# Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction: The Role of Foreign NGOs

## A Case study of the Northern Region in Ghana

Robert Tamba Moikowa

Dortmund, December 2004

# Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction: The Role of Foreign NGOs

## A Case study of the Northern Region in Ghana

Dissertation zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
**Doktor rerum politicarum**
**(Dr. rer. pol.)**
Der Fakultät Raumplanung, Universität Dortmund

vorgelegt von
**Robert Tamba Moikowa, MSc., BA Phil.**

**Gutachter**
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Klaus Kunzmann
(Universität Dortmund)

Dr. rer. pol. Jonas Y. Kokor
(Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology,Kumasi,Ghana)

**Prüfer**
Dr. Rainer Stierand
(Universität Dortmund)

Dortmund, Dezember 2004

# Dedication

*To the loving memory of my Parents,*
*Mrs. Bondu Moikowa and Mansa Sahr G. Moikowa,*
*Chief of Gbatema village, Kono District, Sierra Leone.*
*May their souls and the souls of all who laboured*
*to build my capacity rest in perfect peace.*
*Amen*

# Acknowledgments

This study marks an important milestone in my passion to lobby for the poor, and my thanks go to all who have made this fight their course, on the field and/or in their writings for their inspiration. I would like to thank all who have been part of building my capacities, and duly supported this study, especially my family who laid the foundations and encouraged me all the way.

My special gratitude goes to my academic advisor and “Doktorvater” Prof. Dr. Klaus R. Kunzmann. I thank him for his support, inspiration and the confidence bestowed on me, in my difficult circumstances, to carry out the study. This study would not have been possible without his scientific guidance and fatherly concern. In addition, I thank Dr. Jonas Kokor from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, for his scholarly advice, guidance and supervision on the field. My thanks also go to Dr. Rainer Stierand (Universität Dortmund) for accepting to be the examiner.

I am greatly indebted to Pfarrer Michael Scharf and the St. Lamberti Katholische Kirche, Münster, Germany, whose financial support kept me going during the study. My thanks also go to the Martin Schmeißer Stiftung for providing me with the ticket for my first research fieldtrip.

Among the many organisations and people who assisted me during the field work, special thanks go to all the organisations invested in the study for their cooperation. I am very grateful to the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD), especially Mr. Valerie Yao Dogbe. My thanks also go to the Catholic Mission in Tamale and all who opened their doors to me during the study.

There is nothing more comforting than a home away from home during such a study. In this regard, I am most grateful to my friends in Germany. Among these, the undying support and motivation of Ms Plonja Nickell through the course of the study, deserve utmost recognition. Special acknowledgment goes again to Pfarrer Michael Scharf for his brotherly support, encouragment and the family and friends he offered me during the rather tough years. Others include Mr. Bawah Mahama (proof reader), Mr. Sahr Kodoh and my family in England. I thank my colleagues, especially, Ms Sylvia Wanczura, Mr. Alfred B. Kanu, Fr. Steven Koya, Drs. Luke Ikeanyionwu, Andreas Freund and Lars Tata, and our hard working department secretary Frau Marlis Eckey for their support and the friendly working atmosphere they accorded during the entire period of my studies.

Notwithstanding the numerous contributions, especially those not mentioned here, the author takes full responsibility for any shortcomings of the study report.

# Table of Contents

List of Figures ix
List of Tables x
List of Boxes x
Appendices x
Acronyms xi
Abstract (English) xiii
Abstract (German) xvi

**Chapter One: Background and Aim of the Study**
1.1 Introduction 1
Development strategies: Technical Co-operation and Capacity Building 3
1.2 The Research Issue 4
1.3 The Research Questions 9
1.4 The Propositions of the Study 10
1.5 The Objectives of the Study 11
1.6 The Research Approach 11
1.6.1 Action research 12
1.6.2 The case study research 12
*1.6.2.1 Basic elements of the case study method 13*
*1.6.2.2 Quantitative versus qualitative research methods 14*
1.7 Nature of the research 15
1.8 Justification for the research approach 16
1.9 Research problems and limitations of the study 17
1.10 Structure of the report 17

**Chapter Two: Towards an Understanding of Poverty and Capacity Building**
2.1 Introduction 21
The evolution of development thinking and capacity building 22
2.2 Defining poverty 24
2.2.1 Rural poverty and its characteristics 26
2.2.2 Access to livelihood opportunities 28
2.2.3 Well-being 30
2.2.4 The basic needs perspective 31
2.2.5 Social exclusion 32
2.2.6 Alternative definitions of poverty 33
2.3 Measuring poverty 34
2.3.1 The income or consumption perspective 34
2.3.2 The human development dimensions 35
2.3.3 Measuring and analysing human development 35
2.3.4 The Human Poverty Index 36

2.4 Understanding poverty in the developing countries 36
2.4.1 The development challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa 37
2.4.2 The colonial legacy and nation building in Sub-Saharan Africa 39
2.5 The causes of poverty in developing countries 41
2.6 Rationale for poverty reduction 43
2.7 Defining Capacity Building 45
2.8 Capacity for poverty reduction: helping hands and strategies 47
2.8.1 Development assistance as a linear process 50
2.8.2 The “Poverty Reduction Strategy” 51
2.9 Conceptualising Capacity Building 51
2.9.1. The three dimensional nature of Capacity development 53
2.9.2. Models of Capacity Building 55
2.10 Conclusion 58

**Chapter Three: Poverty Profile of Ghana and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy**

3.1 Introduction 60
3.2 Background to Ghana 60
3.3 Understanding poverty in Ghana 65
3.3.1 The perceptions of poverty in Ghana 68
3.3.2 The causes of poverty in Ghana 69
3.4 Spatial Dimension 70
Regional variations in level of deprivation 71
3.5 Profile of the Northern Region (the study area) 73
3.5.1 Geographical, political and demographic characteristics 73
3.5.2 Socio-economic characteristics: opportunities and challenges 75
3.6 Approaches to poverty reduction in Ghana 79
3.7 National effort and major policy instruments at poverty reduction 82
3.8 The Ghana poverty reduction strategy: growth and prosperity 84
3.8.1 Strategies of the GPRS 86
3.8.2 Medium term priorities (2003-2005) 89
3.8.3 Human resource development and basic services 91
3.8.4 Relief package for the northern regions 94
3.9 Reflections on the GPRS decision-making model 94
3.10 Conclusion 97

**Chapter Four: Non-Governmental Organisations and Poverty Reduction**

4.1 Introduction 98
4.2 Civil society and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) 102
4.2.1 Defining NGOs 104
4.2.2 The question of scope 105
4.3 The Emergence of NGOs and Voluntary Organisations 109
4.3.1 NGO generations – Historical perspective 110
4.3.2 NGO stages of development 115
4.4 Preference and mandate of NGOs: contributory factors 116
4.5 Civil Society Organisations/NGOs in Ghana 119
4.5.1 Analytical framework 120
4.5.2 Foreign NGOs 121
4.5.3 Local partners in development 121
4.6 Approaches to poverty reduction 127
4.6.1 NGOs areas of activity 128
4.6.2 Institutional development – linkages 132
4.6.3 Institutions and poverty reduction 133
4.6.4 Capacity-building 137
4.6.5 Participation 137
4.6.6 Partnership with other sectors 138
4.6.7 Strategic partnership with NGOs in Ghana 139
4.6.8 Towards a holistic approach 139
4.7 Limitations of NGOs 140
4.8 Conclusion 142

**Chapter Five: Developing Capacities for Poverty Reduction: A conceptual framework**

5.1 Introduction 143
5.2 Definition of terms and concepts 144
5.3 The economic development system 148
5.4 The conceptual framework 149
5.4.1 The Input: Partnership 151
5.4.2 The Process: Capacity building 153
5.4.3 The Output: Self-reliance 157
5.4.4 The Outcome: Reduced Poverty & sustainable local development 158
5.5 Building blocks in poverty reduction and sustainable development 161
5.6 Analytical model for local capacity building 162
Indicators of poverty reduction 163
5.7 Assessment 165

**Chapter Six: Foreign NGOs at work in Ghana: The case study**

6.1. The choice of the study area 166
6.1.1 The selection of cases - the unit of analysis 167
6.1.2 Control of subjects, variables and research environment 168
6.2 Data collection 172
6.3 Data analysis and processing 173
6.4 Selection of evaluation criteria 174
6.5 The case studies 176
6.6 Case One - Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany) Political 176
6.6.1 The voluntary / NGO sector in Germany 176
6.6.2 The Konrad Adenauer Foundation 179
6.6.3 Local partners and projects surveyed 180
6.7 Case Two - ActionAid (UK) Philanthropic 185
6.7.1 The voluntary / NGO sector in the United Kingdom 185
6.7.2 ActionAid Ghana 185
6.7.3 The local partners and projects surveyed 187
6.8 Case Three - Catholic Relief Services (USA) Religious 189
6.8.1 Catholic Relief Services: A Brief profile and Agency History 189
6.8.2 Sectors and areas of involvement 193
6.8.3 Implementing partners 205
6.9 Conclusion 208

**Chapter Seven: Capacity Building of Local Partners - the Missing Link in the Role of Foreign NGOs in Poverty Reduction: Findings of the Study**

7.1 Introduction 210
7.2 The major findings of the study 210
7.3 Emerging issues and Implications 220
7.4 Limitations of the GPRS 224
7.5 Conclusions 224

**Chapter Eight: Recommendations and Transferability of the Ghana experience**

8.1 Introduction 227
8.2 Foreign NGO and the development framework 229
8.3 The Foreign NGOs and the development framework 231
8.4 Linking the findings to the recommendations: Developing a strategic capacity building approach for poverty reduction 234

8.5 Recommendations for Capacity Building 238
8.5.1 Mainstreaming Capacity development 244
8.5.2 Investing in people for synergy effect 245
8.5.3 National Commission for NGOs 246
8.5.4 Raising public awareness 247
8.5.5 Voluntarism 248
8.5.6 Ownership 249
8.6 Policies and implementation design: risks and challenges 250
8.7 Transferability of the Ghana experience 253
8.8 Some thoughts about the future agenda of FNGOs and areas for further research 254
8.9 Conclusion 255

**References** 257

## List of Figures


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Figure 1.1 | The problematic: weak political and socio-economic capacity | 6 |
| Figure 1.2 | Help to the poor | 7 |
| Figure 1.3 | Structure and outline of the study report | 19 |
| Figure 1.4 | Africa showing Ghana | 20 |
| Figure 2.1 | Characteristics of the rural poor | 26 |
| Figure 2.2 | The reality of rural poverty | 27 |
| Figure 2.3a | Where the poor live | 37 |
| Figure 2.3b | Proportion of people on less than a dollar | 37 |
| Figure 2.4 | The Millennium Development Goals and poverty in SSA | 44 |
| Figure 2.5 | Response to poverty | 50 |
| Figure 3.1a | Ghana showing the study area and poverty incidence in Ghana | 61 |
| Figure 3.1b | Ghana Poverty map: incidence of poverty 1999 | 61 |
| Figure 3.2 | Statistical profile of Ghana | 62 |
| Figure 3.3 | Spatial dimension and incidence of poverty in Ghana | 66 |
| Figure 3.4 | Regional poverty profile | 70 |
| Figure 3.5 | A typical picture in northern Ghana – girls carrying fuel wood | 73 |
| Figure 4.1 | Anti-Poverty campaign poster in the rich industrialised North | 112 |
| Figure 4.2 | Emergence and generation of NGOs | 113 |
| Figure 4.3 | The presence of NGOs on the road side in Tamale | 124 |
| Figure 4.4 | Analytical Framework: Foreign Development Assistance flows | 125 |
| Figure 4.5 | Location of NGOs in the development cooperation/aid chain | 126 |
| Figure 4.6 | Broad roles of NGOs in poverty reduction and development | 131 |
| Figure 4.7 | The World Bank project circle | 134 |
| Figure 4.8 | Steps in a holistic approach to capacity development | 139 |
| Figure 4.9 | Problems of NGOs in district planning and development | 141 |
| Figure 5.1 | The Conceptual Framework | 151 |
| Figure 5.2 | Elements of a successful partnership for capacity development | 153 |
| Figure 5.3 | Components of an organisation’s total capacity | 154 |
| Figure 5.4 | Building blocks in poverty reduction and sustainable development | 161 |
| Figure 6.1 | A KAF partnership programme on the Training of Trainers (TOT) | 181 |
| Figure 6.2 | Getting children to school: school-feeding programme (CRS) | 184 |
| Figure 6.3 | Bringing the conflicting parties under one roof | 188 |
| Figure 6.4 | The Church a strong local partner (Sunday worship) | 189 |
| Figure 6.5 | Beneficiary-Benefactor partnership | 208 |
| Figure 6.6 | One incapacitated local NGO (with effective synergy effect) | 209 |
| Figure 6.7 | The author sounding public opinion | 209 |
| Figure 8.1 | The context of capacity building | 235 |
| Figure 8.2 | Areas for action to reduce poverty and enhance development | 237 |
| Figure 8.3 | The capacity development triangle | 240 |

## List of Tables


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Table 1.1 | Number of foreign and local NGOs per region in Ghana | 8 |
| Table 2.1 | Conceptual predecessors to capacity building | 23 |
| Table 2.2 | Concepts of capacity growth | 53 |
| Table 3.1 | Dimensions of poverty in Ghana | 67 |
| Table 3.2 | Gender analysis of education by region | 72 |
| Table 3.3 | Government spending on education | 80 |
| Table 3.4 | Poverty reduction targets | 85 |
| Table 3.5 | Targets for education | 93 |
| Table 4.1 | Types of NGOs | 114 |
| Table 5.1 | Types of intervention for capacity growth | 150 |
| Table 5.2 | Systems in sustainable development | 162 |
| Table 5.3 | Analytical framework for local capacity building | 163 |
| Table 6.1 | Foreign NGOs operating in Northern Ghana | 169 |
| Table 6.2 | FNGOs operating in Northern Ghana by Country of Origin | 170 |
| Table 6.3 | Final list of units of analysis | 171 |
| Table 6.4 | CRS Educational Support Programme – overview | 194 |
| Table 7.1 | Overview and summary of major findings | 218 |
| Table 7.2 | Location of personnel | 218 |
| Table 7.3 | Mode of operations | 219 |
| Table 7.4 | NGOs and the GPRS | 223 |
| Table 8.1 | A new paradigm for capacity development | 236 |


## List of Boxes


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Box 2.1 | Definitions of poverty | 33 |
| Box 2.2 | Definitions of capacity building | 47 |
| Box 3.1 | Regional variations | 75 |
| Box 4.1 | “Breaking the poverty cycle: The Christmas Appeal” | 100 |
| Box 4.2 | Definitions of NGOs | 105 |
| Box 5.1 | Sustainable development: Plants or People? | 160 |


## Appendices


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Appendix A | Matrix of the cost of all GPRS policy actions and programmes | 268 |
| Appendix B | The role of stakeholders in the GPRS | 269 |
| Appendix C | LNGO (ISODEC) Activity | 275 |

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACBF | African Capacity Building Foundation |
| ACP | African Caribbean Pacific |
| BILFACU | Bimbola Literacy Farmers Agricultural Cooperative Union |
| CD | Capacity Development |
| CB | Capacity Building |
| CBOs | Community-Based Organisations |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisations |
| CWIQ | Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| EU | European Union |
| FNGOs | Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations |
| FY | Financial Year |
| GAPVOD | Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development |
| GDI | Gender related Development Index |
| GEM | Gender Empowerment Measure |
| GLSS | Ghana Living Standard Survey |
| GPRS | Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy |
| GROs | Grass-root Organisations |
| GSS | Government Statistical Service |
| GTZ | Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| HIPCs | Highly Indebted Poor Countries |
| HPI | Human Poverty Index |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| IMCPR | Inter-Ministerial Committee on Poverty Reduction |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INGOs | International Non-Governmental Organisations |
| ISODEC | Integrated Social Development Centre |
| KAF | Konrad Adenauer Foundation |
| LCD | Least Developed Countries |
| LNGOs | Local Non-Governmental Organisations |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MMDE | Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment |

| | |
|---|---|
| NCNGO | National Commission for Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NCWD | National Council for Women and Development |
| NDC | National Democratic Congress |
| NDPC | National Development Planning Commission |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NPP | National Patriotic Party |
| ODI | Overseas Development Institute |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PACT | Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa |
| PAMSCAD | Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment |
| PLWHA | Persons Living With HIV/AIDS |
| PRIME | Planning, Resource mobilisation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programmes |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| TC | Technical Cooperation |
| TEPCON | Tamale Ecclesiastical Provincial Pastoral Conference |
| TOKTEN | Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCSD | United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |

**Abstract**

Three issues dominate the response to poverty reduction: Debt relief, Trade justice and Aid. It is argued that the best evidence that development is working is when ordinary people in poor communities can testify that they are experiencing a better life. True, but this indicator often falls short of either stating “how” the better life comes about (for example through “hand-outs”), or looking into the future of the poor. Consequently dependence and the cycle of poverty continue. In response to the urgency of action to reduce poverty, the big target of the Millennium Development Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the study considers the response from the point of view of capacity: capacity (to compliment other efforts) for a sustainable poverty reduction. “Capacity” has grown into that aspect of development (in SSA) that is acknowledged and discussed largely in relation to foreign development cooperation (foreign expertise). Consequently a lot of development projects and development aid to most African countries have been left to rot for lack of local capacity to sustain them and enhance the much needed local synergy effect in the fight against poverty.

Development planning, implementation and management has been characterised in the past by a history of shifts between various paradigms, the private and public sectors. While the major helping hands such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and donors are yet to settle for a clear development approach, a third sector in the form of civil society, a strong part of which is Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), have claimed great prominence in development in SSA.

The mention of NGOs in poverty reduction is often largely limited to “northern” or foreign NGOs (FNGOs) and with the NGO landscape dominated by a handful of such ‘giants’ in Europe and the US, to explore the relationship between FNGOs and sustainable poverty reduction is a daunting undertaking. For notwithstanding decades of development co-operation and the gloomy prospect of meeting the development targets through FNGOs, the position of FNGOs as the agents of donor countries, duly guaranteeing the flow of money and development projects in SSA, is very important and their role in building capacities for poverty reduction should be investigated.

The relatively stable but poor West African country Ghana, which has a large foreign NGO presence is selected for the study. Poverty in Ghana is highly concentrated in the north. The Northern Region which lies below the national average in living standards and (thus) with the highest number of FNGOs after the nation’s capital is selected for the study. The selection of FNGOs working in the region considered type of NGO, country of origin, international spread, experience and diversity of interventions. The three emerging FNGOs for the multiple case-studies are as follows:

Case I: **Konrad Adenauer Foundation** (Germany) Political. Not resident in region.

Case II: **Action-Aid** (UK) Philanthropic. National affiliate. Resident in region.
Case III: **Catholic Relief Services** (USA) Religious. Resident in region.

The following questions were prioritised for the study:

- What are the capacity needs for a sustainable poverty reduction in the region?
- How (and with whom) are foreign NGOs implementing the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in the Northern Region?
- What are the guarantees for the future of FNGO poverty reduction interventions in the region?

The propositions of the study are summarised as follows:

- If foreign NGO interventions are to reduce poverty and arrest the dependence of the poor on development aid, FNGO programmes should have the objective of building local capacities without supplanting the local initiatives.
- A pro-people (organisations) approach to poverty reduction will bear more fruit in the future for the poor than a welfare service provision/project focused approach.
- Local ownership is needed to make FNGO intervention in poverty reduction sustainable.

To achieve the big target, the study focused on the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the capacity support provided by FNGOs to their local partners for a sustainable poverty reduction and development in the Northern Region.
- To examine how the process adopted by the FNGOs supports the implementation of the Ghana poverty reduction programme in the region.
- To identify and recommend areas in which the FNGOs and local actors can co-operate to reduce poverty and enhance sustainable local development.

Capacity building is defined considering “who” does “what” and “how”, and how these translate to actors, the content and the process of poverty reduction respectively. This means a sustainable capacity building should not only stop at impacting skills to the local actors, but should also consider appropriate resources and equipment, as well as the system and framework to ensure the operationalisation of the process.

The idea that capacities exist in Ghana and need to be developed synthesizes the conclusion that capacity for poverty reduction and sustainable development do not have to, and indeed should not be imported. Capacity for poverty reduction should not involve foreign actors, tools and strategies but also the poor themselves. Another component is the environment in which the whole operation takes place, the socio-economic and political context. The study found out that the talk about capacity development is hardly reflected on the ground. FNGOs are overwhelmed by welfare and relief work in the region, and are in transition from relief to real development, and yet to translate the talk about capacity development into local significance.

The true test of FNGOs is not (only) how to provide relief and welfare services, immediate emergency needs, but (also) enabling local capacities to consolidate foreign efforts for poverty reduction when they shall have left. With reference to the conceptual framework, the recommendations depart from drawing up a capacity building manual, and deal with a goal-oriented partnership among local and foreign actors based on a “hands-off” approach and the principle of subsidiarity, which allows beneficiaries to do what they can do better, to be productive and self-reliant. As no single FNGO makes an all encompassing intervention, it is recommended that FNGOs also collaborate and compliment each other. The picture of rural women at a midwifery class (cover photo) in the region speaks tons. The implementation of the recommendations will require political will, policies and commitment at all levels, as well as curbing the ensuing socio-cultural and policy implications.

A capacity building mechanism to guarantee a synergy effect and the sustainability of foreign interventions in poverty reduction will need to address certain issues in order to make the Ghana experience transferable to other countries in the SSA region. Capacity building for poverty reduction should be about mobilising African (human) resources: accountable Southern and local NGOs, and not “transnational development agencies”, vying for contracts in poor countries. There can hardly be a more crucial role for FNGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction than promoting and leaving the Southern and local NGOs to do the job.

## Zusammenfassung

In der Debatte um Strategien der Armutsbekämpfung in „Sub-Sahara Afrika“ (SSA) dominieren drei Schlagworte: „**Schuldenerlass**“, „**Faire Handelsbedingungen**“ und „**Entwicklungshilfe**“. Es wird gesagt, der beste Beweis für eine wirksame Entwicklung sei es, wenn die Bevölkerung die Verbesserung ihrer Lebensbedingungen bestätigt. Allerdings mangelt es diesem Indikator oft an einer Beschreibung dessen, wie diese besseren Lebensbedingungen entstehen (z.B. durch die Verteilung von Hilfspaketen) oder wie die Zukunft der Armen aussieht. Folgerichtig bestehen Abhängigkeit und Armut weiter. Als Antwort auf die dringende Notwendigkeit, Armut zu verringern - dem erklärten Ziel des “Millennium Development Goals“ (in SSA) - betrachtet diese Arbeit den Aspekt der „Capacity“, nämlich „Capacity“ (als ergänzender Ansatz zu den oben genannten Bemühungen) für eine nachhaltige Armutsbekämpfung. „Capacity“ hat sich zu einem Aspekt in der Entwicklungspolitik (in SSA) entwickelt, der anerkannt ist und breit diskutiert wird, allerdings fast ausschließlich von Experten aus dem Ausland. Folgerichtig sind viele Projekte in den meisten afrikanischen Ländern gescheitert, da es eben nicht gelungen ist, „Local Capacity“, also lokale Kompetenzen zu entwickeln und dadurch die so dringend benötigten Synergieeffekte im Kampf gegen die Armut vor Ort zu erhalten.

Planung, Durchführung und Management der Entwicklungsarbeit waren in der Vergangenheit gekennzeichnet von einem Wandel der Zuständigkeiten zwischen privatem und öffentlichem Sektor. Während Hauptgeldgeber wie die Weltbank, der Internationale Währungsfond und die westlichen Industrieländer noch dabei sind, eine klare Strategie für die Entwicklungsarbeit zu finden, hat der dritte Sektor in Form der Zivilgesellschaft, von dem die Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NGOs) ein wesentlicher Teil sind, stark an Bedeutung für die Entwicklungsarbeit in SSA gewonnen.

Die Erwähnung von NGOs in Zusammenhang mit der Verringerung von Armut wird oft beschränkt auf ausländische, westliche NGOs. Da die ‚NGO-Landschaft’ von einer handvoll großer Organisationen in Europa und den USA dominiert wird, ist es ein gewagtes Unterfangen zu untersuchen, inwieweit die Aktivitäten dieser Organisationen tatsächlich zu einer nachhaltigen Verminderung der Armut führen. Trotz jahrzehntelanger Kooperation in der Entwicklungsarbeit und unsicherer Aussichten, die Entwicklungsziele zu erreichen, ist die Position der ausländischen NGOs als Vertreter der Geberländer, die den Geldfluss und Entwicklungshilfeprojekte in SSA garantieren, sehr wichtig und demzufolge sollte ihre Rolle im Aufbau von „Capacity“ zur Armutsbekämpfung sehr wohl untersucht werden.

Das politisch relativ stabile, jedoch arme westafrikanische Land Ghana, in dem viele ausländische NGOs präsent sind, wurde für die Untersuchung im Rahmen dieser Arbeit ausgewählt. Die Untersuchungsregion ist die „Northern Region“ des Landes, wo die Armut besonders groß und wo deshalb die meisten NGOs in Ghana, nach der Hauptstadt, aktiv sind.

Die Auswahl der in der Region tätigen ausländischen NGOs richtete sich nach Art, Herkunft und ihren internationalen Aktivitäten und Erfahrungen. Die drei Fallstudien sind:

1. **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung** (Deutschland), politisch geprägt, nicht ansässig in der Northern Region
2. **Action-Aid** (Großbritannien), philantrophisch geprägt, ansässig in der Northern Region
3. **Catholic Relief Services** (USA), kirchlich geprägt, ansässig in der Northern Region

Folgende Fragen werden in dieser Arbeit hauptsächlich behandelt:

- Welche „Capacities“, also welche Kompetenzen und Fähigkeiten, werden für dauerhafte Minderung der Armut benötigt?
- Wie (und mit wem) führen die ausländischen NGOs die „Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy“ durch?
- Was garantiert, dass die Armutsbekämpfung durch die ausländischen NGOs zukünftig besser funktioniert?

Die dieser Arbeit zugrundeliegenden Thesen sind:

- Wenn das Eingreifen ausländischer NGOs Armut begrenzen und die Abhängigkeit der Armen von der Entwicklungspolitik eindämmen soll, dann sollten diese NGOs den Aufbau von „Local Capacities“ zum Ziel haben, ohne bereits vorhandene lokale Initiativen zu verdrängen.
- Ein an den tatsächlichen Bedürfnissen der Menschen orientierter Ansatz für die Armutsbekämpfung erzielt mehr Wirkung als ein auf Wohltaten konzentrierter Ansatz.
- Um einen möglichst nachhaltigen Effekt in der Armutsbekämpfung durch die ausländischen NGOs zu erzielen, ist lokale Beteiligung unumgänglich.

Ziele der Arbeit sind,

- zu untersuchen, in welcher Weise die ausländischen NGOs die „Capacity“-Entwicklung von lokalen Partnern in der „Northern Region“ unterstützen;
- zu analysieren, wie die Strategien der ausländischen NGOs die Umsetzung des „Ghana Poverty Reduction Programme“ in der „Northern Region“ unterstützen.
- Bereiche zu identifizieren und vorzugeschlagen, die sich für eine Zusammenarbeit von ausländischen NGOs mit lokalen Partnern anbieten.

Die Vorstellung, dass in Ghana „Capacities“ vorhanden sind und entwickelt werden müssen, lässt den Schluss zu, dass es kontraproduktiv ist, „Capacities“ zu importieren, ohne dass Wissen und Kompetenzen an lokale Partner weitergegeben

werden. Die Arbeit fand heraus, dass das Wissen um die Notwendigkeit, vor Ort „Capacity“ für die Armutsbekämpfung aufzubauen, in der Praxis, zumindest in der „Northern Region“, bisher kaum seinen Niederschlag gefunden hat. Angesichts der „Ersten Hilfe“, also der unmittelbaren „Fürsorge“, die vielfach vor Ort nachgefragt wird, sind die ausländischen NGOs überfordert, wirkliche Entwicklungsarbeit zu leisten. Jedoch befinden sie sich – das ist zu konstatieren – im Übergang von der Entwicklungshilfe eben dort hin. Die wahre Herausforderung für die ausländischen NGOs ist also sicherzustellen, dass neben der klassischen Entwicklungshilfe die Bemühungen dahingehend genutzt werden, lokale Kapazitäten zu bilden.

Was den konzeptionellen Teil der Arbeit angeht, laufen die Empfehlungen nicht auf die sonst übliche Erarbeitung eines „Capacity Building“-Handbuches hinaus, vielmehr geht es um zielorientierte Partnerschaften zwischen lokalen und ausländischen Akteuren basierend auf der Idee „Hilfe zur Selbständigkeit“ und dem Subsidiaritätsprinzip. Diese Haltung soll das Bild der Landfrauen in einem Geburtshilfekurs (Titelbild) symbolisieren. Außerdem sollten die einzelnen ausländischen NGOs zusammenarbeiten, da sie alleine nicht alle Probleme lösen können. Die Umsetzung dieser Empfehlungen erfordert vor allem politischen Willen, Engagement auf allen Ebenen und die Erarbeitung und Durchführung von Programmen sowie von Maßnahmen zum Umgang mit sozio-kulturellen Nebenwirkungen.

Ein Mechanismus zum Aufbau von „Capacities“, der Synergieeffekte und die Nachhaltigkeit ausländischer Beteiligung an der Armutsbekämpfung garantiert, muss, wenn die Erfahrungen aus Ghana auf andere Länder in SSA übertragen werden sollen, die individuellen Bedingungen in anderen Ländern beachten. Der Arbeit „Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction: The Role of Foreign NGOs“ geht es vor allem um die Mobilisierung afrikanischer Humanressourcen, insbesondere solcher, die zuverlässig sind und zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden können, und es geht weniger um eine isolierte Betrachtung der „transnationalen Entwicklungsorganisationen“, die um Aufträge in Entwicklungsländern konkurrieren. Es kann kaum eine wichtigere Aufgabe für die ausländischen NGOs geben, als die lokalen NGOs in SSA zu fördern und sie am Ende den Job allein erledigen zu lassen.

# Chapter One

## Background

## and

## Aim of the Study

# Chapter One
# Background and Aim of the Study

## 1.1 Introduction

*"Give someone a fish and he eats for a day;*
*Teach someone to fish, and he can feed himself for a lifetime."*

"Band Aid", "Live Aid", "Run for Africa", "United Artists for Africa" and the like, tell a unique story in Africa: poverty and foreign action to feed the dying. Bob Geldorf, musician and Band Aid organiser had this to say almost two decades ago: "Eliminating hunger is not our objective. We call it 'Band Aid', because you cannot put a band aid in a gaping wound". Needless to say, hunger and other problems and populations in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are on the rise, and expanding beyond the capacity of governments. The mention of Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan, suggest a picture of political crises, famine, and the horrible statistics of HIV/AIDS and destitution. What is the best strategy to challenge these problems? Technical cooperation (TC) has come in many colours: for some, it is the use of expatriate experts on long-term missions, working with local counterparts. For others, it is mainly "gap-filling", that is, the use of foreign expertise for functions for which local capacity is insufficient. For others still, it amounts to capacity building, development or "growth" (Fowler, 1998), a problematic term in itself. How much do development agents really care about capacity building, development or growth?

Until recently very few have stopped to examine the capacity to confront these problems in a sustainable fashion. The much promised "trickle-down-effect" of development policies and strategies didn't get to large parts of the population: the poor. There have been calls to get to the cause of hunger and other problems. Sparked off by the publication of the '*World Development Report 1990: Poverty*[1]' (World Bank, 1990), and the subsequent World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen five years later, the focus on poverty and its eradication as the challenge of the millennium, has since gained great attention through heightened efforts of governments, Non-Governmental / voluntary development organisations and agencies, making it the major development challenge of the new century.

[1] This report follows another World Development Report on poverty, in 1980. The "Human Development Report" is prepared annually by the United Nations Development Programme, while the "World Development Report" is prepared by the World Bank.

The importance of capacity to tackle these problems could not have been better trumpeted than the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted at one of the largest gathering of heads of States in 2000. The declaration committed countries (rich and poor) to do all they can do to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity and equality and achieve peace, democracy and environmental sustainability. Poverty has since become the big target (and first) of the Millennium Developments Goals (MDGs). With the 2015 target for the MDGs about a decade away, there are however serious concerns about achieving the MDGs. What are the actors doing?

The United Nations (UN) declared 1997 – 2006 as the first "Decade for the Eradication of Poverty"; buttressing the point that "*the principal objective of development (widely agreed) must be the eradication of poverty and its underlying causes*" (Clark, 1995). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) further acknowledged the magnitude of the problem noting that: "*Poverty is as pervasive today as it was when the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights was drafted 50 years ago. One third of the developing world's people are enslaved by a poverty that denies them fundamental human rights to live, liberty and the pursuit of meaningful lives. About 1.3 billion people exist on an income of less than one US dollar a day.*" (UNDP, 1998 in The Courier).

The European Union (EU) also observes that, "*It is an uncomfortable but inescapable fact that, at the start of the 21st century 1.5 billion people are living in abject poverty; surviving on less than US$ 1 a day. It is clear that despite all the advances mankind has made in medicine, science and technology a significant minority (sic) has been left behind. In fact the problem of poverty is proving so intractable the number of countries classified by the UN as 'Least Developed' has risen from 24 in 1971 to 49 in 2001"* (European Union, 2001 in The Courier).

Notwithstanding the above acknowledgments, there is growing concern about achieving the first of the Millennium Development Goals. Amidst the efforts; research and apparent shift in goals, theories and strategies; from poverty eradication, to poverty alleviation and poverty reduction, it is imperative to draw attention to the point that for four fifths of the world's population still living in developing countries, the practical question is not what development is, but how to achieve it - and how to implement the process in a sustainable way. The trend at the World Bank and for most of the development community reflects poverty reduction as a more realistic objective.

Development is a state as well as a process, and a society is said to have achieved a state of development to the extent that its citizens live free from want and tyranny and can obtain education and employment. This state is a distant dream for most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which records a very high incidence of poverty

(figure 2.1a & b). Amidst flagging State ability to deliver to its people in these countries, many foreign helping hands have come to the rescue. There is often a bias which credits all development work to foreign actors, predominantly the northern or International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). Largely through their efforts, the increasing complexity of poverty and sustainable development in the developing world has in the last decade gained great attention and relief. Together with governments, most international agencies stress the need to learn from past experiences and improve the effectiveness of external development assistance towards a sustainable local development.

The relevance of the INGOs (who are playing a significant role in development co-operation) in the fight against poverty may be increasingly evident, but so is the need to clarify their role, strategies and the underlying concepts that guarantee a future for the poor and sustainable development in developing countries. For after four decades of development co-operation, the prospect of meeting development targets is gloomy. These facts have led to questions about the strategies and of course the implementation and effects of the development programmes and projects.

***Development strategies: Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building***

Among the many development strategies making the headlines in development circles today is Capacity Building or Capacity Development. Developing capacity is said to be a fundamental component of international development assistance since the Marshall Plan. The huge success of that far-sighted programme, however, inadvertently generated an overly simplistic and optimistic view of what worked: Simply transfer capital and know-how to other countries, and swift economic growth will follow. Today the use of “capacity development” and “capacity building” is a matter of preference. The former is said to connote a long-term process that covers many crucial stages, including building capacities and ensuring national ownership and sustainability. Nonetheless, the most commonly used term in literature is capacity building.

The term is said to have emerged in the field of development in the 1980s (Lusthaus, 1999). It is regarded as the central purpose of technical cooperation[2] (UNDP, 1996). It is seen as complementary to other ideas that dominated development thinking and still play an important role over the past five decades (table 4.1). Under the label of capacity building however, a lot of money is spent and wasted (Fowler, 1997). In the face of dwindling funds and returns from appeals, there is every reason to worry about where and how a cent is spent, and more so on any thing other than breaking the cycle of poverty. According to Fowler (ibid.), mechanically inspired *ad hocism* is

[2] Technical cooperation according to the UNDP refers to free-standing (as opposed to investment project-related) technical assistance.

probably the best way of describing how the aid system presently understands and deals with the concept of capacity building. One reason is that insufficient distinction is made between capacity building as a means, ends or process and whether it is intended to improve things within the organisation itself, within society at large, or both. As with other development strategies, problems will arise when concepts of capacity development are not clear because the methods chosen are inappropriate. Capacity, like past catchwords is widely in use in the West and occupies a central role in the theory and practice of local and regional development. The list of capacities can hardly be exhausted: managerial, entrepreneurial, financial, institutional, military, etc. The study sets about to consider the role of foreign NGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction in Ghana (figure 1.4).

## 1.2 The Research Issue

In the words of a senior World Bank officer, the problem is all too familiar: “Everywhere we turn, whether it’s because we want to get that $14 billion drawn down or get that project completed, or get an economy managed from Accra instead of from the Fund, we see the capacity problem. It stares us in the face. It’s embarrassing sometimes” (The Courier, 2000).

Any attempt to present poverty and the efforts at the international level to reduce poverty is difficult enough without the mention of strategies that will lead to a future for the poor. Although the reduction of poverty as acknowledged above is the aim of any genuine interpretation of development in the highly indebted poor countries, the implementation is much a problem as has been other development programmes in the past. There is also the view that the “rolling back of the state” is swiftly allocating social roles and burdens to NGOs for which they are often ill prepared, hence the recent interest in NGO capabilities and absorptive capacity (Fowler, 1992). Investing in people and ideas is a powerful means of reducing poverty and promoting equitable and sustainable development but does not say how this role can be fulfilled.

Accumulated experiences state that poverty reduction requires strategies and capacity: manpower, infrastructure, funds and organisations. Cost is definitely a big and critical issue, but experience in SSA also shows that most development programmes have failed due to corruption and inadequate capacity for the implementation, and not for lack of cash. The experiences of the past four decades have shown that the implications of certain choices; policies and programmes, could have been better thought through and more could have been done in the planning, and implementation and management of some of the strategies and programmes. The consequences of these have been grave in Ghana and other Sub-Saharan

African countries; resulting in persisting poverty; deplorable living standards, low literacy, high unemployment and poor health care for the past four decades and more (figure 1.4).

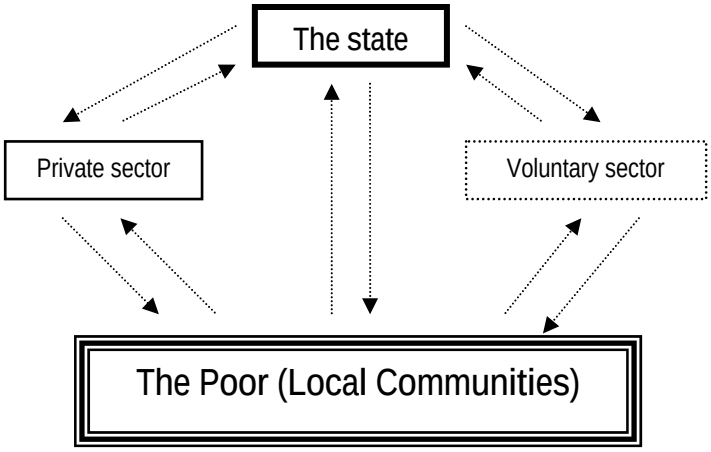
Challenges of this scale require recognition of capacities. To address these problems, past and present governments of Ghana have forged partnerships of various kinds over the years with the international community. One such partner is the NGO community, formerly predominantly foreign, but now with local counterparts. A host of foreign NGOs have arrived and are keen to play a role in Ghana especially in the northern part of the country. Notwithstanding the huge foreign assistance they bring and various other efforts, the situation of the poor as observed above is still wanting.

The World Bank (2000) argues that the fight against poverty is not just about ideas and concepts though, but achieving sustained economic growth, and investing in people, both to reduce poverty and enhance the continent's (Africa) ability to compete globally. It has been adequately acknowledged that "people today have an urge – an impatient urge – to participate in the events and processes that shape their lives"[3]. It is relished by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his hope that "Africa's future will be determined by Africans" who have an "impatient urge" to change the situation in figure 1.1: the inadequacies due to weak linkages denoted by broken lines.

The on-going decentralisation process in Ghana can be partly accredited with development of a huge pool of local NGOs. The northern region alone is home to an estimated 250 Local NGOs (LNGOs) and 30 foreign NGOs (table 1.1.). The NPP government duly recognises these and other organisations as development partners. The Government of Ghana (GoG) is seeking strategies and partnerships to reduce poverty in individuals, households, communities, groups and local organisations. As it stands, there are three main groups of actors serving the local community through whom FNGO (are supposed to) channel assistance for the poor (local communities): the State, the Private Sector and Voluntary Sector (figures 1.1 & 1.2).

[3] The UN underlined the importance by making "Participation" the theme of its 1993 World Development Report: People's Participation. (UNDP, 1993)

*Figure 1.1. The problematic: weak political and socio-economic capacity*



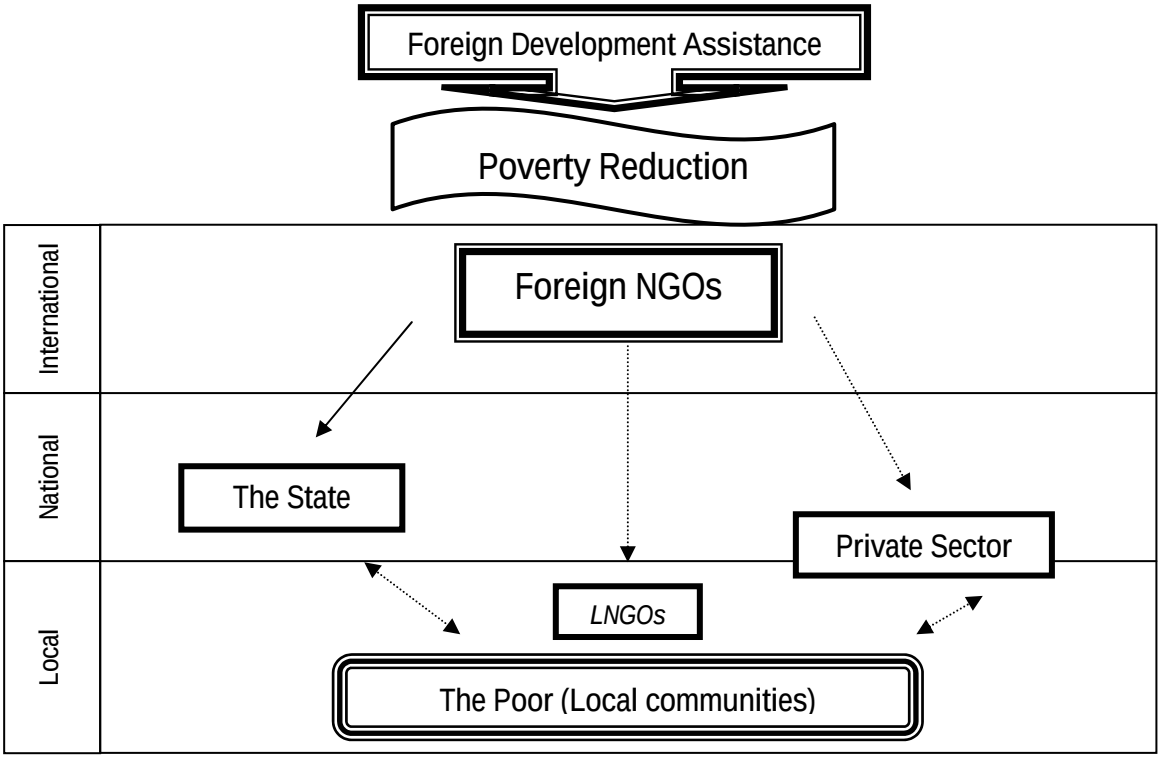

*Source: Author's construct*

These are valuable manpower and resources for poverty reduction in Ghana. However the socio-economic indicators (figure 2.1) show that most of the potential manpower are unskilled, untrained and can't take or create jobs. With limited jobs and services from the public and private sectors, the result is a poor citizenry dependent on foreign "hand-outs" and organisations (INGOs). There is subsequently little to expect in return from the citizenry who form the base of the system. They can neither improve their living standard nor contribute to the system, thus the poverty cycle. The Private sector (the market) is not strong enough to provide jobs for the masses who lack the capacity to take the jobs. The situation is one of weak backward and forward linkages between the State, the Private sector, a weak (struggling) local voluntary / non-profit sector (thus the demarcation with broken lines) and the citizenry as shown by the broken lines in figure 1.2.

Whichever way one looks at it, the result is a poor citizenry who bear the brunt of the system, as is the case in the Northern Region in Ghana. The indicators of their poor state are evident in a litany of inadequacies:

- Inadequate choices for a decent life
- Inadequate basic infrastructure
- Inadequate skills and know-how to even take a job or employ themselves.
- Limited accessibility, power and capital
- More expenditure than income; living on less than a dollar a day

*Figure 1.2 Help to the Poor*




*Source: Author's construct*

The pilot study revealed that there are many local and foreign organisations working to solve people's problems in various fields in the Northern Region (table 1.1.). A preliminary finding from the pilot study is adequately highlighted in the distribution of NGOs (activities) in Ghana (table 1.1.); namely the relationship between the presence (number) of NGOs and the prevalence of poverty. One local government authority remarked: "Where NGO presence is high, there is poverty". Residents the author spoke to also confirmed that the heavy presence of NGOs in a region reflects the extent of poverty in the region. After the Greater Accra Region, which is the nation's capital and the seat of most NGOs, the Northern Region has the highest number of NGOs. The region falls in the area of the poor, rural, and remote northern part of Ghana, and thereby makes a perfect choice for the study region.

*Table 1.1 Number of foreign and local NGOs per region in Ghana*

| Status of NGO | Gr. Accra Region | Central Region | Volta Region | Eastern Region | Western Region |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local | 260 | 80 | 100 | 30 | 45 |
| International | 35 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 10 |

| Status of NGO | Ashanti Region | Brong-Ahafo | *Northern Region* | Upper-East | Upper-west |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local | 175 | 120 | *250* | 47 | 20 |
| International | 11 | 10 | *30* | 14 | 10 |

*Source: Author based on GAPVOD and pilot study*

The picture in table 1.1 presents a couple of implications for poverty reduction and the development of the region in general. With this brief introduction of the local actors involved in one way or another in the fight against poverty, one might be excused for concluding that many hands make light work; if not be appalled by the prevalence of poverty in a region with so many experienced and affluent foreign NGOs, who administer a large amount of foreign development funds. One question presented by the situation in a donor-dependent country such as Ghana is, where to direct the limited foreign assistance. A major concern is the capacity to bring about the synergy effect. Questions are raised about how many of the local actors are "real", sustainable and effective? In reality barely half of the huge number of local NGOs working in the Northern Region will be able to sustain their work, since local business is still too weak to engage in charitable giving, and also because the institutional framework is not so favourable (GAPVOD, 2002). Another concern is how to carry out foreign intervention to ensure a synergy effect. These have been made highly debatable in the past.

What does capacity building for poverty reduction mean for FNGOs in this situation and what are they focusing on: The (mis)match between the worsening poverty situation and the capacity to contain poverty, the strength and capacity of the local actors, the welfare needs of the poor, or sustaining their efforts at the local level (for the day when they leave or can no longer deliver)?

Addressing the underlying problems and their causes rather than their symptoms alone will mark a major step in the development of civil society as a whole. A representative of a civil society organisation in local development is quoted in Kokor (2001) as saying: *"for a long time, over (several) decades, we have seen development designers (and workers) try to do development instead of letting the people do it themselves. Their approach failed… Finally, we all come to realise and accept that it is the people who should define their own development needs. The vitality of local communities is only really properly expressed through their*

*associations, movements and co-operatives, and their endogenous bodies that they set up, in short civil society organisations"*.

It is worth keeping the background in view: it has been abundantly documented that only about 25 percent of aid for the poor channelled through the state/government reach their target. NGOs also have their own shortcomings as will be seen in chapter three. Notwithstanding, donor countries, the Breton Woods, the UN and other donor agencies still largely work with these actors. Though some practitioners and academia crown NGOs as the most effective in reaching the poor, the preference for the implementer varies from private sector development, to the State and local government, and the local NGOs (figure 1.2.). Most donor development assistance is directed to poverty reduction and mainly comes through FNGOs (figure 1.2.). On the other hand, there are the problems and the welfare of the poor, which in FNGO development interventions have translated into projects: welfare and service provision. But even these practices in its long history fall short of halting poverty.

## 1.3 The Research Questions

Research questions delineate the boundaries of the research, give it an over all direction (Yin, 1986) and thereby help to operationalise the major research agenda. A cloud hanging over any such study on the work of INGOs and the international development cooperation as a whole is the issue of dependency (of the poor) and sustainability. If foreign assistance enhances dependency, then the question for the zealous foreign NGOs is how their interventions contribute to making the poor independent. The issue of almost any form of foreign aid/assistance and to a large extent the role of foreign NGOs, in literature, is enshrouded in a lot of contention. For instance, some critics question the intention of Western countries in former colonies in Africa and see foreign NGOs as new forms (arms) of neo-colonialism. Others doubt the effect of foreign aid altogether (Erler, 1990). But the basic assumption of the study is based on a generally acclaimed view in development circles that NGOs are reaching out more effectively and they are better able to reach out and improve the well-being of the poor: and this refers predominantly to foreign NGOs. The second assumption is rooted in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), which counts on the role of foreign NGOs in poverty reduction.

Against this background, it will be almost imperative to question why the other local actors (Local NGOs, Local Government and the Private Sector) are not able to perform equally or being at least entrusted with the task, do they have the capacity to perform the task, or what inhibits their performance, or are foreign NGOs enhancing the role of local actors in the fight against poverty? Such a question needs to explore

the needs of the actors for an effective poverty reduction intervention. An option could be a choice of the most effective among the three actors: through whom should the help for the poor be channelled: the State (local government and departments); the Private Sector or the local voluntary sector who is relatively closer to the poor than the other two actors? In short, whose capacities should the FNGOs build within the diversity of local actors to reduce poverty? What is the level of co-operation between the foreign development agencies and local partners in the implementation of the GPRS in the Northern Region in Ghana? Though the causes of poverty are deemed important for poverty reduction, the mentality or cultural aspect and context is hardly questioned.

Against the foregoing background, the major emerging questions for the study have been summarised and prioritised as follows:

- What are the needs for a sustainable poverty reduction in the region?
- How (and with whom) are foreign NGOs implementing the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in the Northern Region?
- What are the guarantees for the future of FNGO poverty reduction interventions in the region?

## 1.4 The Propositions of the Study

According to Yin (1984), the study proposition is the second of five important components after the Research questions, in the research design of case studies. Given the possibility of varying views on the research topic by other researchers, a research issue may open itself to a lot of doubts if left unbounded. Subjective though the broad generalisations from case studies may be, the research propositions, backed by a thorough examination of the theoretical framework upon which the research is based could make generalisation of the research findings possible.[4]
The position of this researcher has been summarised as follows:

- If foreign NGO interventions are to reduce poverty and arrest the dependence of the poor on development aid, FNGO programmes should be provided with the objective of building local capacities without supplanting the local initiatives.
- A pro-people approach to poverty reduction will bear more fruit in the future for the poor than a welfare service provision project focused approach.
- Local ownership is needed to make foreign NGO intervention in poverty reduction sustainable.

[4]Yin (1993) maintains that a research issue may be incomprehensible if left unbounded. This may particularly be so if the phenomenon being studied is influenced by several variables. Moreover, in a case study research approach, a prior formulation of propositions is important because propositions constitute the reference point against which the collected data is collated and results generalised.

## 1.5 The Objectives of the study

The overall aim of the study is to clarify the role and strategies of foreign NGOs, and the underlying concepts that guarantee a future for the poor and sustainable development in Ghana. With the popularity of capacity building among NGOs, the study sets out to find out how foreign NGOs are using the strategy to reduce poverty in the Northern Region in Ghana. From the above discussion, hardly any better programme can be used to examine the role of Foreign NGOs than the Government's own Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, and its goal: growth and prosperity. To achieve this broad objective against the above background and the assumptions of the study, the study focused on the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the capacity support provided by FNGOs to their local partners for a poverty reduction and sustainable development in the Northern Region.
- To examine how the process adopted by the FNGOs supports the implementation of the Ghana poverty reduction programme
- To identify and recommend areas in which the FNGOs and local actors can co-operate to reduce poverty and enhance sustainable local development.

## 1.6 The Research Approach

With the complex nature of the study, and the contemporary issues that the researcher does not have absolute control over, it was necessary to select an appropriate research methodology that would address the issues adequately. A methodology is a general approach or strategy used for studying a research problem. It relates to the general philosophical issues applied to guide a study, and is never wrong but only appropriate to the problem under investigation (Silvermann, 1993). According to Yin (1984), the choice of most appropriate research methodology revolves around three main issues: the nature of the research problem, the behaviour of the research theme and the extent of control the researcher has over contemporary events relating to research issues.

The methodology used for data collection and analysis of the research is discussed within the framework of the conceptual and analytical tools developed for the study. Also discussed is the research approach used in this study: the process, methods of data collection and analysis and the measures taken to ensure their validity and reliability. These are considered within the context of the research issues being investigated and the demands in terms of available resources such as time, finance and logistics. Effort is made to expose some alternative evaluation methodologies before attempting a concrete description of the research strategy adopted - the case study; and a justification of its appropriateness for this study. The unit of analysis,

data collection and analysis procedures are then discussed. Primarily based upon the issues under investigation and an assessment of the demands of the study area and the resources (logistics: time and finances) available to the researcher, there was the need to choose between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

It is suggested that research methodology should be considered in terms of research approach and research technique (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996). While research approach refers to the philosophy and general strategies guiding a study, research technique refers to the nature and methods of date collection and analysis, on the basis of which findings and conclusions are drawn.

Research approaches include surveys and experiments. Surveys focus on study of a representative sample or defined population and are mainly used to generate primary data. Experiments are at the heart of the scientific method of study, by formulating and testing hypotheses through carefully designed and controlled tests. Experiments are mainly used in the natural and physical sciences with the possibility of the researcher controlling some of the variables that may influence research behaviours and outcomes. In the social sciences where human behaviour and social phenomena are studied, and where these variables can neither be predicted nor controlled, the use of experiments is limited to social experiments in social laboratories.

### 1.6.1 Action Research

Action research is the study of a given social situation with a view to improving the quality of actions within it (Stringer, 1996). It is common with those working in professional areas with the aim of implementing the research outcomes. Hence, it is a research process with a practical purpose in view, which can lead to changes in ways and practices. According to Stringer (1996), the main characteristics of an action research approach include the following:

- It is founded on a research relationship in which those involved are participants in the change process,
- It involves a cyclical process in which policy, action and evaluation are inter-linked,
- It is problem focused and context specific,
- It is a learning process and hence, educative.

### 1.6.2 The Case Study Research

This is a method of inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. The method addresses a situation whereby the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident. It also uses multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1993) and is suitable for context-related events. A distinct technical

characteristic of the case study method is that there are always more variables of interest to be analysed than data points, which makes quantitative statistical analysis difficult as some of the research variables cannot be quantified. However, case studies can and should include quantitative (numerically measurable) and qualitative (descriptive, interactive) data.

Case studies make analytical generalisations to a body of theoretical framework or findings from within a specific study (Yin, 1984). As such, case study generalisations are limited to the specific context and phenomena under investigation. The case study method enables in-depth study of complex events and processes, most of which may escape statistical analysis. A major strength of case study method is that it meets the evaluation needs to monitor and assess policy interventions and implementation process. It serves evaluation needs by being amenable to both quantitative and qualitative data. In this way, it is able to draw from the advantages of quantitative and qualitative research. Its major critique is that being a social research method, case studies are too general or qualitative and are open to validity and reliability questions, which tends to limit its usefulness as a scientific study method and its contribution to a body of knowledge (Yin, ibid).

#### *1.6.2.1 The basic elements of the case study method*

The case study method is a research method for empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and uses multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1993). The inclusion of the context as an integral part of the case study creates its technically distinctive characteristics: that there will always be many more variables of interest than data points to be analysed. This technical characteristic of the case study makes statistical analysis difficult, if not irrelevant because the data points will have no variance. However, case studies can and should still include quantitative data (numerical measurement) where relevant.

Unlike statistical inferences and generalisations, case studies make analytical generalisations (Yin, 1984; Fekade, 1994), to a body of theoretical framework (Uphoff, 1992; Fekade, 1994). Case studies, hence, enable researchers to study in depth ”peculiarities” and idiosyncrasies that may shed light on the prominence of certain, hitherto uncovered, complex events and processes - most of which may escape statistical manipulations. Case studies ”manipulate” concepts, and categories and not incidences and frequencies. The testing of theory and extrapolation to theory is the strength of case studies (Brannen, 1992).

The case study method, however, being a scientific method of gaining social knowledge, must and does render itself to established scientific norms and

procedures. A case study research must, in its own way, be subjected to such tests as validity (of constructs, of explanations regarding causalities, of generalisations) and reliability if it is to contribute to useful body of knowledge i.e. applicable to the solution of social and development problems. Hence, transparency is called for. The case study method has the following advantages:

- case studies meet the needs of evaluations to monitor and assess the interventions and implementation process.
- case studies have the potential of being amenable to both qualitative and quantitative data.
- case studies serve evaluation needs by being able to assess outcomes and to test hypotheses. This requires a prior development of theoretical formulations - of causal relationships. These theoretical formulations form the basis for making generalisations from the case study findings (Yin, 1984; Yin, 1993; Fekade, 1994).

#### *1.6.2.2 Quantitative versus Qualitative research methods*

Until quite recently, most researchers have favoured quantitative research methods as a means of ensuring that their work is scientific and statistically representative. Quantitative methods measure the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparisons and statistical aggregation of the data. Quantitative methods make it possible for the researcher to make broad, generalisable conclusions from the findings. It is however critical to note that in the process of making the summaries and generalisations, or in computing the averages, means, standard deviations, etc., the uniqueness of the cases is often lost. The likelihood of making wrong interpretations is heightened. It is therefore difficult to identify the individual characteristics of the elements in a sample.

This is very crucial for development professionals who would not want to lose sight of the unique peculiarities of the elements in their samples. It is especially crucial because the major object of social science research is man. Man is very dynamic and unique in several respects. Making broad generalisations on issues that affect man often invalidate the findings and make the entire conclusions and recommendations unreliable.

Researchers have therefore resorted to qualitative research methods which permit the evaluator to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and details because data collection is not necessarily constrained by predetermined categories of

analysis[5]. Conversely, quantitative methods use standardised measures that fit diverse opinions and experiences into predetermined response categories.

In this study, it has been necessary to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods as necessary. While using qualitative methods to ensure an in-depth and detailed analysis of the cases without losing sight of their uniqueness, quantitative methods have been applied in some cases to increase the possibility of making some limited generalisations and thus increase the chances for replicability of the research findings. The case study method was therefore considered appropriate for this study.

## 1.7 Nature of the Research

Standard quantitative research methodologies cannot be adopted in this study because it would require adoption of rigorous statistical techniques. It would require statistical representative samples which will not be feasible in a study of this nature. The typical quantitative methodologies assume knowledge of the entire population (N) from which a statistically representative sample (n) will be selected. Such assumptions cannot be easily made in this study because the cases to be dealt with are unique individual entities for which one cannot safely make very broad generalisations. The structure and composition of even the various elements within the cases could have varying characteristics. It will be erroneous, for instance, to use the case of one FNGO (e.g. the CRS) to generalise for all FNGOs. Even the groups that make up the FNGOs have inherent differences. The same is true for GAPVOD or government. The case study method therefore has the advantage of ensuring that the uniqueness of the cases is not lost. It is nonetheless possible to replicate the outcomes in other areas that share a series of commonalties. In essence, it is necessary to consider the socio-economic, political, and administrative structure. of the area under investigation in deciding on an appropriate research method. This would make the research findings valid and reliable[6].

[5] Patton, M.Q. 1987:9 stated that the qualitative methods provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of programme situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviours.

[6] Fekade 1994:5 - Any statistical analysis that is detached from the social, economic, political, administrative, cultural, psychological, etc. background of the study area in which the development problems and issues take place is of limited value, if any.

## 1.8 Justification for the Research Approach

Research approaches are not mutually exclusive or compartmentalised. A research project can make use of one research approach or a combination of approaches at different points in the research process. This study adopts a combination of action research approach and case study method.

This study is both descriptive and explanatory. It is descriptive in the sense that it intends to describe the structure, process and outcomes of the roles of selected FNGOs operating in Ghana. It further seeks to describe the relationships that currently exist among the major actors. It is explanatory in the sense that it intends to explain the factors responsible for the observations and the likely impact this could have on sustainable local development in Ghana.

This study addresses contemporary issues crucial to development in Ghana because they affect “real-life” situations. However, the boundaries between the phenomena are ill-defined and thus not amenable to certain rigorous statistical research methodologies that emphasise the statistical representativeness of the samples. The case study method is chosen because of the nature of the research, need to maintain the uniqueness and independence of the cases, lack of control on subjects, and the nature of conflicting opinions about the research issue.

Other reasons for applying the case study method in this research are as follows:

- The fact that the researcher has no control over the behaviour of actors in the study of FNGOs and local actors in poverty reduction. The policies of government and the decisions made by national and local government, local residents and the regulatory environment are outside the control of the researcher. These behaviours can only be observed and analysed for drawing conclusions as to how they influence the role of FNGO in poverty reduction
- The case study method allows for flexibility to adjust a changing circumstances in the research environment, the type of data, data collection and data analysis techniques that are appropriate.
- The research issue is a contemporary on in real life context, given that the role of NGOs is crucial to poverty reduction and improve the chances of development at the local level in Ghana.
- The nature of the research is such that there are both quantitative and qualitative aspects that should be analysed. Hence, case study method enables the application of these date tools to reflect the prevailing conditions or realities without much of the abstractions associated with quantitative analysis.
- The concepts and constructs used in this study are not universally accepted terms, measurements, standards, definitions and norms, because of the social nature of the research problem. The concept of development, the nature and strategies for capacity building call for consensus building in order to achieve common grounds of understanding. A study of such social phenomena requires a methodological approach that is flexible and dynamic to allow for

and accommodate the operationalisation of the concepts within the research context, hence the use of case study method.

## 1.9 Research Problems and Limitations of the study

Well known limitations apply to the study: First and foremost, the insights are limited to the literature and documents available. Most of the capacity building literature[7] is derived from international development assistance, but many of the concepts and lessons described are applicable to FNGOs and development agencies in the developed world that provide assistance to communities and organisations in developing countries. Second, the study had to cope with a range of logistic as well as time constraints. In some cases, the smooth running of this exercise was hampered by deplorable road conditions, and constant breakdown of some field vehicles. Consequently certain parts of the Region could not be visited. This however poses no bias in the outcome of the study, because the study is aimed at FNGO interventions: projects and partners. Access to the FNGO projects and partners are also limited by the same problems. All major operational areas and partners of the selected cases were visited.

The study took off with a pilot study in 2001, after the general elections in Ghana. The change of government which resulted in transfers and new appointments meant most officials were either not available for interviews or felt insecure to release information. The ethnic conflict in the study region was always a force to reckon with. In the light of these challenges, the author could not visit all the local government areas (District Assemblies) as was earlier planned during the first fieldtrip. However these limitations do not affect the quality and outcome of the study.

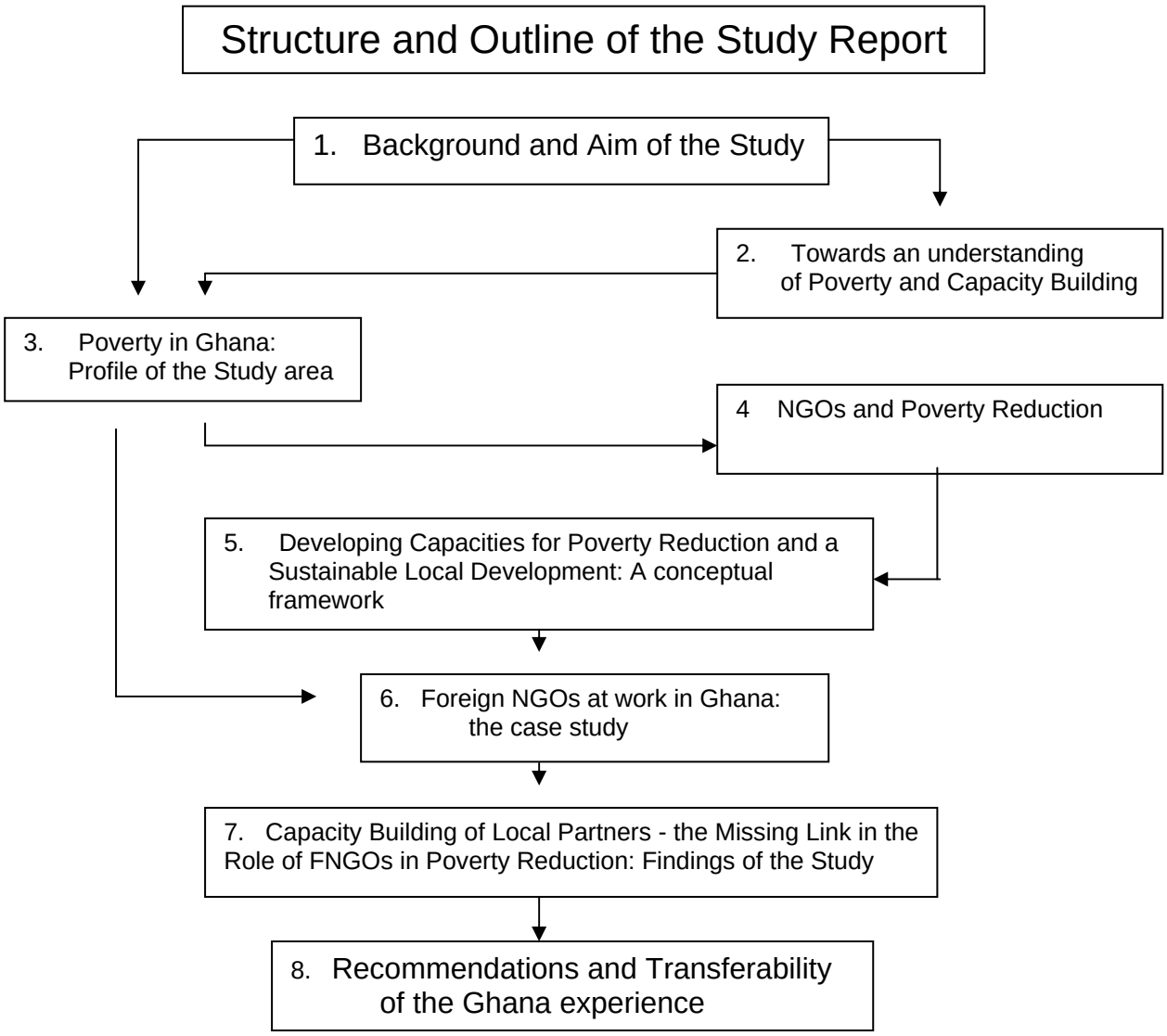
## 1.10 The Structure of the Study Report

The rest of report comprises two major components: theoretical and empirical, and is presented in seven chapters, each addressing specific components within the framework of the study. The theoretical foundations and methodological approach make up the first three chapters. The fourth chapter provides the conceptual framework for the study of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in the context of the Northern Region. The next three chapters constitute the empirical study. The last chapter is devoted to recommendations and possible transferability of the Ghana experience (figure 1.3).

[7] As well as the author's own experience.

The opening chapter offers a general introduction which sets the background and duly presents the aims and objects of the study. Fighting poverty requires defining the concept of poverty and identifying the underlying causes. This definition takes up the place of the conventional definition of development alongside capacity building in Chapter Two. Chapter three takes up from the general introduction of the challenges of poverty in SSA and examines poverty in the study area; the Ghanaian context with a particular focus on the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Northern Region (the study area). NGOs and poverty reduction strategies is taken up in Chapter Four. Foreign NGOs are gradually the principal actors in the design of implementation of poverty reduction strategies. The enormous literature on the 'best practices' and strategies for poverty reduction is reviewed within the context of (foreign) NGOs operations. At this point of the discussion it is all but appropriate to get into the theoretical and conceptual framework for poverty reduction, which is set out in Chapter Five. The research methodology which deals with the instruments used in the study is highlighted in the opening chapter on the case study. The study employed a mixture of case study and action research methodologies. To assess the role of foreign NGOs working in the Northern Region in Ghana, the study selected and investigated three foreign NGOs with a history of development interventions in the region. These cases are presented in Chapter Six. The findings and recommendations of the study make up chapters Seven and Eight respectively.

Figure 1.3 Structure and Outline of the Study Report




*Source: Author's construct*

*Figure 1.4 Africa showing Ghana*

*Source: Source: http://earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/map on July, 04*

# Chapter Two

## Towards an Understanding of Poverty and Capacity Building

# Chapter Two
# Towards an Understanding of Poverty and Capacity Building

## 2.1 Introduction

There are undoubtedly many resources; actors[1] but questions persist on capacity (and consensus on strategies) to address the first Millennium Development Goal: poverty reduction. The trouble according to Friedmann (1992) is, "we think that we know about poverty, and that all that remains (to be done) is to think up better ways to do … what? *Eradicate it? Reduce it? Alleviate it? Cope with it? Manage it?* Quite apart from being unsure (about) what it is we want to do about poverty, we are wrong to think that combating poverty simply boils down to '*knowing how'* without, at the same time, being very clear about the '*what'* of poverty" (Friedmann, ibid.).

In "*Challenging the Professions*", Chambers (1998) questions the dominant approaches of professions, disciplines and bureaucracies concerned with rural development: "'*We' who call ourselves professionals, are much of the problem*". The whole issue has thus spun into a search for a paradigm, which as defined by Chambers is a coherent and mutually supporting pattern of concepts, values, methods and action amenable to wide application (Chambers, ibid.).

There is the view amongst planners that the current planning and administrative methods of the international community have resulted in costly but ineffective analysis, inconsistency and greater uncertainty, delegation of important development activities to technical experts, inappropriate and ineffective projects (Rondinelli, 1990). The World Bank Group and the United Nations (UN), form the multi-national development institutions and they have a lot in their power to influence and make policies for the good of the poor. The hardship in most countries today however, is a stark reminder that Foreign Aid (FA), the most popular panacea in most developing countries is not a limitless resource and its sustainability is questionable.

According to Anheier (1987), earlier modernisation theories were criticised for failing to take account of two crucial factors now coming to be regarded as essential to effective development: local participation and initiative, and self-help and self-management by the people affected. Development programmes were no longer to be "implemented" but rather to be "facilitated." What was once planned on a macrolevel – the development of whole African societies or entire regions – is now to be conducted at the community level: focusing on the poor themselves. Catchphrases like "bottom-up" versus "top-down" administration, "development from above" versus

[1] Governments, official donors and development agencies and NGOs

"development from below", and "blueprint" versus "greenhouse" approaches – were heard that illustrated well the divergent paths to development.

At the heart of this controversy, as seen by many planners is "sustainability". Development assistance activities have long sought broader participation in benefits of projects or programmes and access to resources. Even where these goals have been achieved, progress was rarely made towards sustainable development and sometimes the operation simply created dependence, since the beneficiaries tended to be passively rather than actively associated with the development effort, which was mainly depended on and driven by external support (Schneider & Libercier, 1995).

***The evolution of development thinking and capacity building***

Looking back at the decades since W. Arthur Lewis[2] posed the question that partly changed the trends in development, there appears an evolution of development thinking. It began with simple growth models, then the model to the provision of basic needs, investment in human capital, to rural development. Then came the expansion of the development paradigm into environmental issues, understanding the limits that nature poses, triggering the ideas of the sustainable use of natural resources and of inter-temporal equity, the needs of future generations. After the disappointments of state- led planning, which decreased productivity, fed corruption and increased vulnerability to the vagaries of international markets, the structural adjustment programme was introduced. In addition to better thinking of economic policy-making and management, focus has also moved into areas of governance, privatisation and now public-private partnership.

The sketch of development practices in table 2.1 illustrates how the strategies (the 'how') of the early development phases faired: projects were implanted and isolated; few took roots. History shows that the 'how' of government planning didn't work in the seventies, nor did the Breton Woods institutions dominating in the eighties. So if one seeks better outcomes and higher efficiency one needs to look at the way (the 'how') things work differently. There are growing calls to draw lessons both from the private sector and civil society. The growth of civil society has been one of the most significant trends in international development.

[2] In 1979, W. Arthur Lewis was awarded the Nobel Prize for "pioneering research into economic development, with particular consideration of the problems of developing countries." One of Lewis's major contributions to economics was a 1954 article that discussed his concept of a "dual economy" in a poor country. According to Lewis, a poor country's economy could be thought of as containing two sectors, a small "capitalist" sector and a very large "traditional" (agricultural) sector. He was an advisor in Ghana in the early days of Ghanaian independence.

*Table 2.1 Conceptual predecessors to capacity building (CB)*

| Term | Emergence as Development Theme | Associated meaning |
|---|---|---|
| Institution building | 1950s and 60s | Objective was to equip developing countries with the basic inventory of public sector institutions that are required to manage a program of public investment<br>Focus was on the design and functioning of individual organizations, not broader environment or sector<br>Imported or transplanted models from developed countries were often used |
| Institutional development | 1960 and 70s | Shift from establishing to strengthening institutions<br>Focus was still on individual institutions and not a broader perspective<br>Tools were expected to help improve performance |
| Development management / administration | 1970s | Objective was to reach special public or target groups previously neglected<br>Focus was on delivery systems of public programs and capacity of government to reach target groups |
| Human resource development | 1970s and 1980s | Resource development is about people<br>Stresses importance of education, health, population<br>Emergence of people cantered development |
| New institutionalism | 1980s and 90s | Focus was broadened to sector level (government, NGO, private) including networks and external environment<br>Attention to shaping national economic behaviour<br>Emergence of issue of sustainability and move away from focus on projects<br>Emerged in 1970s through field of institutional economics |
| Capacity building / development | 2000 onward | Emerged in the 1990s as an aggregate of many other development approaches<br>Re-assessed the notion of technical cooperation<br>Stressed the importance of ownership and process<br>Has become “the way” to do development |

*Source: author’s construct based on literature*

These and other concepts related to development work – *organizational development*, *community development, integrated rural development* and *sustainable development* – have been subsumed under the wider concept of Capacity Development (CD) which can be seen as an umbrella concept (Morgan, 1998) that links previously isolated approaches to a coherent strategy with a long-term perspective and vision of social change (figure 5.1). In part, the theme of CD has emerged in reaction to the lack of results produced by initiatives based on technical cooperation (Morgan and Baser, 1993; UNDP, 1993). However, using CD as an umbrella concept has both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, many people see the idea as an integrating force that brings together a large number of stakeholders who believe that CD is an important part of the overall development puzzle. On the negative side, CD has taken on many meanings and has been used as a slogan rather than as a term for rigorous development work.

Capacity development, building or growth is not a new concept. Sub-Saharan Africa's limited capacity for policy analysis and economic management was first identified as a primary contributing factor to the region's inability to adjust to the economic dislocations of the 1970's during a brainstorming session convened by the World Bank between its staff and African policymakers, economic managers and academics to exchange views on Africa's development problem in Kenya in 1988. This led to the formation of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), which was later integrated with the Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa (PACT).

Various other organisations are working to help develop the capacities required to achieve the MDGs. Before the MDGs, the "Capacity 21" was born out of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, UNDP was appointed capacity-building task manager for the conference's ambitious Agenda 21 action plan. Capacity 21 was subsequently established by UNDP and for the past decade has worked with over 75 developing countries and countries in transition to find the best ways to achieve sustainable development and meet the goals of Agenda 21. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg gave birth to its successor the Capacity 2015, which is supposed to build on the success of Capacity 21.

According to Lusthaus & co. (1999), many development practitioners believe intuitively that all development involves some sort of capacity development. Development is about people and their societies interfacing and developing within their environment. However, if it is going to be a useful term for learning about development, CD needs to be more specific. Whose capacity are we focusing on? What type of development are we seeking? CD has taken on an extremely elastic definition and incorporates a wide assortment of development ideas. To duly examine capacity for poverty reduction it is useful starting with an understanding of poverty.

## 2.2 Defining poverty

In addition to an examination of capacity, reducing poverty also requires defining the concept of poverty and identifying the underlying causes. As development is now synonymous with poverty eradication (to use the objective of the MDGs UN document), the conventional exercise of defining and conceptualising development is gradually shifting to an understanding of poverty, the first MDG: "*To know what helps to alleviate poverty, what works and what does not, what changes over time, poverty has to be defined, measured, and studied - and even lived. As poverty has many dimensions, it has to be looked at through a variety of indicators - levels of income*

*and consumption, social indicators, and now increasingly indicators of vulnerability to risks and of socio/political access*" (www.worldbank.org, 2002).

There is no unanimously accepted definition of poverty. In Kankwenda's (2000) view, poverty is almost never defined in itself, but described through other concepts such as growth, well-being, exclusion or equity. As a result it is not easy to clearly identify the key element of the concept of poverty, especially when it is defined in relation to a specific context, whether global, or regional, national or local. Until the mid 1980s, much of the development literature defined poverty purely in terms of economic deprivation*: "not having enough money to live on".* Since the World Summit in Copenhagen, it is increasingly recognised that poverty is multi-faceted, involving such factors as health, infrastructure, remoteness and access to political power. In this framework, some nominal definitions of poverty relevant to the study are discussed below.

As highlighted in the *2000/2001 World Development Report, Attacking Poverty*[3], economists like Amartya Sen (economics Nobel prize-winner) now emphasise a much broader approach to understanding poverty. Poverty is also:

- Lack of voice: people need avenues to express their needs or obtain redress
- Lack of empowerment: people need the resources and authority to take charge of programmes meant for their benefit.
- Lack of government: people are worse off when officials are corrupt, unresponsive to local demands and unaccountable (Kankwenda, 2000).

Seen in this light, local empowerment is considered a form of poverty reduction in its own right, quite independent of its effects. Sen (1999) lists five dimensions of poverty, and views poverty as deficits along these five dimensions, which limit the ability of people to develop their capacities and function as empowered persons:

- Political space
- Economic space
- Social space
- Transparency and
- Protective security

One German organisation[4] defined the poor in a rather rudimentary but concrete fashion along three lines: Daily income (US$1), Food security and Socio-economic status: "*wer nur einen Dollar am Tag besitz* (figure 2.3b)*, wer hungern muss, wer von Hand in den Mund lebt, ist ein armer Mensch"* (AKA, 2000).

[3] Follows two other World Development Reports on poverty, in 1980 and 1990
[4] Der Arbeitkreis Armutsbekämpfung durch Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe (AKA).

Effective programming and implementation of poverty reduction strategies makes the definition of poverty even more crucial for NGOs and other actors. Though many NGOs use a combination of the above definitions and concepts, the basis to design national poverty reduction strategies is also important. Despite country specific conditions the variety of conceptual approaches and the difficulty of identifying and defining poverty, a clear definition of the concept must be sought as a basis to design a national poverty reduction strategies. Such definitions should have an operational purpose and draw on the paradigm of sustainable human development. Taking advantage of these and issues such as funding, most NGOs find themselves juxtaposed between the World Bank and the UN, who draw up and fund most of the development programmes on the one hand, and their own traditional partners, structures and values on the other. So beyond the theoretical values and the importance of having clearly identifiable concepts and methods on which to base poverty reduction strategies, it is worth examining the World Bank and the UN's views of poverty and sustainable development.

### ***2.2.1 Rural poverty and its characteristics***

Some studies on rural poverty define the poor by reference to single measures such as land holding or per capita annual income. These indicators are valuable in establishing 'poverty lines', quantifying the extent and depth of rural poverty, differences between areas, and change over time. However, even when used in combination they provide only a very partial view of rural poverty. It is possible to list the characteristics of the rural poor (figure 2.1) and some of the effects in an attempt to produce a more representative picture, but figure 2.2 shows the linkages in a clear fashion (Dixon, 1990).

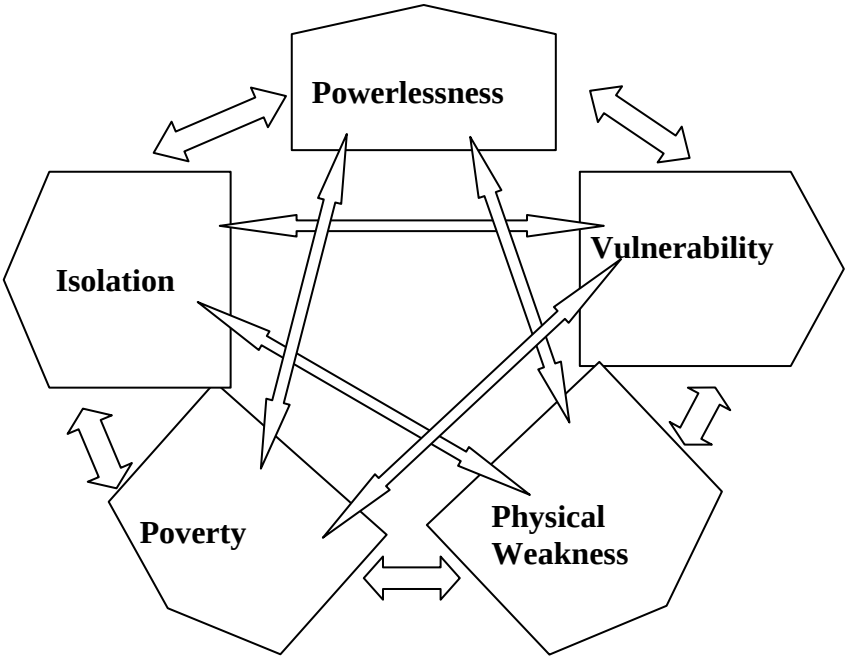
*Figure 2.1 Characteristics of the rural poor*

| | |
|---|---|
| Landless | Low life expectancy |
| Too little land | Low income |
| Family too large | Irregular income |
| Malnutrition | Weak bargaining position |
| Ill-health | Isolated, owing to poor communications |
| Uneducated | Preoccupied with survival |
| High infant mortality rate | Indebtedness |

*Source: based on Chambers, 1983*

In addition, the poor have little access to political power and have limited bargaining power with merchants, landlords, moneylenders, or the state. Isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness are all reinforced by the physical weakness that stems from ill health and malnutrition. Chambers (1983) demonstrates how those factors are closely integrated in figure 2.2.

*Figure 2.2 The reality of rural poverty*




*Source: Chambers, 1983*

### *Explanations of rural poverty*

The explanations for the persistence of rural poverty according to Dixon (1990) are extremely varied, and the list below is by no means exhaustive. Hardly any list can deal with the issue exhaustively, and people are bound to agree or disagree with points on any list. There is the question of terminology: Underdevelopment or Poverty. The causes of poverty are either referred to as underdevelopment[5] or are treated by some authors interchangeably. For example Dixon (1990) explains rural poverty as "underdevelopment" and attributes part of the underdevelopment of the "Third World" to a number of factors:

The extraction of surplus production under:
I. Colonialism
II. Neo-colonialism
III. International capitalism

Uneven exchange between:
I. Third World and Developed World
II. Rural and urban sectors

Pre-modern social structures and attitudes
Ill health and poor nutrition
Poor environments
Natural disasters
Shortage of resources
Distribution of resources
Wars and disruption
Rapid population growth

[5] A growing number of Africans view the causes of poverty in the light of under-development

Over-population
Degradation of the environment
Inappropriate development policies
Bias in policies against the rural sector
Inefficient governments
Lack of education

Merely listing possible causes and then grouping, ranking, or eliminating them is, of course, a far from satisfactory approach. Dixon (ibid.) raises three questions: First, are some of these 'explanation' not 'causes' of rural poverty but 'consequences'. Second, are some 'underlying' causes which explain other problems? Third, do the causes or rural poverty lie in the rural sector itself or are they external to it?

### 2.2.2 Access to livelihood opportunities

According to the World Bank (worldbank.org, 2002) poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. "Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action - for the poor and the wealthy alike - a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities".

The World Bank (ibid.) states that:

- "Poverty is hunger.
- Poverty is lack of shelter.
- Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor.
- Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read.
- Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.
- Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water.
- Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom".

The principles of poverty eradication expressed at the Copenhagen Summit for social development and in UNDP's *Human Development Report* (1997) are worth mentioning at this point. They emphasise two essential features of the concept of poverty: Its comparative nature: nationally and internationally within specific situation of poverty; and its complex and multidimensional nature[6].

The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) definition of human poverty is clearly stated in a document of the Copenhagen Summit. The principles of action and poverty eradication objectives formulated at the Summit stressed the multidimensional nature of poverty:

[6] Copenhagen Summit on Social Development World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995 and UNDP, Human Development Report 1997

*"Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition; ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environment; and social discrimination and exclusion.[7].*

As emphasised in the conclusion of the Copenhagen Declaration, the manifestations of poverty should be apprehended not only in the forms of income, but also in the forms of access to social services. This represented an initial convergence of concepts in an attempt to reach a definition of poverty. Alongside aspects related to income and productive resources, the Summit addressed access to social services, social exclusion and lack of participation in decision-making processes.

The approach adopted by the UNDP to the concern of poverty is derived from the paradigm of sustainable human development and the declaration and resolution of the Copenhagen Summit. It aims to reconcile and integrate the various existing definitions of poverty. It is a people-centred approach, in which economic growth is recognised as important for poverty reduction, but insufficient in itself. The concept of human poverty developed by the UNDP draws on previous definitions, integrates their fundamental elements and enhances the processes with the concept of a lack of capabilities.[8] This form of poverty, partly captured by the notion of social exclusion, applies to people who do not have the opportunity to achieve minimally acceptable levels of capabilities to function. These functionings can range from such physical ones as being well nourished, adequately clothed and sheltered, to more complex social criteria such as participation in community life and the opportunity to improve the living standards. The capability approach reconciles the notion of relative and absolute poverty, since relative deprivation in income and commodities can lead to absolute deprivation in minimum capabilities.

In other words human poverty encompasses both a monetary aspect - inadequate income and consumption - and aspects related to the accessibility of social services and lack of capabilities. This broad, consensual definition encompasses the use of an extended range of tools to more effectively assess and reduce poverty. These include poverty lines, qualitative surveys on perceptions of poverty, public spending reviews and socio-economic studies on the accessibility of and availability of essential social services. This approach has also made it possible to standardise the definition of poverty.

In Benin, the national human development report, focusing on poverty, gave the following definition of poverty based on a human development approach: *"Poverty*

[7] "Poverty Eradication", Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995.

*means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied - to lead a long, healthy and creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-respect and the respect of others"* (Kankwenda, 2000).

The Nigeria Poverty Reduction Paper considers poverty as a lack of capabilities in terms of income and fulfilment of basic needs. The 1996 Human Development Report indicates, "*By poverty is meant inability to provide for physical subsistence to the extent of being incapable of protecting human dignity. These include food, clothing and shelter, potable water, health service, basic education, public transportation and network."* In most African countries, approaches to poverty take into account UNDP's three main concerns (UNDP, 1997):

- Income poverty and economic growth,
- Fulfilment of basic needs and
- Participation in decision making.

However, it is optimal to standardise countries' viewpoint to reach homogenous operational definition of poverty that would explicitly integrate these three dimensions of the concept of human poverty. As expressed by James Gustave Speth (UNDP Administrator 1997): "*Poverty has many faces. It is much more than low income. It also affects poor health and education, deprivation in knowledge and communication, inability to express human and political right and the absence of human dignity, confidence and self-respect"*[9]

UNDP's efforts to reach a comprehensive concept of poverty have gradually been recognised and the following consensual definition has emerged: *Poverty is a state of deprivation or denial of the basic choice and opportunities needed to enjoy a decent standard of living, to live a long healthy and constructive life and to participate in employment and in the social, political and cultural life of the community.*

### 2.2.3 Well-being

Definition of poverty is expressed in terms of its universally recognized comparator, well-being. According to Kankwenda (ibid.), approaches to poverty can be divided into "*utilitarian/welfarist*"[10] - those that emphasis people's perception of their well-being, and "*non-utilitarian/non-welfarist*"-those based on a range of possible degrees of well-being.

*Utilitarians/Welfarists* define well-being as the degree of satisfaction derived by individuals from consuming goods and services. This approach emphasises individual perception of what generates utility, or well-being. The degree of well-being

[8] Human Development Report 1997
[9] Human Development Report 1997
[10] UNDP.1997

is measured by neutral indicators that do not distinguish between types of goods and services, since what is important is that the person derives utility or satisfaction from them.

In contrast, the *non-utilitarians/non-welfarists*, define well-being more independently from individual perceptions by considering what is desirable for people from a social point of view. To measure well-being, they use selective indicators of particular goods and services considered to generate social utility. Poverty assessments in developing countries are inspired variously by utilitarian/welfarist and non-utilitarian/non-welfarist thinking. For example particular surveys on the dimensions of poverty are utilitarian/welfarist, while studies emphasising the nutritional aspects of poverty and well-being are non-utilitarian/non-welfarist. Both approaches offer an invaluable insight into poverty and are therefore not mutually exclusive. It is not operational to consider approaches to poverty in terms of an opposition between utilitarian/welfarist and non-utilitarians/non-welfarists. Rather a definition of poverty should be based on the major theme that has emerged as thinking and practices have evolved.

### 2.2.4 The basic needs perspective

This approach to poverty identifies certain basic needs - such as food, clothing and shelter - that must absolutely be fulfilled to keep people out of poverty. These needs are considered to be universal, even though their fulfilment will vary between countries, according to factors such as climate, culture or socio-economic situation. Developed principally by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), this definition defines poverty as deprivation in the material requirements for minimally acceptable fulfilment of human needs, including food. This derivational concept goes far beyond lack of private income: it includes the need for basic health and education and essential services that must be provided by the community to prevent people from falling into poverty. This concept served as a model at the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development and for the 20/20 Initiative that stemmed from it.[11]

This conceptual approach has been used by some countries to set the absolute poverty line that takes into account, needs other than food consumption. The poverty line set in Ethiopia (1991), Namibia (1991) and the Seychelles (1994), for example takes into account spending on basic needs such as clothing and transport. However, there is a lack of homogeneity in the definition of the basic needs. The basic needs approach is non-utilitarian in that it involves prior identifications of the determinants of poverty. The basic needs approach represents an initial extension of the concept of

[11] Human Development Report 1997

poverty to include both monetary and non-monetary factors and a concern for fulfilling needs, particularly food and access to basic services.

### 2.2.5 Social Exclusion

At the instigation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the theme of social exclusion was used mainly to explain the re-emergence of poverty in the industrialised countries (Kankwenda, 2000). In the 1970's the concept of social exclusion emerged to analyse the conditions of people who are not necessarily income poor- although many are that too, but who are kept out of the mainstream of society for other reasons. The ILO published a study in 1966 that sought to link the concept social exclusion to poverty reduction strategies. Case studies notably in Cameron and Tanzania served as a basis for the formulation of this analysis (Kankwenda, ibid.).

The theme rather enhanced the concept of poverty with the notion of personal exclusion (e.g. the obstacles to social integration of vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, street children and the elderly) or social exclusion as collective attribute of a society (e.g., racial, sexual or religious discrimination). This dynamic approach, more social than economic in focus, served as a conceptual basis to define poverty during the preparation for the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development in 1995. This approach does not require the setting of poverty lines. It is primarily a qualitative, social conception of poverty, which is often missing from other attempts to define poverty. The above description of poverty accords closely to surveys of poor people's own attitude towards their situation. Sadly, few such studies have been made. For example a survey of poor people in two villages in India produced the following criteria of poverty (Kankwenda, ibid.).

- More than one family member working as an attached labourer;
- Residing on patron's land;
- Marketing produce just through patron;
- Members seasonally out-migrating for jobs;
- Selling more than 80 per cent of their marketed produce immediately;
- Cash purchases during the slack festival season;
- Adults skipping one meal a day during the summer months;
- Women and children not wearing shoes regularly;
- Only housing made of mud;
- Animals and people living in same dwelling

### 2.2.6 Alternative definitions of poverty

From the above discussion, it is clear that there is no shortage of approaches to the conceptualisation and definition of poverty. Social scientists and politicians have been trying to define poverty for the past 200 years and box 2.1 summarises the key features of the most influential approach.

*Box 2.1 Definitions of poverty*

Adam Smith (1776):

'By necessaries, I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life but *whatever the custom renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without*. A linen shirt, for example, is strictly speaking not a necessity of life … But in the present time … a creditable day-labourer would be ashamed to appear in public without a linen shirt, the want of which would be supposed to denote that disgraceful state of poverty'

Seebohm Rowntree (1899):

'[A family is counted as poor if their] … total earnings are insufficient to obtain *the minimum necessities of merely physical efficiency'*

William Beveridge (1942):

'In considering the minimum income needed by persons of working age for *subsistence during interruption of earnings*, it is sufficient to take into account food, clothing, fuel, light and household sundries, and rent, though some margin must be allowed for inefficiency in spending'

Ronald Henderson (1975):

'Insofar as poverty is defined by reference to a minimum acceptable standard of living, it is a relative concept. [It requires] a value judgment [that] must *reflect the productivity of the economy and community attitudes*. The task of determining a minimum standard of living is difficult given the variety of lifestyles and values in Australian society and the range of matters, such as food, shelter, clothing, health and education, that must be considered'

Peter Townsend (1979):

'Individuals' families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities *which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong'*

Joanna Mack and Stewart Lansley (1985):

'Poverty is an enforced lack of *socially perceived necessities'*

Amartya Sen (1992):

'Poverty [is] *the failure of basic capabilities to reach certain minimally acceptable levels*. The functionings relevant to this … can vary from such elementary physical ones as being well-nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered, avoiding preventable morbidity, etc., to more complex social achievements such as taking part in the life of the community, being able to appear in public without shame, and so on'

*Source: compiled from literature*

These definitions encompass two key features that form the core of any definition of poverty. The first is that poverty is a situation in which resources are not adequate to meet *basic needs*. This is brought out in Adam Smith's reference to what is 'indispensably necessary', or in Rowntree's famous definition in terms of 'the minimum necessities of merely physical efficiency', or in Sen's 'basic capabilities'.

The second is that any definition of poverty should embody *community perceptions* of poverty in some way - as reflected in Henderson's reference to community attitudes, or in Townsend's reference to activities, conditions and amenities that are widely approved.

## 2.3 Measuring Poverty

Apart from utilitarian and non-utilitarian considerations, poverty is generally defined as a "state of deprivation of well-being judged inadequate to live decently" (Kankwenda, ibid.). In this context, discussions about defining and measuring poverty naturally resemble discussions about well-being. Using this reference concept, the distinction is made between absolute and relative poverty.

The terms "absolute" and "relative" poverty are used to describe the fall below some minimum standard of consumption. The level of minimum household consumption that is socially acceptable is called the poverty line. Absolute poverty is thus related to a poverty line expressed in absolute values and corresponding to the ability to meet minimum needs. But poverty also exists above this line. A person is in absolute poverty if their income falls below a poverty threshold defined in terms of people's income. For example, the World Bank standard for identifying poverty, less than a $1 per day, is an absolute definition of poverty based on income. The advantage of this approach according to (Kankwenda, ibid.) is that it sets a predefined, fixed poverty line, so that it is possible to count the number of individuals or households below the line and thus clearly identify a group of people considered to be poor. The relative poverty approach is closer to the concept of inequality, since it is concerned with the relative differences between people in a given community. Extreme poverty is defined as the proportion of households with income below the level required to purchase the minimum food basket. The poverty gap quantifies the depth of poverty by measuring the difference between the poverty lines and the mean income of the poor, expressed as percentage of the given poverty line. Vulnerability according to Kankwenda (ibid.) has two sides: external exposure to shocks, stress and risk, and internal defencelessness, a lack of means to cope with crises without devastating effects. Other descriptive categories used include the chronic poor and the borderline poor (Friedmann, 1992).

### 2.3.1 The income or consumption perspective

The first conceptual approach to poverty measured in terms of household income was chiefly on monetary poverty, measured in terms of household income or consumption. By this definition, people are considered poor if - and only if - they do not have sufficient income to enjoy a certain level of well-being. From this perspective of household income or consumption, a person is considered poor if his income or consumption is below a predetermined poverty line. Many countries set a "poverty line" to identify poor people and to monitor their progress on poverty eradication. These thresholds are often defined as the income or consumption level below which it is not possible to obtain or consume a specific quality of food. No

fewer than 35 African countries, generally, on the initiative of the World Bank, have used these methods and set poverty lines based chiefly on food expenditure.

Despite the incompleteness of the monetary approach, the vast majority of tools used to assess poverty are derived from it. However, setting poverty lines based on household consumption data does not take into account people's own perspectives and aspirations. The monetary approach in line with the World Bank's development paradigm is basically utilitarian. It measures household income or consumption without taking into account how this income or consumption is used. But, poverty lines whether purely monetary or related to calories intake, are also influenced by the non-utilitarian approach, since poverty lines are set "arbitrarily" and food is considered to be a priority determinant of poverty.

### 2.3.2 The human development dimensions

The Human Development Report has developed and constructed several composite indices to measure different aspects of human development. The Human Development Index (**HDI**) has been constructed every year since 1990 to measure average achievements in basic human development in one simple composite index and to produce a ranking of countries. The gender related development index (**GDI**) and the gender empowerment measure (**GEM**), introduced in the Human Development Report 1995, are composite measures reflecting gender inequalities in human development. While the GDI captures achievements in basic human development adjusted for gender inequality, the GEM measures gender inequality in economic and political opportunities. The Human Development Report 1997 introduced the concept of human poverty and formulated a composite measure of it: the Human Poverty Index (**HPI**). While the HDI measures average achievements in basic dimensions of human development, the HPI measures deprivations in those dimensions.

### 2.3.3 Measuring and analysing human development

The Human Development Index measures the overall achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: Longevity, Knowledge and Decent standard of living. This composite index is measured by life expectancy, educational attainment (adult literacy and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment) and real per capita GDP (purchasing power parity adjusted). The Human Poverty Index concentrates on the deprivation in three essential dimensions of life already included in the HDI. The variables are the percentage of people likely to die before age 40, and the percentage of adults who are illiterate, and deprivation in overall economic provisioning, reflected by the percentage of people without access to

health services and safe water and the percentage of malnourished children under five.

### 2.3.4 The Human Poverty Index

The Human Poverty Index is a multidimensional measure of poverty. The Human Poverty Index for developing countries is distinguished from the human poverty index for industrialised countries by 1 and 2; HPI-1 and HPI-2 respectively. HPI-1 concentrates on deprivations in the three essential dimensions of human life already reflected above, in the HDI: longevity, knowledge and decent standard of living:

- The first deprivation relates to survival: vulnerability to death at a relatively early age.
- The second relates to knowledge: being excluded from the world of reading and communication.
- The third relates to a decent living standard in terms of overall economic provisioning.

In constructing the HPI-1, the deprivation in longevity is represented by the percentage of people not expected to survive to age 40 (P1), and the deprivation in knowledge by the percentage of adults who are illiterate (P2) (age 60 for HPI-2). The deprivation in living standard is represented by a composite (P3) of three variables – the percentage of people without access to safe water (P31), the percentage of people without access to health services (P32) and the percentage of moderately and severely underweight children under five (P33) (Kankwenda, ibid.)

*The composite variable P3 is constructed by taking a simple average of the three variables P31, P32 and P33.* Thus $P3 = \frac{P31+P32+P33}{3}$

## 2.4 Understanding Poverty in the Developing Countries

Understanding the causes and consequences of poverty is important for the effective programming and implementation of poverty reduction strategies and programmes. An understanding of poverty on which the design and implementation of operational poverty reduction strategies are based can be shaped by various economic, social and anthropological factors or the stand point of international development agencies and institutions such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and NGOs. Poverty is by nature a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and where one begins: "*Who*" the poor are, or "*Where*" the poor live, may be a choice of one's academic discipline, but mutually of great importance. From a planning point of view, "where" is adopted as point of entry for the study.

## 2.4.1 The development challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

The World Bank (2001), reports that Africa comprises 32 of the world's 48 least developed countries (LDCs) and 34 of the 45 lowest-ranked countries for human development (figure 2.3a & b). Estimates put the number of poor people living in SSA at 250 million, which is around 45 percent of the region's population (World Bank, 2001). Africa makes up for 52 of the bottom 75 countries of the total of 173 listed (UNDP, 2002) making her the least developed continent. The UN observed that during the 1990s not only did Africa fail to make advances in eliminating poverty, but also the number of people living in "extreme poverty" on the continent grew (UNDP, 2002).

According to the World Bank, (2002) of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion live on less than $2 a day and 1.2 billion on less than $1 a day (figure 2.3a & b). Eight out of every 100 infants do not live to see their fifth birthday. Nine of every 100 boys and 14 of every 100 girls who reach school age do not attend school.

*Fig. 2.3a Where the poor live*

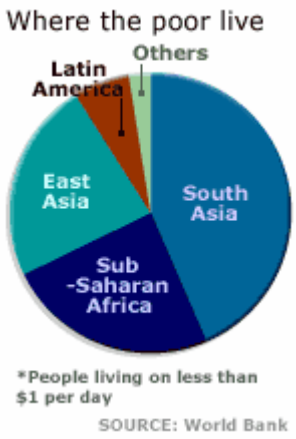
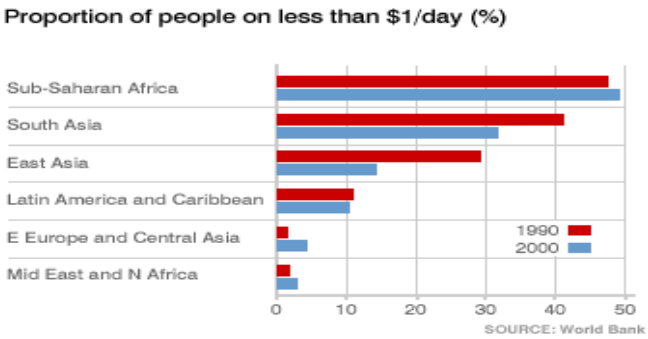



*Fig. 2.3b Proportion of people on less than a $1*




Poverty is also evident in people's lack of political power and voice and in their extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, personal violence and natural disasters. And the scourge of HIV/AIDS, the frequency and brutality of civil conflicts, and rising disparities between the rich (countries) and the poor (developing countries) have increased the sense of deprivation and injustice for many. Nowhere has the impact of HIV/AIDS been more severe than Sub-Saharan Africa. Two-thirds of the world's HIV/AIDS epidemic is in Africa" (World Bank 2000). The World Bank's (WB) forecast is that much of Africa will enter the 21st century watching the gains of the 20th century evaporate.

The UNDP (2002) report points out that the AIDS epidemic has been a major obstacle to development. Malaria was identified as another serious health risk to development, with 300 million people globally - 90 percent of them in Sub-Saharan

Africa - affected by the disease. Armed conflict and military involvement in politics in Africa and the genocide in Rwanda were also identified as major factors in the lack of human development. Since 1989, armies have intervened directly in politics in 13 African countries.

Amidst political unrest, high unemployment, corruption, hunger and flagging government efforts at development, most post-independence Africa rely heavily on foreign assistance to tackle development issues. The background to this scenario is abundantly explicit in the enduring development challenges in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, e.g. Ghana. After years of colonialism and external support, Ghana, one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most stable and thriving countries is only just aiming at becoming a middle-income country by the year 2020. The experiment with foreign credit from the developed countries towards development that has left many developing countries with crippling debts has not achieved any significant improvement in living standards for the majority (Gélinas, 1998).

The plight of the Sub-Saharan continent is seen by some in economic terms, while others argue that growth dynamics cannot simply be measured in economic terms. Others still argue that indicators must also include governance, efficiency and democracy of institutions, and an appropriate climate for business (Braga de Macedo & Kabbaj 2000).

Half the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is living in absolute poverty and progress has been patchy and slow. Poverty is still largely characterised by:

- Low production
- Low level or lack of education
- Low income
- Poor health and sanitation
- Environmental degradation
- Uncontrolled human settlements
- Political instability and unrest (BBC Online, 2001).

Though the new century opened with an unprecedented declaration of solidarity and determination in the international community to rid the world of poverty, the goals are yet a distant reality. Many doubt how these challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa - fighting poverty and HIV/AIDS, and the transformation from a producer of raw materials (only) to an active player in the world - can be achieved in practice.

### 2.4.2 The colonial legacy and nation building in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the midst of the controversy about the colonial past, Sub-Saharan Africa is said to have inherited from the colonial regimes[12], infrastructures in health delivery and education that were not only alien to its culture and traditions, but also totally inadequate for nation building. It is a well-known fact that in 1960, there were no more than 1200 university graduates in the region as a whole. Indeed, some countries had no graduates at all and in others, they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. In what was effectively a race against time, African leaders understandably responded by investing massively in human resource development. This was made possible partly by small, but steady rates of economic growth and partly by sustained foreign assistance. Between 1960 and 1980, Sub-Saharan African governments are said to have consistently allocated high proportions of their annual budgets to health and education. Households and individuals made similar efforts (accounting for nearly 75 percent of all spending on health). They made sacrifices and gave a high premium to the education of their children.

The results were tangible and very significant by the late 1980s, when Sub-Saharan Africa was producing over 70 000 graduates a year. Major cities had hospitals and health centres and the rural areas, clinics and dispensaries. Amid a general improvement in nutrition and health-care delivery, the incidence of infectious disease, and maternal and infant mortality were considerably reduced.

Despite these achievements, the approach to manpower building by the post-independent African leaders was, to say the least, haphazard. As a result, a number of problems, such as the appropriateness of school curricula, understaffing and the long-term budget implications of recurrent expenditures, were overlooked (although reform efforts have since been attempted in some countries with varying degrees of success).

The consequences were felt in the 1980s when the region's economic crisis was only just beginning. Health and school infrastructures deteriorated for lack of maintenance. There were shortages of qualified teachers and teaching materials leading to falls in educational standards as well as in primary school enrolments. And health systems failed for lack of personnel and drugs.

The situation worsened as the region's economic crisis deepened - a crisis characterised by huge budget deficits, high inflation rates, sluggish growth rates and a heavy debt burden. Post-mortems on the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) introduced in response to this, say the programmes only served to undermine further the gains made in human resource development. SAPs have been aimed

[12] Widely referred to as the "colonial legacy"

mainly at macro-economic stabilisation, deregulation and privatisation of state enterprises, and the social sectors have lost out in the process. Subsidies on basic commodities, especially food, have been removed, civil servants and employees of state enterprises have been made redundant and cost-recovery has become the standard practice in medical services. These measures have all combined to produce a level of poverty never before seen in the region, a situation which has adversely affected nutritional standards, provoked malnutrition in many countries and reduced resistance generally to infectious diseases. Because of the rise in unemployment, large sections of the educated population have been rendered unproductive, a waste of several years investment by both the state and the individuals in question.

***Brain drain and ethnicity***

African governments are also said to have pushed away professional talent that were trained at very high cost, in many cases. This is in some cases the just result of a very poor economic performance. Government can't pay these talented people, and they are not going to spend their lives working for nothing and not even having the psychological rewards of working in a dynamic, forward-going society. There's been an amazing brain drain from Africa. The rest of the world has benefited from this, but it's not been to the benefit of Africa.

Ethnicity has also gotten in the way of professionalism in Africa. People have been excluded or discarded even as ministers because of their ethnicity. And when political power has been monopolised to the extent it has in Africa, in a single party or in a group, the in-group that is there for life, there is no room for professional growth. People build up jealousies against anyone who is competent, anyone who might be able to threaten them intellectually, professionally or technically.

***Appropriateness of skills***

Although Sub-Saharan Africa produced a large number of graduates before the economic crisis began, few had the kinds of skills needed for industry and agriculture. The evidence is accredited to the unsuccessful attempts by some governments in the late 1970s to indigenise executive positions, most of which required high levels of technological knowledge or experience. The 1980s saw a dramatic increase in the number of foreign technical assistants working on the continent and, paradoxically, in the number of qualified African professionals leaving, mainly for Western Europe, the United States and Canada.

***Expatriate help – 'A destructive force?'***

On the donors' side, they tend to use expatriate resident technical assistance to solve all kinds of problems. The practice is highly contended, and seen by many as a systematic destructive force which is undermining the development of capacity in Africa. Technical assistance is also considered imposed, that is, it is either not

welcome or there is no demand for it, except from the point of view of the donor. What this results in is that a well-designed project may find a big mismatch between that project design and the local capacity to carry it out. Monies and technical assistance are invested in such projects with the hope of bridging the gap; and donors wonder why it is not working, or whether it will ever work at all. There is another side to this situation though: Expatriate management substituting for domestic management, for scarce domestic talent, is considered another endemic problem in the international development community. The brain in a demoralised ministry is being attracted away by foreign organisations and salary supplements, or the offices are filled with expatriates. The result, of course, is that the Ministry is undermined, the talent is taken away and the general system is further debilitated. Consequently, most programmes run on remote, because the capacity is not there to think through each problem and treat it with tailor-made solutions.

## 2.5 The causes of poverty in developing countries

The causes of poverty in developing countries are many. The perception of the causes has travelled the whole distance from the absurd to the scientific. The traditional 'old' establishment saw poverty as resulting largely form the inherent weaknesses of the poor – and they feared the spread of a kind of social infection. People were poor because they were either lazy or did not have it in them to do otherwise. To this class, the causes of poverty "rest overwhelmingly in individual and sub- cultural defects and disposition" (Townsend 1993). Structural factors and the like are totally absolved from blame. This position is of course, false or at best inadequate in explaining individual or mass poverty. Explanations need, therefore, to be found elsewhere, and it is in furtherance of this search that the roles of both the international and local development co-operation come in for examination.

***Global politico-economic structures***

Global economic and political arrangements are playing a significant role in the impoverishment of individuals, communities and nations of the Third World and thus a fundamental cause of world poverty (Bandyopadhaya, 1988). Notwithstanding this, the poverty of the Third World is treated as if it has no bearings on the accumulated wealth of the developed world. The causes for both individual and mass poverty can also be located within individual countries and their structures or pursuit of policies. While the global environment marginalises a country – thus denying such a country the resources to fight poverty – the ability of the privileged in society to protect and extend their privileges equally creates havoc on poverty levels.

According to Donkor (1997), social stratification and extrapolation poverty, is in the twentieth century global in character and a by-product of colonialism and neo-colonialism of economic, political and social arrangements which in turn originated from capitalism and imperialism. It is therefore, impractical, if not unethical, to attempt to separate national and individual poverty from world poverty since the two are intrinsically linked. A good internal distribution would at best, only lessen the extent of individual poverty but would do nothing for national poverty.

***Agriculture***

The agricultural sector which engages the bulk of the people, and "particularly important for Africa's growth" (World Bank, 1994) has been neglected over time. According to Dorosh and Sahn (1993) most of the poor - 80 percent in Ghana, 92 percent in Madagascar and 99 percent in Malawi – live in rural and peri-urban areas and depend on agriculture and agro-related activities. In northern Ghana for example, where farming is the main stay of the household, incomes are derived partly from the sale of food crops, the decline in agricultural production has meant a worsening of the plight of many households. This is one of the bases of poverty in SSA, and it manifests itself in many ways and at various levels: individual, family, household, etc.

***Interlocking web***

An analysis of the causes of poverty offered by Chambers (1983) describes an interlocking web of five factors, each of which feeds off and exacerbates the others (see figure 2.2). The factors are poverty itself, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, and powerlessness. *Isolation* means lack of contact, not just in a physical sense, through ostracism or illiteracy. *Vulnerability* can be due to natural disasters, to exploitation, to physical incapacity or to social conventions (e.g. the dowry system which bankrupts many families with large numbers of daughters in countries such as Bangladesh). *Powerlessness* also relates to exploitation and comprises three categories:

- Powerlessness to prevent the elite trapping all or most of the benefits of a development advance; for example, agricultural extension services favouring the larger farmers, credit schemes benefiting the already wealthy, food aid being siphoned off by government officials, and so on. This phenomenon has been powerfully described by BRAC (a Bangladeshi Voluntary organisation).
- Powerlessness to prevent robbery, deception, blackmail or violence.
- Powerlessness to negotiate – an absence of bargaining power.

Two other factors should be added to Chambers' list: environmental damage and gender discrimination. These are real issues in most SSA countries. Furthermore, the lack of opportunity for self-determination and vulnerability to risk is perceived by the poor as most important, but outsiders and foreign development agencies often ignore these factors. Sometimes, in fact, these problems can be compounded.

On the link between the global and national players, vis-à-vis poverty, Bandyopdyaya (1988) commented: 'while impoverishing the South and enriching the North through the colonial drain, imperialism also created structural and socio-cultural distortions in the colonies which further retarded their economic development and made them heavily dependant… It created in the colonies, a dualistic socio-economic structure, consisting of a small capitalist sector superimposed on, and draining the wealth of a vast pre-capitalist agricultural sector'.

The end result of the above distortions is the rise of poverty. Poverty arises because the poor do not have assets which are needed to generate an adequate level of income: skills, land, capital or labour power. Secondly, they are prevented from using these assets by unemployment or lack of demand for what they produce; or the economic conditions are such that the rate of return on their productive assets does not generate enough income. Other causes cited as internal factors for development in Africa in general are culture, neo-patriotism (Weber), State class (Elsenhaus), ethnicity, military coups and "bad governance"

## 2.6 The rationale for poverty reduction

The rationale for poverty eradication (to use the objective of the UN document) are obvious, but deserve mention, in order to give due meaning to the poverty reduction efforts in developing countries. The "Millennium Development Goals", of which poverty reduction ranks number one, makes a perfect case for poverty reduction, but is not the only reason.

***The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)***

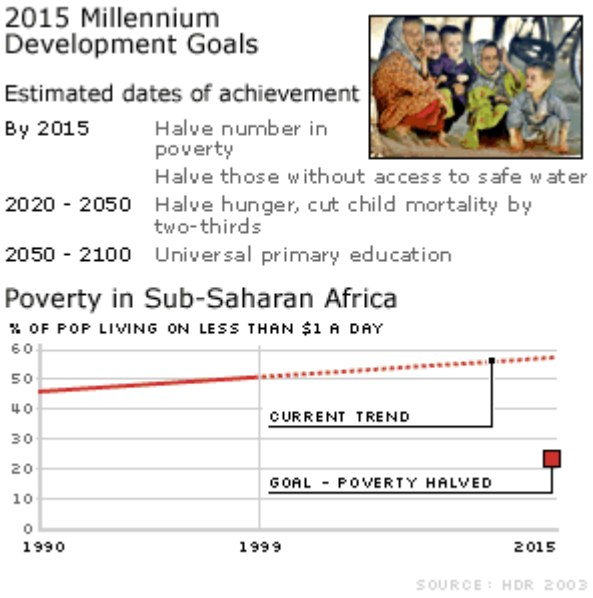
The General Assembly of the United Nations incorporated the development challenges around the world in the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 to make up the "Millennium Development Goals" (Figure 2.4). These goals set new targets for reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger, increasing access to improved water sources, improving the lives of slum dwellers, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and other major diseases. The MDGs comprise 7 social and environmental goals linked to 11 quantified targets and a new goal for "Partnership in Development" with 7 associated targets concerned primarily with improving opportunities for developing countries in the global economy (United Nations, 2001). Other goals and resolutions of UN summits and conferences, though not included in the Millennium Declaration, also remain in effect.

These goals were reaffirmed and expanded in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, cementing the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs set

quantitative targets for poverty reduction and improvements in health, education, gender equality, the environment and other aspects of human welfare:

- Halve poverty and hunger by 2015
- Universal primary education
- Promote gender equality
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

*Figure 2.4 The millennium development goals and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*




*Source: Human Development Report, 2003*

Conference after conference sound abounding consensus on reasons to continue development efforts aimed directly at poverty reduction. Besides the MDG, there are other very strong reasons for the eradication of poverty. A selection of other reasons is listed below:

***Economic benefits:*** Society benefits by converting the poor from being a social liability to that of an asset through investment in human capital. The returns on investment in education, health, and income-generation for the poor are known to be high.

***Environmental damage:*** It is now recognised that poverty puts pressure on the poor to exploit the environment for today's survival in ways that damage the environment and reduce its productive capacity (Getubig Jr. et al 1991). This takes the form of

depleting forests, soils, watersheds and fishing resources, as the poor are forced to search for new land to cultivate and graze their animals, trees for firewood and building materials, and marine animals for food[13] (Getubig Jr. ibid.).

***Social instability:*** Persistent poverty, especially where it afflicts large sections of society, could cause social instability and threaten the established social order and sprawl into political unrest. Poverty is often associated with corruption and mismanagement in most developing countries.

***Moral imperative:*** There is a moral imperative for society to help the poor overcome poverty for the simple reason that they are part of the human community. It is no longer acceptable in most societies to see significant numbers of the human community suffer from the debilitating effects of poverty when the rest live in relative comfort and prosperity.

## 2.7 Defining Capacity Building

The term “capacity building” (or “capacity development”) came into vogue in the early 1990s among international development agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (Lusthaus and Adrien, 1999). Many NGOs and bilateral development agencies have also adopted the terminology, referring increasingly to the importance of “building the capacity” of the communities or partners with which they work.

Capacity building has been variously defined and described as an explicit effort to improve (strengthen or improve) an organisation’s performance in relation to its purpose, context, resources and sustainability. A selection of definitions reflects the preference for the strategy as well as the diversity of understanding (box 2.2).
"Capacity enhancement means, investment in learning and knowledge-sharing that strengthens institutions and gives individuals the skills they need to problem solve, innovate, educate, and harness productive potential of societies." Frannie Leautier, Vice President, World Bank Institute, 2002).

Capacity building refers to investment in people, institutions, and practices that will, together, enable countries in the region to achieve their development objective (World Bank 1997, PACT Progress Report).

Capacity development is as much about creating the ability to build capacity as it is about creating capacity itself in the form of formal structures and procedures (World Bank, Perspectives on technical assistance, OCS 1998).

[13] There are however exceptions to this: some traditional practices protect the forest from depletion

Capacity enhancement implies the enhancement of capabilities of people and institutions in a sustainable manner to improve their competence and problem solving capacities (GTZ).

Capability enables people to turn information into knowledge that they can act upon to solve client's needs. (Hubert St. Onge - Delphi summit on Enterprise Learning and Knowledge Exchange, 2001).

Capacity development means, investment in learning and knowledge-sharing that strengthens institutions and gives individuals the skills they need to problem solve, innovate, educate, and harness productive potential of societies. (Frannie Leautier, Vice President, World Bank Institute, 2002)

It takes capacity to build capacity. (Heather Baser, UNDP; virtual discussion, 2001)
Capacity is the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives. (UNDP 2002)

Above all else, capacity building requires new skills and changes in individual behaviour, and also in organisational behaviour, in terms of systems, structures, procedures, strategies and decision-making. Capacity building: refers to the skills and knowledge required to handle the problems in a sustained way. Capacity building of the organisations refers to the ability to reform Planning, Resource mobilisation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME) functions.

Within organisations, capacities exist among individuals and groups, and within the organisation as a whole. Individuals possess knowledge, skills and attitudes which reflect their experience and training. When individuals share their knowledge, skills and attitude with colleagues and these become imbedded in group norms and processes, it can be said that they become part of the group's capacity. And when individual and group capacities become widely shared among the organisation's members and incorporated into management systems and culture, they become organisational capacities.

Capacity building of the poor means building their bargaining power by organising them into beneficiary groups. With increased bargaining power, the poor can take control over the means of development and participate meaningfully in the planning and implementation development process. In this regard, institutional development that will create a framework for these groups to operate at the grassroots level is a consequence of regional development planning.

Capacity building encompasses three main activities (Berg, 1993):

- Skill upgrading, both general and specific,
- Procedural improvements, and

- Organizational strengthening.

*Box 2.2 Definitions of capacity building*

1. "Capacity building is the ability of individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to identify and solve development problems over time." (Peter Morgan. 1996)
2. Capacity development is a concept which is broader the organizational development since it includes an emphasis on the overall system, environment or context within which individuals, organizations and societies operate and interact (and not simply a single organization) (UNDP.1998)
3. Capacity development is "…any system, effort or process… which includes among it´s major objectives strengthening the capability of elected chief executive officers, and administrative , department and agency heads and programme managers in general purpose government to plan, implement, manage or evaluate policies, strategies or programms designed to impact on social conditions in the community." (Cohen, 1998)
4. "…capacity is the combination of people, institutions and practices that permits countries to reach their development goals… Capacity building is… investment in human capital, institutions and practices" (World Bank, 1998)
5. Capacity building is any support that strengthens an institution´s ability to effectively and efficiently design, implement and evaluate development activities according to its mission (UNICEF-Namibia, 1996)
6. "Capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner…" (CIDA, 1996)
7. Capacity development: "The process by which individuals groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities: to understand and deal with their development need in a broader context and in a sustainable manner" (UNDP, 1997)

*Source: Based on Berg, 1993*

## 2.8 Capacity for poverty reduction: Helping hands and strategies

The design and implementation of appropriate measures to enhance the economic status of the poor have largely been the prerogative of national governments, with influence to an increasing extent by the large international agencies and individual official aid donors. Consequently, when economic chaos breaks out in a developing country, there are often heated arguments about where to shift the blame. If the state government is not blamed, then some tend to blame the international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), because they are the ones that lend money to troubled countries to help instigate reform and modernise economies.

A multidimensional phenomenon as poverty requires many hands to conquer. Notwithstanding the many hands, achieving the MDGs by 2015 (figure 2.4) has raised a lot of questions. In the absence of funds and a home-grown strategy, SSA has become susceptible to external sways and the virtual dependence on externally developed paradigms, theories, models and concepts. Most SSA countries rely on foreign development assistance to tackle their problems, making external assistance very important in national development. A programme of international development assistance, commonly called Development Co-operation, which has been in existence for over three decades, has left remarkable impression, but also most African countries worse than they were thirty years ago (Moikowa, 1996; Fekade, 1993).

International technical assistance to, or cooperation with the Sub region has intensified: the World Bank, IMF, UNDP, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), European Union (EU), Commonwealth and a lot of northern NGOs are all involved in one form or another. The effectiveness of this assistance varies, however. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation was set up more than 25 years ago to mobilise Commonwealth skills to meet the needs of member states as required. The UNDP's TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals) programme is designed to reduce the negative impact of the brain drain by getting highly qualified developing country expatriates to contribute their skills to the development of their home countries without necessarily having to return permanently. The UNESCO's university twinning programme is designed as a mechanism for the rapid transfer of technology and sharing of knowledge.

Sub-Saharan Africa has been struggling with the lack of a comprehensive home-grown theory and strategy to approach development and subsequent eradication of poverty. In addition to the ACBF – PACT, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is one African-led strategy directed to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty reduction in Africa, but very much toddler to judge at this stage.

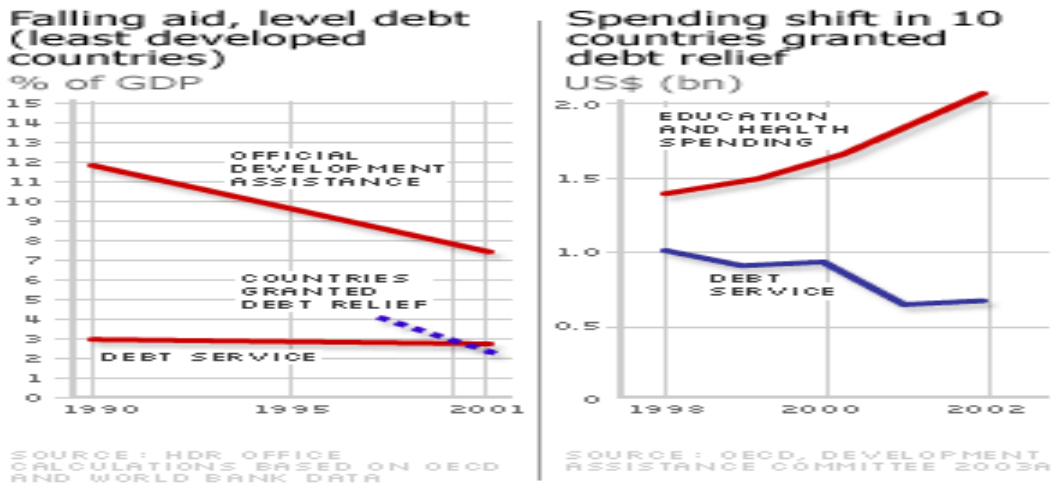
The second part of figure 2.5 shows a rising trend in the number of poor people in SSA. A UN Report (2001) notes that the amount of official aid given and promised is decreasing: far short of the estimated $100 billion a year required to achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals. According to the report, any attempt to determine the aggregate costs of achieving the development goals is a highly speculative exercise. Although halting the trend or reducing poverty will depend mostly on actions by the poor countries the international community is called to play a major role. Figure 2.5 shows falling aid and the shift in some developing countries.

Not only do countries vary in their ability to use aid effectively, the relationship between foreign aid (or other public resources) and outcomes is a highly uncertain one.

While international assistance or cooperation is considered indispensable by some, it is considered by others as no substitute for Africa's own efforts at human resource development. When Edward Jaycox (then World Bank Vice-President for the Africa Region), announced what appeared to be a change of policy at the annual conference of the African-American Institute in Washington DC (about five years ago), he said that the Bank would no longer pay for foreign technical assistants to help resolve African economic problems but would instead help African governments build their own capacity. Although the Bank has traditionally had enormous influence on development thinking and policy worldwide, the apparent policy change does not appear to have influenced other donors. Nor, indeed, is there any evidence that the Bank itself is implementing it vigorously. The number of foreign experts being sent to Africa continues to grow; there were over 100 000 in 1988 according to the Courier (1990) and has doubled since then.

The scenario makes the calls for local participation louder and leaves open a lot of questions and fears about the future, with observations that development projects rarely improve the living conditions of the people for whom they are intended (Rondinelli, 1990). Donor fatigue is getting more evident than ever before; a wide spread problem in Sub-Saharan Africa. A UNDP (2002) report, confirmed that aid to developing countries fell; for Africa it was halved in real terms over the decade from $39 to $19 per capita (cf. figure 2.5). The consequence is increased suffering for the masses in these countries.

*Figure 2.5 Response to poverty*




The response of development agencies has evolved substantially over the last 30 years. In the 1970s, organisations like the World Bank and the then British Overseas Development Ministry (now Department for International Development (DFID) saw it as their key role to finance projects (cf. Rondinelli, 1990). The idea was that by supporting the development of capital infrastructure - roads, power stations, etc - developing countries would generate the basis for higher economic growth from which public services to reduce poverty could be financed. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a growing emphasis on technical assistance to build the capacity of developing country governments, and financial support to help cope with major changes in the world economy: in particular, moves towards more liberalised trading and foreign exchange arrangements. The limitations of the project approach for tackling development needs, say in the health and education sectors, became more widely appreciated. Health and education, like other public services, need long term recurrent funding, for example, to pay for teachers and books, health workers and drugs. By their very nature, projects are not designed for this (Development, Issue 16, 2001).

Over the last five years, a broad consensus has emerged that, in order to maximise their effectiveness, development agencies need to work much more closely within and in support of a poverty reduction strategy which is led by each developing country itself (Development, Issue 16, 2001). This consensus has prompted a renewed discussion of the kind of assistance development agencies can best provide.

### 2.8.1 Development assistance as a linear process

The international aid system according to Fowler (ibid) was initially premised on the notion of understanding as a ‘deficit’ in capital, knowledge and technology. The transfer of such resources from rich to poor countries would, it was believed, enable or speed up economic growth, leading up to an improvement in the material circumstances and well-being of the poorer strata within recipient societies. Projects,

the discrete packages of resources and activities, were the mechanism chosen to achieve this outcome. The project mode of development, sometimes called the "blueprint approach" assumes that it is possible to pre-determine a set of cause-and-effect relationships that will turn resources, knowledge or technology into desired and sustainable human change. Putting project development into practice requires action by a number of organisations which are tied together like a chain between the resource provider and those intended to benefit.

### 2.8.2 The "Poverty Reduction Strategy"

In September 1999, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), unveiled the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), a new approach to their lending programs for poor countries which has since been making headlines. It is one of several improvements made to the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative, the official program for reducing the debt of the poorest countries. Under the new approach, approximately 70 low-income countries are now required to produce a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in order to receive either debt reduction or new loans. The stated intention of this Poverty Reduction Strategy approach marks a departure from the past approaches of the World Bank and IMF in several respects.

It requires that poverty reduction be the overarching goal for all World Bank and IMF lending programs to low-income countries and that progress toward this goal be measured through concrete objectives and indicators. The PRSP framework states that governments of the borrowing countries will produce the paper, with substantial consultation and participation of their own citizens, and that the role of the World Bank and IMF will be primarily advisory, but many wonder whether this is the case. All official donors - including bilateral government donors, international organizations, and international financial institutions - are supposed to coordinate their aid and lending programs with the PRSP. However questions abound on whether the HIPC / PRSP concept holds any more than earlier approaches such as the Structural Adjustment Programme. As observed above, Ghana has adopted both the HIPC initiative and the poverty reduction strategy, but not without controversy at home.

## 2.9 Conceptualising capacity Building

The concept of capacity building, development or growth is subject to many interpretations. According to Moore et al (quoted in Green and Ahmed, 1998) "there is probably no other area of development policy where so much money is spent in pursuit of an object whose very name, as well as content, is subject to such basic and continuing dispute". This is probably because it encompasses a wide range of activities including human, technological, organisational, financial, scientific and

cultural aspects. Generally, capacity building spans from helping people to help themselves at a personal, local and national level to strengthening civil society organisations in order to foster democratisation and build strong, effective and accountable institutions of government (table 2.2)

The term has come to convey such a range of meanings that it may increase confusion rather than clarity, leading some in the development field to suggest that it should be dropped altogether. However, an examination of the broad spectrum of ideas and activities described as ‘capacity building’ reveals that they are essential in eliminating poverty (Development, 2001). Its significance has increased as approaches to development have evolved over the last few decades. From support to the state, to supporting ‘the market’, the emphasis is now shifting back to stress the importance of national government. With these changes, the role of other development actors has come to be seen as increasingly valuable. Initially, NGOs were seen as the prime movers in this ‘third sector’. Now, however, there is more focus on broader civil society. The types of role this sector could fill include promoting the rights and entitlements of citizens, engaging governments on their policies, and filling gaps in service provision. But many say civil society often lacks the skills and means to meet such a challenging and diverse range of functions, hence the need to build capacities.

There is a need to increase and strengthen capacity across the whole spectrum outlined above, from increasing individuals’ understanding of their rights, through to creating legal environments where organisations can take an active role in the governance of their countries. Although arguments may continue about the precise meaning of the term, there is a growing consensus that capacity building is essential in order for civil society to fulfil its potential to have a meaningful role in poverty elimination (Green and Battcock, Development (DFID, 2Q 2001). Other questions remain to be answered: Capacity, for who, by whom and how?

*Table 2.2 Concepts of capacity growth*

| | Means | Process | Ends |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capacity growth of NGOs: Organisational Development (OD) | Strengthen the NGO ability to perform specific functions | Bring coherence at all levels of internal action with possibility of learning and necessary adaptation | Improve NGO viability, sustainability and direct impact consistent with the chosen mission |
| Capacity growth of LNGOs or specialised NGO: Sectoral Development | Strengthen the ability of the sector to improve overall civil impact | Bring mutually supporting relations and understanding amongst subsectors | Achieve confident and powerful interaction with other sectors and social actors based on shared strategies and learning |
| Capacity growth of civil society: Institutional Development (ID) | Improve the ability of primary stakeholders to identify and carry out activities to solve problems | Enable and stimulate strong civic interactions and communication, conflict mediation and resolution in society, thereby enhancing social capital | Increase ability of primary stakeholders to engage with and influence the political arena and socio-economic system in accordance with their interests |

*Source: based on Fowler, 1997*

### 2.9.1 The three-dimensional nature of capacity development

Among development practitioners, capacity has traditionally been conceived in two dimensions: human resources and organizational functions. “Capacity building” – as it has most commonly been referred to – therefore involved human resource development and organizational engineering, or “institution building”, with particular reference to the public sector. The organizational dimension significantly extended that of human resource development, since it implied the need for management skills that reached beyond the technical (Browne/UNDP 2002).

It has become apparent that institution building, as a basis for development capacity, also needs to expand beyond the formal functions of organisations in the public sector, for at least two reasons (Browne/UNDP, ibid). In the first place, the functioning of the public sector is itself influenced by non-organisational factors, including what might be termed the “state of governance”: the legitimacy and independence of the various organs of state, the relevance and quality of public policy, and so on. Secondly, capacity for development increasingly encompasses organisations and institutions that lie entirely outside the public sector – private enterprise and civil society organisations in particular.

In Fukuda-Parr et al and UNDP (2002), the UNDP defines capacity as “the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives”. This generic definition builds on an earlier one drawn up by UNDP and UNICEF[14], but is a

[14] A UNDP/UNICEF study in 1999 described capacity as “the ability to define and realise goals effectively”.

significant departure from the previous focus on human resource development and institution building. Encompassing individual and institutional levels previously addressed, UNDP emphasizes the importance of a third, societal level of capacity development that involves “capacities in the society as a whole” (Fukuda-Parr et al and UNDP, 2002).

According to Browne (2002) the first level is that of the individual. The second, the institutional, merits an interpretation beyond the merely organisational. Institutional capacity involves laws, procedures, systems and customs. As a symptom of the importance of these institutional factors, some country papers allude to the problems of corruption and the misuse of power and resources, which impede capacity development. Other indispensable facets are policies and leadership.

The policy environment is critical to capacity development. But the mere enunciation of “good” policy is not enough. It must be consistently and transparently enacted, for which there need to be capacities for planning and implementation, and mechanisms of objective inspection and auditing. Policies are determined in large part by the qualities and commitments of leaders, and recent development history is replete with examples. Leadership is important for another reason. Development is a process of transformation, and capacities continually need to change and adapt. Strong leadership – and the strategic vision that goes with it – is necessary to anticipate change and adjust to it.

The third dimension, the societal, encompasses the facilitatory processes which lie at the heart of human development: the opening and widening of opportunities that enable people to use and expand their capacities to the fullest. Social capital and cohesion are at the core of societal capacity and apply both nationally and locally.

Capacity development cannot ignore the critical importance of decentralized village and community-based organizations and units, right down to the individual household, where the empowerment – or “capacitation” – of e.g. women’s or traders’ organisation is an important consideration.

Capacity development also needs to take account of the global environment, which increasingly impinges on the capacity of countries, at all three of these levels to address the challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development. People, goods, finance, technology and information are moving across the globe in unprecedented quantities and frequencies. This brings in the issue of globalisation. The ramifications of globalisation can be positive or negative, but they cannot be ignored. The globalisation of the skilled labour market, the opportunities and

adversities of more open external markets, and the impact of the digital divide, all have important consequences for the development of capacity.

### 2.9.2 Models of capacity building

An NGO's programmes in any given country or region (should) depends on its analysis of factors affecting people who are poor or marginalised. Eade (1997) sets out these factors as follows:

- Macro-policy environment (structural adjustment programmes, debt-servicing and balance of payments, main export sector)
- Nature of the state (powerful/effective, weak/ineffectual; all-encompassing, patchy, non-existent)
- Economic and production systems (industrial, service; rural [nomadic or settled]; public, private, informal)
- Role and nature of domestic market relations (monetary and informal or reciprocal); participation in regional markets
- Strength and cohesiveness of civil society (range of organisations, freedom of expression and association, extent of popular participation through organised forms)
- Social relations (class, gender, culture/religion, ethnic, age differences), including intra-household relations.

Oxfam, a British NGO with a wealth of experience sets seven archetypes or idealised models[15], within which its programmes generally fit. Each provides a framework for seeing a programme as a system (and not merely a cluster of self-contained projects), and being aware of the connections within it. Eade (ibid) observes that thinking in this way takes us away from thinking about capacity-building in terms of categories, compartments, and mechanistic progression. Change in favour of the poorest sectors of society is said to require a combination of interventions at several complementary levels (nationally and internationally). A shift in one part of the system will have an impact (not always positive or uncontested) on other parts of it (Eade, ibid.).

#### *Model 1: Working through intermediaries*

Working through intermediary organisations, often in the form of local NGOs or CBOs, and sometimes international NGOs is a standard way of working for international agencies. There is little or no direct linkage between NGO and state in this model. The relationship between an NGO and its counterparts here is often mediated via the provision of grant-funding for specified purposes, but may also involve other forms of support (such as advice, information, or contacts).

[15] The models were set out in an internal discussion paper by Chris Roche, of Oxfam's Gender and Learning Team.

Oxfam has actively encouraged linking and networking between and among its counterpart organisations in-country and beyond. A good example of this way of working is the Campesino a Campesino initiative in Central America. This began life in the 1970s as a project by the Mexican NGO, SEDEPAC to foster 'horizontal learning' among peasant farmers from the State of Tlaxcala and from Guatemala. In the mid-1980s, with support from Oxfam, SEDEPAC established links with the Nicaraguan farmers' union, UNAG. In addition to knowledge-sharing across national boundaries, this gave rise to UNAG's extensive soil-conservation programme in Nicaragua.

***Model 2: Generating synergies***

A more focused variation is the synergy model, in which an NGO works with a specific combination of counterparts in order to generate changes at several levels. In its work with the artisanal fishing sector in the Philippines, for example, Oxfam supports grassroots CBOs in coastal resource management (CRM) activities, such as replanting mangroves and developing artificial reefs. At the same time, Oxfam assists national fishery organisations which provide support to CBOs and represent their interests. Oxfam encourages links between them and more specialist lobbying organisations in order to change national legislation. Enlarging the zone of municipal waters from which commercial trawlers are excluded is an example of change at a national level having a significant impact on local livelihoods.

***Model 3: Promoting representative organisations***

A common model for both operational and non-operational programmes is one based on facilitating the emergence of federated CBOs into, for instance, farmers' unions, or NGO alliances, or trades union federations. It is hoped that as these structures gain in strength they will be better able to demand adequate public services as well as develop their own funding and non-funding relationships with other bodies. Support for capacity-building processes and organisational development are often the foundations of such programmes, alongside technical assistance in appropriate areas (credit, legal training). An example of this kind of approach is given of the Rural Literacy and Health Programme (RLHP), which focuses on people living in slum areas of the District of Mysore, India. A major element of its methodology is to encourage slum-dwellers to form *sanghas* (local associations) and eventually federations, whose purpose is to seek better housing and educational facilities, higher wages, an improvement in the status of women, and greater participation in local bodies.

***Model 4: Generating independent organisations***

Occasionally, projects originally funded by an NGO themselves become independent organisations. An example of the evolution of an independent organisation is the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) based in Senegal, which started life as an Oxford-

based Oxfam networking project but is now an independent organisation. Such organisations according to Eade (ibid.) may continue to receive funding after 'independence', but usually for a limited period only.

***Model 5: Government and non-governmental structures in parallel***

It may be occasionally appropriate to work predominantly through the state, usually through sectors such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture. Other CBOs or NGOs may be supported to provide training to individuals in both the public and non-governmental sectors. This was how Oxfam worked in Nicaragua throughout the 1980s; combining support for the popular education programmes run by the regional offices of the Ministry of Health, with funding for complementary health education activities run by Nicaraguan NGOs. Funding of government-run programmes may also be linked with influencing government policy through provision for training and exchange visits.

The relative merits of working *within* or *alongside* were debated, though in rather technical terms: the *post hoc* internal evaluation laments that for internal reasons 'the "new wave" development debates - good governance, extension of civil society, capacity-building etc - lost the opportunity of being grounded in reality in this newly-emerging state' (Lang, 1996 in Eade, 1997). However, the evaluation identified some useful lessons for such an approach, which are summarised below:

- Total financial dependence on official aid can work - if ground-rules are agreed.
- Working with government can work - if there is a relationship of mutual trust; an accepted structure through which to ensure open discussion; a critical mass of stakeholders within the relevant Ministry with the commitment and skills to work for change; and appropriately skilled project staff.
- Community-based activities through a Ministry can take root - if there is a management structure in place that recognises the importance and role of such activities.
- Training can be an entry-point for capacity building - if the trainers are skilled in facilitation and adult learning (ibid,).

***Model 6: Non-operational emergency programmes***

Where local organisations are strong, an international NGO such as Oxfam will usually seek to implement its emergency response through these. This may take the form of supporting the humanitarian wings of rebel armies as in Tigray or Eritrea, or local NGOs such as ADRA in Angola or FASTRAS in El Salvador, or through federations of CBOs as in Burkina Faso. In some circumstances, fostering networking and information sharing between organisations may help them to develop common strategies and lobby governments or the international community. This way of working in emergencies is most common in areas where the NGO already has a

programme in place, and where its local counterparts may expand their work to cover wider geographical areas, new activities, or greater numbers of people.

***Model 7: Operational emergency relief programmes***

Where local organisations and intermediary NGOs are weak, an international NGO like Oxfam may implement an operational programme to provide emergency relief. An international body, such as UN High Commission for Refugees, may coordinate the overall aid programme. Oxfam may collaborate with or fund other international NGOs to deliver vital services, or take on an operational role in its own right. For instance, in the Rwandan refugee camps in Goma, Oxfam provided water and sanitation facilities to over one million people. Advocacy work is an important element of an emergency response. The focus may be on governments, official donor agencies, or UN bodies. Oxfam may, for example, press host or sending-country governments, as well as the international community, to provide assistance or to protect refugees or displaced persons from further human rights abuses.

## 2.10 Conclusion

That capacity building is a complex issue has been recognised for some time. Writing on capacity building by NGOs, Eade (2000) highlights three things that capacity building approach to development should not succumb to:

1) *Capacity building should not create dependency.* This is even more crucial for countries emerging from war. Most relief interventions create dependencies. When the emergency subsides and relief supplies dry up these communities relapse to poverty and misery.
2) *Capacity building should not lead to a weakening of the state*. Building the capacities of local actors should not jeopardise the state's ability to perform its obligations. In complex emergencies, intervening organisations often establish parallel service provision channels outside the Government ministries. International NGOs and other organisations may attract qualified staff from Government Ministries because of the better conditions of service. This may lead to a further weakening of the state institutions.
3) *Capacity building should not be seen as a separate activity* - It should be seen as an integral part of all interventions. For instance one cannot choose between building a well and building capacities. The capacity building measures should be incorporated in the process of building the well, for example, the formation of committees to ensure sustainable well management.

In sum, capacity is both easy and hard to define. A generic definition, at its simplest, includes both the attainment of skills and the capabilities to use them. But the

answers to the questions “which skills?” and “whose capabilities?” are much more complex because each development context is unique, and none is static. It is the unique circumstances of countries and communities that make capacity development such an inexact science; not to mention the different approaches of FNGOs and donor agencies. A flavour of these particularities is provided by the case studies in chapter six.

# Chapter Three

## Poverty Profile of Ghana

## and the Ghana

## Poverty Reduction Strategy

# Chapter Three
# Poverty Profile of Ghana and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

## 3.1 Introduction

In order to better understand poverty and the capacity to eradicate poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the foregoing chapters presented the big picture in a general introduction of poverty and poverty reduction interventions at the international level. This chapter goes from the big picture to the particular: Ghana, the spatial context of the study (see figures 1.4 and 3.1a). After several decades of development cooperation, many wonder that a number of African countries are barely sustaining more than 5 percent growth per year. The prevalence and magnitude of poverty in Ghana is well documented by other international organisations in development (figure 3.1b). Poverty reduction in Ghana has also been a major theme for successive governments in Ghana, development agencies, donors and the academia alike for many decades. Government after government has sought strategies to reduce poverty directly or indirectly. In Chapter One, mention is made of the Poverty Reduction Strategy recommended by the World Bank. Like most past development strategies, the enabling capacity for the implementation gets little attention. The poverty profile of Ghana considers the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), the framework for poverty reduction and sustainable development in Ghana.

## 3.2 Background to Ghana

Any talk of poverty reduction strategies and development policies in general must take into account the local condition of the region or country in question, and its population structure. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2000), the population of Ghana stands at 18,412,247, of which 25 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women cannot read or write. Roughly the size of Britain and approximately the population of the German federal State of Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW), Ghana is located in West Africa bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Côte d'Ivoire and Togo (figure 1.4). Formed from the merger of the British colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territory, Ghana in 1957 became the first country in colonial Africa to gain its independence (from Britain). There are six major ethnic groups the largest of which is the Akan. There are more than 50 languages and dialects. Akan is most widely spoken but English is the official language. Islam and Christianity are practised, but most people hold traditional beliefs.

*Figure 3.1a: Ghana showing the Northern Region (study area)*

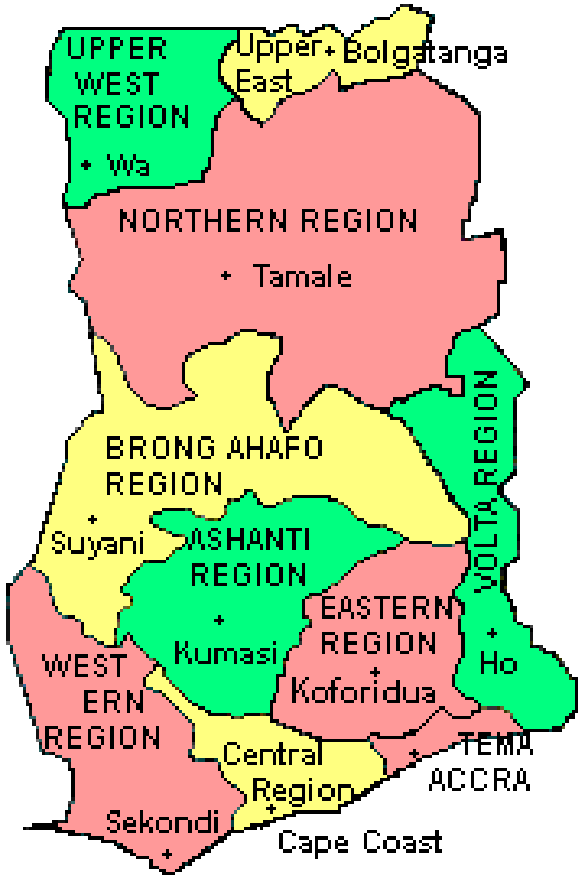
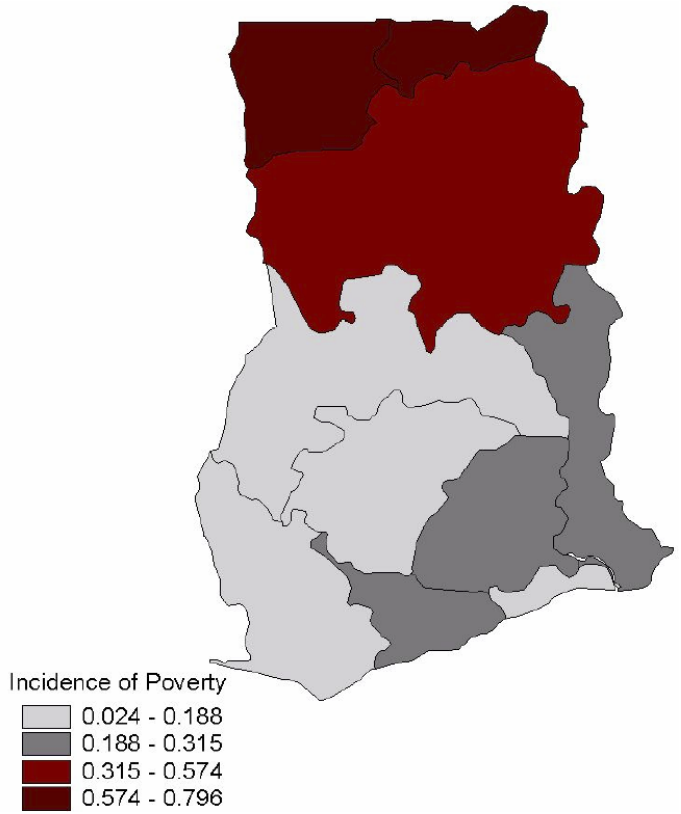



*Figure 3.1b. Poverty map Ghana: incidence of poverty 1999*



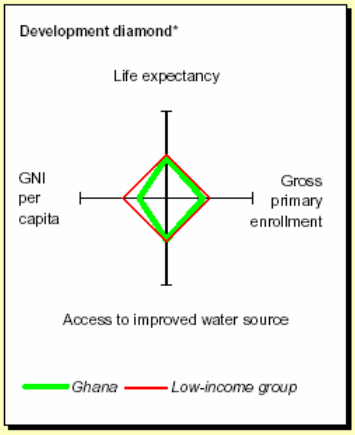

*Source: http://earthtrends.wri.org/povlinks/map on July, 04*

*Figure 3.2 Statistical profile of Ghana (Ghana's social and economic indicators)*

# Ghana at a glance

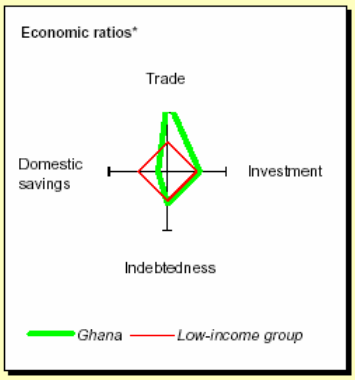
8/20/03

| POVERTY and SOCIAL | Ghana | Sub-Saharan Africa | Low-income |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2002** | | | |
| Population, mid-year *(millions)* | 20.1 | 688 | 2,495 |
| GNI per capita *(Atlas method, US$)* | 270 | 450 | 430 |
| GNI *(Atlas method, US$ billions)* | 5.4 | 306 | 1,072 |
| **Average annual growth, 1996-02** | | | |
| Population *(%)* | 2.1 | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| Labor force *(%)* | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.3 |
| **Most recent estimate (latest year available, 1996-02)** | | | |
| Poverty *(% of population below national poverty line)* | .. | .. | .. |
| Urban population *(% of total population)* | 37 | 33 | 30 |
| Life expectancy at birth *(years)* | 55 | 46 | 59 |
| Infant mortality *(per 1,000 live births)* | 55 | 105 | 81 |
| Child malnutrition *(% of children under 5)* | 25 | .. | .. |
| Access to an improved water source *(% of population)* | 73 | 58 | 76 |
| Illiteracy *(% of population age 15+)* | 26 | 37 | 37 |
| Gross primary enrollment *(% of school-age population)* | 80 | 86 | 95 |
| Male | 84 | 92 | 103 |
| Female | 76 | 80 | 87 |

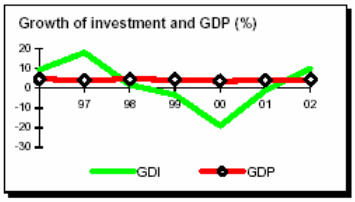



| KEY ECONOMIC RATIOS and LONG-TERM TRENDS | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GDP *(US$ billions)* | 4.0 | 6.4 | 5.3 | 6.0 |
| Gross domestic investment/GDP | 3.4 | 12.8 | 24.0 | 22.7 |
| Exports of goods and services/GDP | 3.3 | 17.2 | 52.2 | 51.0 |
| Gross domestic savings/GDP | 3.7 | 1.3 | 5.8 | 6.5 |
| Gross national savings/GDP | 3.5 | 3.6 | 18.2 | 16.6 |
| Current account balance/GDP | -4.8 | -9.2 | -7.3 | -8.1 |
| Interest payments/GDP | 0.7 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 2.1 |
| Total debt/GDP | 36.8 | 70.3 | 127.5 | .. |
| Total debt service/exports | 15.5 | 28.2 | 12.8 | .. |
| Present value of debt/GDP | .. | .. | 74.4 | .. |
| Present value of debt/exports | .. | .. | 160.4 | .. |

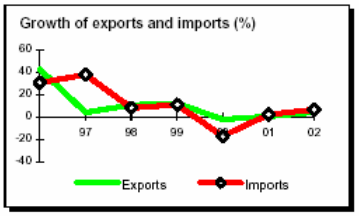
| | 1982-92 | 1992-02 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002-06 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(average annual growth)* | | | | | |
| GDP | 4.7 | 4.2 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
| GDP per capita | 1.1 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.6 | 3.6 |
| Exports of goods and services | 6.8 | 9.6 | 0.3 | 4.2 | 2.4 |




| STRUCTURE of the ECONOMY | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(% of GDP)* | | | | |
| Agriculture | 57.3 | 44.8 | 35.9 | 34.7 |
| Industry | 6.2 | 17.4 | 25.2 | 24.9 |
| Manufacturing | 3.6 | 9.3 | 9.2 | 9.4 |
| Services | 36.4 | 37.8 | 38.9 | 40.3 |
| Private consumption | 89.8 | 86.6 | 78.7 | 79.1 |
| General government consumption | 6.5 | 12.1 | 15.6 | 14.4 |
| Imports of goods and services | 3.0 | 28.8 | 70.5 | 67.1 |




| | 1982-92 | 1992-02 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(average annual growth)* | | | | |
| Agriculture | 2.1 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 4.1 |
| Industry | 7.1 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 6.3 |
| Manufacturing | 7.3 | 1.2 | 7.6 | 0.0 |
| Services | 7.3 | 4.8 | 4.3 | 4.4 |
| Private consumption | 4.7 | 4.2 | 1.4 | 10.3 |
| General government consumption | 4.5 | 4.5 | 15.0 | -10.7 |
| Gross domestic investment | 7.1 | 1.9 | -1.1 | 10.1 |
| Imports of goods and services | 7.4 | 9.4 | 2.0 | 6.6 |




Note: 2002 data are preliminary estimates.
This table was produced from the Development Economics central database.
* The diamonds show four key indicators in the country (in bold) compared with its income-group average. If data are missing, the diamond will be incomplete.

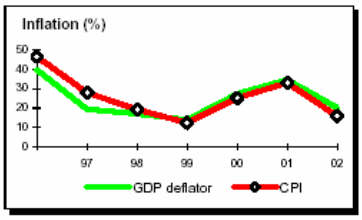
*Source: the World Bank website, 2003*

*Figure 3.2. Statistical profile of Ghana (continued)*

*Ghana*

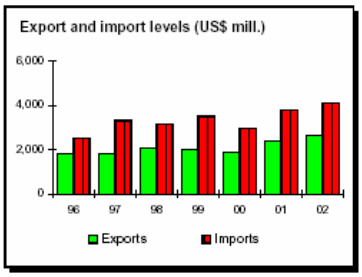
**PRICES and GOVERNMENT FINANCE**

| | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Domestic prices* | | | | |
| *(% change)* | | | | |
| Consumer prices | 22.3 | 10.0 | 33.0 | 15.9 |
| Implicit GDP deflator | 27.9 | 11.2 | 34.6 | 20.2 |
| *Government finance* | | | | |
| *(% of GDP, includes current grants)* | | | | |
| Current revenue | 6.0 | 18.5 | 20.7 | 22.3 |
| Current budget balance | -3.2 | 4.2 | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| Overall surplus/deficit | .. | -6.1 | -5.4 | -4.5 |



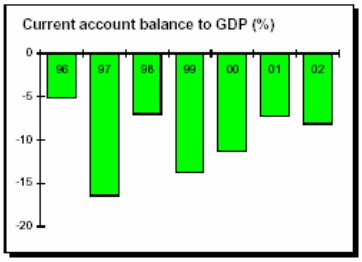

**TRADE**

| | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(US$ millions)* | | | | |
| Total exports (fob) | .. | 986 | 2,380 | 2,681 |
| Cocoa | .. | 302 | 503 | 535 |
| Timber | .. | 114 | 215 | 265 |
| Manufactures | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Total imports (cif) | .. | 1,589 | 3,781 | 4,099 |
| Food | .. | 38 | .. | .. |
| Fuel and energy | .. | 162 | 257 | 275 |
| Capital goods | .. | 277 | .. | .. |
| Export price index *(1995=100)* | .. | 85 | 78 | 81 |
| Import price index *(1995=100)* | .. | 103 | 99 | 96 |
| Terms of trade *(1995=100)* | .. | 83 | 79 | 85 |



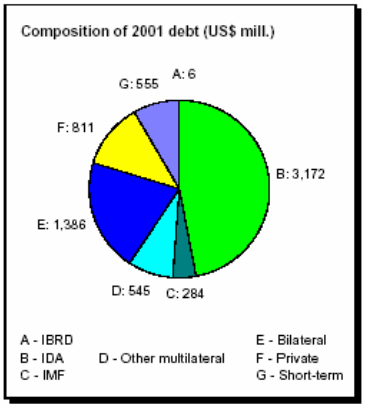

**BALANCE of PAYMENTS**

| | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(US$ millions)* | | | | |
| Exports of goods and services | 711 | 1,105 | 2,433 | 2,607 |
| Imports of goods and services | 813 | 1,845 | 3,428 | 3,662 |
| Resource balance | -103 | -740 | -995 | -1,055 |
| Net income | -89 | -106 | -178 | -185 |
| Net current transfers | -1 | 255 | 787 | 750 |
| Current account balance | -192 | -592 | -386 | -490 |
| Financing items (net) | 191 | 467 | 465 | 559 |
| Changes in net reserves | 1 | 124 | -79 | -69 |
| *Memo:* | | | | |
| Reserves including gold *(US$ millions)* | .. | .. | 431 | 679 |
| Conversion rate *(DEC, local/US$)* | 21.4 | 437.1 | 7,170.8 | 7,932.7 |




**EXTERNAL DEBT and RESOURCE FLOWS**

| | 1982 | 1992 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(US$ millions)* | | | | |
| Total debt outstanding and disbursed | 1,484 | 4,508 | 6,759 | .. |
| IBRD | 131 | 87 | 6 | .. |
| IDA | 125 | 1,631 | 3,172 | .. |
| Total debt service | 111 | 319 | 316 | .. |
| IBRD | 16 | 21 | 4 | .. |
| IDA | 1 | 14 | 59 | .. |
| Composition of net resource flows | | | | |
| Official grants | 30 | 218 | 305 | .. |
| Official creditors | 58 | 309 | 269 | .. |
| Private creditors | 14 | 45 | 154 | .. |
| Foreign direct investment | 16 | 23 | 89 | .. |
| Portfolio equity | 0 | 0 | 0 | .. |
| World Bank program | | | | |
| Commitments | 0 | 375 | 433 | .. |
| Disbursements | 24 | 170 | 193 | .. |
| Principal repayments | 8 | 15 | 37 | .. |
| Net flows | 16 | 156 | 156 | .. |
| Interest payments | 9 | 20 | 25 | .. |
| Net transfers | 7 | 136 | 130 | .. |




The World Bank Group: http://www.worldbank.org/data/ 8/20/03

*Source: the World Bank website, 2003*

Around half the rural population do not have access to safe water, and 37 per cent of the population do not have access to adequate sanitation[1]. Almost 1 in 10 children die before they reach their fifth birthday (figure 3.2). The country suffered severe economic decline under several corrupt regimes, some of them military.

[1] According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census

Having undergone years of economic decline, Ghana embarked on an Economic Recovery Program in 1983. Rapid economic growth (views vary on this matter, depending on whom one talks to) is said to follow the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as a condition for international loans in the mid 80s, but declining world prices for Ghana's export caused further economic pressure. This led to the establishment of the National Development Planning Commission which is credited with the decentralisation programme and the formulation of the Ghana Vision 2020. The ensuing military rule ended with the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in January 1993.

Since the early 1990s, Ghana's economy has been characterised by high rates of inflation, continuous depreciation of the local currency the Cedi, dwindling foreign reserves, an excessive public debt overhang and stagnant growth. Extensive liberalisation and structural adjustment in the 1980s resulted in growth in services and mining, but did little to produce and sustain growth in agriculture and manufacturing. As a result, both growth and incomes have remained fairly stagnant, with serious implications for the country's ability to reduce poverty and environmental degradation (figure 3.2).

While some accredit the country (National Democratic Congress (NDC) government) in the 1990s with improvement in output and some improvement in economic performance, studies by various economists (Norton et al. 1995 and Boateng et al. 1990) indicate that many individuals still remain in acute poverty (cf. figure 3.2). Thus, in planning poverty reduction strategy both for short and long term, it is necessary to get timely and reliable information on key economic and social indicators as in figure 3.2 above.

In December 2000, the conservative liberal New Patriotic Party (NPP) won the parliamentary and presidential elections, ousting President Jerry Rawlings (of the NDC party) after nearly 20 years in power. According to the World Bank (2003), the varied incidence and depth of poverty suggest that the continuation of economic policies of the 1990s is not likely to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poor, especially those in extreme poverty in the current decade. And, even if it does, change may be very slow or not fast enough to avoid a widening gap between the poor and non-poor. In its 1995 report, the World Bank observed that despite the positive impact of Economic Recovery Programme, it will take the average poor Ghanaian no less than 10 years to escape poverty, and for the poorest nearly 40 years if specific policies are not in place. The GPRS document (2003) confirms that the overall picture is that economic growth has taken place unevenly across regions, among socio-economic groups, between genders, or that the positive effects of growth on poverty have not been uniform.

## 3.3 Understanding poverty in Ghana

***Mass poverty***

Poverty in Ghana as in most developing countries of Africa and South Asia, is quite widespread and on the mass scale. Mass poverty is widely defined as largely the function of acute, often contrived socio-economic inequality, which in turn is engendered and reinforced by acuminate, often deliberately organised, social stratification. It is not static, fortuitous, a historical and purely economic phenomenon, but a dynamic, structured, historically conditioned, and multi dimensional experience of the peoples of the South.

This is evident in the percentage of the population said to be below the poverty line in figure 3.2 and table 3.1 compared with 36 percent of the population below the poverty line in 1987-88. From this evidence, Boateng (1990) observed that the conclusion of mass poverty was indisputable. Donkor (1997) claims that mass poverty differs from case or individual poverty where a relative few are poor in a general affluent society. The term helps to direct attention to 'structural causes'. With mass or general poverty, poverty is the norm and not to be poor is the exception. In the former, poverty is often attributed (if even wrongly) to various characteristics-moral, genetic, familial, environmental, educational, racial, social etc., while in case of the latter; explanations have to be sought elsewhere (Donkor, ibid.).

Specific to mass poverty, the following explanations have been advanced as responsible for mass poverty (Prebisch, 1963):

1. 'Naturally Poor'. Here, countries are said to be naturally poor in terms of physical or natural resource endowment. However, the experiences of Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Israel do not support this contention. Either they have insufficient land or they lack the natural resources in the traditional sense and yet they are all very rich countries.
2. The political system of administration has often been advanced as an explanation for the poverty of nations. The political 'right' stresses the absence of free 'enterprise' as being the cause of mass poverty while the 'left' argue that the appropriation of gains of production by the land and capital owners leaves no incentive for peasants to increase productivity. Empirical evidence does not however seem to support any credible extent, either of these absolutes. China and India, endowed equally, have attained different levels of mass prosperity with China obviously the better off.

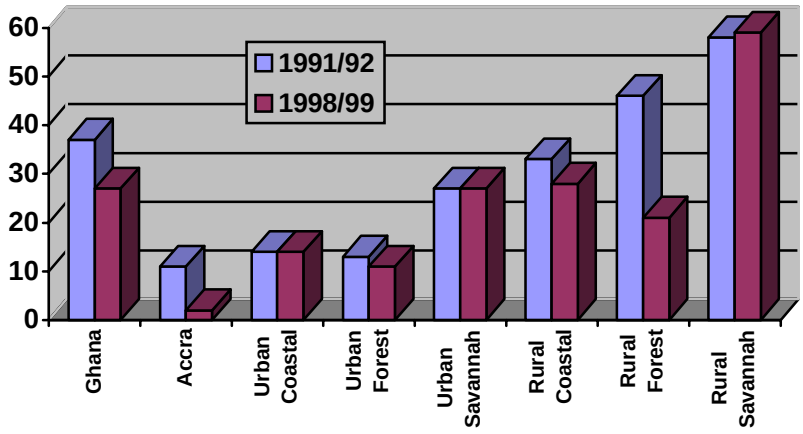
3. Prebisch addresses the issue from another angle. He argues that poor countries, producers in the main of raw materials and other agricultural products, suffer persistently in terms of trade with industrial countries.

***Urban/rural***

The concentration of poverty in rural Ghana is widely acknowledged in literature as in figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. This judgment is irrespective of how poverty is defined; whether in monetary terms or in terms of basic needs provision (amenities as well as food and other items like fuel and clothing for household consumption). This is also true of both case/individual poverty of mass poverty (Ewusi, 1976, Boateng et al.1990, Roe & Schneider 1992).

According to the Ghanaian statistical office/Ghana Living Standard Survey 4 (figures 3.1b and 3.3 and table 3.1), the dichotomy between urban and rural dwellers becomes even more striking in relation to expenditure on food. The rural poor are predominantly engaged in agriculture and yet rural dwellers spend 52.2 percent of all expenditure on food, while the urban average is 48.65 percent (GLSS 1995).

*Figure 3.3. Spatial dimension and incidence of poverty in Ghana*




*Source: Ghana Statistical Services*

The poverty gap between urban and rural is said to extend more significantly to the provision and uptake of basic economic and social rights such as the right to education. While 65 percent of all Ghanaian adults surveyed in 1991 – 1992 were literate, the equivalent of rural Ghana was 48.8 percent. The effect of this is seen more in agriculture where farmers, predominantly rural, find themselves unable to adopt agriculture practices being encouraged by the Ministry of Agriculture because they are unable to read accompanying instructions.

*Table 3.1 Dimensions of poverty in Ghana.*

| Dimensions of Poverty based on Ghana Living Standards Survey (April 1998 - March 1999) & Core Welfare Indicators (1997) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Households | | | 4.2 million |
| Average household size | | | 4.3 persons |
| Proportion of population rural | | | 56.0% |
| Proportion of population female | | | 50.5% |
| Intercensal population growth rate | | | 2.6% |
| | | | |
| Average annual household exp. | ¢4.244 million | | (US$1,1773) |
| Average per capita total (cash + imputed) household expenditure | | | US$412 |
| Average per capita annual cash exp | | | US$336 |
| Average per capita income | | | US$220 |
| Overall cash expenditure on food (% of total exp) | | | 45.4% |
| Imputed value of own produced food (% of total exp) | | | 10.3% |
| Proportion of households with someone holding a savings account | | | 28% |
| | | | |
| **Population defined as poor (Welfare measure)** | | **1991/92** | **1998/99** |
| Upper Poverty Line | | 50% | 40.0% |
| Extreme Poverty | | 37% | 27.0% |
| | Urban | 18% | 17.3% |
| | Rural | 46% | 36.0% |
| Food crop farmers | | 68% | 59.0% |
| Males (Females) who never attended school | | | 21% (41%) |
| Males (Female) literacy rate | | | 62% (36%) |
| Literacy rate in urban (rural) areas | | | 63% (40%) |
| Children aged 6-15 attending school | | | 80% |
| Attendance rate rises with urbanization but proportion of females significantly lower. | | | |
| Nearest primary school is at least 30 minutes away | | Urban | 3% |
| | | Rural | 10% |
| | | | |
| Nearest health facility is at least 30 minutes away | | Urban | 20% |
| | | Rural | 61% |
| Lowest 2 poverty groups | | | 70% |
| Population citing cost as key reason for non-use of medical services | | | 70% |
| Children under 8 years never vaccinated against any of the childhood killer diseases (for Rural Savannah) | | | 6.5% (12.4%) |
| Supervised delivery assistance (Doctor, Nurse, Midwife) | | Urban | 79% |
| | | Rural | 33% |
| Pipe-borne as a source of drinking water | | Urban | 80.3% |
| | | Rural | 18.8% |
| Prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS (1999) | | National | 3.6% |
| Households using electricity | | | 41.4% |
| Population employed in agriculture | | | 55.0% |
| Population employed in trading | | | 18.3% |
| Population employed in manufacturing | | | 11.7% |
| Women self-employment in agriculture | | | 48.7% |
| Women self-employment in non-agriculture | | | 45.1% |
| Men self-employment | | | 77% |

Source: Ghana Living Standards Survey 4

### *3.3.1 The perceptions of poverty in Ghana*

*Local Communities*

A Participatory Poverty Analysis (PPA) survey administered by the GPRS in thirty-six sample communities from fourteen Districts and six Regions made evident that communities on the whole had an innate understanding of the symptoms and causes of poverty. There was also ample evidence that over the past decades there had been a marked attitudinal change. Only in a small minority of cases was poverty seen, as in the past, as an inevitable condition expressed by a few as *destiny*, *fate*, and *incurable disease*. The large majority were aware that with help communities and individuals had the ability to intervene in the pattern and rhythm of life, to improve their social and economic environments and to enlarge choice.

For most communities, poverty is represented by a lack of basic necessities and facilities, an inability to provide education and medical care for the family, a lack of access to assets and a lack of education. In all communities there was a noticeable gender differentiation in relation to poverty. Men gave priority to the need for support to agriculture, non-farming activities and other alternative employment. Women stressed the importance of being able to support the family by provision of basic necessities with particular reference to education and health. Lack of access by women to land and other assets was also noted.

Sample community consultations conducted by the GPRS team have made clear that there is the need for priority action to redress the exclusion of the poor, particularly those in the rural environment. The analysis (PPA) shows that local communities have an important part to play in development decision making and have a commonsensical approach. A number of key entry points identified during the PPA for priority interventions include the following:

- Small scale irrigation schemes, particularly in the northern savannah.
- Provision of potable water in rural areas
- Generation of non-farming employment in rural areas
- Improved access to education and health facilities in rural areas
- Free basic education including provision of school clothing and meals for children in the three northern Regions
- Measures to ensure equal rights to women.
- Provision of safety nets and measures to rehabilitate those trapped within demeaning and anti social circumstances.
- More equitable distribution of basic services between rural and urban environments, particularly in the north
- Reform of the traditional land administration system to give farmers and those in the informal industrial sector access to land as a monetary asset

- Increased provision for useable vocational training schemes

***Perceptions at the District and Regional levels***

At the District and Regional levels there was optimism that policy measures, programmes and projects when properly planned and effectively delivered, were the means of first reducing and then eliminating poverty. The perceptions at this level are worth noting for it is the level at which the poverty reduction programme is implemented. This awareness is said to be important for the role of District Assemblies as,

- Change agent for the transformation of society and the local economy
- Mobiliser of human and physical resources
- Protector of vulnerable groups and
- Provider of information to occupational and social groups

### *3.3.2 The causes of poverty in Ghana*

The consensus that the principal objective of development must be the eradication of poverty (to use the objective of the first UN document) and its underlying causes necessitates an understanding of poverty and its causes in Ghana. In addition to the causes of poverty in Sub region (chapter one), it is proper to take a closer look at the causes of poverty in a particular country, because poverty is recognized as multi-dimensional with complex interactive and causal relationships between the dimensions. Poverty is defined by the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) as "unacceptable physiological and social deprivation". This according to the document may be caused or exacerbated by the:

- lack of macro-economic stability that erodes the resources of the poor through inflation and other variables
- 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 and market opportunities
- 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 resource allocations
- the disadvantaged position of women in society

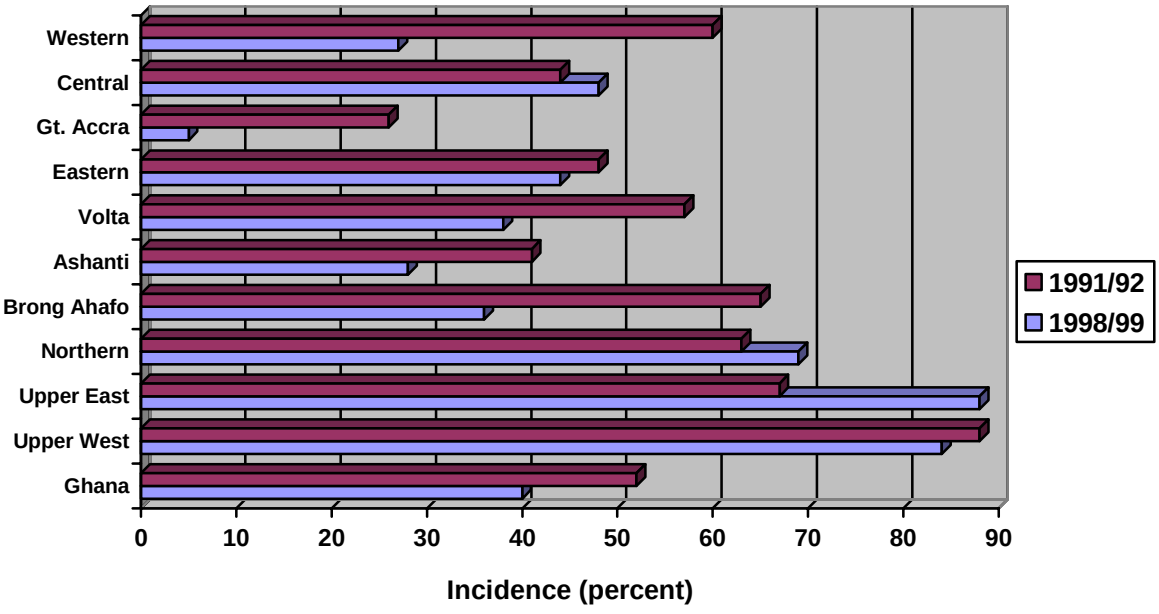
- other factors leading to vulnerability and exclusion

Two further reasons are given for the uneven economic growth across regions, among socio-economic groups, between genders, or for uneven positive effects of growth on poverty: the development policies put in place to address the hardships experienced by the poor and the vulnerable were not sufficiently guided by adequate data on the incidence and depth of poverty and, therefore, how to design and deliver targeted poverty reduction measures. The other reason is that population increases may have outstripped the positive effects of growth on poverty.

## 3.4 Spatial dimension

There are significant differences in the spatial distribution of poverty. Five out of the 10 regions in Ghana had more than 40 percent of their population living in poverty in 1999 (figures 3.1b and 3.4). By income measure, poverty levels are highest in the three northern savannah regions (the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions), ranging between 69 percent and 88 percent. Nine out of ten people in the Upper East, eight out of ten in Upper West, seven out of ten in Northern Region and five out of ten in Central and Eastern Regions were classified as poor in 1999. Of the ten regions, the Upper East, Northern and Central regions experienced increases in poverty levels and extreme poverty in the 1990s. Urban areas in the northern savannah also experienced significant increases in poverty levels during the period (figures 3.1b and 3.4).

*Figure 3.4. Regional poverty profile*




*Source: GPRS 2003*

Past policies are blamed for not implementing a more equitable distribution of resource investment. The GPRS claims that failure to allocate investment on the basis of a rational analysis of prevailing conditions has led to very high levels of deprivation in some parts of the country. A disproportionate *per capita* investment in Accra has dramatically skewed opportunities, life styles and quality of life in favour of this metropolitan area to the disadvantage of those living elsewhere. The northern parts of the country suffer enduring high levels of poverty (figure 3.1b). Poverty has deepened and become more intractable in the Northern, Upper East and Central Regions.

According to the GPRS, the geographical variations of extreme poverty ranged from 2 percent in Greater Accra to 59 percent in Rural Savannah, which spans much of the Northern, Upper West and Upper East administrative regions. The 1 percent increase in extreme poverty between the two census periods in rural savannah is in contrast with the no-change in extreme poverty in the urban savannah. The increase in overall poverty across these three administrative regions is therefore largely a rural phenomenon, a case of the poor getting poorer, and an indication that policy measures to alleviate poverty could not have taken hold in this region of the country.

***Regional variations in level of deprivation***

The GPRS document point out variations in levels of deprivation by scores based upon twenty-seven parameters. Locational priorities in this section are based upon quantified measures of consumption and quantified factors leading to or exacerbating poverty. The GPRS uses seven areas related to poverty. Priorities are defined by less favourable conditions. The subject areas are as follows:

- Consumption
- Health
- Social Infrastructure
- Education
- Economic Infrastructure
- Household Budget

Another case in point presented by the GRPS is the gender analysis of education by region (table 3.2).

*Table 3.2 Gender analysis of education by region*

| Number of Males to Every 100 Females by Indicator | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | National | Rural | Urban |
| Literacy rate | 170 | 192 | 149 |
| Never attended School | 59 | 64 | 45 |
| Primary school not completed | 74 | 79 | 60 |
| Junior Secondary completed | 150 | 164 | 132 |
| Senior Secondary completed | 256 | 417 | 201 |

| Gender Analysis of Education: Regional Analysis of Individual Characteristics in the Rural Areas | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Western | Central | Greater Accra | Volta | Eastern | Ashanti | Brong Ahafo | Northern | Upper East | Upper West |
| Literacy rate | 210 | 241 | 183 | 161 | 170 | 211 | 250 | 414 | 201 | 196 |
| Never attended School | 37 | 44 | 63 | 50 | 51 | 54 | 53 | 83 | 86 | 90 |
| Primary school not completed | 90 | 71 | 97 | 81 | 104 | 45 | 43 | 252 | 332 | 100 |
| Junior Secondary completed | 211 | 218 | 217 | 154 | 145 | 159 | 176 | 395 | 145 | 176 |
| Senior Secondary completed | 300 | 600 | 240 | 277 | 463 | 91 | 833 | 440 | 247 | 190 |

| Gender Analysis of Education: Regional Analysis of Individual Characteristics in the Urban Areas | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Western | Central | Greater Accra | Volta | Eastern | Ashanti | Brong Ahafo | Northern | Upper East | Upper West |
| Literacy rate | 146 | 178 | 130 | 146 | 156 | 166 | 169 | 235 | 193 | 110 |
| Never attended School | 42 | 36 | 43 | 36 | 33 | 49 | 55 | 55 | 39 | 72 |
| Primary school not completed | 46 | 89 | 45 | 66 | 37 | 47 | 77 | 148 | 112 | 83 |
| Junior school completed | 137 | 161 | 113 | 160 | 140 | 130 | 146 | 230 | 182 | 120 |
| Senior Secondary completed | 274 | 303 | 180 | 230 | 175 | 258 | 279 | 139 | 203 | 79 |

*Source: GPRS 2003*

## 3.5 Profile of the Northern Region (the study area)

The primary objective of the profile is to present a picture of the Northern Region and to answer the basic questions like: who are the poor in the region and why are they poor. As shown above, the national average of poverty is estimated at 39 percent while in the Northern Region it is 69 percent, Upper East Region 88 percent and the Upper West Region 84 percent. The next poorest region is the Central Region at 48 percent. The situation is not one of normal poverty but a critically precarious existence (figure 3.5). Low life expectancy, low educational standards, high infant mortality rates and the high incidence of emigration especially of the youth to other parts of the country, further entrench a vicious cycle of poverty in the north.

*Figure 3.5 A typical picture in northern Ghana - girls carrying fuel wood for cooking*

*Photo: courtesy of Christian Children's Fund, Tamale, Ghana*

### *3.5.1 Geographical, political and demographic characteristics*

Looking at figure 3.1a, the Northern Region can be easily mistaken for northern Ghana. The regions comprising northern Ghana; the northern regions as they are called (Northern, Upper-East and Upper-West), constitute 40 percent of landmass of Ghana (see figure 3.1) but are less densely populated. The Northern Region alone occupies a land area of about 70,373 sq. km, representing 30 percent of the total land area of the country. It is by comparison the largest administrative region in the country. Cutting through the country, it is boarded on the west by the republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to the east by the republic of Togo, to the north by Upper-East and Upper-West Regions, and to the south by Brong-Ahafo and Volta Regions. The Black Volta

River runs along the southern boundary of the region, while the White Volta River cuts the region into two halves at Yapei and Nasia. Its geographical features are mostly low lying, except in the north-eastern corner with the Gambaga escarpment and along the western corridor. The land is drained by the tributaries of the Volta Lake: Rivers Nasia, Daka, Oti, the Black and White Volta covering over a third of the whole land mass of the 70,390km big enough to swallow up other regions like Volta, Ashanti, Western and Greater Accra put together; thus called the mother of all Regions. The vegetation cover is guinea savannah with grasses interspersed with short trees. The vegetation is however dense in the south but thins out northwards. The region's soils are classified into four main groups most of which are suitable for crop production: deep medium and heavy alluvial soils, moderately deep and light alluvial soils, moderately deep and well drained soils, and moderately deep, well-drained and concretised soils.

According to the 2000 national population census, the region has a population of 1,820,806, which represents about 9.8 percent of the country's total population. It has a growth rate estimated at 2.7 percent, which is above the national average of 2.6 percent. The population is predominantly rural i.e. 74.5 percent of the total population live in communities of less than 200 people. This is a noteworthy statistic for the study, because of the relationship that has been established between rural settlements in developing countries and poverty (cf. Chambers, 1986). Almost 95 percent of all settlements in the region contain fewer than 500 people. According to the previous (1984) National Population census, the population of the region is 1,164,583, comprising 49.53 percent male and 50.47 percent female. Population density varies from some of the least densely populated areas such as West Gonja with a density of 4 persons per sq. km to over 70 persons per sq. km. in the Savelugu-Nanton area, which is far above the national average. The average population density in the region is about 26 persons per sq. km.

The Northern Region is one of 10 administrative regions in Ghana. The administrative headquarters of the region is Tamale. The region is made up of 13 administrative districts, and four traditional political systems based on ethnicity and chieftaincy. The traditional authorities are seated in Yendi, Damongo, Bimbilla, and Nalerigu. These traditional political democracies coupled with their claim to land and tutelage have often been the major cause of inter-ethnic disputes and conflicts in the region. The region is made up of many ethnic groups each with fairly distinct cultural practices and identity. Long distances separate the district capitals from each other and from the Regional Capital. The region has 23 parliamentary constituencies. There are more than 15 ethnic groupings in the region with four paramountcies, representing the four major ethnic groups of Dagomba, Gonja, Mamprusi, and Nanumba. Other ethnic groups include Komkombas, Chekosis, Bimobas and Vaglas.

There are diverse religious affinities in the region: Moslems, Christians; Traditional/Animists and others.

### *3.5.2 Socio-Economic characteristics: opportunities and challenges*

The 1987 –1988 Living Standards Measures Survey found that the savannah areas of Ghana, particularly the rural savannah, were over-represented among the poor. The urban and rural savannah combined constituted 25.4 percent of the population but 54.2 percent of the poorest 10 percent and 41.5 percent of the poorest 30 percent (Glewwe & Twum-Baah, 1991). The three Northern Regions are the most under resourced, just as the incidence of malnutrition in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions (Sarris & Shams 1991).

Surveys have reported a correlation between employment status and poverty in Ghana. The First Ghana Living Standards Survey (1987 - 1988) found that 85 percent and 87 percent of the 'vary poor' respectively were self-employed but only 4 percent and 6 percent respectively were in government employment. This finding confirmed the view that a government job was relative way out of poverty. Poverty was also greatest among non-cocoa farmers with only 6 percent and 18 respectively in the 'very poor' and 'poor' engaged in cocoa farming (Roe & Schneider, 1992).

According to Mr. E. A. Debrah[2], the region's economy is largely agrarian. The three northern regions together account for 14 percent of agriculture output (Roe & Schneider 1992), have one main crop cycle, and the least rainfall in the country. Food crop and livestock farming is the mainstay of almost the entire population of the region. A small section of the population is engaged in petty trading, light manufacturing, and small-scale agro-processing.

***Agriculture***: Over 70 percent of the population are engaged in agriculture. The region has about 7 million hectares of flat arable land with 70 percent of this available for agriculture. The agricultural activities include: Crop and livestock production, and Fishing, agro-forestry and agro-processing. The major crops grown in the region are maize, millet, sorghum, cotton, yam, groundnuts, beans, cassava and cashew. Vegetables grown include tomato, okra, pepper, and garden eggs. Livestock produced in the region are cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry.

***Manufacturing***: With reference to the huge agricultural potential of the region there is an enormous potential for agro-based industries.

[2] Ag Northern Regional Minister, briefing the Media on the Region in November 2002.

***Tourism***: The region has a wide range of tourist attractions, and is considered as part of the country's wide tourism market. These include; the Mole and Bui National parks, the Salaga slave market, traditional festivals, the Laribanga mosque, the mystic stone etc.

***Mining***: The region has a number of mineral deposits; notable among them are iron ore, gold, granite, clay and lime. It is reported that West Gonja and West Mamprusi district assemblies have received offers for the prospecting of gold in their districts (Debrah, ibid.). According to the minister, gold has been found in commercial quantities in the Bole District.

***Water***, which is so vital for human existence, is quite scarce in the Region. The region's topography and long dry season do not support perennial rivers. Most of the streams and rivers are seasonal; water is therefore a very scarce commodity during the dry season. The non-availability of potable water in a lot of communities accounts for the incidence of guinea worm in several districts.

The Ghana Water Company Limited caters for supply of potable water to Yendi, Damongo and Tamale. The installed capacity of water to Yendi and Damongo is inadequate to meet the demands of the people. Water is therefore only pumped between 6 – 8 hours daily. Supply of water to the rural communities is mainly through Community Water and Sanitation Agency in collaboration with a number of NGOs e.g. CIDA, EU and UNICEF. The daily demand for water in Tamale is far above the daily production of 4.3 million gallons. Consequently Tamale is on a rationing system.

***Electricity***: According to the acting Regional Minister, all the 13 district capitals have been connected to the national grid. Otherwise settlements not lying along the main line of the national grid have no electricity. This constitutes large parts of the region.

***Education***: The acting Regional Minister admitted that low literacy rate is one of the main problems responsible for the slow development of the Region. The low literacy rate according to the Minister is due to the following factors:

- Low School enrolment
- Poor educational infrastructure
- Inadequate staffing
- Poor parental interest in the education of their wards
- Inadequate furniture
- Poor supervision and management

*Statistics of Basic Schools Enrolment -Northern Region (2001):*

| Level | No. of Schools | Enrolment: | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Male* | *Female* | *Total* |
| Nursery School | 445 | 25,567 | 25,158 | 50,725 |
| Primary School | 1.465 | 28,252 | 96,852 | 225,104 |
| Jr. Sec. Sch. | 319 | 29,888 | 15,873 | 45,761 |
| Senior Sec. Sch. | 32 | 13,166 | 5,380 | 18,546 |

*Source: office of the Regional Minister, Tamale.*

Figures released by the Population Office in 2000 indicate that the Northern Region has 587,849 children between the ages 1-9 years. The above statistics reveals that the Region has 47 percent of children of school going age actually in school. The region lies below the national average.

***Pupil-Teacher Ratio:*** The table below clearly indicates that the pupil teacher ratio in Northern Region is above the national figure.

| | *2000* | *2001* | *National* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nursery/Kindergarten | 46:1 | 59:1 | |
| Primary Schools | 36:1 | 45:1 | 33:1 |
| Junior Secondary School | 19:1 | 22:1 | 20:1 |

*Source: Office of the Regional Minister, Tamale*

**Health**

Health facilities in the region are inadequate to totally meet the health needs of the people. The greatest constraint to health delivery service in the Region according to the Minister is inadequate numbers of skilled health personnel. The table below amply demonstrates this.

*Staff establishment No at post 2000 2001 2002*

| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doctors | 85 | 33 | 31 | 28 | 57 |
| Nurses | 1239 | 716 | 730 | 732(+85) | 422 |
| Pharmacists | 26 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 18 |
| Lab. technicians | 59 | nil | nil | 10 | 49 |

*Source: office of the Regional Minister, Tamale*

**Under 5 Mortality Rate** Severest conditions are experienced in the following Regions below the national average of 110/1000 in ascending order of severity. This situation is said to correlate with the high incidence of self- reported malaria

| **Region** | **Rate/1000** |
|---|---|
| NORTHERN | 170 |
| UPPER EAST and UPPER WEST | 157 |
| CENTRAL REGION | 141 |
| BRONG AHAFO | 130 |

The highest Maternal Mortality Rate is recorded in the region, as is the lowest percentage of married women using modern family planning methods; the lowest levels of supervised delivery; the lowest percentages of fully immunised children, and the highest levels of stunted children under five years old.

***HIV/AIDS:*** The region has not been spared by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to the regional minister, two sentinel surveillance sites puts the prevalence rate among women attending antenatal clinics at 1.0 percent in 2000 and 1.4 percent in 2001. Among blood donors the prevalence rate was 1.1 percent in 2001. Even though in comparison to other regions this is low, there is no room for complacency. It is on record that awareness is almost universal but translating this to attitudinal change is still poor.

***Guinea Worm Disease***: Since the inception of the Guinea Worm eradication programme in 1989, the region has recorded more cases than any other region in Ghana. At the close of 2001, the region reported 2,929 (62 percent of Ghana's total) and is reportedly the most endemic spot globally outside of Sudan. Among the many challenges facing eradication efforts in the region are the negative attitudes towards preventive measures, dispersed nature of the settlements, low potable water supply and poverty.

**Transport and communication**

Road Network: The region's road network consists of highways, feeder roads and urban roads. Feeder roads link villages and small towns, while highways link large towns and district capitals. Urban roads are limited to municipalities, cities and towns.
***Highways***: Northern Region has 2,225 km of highways representing about 16.6 percent of the national total and the largest network of highways in the country. Out of this however 1402 km or about 63 percent is in poor state as at January 2001.
***Feeder Roads***: The total length of identifiable feeder roads as at January 2001 was 5,920.78 km out of which 1550.58 km (27 percent) was maintainable and 4,370 km (73 percent) non-maintainable. The status of Telecom Network in the region (with its scattered settlements) needs a lot of improvements.

**Environmental issues**

The Northern Region is undergoing rapid environmental degradation due to bad land management practices such as over grazing, indiscriminate felling of trees, bush burning and invasion of alien herdsmen. Apathy, ignorance and the inability to enforce laws account for this sad state of affairs.

**Bush fire:** Overall destruction to human life and property by bush fires is on the decline as compared to the early 90's. However bush fires continue to destroy the environment and threaten human lives and property. It appears the enforcement of the bush fire law 229 is a problem. Chiefs, Tindanas, elders and the Assemblies are being requested to assist in the enforcement of the law and to arrest perpetrators.

**Governance and Security**

Policing coupled with a good judiciary system is the principal ingredient of good governance. In the Northern Region with an area of 70,000 Sq. km, there are only 7 Police Districts and 28 Police Stations with a total number of 622 personnel. With a total population of 1.8 million, the Police – population ratio is 1:2,857 or 1:111 sq. km. in relation to the land area. The situation makes easy the escalation of tensions and insecurity in the region, because the police personnel are simply out numbered, over stretched and may be overwhelmed in times of conflict. As in the case of the police, the judiciary seems to be present only in Tamale, the regional capital. The High Court, the Regional Tribunal and the Circuit Court are the only ones operating in the region while courts in the districts are practically non-existent mainly because there are no magistrates/judges and other judicial personnel.

***Regional Priorities by Poverty Level, Service or Facility***

A basis for prioritising to achieve relative equity and to rectify seriously adverse conditions is provided below in relation to consumption, health, social infrastructure, education (table 3.3) and economic infrastructure

## 3.6 Approaches to poverty reduction in Ghana

Prior to the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) there was the Structural Adjustment Programme which gave birth to the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD). PAMSCAD was developed as a short term action programme to address the immediate problems of the poor and vulnerable groups arising from structural adjustment process. Kwabena Donkor (1997) in his discussion of the "Structural Adjustment and Mass Poverty in Ghana" talked about three major concepts or approaches to poverty in mainstream thought:

- Subsistence approach

- Basic needs approach
- Relative deprivation

According to Donkor (ibid.), it has been argued that these three definitions or concepts are not sensitive to the experiences of the developing world. He quotes Vic George who argues that "definitions of poverty used in advanced industrial societies are not sensitive enough to cope with breadth and depth of deprivations in the third world countries".

*Table 3.3 Government spending on education*

| | 2000* | 2005 |
|---|---|---|
| % of total government spending on education | 16.4%** | 19.5% |
| % of total education spending on: | | |
| - Primary | 31.9% | 36.0% |
| - Pre-school | 6.6% | 6.6% |
| - Junior secondary education | 18.8% | 19.8% |
| - Secondary education | 15.1% | 13.8% |
| - Technical and vocational education and training | 1.1% | 2.4% |
| - Teacher training | 5.0% | 4.0% |
| - Tertiary education | 13.3% | 10.3% |
| - Non formal education | 1.3% | 2.0% |
| - Special education | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| - Management | 6.3% | 5.0% |
| - O/w basic (pre-school, primary, JSS, non formal) | 58.6% | 64.4% |
| Gross primary school enrolment rate | | |
| – Total | 77.6% | 82% |
| – Girls | 71% | 80% |
| Gross primary school enrolment for: | | |
| – Northern region | 45.8% | 55.8% |
| – Upper East region | 48.5% | 58.5% |
| – Upper West region | 50.7% | 60.7% |
| % of Primary Schools with Pre-school | 50% | 100% |
| % of Districts with Model SSS | | 100% |
| Share of primary classrooms in each of three Northern regions increases to 30% | 20% | 30% |
| Gross junior secondary school enrolment rate | 61% | 65% |
| Gross secondary school enrolment rate | 17% | 25% |
| Primary school drop out rate at primary: | | |
| – Girls | 30% | 20% |
| – Boys | 20% | 10% |
| P6 pass rates for Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) at mastery level for public schools: | | |
| – English | 8.7% | 11.0% |
| – Math | 4.0% | 6.4% |
| Transition rate from P6 to JSS1 | 96% | 98% |
| Transition rate from JSS to SSS | 35% | 40% |
| Children reached by alternative education in: Accra, Kumasi, Three northern regions | | 100,000 |

* 2000 or most recent year
** Revised budget November 2001

*Source: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003*

The Subsistence approach is the oldest and has its origins in the Poor Law regimes of nineteenth century Britain. According to Donkor (1997), the reference point under the Poor Laws was crude and largely limited itself to bread and bread-flour measurements, although some Parishes[3] routinely made significant allowances for other necessities. A family was deemed to be poor if the family income was "not sufficient to obtain minimum necessaries for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency"[4]. A family under Rowntree's formula was treated "as being po0r if their income minus rent fell short of the poverty line. Although allowance was made in the income for clothing, fuel, and other items, this allowance was very small and food accounted for much of the greatest share of the subsistence" (Townsend 1993).

The subsistence approach became the standard approach both to the measurement and conceptualising poverty not just in the first three decades of the last century in Britain but by extension to all former British colonies including Ghana, where the Guggisberg Ten Year Development Plan (1920 – 1930) saw "development " as a pre-requisite for moving subjects of the colony from poverty.

Although the history of the subsistence among former British colonies is best known in India and perhaps South Africa, it was also very important in Ghana. The subsistence approach is not just a historical import from Britain, but visible in the position of international organisations, such as the World Bank and the IMF on poverty in the developing world. They all rely on the "poverty line" developed "by estimating the minimum income required to provide for adequate nutrition while allowing for a proportion of total expenditure for non-food items". To some extent, this sanctioned in the US too, and still remains centrepiece of measuring poverty today (Townsend 1993).

The subsistence approach is however not without shortcomings. The most critical for the purpose of this study is the implicit assumption that human needs stop at the physical: food, shelter and clothing. Townsend (1993), and Lister (1990) argue that human needs also include the social. Human beings are social beings expected to perform socially and economically demanding roles as responsible citizens; parents, husbands and wives, and workers. Human beings are equally not just consumers but producers of goods and services as well as active participants in the complex social, economic and political relationships (Townsend, 1993).

Relative Deprivation is essentially incomplete as an approach to poverty, and supplements [but cannot] the earlier approach of absolute dispossession. The maligned biological approach, which deserves substantial reformulations but not

[3] The smallest unit of local government administration in England and Wales
[4] Rowntree 1901, p.86, quoted in Donkor, 1997

rejection, relates to this irreducible core of absolute deprivation, keeping issues of starvation and hunger at the centre of the concept (Sen, 1981).

To classify a person or even a group as poor by virtue of their inability to meet a norm, or a set of norms has its own conceptual and empirical problems. How can one define such a set of norms? How can one for instance quantify an agreed minimum of clothes, food and shelter needed to sustain life in universalist terms when the body functions of individuals are influenced by age, sex, height, weight etc., indices that are not constant even for the individual? And what of an individual who has the resources to meet the set of norms but does not do so either because of ignorance or wilfulness? This is the critical issue in the Northern Region. Is such a person to be considered poor? And how does one quantify values that a community holds dear? It is worth noting that poverty is more than insufficient resources to surmount physical deprivation. There are social and psychological effects of a ramifying character which prevent people from realising their potential. Additional resources are required to meet these equally 'basic needs.

## 3.7 National effort and major policy instruments at poverty reduction

Ghana's strategic policy framework for the poverty reduction strategy takes its legal strength from the 1992 constitution and the subsequent long-term plan, dubbed "Vision 2020". Article 34 to 41 of the 1992 constitution clearly outlines the directives of state principles and national development. The relevant provisions in Article 36 which deal with development objectives are as follows:

1. The State shall take all the necessary action to ensure that the national economy is managed in such a manner as to maximise the rate of economic development and to secure maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every person in Ghana and to provide adequate means of livelihood and suitable employment and public assistance to the needy.

2. The State shall in particular take all necessary steps to establish a sound and healthy economy whose underlying principles shall include:
   i. The guarantee of fair and realistic remuneration for production and productivity in order to encourage production and high productivity;
   ii. Affording ample opportunity for individual initiative and creativity in economic activities and fostering an enabling environment for a pronounced role of the private sector in the economy;
   iii. Ensuring that individuals and the private sector bear their fair share of social and national responsibilities, including responsibilities to contribute to the overall development of the country;

iv. Undertake even and balanced development of all regions in Ghana, and in particular improve conditions of life in rural areas, and generally redressing any imbalance in development between rural and urban areas;

v. The recognition that the most secure democracy is the one that assures the basic necessities of life for its people as a fundamental duty.

With the backing of the constitution, the overriding aim of the government's economic development programme is the reduction of poverty and general improvement in the welfare of Ghanaians. The strategic framework for poverty reduction which was developed in 1995 lays emphasis on economic growth, integration and rural development, the expansion of employment opportunities, and improved access by the rural and urban poor to basic public services such as education, health care, water and sanitation, and family planning services. The principal objectives of the strategy are:

1. A reduction in the incidence of poverty in both rural and urban areas;
2. Strengthened capabilities of the poor and vulnerable to earn income;
3. Reduced gender and geographical disparities; and
4. A healthier, better educated and more productive population.

The long-term vision for Ghana is that by the year 2020, Ghana will have achieved a balanced economy and middle-income country status and standard of living. Specifically the vision of Ghana is a country in which:

1. Long healthy and productive life for all individuals is the norm, with access to an enlarged range of choices for employment, shelter and leisure.
2. The benefits of development are equitably distributed and gross deprivation and hard core poverty eliminated.
3. National income is growing at least 8 per cent per annum, compared with the present average of 4.5 per cent.
4. Population growth is reduced from its present level of about 3 per cent to 2 per cent per annum, thereby allowing real income per head to rise to more than four times the 1995 level.
5. Solutions to socio-economic problems of the individual, the community and the nation are recognised and sought within the domain of science and technology.

Specific national development efforts aimed at poverty reduction are discussed below:

***Institutional framework***

After the consultative group meeting on Ghana held in Paris, France in 1995, the government of Ghana established the institutional framework for co-ordinating poverty reduction initiatives countrywide as a way of avoiding duplication and reducing waste. The inter-ministerial committee on poverty reduction (IMCPR) which

is the highest policy making organ on all issues relating to poverty reduction in Ghana was thus established in 1995. The IMCPR is composed of all ministers responsible for the social sector (including health, education, employment and social welfare), local government and rural development, agriculture and infrastructure. Additionally, the heads of National Council for Women and Development (NCWD) and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) are also members of the IMCPR. The chairman of the IMCPR is the minister of finance.

Similar structures have been instituted at the district and sectoral levels. These are the District Planning Coordinating Units (DPCUs) of the District Assemblies (DAs) and Policy, Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PPMED) of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) have the responsibility for co-ordinating poverty reduction activities and technically mainstreaming poverty reduction into policies and plans.

***Previous poverty related plans***

As the current situation and problems described above didn't arise over night, the GPRS was preceded by a series of plans, which placed emphasis on poverty reduction and human development, namely:

*Making People Matter: A Human Development Strategy for Ghana* (1991)

*The National Development Policy Framework*[5]*,* (1994)

*Vision 2020: the First step* (1995), a five year policy statement later developed into the *First Medium Term Development Plan 1996-2000,* (MTDP).

In 2000, an *Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (I-PRSP) was produced. The final version: the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy was prepared over a period of two years in response to the changing circumstances in the well-being and poverty situation of Ghanaians. As noted earlier, the GPRS is said to represent comprehensive policies, strategies, programmes, and projects of the Kuffour Government to support growth and poverty reduction over a three-year period (2002-2004).

## 3.8 The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy: Growth and Prosperity

Ghana's current strategic policy framework for the poverty reduction strategy takes its legal strength from the 1992 constitution and the subsequent long-term plan, dubbed "Vision 2020". Article 34 to 41 of the 1992 constitution clearly outlines the directives of state principles and national development.

[5] 1 Later renamed *Vision 2020*

- The GPRS claims to represent comprehensive policies, strategies, programmes, and projects to support growth and poverty reduction over a three-year period (2002-2004). The main goal of the GPRS is to ensure sustainable equitable growth, accelerated poverty reduction and the protection of the vulnerable and excluded within a decentralised, democratic environment (table 3.4).

*Table 3.4 Poverty Reduction Targets*

| | 2000* | 2005 |
|---|---|---|
| **Core Poverty Indicators** | | |
| Incidence of poverty | 39% | **32%** |
| Incidence of extreme poverty | 27% | **21%** |
| Real GDP growth rate | 3.7% | **5%** |
| Real GDP per capita growth | 1.4% | **2.4%** |
| Gross primary school enrolment rate<br>Total<br>Girls | <br>77.6%<br>71% | <br>**82%**<br>**80%** |
| Under-five mortality rate | 110/1000 | **95/1000** |
| Maternal mortality rate | 200/100,000 | **160/100,000** |
| Children under-five underweight | 25% | **20%** |
| Total Fertility Rate | 4.6 | **4.2** |
| **Supplementary Indicators** | | |
| Incidence of poverty among food producers | 59% | **46%** |
| Incidence of poverty in:<br>Northern<br>Upper East<br>Upper West | <br>69%<br>88%<br>84% | <br>**60%**<br>**75%**<br>**70%** |
| Consumer price index (end year) | 40% | **5%** |
| Agricultural growth rate | 3.8% | **5%** |
| Infant Mortality Rate | 56/1000 | **50/1000** |
| Criterion Reference Test (mastery level) for public primary schools<br>English<br>Math | <br>8.7%<br>4.0% | <br>**11%**<br>**6.4%** |
| Gross junior secondary school enrolment rate | 60% | **65%** |
| Households with access to safe water<br>Urban<br>Rural | <br>70%<br>40% | <br>**78%**<br>**54%** |
| HIV/AIDS behaviour indicator – condom use<br>Female<br>Male | <br>6%<br>14% | <br>**20%**<br>**30%** |

*Or latest year.

*Source: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003*

According to the document this will be achieved by

- ensuring economic stability for accelerated growth
- increasing production and promoting sustainable livelihoods
- facilitating direct support for equitable human resource development
- providing special programmes in support of the vulnerable and excluded
- ensuring gender equity
- ensuring good governance and the increased capacity of the public sector
- the active involvement of the private sector as the main engine of growth and partner in nation building.

### *3.8.1 Strategies of the GPRS*

According to the GPRS (2003), strategies for poverty reduction include prudent fiscal and monetary policies; private sector-led industrial production through the application of science and technology; sound and sustainable management of the environment; promotion of commercial agriculture using environmentally friendly technologies; agro-based industrial expansion; export promotion based on diversification and competitive advantages; increased investments in social services; and accelerated decentralisation as the key mechanism for policy implementation. A summary of the strategies pertaining to each of the objectives identified above is presented as follows:

***Strategies for ensuring macroeconomic stability***

Strategies to achieve macroeconomic stability are to include prudent fiscal, monetary, and international trade policy measures. The fiscal measures will focus on conversion of short-term debts into long-term instruments, reduction in fiscal deficits, and more effective revenue mobilization. Monetary policy will focus on effective monetary management to ensure low and competitive interest rates, single digit inflation, stable exchange rates, reasonable spread between lending and savings rates, and the establishment of long-term capital market. International trade measures will focus on mechanisms to diversify exports and enhance productivity to ensure international competitiveness to achieve a sustainable level of foreign reserves.

***Strategies for increasing production and gainful employment***

The strategy for improving production and generating gainful employment is based on the creation of an enabling environment for improved private sector-led agro-based industrial production propelled by the application of science and technology and the promotion of tourism. This will involve improvement in the capacity of the private sector to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to increase production and generate employment. This will include:

- Easing access to farming inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides, high yielding seed varieties and irrigation-based farming techniques.

- Development of marketing channels for agricultural produce.
- Encouraging the development of non-traditional exports to expand industrial production and gainful employment.
- Accelerated growth of small and medium scale manufacturing industries through among others, the diffusion of appropriate technologies and vibrant training programmes.
- Utilising information and communication technology to further enhance our development efforts.
- Addressing the gender dimensions of production including access to credit.
- Vigorous encouragement of tourism to take advantage of both its foreign exchange earning capability, and its direct and indirect employment creation potential.
- Ensuring the sustainability of resources on which production is based.

The programme on production and employment will seek not only to improve public sector delivery of programmes but also provide sufficient incentives to stimulate private sector activities in increasing and sustaining production of basic staples, production of selected export crops, and vigorously expand employment in sectors such as tourism which can employ and enhance the skills of people in geographical areas where the poor reside most.

***Strategies for human development & provision of basic services***

The GPRS acknowledges that significant gaps exist in access to and utilisation of basic services by the poor, particularly with regard to health, HIV/AIDS control, population management, water and sanitation, and education and training. Gaps in health are reflected in high levels and wide geographical disparities in outcomes, particularly under five and maternal mortality and child malnutrition. Diseases that affect the poor, including malaria, guinea worm and tuberculosis continue to exist in considerable dimensions. Quality of care, at current levels and the cost discourages many poor people from consulting qualified health personnel. The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has received attention from government and its partners. The immediate challenges include the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS and the provision of care for persons living with AIDS and their families.

There are very limited choices on fertility regulation among poor families. These families tend to have large family sizes, which critically constrain sustainable poverty reduction. With regard to quality education, the constraints include poorly equipped and supervised public basic schools and the wide geographical disparities in access and outcomes. Other constraints are the limited relevance and participation of the poor in post basic education, constraints in regular and timely transfer of approved funds to the education sector and very severe management gaps.

The GPRS aims at removing key obstacles to access and utilisation, by the poor, of basic education, health care, population control, good drinking water, and improved sanitation. Access to basic education will mean the rehabilitation of dilapidated public school buildings, provision of basic school materials such as furniture, blackboards, chalks, and textbooks to public schools in deprived districts and training more teachers and providing incentives to teachers to stay in deprived areas. Improved basic health care for the poor will include bridging gaps in access to health, nutrition, and family planning services, ensuring sustainable financing arrangement that protects the poor, and enhancing efficiency in service delivery. Strategies for providing safe drinking water and sanitation include accelerated provision of bore holes especially in guinea worm endemic communities and accelerated provision of toilet facilities in poor communities.

***Strategies for special programmes for the vulnerable and excluded***

Special programmes for the vulnerable and excluded it is hoped will establish systems and provide resources to ameliorate conditions of extreme poverty and social deprivation. The focus will be on interventions that have not been mainstreamed including measures to promote gender balance and equity. These interventions will also be aimed at responding rapidly to the needs of those affected by natural and man-made disasters. This will involve expanding coverage of social security scheme, introducing mutual health insurance to cover majority of workers, developing systems that enforce the rights of the vulnerable especially the rights of children and women and preventing disasters and mitigating their impact on the poor.

***Strategies for good governance***

To ensure effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes and projects, steps will be taken to establish and strengthen the leadership and oversight functions of the Executive and Parliament. Communication between civil society, traditional authority and all branches of government will be institutionalised as a means of strengthening public policy management.

A major objective of the GPRS is to ensure that no Ghanaian is excluded from participation in governance, from protection of their civil liberties, from the pursuit of freedom and justice under the banner of the rule of law. To realise these objectives the GPRS will focus on ensuring:

- Timely access to justice for all;
- Transparency of Government decision making;
- Accountability and zero tolerance for corruption in both public and private sectors;
- Public participation in decision making;
- Decentralization of responsibilities;

- Observance of both rights and responsibilities; and
- Discipline and observance of laws, rules, regulations in both public and private sectors of the society.

### *3.8.2 Medium term priorities (2003 – 2005)*

Given the magnitude of funding required to implement the GPRS, it became necessary to prioritise the programmes and projects to ensure that financing can be secured and good progress made toward meeting the major poverty reducing targets set out in the GPRS. Even if the necessary funding could be obtained, government's spending patterns over the past three years indicate a low capacity of the economy to absorb such a high level of funding. This not only reinforces the need for prioritisation, but calls for re-engineering government machinery to enhance its ability to absorb higher levels of spending and implement the required activities while ensuring efficiency, value and quality. Programmes have been carefully prioritised to provide a balance between growth and direct pro-poor objectives. The process of selecting programmes and projects for the priority list was guided by four main factors:

- The results of the analytical and consultative work undertaken during the preparation of the GPRS,
- The need to continue current on-going programmes and projects which are fully funded,
- The relative importance of programmes to overall poverty reduction, and
- The vision of the government.

The priority programmes and projects, which span the five thematic areas, are infrastructure development and modernised agriculture based on rural development to ensure increased production and employment; investments in education, health, and sanitation to enhance delivery of basic social services; upholding the rule of law, respect for human rights and the attainment of social justice and equity to enhance good governance; and private sector development through macro-economic stability and streamlining of public bureaucracy.

#### *Infrastructure*

The objective is to open up the country, introduce competition and create an enabling environment for the Private Sector. These priorities are consistent with the location analysis and are reflected in the sectoral elements of the GPRS.

#### *Modernized agriculture based on rural development*

Government's objective is to develop the country to become an agro-industrial economy by the year 2010. This will require the development of the rural economy.
The actions to be taken will include the following:

- Reform land acquisition to ensure easier access and more efficient land ownership and title processes.
- Serve as a catalyst to assist the private sector to increase the production of grains such as rice, maize and tubers so that we can achieve food security. This will include extension and research services, irrigation facilities, and affordable credit to support the farmer.
- Encourage the production of cash crops such as cashew.
- Support the private sector to add value to traditional crops such as cocoa.

***Enhanced social services***

The objective is to enhance the delivery of social services to ensure locational equity and quality, particularly with regard to education and health services. This will be done through actions including the following:

- Change the educational system to ensure that there is uninterrupted education for all Ghanaians from pre-school to age 17 to create the opportunity for human development and reduce poverty.
- Develop model senior secondary schools in every district in the country.
- Develop model health centres for every district in the country.
- Phase out the cash and carry system and replace it with a more humane and effective system of financing health care.

***Good governance***

The objective is to ensure the rule of law, respect for human rights and the attainment of social justice and equity. This is to lead to the strengthening of the three arms of government, the executive, judiciary and the legislature. The actions to be taken include the following:

- Support the work of Parliament to enable the institution to play its role for better governance.
- Restructure the civil service to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and related performance-based compensation.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Attorney General and the judiciary in terms of numbers, technology, training and equipment in order to ensure the appropriate rule of law.
- Enhance social order by improving the police service. Equip them with vehicles, communications, equipment and technology, enhance training and increase their numbers.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in resource generation, allocation and management.

***Private sector development***

The objective is to strengthen the private sector in an active way to ensure that it is capable of acting effectively as the engine of growth and poverty reduction. This is to lead to the creation of wealth at a faster rate in order to reduce poverty in a sustained manner. The actions to be taken will include the following:

- Work with the private sector, both foreign and domestic as an effective development partner.
- Provide active assistance through the divestiture programme, financial support and streamlining government bureaucracy.

### *3.8.3 Human resource development and basic services*

This is a very important component in poverty reduction and indeed in the GPRS. Support for the development of human resources and basic services will remove key obstacles to access and utilisation by the poor and will focus on five areas: education, skills and entrepreneurial development for the youth, HIV/AIDS, population management, basic health, and safe drinking water and sanitation. In addition, targeted programmes will be outlined to address issues that are not mainstreamed in sector strategies. Significant gaps exist in access to and utilisation of basic services by the poor, particularly with regards to education, health, HIV/AIDS control, population management, water and sanitation.

The major issues with regard to education are quality, equity and efficiency. Quality education is constrained by poorly equipped and supervised public schools, wide geographical disparities in access and outcomes to basic education, limited relevance and spread of vocational and technical education and severe management gaps including unaccounted for resources, gaps in redeployment of teachers and frequently late arrival of school material. Constraints in secondary and tertiary education also require redress, given low enrolments and their impact on economic development.

Gaps in health are reflected in high levels and wide geographical disparities in outcomes, particularly under five and maternal mortality and child malnutrition. The three northern regions and the Central region are particularly disadvantaged. Diseases that affect the poor most: malaria, guinea worm and tuberculosis, continue to exist in considerable dimensions. Poor quality of care discourages many poor people from seeking state-provided health services.

Underlying constraints in the provision of quality health care are efficiency and financing gaps. These include limited decentralisation, inadequate motivation of professional staff, ineffective supervision and monitoring, and weak links between facilities and communities. Financing constraints are reflected in weaknesses in the

implementation of the user-fee exemption policy, yet-to-be established links between the exemption policy and the proposed national health insurance scheme, concentration of considerable resources at the regional level and limited success with partnership with other government agencies and the private sector.

With HIV/AIDS, the immediate challenges include ensuring implementation of the Ghana HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework: 2001-2005 and providing care for persons living with AIDS and their families. Very limited choices on fertility regulation among poor families (who generally have large families) remain a critical constraint to sustainable poverty reduction.

Provision of water to majority of the rural population and the urban poor also poses a considerable challenge. In addition, action is urgently required to ameliorate the extremely unfavourable environmental health conditions. Adequate management of solid and liquid waste is particularly essential in bringing down morbidity and mortality among the poor.

***Education***

The priority interventions under the GPRS are as follows:

- School improvement
- Teacher development, deployment and supervision
- Reformed management
- Special partnership programmes with non-state actors

The strategy places a renewed emphasis on developing basic education. Access to basic education will be supported by early childhood development and alternative education for children out of school, with emphasis on the hard-to-reach areas of northern Ghana, remote rural areas and urban slums. The intention is to ensure uninterrupted education for all Ghanaians from pre-school to age 17 to reduce poverty and create the opportunity for human development.

Ghana has a *Free* Compulsory Basic Education programme (fCUBE) based on which the Ministry of Education is currently preparing an Education Sector Plan (ESP) to reflect the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The ESP includes a framework to access international support under the Education for All/ Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI). The EFA/FTI will enable Ghana achieve its medium term education targets (Table 3.5).

The strategy on education addresses the lack of progress in the 1990s in increasing enrolment and raising quality. The strategy focuses on fundamental issues, including wide inequalities in access; shortfalls in spending; extremely limited and restrictive non-salary expenditures; and the acute management gaps, particularly in teacher deployment and supervision, distribution of learning material, retention of qualified

personnel and coordination of donor support. Education of the youth is to be linked with the labour market through expansion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), special skill acquisition programmes and tertiary education, particularly through a greater role of private providers.

*Table 3.5 Targets for education*

| | 2000* | 2005 |
|---|---|---|
| % of total government spending on education | 16.4%** | 19.5% |
| % of total education spending on: | | |
| - Primary | 31.9% | 36.0% |
| - Pre-school | 6.6% | 6.6% |
| - Junior secondary education | 18.8% | 19.8% |
| - Secondary education | 15.1% | 13.8% |
| - Technical and vocational education and training | 1.1% | 2.4% |
| - Teacher training | 5.0% | 4.0% |
| - Tertiary education | 13.3% | 10.3% |
| - Non formal education | 1.3% | 2.0% |
| - Special education | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| - Management | 6.3% | 5.0% |
| - O/w basic (pre-school, primary, JSS, non formal) | 58.6% | 64.4% |
| Gross primary school enrolment rate | | |
| – Total | 77.6% | 82% |
| – Girls | 71% | 80% |
| Gross primary school enrolment for: | | |
| – Northern region | 45.8% | 55.8% |
| – Upper East region | 48.5% | 58.5% |
| – Upper West region | 50.7% | 60.7% |
| % of Primary Schools with Pre-school | 50% | 100% |
| % of Districts with Model SSS | | 100% |
| Share of primary classrooms in each of three Northern regions increases to 30% | 20% | 30% |
| Gross junior secondary school enrolment rate | 61% | 65% |
| Gross secondary school enrolment rate | 17% | 25% |
| Primary school drop out rate at primary: | | |
| – Girls | 30% | 20% |
| – Boys | 20% | 10% |
| P6 pass rates for Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) at mastery level for public schools: | | |
| – English | 8.7% | 11.0% |
| – Math | 4.0% | 6.4% |
| Transition rate from P6 to JSS1 | 96% | 98% |
| Transition rate from JSS to SSS | 35% | 40% |
| Children reached by alternative education in: Accra, Kumasi, Three northern regions | | 100,000 |

* 2000 or most recent year
** Revised budget November 2001

*Source: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003*

To develop capabilities in all regions of the country, the GPRS wishes to focus on better prioritisation and targeting as well as developing stronger partnerships with the

non-state sector. Efficiency measures are also critical to achieving outcomes in education, particularly in the elimination of the severe management gaps at the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ghana Education Service (GES) and improving donor coordination.

### *3.8.4 Relief package for the northern regions*

It is reported by government sources that the three northern regions (Upper East, Upper West and Northern) are targets for a comprehensive relief package due to the widespread and endemic poverty. The incidences of poverty are 88 percent, 84 percent and 70 percent respectively in these regions. Under-five mortality is three times as high as in the best region, Greater Accra. Community, district and regional level consultations have identified the following as urgent relief requirements for the three regions:

- Support for provision of basic agriculture infrastructure, particularly small dams, storage facilities and feeder roads in the rural food producing areas of the regions.
- Provision of marketing support, including formation of marketing co-operatives for food producers
- Urgent social protection through targeted programmes for skill development and credit delivery
- Support implementation of compulsory basic education, particularly provision of school infrastructure, learning material and the attraction and retention of teachers
- Supply of basic obstetric care equipment to all public health centres and clinics
- Provision of potable water to all guinea-worm endemic communities
- Targeted support activities to bring down malaria, diarrhoea, malnutrition and to expand immunisation.

## 3.9 Reflections on the GPRS decision-making model

World Bank recipes to development in developing countries are no strangers to critique. The GPRS and the HIPC initiatives of the World Bank have come up against a lot of debate in the press and among civil society organisation. The critiques were echoed at the Second Development Dialogue Series (DDS II) - May 23, 2003, Accra International Conference Centre. At the conference, Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey [6] observed that despite the extensive consultations held with civil society groups in the formulation of the GPRS, many citizens and organisations still felt excluded from the deliberative and dialogue processes of GPRS decision-making. The persistence of exclusion he said can partly be attributed to the methods that were applied to the

consultation with civil society in the preparation of the GPRS. The participatory methods applied were more oriented towards enquiry, public hearing, and validation of information and proposals, than towards deliberation, thinking through options, analysing costs and benefits, making trade offs and compromises in order to mobilise broad-based support and collective action in support of the strategy. Thus, although the pre-formulation GPRS consultation process yielded valuable quantitative and qualitative information that aided planning and programming, it failed to generate effective collective action in support of the subsequent implementation of GPRS programmes and projects. This partly explains why civil society actors have not been pro-active in the implementation of the GPRS.

Apart from reinforcing exclusion, the participatory methods applied to GPRS consultations also had the tendency of defining the membership of civil society narrowly. The term is often used to refer to development NGOs and CBOs. Civil associations of professionals like accountants, auditors, economists etc., whose members have undergone professional training and possess the requisite skills and experiences for accountability practices and advocating the strengthening of weak links tend to be excluded from the so-called consultation with civil society. Consequently, those civil society actors with the knowledge, skills, and abilities for strengthening existing links of accountability also feel excluded from the GPRS system.

Finally, the existing model of governance of the GPRS process has maintained the dichotomy between state and non-state actors in a manner that reinforces the exclusive system of macro-economic decision-making that the principles of the CDF and Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers sought to reform. Whilst the national government and its international development partners meet regularly to deliberate and dialogue on the policy issues of implementation and how to address them, as exemplified by the Multi Donor Budget Support approach, there is no such mechanism for regular dialogue and deliberation with civil society actors. The above-mentioned factors have had the cumulative effect of weakening civil society actors' role in strengthening the links of accountability.

***The role of the District Assemblies***

Ghana has, since independence struggled to establish a workable system of local level administration. After over 30 years, the 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act 462 of 1993 appears to provide a suitable basis to end Ghana's struggle for the establishment of an appropriate framework for managing the national development agenda. In just over a decade, district assemblies have become accepted by ordinary people as the institution to look up to for most of their basic

[6] Dr. Akwetey is Executive Director of the Institute for Democratic Governance, Accra.

needs. Indeed the expectation has been so high that only a few districts, if any, appear to be meeting the peoples aspirations and expectations. Though much has been achieved in attempts to decentralize state machinery, much more remains to be done, particularly in matching the responsibilities entrusted to district assemblies with resources required to make meaningful impact.

***The current state of the District Assemblies***

With all the 110 district assemblies firmly established for more than a decade, Ghana could have by now been counting on local governments to spearhead the implementation of the country's development agenda. However the recently completed fiscal decentralisation study sums up quite well the state of district assemblies and the gaps that remain to be filled before districts are able to perform their statutory functions satisfactorily. Some of the pertinent points listed include

1. Overlapping responsibilities between central and local government bodies
2. Some department of MMDAs not yet established
3. High turnover of personnel, particularly due to transfers
4. Lower that optimum internal revenue generation and over reliance on common fund transfers
5. Need to streamline mode of channelling donor funding to development programmes at district level
6. Inadequate co-ordination between development plans, budgets and financing
7. Weak financial management and auditing systems
8. Outdated financial legislation.

Notwithstanding these constraints, district assemblies are expected to achieve the desired results.

## 3.10 Conclusion

From the foregoing chapters (one and two) it is safe to conclude that there is a gross mismatch between the escalating poverty and capacity to fight poverty and improve

the living standards of the poor in a sustainable manner. The demand and supply of technical infrastructure as well as managerial and technical skills in Ghana is great. Though the high incidence of poverty in the region attracted the NGOs, and the decentralisation programme operational, Regional and District Councils and other local actors in development (local NGOs) and the foreign NGOs are faced with a lot of challenges in reducing poverty.

The Northern Region is endowed with enormous potential for economic development which until they are earnest and tapped will remain development challenges. The region though not a major mineral producer has a number of mineral deposits and many potentials. Agriculture undoubtedly offers the region its greatest advantage. There are therefore great potentials for investors in the tourism sector.

There is however a lack of real capacity as of now to take these roles to the fullest extent. Many civil society actors do not have clear strategic priorities, ability to mobilise resources and define their role and standards of performance; notwithstanding their knowledge of their wider development circumstances. Few are aware of significant contribution that some donor agencies and foreign partner NGOs (from the North) make and how this is organised and delivered. The ability of the local actors to play a role in poverty reduction depends greatly on their relationship with their foreign counterparts. In the development of the GPRS due consideration has been given to the bi-directional nature of the relationship between economic, governance and political factors. But as noted earlier there is little about the implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The overall picture of the diversity of socio-economic conditions and the disparities in the incidence of poverty in the country suggests that there can be no excuse for complacency in confronting poverty. The rural nature of poverty has not changed much since the early 1990s.

# Chapter Four

## Non-Governmental Organisations and Poverty Reduction

# Chapter Four
# Non-Governmental Organisations and Poverty Reduction

## 4.1 Introduction

> *The State has been largely ineffective in reaching the poor. Although the government's role in providing infrastructure, health, and education services is recognised by the poor, they feel that their lives remain unchanged by government interventions*
>
> Deepa Narayan, 2000.

Three groups of agencies are involved in the design and implementation of poverty reduction efforts: the State (governments), Official donors and Non-Governmental Organisations (cf. figure 4.4). As remarked earlier, it remains to be seen though who is doing what and how in the fight against poverty. The focus of this study is however the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This sense of responsibility or what has come to be known as development co-operation has flourished to include civil society organisations[1] to address poverty. Until recently, the activities of NGOs in developing countries were widely considered to be peripheral to the mainstream efforts of governments and official aid agencies to solve the problems of world poverty. And there has been a growth of interest in what has been variously termed non-governmental, non-profit and voluntary organisations, in both the industrialised and the aid-recipient countries (Salamon, 1994; Smilie, 1995).

With the widely acknowledged link between poverty and Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations, the call to sharpen focus on poverty reduction has gained momentum, and with it the prominence of civil society organisations[2]; voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations (local and foreign). NGOs are increasingly being put forward as a vehicle for development, for social action, and as a means for popular participation in social problem-solving, especially in developing countries. NGOs are becoming a measure of citizen's participation, and in turn, the participation of civil society of which they are a part is seen as a critical measure of democracy.

[1] The inclusion of civil society organisations in development meant the opening of a previously state-monopolised planning process in some countries.

[2] Civil society is described as a non-governmental sphere in which a multitude of (sometimes competing) groups of people articulate their interests and specific concerns autonomously, and is the umbrella sector for Voluntary or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

NGOs have been on the development stage longer than the World Bank, the United Nations or any other official aid agency (Clark, 1991). It is widely acknowledged that the days when they played minor parts; doing works but largely irrelevant to the overall plot have long gone. This has changed over the years and they have moved to centre stage. A central strength of NGOs according to Narayan (2000) is their ability to bring in or access additional financial, technical, and often political resources.

However, criticism in recent years of these organisations is growing; especially in the face of the commitment and race to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Depleting development assistance and amidst increasing poverty makes the case even more urgent. The search for solutions is not just about ideas and concepts, but achieving sustained economic growth, and investing in people to reduce poverty and enhance the continent's (Africa) ability to compete globally, argues a major new report published by the World Bank (2000) and co-signed by four other institutions working extensively on Africa.

"Breaking the poverty cycle" (Box 4.1) is one of many appeals[3] in response to poverty and the complexities of the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This chapter though not another of such appeals, acknowledges the well-informed account of a foreign journalist (Feargal Keane) of some of the complexities foreign NGO development workers face in SSA. To continue with the full length of account from The Independent Newspaper (2002) might however mislead or obscure the aim of this chapter and the report of the study in general. However with the help of this account, the background of foreign NGOs (FNGOs) interventions and indeed the study is presented, be it from the view of a foreign journalist. Keane's story highlights the big picture which brings together the perception and motivation of the "Northern" NGOs (expatriate staff) moving into the continent.

[3] Launching the Independent's Christmas Appeal 2002, Fergal Keane a BBC special correspondent reflects on his vast experience in Africa, a continent that suffers on an almost unimaginable scale, but whose vitality continues to survive against the odds.

*<u>Box 4.1.</u> "Breaking the poverty cycle: The Christmas Appeal"*

"Khartoum airport was dark when we arrived. I was 23 years old and Africa was the continent of my dreams. From the Ladybird book on David Livingstone through to Alan Paton and Chinua Achebe, I had read everything about Africa I could find. And, from the age of 13, I had cherished the prospect of this moment of arrival. Now, standing on African soil for the first time, I was assailed by a sense of surprise. Nothing in all my reading had prepared me for this first collision with the difference of the place. I had set out for Africa with many warnings. In Sudan, I should avoid any offer of alcohol like the plague. An Italian priest had just been given many lashes for fermenting some altar wine. Don't drink the water. Don't trust anybody. Be prepared to pay lots of bribes. Never criticise the government if you're talking to a local. The Europe I'd left behind saw Africa through two alternate prisms: it was a place of wild and dangerous people who were to be avoided at all costs; or a place of wild and delightful animals to be viewed from the safety of an air-conditioned minibus. I was tired and still sick with the inoculations I'd been given in a rush two days before. Sleepless that night, I lay awake listening to the endless barking of dogs and, somewhere far off in the city, heard the sound of a woman ululating. Shortly after dawn, I rose and went to the window. Placing my hand against the glass, I felt the heat of the day rising, pressing in against my air-conditioned cocoon. Looking out, I saw men leading packs of donkeys and camels along the road. It was noisy and chaotic, but I felt indescribably happy.

There was vitality to this great motion outside my window that swept away my fears. Life. Such amazing life, I thought to myself. Now, almost 20 years later, after covering genocide, coups and famines, after witnessing the holocaust of Aids, I am still ambushed by this vitality every time I set foot on the continent. Yes, vitality and an extraordinary gift for renewal. The Angolan liberation leader and poet, Agostinho Neto, wrote once: "My people they are walking/always walking." It is, for me, an emblematic image of Africa – people constantly on the move on roads, pathways, and jungle trails. They are moving from the village to the city, from the frontlines to the refugee camps, people who can carry everything they own because what they own is so little. Walking, always walking.

We were four hours into a hellish journey across the desert in the direction of the Red Sea coast when we spotted the first refugees. Sudan was in the grip of famine. Neighbouring Ethiopia was in the middle of a civil war with the peoples of Eritrea and Tigre. I was sent to the region to cover both of these miseries. Back then, almost everywhere you might have wanted to travel in Africa was experiencing some kind of upheaval. The Four Horsemen were wearing out their mounts galloping back and forth across the continent. They have been at it pretty much relentlessly ever since.

Over the next fortnight, I would see the starving and the dying in places so remote and strange that you felt as if you'd crossed the line into a parallel universe. I swam in the Red Sea with limbless soldiers from an Eritrean war hospital; drove hundreds of kilometres by night to avoid Ethiopian bombers with an old guerrilla who kept one hand on the steering-wheel while another cradled his assault rifle. I saw foreign aid for sale in the markets of Sudan, and wondered for the first time (but, sadly, not the last) what aid was doing to the people it purported to help. And, on a hillside inside Eritrea, I sat in a tent and glimpsed the lingering death of a boy burned by napalm. His name was Ande Mikhail and he had been visiting the market with his sister when the Ethiopian planes attacked. A doctor told me that the child had been caught out in the open and burned from head to toe. I am pretty sure that he died soon after we left. How many of Africa's children have I seen die since then, in South Africa, Rwanda, Angola, Congo, Burundi, and many more places? There have been too many to count but enough to haunt me for life.

I set out to write this piece determined not to become bogged down in the misery of much of African life – the hunger, the Aids, the plummeting commodities prices, the book-bereft schools and the drug-starved clinics, the incalculable burden of Third World debt. Instead, I want to try to do honour to the resilience and humanity that are Africa's truest features. But I cannot face the past two decades of my African experience without feeling an enervating sense of sorrow. There is much sorrow, and its inevitable bedfellow, anger. How can the heart not recoil in anger at what we have done and what we have allowed to happen? Two snapshots from very different places:

I am standing in the United Nations compound in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. It is early in the terrible month of June 1994. In the previous seven weeks, hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus have been exterminated in a campaign waged by a Hutu extremist clique that has taken power. The city is a charnel house.

By now, we have seen enough of the rotting corpses and the blind hatred at the roadblocks to understand that this is no civil war in which civilians are "inevitable" casualties. This is genocide, what international law calls the attempt to wipe out "in whole or in part" an ethnic group. So I am surprised to hear a Nigerian UN officer tell me that he can't do more rescue missions because the United States won't send armoured vehicles. Get this clear: the UN wasn't asking for American troops to stop the worst genocide since the Nazis. It only wanted to rent some vehicles so that the lightly armed but brave peacekeepers from Ghana and Tunisia could try to save some Tutsi lives. The Nigerian said that the Americans were haggling over rental terms. It was, he reasoned correctly, just an excuse to avoid having any involvement.

Snapshot number two: South Africa in the southern winter of 1986. It is June on the high veld, and the winter fires in Soweto have blanketed the great township in smog. I get as far as the first police and military roadblock and am turned back. This is the beginning of the State of Emergency, and the powerful fist of the security forces is crushing black opposition. I call at the home of a leading civil-rights activist who tells me to go away. She expects the security police to arrive at any minute and I could be arrested along with her. The following morning, I go to Khotso House, headquarters of the South African Council of Churches, and interview some boys who have just been released from security- police custody.

They are children but it's clear that many have been brutally beaten. One boy is sitting in the corner, crying non-stop. Later, an activist called Joe Seremane asks me why the world is sitting on its hands. Why are Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher still willing to do business with the odious regime of P W Botha? Then Joe asks whether I have any idea what it's like for an African child to see their father arrested, dragged out of bed and made to stand naked before his family while the white cops laughed. Of course, this, he assures me, is the very least of what is happening. State terror is rampant.

When I try to examine the history of our relationship with Africa, the words that always come up are "responsibility", "complicity", "indifference". And when I say "our", it's worth giving a roll-call of the main parties. After the British left, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya became bywords for corruption and brutality. Botswana was a notable exception to the rule. The French gave us the delights of the Central African Republic (with the child-murdering "Emperor" Bokassa), not to mention Chad, Gabon and Congo Brazzaville, with their wretched dictatorships. The Portuguese left their African colonies in a rush, after centuries of brutal exploitation; the Belgians bequeathed to history the singular gifts of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. The Germans and the Spanish had a lesser but also inglorious role.

The colonial powers never really left Africa. They came back in a different guise, as mining corporations and oil companies, still with an eye to the main chance, and with the welfare of ordinary Africans, as ever, far off their radar. For nearly three terrible decades, the West and the countries of the Eastern Bloc used Africa as a proxy battleground. The plump Soviet and East German advisers represented a new breed of colonist. They mouthed the language of internationalism but kept their hands deep in Africa's pockets. Like their western counterparts, they helped to flood Africa with cheap weapons and advice on methods of killing and torture.

Under the realpolitik of Henry Kissinger, the Americans backed anybody who could whistle "The Star-Spangled Banner" and make it look like they were sincere. The continent was divided into a landscape of "our" and "their" sons-of-bitches.

I remember an extraordinary few days in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) in the early 1990s. Part of the army had mutinied against the dictator Joseph Désiré Mobutu, and I was dispatched on a charter plane to the capital Kinshasa. At long last, it appeared as if Mobutu, no longer of use to America now that the Cold War had ended, might be overthrown.

The streets were full of cheering crowds. "Mobutu c'est Lucifer!" they chanted. The élite DSP – Division Spéciale Présidentielle – was careering around the streets and seemed increasingly edgy. And then the strangest thing happened. Two foreign armies deployed in the capital, Belgian paratroopers and French legionnaires fanned out across the streets. The crisis abated and Mobutu returned from the sanctuary of his yacht on the river Congo. I will never forget the look of triumph on his face as he walked with an attitude of contempt through the waiting throng of journalists at his palace overlooking the city. In those days, Mobutu was still good news for the French and the Belgians as they competed for influence in central Africa. As I write, the Congo is still a battleground, with foreigners ravaging its resources as they have done for nearly two centuries.

But those with a greedy or malign intent have not solely caused the damage inflicted on Africa. I keep thinking of Graham Greene's line from The Quiet American – 'No man ever had better motives for all the trouble he caused'. In our attempts to alleviate the misery that has been a consequence of war, corruption and natural disaster, we have created new problems. The problem isn't so much about the creation of a dependency culture: anybody who opens their eyes in Africa quickly learns to marvel at the resourcefulness of the peasant farmer or township hawker. Nor does it only have to do with the misappropriation of bilateral aid by corrupt governments. It is about being willing to decolonise aid. In all of the great disasters – Biafra, Karamojong, Ethiopia, Sudan, Mozambique, Goma – the western aid-worker has been the icon of compassion. The Africans are relegated to an eternal supporting role. Aid is something "we" give to "them". Whether it is food for the starving or training for farmers, the westerner is invariably cast in the role of the benevolent donor.

In saying this, I know that many of the aid agencies ... have recognised the crisis. At Oxfam, Tree Aid and Amref, the policy is to use aid and training as a means to empower the beneficiaries. I would advocate going a step further. The foreign non-governmental organisations should make it their aim to get out of Africa over the next decade. They can do this by handing over to local workers, so that by the year 2012, say, Africans control the administration and distribution of development aid. We will still be called upon to recognise a common humanity by donating to appeals such as this, and we will still need to pressure our leaders to give Africa fair trade terms and relief from the crippling burden of debt. I have long believed that real change in Africa will come from outside the presidential palaces and army barracks. It will be driven by a resurgent civil society, with its brave human-rights workers, newspaper editors, social workers and doctors. The Africa of white angels of mercy is an anachronism. The real heroes are the Africans who cannot, but, ..." (Fergal Keane, 2002)

With their prominence on development cycle, the 1990s witnessed a significant increase in efforts to assess the performance of non-governmental, non-profit development organisations (NGOs). This trend can be traced to a number of factors. In the new millennium at least, the consensus to fight the growing poverty in the developing countries, both within and without the framework of the MDGs; the depleting funds to meet cost for development, make performance-assessment and accountability a major theme in international development. Consequently it has become imperative for all parties involved to be accountable as well step up performance.

In development studies, the new interest in NGOs has arisen partly in response to the perceived failure of state-led development approaches during the 1980s and the 'new policy agenda' which combines neo-liberal economic policy prescriptions with that of 'good governance' (Robinson, 1993). It also reflects the post-Cold-War policy context in which international NGOs have been brought centre stage in relief and emergency efforts (Fowler, 1995).

Literature on NGOs has been concerned with the growth and evolution of NGO roles in development and relief work, with policy issues of NGO relations with the state and donors and with community-based action and social change (Clark, 1991; Drabek, 1987; Farrington, 1993). In general NGO literature has focused on NGO roles within the aid industry (e.g. Clark, ibid; Fowler, 1997; Hulme and Edwards, 1997), and on development practice (Carroll, 1992; Korten, 1990; Smilie, 1995). Its tone, while sometimes critical of the attention currently being given to NGOs, is usually one which documents and suggests the potential of NGOs to transform development processes in positive ways (e.g. Clark, ibid; Edwards & Hulme, ibid; Korten, ibid.).

Having presented the framework for poverty reduction within which FNGOs are expected to operate in Ghana (Chapter two), this chapter introduces NGOs and examines literature on their interventions in poverty reduction. The more the interest and growth of NGOs, the deeper the discussion of their definition and role in poverty reduction. This chapter endeavours to treat these issues from the point of view of a planner (in keeping with the faculty of planning[4]).

## 4.2 Civil society and Non-Governmental Organisations

While some people marvel at the sudden interest in civil society organisations, others wonder what civil society is all about. Legend has it that the term was en vogue in the 18th and 19th centuries, but had long fallen into disuse, and became a term of interest to historians primarily. Civil Society is together with state and market, one of

the three ‘spheres’ that interface in the making of democratic societies. Civil society broadly speaking is a reference to the unorganised mass of the people as contrasted with government: all social institutions of a non-state-administrative nature (thus including business associations and representatives of communal, regional and national assemblies). Civil society is thus said to be the sphere in which social movements become organised. The organisations of civil society, which represent many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests, are shaped to fit their social base, constituency, thematic orientations (e.g. environment, gender, human rights) and types of activity. They include church -related groups, trade unions, co-operatives, service organisations, community groups and youth organisations, as well as academic institutions and others[5].

The remarkable growth of interest in this sector is consequently attracting more people: while economists and development planners laud their role in alleviating rural poverty and helping communities adapt to modernisation, political scientists are re-evaluating the role of the voluntary associations in building vibrant civil societies and their relationship between society and state. Scholars of international relations have begun to examine the impact of NGO coalitions and networks on international politics and their role in the formation of an international civil society and some activists and analysts are considering the relationship of NGOs to social movements and their ability to both empower people and contribute to alternative discourses of development and democratisation (Fischer, 1997).

For Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics, London, the answer is obvious but full of implications. For a long time, social scientists believed that we lived in a two-sector world. There was the market or the economy on the one hand, and the state or government on the other. “Civil society refers to the set of institutions, organisations and behaviour situated between the state, the business world, and the family. Specifically, this includes voluntary and non-profit organisations of many different kinds, philanthropic institutions, social and political movements, other forms of social participation and engagement and the values and cultural patterns associated with them”.

It all looks well today scholars say, but for a while, ‘society’ was pushed to the sidelines and ultimately became a very abstract notion, relegated to the confines of sociological theorising and social philosophy, not fitting the two-sector worldview that has dominated the social sciences for the last fifty years. Likewise, the notion that a ‘third sector’ might exist between market and state somehow got lost in the two-sector view of the world. Of course, there were and are many private institutions that

[4] Planning focuses on the practical implementation of policies discussed in development studies.
[5] (UNDP, 1993, *UNDP and Organizations of Civil Society.. Building Sustainable Partnerships,* New York: UNDP, *quoted in* Bebbington and Riddell, 1995).

serve public purposes-voluntary associations, charities, nonprofits, foundations and non-governmental organisations-that do not fit the state-market dichotomy. Yet, until quite recently, such third-sector institutions were neglected if not ignored outright by all social sciences, except in development.

Such a short-sided approach has had disastrous consequences for our understanding of how economy and society interact, of which the inability of the social sciences to predict and understand the fall of communism in central and eastern Europe is just one of many examples. One of the most important events of the 20th century escaped the attention of mainstream social science until after the fact. Looking back, it is to be seen how events in central and Eastern Europe were indeed instrumental in bringing the topic of civil society to the attention of social scientists in the West. An example of a civil society organisation with striking history is the ANC (African National Congress) which brought down the apartheid regime in South Africa. The ruling party today in South Africa was originally a civil society organisation. With the focus now on the “third world”, it remains to be seen how research and practice would serve the fight against poverty.

### 4.2.1 Defining NGOs

With this much interest in NGOs, it is said to be easier talking about their deeds than defining them. The acronym (NGO) could mean different things to different people in different circumstances: Neo-Government Organisations? Non-governable organisations? Governments’ puppets, DINGOs, RINGOs, NGONGOs, INGOs - the literature is full of acronyms (table 4.1.). The critics of the term NGO also abound: Jörg Bergstedt for example refers to it as “nicht nur eine Organisationsform sondern auch eine Denklogik”; a business strategy (“Handlungsstrategy”) (Bergstedt 1999). Subsequently, question persists about how NGOs can remain independent and radical in their approaches and avoid being ‘sucked into the system’ (Harris, in Poulton and Harris, 1988:5). The box (Box 4.2) below presents a selection of definitions of NGOs from various sources.

So a definition is essential and has been adequately accentuated in the John Hopkins Non-profit Sector Series: “Defining the Non-profit Sector” (Salamon and Anheier 1997) - a source this researcher is proud to have at his disposal, among others to meet this demand. Firstly it has to be said that NGOs, Voluntary Organisations or Non-Profit Organisations have successfully established themselves as major players in the development game. With respect to the other players (State and Market), they are seen as the middle sector or a Third sector with the primary goal of:

- Correcting the inefficiencies of the State, and
- Checking the profit excesses of the Market, all in the interest of (and sometimes on behalf of) the common people (or civil society)

Box 4.2. Definitions of NGOs

They include many groups and institutions that are entirely or largely independent of government and that humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial objectives. They are private agencies in industrial countries that support international development; indigenous groups organised regionally or nationally; and member-groups villages…-World Bank

Non-Governmental Organizations are also regarded as non-profit voluntary organizations that promote development initiatives outside the framework of commercial enterprises, political parties, the state and parastatal organizations.

-Rajesh, 1991

Non-profit making voluntary, service-oriented organization either for the benefit of members (a grass root organisation) or other members of the population (an agency)

It is an organization of private individuals who believe in certain basic social principles and who structure their activities to bring about development to communities that they are serving.

Social development organisations assisting in empowerment of people.

An organization or group of people working independent of any external control with specific objectives and aims to fulfil tasks that are oriented to bring about desirable change in a given community, are or situation.

An independent, democratic, non-sectarian peoples' organization working for the empowerment of economic and /or socially marginalized.

An organization not affiliated to political parties, generally engaged in working for aid, development and welfare of the community. -

Global Development Research Centre, 1988

### 4.2.2 The question of scope

So much has happened since this development that it is simply not enough to stop at definitions of NGOs such as:

> *"Professional (though not always salaried), intermediary non-governmental groups channelling financial, technical, intellectual and further support to other groups within civil society"* (Bebbington and Midin, 1996).

This term which is supposed to imply that NGOs keep their distance from officialdom; that they do things voluntarily that governments will not or cannot do, have now even gathered more momentum and pillars, namely the Civil Society ("Zivilgesellschatlicher Kräfter"). There is also much discussion about their identity (non-profit) and the health of their relationship with Governments, and "the Multis", posing new parameters for any definition. And appreciation and prominence of Civil Society has made the discussion further tense.

In the John Hopkins' Comparative Non-profit Sector Project (1997), which has grown into a major authority on the Non-profit sector, the term voluntary and non-profit are used interchangeably. John Clark (1991) also states that non-governmental organisations is the formal name for voluntary organisation. There is however an underlying difference of terminology and set-up (legal) from region to region (USA, UK and mainland Europe); an issue addressed by as well by the John Hopkins' Comparative Non-profit Sector Project in their Cross-National Analysis.

These differences really only enhance the terminological profusion and entanglement, culminating in a "conceptual challenge" (Salamon and Anheier 1997). The first challenge involved in forging a definition is evident in the great profusion of terms used to depict this range of institutions –

"Non-profit" sector
"Charitable" sector
"Independent" sector
"Voluntary" sector
"Tax-exempt" sector
"Non-governmental" organisations (NGOs)
"Associational" sector
"Economie sociale", and many more.

They are all said to be independent of the State and the Market, existing in the space between the Public and the Private Sectors; and (thus) collectively referred to some scholars as the "Third Sector" (Anheier ibid.). Against the background of the two traditional players in development: the State and the Market, this clarification is vital to understanding the non-governmental organisations as a new force, player and sector in development. Its position in this triangular existence, between the Public and the Private Sectors, partly makes up its identity. Salamon (1992) points out that each of these terms emphasises one aspect of the reality represented by these organisations at the expense of overlooking or downplaying other aspects. Each is therefore at least partly misleading. For example:

The ***Charitable sector*** emphasises the support these organisations receive from private, charitable donations. But private charitable contributions do not constitute the only, or even the major, source of their revenue.

The ***Independent sector*** emphasises the important role these organisations play as a "third force" outside of the realm of government and private business. But these organisations are far from independent. In financial terms they depend heavily on both government and private business.

The ***Voluntary sector*** emphasises the significant input that volunteers make to the management and operation of this sector. A good deal of the activity of the organisations in this sector in many countries is not carried out by volunteers at all, but by paid employees.

The ***Tax-exempt sector*** emphasises the fact that under the tax laws of many countries the organisations in this sector are exempted from taxation. But this term begs the question of what characteristics qualify organisations for this treatment in the first place. In addition, it is not very helpful in comparing the experience of one country with that of another, since it is dependent on the particular tax systems of particular countries.

***NGO (non-governmental organisation)*** is the term used to depict these organisations in the developing world, but it tends to refer only to a portion of what elsewhere is considered to be part of this sector - namely, the organisations engaged in the promotion of economic and social development, typically at the grass-roots level.

***Economie sociale*** is the term used to depict a broad range of non-governmental organisations in France and Belgium, and increasingly within the European Community institutions, but it embraces a wide variety of business-type organisations such as mutual insurance companies, savings banks, co-operatives, and agricultural marketing organisations that would be considered parts of the business sector in most parts of the world.

The term ***non-profit sector****,* more generally in use in the US, is not without its problems. These organisations sometimes do earn profits, i.e., they generate more revenues than they spend in a given year.

Underneath this profusion of terms lie a number of ambiguities about the exact scope and character of the entities properly included within this sector. Three such ambiguities mentioned by Salamon and Anheier (1997) are:

***Philanthropy* vs. *The non-profit sector****.* In the first place, a crucial distinction needs to be drawn between *philanthropy,* on the one hand, and *the private, non-profit sector,* on the other.

Too often, these two terms are treated interchangeably and the non-profit sector is considered essentially equivalent to private charity. In fact, however, philanthropy is really just a part of the non-profit sector.

- *The private nonprofit sector,* as the term will be used here, is a set of private organisations providing a wide variety of information, advocacy, and services.
- *Philanthropy,* by contrast, is the giving of gifts of time or other valuables (money, securities, and property) for public purposes. Philanthropy, or charitable giving, is thus just one form of income of private non-profit organisations. To be sure, some non-profit organisations have the generation

of charitable contributions as their principal objective. But these are not the only types of non-profit organisations, and private charitable contributions are not the only source of non-profit income.

***Sector vs. Sub-sectors: the "unit of analysis" problem.*** In the second place, there is considerable ambiguity about the appropriate unit of analysis to use in the definition of the non-profit sector. The concept of a "non-profit sector" suggests that there are sufficient commonalties among a significant number of different entities to warrant treating them as part of a single group or sector even though they may have numerous differences as well. However, as the discussion later will make clear, this is far easier in some countries than in others. More generally, the considerable variations that exist in the size, purpose, fields of activity, structure, and orientation of non-profit organisations raise serious questions about whether a true sector exists and cause some experts to restrict their attention to particular subgroups of organisations, such as "charities" as in the UK, or "NGOs" in the developing world.

***Formal vs. Informal institutions.*** A third ambiguity involved in defining the non-profit sector relates to the degree of organisational formality required of the entities considered part of it. In some countries (for example the United States), non-profit organisations are typically formally incorporated under state laws. In countries where legal incorporation is not permitted (for example, the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe), or where informal associations are the norm (for example, village associations in parts of the developing world and much of the non-profit sector in Italy), restricting the concept of non-profit organisation to entities that are formally incorporated or legally registered could artificially limit the scope and scale of the sector.

Hulme and Edwards (1997) make a distinction between NGOs, which are intermediary organisations engaged in funding or offering other forms of support to communities and other organisations that seek to promote development and grassroots organisations (GROs), which are membership organisations of various kinds. Other authors make the same distinction, but use different terms. For example, Carroll (1992) distinguishes between 'grassroots support groups' (which are NGOs) and 'membership support organisations'; GROs are also sometimes called 'community-based organisations (CBOs). Where does the difference between the two groups lie? Some scholars argue that that the most important difference lie in their accountability structures: GROs are formally accountable to their members, while NGOs are not. However many other authors use the term NGOs to cover all forms of non-profit organisations. The term northern NGOs is used to refer to NGOs with their headquarters in the north (that is OECD countries) and southern NGOs for NGOs with their headquarters in low-income and middle- income countries.

The idea has a long history, tracing back to Hobbes and Hegel. Its contemporary usage came into political science literature only quite recently. Synonymous or earlier terms are: pressure groups or, interest groups. In effect one cannot define NGOs (the voluntary Sector) without due reference to the much broader domain; civil society. There is considerable debate on what should be included under the rubric of “Civil Society”: While a consensus is yet to emerge, some restrict it to Voluntary organisations, and excluding the media.

## 4.3 The emergence of NGOs and Voluntary Organisations

The term Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) is said to be a modern creation with a more recent history than its origin is rooted in voluntary organisations, which have existed in different guises in both north and south well before the 20th century. The tag “Non-Governmental Organisation” was however first used at the founding of the UN. (Clark, 1991). Clark (therefore), as indeed many other scholars, use both names: Voluntary Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations interchangeably, although the latter is the more formally known tag today. While NGOs in the north gained prominence after World War I, their southern counterparts arose out of independence struggles. It is therefore little wonder that NGOs are almost synonymous with relief and development assistance (see figure 4.2).

They included the Catholic Church based Caritas and Save the Children Fund, who gained strength towards the end of and immediately after World War II. Hence Oxfam started in 1941, Catholic Relief Services in 1943 and the American Co-operative Agency for Relief Everywhere (CARE) in 1945. Initially these NGOs were engaged in relief work, primarily in war-torn Europe. They gradually shifted their attention to the Third World and also broadened it to include welfare activities - a natural extension of relief.

During the 1950s and 1960s the number of Northern NGOs multiplied and their focus moved progressively into development activities. They saw that relief attacked only the symptoms of poverty. To attack deprivation necessitated helping the poor increase their capacity to meet their own needs with the resources they control. The shift of location from the refugee camps, feeding centres and hospitals to the villages and slums where they let about establishing their projects opened the Northern NGO's eyes to the full reality of poverty (figure 4.1). In the first locations the symptoms of poverty are apparent, in the second it is the root causes.

At the start of this period their development work fitted into a conventional “modernising” school of thought - helping poor communities to become more like Northern societies by importing Northern ideas, Northern technology and Northern

expertise. Initially they were oblivious of their Southern counterparts, of village committees and other indigenous structures. They set up their own projects, with their own staff. But gradually many of them came to criticise the negative effects of the traditional development model and to seriously question their contribution to it. They started to shift to a new role, that of providing a service to the popular grassroots organisations and self-help movements. This work was characterised by its small scale, its local (or at least national) leadership, and its support for economic and political independence of the poor.

New political concepts emerging from intellectuals in the “developing world”, such as the Theology of Liberation, also greatly influenced NGO thinking during this period. Development theory, once dominated by northern practitioners, was becoming an indigenous process, led by the people themselves. In the “early days” there was homogeneity among NGOs. They more or less pursued a common agenda. But by the 1960s there had been a considerable fanning out. Some remained with their traditional activities, others progressed to new activities and analysis at different rates. And many Southern NGOs became more assertive. Up till the 1960s the NGO community was almost exclusively a Northern preserve, thereafter it has become increasingly a shared ground, albeit initially shared with Southern NGOs created by their Northern “Partners”.

### 4.3.1 NGO generations – Historical perspective

As noted above, NGOs have not emerged overnight. Most indigenous NGOs started out as small groups often with micro projects. As the NGOs began to build up their experience base and skills, they began to expand their coverage to village clusters, eventually moving to larger areas covering more issues and problems. With grassroots support, NGOs began to affect other institutions and to confront directly other social forces and groups. Largely inspired by Korten’s classification, Ignacio de Senillosa (in Kothari, 1999) puts forward four “generations” of Northern NGOs (also applicable to an extent to those in the south); according to their overall orientation (figure 4.2).

While ‘generation’ is a useful concept, it does have its limitations: the overlapping of different generations, the co-existence in many NGOs of characteristics that fit into more than one generation, the marked differences in how these have evolved in different countries, and so on. But the term nevertheless implies evolution and adaptation to the socio-economic context, and assumes that certain central decisions will be taken in order to meet a given organisation’s central objectives.

**First generation:** *welfarist* and characterised by emergency activities that began around 1945, the year in which the Nuclear Era began, the Second World War ended, and the United Nations was created; one year before the signing of the Bretton Woods Agreement from which the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development was born, and whose most important institutions are the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

**Second generation:** *developmental*, in that they promote local development in the south and raise public awareness in the North, taking 1960 as their starting point: the beginning of the neo-colonial dependency period.

**Third generation:** based on *partnership* with the south and protest in the north, and for which 1973 can be taken as their starting point, the year in which non-aligned countries proclaimed a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and which, paradoxically, thanks to higher petrol prices, which gave rise to the abundance of petro-dollars, began the period of southern indebtedness that resulted in the so-called debt crises of 1982 when Mexico complained that it could no longer service its foreign debt.

**Fourth generation:** based on *empowerment* in the South and *lobbying* in the North, and emerging from *1982.* Obviously, this overlaps with the previous generations and shares many of their characteristics. It is formed by those NGOs who, without abandoning their close co-operation with their Southern counterparts, prioritise the lobbying of opinion-makers and powerful groups as well as research and public awareness raising in their own countries.

The change processes of established NGOs and the emergence of new players likewise assume increasing diversity within the sector, and the growing specialisation of its members as well as ideological diversity among them. While the first generation is no worse than the fourth - it is vital to work for people's survival in situations of real need certain NGOs believe that certain characteristics and objectives of the latter make them better able to:

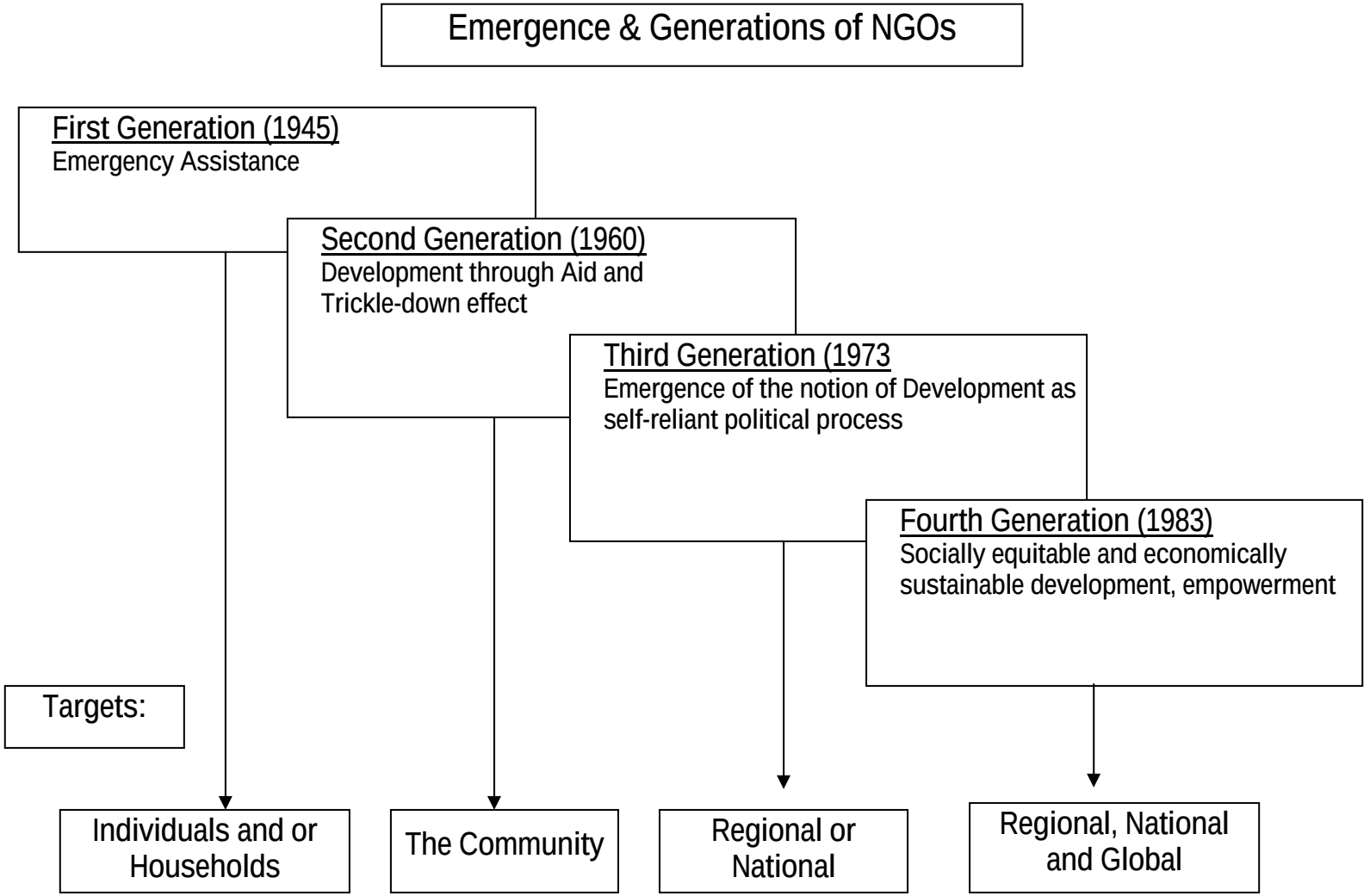
- contribute to bringing about structural economic and political changes in favour of those who are marginalised and impoverished throughout the world, in the belief that, as Jon Sobrino SJ argues, they frequently offer 'community against individualism, service against selfishness, simplicity against opulence', and can learn from their own efforts and others struggles for freedom'*;* and
- contribute to bringing about structural economic and political changes in favour of the environment to which we are inextricably linked, in that 'everything that happens to the earth will happen to the earth's children'

*Figure 4.1* *A party anti-poverty campaign poster in the rich industrialised North*[6].

*Photo: Author*

[6] Borsigplatz, Dortmund, Germany. Translation: Fight Poverty, not the Poor!

*Figure 4.2 Emergence & generations of NGOs*




*Source: Author's construct based on Kothari, 1999*

*Table 4.1 Types of NGOs*

| Type | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| International / Foreign | Operate in different countries and mostly have their headquarters in Developed countries |
| National | Operational area is limited to the country in which they are based |
| Community Based | Traditional self-help development oriented informal organizations, operate at community level |
| DONGOs | Donor Organized NGOs |
| Relief | Provide relief services to disaster or war stricken areas in the form of food, clothing medical care, temporal housing etc. |
| Service Providers | Welfare-oriented, emphasis on provision of basic socio-economic facilities for the poor & marginalized. |
| Empowerment NGOs | Development oriented emphasis on local organization empowerment, and capacity building known as Popular Education NGOs in Latin America. NGOs play a facilitative role |
| Support NGOs | Provide support for Grassroot NGOs or Community Based Organizations with varying orientations (empowerment or welfare orientation) through program planning, training, provision of inputs and evaluation. |
| Umbrella NGOs (NGO Networks) | Network with other NGOs on issues of common concern such as the environment, drug abuse and human rights. By networking, NGOs bring together their experiences to address issues with collective strength, advocacy and action. |
| Charitable orientation | Top-down paternalistic approach with low level of community participation in planning and implementation, as mostly found in the relief agencies |
| Participation orientation | Self-help promotion through community animation mobilization and involvement in implementation. |
| GRINGOs | Government Run, Inspired or Initiated NGOs, conduits for bi-lateral aid |
| BONGOs | Business Organized NGOs |
| Come N'GOs | They are noted for emerging spontaneously writing proposals for funding operating a few projects and then disintegrating |

*Source: Author's construct based on literature*

### 4.3.2 NGO stages of development

Referred to by some as “a non-government, associational, or “quiet” revolution” (Fisher 1997), many analysts have noted and commented on the scale of this growth in NGOs (1992; Clarke, 1993; Edwards & Hulme, 1996a; Fisher, 1993; Fowler, 1991; Fowler & James 1995; S. Kothari, 1993). The evidence of this growth is widespread and includes: the increased numbers of registered associations, the thousands of NGOs represented at international conferences, the increased proportion of development funding directed through NGOs, the attention paid to co-operation with NGOs by the World Bank and other international agencies, the highly publicised success of lobbying efforts of NGO coalitions, and the growing support provided to NGOs through global networks, including hundreds of World Wide Web sites.

According to Gariloa (Drabek, 1987), the past two decades have witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of NGOs operating in the third world but as well as in the north. This new type of organisation, motivated by a service objective and largely voluntary in nature, arose in many cases out of

a) societal conflict and tension
b) the need to respond more effectively to crisis situations in the face of the breakdown of traditional structures
c) ideological and value differences with the powers-that-be in the planning and implementation of development work, or
d) the realisation that neither government nor the private sector had the will, wherewithal or the capacity to deal with immediate and lingering social problems.

According to Drabek (1987) NGOs have followed a fairly well documented pattern of organisational development, passing through three stages of growth. The first stage is the formation and development wherein groups of individuals identify common needs and problems and organise themselves to respond collectively to these problems. Often the intervention is very micro in scope and immediate in time frame. Leaders are elected and the expectations of the membership are simply defined. The rules of the running of the organisation, however, are often not well defined. These in fact take second seat to short-range activities and projects.

The second stage is the consolidation stage. At this point, the NGO consolidates its gains. Leaders emerge from the core whose decisions and positions are respected by members. It is at this stage that the NGO is able to develop an expertise, whether this be a service or a product which can be utilised in favour of its beneficiaries. In fact, it is this ability to carry out its activities and projects effectively and efficiently that gives the NGO a distinctive competitive edge in carrying out its programs vis-à-vis other groups. Many NGOs remain at this stage, and if they eventually become inactive, it is due to the leadership’s inability to maintain membership interest in

pursuing the organisation's objectives or the ability to meet the changes in the environment in which they work.

Some NGOs however move on to the third stage - institutionalisation. Here it can be said that the NGO has all the requisites needed for its survival as a long-term organisation. Not only does it carry out its own programs and projects well, but it also has a certain strategic impact in its geographic locality. In fact the program becomes the model after which other NGOs and even government, pattern their programs. The NGO has a stable resource base, both internal and external, and has alliance and network linkages. Often this stage also marks an expansion in size and area of coverage of the NGO, but it is not the size that spells the difference.

All this leads to the idea that, over time, NGOs transform themselves into institutions, becoming permanent structures in a developing society. Alliance building and networking, very important indicators of the institutionalisation stage, lead to a further development – the growth of a NGO as a sector

*"Fundamentally, NGOs have to be seen as producers as well as consumers of knowledge. The packaging (form and content) of this knowledge must be such that it is widely usable for advocacy and development education as well as for development scholars and practitioners"* (Drabek, 1987).

During the last decade, the conception of world orders (Edwards and Hulme 1996b) has been encouraged by a perceived turbulence in world politics (R. Kothari 1993), the volatility of culturally plural societies, the acceleration of globalisation, and the sense that nation-states are no longer obvious and legitimate sources of authority over civil society. Through this period, local, regional and transnational collective action has attracted heightened attention from development practitioners, politicians, and social scientists. In the political space created by shifting interdependencies among political actors, by the globalisation of capitalism and power, and by the decline of the state, growing numbers of groups loosely identified as non-governmental organisation, (NGOs) have undertaken an enormously varied range of activities, including implementing grass-roots or sustainable development, promoting human rights and social justice, protesting environmental degradation, and pursuing many other objectives formerly ignored or left to governmental agencies.

## 4.4 Preference and mandate of NGOs: Contributory Factors

It is widely acknowledged that the significant global changes in the last decade are offering NGOs world-wide unparalleled opportunities to make a considerable contribution to the development (James, 1998). Concerns about cooperation with the NGOs have also been answered by the level of partnership between NGOs and

organisations like the World Bank. Their involvement is seen to contribute to sustainability and effectiveness (e.g. of World Bank-financed projects) by introducing innovative approaches and promoting community participation. It is also said to help expand project uptake and reach, and can facilitate greater awareness of diverse stakeholders views. Other factors according to Ignacio de Serillosa (1999) include:

- The disenchantment with and mistrust of officialdom.
- A greater awareness of certain problems that have both a local and global dimension-principally the increase in poverty and environmental degradation.
- The rapid globalisation of the world economy in the last two decades, as consequence of deregulation and privatisation policies.
- The spread of neo-liberalism, declining living standards among large sectors of the North a situation that lends itself to unsupportive or even racist attitudes towards the South, and a denial of the shared causes linking their poverty with ours.

When the World Development Journal came out with a volume on NGOs in 1987, Anne Drabek (1987) wrote that this was in recognition of the rapidly increasing involvement of NGOs in the development process, and that the idea of the volume of the volume was actually conceived more than two years earlier. Factors contributing to the trend she went on, included among others the perceived failure of official aid agencies - bilateral and multilateral - and of national governments to effectively promote development and to raise the standard of living world's poor; the unprecedentedly large financial contribution channelled through NGOs during the African famine that focussed attention on NGO's effectiveness in dealing with emergency and relief situation; and the donor country governments' ideological preference for „private sector" development and for the encouragement of pluralistic political systems. Not so clear though were the broader implications of this trend and what NGOs should be doing to prepare for the future: as Tim Brodhead (in Drabek) said, "to fashion change" rather than to react to „changing fashions". What Drabek perceived as apparent is all too obvious today and even more.

NGOs have become the "favoured child", of official development agencies, hailed as the new panacea to cure the ills that have befallen the development process (Edwards & Hulme 1996a), and imagined as a "magic bullet" which will mysteriously but effectively find its target. Sharp criticism of previous interventionist, top-down development efforts, widespread evidence that development strategies of the past few decades have failed to adequately assist the poorest of the world's poor, and growing support for development efforts that are sustainable and that include the participation of intended beneficiaries have stimulated existing development agencies to search for alternative means to integrate individuals into markets, to deliver welfare services, and to involve local populations in development projects.

However, the acceptance of NGOs by the development industry has been limited, and the transfer to them of some of the responsibility for the successful implementation of development efforts is not without risk to the autonomy and existence of NGOs. The appropriate role imagined for NGOs in development depends on the critical stance one takes toward the development industry. Critics of development can be situated within one of two general camps (Ferguson 1990). The first views contemporary development processes as flawed but basically positive and inevitable (Cernea 1988; Clark 1991, 1995). From this perspective, NGOs provide a means to mitigate some of the weaknesses in the development process. The second finds both the dominant development paradigm and the implementation of it fundamentally flawed.

According to RAPID[7] (2003) "Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in poverty eradication by empowering the poor so their voices are heard when decisions that affect their lives are made. Working in between the household, the private sector and the state, CSOs include a very wide range of institutions, including non-governmental organisations, faith-based institutions, professional associations, trade unions, research institutes and think tanks".

The ODI has been working with governments, non-government and private sector organisations in the north and south for the past 40 years is launching a new programme designed to promote improved contribution by CSOs to pro-poor national and international development policies.
The programme will focus on four outcomes:

- CSOs understand better how evidence can contribute to pro-poor policy processes;
- Regional capacity to support Southern CSOs is established;
- Useful information on current development policy issues, and how this knowledge can contribute to pro-poor policy, is easily accessible to CSOs;
- CSOs participate actively in Southern and Northern policy networks to promote pro-poor policies.

Questions about the mandate of NGOs are seldom, but not completely irrelevant or non-existent. In addition to the above acceptance and popularity, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 is cited as a good reference point (Kankwenda et al, 2000). At this summit, heads of states and leaders of more than 180 countries recognised the worsening problem of poverty across the world and committed themselves to take action to reduce it with the help of NGOs.

[7] Research And Policy In Development

## 4.5 Civil Society Organisations / NGOs in Ghana

There are various types of voluntary organisations in Ghana; typical products of distinct historical periods. Many traditional institutions existed well before western influence and urbanisation. Church-related organisations emerged largely in the early part of this century from missionary societies, often in close cooperation with the colonial administration. Community-based organisations have generally emerged from the town and village development programs of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Many government-sponsored organisations emerged in the 1960s as a result of public social welfare efforts that tried to focus on community development by encouraging popular participation at the local level. By the late 1970s, in the face of growing economic and social problems (rapid urbanisation, unemployment and growing population pressures, and deep recession), the State became increasingly unable to meet the welfare needs of the population, and demands began to shift toward private voluntary associations and non-governmental organisations.

According to the John Hopkins series on non-profit sector, the diversity of Ghana's non-profit sector notwithstanding, the various types of non-profit organisations seem to reflect three types, each indicative of broad historical and ideological currents: First, there are traditional types, grounded in institutions indigenous to Ghanaian society and culture. This type also includes community-based organisations (CBOs). Although they developed relatively recently in Ghana's history, they nonetheless make a strong connection between their mission and modus operand*i* and the country's traditions and cultures. Second, there are religious organisations, based on the worldviews and missions advanced by the major monotheistic religions, especially Christianity and Islam. Religion-related groups gained salience during the colonial period, and have been an important element of Ghana's non-profit sector ever since. Third, there are modern organisations, based on the principle of separation between the public and the private sphere, and subject to formal-rational rules and regulations. This type of organisation was established during the colonial and postcolonial periods, by either governments or quasi-governmental entities, to address the needs of various economic and social development programs.

The terms "private voluntary organisation" (PVO) and "non-governmental organisation" (NGO) are used interchangeably. These two terms were not well established in Ghana until the early 1980s. Today, the term NGOs is used to denote a broad spectrum of non-profit and local organisations. Their objectives are diverse and include private development assistance groups as well as relief agencies and social service and health providers (Anheier and Salamon, 1999). In addition, some NGOs represent economic and other special interests - craft guilds, chambers of commerce, professional associations, recreation clubs, youth associations,

environmental groups, and trade unions, among others, that go beyond the concept of development assistance as such.

NGOs in Ghana are defined as civil society organisations that are formed independently of the State but register voluntarily under specified laws in order to gain official recognition to pursue purposes that are not self-serving but oriented towards public benefit. Such registration qualifies NGOs to access public development funds, be it from external Development Partners or Government MDAs, and/or benefit from tax exemptions and account for their usage in their operations in the non-profit sector. NGOs in Ghana may be national as well as international; secular as well as faith-based; and membership or non-membership based.

The role of civil society in the development of Ghana is laid out in the 1992 constitution[8]. In the last few years and notably under the present government, there is even greater emphasis placed upon the role of civil society in development in Ghana by the government and donors alike. As sole partners in the fight against poverty, they are encouraged at national level to help monitor poverty reduction strategies at community level; to interact with decentralised government departments and to ensure the delivery of services. Can that be a possible point of entry for the FNGOs to alleviate poverty in Ghana?

NGOs in Ghana operate in fields such as health, education, rural and urban development, environment, population and social welfare. NGOs are also involved in employment creation, micro-credit/financing, economic development, skills training, gender awareness and action, peace and human rights, informal economic activity, anti-corruption, poverty reduction and advocacy on policy reforms. They may operate across sectors, regions and at the centre in their service to the community, the deprived and underprivileged as well as the general public. NGOs are not homogeneous actors. They differ in activities, structure, organisation, resources, leadership, membership, ideology and aspirations.

### 4.5.1 The analytical framework

With NGOs in the middle of the aid chain and development, the picture of the donor-dependent poverty reduction framework is very complex. There are three main actors involved in poverty reduction in Ghana, and these three main actors also comprise the framework in which NGO operate in Ghana (figures 4.4 and 4.5). The analytical framework (figure 4.4) can be divided into three tiers: the upper comprising donor governments, aid agencies and foreign NGOs. Governments in developing countries occupy the middle of the table. The role of governments in developing countries as

8 Article 21 (1)(a-e) of Chapter 5 and Article 37(1), (2)(a)(b), and (3) of Chapter 6.

noted earlier is shrinking. A bottom-up development strategy means more and more power has been transferred to the bottom part of the table.

### 4.5.2 Foreign NGOs

As illustrated in figure 4.4 and 4.5, most of the aid is channelled through the foreign NGOs. Though the donor countries and international aid agencies, who occupy the upper level of the table, do try to reach the beneficiaries directly, a large proportion of the aid for the poor and the lower part of the table is channelled through foreign NGOs. The large presence of FNGOs warrants a selection of the foreign NGOs operating in the study area.

### 4.5.3 Local partners in development

The foreign NGOs in turn work partly through local partners and otherwise directly to the beneficiaries. The local partners or co-operants as they are called by certain FNGOs are local actors in development in Ghana. They have been summarised as follows:

- Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGO)
- Local Private Voluntary Organisations (LPVO)
- District Assemblies (DA)

**a) Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGO)**

*The Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD).* There are a lot of local NGOs in Ghana. The ever-growing sector necessitated the formation of the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD) in 1980. GAPVOD is an indigenous not-for-profit umbrella organisation incorporated under the Companies Code 1963 (Act 179) to represent the collective voice of Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations (NGOs and CSOs) in Ghana. It is dedicated to networking and alliance building among NGOs and CSOs operating in Ghana. Since its formation, GAPVOD has raised its profile to include current membership of nearly 400 large and small local, national and international organizations. GAPVOD is governed by a 19 member Executive Council made up of 14 members and 5 ex-officio members. An Executive Director heads the GAPVOD Secretariat situated in Accra.

**b) The Local Private Sector / Local Private Voluntary Organisations**

There exist a lot of small-scale enterprises, the bedrock of a thriving private sector. A part of this group came together, considering themselves as a part of civil society and duly formed themselves into an association under which they promote their common

interests. This gave birth to an umbrella body of local private voluntary organisations called the *Federation of Associations of Small Scale Economic Operators* (FASSEO). It is comprised of carpenters, traders, masons, mothers, mechanics, farmers, small scale entrepreneurs, etc. According to their constitution, they regard themselves as "the small scale sector associations involved in agriculture, commerce and trade, industry and micro-finance activities in Ghana" (Kokor, 1999). So they are not a non-profit association. It is made of up five different sector associations:

1. Christian Mothers Association (CMA)
2. Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA)
3. Credit Union Association (CUA)
4. Association of Small Scale Industries (ASSI)
5. Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ECASARD)
6. The Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP).

ECASARD is a network of both church and private voluntary organisation, but operates only in the seven southern regions of the country. It has its head office in Accra, and regional co-ordinators out in each region. ACDEP operates in the three remaining regions; the northern regions. It is based in the north and has its head office in Northern regional capital Tamale. According to a senior member of staff, ECASARD runs four projects:

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Participatory Technology Development
- Development Educational Leadership Services (capacity building) and
- KIEM – Rural economic for Agro-logistics programme

*The Private Enterprises Foundation*

It is to be noted that there also exist an association of large scale enterprises: The Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF). The two are different in scale and should not be confused or interchanged. FASSEO is national in character, with branches in all ten regions in the country. The Foundation was founded on the initiative of four existing major business associations who felt the need to come together to exert greater influence on policy initiatives for the creation of an enabling environment in which private sector businesses can thrive as partners in national development :

- The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI)
- The Ghana National Chamber of Commerce (GNCC)
- The Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) and
- The Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE)

PEF is said to be a non-profit making, non-political, autonomous institution, incorporated on January 24, 1994, as a Company Limited by guarantee under the Ghana Companies Code, Act 179 with AGI, GNCC, GEA, and FAGE as the founding members. Membership is open to the private business and trade associations. The Ghana Association of Bankers has been admitted and other members include Ghana Association of Consultants (GAC), and Ghana Real Estate Developers Association (GREDA), Ghana Association of Tourism Federation (GHATOF) and others.

**c) Local Government: District Assemblies (DA)**

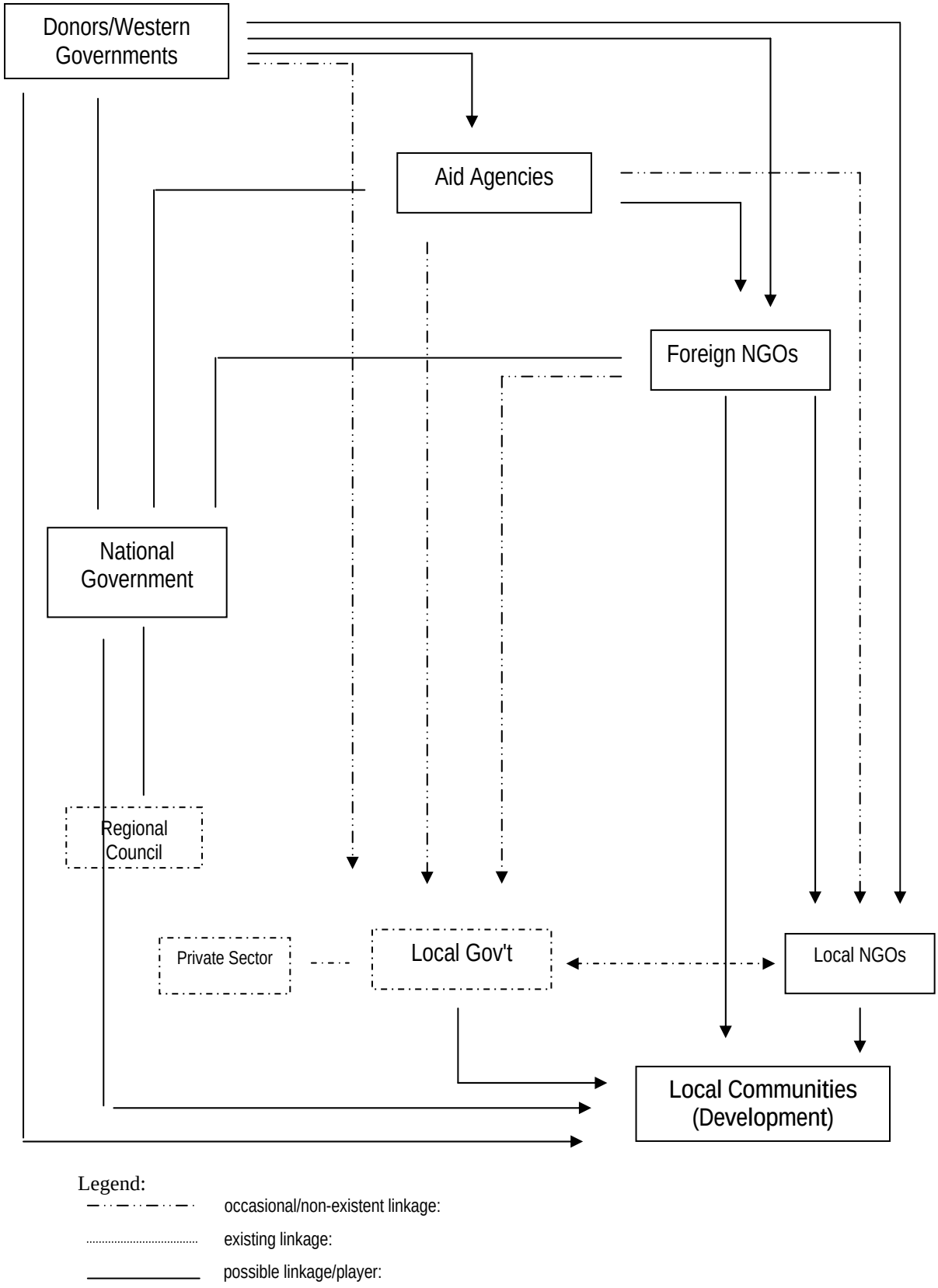
Traditionally, most NGOs have been suspicious of governments, and their relationship often varies between benign neglect and outright hostility (Edwards & Hulme, 1993), there are nonetheless sound reasons for NGOs to enter into a positive and creative relationship with both state and government. Governments remain largely responsible for providing the health, education, agricultural and other services. Local governments (District Assemblies) are major stakeholders in the GRPS. The District Assemblies were established as part of its democratisation process under the decentralisation policy. They have been given the mandate to take development decisions concerning their respective districts (and metropolis) implement and manage local development. Questions however abound regarding their capacity to meet this mandate. Their involvement in development project activities can be summarised below calls for collaboration between them the other actors in local development.

- Policy formulation (through their presence on the project board)
- Community mobilisation (through assembly members)
- Contribution of 15 percent as counterpart funding for sub-project financing
- Review and approval of project proposals

*Figure 4.3 The presence of NGOs on the road side in Tamale*

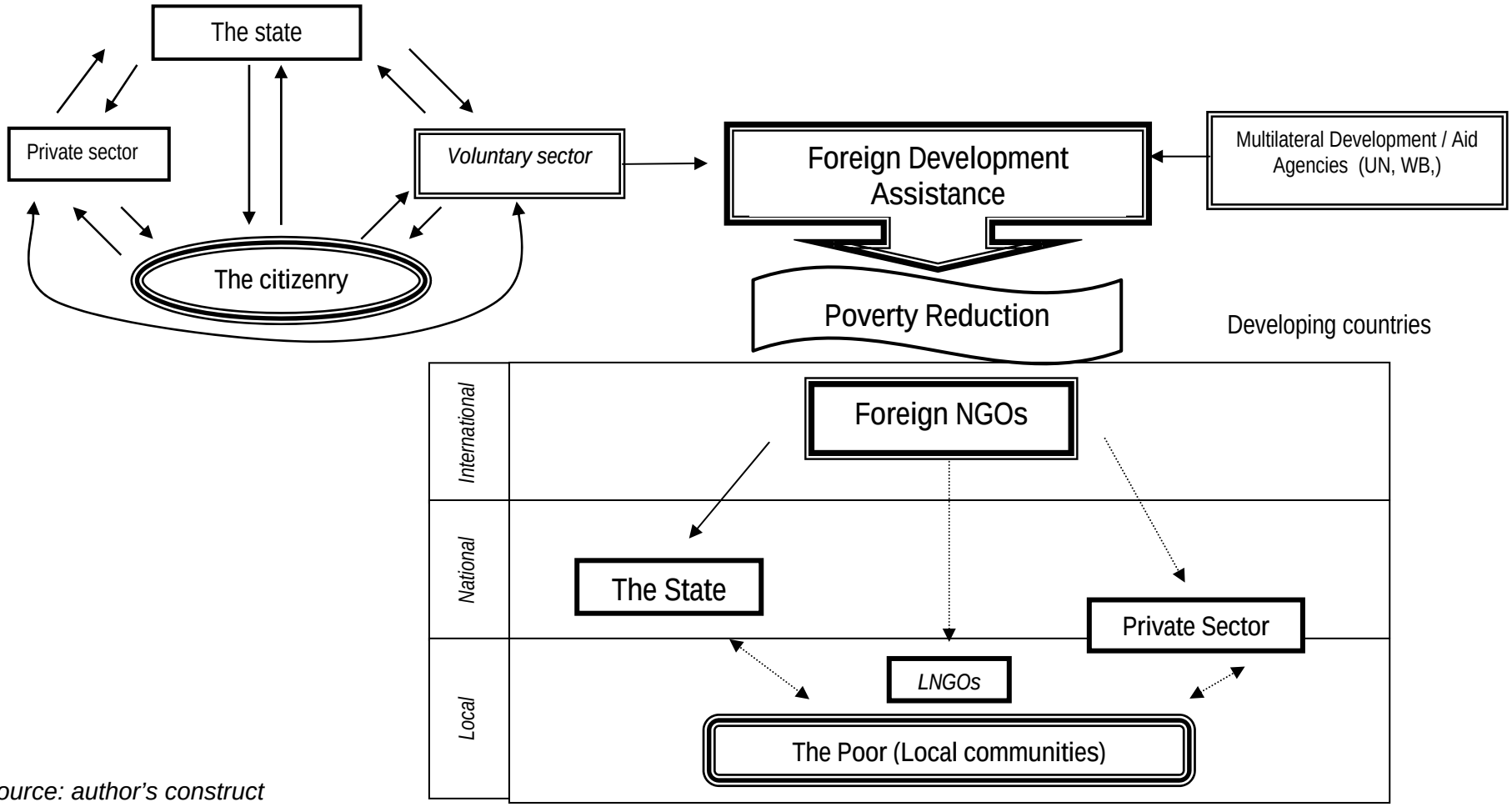
*Photo: Author*

*Figure 4.4 Analytical Framework: Foreign Development Assistance flows & linkages*




*Source Author's construct*

*Figure 4.5 Location NGOs in the development cooperation/aid chain*




*Source: author's construct*

## 4.6 Approaches to poverty reduction

Conventional models of development prominent in the 50s and much of the 1960s were principally models of economic growth: it was assumed that over time, economic growth would 'trickle down' and thereby benefit all sections of society. Proponents of the growth-centred approach to development argue that economic growth remains of fundamental importance for three main reasons: first, growth is a prerequisite for raising per-capita incomes in society as whole, and for expanding the economic opportunities of which the poor are able to take advantage. Second, economic growth is needed to provide the resources required to support increased social expenditure. Third, growth is essential for investment which is necessary to sustain improvements in living standards in the long term. In many countries however, the evidence, sparse though it may be suggest that growth alone has not been able to reduce poverty to any great extent in the absence of more direct policy initiatives.

In its 1990 *World Development Report*, and the subsequent policy paper, *Assistance Strategies to Reduce Poverty*, the World Bank advocated a two-part strategy for achieving sustainable improvements in the quality of life for the poor. The first is premised on economic growth, providing opportunities for productive employment and the resources to fund government development expenditure. The second is focused on an expansion of basic needs and services in particular, primary education, health care, and family planning, mainly for the benefit of the poor.

The UNDP put forward a similar approach in its 1990 Human Development Report, arguing in favour of a combination of policies designed to increase incomes and to provide the poor a decent standard of living and the potential to lead full and creative lives, through economic growth, targeted anti-poverty programmes, and enhanced social expenditure. Both approaches were based on an implicit assumption that the state should provide an enabling policy environment for efficient production and implementation of programmes aimed at alleviating poverty. This is an interventionist approach.

This has all changed now; as the role of the State is reduced in the face of privatisation and the prominence of NGO in development. And there is no scarcity of strategies or "design level" (Oyen, 2002) ideas for effective anti-poverty interventions either: targeting or appropriate wage levels for public works and making micro-credit accessible to the poor. Yet programme outcomes are often disappointing. A paramount concern of donors and beneficiaries as observed in the problem statement is implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategies. Until recently, the development profession viewed NGOs projects as at best, interesting

oddities, but more widespread was the view that they are largely irrelevant to what were considered the more fundamental issues in development (Fowler, 2002)

According to the World Bank (2002), actions are needed in three complementary areas to fight poverty:

- "Promoting economic opportunities for poor people through equitable growth, better access to markets, and expanded assets;
- Facilitating empowerment by making state institutions more responsive to poor people and removing social barriers that exclude women, ethnic and racial groups, and the socially disadvantaged; and
- Enhancing security by preventing and managing economy wide shocks and providing mechanisms to reduce the sources of vulnerability that poor people face".

But the Bank observes that actions by countries and communities will not be enough. Global actions need to complement national and local initiatives to achieve maximum benefit for poor people throughout the world. The World Bank's **strategy for long-term growth and poverty reduction** has two pillars: improving the investment climate; and empowering and investing in people. The *2005 World Development Report (WDR)* will focus on the first of these pillars. It is supposed to complement previous WDRs, and in particular the 2004 WDR, which focuses on making services work for poor people.

### 4.6.1 NGOs' areas of activity

Foreign NGO strategies can be summarised as follows.

*The direct approach*: increasing impact by organisational growth. For many FNGO the obvious strategy for increasing impact is to expand projects or programmes that are judged to be successful.

*Advocacy in the North:* Rather than working directly within the structures they intend to influence, FNGOs may choose to increase their impact by lobbying governments and other structures from the outside.

*Linking the grassroots with lobbying and advocacy:* The main emphasis for FNGOs involved in such efforts is usually held to be the *process* involved in supporting local initiative – awareness raising, conscientisation, group formation, leadership, training in management skills – rather than the *content* of the programme and activities which local organisations pursue.

Tandon (1991) puts the role of NGOs in poverty reduction and development into four broad areas (figure 4.5). Riddell and Robinson (1995) put current attempts to reduce poverty into three broad categories: the first are macroeconomic policies designed to promote and accelerate growth, combined with fiscal policies aimed at reducing inequality. The second set centre on public investments in physical infrastructure and

expenditure on health and educational provision to promote human resource development, which may involve targeting for vulnerable social groups. Third are a range programmes which directly aim to contribute to rural poverty alleviation. These operate at three different levels: national, local and individual.

Foreign or Northern NGOs include very diverse organisations involved in one or more of the following activities: technical advice (appropriate technology, livestock techniques, management and administration models); the sending of volunteer co-operants; the funding of development programmes; development education, (including publications and activities aimed at the general public, teachers, and a range of educational levels); fair-trade issues; and research and lobbying.

In terms of development education, a 1990 OECD survey of 2,542 major Northern NGOs showed that, while 75 per cent ran development education programmes, only a small proportion of these involved activities that went beyond, for example, publishing materials or organising conferences. Development education continues to be a pending item on the agenda of many NGOs which have the means to promote it, but choose to focus instead on their overseas assistance programmes, even at the expense of making an impact in their own societies.

The late Julius Nyerere's response to Leslie Kirkley (then Director of Oxfam) on how best Oxfam can help Tanzania, is still considered valid to the situation today: 'Take each and every penny that you have planned for Tanzania and spend it in the United Kingdom explaining to your co-citizens the nature and causes of poverty' (Harris, 1992). Southern NGOs and more progressive networks constantly request that their Northern counterparts re-direct their activities in order to give more importance to defending the interests of Southern people, and especially to influencing the business, financial, and development aid policies of their governments, their transnational companies, and the multilateral institutions that are having such an adverse effect on people's well-being and their chances of social and political progress.

Southern NGOs have therefore called on their northern counterparts to intervene decisively in awareness-raising, protest, and lobbying activities. Clearly, the leading NGOs do have enormous value. Their three main activities are mutually reinforcing:

- the transfer of resources (funds, goods, and services),
- public awareness-raising, and
- political campaigning.

The last two may be specific such as lobbying around the final phase of the UN inter-governmental conferences, GATT negotiations, or Lome Agreements); or more general and sustained for instance, working on foreign debt, official development aid, gender policies, or follow-up on inter-governmental agreements.

Lobbying also presents NGOs with a great opportunity to keep faith with their central objectives. The major UN conferences and inter-governmental 'Summits', especially since the United Nations Conference Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, have been forums in which, despite the lukewarm commitments of their governments, many NGOs have learned how to develop lobbying strategies by establishing contacts and forming networks to promote mutual concerns. Between 4,000 and 20,000 NGO delegates have participated in the alternative forums held alongside each of these conferences, while some 2,000 to 4,000 have attended the official events.

In the 1970s and 1980s (and even before), the emergence of Northern NGOs that specialised in lobbying campaigns (such as World Development Movement in the UK, Bread for the World in the USA, Agir Ici in France, or the Berne Declaration in Switzerland) represented a milestone. Notable achievements included the 1979 campaign started by 150 NGOs worldwide as part of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), which gained UN approval for a Code of Conduct prohibiting the immoral promotion of breastmilk-substitutes by transnational companies such as Nestle.

In the North as in the South, there is enough accumulated campaigning experience to make it possible to speak about an embryonic lobbying movement that, through concrete and well planned actions, and thanks to the ideological synergy, complementarity, and like mindedness of the major NGOs, is itself generating an alternative globalisation process. With or without the backing of Northern NGOs, there is for instance a remarkable Southern movement opposing the construction of 30 large dams (besides 135 of medium size and 3,000 small ones) in the sacred Narmada river valley in India, just as the felling of the Sarawak forest is opposed by the movement of the Penan Indians who live there.

But despite all this, the professionals say there is no call for complacency. Anti-globalisation activists say there is a long path to tread before they reach the hypothetical alternative globalisation referred to above. It is warned that: ‘If (the ineffectual public bodies) make ordinary citizens giddy by sending them from one counter to another, [they also] make the NGOs waste time by calling them to endless meetings’ without making any real progress (Vizquez, 1996). Undoubtedly, the same warning is relevant to other organisations with which the NGOs must engage within their respective spheres of influence.

*Figure 4.6 Broad Roles of NGOs in poverty reduction and Development*

*Source: Author's construct based on Tandon, 1991*

In the context of the processes of economic globalisation, two worrying elements stand out: firstly, the absence of opposing models for social progress and participatory, equitable, and environmentally sustainable economic development (though these have been outlined on a small scale and there is a major body of accumulated historical wisdom now concealed by obsolete modernisation models); and secondly, the lack of genuinely representative international institutions in a world in which the nation state appears to play an increasingly insignificant role, especially in order to defend the most vulnerable sectors. This neglect by the public authorities is only countered and moderated by strengthening the New Social Movements mentioned earlier, and by the growing organisation and participation of poor communities in creating a more equitable economic and social order at the local level. Within such a context, and given all their accumulated experience, what role can those NGOs play that have reached, or largely taken on board, the Fourth Generation? What might a Fifth Generation look like?

The active role of human rights organisations in international human rights policy, the effective influence of environmental groups on global environment policy, and the impact of the growing transnational development lobby network on national and international development policy raised the question of whether there had not already been a "NGO-isation of world politics" and a shift of power from governments to civil

society. Or, given such assessments, are NGOs the most over-estimated actors on the national and international political stage, as some critics believe?

### 4.6.2 Institutional development - Linkages

A strategically significant shift in focus is currently taking place in development co-operation, a shift away from conventional project promotion towards institutional development. The development co-operation of the last 30 years was all about promoting projects, projects of limited duration with a sectoral or regional focus. It was claimed that these projects generated broad-based impacts, and were replicable. Yet only in relatively few cases was this claim borne out. The proclaimed aim of development was asset creation, especially in poverty eradication; it was not the creation of structures enabling the poor to gain access to resources. In recent years there has been discussion of how projects might also address the problem of structural constraints to development. Nevertheless, the attempt to use projects as a lever to change such structures has not proved successful, because it has adhered too closely to conventional approaches with limited outreach. On the other hand, structural adjustment and sector investment programmes did not meet the high expectations placed in them, primarily because they failed to create the necessary institutional structures for policy reforms.

Institutions have come to be seen consistently as the missing link in development cooperation. There has, of course, always been institution building and organisational development, but rather within the framework of projects and programmes, and not as a strategic approach of development cooperation per se. Currently, the issue of promoting political, social and economic institutions in the context of poverty alleviation is arising as a matter of top concern. In the context of the extended debt cancellation for the HIPC countries, Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) attempt a new approach to structural reforms, designed to sustainably eliminate mass poverty. The policy of the Bretton Woods institutions has clearly exposed both the limits of traditional policy at the national and international levels and the need to identify new ways of approaching development. New approaches are even more necessary if the process of globalisation is taken into consideration, a process that should not be taken as a given fact but rather be influenced. This calls for the establishment and interplay of democratic institutions that go beyond national borders. Institutions are therefore of prime significance for continued economic and social development.

Institutions can enable political stability, effective and responsible administration, good governance and secure property rights, the presence of a competitive financial sector and finally can ensure provision of basic health care and education. Michel Camdessus, the former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, has

made a number of points concerning the task now faced by the IMF of linking the goals of stability, growth and poverty alleviation within the "second generation reforms". He has stated that viable social, political and economic institutions are a necessary, albeit not the sole precondition for macro-economic stability and growth. Furthermore, in his view institutions and economic policy frameworks are the common denominator which needs to be incorporated into all further development efforts, in addition to macro-economic stabilisation and reform. Camdessus refers to the economic historian Douglas C. North, one of the founding fathers of the new economics of institutions. In his speech at the Nobel Prize award ceremony, North pointed out that while much attention has been given to date to the 'modus operand' of markets, the analysis of the historic development of market institutions has been rather neglected. In North's view, the institutional structure of functioning markets is crucial for developing countries and countries in transition, and therefore of major practical relevance to development co-operation as well.

### 4.6.3 Institutions and poverty reduction

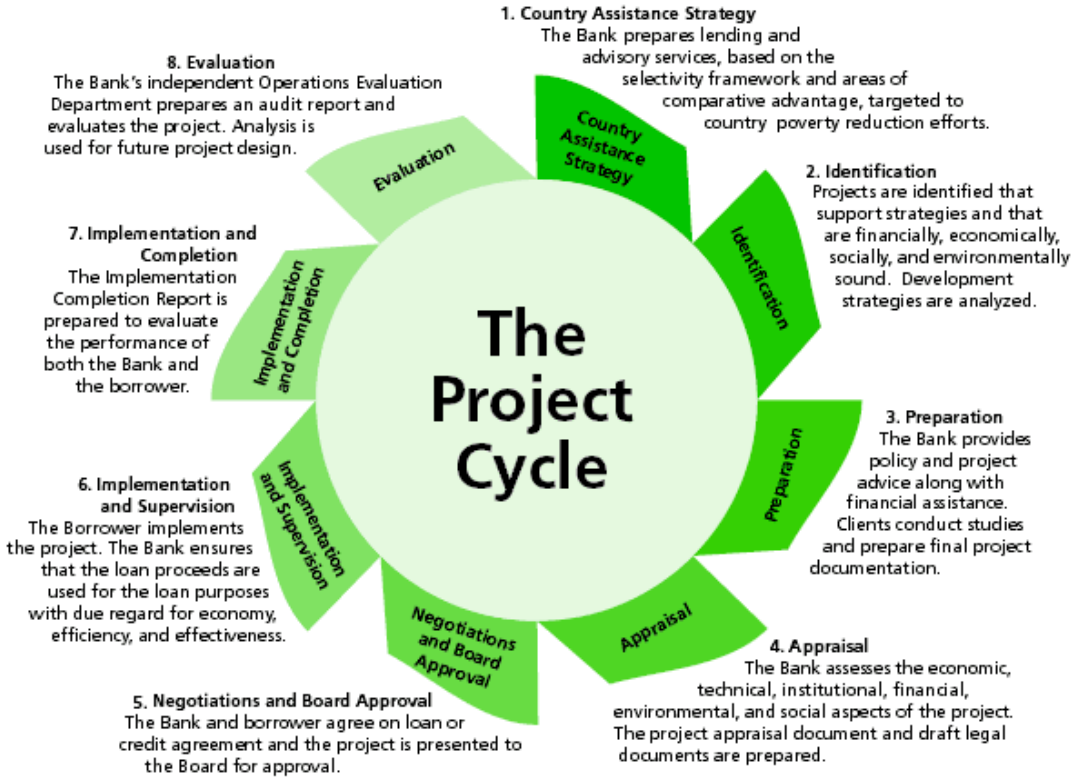
The role of institutions in recent years in creating conditions conducive to growth and economic development is largely acknowledged. According to Fowler et al (1992) institutional development is recognised as an important element in projects and programmes dedicated to the sustainable alleviation of poverty, the promotion of gender equity and achieving social justice for marginalised populations. This comes against the background that for too long, development policy has laboured under the (false) assumption that scarce resources are the main cause of poverty and underdevelopment. Today, a consensus exists in international discourse on development policy that the major problem is access to resources. This applies to natural resources (water, land), means of production, financial resources, marketing infrastructures, technical expertise, education and training. Nonetheless, this consensus still has to be translated into the practice of development cooperation.

According to Kochendörfer-Lucius & van de Sand[9] (in D+C 2000), the traditional project approach sees the elimination of resource scarcity as the point of departure for development (cf. figure 3.7). Although there is growing acknowledgement of the significance of the policy and institutional environments, the majority of projects still view these aspects as "frameworks", and not as starting points per se. The conventional project is based on a (misleading) concept that perceives the relationship between input and output as a linear one. By contrast, a modern understanding sees development as a sequence of interrelated and open processes.

[9] Dr. Gudrun Kochendörfer-Lucius is director of the Development Policy Forum of DSE, Berlin, and Dr. Klemens van de Sand is assistant President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Rome.

This concept of development seeks to reconcile the interests of different social groups competing with each other on an essentially equitable basis. Those players' capability to act is reflected in institutions that define the rules stipulating who has access to resources, on what scale and on which terms.

*Figure 4.7 The World Bank project circle*




*Source: The World Bank*

The author concludes these views with the question how these institutions can all by themselves help eliminate poverty or contribute to maintain it. Hence the major problem in the context of poverty reduction is not necessarily the absence of institutions. Another view proposes that the real issue is that those institutions which most strongly affect the lives of the poor are not accessible to them - and they generally do not serve the welfare of the poor groups in the society.

The government and administration, the military (or also guerilla movements), political parties and labour unions (if they exist at all), parastatal and private service organisations, banks and commercial enterprises create structures enabling them to pursue the interests of privileged (mostly urban) minorities. Unless the poor - i.e. the majority - are organised, they remain excluded from the political and economic "system", politically powerless and economically unattractive. This, according to Kochendörfer-Lucius & van de Sand (ibid.) does not mean that "the poor" are a homogeneous group without any conflicting interests. However, it does mean that an

inequitable distribution of resources and inequitable access to economic opportunities act as constraints to economic growth and cause mass poverty.

An analysis of rural poverty in Eastern and Southern Africa, for instance, corroborates this consideration. Most of the poor in this region live in areas with medium to high potential for agricultural development, but this potential is not being exploited. If the lack of natural resources does not provide an explanation of the rural poverty, then the reasons must include the access to production inputs and markets. In this part of Africa at least, production and marketing structures were tailored to the specific interests and needs of the colonial rulers. The indigenous population was excluded from the independent production of marketable agricultural produce, in order to meet the demand for labour on farms and in mines (while women remained in the villages, which significantly increased the feminisation of poverty). After independence, these structures changed in that a small, politically and economically dominant elite replaced the colonial rulers, and by utilising parastatal distribution and marketing organisations, regulated access to these structures such that primarily their own best interests were secured. The development of rural areas was thus driven by an institutional system that the rural poor could not control or be served by.

In many African countries, state monopolies of the agricultural sector have been dismantled in the recent past. The result is an institutional vacuum, which is gradually being filled by private enterprises. In this situation, the challenge consists in promoting private-sector solutions such that the interests of small farmers are institutionally secured. Yet the vision should be wider than that: in the age of economic globalisation, the primary task of public investment in poverty alleviation, including development aid, is to create conditions which guarantee the poor access to the formal private sector. This intermediary and linking function should enable not only the access to the national and international markets, but also the creation of an institutional and environmental framework allowing the poor to exploit the development potentials of the private sector.

As regards the issue of access to technical know-how, Kochendörfer-Lucius & van de Sand observed that the traditional project approach involved supplying technologies and expertise that experts considered being necessary and appropriate, and transferring the skills and knowledge required to apply those technologies. By contrast, the institutional approach considers the rural poor as individuals demanding and assessing alternative options on offer and organising the effective use of technologies.

On the matter of financial resources, the main problem for rural development is according to Kochendörfer-Lucius & van de Sand (ibid.), as it has been widely recognised, not the lack of credit funds or the level of interest rates. It is rather one of

organising access to financial resources, and establishing conditions of production that allow saving and make investment profitable. The conventional approach usually implied the design of credit-line projects, executed by state banks that generally dictated to the borrower the conditions and purposes of the use of funds, often incorporating obligatory input packages into the terms. The new way paved by the institutional development approach aims at helping the poor mobilise their own resources and establish local savings and credit systems. It empowers the poor to take their own decisions concerning the terms and designated use of credits, and it facilitates their link with commercial financial institutions. The financial autonomy of microfinance organisations and financial intermediaries; their independence from external subsidies, is considered a key prerequisite for broad-based poverty reduction. The success of external assistance is to be measured both on the basis of the number of households that sustainably cross the poverty threshold and on the economic viability of the involved institutions. The lack of these institutional underpinnings explains why the development-policy landscape, above all in the financial sector, is strewn with the ruins of pilot projects.

As regards *marketing activities*, the institutional aspect also plays a crucial role. In Africa, access to transport routes is often a critical point. The traditional projects envisaged building roads, but their maintenance was not institutionally guaranteed, not least because the issue of incentives was misjudged. National and local elites often “benefit” from donor-financed road construction, and therefore have a stronger interest in construction of new roads than in road maintenance carried out by local authorities. Despite the lack of infrastructure, the opening of markets is also impacting in poorer rural regions. What the market participant needs, in addition to guaranteed transport routes, is above all appropriate prices, adequate services and information on market potentials and requirements. These elements constitute an enabling economic environment for rural producers and can be created and influenced by the work of institutions, not by projects of limited duration.

Chambers (1998) used the concept of “additionality” to describe the potential contribution of NGOs to the development process in far back as 1987 as follows: ”Additionality means making things better than they would have been, and allows for bad as well as good effects. Seeking high “additionality” entails four elements: identifying and matching needs and opportunities; assessing comparative advantage – seeing what one NGO does best compared with others; learning and adapting through action; and having wider impacts. An NGO can achieve wider impacts in many ways including its operations: introducing or developing technologies which spread; developing and using approaches which are then adopted by other NGOs and/or by government; influencing changes in government

and donor policies and actions; and gaining and disseminating understanding about development".

### 4.6.4 Capacity-building

A recent survey of foreign NGOs revealed that an overwhelming majority, over 90 percent, claim to be involved in capacity building (Fowler, 1998). The term "capacity building" has become almost synonymous with "development"; as bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs and some local NGOs prioritise capacity building. This strategy notwithstanding its popularity and appeal in the development circle would meet the same fate as its predecessors (a catchword) if it does not respond to current development challenges in the long run. It can however not be dismissed either without examining how NGOs and development planners and other actors are using it in the overarching development goal of the millennium

### 4.6.5 Participation

An overall aim, even in operational programmes, is to encourage the formation of structures to assist with service-delivery, and to represent the affected population. For instance, in its work with Sudanese refugees in the Ikafe area of Uganda, Oxfam tried to foster community management structures through which to ensure the participation of refugees in decision-making, and to facilitate their integration into Uganda. In practice, however, this has been thwarted by several factors. Firstly, poor communication among the various agencies (including UNHCR and the Ugandan Government) and the Aringa host community meant that 'refugees [were] not informed of Aringa cultural practices and... violated tradition by using water from sacred water sources' (Neefjes and David, 1996). Further, although key technical staff (e.g. land surveyors) was 'the interface between Oxfam and the refugee and national communities', they proved insensitive. Finally, efforts to mesh the Refugee Council structure promoted by Oxfam, and Ugandan representative systems were frustrated: the former had no legal status, and no right to vote in local Council meetings. So although Oxfam had hoped to hand over 'the management of water points, schools, clinics, grinding mills etc to joint committees, there [was little] dialogue between these two parallel council systems' (ibid.).

In a candid participatory review, the Refugee Councils complained that 'the Oxfam structure' was just 'window-dressing' and that without regular meetings they could not participate in decision-making. Oxfam's local representative acknowledged, with hindsight, that it might have been better to have first strengthened the existing Sudanese structures, adding that 'strategies seem to have been decided before we knew more of the culture and social life of the refugees' (ibid.).

What this illustrates is the real difficulty in trying to dovetail an operational programme with local representation, particularly in the politicised, fast-moving, and dangerous setting of an emergency. However, the fact that refugees and local people were able to discuss the problems may open the door to more appropriate ways of dealing with these in the future.

***Types of participation***

A lot has been written about participation. Without being very academic about this popular concept, the typologies of participation summarised by A Trainer's Guide: Participatory Learning and Action (Kokor, 2001) are presented below. The list underlines the questions about the type of involvement of local actors and beneficiaries:

*Self-mobilisation:* people participate by taking initiative to change the system independent of external influences or actors.

*Interactive participation:* people *participate* in joint analysis, which leads to activitiy plans and formation of new local organisations or strengthening of existing ones.

*Functional participation:* people participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to a project but are still dependent on external influences or actors.

*Participation for material incentive: people* participate by providing resources in return for material incentives

*Participation by consultation:* people *participate* by being consulted and external agents listen to views (this is the commonest form of participation in policy dialogues)

*Participation by providing information:* people participate by answering questions from external agents

*Passive participation:* people are informed about what is going to happen or what has already happened.

### 4.6.6 Partnerships with other sectors

NGOs need partnership at all levels to address pertinent issues; to adequately implement poverty reduction and development programmes and raise necessary funds. It is however observed that at the heart of the partnership debate, there is the contradiction between the implied mutuality and equality of the term 'partnership' and the fact that in reality partnerships between Northern and Southern NGOs are generally imbalanced in favour of the North, given its control over financial resources. Another issue regarded paramount is trust; partnerships is said to only develop over a period of time where there is a sense of long-term commitment (Ontrac, 2000).

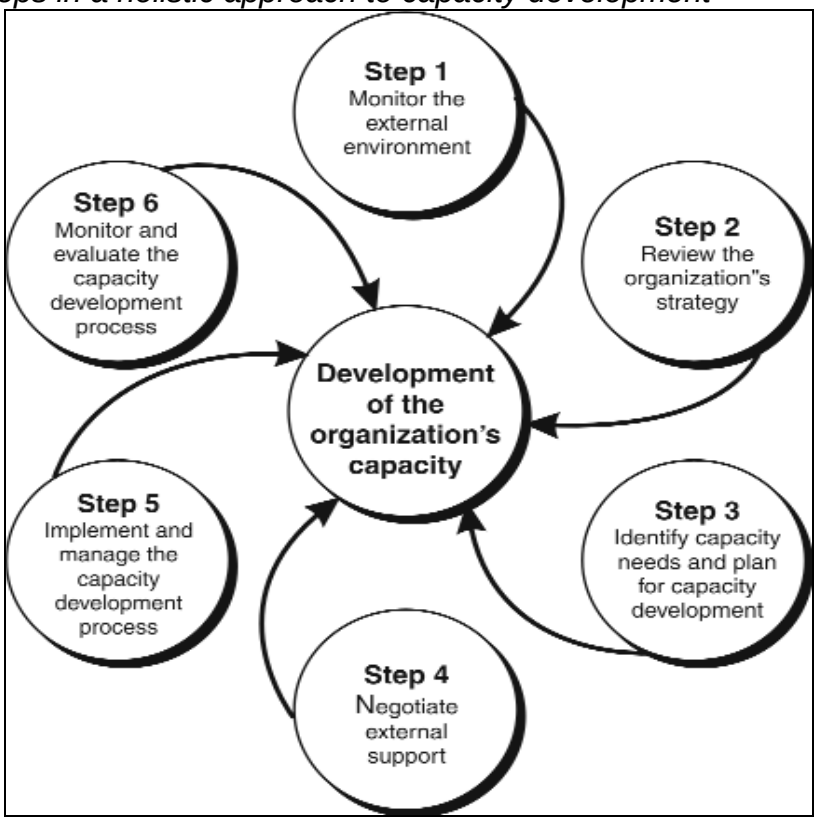
### 4.6.7 Strategic partnership with NGOs in Ghana

The Government of Ghana seeks to forge a *strategic partnership* with NGOs and other stakeholders operating in the 'non-profit sector' to implement the GPRS, so that its long-term development goals would be pursued more vigorously and achieved with the effective support of all parties. The partnership would be strategic insofar as it is developed in a manner that consciously takes advantage of the unique capabilities of NGOs to accelerate and sustain social and economic development and strengthen democratic governance in the long term in Ghana.

### 4.6.8 Towards a holistic approach

Considering all these points, one is made to think about a holistic approach that binds all the above approaches. A holistic approach to capacity development (figure 4.8) was presented at a project on Evaluating Capacity Development (ECD) by a group of evaluation specialists, led by the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and attended by research and development organisations from Asia, Africa and Latin America and their international partners supporting their capacity development efforts. The steps presented below are an ideal sequence. In practice, however, capacity development efforts may begin at different points in the sequence and they may skip steps (capacity.org/2 2003).

*Figure 4.8 Steps in a holistic approach to capacity development*




*Source: capacity.org/2 2003*

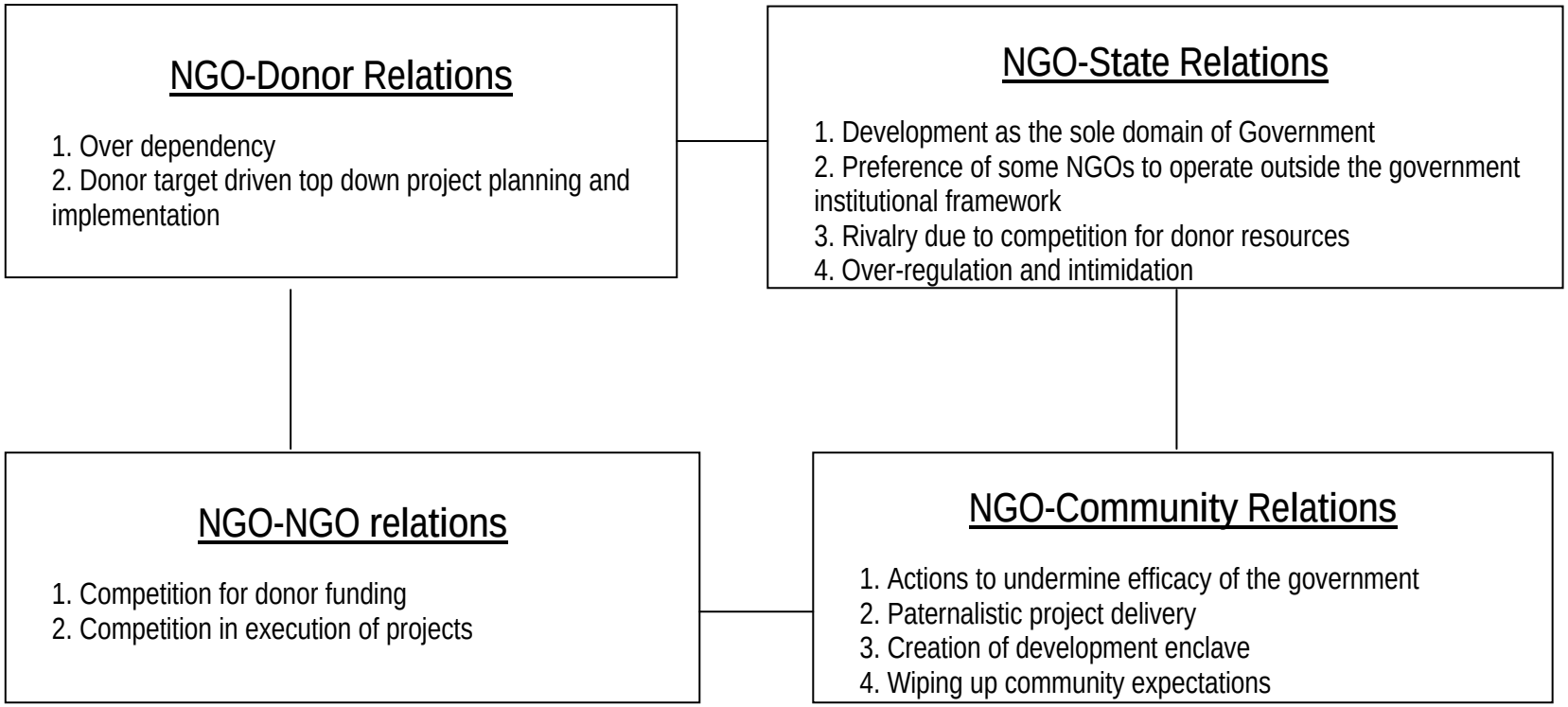
## 4.7 Limitations of NGOs

So much emphasis is placed on the controversial but often times successful impact of NGOs that few people want to spoil the party for the NGOs. But while they are said to play a key role in making development in general and in the fight against poverty in particular, they are often said to have limited outreach (Narayan, 2000; Edwards & Hulme, 1993). Many more field reports say they have not touched the lives of the majority of poor people. Like the State, they are also guilty of the tarmac bias: they tend to reach people who live close to passable roads and miss the very poor. While insufficient geographical coverage is one aspect of not reaching the poor, another aspect is lack of fit between programme design and the needs of the poor. NGO presence is also said to be heavily concentrated in certain projects areas, leading locals to conclude that NGOs are "vehicles to dispense financing with little participation". Narayan (ibid.) writes: "Perhaps the biggest weakness of NGOs is that they generally do not tend to support the long term capacity for local self-governance". This makes the ultimate institutional legacy of NGO activities questionable and the problem according to Narayan (ibid.) is likely to become more acute as the pressure grows on NGOs to deliver services quickly. Another sentiment voiced in some places is that there is little altruism in NGOs, and many (NGOs) are established for the personal gains of their founders. Worst still, some people think that relief funds flow into the pockets of NGOs rather than finding their way to the poor people; or there is a large-scale deal between aid distributors and corrupt businesses. Faith-based groups often mention as the exception or a great source of help, have also come under criticism in certain places for divisive practices.

Experience shows that in the absence of secure financing and the resulting dependence on governments and international agencies, NGOs in many places have become contractors rather than community catalysts. The pressure to achieve pre-determined targets is widely cited as an inhibiting factor for performance or quality-led output. In Senegal (as in Ghana – figure 3.1) 80 percent of financing is external; NGOs are "dependent on implementing the 'Pet Projects' of external donors" (Narayan, ibid.). A summary of the problems NGO face in regional/district development is presented below (figure 4.9).

The one problem on which most of the above issues hinge is capacity, as has been duly prioritised by many NGOs (and this study). NGO reports and literature suggest that uncertain funding and limited management capacities, organisational capacity hinder effectiveness and independence of NGOs. Beyond the problems of finances, capacity and coverage, there are some reports of problems which require a lot effort to tackle: insulting behaviour, corruption and nepotism within NGOs. These issues have undermined people's general confidence in NGOs.

*Figure 4.9 Problems of NGO involvement in District Planning and Development*




*Source: Author's construct based on literature*

## 4.8 Conclusion

While there are some 4,000 NGOs in the 20 member countries of the DAC (which handle more than 95 per cent of official development assistance), a small number account for most of the sector's activities, including public and private fund-raising. Certainly, if a Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO) wants to work without external impositions or conditions, it needs the kind of economic independence that comes from private funding. But the OECD has found that 90 per cent of the available resources are concentrated in only 20 per cent of the NGOs registered. This is not to deny the important role played by smaller organisations in terms of their critical input and their capacity to complement the vision of the larger NGOs.

Successful project interventions are related to different variables. Outstanding among them are genuine participation, strong and effective management, favourable social and economic environment, and skilled and committed staff. A major hurdle for NGOs is their dependence. Most NGOs are fed up with this and now consider their highest priority to be achieving financial independence for themselves and their clients

# Chapter Five

## Developing Capacities for Poverty Reduction: A Conceptual Framework

# Chapter Five

# Developing Capacities for Poverty Reduction: A Conceptual Framework

## 5.1 Introduction

*Development is not a cluster of benefits given to people in need, but rather a process by which a populace acquires greater mastery over its own destiny.*
(Dennis Goulet)

If the poor are missing out on the economic growth programmes and strategies, or if the poor are especially likely to lose out during the implementation of anti-poverty interventions, it is imperative to try to bridge the gaps. This is the call in development circles. Though countries in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) region have duly enshrined the eradication, reduction or alleviation of poverty in their development programmes as the overriding aim, few programmes or policy documents[1] discuss the actors for the implementation of the programme[2], and subsequently wanting in results. To say that cross-cutting approaches to assessing poverty and developing operational responses are often at variance with conventional adjustment plans, sectoral development policies and the conditionalities attached to external assistance in the opinion of Kankwenda, (2000) is maybe an understatement.

The increasing poverty in the midst of so many actors and decades of development co-operation opens a huge debate on "*Best practices in poverty reduction*" (∅yen, 2002). The reminder that, "the reality of aid is that aid is not eliminating poverty" and that "more than four million children in the year 2000 will die before they reach the age of five" (Riddell & co., 2000) is frightening enough and makes action an imperative. While some see the whole drama as nothing new, the action taken now and in the future could make all the difference.

The shifts in development strategy are said to be there, all be it with limited but and often disputable outcomes. After several "lost decades", a number of African countries are sustaining more than 5 percent growth per year – but as shown in chapter two, Ghana is not quite there yet. Obviously, Ghana should be doing much better. A lot is known about 'what' to do, but the focus now is implementation. To sustain progress, the low performance of past decades should lead us to ask more questions of 'how', and not just about 'what' is to be done.

[1] Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAD), or Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (under the WB)
[2] cf. Ghana: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Government of Ghana, 2000

The previous chapter highlighted mechanisms employed by NGOs to reduce poverty. The critical causal factors emerging from the foregoing chapters are pooled and discussed to form a basis upon which a conceptual framework essential for the building of capacities for poverty reduction and a sustainable development can be carried out.

The conceptual framework attempts to pull together issues of relevance to poverty reduction and the role of FNGOs in the Northern Region in Ghana. It provides an understanding of the key concepts relevant to the study and their operational limits, as well as clarifies some of the issues relative to the research context. This is done against the existing body of knowledge and understanding of the theme and of course the theoretical background developed in the previous chapters (One, Two and Four).

## 5.2 Definition of key terms and concepts

Definitions lie at the heart of all social analysis. Without a set of concepts to give some order to reality, there is no way to group perceptions and begin making sense of them. Without a clearly articulated and understood set of definitions, the probability is high that different observers will perceive the same reality in far different ways, including or excluding aspects that others may view in a wholly different light. However definitions, any definition, suffer from or run the risk of being limiting (Scheidtweiler, 2000). In addition to the definitions in the previous chapters, it is necessary to state ones position in context. The author's definitions act as conceptual filters for approaching the pragmatic aspects of capacity building for poverty reduction.

***Foreign*** NGOs as observed earlier in this report represents part of the international development cooperation. For purposes of this study, International NGOs from the north will be referred to as Foreign NGOs (FNGOs). The term Northern NGOs which is used in most literature to refer to International NGOs is avoided here because the use of the term "North" is also prone to misunderstanding in the Ghanaian context where the North is a political region as well a geo-political divide of convenience to distinguish the "rich south" from the "poor north". The use of Foreign NGOs also achieves a distinction between some Ghanaian NGOs who are gradually expanding their operations across the boarder and thus qualify as international NGOs, and foreign NGOs from developed countries. The word "*foreign"* in most developing countries conjures up mixed reactions of self-reliance and dependence.

***Region*** in this study is a sub-national unit and ***Local*** refers to the spatial area within the (Northern) regional territorial jurisdiction. It is the intermediate spatial unit where national policies and local interest merge, and where the functional interrelations of

development constraints and potentials are most concrete. The problem of mass poverty and its offshoots as discussed earlier cannot be tackled entirely at the national level. Jensen (1998) argues that these problems must be attacked simultaneously on the national as well local level. The regional approach to national development makes it possible to deal with the regions and their specific problems and potentials individually, without losing the national perspective (Jensen, 1998). According to Jensen (ibid.), regional approach brings the understanding of development and its prospective outcome closer to the local population concerned, who are not only considered as an object of development but as active participants. Empirical observations suggest that global and national economic change should be understood as a process, which is dependent on local dynamics according on the regional level. Perceptions and models of such a change have been underpinned with various theoretical perspectives generally referred to as the new endogenous growth theory.

***Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):*** Whichever of the many available definitions is adopted presupposes ***Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).*** This comes with the assumption that civil society exhibits a certain range of functions. These functions in turn imply a series of attributes for civil society and by implication, the areas of potential need for strengthening capacity.

Working in between the household, the private sector and the state, CSOs include a very wide range of institutions, including non-governmental organisations, faith-based institutions, professional associations, trade unions, research institutes and think tanks. In simple terms, civil society encompasses beneficiaries of, or stakeholders in development efforts: the NGOs, civil and professional organisations, citizens groups, community-based organisations (CBOs), labour unions and media groups.

Similarly ***Capacity*** refers to the combination of human resources, institutions, and practices that enable organisations and countries to achieve their development goals. ***Capacity building*** is considered to be a structured response to the multidimensional process of poverty reduction, and not a set of pre-packaged technical interventions intended to bring about predefined outcomes. It is considered as an integral part of the development process and not a strategy separate from that process.

Having talked about the capacity to reduce poverty above, it is worth making the point that capacity building in the context of this study is not entirely about forming a force to reduce poverty. Sen's description of "poverty as capability deprivation" (1999) enriches the point further. In his perspective, poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes, which is the standard criterion for the identification of poverty.

***Poverty:*** It is easy to get involved in highly academic discussions on the concept of poverty. This study adopts a more pragmatic and operational definition of poverty which borders on power[3] and the much quoted "human deprivation of basic needs such as food, education, shelter, potable water, basic social infrastructures" (Streeten, 1981; Sen, 1999). The concept of relative poverty, while useful in certain contexts, is perhaps not very practical in this study for purposes other than rural poverty (because Ghana is characterised by mass poverty). The situation in the Northern Region is widely characterised as 'rural poor'. Poverty (and poverty reduction) is interlocking multidimensional phenomena, comprising material well-being (food security and employment), psychological well-being (cultural and social norms, and power and voice).

***Partners and counterparts, recipients, clients, and beneficiaries:*** Partnership is a term firmly established in the vocabulary of NGOs in development co-operation. Most FNGOs refer to those whose work they fund in the South as their 'partners', and such organisations in the south who implement the project work are called project partners. Questions are raised about whether they are really treated as partners. Though there is no commonly accepted definition or understanding of the concept of partnership, it is however taken to imply consensus and openness, and it represents an invitation to participate. They wish to be seen as partners, but are they partners or rather 'counterparts' or 'recipients'. Although it is increasingly used in literature, the study avoids the term 'client' because of its ambiguity: it both implies patronage, and yet suggests that Southern organisations can freely shop around to find the best supplier - something they are seldom able to do. 'Beneficiaries' mean the people ultimately intended to benefit from a given intervention. The invitation (of LNGOs) to participate (with FNGOs) in local development is a fundamental assumption of this study, and in development co-operation in general. ***External catalyst*** refers to the FNGO (field worker of the service delivery agency) who facilitates.

***Institutions*** apply to formal organisations or 'deliberately constructed human groupings' (Goldsmith, quoted in Moore: 1995). "Institutional development" refers to efforts that are intended to improve the functioning of a given institution (or set of institutions) so that they can perform more effectively, e.g. by improving their financial management systems, or training their staff. This is sometimes called 'institution building'. Bruno S. Frey (2002) provides three elements that define institutions:

- Rules or procedures followed in a given society in order to make decisions;
- Legal norms, traditions and other behavioural rules;
- Organisations like the state, associations in the private sector or civil society and families.

[3] Political, economic and knowledge/skills power which go make social capital

***Donors*** refer to official (i.e. bilateral or multilateral) donor agencies, such as the Department for International Development (DfID) of the British government, formerly the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), or the European Union (EU). While the international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, are not donors, they are classified for the purposes of this study as official agencies. International or foreign NGOs are also funding agencies, and often channel official aid to Southern organisations.

***Participation*** refers to the voluntary, conscious and organised involvement of (the local organisations) people in all phases of decision-making process affecting planning, resource mobilisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and operation and maintenance in a substantive manner.

***Subsidiarity*** in modern times was first used in 1931 when Pope Pius XI formulated the principle of subsidiarity in his famous Social Encyclical which he defined as follows:

> *"Just as it is seriously wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry, and give it to the community, it is also an injustice and at the same time a severe evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organisations can do."*

According to the document, every social activity ought – out of its very nature – to furnish help to members of the society, but never destroy and absorb them. Therefore those in power should be sure – that the more perfectly a graduated order is kept among various associations, in observance of the principle of subsidiary function, the stronger social authority and effectiveness will be, and the happier and more prosperous the condition of the state (Quadragesimo anno[4], 1979).

***Organisational development*** While organisational and institutional development overlap, the former is used to refer to processes and systems for achieving greater effectiveness within a given structural organisation of people, such as decision making and policy formulation, planning, evaluation and 'institutional learning', and training. While institutional development refers to activities aimed at formal structures, organisational development is equally relevant to informal or nascent associational forms.

[4] Papal encyclical are normally first published in Latin and are named after the words they begin with. "Quadragesimo anno" means "forty years after", and refers to the very first social encyclical, "Rerum novorum, which was first published in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII.

## 5.3 The economic development system

Development literature has largely focused its attention on the issue of why countries are poor, rather than why certain segments of people within a given country are poor. The latter is necessary for addressing poverty in the Northern Region, and in the country as whole. From a general point of view, the economists say all economies have to answer three questions:

- What do we produce?
- How will this be produced?
- Where will it be produced?

This alludes to the factors of production, which are the resources that used to produce the economies' good and services. The factors of production are often examined from their financial rewards[5] (and this naturally holds for developed countries):

***Land:*** all businesses need land to create their products,

***Labour:*** businesses need to employ people to make and market their products – trained and qualified people,

***Capital:*** to make their goods or provide their services, firms needs to invest money in machinery, equipment, buildings, vehicles and other major resources) and

***Enterprise:*** the entrepreneur owns the business and is prepared to take the chance that his or her product will be successful.

In developing countries however their remains a lot to be done to reap the benefits enjoyed in developed countries, namely another form of investment in labour: building the capacity of people.

All economies have limited resources and cannot provide all the goods and services that are demanded. As a result, they have to share out – allocate – the resources. This reality presents two different economies:

- ***The Free Market Economy****:* in which resources are owned by individuals, and prices are set through demand and supply. In this system, the profit motive encourages risk-takers (entrepreneurs). The strengths of the free market private sector are:
  - Employers and employees can create their own personal wealth through profit motive and hard work
  - A greater range of products are supplied
  - People have greater freedom to choose and buy what they want
  - Competition helps keep prices down and encourages new ideas

[5] Owners of Land receive Rent; Employees earn Wages; the Owners of Capital receive Interest and Enterpreneneurs make Profits.

- ***The Planned Economy****:* in this economy resources are owned by the State; and prices are set by the State. In this system, supply of goods and services does not depend on the profit motive. The strengths of the planned public sector are
  - Public services do not depend on the profit motive and could be supplied even at a loss
  - The provision of basic services (such as education and health services) is available to all, regardless of people's ability to pay for them

Whereas most economies are partly free and partly planned, the developing countries are largely planned economies. This means that these countries (developing countries) cannot benefit from the strengths of the free market and private sector.

## 5.4 The conceptual framework

Conceptual ambiguities and terminological disparities find all too ample reflection in the varying perceptions of capacity building vis-à-vis NGOs intervention in poverty reduction in developing countries. As well as the foregoing discussion, the conceptual framework for the study is done against the background of the research propositions which have been summarised as follows:

- If foreign NGO interventions are to reduce poverty and arrest the dependence of the poor on development aid, FNGO programmes should have **the objective of building local capacities without supplanting the local initiatives**
- A **pro-people approach** to poverty reduction will bear more fruit in the future for the poor than a welfare service provision/project focused approach.
- **Local ownership** is needed to make FNGO intervention in poverty reduction sustainable.

Based on the foregoing discussions, the framework for the intervention of FNGOs in poverty reduction considered the following order: inputs – process – output – outcome, with the concepts: partnership, capacity building and self-reliance, respectively. The order in which any action is conducted or takes place is very crucial for formulating the conceptual framework. The author adopted the 'input-process-output' model (figure 5.1). Capacity building or development is a process, and if followed effectively this framework will lead to the overall outcome – reduced poverty and a sustainable local development.

While not pretending to advance 'the' ultimate model, the framework concentrates on critical areas for FNGO intervention in poverty and sustainable local development (cf table 5.1)

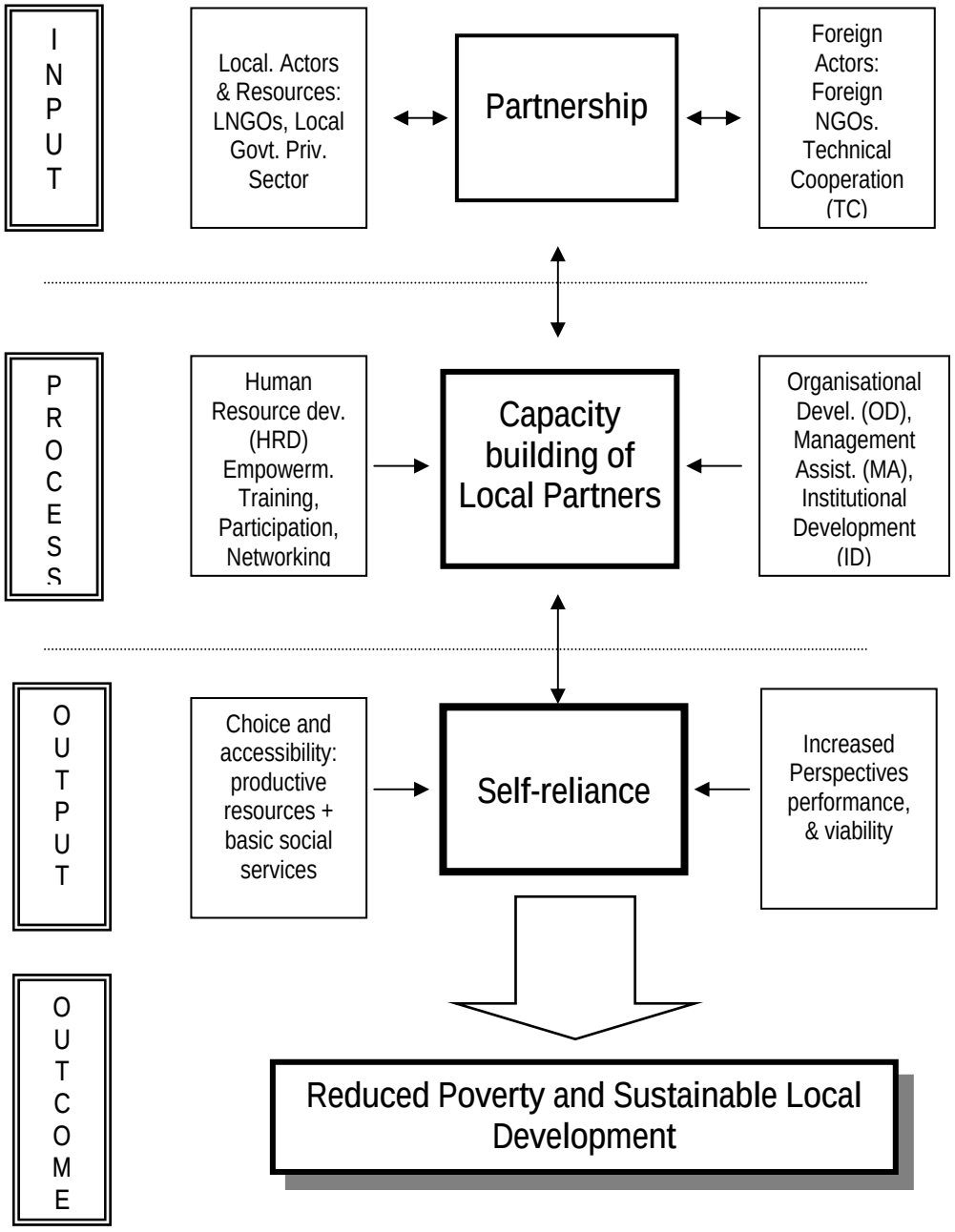
*Table 5.1 Types of intervention for capacity growth*

| Type of intervention | Technical Cooperation (TC) | Management Assistance (MA) | Relational Development (RD) | Organisational development (OD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Purpose | To improve operational and technical skills | To improve specific organizational areas | To improve civic and inter-sector interaction | To improve the organization overall |
| Method | HRD options<br>Technical inputs<br>Finance<br>Physical resources<br>Counterparts / advisers | HRD options<br>Management / leadership forming<br>Board + leadership development<br>Strategic development<br>Short-term problem-solving | Coalition building<br>Joint policy development<br>Mediation<br>Civic linking<br>Sector coupling and networking | HRD options<br>Organizational change consultancies<br>Partnering<br>Strategic development exercises<br>Team/group relationship exercises |
| Approach | Problem-solving | Problem-solving and counseling | Mobilising and bridging | Facilitating |

*Source: based on Fowler, 1997.*

The degree of emphasis given to each stage of the framework in a given context would vary according to the level and complexity of existing human and socio-political framework (institutional capacities and the involvement of civil society in the decision-making process, the economic and financial means to support capacity, and the roles of the public and private sectors.

*Figure 5.1 The Conceptual Framework*




*Author's construct*

### 5.4.1 The Input: Partnership

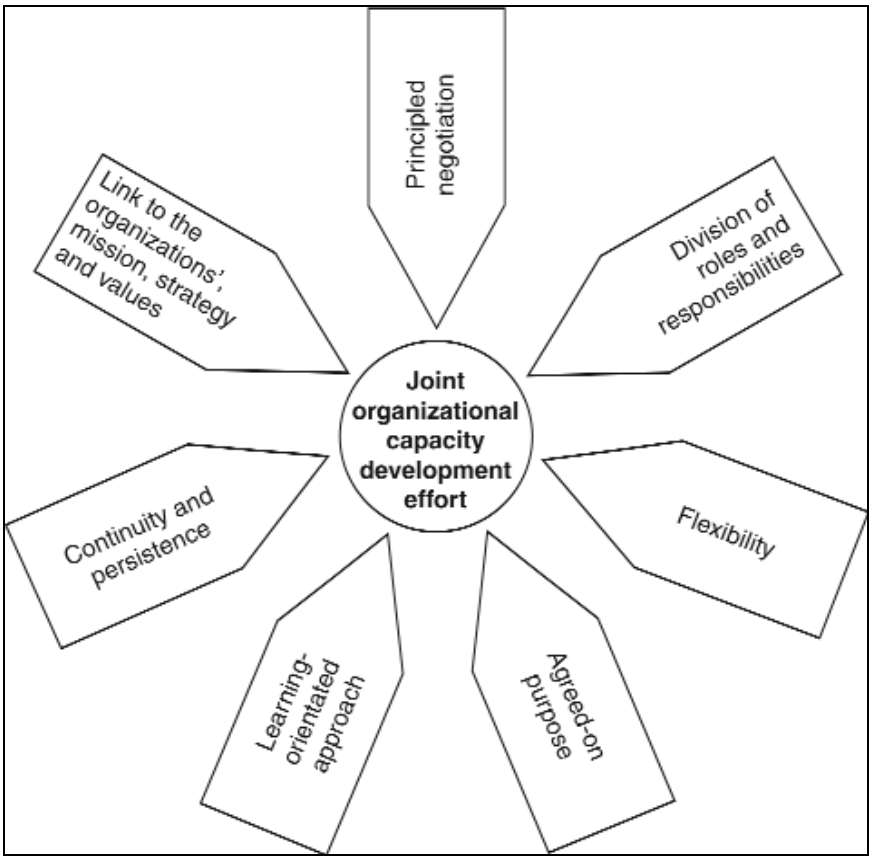
The need for greater partnership capacity in the fight against poverty is one of the most commonly cited challenges in development circles and a lot has indeed been written on the issue. The term 'partnership' means different things to different people. At its simplest level, partnership can mean working in close collaboration with a second party towards a common aim. As observed earlier, a challenge as huge as the first MDG requires many hands. Input in development refers to resources, in this

framework “input” refers to the actors – the most valuable resource to tackle any situation. To tackle poverty, the author proposes a coming together of the local actors in a country (Ghana) with the foreign helping hands in an understanding or framework of partnership. The actors here in question are foreign NGOs on one hand and the local actors (local NGOs, local government and the private sector) on the other (figure 5.1.). In the view of the Ghanaian government and indeed many in the Sub-Saharan region, poverty reduction will require partnership and participation at the local and international level and every help including the foreign NGOs is welcome. The contribution of these partnerships to a lasting poverty reduction strategy is a keen interest in Ghana and other developing countries.

However, the notion of partnership within development circles has become less clear as it has become more fashionable. ‘Partnership’ now covers a whole range of organisational relationships between different actors including official agencies, NGOs and businesses. Partnership has come to be used interchangeably with development co-operation. In fact, partnership is a particular form of relationship which goes beyond a loosely defined collaboration or contractual agreement between two organisations.

Partnerships between Southern and Northern NGOs have become a key element of the development process. Elements of a successful partnership for capacity development remain largely academic (figure 5.2.). Whilst most NGOs are drawn to the concept of partnerships as an expression of solidarity that goes beyond financial aid flows, the practice of partnerships is highly complex, diverse and hotly debated. There are calls for partnership with the public and private sector as well. Given that every partnership – like every relationship - is different and develops in particular circumstances, there is no blueprint for a perfect partnership. Some key elements centre around mutuality, clearly defined expectations, rights, responsibilities and accountability (capacity.org/2 2003).

*Figure 5.2 Elements of a successful partnership for capacity development*




*Source: capacity.org/2 2003*

### 5.4.2 The Process: Capacity building

This is the part that holds the framework together. The coming together and establishment of partnerships (in the preceding stage) is only an input to achieving the desired output. The desired output is achieved through various ways. The way to self-reliance in according to the author is through the process of capacity building. So this is the heart of the framework. It is the point where inputs are converted into output. The question of course is how. Development strategies in the past have often pursued the "hand-out"; welfare, service delivery approach at a great cost and little return in the future, without due consideration of the future. Capacity building encompasses three main activities (Berg, 1993):

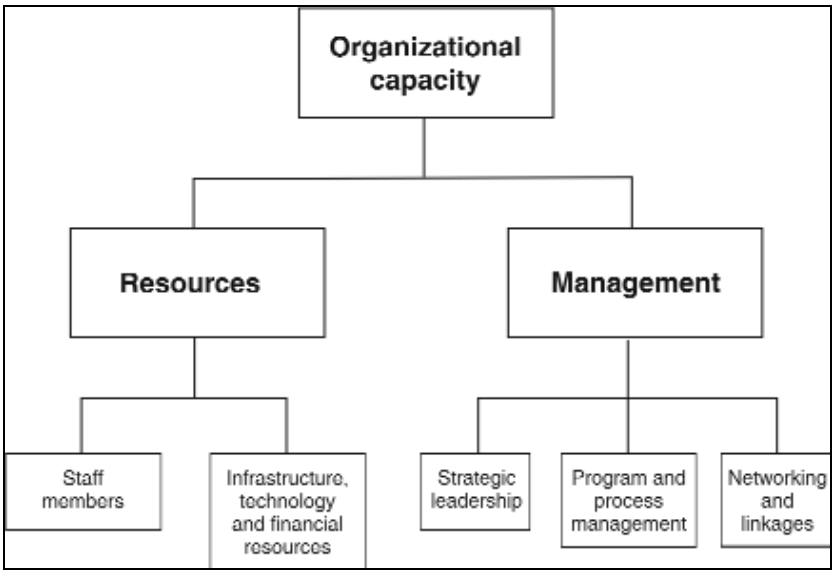
- Skill upgrading, both general and specific,
- Procedural improvements, and
- Organizational strengthening.

The project participants at a project on Evaluating Capacity Development (ECD) by a group of evaluation specialists, led by the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and attended by six research and development

organisations from Asia, Africa and Latin America and their international partners supporting their capacity development efforts classified capacities broadly into two types that all organisations need in order to perform well: resources and management. An organization's overall capacity depends upon its resources (human, physical, financial and technological) and its management (leadership, program and process management, networking, and linkages) as illustrated in figure 5.3. *Resources* include those things traditionally thought of as 'hard' capacities, such as infrastructure, technology, finances and human resources. *Management* is concerned with creating the conditions under which appropriate objectives are set and achieved. According to capacity.org (2003), three types of management are important:

- Strategic leadership
- Programme and process management
- Networking and linkages with groups

*Figure 5.3 Components of an organisation's total capacity*




*Source: capacity.org/2, 2003*

Other ingredients and contents of capacity building in this framework are: training, organisation, management, participation, institutional development, the principle of subsidiarity and networking. The content of the process is also a test of the interventions of the donors and foreign agencies, represented on the ground by the foreign NGOs.

***Empowerment***

Empowerment is considered to be one of the most important ingredients of capacity building. The *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty* (World Bank, 2002) identifies opportunity, empowerment and security as crucial focus areas in the design and execution of poverty reduction strategies. The centrality of empowerment has since been recognised as a strategic framework. It underscores the importance of increasing poor people's access to opportunity, security, and empowerment for economic growth and poverty reduction. Building on *WDR 2000/2001*, the World Bank's Strategic Framework Paper identifies two priority areas for Bank support to client governments:

- Building the climate for investment, jobs, and growth, and
- Empowering poor people and investing in their assets.

In its view (World Bank, 2002), empowerment refers broadly to the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life. It implies control over resources and decisions. For poor people, that freedom is severely curtailed by their voicelessness and powerlessness in relation particularly to the state and markets. There are important gender inequalities, including within the household. Since powerlessness is embedded in a culture of unequal institutional relations, the Bank adopts an institutional definition of empowerment in the context of poverty reduction, which also helps draw out the relevance to the Bank's work: *Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.*

Since poverty is multidimensional, poor people need a range of assets and capabilities at the individual level (such as health, education, and housing) and at the collective level (such as the ability to organize and mobilize to take collective action to solve their problems). Empowering poor men and women requires the removal of formal and informal institutional barriers that prevent them from taking action to improve their well-being - individually or collectively - and limit their choices. The key formal institutions include the laws, rules, and regulations upheld by states, markets, civil society, and international agencies; informal institutions include norms of social solidarity, sharing, social exclusion, and corruption, among others.

### *Key elements of empowerment*

According to literature and practice, many institutions hold the view that State actions (should) create the conditions in which poor people and other actors make decisions. Many institutions have therefore made State reform the primary focus of their operations: to improve provision of basic services, local and national governance, pro-poor market development, and access to justice. These reforms are premised on a mindset and values shaped by the view of poor people as partners and initiators of development rather than as problems. However NGOs and civil society roles support

pro-poor policies and actions at all levels. Since social, cultural, political, and economic conditions vary and institutions are context-specific, reform strategies must vary as well. Although there is no single institutional model for empowerment, experience shows that certain elements are almost always present when empowerment efforts are successful. These elements act in synergy and strengthen the demand side of poverty alleviation. The Bank lists four key elements of empowerment that must underlie institutional reform, but leaves out the training component.

- *Access to information.* Information is power. Two-way information flows from government to citizens and from citizens to government are critical for responsible citizenship and responsive and accountable governance. Informed citizens are better equipped to take advantage of opportunity, access services, exercise their rights, and hold state and non-state actors accountable. Critical areas where information is most important include state and private sector performance, financial services and markets, and rules and rights regarding basic services. Information and communication technologies often play a pivotal role in broadening access to information.

- *Inclusion / participation.* An empowering approach to participation treats poor people as co-producers, with authority *and* control over decisions and resources devolved to the lowest appropriate level. Inclusion of poor people and other excluded groups in decision-making is critical to ensure that limited public resources build on local knowledge and priorities, and brings about commitment to change. However, in order to sustain inclusion and informed participation, it is usually necessary to change rules and processes to create space for people to debate issues, participate in local and national priority setting and budget formation, and access basic and financial services.

- *Accountability.* State officials, public employees, private providers, employers, and politicians must be held to account, making them answerable for their policies and actions that affect the wellbeing of citizens. There are three main types of accountability mechanism. Political accountability of political parties and representatives takes place *increasingly* through elections. Administrative accountability of government agencies is ensured through internal accountability mechanisms, both horizontal and vertical, within and between agencies. Social or public accountability mechanisms hold agencies accountable to citizens, and can reinforce both political and administrative accountability.

- *Local organisational capacity.* This refers to the ability of people to work together, organise themselves, and mobilize resources to solve problems of common interest. Organized groups and communities are more likely to have their voices

heard and their demands met. When such membership-*based* groups federate at higher levels, they can gain voice and representation in policy dialogues and decisions that affect their wellbeing. These four elements are already present in some of the Bank's ongoing work in projects, although investment in local organizational capacity is the least developed. They are much less present in policy loans and in analytical work. They also need to be reflected much more systematically in the Bank's Country Assistance Strategies, in its support for poverty reduction strategies, and in related mandates and analytical guidelines.

***Empowerment and poverty reduction***

A growing body of evidence points to the linkages between empowerment and capacity development both at the society-wide level and at the grassroots level in the fight against poverty. Empowerment approaches can strengthen good governance, which in turn enhances growth prospects. When citizens are engaged, exercise their voice, and demand accountability, government performance improves and corruption is harder to sustain. Citizen participation can also build consensus in support of difficult reforms needed to create a positive investment climate and induce growth. In addition, the empowerment agenda supports development effectiveness by promoting growth patterns that are pro-poor. This involves reducing inequalities by investing in poor people's capabilities through education and access to basic health care, as well as by increasing their access to land, financial capital, and markets.

Experiences also demonstrate that empowerment can improve development effectiveness and pro-poor impact at the individual project level. Grassroots community involvement is a powerful tool for the production and maintenance of local public goods such as water supply, sanitation, schools, health, roads, and forest management, which in turn increase the development effectiveness of investments. Empowerment strategies at the project level are supported by civil liberties in society. Evidence shows that projects in countries with strong civil liberties - particularly citizen voice, participation, and accountability - significantly outperform projects in countries with weak civil liberties.

### 5.4.3 The Output: Self-Reliance

The importance of the stage after the process cannot be overstated. The output is the stage between the process and the overall goal. It reflects the gains of the process, and will greatly determine the quality of success towards to the overall goal. Following this framework, capacity building will lead to increased perspectives, performance and viability on one hand and choice and accessibility (to productive resources and basic needs) on the other. This leads to and make up the desired output: ownership and self-reliance!

Self-reliance and sustainability according to Riddell and Robinson (2001) became priorities among most southern NGOs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It reflects a level of vulnerability in the face of the uncertainty of outside funding, a need which is even more evident today than ever before. To guarantee some independence as institutions, various measures in different scales have been set up in various places and contexts. In this framework, it is suggested and hoped that the above set of capacity building strategies will lead to and eventually guarantee independence and sustainability. It will ensure choice and accessibility to productive resources and basic social services. Self-reliance and sustainability will only come about through the other outcomes of the process (capacity building); increased perspectives, performance and viability.

Self-reliance, according to Mahatma Ghandi is the capacity to stand on one's legs without anybody's help. But this does not mean indifference to or rejection of outside help. The Arusha Declaration, according to Crouch (1987), provided one of the first comprehensive definitions of self-reliance in Africa. Countries in the developing world are either branded as donor-dependent, or anti-foreign aid, but often without due clarification. For example, Eritrea is branded anti-foreign aid because the government and donor agencies could not come to a consensus on the administration of aid (Fengler, 2000). The donor agencies could not accept the government's request to administer the aid in return for an evaluation, and therefore packed out of the country. Whereas the government may have a point in saying that they know the needs of their people and can therefore better administer the aid, the agencies based their action on the negative experience with governments in other countries.

Unlike the communist countries, whose leadership opposed foreign penetration and interdependence, most African countries feel their countries are too poor to reject external contact. According to Fekade (1994), Nyerere who was popular for his Ujamaa policy, considered co-operation with the outside world, but "only in so far as it decreased future dependence on foreign experts, foreign technology and foreign trade". Self-reliance implied the autonomy to set one's own goals and to realise them as far as possible through one's own efforts and resources. This means some countries are aware of the pitfalls of accepting aid from the very outset, but government policies often give way to local circumstances and needs in some developing countries, without ensuring empowerment and capacity of the poor to stand on their own.

### 5.4.4 The Outcome: reduced poverty and sustainable development

Reduced poverty and sustainable development is the overall goal and the desired outcome of the whole exercise. The drive to approach development from an outcome perspective, target the Millennium Development Goals or other outcome goals, and

manage inputs, measurement and evaluation to get there, this will work if it is based on true respect for the choices and political priorities made nationally, and built on local participation. This ushered in the concept of “ownership”. The concept is however contested in certain quarters as been too timid, and evoking the image of an externally defined paradigm that somehow ‘ought’ to be adopted. With the introduction of the Poverty Reduction Strategy by the World Bank, developing countries are now said to be working to create their own national poverty eradication strategies based on local need and priorities.

Poverty has been variously defined and measured by income or consumption levels. But there are limitations to this approach. Nigel Cross (DFID, 2002) explains this as follows:

- The lack of attention to the assets on which most poor people rely for their livelihoods, including access to resources (natural and financial), good health, and capacity to work.
- The extent to which income-based poverty indicators fail to capture many critical aspects of deprivation, including the health burden linked to very poor housing and lack of basic services, and powerlessness of poor communities (seen in the contravention of poorer groups’ civil, political, and resource-using rights).
- The lack of attention to the social relations that so often underpin poverty (or processes of impoverishment) – for instance, a lack of political influence, insecure or uncertain tenure of resources, and being the object of discrimination. These often underpin poverty because they limit both people’s access to income-earning opportunities, services and resources, and the fulfilment of their civil, political and resource-use rights.

This recognition has led to the concept of ‘sustainable livelihoods’ - entailing the capabilities, assets (material and social resources), and labour required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the resource base (see box 5.2). Box 5.2 highlights the extent to which poverty reduction must ensure that poor farmers, pastoralists, and those who depend on forests and fisheries have access to the natural resource base that permits sustainable livelihoods. This implies the need to address inequitable patterns of ownership or use rights. Or Multiple Goals (Cross, ibid): meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;

- Economics needs
- Environmental needs
- Social, cultural and health needs
- Political needs

This requires a couple of measures:

- Minimising the use or waste of non-renewable resources
- Sustainable use of finite renewable resources
- Not overtaxing the capacity of ecosystems to absorb or break down wastes
- Protecting natural processes and climatic systems, including not overtaxing the capacity of global systems to absorb or dilute wastes without adverse effects
- Political and institutional structures within nations and internationally which support the achievement of the above.

*Box 5.1 Sustainable development: Plants or People*

In northern Namibia, between the more internationally renowned Skeleton Coast and Etosha National Game Park, lies the Torra conservancy, home to two semi-nomadic tribes, the Damara and the Herero. They share their land with wild elephants and black rhino. Poaching has been a perennial problem. While poachers were regularly caught, it was not usually until after the rhino had been killed. Poachers were jailed, but others simply took their place. So far, this is the familiar and depressing story that plagues conservation and development efforts across the world.

But what happened next didn't follow the script. A radical approach was devised that typifies the shift in thinking that has taken place among the international community on the issues of the environment and poverty in the past ten years. When you scratch your head and wonder what is meant by that rather ponderous term "sustainable development", think of the Torra conservancy. For their experience has everything to do with the World Summit on Sustainable Development taking place at the end of August in Johannesburg.

WWF-UK recognised that the traditional approach to poaching was not working. Poachers are not, by and large, "evil". They shoot rhinos because poverty presents them with no alternative. One poacher questioned by WWF hunted rhino because he needed money to buy his son the shoes the child required to attend school. The father was jailed, the boy didn't go to school and so the cycle of poverty and poaching continued.

Looking for a new way of tackling these problems, WWF arranged with its local partner organisation, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, a Namibian NGO, for the conservancy to be granted rights over the land independently of the national government. As a result, they were given social responsibility and were able to arrange for access to the land by travel companies.

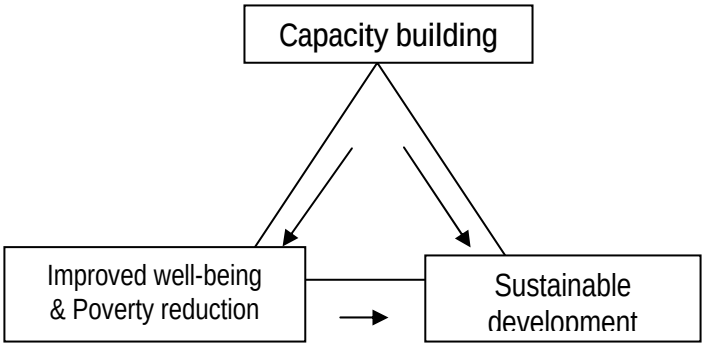
The success has been astonishing. The project has created a living for local people, preventing urban drift and reducing pressure on vital resources such as fresh-water. It promotes local culture and sensible and regulated tourism; it empowers women who are required to sit on the conservancy committees. Perhaps the greatest beneficiary is the wildlife: the conservancy has an incentive to protect it. Black rhino numbers have more than doubled to over 200 individuals, forming the largest free-roaming black rhino herd in Africa.
(Mark Rowe, Development Issue 18; DFID, 2002)

About ten years ago, at the Rio Earth Summit, sustainable development was seen as an environmental issue. But greater understanding of the links between poverty and the environment has changed that. It is interesting to note the evolution of the debate. In simple terms, the consensus since Rio has switched from plants to people. For the main part, Rio laid down policies that targeted the environment. Having said that, it has to be acknowledged that most governments and non-governmental organisations prefer to see a bigger picture – where the environment, the damage we do to it and poverty are, like a cat's cradle, inextricably interlinked (DFID, 2002).

## 5.5 Building blocks in poverty reduction and sustainable development

There has been a considerable development at the conceptual level at least on the building blocks for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Key among these blocks according to Fowler (2000) is capacity building which leads to improved well-being and poverty reduction and eventually sustainable development (figure 5.4).

*Figure 5.4 Building blocks in poverty reduction and sustainable development*




*Author's construct adapted from Fowler, 2000*

### *Systems in sustainable development*

The prominence of sustainable development in these blocks is no accident. Three questions highlight the systems in sustainable development: social, ecological and economic but who are the poor, where do they live and what do they do for their living (respectively)?

*Table 5.2 Systems in sustainable development*

| Systems of foreign NGO interventions | Dimensions of sustainable poverty reduction interventions | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Well-being (individuals, households, groups* | *Capacity (local organisations)* | *Empowerment (groups, households, individuals)* |
| Economic | | X | |
| Social | | X | |
| Ecological | | X | |
| | Gender and generation | | |

*Source Adopted from Fowler, 2000.*

## 5.6 Analytical model for local capacity building

At this point, it is pertinent to summarise and explain how the main issues in the conceptual framework come to bear on the role of foreign NGOs with an analytical model. The analytical model is derived from the conceptual frame as presented in figure 5.1. It is the input-process-output model, which aims to identify the differences in the normative and positive or functional domains, so as to optimise policy results as well as operationalise the conceptual issues. This model describes how inputs (of the actors and beneficiaries) are translated into output, through the process of capacity building. All things being equal, a careful observation of the steps in figure 5.2 should lead to poverty reduction. But there are almost always eventualities which come to bear on the vulnerability of the poor. A combination is captured by Anderson and Woodrove, (1998) in table 5.3.

*Table 5.3 Analytical framework for local capacity building*

| | Vulnerabilities | Capacities |
|---|---|---|
| Physical/Material | o Emphasis on productive assets that have been destroyed<br>o Social, technical and physical infrastructure that has been destroyed<br>o Assessing the livelihood patterns before the war and how they have been disrupted<br>o Assessing the effects of the above on men, women, children, the aged, and the disabled?<br>o I incorporating implications for future planning | To what extent are skills and productive assets still possessed by community built upon?<br><br>Have existing coping strategies been analysed for possible strengthening and application in post-war reconstruction? |
| Motivational/ attitudinal | o Assessing level of trauma in communities<br>o How do they view prospects for the future?<br>o How do they perceive reconciliation?<br>o What is the impact on the motivation of men, women and youths? | What hope still exist for the future?<br><br>Targeting programs on motivations and hopes of the future still existing in communities |
| Social/ organisational | o Was the social structure before the war considered?<br>o Have those social institutions that have disintegrated (e.g. family, traditional authority structures, interpersonal relationships, etc. been identified?<br>o What is the impact of the atrocities on ethnic and religious groupings? How is this addressed? | Which community leadership structures still exist (imams, pastors, traditional authorities)?<br><br>How do interventions build on these networks?<br><br>Which traditional conflict resolution measures exist? |

*Source: Adapted from Anderson and Woodrove (1998)*

**Indicators of poverty reduction**

As mentioned above, poverty has many dimensions. Poverty reduction programmes can be classified into three (3) major categories:

- Targeted poverty reduction activities: working directly with the poor to improve their welfare
- Poverty focused activities: programmes and activities which benefit the poor but do not involve working directly with the poor
- Activities which affect the policy environment: aim removing systematic constraints at both national and international level to address the root causes of poverty

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. Based on the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 4) conducted by the Ghana Statistical Services over the period April 1998-March 1999, the GPRS analysis focused on three dimensions of poverty:

- Income or consumption poverty,
- Lack of access to basic services, and
- Deprivations in human development.

The fourth round of the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS 4) and several participatory poverty assessments provide an insight into vulnerability in Ghana. The description of the *extreme poor* by GLSS 4 in particular offers a starting point for understanding vulnerability in Ghana. GLSS 4 defines the *extreme poor* as those whose standard of living is insufficient to meet their basic nutritional requirements even if they devoted their entire consumption budget to food. The situation of extreme poverty is disturbing, given that the victims are faced with long periods of hunger every year.

Cross-sectional surveys and social assessments further indicate the continued existence of a long hungry season in northern Ghana, when most families can barely afford a decent meal in a day. A subsequent policy issue is how deep extreme poverty is in Ghana. The income gap ratio gives an indication of the depth of (extreme) poverty. The depth of extreme poverty increased marginally in the total country in the 1990s, with significant increases in the rural savannah, urban coastal, urban forest and rural forest areas.

Measures of social deprivation also point to a grim state of vulnerability and exclusion in Ghana. The proportion of children with no or inadequate education is alarming. Currently, between 20 percent to 25 percent of children of school going age are not in school. About half of all adults are unable to write a simple letter. The proportion of children under-five who are malnourished also points to extreme poverty. About a quarter of all children under five are stunted and underweight; a tenth are wasted. Of great concern also is the proportion of children who die before their first and fifth birthdays due to preventable diseases. About 57 and 108 out of every 1000 live births die before their first and fifth birthdays respectively.

The poorest in urban and rural areas face harsh conditions of unreliable water supply, poor sanitation, pollution, and limited access to power supplies and to poor nutrition. Emerging forms of exclusion also depict worsening vulnerability. These include the phenomenon of street children, increasing child labour; the phenomenon of *Kayayei*, families plunged into poverty by HIV/AIDS and victims of traditional harmful practices and domestic violence.

## 5.7 Assessment

Whatever the choice of strategy, the question of assessment cannot be over looked. As capacity building emerges as the most popular among NGOs or the way forward in development circles, the question about its assessment deserves due mention. According to Gubbels & Koss (2000), capacity assessment is currently being approached from two perspectives. First, many Northern agencies are concerned about appraising the capacity of their partners and of a new organisations they are considering funding. These agencies are developing tools and procedures to enable their staff to carry out assessment in order to make funding decisions and provide advice. (World Neighbours, 2000)

Initially, demand for assessing organisational capacity came from Northern Donor Agencies seeking an approach that can assist them as they move away from a “project” model towards programme or partner-based funding. More recently, many donor agencies have started supporting a second approach that helps local NGOs, CBOs, and government structures carry out their own self-assessments.

# Chapter Six

## Foreign NGOs at work in the Northern Region:

## The case study

# Chapter Six

# Foreign NGOs at work in the Northern Region: the case study

*It takes capacity to build capacity.* (Heather Baser, UNDP, 2001)

## 6.1 The choice of the study area

Poverty is a wide spread problem in Sub-Saharan Africa. For logistic constraints however, the study is conducted in one country south of the Sahara - Ghana. As already noted, all available evidence suggests substantial levels of poverty or deprivation in Ghana, notwithstanding recent progress. There are also important patterns to poverty in Ghana, notably by geographic location, with almost all studies, methods and indicators showing substantially higher levels of deprivation in the northern savannah region compared to the south. Like most countries south of the Sahara, Ghana has accepted almost anything it received on its path to reduce poverty and attain sustainable development. She duly adopted the Millennium Development Goals[1], the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative[2] of the World Bank. But qualifying for these programmes or adopting them has not relieved the country of poverty, nor have the programmes been implemented in a manner that will enhance sustainable development. Ghana is poor and donor-dependent, notwithstanding her large host of foreign NGOs and other development agencies. A fairly stable country in the West African region, Ghana emerged as an ideal choice for a study of the role FNGOs in poverty reduction. Additionally, the choice comes after extensive literature review, observations and personal knowledge of the country.

Government statistics, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) document and World Bank statistics are used for the selection of the study region in Ghana. The document worked out Regional variations in level of deprivation, depicting the Northern Region as one of the poorest regions in the country. The region also happens to be the biggest and with the most number of NGOs.

[1] A compact among nations to end human poverty emanating from the UN Millennium Declaration
[2] The HIPC initiative, launched in 1996, is the mechanism for providing debt relief for those countries qualifying for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries status.

### 6.1.1 The selection of Cases - the Units of Analysis

Having selected a region with a huge number of foreign NGOs, it was clear that logistical reasons will not permit a study of all the foreign NGOs in the region. So the author was faced with the issue of selecting a number of FNGOs for analysis. A pilot study revealed that the FNGOs operating in the region came mainly from the UK, USA, Canada and Germany (table 6.2). It was also revealed that the FNGO either worked jointly in the three northern regions of the country or nation-wide (table 6.1).
So the selection criteria was built around

- Operational Location (OL):
- Foreign Character (FC)
- Area of intervention
- Type of NGO

*Operational Location*
With a lot of NGOs operating in the country and in the Northern Region in particular, there is a lot of concern about NGO pretenders[3] in the country. So the operational location of the NGO is of vital importance. The survey revealed that some FNGOs operated nation-wide from the capital city, Accra, while others are located in the region or within reach of the regions. For the purpose of this study, two parameters are agreed:

- Nation-wide (NW)
- Northern Ghana: the Upper East (UE) and the Upper West (UW) regions

*Foreign Character*
The definition of "foreign" with reference to NGOs, is Northern NGOs, and not local NGOs e.g. ISODEC, a Ghanaian operating across the border. This brought in the "Country of Origin (CO)" as a criterion. Another criterion considered under "Foreign Character" is the "International Spread" (IS) of the NGO. West Africa and beyond were considered as immediate boundaries (WA+). This is to ensure that the picture obtained is of an NGO with vast international experience, and not just one that had grown overnight from Europe or USA in Ghana.

*Selection of countries*
The selection of countries of the origin of FNGOs cannot be separated from the choice of the FNGO, and followed the same procedure as the selection of cases. Firstly the pilot study compiled a list of the FNGOs active in the region from the general list of NGOs working in the country. The FNGOs were then classified along countries of origin. From this list of countries (table 6.2.), it emerged that the study

[3] Fowler (1997:32) lists a dozen such NGOs

could have otherwise been confined to European NGOs because most of the FNGOs in the study region and the country as a whole are from Europe. However a few non-European NGOs, namely from the United States had a strong presence.

Based on practical logistic reasons and the nature of the study, three units of analysis[4] were selected for the study. The final selection of the three was decided on the areas of NGO intervention in the country (table 6.3.), complied by GAPVOD. The three with the most areas of intervention and the above criteria who made the final selection are: Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), ActionAid (AAG) and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) from Germany, Britain and USA respectively. A notable absentee from the countries active in the region and the country as a whole are the French (NGOs). About two-thirds of West Africa is Franco-phone, making France a very interesting player in the region. A practical reason for this could lie in the fact that Ghana is an Anglo-phone country. There are clearly very few French NGOs in Ghana and none in the study region.

The type of NGO was also considered in the selection criteria as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Political | KAF (Germany) |
| Religious | CRS (USA) |
| Non-political, non-religious | ActionAid (UK) |

### 6.1.2 Control of subjects, variables and research environment

Since the author had very limited, if any, control over the respondents or subjects of the study, the case study method was very ideal (Yin, 1984; 1993; Fekade, 1994). There was the need to make adjustments to the research design in line with the daily schedules and demands of the respondents, and as the variables under consideration became modified[5]. The research environment also influenced the type of data collection and analysis methods that were appropriate. Since the case study method allows for such flexibility, it was considered appropriate for this study.

[4] Patton, 1987:51 - "The key factor for making the decisions about the appropriate unit of analysis rests on what unit one wants to be able to say something about at the end of the exercise".

[5] Flyvberg 1990 in Fekade 1994:6 - "..the object of the social sciences, man, is self-interpretative, whereas physical objects to the best of our knowledge, are not; the object of the social sciences is, in effect, the subject".

**Selection of Units of Analysis**

*Table 6.1 Foreign NGOs operating in Northern Ghana*[6]

| FNGDOs \ OPERATIONAL SPREAD | 1 UE | 2 UW | 3 NR | 4 NW | 5 WA+ | CO |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACTION ON DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT | @ | @ | @ | | | UK |
| ACTIONAID | @ | @ | @ | | @ | UK |
| ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY | @ | @ | @ | | @ | US |
| CANADIAN FEED THE CHILDREN | | @ | | | @ | CA |
| CHARITY AID FOUNDATION (CAF) | | | | @ | | UK |
| CARE INTERNATIONAL, GHANA | @ | @ | @ | | @ | US |
| CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS) | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | US |
| CHRISTAIN CHILDREN'S FUND OF CANADA | | | @ | | @ | CA |
| CONCERN UNIVERSAL | | | @ | | @ | UK |
| CUSO | @ | | @ | @ | @ | CA |
| THE FREE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL | @ | @ | @ | @ | | US |
| FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION | | | | @ | @ | D |
| FRIEDRICH – NEUMANN STIFTUNG | | | | @ | @ | D |
| HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – GHANA | @ | | | | | US |
| HUMANITY FIRST | | | | @ | | |
| KONRAD-ADENAUER FOUNDATION (KAF) | | | | @ | @ | D |
| OXFAM | @ | @ | @ | | @ | UK |
| THE PLAIN TRUTH INTERNATIONAL | | | | @ | | US |
| PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION OF GHANA | | | | @ | @ | US |
| SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND | @ | @ | @ | | @ | UK |
| SIGHT SAVERS INTERNATIONAL | @ | @ | @ | | | UK |
| TECHNOSERVE | | @ | | | @ | US |
| THIRD WORLD NETWORK | | | | @ | | |
| TRAX PROGRAM SUPPORT | @ | | @ | | | UK |
| VILLAGE A.i.D PROJECT | | | @ | | @ | UK |
| WATER AID | @ | @ | @ | | @ | UK |
| WORLD NEIGHBOURS | @ | | | | @ | US |
| WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL (WVI) | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | US |

*Source: author's field study*

D – Germany; CA – Canada; UK – United Kingdon; USA – United States of America

[6] Northern Ghana comprises the three northern regions: Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions

*Table 6.2 Foreign NGDOs operating in Northern Ghana by Country of Origin*

| UK | USA | Canada | Germany |
|---|---|---|---|
| ACTION ON DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT (ADD) | ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY | CANADIAN FEED THE CHILDREN | FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION |
| ACTIONAID | CARE INTERNATIONAL, GHANA | CHRISTAIN CHILDREN'S FUND OF CANADA | KONRAD-ADENAUER FOUNDATION (KAF) |
| CHARITY AID FOUNDATION (CAF) | CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS) | CUSO | FRIEDRICH-NEUMANN STIFTUNG |
| CONCERN UNIVERSAL | HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – GHANA | | |
| OXFAM | TECHNOSERVE | | |
| SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND | WORLD NEIGHBOURS | | |
| SIGHT SAVERS INTERNATIONAL | THE PLAIN TRUTH INTERNATIONAL | | |
| TRAX PROGRAM SUPPORT | WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL (WVI) | | |
| VILLAGE A.i.D PROJECT | THE FREE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL | | |
| WATER AID | PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION OF GHANA | | |

**KEY:**
Operational Location:

1. UE – Upper East
2. UW – Upper West
3. NR – Northern Region
4. NW – Nation-Wide
5. WA+ - West Africa and beyond

CO – Country of Origin: UK – British; US – American; CA – Canadian; D – German

*Source: author's field study*

*Table 6.3 Final list of selected Units of Analysis (in bold) for study (Summary of selection criteria)*

| Foreign NGDO | Operational Location (OL) | | | | Foreign Character | | *Areas of intervention* | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | UE | UW | NR | NW | IS | CO | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| CUSO | @ | | @ | @ | WA+ | CA | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | | @ | | @ |
| Konrad Adenauer Foundation | | | | @ | WA+ | D | @ | | | | @ | @ | | | | @ |
| Action on Disability and Development (ADD) | @ | @ | @ | | WA+ | UK | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | |
| Action Aid | @ | @ | @ | | WA+ | UK | @ | @ | | @ | | | @ | @ | @ | |
| Save the Children Fund | @ | @ | @ | | @ | UK | @ | @ | @ | | | | @ | @ | @ | |
| Catholic Relief Services | @ | @ | @ | @ | WA+ | US | @ | @ | @ | @ | @ | | | @ | | |
| World Vision International | @ | @ | @ | @ | WA+ | US | @ | @ | | | | | @ | | @ | |

Areas of intervention:

1. Women in Development (WID)
2. Health and Population (HP)
3. Agriculture and Food Security (AFS)
4. Water and Sanitation (WS)
5. Advocacy and Media Relations (AMR)
6. Small Scale Enterprise Development (SSED)
7. Youth and Culture (YC)
8. Environment and Disaster Relief (EDR)
9. Child Survival and Development (CSD)
10. Non-Formal Education Training (NFET)

*Source: author's field study*

## 6.2 Data collection

Understanding poverty; how it occurs, why it persists and how it may be reduced is essential to devise effective, appropriate strategies. A variety of different data collection instruments are necessary to understand the cultural, social, economic, political, and institutional realities that determine the opportunities and barriers poor people (and NGOs) face in their efforts to reduce poverty or at best move out of it.

Data for the study was collected through a review of selected literature, administrative records and reports; in depth, open-ended key informant interviews; participant observation and target group discussions or seminars. Due to financial constraints, field data collection was chiefly undertaken during two fieldtrips, of at least three months each; at an interval of two years; in 2001 and 2003. The two-year interval made it possible to gauge the development and events over time.

***Review of selected literature, administrative records and reports***

A substantial percentage of the data for this study was collected through review of secondary data. The author reviewed records and reports from the GAPVOD on its operations and that of its members, the local NGOs. The selected FNGOs of course received greater importance. The pilot study made research problem clearer; the author was able to deduce from these reviews that the big issue was inadequate capacity.

In conceptualising capacity building and developing the conceptual framework for this study, the author undertook an indepth literature review. This exposed the author to the range of thoughts on the subject and guided him in identifying information gaps that this study intended to fill. The conflicting views about capacity development and the need for a clear definition or conceptualisation of development as it pertained to this study was facilitated by a detailed review of the literature on the subject. The author was thus able to arrive at his own convictions and approaches to analysing the subject. From the review, the author was also able to examine various methodologies that have been adopted in similar studies, the problems they faced or the shortcomings of these methods, before selecting an appropriate research methodology for this study.

***In depth, open ended key informant interviews.***

To facilitate the data collection process, the author relied on a number of key informants. These included the operations of the local FNGOs partners. Identifying the local partners of the FNGOs gave a balanced perspective on the activities of the FNGOs. These interviews were mostly open-ended and informal especially at the first meeting. In subsequent meetings, after some rapport had been established, the interviews became more structured and formal. An interview schedule or

questionnaire was used and sent out after acquaintance or permission had been established during the first encounter. The returns from it were unfortunately minimal or not forthcoming. In either case, the author took extra notes on the deliberations with the help of some assistants who accompanied the author.

***Participant observation***

In the data collection exercise, the author did not only rely on information supplied by the respondents. The author wanted to have his own experiences and observations or impressions. The author therefore toured the study area extensively assessing the development activities and sometimes even taking photographs. The author also spent long periods especially with the staff of the NGO and beneficiaries and established rapport which helped him in acquiring the desired information.

## 6.3 Data analysis and processing

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in this study. The qualitative data was either summarised and presented as part of the findings or in some cases the original text, as produced by the respondent, was reproduced in the report. The data obtained from the questionnaires was quantified and percentages, rates and ratios computed from them. Tables and graphs, as necessary, were constructed and presented.

The conceptual framework within which the core list of indicators has been developed is as follows: FNGOs and local actors should come together in partnership to offer the best possible input to tackle poverty in the region. In order for local actors to have a synergy effect; serve poor communities and households to maximise their potential, they need to have access to training, services and facilities that will help them improve their living standards of the region.

The Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) which focuses on the collection of information to measure peoples' access, utilisation, and satisfaction with key social and economic services was duly selected for the study. The CWIQ asks for: distance to the nearest school (access), number of children enrolled in school by age and gender (utilisation), and whether the household is satisfied with the quality of the schooling (satisfaction).

***Validation checks on the field***

Validations was performed by the author after each interview. There were no assistants (enumerator) employed, and the author relied on the services of GAPVOD staff, teachers, opinion leaders and local staff NGOs. Mr. Dogbe's (GAPVOD) long years of work at GAPVOD and his vast knowledge of the country, local and foreign actors in development proved to be an invaluable source guidance for the foreign author. The author could have hardly found a better field supervisor than Dr. J.Y.

Kokor, Head of Department, Department of Planning in the Faculty of Environmental and Development Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. Notwithstanding, the following steps were additionally taken to validate data:

***Step 1:*** bubble in all the answers and jottings. Verify there is only one answer per question, unless otherwise specified.

***Step 2:*** examine all number grids and make sure the numbers bubbled in match the numbers written in the box above each grid.

***Step 3:*** make sure that organisation, and designation of interviewee is correct.

***Step 4:*** verify that the correct reference number has been entered on top of each questionnaire.

In order to create this picture, the author consulted literature but also got the views of the press and people in and outside the region. The study was conducted after John Kufuor's victory in the presidential ballot in December 2000. Settling in and getting things going took the new government lot of time, and up to November 2002, the Northern Region still had an Acting Regional Minister. As he got to work, he invited the press to brief them on the region. This press briefing ("the horse's mouth") as reported on the Ghanaweb.com (2002), forms a significant part of the profile of the region.

## 6.4 Selection of evaluation criteria

The central question of the study; capacity for the implementation of the poverty reduction policy and sustainable development is considered from two angles: the actors involved and the strategies adopted and the goal (cf. title of the study). In determining criteria for measuring the capacity of the local actors in poverty reduction and sustainable development, it is crucial to ensure that the criteria are realistic and objectively measurable over time. Drawing from the works of Pearce, et al (1990); Yin (1993); Stenhouse (1995) and Fekade (1994), the author has identified five criteria that could be used to measure the success of community development. These criteria are as follows:

- the institutional capacity;
- the extent to which local resources and potentials are being utilised;
- the extent of environmental degradation;
- the level of community participation and
- the appropriateness of the technology used in enhancing community development.

The emphasis on institutional capacity and participation is meant to ensure that the focus of the study, which is on capacity for poverty reduction, is not lost in a broader

debate about environmental issues, appropriate technology and endogenous development. The working definition of capacity building is reflected in the conceptual framework in chapter five, to provide the reader with the scope within which these concepts are to be applied in the study.

***The uniqueness and independence of the cases***

Every project or institution has certain unique peculiarities that distinguish it from others. Even though they might share a lot of identical attributes, the author ensured that the integrity and identity of the cases was not lost in the process. This would have been difficult, if not impossible, using only the quantitative research methodologies. The quantitative research methodologies are so statistically biased that they lose sight of the uniqueness of the cases. Statistical means or averages, standard deviations, etc. do not highlight the uniqueness of the cases. Fekade (1994) and Kunfaa (1996) have revealed in their studies that the case study method does not yield to these shortcomings.

***Poverty reduction indicators***

Indicators are needed to monitor poverty and the effects of development policies, programmes, projects and living standards. It is not enough that such indicators should be provided at the level of national aggregates. They need to be presented to show the effects on different population subgroups. The problem however is that traditional impact indicators that measure changes in welfare status (e.g. percentage of the population below the poverty line, number of malnourished children etc.) are expensive and time-consuming to collect. While the periodic collection of such impact indicators is necessary, the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) is intended to be applied more frequently and to be used to collect a set of simpler indicators that will indicate who is, and who is not, benefiting from various actions that are intended to improve social and economic status of the poor.

The CWIQ consists of short set of core questions to be administered annually to a random sample of households. The conceptual framework within which the core list of indicators has been developed is that, in order for poor communities and households to maximise their potential, they need to have access to services and facilities that will help them improve their living standards. The CWIQ therefore focuses the collection of indicators that measure **access, utilisation,** and **satisfaction** for a select number of key social and economic services. Thus for instance in the case of schooling, the CWIQ asks for: Distance to the nearest school (access), Number of children enrolled in the school by age and gender (utilisation), and whether the household is satisfied with the quality of the schooling (satisfaction).

It is suggested that the CWIQ should ideally be part of an overall national monitoring package which should also include: focus-group interviews and qualitative studies;

panel surveys to monitor income, expenditure and consumption patterns; and periodic (5-year) nationwide Integrated Surveys.

## 6.5 The case study

The investigation of the objectives of the study are guided by the three propositions of the study:

- If foreign NGO interventions are to reduce poverty and arrest the dependence of the poor on development aid, FNGO programmes should be provided with the objective of building local capacities without ***supplanting the local initiatives***.
- A ***pro-people*** (organisations) approach to poverty reduction will bear more fruit in the future for the poor than a welfare service provision project focused approach.
- ***Local ownership*** is needed to make foreign NGO intervention in poverty reduction sustainable.

At this point, the focus is on the developments issues in the Northern Region; as highlighted in the profile of the study area in chapter three. The aim is to gauge the response of the FNGOs to the development issues and poverty reduction in the region. The three cases have not been tagged to specific propositions but will be investigated generally. While the selection of the three cases easily considered the points in the proposition, developing criteria for assigning the cases to specific proposition is much more difficult exercise.

Organisations must find a legal home in either the civil law or the public law (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). Both the US and the UK share a basic notion of an organisational universe distinct from the State and market. In the countries of continental Europe, by contrast, such a notion is far less developed. There the right to form private organisations is more tightly defined by law and the concept of a public-serving non-profit sector is complicated by the notion that the state is considered the truest embodiment of the public good. Not all of what would normally be considered part of the non-profit sector in the US and the UK falls under the civil law in Germany. A significant portion also falls under public law.

## 6.6 Case One - Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Germany) Political

### 6.6.1 The voluntary / NGO sector in Germany

A rather rigid and well-defined system exists for defining the status and rights of organisations in Germany. However, this system is not particularly designed to clarify the existence of a set of organisations that fit common notions of a private, non-profit sector. On the contrary, they actually blur such a classification. At the heart of the

German system are two quite distinct systems of law, one of which (the civil law) applies to private individuals and organisations, and the other of which (the public law) applies to public institutions. A discussion of organisations in the German legal order is a complex undertaking. The challenge is that they are civil in form and public law in function.

To cope with the challenge, a variety of special provisions have been made. In the first place, the civil law acknowledges the existence of a variety of types of civil law organisations that serve essentially public purposes. This includes:

(1) So-called “ideal associations”, or *Vereine,* which are essentially membership organisations serving other than commercial purposes (for example, political and civic organisations, local voters' groups, sports clubs); (2) certain limited liability companies and other forms of corporations considered to have a public mission, such as hospitals; and (3) foundations.

Under German tax law, these civil-law organisations are tax-exempt and eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts to the extent that they are ‘gemeinnützige’, or public-benefit, organisations serving certain specified public purposes (for example, public health, youth and youth welfare, life-saving, prisoners’ welfare).

Although theoretically reserved for public agencies, the public law category has been broadened to include a wide variety of organisations that are public in purpose but essentially private in structure, such as public television stations, the Bavarian Red Cross, the Jewish Welfare Agency, most universities, and even the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. Germany has thus included within the domain of public-law corporations, which applies mainly to government agencies, many types of organisations that would be classified as private, non-profit organisations in other societies. Yet not all public-law corporations fit this criterion.

In the German setting, therefore, no clear line can be drawn between public and private institutions in defining the non-profit sector. By law, some are public and some private. What is more, particular types of organisations can end up on both sides of this amorphous line, depending on peculiar historical circumstances. Thus, some German charitable foundations are chartered under civil law and some under public law. Similarly, the Church, commonly regarded as pre-eminently a private institution, is covered by the public law in Germany. Nor does the tax structure clarify what the legal structure leaves confused. The German law permits tax exemptions for private donations to public-benefit organisations. This category includes government agencies, civil-law organisations, and functionally independent public-law organisations. In short, although Germany contains a rather rigid and formal legal structure and quite a sizeable and well-developed set of non-profit organisations, including some of the largest private social welfare organisations in the world - the

so-called “free welfare associations” - no coherent concept of a non-profit sector exists. Rather, this sector is thoroughly mixed up with both the governmental and the private, for-profit spheres. A well-known segment of this sector is the “Foundations”.

The foundations are somehow unique and are hardly to be found in other democratic countries. Although maintaining close ties to specific parties represented in the German Federal parliament (Bundestag), they are financially and organisationally separate entities. Mostly set up in the course of democratisation process after World War II, they aimed and still aim at mobilising people’s participation in democratic institutions and building up a genuine democratic society in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Besides their civic-education and socio-political activities in Germany, the political foundations started in the early sixties to promote development support programmes in various fields in the Third World countries to foster international understanding and co-operation. The general aim of these activities is to strengthen organisational forms and institution that steps to improve the living standards disadvantaged sectors of the populations in order to satisfy basic needs for existence, to ensure appropriate participation in economic success and to also achieve favourable effects on generating income and employment.

At the same time, by supporting local partners in their efforts in promoting social and political progress, they aim at strengthening democratic organisations and development within the framework of Parliamentary Democracy and Human Rights. Though political foundations are private organisations and real NGOs, their development co-operation activities are financed to a large extent by government sources. On the other side, the Foundations’ policy is to provide support to the various partners while respecting their independence, sovereignty in determining their own political ambitions, cultural traditions and modernisation needs.

The ministry of government for the funding is the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation. So their activities are clearly conceived as contribution from the German government and collaboration. A very important aspect of the German - Ghana development co-operation is the concept of ownership. According to the C. Nakonz, German Ambassador to Ghana (KAF, 1998), “Ownership means first and foremost that the people regard projects as ‘theirs”. Development and development projects need the full ownership of the local people. To let people experience that projects are really ‘theirs’, and not those of a support agency, people must not only be involved or only take part in the decision making process, but must themselves be the centre itself of any decision making process.

As with previous governments, good governance is an important criterion for Germany’s development cooperation. According to a German Minister, “there can be

no financial cooperation with dictatorial regimes. Individual projects which benefit the local population may still be realised; in extreme cases, however, cooperation must be channelled through non-governmental organisations" (D+C, 1/1999).

Four of the five German political foundations are represented in Ghana:

- Konrad Adenauer Foundation (CDU),
- The Friedrich Ebert Foundation (SPD),
- The Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FDP) and
- The Hanns Seidel Foundation (CSU).

The only one not represented in Ghana is the Heinrich Boll Foundation (from the Greens/Bundnis90 party).

### 6.6.2 The Konrad Adenauer Foundation

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) emerged from the 'Society for Christian Democratic Education Work' founded in 1956 and was named after the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic in 1964. It is related to the Christian Democratic movement and is said to be guided by the same principles that inspired Adenauer's work: offers political education, conducts scientific fact-finding research for political projects, grants scholarships to gifted individuals, researches the history of Christian Democracy, and supports and encourages European unification, international understanding, and development-policy cooperation.

The foundation's headquarters is located in St. Augustin near Bonn (in Germany), plus two education centres and 21 education institutes. KAF offers political education, conducts scientific fact-finding research for political projects, grants scholarships to gifted individuals, researches the history of Christian Democracy, and supports and encourages European unification, international understanding, and development-policy cooperation. With about 500 staff in Germany, 75 advisers abroad, it is one of German's biggest NGOs. The annual budget amounts to around Euro 100 million. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation accounts publicly for its expenditures, and the management of its funds is scrutinised by Federal and Land ministries, courts of audit, and fiscal authorities.

***International co-operation***

Konrad Adenauer Foundation has been cooperating with partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, in the Middle East and in North America for more than three decades. KAF has about 85 foreign representatives looking after more than 200 programmes in more than 100 countries. The KAF partners abroad include political parties, parliaments and governments; education and research institutes; universities; industry confederations and trade unions; cooperative societies;

women's, environmental, and self-help organisations; and the media. Basically, all their projects serve the goal of promoting democracy and development, improving understanding across national. Its budget for these international activities amounts to more than Euro 50 million every year.

### 6.6.3 KAF local partners and projects surveyed

KAF works through a number of organisations in Ghana and cannot be said to be region bound. The selection of its local partners spanned the boundaries of the Northern Region and some of their interventions are partner-oriented, but duly contributes to poverty reduction and development of the country as a whole.

***The Christian Mothers Association (CMA)***

Established in the 1940s by nuns for the spiritual advancement of women in the catholic church, CMA is one the largest and strongest women's organisations in the country with a Nation-wide coverage. The association boasts of more than 1,000 groups of members in 120 districts in nine regions including the Northern Region. Their target group is understandably women and their main activity is income generation. The membership base of the association's ca. 22,000 women is mostly rural. The main aim of the organisation is to develop maximum awareness of the dignity and responsibilities of members as Christian women, wives and mothers; to promote the spiritual, moral and socio-economic advancement of women thereby helping them to be fully integrated in to society and improving their standard of living. Unlike the other local NGOs who deal with a number of foreign NGOs at the same time, CMA's main foreign partner is the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

KAF's has instituted a revolving loan fund scheme to support the economic activities of the organisation. Economic activities include food processing and handcraft. Social activities range from health education, food and nutrition, personal and environmental hygiene, religious education, women's rights, etc. etc. Future plans include providing short and long term entrepreneurial skills and productivity training for self-employment and self-reliance. To intensify the education of women on their civil rights and responsibilities, and active involvement in the decision making process. KAF sponsors training in respective skills and business management.

***The Tamale Ecclesiastical Provincial Pastoral Conference (TEPPCON)***

The conference of Catholic Bishops in northern Ghana like the Christian Mother Association has KAF as their main foreign partners in Ghana. The role of the Catholic Church in development underlines the importance of this body and its close cooperation with KAF. The relationship with KAF is part of a larger partnership between northern Ghana and the Catholic Church in Germany. There exist a partnership between the dioceses and the diocese of Münster in Germany. In

October 2001, a partnership programme by TEPCON, KAF and the Diocese of Münster jointly sponsored and organised the “Training of Trainers (TOT) course for selected District Assembly members from the five dioceses of the northern province on the social teachings of the Catholic Church and participation in public life (figure 6.1). KAF partnership with the Church to support the **District Assembly** is highly rated.

***The Tamale Archdiocesan development Office (TADO)***

The development office of the (Catholic) Archdiocese of Tamale is not an NGO, but a well-established actor in local development in the region. Like its parent (TEPCON), her main foreign partner in Ghana is the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Collaboration with TADO is also in the form of training and sponsoring training.

*Figure 6.1. A KAF partnership programme on the Training of Trainers (TOT)*

*Source: author*

***The Private Enterprise Foundation***

The Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF) is the umbrella national organisation of enterprises, and duly covers the Northern Region. It was founded on the initiative of four existing major business associations who felt the need to come together to exert greater influence on policy initiatives for the creation of an enabling environment in which private sector businesses can thrive as partners in the Economic Development of the Country:

- The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI)

- The Ghana National Chamber of Commerce (GNCC)
- The Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) and
- The Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE)

PEF is a non-profit making, non-political, autonomous institution, incorporated on January 24, 1994, as a Company Limited by guarantee under the Ghana Companies Code, Act 179 with AGI, GNCC, GEA, and FAGE as the founding members. Membership is open to the private business and trade associations. The Ghana Association of Bankers has been admitted with other members including the Ghana Association of Consultants (GAC), and Ghana Real Estate Developers Association (GREDA), Ghana Association of Tourism Federation (GHATOF) and others.

In February 2000, the Private Enterprises Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation organised a workshop On "Building Partnership With Parliamentary Committees - A Private Sector/Legislative Network On Policy For Effective Governance", which offered a rare opportunity for private sector representatives and members of some selected committees of parliament and the leadership of the house to meet in an unstructured and less formal ambience to establish acquaintances and map out their own-levels of interaction, and consequently develop strong channels of communication.

PEF acknowledges in its annual report that her operations have been largely supported through sponsorship offered by Konrad Adenauer Foundation together with USAID and DANIDA. KAF is accredited (by PEF) with sponsoring activities to seek the views of the member associations to enrich the various presentations with regard to advocacy and promotion by PEF.

***The Association of Small Scale Industries (ASSI)***

KAF has been co-operating with the National Board for Small Scale Industries to provide assistance to the association since 1989. KAF interest stems from its belief in the dignity of man. After 15 years of co-operation in capacity building, KAF is (at the time of the study) evaluating its assistance to the association. The aim of KAF is to give support to small and medium scale enterprises, and reflects KAF's new direction: promoting the private sector

***The Ministry of Interior***

KAF's co-operation with the ministry was borne out of a workshop with the ministry of defence on conflicts. The Consultative workshop on conflicts produced Akosombo I and II. The consultative workshop was on the Dagbon Peace Process. The Northern Region is prone to ethnic conflicts.

***The Ministry of Trade***

Collaboration with the ministry of trade is part of KAF's assistance to the ministerial advisory board, restructuring of the ministry and reviewing trade policies (e.g. the Presidential Special Initiative). There is also collaboration with the ***Ghana Standards Board***, which focuses on standardising consumer protection.

***The Ministry of Regional Cooperation and NEPAD***

KAF started co-operating with the Ministry for Regional co-operation and NEPAD in 2003 (almost at its inception). The main theme of their collaboration is good governance and KAF sponsored a workshop on the African Peer Review Mechanism. The Governing Council for National African Peer Review Mechanism (NAPRM) was inaugurated by President Kufour with the mandate to exercise an oversight responsibility over the effective and successful implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in Ghana on March 18, 2004. The APRM is an initiative of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) meant to achieve good governance and socio-economic development.

Acceding to the APRM means Ghana has agreed to ensure that her policies and practices conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards as contained in the strategic policy framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The country's performance under the APRM will be measured in four substantive areas: democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance as well as socio-economic development. For instance, aspects of economic governance and management include the implementation of transparent and credible government policies and the promotion of sound public finance management.

Others areas are the promotion of macro-economic policies that support sustainable development and sustained initiative and action to fight corruption and money laundering. To ensure democracy and political governance, member states are enjoined to uphold constitutional democracy, including periodic political competition and opportunity for choice, rule of law and promotion of economic, social, cultural, civil rights and political rights.

***The National House of Chiefs***

KAF is definitely not the only NGO working in collaboration with the National House of Chiefs (figure 6.3). But KAF's collaboration bring together a lot of current issues for the Northern Region and the country at large:

Codification of customary laws and practices

Good governance and

Conflict resolution in particular reference to the conflicts in the Northern Region. This was done in a tripartite meeting.

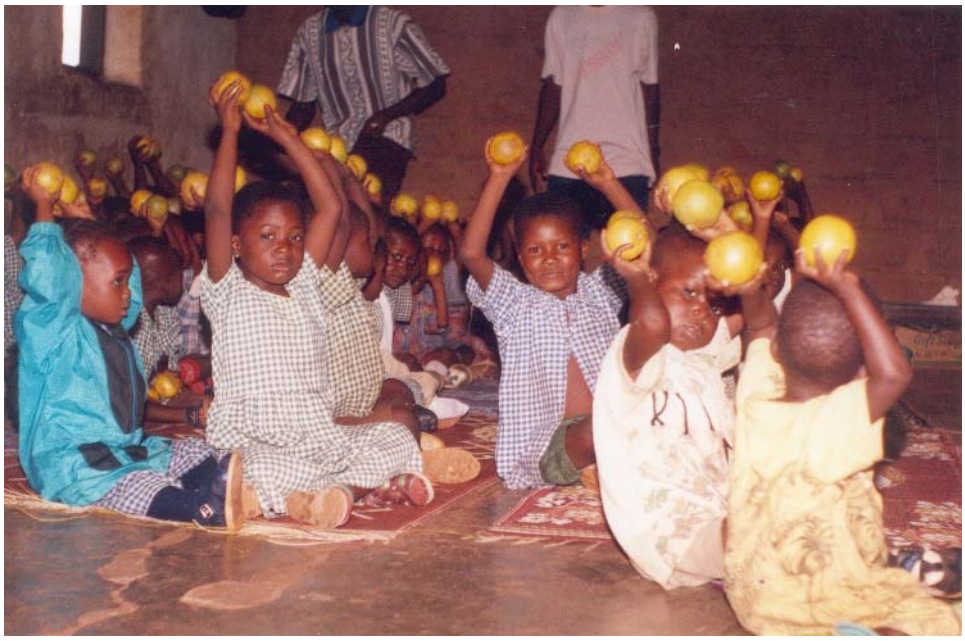
***Elections monitoring***

Monitoring of the 2000 general elections was done in collaboration with the Catholic Church. This included polls watching.

***Publications***

Most of the proceedings from KAF's training programmes (figure 6.1), seminars and workshops have been published and offer a rich library on various subjects, from good governance, and partnership to the role of civil society organisations Ghana's decentralisation and development process. The free market economy is a key principle in KAF's programmes.

*Figure 6.2. Getting children to school: school-feeding programme (CRS)*



*Source: author*

## 6.7 Case two - ActionAid (UK) Philanthropic

### 6.7.1 The voluntary / NGO sector in the United Kingdom

The UK shares with the United States a reasonably clear concept of a “voluntary sector” (UK usage; Non-profit in the US), but the legal boundaries of this sector are nowhere near as neatly demarcated. No single body of tax or other law embraces this set of institutions. One reason for this, according to the John Hopkins Studies of Non-Profit, is the fact that different legal systems, one covering England and Wales, another Scotland, and a third Northern Ireland. Beyond this, however, the “common law” tradition, which puts a premium on flexibility and evolution rather than precise delineation of organisational types, has had a stronger hold in the UK than in the U.S., preventing even the kind of codification that the tax laws have achieved in the U.S. The result is a reasonably prominent notion of an organisational space outside the state and the market, but a far more complicated one than in the American setting.

The centre of gravity of the UK voluntary sector is the so-called charities. These are organisations formally registered as “charities” by the UK Charity Commission and thereby accorded the protection of the Crown, the Courts, and the Charity Commission for their activities, including protection from taxation. The requirements for such classification have never been clearly and definitively specified.

While they share a common set of basic purposes, charities can take any of a number of legal forms - trusts, unincorporated associations, companies limited by guarantee. But other types of voluntary organisations not recognised as “charities” by the Charity Commission can also take the same legal forms. These include such entities as “friendly societies”, “industrial and benevolent societies”, building societies, universities, private schools, and co-operatives. It has been estimated that at least half of the UK voluntary sector falls into these categories.

Defined in legal terms, therefore, the UK voluntary sector is a bewilderingly confused set of institutions with poorly defined boundaries. For the most part, social science research has tended to focus on the registered charities, but this overlooks a significant range of organisations. While the concept of a voluntary sector seems easy to identify in British usage, therefore, it is not easy to specify with any real precision.

### 6.7.2 ActionAid Ghana

ActionAid was founded by Cecil Jackson-Cole, a socially conscious English businessman who believed that business people should actively support charities. Born in 1901, he initiated many charitable activities to help the underprivileged

people at home and abroad. From distributing food parcels during World War II, he became first Honorary Secretary of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (later to become Oxfam) in 1942. In the late 1950s he established the Voluntary and Christian Service Trust, which helped to set up 'Help the Aged', and in 1972, Action in Distress (AID). AID became ActionAid in 1979, the same year Cecil Jackson-Cole died. The UK based NGO has its head office London, but was contemplating internationalisation (or decentralisation) at the time of the study.

ActionAid wants to be seen as a unique partnership of people who are fighting for a better world - a world without poverty. She has no political or religious affiliations. They challenge injustice, work with poor and marginalised people to influence and lobby governments and international institutions like the World Bank, to tackle the causes of poverty, and raise public awareness about the causes of poverty. ActionAid believes that governments are responsible for building the legislative, political and administrative frameworks needed to promote and fulfil people's basic rights so they encourage poor people to hold their national and local governments to account.

ActionAid's vision is a world without poverty in which every person can exercise their right to a life of dignity. The mission is to work with poor and marginalised people to eradicate poverty by overcoming the injustice and inequity that cause it. They are spurned by the belief that by fighting poverty together - working with poor local communities, national governments and international organisations - they can help bring about real change to the lives of poor people.

ActionAid works with governments, locally and nationally, to help them build their knowledge and skills so that they can fight poverty effectively in their own countries. As one of the UK's largest development agencies, they work in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. International operations are organised on a regional basis. Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean regions are managed from Zimbabwe, Thailand and Guatemala respectively. Within each region there are a number of countries with an ActionAid office that manages operation in that country. Some of these also manage ActionAid programmes in bordering countries.

The international functions for finance, policy, organisational development and marketing are based in the UK. Fundraising and influencing purposes are coordinated from the offices in Brussels and Washington DC. With sister organisations in France, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain they form ActionAid Alliance, whose head office is in Brussels.

The author learnt on the field (2003/2004) that the organisation was going international not just in terms of organisational restructuring, but as a cultural

transformation of their global partnership based on mutuality, equality, respect and shared goals. It is the organisation's commitment to transform the ActionAid Alliance worldwide into an international organisation, governed and managed with vision and leadership made up of people from the north (developed countries) and the south (developing countries) to fight poverty together in a coalition and partnership with others with a greater impact at all levels from local to national to global.

ActionAid began operating in Ghana since 1990 and now works with over 31,000 people in sparsely populated areas such as the Northern Region (ActionAid office, Accra). ActionAid supports the basic needs and rights of poor people, working at a practical level to improve their access to services, and lobbying government and others to change the policies and practices that affect their lives.

The location of the head office in Accra is only to give the organisation a national outlook. The major goal of the organisation in the Northern Region is poverty eradication through education and capacity building. It aims to empower and not to duplicate and to correct the mistakes of "bad eggs" in the FNGO community in Ghana.

***Operational programme offices / areas in northern Ghana***

1. Northern Region West Development Programme - Tamale
2. Northern Region East Development Programme - Yendi
3. Upper East Development Programme – Bolga and Zebilla
4. Upper West Development Programme – Tumu

### 6.7.3 The local partners and projects surveyed

ActionAid's partners include the poor, women and local NGOs and District Assemblies:

***The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC)***

ISODEC is by far one of the most vocal local NGOs in Ghana. It was established in 1987 targets groups like children, families and communities. Its main activities are advocacy, girl child and education. ISODEC is a national NGO with a strong presence in the region and indeed a key development partner in the region. Other foreign partners in Ghana include: Save the children (UK) and OXFAM (UK).

**Tuma Kavi** (meaning there is dignity in work) was established in 1983, during the 1982/83 famine in northern Ghana (figure 6.6). It is a women's group and predominantly targets children, women and the local communities.
Main activities: construction, agriculture food banking, health and nutrition, and income generating activities

Geographical coverage: Regional - all 13 Districts in the Northern Region
Other foreign partners (FNGOs in Ghana):
Christian Children's Fund of Canada (Canada)
Save the Children (UK)

***The Amasachina Self Help Association***

This truly indigenous NGO of northern Ghana covers all 13 districts in the northern region, 3 in Upper East, 1 in Upper West and 3 in Brong-Ahafo region. The non-political, non-tribal and non-religious indigenous NGO was established in 1967 by university students from northern Ghana at the present day Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. Its target groups are children and communities, with the following principal activities: construction, development education, agriculture and the environment. Other foreign partners (FNGOs) in Ghana are: CUSO (Canada), CRS and ADRA.

*Figure 6.3 Bringing the conflicting parties together under one roof in Yendi - a project of ActionAid: the Dagbon Traditional Council Hall built by ActionAid*

*Source: author*

*Figure 6.4 Sunday worship at a Catholic Church – the Church is an active part of civil society in development in northern Ghana*

*Source: author*

## 6.8 Case Three - Catholic Relief Services (USA) Religious

### 6.8.1 The Catholic Relief Services: A brief profile and agency history

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is a faith-based organisation which was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States of America (USA) to assist the poor and disadvantaged outside the country. The history of the development agency in international development runs back to 1943, during World War II. As the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic community, CRS provides humanitarian relief and development assistance in eight major programming fields. It first responded to the call to help rebuild a shattered Europe during World War II. The programming expertise has been expanded to provide relief in times of disaster, while also laying the foundation for developing stronger communities for the future. The current portfolio of programming in Ghana includes:

- Agriculture
- Community Health
- Education
- Emergency Response
- HIV/AIDS
- Microfinance
- Peace building
- Safety Net Programming

According to official CRS policy, CRS programmes are woven within common themes that drive each CRS decision and action. These themes are

- Capacity Building,
- Food Security,
- Gender and
- Justice - teach communities how to become self-sustaining, through tolerance, understanding and solidarity. CRS' mission focuses on the poor overseas. Using the gospel of Jesus Christ as mandate, the organisation seeks to help those most in need, providing assistance on the basis of need, without regard to race, creed, or nationality.

In the 1950s, as Europe regained its balance, the agency began to look to other parts of the world, seeking out those who could benefit from the assistance of Catholics in the United States. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, Catholic Relief Services expanded its operations and opened offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Building on its tradition of providing relief in emergency situations, the agency also began to seek ways to help people in the developing world, break the cycle of poverty through community-based, sustainable development initiatives. These programmes today include agricultural initiatives, community banks, health education, and clean water projects, ensure that the local population is the central participant in its own development and that a project can be sustained through the effort and resources of the local community.

With over 50 years of experience overseas, Catholic Relief Services claims to understand that rebuilding societies requires more than mortar and bricks. Through its work, the agency seeks to foster within the U.S. Catholic community a sense of global solidarity, providing inspiration to live out their spiritual tradition of compassionate service to the world. The new millennium is viewed as a renewal of commitment to the most vulnerable members of the human family, and an opportunity to reassess their mission.

With ca. 90 percent share of the US population, the Catholic Church is a big force in the US, and the Catholic development organisation a great voice in the US development policy. The fundamental motivating force in all activities of CRS is the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people and the fostering of charity and justice in the world. CRS educates the people of the United States to fulfil their moral responsibilities toward their brothers and sisters around the world by helping the poor, working to remove the causes of poverty, and promoting social justice. CRS aims to provide direct aid to the poor, and involves people in their own development, helping them to realize their potential.

***CRS Ghana***

CRS began working in Ghana in 1958 when Msgr. Kaiser, the first Regional Director for Sub Saharan Africa, travelled along the West Coast of Africa making contacts with the Catholic Church in the countries he visited and introducing programs to them. During the first ten years the program focused on general relief, but since 1968 has concentrated on the development of the health and education levels of children, and on improving *food security*. Between the offices located in Tamale and Accra, the program employs 169 local staff and four expatriates.

In the early 1990s, CRS/Ghana opted to concentrate on the three most food insecure northern regions of the country. In these regions, the number of children in school was far below the country's average, and there were high morbidity and mortality rates among mothers and young children. However, there were also opportunities for major change. HIV/AIDS was at a level where it could be checked before it got out of hand, and in some areas, possibilities existed for working with farmer groups to increase agricultural production and processing activities. Because the region is prone to disasters and conflicts, it proved to be an ideal place to include aspects of justice and conflict resolution training in CRS activities.

In the spirit of CRS' mission to work with the poorest and most underprivileged populations, CRS/Ghana focuses on the country's three northern regions (Northern, Upper West, and Upper East). As observed earlier, these regions are generally less developed and experience higher levels of poverty and food security than other parts of the country. Catholic Relief Services aims to improve food security and the quality of life of poor families in rural and semi-urban areas in Ghana.

***CRS perception of Ghana***

A donor's perception of the recipient is of vital importance in the response and outreach of the organisation of agency. This view was sought partly through an interview with two different CRS country representatives in a two-year interval. Literature on the CRS including the organisation's official website (www.catholicrelief.org), was also of great use. According to these sources, CRS considers Ghana as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, but still suffers from high rates of malnutrition and ranks 119th out of 162 countries in terms of development. Both of these indicators are red flags for food security issues, which is particularly problematic for the northern regions of Ghana. They also demonstrate how important it is that CRS continue to provide assistance to those in need in Ghana.

Since 1958, CRS has worked in Ghana with the goal of improving the quality of life among the poor and most vulnerable populations. During the first ten years, the program focused on general relief, but since 1968, CRS has concentrated on

increasing the health and education levels of children and on improving food security. Currently, CRS/Ghana has two country program offices with over 180 national staff and three international staff. The reduction in the number of foreign or expatriate staff is most remarkable and different from the picture obtained during the author's first visit. The head office, where all programming activities are coordinated and managed, is based in Tamale, in the Northern Region while the administrative support office is located in the nation's capital of Accra.

***CRS intervention in Ghana***

With regards to the objectives in Ghana, CRS supports programs that promote the involvement of local communities and organisations in the design and execution of activities. CRS/Ghana works through the local church, local partner organizations and communities to reach more than 325,000 poor, marginalized and vulnerable people including: malnourished children, pregnant women and mothers, tuberculosis patients, persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families, the elderly and the institutionalised, victims of social and political injustice, primary school children and rural poor women. Working through local church and government counterparts, CRS/Ghana supports development and relief activities in several sectors including:

***Partnership***

CRS concept of partnership is embodied in essential principles of Catholic Social Teaching such as respect for human dignity, the life of the person in community, and people's ownership of their own development process. CRS/Ghana cultivate relationships throughout the country with organizations with whom they share common interests and vision.

Catholic Relief Services' programs are based upon operational relationships which capitalise on their complementary capacities to achieve the optimum benefit for the poor and marginalized people. At their best, these relationships reflect the concept of partnership - embodying essential principles of Catholic Social Teaching such as respect for human dignity, the life of the person in community, and people's ownership of their own development process. The following principles provide a conceptual framework and set of goals that apply to all CRS' operational partnerships:

- "CRS bases partnerships upon a shared vision for addressing people's immediate needs, and the underlying causes for suffering and injustice.
- CRS' partner of preference is the local Catholic Church, usually through its social action agencies, because of our common commitment to justice as an active and life giving virtue that defends the dignity of all persons. We also collaborate with other faith-based and secular organisations (including private, government, community, and intermediate entities) in recognition of the role they play in promoting justice and reconciliation, and of the fundamental values which are frequently shared by other faiths and humanitarian traditions.

- All of CRS' partnerships assign responsibility for decision-making and implementation to a level as close as possible to the people whom decisions will affect; this is the principle of subsidiarity. Local partners share the responsibility for identifying priority needs and opportunities, designing the response to those needs, and acquiring the skills required for the implementation of that response.
- CRS achieves complementarily and mutuality in its partnerships, recognising and valuing that each brings a set of skills, resources, knowledge and capacities to the partnership in a spirit of mutual autonomy.
- CRS fosters equitable partnerships by engaging in a process of mutually defining rights and responsibilities, in relation to each partner's capacity, needed to achieve the goal of the partnership.
- In its relationships with partners, CRS promotes openness and sharing of perspectives and approaches. These relationships are founded on a spirit of respect of differences, a commitment to listening to and learning from each other, and a mutual willingness to change behaviour and attitudes. CRS also encourages relationships between local partners and local communities based on such openness.
- To foster healthy partnership, CRS promotes mutual transparency regarding capacities, constraints and resources.
- By building partnerships, CRS seeks to make a contribution to strengthening civil society. CRS also encourages partners to engage in dialogue and action with other members of civil society in order to contribute to the transformation of unjust structures and systems"

### 6.8.2 Sectors and areas of involvement

To achieve its goal, CRS acts as a service and support agency for programs and projects implemented by the Catholic Church, the Government of Ghana and its subsidiaries, and other religious and non-religious organisations pursuing common development goals. CRS weaves three key strategies into all of its partner relationships:

- Community Empowerment: To increase their sense of control over resources and ownership of the process, CRS works to empower communities through a participatory planning and implementation approach;
- Partnership Building: To ensure that our initiatives are demand-responsive, sustainable and make effective and efficient use of the available resources, CRS' projects are carried out through the church, existing government structures, and partnerships with local development organisations; and
- Capacity Building: To improve the ability and commitment of the church development agencies, local government, community groups, partnership agencies, as well as its own national staff members, CRS actively pursues a policy of capacity building.

CRS/Ghana supports development and relief activities in several sectors and has a large presence through the extensive ongoing projects in the following areas:

**a. Education**

CRS/Ghana supports two education programmes. The goal of the Education Support Programme is to improve school enrolment and attendance, especially among girls, by providing on-site school feeding (figure 6.2) and take-home rations at the primary school level. The Quality Improvements in Primary Schools programme, aims to improve education for primary school children.

*Table 6.4 CRS Education Support Programme (ESP)*
*School lunch coverage as a % of total number of schools in the district*

| REGION/DISTRICT | | # of Schools | CRS ESP Schools | Coverage % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 1. Tamale Municipal | 221 | 43 | 19.5 % |
| | 2. Savelugu | 70 | 30 | 43 % |
| O | 3. Yendi | 106 | 45 | 42.5 % |
| | 4. Gushiegu/Karaga | 68 | 38 | 56 % |
| R | 5. W. Mamprusi | 81 | 45 | 55.6 % |
| | 6. Tolon/Kumbungu | 118 | 37 | 31.4 % |
| T | 7. E. Mamprusi | 152 | 75 | 49.3 % |
| | 8. W. Gonja | 129 | 45 | 35 % |
| H | 9. Saboba/Chereponi | 94 | 42 | 45 % |
| | 10. E. Gonja | 131 | 66 | 50.3 % |
| E | 11. Nanumba | 110 | 49 | 45 % |
| | 12. Zabzugu/Tatale | 63 | 36 | 57 % |
| R | 13. Bole | 95 | 32 | 34 % |
| | | | | |
| N | SUB-TOTAL | 1438 | 585 | 41 % |
| | | | | |

*Source: CRS, Tamale office*

**The Food for Education (FFE) Programme**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | USAID/Food for Peace (CRS) |
| Duration: | FY2004 – FY2008 |
| Partners: | Ghana Education Service (GES) |
| | Ghana Health Service (GHS); and |
| | The Catholic Church |
| Funding Level | $28 million |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: 199,421 pre-school and primary school pupils

Indirect: 1,610 Parent-Teacher Association committees; 1,948,000 Committee members;
2,906 Ghana Education Services staff

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The purpose of the FFE program is to improve educational attainment in Ghana's three northern regions by end of FY 2008.

*Specific objectives:*

- The quality of primary education in targeted schools in the three northern regions will have improved.
- Ghanaian children, especially girls, in the three northern regions will have increased educational opportunities.
- The health and nutritional status of pre- and primary school students in selected schools in the three northern regions will have improved.

*Achievements / impacts (FY 2003):*

- The FFE program reached a total of 274,200 pupils in 1,096 primary schools and 50,200 pupils in 342 pre-schools in all 24 districts of Ghana's 3 northern regions.
- Girls' enrolment in schools receiving take-home food rations was 88 percent higher than in control schools. Girls' attendance in schools receiving take-home rations was 50 percent higher than in control schools.
- Evaluators of the CRS education program in Ghana found "that the success of CRS in promoting community participation in education was, arguably, the single most important achievement of the program." It is this success in helping communities to recognize the intrinsic value of education that resulted in the evaluation finding that "community participation in program schools goes well beyond school feeding. Communities have provided labour for constructing classrooms and kitchens and making other infrastructure improvements. They have planted orchards and wood lots around school perimeters. They have monitored the attendance of teachers, and even discussed the quality of teaching with head teachers. In some schools, PTAs have offered housing, food, and salary supplements to teachers. PTA activism has also led to the dismissal of teachers who were persistently absent or whose teaching was not judged adequate."
- Out of 74,369 girls enrolled in 593 take home ration schools, 63,260 girls qualified to receive the monthly take home ration based on achieving an 85 percent school attendance in a month.
- 260 communities benefited from classroom blocks, 21 schools benefited from teacher's quarters, and 134 schools received furniture.
- 1,610 executive committee members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) received training.
- Over 1,400 communities were sensitised on the benefits of education, especially on the importance of sending girls to school.

**The Quality Improvements in Primary Schools (QUIPS)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | USAID/Ghana |
| Current Funding Period: | 1999 - present |
| Duration: | 1999 - 2004 |
| Partner: | Ghana Education Service (GES) |
| Funding Level: | $6.1 million |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: Classroom teachers, circuit supervisors, members of PTA/SMC, personnel in management and administrative capacities in both the regional and district directorates of GES, and district assemblies.

Indirect: Pupils, non-partnership school/communities, and district assemblies.

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The main objective is to improve the quality of education in primary schools, which complements the Government of Ghana's fCUBE (free compulsory universal basic education) program and the Education Strategic Plan for 2003-2015.

*Specific objectives:*

- School-based: The aim is to build teacher capacity via (both on-site and residential), supervisory training for circuit supervisors, head teachers, and district officials, as well as working in collaboration with teacher training colleges in curriculum development and training.
- Community-based: To promote community awareness and support for education through Participatory Learning and Action/Participatory Rural Appraisals (PLAs/PRAs) exercises and school management committee/parent teacher association (SMC/PTA) trainings.
- District-based: To address the supervisory and management needs of district officials and representatives from school communities. This takes place in the form of district-based management workshops and grants given to every district education office to replicate QUIPS-like activities in non-QUIPS schools and communities.

*Achievements / impacts:*

QUIPS' mid-term evaluation was conducted nationwide in March 2001. The assessment highlighted many positive changes in the partnership school communities that were a direct result of QUIPS' interventions. The principal changes noted were:

- An improvement in student learning and performance. This is demonstrated in the nearly 70 percent better showing of QUIPS' schools in the Ministry of Education's administered Criterion Referenced Test in English (14.7 percent

pass vs. 8.7 percent nationwide) and over 90 percent in mathematics (7.7 percent pass vs. 4 percent nationwide).

- Strong community participation and ownership - 71.4 percent of QUIPS' communities demonstrated sustained community involvement in the education process, according to data from July 2003.
- Increased teacher knowledge and motivation - this is evidenced in the ability of QUIPS' teachers to plan and deliver lessons effectively, as well as the numerous numbers of teachers passing promotional and university entry exams.

**b. Health**

CRS/Ghana implements a health and nutrition Child Survival Project, which aims to decrease child morbidity and mortality among rural infants and children in the three northern regions of the country. The project seeks to improve health-related knowledge and practices by providing logistical and capacity building support to Ghana's Ministry of Health.

**The Safety Net Initiative (SNI)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | USAID/ Food for Peace (CRS) |
| Duration: | FY2004 – FY2008 |
| Partners: | Public and Private Institutions and The Catholic Church |
| Funding Level: | $9 million |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: 15,000 individuals, focusing on 5,000 beneficiaries for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs), tuberculosis (TB) patients, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).

Indirect: Community members within the vicinity of more than 141 institutions.

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The goal of the program is to improve access to food for highly vulnerable populations throughout Ghana. The SNI programme helps to ensure that the most vulnerable in society, including the physically and mentally challenged, orphans, the elderly, tuberculosis patients, and people living with HIV/AIDS, are able to meet their basic food requirements.

*Specific objectives:*

- Increased access to food for socially and physically disadvantaged persons.

- Increased access to food and other services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs), tuberculosis (TB) patients, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).
- Improved recovery rate of malnutrition in infants through supplementary feeding.
- Training in practical skills for disabled persons in order to help promote sustainable livelihoods for these individuals in society.

*Achievements / impacts (FY 2003):*

- Improved recovery rate of malnutrition cases in 35 Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres in 7 regions in Ghana.
- Provided food to nearly 10,000 physically and mentally challenged persons, orphans, the elderly, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs), and TB patients.
- Increased enrolment and retention of disabled students in training institutions.
- Improved development of practical skills training at 43 vocational and basic schools through the provision of training materials and equipment.
- Expanded from serving 119 institutions in 2000 to 141 institutions in 2003.

**The Food Assisted Child Survival (FACS)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | USAID/Food for Peace (CRS) |
| Duration: | FY2004 – FY2008 |
| Partners: | Ghana Health Service and<br>The Catholic Church |
| Funding Level: | $18 million |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: More than 30,000 pregnant and lactating mothers, over 40,000 children and 1,500 severely malnourished children.

Indirect: Entire population in more than 200 communities in Bongo, Bawku West, Lawra, Wa, East-Mamprusi, and Saboba-Chereponi districts in the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern Regions, reaching approximately 250,000 people.

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

To increase child survival through improved health and nutrition for children under five years of age in the three Northern regions of Ghana

Specific objectives (FY 2004 – 2008):

- Women in program communities will adopt key behaviors that promote child survival and will have increased knowledge of various child survival practices. By September 2008, the accessibility of health services in program districts will be increased, and CRS will help support the development of 60 Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) facilities that provide basic health outreach in rural communities.
- The quality of health services in program districts will be improved, through the use of Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) designed to improve the quality of care for children under five against diarrhea, malnutrition, malaria, measles, and acute respiratory infections.
- The utilization of health services in program districts will be improved. Demand for these services will be stimulated through the distribution of food rations to pregnant women and mothers with infants under 36 months of age, which will also supplement these women's diet over a critical period.
- The program will have expanded into more than 200 new communities in six districts in the three northern regions of Ghana, reaching more than 40,000 beneficiaries by the end of the program.

*Achievements / impacts:*

- The number of children under two years of age classified as stunted decreased by 29 percent in the Bongo District, 10 percent in the East Mamprusi District, and 6.2 percent in the Lawra District between 1998 and 2003.
- Children classified as underweight declined by 17 percent in Bongo District, 11 percent in the East-Mamprusi District, and 6.5 percent in the Lawra District.
- Increased adoption of exclusive breast-feeding of children for first six months from 88 percent in 2000 to 97 percent in 2002.
- Immunization coverage increased in program communities and surrounding villages by 60 percent in program districts over baseline

### c. Agriculture and Microfinance

**The Northern Ghana Food Security & Agro-Enterprise Development Project (FOSADEP)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | CRS Headquarters |
| Current Funding Period: | 1999 - 2004 |
| Duration: | 1999 - present |
| Partner: | Northern Ghana Food Security and Agro-Enterprise Development Project (FOSADEP) |
| Funding Level: | $500,000 |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: 3,627 farmers (2,020 men and 1,607 women) and six commercial agro-processing firms.

Indirect: 3,400 farm families, serving approximately 20,400 people.

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The purpose is to revitalize agricultural production, processing, and marketing as instruments for improving food security in rural households in the northern regions of Ghana. CRS/Ghana works through FOSADEP to support 21 partners, promoting more effective and efficient methods to enable farmers to adopt a more business-oriented approach. To achieve this, support is provided to farmers in the areas of cultivation, processing, and marketing of soybean, which has been chosen largely because of its capacity to serve both as a food and cash crop.

*Specific objectives:*

- By May 2004, 492 individual farmers and 328 groups working with nine church-based agricultural stations and three local NGOs in Northern Ghana will have increased their financial access to food through the production and marketing of soybeans as a cash crop.
- By May 2004, 700 women in 70 groups and two commercial firms will have increased their capacities to purchase and process at least 70 percent of the soybean produced by the farmers participating in the project.
- By May 2004, at least 30 percent of women in 27 communities participating in CRS' Title II Food Assisted Child Survival (FACS) program and their colleagues in 65 other groups supported by sponsoring partners will have obtained the knowledge and skills necessary for incorporating soybean into their family's diets.

*Achievements / impacts (FY 2003):*

- FOSADEP linked 274 production groups to six commercial agro-processing firms to improve commercial relationships, which resulted in obtaining higher profits from soybean production.
- Farmers benefited from training in basic business management, production planning, and farm management, and as a result, they are now able to compare and make informed decisions on which agro-enterprise is more profitable and worth the investment.
- Higher net profits have attracted more farmers into the soybean industry. As a result, the number of farmers has increased from 1,350 in 1999 to 3,627 in the 2003 cropping season.

**The Northern Ghana Integrated Beekeeping & Environmental Protection Project**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor/Funding Source: | CRS |
| Current Funding Period: | 2000-2004 |
| Duration of Project: | 1994 - 1998 and 2000 to present |
| Partners: | Consortium of Church-Based Agricultural Development Projects and Local Non-Governmental Organisations |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

Direct: 3,500 individuals

Indirect: 133,000 community and family members

Rural women

Mixed gender groups working with the participating partner institutions (PPIs)

Church partners to develop their beekeeping into viable commercial ventures

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The overall goal of the project is to improve the standard of living of the rural communities through an integrated approach to beekeeping and environmental improvement. The project seeks to address the annual problem of low food production and food deficits experienced especially by the people of the Upper East Region

*Specific Objectives:*

- By the end of September 2004, 60 percent of beneficiaries would have been supported to produce and market at least 15,000 kg of high quality honey and 3,000 kg of bee wax per year as a regular income generating activity.
- By the end of September 2004, 80 percent of the participating groups would have planted and managed at least one acre of wood lot and 4000 fruits trees for protection of the environment, as well as sources of income in the long-term.

*Achievements / impact:*

The results of the objectives of this programme could not be verified within the time frame of the study. However, interviews with partners and beneficiaries showed satisfaction about the following achievements of the project:

- The inception of the project in November 2000 instilled much awareness and interest of about 46 percent of the population of Northern Ghana (Northern Region, Upper East and Upper West Region) in beekeeping. Particularly, the inscription on the project's pick-up is a contributory factor to the fact that beekeeping is one diversified and beneficial agribusiness venture in the catchment area.

- A substantial number of equipment has been supplied for project implementation and monitoring. Equipment includes; a double-cabin 4-wheel Nissan pick-up, two desktop computers, one for use by the program officer and one for the project partner; office furniture and filing cabinet for project partner.
- A total of 1330 beehives of the Kenyan-top-bar type have been constructed and distributed to members of 23 rural-based women and mixed groups in the Bawku East, Bawku West, Bolgatanga, Kasena-Nankana and Bulsa Districts of the Upper East Region and 7 Senior Secondary School's Beekeeping Clubs.
- Direct beneficiaries of 3500 individuals (men and women) after having gained knowledge and skills from organised training workshops now practise improved beekeeping technology that involves the use of improved beehives, use of appropriate costume and equipment such as solar extractor and hand sprayer.
- Beehives' colonisation which greatly determines beekeeping profitability has achieved 66 percent, that is 878 beehives out of 1330.
- A total of 2704.5 litres (601 imperial gallons) has been harvested and 187.3 Kg of bee wax since November 2000 (after the experience of 5 harvesting seasons). After sale of these products, Beneficiaries realized net incomes/margins of between ¢ 45,500.00 and ¢ 125,000,00 which they used to support either their families' upkeep, school fees or medical bills of the extended family.
- Survival rate of grown tree seedlings has attained 92 percent. In particular, 3 out of the 5 woodlots would serve as good apiary sites by the close of 2004.
- Areas around the beehives are now seen as "spiritual homes" of the ancestors by local neighbours that should not be disturbed at all by bush fires through non-burning.

**Bimoba Literacy Farmers Agricultural Cooperative Union (BILFACU) Village Banking Project**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor/Funding Source: | BILANCE/CRS |
| Current Funding Period: | 1998-2003 |
| Duration of Project: | 1998-present |
| Partner: | BILFACU |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Direct Beneficiaries: | 1,500 rural women. |
| Indirect Beneficiaries: | 30,000 members of 30 communities in East Mamprusi, Northern Region. |

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

Main goal of the Village Bank (VB) is to improve upon the standard of living of members of BILFACU and their families through increased incomes. Many rural women are engaged in income generating activities such as agro-processing, petty trading, pottery and livestock production to buttress household income. However,

they have limited access to credit making it difficult to sustain and/or expand such activities.

*Specific objectives:*

- By April 2003, the income generation capacity of 1,500 women will have been increased and sustained through the establishment of 30 village banks to provide access to credit.
- By April 2003, at least, 50 percent of women participating in the credit program will have increased the scale for their economic activities through participation in production skills, financial training and literacy and numeracy skills.
- By April 2003, BILFACU's capacity for the management of sustainable credit schemes will have been increased through the development and institutionalisation of effective credit management structures and systems.

*Assessment of project:*

- In terms of the projections and targets in the Business Plan, the project is reported to have made achievements of about 88 percent. This is based on the attainment of about seven out of eight targets.
- Project implementation is said to be at 90 percent degree of completion (nine out of ten cycles has been completed).
- In terms of outreach or coverage, 2,223 women instead of 1,500 are beneficiaries, representing 48.2 percent excess achievement in that respect.
- Loan capital to BILFACU which should have been ¢782.835m but was 29.6 percent higher at ¢1,014.793m. This was possible because BILFACU used its earnings for on lending.
- BILFACU has a loan recovery rate 99.38 percent instead of the projected 98.0 percent.
- In terms of operating costs per VB, BILFACU is more cost-effective because the actual cost per VB is ¢8.617m, 44.7 percent below the targeted figure of ¢15.569m.

*Achievements / impact on women:*

- Improvement in businesses and family well being
- Improvement in Education, Health and Nutrition
- Cultivation of Savings Habits and Prompt Loan Repayment Attitude: Saving habit has been well developed among the group members of the VBs. The pattern of loan repayment is excellent.
- Status and Confidence of Women

**Peacebuilding & Conflict Transformation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Donor: | CRS |
| Current Funding Period: | 2000 - 2002 |
| Duration: | 2000 - present |
| Partners: | Damongo Unity Center, and the Catholic Diocese of Damongo |
| Funding Level: | $350,000 |

*Targets/Beneficiaries of the project:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Direct: | 618 pastoral and development workers, youth and women leaders, and local political and traditional authorities. |
| Indirect: | The entire populations of the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern Regions of Ghana. |

*Purpose and goal of the project:*

The purpose is to promote sustainable peace in the three northern regions of Ghana through the creation of opportunities and the building of capacities within church-based organizations, local government institutions such as District Assemblies, traditional political structures, local NGOs, and/or community–based organizations.

*Strategic Objectives:*

- Enhanced in-depth training programs and support services in conflict resolution with Tamale Ecclesiastical Province (TEP) by September 2008.
- Functional Satellite Peace-Building Centers (SPC) established in all dioceses of the TEP by September 2008.
- Functional Peace Education programs established in 180 selected schools in the TEP by September 2008.

*Achievements / impacts (FY 2003):*

- Peace building training for 50 development workers,
- Peace building training for 45 members of the Ghana Network for Peace building.
- Support the operationalisation of Ghana Network for Peace building.
- Successfully developed a second phase of the project.
- Consultations with the five dioceses of the Tamale Ecclesiastical Province on a framework for the implementation of the phase two of the project.
- Initiated mediation strategies for members of the Ghana Network for Peace building in the Dagbon conflict.
- Leads on-going mediation efforts in Dagbon and Wa conflicts

### 6.8.3 Implementing Partners

CRS choice of partners for the implementation of their projects (for example HIV/AIDS), stems from their ethical and philosophical values, as expressed in the decentralised structures and ethical values of the Catholic Church. These partners uphold good collaboration with the church as well as facilitate easy accessibility to HIV/AIDS services provided by their projects. In addition to the above, CRS also collaborates with the Sheikhinah Clinic. With support from CRS/Ghana and St. Sabina's Parish in Chicago, Illinois, Dr. David Abdulai's Sheikhinah Clinic offers free medical services to poor and marginalized people in the three northern regions of Ghana and operates an outreach program that provides daily food to the homeless, mentally ill and destitute.

***The Ghana Education Services***

*Criteria for a good school*

Education is no doubt at the heart of the CRS Ghana programme, but with a total of 1438 schools in 13 districts the Northern Region, the selection of schools for the Educational Support Programme is quit a task. The following criteria is in operation:

- High level of commitment on the part of head teacher and teachers - evidence of regular and punctual attendance and teaching.
- Submission of regular, accurate and timely monthly reports and end-of-term data
- Marking and closing of registers daily, at the end of the week, term and year
- Good management of ESP – evidenced in absence of food /other resources loss/theft and full involvement of Community Food Management committee
- Timely distribution of take-home ration and in the right quantities.
- Availability of toilet and urinal facilities
- General maintenance of school infrastructure and furniture
- General cleanliness of teachers, children and the compound
- Good landscape – with hedges, flowers, playgrounds and no rubbish dumps or uncovered construction pits
- General discipline of the school

***Criteria for final school selection***

1. **Accessibility:** Schools/communities are usually visited during Control School selection and are given an overview of CRS' Education Support Programme and what their expected roles and responsibilities would be. If there are accessibility problems, they are asked to work on their road. A final assessment of the nature of road is made during the final school selection usually in September, before the arrival of the first consignment of food. In rare inaccessible schools are twinned with accessible centre upon agreement

2. **Ural/Urban Criterion:** CRS in principle focuses on rural primary schools. Consequently no programme school could be found within 5 km radius of the regional and district capitals. Schools in and around district capitals in the conflict zone (Nanumba, East Gonja and Yendi, Zabzugu-Tatale, Saboba-Chereponi, and Gushiegu-Karaga) have been exempted

3. **Enrolment and Attendance records:** Each school is required to submit regular, accurate and timely monthly records since their inception as a Control School. It must have also attended all three data collection exercises in the preceding academic year. However, attendance at the end-of-year data collection exercise is a key deciding factor.

4. **Role and Responsibilities in the programme:** Before the school finally comes onto the programme, community sensitisation visits (Final School Selection) are made during which their responsibilities and roles in the feeding programme are discussed with them. These include:
   - The provision of safe, leak-proof and well ventilated storage facilities
   - The provision of adequate security
   - The provision of a well-ventilated kitchen
   - The provision of cooking utensils
   - Engagement of a volunteer cook (s)
   - Food supplementation/payment of Canteen Fees
   - Establishment of a Community Food Management Committee

5. **Deadline for the construction of the kitchen:** The community is given a deadline (usually mid-October) by which time the kitchen including other necessary conditions outlined above must be in place. The programme officers cross-check or delegate Partner Supervisors to do this and report to CRS.

***Criteria for take-home ration school selection***

The selection of the take-home ration school is equally worth noting:

**Duration:** Schools must have been on the feeding programme for at least two years. The two-year duration enables CRS to assess the school in terms of regula, timely and accurate reporting and maintenance of up-to-date records such as Attendance Registers, Daily Issues Books, Cash Books, Tally Cards, CRS Agreement and ESP files

**Enrolment:** The enrolment of girls in the school must be relatively low, usually not more than 50 percent.

**Monthly Reporting:** as noted above, every school must have been submitting regular, accurate and timely monthly records since its inception as a feeding school. Again it must have been attending all data collection exercises in the preceding academic years.

**Good Management:** The school must have a track record of good management; Supportive PTA/CFMC; Devoted and committed headteacher and teacher in-charge; Absence of food loss/food theft

***School Phase-out plan***

CRS/Ghana has a phase-out plan for the schools. The envisaged phase-out plan is as follows:

1. During the Financial Year (FY) 2003, CRS/Ghana will phase out all the schools within a radius of 10 km of all district capitals including those of the Conflict Zone i.e Nanumba, East Gonja and Yendi, Zabzugu-Tatale, Saboba-Chereponi, and Gushiegu-Karaga. Currently there are 52 primary schools with a total population of 15,710 and 33 of such pre- schools with an enrolment of 5,110.
2. In FY 2004, CRS Ghana will phase out schools within a 10 km radius of all Regional and District capitals and big towns such as Paga, Kpandai, Lambussie, Daffiama, Bunkpurugu, Hamile and Nandom. These are estimated at 48primary schools with an estimated enrolment of 13,693 and 30 Day Nurseries with a total enrolment of 3941.
3. In FY 2005, CRS/Ghana will phase out clusters of schools within 15 km of the 1st Cohort of QUIPS schools including. This works out to 45 schools with an estimated enrolment of 8,648. This again works out to 4.4 percent of the receding balance.
4. In FY 2006, CRS/Ghana will apply the FIFO principle to phase out a number of schools whose enrolment will match up to 230,546 as indicated in phase" (CRS Tamale office, 2003)

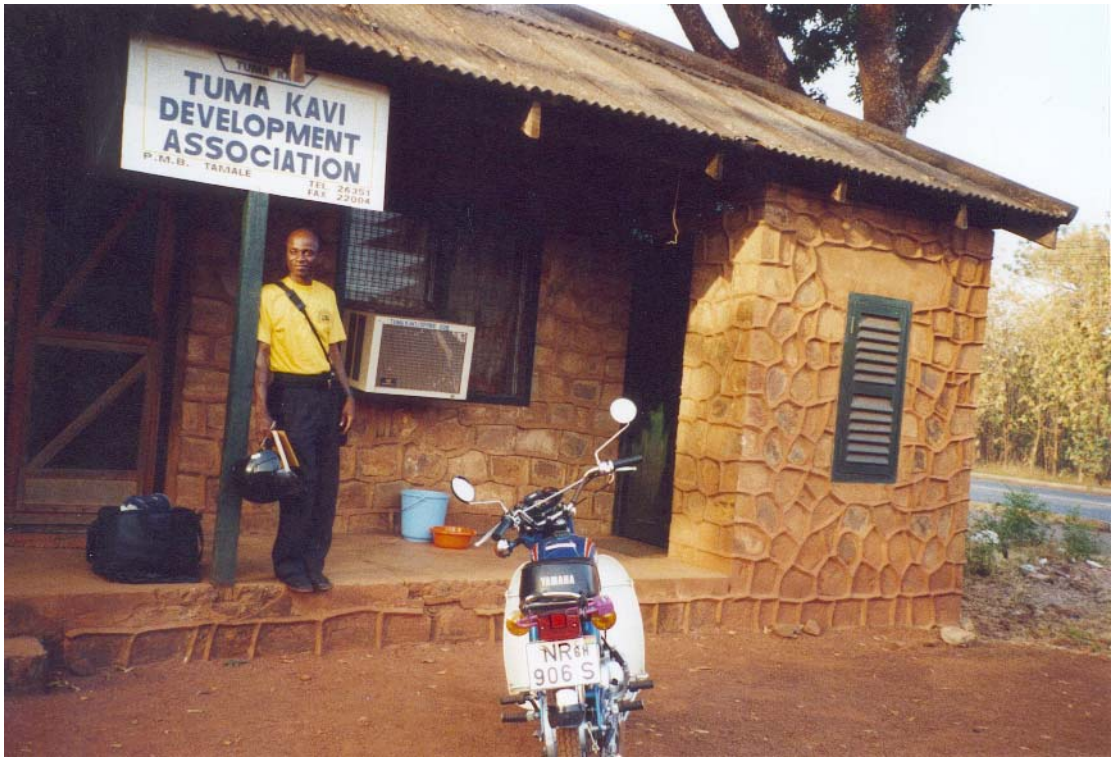
*Figure 6.5 Beneficiary-Benefactor partnership: locals provide bulls, while FNGOs provide the plough and training*

*Source: author*

## 6.9 Conclusion

The choice of the region led to the “workstation” of foreign NGOs in Ghana and indeed the base of numerous local NGOs. The difficulty of telling the genuine from the false NGOs was taken care of in the selection criteria. The chapter also examined the background of the FNGOs and their collaborating partners. The Northern Region presents real challenges in development work. The development challenges have been approached from different angles. The findings of the study are discussed in chapter seven.

*Figure 6.6 One incapacitated local NGO with local effective synergy effect*




*Source: author*

*Figure 6.7 The author (2nd from right) sounding public opinion in Yendi*

*Source: author*

# Chapter Seven

## Capacity Building of Local Partners –

## the Missing Link in the Role of Foreign NGOs in Poverty Reduction:

## Findings of the Study

# Chapter Seven

# Capacity Building of Local Partners – the Missing Link in the Role of Foreign NGOs in Poverty Reduction: Findings of the Study

## 7.1 Introduction

Understanding research results can help understand why and how some things happen. However, understanding is difficult to achieve in relation to human behaviour because it is too difficult to understand and often impossible to predict. It takes a thorough assessment and interpretation of existing literature and the reality on the ground, such as the study carried out to make a statement on poverty (reduction) in Ghana (and eventually Sub-Saharan Africa). The study of the role of foreign NGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction is an investigation into the response of a significant segment of western development agencies and organisations in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in development cooperation with developing countries.

## 7.2 The major findings of the study

***What the study considered***

The findings of the study link the empirical study to the objectives of the study. Effort was made to address the objectives (explicit and implicit) as best as possible to reach formidable conclusions and recommendations. The relevant findings of the study under the following headings as follows:

The context and the poor in the Northern Region

The perceptions of the poor

Coping strategies of the poor

The actors

The relationship between the actors

- NGO – Government relationship / concerns

The Needs of the local actors

The FNGOs:

- The FNGO point of entry in the region
- Personnel and Mode of operation

Public opinion

The GPRS / FNGO impact

Culture

***The context and the poor in the Northern Region***

In addition to the profile of the region in chapter two, the study found out that the context in which FNGOs are working in the Northern Region is changing rapidly and often unstable. There are a number of reasons responsible for this; the ethnic conflicts, and some times climatic changes.

It is important to identify the object of the discussion; the poor: who are they? FNGO interventions are determined by their understanding and view of poverty. With the help of GLSS 4 and Participatory Poverty Assessments survey, the empirical study confirmed the following as the extreme poor or vulnerable and the excluded in the Northern Region:

1. **Rural agricultural producers**: food crop farmers contribute nearly two-thirds of total extreme poverty; almost double its share of the total population.
2. **Children in difficult circumstances**, including the quarter of children under five who are malnourished, victims of child labour, street children, about a quarter of children of school going age who are not in school, about a fifth of boys and a third of girls who have dropped out of primary school, children living in institutions and children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
3. **People living with HIV/AIDS**, including infected persons and families of people living with HIV/AIDS.
4. **Displaced communities**, particularly those subjected to the ethnic conflicts in the region
5. **Disadvantaged women**, particularly single mothers, malnourished rural pregnant and nursing mothers, teenage mothers, and commercial sex workers.
6. **Residents of rural urban slums (in Tamale)**, including redeployed workers and unemployed youth groups negatively affected by reform programmes, relocation/decline of economic activities, including indigenous low-income neighbourhoods.
7. The **elderly** who have no access to family care and pension.
8. **Physically-challenged persons**, (the disabled) particularly those with no employable skills.
9. **People suffering from chronic diseases**, including victims of debilitating diseases such as tuberculosis, buruli ulcer, guinea worm, trachoma, bilharzias and breast cancer.
10. **Drug Addicts**
11. **Victims of abuse**, particularly children and women suffering from sexual abuse and battery.
12. **Victims of harmful traditional practices**, especially victims of harmful widowhood rites, early marriage, servitude, fosterage and perceived witchcraft.
13. **Unemployed**, especially unskilled retrenched workers and the unemployed youth.

14. **Local actors,** these are last but not least and deserve mention. The local civil society organisations, the private sector and the local government have their limitations, but are to a large extent poor in the face of the challenges of their communities and region.

***The perceptions of the poor***

The interventions of FNGOs in the lives of the poor in Northern Ghana can hardly make sense without an understanding of the perspectives of the beneficiaries: what the poor people think about poverty. The perspectives of the poor people form a perfect foundation on which to plan and implement poverty reduction strategies, and got attention in the study. This forms the framework for any response. The GPRS was also took the perceptions of the poor into consideration. The empirical analysis in the study confirms some major conclusions about the experience of the poor

First, poverty is multidimensional. Households are crumbling under the stress of poverty. The social fabric – the poor people's only "insurance" – is unravelling. The poor are disenchanted with the State, which they see as being ineffective in reaching them. The relationship with the FNGOs is not clear either. The role of NGOs in the region is limited.

The persistence of poverty is linked to its multidimensional nature: it is dynamic, complex, institutionally embedded and a gender - and location – specific phenomenon. The pattern and shape of poverty vary by social group, season and location. Six dimensions feature prominently in poor people's definitions of poverty:

1. Poverty consists of many interlocking dimensions. Although poverty is rarely about the lack of only one thing, the bottom line is always hunger – the lack of food.
2. Poverty has important psychological dimensions such as powerlessness, voicelessness, dependency, shame, and humiliation.
3. (Poor people) lack of access to basic infrastructure.
4. Education! While there is widespread thirst for literacy, education is not receiving its due attention. The discussions with the poor reveal that they realise that education offers an escape from poverty, but only if the economic environment in society and the accessibility and quality of education improve.
5. Health! Poor health and diseases are dreaded as a source of destitution. This is related to the cost of health care as well as to income lost due to illness.
6. Finally, the poor rarely spoke of money per se, but focus on their capacity to produce and manage their assets – physical, human, social and environmental – as a way to cope with their vulnerability. This vulnerability has a gender dimension in many areas.

The State through the regional and district assemblies have been largely ineffective in reaching the poor. Notwithstanding the decentralisation programme, local governments are struggling in many areas. Although government's role in providing infrastructure, health, and educational services is recognised by the poor, they feel that their lives remain unchanged by government intervention. This supports the case and preference for NGO intervention. The poor report vast experience with corruption as they attempt to seek health care, educate their children, claim relief assistance, get paid by employers, and seek protection from the police or justice from local authorities.

***Coping strategies of the poor***

Life for most people in the Northern Region in Ghana is a day-to-day miracle. In addition to the 'hand-out' from the many FNGOs, the poor in most of the regions have resulted to a "one-for-all" and where possible (in villages) "all-for-all" survival strategy. This means self-help projects and the few skilled and learned ones among the lot (who can access the limited jobs) taking the responsibility of the family (often extended), and additionally paying taxes from their little earning in order that government might pay others.

This partly explains a pertinent issue of why certain segments of people within a given country are poor. The situation in the Northern Region presents two almost co-existing or complimentary points: Rural poverty, depicting the type of poverty in the Northern Region; and the second point is the reality and the characteristics of rural poverty (chapter two). This point forms the object and a line of action as highlighted in the previous chapters. The framework for the intervention of FNGOs in poverty reduction emerged from this point and considered the following concepts: partnership, capacity building and self-reliance.

***The actors in development***

The region is home to the largest number of NGOs (local and foreign) next only to the capital (Accra), striking though is the fact that most of the FNGOs provide for the poor with limited involvement of local organisations in the implementation of projects. In addition to the NGO community's face on the development of the region, there is a strong public sector presence in development activities as well. The private sector in the region is not actively involved in the development. The actors co-exist and work for the development of the region in various forms of relationships: partners, collaborators, and co-operants.

***The relationship between the actors***

Suspicion is the word that often described the relationship between NGO and the State. Talking to various local NGOs however, the author found out that most LNGOs are equally suspicious of their local counterparts. They however continue to co-

operate with them in order to stay in business. The relationships are maintained through a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Most LNGOs are very much concerned about roles; their role and the role of the FNGOs. Most of them would rather that the FNGOs performed the role of evaluation and leave the implementation to them.

In the absence of a national body to supervise the activity of NGO (such as a Commission for NGOs), conflicts between NGOs are addressed to GAPVOD. GAPVOD the umbrella organisation for all NGOs in Ghana, both local and foreign, offers a good platform for the two groups of NGOs to meet and interact. GAPVOD serves as go-between its members. Although the pilot study hardly recorded any conflict, questions remain about their mandate and capacity to perform the role.

*NGO – Government relationship / concerns*

NGO - Government relations in Ghana in general have evolved from limited interaction and discord to greater engagement and accommodation within the past decade. However, despite the acknowledgement of complementary roles in development, there are certain issues which both consider important to their operations.

*The Government is concerned about:*

- The proliferation of NGOs.
- The tendency of some NGOs to execute projects without prior consultation with regional and district planning authorities
- The lack of skills within NGOs for effective management of development projects.
- Lack of proper documentation of NGO activities.
- Absence of a strong national body responsible to guide and govern the registration and operation of NGOs and to act for and on behalf of all NGOs.

*NGOs are concerned about:*

- The lack of recognition by Government of their right to participate in formulating social and economic policies and to advocate for change in favour of the most vulnerable in society.
- The lack of meaningful consultation with NGOs in formulation of policies and decisions that affect their operation
- Inconsistencies in tax exemption policies. These tend to make charitable activities almost impossible.
- The focus of Government policy on regulating the activities of NGOs instead of facilitating them.
- Inadequate financial support for donors and foreign NGOs and the need to assist in building their operational capacities to be able to provide information to facilitate development planning and implementation.

***The needs of the local actors***

A pertinent question and objective of the study is establishing the challenges or capacity needs of local actors. The study found the following challenges facing the local actors especially the local partners of the FNGOs in the region.

- Most of the local actors especially the local NGOs have scarce resources (lack of adequate funding) leading to competition among each other.
- Weak capacity in terms of skills, knowledge, organisational structures, administrative systems and procedures
- Poor project management skills (monitoring, supervision reporting etc)
- Weak financial management and reporting system
- Weak networking and linkages among themselves and outside world
- There is duplication of efforts and lack of co-ordination
- There is suspicion and lack of trust among NGOs leading to rivalry
- Absence of strong national body for NGOs (leading weak administrative structures and procedures)
- Lack of a code of ethics and professionalism within the sector
- Inadequate information dissemination procedures and sources
- Improper documentation of NGO activities
- Lack of recognition by government to consult in formulation of policies
- Cumbersome tax (exception) policies
- The poor economy of the country threatens the survival of local NGOs (to be considered as a threat)
- Unfair competition from FNGOs leading to weakening of the local actors

Government functionaries, other FNGOs in the region and GAPVOD emphasised:

- Weak capacity within the public sector in dealing with NGOs. This they said has led to inadequate standards, procedures, policies for formation and operation of NGOs leading to mushrooming of NGOs and diminishing image.

*GAPVOD is particularly concerned about:*

- The growing tendency to use NGOs as means of job creation and amassing wealth
- Inadequate support from government agencies to NGOs
- NGO lack of Skills to tackle some problems

In addition to the above, the investigated FNGOs stressed that:

- Local NGOs lack focus thus chasing all sort of project provided there is funding there.
- Local actors not accountable to project funds and lacking transparency.

Hindrances to NGO activities observed are:

1. Religious and ethnic conflicts in communities
2. Undue interference from opinion leaders and politicians
3. NGO affiliation with political parties

***FNGO point of entry, interventions and link to the region***

All NGOs interviewed were asked about their point of entry in the communities or the region. The point of entry can make a big difference to any poverty reduction intervention. Also of great importance is the type of poverty reduction programmes. These have been classified into three (3) major categories:

- Targeted poverty reduction activities: working directly with the poor to improve their welfare
- Poverty focused activities: programmes and activities which benefit the poor but do not involve working directly with the poor
- Activities which affect the policy environment: aim at removing systematic constraints at both national and international level to address the root causes of poverty

The findings from the three cases present a mixed picture (table 7.1).

**Case One – KAF (Germany), Political**: is very ideology oriented – the political ideology and approach is reflected in all interventions. A visit to the field (Northern Region) shows that the political NGO's point of entry to the region, as indeed their link to the communities is partners. They have no offices in the region. Logically, it is evident that they do not work directly with the poor to improve their welfare. They do not fall under "Targeted poverty reduction activities". Their activities are not poverty focused either, but affect the policy environment. They aim at removing systematic constraints at both national and international level to address the root causes of poverty through education at various levels and forms, propagating their political ideology and approach: good governance and a free market economy.

**Case Two: - ActionAid (UK/Ghana), non-political, non-religious:** This category of NGO presented a different working relationship with local partners void of a strong ideology other than cause of the people. Evidently, it is being transformed into a national NGO and has located its operational head offices in the region, Tamale, having increased rapport with beneficiaries and hardly any expatriate staff. Their activities touch on all the three major categories of poverty reduction but there is no clear intervention directly aimed at building of local partners for future. With the aim of becoming a national NGO and being seen as

such, there is no clear intervention or intent directly aimed at building of local partners for future. The organisation is lost in getting the job done.

**Case Three: Catholic Relief Services (USA), faith-based**: tread almost the same path as KAF, in terms of a strong ideology, but different from KAF in terms of point of entry and link to the region and communities. The traditional point of entry is the local Catholic Church. This is changing to include other Christian groups and churches as partners. Implementing own projects are otherwise form the bulk of their work. CRS/Ghana supports development and relief activities in several sectors and has by far more ongoing projects than the other two FNGOs. CRS regards Capacity building as an ongoing process through which individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their ability to identify and meet development challenges. CRS see its role as facilitating learning. CRS' capacity building activities are based on three key elements:

- Partnership
- Organizational development
- Civil society strengthening

For many years capacity building was viewed relatively narrowly as providing local organizations with the capacity required to meet CRS' project goals or reporting requirements. This often took the form of assisting with administration, physical infrastructure (providing vehicles or computers) and training. In 1987, CRS' Board of Directors called for "new international partnerships, especially with developing countries, based on mutual respect, cooperation, and a dedication to fundamental justice". Their activities touch on all the three major categories of poverty reduction, but there is no clear intervention or intent directly aimed at building of local partners for future. The organisation is lost in getting the job done.

What this means is that FNGOs do not always work with the local actors (such as LNGOs), but go personally to the people/field, and (sometimes) seek partners in the face of difficulties. Where FNGOs work with local actors, intervention is often targeted at projects and not building the capacity of the local partner to carry on independently. This is unpopular with the local actors, and raises questions about the role of FNGOs, vis-à-vis the role expected of them (when the FNGOs leave the country). All the FNGOs investigated have local staff, whose training does not form a major part of the FNGO work. FNGOs local counterpart sometimes crave for the credit of the interventions. Partnership is a desired relationship with FNGOs.

In spite of generally good intentions, the evidence suggests that many foreign NGOs still find it difficult to relinquish control and to move towards shared decision-making with their partners.

*Table 7.1 Overview and summary of major findings*

| | KAF Germany (Political) | ActionAid Ghana (UK) (Philanthropic) | CRS USA (Religious) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Whose capacities: (Partners) | Church organs, Public and Private sectors, Local government, SME | LNGOs Local government | Schools Relief Churches Local government |
| Resources: (Local) | Limited 75% local | Limited 99% local | Foreign/paid |
| Process | Institutional (political) and market development | "Hand-up" | Hand-out Welfare support |
| Point of entry in the community / region | Partners | Partners + projects | Partners + projects |
| Link to communities | Through intermediaries | Direct and indirect | Direct and indirect |
| Staff | Mixed | Local | Mixed |
| Type of poverty reduction program. | *Activities which affect the policy environment | *Targeted poverty reduction activities *Poverty focused *Policy environment | *Targeted poverty reduction activities *Poverty focused *Policy environment |

*Source: author's construct*

***Personnel and Mode of operations***

The location of offices and personnel is crucial for the operations of the FNGOs. While all three FNGOs have offices in Accra, for ActionAid and CRS the offices in Accra is for the simple purpose of maintaining a presence in the national capital. Salaries: Action-Aid pays better salaries than CRS and KAF. No figures could be obtained.

*Table 7.2 Location of personnel*

| | Head office in Accra | Regional office in Tamale | Field office in Districts |
|---|---|---|---|
| KAF | + | | |
| AA | + | + | + |
| CRS | + | + | |

*Source: author's construct*

*Table 7.3 Mode of operations*

| | Point of entry | Link to communities |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| KAF | Partners | Through intermediaries |
| AA | Projects + partners | Through intermediaries |
| CRS | Projects + partners | Directly and through intermediaries |

*Source: author's construct*

***Preferences / public opinion***

The study tried to gauge public opinion; views of the beneficiaries. The local NGOs emerged as favourites for a majority of the people questioned. Asked who they would chose to work if faced with the choice of LNGO and FNGOs, the answer was in favour of the LNGO. Asked to chose between the LNGOs and the local government, the answer was again in favour of LNGOs.

FNGO mostly send in their own personnel rather than seek cooperation with local partners, which often proves difficult because many local experts do not fit smoothly into well established teams. At the same time, the FNGOs have become overwhelming competitors for local institutions: they cream off the best of the workforce. What is more, rents are rising due to the aid organisations' powerful presence. Even locals now refer to big NGO-signs when pointing out directions in their home town.

***Participation in formulation of the GPRS / FNGO impact***

In March, 2001, the NPP government, barely three months in power, announced that it had taken the decision that Ghana joins the highly indebted and poor countries initiative (HIPC). This move sparked a lot of debate among civil society organisations, including the press, because they expected a public debate on the matter. One of the conditions under the HIPC initiative is for the country to draw up a poverty reduction strategy, which will direct how the relief from the HIPC initiative would be spent. Though the formulation of the GPRS was supposed to be participatory, the findings confirm the results of a study conducted by GAPVOD that participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) was limited.

Local civil society actors in the region and (in the country as a whole) have limited capacity to deliver quality programmes for the poor and the their ability to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration with the State in the large development debate is limited. Due to the policies of the last decade, the relationship between NGOs and government was characterised by mistrust and suspicion on both sides. This has compromised their role and contribution to development.

*Weaknesses of the GPRS*

The much lauded Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy though a great initiative by the World Bank for poverty reduction in the developing countries, the programme could meet the same fate as its equally lauded predecessors (e.g. Structural Adjustment Programme). The following weaknesses could be observed even in the early days of the government initiative:

Very few local and foreign actors in development knew about the government initiative even after the latest government advert in all the newspapers in the country on 31.01. 2004. Nearly all NGOs asked were baffled by the question about their role in the implementation of the GPRS. On the other hand, government propaganda: reform euphoria, exaggerating expectations is causing social unrest (e.g. the marketing of HPIC, amidst outcry for government's reconsideration of what the programme holds for the country).

Like the decentralisation programme, there is generally insufficient institutional and human capacity at the regional and district levels to implement the programmes and projects and to provide for sustainability. There is heavy dependence on foreign funding and assistance for the implementation of the strategy. Targeting of social investment and support for local groups is still debated as inadequate and so is sequencing of measures and projects.

***Culture***

A third type of culture was identified: the culture of the FNGOs and donors. Their strong ideology is seen as a likely cause of the occasional problems in relationship between Local staff of FNGOs as well as LNGOs. The latter often cooperated for gain and not always accordance with the terms of reference. This often led to strife especially between FNGOs and LNGOs.

## 7.3 Emerging issues and Implications

Having addressed the objectives of the study, the conclusions which lead to the recommendations are tailored on the propositions with the final question: how did the investigated FNGOs fare and measure on:

- Local participation – the involvement of local actors (the input - partnership)
- Local initiatives – the proposition states that FNGOs should not supplant local initiatives (the process - capacity building)
- Pro-poor – poverty reduction is principally about the poor (the output).

While it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, given the period of its introduction and the duration of the study, a few preliminary assessments can be made: Notwithstanding social conflicts, there is a growing awareness and consensus among the civil society that reducing poverty and improving the living conditions of the poor by raising educational levels, improving health care etc. is a national, regional and local task; even in the midst of controversial discussions on how to achieve the goal.

The availability of poverty data has improved greatly (thanks to the GPRS document), but not detailed enough for local consumption. Thus NGOs spend a lot of resource filling the gap before embarking on their work. This work is often contracted to development consultants at great cost. The participation of target groups has improved greatly (the reference point here is the author's personal knowledge of the past and of course literature. There is however great concern among the NGO community and their donors alike on how to remove the weaknesses of the poverty reduction strategy and in particular the question of sustainability.

The development experience of much of Sub-Saharan Africa in past decades provides ample illustration of the importance of capacity building in the development process. The importance is related to the ability to manage economic and social processes, including the analysis and formulation of policy options, for attaining development objectives such as employment generation and poverty reduction. The consequences of failures in domestic economic management, compounded by the effects of a prolonged economic crisis in the region have, *inter alia,* contributed to high and rising levels of open unemployment and underemployment, declining per *capita* incomes and real wages, and an increase in the incidence and intensity of poverty in a number of African countries. The persistence of these adverse consequences, which represent a serious threat to economic growth and sustainable development, are somehow linked - either as a cause or an effect - to weaknesses and instability in the institutional framework to push the "agenda for growth and prosperity" (GPRS, 2003).

Local NGOs (LNGOs) and other civil society actors in the region have limited capacity to deliver quality programmes for the poor and their ability to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration with the State in the large development debate is limited. Due to the policies of the last decade, the relationship between NGOs and government was characterised by mistrust and suspicion on both sides. This has compromised their role and contribution to development.

There is also a lack of real capacity as of now to take these roles to the fullest extend. Many civil society actors do not have clear strategic priorities, ability to mobilise resources and define their role and standards of performance; notwithstanding their

knowledge of their wider development circumstances. Few are aware of significant contribution that some donor agencies and foreign partner NGOs (from the North) make and how this is organised and delivered. The ability of the LNGOs to play a role out their full potentials in poverty alleviation in Ghana also depends greatly with their relationship with their foreign counterparts.

The private sector is evident operates at both local and national level and evident in the growing number of private sector associations. One thing they all have in common is the call from government to participate in the fight against poverty. Given these concerns, one might suggest that there is need to empower local actors especially the civil society actors such as the local NGOs to play their full role in the development process and facilitate better dialogue and co-ordination between civil society and government to ensure a positive operating environment.

Identification of capacity building needs by someone other than the client has meant that the ensuing interventions have not been owned by those they were meant to assist, and their impact therefore undermined. In the situation in the Northern Region however, the local actors also acknowledge their lack of capacity for the task of poverty reduction. Local NGOs (LNGOs) and other civil society actors in Ghana have limited capacity to deliver quality programmes for the poor and the their ability to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration with the State in the large development debate is limited. Due to the policies of the last decade, the relationship between NGOs and government was characterised by mistrust and suspicion on both sides. This has compromised their role and contribution to development.

There is however a lack of real capacity as of now to take these roles to the fullest extent. Many civil society actors do not have clear strategic priorities, ability to mobilise resources and define their role and standards of performance; notwithstanding their knowledge of their wider development circumstances. Few are aware of significant contribution that some donor agencies and foreign partner NGOs (from the North) make and how this is organised and delivered. The ability of the LNGOs to play a role out their full potentials in poverty reduction in Ghana also depends greatly on their relationship with their foreign counterparts. Now that foreign support is fading, the question and worry this situation presents of course is what happens when this supports dries up and the FNGOs depart?

Partnership is about the quality of relationships and, therefore, not every relationship is a partnership. Different categories of relationships between Southern and Northern NGOs need to be identified and named to reflect what they actually are. Furthermore, relationships need to be negotiated outright with open dialogue and agreement on mutual rights and obligations. Again, this suggests the importance of clarity and transparency in defining relationships.

*Table 7.4 NGOs and the GPRS*

| NGO activities in partnership with national and local governments | NGO activities in partnership with local communities | NGO activities in Partnership with other NGOs |
|---|---|---|
| • Collating and packaging of basic information<br>• Monitoring and evaluating Governmental action<br>• Participating in planning and developing GPRS implementation<br>• Participating in operationalising GPRS<br>• Researching, formulating, and supporting public policies on the environment | • Environmental awareness building<br>• Informing local communities on the effects of their lifestyles on the environment<br>• Educating, training and other interactive initiatives in increasing knowledge on the local/ global environment<br>• Preparing publications, bulletins, checklists, guidelines<br>• Establishing demonstration/ pilot programs and projects<br>• Public education | • Sharing of Information, best practices<br>• Supporting and collaborating with each other in operationalising GPRS<br>• Creating networks for capacity building<br>• Technology and policy research<br>• Creating and maintaining databases on publications, activities, organizations etc. |

*Source: author's construct based on GPRS*

## 7.4 Limitations of the GPRS

The roles assigned to civil society actors in the implementation of the GPRS may be described essentially as that of a watchdog. Like the District Assemblies, the incapacitated civil society organisations, especially the local development non-governmental organisations can merely watch and report on the (Government) delivery of poverty reduction projects using the debt-relief HIPC funds. Even if the LNGOs have acquired skills to perform the so-called role of monitoring or tracking of public expenditures, they will still need the recognition of the State to do so. Secondly the role is in deed a limited one given its design as essentially a surveillance mechanism that helps in generating and furnishing the authorities with ground level information. The question is whether this function per se necessarily strengthens links of accountability. Admittedly, the activities of NGOs, such as the Northern Ghana Network, GAPVOD, and the SEND Foundation that are involved in the tracking of the expenditure of HIPC funds may be promoting transparency at the local level. But whether this subsequently translates into improved accountability of civil servants and politicians to citizens and communities remains an empirical question.

Whether as watchdog or watchman, these roles are not particularly empowering of civil society organisations and may not necessarily strengthen links of accountability because they tend to overlook or underestimate the capacity of civil society actors to also participate in the making of decisions to strengthen accountability practices. The greater the emphasis on the watchdog role, the lesser the scope given to civil society actors to operate as advocates of change and participants in the creation of a new regime for effective accountability. Civil society actors are more likely to be seen to be contributing to the strengthening of links of accountability only when watchdog role dovetails with roles of advocacy and participation in the deliberative and dialogue processes of creating new regimes and/or institutions for strong accountability.

## 7.5 Conclusion

The study revealed the perception FNGOs have of the region and their subsequent drive to fix the emergency and poor humanitarian situation with a “food fix” and “Hand-Outs” strategies that that FNGO interventions have had little capacity building components of local actors. KAF on the other hand deals with the State and national organisations. KAF is not physically present in the region, but (works) through its partners. The local partners, in particular the LNGOs are the faces on the KAF interventions; thereby ensuring a synergy effect as well as ownership and capacity building.

On the whole, it can be concluded that FNGOs are

- not clear about the type of development thy should be pursuing and how to pursue it, or
- they have not made the transition from relief to development, or
- they are not clear about the concept of capacity development

The Northern region and country as a whole is faced with FNGOs that have already decided to intervene in a field of their choice; the field of health, agriculture or education, for instance. The FNGOs identified the specific problem that it thought should be tackled. FNGO staff and consultants design the project, and while conscientious attempts are made to involve local people, the project inevitably reflected the opinions, expertise and requirements of the FNGO / donor country. Most of the projects are put into operation under the management of FNGO, working with local counterparts. The quality of output in service delivery is often high. Local staff of the FNGOs and some counterparts are trained through the project, but it is the FNGO that set the terms of the partnership, and the recipient had to follow the leader.

At the end of the project, the international staff left and the local staff and local partners found that they still did not have the experience, confidence, or institutional capacity to take over. The projects are almost entirely funded by the FNGO / donor, and no local funding was available to continue the work. This led to the demand for another project, resulting in an inevitable cycle of dependency. The cycle of dependency is prone within weak local partners (LNGOs).

These issues raise questions for consideration in the formulation of recommendations for reduced poverty and a sustainable local development:
Whose development agenda is being pursued? Are such resource transfers resulting in a new form of dependency?

The findings of the study support the track record of NGOs as being well positioned to respond to the poor and provide effective assistance to them, but with little involvement of the poor. Against this background, there is the view in the West that NGOs in the so-called Third World constitute a viable alternative to governments as channels of development and poverty reduction. Most LNGOs welcome the northern counterparts and this new role, because resource transfer places them squarely in the centre of the development agenda and allows them to continue operating in areas they have chosen for themselves. On the other hand, there is a danger the LNGOs will be reduced to doing just that – conduits of development assistance. The rampant cycle of dependency within weak local partners (LNGOs) makes the case

for the pro-State camp to label LNGOs as intrinsically unsuitable to receive aid, and that such trend leads to a condition of sustained ineffectiveness.

The dominant role of the FNGOs is making local institutions redundant to the annoyance of some LNGOs. The massive injection of foreign aid, coming as reward for positive political reforms threatens to stifle any domestic initiative. Nearly all development projects in the region are owned and operated by FNGOs.

American and European organisations and donors alike have had a great significant influence on the development in Ghana, not only through funding but also by introducing western concepts in a great partnership. While Ghana cannot do without them, the major issue with regards to poverty is the effect of their interventions on local partners in the future in poverty reduction.

There is a huge gap between what the FNGOs have on paper, what they are actually doing; and what their local partners would do and probably expect. It makes one to think of the adage, beggars have no choices. This kind of scenario offers no sight in end for the poor; except of course more jobs for FNGOs in the name of poverty reduction. The recommendations are discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter Eight

## Recommendations

## and

## Transferability of the

## Ghana Experience

# Chapter Eight

# Recommendations and Transferability of the Ghana Experience

## 8.1 Introduction

The study of the role of foreign NGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction is an investigation into the response of a significant segment of western development agencies and organisations in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in development cooperation with developing countries. Development cooperation has evolved substantially over the years, as has been discussed earlier. Some of the factors advanced to explain why many African governments and civil society organisations are unable to implement their own development programmes or the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) independently, are political instability, lack of financial resources, lack of necessary skills and low level of existing local competence, non-operational or non-existing institutional and legal framework, absence of clear environmental policy, lack of awareness at the level of those responsible for acting, lack of documentation and equipment, the list goes on.

Worst still, most of the countries that depended upon development assistance 20 years ago still need assistance today and poverty is on the rise. The most remarkable failure is not helping countries move from dependence to self-reliance and sufficiency. Why should this be, given the massive amount of aid, both financial and human, that has been made available over decades through foreign NGOs among others? Based on literature and personal experience, the study claims that the answer lies in the elusive quality called "capacity"[1]. The beginning of the millennium has been characterised by a revival of multilateral initiatives for development. This revival coincides with the emergence of anti-globalisation movements that have been vocal in rich countries to advocate on behalf of developing countries.

Over the last five years, a broad consensus has emerged that, in order to maximise their effectiveness, development agencies need to work much more closely within and in support of a poverty reduction strategy which is led by each developing country itself (Development, Issue 16, 2001). This consensus has prompted a renewed discussion of the kind of assistance development agencies and organisations should best provide to meet the MDGs; thus this study.

[1] Capacity for Development: New Solutions to Old Problems, Earthscan (London) and United Nations Development Programme, New York, 2002.

Development assistance headed to a large extent by FNGOs has, for one reason or another, failed to give people the capacity needed to successfully manage their own countries, their own businesses and their own lives. With the assumption that all actors in the development business acknowledge this to be the core problem, the study sought to investigate the role of the FNGOs in developing capacities for poverty reduction.

Though development assistance programmes have been typified by donor control, they are largely in FNGO hands today. Development assistance has been marked by major successes and spectacular failures. The successes are all around us: vaccination programmes are reducing child mortality, new crops feed more people, and water and sanitation reach more and more households. Perhaps the most unnoticed aspects of development are the steady transfer of skills and knowledge that have accompanied technical assistance.

To understand the role of the FNGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction, the study selected a region in Ghana where poverty is highest and the number of FNGOs equally high. Three out of the 30 FNGOs in the region are selected considering type and origin of the foreign NGOs among others as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Political | **Konrad Adenauer Foundation** | Germany |
| Religious | **Catholic Relief Services** | USA |
| Non-political, non-religious | **ActionAid** | UK |

The study identified and examined the factors under the need for capacity in the fight against poverty; thus capacity building for poverty reduction. It has been observed that one of the key constraints to meeting the Millennium Development Goals and to reducing poverty is the lack of capacity in Sub-Saharan region and other low-income countries. The relationship between building the capacities of local actors and poverty reduction is a basic assumption of the study. It is by now clear from the study that poverty is not all about income and capacity cannot be all about money either. The study is built on one of the current understandings of poverty: quality of life, which acknowledges (poor) people's capability to fulfil valuable functions within society.

The study investigated the role foreign NGOs in building capacities for poverty reduction in Ghana in Sub-Saharan Africa. To accomplish the objectives of the study, the author reviewed available literature on the understanding poverty, challenges and causes of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also discussed were NGOs and poverty reduction strategies. As the role of foreign NGOs in SSA takes place within the context of international cooperation on poverty reduction, the discussion could have been hardly complete without a mention of the international understanding and efforts at poverty reduction. FNGOs it is hoped do not operate in isolation from their

local environment; independent of the local actors. The emerging issues of partnership, concerns about not supplanting local initiatives, and self-reliance vis-à-vis sustainability made up the conceptual framework for the study. To concretise the investigation, an empirical study is conducted in the poor Northern Region in Ghana, which examined the operations of three foreign NGOs (FNGOs) in the region.

## 8.2 Capacity building for poverty reduction in the Northern Region: context

Confronting the challenges in the region without due reference to the national development issues runs the risk of missing the big picture. Some of the development concerns in the region, which constitute the challenges for FNGOs in the fight against poverty in Ghana are summarised as follows:

- Limited capacity on the part of the State to deliver to its citizens, the private and the voluntary sector
- Limited capacity on the part of the private sector to survive and provide jobs and services.
- Limited capacity on the part of the citizens to access the often limited and expensive services, take jobs or be self-employed
- Limited capacity on the part of the local NGO to help themselves and their communities has subsequently handicapped the voluntary sector.

The capacity issue is evident in two forms: real and potential. A case in point is fiscal decentralisation and the state of the district assemblies and the gaps that remain to be filled before districts are able to perform their statutory functions satisfactorily. Though much has been achieved in attempts to decentralise state machinery, much more remains to be done, particularly in matching the responsibilities entrusted to district assemblies with resources required to make meaningful impact. In just over a decade, district assemblies have been accepted by ordinary people as the institution to look up to for most of their basic needs. Indeed the expectation has been so high that only a few districts, if any, appear to be meeting the people's aspirations and expectations. The general situation calls for capacity (development) in relation to the following priority areas:

- Good governance, to ensure stability;
- Economic management, to maximise resource mobilisation and promote sustainable development;
- Human resource development, to support employment creation and income generation, and reduce poverty;
- Science and technology, to increase the efficiency of the population and facilitate infrastructural development;
- Enterprise development, to enhance the critical role of the private sector in overall development.

Accumulated experiences and knowledge have it that the degree of emphasis given to each of the above in a given context would vary according to the level and complexity of existing human and institutional capacities, the economic and financial means to support capacity, the relative roles of the public and private sectors, and the degree of involvement of civil society in the decision-making process.

These are critical concerns of capacity development. For every goal in general and poverty reduction in particular, there are at least 10 kinds of capacity to be developed:

- The capacity to set objectives: based on an understanding of the national and local contexts, requires sound data and information about current needs and targets vulnerable groups;
- The capacity to develop strategies: requires a clear prioritisation of needs, an understanding of the processes which can contribute to meeting them, and the development of meaningful benchmarks to determine progress;
- The capacity to draw up action plans: based on an agreed strategy, requires a detailed listing of required actions, identification of the parties involved in carrying them out, and a clear timetable;
- The capacity to develop and implement appropriate policies: requires design of policies and methodologies for effective and accountable policy implementation;
- The capacity to develop regulatory and legal frameworks: requires adapting national laws and regulations for compatibility with relevant global conventions;
- The capacity to build and manage partnerships: requires full and constructive consultation among key stakeholders (based on appropriate incentives), to secure commitments by the organizations and entities to be involved in the implementation of the action plan;
- The capacity to foster an enabling environment for civil society: the success and sustainability of development initiatives require the participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly the more vulnerable;
- The capacity to mobilize and manage resources: requires a quantification of the resources (human, financial and other) that are needed for implementation, and requires that these resources be mobilised and put at the service of the plan;
- The capacity to implement action plans: requires that those responsible for carrying out every part of the plan be appropriately selected, that they be aware of their responsibilities, and know to whom they are accountable for performance;
- The capacity to monitor progress: requires that people and mechanisms be put in place to enable the measurement of agreed benchmarks and indicators; provides for feedback to ensure that objectives and strategies are adjusted so that progress is realized and sustained.

Regardless of the assistance of the FNGOs, it has been observed that NGOs also have limitations, and that the partnership with them poses certain challenges. Some of these issues should be duly addressed to ensure an effective role for FNGOs in poverty reduction:

- Mistrust: Relationship between local and foreign NGOs
- Developing and retaining capacity
- Accountability / Transparency

These issues cannot be said to carry the same weight as high illiteracy, high mortality, poor infrastructure, high unemployment, HIV/AIDS, ethnic unrest, etc. (indicators of poverty in the region) in chapter three. To put the Ghanaian situation in perspective with respect to the task of poverty reduction two points are worth keeping in mind. The first is that development planners in the West are concerned with regeneration and renewal. The second point is an example of what development effort can achieve: the state of Germany today is evidence of the resolve and approach to development adopted by allied Western countries (mainly USA) after the world war.

Under the recommendation World Bank, Ghana prepared the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), the framework for any poverty reduction intervention in the country. The GPRS calls for US$ 5,283 million in total investment to achieve its policy goals (appendix A). Of this, US$ 2,515 million will be required for the medium term (2003-2005). There are plans to revise these in the months ahead, ostensibly to bring them in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but it is not expected that the goals themselves will see much change, as the focus of the revision is on restructuring. The essential question at this stage is whether the current strategy and the expected revision to cover the period 2005 - 2008 can lead to the desired and planned outcomes.

Accelerated growth was an important objective of the Ghana's Vision 2020 plans, developed by previous governments, and drawing on discussions with development partners, especially the World Bank. These growth rates were generally not achieved. This raises the question repeatedly asked: can Ghana alter the current poverty trends, more rapidly, to achieve the type of structural changes that will have a more widespread impact on the population?

## 8.3 The Foreign NGOs and the development framework

The three FNGOs present a very mixed picture and a challenge for policy makers and partners to deal with all three concurrently. They have been duly incorporated into the development mechanism to reduce poverty with the development plan of Ghana and are expected to form a partnership with local authorities and civil society organisations wherever they operate. Organisations are different in various ways and NGOs from different countries come with even more differences. Most of the foreign NGOs reflect the political ideology of their home country, and this is bound to determine their interventions in the fight against poverty.

The West (or the North) is home to an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 internationally operating NGOs. The majority of these are development only organisations. Others are what are sometimes known as ‘briefcase’ NGOs, created to respond to specific problems, and often to particular funding opportunities. Once these are excluded, the number is closer to 260. A handful of large and influential organisations predominate.

The US is by far the world’s largest humanitarian donor. In 2000, US relief aid totalled nearly $1.2 billion, around a third of all humanitarian assistance. Despite this predominance, humanitarian aid occupies an increasingly uncertain place in the country’s foreign policy. The percentage of gross national product allotted by the US government to foreign assistance has stood at or below 0.1 percent – lower than at any time in the past half-century. During the cold war, Washington was unapologetic about the use of development aid for political purposes in its global struggle against communism.

The enthusiasm for ‘humanitarian intervention’, evidenced under Bill Clinton, has been tempered by his successor, George W. Bush. Conflicting constituencies and lobbies, from industry to the Christian Right, exert a complicating influence on the formation of policy, while the institutional architecture of humanitarian assistance is fragmented and badly out of date. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the Bush administration is refocusing its foreign policy. While it is too early to gauge the full impact of the attacks on US policy, the ‘war on terror’ is sure to herald a new period in the relationship between humanitarian action and the new security agenda.

Europe is one area in the world where several economic systems have operated side by side during a large part of the 20th century. Europeans have seen how a centrally controlled economic system reduces political freedom and democracy. They have also seen that a free-market system which operates without effective and democratic mechanisms for ensuring social and environmental objectives gives rise to immense injustices. The European Union (EU) as a whole is the world’s largest donor the in development field, providing more than half of all global development assistance of over €30 billion in 2003 (EU Annual Report 2004).

Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain became popular in development circles for his reference to Africa as the scare on the conscience of the world. Britain has a very strong charity culture, and also home to most of the active Northern NGOs in developing countries (for example Oxfam, ActionAid).

Germany was divided into two, one to the Capitalist and the other to Communist spheres. The concept of the social market economy was created in 1947 as an alternative to capitalism and socialism.  It was considered to be the middle way. The Social Market Economy seems to have been the way to avoid the weaknesses of

both systems, yet the statistics seem to say it was more a nicely carved slogan than the commitment of the politicians to serve the general interest. Notwithstanding the political debate it has stirred within some circles, it is widely sold in Ghana and other developing countries (through agents of the State like the Konrad Adenauer Foundation).

The outstanding characteristic that made the most difference on the field of operation are as follows:

- ***Konrad Adenauer Foundation*** against the background of its political system is in a very good position to preach democracy and decentralisation. It is outstanding in the pursuit of the ***empowerment of institutions***. Main ideology of the German NGO is Social Market Economy.
- ***Catholic Relief Services:*** the American faith-based organisation is largely concerned with welfare and services provision. Its ***welfarist*** nature are based on biblical values. 'Wilsonian' humanitarianism characterises most US NGOs. Named after President Woodrow Wilson, who hoped to project US values and influence as a force for good in the world, the Wilsonian tradition sees a basic compatibility with humanitarian aims and US foreign policy objectives. Wilsonians have a practical, operational bent, and practitioners have crossed back and forth into government positions. ***Wilsonians*** are more dependent on and cooperative with governments; have short time horizon and a strong service delivery emphasis.
- The non-political, non-religious British charity ***ActionAid,*** is outstanding in the area of ***organisation***. It is on the verge of transforming itself into a national NGO, in line with the internationalisation of the organisation. It can be best described as 'Dunantist' humanitarianism[2]. 'Dunantist' organisations seek to position themselves outside of state interests. Most of the FNGOs are composed of multiple national affiliates under various forms of Confederation except for the US-based CRS. ***Dunantists*** are independent of and oppositional towards government, have a long time horizon and an outstanding advocacy emphasis.

How all of this plays at the local level for the people in the Northern Region is critical for the future of poverty reduction. At the national level, KAF enjoys a relationship with the government closer than any other FNGO. Though none of the parties admit this officially, and the Christian Democratic Union (of KAF) is not the ruling party in Germany, the two countries have very good ties. The ties between the home country of the FNGO and the host/recipient country are very critical for the operations of FNGOs. All three heads of State of the FNGO home country have visited Ghana (Blair, Shroeder and Bush); a display of political partnership, and a reward (from the donor country) to Ghana for its political reforms and stability. A change of government or policies often affects the FNGOs operations in the country.

[2] 'Dunantist' humanitarianism is named for Red Cross founder Henry Dunant.

## 8.4 Linking the findings to the recommendations: Developing a strategic capacity building approach for poverty reduction

To operationalise the research questions and objectives, the author draws on the foregoing findings and reflections to formulate recommendations. In linking the findings to the recommendations two issues stand out: demand (figure 8.2) and supply capacity building interventions. The major issue at this point is linking the efforts of the FNGOs to reduce poverty; redirecting FNGO intervention to aid the poor in ways that reduce poverty in a sustainable and dignified manner. Poverty in the Northern can be best defined as a lack of choices. The demands and needs of the poor range from humanitarian and relief to real development needs that lead to a sustainable reduction of poverty (figure 8.3). In the face of dire needs, anything that comes is accepted, thus the need for all the FNGOs in the region. A major finding of the study though is the gap between what the FNGOs offer (the supply) and what leads to a sustainable reduction of poverty: capacity development for local NGOs in the fight against poverty in the region and the country as a whole. The study found out that FNGO interventions (the supply) have dwelled on their respective policies and western designs and had little components aimed at building the capacity of local actors:

**KAF:** institutions - political
**CRS:** relief - humanitarian
**ActionAid:** social welfare

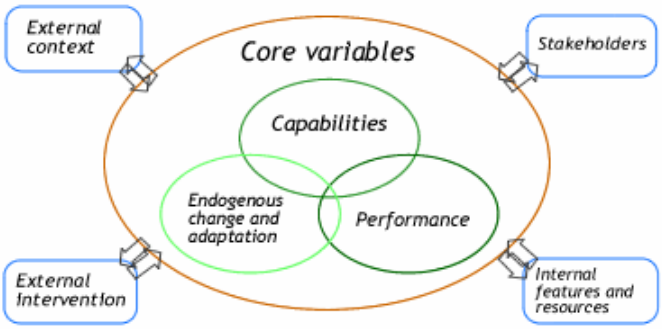
Is solving the problems of the poor through “Hand-outs” and “food-fix” more effective than “teaching the poor people to fish”? This raises the all critical question: What is the goal of development? Whose development? From the foregoing findings, the recommendations of the study are formulated within the context of three intertwined core variables of capacity: capabilities, endogenous change and adaptation, and performance. These core variables of capacity stand together on four blocks which are equally very crucial in the drawing up of any recommendations (figure 8.1):

- External context
- External intervention
- Stakeholders
- Internal features and resources

Based on literature and studies on poverty reduction, it is reasonable to agree that FNGOs interventions designed to reduce poverty cannot be achieved on a sustainable basis without the support of local resources of these countries. This means that the logic of programmes developed must be build on already existing

capacities. This cornerstone contains the core of social, political, economic and cultural dynamics of any country.

*Figure 8.1 The context of capacity building*




*Source: adapted from capacity.org (2003)*

***A broad spectrum***

Whatever the varying views on capacity, it is safe to maintain that capacity is the competence or capability to produce something of developmental value, and not just humanitarian or relief. Rather than viewing capacity building as a single concept, it is better to look at a whole range of ideas, approaches and development interventions. At one end of the spectrum is the purely technical input – the provision of training to an agency's staff, or setting up new financial or computer systems, for example. Although these are isolated instances of development assistance, to have real meaning, they must be considered as part of a broader process.

Further along the spectrum is organisational capacity building. Most development work is carried out by organisations, whether they are civil society groups or government ministries. To be effective in their role, these organisations often need support in their own progress and development. This organisational development not only focuses on the organisation's systems and physical assets, but on its people, its culture and its ability to plan for the future.

In the past, capacity development has seldom been systematically planned or managed. Capacity building occurs by acquiring resources (human, financial, infrastructure, knowledge and systems) and integrating them in a way that leads to changes in individual behaviour and ultimately to more efficient and effective operation of institutions and organisations (table 8.1). The aim is to develop a more effective viable, autonomous and legitimate local organisation by creating the conditions in which change can be made to take place from within the group or organisation. As observed earlier, capacity building is a self-managed process of organisational change by which leaders, members and other primary stakeholders

learn to access strengths, diagnose key organisational weaknesses, recognise priority issues and devise, apply and access actions to address these issues.

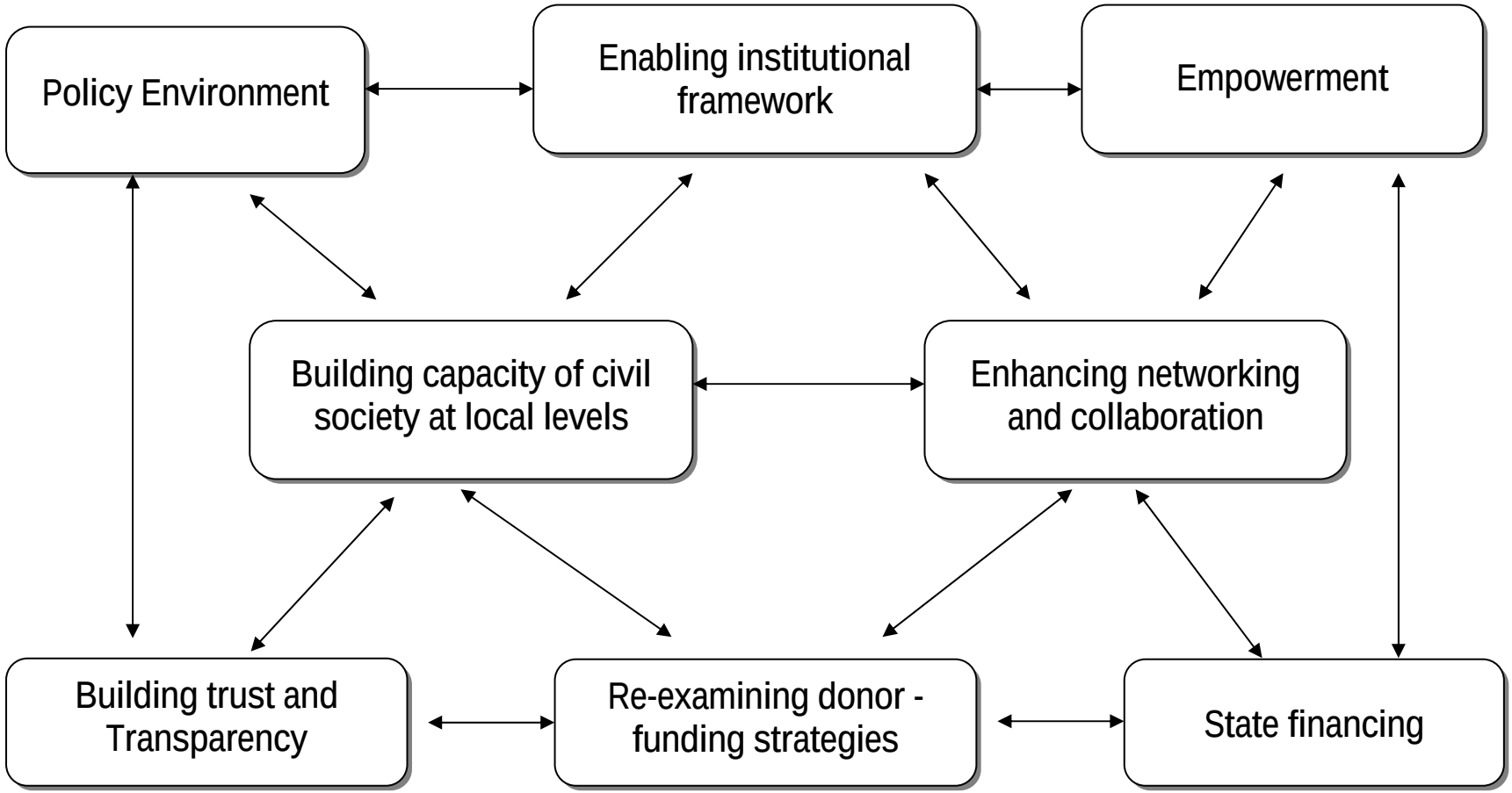
*Table 8.1 A new paradigm for capacity development*

| | Current paradigm | New paradigm |
|---|---|---|
| Nature of development | Improvements in economic and social conditions | Societal transformation, including building of "right" capacities |
| Conditions for effective development cooperation | Good policies that can be externally prescribed | Good policies that have to be home grown |
| The asymmetric donor recipient relationship | Should be countered generally through a spirit of partnership and mutual respect | Should be specifically addressed as a problem by taking countervailing measures |
| Capacity development | Human resource development, combined with stronger institutions | Three cross linked layers of capacity: individual, institutional and societal |
| Acquisition of knowledge | Knowledge can be transferred | Knowledge has to be acquired |
| Most important forms of knowledge | Knowledge developed in North for export to South | Local knowledge combined with knowledge acquired from other countries – in the South and North |

*Source: author's construct based on literature*

As has been observed earlier and learned over the past few decades, however, this view ignored - or at least underestimated - the importance of local knowledge, institutions, and social capital in the process of economic and social development (figure 8.2). And for most of the Cold War, the problem was exacerbated by the phenomenon of aid driven by politics rather than results. Despite some significant achievements, successful and sustainable capacity development has remained an elusive goal.

*Figure 8.2 Areas for action to reduce poverty and enhance sustainable development in Ghana*



## 8.5 Recommendations for capacity building

FNGO areas of intervention are making a mark in the region, but need to be linked together to ensure a sustainable reduction of poverty. The missing link in these dimensions of FNGO intervention is the development of local capacity to enhance sustainable reduction of poverty in the region. For instance, ActionAid and Konrad Adenauer's engagement with local institutions should result in enhancing local political capacity, local administrative or human resources capacity and local fiscal management capacity, if well coordinated in light of the overall goal and outcome of foreign (NGO) intervention (figure 5.1). It is also rightly argued that one cannot teach a person on an empty stomach. So FNGOs, should work together in partnership and subsidiarity with local partners to reduce poverty and achieve the MDGs. Such a network of areas of interventions is presented in Figure 8.2.

capacities exist among individuals, groups, and within organisations as a whole. Individuals possess knowledge, skills and attitudes which reflect their experience and training. When individuals share their knowledge, skills and attitude with colleagues and these become imbedded in group norms and processes, it can be said that they become part of the group's capacity. And when individual and group capacities become widely shared among the organisation's members and incorporated into management systems and culture, they become organisational capacities.

With reference to the conceptual framework, a triangular line of action is recommended for a sustainable foreign NGO role in building capacities for poverty reduction. The triangle (figure 8.4) is based on three questions: Who? What? and How?, which then translate into Actors, Content and Process respectively (figure 8.3 and figure 8.4). In simplest terms, an organisation's capacity is its potential to perform - its ability to successfully apply its skills and resources toward the accomplishment of its goals and the satisfaction of its stakeholders' expectations. The aim of capacity development is to improve the organisation's performance by increasing its potential in terms of its resources and management.

So the first step (from the point of view of the FNGO) as in the conceptual framework should be identifying the local actors who will ensure a sustainable poverty reduction. In the words of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, "A strategy for rapid and sustained growth must first and foremost rely on the skills and creativity of the nation's people and their ability to respond to opportunities in an environment of good governance, political stability and economic transparency".

Capacity and performance should be enhanced in an integrated and progressive way. Capacity building of the poor means building their bargaining power by organising them into beneficiary groups. With increased bargaining power, the poor can take

control over the means of development and participate meaningfully in the planning and implementation development process. In this regard, institutional development that will create a framework for these groups to operate at the grassroots level is a consequence of regional development planning. In particular the skills leaned do not always find suitable structures at national level to support them. In certain cases, the structures exist, but qualified personnel are either not sufficient, or turned down through draconian government or foreign agency policies. Another issue is that, training is not targeted at local needs; often making the high cost of training futile. The consequences of such a situation are detrimental, as those who benefited from the training are frustrated because they will have no opportunity to make use of their skills. The absence of sufficient practical local expertise results in dependence on foreign expertise, which is often very costly.

If local NGOs (genuine ones) are really making the mark on poverty reduction in the region their preference among beneficiaries depict, then enhancing their capacity for poverty reduction should not entirely be left to the foreign NGOs. Once again, this underlines the importance of the sector. Government support for local actors can take several forms which are summarised under the following headings: developing a strategic approach; raising public awareness; promoting youth volunteering; establishing an enabling environment; promoting private sector support; and influencing international organisations. All such action should be based on the following principles:

- Governments should develop policies to support volunteering which are appropriate to the nature of volunteering in their particular country
- In developing such policies, governments should work in partnership with key stakeholders, including the voluntary and private sectors
- Governments should avoid the temptation to try and direct volunteering to meet their own ends and should recognise the essential independence of volunteer action.

Local capacity development is an extension of this essential vision of partnership in the context of particular operational relationships with local organisations and communities. Local capacity development goes beyond a specific project activity, based rather on a shared vision of and commitment to ongoing joint action. Local capacity development includes a commitment to healthy partnership, to the organisational development of partners, and to the development of the broader society in which the relationship unfolds.

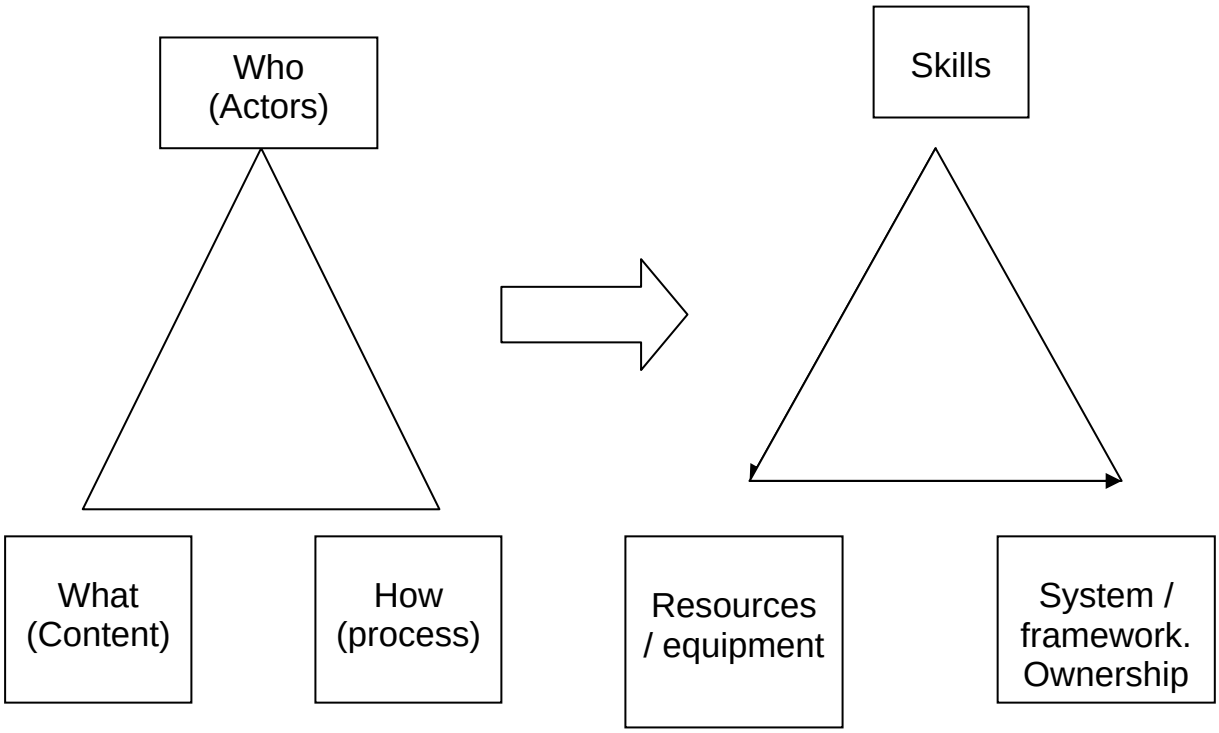
The next step and question is what does one do after establishing the partnership. The establishment of the partnership are not ends in themselves. There is the common task and the job has to be done. One could go further to ask: how? Empowerment: Anyone who cares about the poor should favour incapacitating and

empowering the poor to plough their own development. The intention of the foreign helper (FNGO) could make all the difference, as is summed up in the Chinese adage:

*"Give someone a fish and he eats for a day; Teach someone to fish, and he can feed himself for a lifetime."*

So the question: what good is teaching an individual if he/she is not going to be able to apply what he or she has been thought? By teaching the person and then helping the person to further acquire, access or tap the resources and equipment to perform is moving in the triangle to the next level of more holistic development of the person. The major challenge to development in the Northern Region in Ghana and indeed in many other Sub-Saharan African countries is instability. In the face of conflicts or political unrests, even the best trained and equipped medical doctor will hardly be able to function. Providing a long string of highway projects, as has been the case in Ghana over many years has not put the country ahead in terms of having the capacity to manage its highway system either. Thus the need for the third part of the triangle in capacity building for poverty reduction (figure 8.3).

*Figure 8.3 The capacity development triangle*




*Source: author's construct*

- **WHO:** the beneficiaries; the local, community-based organisations are the actors to implement poverty reduction interventions for a sustainable local development (their purpose, values and approach that give it a distinct identity)
- **WHAT** the organisation does – the content of the capacity development intervention (i.e. its choice of activities, level of efficiency, etc.),
- **HOW** it operates – the process (i.e. management issues, resource mobilisation, etc.) and with

The specific objectives of FNGOs in building capacity for poverty reduction should therefore consider the following objectives:

- to build and, where appropriate, strengthen capacities for carrying out effective implementation of the GPRS at the regional and district levels
- To encourage and empower people to take ownership of the processes and decisions affecting their lives.
- Help community-based organisations (LNGOs), as well as national and local authorities, to overcome capacity constraints to achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- Ensure strong synergies among capacity development initiatives, particularly those related to sustainable poverty reduction and development strategies.

***Comparative advantage of LNGOs (over FNGOs)***

Current strategy of FNGOs are largely humanitarian / relief and short-term. With the exception of the expertise and favourable financial base of FNGOs, LNGOs can do almost anything FNGOs can do, on a lasting basis. Capacity for poverty reduction is not about quantity but quality. Countries with strong domestic institutions and good governance have better records designing and implementing sound growth-oriented and poverty-reducing macroeconomic policies (at least) under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) framework.

The comparative advantage of civil society organisations in local development is undisputable and in the implementation of the GPRS is acknowledged and categorised as follows:

- Actions that fall within the mandate of civil society organisations and which they should therefore concentrate their resources in design, funding and implementation.
- Actions that fall within the mandate of both civil society organisations and other development stakeholders - for example, the establishment of primary schools, an activity that government, missionary groups and the private sector are currently undertaking either jointly or separately. Civil society organisations are encouraged to raise funds to support activities under this category.

LNGOs should however work within the development plans of District Assemblies and ministries to avoid duplication. They (Civil Society Organisations) should also

provide information on their activities in this category to their umbrella associations and relevant District Assemblies and ministries. They should collaborate with FNGOs and be the face (owners) of (FNGO) action on areas critical to sustainable reduction of poverty in the region in the following areas:

***The Environment and Health:*** Promote energy efficiency and conservation measures for domestic, commercial and industrial users through the establishment of community wood-lots, and tree planting in settlements.

*HIV/AIDS* Organise prevention campaigns, including peer education and moral education on HIV/AIDS, care for Persons Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and legal support against discrimination for PLWHA, provision of counselling services, sale of condoms in remote, especially in remote areas. Organise special programmes for commercial sex workers to prevent and manage HIV/AIDS.

Coordinating and leading the sale and distribution of Insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs); promotion of community-based vector control against malaria; public education preventive health; direct provision of health services (clinics, hospitals, laboratories, nutrition centres, etc.); promote consumption of iodated salt; promote community-based health insurance schemes.

Promoting the purification and accessibility of potable water in guinea worm endemic communities and remote areas, and marketing of domestic latrines. Introduce technological options to the KVIP in poor areas with unfavourable terrain. Intensify information dissemination on safe sanitation practices, especially in urban slums, rural savannah and rural coastal areas.

***Education:*** in collaboration with the CRS education programmes, provide school lunches and uniforms in the most deprived communities in the region and in Northern Ghana in general. Establish early childhood centres (pre school) as best as possible in deprived communities as well. Intensify enrolment drive for girls in the three northern regions. Establish rural vacation centres for Junior Secondary School pupils. Establish adult literacy programmes particularly aimed at women and junior youth. Expand vocational and technical training to most deprived communities in the region. Local provision of water and toilet facilities in schools. Establish vocational and technical training centres, especially in rural districts, investment in tertiary education.

***Governance:*** Initiate and support anti-corruption initiatives; establish regular planning and programming with District Assemblies; support community-based approaches to poverty reduction; establish independent joint civil society and Government organisation to enforce access to information and information delivery;

support democracy and democratic institutions; support advocacy on behalf of the poor.

***Monitoring and Evaluation*** An active role for civil society organisations is envisaged in monitoring and evaluation of the process, implementation of activities and outcomes of the GPRS. This will comprise a component of the overall monitoring and evaluation framework of the GPRS and will involve two levels as follows:

- Monitoring and evaluation of activities implemented by civil society organisation under the GPRS
- Monitoring the process and outcomes of the GPRS.

GAPVOD the umbrella organisation of civil society organisations should establish a framework to monitor implementation of activities that are solely to be undertaken by their members. Monitoring and evaluation information under this framework should be fed by the umbrella organisation to the overall GPRS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.

The recommendation and action plan will focus on the issues raised in the findings of the study as follows:

*Building trust between the local and foreign NGOs.* These issues account for most of the poor working relationship between the partners in development. Rick James (2001) argues that the first step to redressing power imbalances is to acknowledge their existence. Recognising and understanding different agendas is important in order to be able to manage those differences effectively. The relationship between local and foreign NGOs is initiated at home and international level. GAPVOD also serves as go-between its members: FNGOs either approach GAPVOD for recommendation of possible partners, or GAPVOD disseminates information about focus and activities and opens the door for inter-contact. With this information, members; foreign and local can initiate their own meeting, resulting in direct LNGO to FNGO contact and direct FNGO to LNGO contact.

*Building and retaining capacities* – the responsibility for the poor record in building and retaining capacities should be accepted by all. This condition accounts partly for weak institutions in the region. Inadequate skilled human resources undermine the goal of achieving the MDGs, while reinforcing dependency on foreign assistance. Achieving this will put LNGOs/CBOs in SSA on the way to taking the driving seat in the formulation, design and implementation of poverty reduction and sustainable local development. There is a growing consensus that good policies, although critical to growth and poverty reduction, stand little chance of becoming effective and

sustainable in an environment characterised by weak institutional and human capacity.

For this to happen, and for capacities to flourish, there need to be an enabling environment and framework characterised by political stability, sound economic policy, and good governance. Responsibility for this rests on the shoulders of government. Additionally, while the political will and commitment of government is essential, FNGOs (and) donors need to rethink their policies and approach to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the region. The best environment can be hardly effective if there is no transparency. All NGOs must be accountable.

### 8.5.1 Mainstreaming Capacity Development

The terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development', ‘capacity building’ or ‘capacity growth’ are used in many different ways in different settings. FNGOs and LNGOs need to reach an understanding of capacity in their work and context of their own organisations. The definitions noted above do indeed suggest that capacity-building might be so all encompassing a term as to be “useless” from an analytical and practical point of view. Helping civil society organisations such as LNGOs (community-based organisations) perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve sustainable development objectives” covers virtually everything that a development agency might wish to do. “Capacity-building” might therefore appear to be indistinguishable from a common understanding of “development”; from the point of view of people who argue that the term at face value adds nothing to the approach to development problems. However, the fact that the term is now in wide use suggests there is more to it than meets the eye. Its rise to a central place in the vocabulary of development assistance has opened the door to re-examining how FNGOs and other aid organisations ought to operate. Asking what it takes for an FNGO to be better at “capacity-building” is tantamount to asking what it takes to be an effective partner in the fight against poverty in developing countries.

Even when efforts to develop capacity have been successful in a narrow sense (as in developing the capacity within a project to carry out its work and achieve the desired results), often that capacity is neither sustained nor translated into meaningful capacity in existing organizations. This is partly because capacity development often is not “mainstreamed”, but is kept parallel and apart. The issue of mainstreaming has two different components: the first relates to organizations such as government ministries directly involved in TC project and programmes, while the second covers the country’s learning institutions and civil society organisations (NGOs), whose purpose is to build human capital and provide knowledge services. Mainstreaming

capacity development should be adopted in educational and research institutions as well as in civil society organisations.

***Influencing International Organisations***

The Government in its Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) sets out a vision for achieving substantial and rapid poverty reduction, with accelerated pro-poor growth seen as playing a key role in achieving this. This suggests a strong political commitment to accelerating growth and poverty reduction, and is a strategy which is achieving significant support from development partners. For instance, the same objectives are the clear focus of the recent World Bank Country Economic Memorandum (World Bank, 2004). Governments should encourage FNGOs and other international organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank to develop capacity building components into all development programmes in the country.

### 8.5.2 Investing in people for synergy effect

To say that investing in people makes economic sense is to state the obvious. But the extent to which the implications of this statement are fully understood in the Ghana's development history remains to be seen. It is definitely not too late to make policies to reinforce it even in these days of constantly shifting development theories and paradigms. Labour or 'human capital' has long been recognised as a key factor of economic growth. As opposed to sustainable human development, which places human beings at the centre of economic activities (the recipient of the fruits of economic progress), 'human capital' places them at the beginning of the process. The difference of approach is thus evident even though the objective is the same.

Investing in people is a concept which simultaneously combines 'human welfare' with the 'human capital' approach at the beginning of the economic development process. It encompasses nutrition, health and education, and should, under the right investment climate or conditions, enable any investor, whether State or individual, to reap an adequate return. FNGOs also need to strengthen their own capacity to respond to local needs. Trained and well-equipped LNGOs will be in a good position to provide guidance for FNGO staff to better understand and address local development issues and activities, and thereby enhance output.

These local NGOs once trained and equipped make a perfect case for a synergy effect. Learning from successes and understanding the sources of failure, this study argues that poverty reduction can be improved by putting local actors at the centre of poverty reduction. The 'how?' is discussed for Ghana and for other countries in the sub region as well. By enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking, and by strengthening the incentives for

providers to serve the poor. Freedom from illness and freedom from illiteracy are two of the most important ways poor people can escape from poverty. To achieve these goals, economic growth and financial resources are of course necessary, but they are not enough. A practical framework for making the services that contribute to human development work for poor people is needed (figure 8.2. and 8.3). With this framework, citizens, governments, and donors can take action and accelerate progress toward the common objective of poverty reduction, as specified in the Millennium Development Goals.

***Tri-sector partnership***

The notion of a developing civil society cannot be introduced in isolation to the development of the State and the Market but rather they are inextricably linked. The power relations that exist between the state, market and civil society are fluid and dynamic. There is a spectrum through which civil society engages with the state, from an oppositional role through to a complementing the state role and even supplementing the state by filling gaps the state is no longer able to provide for through service delivery.

Tri-sector partnering is a new approach that aims to demonstrate how the private sector, civil society and government can work together. The key element in the partnership approach is that all partners act upon their different strengths – complementary resources, knowledge and skills – to jointly address the complexities surrounding social, environmental and economic development. For example, a private sector company could provide financing, project management and engineering skills, or local infrastructure such as roads and water supply. Local or central government could provide strategic co-ordination or source funding of public services. NGOs and community action groups could provide leadership to mobilise local community participation in the form of land and labour.

### 8.5.3 National Commission for NGOs

The issues of NGOs cannot be handled at the district or regional level, or in a bottom-up manner. As a result the first concrete suggestion in the area of an institutional framework is the establishment of a National Commission for Non-Governmental Organisations (NCNGO) to act as an independent and autonomous body responsible for the implementation of the national policy on strategic partnership with NGOs. The financial and political autonomy of such a Commission shall be respected and protected by all stakeholders. Membership shall be representative of all major stakeholders -Government, NGOs, development partners, private corporate firms, and beneficiary communities.

*Proposed functions of the NCNGO:*

The NCNGO couldl perform the following functions:

- Advise the Government on NGO matters and submit to the Minister proposals for policy/making and appropriate legislation on NGOs
- Promote effective working relationships in support of activities of NGOs in the non-profit sector.
- Ensures that NGOs operating at national, regional and district levels comply fully with the National NGO Policy
- Forward to the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE) recommendations on applications by NGOs for tax-related exemptions
- Ensure compliance with equal opportunities and other employment policies of government by NGOs
- Ensure that non-profit organisations fulfill their accountability obligations with respect to the law. For example, reporting periodically on activities and finances.
- Support the MMDE in monitoring the implementation of the national NGO policy ensuring that NGOs operating at national, regional and district levels comply fully with the policy through quarterly and/or bi-annual meetings with stakeholders including officials of Government and NGOs and representatives of communities and Development Partners institutions. The reviews will also aim at assessing the impact of national policy on the effectiveness of operations of NGOs.
- Promote the development of a code of conduct for NGOs by the NGOs themselves to strengthen self-regulation
- Ensure that non-profit organizations fulfill their accountability obligations with respect to the law. For example reporting periodically on activities and finances.
- Support the strengthening through advocacy and other methods

Holding “Capacity Needs Assessment” of LNGOs and District Assemblies in the Northern Region. Such an interactive session could be employed to enhance transparency, through debriefing meetings, focused Group Discussions with relevant Units, physical inspection of existing Logistics and action planning for the year(s) ahead. The NCNGO could be funded through statutory budget grants, registration and related fees paid by NGOs, grants from Development Partners and donations by other stakeholders.

### 8.5.4 Raising Public Awareness

FNGO (programmes in the region) are to make a concerted effort to develop the capacities of individuals to facilitate sustainable development. Key objectives of this activity should include:

- Promoting awareness, understanding and positive attitudes about sustainable development concepts among opinion makers (especially journalists and politicians), technical specialists (especially planners, environmentalists and economists) and the general public.
- Strengthening the capacity of individuals and communities to cope with the challenges of economic transition without adopting non-sustainable life styles.

Governments with NGOs can help raise public awareness about the value of NGOs and the opportunities to volunteer by, for example:

- Carrying out or funding basic research on the level of volunteering and its contribution to society in social and economic terms
- Working with the broadcast and print media to promote a positive image of volunteering and the opportunities for involvement
- Harnessing the power of information technology to signpost people to available volunteering opportunities
- Recognising the contribution of volunteers through an awards system applicable to the society concerned
- Organising high profile events or 'days' to publicise the work of volunteers.

Some foreign development agencies distinguish between systemic, social, institutional and individual capacities; support for an integrated, long-term, decentralised and participatory planning will strengthened these capacities in the region, country other developing countries. Efforts should also be made to develop capacities in society in general, outside of specific planning processes and institutions through, training, networking and knowledge-sharing among practitioners and decision-makers. Support of awareness-raising and sustainable development education should be combined with other demonstrations of sustainable development approaches to economic, environmental and social problems.

### 8.5.5 Volunteerism

Participation is a popular approach to project implementation, policy-making and governance in both developing and developed countries. Recently, however, it has become fashionable to dismiss participation as more rhetoric than substance and subject to manipulation by those intent on pursuing their own agendas under cover of community consent. But volunteering is a significant indicator that a population is engaging in activities and processes that contribute to the fight against poverty, through the creation and sustaining of common or public goods. An understanding of the comparative advantages of volunteering in capacity development can point us towards some possible new solutions to old problems.

The capacities of whole societies can be enhanced through a strong volunteer ethic. Voluntary action contributes to pluralism of organisational forms and the bolstering of

networks of people and communities. It helps ensure, moreover, that the space between the state and the individual is not left as a vacuum.

Enlarging development dialogue and planning to the volunteer community will undoubtedly foster ownership of capacity building programmes, as it broadens the constituency of reference for such programmes. In addition, the resulting diversity of partners should generate a more dynamic interface and interaction, thereby increasing capacity among the stakeholders to organise, manage and co-ordinate relationships and processes. It is known that development initiatives and results mushroom where there is space for and facility of lively and constructive interactions among different socio-economic groups.

An overall, integrated strategy for promoting CSO/volunteering, in partnership with other key stakeholders from the voluntary and business sectors should be developed. The elements of such a strategy might include:

- Establishing a dedicated Unit within government for coordinating policies on volunteering and liasing with the voluntary sector and private sector as applicable
- Establishing a Budget-Line within government for funding volunteering initiatives
- Promoting the increased involvement of volunteers within the public sector
- Funding an effective infrastructure within the voluntary sector at national and local level to facilitate the involvement of volunteers.

Governments and FNGOs should support and encourage the private sector to support volunteering by:

- Developing public/private partnerships which promote the involvement of CSOs
- Offering tax and other incentives for companies to support their staff in volunteering schemes

### 8.5.6 Fostering Ownership

Finally, ownership! “Ownership” is another notion that has appeared in recent years as a *sine qua non* for the starting point of development operations rather than at the end. It is a higher level to participation, and should be seem as the ultimate goal of participation. Ownership of the development process is both a means and an end in itself, articulated in an interactive manner through effective participation of all stakeholders, and sustained by genuine partnerships. Through the direct involvement of local and other volunteers with poor people, communities and organisations, problems of hosts failing to own the capacity development processes can be avoided. To achieve lasting economic growth and a substantial reduction in poverty, developing country ownership needs to be successively strengthened.

FNGOs could do a great deal to encourage LNGOs and their societies to look to their own volunteer sources and to mobilise them for public means. There is, however, a need to ensure a more active follow-up of the projects and commitments made during the FNGOs existence and work in the region to ensure an enabling environment that allows volunteerism to grow and maximise its contribution to regional development.

It is amazing how many aid programmes or financial loans are being implemented in such a way that the recipients are supposed to “own” timetables and reform processes that have in fact been designed far away from their reality. Common sense dictates that sustainability will not be achieved unless the truly committed involvement of local players is ensured in the transformations aimed at by the development programmes. Common sense, however, is not automatically guaranteed in this field. Too often, short-sighted economic or political interests prevail and distort the long-term goals of technical cooperation.

There is an even more fundamental conclusion stemming from the idea of capacity development: the main objective of technical cooperation should be to contribute to the utilisation and expansion of local capacities. This means, for instance, FNGO supporting the capacity of national trade ministries to formulate and implement home-grown trade policies. This is a success to the credit of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. This also means ensuring that national research capacity is developed in order to match the scope of the trade agenda that the country requires; that the government officials in charge of decisions affecting the trade and investment regime are fully aware of the features of the country’s production and export goals; and that the various institutions needed to manage the complexities of economic liberalization are in place – from customs to environmental authorities, from negotiators to financial intermediaries, from private sector groupings to technology transfer mechanisms. In other words, this means giving a predominant role to local expertise and local institutions, while also providing them with the tools they need to be effective in their functions. National ownership respected by FNGOs implies a fully participatory process of engagement with citizens, civil society, academia, trade unions, the private sector, etc., in addition to different government agencies.

## 8.6 Policies and implementation design: risks and challenges

The challenge and task of poverty reduction in the region is huge. The identification of real needs (which all the FNGOs claimed to have done in the region), but more so within all the local partners is a critical step. This can however yield pitfalls. There is a tendency for those who intervene (FNGOs) to impose what they want to do over the real needs expressed by the beneficiaries. Another pitfall could be that a list of needs is prepared without hierarchy, but does not involve the beneficiaries. A list of needs

should include an institutional and legislative framework that is both flexible and operational, support at the local levels from government and national bodies like GAPVOD in their organisational capacity, institutional networking at national level, affiliation with international, regional and sub-regional networks, training of managements, the creation of capacity focused modules in the educational system (universities, training institutes and centres, raising the awareness of all local actors / partners in development on the issue of self-reliance of the individual, family, community, district, region, and organisations.

Civic engagement and sound participatory processes are key elements in the design, implementation and monitoring of social, economic, and environmental policies and practices. Urgent short-term poverty concerns and longer-term sustainability issues require carefully integrated responses. Enacting these recommendations require policies. For example, FNGOs should be to put objectives in writing, and be accountable to local and national authorities. Areas for action to reduce poverty and enhance sustainable development to include figure 8.2. Development practice should think global act local: building capacity within the local NGOs to design and implement effective poverty reduction projects. This calls for local anchorage in global action through LNGOs. FNGOs should adopt a new professionalism: “Hands-off” approach in place of the “Hand-out” approach. In providing technical assistance to LNGOs, FNGOs should train and empower LNGO staff with knowledge, tools and resources needed to mobilise other interest groups in the region (figure 8.2). Expanding existing management training programmes to include local staff and private businesses. Modifying existing FNGO-financed projects (or developing new ones) to build capacity for self-reliance of interest groups.

Effective implementation of the above recommendations would require some changes in FNGOs operations as well as existing national and local frameworks, which will in turn have implications for NGO – government relations, the international development system (figures 4.4 and 4.5), FNGO –donor relations, FNGO – community relations, FNGO – LNGO relations, LNGO – Local Government relations, LNGO – local community relations, the educational and health systems. To implement the recommendations some existing policies might be inconsistent with the hitherto untested strategies.

FNGOs should aim to build the capacity of poor countries for the design and implementation of effective poverty reduction strategies. This means the poverty reduction strategy is be implemented by developing **active partnerships**, supporting networking and the exchange of ideas, and by actively engaging in programmes and projects which encourage the development, retention and extension of existing capacity. FNGOs with government support should use the process to support initiatives which promote both capacity development and projects which increase

incomes and which link local communities to the national economy. Consideration should be given to setting up mechanisms, such as a "Partnership Forum" to encourage regular dialogue and exchanges between the FNGOs programme and their institutional partners on respective experiences on capacity development and on emerging issues.

Policies to build capacities for poverty reduction should be built on principles which address capacity development needs of communities, tying them to national economic, social and environmental policy and processes. To achieve this, policies should promote local and national partnerships among public and private sectors and the major groups within civil society, giving each new opportunities to bring to bear their respective strengths and resources, and learn from one another. Government policy should augment NGO community and vis-à-vis, to develop the capacity of civil society, including youth, to participate, as appropriate, in designing, implementing and reviewing sustainable development policies and strategies at all levels - existing capacities need to be developed, not replaced.

- Local and national actors need to achieve ownership, defining their own needs and implementing their own solutions.
- Work should be carried on through partnerships and strategic alliances, emphasizing the key role of networking in knowledge acquisition.
- Capacity development must include the establishment of the necessary enabling environments at all levels.
- Support for capacity development at the individual, institution, levels, emphasising gender equality.

***Institution building***

A coherent institutional framework should be created to enhance the operations of NGOs at the district and national levels and improve the monitoring and co-ordination of their participation of NGOs in national development. The institutions would comprise a National Commission for Non-Governmental Organisations (NCNGO)

Institution-building encompasses more than just organisational or technical/sectoral development, and relates closely to the development of social capital within a given society. One can argue that volunteering contributes to the fulfilment of wider societal goals beyond the achievement of narrow aims and provision of specific services, and engenders greater commitment and public awareness.

In making a case for local NGOs, it is recommended (to FNGOs) that the NGOs (LNGOs) in developing countries are more than just conduits for funds or aid. A common notion that their long-term survivability is tied to their ability to harness long-term foreign financial support is not only false, it can in fact undermine the very being of the local NGO. The fundamental recommendation of this study makes a case for local NGOs to be seen as institutions and respected as such. Regarding them as

such will ensure a quality of performance and their ability to relate to other permanent structures such as government and the private sector.

## 8.7 Transferability of the Ghana experience

The major findings of the study in the foregoing chapters encompass the situation in the northern region. Whether this is a story to sell or whether this can be held as the big picture for other countries in the region accentuating the problematic features of the role of foreign NGOs will depend on the local context. This raises the issue of the replicability and transferability: is the Ghana experience a model for other countries in the region? A comparative study of countries in the SSA or West African region could have most certainly featured one or all of the three cases or the country of origin of the cases in this study. Generalisability and transferability and important elements of any research methodology, but they are not mutually exclusive: generalisability, to varying degrees, rests on the transferability of research findings. Transferability describes the process of applying the results of research in one situation to other similar situations. Results of any type of research method can be applied to other situations, but transferability is most relevant to qualitative research methods such as ethnography and case studies. Transferability is easy to understand when you consider that we are constantly applying this concept to aspects of our daily lives.

The concept of transfer requires a few ramifications. To begin with, there are potential limitations of transferability in research worth mentioning. Although transferability seems to be an obvious, natural, and important method for applying research results and conclusions, it is not perceived as a valid research approach in some academic circles. Perhaps partly in response to critics in many modern research articles, researchers refer to their results as generalisable or externally valid.

Each country has institutions whose purpose is to build human capital and to engage in research and the creation and analysis of knowledge. These institutions - universities primarily, but also research institutes and NGOs involved in research and training - have a central role to play in capacity development in their own countries. They are critical in the long-term development of the essential human capital, and represent the sustained capacity to continue building, regenerating and updating that human capital.

The recommendations can operate in all developing and transition countries. The approach should be universal but flexible, allowing for different emphases in response to varying sustainable development priorities among different communities, countries and regions. However there will be different approaches and levels of

funding for District Assemblies, LNGOs and communities at different socio-economic levels.

It is important for countries to develop clear strategic frameworks, as well as the capacity to formulate and implement them. This implies strategic planning capacity in the country. When all is said and done however, development practice should think global act local: building capacity within the local NGOs to design and implement effective poverty reduction projects. This calls for local anchorage in global action through LNGOs. FNGOs should adopt a new professionalism: “Hands-off” approach in place of the “Hand-out” approach.

Difficult problems remain. For example, in war-ravaged countries (Sierra Leone, Rwanda, DR Congo, Liberia and Burundi), pressing reconstruction needs may mean large new loans at the same time that old debt is being reduced. Difficult problems also remain in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) that have not yet been able to reach their decision points. Some of these countries are plagued by uneven policy records or poor governance, which in turn may be caused by the serious problems that their governments confront, including civil conflict. Some HIPCs have debts too large to write off given current funding for the Initiative. For these countries, the IMF and World Bank are looking for solutions, with poverty reduction as the central focus.

## 8.8 Some thoughts for the future agenda of FNGOs and areas for further research

A study of this nature can hardly address all the issues and problems of capacity building, and this is definitely not the last word. The subject is open to more research. The role of partnerships in development has become a major concern among development players in the last decade, as a prerequisite and framework for capacity development. Success in the development business will depend largely on how well partnerships are managed and coordinated. Most partnerships are perfect on paper but reflect very little in working relationship on the ground. Failures and itches in partnerships have often resulted in loss of valuable resources.

Cultural identities and values need to be recognized, respected and productively incorporated. Insufficient attention has been paid to the effect different cultural environments may have on capacity development. The overall impact of development cooperation will be greatly improved if the experiences of local and international volunteers were more effectively absorbed and fed into the development of new or amended capacity development approaches.

It has to be noted that the study while advocating the building of local capacities for poverty reduction and the MDGs, falls short of proving whether better capacity necessarily lead to better performance of LNGOs. It is too early to make any conclusions, but the assumption definitely makes an area for investigation in the future. The sustainability of funds for FNGO intervention in SSA is merely speculative and needs to be investigated. And if FNGOs are reluctant to hand over to LNGOs, then more and more funds will be needed in the future. It has to be noted that the best way out might not always be the best way forward, nor is the best way forward today, the best way forward tomorrow. The challenge is huge and requires an on-going (re)search for the new initiatives, strategies and concepts.

## 8.9 Conclusion

Poverty reduction is a huge challenge and hardly any amount of foreign aid in a rapidly changing world with countless other problems will be sufficient. There are numerous other ways to address the problem, and it boils down to the best practices. Where do foreign NGOs fit into the picture? What is needed is not more of the same old kind of development, but a radical shift in values by both North and Southern (local) NGOs and a change in how things are done. It is this type of overall change of direction that can catalyse the emergence of a new strategy for sustainable poverty reduction and development. FNGOs should go beyond the charitable impulse in developing countries to empowerment through capacity development of their southern counterparts. The measure of success should be how soon a FNGO moves from one region or area (sector, instead of project) of activity to another – leaving it to the local partner, and not how long they stay in the region. The ultimate aim should not be to do things for the local communities, but to help local communities and organisations do things for themselves. The local or southern counterparts of the foreign NGOs play a crucial role in poverty reduction.

Northern development NGOs are in transition; shifting gradually from relief to development. After decades of heralding self-help development, there are a lot of local NGOs but little evidence of FNGOs preparing to the LNGOs for self-help development. Focusing poverty reduction interventions on building the capacity of local NGOs offers a good exit strategy for FNGOs, ensures sustainability of past efforts, and cuts down on the scarce much needed funds for poverty reduction and the MDGs. Directing the transition in international development cooperation to the building and employment of local capacities organisations will have enormous benefits for the future, such as checking out-migration and will lead to the retention of local manpower, self-reliance and reduced poverty.

The study focused on capacity building, but takes due cognisance of other concepts and strategies. Building capacity for poverty reduction is an ongoing process of transformation requiring lot of inputs to arrive at the desired output and outcome. As noted in the study FNGOs need to join forces with each other and complement each other, above all with local organisations, because no one FNGO can meet all the capacity needs for a sustainable poverty reduction building and development.

The concepts and constructs employed in this study are not based on universally agreed upon and accepted terms, measurements and standards. The concept of capacity building for poverty reduction is still evolving and is the subject of continued debate; even though common threads which underlie the contending conceptions could be identified. There is also much contention over what constitutes an appropriate development strategy to reduce poverty. While others advocate an isolation of government from the entire process of community development because of fears that they might dominate or introduce corrupt and sometimes over bureaucratic practices that might wreck the entire development process, the author feels that they still have a role to play if development has to be meaningful, comprehensive and sustainable. Secondly, going by such opinion would only bias the outcome of the result of the study; because there may be FNGOs who even do business with the State. Stringent measures, controls and checks and balances must be put in place to ensure that such shortcomings are reduced to the barest minimum. It is the author’s conviction that the roles of the local actors, who have been identified as Local NGOs, the private and public sectors must be clearly defined and there must be effective co-ordination at all levels between and among them. This will ensure that the local actors are uplifted from the role of being passive recipients of development aid to active partners with shared responsibility in the reduction of poverty and the development of their people. The search for a consensus still continues. Such a study requires a methodology that is very flexible and that could be manipulated to fit reality - hence the case study method.

## References

Anderson, Mary & Woodrow, P.J. (1998): Rising from the Ashes: Development strategies in times of danger. IT Publications. London

Anheier, Helmut and Co. (eds.) (1998): Der Dritte Sektor in Deutschland Edition Sigma, Berlin

Axinn, G and Axinn N (1997): Collaboration in International Development Sage Publications, London

Bacho, Francis Zunuo Lankuu (2001): Infrastructure delivery under poverty. SPRING Research Series, Dortmund

Bandyopadhaya, J. (1988): The Poverty of the Nations. Allied Publishers, New Delhi

Bebbington, Anthony and Riddell, Roger (1995): Donors, Civil Society and Southern NGOs: New Agendas, Old Problems. ODI, London,

Bebbington, A. and Mitlin, Diana (1996): NGO Capacity and Effectiveness: A Review of Themes in NGO-Related Research, IIED, London

Berg, Elliot (1993): Rethinking Technical Cooperation. United Nations Publications, New York

Blaxter, L.; Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (1996): How to Research. Redwoods Books, Trowbridge

Boateng, Oti; et al (1990): A poverty Profile of Ghana: Ghana Living Standards Survey (1) Ghana Statistical Service / World Bank. Accra

Braga de Macedo, J. & Kabbaj, Omar (2000): Reform and Growth in Africa. OECD, Paris

Brannen, J. (ed.) (1992): Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research. Vermont, Avebury

Browne, Steven and UNDP (2002): Developing Capacity Through Technical Cooperation: Country Experiences. UNDP, New York

Cernea, M. (ed.) (1988): Putting People First – Sociological Variables in Rural Development. WB-Oxford University Press. New York

Cernea, M. (1988): Non-Governmental Organisations and Local Development Discussion Paper. World Bank. Washington DC

Chambers, Robert. (1997): Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First Intermediate Technology Publications, London

Chambers, Robert. (1993): Challenging the Professions: Frontiers for Rural

Development Intermediate Technology Publications, London

Chambers, Robert. (1986): Rural Development: Putting the Last First. Longman, Essex

CIVICUS (1999): Civil Society at the Millennium. Kumarian Press. West Hartford, Conn.

Clark, John (1995): Democratising Development: The Role of Voluntary Organisations. Earthscan Publications, London

Conyers, D (1984): Local Government in Developing Countries. Joe Heiley, London

Cross, Nigel Cross (2002): Sustainable Development Explained. In Development: Issue 18; DFID, UK

Devarajan, Shantayanan et al (eds.) (2001): Aid and Reform in Africa. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Devarajan, S.; Miller, M. and Swanson, E. (2002): Goals for Development: History, Prospects and Costs. Parasuraman and Vimalanathan,

Diaw, John Kofi (1994): Mobilizing Endogenous Potentials for District Development in Ghana. A study of Dangme West District SPRING Research Series, No. 9, Dortmund

DFID and Ministry of Health, Ghana (2000): Promoting the Participation and Financing of Civil Society. Accra, Ghana

Dixon, Chris (1990): Rural Development in the Third World. Routledge, London

Donkor, Kwabena (1997): Structural Adjustment and Mass Poverty in Ghana Ashgate, Brookfield USA

Dorosh, P. A. and Sahn, D. E. (1993): A General Equilibrium Analysis of the Effect of Macroeconomic Adjustment on Poverty in Africa. Cornell University, Ithaca

Drabek, Anne (ed.) (1987): Development Alternatives: the Challenge for NGOs. World Development vol. 15, Oxford

Eade, Deborah (ed.) (2003): Development Methods and Approaches: Critical Reflections. Oxfam, GB

Eade, Deborah (ed.) (2003): Capacity Building: An Approach to People-Centred Development. Oxfam, GB

Edwards, Michael & Hulme, D. (eds.) (1998): Non-Governmental Organisations – Performance and Accountability. Save the Children / Earthscan, London

Edwards, Michael and Hulme, David (1997): Making a difference: NGOs and Development in a changing world Earthscan, London

Erler, Brigitte (1990): Tödliche Hilfe. Dreisam Verlag, Köln

European Commission (2003): Annual Report 2003. on the Community's Development policy and the implementation of external assistance in 2002. EuropeAid Cooperation Office, Brussels

Esmann, M. J. and Uphoff, N. T. (1988): Local Organisations: Intermediaries in Rural Development. Cornell University Press, London

Fekade, W. (1994): Local Determinants of Development Sustainability: A Study of Rural Development Projects in Tanzania. SPRING R Series No. 7, Dortmund

Fengler, Wolfgang (2000): Politische Reformhemmnisse und Ökonomische Blockierung in Afrika Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft. Baden-Baden

Fowler, Alan (1997): Striking A Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of NGO in International Development. Earthscan Publication Ltd, London

Fowler, Alan (2000): The Virtuous Spiral. Earthscan Publication Ltd, London

Fowler, Alan (1992): Institutional Development & NGOs in Africa: Policy Perspectives for European NGOs. INTRAC Publications, Oxford

Fowler, Alan and James, Rick (1994): The Role of Southern NGOs in Development Co-operation. INTRAC Publications, Oxford

Frey, Bruno S. and Meier, Stefan (2002): Pro-social Behaviour, Reciprocity or Both? CESifo Munich

Friedmann, John (1992): Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development. Blackwell, Oxford UK

Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko et al and UNDP (2002): Capacity for Development: New solutions to old problems. UNDP, New York

GAPVOD / Dogbe, Yao (2002): Strengthening Non- Governmental Organisations in Ghana. Unpublished paper, Accra

GAPVOD/ISODEC (1999): Directory of Non- Governmental Organisations in Ghana. Accra

Gélinas, Mary and Roger, G. (1998): Collaborative Change: Improving Organisational Performance. Jossey-Bass, Pfeiffer. California

Getubig Jr., Ismael P. and Shams, Khalid M. (eds.) (1991): Reaching Out Effectively. APDC, Kuala Lumpur

Ghana, Government of (2003): Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005: An Agenda for Growth and Prosperity Vol.1 Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, Assembly Press

Ghana, Government Statistical Service (2004): Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) 2003. Ghana National Summary, Flyer No. 1. Accra, Ghana

Ghana Statistical Service (2000a): Poverty Trends in Ghana in the 1990s GSS, Accra, Ghana.

Ghana, Republic of (1997): Ghana-Vision 2020: The First Medium-Term Development Plan (1997 – 2000). Accra, Ghana

Ghana, Republic of (1996): Policy Focus for Poverty Reduction. Technical committee Report. NDPC, Accra

Ghana, Republic of (1995): Ghana-Vision 2020 (The First Step: 1996 – 2000): General Information and Planning Guidelines for the preparation of the Medium-Term Development (1996 – 2000) Sectoral and District Plans (Draft). NDPC, Accra

Glewwe, P. and Twum-Baah, K.A. (1991): The Distribution of Welfare in Ghana, 1987 – 88. The World Bank working paper no. 9. New York

Green and Battcock (2001): Development (DFID, 2Q 2001) DFID, UK

Gubbels, Peter and Koss, C. / World Neighbors (2000): From the Roots Up: Strengthening Organisational Capacity through Guided Self-Assessment. World Neighbors, Oklahoma City

Hanmer, L and Naschold F. (2000): Attaining the International Development Targets: "Will Growth be Enough?" Development Policy Review 18: London

Harris, N. (ed.) (1992): Cities in the 90s: the Challenge for Developing Countries. UCL Press, London

Hulme, David & Edwards, Michael (eds.) (1997): NGOs, States and Donors: Too close for Comfort? Save the Children / Macmillan Press. London

Hyden, G. (1998): Reforming Foreign Aid to African Development: The Politically Autonomous Development Fund Model. African Studies Quarterly, Vol. 2, Number 2. London

Ikeanyoinwu, Luke (2001): Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Development in Nigeria. SPRING Research Series 36, Dortmund

InterAction (1997): "The NGO Role in Post Conflict Reconstruction and

Resolution." Monday Developments. Washington, DC

——— (12/1997). "PVO Workshop Examines Tools to Build Effective Partnership with Southern NGOs." Monday Developments. Washington, DC

——— (6/1997): "Concerns of African NGOs as they Interact with US PVOs," InterAction Forum Supplement. Washington, D.C.

———.(1995): "Civil Society and NGOs: Expanding Development Strategies, InterAction's Civil Society Initiative." Report of Workshop #1. Washington, DC

James, Rick (2001): Practical Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity Building: Experiences from Africa. INTRAC Publications, Oxford

James, Rick (ed.) (2001): Power and Partnership: Experiences of NGO Capacity Building. INTRAC Publications, Oxford

James, Rick. (1994): Strengthening the Capacity of Southern NGO Partners. Occasional Papers Series, Number 5. INTRAC Oxford

Jenssen, Bernd (ed.) (1998): Planning as a Dialogue: District Development Planning and Management in Developing Countries. SPRING Research Series 2, Dortmund

Kamara, Siapha and Roche, Chris (1996): A Participatory Impact Assessment and Advocacy Project for Poverty Alleviation in Northern Ghana. ISODEC and Oxfam Paper, Accra

Kankwenda, Mbaya & co. (eds.) (2000): Poverty Eradication: Where stands Africa? Economica, London

Kokor, Jonas (2001): Local Governance of Development in Ghana SPRING Research Series 30, Dortmund

Kokor, Jonas (ed.) (1999): Supporting Democracy Development: the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Ghana's Decentralisation and Development Process. Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Accra, Ghana

Konrad Adenaur Foundation (1998): District Assemblies and NGOs as Partners in Development. Gold Type Ltd, Accra

Korten, David (1987): Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centred Development. World Development, 15, Pergamon Press, Oxford.

Korten, David (1992): Getting into the 21st Century Kumarian Press, West Hartford, Conn.

Kothari, Rajni (1995): Poverty. Zed Books, London

Kothari, Rajni (1984): Communication for Alternative Development: Towards a Paradigm. Development Dialogue, Uppsala

Kunfaa, E. Y. (1996): Sustainable Rural Health Services Through Community-Based Organisations: Women's groups in Ghana. SPRING Research Series No. 16, Dortmund, 1996.

Lecomte, Bernard J. (1986): Project Aid: Limitations and Alternatives OECD, Paris

Lewis, David (ed.) (1999): International perspectives on Voluntary Action Shaping the Third Sector. Earthscan Publications Ltd, London

Lewis, John p. (ed) (1989): Strengthening the Poor: What have We Learned? New Brunswick: Transaction Books.

Lopes, Carlos and Theisohn, Thomas (2003): Ownership, Leadership and Transformation. UNDP / Earthscan London

Lusthaus & co. (1999): Enhancing Organisational Performance: A toolbox for self-assessment. International Development Research Centre. Ottawa

Mensah-Abrampah, K.E. (1999): Ghana's Decentralisation Programme: Structure, Achievements and Challenges, in Supporting Democracy and Development. Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Accra, Ghana

Moikowa, Robert (1996): An Assessment of Educational Infrastructural Needs. A Case study of Junior Sec. Schools in Keta District, Ghana. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation. Kumasi, Ghana.

Moikowa, Robert (1996): Management of Basic Education By Local Governments in the Context of Decentralisation in Ghana Unpublished Paper. Kumasi, Ghana.

Morgan, Peter and Baser, Heather (1993): Making Technical Cooperation more Effective: New Approaches to International Development. CIDA. Canada

Narayan, Deepa (et al) (2000): Can Anyone hear us?: Voices of the Poor IBRD / The World Bank, Washington D.C.

Narayan, Deepa (2000): Empowerment and Poverty Reduction. A Source-book. World Bank, Washington DC

Neefjes, Koos and David, Ros. (1996): A Participatory View of the Ikafe Refugee Programme. Oxfam. Oxford

Oakley, Peter (1991): Projects with People: The practice of participation in Rural development. International Labour Organisation, Geneva

OECD (1988): Voluntary Aid for Development: The role of Non-Governmental Organisation. OECD, Paris

OECD (1990): Partnerships for Rural Development OECD, Paris

Ofori, Sam C. (2002): Regional Policy and Planning in Ghana. Ashgate, Hampshire

Ostrom, Elinor (1990): Governing the Commons. Cambridge University Press Cambridge

Øyen, Else (2002): Best Practices in Poverty Reduction: An Analytical Framework. Zed Books, London

Pearce, David et al (1990): Sustainable Development Economics and Environment in the Third World, London Environmental Economics Centre, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Pierre, Jon and Peters, Guy B. (2000): Governance, Politics and the State. Macmillan Press Ltd. London

Prebisch, P. (1963): Towards a Dynamic Development Policy for Latin America. New York.

Raandriamoro, Z.O. (2001): The NEPAD, Gender and the Poverty Trap: The NEPAD and the Challenges of Financing for Development in Africa and a Gander Perspective. Conference paper

Rapley, J. (1997): Understanding Development: Theory and Practice in the Third World. Lynne Rienner Publishers, UK

Riddel, Roger C. and Robinson, Mark (1995): Non-Governmental Organisations and Rural Poverty Alleviation Claredon Press, Oxford UK

Roe, Alan; Schneider, H. and Pyatt, F.G. (1992): Adjustment and Equity in Ghana. Development Centre Studies. Paris

Rondinelli, Denis A., (1983): Development Projects as Policy Experiment Routledge, London

Rowe, Mark (2002): Plants or People? In Development: Issue 18; DFID, UK

Salamon, Lester and Anheier, Helmut (1997): Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-National Analysis. Manchester University Press. Manchester

Sarris, A. & Shams, H. (1991): Ghana under Structural Adjustment: the impact on agriculture and the poor. IFAD Studies on Rural Poverty no. 2. New York University Press. New York

Scheidtweiler, Thomas (ed.) (2000): Human and Economic Development: The importance of Civil society and Subsidiarity. KAAD, Bonn

Sembola, Joseph & Therkildsen, Ole (eds.) (1995): Service Provision Under Stress in East Africa Center for Development Research, Copenhagen

Sen, Amartya (1999): Development as Freedom Oxford University Press, Oxford

Senillosa, Ignacio de (1999): in Development and Social Action. Introduced by Miloon Kothari. Oxfam, GB

Shepherd, Andrew (1998): Sustainable Rural Development Macmillan Press Ltd. London

Siegmann, Heinrich (2003): Capacity Development: Kapazitäten für Nachhaltige Entwichlung. In E+Z, June 2002, p. 256-257. Berlin

Silvermann, D. (1993): Interpreting Qualitative Data Sage Publications Ltd. London

Smilie, Ian and co. (1995): Stakeholders in Development: NGOs. OECD, Paris

Stohr, W.B. and Taylor, D.R.F. (1981): Development From Above and Below? The Dialectics of Planning in Developing Countries. John Wiley, Chichester

Streeten, Paul (1981): First Things First: Meeting the Basic Needs of Basic Human Needs in Developing Countries. Washington DC

Stringer, E.T. (1996): Action Research: A handbook for practitioners Sage Publications Inc., London

Tandon, Rajesh (1991): Participatory Development as a Dimension of Africa's Development and Transformation Efforts. Journal of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education. Nairobi, Kenya

Therkildsen, O (1989): Watering White Elephants? Experiences from Donor-Funded Rural Water Supply Programmes in Tanzania. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies. Uppsala

Todaro, Michael (1997): Economic Development Longman, New York

Townsend, Alan (1993): Uneven Regional Change in Britain. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Turabian, Kate L. (1996): A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. (6th ed.) University of Chicago Press, London

United Nations Development Programme (1998): UNDP Today – Fighting Poverty. New York

United Nations Development Programme (1997): Human Development Report 1997. New York

UNDP (2001): Reforming Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development:

Ready for Change? Report of First Round-Table Meeting July 16-17 2001, Palais des Nations, Switzerland

UNDP (2002): Capacity for Development: New solutions to old problems. New York

UNDP (1993): Rethinking Technical Cooperation: Reforms for Capacity Building in Africa. By Elliot Berg. UNDP New York

Uphoff, N (1995): 'Why NGOs are not a third Sector' in Edwards, M and Hulme, D. (eds) Earthscan Publications. London

Uphoff, N (1992): Local Institutions and Participation for Sustainable Development. International Institute for Environment and Development, London

USA (1995): Ghana: A Country study Federal Research Division Area Handbook series, Washington

Walk, Heike and Brunnengräber, Achim (2000): Die Globalisierungswächter Westfälisches Dampfboot Verlag, Münster

Wolfe, Marshall (1996): Elusive Development ZED Books LTD, London

Woods, Adele (2000): Facts about European NGOs Active in International Development. OECD Development, Centre Paris

World Bank (2000): Can Africa claim the 21st Century The World Bank, Washington D.C.

World Bank (1997): PACT Progress Report The World Bank, Washington D.C.

World Bank and Malena, Carmen (1995). Working with NGOs. World Bank, Washington DC

World Bank (1994): Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead. WB Research Report, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

World Bank (1993): Ghana 2000 and Beyond: Setting the Stage for Accelerated Growth and Poverty Reduction, Washington D.C.

World Bank (1995): Ghana: Poverty Past, Present and Future. Report No. 14504-GH, World Bank, Washington D.C.

World Bank (2003): World Development Report. Washington D.C.

World Bank (2004): Ghana: Public Policy, Growth and Poverty. A Country Economic Memorandum, Report No. 27656-GH, Washington D.C.

World Bank (1998): An Assessment Tool: Indicators of Effective Civil Society Capacity. Capacity Building Techn. Group. Africa Region. Washington, D.C.

Yeboah, Yao (2003): Partnership in Health Service Planning and Provision: Prospects and Challenges in Ghana. SPRING Research Series 43, Dortmund

Yin, R.K. (1993): Applications of Case Study research. Applied Social Research Methods Series Vol. 34. SAGE Publications. London

Yin, R.K. (1984): Case Study Research: Applied Social Research Method Series, Vol. 34. Sage Publications. Newbury Park, London

**Newspapers**

The Daily Graphic. Ghana

The Public Agenda. Ghana

The Accra Mail. Ghana

The Ghanaian Times. Ghana

The Chronicle Newspaper, Ghana (2002)

The Ghana News Agency (GNA) (2002) Ghana

**Magazines**

Development and Cooperation (D+C)

The Ghana Review International (GRI) (2002)

Centre for Global Development / Foreign Policy (2003)

The Courier (Sept – Oct 1993) Robert Rowe in no. 141

The Courier (1990 and 2000) EU-ACP, Belgium

Development (2001) DFID, UK

Ontrac (The International NGO Training and research Centre) Newsletter

**Online References**

http://www.developmentgoals.org/Poverty.htm

Attacking Poverty Program http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/attackingpoverty/

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries HTTP://WWW.IMF.ORG/EXTERNAL/NP/HIPC

HTTP://WWW.UNDP.ORG/POVERTYCENTRE

www.ghanaweb.com

BBC Online (British Broadcasting Corporation, UK)

UK: Department for International Development (DFID): http://www.dfid.gov.uk/

Germany: Economic Cooperation and Development: http://www.bmz.de/de/

United States of America International Development http://www.usaid.gov/

Catholic Relief Services: http://www.crs.org/

ActionAid: http://www.actionaid.org.uk/

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation: http://www.kas.de/

The Republic of Ghana: http://www.ghana.gov.gh/

www.capacity.org/2 (2003)

APPENDIX A: Summary matrix of the cost of all GPRS policy actions and programmes

| | In Millions of USD | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | Total | % OF TOTAL | REMARKS |
| THEMATIC AREAS/Total Cost | 1,365 | 1,872 | 2,046 | 5,283 | 100 | |
| A. Macro Economic Stability | 110 | 150 | 156 | 416 | 8 | |
| B. Production And Gainful Employment | 434 | 491 | 503 | 1,428 | 27 | |
| C. Human Development & Provision of Basic Services | 680 | 1,094 | 1,269 | 3,043 | 58 | |
| D. Special Programmes For The Vulnerable And Excluded | 66 | 61 | 40 | 168 | 3 | |
| E. Governance | 75 | 75 | 77 | 228 | 4 | |

*Source: GPRS 2003*

Appendix B: The Roles of Stakeholders

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **Parliament and Cabinet** | Inputs by Sub-committees; Debates and endorsement | Approval of provisions; formulating, debating and passing relevant bills; provide oversight function over implementation. | Approval of financial provisions<br>Approve new size for DACF; approve guidelines and formula. | Requirements for reporting on progress; |
| **Ministry Of Economic Planning and Regional Cooperation**<br>**National Development Planning Commission** | Initiate of the GPRS process; form of core teams to address thematic areas; hold consultations with communities and civil society; validate GPRS proposals at national economic dialogue; hold consultations with other stakeholders listed on GPRS | Establish linkage of GPRS with MTEF and annual budget; Hold regional and district workshops to ensure ownership and implementation of strategies;<br>Provide guidelines to MMDA, NGOs, private sector on their expected roles in implementing GPRS. | Table justification for increase in DACF allocation to 7.5%;<br>Negotiate for priority funding in DACF through guidelines and formula with MLGRD; | Ensure monitoring of policy implementation, participatory monitoring by DAs, communities, NGOs and CBOs. |
| **Ministry of Finance** | Participate as key ministry; raise concerns on macro-economic indicators; | Endorse GPRS; include guidelines of GPRS in both MTEF and annual budget for MDA; | Coordinate donor funds; | Monitor of expenditure and cash flows. |

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **Ministries, Departments, Agencies** | Participate in formulation through core teams; validate of proposed strategies; identify priorities for poverty reduction. | Act as lead or collaborating agency for implementation of aspects of strategy; undertake preparation of costed activities; ensure inclusion of activities in MTEF and annual budget; continue implementation of on-going projects that address poverty reduction issues; **refocus on-going projects for poverty reduction**; develop new projects for poverty reduction | Make proposals for budgetary allocations; Realign ongoing projects for poverty reduction. | Undertake internal monitoring and evaluation of programmes under each MDA supervision; provide information for evaluation by the NDPC; provide information for other external and independent evaluators |
| **Development partners** | Participate in initial stages of formulation; support for GPRS process; contribute to the identification of priorities; raise concerns about vulnerable group situations; raise concerns about macro-economic and global | Assess and endorse GPRS; Re-align existing programmes; initiation of new programmes; common GPRS programme support | Give financial support for GPRS formulation process; Ensure flow of HIPC relief funds; redirect current funds to GPRS; respond to new financing opportunities; expand existing programmes for poverty reduction | Undertake independent M&E of GPRS or components of interest |

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| | issues | | | |
| **District Assemblies** | Collaborate on selection of communities for PPA, validate priorities, problems identified, and coping strategies identified by communities | Co-ordinate of implementation of GPRS at the local level; develop partnership with NGOs, CBOs and the private sector for implementation of GPRS | Use of DACF; use of IGF; NGO budget complementation; take advantage private sector investment in partnership | Undertake internal M&E; make data available for MEPRC, NDPC and external M&E; undertake participatory M&E with communities |
| **Traditional authorities** | Participate in community poverty analysis process. | Resolve land acquisition issues; commit land for generally beneficial social and economic uses; undertake community mobilization for project implementation; assist in rationalization of gender roles and asset ownership; initiate elimination and change of obsolete and dangerous traditions; play roles in conflict prevention and management | Commit royalties to social programmes; permit land to be given as equity shares for communities in various projects. | Ensure traditional norms are not violated |
| **Communities** | Serve as sources of information for GPRS | Provide of communal labour; | Adopt market orientation to | Participate willingly and truthfully in |

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| | process; identify problems, coping strategies, constraints and priorities for poverty reduction. | Undertake paid employment in construction; utilize infrastructure for production; take advantage of social programmes; form groups to benefit from programmes; try new products and ideas; | programme support; use landed properties as equity shares in investments; | participatory monitoring and evaluation exercises |
| **Community Based Organisations** | Serve as sources of information for GPRS process; identify problems, coping strategies, constraints and priorities for poverty reduction. | Mobilise community members for activities; undertake implementation of some poverty reduction projects. | Mobilise resources from community members; source for funds for poverty reduction activities. | Undertake independent evaluations; participate in external evaluations |
| **Non-governmental organisations** | Concerns about environment; vulnerable groups; participation | Mobilise community members for activities; undertake implementation of some poverty reduction projects | Source funds from development partners for specific aspects of the strategy; use of DACF; use of new and ongoing project funds; | Conduct participatory monitoring and evaluation with communities |
| **Civil society organisations** | Advocate for inclusion of socially important provisions in strategy; | Implement aspects relevant to CSOs. | Advocate generally for increased spending on poverty reduction | Undertake independent M&E |

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| | validate provisions in the GPRS | | | |
| **The Private Sector** | Contribute to GPRS formulation; seek inclusion of measures that are promotive of private sector investment; | Implement aspects relevant and attractive to private sector; go into partnerships with government, DAs and NGOs; monitor and insist implementation of relevant government policies; develop entrepreneurial approach to production. | Use own financial resources; go into partnerships with government, DAs and NGOs; use of credit facilities; undertake social investment and ask for tax breaks | Monitor the implementation of government policies; assess of changes in policies; umbrella organisations to ensure activities of members are consistent with provisions of GPRS. |
| **The Media** | Contribute to GPRS formulation; Publish the process of formulation; | Undertake continuous commentary on the progress of implementation | Help maintain the flow of financial resources with responsible publications | Provide continuous publication of activities on poverty reduction; publish in simple terms progress or the lack of it in implementation of poverty reduction activities |
| **Religious Organisations** | Direct participation | Propagation of important messages for example HIVAIDS; pre-school facilities and activities; primary, JSS and SSS facilities and staff; vocational | Own funds; support from development partners; government sources; partnership with local governments (MMDA). | M&E on aspects of interest to them |

| STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY | ACTIVITIES TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | FORMULATION | IMPLEMENTATION | | |
| | Formulation | Direct Implementation Activities | Financing | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| | | training; direct production activities | | |
| **Trade Unions** | Assessment of the role of organised labour; assessment of effects on employment levels; concerns on incomes. | Counselling members | None | M&E of effects on paid incomes, employment levels. |
| **Vulnerable group organisations** | Identification and ensuring the of special needs; development of effective and acceptable strategies | None | None | Monitor effects on vulnerable groups. |
| **Training and research institutions** | Indicate relevant areas | Undertake research in identified priority areas | None | M&E on research product utilization |
| **Regional Planning Co-ordinating Unit** | Participation in regional validation workshops; inputs into the GPRS process. | Coordination and harmonisation of District activities | Coordination of use of DACF | M&E of programmes and projects |

*Source: GPRS 2003*

**Appendix C: LNGO (ISODEC) Activity**

The General Public is Invited to a Public Forum on the theme: "The budget as an instrument for the promotion of good governance and poverty reduction – The need for collaboration between the Executive, the District Assembly and Civil Society."

**Date: Wednesday 21 November 2001**

**At: Tohazie Hotel Ltd, Tamale**

**Time: 2:00pm – 6:00pm**

**Organised by:**
**ISODEC, Save the Children- UK & ActionAid –Ghana**

---

Budget Advocacy Workshop
for
Selected District Assemblies & Civil Society organizations in Northern Region

Theme: "**The budget as an instrument for the promotion of good governance and poverty reduction – The need for collaboration between the Executive, the District Assembly and Civil Society."**

Date: 18-24 November, 2001

Venue: TICCs Guest House, Tamale

Organised by:

**ISODEC, Save the Chidden- UK & Actionaid-Ghana**