

# “I Feel Like I Don’t Exist in This Community”: Stakeholders’ Thought on Their Noninvolvement in Community Development Initiatives in Kenyase

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## Abstract

This study adopted a mixed method to investigate the level of stakeholder involvement in community development initiatives in Kenyase. Data for the study were collected from the field using interview schedules, Focus Group Discussions and questionnaires. Findings from the study show the noninvolvement of most of the less resourced stakeholders in decision making notwithstanding the availability of avenues for stakeholder participation in community development initiatives in the community. The study further found the stakeholders’ noninvolvement to be associated with lack resources and the potential of delaying the decision making process. The need for appropriate mechanisms to be put in place to involve all stakeholders in decision making to ensure the success of projects is indicated by the findings.

**Keywords:** community development, stakeholders, participation, Ghana, non-inclusion

## Introduction

Stakeholder participation has long been regarded as the hallmark of community development. Community developers and project managers often advocate for the full participation of all stakeholders more especially the beneficiaries of the community development initiative (Citizens). It is argued by most authorities of community development that stakeholder participation constitutes an integral part of economic improvement and social change efforts (de Wit, 2001; Brown & Hanis, 2008).

The bottom-up approach to community development influences the community development processes which center on stakeholder participation. This approach constitutes “an umbrella term for projects that actively include beneficiaries in their design and management” (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 1). That is communities have direct control over the design, implementation and evaluation of projects. This implies that the voice of the various stakeholders is respected and made to reflect in the initiation, design and implementation of projects. Many authors believe that the main goal of community development is to address problems and issues confronting communities hence the need to actively involve key stakeholders in the community development process (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Biddle & Biddle, 1965; Kamath, 1961). Thus, community development involves the organization of community members for the planning, initiation and design of projects geared towards addressing their common and individual needs and problems. The execution of these plans is often based on available community resources with supplementary efforts from governmental and non-governmental organizations within and outside the community (Miniclier, 1956).

The central means of community development is “a people’s programme with government aid” and not “a government programme with people’s aid” that is doing things for people (Kamath, 1961, p. 4). That is community development can be conceived as development for the people, by the people and of the people (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In this sense, the individual community members must assess and determine their needs; and initiate, design and implement projects with a little or no support from individuals, groups, institutions and organizations outside the community. Basic to community development is the ability to mobilize people for involvement through participation (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). People of the community should actively participate in community change. Participation as a means of ensuring local people’s cooperation/collaboration with externally introduced programmes or processes to facilitate the effective implementation of such initiatives and to achieve a set of objectives and participation as an “end” to ensure the empowerment of people to take greater responsibility for their development through their acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience (Hamilton, 1992).

The main goal of community development is to address community problems based on the concept of ‘the good for all’ (Cavaye, n.d). That is community development can be conceived as an organizational means of ensuring individual member growth through collective action and group work (Hamilton, 1992). In line with this, Biddle and Biddle (1965) indicate that community development involves cooperation, group work,

consensus building and collective action. They further indicate that individual development and growth as the secondary focus of community development can only be achieved through ‘group responsibility’ for the common good of the local community. That is without group responsibility and collective action, there will be no personality growth.

Breuer (2002) however stated that consultation and the availability of participatory approaches do not mean the active involvement of the people in decision making. Hence, consultation and the involvement of the citizenry in the governance of community development projects are very vital in ensuring that they address the needs of the people (Breuer, 2002). Mansuri & Rao (2004) support this by arguing that well thought through and planned projects are likely to be more responsive to the felt needs of the citizenry. Conversely, when community development projects are superimposed on the local people, they often do not conform to the cultural values and norms of the people (Breuer, 2002). Therefore in order to “strengthen networks and identify common concerns and support people in taking actions related to the networks” (Breuer, 2002, p. 11) community organizers and community project management have the responsibility to ensure the participation of the local people in the project initiation, design and implementation. In sum, community participation forms a basis of trust and helps identify community needs, define the community development responsibilities of stakeholders and manage expectations among community members and other stakeholders.

Contrariwise, O’Donnell’s (2010) literature review on the exploration of the history of user involvement initiatives as a way of vitalizing mental health collective advocacy found that beneficiaries’ participation in community development initiatives most often keep important structural issues off the agenda and thus make the outcome of these initiatives non-reflective of national development agenda and goals. Property rights theorists further argue in support of O’Donnell’s finding by arguing that partnership and the overemphasis on community participation will lead to the overexploitation of community resources as the development projects and the processes may fall outside the national agenda and with little or no control from state regulations (North, 1990; Demsetz, 1970).

This partnership principle of community development is one major and most underestimated principle of community development by activists who believe in the top-down approach to community development. These people believe that community development should be paternalistic and projects should be superimposed on the local communities since “poor communities have little to offer besides cheap land and labor and social problems” (Perkins, Crim, Silberman & Brown, 2004; p. 325). Notwithstanding the arguments raised by those who believe in the top-down approach, it is vital to incorporate the local people and institutions in the development process. The incorporation of the local people take into consideration a lot of strengths-based approaches such as bottom-up approach, community-focused approach and community-based approach requiring local planning; partnerships between business, government, and community organizations; and local hiring requirements (Perkins, Crim, Silberman,& Brown, 2004).

The basic ethical principles of fairness, competence, and equal participation for all stakeholders—citizens, CBOs, NGOs, CSOs or government departments—are clearly necessary for the realization of the goals of community development (Dongier et al, 2001). Every person needs to be able to participate in an open discourse so collaboration and consensus building can evolve. Each person needs to know all the rules of the participation so discussion is on a level field.

Recently, however, researchers have shown renewed interest in participatory processes and outcomes involving citizens at the local community level (Cavaye, n.d; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). This paper analyses stakeholder involvement in community development projects, drawing on primary research in Kenyase in the Asutifi District of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

## **Methodology**

In this study the concern was to find out the level of participation of stakeholders in the community development process in Kenyase. It was therefore a matter of cause that the Kenyase community which was the setting for the study and stakeholders of community development such as Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, the local authority, the residents, NGOs, CSOs, Youth groups in Kenyase and the Asutifi District Assembly became the source for data collection.

The study used an exploratory and descriptive research design. The study employed the mixed research method (quantitative and qualitative methods). Creswell (2003) indicated that the integration of results from both qualitative and quantitative approaches at the interpretation phase “can note the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claim of the study” (p. 217). The researcher’s choice of the mixed research method helped in minimizing the limitations inherent in the use of a single method.

The sample size for the study was one hundred and twelve (112) persons. The one hundred and twelve (112) respondents included 90 members of the community, six (6) key informants – officials working in NGOs, and CBOs, the community leaders – the District Chief Executive (DCE), Chiefs and the Member of Parliament (MP) - and government departments in Kenyase, and sixteen (16) Focus Group discussants. The choice of this

sample size is to obtain more comprehensive data from the study population.

With respect to the present study there were different segments from which information was needed to address the research problem. As indicated by Avoyingah (2011) combining the separate groups into one population and drawing a sample might not give a good representation of all the groups and this could lead to increased information variability. The researcher therefore used both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents for the study. The researcher specifically made use of the multi-stage sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the key informants for the study. The purposive sampling technique helped the researcher to select or identify respondents who satisfy the characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation and could provide the needed information to help achieve the objectives of the study.

With respect to the selection of citizens of Kenyase (community members), the multistage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, the units (the primary sampling unit) sampled were the suburbs of the community. Simple random sampling technique (Lottery method) was used to select four (4) suburbs of the kenyase community. The township was divided into two zones. These zones included:

- The Northern zone (Jericho, Adum I, Adum II, Zongo I, and Ola resettlement I).
- Southern zone (Ola resettlement II, Ampedwee, Zongo II, Ahenboano and Newtown).

Each of the suburbs was written on pieces of paper and kept in a box. The researcher shook the box to ensure that the papers mix very well and randomly selected from the boxes. Two suburbs were simple randomly selected from each zone.

In the second stage, the units sampled were households in the selected suburbs. The convenience sampling technique was used to sample the households for the study. Proximity was the major criterion used in conveniently sampling the households. That is, households which were closer and easily accessible were sampled conveniently for the study. In the third stage, individuals interviewed were sampled using purposive sampling technique. Heads of households or adults within the sampled households who have witnessed or participated in the process of community development in the community were purposively selected for the study. One individual from each of the sampled households was selected purposively and interviewed.

The primary sources of data for the study comprised both quantitative and qualitative tools of data collection. The primary data comprised field data gathered from respondents. The primary data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and structured questionnaire.

The quantitative data (data from the close-ended and the Likert scale questions) was edited and checked through to ensure consistency. Satisfied with the edited data, the researcher went ahead to do data entry using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software programme. Thus, SPSS data analysis programme version 16 was used in analyzing the quantitative data obtained from the field. With respect to the likert scale items, the response sets (scales or levels) were transformed into dichotomous variables. The five likert scale had the agreement and disagreement scale expressed in different levels. Each degree of agreement and disagreement was given a numerical representation of one to five,

Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1;

Disagree (D) = 2;

Not Sure (NS) = 3;

Agree (A) = 4 and

Strongly Agree (SA) = 5.

These numerical codes were transformed into different variables that is code one (1) through three (3) were transformed to one (1) while code four (4) through five (5) were transformed to two (2). This is presented mathematically below:

1 – 3 = 1 (Disagree) ;

4 – 5 = 2 (Agree)

After the transformation of the likert scale items into dichotomous variables, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mainly frequency distributions. Tabular and graphical presentations of information were used to facilitate easy interpretation and comprehension. Brief statements were provided to explain the statistical tables and graphs. The likert scale questionnaire has a Cronbach alpha of 0.817 ( $\alpha=0.817$ ). This reliability coefficient shows that the Likert scale items were internally consistent and reliable. According to George and Mallery (2003), a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research situations.

The qualitative data on the other hand were transcribed. They were typed (from interviews and Focus Group Discussion notes) into word processing documents. The researcher then carefully read the transcribed data, line by line, and divided the data into meaningful analytical units (that is segmenting the data). When meaningful segments were located they were coded. The coding was done by marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names. Generally, the data collection, and analysis were informed by Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), in particular by Callon's model of translation of interests.

## Results

The results are presented in three sub-sections. The first section displays the analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study and the response from the likert items on stakeholders' level of participation in community development. This specifically deals with the frequencies and percentage of occurrences of the various characteristics. The second section on the other hand presents the analysis of the qualitative data.

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, marital status, educational status and occupation.

**Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b><u>Sex</u></b>		
Male	46	51.1
Female	44	48.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b><u>Age</u></b>		
20 and below	12	13.3
21-30	27	30.0
31-40	36	40.0
41 and above	15	16.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b><u>Marital Status</u></b>		
Single	34	37.8
Married	47	52.2
Divorced/Separated	4	4.4
Widowed	5	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b><u>Educational Background</u></b>		
None	18	20.2
Elementary/JHS	26	29.2
Secondary/SHS	24	27.0
Tertiary	21	23.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b><u>Occupation</u></b>		
Farming	22	24.9
Trading	18	20.2
Civil Servant	19	21.3
Unemployed	14	15.7
Other (galamsey)	16	17.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 above presents the socio-demographic profile of the survey participants. As depicted, men constitute around 51.1% of all survey respondents. With respect to the distribution of the ages of the participants of the study, it is evident that approximately 40.0% of the respondents were within the 31 - 40 age group while 13.3% were 20 years and below. In terms of the respondents' marital status, the table shows that 52.2% of the respondents were married while 4.4% were divorced/ separated. It is also clear that 29.2% of the respondents were Elementary/JHS leavers while 20.2% has no formal education. The table further shows that 24.9% of the respondents were farmers while 15.7% were unemployed.

## Stakeholders' Level of Participation in Community Development Process

**Table 2 Percentage Response to Likert Item #1 to 8**

Variable	Disagree		Agree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Stakeholders are partners	63	70.0	27	30.0
Citizens take active part in Community Development	26	28.8	64	71.2
Projects are successful and sustainable due to the Partnership Relationship among Stakeholders	71	78.9	19	21.1
Public hearing and meetings for community Participation	17	18.8	73	81.2
Less Resourced CSOs and CBOs are Sidelined	18	20.0	72	80.0
Minority Stakeholder Groups' Involvement raises Opposition	14	15.5	76	84.5
Lack of Knowledge Leads to the Sidelining of Stakeholders	15	16.7	75	83.3
Politicization of Community Development leads to conflict	14	15.5	76	84.5

On the level of participation of the respondents in the community development process, table 2 above indicates the following: only 30% of the respondents (n = 27) agreed that stakeholders of community development in the community are partners; 71.2% of the respondents (n = 64) agreed that citizens participate actively in the process of community development; only 21.1% of the respondents (n = 19) agreed that projects in the community are successful because stakeholders collaborate; and 81.2% of the respondents (n = 73) agreed that stakeholder meetings and public hearings were used in community development process in the community.

Again, as depicted in table 2 above, 80.0% of the respondents (n = 72) agreed that less resourced stakeholders are sidelined in community development process; 84.5% of the respondents (n = 76) agreed that minority stakeholder groups are sidelined because their involvement raises opposition; 83.3% of the respondents (n = 75) agreed that stakeholders are sidelined due to their lack of skills and knowledge and 84.5% of the respondents (n = 76) agreed that the politicization of community development in the community leads to stakeholder conflict.

### Qualitative Analyses

#### Level of Stakeholder Participation in Community Development Process

The study shows that there are different actors involved in the initiation, design and implementation of community development projects in Kenya. Through interviews with participants, the researcher identified group of actors who form core component of projects in the Kenya community. The identification and categorization of these groups of actors is very key and first most important step towards understanding the current environment on the study setting.

Table 3 below illustrates the identified actors together with their roles. These different roles of the individual actors help in the governance of development projects in the study setting.

**Table 3 Actors and Their Roles**

No.	Group of Actors	Roles
1.	Traditional Authority	Prioritization of Interests, engage in the governance of projects
2.	Citizens	Prioritization of Interests, engage in the governance of projects
3.	Local and National Government (Asutifi District Assembly and Unit Committee)	Provision of needed technical support to the communities to complete project proposals, Worked with the communities by preparing all the budgets needed for projects Endorsement of project proposals for submission to NADeF Secretariat to prevent duplication of projects
4.	Youth	Prioritization of Interests, engagement in the governance of projects, monitoring of projects
5.	Sustainable Development Committee	Preparation of project proposals, defend and submission to NADeF
6.	Organisations (NGOs, CBOs and CSOs)	Prioritization of Interests, engage in the governance of projects
7.	Newmont (NADeF)	Empowerment of communities through grants, knowledge sharing, partnership and capacity building to achieve sustainable development.
8.	Technology	Keeping database of stakeholders and the maintenance of the database; Organization of stakeholders, bidding processes and qualification for bidding; dissemination of information and confidentiality.
9.	Documents	Come up with contracting procedures and strategies; Ensure commitment towards the sustainable economic and social development of Kenya, enhance the operation of citizen participation process, Provide guidelines about what areas projects should cover.
10.	Delivery Methods	Bidding processes and qualification for bidding for infrastructural projects; Provision of an avenue for local residents' participation and communication

Beside the identification of these stakeholders, the study further shows that in community development decision making process the different stakeholders have free choice to either accept a proposed idea or not. A

respondent indicated that:

*Nobody or group is forced to accept proposed projects. The individuals and groups choose to support projects that meet their common concern or interest. The moderator only facilitates the process and ensures that these projects and needs are prioritized (A leader of Omanbotantim)*

Current practices involved in the governance of community development projects were also identified through the study. Some of these practices mentioned by participants include communication roll-out programmes, meetings, workshops, phone calls and community forum that ensure stakeholder participation in development initiatives in Kenya. This was captured by one youth Executive who indicated that:

*In this community, before any project is initiated all the members of the community meet to discuss the project the community really needs. Through these discussions we are always able to decide on what we need ...*

A similar sentiment was expressed by a member of the SDC who indicated that “*We use community and stakeholder meetings to decide on projects. These make us collaborate at times... one unfortunate thing is that we don’t get a lot of people during such meetings but they are ok.*”

However there were indications that not all stakeholders are involved in decision making especially less-resourced or less powerful groups. As a leader of the “Omanbotantim” in an interview lamented:

*At times the chiefs and some few organizations initiate projects that meet their own interests ... this has happened several times in this community. For instance, some few people and the chiefs recently decided on ICT and loan projects without the involvement of most of us [the stakeholders]...*

But some of the participants sought to justify the non-inclusion of certain groups in development decision making by assigning various reasons including lack of resources and the perception that some stakeholders are ignorant and incapable of making any meaningful contributions. A traditional leader during a focus group discussion stated:

*Whenever you call for a meeting of all stakeholders, there will be no success because “enkura dodo tu bOn a enkO akyiri” [a hole dug by more mice does not go far or deep – African proverb]... Autocracy is bad but democracy is worse. Some people come to talk about unnecessary things. Emmm during our last community meeting when the people were asked to indicate what the 31.5 billion cedis from Newmont should be used for, some people suggested the building of a mortuary in Kenya because a lot of people die nowadays and as a result the community will get a lot of money ... I believe these people have nothing to offer with respect to community development decision (Nana K)*

The other members of the group agreed that lack of meaningful contributions from some groups during community meetings leave them with no option than to sideline them in development decision making. Another respondent posited that:

*The youth groups are respected ... for instance, when the youth group was not involved in the decision concerning the setting up of a Community Consultative Committee, their leaders talked against it and boycotted that they will not form part of that committee. They are never ignored in decision making. Several CBOs and other associations are often ignored because they are less resourced and lack cohesion (A leader of Omanbotantim).*

Although less-resourced stakeholders were often sidelined, less-privileged groups and individuals in society such as the disabled, women among others are given considerations during fora. The study found that women are given the opportunity to partake in the discussions. One youth Executive indicated that:

*During our meetings we determine the number of women and men who attended. Whenever we are taking decisions some men make suggestions that address the interest of women and that of the vulnerable in the community. We always try to encourage women to attend meetings and also provide the opportunity for those willing to contribute without any hindrances.*

It was found that to carry out a proper evaluation of suggested projects or needs at community meetings, the youth, moderators and leaders of the community use headcount. The headcount and the NADEF-Newmont Agreement document were the mechanisms used to prioritize the needs of the community because all people in support of the specific community needs at the meetings are counted and the project that is supported by a greater number of people at the meeting is considered to be the felt need of the community. An executive of the youth during an interview posited that:

*In order for us to determine the what the community really needs, we always count the number of people present at the meeting who support each of the proposed projects and the project supported by a lot of people is considered as the community’s need. Before I forget, NADEF-Newmont agreement document also guides us in the decision making.*

## Discussions

This section provides a brief discussion of the major findings of the study and integrates them with current literature. Thus, the purpose of this section is to discuss the findings which have emerged from the study and

illuminate them by literature.

A significant finding of the study is that the arrival of NGGL in the Kenyase community has led to the emergence of several actors on the development landscape. The identity (roles, and interests) of these actors are central elements in the establishment, creation and alignment of interests in the pre-NADeF community development network. That is the kind of interactions among these elements is the primary determinant of the success of the network. This finding is in line with World Bank's (2010) report that the presence of mining companies often lead to the increase in the number of interest group, NGOs and Civil Societies which in turn result in mounting demand on these companies to commit much toward the development of their host communities. Saheb and Nobaya (2010) however stated that the increase in the number of stakeholders is not the problem but the level of their participation in development decision making is what matters.

The study further found the availability of series and well-established avenues and approaches such as stakeholder meetings, communication roll-out programmes, workshops, phone calls and community forum as means of providing conducive environment for citizens and stakeholder participation. These approaches were found to provide the actors the opportunity to engage in community development decision making process. This finding is supported by Esnault, Zeiliger and Vermeulin's (2006) findings which indicate that the availability of participative approaches is very vital in ensuring that actors participate fully in an actor-network. They further found that these boulevards help the actors to discover and share their common interests (Esnault, Zeiliger & Vermeulin, 2006).

The study also found that most of the stakeholders are sidelined in the processes of community development on the basis how less-resourced they are (in terms of leadership, numerical strength and financial resources) and the focal actors' perception about their knowledge level. These findings support de Wit's (2001) study which found that three possible factors underwrite the neglect of citizens and local groups from participating in development decision making. According to de Wit (2001) citizens' participation in development decision is problematic due to illiteracy, lack of information and confidence. This is confirmed by de Wit and Berner's (2011) study which found that the scope for patronage and brokerage is a function of a lack of resources or services. Contrariwise, Tosun (2000) found that citizens' noninvolvement in community development process is not about other stakeholders' perception about their lack of knowledge but rather their own belief that their idea will not be considered.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made: First, it can be established that there are sustainable regulatory frameworks to guide the participation of stakeholders in community development initiatives in the Kenyase community but there seem to be some lapses in these documents. The NADeF-Newmont Agreement document does not clearly indicate the enrollment process of the various stakeholders but only outline the composition of the SDC. This makes it easy for some influential stakeholders or individuals to enroll individuals and groups that share their vision hence inducing the neglected stakeholders to be adversarial to any decision made by the SDC. It is therefore recommended that the NGGL, NADeF and NGGL operational communities revisit their agreement document and put into it the means of enrolling the various stakeholders at the committee level. The document should spell out the specific qualifications of individual stakeholders for the various committees and the quota for each stakeholder group. It is hoped that this will ensure due representation of all stakeholders in the available committees.

Also, it was found from the study that while the number of stakeholders is increasing everyday, locally structured means of involving them in decision making to ensure that change efforts address their needs do not exist hence the need to establish a well-structure context specific means of involving all stakeholders in decision making.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings and the recommendations made thereof, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, it can be concluded that community development hinges on stakeholder participation. Stakeholder participation should however not be equated to stakeholder consultation since participation takes into consideration the active engagement of the stakeholders in decision making. The level of stakeholder participation is indispensable in promoting high sense of ownership among the various stakeholders as well as ensuring project accountability. It can therefore be argued that while stakeholders are engaged in collaborative efforts, social cohesion and partnership relationship are likely to be established.

Secondly, not all stakeholders may have the interest to partake in community development decision making, but it is the researchers' view that all the stakeholders are provided with the boulevard to do so. Project managers' ability to address barriers that hinder the active voluntary engagement of stakeholders to decide on projects that meet their common interest is very crucial.

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