

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND
THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WORLD VISION'S
POVERTY REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS IN THE ASSIN
NORTH DISTRICT OF GHANA.**

ERIC AMOAH

2010

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GHANA**

BY

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MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN NON – GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATION STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT**

MAY, 2010

DECLARATION

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in the university or elsewhere.

Candidate Signature.....Date.....

Name: ERIC AMOAH

Supervisor’s Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor’s Signature..... Date.....

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at finding out the perceptions about community participation in project initiation, project planning and designing and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It also seeks to find out the socio-economic impact or effects of world vision's poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North District of Ghana. The study was conducted in four major local communities within the Assin North Districts namely: Assin Endwa, Assin Akropong, Assin Wurakesi and Assin Odumasi. These towns were selected based on the fact that World vision has carried out both their infrastructural projects and financial support programmes all ultimately aimed at helping to reduce poverty among the people in these areas. Although questionnaire was the main instrument used in the collection of data, observations and interview schedule were also used because of the low academic background of the beneficiaries (respondents).

Non random sampling method was used to determine the actual respondents. On the core areas of the study, it was generally revealed that beneficiaries greatly participate in all aspects of project initiation, planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, respondents indicated that their participation in decisions involving finances was very low. In assessing the social and economic impact of world vissions' projects and programmes on beneficiaries, it was generally revealed that most beneficiaries recognise a little or moderate economic impact on their lives. Based on the outcome of this research, a number of recommendations were made.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dearest wife Diana Amoah (Mrs.) and our four wonderful children for the varied support they offered me.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ADEP	Association of progressive entrepreneurs for development programme
GPRS (I)	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (I)
GPRS (II)	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (II)
GEO	Green Earth Organization
GNP	Gross National Product
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCG	National Consultative Group
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
UN	United Nations
USA	United State of America
WV	World Vision
WVG	World Vision, Ghana

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

It is currently estimated that 1.3 billion people live below the poverty line of which 939 million or 72.2 per cent live in rural areas. Asia has the highest proportion of the rural poor with some 633 million, followed by 204 million in sub-saharan African, 76 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the balance in the Near East and North Africa (Francois & da Silva, 2003).

Although the statistics and methods of computation of poverty in various areas are often open to debate, what these figures suggest is that a substantial proportion of the World's poor all live in and depends upon the rural environment for their livelihoods.

Poverty is increasingly assuming an African face and eradicating it has become a predominantly African challenge. Although the region currently accounts for only 10% of the world's population, it now accommodates 30% of the world's poor. The world as a whole has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty over the last three decades, cutting it by nearly two-thirds between 1970 and 2000. In contrast, the trend in sub-saharan Africa has been in the opposite direction, increasing from 36% of the population in 1970 to 50% in 2000. As a result, one in two Africans (or 300 million people) are poor, spending less than \$ 1 a day on basic necessities of life. This proportion

is twice as high as the world average and the number of the poor is twice as high as it was in 1970 (Ndulu, Chakraborti, Lijane, Ramachandran & Wolgin, 2007).

World Bank forecasts anticipate Africa economic growth averaging 1.6 percent over the 2006- 2015 period- a reversal of the region's long term historical decline. But even this is far short of the growth needed to reduce poverty to half the 1990 level. In fact the number of poor in sub-saharan Africa is expected to rise from 314 million in 2001 to 366 million people in 2015 (Louise & Liebenthal, 2006).

Poverty reduction has thus become a dominant global issue and has engaged the attention of development oriented organisations and practitioners. Many high-level national and international meetings and conferences have been held, all aimed at helping to reduce poverty.

World bodies such as United Nations, World Bank and other Non – Governmental Organisations (NGOs) continue to hold discussions on how best to reduce poverty among the general populace of the World, especially in developing countries. The World Bank and other developed countries such as United States of America (USA), Britain, China, Japan and Germany continue to offer various forms of development assistance to the developing countries to tackle poverty. Ghana has remained a beneficiary of such supports.

In September 2000, the United Nations (UN) concluded a Millennium declaration document, which was signed by 189 countries including 147 heads of state. This document contained the eight (8) main Millennium Development Goals (MDG, 2000) spanning from 2000 – 2015. One of these strategic goals is aimed at reducing by half the proportion of people whose income is less

than one dollar (\$ 1) a day. Another MDG also aimed at reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from extreme hunger within the stipulated duration.

Ghana has since 2000 adopted the target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the minimum requirement for the socio-economic development and poverty reduction among her people. The initial findings after putting into operation the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I) provisions for some time was that although some progress and successes had been attained, achieving the goals of the MDGs by 2015 would require additional efforts particularly in the area of poverty reduction.

In Ghana, series of documents and strategies have evolved and have been adopted, all with the ultimate aim of achieving the MDGs with poverty reduction at the heart of it all. Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I) document mainly focused on poverty reduction. However, in 2003 when its impact was analysed on regional basis, it was found to have some shortcomings. Following the shortcomings of GPRS I, the design and preparation of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II, 2006) was implemented which was to span 2006 – 2009. The change in name only reflects the new direction of the government policy, which places more emphasise on growth.

The reviewed document now clearly defines the strategic direction and interventions which are aimed at achieving the basic poverty reduction goals in the MDGs framework, thus bringing Ghana within the threshold of middle income countries.

There has been a contemporary debate on the status of the national income on demographic statistics. That notwithstanding, what matters most is that as a nation we are able to think through, agree upon and vigorously implement a realistic plan to bring about some vast improvement in our living standards.

It is upon this background that the activities of NGOs which are also interested in reducing poverty have become a source of interest and concern to every one. Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) according to the GPRS II (2006), can help to provide a multifaceted support to enhance a family's capacity to provide and care for its members (beneficiaries) according to their needs as girls, boys, women, men and the elderly, taking into account their peculiar social norms and practices, parenting and family life.

In the 1980s the World Bank, the developed nations and other development-oriented organisations made loans available mainly to governments to finance development projects and encouraged policy changes by offering non-project "Structural Adjustment" loans that require changes in national economic policies of the countries (i.e. developing countries including Ghana). This policy for some time did not yield the results for which it was intended. The policy even compounded the poverty levels among the citizenry in most developing countries.

The attention now is to place greater emphasis and involvement of private sector and NGOs in the effort towards poverty reduction. In the last two to three decades more resources have been channeled into the activities of NGOs including World Vision–Ghana. The donor pressures toward structural

reforms and privatisation underlie the increased interest in NGOs as “service deliverers”.

NGOs are thus perceived to be filling the gaps left after the privatisation of the state services as part of the structural adjustment or donor promoted reform packages. NGOs are popular because they are thought to demonstrate unique characteristics and capabilities. These characteristics include perceived flexibility, opened to innovations, more efficient, have more committed workforce, have shared international expertise and can work in unpopular fields (Desai & Potter, 2000). These general perceptions have given rise to the formation of NGOs almost everywhere, both locally and internationally. As a result, the general response has been to increase funding for NGOs which are thought generally to be more able to reach the local grassroots level. Associated closely with this, is the need to assess how they involve their beneficiaries in their activities and the impact or the effects their interventions have had on the social and economic lives of the beneficiaries. In fact, it is a common knowledge that in most communities, projects are totally abandoned and resources are wasted after it is completed because the members in the community (i.e. the ultimate beneficiaries) were not actively involved in all decisions before the project was initiated or undertaken.

Undoubtedly, some international NGOs in Ghana such as the World Vision-Ghana have identified themselves with working with the grassroots organisations and households which often comprise poor and the marginalised groups. Although NGOs activities and contributions have been widely recognized, at times their approaches especially to poverty reduction have not always been the best as it always lacks the beneficiaries’ participation in

planning, implementation and evaluation. For example in the last decade (1996-2006), so much financial and material resources have been spent by World Vision-Ghana by way of poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North District. In spite of these interventions, the district is ranked among the poorest in the country. This may mean that their interventions are not impacting significantly on the lives of their beneficiaries.

This research is therefore important because sometimes certain NGO's interventions are based on project appraised results feasibility (i.e what can be done) without sufficient attention being given to the question of whether they should be done in the first place (desirability). The reality of the whole situation is that NGOs have to respond to considerations of the ultimate beneficiaries of their interventions other than just producing "good projects" which the organisations deem fit.

The target organisation of this study- The World Vision is a Christian relief and development organisation dedicated to helping children; families and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the root cause of poverty. World vision sees relationships as the starting point and the end goal of its work. Through relationship with community leaders, the organisation staffs help communities set goals that families can achieve by working together.

The World Vision organisation's background statement clearly suggest that World Vision do not work in isolation from the communities in which they carry out their activities but rather they work collectively with the communities in setting goals and working together in all aspects to achieve the set goals([http://www.world vision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)) . World vision activities are thus;

centered on community development, disaster relief and on global issues. Community development activities emphasized on (according to the world vision manual) include:

- Helping people to discover and use their own vision, skills and resources to move from abject poverty to abundant living.
- Targeting critical needs: clean water, reliable food supplies, access to basic health care, access to education, and income-generating activities and microeconomic development.
- Partnering with churches, government, local organisations, and international agencies in helping to reduce poverty among the populace. Many World vision activities are underway to help meet immediate needs and promote lasting changes that will strengthen communities and move families toward self-reliance. The overall programme goals include:
 - Upgrading classroom facilities so children have a better place to learn.
 - Conducting immunization campaigns to protect children from polio and other deadly and debilitating diseases.
 - Teaching mothers about hygiene, nutrition, and disease prevention to equip them to better care for their children.
 - Drilling and constructing wells to provide families with safe, clean water.
 - Helping families launch small businesses that will increase income.
 - Training farmers in new agricultural techniques and cultivation methods that can increase their crop production.
 - Offering vocational classes in tailoring, soap making, beadwork and carpentry.

- Organizing camps and Bible clubs for sponsored boys and girls.
- Providing scholarships to needy but brilliant students to enable them further their education, and
- Provision of small loans under their association of progressive entrepreneurship for development programme (ADEP).

Problem statement

Until recently, there has been little evidence with which to judge the contribution NGOs make to development. Very few NGOs, big or small, have a portfolio of representative evaluations of past projects which they place in the public domain. Where assessments have been carried out, especially using external evaluators, these have commonly focused on 'problem' projects, constituting an unrepresentative sample which, understandably, NGOs have not wished to distribute widely. Uncertainty about how to evaluate impact and effect, combined with the high cost of undertaking evaluations which sometimes exceeds the cost of the project itself, has constrained NGOs from commissioning more impact assessments.

It is also common to see in most communities that good projects which could benefit people are totally abandoned and the resources that went into their construction wasted after they are completed by donor agencies (i.e. NGOs). This is because the members in the community (i.e. the ultimate beneficiaries) were not actively involved in all decisions before the project was initiated and undertaken. The question then remains, has World Vision-Ghana been involving their ultimate beneficiaries of their projects and programmes in all aspects of project definition, project planning and designing, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

Again, the World Vision–Ghana has worked in the Assin North District of the Central Region since 1997 implementing various poverty reduction interventions as outlined in the organisation overall programme goals above. In the area of the study however, the world vision has embarked on all of the core programmes and project apart from: helping families launch small businesses and organising camps and bible clubs according to the preliminary visits to their offices in the district and to the communities where the research was conducted. With these entire programme ongoing in some selected towns and villages in the Assin North District, one would have expected a massive decline in poverty among the people at least in towns and villages of their operations.

However, available data from GPRS II ranked the district as the fifty second (52nd) poverty ridden district out of 110 districts in Ghana (i.e. at the time GPRS, II document was prepared-the newly created districts and municipal assembly were not part). Some successes might have been chalked by the organisation (i.e. World Vision-Ghana) in the district, there is a need to assess the perceived level of the community participation and the social and economic impact, and these interventions have had on the lives of beneficiaries, if any. This is very important because there are no clear documentations or research carried out by the World Vision- Ghana, in the district which sought to determine the perceived level of the people's participation in all decision taken before interventions are made and the socio-economic impact of such interventions on the lives of beneficiaries.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this research was to assess the perceived level of community participation and the socio-economic impact of World Vision - Ghana (NGO) poverty reduction interventions on the lives of beneficiaries in the Assin North District of the Central Region of Ghana. In order to achieve the above general objective, the following specific objectives were set to:

1. determine the perceived level of participation of beneficiaries' in defining and initiating the poverty reduction intervention projects by World Vision.
2. determine the perceived level of participation of beneficiaries' in the planning and the designing of poverty reduction projects.
3. determine the perceived level of participation of beneficiaries' in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the poverty reduction projects and interventions.
4. examine the level of economic effects of the World Vision poverty reduction intervention on beneficiaries.
5. examine the social effects of the World Vision's poverty reduction interventions on beneficiaries.
6. make appropriate recommendations or policy implication based on the outcome of this research.

Research questions

1. What is the perceived level of participation of beneficiaries' in defining and initiating the poverty reduction intervention projects?

2. What is the perceived level of beneficiaries' participation in planning and designing the World Vision poverty reduction intervention projects?
3. What is the perceived level of participation of beneficiaries' in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the World Vision's poverty reduction interventions?
4. What are the perceived economic impacts or effects of World Vision poverty reduction interventions on beneficiaries?
5. What are the perceived social impacts or effects of World Vision poverty reduction interventions on beneficiaries?

Assumptions of the study

The following assumptions were made in order to identify all the major external factors that could militate against the success of the study:

1. The World Vision-Ghana staff working in the district would co-operate during the preliminary survey to identify their beneficiary communities and possibly the households who have benefited from their projects and programmes.
2. Respondents would give accurate responses during data collection for analysis.

Justification and significance of the study

The study is significant in the sense that:

1. the research results when applicable can be used by World Vision-Ghana to improve the impact on the socio- economic livelihoods of beneficiaries in their operational areas using their project.

2. other larger NGOs like Action Aid, Plan Ghana operating in the country can equally have the results useful in improving their impact.
3. results will also equally be beneficial to the smaller NGOs who are operating in similar fields as the World Vision-Ghana.
4. Ministry of Local Government, Environment and Rural Development which is directly involved in bringing development to the grass roots may also find the results very useful in implementing their projects and programmes.

Limitations of the study

In the first place, the vast nature of the study area, coupled with the limited time available to carry out the study made it impossible to gather data from all the beneficiary communities for analysis. This situation is worsened by the inaccessibility of some villages due to bad roads and rivers. In the second place, the literacy levels of the respondents were also very low. As a result, a separate interview schedule had to be developed to facilitate the responses to the questionnaire.

Delimitation of the study

The research is delimited by lack of baseline data on the poverty level of beneficiaries in the district before the implementation of the WV-Ghana poverty interventions to accurately measure the WV interventions impacts.

Organisation of the research report

To make easy reading and comprehension, the research report is divided into the following chapters.

Chapter one covers the introduction of the report and includes sub-headings like the background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, variables of the study, research questions, assumptions of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, and the organization of the research report.

Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature on the sub-headings: NGOs- their roles and their impact, global and national poverty levels, livelihoods and people's perceptions, need for community involvement and participation, in NGOs poverty intervention programmes.

The third chapter covers the methodology of the study. This chapter on methodology describes the study area, the research design, the population, sample and sampling techniques, pretest the questionnaire and the structured interview schedule, the field work, the instrument for data collection and the method of data processing and analysis.

Chapter four covers the various analysed results and the final chapter contains the summary of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs): Types, Roles and their Impact

There are a number of workshops, which have sought to clearly define NGO, but no clear agreement has come out of literature as to the definition of the term. It has frequently been defined as a non-profit making development organisation whose activities can best be seen as expanding or improving the delivery of services to the poor.

Douglas (1985) however, comprehensively defined NGO as an organisation which is voluntary, independent, not self serving, not for profit and which aims at improving the quality of life of the people. He added however, that NGOs exclude such organisations such as hospitals, colleges, universities, government department and agencies and those organisations that operate essentially as business enterprises for the direct economic benefit of their members or stakeholders.

Desai and Potter (2000) on their part has indicated that the term NGO is understood to refer to those autonomous, relatively permanent or institutionalised, non profit (but not always voluntary) intermediary organisations, staffed by professionals or the educated elite, which work with grassroots organisations in a supportive capacity.

Katsriku and Oquaye (1996) also on their part have defined NGO as an organisation which is voluntary, independent, not self servicing, not-for-profit and which aims at improving the quality of life of people. Meanwhile, the National Consultative Group (NCG) on NGOs also defines Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as civil society organisations that are formed independently of the state but registered voluntarily under specific laws in order to gain official recognition to pursue purposes that are not for profit but oriented towards public benefit(NCG, 2004). All these various definitions clearly indicate that all NGOs operate outside government control and are usually non profit making although different types may exist with different objectives and what they seek to achieve or accomplish.

There are various types of NGOs. At the international level, differentiation is made between campaigning and charitable (service-providing) NGOs. Green Earth Organisation (GEO) has indicated that in Ghana. NGOs have been categorized into four main groups namely:

- a. Indigenous, that is, community organisations without external affiliations.
- b. National organisations without external affiliations (that is, national indigenous).
- c. National affiliates of international organisations with indigenous leadership, and
- d. International organisations operating locally. ([http://www.Green Earth.org](http://www.GreenEarth.org) World Vision International is an example.

From a practical point of view, NGOs have a number of distinct features that build a solid foundation for effective collaboration with other organisations in rural poverty reduction:

- a. NGOs are often able to reach segment of rural populations that governments neglect or do not target as a priority.
- b. NGOs engage the poor in capacity-building activities as a major component in their programmes and projects.
- c. NGOs are recognized for their role in developing innovative initiatives, programmes or components of programmes, approaches and mechanisms to address development problems and issues.
- d. NGOs possess extensive knowledge of local conditions.
- e. NGOs deem active participation by the poor in their development process as an essential precondition to their empowerment. Participation is not only in the implementation of programmes or projects but also the projects' conception (definition), designing, monitoring and evaluation.

It is argued that over the years, NGOs have developed highly effective participatory process to increase the participation of the poor in their own development process. They are also sometimes credited with the ability to analyze and to act upon their situations through their own eyes, and not as defined by external entities or development agencies. Many of these participatory tools and methodologies have gone on to be adopted by official development agencies and, increasingly by governments.

The Concept of poverty

The importance of the task of poverty reduction means that it must be clear as to what we mean by poverty. First knowing who the poor's are is the best way to help them escape poverty. To this end, the meaning and measurement of poverty should be clearly understood. In everyday language, the usage of the term 'poverty' is synonymous with the shortage of income. Development literature however, stresses the multi-dimensionality of the concept of poverty. In addition to the shortage of income, development literature stresses that material consumption, health, education, social life, and environmental quality, spiritual and political freedom all matter. Deprivation with respect to any one of these can be called poverty. Some however, dispute the use of multi-dimensionality, arguing that-income poverty (i.e. lack of material well-being) is what really matters. Arguments supporting this view include the high correlation between income and other measures of well being such as health and education status and the view that governments can do something about income (i.e. support growth) but are less able to enhance spiritual well-being for example. There are however, good arguments in defense of multi-dimensionality of poverty. These arguments are as follows:

Firstly, the correlation with income is not that strong for some indicators and secondly, poor people themselves often rank other dimensions as being more important than income (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global-poverty>). Participatory approaches to poverty measurement therefore seek to identify the things that matter to the poor. Different perceptions matter since the poverty concept adopted will influence policy. When poverty is defined solely in terms of income, then it is unsurprising that economic growth

is found to be the most effective way to reduce it. But if basic needs such as health and education are valued then the development strategy is likely to put more emphasis on social policy.

Poverty is thus defined comprehensively as the deprivation of those things that determine the quality of life, including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water and also such “intangible” things as the opportunity to learn and to engage in meaningful employment and to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens.

According to the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) document, poverty is recognized as a multi-dimensional with complex interactive and causal relationships between the dimensions. According to the document, poverty is defined as an unacceptable physiological and social deprivation. This may be caused or exacerbated by:

- Lack of macro-economic stability that erodes the resources of the poor through inflation and other variables.
- The inability of the national economy to optimise benefits within the global system.
- Low capacities through lack of education, vocational skills, entrepreneurial abilities, poor health and poor quality of life.
- Low levels of consumption through lack of access to capital, social assets, land market opportunities, etc.
- Exposure to shocks due to limited use of technology to stem effects of droughts, floods, army worms, crop pests, crop diseases, and environmental degradation.

- Habits and conventions based upon superstition and myths giving rise to anti social behaviour.
- The lack of capacity of the poor to influence social processes, public policy choices and resources allocations.
- The disadvantaged position of women in society.
- Other factors leading to vulnerability and exclusion.

The dimensions of poverty in Ghana

Poverty has many dimensions. Therefore a range of indicators is needed to inform the range of policies to tackle the causes and mitigate the consequences of poverty. Households and communities may be characterised as poor based on lowness of income, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, lack of access to safe water and sanitation facilities, and general insecurity. These conditions combine to keep households and whole communities in persistent poverty. The analysis here therefore focuses on three dimensions of poverty: income or consumption poverty, lack of access to basic services, and deprivations in human development (GPRS II, 2006-2009) document.

The Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) has observed that poverty in Ghana has gone down significantly since the introduction and the operation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS, I). According to ISSER, national poverty levels dropped to 28.5 per cent in 2006 from 39.5 per cent in 1999 and 51.7 per cent in 1991. According to the institute, people living in seven of the ten regions in Ghana have experienced reduction in poverty except those in the Northern Regions and attributed the scenario to inequality in the distribution of national projects that resulted in the growth (<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghana/poverty-fast->

[declininig-isser.jsp](#)). The institute defended that, some Ghanaians have benefited from the growth more than others. This is because the gap between the Northern sector for that matter the rural dweller and Southern sector -the urban dweller is huge and argued that if we want Ghana to develop faster, then we have to improve on the lives of those living in the rural areas of the country.

There are significant differences in the spatial distribution of poverty in Ghana according to the GPRS II document. Five out of ten regions in Ghana had more than 40% of the population living in poverty in 1999. By income measure; poverty levels are highest in the three northern savannah regions (the Upper East, the Upper West and the Northern regions and this is closely followed by the central region.

Mullen and Pearce (1993), have indicated that an external variable impacting upon the rural poor has been structural reform, trade liberalization and globalization, particularly of commodity markets, which in fact has led to an increased indebtedness. It is, however, widely acknowledged that the poor- and particularly the rural poor- have been adversely affected in terms of their weak purchasing power, removal of concessional credit scheme, lack of quality inputs, collapse of extension systems etc.

The concepts of households, and people's perceptions of poverty

Ghana population data analysis report has adopted a working definition of a household as a person or a group of persons living together in the same house or compound sharing the same housekeeping arrangements and being catered for as one unit. (Ghana population Data Report, Volume 1, 2005).

Francois and da Silva (2003) have intimated that only household-level data allow one to measure the actual impact of policies and programmes and to assess the distributional effect of public spending. They added that, in order to evaluate the poverty impact or effects of policies, one needs to be able to measure welfare and its changes over time at the household level, identifying those households receiving benefits from public spending (in this case, World Vision interventions) to determine the actual impact of such policies.

Poverty has been argued as something that stems from the perceptions of individuals. People attitude towards anything is guided by the perceptions held for that thing. Whatever an individual perceives as good, one will master every resources (human and material) to pursue and achieve it.

Myers (2002) has defined perception as the process of organizing and interpreting information that enable us to recognise meaningful objects and events. Perceptions are thus a form of mindset that influence peoples attitudes towards objects, people, or events. .

Galdini (1993) had stated that perceptions and attitudes are difficult to change, but pointed out that to get people to agree to something big “start small and build on it” and be wary of those who would exploit the tactics.

The above discourse clearly indicates that the challenge confronting rural poverty eradication include people’s own perception of poverty and their ability to address it. NGOs in trying to help rural poor have come out with different interventions, which in most cases are based on what the organisations deemed fit and not what the people themselves consider as beneficial to their very existence.

Clark (1991) has argued that some NGOs' approach to poverty reduction always insults the intelligence of the poor or the rural folks. Their approach, he added, paints a picture of ignorant hungry people idling about a pool of resources, but just waiting for experts like NGOs to drive from outside to show them how the resources are utilised. He emphasized that anyone who has come close to the poor people will appreciate how hardworking and resourceful they generally are. He concluded that the greatest false assumption is that of addressing the technical issues of production, when in reality it is largely a political issue of distribution and inclusion that is needed to reduce the problem of hunger and poverty.

On their part (Riddell, et al, 1997) reported that a first overarching conclusion confirmed by data and interview in all different case study countries is that in spite of growing interest in evaluation, there is still lack of reliable evidence on the impact or effect of NGOs development projects and programmes. Oakley (1999) has also raised a serious doubt as to whether many NGOs "know" exactly what they were doing, in the sense of their overall impact or effect on people's lives. He concluded that, NGOs may or may not be having positive impact but their ability to scale up that impact must be limited by their inability to provide evidence of those achievements (and their limitations) and communicate this information to others with more resources or influence.

Desai (2000) has indicated that in most cases, and in smaller scales, however, a number of NGOs have produced their own guidelines on monitoring and evaluation. Some NGOs management are giving specific

attention to assessing performance and management of information in order to increase their performance and improve their impact.

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR, 1997), have also opined that outside the legal framework, many NGOs have been actively searching for appropriate methods, especially in ways of enabling people's participation in monitoring and evaluation of their projects and programmes. The problem here, they suggested, was how to aggregate the complex and large volumes of information and analysis generated by these methods.

The need for beneficiary communities' involvement and participation in NGOs poverty reduction intervention programmes to ensure transparency and enhance impact

Participatory approaches are widely seen as a critical ingredient for both project success and sustainability. Studies have confirmed a link between success of projects and programmes of NGOs and participation of the beneficiaries. It is suggested that participation tends to be far stronger when projects are up and running, and to be weakest both at the project design stage and when working out how to wind down projects. There is also evidence of a minority of projects achieving their objectives with little or no beneficiary participation.

Steifel (1981) has defined participation as an organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation on the part of the groups and movement hitherto excluded from such control. He has further opined however, that people have different perspectives and assume different virtues of community participation. Consequently, opinions on who should participate in what and how, vary

widely between and among development agencies and beneficiaries. He further stated that, literature from non-governmental sources tends to emphasize the need for “true participation” (i.e. bottom-up approach) of grassroots development. He concluded that the shift in the participation argument is however, towards the empowerment of the less powerful. Participation is thus a means to increase efficiency through consultation for market relevance, group formation for self-help, to decrease cost of services delivery and to increase commitment and innovation.

Dasai (1995) has again stated that there is always the need to actively involve the beneficiaries of NGOs interventions in all spheres of policy and programme planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation. This community participation is therefore considered as an indispensable part of any programme or project encouraged by government and non-government organisation, if such projects and programmes are to fully benefit the rural folks and for that matter, the ultimate beneficiaries. It is generally agreed that such participations and actions by the poor (rural communities) to influence decision making through direct and informal means have emerged as an alternative way by which the beneficiary poor can gain admission by decision-making and access to resources and thereby improve their well being. In addition to addressing the survival needs of organisation, peoples’ participation in the assessment of impact or effects of interventions is very important because people, who have firsthand experience of the assistance provided, are in the best position to speak about its value and impacts. People participation is also important because donors delegate funds to NGOs, to be used on behalf of the poor people. Within the boundaries of

the donors' expectations poor people have a right to influence and control how those funds are used. Assessing the value of their use, in their own terms, is one limited means of exercising that right.

Dasai (2000) outlined four major reasons why community participation is deemed desirable from the point of view of the development agencies and government. These include the following:

- People have the right to participate in the decision making which directly affects their living conditions.
- Social development can be promoted by increasing local self-reliance. Since people themselves know best what they need, what they want and what they can afford only close co-operation between project implementers (i.e. NGOs in this case) and communities can lead to project effectiveness. The project area continues to develop even after the withdrawal of the development agency staff.
- Community participation clearly demonstrates that, the government and the development partners (NGOs) can work together and make political capital.
- Co-opting a strong but manipulable community leadership and increase political and social control.

Participatory programmes whether sponsored by the state or the NGO sector, have brought tangible benefits to people in many parts of the world, but have also suggested the limits of participation which need to be recognised and accommodated. However, many NGOs, especially the larger ones, function bureaucratically and use formal procedural rules to carry out their tasks. Non-governmental organisation are prone to ossification, particularly if

they are dominated and controlled by charismatic leaders who are unresponsive to new ideas and new innovation as a threat to their authority (Desai,2000).

Presenting a paper on the guidance of increasing the participation of the poor in the assessment of the impact of the development interventions, Oakley and Marsden (1994), have argued that the shift in the participation argument, is however, towards the empowerment of the less powerful. They added that in developing countries, resources for development have always been very scarce, but pressures for their allocation from various interest groups have progressively increased. The poor, since they have neither socio-economic nor political power, do not generally gain access to the decision - making processes and hence are unable to influence them. They argued that the poor have not benefited from economic growth but in fact have become worse off. They therefore concluded that meaningful participation is concerned with achieving power (that is, the power to influence the decisions that affect one's livelihood).

Mayo and Craig (1995) have advocated for effective participation in the making of decisions that set the basic pattern of peoples' collective life. They argued that when beneficiaries are far away from practices and policies that affect their very lives, impact of such policies are very minimal. They argued that, participation is taken for granted in a number of central spheres of social organisations without its justification being analysed at deeper levels.

Mohan and Stokke (2000) have indicated that in rejecting the statism and the top-downism of 'normal development' the focus for participatory development has become the grassroots level which permits a plurality of

development goals to be realised as well as giving communities the self-determination they need.

Davies (1998) argued that NGOs should be honest with themselves and with the poor people when explaining to the poor people why they are seeking their involvement and participation in the assessment of impact or effects. In some cases, this has been seen by NGO staff as something, which is immediately in the interests of the poor people, and even a way of empowering them. He further stated that while this may be a desirable effect, the evidence is not substantial. He concluded that many exercises in participation have an immediate cost in terms of people's time, but benefits in terms of changes in the services they receive are normally much slower to arrive. The immediate transformative power of participating in certain exercises is not likely to be high when either the staff has routinised them, or when poor people have repeated exposures to them.

Roche (1999) quoting from Riddell et al. (1997) has said that the impact of NGOs in development work remained unclear and that there is little consensus on which tool and methods were the most effective to use to find out. He has however, defined impact as significant or lasting changes in peoples lives brought about by a given action or a series of actions. Neil (2002) as quoted by Roche (1999) has pointed out that NGOs like other organisations tend to blame others and/or the external environment when things go wrong. Similarly, they tend to neglect to mention the role played by other organisations or concomitants events when things go right.

Roche (1999) has indicated the following, after an extensive research in different countries, as some of the indicators in measuring the economic and

social well being of the individuals: land holding, assets holding, household expenditure and consumption, food security, credit and savings, ability to cope with financial crises and occupation. The social indicators include literacy and educational level, health, sanitation and family planning and demographic and other household characteristics. Neil (2002) has further indicated that using the household as a unit of assessment permits appreciation of income, asset, consumption and labour pooling. It also permits appreciation of the link between individual households, groups and the community. Lastly, he indicated that it promotes understanding of the links between household life cycle and well being.

Kanshahu (2000) has indicated that there are various methodologies used in project formulation. Some, he indicated, are participatory while others are top-down approaches. He observed that participatory tools are based on involvement of the project stakeholders-the people or institutions participating directly or indirectly in the project. He further observed that recent experiences have shown that project sustainability can be improved by mixing participatory methods and traditional top down approaches. He has indicated that experiences in project management have shown that the probability to achieve project sustainability is high when participatory approaches are used in project formulation. By contrast, there is a high risk of project unsustainability or failure, when the top down project planning approach is used. Sound projects can be formulated by mixing modern participatory tools and classical top-down approaches. In other terms, the views of stakeholders can be added to the classical project planning recipes to generate a well-structured project.

Lewis (2006) has indicated that the NGOs should make their financial standings and their financial reports available to the ultimate beneficiaries of their services to help them know what it costs to provide the services they are benefiting from and to decide if this is good value for their money.

Kanshahu (2000) has again indicated that inadequate participation of communities in the design and management of projects is evidently a major setback in socio-economic development. He added that in order to achieve developmental goals, no resources such as project inputs, and the local beneficiaries capable of contributing to these goals, should be neglected. Without involving these communities, sustainability of projects in any community will remain a dream. If sustainability is a dream, development itself is nothing but a dream. He concluded that community participation which is focused on the community in the planning, implementation and evaluation stage of projects is an appropriate approach to sustainable development.

Monitoring and evaluation in NGOs

Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) serve as an essential management tool in the success of every policy of an organisation. It provides an additional impetus both in the pursuit of policy, programme and project effectiveness and to ensure accountability, responsiveness and transparency in the allocation of resources. Good monitoring and evaluation seek to develop institutional framework for co-coordinating the system, establish tracking of resources and performances and ultimately ensuring wider stakeholder participation (GPRS I document).

Without effective monitoring and evaluation of any policy undertakings, progress and final reports may not be properly ascertained and resources may go waste. It is therefore important that organisations do not relegate these essential tools to the background if they are to ensure success in their policy implementation. Monitoring and evaluation of policy undertaking by any organisation should essentially involve the ultimate beneficiaries. This removes all forms of biases and ensures effective patronage by all stakeholders. Over the last decade there has been a dramatic growth in the number of NGOs involved in development aid, in both developed and developing countries. The total amount of public funds being spent through NGOs has grown dramatically and the proportion of development aid going through NGOs, relative to bilateral or multilateral agencies, has also increased. Associated with this growth has been a growing concern about identifying the achievements of NGOs. This has been evident in the burgeoning literature on the monitoring and evaluation of NGO activities (Davies, 2000).

Fowler (1997) has argued that the "limitations of the instruments that NGOs use to monitor, evaluate and review" are one reason why NGOs have not been able to substantiate their achievements. Certainly there has been a lot of argument over the value of the Logical Framework as a planning and monitoring tool (Wallace, et al, 1997). Logical Frameworks have been useful in encouraging the identification of indicators at the planning stage, but much less so in ensuring their actual use during project monitoring or evaluation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research seeks to find out the perceptions about community participation and the socio-economic effects of the World Vision's poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North District of Ghana. This chapter describes briefly the study area, research design, the population of the study area, the sample size and the sampling techniques used for collecting the data. The chapter also describes the instrument used to gather the data and the method used for the data processing and analysis.

Study area

This research was carried out in the Assin North District of the central region of Ghana. Four of the communities which have benefited from the World Vision programmes and project in the district since the inception of the organisation's activities in the district, were selected for the study. These four communities were randomly selected.

Research design

The research design of this study is a descriptive survey which sought to determine the perceived level of community participation and the socio-economic effects of World Vision-Ghana, poverty reduction interventions on

households in the Assin North District of Ghana. The researcher opted for descriptive survey design because this type of research describes “what is”. It thus involves describing, recording, analysing and interpreting conditions that exist at the targeted research area.

The researcher sought to gather extensive data from a member each from households preferably a direct beneficiary of World Vision-Ghana-ADEP programme. By the World Vision’s activities most of the infrastructural projects like wells and school buildings are intended to benefit each member of the community. This may be seen as indirect benefit for members as its effect on poverty alleviation cannot be easily observed. However, such financial programmes (i.e ADEP) offered to some members in the community are intended to directly help to alleviate poverty among the beneficiaries. The researcher opted for the direct beneficiaries of the ADEP programme of the World Vision as respondents because they also automatically benefit from the general projects of the NGO such as the school buildings, wells, and other similar projects.

Population

The targeted population of the study was the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the World Vision-Ghana poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North District of Ghana. However, due to the large size of the district and the fact that there was limited time and financial resources for the research, only four communities out of a total of twelve beneficiary communities were randomly picked for the study. Respondents were then sampled from these four communities for the study. The following data

represent the entire beneficiary communities and the adult population who have actually benefited from the ADEP programme of the World Vision.

Table 1: Population matrix of the selected communities

Beneficiary communities	A	B	C	D
Assin Endwa	1200	420	120	45
Assin Odumasi	800	300	100	46
Assin Akropong	850	180	110	48
Assin Wurakese	780	320	110	50

Source: Data from World Vision –Assin Foso

A: Estimated population of the entire community selected

B: Estimated Adult Population in the community.

C: Estimated adult population who have benefited from ADEP programme of World Vision –Ghana.

D: Number of households who have benefited directly from ADEP programme

Sample size and sampling Techniques

Owing to the fact that the randomly selected communities differ in sizes and adult population, the researcher adopted the following sampling matrix for his study. In all, one hundred and twenty (120) respondents from the four communities/villages were selected. Proportionate stratified sampling method was adopted to obtain the total sample of averagely thirty (30) respondents from each of the communities since their beneficiary population was approximately the same. Non-probability sampling method was however used to identify the actual households' heads that served as actual respondents

and the unit of analysis. These methods were used together to obtain the sample of respondents which gives a fair representation of the whole beneficiary population in the communities.

Table 2: Sample matrix of the selected communities

Beneficiary communities	A	B	C
Assin Endwa	46	28	21
Assin Odumasi	48	30	26
Assin Akropong	48	30	27
Assin Wurakese	50	32	28
Total	192	120	102

Source: Field survey, 2008

A: Number of beneficiaries of ADEP at the household level.

B: Proportionate sampled respondents

C: Retrieved questionnaire from respondents

Pretest of the questionnaire and the structured interview schedules

Before the main fieldwork, a pretest of the questionnaire and the interview schedules were conducted in some of the selected villages (communities) within the district by the main researcher and the trained field assistants. The respondents used here for the pretest of the questionnaire were selected using purposive sampling method because the researcher wanted people who have the knowledge and are direct beneficiaries to help achieve the ultimate objective of the research. The main reason for this activity was to ensure that the questionnaire and interview schedules were meaningful, easily understood by the respondents and appropriate for the main fieldwork.

It was also to enable the main researcher and the field assistants to become familiar with the interview schedules and the questionnaire and to prepare them for the main fieldwork.

The fieldwork

The fieldwork lasted for approximately two weeks (16th-29th October 2008). During this period, the main researcher and the three trained assistants went to the research area to administer the questionnaire. The problems encountered each day were discussed and resolved before going out the following day. For those household heads that could independently fill the questionnaire, it was handed to them and a follow up made after one week for collection. For those who could not fill their questionnaire independently, the researcher and the field assistants adopted a face-to-face interactions and interviews based on the format of the questionnaires to solicit the data needed. Three people working with the World Vision in the Assin North district were contacted, selected and trained as field assistants. They helped the researcher with the administration of the questionnaire to the beneficiaries. The field assistants were also taught how to do the initial introduction of themselves to those they are going to interview, how to establish good rapport, adopt good verbal explanation and the proper administration of the questionnaire. In all out of the 120 questionnaire administered, 102 were retrieved giving a return rate of 85% which is considered high for the research to be representative enough.

Instruments for data collection

In view of the nature of the topic, questionnaire was the main instrument used for the collection of data. However, structured interview schedules based on the modules of the questionnaire were also used in gathering the data from the household heads that could not independently fill the questionnaire. The questionnaire categorized into modules, took cognizance of the objectives and the research questions set out in the introductory part of this research work. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were close ended type/ Likert scale type .There were however some few open ended types. Consequently a fourteen (14) item questionnaire (shown in appendix) was developed for WV-Ghana, poverty intervention beneficiaries at the household levels. The questionnaire was also structured in such a way that it had five basic modules to cater for all the objectives of the research.

Methods of data Processing and Analysis

The data gathered from the field of study were edited by the researcher to ensure that all answers to the questionnaires were complete and contained accurate information, Statistical methods including tables, frequencies, percentages, and means were used in the analysis of the data. Each item on the questionnaire was fully analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter contains presentation, analysis and discussions of data collected from the study area. The data were obtained from the sampled respondents from the communities who have benefited from the organisations poverty reduction projects and programmes in one form or the other. Each item was then subjected to statistical analysis using basically: frequencies, percentages and means within the context of the objectives set for the study. It analysis the respondents responses to the questionnaires presented, to assess their perceived level of participation and the socio-economic impact of World Vision poverty reduction interventions in their respective areas. The first section of the presentation focuses on the background characteristics. Here issues examined are the gender, marital status, age distribution, and the last completed level of formal education and main occupation of respondents.

Table 3: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender (Sex)	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage%
Female	63	76	76
Male	39	24	24
Total	102	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2008.

In finding out the age distribution of respondents, the results from the age distribution clearly show that twenty four (24) per cent of the respondents were males against seventy six (76) per cent who were females. This trend of responses is very important because it reflects the national demographic pattern where females are more than the males. It also gives a fair representation of the beneficiaries because the core programmes and activities of the organisation are tilted towards women.

Marital status of respondents

Marriage is a social institution which society recognizes as leading to the formation of kinship ties and membership in decent groups. In other words, marriage leads to the creation of new and entrenchment of old social relationships. When a man and a woman are joined in marriage; their respective families become relatives automatically.

Table 4: Marital status of respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentages %
Married	68	66.67	66.67
Widowed	13	12.75	79.42
Single	10	9.80	89.22
Divorced	7	6.86	96.08
Separated	4	3.92	100.00
Total	102	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

On the marital status of respondents, the results from the various communities clearly indicates that sixty eight (68) (66.67%) of the

respondents were married with only ten (10) (9.8%) who were singles and were not married. Thirteen (13) of the respondents, representing 12.74% were widowed with seven (7) (6.86%) representing the divorced. Only four (4) (3.92%) had separated from their marital homes. This result is very significant in that it indicates that most of the respondents were married and are responsible and capable of taking decisions that affect their very existence and their families.

Table 5: Age distribution of respondents at last birthday

Age of respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage (%)
20-29 years	22	2.57	21.57
30-39 years	23	22.55	44.12
40-49	24	23.53	67.65
50-59	20	19.61	87.26
60-69	13	12.75	100.00
Total	102	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

On age distribution, the result indicated twenty two (22) of the respondents representing 21.57% fell within the range of 20-29 years. Twenty three (23) of the respondents representing 22.55% were within the age of 30-39 years. Twenty four (24) of those who responded to the questionnaire representing 23.53% indicated that they fell within the range of 40-49 years.

Twenty (20) representing (19.61%) and Thirteen 13 (12.75%) of the respondents were between the ages of 50-59 and 60-69 respectively. The results from the age distributions are important because almost all respondents

were in their active age group (i.e.20-60 years) capable of taking significant decisions that affect their very lives.

Table 6: Last completed level of formal education of respondents

Level of Education of respondents	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
No Formal Education at all	19	18.63	80.39
M.S.L.C.	32	31.37	31.37
Junior Secondary School/JHS	3	2.94	98.03
Senior Secondary School/SHS	7	6.86	95.09
Teacher Training College	31	30.39	61.76
Bachelor (1 st Degree)	8	7.84	88.23
Post Graduate Degree	2	1.97	100.00
Total	102	100	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

In finding out the level of formal education of respondents, the result showed that nineteen (19) (18.62%) of the respondents had had no formal education at all, thirty two (32) (31.37%) had middle school leaving certificate. Three (3) (2.94%) and seven (7) (6.86%) had had junior high school/junior secondary school and senior high school/senior secondary school certificates respectively. As many as thirty one (31) of the respondents representing 30.39% have either completed teacher training college and other paralleled or related institution. The researcher's observation indicated that these respondents were basically teachers working in the communities where the research was conducted. Eight (8) (7.87%) respondents hold first degree with only two (2) (1.96%) having post graduate degree. The balanced nature

of the respondents is a good result as it clearly represents the varied shield of academic levels and gives a good representation of the opinion of the people.

Table 7: Main occupation of respondents

Main Occupation Of Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Agric/Fishing	102	57.80
Government Sector employee	41	23.70
Trading	25	14.45
Pensioner	3	1.73
Self Employed	2	1.16
Private Sector Employee	2	1.16
Total	173	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

On the main occupation of respondents, the researcher observed from the responses that most of the respondents were engaged in more than one main occupation. As such there were multiple responses. Although the questionnaire clearly indicated that respondents should indicate only their main occupation, some of the respondents ended up stating two or more occupations indicating that some of them are engaged in two or more occupations which make it very difficult for them to isolate one specific occupation as their main one. The most cited main occupation was agric and fishing (102 representing 57.8%. Forty one (41) and twenty five (25) of the responses related to government employees and trading respectively. Only three (3) responses were pensioners representing 1.76%, and two (2) each representing 1.16% related to private sector employment and self employment respectively.

Table 8: Forms of projects and programmes which respondents have benefited from World Vision

Forms of project	Frequency	Percentages
Building/Upgrading of classroom Facilities	102	26.91
Drilling of boreholes	102	26.91
Conducting immunization campaign	87	22.96
Teaching about hygiene	40	10.55
Training farmers in agriculture	17	4.49
Supply oil palm seedlings	16	4.22
Feeding orphans and widows	11	2.90
Gift from sponsors and school materials	4	1.06
Total	379	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008.

On the various projects and programmes of the world vision respondents have benefited, the researcher observed that most respondents had indicated that they had benefited from more than one project or programme carried out by the World Vision International in their community.

All the respondents, (102) representing 100% indicated that they had benefited from the building/ upgrading of classroom blocks and the drilling or construction of wells to provide water for the community. This is because such projects had been carried out in all the selected communities where the research was conducted. The above data clearly indicates that there are evidences to prove that the organisation is at least impacting on the local people in their quest to overcome poverty.

Table 9: Level of participation in project definition and initiation

Activity	Sum of responses	No of respondent	Mean level of participation	Key
Initial Analysis of the needs of the community	494	102	4.84	A
Appraisal of different options of the interventions	461	102	4.52	A
Discussions on the potential benefits of the interventions	460	102	4.51	A
Selection of the best options of the interventions	452	102	4.43	A
Discussions on the role beneficiaries were expected to play	441	102	4.32	A
Prioritization of the needs of the community	439	102	4.30	A
<i>Mean of means(overall mean)</i>			4.49	A

Source: Field survey, 2008

Key

Mean Range

Interpretation

4.0-5.0

A: Extremely high level of participation.

3.0-3.9

B: High level of participation.

2.0-2.9

C: Low level of participation.

1.0-1.9

D: Very low level of participation.

Less than 1.0

E: No level of participation.

From the table above the results indicate that there was a very high level of participation of beneficiaries in all aspects of project initiation. This is

because the means for the various activities ranged from 4.0-5.0 .An overall mean of 4.49 of the respondents is an indication that the respondents extremely participated in all decisions and activities culminating into project initiation. This trend, tend to corroborate the position held by Kanshahu (2000) when he indicated that to achieve developmental goals, no resources such as project inputs, and the local beneficiaries who are capable of contributing to these goals, should be neglected. This level of true participation is amply demonstrated by the World Vision, at least, from the data elicited from the beneficiaries above.

Steifel (1981) has also stated that literature from non-governmental sources tends to emphasize the need for “true participation” (i.e. bottom-up approach, grassroots development). He however, concluded that the shift in the participation argument is towards the empowerment of the less powerful. Participation is thus a means to increasing efficiency through consultation for market relevance, group formation for self-help, to decrease cost of services delivery and to increase commitment and innovation.

Table 10: Need for greater participation in project definition and initiation?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage%
No	96	94.1	94.1
Yes	6	5.9	100
Total	102	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

In eliciting whether or not respondents needed greater participation in decision making, the result showed that only 6 (5.9%) called for greater participation in decision making with 96 (94.1%) not desiring any increase in

participation in decision making in project initiation. The results from the data at least indicated that World Vision as an organization has not relegated the beneficiaries' participation in decision making to the background.

This pattern of the level of participation is supported by Mayo and Craig (1995) when they advocated effective participation of beneficiaries in the making of decisions that set the basic pattern of their collective life.

They also argued that when beneficiaries are far away from practices and policies that affect their very lives, impact of such policies are very minimal. They further argued that participation is taken for granted in a number of central spheres of social organisation without its justification being analyzed at deeper levels.

Table 11: Level of participation in project planning and designing

Activity	Sum of responses	Number of respondents	Mean	Key
Designing the project intervention	474	102	4.65	A
Discussions on how to get the intervention carried out.	439	102	4.30	A
Discussion on where the project is to be sited.	436	102	4.27	A
Discussion on maintenance of the project.	433	102	4.25	A
Discussion on completion of the project.	395	102	3.87	B
Discussion on materials to be used.	388	102	3.80	B
Discussion on the cost involved and the funding sources	177	102	1.74	D
<i>Mean of means(overall mean)</i>			3.84	B

Source: Field survey, 2008

Key Mean Range	Interpretation
4.0-5.0	A: Extremely high level of participation.
3.0-3.9	B: High level of participation.
2.0-2.9	C: Low level of participation.
1.0-1.9	D: Very low level of participation.
Less than 1.0	E: No level of participation

Kanshahu (2000) has indicated that inadequate participation of communities in the design and management of projects is evidently a major setback in socio-economic development. From the results obtained above, the overall mean of 3.85 of the respondents on activities culminating into project planning and designing indicate that there was a high level of participation of respondents in all decisions culminating into project planning and designing. However, sizeable number of the respondents was not impressed by the level of participation permitted by the organisation in decisions concerning some aspects of the project planning and designing.

Mean numbers of 4.65, 4.31, 4.28 for the design of the project, how the intervention is to be carried out and the siting of the project respectively were recorded. These indicated an extremely high level of participation in those areas. Mean scores of 3.81 and 3.88, also indicated a high level of participation in decisions regarding project completion and its use and maintenance respectively. There was however, a very low level of participation of respondents in decisions regarding project cost and funding source. Decision on project cost and funding source recorded a mean rate of 1.74. This is in fact very low. It is based on this trend of most NGOs' that Lewis (2006) advised that the NGOs should report their financial standings

and make their financial reports available to the ultimate beneficiaries of their services to help them know what it costs to provide the services they are benefiting from and to decide if this is good value for their monies.

Table 12: Beneficiaries’ response to level of participation in decisions making in project planning and designing

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage %
I Disagree	55	53.92	53.92
I Strongly disagree	43	42.16	96.08
I Agree	4	3.92	100.00
Total	102	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

On the question that World Vision-Ghana has not done enough in terms of actively involving beneficiaries’ in most of their project planning and designing, the results from the table confirm that, the respondents were satisfied with their level of participation in World Visions’ project planning and designing of their poverty reduction interventions in their communities, irrespective of their lack of involvement on issues concerning funds. This observation is in sharp contrast to the position held by Clark (1995), who argued that most NGOs approach to poverty reductions always insult the intelligence of the poor or the rural folks. Their approach, he added, paints a picture of ignorant hungry people idling about a pool of resources but just waiting for experts like NGOs to drive from outside to show them how the resources are utilized. His observation tends to suggest that NGOs only push their agenda on beneficiaries without their consent and expected that beneficiaries will succumb.

Table 13: Level of beneficiaries' participation in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Activity	Sum of responses	No of respondents	Mean level of participation	Key
Beneficiaries' labour				
contributions	326	102	3.20	B
Supervision of the project	333	102	3.26	B
Purchases of the materials				
used	125	102	1.23	D
How finances were used	106	102	1.04	D
<i>Mean of means</i>			2.18	C

Source: Field survey, 2008

KEY

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.0-5.0	A: Extremely high level of involvement.
3.0-3.9	B: High level of involvement.
2.0-2.9	C: Low level of involvement.
1.0-1.9	D: Very low level of involvement.
Less than 1.0	E: No level of involvement.

On the beneficiaries' responses to their level of participation in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the result indicated a widely distributed response. An overall general mean respondent of 2.19 indicate low level of involvement in all the activities culminating into project implementation monitoring and evaluation. However, means of 3.20 and 3.27 for their labour contributions and supervision of the project respectively are considered as high level of participation. This trend is

corroborated by Kanshahu's (2000), when he rightly indicated that participation which is focused on the community in the planning, implementation and evaluation stage of projects is an appropriate approach to sustainable development.

From the data, there was a low level of participation however, in decisions on how finances were used and how materials meant for the project were purchased as these recorded a mean of 1.04 and 1.23 respectively.

Table 14: Financial assistance programme of WV respondents have benefited from

Financial Assistance	Frequency	R.P	C.P
Scholarships	96	52.46	52.46
A D E P small loans	87	47.54	100.00
Total	183	100.00	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

R.P = Representative percentages

C.P =Cumulative percentages

World Vision offers financial assistance to members in communities where they undertake their major projects as part of their poverty reduction interventions. The research also sought to identify those members in the communities who have directly or indirectly benefited from these financial assistances from the World vision. The researcher observed from the results that some of the respondents have benefited from all the financial assistance being offered by the organisation. From the results, eighty seven (87)

respondents representing 47.54% had benefited from their Association of Progressive Entrepreneurs for Development (ADEP) small loan scheme. Ninety six (96) of the respondents representing 52.46% had also benefited from the scholarship scheme for their children and wards.

Table 15: Economic impact of World Vision’s programmes and projects on beneficiaries

Economic impact measures	Sum of responses	Number of respondents	Mean	Key
Changes in the income level	294	102	2.88	C
Improved level of financial /monetary savings.	285	102	2.79	C
Improved food security of household.	277	102	2.72	C
Improved household expenditure and consumption.	265	102	2.60	C
Improved economic household status	258	102	2.53	C
Increased Assets owned.	249	102	2.44	C
Improved in the level of agricultural Production.	236	102	2.31	C
Increased land holding.	230	102	2.25	C
<i>Mean of means (overall mean)</i>			2.57	C

Source: Field survey, 2008

Key

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.0-5.0	A: Extremely high economic impact.
3.0-3.9	B: High economic impact.
2.0-2.9	C: Low/moderate economic impact
1.0-1.9	D: Very low economic impact
Less than 1.0	E: No economic impact at all.

In assessing the economic impact of the organisation's 'projects and programmes on beneficiaries, the data above indicates a varied responses from the beneficiaries. In general however, an overall mean of responses of 2.57 implied that the World vision's programmes and projects in their communities have had low or moderate economic impacts on their lives. All the economic impact measures spelt out attain a mean range of between 2.20 and 2.90 which all indicated low economic impact on the lifes of the beneficiaries. This partly explain the reason why the GPRS II document ranked the district fifty second (52nd) position and as one of the poorest district in the country. It should however be appreciated that it is not only the World Vision organisation's projects and programmes that could bring about the desired economic impact. That notwithstanding, the organisation could contribute to the economic development of the beneficiaries.

Table 16: Social impact of the organisation’s programmes and projects

Social impact measures	Sum of responses	Number of respondents	Mean	Key
Improved literacy and				
Educational levels.	268	102	2.63	C
Improved sanitation.	265	102	2.60	C
Improved family				
relationship.	258	102	2.53	C
Improved family planning.	256	102	2.51	C
Improved health status.	177	102	1.74	D
<i>Mean of means</i>			2.40	C

Source: Field survey, 2008

Key

Mean Range	Interpretation
4.0-5.0	A: Extremely high social impact.
3.0-3.9	B: High social impact.
2.0-2.9	C: Low /moderate social impact
1.0-1.9	D: Very low social impact
Less than 1.0	E: No social impact at all.

In eliciting the social impacts of the organisation’s projects and programme on beneficiaries, the data above indicates a similar trend to that of the economic impact. An overall mean responses of 2.40 also implied that the World vision’s programmes and projects in their communities have had low social impacts on the lives of beneficiaries. Again the social impact measures, the researcher sought to ascertain attained a mean range of between 2.50 and 2.80 which all indicated low/moderate social impact. Health status measure

however, attained a mean of 1.74 indicating very low impact on beneficiaries' health. This trend confirms the position of (Oakley, 1999) that raised a serious doubt as to whether many NGOs "know" exactly what they were doing, in the sense of their overall impact on people's lives. Oakley had concluded that, NGOs may or may not be having positive impact but said their ability to scale up their level of impact are limited by their inability to provide evidence of those achievements and their limitations and communicate this information to others with more resources or influences.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The aim of the survey was to find out the perceptions about community participation and the socio-economic impact of world vision's poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North district of Ghana

Major areas investigated included the beneficiaries' educational background, their marital statuses and other personal data. The research also investigated beneficiaries' level of participation in the projects and programmes undertaken in their area. These areas of participation investigated included project initiation, planning, designing, implementation; monitoring and evaluation. The survey also investigated the social and economic impacts or effects of the organisation's projects and programmes on their beneficiaries.

Conclusions

Beneficiaries of WVG programmes were greatly involved in all aspects of project initiation. That is, they were involved deeply in the initial analysis of the needs of the community, appraisal of different options of interventions, prioritization of the needs of the community and the selection of the best options of interventions for the community. Again, beneficiaries were involved on all discussions on the potential benefits of the interventions and the role they were expected to play.

Beneficiaries' participation in projects planning and designing was high in all aspects of planning and designing of projects. However, decisions involving the costs and the sources of funding were made without the active participation of the beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries were not satisfied with how decisions were taken on how finances were used, and the procedures for purchasing of materials for the projects. On other core areas of project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the participation of beneficiaries was moderate. Beneficiaries' were satisfied with their level of participation and their roles in the implementation and supervision of the projects.

On the economic and social effects of WVG programmes and projects, on beneficiaries the research results indicated a little improvement in their socio-economic lives as a result of the organisation's interventions.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this research, the following recommendations were made. These recommendations when adhered to by the NGO and other relevant organisations can help to improve on the activities and the impact of the NGOs and the organisation in their operational areas.

1. It is recommended that the World Vision and other NGOs should improve on their financial transparency and accountability level to their beneficiaries. This is because from the research results beneficiaries seemed ignorant on all aspects pertaining to finances (sources, how much and mode of disbursement) during the project implementation
2. NGOs must improve upon the beneficiaries' involvement in all aspects of project initiation since some beneficiaries were not satisfied with their level of

involvement. This will go a long way to increase their impact on the beneficiaries and in the communities where they operate.

3. Lastly, NGOs should allow active participation of their prospective beneficiaries of their projects, in all aspects of projects planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Although the research result indicated high level of involvement in this regard, more could be done by NGOs to attain very high level of participation to improve impact.

4. WV-Ghana should work harder to improve on their social and economic impact of their beneficiaries by engaging in good monitoring and evaluation of their programmes and to occasionally assess their impacts.

Suggestions for further research

It is suggested that in future when the organisations programmes (especially their financial support programmes) have lasted for more than 15-20 years, a comprehensive research is conducted to establish clear correlations between the various projects and programmes and the social and economic impacts on the people (beneficiaries).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND EXTENSION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WORLD VISION-GHANA, POVERTY

REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS BENEFICIARIES-HOUSEHOLD

HEADS

Context of the exercise

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the perceptions about community participation and the socio-economic impact of the World Vision's poverty reduction interventions in the Assin North District of Ghana.

Please Note

Being an academic exercise, the information provided would be kept as confidential and would not be revealed to any individual or institution. Therefore be candid in expressing your opinion and offer suggestion that can enrich the implementation of the project. **THANK YOU.**

RESPONDENT: (HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD AND / OR ANY OF THE SPOUSES)

Module 1: Socio – demographic characteristics_

Q1. Are you Male []₁ or Female []₂?

Q 2.Marital Status: Single []₁ Married []₂ Widowed []₃ Divorced []₄ Separated []₅.

Q 3.What is your age at the last birthday? Below 19 years []₁ 20 - 29 years []₃ 30 – 39 years []₄ 40 – 49 years []₅ 50 – 59 years []₆ 60- 69 years []₇ above 70 years []₈

Q 4.What is your last completed level of formal education?

- i.No formal education at all []₁
- ii.Middle School leaving certificate []₂
- iii.Junior Secondary School / Junior High School []₃
- iv.Senior Secondary School / Senior High School []₄
- v.Technical Training College / Institute or Training College []₅
- vi.Bachelor Degree (1st Degree) []₆
- vii.Post Graduate Degree []₇
- viii.Others (please specify)₈

Q 5.Main Occupation: Please indicate your professional work or the main work that you do to earn your living

- i.Agriculture: farming / fishing []₁
- ii.Trading []₂
- iii.Government sector employee []₃
- iv.Private sector employee []₄
- v.Self employed []₅
- vii.Pensioner []₆
- viii.Disabled / Cannot work []₇
- Others (please specify)

Module 2 : Finding out how households have benefited

Q 6.Tick (✓) against the various World Vision –Ghana, activity (ies) that have been initiated in your community of which you or your household have benefited from. (Tick as many as are applicable).

- i. Building/Upgrading classroom facilities so children can have a better place to learn []₁
- ii. Drilling and constructing wells to provide families with safe, clean water []₂
- iii. Providing knowledge to help families launch small businesses that will increase income []₃
- iv. Training farmers in new agricultural techniques and cultivation methods that can increase their production. []₄
- v. Offering vocational training in tailoring, soap making, bead-work and carpentry []₅
- vi. Conducting immunization campaigns to protect children from polio and other deadly and debilitating diseases. []₆
- vii Teaching mothers about hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention to equip them to better care for their children []₇
- Other (please specify)..... []₈

Module 3: Perceived level of participation of beneficiaries in project definition

Q 7. With a score of 5,representing an extremely high level of participation, 4, representing very high level of participation, 3,representing low level of participation, 2, representing very low level of participation,1,representing no

participation at all, indicate clearly by ticking (✓) your perceived level of participation in WV- Ghana poverty reduction interventions / project definition in the table below

What is your perceived level of participation in defining the interventions in terms of?

ACTIVITY	5	4	3	2	1
Initial analysis of needs of the community?					
Appraisal of different interventions option?					
Prioritization of needs for interventions?					
Selection of the “best” option?					
The potential benefits of the intervention?					
Your role you are expected to play?					

Q 8.In general would you have wished that you were made to involve yourself more in the WV – Ghana poverty reduction interventions than you did? Yes []₁ No []₂

Module 4: perceived level of participation in planning and designing of WV- Ghana poverty reduction interventions

Q 9.Please indicates your perceived level of participation in planning and designing of WV-Ghana poverty reduction interventions. Please tick (✓) the number that most clearly / closely represent your opinion noting that a score of 5 represents extremely high level of participation, 4 is very high level of

participation, 3 is low level of participation, 2 is very low level of participation and 1 is no participation at all.

What is your perceived level of participation in planning and designing the interventions in terms of?

ACTIVITY	5	4	3	2	1
Designing the project/interventions?					
Discussion on how to get the intervention carried out.					
Decision on materials to be used?					
Decision on where the project should be sited.					
Discussion on the cost involved and the funding sources.					
Discussion on when the project is to be completed?					
How the project will be used and maintained?					

Q 10. In general, World Vision – Ghana has not done enough in terms of involving you in their poverty reduction interventions planning and designing of their project.

I strongly agree []₁ I agree []₂ I disagree []₃ I strongly disagree []₄
 I am not sure []₅

Q 11. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 represents extremely high level of participation, 4 is very high level of participation, 3 is low level of

participation , 2 is very low level of participation and 1 is no participation at all.

What is your perceived level of participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the interventions in terms of?

ACTIVITY	5	4	3	2	1
Your personal labour contributed to the work					
Supervision of the project					
How finances (money) were used in the course of project.					
Purchases of the materials used for the project					

Q 12. What kind(s) World Vision-Ghana financial assistance have you or any member of your households benefited from?

- i. Association of Progressive Entrepreneurs for Development (ADEP) small loan scheme.[]1
- ii. Scholarship scheme for your children or ward(s) []2
- iii others (please specify).....

Module 5: social and economic effects of the poverty reduction interventions on households

Q 13. Of all the benefit derived from the organization poverty reduction interventions, how would you assess their impact on your life and that of your household.

Please indicate your perceived level of **economic** and **social** impact on your life and that of your households. Please tick (√) the number that most clearly / closely represents your opinion noting that a score of 5 represents: Extremely

high impact 4 represent high impact, 3 is moderate/low impact, 2 is very low impact, and 1 is no impact at all.

Economic impact measures	5	4	3	2	1
Improved in the level of agricultural production					
Increase land holding					
Increase assets owned					
Improved household status					
Improved household expenditure and consumption					
Improved food security of the household					
Improved level of financial/monitoring savings.					
Changes in the level of income					

Any other (specify).....

Q 14. Has WV-Ghana poverty reduction interventions projects/ programmes had any **social** impact on your social life and that of your households in terms of:

Social impact measures	5	4	3	2	1
Improved literacy level and educational level					
Improved health status					
Improved sanitation					
Improved family planning					
Improved nuclear family relationship					

Any other
(specify).....