiveness in the context of aid used in this study refers to judicious application and utilization of foreign financial/development assistance in line with its intended purpose (Kindornay & Morton, 2020). Dreher and Langlotz (2020) have added that aid effectiveness is considered those measures initiated by aid recipients in planning, management and utilizing aid in an efficient and judicious ways geared towards achieving development outcomes intended by aid donors. According to the Economic Commission for Africa (2009), effectiveness of foreign aid is measured by its utilization in achieving expected outcomes. Bizhan (2023) posited that, in the measurement of aid effectiveness across countries, scholars must desist from adopting a one-size-fit-all approach due to policy and governance dynamics. The author recommends the adoption of flexible principles in the measurement of aid effectiveness.

To measure aid effectiveness in the case of the MAG fund in the Adaklu District, the study adopted and developed a model/framework based on the principles of assessing aid effectiveness proposed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1985). As depicted in Figure 1, the measurement of aid effectiveness in agricultural development is premised on the organizational effectiveness of those institutions charged with the utilization of the fund, coherence/coordination, and development outcomes and benefits emanating from aid. The application of organizational effectiveness as a principle for assessing the effectiveness of the MAG fund in the study area is concerned with the judicious utilization of the Fund by those institutions (both public and private) charged with the implementation of viable agricultural development policies and programs in line with the stated objectives of the MAG Fund. Further, in the figure above, coherence and coordination is dependent on the ability and consistency of policies and programs in achieving the overall objective of the foreign aid (MAG Fund) received (Lockhart, 2005). Lastly, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1985) posited that to measure effectiveness on the principle of development outcomes due to aid, attention should be given to the utilization of the received financial aid in meeting the development objectives accompanying the aid. This paper argues that the judicious utilization of foreign aid, coupled with viable governance architecture and policies, strong institutions and systems are factors necessary for the rapid modernization, growth and development of Ghana's agriculture sector. In line with this, Huang and Zhao

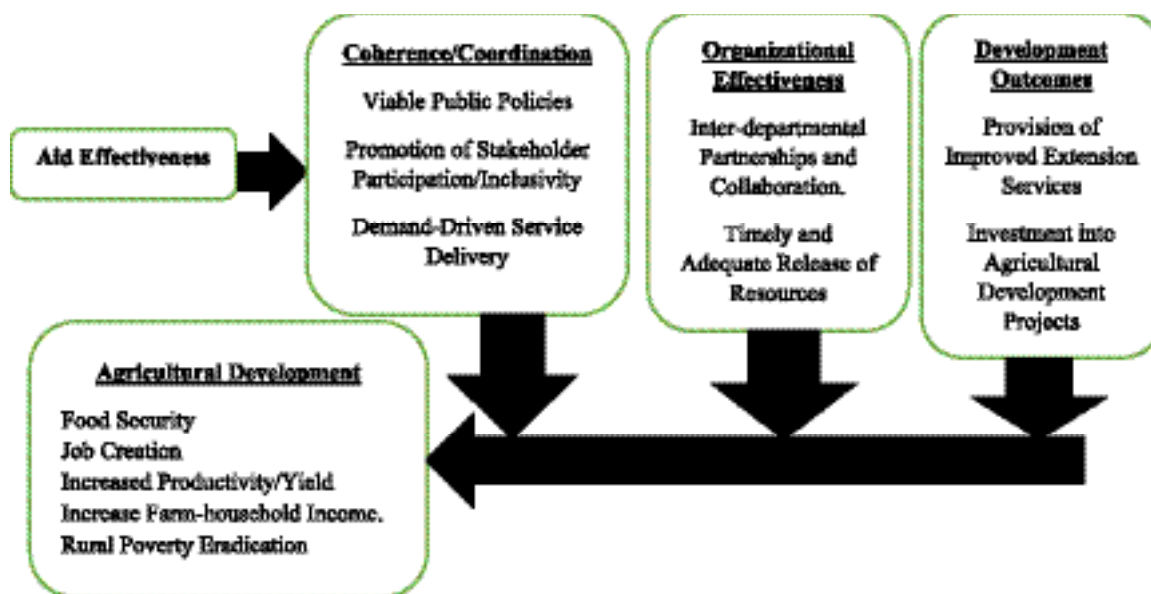


Figure 1. Framework for aid effectiveness in agricultural development.
Source: Author's Construct, 2023.

(2018) recommended that ensuring aid effectiveness in Africa is dependent on effective economic policies, and improving institutional and human capacities of agencies and persons charged with the utilization of aid in recipient countries. The authors of this paper took the position that Ghana's agriculture sector remains rural, dominated by smallholder farmers using traditional farm practices including overreliance on rain-fed, non-mechanized agriculture, and non-technological deployment in farming. The growth and development of the agriculture sector through the effective utilization of aid or funds for agricultural development would result in food security, sustainable job creation for the citizenry, increased productivity/yield, and increased household incomes for the farmers.

3. Methods and materials

3.1. Research approach and study area profile

The study adopted a qualitative research approach in investigating the effectiveness of foreign aid (Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana Fund, a 135 million Canadian dollar) in Ghana's agricultural development, specifically, in the Adaklu District. The qualitative approach involves the systemic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data for generating insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The qualitative research approach offers researchers an opportunity to conduct an in-depth investigation through face-to-face interviews with informants. Bougie and Sekaran (2019) posit that the qualitative research is exploratory and relevant in social science research. The approach focusses on the interpretation and experience of people on a phenomenon.

The Adaklu District was selected for this study due to its agrarian status and immense contributions to the food basket of the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020a). According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2020b), the dominant economic activity in the District is agriculture, employing about 78% of the active labor force. According to the report, of the 6,089 households surveyed during the population census in the District, an overwhelming majority of 4,977 (81.7%) were engaged in agriculture and 1,112 (18.3%) engaged in non-agricultural activities. The District has a favorable weather for food-crops production, and is endowed with abundant arable land for commercial agricultural use. The agriculture sector of the District is said to be characterized by conventional and traditional agriculture practices in spite of the sector's contribution to the food basket of the District and the country at large. The 2018–2022 Medium Term Development Plan of the District lamented the lack of agricultural mechanization and modernization through technological innovation and deployment in agricultural development. The report further stated

that, to ensure agriculture growth for food security and poverty eradication, providing agricultural infrastructure and resources including irrigation facilities, roads and inputs were crucial. These challenges confronted agricultural growth at the time of the receipt of the Modernizing Agriculture in Ghana Fund, for effective implementation of agriculture development policies (Adaklu District Assembly, 2017, 2021).

3.2. Data sources and data collection procedures

This study relied on both the primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data for the study were collected through the conduct of face-to-face interviews with informants engaged by the researchers. Becker et al. (2012) have stated that interviews are the most utilized qualitative data collection strategy in social science research. Interviews offer opportunities for researchers to understand the lived experiences of people of a phenomenon. An interview guide, designed based on the themes in the study objectives, guided the interviews. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), an interview guide is a qualitative data collection instrument consisting of a series of questions, which guides researchers in the conduct of interviews. The interview guide consists of semi-structured questions, giving an opportunity for researchers to probe for insight into the utilization and effectiveness of the MAG Fund for agricultural sector development. As shown in Table 1, the researchers purposively selected sixteen (16) persons from agencies in-charge of the utilization of the MAG Fund, and farmers within the study area. Of the sixteen informants selected, two (2) were selected from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. They were designated with pseudo codes: MF1 and MF2. Three (3) were from the Adaklu District Assembly, and were labeled: DA1, DA2 and DA3. From the Adaklu District Department of Agriculture, seven (7) informants were selected, and were identified as AD1, AD2, AD3,... & AD7. Four (4) farmers were selected from the study area, and were designated: FM1, FM2, FM3, and FM4.

The informants engaged by the researchers on the study were interviewed at their various offices and locations between October and November 2022, with each interview lasting between 45 min and 1 h. With the consent of informants of the study, the proceedings of the interviews were audio-recorded. Creswell and Creswell (2017) asserted that audio-recordings of interviews ensure consistency and accuracy of transcripts and research reports. In addition to the audio recording of the interviews, the researchers took notes of relevant and salient issues emerging during the interviews. The secondary data for the study were gathered through journal publications and articles of related topic. The conduct of this critical review was guided by the themes in the objectives of the study.

Prior to the entry into the agencies spearheading the utilization of the MAG Fund for the data collection exercise, the researchers submitted a letter of introduction in September of 2022 on the purpose of the study. The researchers were invited through writing and a phone call to commence the data collection exercise. In compliance with ethical principles of social science research, the informants were duly informed on the purpose of the study, and assured of confidentiality, anonymity and nondisclosure of identities in the study report. The informants of the study were made to understand their voluntary participation in the study.

3.3. Data analysis procedures

The study adopted the thematic analysis technique in analyzing the data for the study. Braun and Clarke (2006) asserted that thematic analysis is one of the mostly used qualitative data analysis methods in social science research. The technique involves a careful and systematic identification, analysis, and reporting of repeated themes and patterns in qualitative data (Bhat, 2019). Adopting the thematic analysis, the

Table 1. Composition and number of informants engaged in the study by the researchers.

Categories of informants	Number	Data collection approach	Themes
Ministry of Food & Agric.	2	Interviews	National Agricultural Development Projects under MAG support.
Adaklu District Assembly	3	Interviews	MAG Fund management, and allocation practices.
Adaklu Dist. Dept. of Agric.	7	Interviews	District-level Agricultural development projects and challenges with accessing MAG and its utilization.
Farmers	4	Interviews	General challenges with farm practices within the study area.

Source: Author's Construct, 2023.

researchers selected codes and constructed themes in the transcripts. In analyzing the data, the researchers transcribed the data collected through interviews and audio-recorded into readable texts. The transcripts were shared with the informants to ensure accuracy and consistency with their assertions during the interviews. In addition, the researchers scrutinized various transcripts for consistency, and accuracy of information provided. The transcripts were coded based on the themes in the study objectives. The results emanating from the analysis were presented and reported in both analyzed and direct quotes for emphasis. Premised on the findings of the study on the effectiveness of foreign aid in agricultural development, the researchers made practical and policy recommendations for government and stakeholder action. The implementation of these recommendations are expected to ensure the effectiveness of foreign aid in agricultural development in Ghana. Further, the recommendations provided by the researchers are linked with the various challenges associated with aid effectiveness, which they sought to address.

4. Study findings

4.1. Agricultural development flagship programs implemented under the MAG funding

The implementation of Ghana's three major agricultural development policies: Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), the Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) and the Rearing for Food and Jobs (RFJ) were funded by the MAG fund. Informant MF2 indicated 'the implementation of all Government flagship agricultural development interventions are dependent on the MAG Fund'. Ghana's Minister of Food and Agriculture confirmed in a public address to the nation that 'the MAG Fund is utilized in the implementation of our flagship agriculture development policies in the entire 261 Metropolitan, Municipal, and Districts in Ghana'.

4.1.1. Planting for food and jobs

The Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) Policy aimed at modernizing Ghana's agriculture sector. The PFJ was implemented on five (5) key pillars: provision of improved seeds at a 50% subsidized rate, provision of fertilizer to farmers at 50% subsidized rate, facilitation of market opportunities, enabling e-agriculture, and establishment of free extension services. The policy was expected to ensure food security, reduce poverty and create employment opportunities among the populace (Ministry of Food & Agriculture, 2019a).

This study revealed an absence of specific roles that had been spelt out for the Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District in the implementation of the policy in the District. This is premised on the centralization of its implementation, defeating the holistic idea in the devolution of the agriculture department and the bottom-up approach in policy formulation and implementation. The centrality of the PFJ implementation is demonstrated through the direct allocation of inputs from the central government through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to the local private input merchants in the District without the involvement of the Department of Agriculture of the District. AD4 observed:

We are sidelined in the implementation of the PFJ policy in the district. As a department, we do not have any records of those inputs received by the inputs merchants and beneficiaries in the district.

This was confirmed by AD2, who said:

The implementation is centralized, which defeats the essence of the department as a conduit between local stakeholders on the agriculture value-chain and the central government.

4.1.2. Planting for export and rural development

According to Ministry of Food and Agriculture (2019b), the Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) Programme is concerned with developing Ghana's National Tree Crop subsector to promote the growth of rural economies, improve the income of rural households and farmers. This policy sought to provide local farmers with certified and improved seedlings of tree crops such as the cashew, coffee, cotton, coconut, citrus, oil palm, mango, rubber and shea. All the informants from the Department of Agriculture indicated that there was no implementation of the planting for export of rural development

in the District. This could be attributed to a reluctance or failure of Government to employ a judicious and effective utilization of the Fund in line with its objectives, especially in the District. AD3 stated:

The Adaklu District is not a beneficiary of the planting for export and rural development program. I only know of some private companies and individuals in the district cultivating some acreages of cashew and mango. There is no record indicating government's allocation of seedlings of any tree or cash crops to any beneficiary in the district.

AD6 confirmed this:

It is surprising how the MAG fund, which is meant for agricultural development in Ghana will neglect some local administrative districts. Meanwhile, the government touts the policy as successfully implemented in every district across the country.

4.1.3. Rearing for food and jobs

The rearing for food and jobs policy in Ghana aimed at developing the country's livestock sub-sector for increase local meat production, reduce the importation of livestock products, and create employment (Ministry of Food & Agriculture, 2019a). The program targeted five livestock species: sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and dairy cattle. The major components of the program was to improve the livestock breeds in the country, ensure development of safe water and feed, provision of improved technology, effective disease control and surveillance measures, and government infrastructural support.

As part of the implementation of the policy in the District, the government of Ghana through the Department of Agriculture of the District distributed fifty (50) pigs to five (5) beneficiaries. This policy was assessed by the majority of the informants at the Department of Agriculture as poorly implemented based on the funding challenges that faced the implementation of the policy in the District. AD3 asserted:

The rearing for food and jobs policy in this district lacks the necessary funding attention, which is dire for its success.

AD1 reiterated this with these words:

The distribution of piggery to beneficiaries does not create enough grounds for livestock subsector development, in the absence of proper funding arrangements in the district.

FM1 also lamented the situation in this way:

I am sad about the way government is implementing the rearing for food and jobs policy. I was given five pigs including four females and one male. I kept these pigs for months without any support from the department for feeding the pigs. It is difficult to feed these animals in this economic hardship.

4.1.4. Logistical deployment

Important to any project is the provision of logistical support. The study revealed that the government of Ghana distributed pickup vehicles and motorbikes to all the departments of agriculture in each district in the country. This was to ensure the mobility of Agriculture Extension Service Agents to enhance extension service delivery. At the time of this study, the Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District had received one (1) pickup vehicle, and six (6) motorbikes for the operations of the office and extension services in the District. The District had about 36,000 farmers scattered across the sixteen operational areas. Effective mobility, thus, required enough and adequate vehicles, especially, for delivery of extension services.

AD5 asserted:

The department was allocated with one pickup vehicle and six motorbikes for its operations. Due to financial challenges of the Department, we are unable to fuel those motorbikes for our operations.

AD7 claimed:

We have been personally pre-financing most of our operations in the District due to delays of the District Assembly in allocating agricultural development funds to the Department.

4.2. Agricultural development projects under MAG funding in the Adaklu District

The medium-term development and annual action plans of the department indicated plans towards ensuring an improved agriculture service delivery and the development of the sector in the District. These include extension service delivery, good agricultural practices, and women in agriculture development.

4.2.1. Agriculture extension service delivery

Agriculture extension services are major on-farm educational and sensitization exercises delivered by the department to farmers. In the Adaklu District and in any other district, agriculture extension agents are expected to conduct periodic on-farm visits to provide technical and expert advice to farmers on issues including crop surveillance and disease control. The effective delivery of these services in the District are challenged because of financial challenges.

AD3 asserted:

We are challenged in agriculture extension services delivery to our farmers due to series of challenges including unavailable funding to fuel our vehicles and motorbikes. These services are crucial as they offer the opportunity for extension officers to educate farmers on best practices. In the absence of these services, farmers resort to the use of primitive farming methods and over-dose application of chemical of harmful for human consumption, rapid spread of infection due to late detection.

AD1 agreed:

Even though the focus of the fund is to ensure improved extension service delivery to farmers, we are handicapped in the delivery of these services due the mismanagement of funds by the District Assembly.

DA2 argued:

We are just managers of central government funds in the District; we delay in our allocations to the departments under us if the central government delays.

4.2.2. Research extension linkage

The participation and involvement of farmers and stakeholders on the agriculture value-chain in the planning and implementation is crucial for the development of the sector. The research extension linkage encourages bottom-up approaches in problem identification, planning and implementation through forums organized by the department soliciting ideas, views and suggestions necessary for agricultural development in the District. These engagements are conducted at the community, zonal and district levels to ensure participation of farmers on issues of importance for the development of the sector. It emerged that the policy decisions of these engagements were referred to the District Assembly for action; research decisions are referred to the Center for Scientific and Institutional Research for action, and implementation decisions are referred to the Department.

AD6 opined:

These engagements offer the opportunity for farmers to express and contribute ideas and suggestions geared towards the development of the agriculture sector in the district. Over the years, we were unable to organize these engagements due to the frustration we suffer from the assembly in the forms of delays and insufficient release of funds.

AD2 confirmed this:

We are faced with several challenges in the absence of funds to conduct farmer engagement forums. When we were under the under the auspices of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, we receive adequate and timely financial allocations for the implementation our programs.

4.2.3. Good agricultural practices-GAPS

Good agricultural practices enhance production. The informants' engaged by the researchers' state that the Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District was expected to conduct pre-season on-farm demonstrations on good agricultural practices and methods. This was expected to provide farmers with

the requisite knowledge and skills on improved and good agricultural practices, ranging from ground preparation, planting/sowing, fertilizer application and harvesting. It emerged that the Department was challenged in the conduct of the GAPS in the District due to both delays in accessing funds and inadequate/unavailable funds. A visit to the GAPS demonstration sites confirmed an absence of pre-season demonstration for the farmers in the year. This implies an absence preseason farming guidelines for the farmers.

AD1 hinted:

Even though the MAG fund is meant for agricultural sector development such as the GAPS, there is the lack of commitment and the willingness by the government in the release of funds in the district. This resulted in low productivity due to the poor farming methods and practices utilized by the farmers.

AD3 confirmed this:

The biggest challenge faced by the Department is frequent delays and insufficient funding from the government.

4.2.4. Women in agriculture development-WIAD

The MAG Fund sought to promote women's involvement in agriculture. Women in Agriculture Development is an agricultural produce processing, packaging, good hygiene and housekeeping training program offered by the Department of Agriculture to women in the various farming communities and households. This was to create business knowledge and management enhancement skills among the women, and create jobs through local agro-processing to end post-harvest losses. The WIAD program was in line with the first component of the MAG Fund, which sought to provide access to essential demand driven skills, training, knowledge and capacity development for private operators on the agricultural value-chain.

AD1 emphasized:

As an objective of the fund, we are expected to train and enhance skills of women farmers in agro-processing. Over the seasons, we could not offer these trainings due to the debts we have accrued from the service providers we engage.

AD7 supported this position:

All trainings on agro-processing are on a halt due to unavailable funds.

4.3. Challenges with the MAG fund utilization in the Adaklu District

This study revealed lack of institutional collaboration and partnerships between the Department of Agriculture and the Adaklu District Assembly in local development planning in the District. This resulted in ineffective and unproductive utilization of the MAG fund in the implementation of agricultural development programs in the district. This is attributed to the organizational inefficiencies resulting in the cumbersome bureaucratic channels in accessing fund, inadequacies and delays in financial allocations from the Adaklu District Assembly, poor logistical provision, and high costs of inputs for farmers.

4.3.1. Cumbersome bureaucratic fund accessing channels

Firstly, this study has revealed cumbersome bureaucratic processes characterizing the quest of the Department in accessing the MAG Fund from the Assembly for the implementation of its policies. This situation is attributed to the composite budgeting system under the devolution of the agriculture department as a local government unit under the assemblies. The effect of these cumbersome bureaucratic processes is the failure of the Department to implement most of their agricultural development programs initiated in their medium-term development and annual action plans. For example, as part of the procedure in accessing the MAG Fund from the Assembly, the Department was expected to submit an action plan and a memorandum describing the programs and their respective budgets. As alluded by many of the informants at the Department, the submission of the action plan and the memorandum did not guarantee the allocation of the Fund by the Assembly.

AD1 lamented:

We are frustrated as a department as a result of the difficulties we face in accessing funds from the assembly for the implementation of programs the MAG fund is meant for. We are unable to render time-bound programs to our farmers.

AD3 supported this viewpoint:

The MAG fund is meant for agricultural development, surprisingly, the assembly creates difficult situations for the Department in accessing the fund. This impedes the progress of agricultural development in the District.

DA2 explained:

The processes in accessing the MAG fund is not cumbersome. As a local government authority, we are guided by laid down regulations in disbursing funds under the management of the assembly.

4.3.2. Weak inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships enhance productivity. This study has revealed weak collaboration and partnership between the Adaklu District Assembly and the Department in agricultural development planning and implementation in the District. Even though the devolution of the Department of Agriculture as a local government unit was expected to cure these ills, this seemed not to be the case in the District. Under this new arrangement, the Department submitted its medium-term development and annual action plans with a program-based budget to the Assembly for incorporation into the district-wide development plan and composite budget. Based on this, the District Assembly was expected to release programs and projects funds to all departments for their execution. An overwhelming majority of the informants posited that the Assembly lacked an understanding and appreciation of the agriculture sector's contribution to the socio-economic development of Ghana, hence their inability in ensuring collaboration with the Department.

AD3 indicated:

Interdepartmental collaboration among local government units is an important mechanism at the subnational level for ensuring rapid development. That is not the case between the Department and the Assembly in the implementation of agricultural development policies in the District.

DA1 disagreed and opined:

As the head of all local government departments at the subnational level, we recognize the essence of interdepartmental collaboration and partnerships in the development of the district. Over the years, especially after the devolution of the department as a local government unit, we have collaborated through diverse ways including the preparation of the composite budget, and medium term development plan. All these are geared toward the overall development of the district including the development of the agriculture sector.

4.3.3. Inadequacies and delays in resource allocation

Prompt delivery of supplies enables smooth project execution. The Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District suffered budget down-cuts and delays in the release of funds for programs to be implemented under the MAG funding. This resulted in the failure by the Department in implementing agricultural development programs in the District. This implies the mismanagement and poor utilization of the Fund by the institutions in charge, especially the District Assembly.

AD4 stated:

Most of our financial requests submitted to the Assembly for programs were slashed. Meanwhile, the accompanying utilization guideline of the MAG fund emphatically mentioned the utilization of the fund for an improved extension service delivery and agriculture development in general.

DA1 agreed:

The issue of budget down-cuts by the assembly is mostly attributed to the inadequate funds in the custody of the assembly. As a local government unit, we also rely on the central government for allocation of these funds for onward disbursement to the various department under our auspices.

4.3.4. Lack of monitoring and evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation eliminates wastage and helps cut cost. This study has revealed the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms on the utilization of the MAG Fund at the local level. This accounts for its unproductive utilization resulting in cumbersome bureaucratic fund accessing channels from the Assembly, lack of interdepartmental collaboration and inadequacies in resource allocation. Additionally, this demonstrates ineffectiveness of the secretariat established at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to monitor and supervise the utilization of the MAG Fund. The absence of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism in the utilization of the MAG Fund implies the inability in tracking the contributions made by the Fund in Ghana's agricultural development.

AD1 asserted:

When the department was directly under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, there were monitoring and evaluation teams, which regularly visits to track progress of agricultural development and utilization of funds in the district. That is not the case today.

AD7 concurred:

There is an absolute absence of monitoring and evaluation systems at the local level in tracking the progress and the impact made by the MAG fund in the development of Ghana's agriculture sector.

4.4. Effects of MAG fund challenges on agricultural development in Adaklu District

This study found poor extension service delivery, lack of technological deployment, and high cost of farm inputs and low agriculture production in the District due to poor utilization of the MAG fund.

4.4.1. Poor agriculture extension service delivery

In the agriculture sector, extension service delivery ensures effective farming practices. However, the study has revealed unproductive utilization of the MAG Fund in extension service delivery in the District. The findings of this study indicate that the Department had six (6) agricultural extension agents in charge of over thirty-six thousand (36,000) farmers scattered across the sixteen (16) operational areas of the District, violating the Food and Agriculture Organization standards of one (1) agriculture extension agent to five hundred (500) farmers. This implies that one (1) agriculture extension agent in the Adaklu District took care of six thousand (6000) farmers. This created a deficit of fifty (50) agricultural extension agents in the District. This study can conclude that the MAG Fund failed in achieving its target of improving on agricultural extension service delivery to farmers.

AD3 asserted:

One major aim of the MAG fund is to increase and improve agriculture extension service delivery to farmers. This implies the recruitment of agriculture extension service agents and the provision of logistics. Since the receipt of the fund, we have not seen a single recruitment of an extension service worker to aid in the provision of extension services.

AD6 supported this:

Extension service delivery is becoming challenging due to the inadequate number of officers expected to oversee about 36000 farmers with fewer logistics.

4.4.2. Poor technological deployment

The Government of Ghana is expected to utilize the MAG Fund judiciously in procuring relevant equipment for agricultural development. Nevertheless, agriculture mechanization remains a major factor for consideration in the District. The repercussions of climate change resulting in irregular rainfall patterns, drought and harsh weather conditions, necessitate the investment in the provision of irrigation facilities and technology to augment the insufficient and irregular rainfall patterns.

AD2 states:

There is unproductive utilization of the MAG fund for agricultural development. As expected, irrigation facilities are needed in these crucial times of climate change actions, which distort farming seasons resulting in irregular rainfall patterns and harsh weathers.

AD1 added:

There is no investment in technological advancement in the development of agriculture in the District. Our farmers rely on traditional methods. In the wake of climate change actions resulting in irregular rainfall patterns, there is high dependence of farmers on rainfall. We expect the government to utilize the MAG fund in procuring irrigation facilities to ensure an all-year round availability of water.

4.4.3. High inputs cost

The supply of inputs at affordable prices encourages farmers in their work. This study has revealed high inputs costs including fertilizer and seeds in the District. This is attributed by many of the informants to the failure of the government to provide adequate funding for the implementation of fertilizer subsidization under the planting for food and jobs policy. The study examined the effectiveness of the MAG Fund in Ghana's agricultural development, considering the failure of government in fulfilling its promise for a 50% subsidized rate on fertilizer, barely three years into the receipt of the MAG Fund. It emerged that the prices fertilizers of the various weights (25 kg and 50 kg) and types (NPK, Urea, and Ammonia) in the district had increased by over 300% within a year. The effects of the high prices of inputs are high production cost resulting in high costs of farm produce and food crops on the market defeating the food affordability aspect of food security. AD4 opined:

I do not think the government cares about the growth of Ghana's agriculture. The impacts of Ghana's fertilizer subsidization across the country, through the MAG fund cannot be realized.

AD3 added:

We do not understand why in the wake of this fertilizer subsidization, which is heavily funded by the MAG fund, farmers face price hikes in inputs. This raises questions of ineffective utilization of the fund in agricultural development.

4.4.4. Low agriculture production

Adequate yields in agricultural production is the aim of any agricultural policy. However, this study has revealed a significant decline in the yields of major food crops in the Adaklu District over the years. The drastic decline in the production capacity of the District was attributed to the poor services rendered by the Department of Agriculture to farmers in the District. The lack of funds at the disposal of the Department in the implementation of its agricultural development programs including on-farm and off-farm extension services coupled with poor technological deployment for agricultural production, and the recent price hikes in farm inputs across the country have contributed to the low food crop production of the District.

AD7 lamented:

There has been a decline in the production of many major crops we cultivate in the district. As a department, we have been handicapped in the implementation of agricultural development programs to equip farmers with skills relevant for increase agricultural production.

FM2 observed:

We hardly see extension service workers in our farms these days. We were made to understand by the department that, they do not have the resources in visiting our farms.

5. Discussion of results

The study investigated the effectiveness of foreign aid in agricultural development using the application of the Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana (MAG) Fund in Adaklu District as a case. The first objective of

the study was to examine national and district agricultural development policies implemented on the MAG Fund. Secondly, the study analyzed the challenges that confronted the utilization of the Fund in the District. Finally, the study assessed the effects of the challenges confronting the utilization of the MAG Fund in the District. The major findings of the study, based on the objectives, are presented in Figure 2.

In line with the first objective of the study on examining agricultural development policies implemented under the MAG fund, the study revealed that the central government and the Adaklu district department of agriculture initiated various policies geared at agricultural development. At the national level, the central government of Ghana implemented a series of flagship agricultural development policies including the Planting for Food and Jobs, Planting for Export and Rural Development, Rearing for Food and Jobs, and Logistical Deployment. At the district level, the Adaklu district assembly and the department of agriculture are expected to implement policies such as Agriculture Extension Service Delivery, Research Extension Linkage, Good Agricultural Practices-GAPS, and the Women in Agriculture Development-WIAD programme under the MAG fund. The study found that agricultural development policies are important for the overall development of the sector. In line with the above, Essegbey and MacCarthy (2020) posit that agricultural development policies and extension services are crucial components to the growth of the sector due to its contribution to changing existing behavior patterns of the wider traditional agriculture practices. In contrary, Asfaw et al. (2012) added that poor agriculture policies and inadequate extension service delivery to farmers account for low growth and development of the sector across most countries in Africa. Danso-Abbeam et al. (2018) point out that the repercussions and

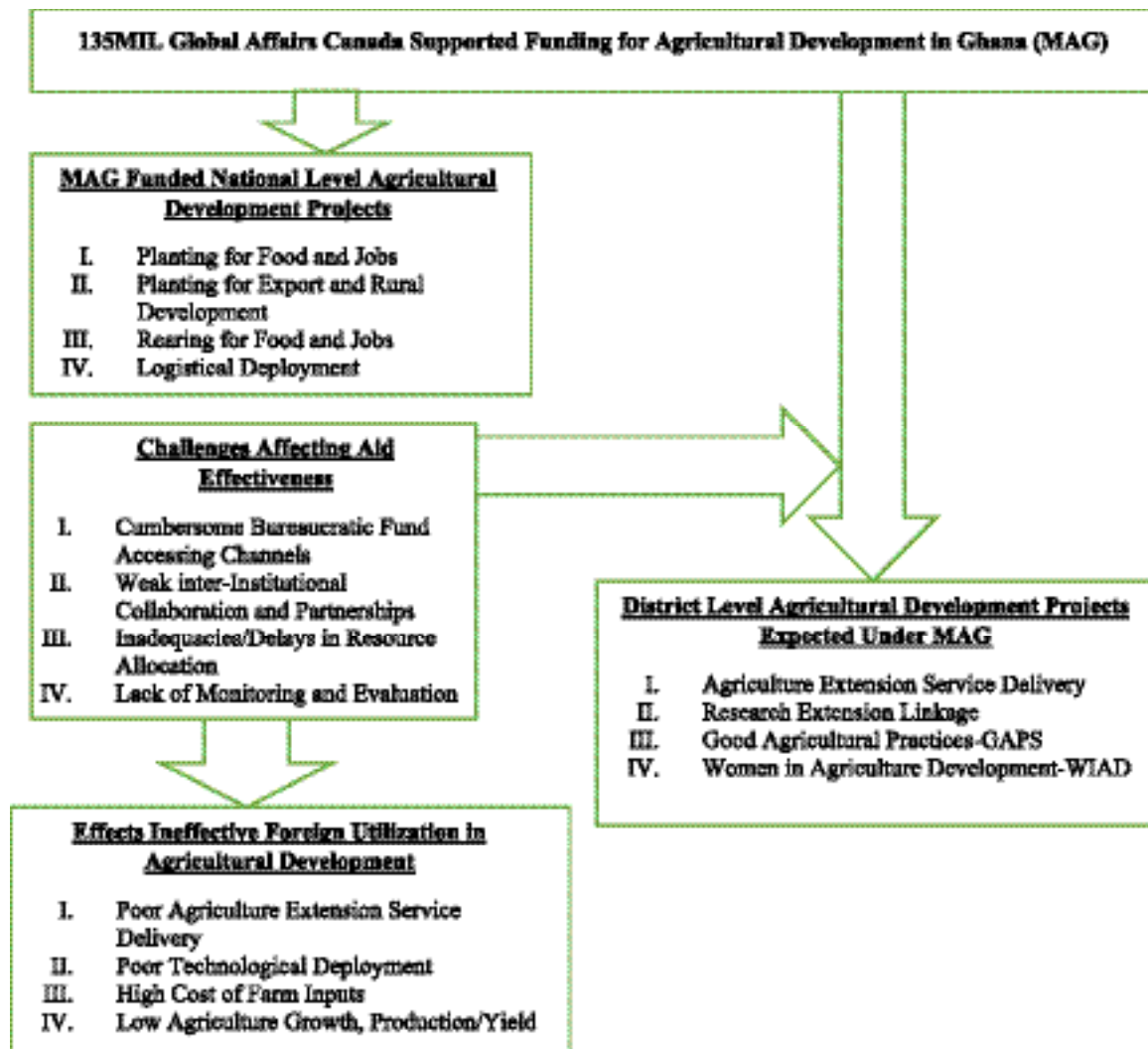


Figure 2. Framework depicting major findings of the study.
Source: Authors Construct, 2023.

threats of climate change coupled with advancement in technology requires huge capital investments in the development of both the agriculture sector and human capacity of farmers. Agriculture extension services are crucial for the development of the agriculture sector through the deployment of technology in agricultural production, provision of problem solving opportunities for farmers, support for rural adult learning through on-farm agricultural practices and agricultural knowledge and information sharing. The adequate provision of these services are expected to address rural poverty and food insecurity (Christoplos & Kidd, 2000). Specifically, foreign aid impact on rural agricultural development ensures the provision of agriculture research and development, education and training through agriculture extension service delivery, irrigation infrastructure to augment the irregular rainfall patterns resulting from the actions of climate change, and the provision credit facilities for farmers. Additionally, foreign investment through aid in rural development resulting in the construction of certain social infrastructure such as roads and agriculture warehousing systems ensure the easy transportation and storage of farm produce and in effect mitigate the post-harvest losses. In most countries in Africa, foreign aid for agricultural development is crucial for improved agricultural production and growth (He et al., 2022). This is due to the economic distress status of those countries resulting in low investment into its agricultural sector necessitating foreign financial support through aid.

The study revealed that as part of agricultural development and in line with the objectives of the MAG Fund, the department of agriculture was expected to implement agriculture policies/projects in the district. The study found that the Department of Agriculture in the Adaklu district was unable to implement those agricultural development policies due to the challenges it had faced in accessing the MAG Fund from the Adaklu District Assembly, implying an ineffectiveness of the Assembly (Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development, 1985). As indicated in [Figure 2](#), poor institutional practices: cumbersome bureaucratic processes in accessing the MAG fund, lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and weak inter-departmental collaboration between the Department of Agriculture of the Adaklu District and the Adaklu District Assembly were factors hindering the effectiveness of the MAG Fund in the District. These findings corroborate many of the findings in the area of foreign aid and agricultural development conducted by scholars in their earlier studies. For instance, World Bank (2010) stated that factors accounting for the decline and ineffectiveness of aid to Africa for agricultural development were weak governance structures and weak institutional capacities in the utilization of the funds for its purpose. This led to the shift in donors' attention to both sectoral and macro-level policy reforms resulting in policy-based lending instead of direct lending for agricultural development (Umbadda & Elgizouli, 2013). Cawley et al. (2015) added that agricultural development in developing countries is undermined by financing malpractices and organizational ineffectiveness in the implementation of agricultural development policies including extension service delivery. Additionally, Burnside and Dollar (2000), Asongu and Nwachukwu (2017) and Svensson (2000) attributed the ineffectiveness in the application of aid to Africa to corruption and weak institutional and governance quality of recipient countries. The positions of Norton et al. (1992) seem to suggest that aid has divergent impact on agriculture, depending on the region of its recipients. Huang and Zhao (2018) and Vitenu and Alhassan (2020) supported the previous scholars by stating that the inhibiting factors accounting for the ineffectiveness of foreign aid in the development of Africa are weak governance and institutional capacity, and low human capital development. Aid inflows to Asia for agricultural development is assessed to improve agricultural production, but had a little magnitude of impact on agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa countries. Pindiriri (2012) added that the consensus among scholars positing the absence of correlation between aid and development in aid recipient countries is due to ineffective policy decisions, weak governance systems in the management of those funds in accelerating economic growth and development.

The study found in line with the third objective of the study that ineffective utilization of the MAG Fund in the Adaklu District demonstrates its direct negative impact on rural socio-economic development in Ghana. As presented in [Figure 2](#), poor agriculture extension services, poor technological deployment, high input cost and low agriculture production are the associated effects of the challenges associated with the poor utilization of aid funds. These findings contradict those of Feeny (2007), who posited that the general impact of aid on the rural sector is manifested in agriculture growth and output. Across the sub-Saharan African region, the low records of financial investment into agricultural development resulted in limited agricultural production due to the lack of irrigation, technological and transport

infrastructural deployment into the sector's growth (World Bank, 2007). Ameh et al. (2017) emphasized the need for agricultural development across the globe through adequate investment in agriculture mechanization and technological deployment. This emphasis is based on reliance of countries on the sector in providing adequate and sufficient food to feed the over 9.7 billion population, projected to be food insecure by 2050. Applying the modernization theory and Rostow (1960) stages of economic growth and development, transitioning Ghana's agriculture from traditional to modern and developed status for socio-economic development is dependent on the effective use of foreign aid. This must be combined with good governance, proper institutional arrangements and policy effectiveness of the country. In addition, investment into technological infrastructural development and mechanization are crucial factors in transitioning Ghana's conventional agriculture into a desired modern status for socio-economic development (Kindornay & Morton, 2020; Mbaku, 2004). Sikandar et al. (2021) opined that effective utilization of foreign aid in agricultural development was an important factor for socio-economic development of developing countries. In line with the above, Erokhin and Gao (2019) and Erokhin (2017) posited that agriculture development was the primary solution for ensuring food security and poverty eradication in most countries across the world.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The study assessed the effectiveness of the application of the Modernizing of Agriculture in Ghana Fund in the development of the agriculture sector in the Adaklu District of the Republic of Ghana. The study concludes that, due to ineffective utilization of the MAG fund in the Adaklu district, less-to-no impact has been made in the development of the sector in the District. The institutional challenges at the local level in the development of the sector continues to be major hindrances for its growth and development. It is noteworthy that the Adaklu District Assembly failed in promoting development at the local level through its continuous delays in the allocation of the MAG Fund for the implementation of agricultural development programs in the District. The ineffective utilization of the MAG Fund for its intended agricultural development affects agricultural productivity, resulting in low-income of farmers. Consequently, food security is threatened in the wake of low agriculture productivity due to financing challenges.

As an agrarian economy, effective and judicious utilization of foreign aid for the development of Ghana's agriculture sector is essential for its overall socio-economic growth. As demonstrated in the utilization of the Fund in the study area, the absence of inter-departmental collaborations and cumbersome bureaucratic processes resulted in ineffective use of the Fund in achieving its objectives to ensure a comprehensive market-oriented approach to farming, strengthen and modernize agricultural extension service delivery in the country. Additionally, institutional reforms resulting in a composite budgeting system due to the devolution of department as local government unit partly contributes to challenges associated with timely fund disbursement at the local level. As a result, agricultural development and productivity is stagnated, defeating the rural poverty eradication agenda of the country. The theoretical argument of the researchers on this study is that ineffective foreign aid utilization resulting from weak institutional structures and poor policy decisions hinders the growth and development of countries.

Premised on the study findings, the following are recommended. Firstly, the government of Ghana must prioritize and ensure the effectiveness in the application of foreign aid through its utilization based on the stated objectives. This is dependent on strengthening the capacities of institutions and persons in-charged of utilizing foreign aids for development. Additionally, inter-institutional partnerships among institutions are crucial for effective utilization of foreign aid for development in line with the development objectives of the fund. As revealed in the case of the MAG Fund in the Adaklu District, poor institutional practices accounted for poor utilization of the fund resulting in its ineffectiveness for the intended purpose. For instance, Ghana's National Development Planning Commission must be resourced to coordinate and play an oversight role in the effective utilization of foreign aid for the overall development of the country. Furthermore, government must ensure the institutionalization of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at both the local and central government levels in ensuring effective utilization of the MAG Fund for its purpose. Five years after the receipt of the MAG Fund by the government of Ghana for the development of its agriculture sector, there is an absence of an effective monitoring and evaluation system for tracking the progress or otherwise of the Fund against its objectives.

Obviously, effective monitoring and evaluation could be the measure for curing the weak institutional partnership hindering the effective utilization of the MAG Fund in the Adaklu District. Lastly, the government of Ghana must decentralize the formulation and implementation of agricultural development policies in line with comparative advantages of the districts, accompanied by adequate resources to appropriate local level authorities. This is expected to resolve the central-local government challenges and the delays from district assemblies in the disbursement of resources for the implementation of central government policies by the Department of Agriculture of the District.

Disclosure statement

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