

THE ROLE OF GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATION IN NGO DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF ABT ASSOCIATES IN THE US
GOVERNMENT'S INDOOR RESIDUAL SPRAYING PROGRAM IN TAMALE,
NORTHERN GHANA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my children Nana Sakyi and Araba Edumaba (aka Emma Betty Sackey), and my husband, Kofi Sackey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	9
III. METHOD	30
IV. FINDINGS	38
IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	60
REFERENCES	68
APPENDICES.....	72
APPENDIX A. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL	73
APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT	74
APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	76
APPENDIX D. PROCESS OF CODING.....	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Map of Ghana.....	2
2. Relationships between Abt Associates, the funders, and the local communities.....	39
3. Operational structure of Abt Associates with stakeholders.....	42

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Preface

I chose to research this problem because of my experiences while working as a reporter with the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, West Africa. I covered many stories related to development projects which were implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and aimed at improving the lives of people within the communities. However, it appeared to me that these projects did not succeed as intended by the donors who funded the agencies. Most of these projects died, the NGOs ran out of funds and went out of business, while the communities still lived in the same conditions. I encountered this problem over and over, as I covered the launching of new development projects initiated by newly formed and existing NGOs for the various communities within the Accra Metropolitan area where I worked. Over the period, I kept thinking that something was wrong with how NGOs either communicated their intentions to the people or how they run their operations. Since then, I have had a burning desire to research and find out what is causing the waste of funds and the failure of NGO projects. This research is borne out of my interest to find an answer to the problems that I observed in Ghana.

Brief Background of Ghana

The Republic of Ghana is a democratic country ruled by a central government. However, in 1989, District Assemblies were created as local governing institutions that would offer opportunities to ordinary local community members to become involved in the political process. Assembly members were to be responsible for deliberation, evaluation, coordination, and implementation of programs accepted as appropriate for the district's economic development; however, district assemblies were to be subject to the general guidance and direction of the central government.

Ghana is divided into 10 regions including Greater Accra, Central, Eastern, Western, Ashanti, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, and Brong Ahafo Regions. These regions are depicted on the map below. The subject of this study is about a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) working in Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Map of Ghana

The central government of Ghana is mostly responsible for providing infrastructural development in all the regions, as well as programs that are aimed at improving the lives of its citizens. However, the central government has not been able to achieve this due to inadequate resources. As such, Non-Governmental Organizations have been supplementing the government's efforts by implementing programs in the various localities. This study investigates the role communication plays in the implementation of NGO activities in Ghana. The study looks at how communication is used in the activities of Abt Associates in Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana.

History of Non-Governmental Organizations in Ghana

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been working on the international scene for a very long time. In Africa, the activities of such NGOs are prevalent throughout most countries, including Ghana. NGOs are regarded as key agents in the fight against poverty, and also have certain advantages over the state and the local economic market (Luecke, 2012). This is because NGOs have significant access to funding which enables them to dictate and control the trend of the social and economic conditions around them. This position has attracted many donor agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the British International Development Agency, who have established relationships with local NGOs (Luecke, 2012). The donors frequently work in collaboration with local NGOs to provide help basic amenities to the poor.

NGO activities in Ghana dates back to the colonial era in the 19th century (Edward & Hulmes, 1996). Since then, NGOs and other private organizations have been involved in delivering social services to marginalized communities in Ghana, and other parts in Asia and Latin America (Clarke, 1998). Ghana first registered NGOs in the country in 1960. By the mid 1990s the number of NGOs had increased steadily. Today there are over three thousand NGOs operating in Ghana (Bawah, 2007). These aid agencies offer development services such as the provision of good drinking water, building clinics catering to the health of people in rural communities, providing agricultural equipment and small loans to farmers, as well literacy services such as building libraries (Bawah, 2007, Ghana Government, 2006). Examples of such NGOs include ACTIONAID, Catholic Relief Services, Abt Associates; and Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (Bawah, 2007). Edwards and Hulmes, (1996) argue that NGOs provide such services because most African governments lack the resources to provide the basic services to meet the needs of the people. As such, the NGOs have acted as social welfare safety nets, absorbing the costs of economic recovery programs and macroeconomic policies, such as Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs) and now the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) (Bawah, 2007).

Bawah (2007) explains that two main types of NGOs operate in Ghana. These are the local Ghanaian NGOs (LNGOs) and International NGOs (INGOs). The LNGOs operate in partnership with INGOs that serve as the main funding partners which also provides technical advice and support to their Ghanaian counterparts. The LNGOs in turn offer funding and technical support for development projects in rural communities. NGOs

have been recognized both by the state and the citizens as development partners of the state. Bawah notes that many NGOs see their services as crucial to the development of the country particularly for rural and deprived areas. They also see their roles as complementing efforts of the state in poverty alleviation. She explains that although NGOs have provided and continue to provide relief services to many deprived areas in Ghana, many rural communities still experience severe poverty. This is because most NGOs are not financially self-sufficient and rely on foreign donor aid to carry out their programs. The question then is, are NGOs able to provide services free of interference from their donors? Several studies have shown that NGOs face the challenge of being donor driven, which may cause them to fail in their mission to address the problems of the poor communities. Several studies have revealed that most NGOs have not been doing very well in delivering essential services as expected (Hulmes & Edwards 1992; Kang 2010; and Lewis & Kanji 2009). All of these studies suggest that those who fund the NGOs dictate the policies and management practices of these organizations. Edward and Hulmes, (1996) explain that the NGO's organizational structure, policies and agenda are often dictated by donors, in line with the donors' philosophies, values and culture. Since most donors are from North America and Europe, the operations of most charitable organizations are based on Western ideology and practices, which include a top-down management style (Hulmes & Edwards, 1996). Hulmes and Edwards note that NGO planners and policy-makers claim to have superior knowledge and expertise in scientific and technical knowledge compared to the experience of local community members who have been resolving the problems, needs, and aspirations of their people. Busiinge (2010)

blamed NGOs' failure to achieve their development objectives on the over-dependence on donor funding. In the same vein, Zaidi (1997) mentioned that over-dependence on donor funding is a problem facing NGOs in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Research Focus

One factor that has been understudied is the important role communication plays in NGO dealings with local communities. Riddell and Robinson (1992) explain that there are often problems in communication between the locals who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of these projects, and the workers who represent the charitable organizations that fund the projects. They note that lack of effective communication between the locals and the NGOs can create an apathetic attitude on the part of the locals who may not patronize the projects intended for their benefit. They argue that when community members do not fully participate in development projects, they have little potential for sustainability. As such, there is little chance of the project becoming economically viable. Riddell and Robinson note that the absence of communication makes it hard for the aid agencies to empower their target population to take ownership of the projects. Vivian (1994) also notes that the lack of communication between NGOs and the local people creates suspicion and doubt about the intentions of the aid agencies. Often, the local people see these projects as foreign, and not aligned with their local understanding of development and culture.

Adedokun (2010) explains that for community participation in development projects to be truly effective, the critical role of the members living in the community cannot be ignored. The author notes that development initiatives without effective

communication between the NGO and local recipients will not succeed if the initiative is to be sustained. The author describes the goal of community development as a process of helping a community to develop towards its full potential, with communication as the key element of a sustainable development. Adedokun further explains that in order to bring a change among marginalized and vulnerable population groups, participation must be fostered through communication because this is the only way to transform the community. Thus, the aim of communication in development projects is to enable the people who benefit from the program to have relevant information so they can play a part in the development and implementation of the projects.

The objective of the current research is to investigate the effectiveness of communication in the activities of an NGO community development project, and how this impacts the success or failure of the project. The focus will be to learn about how NGO community development projects are communicated in relation to local peoples' everyday experiences. The study will investigate how communication with target communities may help or hinder NGOs in their project initiation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Also, the research will consider how NGOs might accommodate local knowledge as a basis for developing a better understanding of the local needs, and the best way to initiate and implement these projects in the communities.

The research will take the form of a case study of Abt Associates, a non-governmental organization which is one of the many contractors implementing the Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) program in Tamale, Northern Ghana. The research will look at communication within Abt Associates, and between the agency and its donors, and how

the local workers in the office in Tamale communicate with their target population in terms of conducting field activities related to the IRS program, which is currently being funded by the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and United States Aid in Development (USAID) in an effort to control malaria in Ghana. Abt Associates is one of the many NGOs who are implementing the projects in the target areas in Africa. The primary focus of Abt Associates is to improve the health of people in developing countries. The purpose of the Indoor Residual Spraying project (IRS) is to support the PMI, as well as USAID Missions and Bureaus with malaria programs, with the ultimate aim of reducing the incidence of malaria cases in Africa. The IRS1 and IRS 2 are aimed at supporting 13 countries in Africa which includes Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia, and Ghana (Ghana Spraying Performance Report September 2010).

This research is important in that it may suggest factors to consider when attempting to achieve increased success for NGOS' efforts in Africa, and to stem the rate of failures of NGO projects. National and local governments, as well as other international development agencies may also benefit from this research as it will provide them with information that may help them to guide these organizations more effectively in keeping with their missions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws from literature conducted on activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the theories about the role communication plays in the success or failure of the projects managed and or implemented by these organizations. The sections in this review include the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in development communication theories, participatory theories, and NGOs as ineffective communication partners. Also included is the a section on the activities of NGOs in relation to Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), which will help to explain how NGOs depend on other resources within the various localities to operate and implement their projects.

The failure of the economic policies of African governments to improve the living standards of their people has given rise to an increase in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in most African countries (Adu-Febiri, 2007). The main objective of these aid agencies is to supplement the efforts of African central governments, as well as the private sector in the provision of infrastructure and social services (Ridell & Robison, 1992). For example in a developing country such as Bangladesh, foreign aid plays an important role in the economy of the country, accounting for eighty-seven

percent (87%) of government development expenditure and more than fifty percent (50%) of the value of imports (Riddell & Robinson, 1992).

Donor countries that provide free funding or other forms of aid for such projects do not have confidence in the ability of most African governments to provide services to the needy population because they have always failed to provide development projects for their citizens (Adu-Febiri, 2007). The issue has given rise to NGOs as the new development paradigm. NGOs are organizations that operate independently of the local governments and usually deliver resources to the people, or serve some social or political purpose. The World Bank classifies NGOs as either providing development services or advocating and promoting a cause (<http://www.nonprofitexpert.com/>).

These aid agencies currently deliver economic and social development services in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and are considered to be a far better alternative to the governments in the delivery of social services (Luecke, 2012). For instance, in Bangladesh there are an estimated number of 500 local NGOs involved in development work, which together receive external aid of about \$85-100 million per year. Foreign donors such as British NGOs annually transfer in excess of \$20 million to their local counterparts in Bangladesh (Riddell & Robinson, 1992). This increase in aid is viewed as a solution for sustainable development in Africa and around the developing world (Edwards & Hulmes, 1996). In recent times, NGOs are undertaking projects aimed at solving the socioeconomic problems in most developing countries.

Despite their aspirations to help alleviate the problem, these NGOs have not been able to deliver effective services as expected. It has now become obvious that they too

have failed at their tasks (Adu-Febiri, 2007; Edwards & Hulmes, 1996). The factors contributing to the development failure of NGOs in Africa are many, and as Luecke (2012) notes, over-dependence of NGOs on their western donors is a critical factor that accounts for their failure in gaining the support the local people for development activities. Luecke explains that these aid agencies operate solely on the directives of their funders, and that due to the lack of Ghanaian funding available to NGOs, there is a tendency for the local agencies to simply to jump to provide whatever foreign donors demand. Fowler (1992) notes that during the 1980s, funding to NGOs increased to a rate five times more than average expenditure on NGO activities. He notes that this creates a problem because local NGOs are increasingly relying on this form of funding which could lead to a new form of dependency for local charitable organizations.

Zaidi (1997) notes that the directives received from donors are often based on Western values, culture and beliefs, which maybe very different from that of the locals they intend to help. Zaidi explains that people in local communities do not understand the communication and management style used by these agencies, and also do not have a say in determining what development program they might want. Everything is prepared and decided by the funders of the projects. As such, projects mostly initiated through foreign aid often do not reflect what the people belief they need. Therefore projects end up being a waste of funds, while the actual needs of the target population remain unmet. For example, a report evaluating the progress of a farming project initiated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in northern Ghana revealed many reasons why the project failed ("Upper West agricultural," 2005). The report

explained that the majority of resources were spent on capital goods and central infrastructure with very little visible agricultural return, while the agricultural components of the project did not meet the needs of actual farmers. The report explained that the local farmers told the aid agencies what they needed and how they preferred to manage their farming projects but their requests were apparently ignored by the funders ("Upper West agricultural," 2005).

Zaidi (1997) argued that Non-Governmental Organizations have failed to institute some main objectives of their operations. These include their ability to replicate their projects anywhere they operate, as well as the ability to sustain the development projects on an ongoing basis. This means that conditions which enable successful projects in one place are not always present in other locations, and cannot be exactly replicated with the same result. This problem was confirmed in an IFAD report released in 2005 which explained the reasons for the failure of an agricultural project in northern Ghana. The report notes that conditions such as cultural or other traditional factors were not favorable for setting up similar projects in a given community, or that leadership skills that could have helped promote the success of development projects could not be found in all the local communities. The report explained that there was a problem of replicating many features of a project called Land Conservation and Smallholder Rehabilitation Project (LACOSREP), which had been successful in other districts of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The report noted that a fundamental mistake made by the NGO was to execute the projects in the way they preferred without due consideration for the different ecological, economic, social and demographic characteristics of the Upper West Region.

Recommendations made in this report include redesigning projects to reflect conditions pertaining to specific target area (Evaluation of UWADEP, 2005).

On the issue of project sustainability, several NGOs have not been cost-effective as they have always claimed. Edwards and Hulmes (1996) studied the cost effectiveness of these agencies and concluded that on the whole, there is no empirical evidence that shows that NGO service provision is cheaper than that of the local governments. As expressed in the IFAD report (2005), more expenditure was made for training and buildings than was spent on implementing the problem in the community. The report said the amount spent on the project far exceeded what could have been accrued from the project. Moreover, NGOs have not reached a huge percentage of the poor in countries they operate. For instance, Vivian (1994) puts the percentage of the Zimbabwe population reached by NGO projects at one percent (1%).

Other studies which researched the failures of NGOs have also cited the determination of these aid agencies to institute or perpetuate specific objectives as identified by their funders. These researchers argue that such over-dependence gives donors almost absolute control of the direction of NGO operations (Adu-Febiri, 2008; Brett, 1993; Dichter, 1996; Edwards & Hulmes, 1996). Fowler (1991) and Zaidi (1997) have also expressed similar concerns about the integrity of foreign aid agencies and their loyalty to their donors. These arguments may be legitimate because foreign donors expect the local NGOs to promote their agenda, as states and the private sectors would not do so (Zaidi, 1997).

Most Western donors who fund NGOs do so with the understanding that they will incorporate their values and ideologies into their operations. In effect, Western donors want NGOs to help liberate communities by empowering them to take control over their socioeconomic and political progress (Najam, 1996). However, the conditions for getting funding have created a situation where decisions are made by the management of the agencies delivering their services to people who may not hold the same ideals of democratic development (Fowler, 1991). Writing on NGO accountability, Najam (1996) noted that not only has the concept of participation been misunderstood by NGOs and the donors, but it is also misused. He argues that participation means the local communities should be given the chance to evaluate the project to see if they agree with what the aid agencies propose. Nejam found out that most development projects fail in developing countries because the target population do not patronize the projects, either because they do not like it, or that they do not see how it benefits them. Nejam also explains that communities become apathetic towards the efforts of the NGOs and refuse to support the projects when they are excluded from the project's implementation. This leads to massive failures of NGO development projects (Adu-Febiri, 2007; Edwards & Hulmes, 1996).

NGOs as Ineffective Communication Partners

A report by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2006) recommended that NGOs must reinforce the participation of local people by mobilizing people in the communities to take part in the decision-making related to development projects. The report says that NGOs should seek to build confidence among the local people by raising awareness, sharing knowledge and changing attitudes, behavior and

lifestyles (FAO, 2006). The reports notes the importance of improving learning and training rapidly spreading information to assist with program planning and formulation, and the fostering of support for development projects (FAO, 2006). In other words, NGOs need to fully engage communities in order to foster trust in their work. The FAO's research which investigated NGOs and rural development revealed that it is important for NGOs to put rural people in a position where they have the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding development projects in their communities. Manyozo (2009) emphasized that when community groups are more closely involved in the interactions with NGOs about their operations, it helps the communities to take ownership of initiating of development projects rather than seeing themselves as beneficiaries. Other authors suggested that NGOs need to rely on local people as part of the process of development by educating them about their activities, and not to impose alien knowledge, thoughts, ideas and skills on the people (Beltran, 2004). This assertion has special relevance, especially where the media is the only medium of education, instead of having face-to-face interactions with the local people. Adedokun (2010) also examined the impact of communication in development initiatives and concluded that improved interactions between NGOs and aid recipients could lead to more active participation of members in community development activities. Writing about the lack of communication between the locals and foreign aid agencies in Ghana, Vivian (1994) noted that many NGOs in Ghana have failed to make a significant difference in the civil society, and in the living conditions of both the rural and urban poor because the aid agencies do not tap into the aspirations and organizing practices of the locals. She

explained that many foreign aid agencies prepare their projects, develop implementation plans and send them over to Ghana with their own expatriate personnel to implement in the local communities. However, such projects do not inspire the trust or acceptance of the local communities because the process does not make them feel any ownership of the projects. Instead, they develop an apathetic attitude towards them.

NGOs as Effective Communication Partners

Vivian (1994) notes that in contrast, some Canadian NGOs who managed to tap into local leadership in Ghanaian communities are flourishing. Such agencies have been able to empower the people to take a greater role in the initiation and implementation of development projects. An example of such a successful project is the Kathy Knowles Children's Library (Vivian, 1994). This library was started in 1990 by a Canadian who read to her four children in their garden. She later added six more children from the neighborhood and soon the number increased to one hundred and fifty. To expand reading opportunities for Ghanaian children, the first Osu Community Library was opened in 1992. Today, there are six more Kathy Knowles libraries in various parts of Ghana as well as other African countries such as Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Cameroon, and the Philippines.

Another NGO which has achieved remarkable progress in Ghana is Actionaid, which operates in six of the ten regions of Ghana. These are Northern Region, Upper East Region, Upper West Region, Brong Ahafo Region, Greater Accra Region and Volta Region. The organization provides services such as water in rural communities, civic education, and sponsorship of pupils whose parents cannot afford to pay their tuition.

Recently, a report by the Ghana News Agency (GNA, June 29, 2013) showed that Actionaid Ghana and Songbata, also an NGO, have made great strides in reducing violence against girls to 72 percent in the Nanumba North and South districts in Northern Ghana. The report notes that between 2005 to 2013, the two NGOs collaborated to implement a program called Stop Violence Against Girls in School (SVAGS). The program aimed at strengthening the capacities of pupils, particularly girls to be aware of their rights and, and strategies they could use to defend themselves against such violence, while enforcing their rights. Before the project began, there was the prevalence of forced marriages, sexual harassment, and other violations against girls in the area. Members of the communities were involved in dialogue in forums and sensitization of the issue over a period of about 4 years. Currently, the violence rate against girls has reduced to about 50 percent.

Theorizing the Role of Communication in Development

Early interest in the potential use of mass communication to convey information that was useful to development communication drew the attention of communication scholars, leading to the diffusion of innovations theories by Everett Rogers (1962) and colleagues. Later theorists critiqued this modernist approach. Servaes (1996) notes that development problems resulted from the unequal distribution of resources created by the global expansion of Western capitalism. He explains that dependency analysis was informed by Marxist and critical theories which states that the problems of the Third World reflect the general dynamics of capitalist development.

Dependency theorists such as Hornik (1988) argued that the problems of underdevelopment were not internal to Third World countries but were determined by external factors and the way former colonies were integrated into the world economy. Hornik explained that the problems of the underdeveloped world were political rather than the result of the lack of information..

Boafo (1985) extends this argument and says that underdevelopment in Third World countries resulted from economic factors such as dominant position that Western countries held in the global order. He explained that Western Countries such as North American and European nations had the power to make political decisions for the least developed countries, leading the Third World countries to become politically dependent on the Western countries such as the United States.

For Beltran (1976) modernization theories were driven by behaviorist, positivist and empiricist assumptions. These particular biases accounted for why structural factors were ignored and for why interventions were focused on behavior changes at the individual level rather than on addressing social causes of poverty and marginalization. He suggests that the solution to underdevelopment problems is essentially political, rather than informational. What is required is social change in order to transform the general distribution of power and resources.

Participatory theorist Gumucio-Dagron (2001) explains that the top-down approach of persuasion models implicitly assumes that the knowledge of governments and agencies was correct, and that indigenous populations either did not know, or had incorrect beliefs. He notes that because programs came from outside villages,

communities felt that innovations did not belong to them but to the government and thus expected government to fix things where they went wrong. Gumucio-Dagron also explains that the sense of disempowerment was also rooted in the fact that targeted populations did not have the choice to reject recommendations or introduce modifications to interventions. He explains that development communication requires sensitivity to cultural diversity and specific context that is ignored by modernization theories. He claims the lack of such sensitivity accounts for the problems and failures of many international development projects. As a result, a new definition of development communication has been redefined by the participatory theorists as the systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development programs to inform, motivate, and train at the grass-roots level. This means that for the participatory theorists, development communication needed to be human rather than media-centered.

Melkote (1991) describes communication as a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development rather than information transmission. He notes that communication should involve the articulation of social relations among people. Melkote explains that people should not be forced to adopt new practices no matter how beneficial they seem in the eyes of agencies and governments. Instead, people need to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information. In stressing the relevance of media in communication, participatory theories provided a new understanding of development communication, and expanded the concept of participation beyond what was considered in the modernization theories. Melkote is of

the view that the locals, rather than officials of aid agencies, are central to community participation. Participatory theorists downplay the role of expert and external knowledge while stressing the centrality of indigenous knowledge and aspirations in development.

White (1994) notes that participatory communication supports encouraging participation, stimulating critical thinking, and stressing process, rather than specific outcomes associated with modernization and progress, as the main tasks of development communication. White explains that participation need to be present in all stages of development projects. This means that communities should be encouraged to participate in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of projects. This would give them a sense of involvement in the development activities within their communities, and also provide them with a sense of ownership of development projects initiated.

The development of participatory communication theories gives evidence that participatory approach is one of the main contributions to development communication. This is because empowerment is possible only if community members critically reflect on their experiences and also understand the reasons for failure and success of interventions programs.

This research focus of this study is to investigate NGOs' use of communication in development initiatives in Africa and whether lack of participatory communication plays a role in the failure of NGO operations in Africa. Other factors that might contribute to the research will include the level of dependency of the NGOs on their donors and how this affects their decisions to involve the local people in project initiation and implementation. To help explain the success and failure of NGO projects in Ghana, this

research will be guided by the participatory approach and resource dependency theory to explain how NGOs involve communities in their projects, and how NGOs' dependence on donor funding affects their decisions to involve communities in initiation and implementation of their projects, and the factors that lead to the success or failure of these projects.

Theoretical Framework; Participatory Communication

Participatory communication comes from community development. It is a term that refers to the theory and practices of communication used to involve people in the decision-making of the development process (Mefalopulos, 2003). Mefalopulos explains that the purpose of communication should involve something common to all the stakeholders. This includes the sharing of meanings, perceptions, worldviews or knowledge of all parties involved in a development project. Sharing in this context means having an equitable division of what is being shared, such as benefiting from development projects, which is why communication should almost be naturally associated with a balanced, two-way flow of information. The main elements that characterize participatory communication are related to its capacity to involve the human subjects of social change in the process of communicating (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001).

In a compilation of stories for social change, Gumucio-Dagron noted that participatory approaches aims to put decision-making in the hands of the people, and explained that employing participatory approaches strengthens the capability of communities to confront their own ideas about development projects with planners and

technical staff working for aid agencies. In addition, participatory approach strengthens an internal democratic process within the communities.

Proponents of the participatory approach such as Beltran (1985) described the modernization paradigm as promoting a top-down, ethnocentric and paternalistic view of development. He noted that any intervention that was focused on only improving messages to better reach individuals, or only change behavior was by definition, unable to implement social change. Gumucio-Dagron (2001) notes that one of the many roles of communication in participatory theory is that it provides a sense of identity to the local community that receives aid, especially in communities that have been marginalized, repressed or simply neglected during decades. The author explains that employing the participatory communication approach helps to install cultural pride and self-esteem among the local people. It also strengthens local and indigenous forms of organization, and protects tradition and cultural values, while facilitating the integration of new elements. This premise is very relevant to this current research because it will help understand how the local people of Tamale feel about participating in the Indoor Residual Spraying Program.

Another role of participatory communication is that it determines if the communication process is adapted to each community or social group in terms of content, language, culture and media, rather than the tendency to use the same communication strategies in diverse cultural settings, and for different social sectors of society (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). This is because development communication requires sensitivity to cultural diversity and specific contexts that were ignored. Gumucio-Dagron

notes that lack of such sensitivity accounts for the problems and failures of many international development projects. For this current research, this assertion will help to guide investigation of whether NGO funded by a Western donor will consider the culture and traditions of the local community and if this contributes to reasons why they fail in their development projects in Ghana.

Gumucio-Dagron is also of the view that development communication needs to be human centered. He explains that theorists in the communication field propose the use of communication as a tool to involve the community in development programs to help ensure the success of projects. These approaches show that involving members of the community in the activities of an NGO would help to ensure their full participation and patronage of the projects that are intended for their benefit. Such situation will help NGOs to empower the people to take control of the projects.

In stressing the relevance of the media in communication, participatory theories provided a new understanding of development communication, and expanded the concept of participation beyond what was considered in the modernization theories. Melkote (1991) is of the view that locals rather than aid agencies are central to community participation. Participatory theorists advocate for the use of local knowledge as opposed to expert and external knowledge as paramount to the success of development (Melkote, 1991; Gumucio-Dagron, 2000; Altafin, 19991).

Participatory communication identifies encouraging participation, stimulating critical thinking, and stressing process, rather than specific outcomes associated with the management style and policies of most NGOs (Altafin 1991). Altafin explains that

participation needs to be present in all stages of development projects. Communities should be encouraged to participate in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of projects. This would give a sense of NGO interest in their lives and communities, and provide them with a sense of ownership and skills that they can use beyond the timetable of development projects. Altafin (1991) notes that community empowerment has become one of the main contributions of participatory theories to development communication. He explains that empowerment is possible only if community members critically reflect on their experiences and understand the reasons for failure and success of interventions (Altafin, 1991). This is why this study is important because it will investigate NGOs' use of communication in development initiatives in Africa and whether lack of effective communication plays a role in the failure of NGO operations in Africa.

Participatory communication also plays the role of identifying the difference between what the local people believe they need and what the donors think the people must have (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). Gumucio-Dagron explains that community-based dialogue and communication helps to identify, define and discriminate between the felt needs of the people and their real needs, rather than donor-driven communication initiatives based on donor needs. This criterion is important because it will help to address one objective of this current study, which is to find out if the IRS project is what the local people actually wanted. Brett (1993) noted that communities should be viewed as partners and not aid recipients. He explains that many health and social problems of contemporary times are ill-suited to the traditional outside expert approaches to health intervention. Brett notes that the success of projects lies in the ability of NGOs to

maintain a relationship with each of these stakeholders. He explains that a hallmark of participatory approach is the transfer of power of decision making in intervention programs from the experts to the disenfranchised communities.

Resource Dependency Theory

Services once provided by governments, such as health, education, and financial assistance, are now commonly provided by NGOs (Fruttero & Gauri, 2005). NGO workers provide technical expertise in programs aimed at solving the basic problems of the poor communities, while funding for these programs are mainly provided by foreign donors. One area of organization theory which has helped to improve the understanding of how NGOs are managed is the resource dependency perspective (RDT) (Pfeffer & Salancik (1978). Resource dependence theory (RDT) maintains that organizations do not have sufficient resources, so they strive to acquire and sustain resources from their external environment. Resources are controlled by external actors who exert demands on the organization, and these actors perceive certain advantages in their relationship with the organization and exercise power through control over resources. The heavier the dependence on external resources, the more the demands of particular actors controlling these resources are influential (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Lewis (2001) explains that organizations depend on the environment for the resources they need, and as a condition, the organizations must continuously collaborate with stakeholders within the environment to ensure that they compromise or reach a deal on decisions taken by both sides. This creates a situation whereby organizations become externally controlled. To reduce the level of dependence on outside institutions,

organizations restrict the amount of information they reveal about themselves to outside forces within the environment, and also find other ways of getting resources for their activities (Lewis, 2001). Accordingly, organizational behavior is a reflection of the NGO's management of its dependence on an external resource and the ensuing demands of a donor controlling the resources. The magnitude of resource dependence often determines the behavior of an NGO. Therefore it is expected that NGO characterized by high resource dependency will tend to comply with donor interests.

Lewis (2001) notes that internal management factors, such as succession to leadership positions are determined by the conditions in the environment. In such a situation, management takes the responsibility of directing the need of the organization towards a more favorable relationship with its environment. This is done through three kinds of management action, namely, symbolic, responsive and discretionary. Lewis defines symbolic management as actions which only make a difference when viewed in the context in which the action was taken, such as replacing a leader. Alternatively, responsive management actions are ones that make a difference in the organization (Lewis, 2001). An example of this is a CEO of an organization who makes a decision on whether or not his workers get paid for overtime or not (Lewis, 2001). The discretionary management actions balance the constraints in the environment in the interests of the organization. This includes a manager's decision to collaborate or join forces with another institution to provide health services to their target population. This is, however, based on a good observation of information within the environment. This helps to explain how NGOs operating in Africa are vulnerable to obeying the demands of their

fundings. For example a report released by Action Aid on NGOs in Ghana noted that dependency on foreign aid can be more problematic because aid dependency inhibits economic development or mobilization of domestic resources. The report reads:

“.... it undercuts countries’ ability to chart their own development strategies, which is what is needed if development is to really take root. It does this by reducing developing countries policy autonomy, undermining recipient governments’ accountability to their own citizens, and making it harder for them to plan development programmes due to its unpredictability. So it is good news that, over the last decade, even while aid has increased aid dependency has fallen by a third in the poorest countries.” (ACTION AID, pg. 16, September 13, 2011).

This finding as contained in this report is very important to the purpose of this research because it suggested insight into the difficulties faced by many NGOs. It also highlights the inability of aid agencies to make decisions independent of their donors because they rely on them for funding. This confirms the concept of overreliance on donor funding as explained by the resource dependency theory, which attributes some of the failures of organizations to environmental factors. Also, this situation is very well explained by the participatory theory which advocates for the involvement of local aid recipients in the decision-making process of their development projects.

Using resource dependency theory, Uche (1994) explains that Africa’s continued economic dependency on Western countries continues to be an advantage to Western nations and African rulers because any attempt to transform the economy from colonial exploitation to a more autonomous and profitable development requires extensive help from the outside world. He explains that Africa relied on Western countries for technical expertise and funding to build industries aimed at developing the countries. Uche notes that the paradox is that the outputs of the industries are not enough to meet the loan

demands upon which they were installed In the first place and that this practice furthers dependency.

The resource dependency perspective and the participatory communication approach will both help to understand how community participation in the decision-making process of an NGO could either have a positive or negative impact on the programs initiated within the communities. Working together offers organizations the possibility for improved delivery of individual objectives and the creation of new opportunities. The resource dependency perspective has been used to study interagency relationships with emphasis on competition and collaboration among agencies. Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) explain that understanding the interactions between organizations have broadly originated from two organizing principles notably, competition and collaboration. The impact of continued constraint on public resources since the mid-1970s has stimulated the search for new sources of finance and examination of whether the creation of multi-agency partnerships involving public, private, voluntary and community organizations might offer ways of delivering more with less. Partnerships have the potential to increase resource efficiency, making better use of existing resources by reducing duplication and sharing overheads. They can add value by bringing together complementary services and fostering innovation and synergy. Finally, partnerships enable the provision of new resources by enabling access to aid recipients to obtain financial and in-kind contributions from the private donors. This enables NGOs to use private sector partners to supplement inadequate public resources (Mackintosh 1992). As their role moves away from that of monopolistic service provider, many local authorities

are embracing a vision of community governance in which they orchestrate and facilitate partnerships involving a range of local stakeholders (Stewart, 1995). This developing politics of partnership may be seen as complementing formal democratic processes or, more radically, as empowering traditionally excluded social groups (Wheeler 1996).

Resource dependency theory has not yet been used to study the relationship between NGOs and community members; however, it should prove fruitful to guide the exploration of this kind of relationship between donors, NGOs, and aid recipients in Ghana.

Research Questions

This research is designed to investigate the role communication plays in supporting development projects. The theoretical framework for this research includes resource dependency theory and the participatory communication approach. This research intends to investigate NGOs' use of communication in development initiatives in Africa and to gain insight into whether communication plays a role in the failure of NGO operations in Africa. Other factors that might contribute to the research will include the level of dependency of NGOs on their donors and how this affects their decisions to involve the local people in project initiation, and implementation. The research will address the following questions:

RQ1: What communication strategies does an NGO's management use to implement projects in the community taking into account their funder's mission?

RQ2: What communication strategies does an NGO's management use to involve local community members in the implementation of an aid project?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The study employed a qualitative research methodology in the form of an intrinsic case study approach because of a genuine interest the researcher has cultivated in the activities of NGOs, and why many NGO programs fail in developing countries. This study used the intrinsic case study because it would provide a better understanding of one particular case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The intrinsic case study will help answer the question about the role communication plays in the activities of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs). The choosing of this methodology does not mean that it represents other cases, traits, or problems. Rather, it was used because of the researcher's interest in learning more about the activities of NGOs (Stake, 1995). The present study involves an interest in knowing how the management of NGOs communicates with their staff and the local people who are the target of the aid programs. This inquiry includes communication with the representatives of the local people, and how they involve members of the communities in the activities. The case study approach was chosen for this research it will help to analyze the specific problem under study. Creswell (2013) explains that case study approach is good for analyzing specific problems in social science.

The unit of analysis for this study is a single case or an organization (within site study) (Creswell, 2013). The study took the form of an examination of a single unit or case, which is also described as a bounded system, consisting of one particular NGO. The unit is Abt Associates, an American based NGO, funded by international donor President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) located in Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana, and charged with implementing the IRS program. Using the case study approach allowed me to explore a real life contemporary system over time through detailed data collection from phone interviews obtained from the participants (Creswell, 2013, Charmaz, 2006) and contextual information from the websites about the IRS program and the aims and mission of PMI. The study resulted in a case description and case themes based on the responses received from the participants and provided context by the documents. This involves a study of how Abt Associates employ different communication strategies to involve the local aid recipients in their activities. The study also looked at how this organization maintains its relations in accordance with its funder's mission and aspirations.

While the limitations of this approach is that the findings from a single case study cannot be generalized to all similar cases (Stake, 2000), it can help to develop and refine understanding of the participatory communication approach and extend understanding of the resource dependency theory in relation to NGOS, by looking at how the organization interacts or communicates with the aid recipients and other "stakeholders." This will also include a review of the extent to which Abt Associates depends on other local institutions

in Ghana to implement their operations, and how such dependency affects the operations of the NGO.

Setting

The branch office of Abt Associates International in Tamale, Northern Ghana which implements the Indoor Residual Spraying program (IRS) served as the case study for the research. The aim of the IRS program is to eradicate malaria diseases in the local communities.

Participants

My contacts with the participants were coordinated by my younger sister who works as a seasonal accounts clerk at Abt Associates. As a result, I had easy access to the workers and the management, conducting the telephone interviews from the USA while my sister and one of the junior managers provided consent forms to the participants. The interviews were recorded with a small microcassette recorder. A landline phone which was used to call the participants from the US was put in a loud speaker mode which made the answers of the respondents loud and clear. The cassette recorder was then set to record the interview. This was later transcribed verbatim and coded. All participants spoke English Language so there was no need for any form of translation.

Participants interviewed included one senior-level manager and three lower-level managers (District Operations Coordinators). Two of the junior managers provided names of four local people in their communities who had been contacted and agreed to participate in the interviews for the research. The senior manager is involved in making decisions about the IRS program for the whole Northern Region of Ghana, while the

junior managers make decisions for their respective districts. At least two of the local aid-recipients interviewed also doubled as field workers called implementers who go into the neighborhood to educate the local people about the benefits of the IRS projects, as well as removing the belongings of the people from their rooms in order to spray.

Data Collection

Eight participants agreed to participate in a phone interview for the research. These included one senior-level manager, three lower-level managers and four aid recipients from the local communities. The participants were contacted via phone after they signed consent forms. The phone interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes for each participant. The managers answered questions pertaining to their role in the organization, and how they communicate and coordinate with the local people to ensure success of their programs. Participants from the communities answered questions pertaining to their role in decision-making in the NGO activities and whether they agreed with the projects in their communities. All participants in this interview speak English Language so there was no need for any translation as previously anticipated.

Data Coding

The data from this study was coded using a Grounded Theory approach which helps to provide analytic questioning of the data gathered (Charmaz, 2006). This method also helps to direct subsequent data-gathering toward the analytic issues defined for the study. The process for this study involved three major phases. These include 1) Open or Initial coding where fragments of data including quotes and phrases, and words were examined for any analytic import. Themes are created out of these and the data were

grouped according to the features of the theoretical framework for the second phase which is 2) Focused Coding. For this phase, the data was coded based on selections of relevant and useful phrases, words and which fall under the themes. These were tested against the general data gathered from all sources for consistency and similarity with the issues under study. The third phase is 3) Axial Coding where patterns of words and phrases said by the respondents are sorted and grouped into categories. The fourth and final phase is 4) Theoretical Coding where data gathered were compared, and the different codes generated were also compared against each other to help conclude if the data on the responses of participants, as well as other information obtained from documents and artifacts relates to the features of the theoretical framework of the study (See Appendix D for data codes).

Open Coding. This is the initial coding where all transcribed responses were read and coded to uncover central themes (Creswell, 2013, Charmaz, 2006). This included an open coding which identified common words relating to participatory communication and resource dependency. I looked for phrases that described and alluded to the subject of this research that appeared in the responses of the participants, including significant words and phrases, and the order in which they appeared (See Appendix D for a list resulting from open coding). The coding was used to find the major features in the responses which were participatory communication, dependency on donors, and conditions denoting non-participatory communication as well as instances explaining the reasons for failure or success of NGO projects, as identified in the literature review. As part of the approach

Focused Coding. In the second phase of the coding process, which is Focused Coding, the phrases were more directed towards the theoretical framework of this research. The coding process was more selective and conceptual in nature (Charmaz, 2006). This included decisions made to select those codes which make the most analytic sense. At this stage, words were created from this the open coding to match the focus of this research. This included phrases that matched any form of participatory communication, decision-making, and the NGO's reliance on external factors in their operations. Others included any form of interactions or collaboration between the NGOs and the local community members. At this stage I grouped the phrases into sections which helped to identify where there was some participatory communication between the NGO and the local community members, and also if the community members were involved in decision making process on projects in their localities or not (See Appendix D).

Axial Coding. The third phase in the coding process is the Axial Coding where themes connecting all or most of the features that emerged from my initial grouping of the responses were created. These included patterns of phrases used or said by the respondents. I sorted the codes from the interview responses and coded them in detail by making a list of categories that were grouped based on the major ideas generated from open coding (Charmaz, 2006, Creswell, 2013). The list of words created under these was in categories. These included phrases that matched 1) conditions: referring to circumstances that explain any of the questions or topic of this study, 2)

actions/interactions: referring to routine or strategic response from the participants in relation to the focus of this study, and 3) consequences: referring to the outcomes, or interactions (Charmaz, 2006), (See Appendix D).

Based on the groupings and the categories created, the following themes emerged:

1) participation, 2) collaboration, 3) decision-making, 4) coordination, and, 5) communication.

Theoretical Coding. Finally in the fourth phase of the coding where the theoretical framework is considered, themes that relate to the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) or participatory communication approach were drawn. The process included comparing the phrases to the ideas and topics that emerged from the literature review (See Appendix D). Themes for this study are framed from information gathered from the coding which help to answer the question of whether participatory communication is relevant to the success or failure of NGOs' activities in Ghana, and also if NGO's reliance on external factors affected their operations.

The participatory communication approach requires that decision-making should be placed in the hands of the people receiving benefits from the program or projects. This involves providing relevant information to the people, their involvement in decision-making and collaboration with the NGO to ensure a successful NGO activity. So the themes were created based on these features to help draw conclusions as to whether the activities of NGOs were participatory or not. Also, the main idea of resource dependency theory is that organizations do not have sufficient resources alone and they strive to survive by obtaining resources from the external environment, which in turn, controls the

activities of the organizations by making demands in exchange for resources. Therefore the themes of coordination and collaboration were created to help explain if and how the NGO relies on the local institutions to function, and also if and how such collaboration impedes or support the activities and the decision-making power of the NGO.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter is organized into two main sections to address the research questions:

RQ1: What communication strategies does an NGO's management use to implement projects in the community taking into account their funder's mission?

RQ2: What communication strategies does NGO management use to involve local community members in the implementation of an aid project?

As a result of conducting interviews with the participants, it became apparent that there is even more complexity in the array of stakeholders which the NGO which is the subject of this case study must interact. The first section of this chapter provides more background to help explain the complex web of relationships in which Abt Associates functions. This background will help make sense of the findings that emerge from the analysis of the interviews in the second section.

A Venn diagram in Figure 2 has been used to explain the interwoven relationship between PMI, which is the international donor, Abt Associates, which is the NGO, and the local communities, which are the recipients of the aid provided by the NGO. This is followed by Figure 3, which provides a visual representation of the structural relationship of PMI, which funds the IRS, entities of the government of Ghana, Abt Associates, and

the district assemblies and local stakeholders, as well as the various management roles at the Tamale local office of Abt Associates and how they relate to other local institutions that provide resources for their activities. Figure 3 also illustrates how the NGO relates to the people who receive the aid, and the intermediary role that District Assemblies (DA) representatives, chiefs and opinion leaders play in Abt Associates' connection to the local people. This relationship provides a context for understanding the different perspectives of both the staff of Abt Associates and the local people of participatory communication as it pertains to the Indoor Residual Spraying program in the localities. This is followed by findings from the thematic analysis and an explanation of the resource dependency theory and how it helps to explain the collaboration between Abt Associates and the other health institutions in Ghana. The relationship between the donors, NGO, and government of Ghana and community is intertwined as illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Relationships between Abt Associates, the funders, and the local communities

Structural Relationships between NGO, Community, Stakeholders and Donors

The interviews revealed a more complex set of relationships between the donor, the NGO, and the local community members than was previously realized. For instance, Abt Associates must negotiate with multiple stakeholders in order to implement anything in a particular community. The Indoor Residual Spraying program (IRS) is currently funded under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) which was instituted under the former US President, George Walker Bush in June 2005. Until 2005, the indoor residual spraying program in Ghana was carried out sporadically and on a limited scale, mainly by small private interests, and, in some cases, funded by nongovernmental organizations, tourist resorts, or district assemblies (Ghana Program at a Glance, 2009). Several recent developments brought IRS to the forefront of activities in Northern Ghana.

Internationally, the World Health Organization began recommending IRS for areas with high malaria transmission cases and Ghana was announced as a PMI focus country in December 2006 (http://www.pmi.gov/resources/reports/pmi_fastfacts.pdf). In 2007, the National Policy for Vector Control was rewritten to incorporate IRS as part of the integrated vector control program. The objective of the IRS project is to help the Ghana Health Service provide IRS to 85% of the population in targeted geographic areas, thereby contributing to the PMI goal of a 50% reduction in malaria-related mortality. The IRS project is implemented under the direction, and in full collaboration, with the Ghana National Malaria Control Program, which is an integral part of the government's malaria control program. The IRS project in Ghana was led by RTI International with funding

from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) (Ghana Program at a Glance. 2009). Currently, the IRS program is being implemented by Abt Associates International, another US based organization.

Abt Associates is Non-Governmental Organization involved in health and disease prevention in developing countries (<http://abtassociates.com/>). This organization undertakes various projects in localities aimed at improving the lives of the local people. This time, Abt Associates is involved in malaria control prevention in Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana, in West Africa. The program was previously carried out in nine districts of the Northern region but has been reduced to four regions due to funding cuts. Currently, the program is being implemented by Abt Associates which now has the contract for recruiting local people to carry out the project in the communities. The Chief of Party (COP) who heads the overall project in the Northern region is hired by the country head office of Abt Associates and need not necessarily be a native of the Northern Region. The current COP of Abt Associates in Northern Ghana is from a different African country. However, all of the workers who carry out the malaria eradication campaign are locals who come from the community and speak or understand the local vernacular of the dialect of the people.

Communication Strategy for Implementation of Projects

The study found an interesting communication pattern that answers the first research question, which focuses on what communication strategies NGO management uses to implement projects in the community, taking into consideration the funder's

mission. The communication pattern in Figure 3, as gathered from the interviews, shows the dynamics between the organization, stakeholders and the community members.

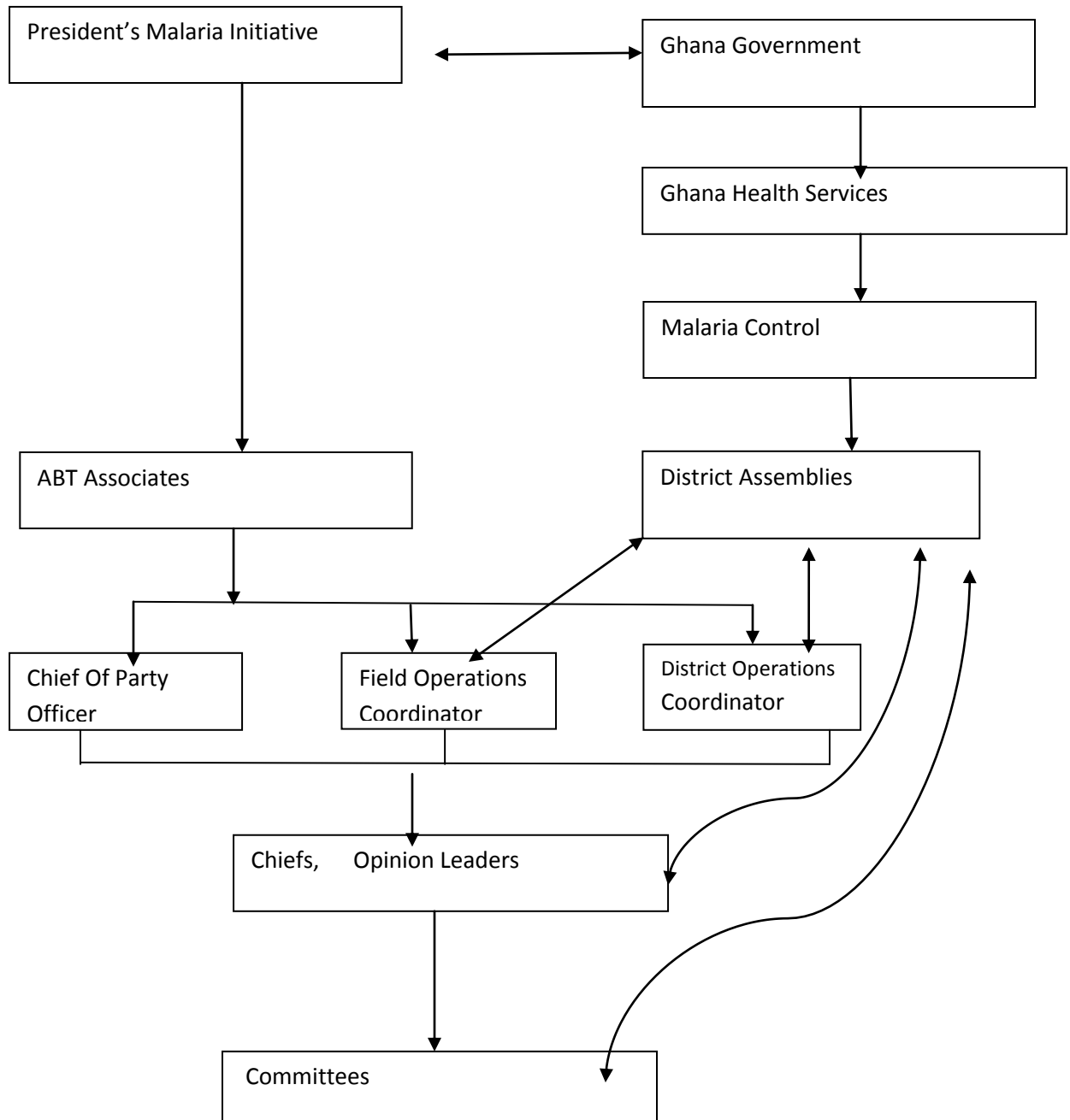


Figure 3. Operational structure of Abt Associates with stakeholders

In considering RQ1, the study revealed that local heads of Abt Associates receive instructions on policy and implementation strategies from the head office in Washington DC. This becomes the guiding principle for the implementation of the IRS program in the districts. The staff of the organization consults and teams up with existing institutions in Ghana, such as the Ghana Health system, the Malaria control program, research centers such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, and the district assemblies. The relationship between Abt Associates and its stakeholders is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

The Tamale office of Abt Associates is headed by the Chief- of-Party (COP) who handles the administrative duties of the organization in the Northern Region. His duties include coordinating the operations of the organization in the Northern Region and maintaining the funders about their mission in his region. This is followed by the Chief of Operations (CO) who supervises the entire field work of the NGO in the Northern Region. He collaborates with the COP to make strategic decisions such as procurement of logistics for the operation, and helps to decide which districts will be sprayed. It is also his responsibility to obtain the insecticides, and other items needed for the operations of IRS program in the Northern Region. The Field Operations Coordinators (FOC) are the junior level managers who work directly under the Field Operations Manager. The FOCs manage the IRS program in their respective districts. Their duties include recruiting staff, coming up with communication strategies and coordinating with traditional rulers such as chiefs, opinion leaders and elected representatives of District Assemblies, personnel of

the Ghana Health service stakeholders, and community volunteers to ensure the success of the IRS program.

Abt Associates also coordinates with other stakeholders, which includes the Ghana Health Services (GHS) which provides the NGO with trained volunteers who help in educating the local community members about the benefits of the IRS program. GHS also gives Abt Associates access to the various health centers in the districts which have identified recorded cases of malaria. The organization uses this data to help determine the effectiveness of the IRS program. The Ghana Malaria Control Program (GMCP), which is also a stakeholder, is already in the business of eradicating the disease in the region so they offer technical advice to Abt Associates and coordinate with them to determine the success of their programs.

The aspect of decision-making and control over strategies and processes of the NGO were seen to be limited within Abt Associates and among the stakeholders in regards to the IRS program. Responses from the staff of the NGO show that they do not have decision-making role in choosing whether or not the organization should implement the IRS aid program versus some other form of aid. Such decisions about programs are made by donors who fund the program from the US. Instructions on how to carry out the program are handed down to the local offices in Ghana. The staff's role is to recruit local people who will do the job. As such, both the staff and members of the local communities do not have a role in deciding what project should be implemented in the communities and whether or not a given aid program is what the people want or believe they need.

Communication Strategies with Local People

Even though the staff of Abt Associates does not initially contact the local people about their projects, they are able to encounter them directly at forums and meetings which are organized by the chiefs, District Assembly members and opinion leaders. The community members are last in line of the hierarchy. They are the recipients of the aid and mostly have no decision-making power beyond acceptance (or refusing to accept spraying in their homes). They just listen to their DAs, the chiefs and opinion leaders and the staff of Abt Associates to tell them what to do with regards to the IRS program.

The second research question of this study was to find out what communication strategies NGOs use to involve the local people in their projects. The responses from interviews showed some interesting aspects of communication in the activities of Abt Associates. The organization mainly communicates with community members through elected representatives such as the District Assembly members (DAs) who attend meetings organized by Abt Associates to discuss planned projects by the NGOs and the Assembly members can help the NGO to implement the project in their respective localities. Because they are elected by the people, DAs are highly regarded by their constituents, and wield some authority when they speak to the local community members. Therefore they are able to communicate the wishes of the NGOs to the people, and are able to explain to the people as why they should accept the IRS project, even though the local people have no role in choosing this project. So the NGO collaborates with the District Assemblies (DAs) who have the ultimate decision-making power in deciding if IRS program would be implemented in a particular locality or not.

Traditionally, chiefs are highly regarded as sacred beings in the African communities. They are revered by the people and wield great authority in the respective jurisdictions where they rule. As such, their subjects follow and obey whatever they tell them to do in part because disobeying could result in some form of punishment. When it comes to making decisions chiefs usually invite all the community members to a forum at a public place or at the chief's palace. The chief then explains the planned NGO project to the people and urges them to accept the project to be implemented in their communities and homes. In this way, the people tend to agree with whatever projects the NGO passes through the chiefs. Staffs of the NGOs also use such forums to explain or educate the people about their projects.

Other forms of communication in the NGO activities also include the use of opinion leaders in the local communities. These people are highly respected in the local communities and the people listen and follow they say. They are mostly highly educated individuals, religious leaders, and wealthy individuals or community volunteers for programs such as the Ghana Health Service system.

Themes derived from this information include whether or not local community members participate in the activities of NGOs. The study found out that in the case of Abt Associates, the local community members do participate in the Indoor Residual Spraying program by allowing their rooms to be sprayed. They do so because the chiefs tell them to comply. Other people who influence the people to participate include the District Assembly members and the opinion leaders in the communities.

There is an element of collaboration between the staff of Abt Associates and other stakeholders. These stakeholders include the Ghana Health Service system which is comprised of clinics and major hospitals located in the regions and districts where the IRS program is implemented. These health centers help to collect data on the malaria cases reported by the local people living in the target areas. Other people who work with Abt Associates from the GHS include community volunteers whom the NGO call “implementers.” Other government institutions include the Ghana Malaria Control system, which also works with health laboratories such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute. As explained by a staff member of Abt Associates, the success of the IRS program depends on a successful collaboration between the NGO and its stakeholders.

An upper level manager of Abt Associates in the Northern Region explained that the organization does not undertake a project without consulting the members of the stakeholders because the organization uses existing structures in places where they operate to advance their cause. He said

You realize that IRS cannot function as an individual organization. It functions as a decentralized government or department. We have the Ghana Health Service, which is the mother organization that is the strong hold of health activities in Ghana. There’s no way we can do health activities in Ghana without involving the Ghana Health Service.

Another reason for the collaboration is to ensure continuity of the project by the government of Ghana after the NGO leaves the area. A staff member explained that the organization assumes that the government would be able to continue their work, using the already established infrastructure, including the human labor and other resources available.

So what we do is to work through special agencies, use their strictures so that at least, when we wind up, and the government wants to continue, doing the indoor residual spraying, it can still maintain those structures.

For example, for the IRS program, the organization uses local volunteers trained by the Ghana National Health Services (GNHS) to serve as their advance party into the communities. These local people are called implementers, and they assist the GNHS in educational campaigns on health issues in the local communities where they live.

Because they live among the community members, they are trusted and the people listen to them about health related programs in which the people are expected to participate. As a result, Abt Associates view them as representatives of the people and as such a good substitute for communicating with the local recipients of the IRS aid program directly. As explained by a staff of Abt Associates,

In terms of passing information about IRS, we use the implementers who get in touch with the CBV, and they send information back to the people. They hold community meetings, and educate the people about how IRS operates, how it affects the people, how people need to follow safety standards to get maximum benefit.

Another form of communication link is between Abt Associates and the District Assemblies (DA) whose members are democratically elected by the people. Because of this Abt Associates regards the implementers as a direct contact with the local communities. Since the DA members have the power to stop a program from being implemented in their communities, the NGO has the view that they do not impose projects on the local people but rather, consult with them in the persons of their elected representatives and, if the DAs agree, receive the support to go ahead and implement the program. Thus, by consulting with the democratically elected representatives of the local communities, the management of the NGO believe they have the approval of the local

community. A staff of the NGO justifies the use of DAs as a substitute for participatory communication by saying that:

The district assembly is the custodian of every organization and they are in-charge of every development. So at this point in time, you need to meet with them. So at least they can also find out what we are doing. So they are also part of our people. They are the authority where every development interacts. So we definitely have to partner with them so that at least, they also monitor what we are doing.

However, while the district assembly member has the final say on whether or not a project should go ahead, the people or their representatives do not necessarily have the opportunity to agree with the implementation of a particular the project. The local people explained in the interview that they are only informed of an action taken on their behalf, and how they are expected to cooperate by participating in a program. One participant explained that “When they come, they normally go and announce to the people that on a particular day they will be spraying. They also inform the representatives and they come back and inform us.”

Basically, members of the communities do not have the opportunity to actually take part directly and fully in the decision making process. In addition, members of the organization explained during the interview that the IRS program is a predetermined program that is set to go from outside of Ghana, pre-packaged so to speak. There is no opportunity for the Abt staff nor the members of the local community to change or revise the implementation of the program. One junior staff member explained that,

At the district level we actually don't decide on what the communities want. But as you explain the projects you have for them, other issues do come up. We explain the IRS project to them and they talk about other issues that are not covered under the program. But we have a particular program, we a predetermined activity and ready are to go.

So all local community members are allowed to do is to either clear their rooms of the clothing and other items or allow the sprayers to remove their things and spray the walls to prevent mosquitoes from biting them at nights. This means that the decision making process as portrayed by the organization is actually a top-down decision making process, rather than a bottom-up communication process, as perceived by the organization.

Traditional leaders such as chiefs and opinion leaders also form part of the education and participatory process as envisioned by Abt Associates. The staff explained that the organization also employs the assistance of the local chiefs in the implementation of their IRS program. In this process, the chiefs are consulted and educated about the benefits of the program and their assistance is sought to involve the people in the program. So the chief gathers his people by beating a talking drum (*gong gong*) to assemble the people. The junior level staff explained that “sometimes, we use the chiefs in the villages. “We go and talk to them so they gather the people and in turn talk to the community members.” Comparatively, the decision making process in the local Ghanaian communities is a more decentralized and democratic process. Everyone gives an opinion and there is usually a general consensus on what to finally implement. He said the chiefs also explain the dangers of the malaria disease and solicit ideas from the people about what to do in the traditional manner.

The chiefs allow the staff of the organization to come and educate the people and take questions and suggestions about development programs for the community. However, the main purpose of such a meeting is basically to implore the people to allow

the organization to implement the program in their homes, not to gain any ideas or discuss other problems the people might prefer be addressed. The task is merely to implement the NGO funder's mission. In this case, the people accept it because the information is coming from a chief who is their traditional leader. Also, it is important to note that the participation rate will be high since chiefs are revered in Ghanaian society.

As explained by Gumucio-Dagron, 2001), participatory approaches put decision-making about matters that concern them directly in the hands of the people. He notes that employing participatory approaches strengthens the capability of communities to confront their own ideas about development with NGO staff. Therefore, the inclusion of chiefs and opinion leaders in the implementation of the IRS program does not necessarily suggest a participatory communication since the people are basically been asked to agree to receive the aid by both their traditional leaders and their elected representatives.

Consulting the People Versus Engaging in Participatory Communication

It is now clear that staff of Abt Associates think that because they work in consultation with district assembly members, chiefs, implementers from the local communities, and the government, their method of communication is participatory. This is because they perceive the stakeholders represent the people and the government as a whole. This was explained in an interview response by one staff member of the NGO:

The people themselves, the community members still implement the program, as it is their responsibility. We don't have the responsibility to go and identify problems. By our standards, we are supposed to collaborate with our community based organizations and district assemblies, and the Ghana health service, as well as those in charge of malaria control programs to implement the interventions.

However, the aid recipients who were interviewed think that they are not given the opportunity to contribute their suggestions to the program. Also, they think that they are not allowed to decide which program they prefer for their communities. When asked if they had a role in making a decision about the IRS program, a participant responded that

No, we didn't get access to such a forum. There wasn't any forum for us to decide which project to choose. It was err... only what the stake holders wanted. This was how it was done. It was stakeholders who came out with their own decision.

Therefore, the issue of consultations, as described by staff of Abt Associates, only pertains to formal meetings between stakeholders and the organization. In this case, the stakeholders are only informed of a pre-arranged program. They do not have a decision making role during which they consider other program. Consultations are only meant to seek their support for the program and not to allow any form of participation, which could include the opportunity to choose a different program for the local communities. Since development participatory is the process where decision-making is in the hands of the people affected and which strengthens the capability of the communities to confront their own ideas about development with NGO staff, it can be concluded that the communication process as pertains in the IRS program implemented by Abt Associates is not truly participatory development.

Organizational Dependence on Stakeholders

The responses from both the senior and junior level management of Abt Associates revealed that the organization is not able to implement its IRS program until it is approved by the representatives of the people in the District Assemblies. They explained that even if the local people were to be in agreement about accepting an aid

program, any opposition by a member of the district assembly could stop implementation of their program in a particular locality. This leads the organization to believe that they consult with the local people, and as such, their relationship with the people is participatory. The staff explained that

We have another level where we hold the stakeholders meeting. This time it is at the community level where we invite members to a town hall and we educate them and explain the text about the IRS program. We let them ask questions and we answer them. At that level too, we share responsibilities. How do we get the responsibilities? Okay, as a community member, now that we are going to explain how we are going to send this information to this people, what will be your role? Then we tell everybody the same facts, so everybody knows this is my responsibility. This is an organization's responsibility, and that is the responsibility of community members. So everyone is made aware.

This means that the NGO management believes that they are including local members in their decision-making. Also, they consult with the Ghana Health Service System, and the Malaria Control Systems in Ghana to help facilitate the program. The organization uses existing structures such as laboratories, research centers and trained personnel such as implementers to help educate the people to comply with directives of the IRS program, and also to collect data about the trends in malaria cases in the areas where they operate. The staff explains that:

Environmental health, fire service, all these organizations are our big stakeholders. So what do we do? We meet with these stakeholders, use the structures they are already using to implement the health services so that we don't duplicate.

Recipient Perspective of Participation in Decision-Making

While the staff of Abt Associates thinks that their approach is participatory, the local people have a different view of their role in the IRS program. All respondents whose rooms were sprayed under the IRS program said that they were basically told to

comply, and that they did not play any role in choosing the program for their communities. For example, on the question of whether the local people were consulted before the implementing the program, an aid recipient said that

There weren't any concerns about that. They did not explain. None of this came out when I was preparing to spray. None of such matters came up. There wasn't anything like that. If there is any other help apart from Indoor Residual Spraying we'll take it. For the district itself, it was done by the stakeholders . When you come to the communalities like a village, we'll take the project to the chief. Then they will in turn let the chief beat the gong gong (talking-drum) to assemble the villagers and then they will give the information out to the people. The chief will then ask them to say their issues about it

Such a response means that the aid recipients or community members believe that they are not consulted. This does not provide any reason for participation in decision-making.

Findings from the Thematic Analysis

Themes developed from the responses helped to explain the communication pattern between Abt Associates, the stakeholders and the community members. The emergent themes are reviewed in light participatory communication approach and resource dependency theory. For example, themes that explain participatory communication include consultation with stake holders and community members. A staff explained that:

Because we're using the Ghana Health service, we have something we call the implementers, and we also have another group at the community level called the Community Based Volunteers (CBV). In terms of passing information about IRS, we use the implementers who get in touch with the CBV, and they send information back to the people. They hold community meetings, and educate the people about how IRS operates, how it affects the people, how people need to follow safety standards to get maximum benefit.

They also meet with the funders and brief them about the progress of the project, as well as receive feedback from their funders. When asked if they hold meetings with

funders, and if they have a role in choosing the programs for the areas, a staff of the NGO replied that:

Basically they say we have money for the malaria control, can you tell when we should do the control intervention program? There is a laid procedure for malaria spraying. They have to make sure that their program is within the standards as set in Ghana. But we don't have the choice to identify a particular program." He added that "we also write reports and send that to the funders, have meetings with the PSI to brief them on what is happening, get feedback which we include in the management practices of the organization's program.

This means that there is a level of coordination and collaboration between funders and staff of the NGO. The responses also revealed a level of coordinate with district Assemblies and authorities as explained by a staff of Abt Associates that:

The district assembly is the custodian of every organization and they are in-charge of every development.... so we definitely have to partner with them so that at least, they also monitor what we are doing.

This means that the NGO coordination with the DA on their activities. Other issues derived for the theme include the holding of town hall meetings with community members and opinion leaders and how suggestions are solicited from the local representatives at such meetings. This was explained by a staff of the NGO as:

We interact with the community through sensitization and from that you can also pick up something towards your next program to educate the people. Basically, we share the idea. The question is whatever we do; we do it in connection with IRS.

This means that there is an element of communication between the NGO and the local people. They also collaborate and coordinate with other institutions to facilitate their projects. A response on this issue by a staff of Abt Associates is that:

Mostly at the stake holders meetings we make sure that they understand how the community members feel about the program and this helps us to really prepare.

They give us ideas on how to educate the people and also build on what we have learned in the field, like the learning curve.

The NGO also works with the Ghana health service, using community members to explain the program. Such activity suggests some participatory communication between the NGO and the local institutions they work with, but it also shows that community members are primarily informed about the program, and are told to expect the implementation of the program.

Lack of Participatory Communication

Themes that explain the lack of participatory communication in the activities of NGOs include: introduction of program and instructions to participate, predetermined program activity, no choice to decide, and no opportunity to disagree with the program.

These are explained in a response by a staff of the NGO that:

at the district level we actually don't decide on what the communities want. But as you explain the projects you have for them, other issues do come up. We explain the IRS project to them and they talk about other issues that are not covered under the program. But we have a particular program; we have a predetermined activity and ready to go.

This means that the local people do not have an opportunity to explain what they really need or if they see a need for the spraying, or if the way it is sprayed is effective. Also within the theme is the NGO seeing its role as planning for the community planning for the community. This was affirmed in an interview response by a staff member as follows:

So some of the strategic interventions that the government or other NGOs will have is to sit and plan for the people: What should they do? They get back to the community to obtain some of the decisions they should make, and why the people should understand. It is when you fail to communicate these to the people to understand and appreciate that that you have a problem.

For instance, Abt Associates, they informs the community members about what they need and ask them to participate in the program. Here is a quote to illustrate the theme:

At least in our case, we decided that we go to say what they need because we are implementers. We are into malaria control and we have realized that malaria is a problem. And we send some people to let the community members understand that byes, even though we need a school, we need to be healthy first before we can get the benefit of the school. It is our services that will draw the attention of the villagers or community members towards the project.

Other themes that show the lack of participatory communication between the NGO and the local community members include meeting only with stakeholders. For example a response to the question of how the NGO interacts with the community was explained as like this:

We have another level where we call the Stakeholders Meeting. This time it is at the community level where we invite members to a town hall and we educate them and explain the text about the IRS program, we let them ask questions and we answer them. At that level too, we share responsibilities.

Note that the NGO management sees its role as educating and explaining, not listening or deliberating together with the aid recipients. The staff respondents also talked about issues which the local people care about but are not covered under IRS program. A breakdown of these suggests that there is no formal way by which the NGO listens with the local people or involves them directly in decision-making. The program per se has already been decided, and all that is needed is to convince or just tell the people to accept the aid, to allow the workers to remove their personal items from their rooms so the workers can spray them.

Thematic Findings as Related to Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)

As can be seen, there is ample evidence that confirms resource dependency theory (RDT) in themes of collaboration, coordination and coordination between Abt Associates and other government institutions. A senior level manager explained it this way:

You realize that IRS cannot function as an individual organization. It functions as a decentralized government or department. We have the Ghana Health Service, which is the mother organization that is the strong hold of health activities in Ghana. There's no way we can do health activities in Ghana without involving the Ghana Health Service.

Other separate statements made by the respondents those points to this theme include:

“We gather data through labs such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute, “because we’re using the Ghana Health service, we have something we call the implementers,” “We make use of community members to explain the program,” “We coordinate with the district assemblies because they are the authorities in the districts.”

The themes as noted here reveal that the NGO does not function as a separate entity because it relies on existing structures built by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to advance its cause. For example the implementers who serve as an advance party for the NGO are volunteers who have been trained by the GHS to explain health issues and help educate the local people about health programs. These implementers are also members of the community who are trusted by the people. Such a relationship helps to bring make the NGO credible to the aid recipients and also, ensure their participation in the program. Also, the NGO gathers data on malaria control through the Ghana Malaria Control Program, which works with entomological units at the various hospitals and labs such as the Noguchi memorial Institute. Dependence on the organization for resources can also

be seen the way the NGO communicates with the local people, by seeking the opinion of their elected representatives.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study are that Abt Associates, which is the NGO under study, believes that it practices participatory communication because it consults with members of the district assemblies who are elected by the people. It also believes that consulting with the local chiefs and opinion leaders means they are involving the people who are the recipients of the aid program in the decision-making process. However, the local community members who were interviewed and whose homes and bedrooms are to be sprayed do not see this type of communication as being participatory. They explained that they do not have direct interaction with staff of the NGO and do not have the opportunity to contribute their suggestions to the IRS program.

Another finding of this study is that local community members do not see the complexity that goes into NGO decision-making and how this impacts the communication strategies the NGO uses in implementing the aid programs. The local community members have no idea that Abt Associates collaborates with local institutions and relies on them for a successful implementation of their program, and that most decisions are made in consultation with government stakeholders who do have the power either agree or disagree with particular decisions of the NGO. With the ability to act, these organizations can prevent the NGO from directly consulting the local people in

decision-making process, thereby preventing any form of a meaningful participatory communication by the NGO.

The case study approach employed has provided advantages of convenience and considerable access to one NGO's management and local participants given that the interviews were conducted through long distance phone calls to Ghana with the help of my younger sister to coordinate with the staff of the organization to participate in the interviews. This was also successful because the staff assisted me by contacting local community members to participate in the interviews. The most important reason for choosing this method is because of my genuine interest in knowing more about the activities of NGOs from the inside and, how that impacts the general wellbeing of local community members. The case study approach gave me the opportunity to choose one organization for my study, which in turn enabled me to have a focused interaction with the personnel of the NGO regarding what they think about their operations, and what they and believe the people think about them. This aspect of my interaction with the staff was an eye-opener for me because it confirmed some of my prior perceptions about NGO activities, as well as my long held beliefs about the management practices of NGOs including the fact that management is not concerned with what aid recipients want, but instead focuses on what outside agencies have determined the people need. Funders from outside the community and outside the country prefer to implement programs that they think will benefit the people. Such imposition on aid recipients often causes them to be apathetic towards the programs, leading to low participation and the resulting failure of many NGO projects. This case study approach helped to provide evidence of the

ineffective communication practices of one NGO which suggests an area of focus for other similar organizations, particularly other NGO implementation programs in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa. .

This study also confirms and extends the usefulness of Resource Dependence Theory to explain the inter-organizational relationship between NGOs and the local intuitions on which rely in order to implement their projects. The study shows that NGO reliance on external institutions can serve as an impediment to the extent to which they can make decisions about the aid activities, and how they can involve the local people in their decision-making process or even the implementation of their projects. An example of this is the reliance on district assembly members to agree to the IRS program and allow Abt Associates to implement it in their districts.

As reported by the management interviewed, a district assembly can block the NGO from implementing any such thing in their community unless they agree to implement other projects in the community. Since the NGO relies on them to drum up support for the project their actions can thwart the effort of the NGO in reaching their target of eradicating malaria in the communities. Therefore this can be applied to existing knowledge about the role of local intuitions in relation to NGO activities. One interesting thing I learned was that district assembly members have become powerful enough to be able to block projects funded by international donors. This was not anticipated when the concept of district assemblies were initiated in the late 1980s. This means that the district assemblies have come of age.

This research was undertaken to find out if Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved local communities in their programs, specifically, if the NGOs involved the intended recipients of their aid in the decision making process. The main elements that characterize participatory communication are related to its capacity to involve the human subjects of social change in the process of communicating. This aspect of human involvement was present in the activities of Abt Associates in the IRS program. As explained by the staff of Abt Associates, the NGO works in collaboration with the representatives of the various district assemblies, volunteers of the Ghana Health Service and implementers. The interesting thing about this is that members of these organizations live in the communities, and are engaged by the NGO to help spread the word about the dangers of mosquito bites and the consequence of getting malaria from the bites. The team then helps to explain the benefits of the IRS program to the people. Such communication helps to drive up the level of participation of the IRS program in the communities. So although the people did not have a direct role in the decision- making process, Abt Associates has been able to involve human subjects of social change in the process of communicating the IRS program to the people.

Strategies used by the NGO include deploying trained volunteers of the Ghana Health Service to explain their program in the communities. They also used existing structures of the Ghana Malaria Control Program, The Noguchi Memorial Institute, and the chiefs and opinion leaders in the communities.

Contribution to Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)

The elements of RDT illuminates in the way Abt Associates related to its partner organizations, which includes the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Malaria Control Program, the District Assemblies and the Chiefs and Opinion Leaders. The organization relied heavily on these institutions to implement their IRS program. For example, they rely on the clinics and hospitals which form part of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to record the prevalence of malaria cases before and after the spraying of the communities. The NGO uses malaria cases reported and recorded at the various health centers to determine if they have been able to reduce malaria or not. They also rely on trained volunteers called implementers who work for GHS to educate the local community members about the IRS program and help to prepare the ground for the sprayers to go into the neighborhoods and do the job. The organization also coordinated with the Ghana Malaria control program to choose target areas, and also use strategies such as the Indoor Residual Spraying which has been used for a long time before PMI came to help with eradicating the disease. The research labs such as the Noguchi Memorial Institute assisted in determining how to come up with better antidotes to fight the type of mosquitoes that caused the malaria disease.

The District Assembly members and the chiefs and opinion leaders assisted Abt Associates to get the attention and participation of the people in their program. They helped the NGO to mobilize the people so they could inform them about their programs and what they expect the people to do to help their cause. This intertwined relationship controls the activities of Abt Associates so they may not be able to do things the way they

want. This is so because Abt Associates relies on the Ghana Health Service (GHS) to provide infrastructure such as hospitals and clinics where data for malaria cases are recorded. Also, GHS provides personnel that help to foster a relationship between the staff of Abt Associates and the communities. Such assistance is very important for getting the participation of the local people and also for determining if the program is successful or not. If Abt Associates loses the support of the GHS they might not be able to function effectively. This is explained by the principles of RDT, the NGO will only thrive if there is an enabling environment to help it reach its goals. Therefore, this relationship helps to confirm the activities of Abt Associates and its stakeholders in relation to RDT cement the theory into the activities of Abt Associates and its stakeholders. The District Assemblies also help to streamline the activities of the NGO by giving the permission to operate on their localities.

Limitations of the Study

Interviews conducted for the study were made through long distance phone calls. At least one of the recorded interviews had a bad reception and it took a long time to transcribe because it had to be played over and over to get the words clearly. This involved an interview with one junior level manager which could not be included in this study. This caused the loss of valuable information that could have helped to clarify part of the interaction among the stakeholders and also enabled a better understanding of the way the NGO operated within its organizational structure. Also, for most of the beginning of the interviews, the participants spoke in a low voice and gave quick and short answers in a guarded manner, which made it seem like they were holding back

information because they were not sure to whom they were speaking. However, when the interviewer told them that she lived in Northern Ghana, they became friendly and opened up more in their answers. This study could have gathered more information if the interviews were conducted face-to-face on site and the researcher had to observe community forums, or lived in the community while conducting the study which a more ethnographic approach would have permitted. Also, a case study while valuable is only one instance of the relationships between NGOs and the communities and cannot be applied to all NGOs and all communities because for example, this study is just one NGO in just one side of Africa.

Implications for Future Research

It would be important to consider further research that addresses the following questions: 1) what is the goal of donors? What do they imagine to achieve as they set out to help disadvantaged societies? 2) Do donors set out to impose their goals and aspirations on the people they tend to help, or do they have a mission to allow the people to pursue their own goals and aspirations using the donors' financial support?

On a broader scope, such studies would help to consider if the NGOs' approach to involving their target communities is participatory communication, even when local communities feel left out in decision making process. This will be important since most NGO management believe that consulting with selected member of the communities means involving the people. So a question for this could be 3) does participatory communication mean interacting with a few chosen representatives of a community or interaction with all members of a community through forums and other forms of

communication? Also, a future research could consider the importance of the role of elected officials in institutions such as district assemblies in relation to NGO activities. This is will help to provide a broader perspective in light of the role that local institutions such as DAs play development politics in developing countries such as Ghana.

Also, the extent to which NGOs need to work with the traditional political structure of chiefs and opinion leaders in order to gain access to local people's minds and hearts in order to accomplish goals became apparent in the course of this research. This aspect, especially in light of the District Assemblies' interaction with these traditional leaders, merits further investigation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Office of Research Administration
Akron, OH 44325-2102

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

August 15, 2013

Esther Sackey
1398 Buckingham Gate Blvd. #23
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221.

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

Re: IRB Number 20130701 *"The Role of Communication in NGO Community Development in Tamale, Ghana, West Africa"*

Thank you for submitting an IRB Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects for the referenced project. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and has been approved under Expedited Category #7.

Approval Date: August 15, 2013
Expiration Date: August 15, 2014
Continuation Application Due: August 1, 2014

In addition, the following is/are approved:

- ☐ Waiver of documentation of consent
- ☐ Waiver or alteration of consent
- ☐ Research involving children
- ☐ Research involving prisoners

Please adhere to the following IRB policies:

- IRB approval is given for not more than 12 months. If your project will be active for longer than one year, it is your responsibility to submit a continuation application prior to the expiration date. We request submission two weeks prior to expiration to insure sufficient time for review.
- A copy of the approved consent form must be submitted with any continuation application.
- If you plan to make any changes to the approved protocol you must submit a continuation application for change and it must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
- Any adverse reactions/incidents must be reported immediately to the IRB.
- If this research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.
- When your project terminates you must submit a Final Report Form in order to close your IRB file.

Additional information and all IRB forms can be accessed on the IRB web site at:
<http://www.uakron.edu/research/orssp/compliance/IRBHome.php>

Cc: Kathleen D. Clark - Advisor
Cc: Valerie Callanan - IRB Chair

☒ Approved consent form/s enclosed

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

The Role of Participatory Communication in NGO Activities in Ghana:
A Qualitative Investigation of an NGO Project in Tamale, Northern Ghana.

You are being asked to participate in a research study about how participatory communication contributes to the success and failure of the activities of Non-Governmental Organizations in Ghana. This study is being conducted by Esther Sackey, a graduate student in the School of Communication at The University of Akron. This study is being conducted as a requirement for an M.A. Project at The University of Akron.

Your involvement in this study will through telephone interviews and by Skype. Upon your agreement for participating, several questions will be asked through the interview and taped. The interview will take approximately thirty minutes to one hour. There are no psychological or legal risks involved in participating in this study. All participation is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions with which you are uncomfortable. There are no costs associated with participating in the

study or tangible reward offered in association with participation in this study. However, your time and effort in contributing to the study are greatly appreciated.

This study is a requirement for a master's degree. Therefore, the professors will have knowledge of the information you provide, and all the information will be typed upon permission. Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. In reports of your interview your name will be pseudonymous. Your name will not be used in any publication or presentation of results and no one will be able to link your responses to you. Overall, your private information will be protected and your participation will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact me at 234-678-0305 or ees34@uakron.edu, or Dr. Kathleen Clark, Associate Professor, School of Communication, The University of Akron at kclark@uakron.edu. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Services at The University of Akron by calling Ms. Sharon McWhorter, Associate Director, ORSSP 330-972-8311 or sm48@uakron.edu, with questions about your rights as a volunteer in this study.

If you agree to participate, please sign and return this consent. You can keep a copy of this consent for future reference.

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Questions for the head of Abt Associates:

1. What is your title?
2. What is your position?
3. How long have you worked for this organization?
4. What is the mission of your agency?
5. What is the organization's specific purpose for being in Tamale?
6. Give me a general overview about the organization and its work within the communities.
7. How do you work with the funding agency?
8. How did you choose the Indoor Residual Spraying project?
9. How do you communicate with the indigenous people?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

B. Questions for 3-6 Field Workers at Abt Associates

1. What is your title?
2. What is the mission of your agency?
3. What is the goal of this project?
4. What are the duties of your position?

5. How long have you been working for this organization?
6. How long have you been working in the in the communities?
7. How do you explain projects to the local people?
8. How do you evaluate your projects?
9. Are community members involved in evaluating the projects?
10. How do you think the projects are impacting on the people? (proof)?
11. Do you agree with the projects implemented in the communities?
12. Are there are other projects you think the communities would prefer?
13. Do you have any problems explaining the projects to the communities?
14. Do you have any problems interacting with the community members about the projects?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

C. Questions for Aid Recipients of the IRS

1. What is the mission of Abt Associates?
2. What is the goal of the program
3. How do you benefit from this project?
4. Did you help in choosing this project?
5. Do you like it?
6. Would you prefer some other project to this one?
7. How did Abt Associates communicate with you about the project?
8. Were your suggestions were considered in the implementation of the project?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX D
PROCESS OF CODING

Open Coding

Frequent words, phrases identified in interviews

Abt Associates cannot function as an individual organization

We meet with and funders and brief them about our activities

We receive feedback from community volunteers and funders on the program

Abt. Assoc. works with as a decentralized gov't, works with the Ghana Health Service.

Communication through stakeholders' meetings.

We coordinate with the district assemblies because they are the authorities in the districts

We meet with stakeholders. We work through special agencies

We use volunteers of the Ghana Health Services. The volunteers live in the communities

We hold town hall meetings and we tell everybody the facts

We use implementers who are members of the communities

Introduce program to the people, just to remind them of what we do for them, to accept our program

Explain what program we have for them. We explain IRS program to them

They talk about other issues not covered under the IRS program

We have a predetermined program activity and ready to go.

We make use of community members to explain the program

Malaria prevention- we explain malaria issues, including statistics on malaria

We meet and talk with opinion leaders

We do not decide on projects for the communities

Some communities have no water, road. Some communities need other things.

The people say help us with schools, roads, water fertilizer for crops.

We do community intervention

The people understand us.

We tell the people that we have looked around and we think malaria is an enemy so we want to help control malaria

We send people to go and explain to the communities

We don't have the choice to identify a program

We don't have the opportunity to agree or decide on project

We don't give the people the chance to decide on what they want

We do not decide on a program, we explain identified program to the community

We don't give the people the choice to decide what they want

Other NGOs sit and plan for the people

We choose and allow the people to participate

We organize Info Educ. Campaign to educate the people about our program

Difficult to satisfy everyone

We only see people going round and telling the community how they are going to spray

The communities ask for other things

Axial Coding

1. Conditions-situations that form the structure of the studied phenomenon (examples of some phrases used)

- a. Communication between NGO, community and Stake holders
 - “We tell the people that we have looked around and we think malaria is an enemy so we want to help control malaria”
 - “We hold town hall meetings and we tell everybody the facts about malaria”
 - “We make use of community members to explain the program”
 - “We explain malaria issues, including statistics on malaria”
 - “Meet and talk with opinion leaders”
 - “We organize Info Educ. Campaign to educate the people about our program”
 - b. Coordination between NGO and community and stakeholders, NGO reliance on external environment
 - “We coordinate with the district assemblies because they are the authorities in the districts”
 - “Abt. Assoc. works with as a decentralized government works with the Ghana Health Service to control malaria”
 - “We coordinate with the district assemblies because they are the authorities in the districts to help control malaria”
 - “We meet with stakeholders. We work through special agencies”
2. Actions-strategic responses to issues, events, problems
 - “We do community intervention”
 - “We tell the people that we have looked around and we think malaria is an enemy so we want to help control malaria
 - “Abt. Associates works with a decentralized government, such as the Ghana Health Service”
 - “We use volunteers of the Ghana Health Services. The volunteers live in the communities”
 - “We hold town hall meetings and we tell everybody the facts”
 - “We use implementers who are members of the communities”

“Meet and talk with opinion leaders”

3. Consequences-outcomes of actions or interactions

a. No participatory communication, no involvement in decision-making process

“We don’t have the choice to identify a program”

“We don’t have the opportunity to agree or decide on project”

“We don’t give the people the chance to decide on what they want”

“We do not decide on a program, we explain identified programs to the community”

“We don’t give the people the choice to decide what they want”

“Other NGOs sit and plan for the people”

“We choose and allow the people to participate”

“We organize Info Educ. Campaign to educate the people about our program”

“There is a difficult to satisfy everyone”

“They talk about other issues not covered under the IRS program”

“We have a predetermined program activity and ready to go”

“We only see people going round and telling the community how they are going to spray”

“The communities ask for other things”

“Some communities have no water, road. Some communities need other things”

“The people say help us with schools, roads, water fertilizer for crops”

Theoretical Coding

These were phrases, or words relating to resource dependency theory, the participatory communication approach, and the research questions developed for this study. Themes developed for the theoretical coding include 1) *communication*, 2)

articipation, 3) collaboration, 4), coordination, and 5) decision-making. See the coding grid below for groupings of phrases and words as related to these themes.

Open Coding	Axial Coding	Theoretical Coding
<i>We meet to talk with opinion leaders</i>	Participatory	Communication
<i>b</i>	Information dissemination	Communication
<i>We use implementers who are members of the communities</i>	Collaboration	Collaboration
<i>Introduce program to the people, just to remind them of what we do for them, to accept our program</i>	Not involved in decision-making/ information	Non-participatory
<i>We make use of community members to explain the program</i>	Participatory	Communication
<i>We explain malaria issues, including statistics on malaria</i>	Information dissemination	Communication
<i>We meet and talk with opinion leaders</i>	Participatory communication	Participation
<i>Abt Associates cannot function as an individual organization</i>	Coordination with stakeholders	Collaboration
<i>We meet with funders and brief them about our activities</i>	Management communication strategies	Collaboration/ coordination
<i>We receive feedback from community volunteers and funders on the program</i>	Participatory communication	Participatory communication/ collaboration
<i>Abt Associates works with a decentralized gov't agency, such as the Ghana Health Service</i>	Participatory communication	Collaboration
<i>Communication through stakeholders' meetings</i>	Collaboration/ coordination	Collaboration/ coordination
<i>We coordinate with the District Assemblies because they are the authorities in the districts</i>	Collaboration/ coordination	Coordination/ collaboration/ participatory communication
<i>We meet with stakeholders.</i>	Participatory communication/ coordination	Coordination/ participatory communication
<i>We work through special agencies</i>	Coordination/ collaboration	Coordination