

Institutional Sustainability in the Context of International
Donor Funded Programs in Fragile and Post-Conflict
Communities of West Africa

(The Cases of CDDP Funded Decentralised Village Development Institutions in
The Gambia and Sierra Leone)

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Declaration

I hereby affirm that the work I have submitted was done independently and without unauthorised assistance from third parties. All parts which I took word-for-word or nearly word-for-word from any sort of publication are recognisable as such. I did not use any means or resources other than the literature I have quoted, and all of my works which I have used (including previous publications and another thesis) have been properly cited.

I hereby affirm that I have not submitted any edition of this dissertation in its current or a similar form to another academic institution in order to acquire a doctoral title, and that the dissertation or parts of the dissertation have not been used for any other examination procedures.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the blessed memory of my late parents, Mr Omar Ceesay commonly known as In Shaa Allah and Mrs Aminata Manjang. They sacrificed everything to ensure I went to school. To my dear wife, Fatoumata Sanyang and my lovely children: Fatima, Muhammed, Mariama and Luqman for their love, support and understanding throughout this journey.

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to understand and explain the sustainability problem of foreign aid driven institution-building or development initiatives in fragile and post-conflict contexts using decentralised development planning institutions called VDCs as cases. The research integrates case study embedded with mixed-method research design. Evidence shows that VDCs in West Africa are not independent and self-sufficient institutions. They don't have the capacity and inputs of their own necessary to exercise the powers and responsibilities bestowed on them as coordinating entities of the multilevel planning process at the village level. Capacity issues includes the ability to learn and adapt to environmental changes, to build their human resources, their internal incentives systems, and to ensure the fit of their strategy, structure and technology to the environment. In contrast, there is short supply of inputs such as materials/logistics, monetary, human, information, and knowledge resources that VDCs acquire from their environment to facilitate the production of outputs such as products, services, programs, and ideas. All these deficiencies explain the unsustainability of VDCs' active involvement in the decentralised planning system.

After the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP, VDCs no longer enjoy substantial external support in terms of inputs and capacity building either from their governments or external donor agencies. In terms of clientele, VDCs tend to serve people of lower socioeconomic strata who are resource and capacity poor. What explains the unsustainable activity of VDCs as local level public sector planning institutions are chiefly: the minimal degree of political and bureaucratic support for their participation in multilevel development planning, weak links with local governments, central government MDAs, NGOs, private sector entities and other CBOs operating within their respective regions. VDCs in West Africa rely heavily on voluntary efforts of their members, which means they lack stability and are susceptible to dissipation at any critical stage when their leadership functions are not institutionalised.

Periodic capacity-building and having mechanisms in place for community access to information are essential to institutionalise the leadership functions of VDCs. In addition are the strict enforcement of legal and regulatory frameworks that support community action and functioning intergovernmental arrangements for financial flows to local governments and their lower-level assemblies. Added to these are the forging of strong and

effective functional linkages between VDCs, their governments (local and central) and non-governmental institutions for the injection of the necessary external technical inputs and financial resources. While the presence of all of these factors is vital for the sustainability of voluntary public institutions like the VDCs, their absence or limited supply can cause institutional decay and eventual unsustainability as being experienced in the case of West African VDCs. The mismatch between the nature of the outputs and services of VDCs and their voluntary nature makes their existing inefficiency and sustainability problem almost inevitable.

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Dissertation zielt darauf ab, das Nachhaltigkeitsproblem von ausländischen Hilfs-Initiativen zur Institutionenbildung oder Entwicklungshilfe in fragilen und Post-Konflikt-Kontexten unter Einbeziehen von Dezentralisierten Entwicklungsplanungsinstitutionen (VDCs) als Fallbeispiele zu verstehen und zu erklären. Das Forschungsdesign verbindet die Methoden der Fallstudie und Mixed-Methods Design. Es lässt sich belegen, dass VDCs in Westafrika weder unabhängige noch autarke Institutionen sind. Sie verfügen nicht über die notwendigen Kapazitäten und Kräfte, um die ihnen als Koordinationseinheiten im mehrstufigen Planungsprozess auf Dorf-Ebene zugeschriebenen Verantwortlichkeiten und Funktionen auszuüben. Kapazitätsprobleme umfassen dabei die Fähigkeit zu lernen und sich veränderten Umweltbedingungen anzupassen, das eigene Personal sowie interne Anreizsysteme aufzustellen, sowie die Passfähigkeit der eigenen Strategie, Technologie und Struktur mit der Umwelt sicherzustellen. Hinzu kommt, dass wichtige Faktoren, die VDCs zur Umsetzung von Programmen, Ideen und Dienstleistungen wie Materialien, Logistik, sowie finanzielle, personelle, informationsbezogene und wissensbezogene Ressourcen nur spärlich vorhanden sind. All diese Defizite erklären die nicht nachhaltige Beteiligung der VDCs in den dezentralisierten Planungsprozessen.

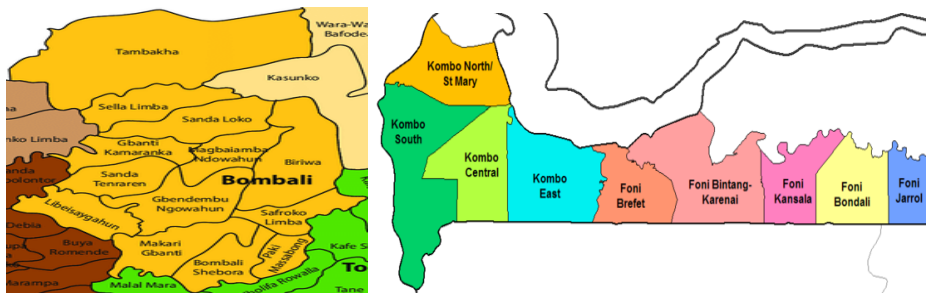
Nach dem Auslaufen von spendenfinanzierten CDDP genießen VDCs keine nennenswerte externe Förderung im Sinne von Kapazitätsbildung und Ressourcen von Seiten der Regierungen oder externen Geberinstitutionen mehr. Was die Zielgruppe betrifft, so dienen VDCs tendenziell Bevölkerungsgruppen aus den unteren sozioökonomischen Schichten, die über wenig Ressourcen und Kapazitäten verfügen. Folgende Aspekte erklären die nicht nachhaltigen Aktivitäten der VDCs als lokale öffentliche Planungsinstitutionen im Wesentlichen: die minimal ausgeprägte politische und bürokratische Unterstützung für die Teilnahme an mehrstufiger Entwicklungsplanung, schwache Verbindungen mit lokalen Regierungen, der Zentralregierung, MDAs, Nichtregierungsorganisationen, Akteuren des Privatsektors und anderen CBOs, welche ebenfalls in der entsprechenden Region arbeiten. VDCs in Afrika sind stark auf die freiwilligen Bemühungen ihrer Mitglieder angewiesen, was bedeutet, dass sie instabil sind und anfällig für Zersplitterung, wenn ihre Führungsposition nicht institutionalisiert wurde.

Regelmäßige Kapazitätsbildung sowie Mechanismen, die der Gemeinschaft Informationszugang ermöglichen sind essentielle Voraussetzungen, um die Führungsposition der VDCs zu institutionalisieren. Weitere wichtige Faktoren sind die strikte Umsetzung der rechtlichen und regulatorischen Rahmen, welche Gemeindegarbeit unterstützen, sowie funktionierende zwischenstaatliche Vereinbarungen für Finanzströme zu den lokalen Regierungen und den ihnen unterstehenden Versammlungen. Hinzu kommen die starken und effektiven funktionellen Verbindungen zwischen den VDCs, ihren Regierungen (lokal und zentral) und nichtstaatlichen Institutionen, um notwendige externe technische und finanzielle Ressourcen zu erlangen. Während das Vorhandensein all dieser Faktoren für die Nachhaltigkeit der ehrenamtlichen öffentlichen Institutionen wie den VDCs von höchster Bedeutung ist, kann ihre Abwesenheit oder ungenügende Ausprägung den institutionellen Zerfall und Untragbarkeit wie im Fall der westafrikanischen VDCs zur Folge haben. Die Diskrepanz zwischen der Natur der Ergebnisse und Dienstleistungen der VDCs sowie deren ehrenamtlicher Natur macht ihre vorliegende Ineffizienz und Nachhaltigkeitsproblematik nahezu unvermeidlich.

The Map of West Africa sub-Region



Bombali District of Northern Sierra Leone



Kombo East & Central Districts of West Coast Region of The Gambia

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BKK	Badan Kredit Kecamatan
CA	Chief Administrator
CARDI	Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBD	Community-Based Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CDDP	Community-Driven Development Project/Program
CDR	Community-Driven Reconstruction
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CDO	Community Development Officers
CDR	Community Driven Reconstruction
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIG	Common Initiative Group
CLP	Community Livelihood Project
Co-ops	Cooperatives
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCD	Department of Community Development
DDP	District Development Plan
DFID	Department for International Development
DO	District Officer
DPD	Director of Planning and Development
DSE	Direction De Suivi Et d'Evaluation
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FCS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situation
FCU	Farmers' Cooperative Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMT	Fund Management Team

FONADER	Rural Development Bank
FSC	Fund Steering Committee
FSR/D	Farming Systems Research and Development
FSRE	Farming Systems Research and Extension
FSSRP	Fertilizer Sub-Sector Reform Program
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMB	The Gambia
HYV	High-Yielding Varieties
IDA	International Development Aid
IDA	International Development Association
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMO	Implementing Organisation
IVA	Institut Agronomique Et Vétérinaire
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KDP/BRA	Kecamatan Development Program/Aceh Reintegration Body or Badan Reintegrasi Aceh
KII	Key Informant Interview
LA	Local Administration
LCCA	Local Council Chief Administrator
LC	Local Council
LDF	Local Development Fund
LID	Local Institutional Development
LGAct	Local Government Act
LGA	Local Government Area
LG	Local Government
LGU	Local Government Unit
LO	Local Organisation
LTPC	Local Technical Planning Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDFT	Multi-disciplinary Facilitation Team
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MLGL	Ministry of Local Government and Lands

MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MO	Membership Organization
NEP	National Extension Project
NERAD	Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIE	New Institutional Economist
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluations Department
PB	Private Businesses
PCT	Program Coordination Team
PDP	Provincial Area Development Program
PED	Private Enterprise Development
PHRD	Program for Human Resources Development
PIM	Program/Project Implementation Manual
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PMT	Program Management Team
PBA	Program-Based Approach
PSC	Program Steering Committee
PVO	Private Voluntary Organizations
QAG	Quality Assurance Group
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
RPO	Rural Producer Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Package
SCOPE	Systems theory, Contingency theory and Political Economy
SDF	Social Development Fund
SDP	Strategic Development Plan
SFs	Social Investment Funds
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLSA	Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa
SL	Sierra Leone
SO	Service Organization

SPSS	Statistical Package for The Social Sciences
SWAPs	Sector-Wide Approaches
T&V	Training and Visit Extension System
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPP	Urban Poverty Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
US	United States
VDP	Village Development Plan
WB	World Bank
WDP	Ward Development Plan

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter starts with the discussion of the research background followed by the research problem. Next, the chapter deliberates the objectives and questions of the research followed by the justification for the research, including the potential beneficiaries of the research findings. Further, the chapter provides the scope of the study, which encompasses the focus areas of the study both in terms of geographic coverage and target groups/population. The concluding part introduces the chapters and their contents.

1.1. Study Background

From the 1980s to date, democracy and good governance promotion have been the two most important program for most foreign aid agencies, their local partner organisations and bilateral or official development assistance (ODA) to developing country contexts such as fragile, post-conflict, post-disaster and authoritarian or in contexts that have poor track records of service delivery within the bureaucracy. Besides improved access to and use of essential services at the local level, at the heart of democracy and good governance promotion has been institution-building or institutional development agenda (Israel, 1987; Moore, 1995a, 1995b; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006; N. T. Uphoff, 1986; Wong, 2012; Wong & Guggenheim, 2005). Central to these efforts is the support for effective decentralised governance system which ensures accountable, transparent, and inclusive national and local development institutions.

In the last decades of the 20th Century on, the most embraced Program-Based Approach (PBA) used to deliver International Development Aid (IDA) has been the Community-Driven Development (CDD) (Adusei-Asante & Hancock, 2014; Casey et al., 2011b; King & Samii, 2014; Mansuri & Rao, 2013; Wong, 2012). As of 2012, the World Bank (WB) supported circa 400 Community-Driven Development projects/programs (CDDP) in 94 countries valued at about \$30 billion, and ten years before 2012, CDD investments of the Banks' overall lending portfolio "represented between 5 and 10 per cent" (Wong, 2012, p. iv). Using a conservative calculation, Mansuri and Rao (2004) state that, WB's lending for CDD project has "risen from US\$325 million in 1996 to \$2 billion in 2003-or from \$3

billion in 1996 to \$7 billion in 2003 when lending for an enabling environment for such projects is included” (p. 2).

For decades, despite the centrality of institution-building or development agenda among supranational institutions operating in developing countries and IDA countries, the debate is still heated as to the sustainability of institutions established or revamped through foreign aid financing, in particular, those of local/community development planning institutions. Often with the departure of donor agencies or with the end of their funding, these institutions cease to effectively function or perform the roles they were set up to accomplish. Simply put, they often fail to attain the goals of participation in active development planning and service provision for the communities they represent. Existing evidence shows a limited and varied understanding of the reasons for the lack of functional durability of institutions whose setup or strengthening is linked to foreign aid in developing countries, especially those of local institutions for community development planning. The existence of a variety of active longstanding traditional local institutions raises an essential question as to why decentralised development planning institutions established through donor programs such as the CDDP in communities of developing countries would often cease to function effectively when these programs phased-out.

The leading proponent of the CDD approach, Dongier et al. (2003) define CDD as an approach to development that “gives control of decisions and resources to community groups” (p. 303). The sector manager for the Social Development Department of the WB and WB’s Global Lead for CDD, Susan Wong and her colleague Guggenheim (2005) define CDD as an approach “that gives communities or locally elected bodies control over the decision making, management, and use of development funds” (p. 254). CDDPs are designed often with at least two critical sets of goals in mind: 1) Improved service delivery/provision and enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of communities; and 2) improved governance institutions and social cohesion at the communal level (Casey et al., 2011b, 2011a; Fearon et al., 2009a, 2011, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). Institution building and/development, capacity strengthening of local governments/decentralised institutions and community-based organisations (CBOs) are among the most critical aspects of CDDP implementation and the sustainability strategy for its investment.

In general terms, the words institution and organisation are used interchangeably, thus contributing to the ambiguity and confusion of the concepts. Three such commonly used categories recognised by Uphoff (1986) include (a) organisations that are not institutions, (b) institutions that are not organisations, and (c) organisations that are institutions (or vice versa, institutions that are organisations) (p. 8). The concern for this research is the decentralised development planning institutions called village development committees (VDCs) and their functional sustainability issues in West Africa. VDCs that have been built/revamped through donor-funded CDDP in West Africa are established as part of the local governance system thus, by design they fall under the latter category, i.e. organisations that are institutions or institutions that are organisations. Whenever development practitioners and administrators talk about institutional sustainability, often what they have in mind are those collective entities that fulfil one or more of the following criteria: 1) can recover part of their recurrent and other costs or for the entities to become self-financing; 2) can continuously supply benefits or services intended; and 3) can continue to live or exist over time, or sustain themselves as identifiable entities (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990, p. 13).

VDCs are decentralised village institutions with organisational structure, or organisations having the potential to becoming institutionalised that fulfil both the role-and rule-oriented types of institution. The interest of this dissertation is both in the extent of institutionalisation of VDCs as local development institutions and the sustainability problem. In fragile and post-conflict West Africa, VDCs are introduced or revamped by WB funded CDDP to ensure sustainable participation in the multilevel planning process (Casey et al., 2011b, 2011a; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). The key objective of foreign aid CDDP in communities is that the inputs of their programs such as facilitation, recognition, promotion or the establishment of inclusive community institutions would “generate lasting and transferable change in attitudes and behaviour” (King & Samii, 2014, p. 740). In the words of other scholars, CDDPs are effective at “durably reshaping local institutions” (Casey et al., 2011b, 2011a).

At the national level, WB’s West Africa CDDP ensured more responsive and effective local governments (LGs). Such LGs would support the operations and maintenance of services at the community level and continue to fund community groups, notably the VDCs and ward development committees (WDCs) for their active participation in multi-level

planning processes. Decentralisation reform programs are financed by CDDP to encourage LGs to be responsive and effective. The program strongly urged central governments to transfer policy and legislative powers to the democratically elected and autonomous local councils (LCs) and their lower-level assemblies (VDCs and WDCs). Central governments were also encouraged to ensure locally situated civil servants are placed under the jurisdiction of elected LGs together with the planning and implementation responsibilities. Last but not least, central governments are encouraged to accorded LGs with substantial revenue and expenditure autonomy involving the power to levy taxes and charge user and service fees (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 322).

In furthering its institutional development agenda in fragile and post-conflict contexts, WB funded CDDP in the Gambia between 2007 and 2012 (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 4) and Sierra Leone between 2006 and 2009 (Casey et al., 2011a, pp. 11–12, 2012). Each of the programs, either formed or revamped VDCs within the decentralised structures not just to implement aid programs but, for institution building/development purposes. Donor agencies designed local institutions to outlive the donor funding periods (Casey et al., 2011a; Diop et al., 2013; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; Sesay et al., 2010). Both programs provided communities with technical and financial supports and guidance to implement small-scale projects and project planning and managerial skill sets to community groups like the VDCs and WDCs.

The long-term objective of the institutional development component of donor-funded CDDP was to ensure that VDCs acquire experience and organisational capacity necessary to facilitate participatory decision-making, resource mobilisation and management, communication and coordination, and conflict resolution among a host of others. At the end of the funding, VDCs are to help coordinate village level multilevel planning and spearhead all project implementation, community mobilisation efforts in support of various social development works and to serve as the local entry point for all development assistance to the villages.

Furthermore, the capacities of LCs and locally situated civil servants were enhanced and operationally linked to the VDCs and WDCs. It was to ensure LCs continue to fund local projects through VDCs and local civil servants in collaboration with other stakeholders operating in the different sectors would continue to provide technical support and supervise village development activities. VDCs are to maintain links with LCs and coordinate all

community development activities with LGs and other service providers such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector within their locality. To ensure sustainability and the alignment of CDDP with national and regional development objectives and plans, the program model forged a link between village development planning processes and decentralised local government institutions.

Apart from the VDCs, CDD approach also attracts the attention and involvement of other community groups and leaderships such as the WDCs, representatives of chiefdom/clan administrators and local government authority staff, community development officers and councillors. Community leaders and groups played an active role in project planning, execution and oversight functions of local public goods and service provisions in their areas of jurisdiction. Decentralised structures of LGs are at the heart of CDD strategy for the reasons that local institutions are not only closer to the program beneficiaries but, that they: 1) interact with communities and informal groups in a participatory manner, such that there is the potential for achieving economies of scale in terms of effective and efficient delivery of public goods and services; 2) can ensure sustained operational support, maintenance of services; and 3) are central to the continued financing of community groups such as the VDCs. Dongier et al. (2003) identify three shared institutional arrangements for CDD program implementation and durability as follows: 1) partnerships between CBOs and local governments; 2) partnerships between CBOs and NGOs/private firms; and 3) direct partnerships between CBOs and central government or central fund (p. 309).

After the review of the literature, the partnership between CBOs and local governments appear to be the most preferred institutional arrangements among the staff of the WB. Presumably, the choice for the partnership between CBOs and local governments is informed by the assumption that with local support, CDDP can strengthen national systems of inter-governmental resources transfers. It can also make resource allocation decisions more accountable to local priority needs (de Regt et al., 2013; Dongier et al., 2003; Grootaert et al., 1999; Klugman, 2002; Mansuri & Rao, 2002, 2004; Wong, 2012). A more significant reason for the CDDP strategy's emphasis on building local-level institutions of governance and development is perhaps due to the many links that exist between institutions and sustainable local development. Alexander (2006) argues that there are many links between functioning institutions and sustainable development at the local level. One such numerous links is the one formed "through the institutional context of human

activities-social, and individual-that can support or inhibit behaviour that affects sustainability”. At the same time, the other relation could be “institutions themselves and how or whether they promote or constrain unsustainable development” (p. 1). The two links, Alexander (2006) argues, are “implicit in another, which connects institutions and sustainable development through planning for sustainable development” (ibid).

Foreign Aid and Institution Building/Development

Since the 1980s, there have been recurrent arguments in the literature on aid and institution building/development. They are affirming that foreign aid agencies are not very good at the job of institution building in contrast to service delivery and the improvement of socioeconomic wellbeing of local communities (Israel, 1987; Moore, 1995a, 1995b; N. T. Uphoff, 1986, 1992; Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988). Moore (1995b) contends that “a recurrent theme in the literature on aid and institution building is that aid agencies are not very good at this particular job, and certainly less good at it than projects with larger hardware components” (p. 90). From the 1980s to data, there exist four main conventional arguments in the literature on foreign aid and institution building/development in favour of the negative findings on donor-funded institution building/development.

The first two of the conventional arguments relates to the character of donor agencies that are involved in the business of aid. 1) The operations of aid agencies as bureaucrats (in the pejorative sense of the term). Resulting in the relative rigidity and inflexibility in their approach with much focus on “blueprint” and large-scale activities, rather than on a “process mode” as the preferred standard formulas and approaches for institution development. 2) Aid agencies always perform worst because they are foreign bureaucracies with “limited understanding of, communication with, or empathy for the environment in which they operate” (ibid, p. 90). Two other explanations concerning institution building/development failure of aid agencies are related to the nature of institution-building itself: 1) institution building is a low specificity activity which means are relatively imprecisely defined and lacking feedback mechanisms that could assist identify or reverse poor task performance in a quasi-automatic manner (Israel, 1987, p. 200; Moore, 1995b, p. 90); 2) aid projects with an institution-building component (which often fall under the “software” component of donor projects) tend not to enjoy the required political support as the case is in aid projects with “hardware” components where

individuals or groups with a clear interest in the progress and capacity such as suppliers or contractors, would exert influence to ensure completion with relative speed and enthusiasm and are less likely to receive the kind of attention and priority needed from decision-makers (Moore, 1995b, p. 91).

The proposition that CDDP inputs can “generate lasting and transferable change in attitudes and behaviour” within a few years of program implementation triggers much debate. It goes contrary to the notion that social and institutional changes such as institution building/development are slow and time-consuming (King & Samii, 2014, p. 740). In most cases, empirical evidence shows that prospects for foreign aid-funded “fast track” institution building, and local capacity strengthening aimed at “inclusive problem solving and collective action” have been a failure in fragile contexts (ibid). King and Samii (2014) kind of ridiculed CDDP theory of change by calling it a “fast-track institution-building” model. They argue that the idea that brief exposure of communities to program inputs of CDD has the potential of “generating lasting and transferable change in attitude and behaviour” is contentious and a debated proposition (ibid). In earlier institutional scholarship other arguments advanced concerning factors affecting institutional sustainability includes commitment issues at the national level (Heaver & Israel, 1986), lack of political and bureaucratic will to pay for the recurrent costs of institutions (Gray & Martens, 1983), an inappropriate blend of public and private sector institutions (Lamb, 1987; Nellis, 1986) and within the public sector is the improper task delegation of responsibilities to the different levels of government (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990)

Similarly, several convincing pieces of evidence exist from the aid agencies themselves in support of these arguments. For instance, Israel (1987) argues that ever since the systematic ex-post evaluations on institutional development programs of WB completed in the mid-1970s, it has become “more apparent that the physical components of programs had generally been more successful than the institutional development components” (p. 2). Moore (1995b) also cited a couple of similar evaluation findings of projects of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) completed in 1985 and 1986 in which 40 per cent had woefully failed to contribute to institutional capacity improvement. Moore (1995b) cited a study of British aid projects involving an in-depth analysis of five projects, 15 evaluation summaries, and 50 project completion reports, all of which had

institution-building components. Here too, the institutional building components of each data set indicated less success than the other parts (p. 90).

In 2012, after analysing the impact evaluation results of WB funded CDDPs from 17 countries in three continents between 1987 until 2006, a period spanning over 25 years, Susan Wong finds out that overall, evidence regarding social capital and governance was mixed. Out of the impact evaluations that measured local government, five “shows positive to mixed results” (p. 31). Variables measured by Wong (2012) are: “attitudes toward governance, participation in other village assemblies, awareness of project information and other local civic activities, and spillover effects in terms of the way government officials and citizens approach and manage other development programs and civic activities” (p. 31). Out of the eight impact evaluations that measured social capital in relation “to greater trust, association, and collective action”, the most significant number of projects “have no impact on social capital, or at best-mixed impacts” (p. vi).

Again, evidence from CDD programs of Philippines, Zambia, and Armenia shows “mixed” results. In contrast, programs of Sierra Leone, Indonesia’s Kecamatan Development Program/Aceh Reintegration Body (Badan Reintegrasi Aceh) (KDP-BRA) and Urban Poverty Program (UPP) in Indonesia, Nepal, and Afghanistan “showed no impacts” (Wong, 2012, p. 31). Wong (2012) defines social capital as “the norms and networks that enable collective action” which are best driven by local institutions at the community levels (p. 28). Equally, King and Samii (2014) conclude that CDDPs have been very successful when it comes to setting up of CBOs, broadening community participation in local development, and availing community members the opportunity to work together for the common goods. However, their findings show that largely, CDDPs of Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Sierra Leone have “failed to increase the capacity for collective action in a way that is durable and transferable beyond the CDD interventions” (p. 740).

1.2. Problem Statement

From the 1980s to date, CDDPs is the most popular strategy employed by international development aid agencies to build, develop or reshape local institutions in fragile and post-conflict situations (Casey et al., 2011b, 2011a; Fearon et al., 2009b, 2011, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). As of 2012, WB supported circa 400 CDD projects in 94

countries valued at about \$30 billion, and ten years before 2012, CDD investments of the Bank's overall lending portfolio "represented between 5 and 10 per cent" (Wong, 2012, p. iv). Using a conservative calculation, Mansuri and Rao (2004) state that the Bank's lending for CDD projects has "risen from US\$325 million in 1996 to \$2 billion in 2003-or from \$3 billion in 1996 to \$7 billion in 2003 when lending for an enabling environment for such projects is included" (p. 2). Looking at the regional distribution of the Bank's Community-Based Development (CBD)/CDD portfolio per region, Africa has the highest number of projects (31.5 per cent) between fiscal 1989-2003 (Kumar et al., 2003, pp. 16-17).

The recurrent argument/debate in aid and institution building/development literature is that foreign aid agencies are not very good at institution building in developing countries (Israel, 1987; Moore, 1995a, 1995b; N. T. Uphoff, 1986, 1992; Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988). Evidence shows a persistent problem in sustaining these institutions beyond donor funding periods (Casey et al., 2011a; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014). Evidence regarding factors responsible for the failure of aid agencies when comes to institution building/development in developing countries largely relates with the character of the donor agencies involved in the business and the nature of institution-building itself (Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988; Israel, 1987, p. 200; Moore, 1995a, 1995b, p. 90). Mostly there exists a shortage of evidence in the literature about the role of internal capabilities of institutions built/developed by donor agencies or their funded programs and the factors of these institutions' external environment in explaining their sustainability problem beyond the intervention period.

Evidence from program evaluation findings of CDD across the world and in particular West Africa shows unsustainable local institutions beyond the intervention period despite the widespread preference and use of recommended institutional sustainability practices such as partnerships between CBOs and elected local or municipal governments as an alternative institutional arrangement to promote institutional sustainability (Casey et al., 2011b; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). Alternative institutional arrangement of partnerships between decentralised village development planning institutions and elected local or municipal governments are deemed critical to sustainable institutional building/development in fragile and post-conflict contexts (Dongier et al., 2003; de Regt et al., 2013). Such partnerships "can strengthen the national system of intergovernmental transfer of resources, allows resource allocation decisions to

be accountable to local priorities (...), and provides a sustainable source of CBO funding” (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 308). However, relying on the evidence from their research on the private fertilizer marketing system in Cameroon, Truong & Walker (1990) while applying SCOPE (S-systems theory, CO-contingency theory and PE-political economy) framework argue that:

Establishing new institutional arrangements does not necessarily mean they will be effectively used. (...) privatizing importation will not lead to better results if private businesses lack the capacity to pursue importing activities in the first place. Awareness, knowledge, and skill are all aspects of capacity and cannot be assumed. (p. 117)

Again, from their Fertilizer Sub-Sector Reform Program (FSSRP) experience, Truong & Walker (1990) observe that the policy reform process is both “lengthy” and “time-consuming”. It doesn’t end with the promulgation of new policies; instead, the function “continues during implementation, is inherently confrontational, and requires continued monitoring and intervention to become sustainable” (p. 116). Missing from the idealised notion of policy design as “rapid”, “self-implementing, and self-sustaining”, according to critics, is the failure to recognise the “deeply political nature of policy reform”. Added to this is their inability to pay “sufficient attention to the pitfalls inherent in the implementation of reform efforts” (Truong & Walker, 1990, p. 116). Among developing country governments and WB an institutional arrangement known as partnerships between local institutions/CBOs and elected local or municipal governments gained momentum “particularly in the context of weak or fragile states, in post-conflict and post-disaster environments, or in areas with poor track records of service delivery within the bureaucracy” (Wong, 2012, p. iv). This institutional arrangement is the preferred option for WB scholars and practitioners in West Africa (Adusei–Asante & Hancock, 2012) presumably due to the notion that it links CDD with decentralisation reform program of beneficiary countries.

1.3. Research Objectives

General Objective

This dissertation aims to explore the sustainability problem of institutions built/developed through international donor-funded agencies/programs in fragile and post-conflict contexts or regions with poor bureaucratic service delivery track records. It investigates institutional sustainability issue through the analysis of organisation and management mechanisms of decentralised development planning institutions established/revamped through donor-funded CDDP and their external environment (resource flows and responsive output flows) in fragile and post-conflict West African contexts.

Specific Objectives

- a. Identify the relationships between the internal capabilities and strategies of local development planning institutions and their inactive participation in the multilevel planning process after the donor-funded CDDPs phased-out.
- b. Explain the relationships between the proximate and general external environmental factors of local development planning institutions and their inactive participation in the multilevel planning process after the donor-funded CDDPs phased-out.

1.4. Research Questions

Why are decentralised development planning institutions formed or strengthened through foreign aid financed CDD programs not functionally sustainable after the donor funding phased-out?

- I. What is the relative importance of proximate and distant environmental factors in the sustainability problem of donor-funded decentralised development planning institutions?
- II. What type of organisational characteristics and management strategy contribute to the sustainability problem of donor-funded decentralised development planning institutions under environmental conditions that are internally complex and externally uncertain?

1.5. Study Methodology at a Glance

This study selected embedded cases from empirically treated CDDP beneficiary villages, field-tested and matched with comparison villages and validated by Casey et al. (2013), in the case of GoBifo CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone and Fanneh and Jallow (2013), in the case of CDDP of the Gambia. The selected sites are part of WB's West Africa CDDPs. As the units of analysis, ten (10) villages/embedded cases were chosen in each of the two program locations to collect data. Data collection refers to the process of information gathering as required for each of the selected units in research. This research employed a case study using mixed-method data collection and analysis strategy to conduct the investigation, analysis and reporting. The emphasis here is on complementarity (Gable, 1994). Mixed methods research integrates survey data collection and analysis-a quantitative approach with qualitative data collection and analysis using focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Integration is done both at the levels of data collection, analysis and reporting (Baptist & Befani, 2015; Bennett, 2004; Devers et al., 2013; Goodrick, 2014; Shakir, 2002; Yin, 1994, 1998, 2009).

The literature review focuses on impact evaluation literature and case or ethnographic studies. The justification for the assessment of both qualitative and quantitative research findings is to have a broader insight into the research problem. Even though case studies are not good at attributing impact, they are useful techniques at providing a more subtle or nuanced understanding of the contexts of projects and other insights that quantitative methods have proven difficult to generate. The review of literature focuses on peer-reviewed publications and studies conducted by independent researchers. An approach that "allows the use of an exogenous rule that improves the quality and reduces the level of potential bias while casting a wide enough net to let in research from a variety of disciplinary perspectives on different types of community-based development projects" (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 3).

In addition to the review of literature on CDD impact evaluations, the research has collected secondary data through the journals on participatory development approaches, academic journals and books on institutional building, sustainability, aid, decentralisation, local governance and so on. The researcher also reviewed documents on contextual factors, CDD program/project design documents, and project/program completion reports to

strengthen the discussion. Due to the issues of access, cost and the gross absence of data in developing countries, the study utilises a mixture of peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications such as reports from credible national and international organisations and government institutions.

1.6. Synopsis of Theoretical Framework

The analytical framework used for this dissertation is the institutional sustainability framework called SCOPE. The framework is the product of a mixture of three influential theoretical schools of thought namely: the systems theory, contingency theory and political economy, the precepts of which are “mutually reinforcing, not just a patchwork of ideas” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 20). SCOPE is a generic framework designed to understand the institutional sustainability issues of local development institutions in developing country contexts. The framework has drawn lessons from rural development sectors, namely, agriculture and health. It considers institutions as 1) functional systems within their environments; 2) organised and managed entities whose administrative structures and processes must match the tasks, people, products, resources and the contexts they operate; and 3) settings that are very much concerned with the exchange of resources where the relationships between the economy and politics are interlinked to generate varying power and incentive systems (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992).

Even though the three schools of thought pulled together have differing origins and propositions, Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) maintain that their conceptual framework is not “atheoretical” instead it’s based on or concerned with theory (p. 20). The three components of SCOPE complement each other during the analysis of political systems. Two hypotheses undergird the conceptual framework: a) that the internal capability of an organisation and its external environment are critical to its long term survival thus, to understand institutional sustainability it is vital to gaze both inward and outward; b) assumption that an organisation must create and stick to a strategy or a “game plan” that has a robust fit amongst its own internal weaknesses and strengths and the external opportunities and threats to remain viable in this changing world. And that if there exists a mismatch or misfit the likelihood of an institutional decline or demise is apparent (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 372).

1.7. Justification for the Research

Consistent evidence shows that institutions built or revamped by donor agencies or funded interventions in almost all contexts, particularly in fragile and post-conflict communities is positive only in the short-term but, on the whole, discouraging in terms of durable change. The expectation is that foreign aid-funded institutions would outlive the funding period and continue with the bottom-up development planning strategy introduced by the CDD program. The magnitude of investment-human, material and financial, the pervasiveness of CDD philosophy and the significance of local institutions in development planning and governance, in particular, the multi-level planning processes. It is important to understand the reasons for this perpetual failure in sustaining local development institutions built/developed during donor-funded CDDP.

Wong (2012, p. viii) affirms the importance of understanding the sustainability problems of local institutions as well as their linkages with government agencies and private sector actors. According to her data on the sustainability problem of the “software” investments of CDDPs is missing or scanty in aid and institution building literature. In the concluding section of Wong’s (2012) article, she acknowledges the “growing need for more longitudinal studies examining longer-term impacts of the program and the sustainability of CDD investments” (pp. 52–53), and one such investment are the decentralised village development institutions called VDCs. In their critique of one of the notions underpinning CDDP’s operation, Adusei-Asante & Hancock (2012) express the need for future research focusing specifically on issues affecting the sustainable functioning of local institutions built/developed by CDDP in the program recipient-countries. Such study they argue should conduct a more realistic analysis of political systems (pp. 83 & 92). Local development planning institution’s ability to protect the inherent participatory right of citizens and the ability for better use of resources to meet community needs also makes it not only worthy but, timely to conduct this research. Thus, understanding how the internal capabilities and strategies of local development institutions and their external environment in terms of the sustainability issues they currently face is necessary.

1.8. Contributions to Knowledge and Practice

With the focus on potential factors within the local government environment and internal capability and strategy of village development planning institutions referred to as VDC in

search for an explanation for the sustainability problem of local development institutions, findings of this research would in no doubt add a fresher perspective to foreign aid and institution building/development literature. As of now, most institutional sustainability problems point to the character of the donor agencies involved in the business and the nature of institution-building itself. Thus, adding another dimension to the sustainability problems of donor-funded institutions in developing countries in general and in particular those of CDDP in fragile and post-conflict contexts is a welcoming development. Decentralised village development institutions such as VDCs which are the subjects of this study are created within the local governance and decentralisation framework/system to promote sustainability. Understanding the sustainability linkages between the internal competencies and strategies of these institutions on the one hand and their interaction with the various stakeholder groups in the local governance environment on the other would in no doubt contribute significantly not only to donor-funded institution-building and decentralisation literature but to development theory and practice in general.

The findings envisaged to not only contribute to the continued debate on foreign aid and institutional building but, to help improve the quality of CDDP design strategy and operation in the context of decentralised local governance in fragile and post-conflict contexts. Hopefully, the findings would enable supra-institutions, NGOs, governments, and local government councils to have a clear understanding of the kind of support needed for local institutions to be sustainable both structurally and functionally long after the end of international donor funding. The findings would contribute to the quest in the scholarly literature to better understand the pathways to sustained local governance reforms in terms of which factors-environmental, individual or organisational and so forth, are paramount to ensuring broad-based institutionalised local participation in development decision-making. The dissertation is also among the few studies that use SCOPE institutional sustainability framework. This analytical framework combines systems theory, contingency theory and political economy to analyse and report on its findings. There is no study to my knowledge which uses case study-mixed methods research with data collected from different contexts within a region and used SCOPE analytical framework to study institutional sustainability issues of CDDP in fragile and post-conflict situations.

1.9. Scope of the Study

The focus of the study in terms of the program is WB's West Africa CDDP. Data is collected from the program sites of the Gambia's CDDP implemented between 2007 and 2012, and the GoBifo¹ CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone executed between 2006 and 2009. The specific study areas in the Gambia are selected villages in the Kombo East and Central Districts of Brikama Local Government Area and in villages in Makeni Local Government Area, Northern Sierra Leone. The target group/populations are VDCs and households (men, women and youth-both male and female) of CDDP beneficiary villages. It also targeted the WDCs within which the selected villages fall, ward councillors, area council staff, the locally situated staff of central government, NGOs and CBOs operating within the local government area of the beneficiary villages. The research focuses on only the institution-building/development component of the CDDP.

¹ 'GoBifo' is a Krio (lingua franca in Sierra Leone) word meaning 'move forward' or 'forward march' (Sesay et. Al. 2010).

1.10. Chapter Outline

Chapter One: This section prepares the ground for the study by providing the background information about the study, the research problem, questions and objectives. The genesis of the research problem is presented, beginning with a global perspective to the local scenario, including the target group of the study. Research problem indicates what the problem is and explains with evidence of why and how it's a problem that requires an investigation. Discussion of research objectives provides one general purpose and specific goals. Next, the chapter provides a brief overview of the research methodology and the theoretical framework that guides data collection, analysis and discussion. It discusses the justification for the study illustrating why the research and its beneficiaries, the contributions it makes to knowledge. Finally, the scope of the investigation is presented in terms of target population or groups and geographical region are discussed.

Chapter Two: This part presents the review of the literature, both empirical and theoretical that are relevant to the research problem. It indicates what previous researchers in the fields of institution-building/development and sustainability and foreign aid and development support have done, the methodologies used and available gaps in the literature. Discussed also are relevant concepts to the understanding of donor-funded institutional building/development. Explored topics included approaches used, the sustainability problem, community-driven development and institution building, institutional sustainability in general and those of the local institutions selected as cases for this study, and social capital and its need for collective action in community development. A distinction is made in the chapter between confusing terms like institution-building and institutional development, local and rural, institution and organisation, understanding of what community means in development discuss.

Chapter Three: This segment is dedicated to the review of the conceptual/theoretical framework of the investigation. The first part of this section presents the SCOPE institutional sustainability framework, its propositions and the three theories that constitute the framework namely-the systems theory, contingency theory, and political economy. A brief presentation of each of the ideas is made. At the same time, the rest of the section discusses the SCOPE-model and how it was applied in the analysis of donor-funded programs and institutions in different developing country contexts around the world. The

chapter also discussed some institutional theories that are relevant to political science. Included are old institutionalism and the different variants of new institutionalism. It discusses their origin, propositions, key contributors, their definition and perception about the institutional formation, operation and change as well as overlaps and sharp disagreement of the various stands in the analysis of political science.

Chapter Four: This chapter presents the research design, which indicates the type of research, which is a case study research design. It explains case study-mixed methods design, a design where a case study researcher employs mixed methods design in data collection. Next, the section identifies the cases, the selection approaches used and justification. Different authorities in the field of research design are cited in the rationale for choosing the research type. Instruments used in data collection and data collection methods are mentioned, including the procedure used and pilot testing of tools. Finally documented in this chapter includes the data processing, analysis and reporting processes.

Chapter Five: This part provides the analysis of case background and context. The chapter has three sub-sections. The first one focuses on the overview of West Africa's social, political, and economic contexts; the second part presents the contexts of donor-funded CDDPs both at regional and community level (the general environment) while the final part looks at the decentralised governance environment within which decentralised local development planning institutions are formed and operate. Discussion in part one presents WB Africa region's new CDD vision; its CDDP strategy in West Africa sub-region and the institution-building/development approaches employed by donor-funded CDDP. Described next is the CDDP of the Gambia and GoBifo CDDP/R of Northern Sierra Leone. Part two focuses on the decentralized local governance and intergovernmental environment, which is the task environment of local institutions built or developed by donor agencies or their funded programs. Explained next is the institutional context of the decentralised governance system of the Gambia and Sierra Leone at national, regional, sub-regional and the community level, including the very decentralised development institutions studied as cases.

Chapter Six: This section presents the research findings and discussion. It is divided into three sub-sections which corresponds to the levels of analysis and discussions. The initial section separately outlines the raw data from the communities of Bombali and Brikama areas in the forms of tables and figures. A discussion of the data follows each table or

figure. The chapter again features the application of the SCOPE framework. Evidence from the general and task environments, together with the internal dimensions and strategies of the institutions deemed relevant in explaining their sustainability problem, are discussed in brief. In the final analysis, SCOPE analysis was applied to the West Africa case using evidence presented in the preceding sub-section to understand the non-sustainability characteristics of the donor of funded local development institution in light of the framework. Planning and decision-making relationships between VDCs, central government, other decentralised planning assemblies and organisations wrapped up the chapter. Finally discussed are the implications of research findings for donor-funded CDD institution building/development approach in fragile and post-conflict contexts. This section is sealed by indicating the challenges encountered in the study that could have limited that study.

Chapter Seven: This section presents the study summary, conclusions and recommendation. It provides readers with a brief overview of the entire study from the problem statement, objectives, cases, case selection technique, number of cases, data processing and analysis, key findings, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the review of both the empirical and academic literature deemed relevant to the understanding of the investigated problem. The chapter indicates the previous works by other researchers in the fields of institution-building/development, foreign aid, growth and development, donor driven-driven decentralisation reform programs, sustainability and institutional sustainability in general and in particular the local/village development institutions/VDCs. Also included is the critique of findings on institution development component of CDDP, the concept of community in development discuss, community-driven development concept and a distinction between local and rural.

2.1. Donor-Driven Decentralization Reform Programs

Donor agencies often support decentralisation reform programs in contexts where policies and related legislations, and priority areas for donor support and modalities for donor-government interactions are not well defined. In such contexts, donor agencies concurrently support decentralisation policy formulations and experiment planning programs (OECD, 2004). Donor support for decentralisation and local governance is characterised by attempts to secure autonomy for local governments. They ensure civil society actors are empowered to check local governments; and that central government can monitor, coordinate, and check on the local governments (Dickovick, 2014). Brinkerhoff (1990) argues that the institution-building experiment of USAID-funded Provincial Area Development Program (PDP) in Indonesia consisted of three components. These are: “(1) recruitment and training or retraining of staff; (2) development of accounting, supervision and auditing, reporting and classification procedures for the system as a whole; and (3) increased capitalization on a graduating scale based upon unit classification” (p. 92).

The dominance of the relationship by any of the three sets of actors mentioned by Dickovick (2014) above, will impact local governance negatively. Design for decentralisation reform program requires countervailing forces to balance the powers of local governments, local civil society and the central governments (Dickovick, 2014). Instead of merely empowering local government councils, donor initiatives should aim at striking a balance between local government autonomy and their accountability to other

actors through working to ensure complementarity in the correlation of forces. Decentralised governance administration expects to empower local people for active participation in decision-making processes, transfer real power both vertically and horizontally and responsibilities to local-level governments and/ assemblies for efficient and effective service delivery (Muhumuza, 2008). Since the 1990s, one of the key priority areas of international development assistance in fragile and post-conflict contexts has been to improve governance. Remedying poor governance as the primary cause of underdevelopment is crucial for unlocking progress in the developing world. Among the issues identified under the general rubric of how to improve governance is institution building/development. Despite the slight variations in their understanding of the concept of governance, broadly, however, the different donor agency definitions of the terms converged around “the exercise of authority over a country’s economic, political, and social affairs” (Carothers & de Gramont, 2011, p. 3).

The Democracy Initiative of the USAID in 1990 connects decentralisation to both democratization and political empowerment (Ott, 1996). It considers “the explicit political benefits of decentralization and its relationship to democratization” (Ott, 1996, p. 11). Earlier the focus of decentralization programs was on “improved efficiency in the provision of services, particularly to rural populations, rather than on the devolution of political power to the local governmental units” (ibid). Ott (1996) concludes that political objective was the concern for relative newness of projects while recent efforts tend to focus on the “governance” (i.e. efficiency) component of decentralization rather than the democracy (political empowerment) component” (ibid). Considering the multiplicity of regime types that have made attempts to decentralise governance suggest not just the presence of a diversity of influence, but the presence of a variety of motives and goals that inform the decision to undertake decentralisation reforms (Manor, 1999). However, “it must be remembered” according to Tordoff (1994) that many developing countries had “experienced some form of decentralization before becoming independent” (p. 556). According to Tordoff (1994) in numerous African countries “authority was delegated from the centre to administrative officers in the field; they enjoyed wide discretionary powers and, in the terminal stages of colonial rule, coordinated the operations of specialists in agriculture, veterinary affairs, health, and education” (ibid).

While the preferred administrative system of French was “prefectural” where local governments are regarded as either an extension or instrument of the centre, the British had conferred administrative authority on district officers and devolved political power to local institutions with some form of autonomy. From the 1920s, according to Tordoff (1994), the British introduced indirect rule system of governance where native authorities enjoyed some form of autonomy and from the 1940s introduced local authorities with an increased number of elected representatives. The fact that decentralization takes additional power away from the already weak states Ott (1996) argues can have profound implications in Africa, in contrast to Europe where countries are unable to penetrate and have control over society. As a result of such a reason, “it seems probable that attempts at decentralization in these states while giving greater local political control may also result in increased fragmentation and political instability at the national level” (p. 10).

Evidence from Africa’s decentralization projects shows diversity circumstances in the implementation of decentralisation support programs (Ott, 1996). In their attempt to effect institutional change in fragile and post-conflict contexts, multi-and bilateral donor agencies often provide aid in the form of projects designed to improve governance and participatory decision-making. In such a context, individual institutions are targeted directly for change or transplant (Fritzen, 2007b). Donor investment or support to institutional building/development is made with the hope that overtime developing country governments would have to undertake policy and institutional reforms processes by themselves and finance projects that would affect preferences to induce lasting institutional change (Islam, 2018). As part of their institution-building/development plan, international donor agencies provide technical and financial assistance to decentralisation reform processes and capacity building for local governments. To deepen and sustain decentralisation, donor agencies offer support to developing country governments to create enabling legal, political and policy environments (Romeo, 2003; OECD, 2004). The form of support provided by donor agencies in a given country depends on the stage of her reform process.

Donor agencies support for decentralisation reform programs in developing countries has been observed in the areas of political, fiscal and administrative devolution of power and responsibility including the building of mechanisms for local government accountability (OECD 2004). Dickovick (2014) observes that donors fund decentralisation

programs/policies aimed at subnational autonomy. The support seeks independence in terms of powers, resources, and responsibilities and the responsiveness of subnational actors in the areas of development and improved governance. Through support for enhanced capacity and accountability, donors help to improve the responsiveness of subnational actors to their constituents. In developing countries, foreign aid donors support for decentralization reform programs is observed in the following areas: drafting of decentralization laws and regulations, funding of capacity building projects (Winters 2012). All of which aims for enhanced service delivery and resources mobilisation.

In the Gambia donor support for decentralization reforms is captured in the following areas: funding for regular local government elections, improving access to information, and to foster deliberative decision-making mechanisms on the demand side. While on the supply front assistance was rendered in the form of capacity enhancement for local governments and their decentralised development planning structures in the areas of coordination, development planning, and service provision (Ceesay, 2019, p. 181). As part of its long-term development strategy/approach, the US Treasury Department provides state-building and institution-strengthening assistance through two distinct activities: organizational and functional.

The Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance (OTA) offers technical expert advisors usually based within local institutions, and financial attachés who are based at the U.S. embassies and act as economic policy officials/diplomats (Pam, 2008). Review of literature shows that the focus of the European Commission's (EC) support to decentralisation policy development or good governance program is in the areas of rural development or urban management. The support targets a diversity of actors including civil society, central government agencies, local governments and their associations. In some countries, EC's approaches to decentralisation and local governance are in the form of budget support. Analysis of existing support programs reveals that EC's strategies in some countries are well-conceived and properly coordinated while in others assistance is less comprehensive and appears somehow more fragmented (EuropeAid, 2007).

Donor agencies that support fiscal decentralisation help countries develop necessary legal frameworks and institutions in the form of finance commissions for instance and to assist in the design and implementation of grants systems including capacity-building support to local governments (OECD, 2004). Donor support for system development activities in the

field of fiscal decentralisation includes local government taxation and revenue-raising; bilateral support to district assistance programs in the form of capacity building of local governments on finance management; and help to capital investments/capacity building in a large number of local governments. Donors have also supported the setting up of critical institutions like local government finance commissions that are crucial for intergovernmental relationships (ibid). In the area of enhanced local accountability, donors fund training programs for elected representatives like the ward councillors and informal political entities to ensure their active participation. They also set up where applicable and trained local development planning institutions to participate in multilevel development planning and implementation processes. Through the holding of regular meetings with their constituencies, ward councillors become accountable to them. Besides, broadening popular accountability and the strengthening of the accountability mechanisms between local governments and citizens, donor agencies have also supported NGOs and CBOs. Findings of OECD (2004) show that many donor agencies combine capacity building efforts of councillors, participatory planning methods and support to local government financial management systems with capacity strengthen efforts of civil society groups.

The Motivation for Decentralisation and Local Governance

Decentralisation is not a recent phenomenon on the continent of Africa because the practice has been on since the 1980s and 1990s as part of WB's infamous structural adjustment package (SAP) the aim of which was said to promote effective use of resources and to address local needs. Part of the conditionalities of SAP/access to foreign aid in developing countries was the devolution of political, fiscal and administrative powers to autonomous local authorities (Muriisa, 2008). Countries differ markedly from one another regarding their motivation for decentralisation. There is a combination of factors that explain a country's decision to devolve authority and responsibilities from the centre to the local level (Manor, 1999, p. 26).

WB's push for decentralisation in developing countries was to tackle some identified ills of centralised governments like corruption, clientelism and political alienation. Countries and regions vary in their motivation for decentralisation (Muriisa, 2008). In general, in the 1970s decentralisation arose in most developing countries "out of the dissatisfaction with the centralised systems of national planning and administration that were the by-products

of former colonial systems” (ibid, p. 85). Motives for decentralisation reforms in less developed countries, according to Manor (1999) are as diverse as there are the regime types. Reasons for decentralisation reforms include 1) the degeneration of patronage systems and ruling parties in meeting the demands of their constituents; 2) technological innovations and flexibility and capacity it gives to small enterprises to compete with larger companies and to quickly respond to changing conditions and consumer needs; and 3) increasing pressure from Western donor agencies to promote good governance in developing countries in the early 1980s and their shift of emphases away from large-scale development programs to more modest, microlevel/grassroots communities projects coupled with the growing suspicion that integrated rural development programs/centralised governments had severe shortcomings.

Other push factors for decentralisation reforms in developing nations in the 1980s are the following. 1) The decrease in the dominance of Keynesian (political development/modernization school) and Leninist approaches (dependency theory) in political and economics analyses of less developed countries: 2) the increasing popularity of new modes of study, such as institutional research approaches to the public policy pursued by public choice approaches together with specialists in public finance and advocates of the new institutional economics (Manor 1999). Added to these are 1) the opportunity democratic decentralization appeared to pressure central governments into off-loading their obligations onto local- and intermediate-level bodies and to facilitate cuts in public expenditure; 2) the collapse of Soviet system and the end of the Cold War, and 3) the disintegration of USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) are yet other push factors for decentralisation in developing nations mentioned in the literature.

Decentralisation in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries is motivated by benefits of political transformation or a transition from a system where few citizens were involved in decision-making processes to where many could take part in the process of decision making (Muriisa, 2008). While in Sri Lanka and South Africa decentralisation is practised as a response to ethnic and regional conflicts, in Uganda, Chile and Cote D'Ivoire it was carried out to improve service delivery (ibid). Manor (1999) casts doubt on the role of the recent surge of ethnic conflict (citing the cases of Sri Lanka in 1995, South Africa and Nigeria) in encouraging decentralisation. Due to the scarcity of “recent evidence, there seems little reason to see ethnic tension as an important spur to decentralization” (p. 34).

Decentralisation is praised for its ability to provide an institutional framework through which divided groups/communities are brought into “a formal, rule-bound bargaining process” thus serving as a path to national unity (Muriisa, 2008, p. 85).

The nature, extent, and pace of decentralization reform programs are contingent on certain domestic political economy variables of the central government decision making processes. These variables include the diverse motivations pursued by elected politicians and national-level bureaucrats. Incentives faced by elected politicians are as electoral, partisan, institutional, and coalitional. In contrast, those of bureaucrats relate to the ways or manners or means through which to consolidate institutional power, improve career trajectories, and check rival agencies (Eaton et al., 2011). In developing countries, the push for decentralisation reforms rather than driven by concerns for efficiency in local-level service delivery tends to be guided predominantly by either external pressures or central level political motives. External stress comes from external aid agencies who are motivated by their desire to ensure efficient service delivery and the practice of participatory democracy at the local level (Romeo, 2003).

In Mozambique for instance, the granting of more autonomy to lower levels of government as part of a broader motivation of improving state capacity to deliver services and to re-establish the legitimacy of government institutions at the local level. In Zimbabwe, the push for decentralisation was triggered first by the desire of the new ZANU(PF) government and party officials to parallel the party structure established during their liberation struggle. Secondly, and to replace the “illegitimate” traditional authority system which involved chiefs and headmen who had collaborated with the former Rhodesian regime. In South Africa, the main drivers are the suitability of local-level governments in undertaking many functions more effectively and the desire of the national government to “relieve itself of existing, or potential, fiscal pressure and administrative responsibilities” (Team SLSA, 2003, p. 84). In the Gambia, however, decentralisation reform was motivated by the desire to strengthen local democracy and citizen participation in local governance (Ceesay, 2019). While in Sierra Leone, the objective of reintroducing elected LCs in 2004 was to promote democracy, good, accountable and inclusive governance and to foster local economic development and improved service delivery.

Review of literature shows that decentralization is facilitated more or less by three conditions, two of which reflect central government incentives and the third one is the

motivation by the non-state actors. Channa and Faguet (2016) argue that although the basis to decentralise no doubt differ across countries, however, “improved delivery of public goods has been at least an implicit goal of most reforms, and usually an explicit one” (p. 201). The first and the most important is the regime level incentive aimed at addressing regime stability or what Dickovick (2014) calls “security imperative” to avoid regime collapse. The government-level motivation is the second; here it’s the short-term contingent opportunity of the ruling government/party in the form of partisan or electoral advantage. The third possibility is motivated by non-state actors, including donors which is much less likely to result in robust decentralization.

Romeo (2003) argues decentralisation reforms in sub-Saharan Africa, are driven principally by central level political motives which includes an attempt by a dominant/ruling party to extend its influence on the local level. Or an effort at the community level to counter political threats coming from ethnically based opposition forces. These are achieved respectively through the creation of a new layer of political personnel or to break the regional base of ethnically based opposition forces into multiple jurisdictions. In contrast, Muhumuza (2008) credits African rulers’ desperate need for foreign aid due to economic and legitimacy crises that challenged their different states for their acceptance of public sector reforms. He concludes that support for decentralization reforms in Africa is amply explained by “the convergence of interests of Western donors and African rulers” (p. 60).

Motivational experiences of decentralisation in developing countries show various reasons as responsible for the transfer of power, responsibilities and finances from central to local governments. Political reasons or as part of a country’s political transition to democracy as in the case of Latin America are mostly the motivations; as part of the general economic and political transformation as experienced in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam; as a response to ethnic and regional conflicts resolution mechanism such as in South Africa, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka; or a strategy to improve the delivery of health and education services as in the case of Chile, Uganda and Cote d’Ivoire (Couttolenc, 2012). Whatever its principal motivation are, “improving social services delivery through strengthening incentives of government agents” is a vital component of the decentralisation reform agenda (ibid, p. 13).

Justification for decentralisation in Tordoff's (1994) view includes the confidence that popular participation is essential in ensuring realistic and locally support projects. And the conviction in the inherent inefficiency of centralised decisions making and over-tight controls, particularly in situations of poor communications and transport facilities, high levels of poverty and illiteracy and in communities divided along linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural lines. Dickovick (2014) identifies some kind of political duress such as a threat to national stability or the desire of central governments to have strong footholds/to extend patronage down to actors at the local level for future electoral advantage. Dickovick (2014) argues that the extent of decentralization "relates directly to the extent of central government incentives to decentralize, and only indirectly with the efforts of donors" (p. 199).

The motivation for foreign assistance is either for security concerns or to facilitate/secure trade and investment interests of donor countries abroad. Donor support for decentralisation in Africa "is largely driven by ideological interests, such as the need to spread liberal values". In contrast, the embracing of donor-driven decentralization reforms by African rulers is motivated by "the need for political self-preservation" rather than the desire to genuinely "transform state-society relations" (Muhumuza, 2008, p. 60). In most part, the essential motivation for EC support for domestic decentralisation and local governance reforms processes in the various parts of the world is twofold: poverty reduction through improved social service delivery and governance reforms (EuropeAid, 2007). The two well-established motivations for foreign aid provision, Winters (2012) states are "geostrategic and commercial reasons" (security concerns and the desire to facilitate trade and investment) (p. 320). Contrary to the popular motivation of community empowerment, in most of the cases, the support for decentralisation by either the donor community or rulers of Africa has been motivated by "self-serving political interests as opposed to the genuine desire to empower the African people" (Muhumuza, 2008, p. 62).

African rulers are often driven by "selfish political motives" like "economic and political survival" or for the renewal of "political legitimacy" at the community level (ibid, p. 63). In contrast, donors are driven by "ideological interests" such as "multiparty political systems and market-driven economic systems" (ibid, p. 62). For Muhumuza (2008) decentralization reforms in Africa should be viewed as more or less "a tactical weapon used by both external and internal actors to serve their selfish strategic interests". In this

view, Africans are nothing but “pawns in the chess game of good governance reforms that have remained a phantom” (p. 63). Politically motivated decentralisation reform programs often fall short of empowering elected LCs established for adequate administrative and fiscal transfers (Romeo, 2003).

In the year the 2000s, decentralisation mostly in the rural districts (Hydén, 2016) means officially granting local government authorities with more power without adequate financial and human resources capacity to match the newly acquired powers. Hydén (2016) notices that such discrepancy is much more drastic in Africa where “it’s not unusual that central governments assign more functions to local government level than what can be financed from own sources at this level” (p. 6). Although Muhumuza (2008) as argued above would disagree, however, Romeo (2003) believes it is such problematic contexts of countries in sub-Saharan Africa that motivate external aid agencies to intervene and support decentralisation reforms and to build up the capacity of local governments.

Inconsistencies in Donor Support for Decentralisation Reforms

International aid agencies develop programs managed at sectoral and multisectoral levels. A number of these interventions have some degree or possibility of involving local governments in the delivery of financed service. In contrast, others ensure local governments and communities have direct access to financial resources and technical assistance. In spite of providing substantial financial resources for the delivery of infrastructure and services at the local level, external aid to decentralisation reforms is plagued with several limitations and contradictions (Romeo, 2003; World Bank & Manor, 2006). As a concept that is subjected to a wide range of interpretations and alternative goal specifications, articulating or creating clarity of purpose in decentralised programming is one fundamental failure that is associated with donor planners. As observed by (Fritzen, 2007a) donor planners often “fail to articulate clearly (for themselves internally and others externally) justifications for the structure of a ‘country program’” (p. 16).

To build/develop constructive institutions for sustainable development, governments and donors would often create special administrative agencies at higher-than-local levels that operate alongside and bypass conventional bureaucratic structures. Similarly, to facilitate consultation with residents, they would create new committees or bodies at or near the local level, which also operate alongside elected councils at or just above the local level. It

is no doubt that parallel agencies and bodies enhance the political legitimacy of governments and performs urgent tasks in emergencies necessary to meet vital human needs and in saving lives; however, “if these parallel agencies and bodies are kept separate from mainstream bureaucratic agencies and elected bodies over the long term, they can prevent the latter from developing an administrative and political order that provides, at a minimum, adequate governance” (World Bank & Manor, 2006, p. 19)

Sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) used to finance social sector development, and the widespread Social Investment Funds (SFs) form part of the first category of support to sectoral decentralisation (Romeo, 2003). Bypassing of established government structures through the setting up of parallel agencies with separate funding from mainstream government agencies is the hallmark of social funds. Social fund approaches are designed to bypass seriously damaged government structures and avoid government malfeasance or lack of sufficient fund management capacity to undermine efforts to address the severe problems encountered in fragile states or as emergency measures (World Bank & Manor, 2006). However, whenever “social funds become a long-term feature of the landscape, as has occurred across much of Asia and especially Africa, they tend to sustain the incapacity of state institutions-both administrative institutions and elected bodies” (ibid, p. 20).

Sustained separation partly or wholly of the administrative instruments that used to manage social funds away from the established bureaucratic structures of governments would undermine efforts to address government wrongdoing. In contrast, the passing of substantial funds through special agencies associated with social funds instead of government administrations with severe resource shortages tends to undermine the morale within them and perpetuate the lack of adequate fund management capacity. Similarly, making funds available to social funds when local elected bodies are grabbling with severe resources shortages compound the problems for elected bodies as they struggle to acquire legitimacy. Such practices do not only undermine fragile and post-conflict governments institutions but the entire reform process.

Elected bodies’ inability to fulfil their unfunded or underfunded mandates is vividly dramatized to local residents when those bodies stand alongside well-resourced committees associated with social funds. These residents naturally tend to become dismissive of elected local bodies. (World Bank & Manor, 2006, p. 20)

User committees or stakeholder committees² are yet another result of donor programs within individual sectors with destructive impact comparable to that of social funds on elected local bodies. Often these committees fragment collective efforts within localities and make coordination difficult as often they too “undermine the legitimacy of badly underfunded elected bodies that are supposed to deal with multiple sectors” (ibid, p. 21). World Bank and Manor (2006) argue for committees associated with social funds to be regarded as structures for providing initial emergency responses to urgent needs. Overtime these committees “should be integrated with mainstream state structures, particularly elected bodies at or just above the local level” (p. 21). Experience from developing countries like Uganda, Mozambique, Cambodia, and Afghanistan “has shown that giving elected bodies significant influence or full control over these parallel institutions can produce benefits” (ibid, p. 21). Similarly, supporting evidence that emerged from the country, as mentioned above, shows that:

Linking user committees (which tend to be unelected or “elected” through processes that are less rigorous and genuine than those used to choose local councils) with local councils (which have greater democratic legitimacy) provides community-driven development with solid, unified institutional support. Such support increases the likelihood that community-driven development will be coherent and sustained. (ibid, p. 21)

Dickovick (2014) notice that there is “a potential for either complementarity or conflictual relationships between donor initiatives” (p. 196). Central government incentives issues and the potential counteracting donor initiatives seem to be the two significant challenges confronting donor support for decentralisation reforms in developing countries. Notwithstanding the popularity of and rhetoric surrounding decentralisation reform agenda among international donor agencies, increasingly there is a growing concern for the lack of consistency in their support for the reform programs (Dickovick, 2014; Romeo, 2003). Unfortunately, central to the policy dialogues between major international aid agencies and developing country governments are often the issues of macro-economic and sectoral policy rather than decentralisation. While some donor-funded programs explicitly support decentralisation reforms, others either ignore or contradict the programs altogether. The

² Examples are parent-teacher associations, mothers’ clubs, water users’ committees, joint forest management committees

hasty and incomplete nature of many decentralisation reforms result in the lack of a strategic plan to guide the gradual implementation and the inherent limitation of local government ministries, their related departments and agencies tasked to manage the process (Romeo, 2003).

In their assistance to decentralisation reforms, donors don't have a systematic approach in addressing legal, fiscal and institutional frameworks and in building local government incentive system (OECD, 2004). Findings of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2004) show that very few donor agencies provided systemic support to both the central government and the local governments at the same time which affects the necessary synergy effects. Donor agencies also didn't build capacity and transfer of development investment at the same time. Donor support for the development of local government finance systems is equally fragmented, scattered and lacks an overall strategy or action plan. Donors didn't coordinate the development of grants systems support with the development of systems of local government taxation while failing to link databases to local government intergovernmental transfers systems (OECD, 2004, p. 37). Poor coordination and the lack of systemic approach hindered progress in external support to decentralisation. Instead of taking a systemic approach, elements of the systemic policy and institutional development are selected to develop projects and programs to address issues in a piecemeal fashion.

The compartmentalisation of decentralisation reform programs "along intra-organisational and professional lines of the technical expertise and financial support within major international agencies" further aggravate the absence of a systemic approach. Thus, tending to produce "fragmented and competing interventions that are ineffective or counter-productive with respect to the integrated changes that must be introduced to move forward the decentralisation agenda and build LG capacity" (Romeo, 2003, p. 92). External interventions in the development of normative legal decentralisation framework usually, provide policy and technical advice. However, they:

Seldom support strategic implementation of reforms nor do they systematically link to complementary 'downstream' activities often concurrently financed by the same external agencies. The design of downstream projects is usually left to sectoral planners or urban/rural development experts with limited understanding of, and interest in, systemic public sector reform. (ibid, p. 93)

The efficiency of donor agency support for decentralisation reforms is also limited by the variations in their actions and preferences for the type of local government autonomy, capacity and patterns of accountability. While some donors focus on the downward accountability of local governments to local citizens, others strengthen their upward accountability to the central governments. Dickovick (2014) observes that the quantity/sum of decentralisation/LC autonomy is affected by the quality of decentralised governance or responsiveness, which in itself depends on a certain meaningful degree on local government autonomy. Smoke (2015) notices competition among donor agencies, including across different government departments. Where one donor would be “supporting a national agency promoting decentralization and another supporting a different national agency promoting a public sector reform-financial, management, civil service, or sector specific-that undermines the autonomy of local governments” (p. 103). Such practices of donor agencies are likely to not only strengthen rivalries among different government departments and reform programs but also the tendency of contributing to decentralization policies and systems in some aid-dependent countries that are inconsistent.

Smoke (2015) admits that for long, many donors have “parallel mechanisms that were not politically and institutionally sustainable” (p. 103). Added to this, is the propensity to draw on experiences from different contexts and endorsement of inappropriate or difficult reforms for other nations to implement successfully (Smoke, 2015). Hydén (2016) is equally surprised at how the literature on Africa’s decentralization has paid little attention to both the contextual and structural differences between Europe and Africa. He faults political economy literature in particular for analysing issues underlying policymaking and how African economies operate with Western market lens/outlook. This practice tends to eclipse the peculiarities of the political economy of African countries. Hydén (2016) states that governance institutions in African are “syncretic in the sense that they combine elements of both Western and local norms and values. There is no specific mix of these two elements that make them effective. They are continuously in flux” (p. 9).

Institutional weaknesses, capacity limitations, and ineffective coordination can result in problematic relationships among national agencies, across elements of public sector reforms and among donor programs (Smoke 2015). He is, however, convinced that “they are often rooted in the types of political economy considerations (...) the incentives of

various (often unevenly empowered) actors to pursue different and perhaps incompatible objectives” (pp. 103–104). Included in the various actors are international development partners who are also challenged by specific incentives that influence their performance and the way they interact with their peers and country counterparts. Designing decentralisation programs in situations where improved responsiveness and accountability involve tightening constraints on local governments, donor agencies are faced with trade-offs between promoting local government autonomy against efforts to improve their responsiveness and accountability.

The definition and goals of USAID’s decentralization programs in Africa evolved from the idea of resource mobilisation for development to a means of improving governance and public accountability challenges on the continent (Ott, 1996). One of the two ways in which such situations arise is in the vertical dimension of accountability where “support for decentralizing functions contradicts sectoral efforts at central government coordination or national systems of public financial management” (Dickovick, 2014, p. 203). The participation of LGs in the contractual financing mechanism of the SFs where they are looked at as central government agents are seen as “alternative rather than complementary to devolution of fiscal powers and development of general-purpose transfers” (Romeo, 2003, p. 93). When SFs have adequate resources (human and financial) and newly extended systems and procedures, they “displace state agencies (...) whose central mandate is to build LG capacity and monitor LG performance in managing local planning and budgeting” (ibid). Such a practice seriously obstructs the strategic implementation of sustainable decentralisation reforms as it results in the absence of appropriate capacity development for critical ministries, department and agencies.

Dickovick (2014) realises that often while some donors push for substantial devolution of sectoral decision making to local levels at local government ministries, others invest in empowering ministries of finance to control intergovernmental transfers to local officials. A similar situation is observed in donor support within major public service sectors or line ministries. Where donor agencies in support of autonomy would encourage the devolution of responsibilities and sectoral personnel to the local level/push for decentralized human resource management. In contrast, those in support of upward accountability would assist in developing systems that ensure central coordination of budgeting and planning and single national civil service (Dickovick, 2014, 2013). Many donors that support the

devolution of responsibilities to local governments advocate increasingly for the use of SWAPs as aid coordination and budgetary support in the social sectors. However, (Romeo, 2003) observes that these approaches “tend to bypass local government planning and decision-making processes” and instead involves them “in contractual arrangements with central and deconcentrated state agencies for co-provision of services” (p. 93). In some instances, SWAPs compete for decentralisation resources directly with local governments.

The development of sectoral programmes redirected resources previously allocated to sub-national authorities to provide counterpart funds to donor-supported SWAPs. This resulted in the re-centralisation of the planning, financing and implementation of line agency programmes in the provinces. (Romeo, 2003, p. 93)

Although SFs are mechanisms that are often saluted for their support to decentralisation and capacity building for local institutions. In practice as (Romeo, 2003) observes SFs act as centralised agencies that implement national policies but do not support operating expenditures. Often SFs have restricted pre-planned sectoral investment options with specific design, construction standards and procurement procedures. Instead “many SFs bypass LGs, inviting applications for funds directly from community groups” (ibid). Although increasingly the new generation of SFs are working through local governments; however, implementation of significant priorities often remains their primary objective where constrained resources are made available to local communities.

If local governments are effectively bypassed and remain under-funded and institutionally under-developed, individual citizens and community groups will have no incentive to engage in the local political process and to demand transparent and accountable management of local public resources. (Romeo, 2003, p. 94)

Many donor agencies claim to support a decentralisation model where they provide LGs with “resources for autonomous development and implementation of local policies” (ibid). However, SFs local financing, planning, programming, budgeting and implementation systems and procedures are designed to implement centralised priorities (Romeo, 2003). Often SF systems and methods “focus on investment, ignoring a function of LGs that is critical for sustainability, the preparation and approval of annual budgets” (ibid). The failure of central governments to treat the need for the full implementation of fiscal decentralisation reforms with the urgency it deserves is related to the superficial focus of

some SFs on LGs in terms of the transfer of resources to the community level. Local government councils, Dickovick (2014) finds out, often have limited control over community-level civil servants. Which is because of the reluctance of the central governments to decentralise personnel due to their desire “to control patronage opportunities, defend their political prerogatives”, or genuine concern about local governments’ limited administrative, resource mobilisation and management capacity (p. 203). This limitation can also be caused by the reluctance of civil servants themselves to become the employees of LCs due to the fear of “reduced pay and benefits, and less control over postings” and their desire to work toward higher posts at the national level in cities rather than remain posted in remote rural areas (ibid).

The second trade-off observed at the local level politics by Dickovick (2014) happens where support for decentralisation reform alter the relations between civil society organisations (CSOs) and local governments. To ensure local government accountability and to countervail local rent-seeking or elite capture issues, actors outside the local governments such as the CSOs are necessary. However, care must be taken as these local non-state actors can also counter LC autonomy through seeking personal gains from projects or rent-seeking behaviour, for instance (p. 204). In most sub-Saharan African countries, for example, customary/traditional authorities “earn greater trust than local governments, with the latter viewed as contributing little to local development”. Despite creating a local governance track record for themselves in such contexts, actors outside local governments would become beneficial when they are “public-service minded NGOs and CSOs”. However, over time, they too may “supplant or marginalize local governments, or stunt the development of local electoral accountability” (Dickovick, 2014, p. 204).

CDD approach becomes the third typology of ‘downstream’ projects in foreign aid agencies’ support of decentralisation reforms. After SWAPs and SFs the first and second categories respectively of support to sectoral decentralisation (Romeo, 2003). Included in this support is “a new generation of rural/area development projects that stress community participation in local-level resource allocations and establish demand-driven rural investment facilities” (ibid, p. 94). The practice of financing community groups through LGs is to ensure operational sustainability and durable involvement of LGs in community development. Two ways that contribute to undermining the downward accountability of LGs to their communities are the continued direct “donors finance grassroots

organisations”. And the rigid management of “resources that pass to them through LGs- for infrastructure and services that LGs should provide or co-provide” (Romeo, 2003, p. 94).

A review of literature has shown that it’s rare to sustain high levels of participatory engagement of citizens in a situation where local governments have limited resources and responsibilities. Citizens participate more willingly where local governments “are more consequential”. Thus, central governments that severely restrict local government autonomy could equally compromise their capacity to respond to local needs (Dickovick, 2014, p. 203). Hydén (2016) observes that the confidence communities have for their local institutions would decline when local government authorities are granted officially with more power with inadequate financial and human resources capacity that match their newly achieved powers. And when central governments and donor agencies become sources of funding for local government authorities rather than the local population. All these happen because local communities “contribute little to their development, they have taken little interest in elections of councillors or holding officials accountable” (p. 6).

Sharing their experience with donor-funded projects in the field of agriculture and rural development Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) notice an occasional discrepancy between the objectives of development assistance and what is done on the ground by development practitioners. According to Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990), the aim of development assistance in the fields of agricultural and rural development is to alter “a village society’s fundamental rules”. Which is done “by promoting tenure reform and land redistribution” however, while seeking to build better institutions, what development practitioners usually have in mind is “the role-oriented organisational definition” (p. 12). The focus of development community on “role-oriented, organised activities” Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) argue results in confusion as institutions in such sense can be loosely used to mean “any formal or semi-formal collective entity” (p. 12). Donor-driven decentralisation support interventions in the most part are often designed based on the transfer of models from another context. EuropeAid expresses the need to replace the ‘one-size-fits-all’ models with the ‘right’ policy mix and calls for country specificity approaches (p. 33). Similarly, Hydén (2016) faults the decentralization approaches employed by donors of being generally “more prescriptive than analytical, more focused on theory or blueprints than practice and reality” (p. 8).

While adapting their assistance strategies to the different developing country contexts international donor agencies are confronted with three critical challenges in their operations including 1) coping with the variety of governance contexts that range from failing to comparatively strong states and democratic to authoritarian systems; 2) the swift and often rapid nature of the institutional change which makes long term planning difficult; and 3) the changing modalities of donor support (Fritzen, 2007a). Whereas Fritzen (2007a) acknowledges the substantial capacity and strategic challenges donor agencies face while linking ‘upstream³’ and ‘downstream⁴’ avenues of assistance. Romeo (2003) commenting on the linking of the two streams recommends for new and significant partnership arrangements between decentralising governments and their external partners. The ever-changing trajectory in the relations between central and local governments is one extreme environmental changes confronting donor community and which affects the impact of their mission and their continued support to communities (Fritzen, 2007a). For decades numerous donor agencies operating in different countries have strongly advocated for decentralisation reforms with a wide variety of motives. However, most of such reforms often fell far short of expectations due to reasons like elite capture and the tendency of decentralisation reforms broadening the disparities amongst different local government entities in terms of fiscal and administrative performance (Team SLSA⁵, 2003; Fritzen, 2007a).

There is universal recognition of donor coordination and the incorporation of central governments in decentralization support programs. Yet there exist “potentially conflicting assumptions or worldviews” among donors on how to involve central governments in decentralization. Dickovick (2014) states that “insofar as a substantial degree of autonomy is a requisite for responsiveness, conflicting donor initiatives may cut against the functioning of decentralization” (p. 204). Political-economic inefficiencies resulting from the harmonisation problem of donor agencies distorts incentives. Competition among donors for instance, “allows national governments to play donors off of each other, reducing the effectiveness of conditionality and perhaps hindering reform within a country” (Winters, 2012, p. 309). Likely it could create a possibility for government officials who receive pay from donors or their projects to favour those donors/projects even

³ Support to national decentralisation reform framework

⁴ Assistance to local governments

⁵ Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa

at the detriment of the interests or policy choices of their governments. Some of the negative implications that foreign aid recipient governments experience from the perspective of the new institutional economics are increased transaction costs, economic and planning inefficiencies, political-economic inefficiencies (Winters, 2012). All of which are the result of foreign aid harmonization problem (also see Winckler Andersen & Therkildsen, 2007). Every donor agency often has its customised project negotiation strategies, procurement processes, financial management systems, auditing, monitoring and evaluation system. Having to entertain and interact with different project missions and management units from separate donors directly certainly would increase the transaction costs for recipient countries.

Taking, for instance, all the foreign donors operating in a particular country altogether could mean several field visits from the donor/agent(s). It also means dealing with individual donor projects and ensure sustained relationships with an assortment of agencies. The presence of multiple donors in a specific sector in a single country wouldn't only overstretch and divert the attention of senior government personnel but consume the valuable time and energy they would have spent on their daily functions. Winters (2012) states that dealing with different project missions and management units from separate donors directly divert "the attention of government officials from other matters and can easily imply duplication and hence waste of the government's human and financial resources" (p. 319). Foreign aid recipient countries find it problematic to track the total foreign aid inflow into their country, track the activities of the different donor agencies and to prepare budgets that incorporate this information. The cause of which is the economic and planning inefficiencies induced by a lack of harmonization/coordination of donor programs.

The failure of donors to coordinate their agendas with each other results in regional imbalances of development assistance in a country which has the possibility of inhibiting widespread poverty alleviation or equitable economic growth. Excessive concentration of donors in specific sectors or geographic regions creates the scenario of "aid darlings" and "aid orphans" within a country. Failing to harmonise "with each other, donors can undermine their ostensible long-term development objectives" (Winters, 2012, p. 309). The use of foreign assistance to either address security concerns or to facilitate or secure trade and investment interests abroad provides donors with a strong incentive not to

harmonize with each other. And instead “exercise single agency control over projects to ensure that the projects are recognized as coming from that particular donor and perhaps to ensure that the activities of the project result in specific outputs” (Winters, 2012, p. 320).

Program harmonisation problem among national aid agencies is caused by the presence of different local organizations as well, both for-profit and nonprofit with distinct intervention areas. Bureaucratic incentives within aid agencies are other barriers to harmonisation/coordination. The difficulty in changing the individualised standard operating procedures of donor agencies set at their various headquarters hinders harmonisation efforts at the recipient country level. Different donors have dissimilar financial, auditing or monitoring and evaluation requirements prescribed by their head offices for control and command. Due to the career-threatening possibility for in-country bureaucrats and the likely tension it could create between the field staff and headquarters, in-country bureaucrats find it challenging to make attempts at harmonizing donor activities. The absence of incentive in terms of pay and promotion for pursuing harmonization activities is another discourages factor. The amount of time required to coordinate harmonisation activities with others compared to those of their traditional programming in themselves is another (Winters, 2012).

The enforcement of aid conditionality also limits the interest of aid recipient governments which therefore hinders coordination among development partners. When donors become too harmonised the possibility for them to become very useful in coordinating both the standardisation and enforcement of aid conditionality is high, thus, limiting the independence of the government (Winters, 2012). For a lasting solution, alongside harmonization, donors need to embrace country ownership and alignment fully. However, governments will lose the incentive to facilitate harmonisation “insofar as governments and donors have different preferences over the use of resources”. As “they would prefer to avoid credible enforcement of conditionality” (Winters, 2012, p. 321). Winckler, Andersen and Therkildsen (2007) identify budget support and decentralised aid management as the two key instruments to improve donor harmonisation and to align donor support with priorities of recipients, institutional arrangements and procedures. The trio considers devices like “joint analytical, sector, review and evaluation work; joint capacity development and technical assistance; development policy and assistance strategy coordination; harmonisation of financial management and accountability procedures;

coordination of financial and non-financial reporting requirements; joint procurement procedures” (p. 4).

Performance and Sustainability Challenges of Donor-Driven Decentralization

Donor agencies provide support to decentralisation reform programs within frequently changing contexts due to a countless number of both internal and external pressures. Aligning their interventions to the governance settings of the variety of countries in which they operate is one such challenge faced by donor agencies (Fritzen, 2007a). To understand the implications of governance and institutional context on decentralised programming, Fritzen (2007a) recommends for donor agencies to assess the governance capacities and context; ensure clarity of purpose in decentralised programming, and generate practical options for decentralised programming. Of particular importance to sustainable development outcomes, according to Fritzen (2007a) are the presence of three broad capacity categories of “political, operational and social” dimensions of development (p. 14).

Muhumuza (2008) concludes that donor-driven decentralization reforms have failed to perform as expected due to “converging external and domestic interests” (p. 59). While the ideological interests of spreading liberal values mainly drive external interest, the domestic interest is motivated by the need for political self-preservation. He postulates that for donor-driven decentralization reforms to succeed in Africa “the specific conditions pertaining to each country must be considered hand in hand with the honesty and political will of national leaders to genuinely transform power relations” (ibid). To ensure practical decentralisation reform programs efforts must be made to avoid the creation of parallel structures or authorities. There should be efforts to understand the underlying political dynamics of the country and the appreciation of social differentiation. Capacity should be improved beyond the council and at the same time, offer new local administrations with real power and real resource (Team SLSA, 2003, pp. 93–95).

In Africa, despite the numerous challenges that characterise local governance reforms processes (Hydén, 2016) the common feature shared by them is that “they are less driven by outside models and have evolved from domestic political dynamics” (p. 10). Shortcomings of homegrown decentralisation agenda in Africa are democratic deficit,

populism and corruption (Hydén, 2016). Unlike donor-driven reform, in home-grown transformation, people do not only own the process but “take pride in refining it from within rather than appealing to the international community” (p. 11). As observed in the cases of Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda, the factor that seems to provide a favourable environment for decentralization is “the overthrow of an old regime” (ibid, p. 10). While in the cases of Kenya and South Africa its the pursuance of “home-grown constitutional reform process” (ibid).

Writing about local governance strengthening in Africa beyond approaches employed by donor agencies, Hydén (2016) states that decentralization reforms in Africa, particularly those driven by donor funding face with specific structural and institutional challenges. These are: granting of local government authorities particularly those in mostly rural districts with more powers without adequate capacity to match these newly assigned powers (more power, little capacity); the failure of civic education programs to eradicate the “subject” legacy of colonialism thus describing African voters as subjects and not citizens; the political economy circumstances such as the mostly agrarian nature of African countries with the prevalent of one-person enterprises (private, not public goods); the persistence of informal cultural rules, norms and values in Africa which continue to serve as the basis for how people organize their lives and pursue joint ends despite modernity and globalization; and the reluctance of African governments to adopt sanction regime to formalise informal institutions (incentives, not sanctions) (pp. 6–10). Donor-driven good governance promotion approaches including decentralization in Africa over the years survived on motivating government actors to act as donors wished. After all, the rationale behind providing foreign aid is to ensure “African governments use it to promote goals that donor governments can sell to their domestic constituents as legitimate expenses” (Hydén, 2016, p. 9).

The general experience in African countries has been that political or financial incentives by the donors to steer governance or development in a certain direction do not really produce much result. These incentives tend to be like fitting a square peg into a round hole. They are rarely devised with local conditions in mind. They are “prefabricated” interventions that stand little chance of yielding results in Africa’s largely informal and complex political environment. (Hydén, 2016, p. 9)

A “threat to stability” Dickovick (2014) argues “does not necessarily lead to robust decentralization in all cases, but it is the factor that best explains major increases in autonomy in Africa and several other countries in recent years” (p. 200). When “cases where central governments have incentives to decentralize” is juxtaposed with “when decentralization has been championed primarily by donors or other actors outside of central government” “increases in autonomy have tended to be lower” (Dickovick, 2014, p. 201). There have been instances where donors and civil society groups champion decentralization of power. However, the likely outcome of such a push “is a modest (at best) decentralization de jure that means little de facto” (ibid, p. 202). Besides increasing the political voice and participation of ordinary citizens and improving responsiveness and accountability of states, Channa and Faguet (2016) argue that decentralization decreases corruption, reduces bureaucracy and lower the unit costs of government expenditure. Evidence produced by Manor (1999) contradicts the idea that decentralisation facilitates cuts in public spending. His findings show that often democratic decentralization “ends up increasing overall government expenditures” (p. 27). According to Tordoff (1994) to enable proper discharge of transferred functions, decentralisation reform programs whether political or administrative or a combination must ensure “qualified personnel will then need redeployment to provincial and district levels, together with sufficient financial resources” (p. 556).

The idea that decentralization decreases corruption, as discussed in Channa and Faguet (2016) is challenged by the findings of Shah and Ivanyna (2010). They argue that decentralisation has “a significant negative (positive in the sense of good governance) effect on corruption regardless of the choice of the estimation procedures or the measures of corruption used” (p. 34). Evidence shows that in terms of combating corruption “voice (political accountability)” matter more compare to “exit options made available through competition among jurisdictions” (ibid). Prud’homme (1994) argues that the allocative efficiency benefits of decentralization are fragile and doubtful. And that decentralization runs counter to redistribution and stabilization. It makes redistributive policies (interpersonal or inter-jurisdictional) more difficult, if not impossible as well as renders macroeconomic stabilization programs more challenging to implement.

In some instances, central governments agree to policy reforms just to appease donors with slight intent to transform the existing governance practices. Often decentralisation is

inadequate when championed by donors and uneagerly implemented by a centralised state. Thus, environments that support local government autonomy are “thus most propitious where donor preferences and central government incentives align” (ibid, p. 202). With the evidence from his paper, Hydén (2016) is convinced that in reality, Africa’s development challenge is “less about voice and accountability and more about choice and capability” (p. 11). He faults the use of the principal-agent model in providing solutions to the developmental problems of Africa where donors as part of the conditionalities of their national aid policies tied their financial support to the embracing/respect for the principles of democratic governance. He argues further that:

Political space for reforms aimed at devolution must be created from within the African countries in order to be viable and sustainable. Wherever decentralization is attempted, lack of capability is the critical factor. This means that it is not just technical capacity that is needed but political will that boosts the capability for implementing devolution and strengthen local governance. (Hydén, 2016, p. 11)

In its guiding principles for donor community’s support for decentralisation reforms EuropeAid (2007) expresses the need for donor support modalities “to be based on longer time horizons and incremental action” (p. 34). OECD (2004) acknowledges the sustainability challenge of donor-supported decentralisation and local government programs both in the long- and short-term. The few successful programs are those either “implemented in close co-operation with partner governments” or those that “aimed at promoting sustainable and replicable institutional development of local government” from the outset (OECD, 2004, p. 52). Long-term sustainability is challenging for most programs. However, OECD (2004) argues that “long-term sustainability strategies can be expected to be a part of the original programme document or to be formulated at a relatively early stage of a programme cycle” (p. 52). OECD (2004) associates the potential for longer-term program sustainability to “better institutionalisation or up-scaling of pilot programmes; more joint donor efforts, e.g. through basket fund arrangements; formulation of exit and/or mainstreaming strategies in every support programme from the initial stages” (ibid, p. 52).

For donor-driven decentralisation reform programs to promote local government autonomy and bottom-up accountability/responsiveness, Dickovick (2014) recommends for a combined characteristic of co-financing across various levels of government and participatory planning and budgeting requirements. The two accustomed participatory

approaches identified by Dickovick (2014) are participatory practices in budgeting and planning and co-financing of public goods and services. In participatory budgeting and planning, CSOs don't only work with local governments but also check on them while in co-financing of public goods and services funds are mobilised from social institutions, local governments, and central governments. In the medium-term co-financing and co-production help local governments to generate own revenue which is imperative for both autonomy and responsiveness. Local governments that don't have much access to independent sources of income "are tightly enmeshed in top-down fiscal and administrative systems" (p. 205). Whereas those that rely heavily on intergovernmental transfers are usually conditioned to "comply with central government earmarks, standards, and requirements passed down through the administrative state" (ibid). In contrast, local governments with their source of revenue attain superior spending autonomy and robust mechanisms for downward accountability to local communities. It is because it reduces 'fiscal illusion' that services received by residents are paid for by national taxes collected in part from residents of other jurisdictions (ibid).

Most of the times central governments' motivation for decentralised governance is beyond the control of donor agencies, however, when and wherever government incentives exist there is a higher possibility for donors to succeed in promoting greater autonomy for local governments. Instead of donor-driven, "key decisions about decentralization" are nearly always made by political leaders with the assistance of technocrats (Manor 1999, pp. 27-29). Donor-driven initiatives, according to Dickovick (2014), should promote decentralisation both "as a means to an end and an end in its own right" (p. 205). And advocates for donor support programs aimed at de facto autonomy of local governments to focus on capacity building, the promotion of linkages between LCs and civil society, and to combine demands creation on the central government with checks on local governments from both the civil society and the central government. To ensure effective local governance reform programs in African countries (Hydén, 2016) recommends that donor agencies should pursue the following initiatives. A) Making strategic and policy analysis more effectively country-based; (b) supporting feasible initiatives in which African institutions are in the lead; (c) supporting institutional twinning arrangements; (d) rethinking capacity-building; and (e) investing in funds for local governance and development that generate both demand and collective action (pp. 12-14). EuropeAid

(2007) identifies the following guiding principles for decentralisation program design and implementation in developing countries.

- Support programs that are based on country-specific instead of designed based on ‘models’ from other places;
- Design focus on the country/community ownership of the process and partnership between local actors and donors;
- Support legal framework for decentralisation to avoid parallel structures and respect the legitimate division of roles between various development actors;
- Use of flexible instruments and modes of cooperation that can adapt to changing political and institutional environment, dynamics of reform processes and new challenges and priorities;
- Promote program alignment and harmonisation by building strategic alliances and strive for complementarities with other partners in development; and
- Support modalities that ensure long-term and gradual processes (pp. 33–34).

2.2. Foreign Aid, Growth and Development

In their analysis of the fundamental causes for the huge variations among countries in terms of income per capita, Acemoglu et al. (2001) after admitting the absence of consensus among scholars, assert that “differences in institutions” have commanded “considerable attention” in recent years (p. 1369). Responsive, accountable and inclusive government institutions many scholars argue are the most crucial determinants of economic performance and development (Acemoglu et al., 2001; Banerjee & Iyer, 2005; Engerman & Sokoloff, 1994, 2002; McArthur & Sachs, 2001). The debate is still on concerning the appropriate policy reform pathways to be followed either by governments of fragile and post-conflict countries or their partner aid agencies to “engender better functioning institutions” (Casey et al., 2012, p. 1756). One of the most significant challenges faced by development research is the understanding of how ODA or programs financed through outside aid agencies could contribute to poverty alleviation efforts in poor and diverse communities, knowledge of whose sociocultural traditions remain partial.

Majority of the empirical studies over the years observed inconclusive findings on aid effectiveness on growth, development and institution building (Balioune-Lutz & Mavrotas, 2009). The question has been whether it is “possible, or even desirable, for external actors like foreign aid donors to attempt to reshape local power dynamics in less

developed countries” (Casey et al., 2012, p. 1756). A similar sentiment was echoed by Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, at the 2017 G20 Africa Partnership conference held in Berlin, Germany when he stated that:

We [developed and developing nations] are on the same page that traditional aid, while useful, is never going to be enough to bring about sustainable development. We are at the limit of what government-to-government action alone can achieve. The time is right to put commercial and investment relations at the centre of our joint agenda. (President Paul Kagame of Rwanda at G20 Africa Partnership conference, Berlin, 12 June 2017)

Whether ODA or international aid agencies do have an impact on growth, development and institution building, has been the subject of several empirical studies in the recent past. Two influential but opposing publications on the subject are Sachs (2005) who holds a favourable view of ODA and Easterly (2008) who has issues with aid effectiveness on growth. Another two-recent literature published on aid effectiveness and growth, one of which validates the views of Sachs (2005) and the other confirms the findings of Easterly (2008) are the following: Doucouliagos and Paldam (2011) argue that their analysis of decades of research results “suggests that, on average, aggregate development aid flows are ineffective in generating growth” (p. 8). And Mekasha and Tarp (2013) show “positive and significant effect of aid on growth” (p. 579). The two findings demonstrate the controversial nature of the aid-growth debate and its continuation into posterity.

Other studies that validate the effectiveness of aid/ODA in driving growth include: Levy (1988) who despite concerns about persistent disappointing economic performance indicators in Africa since 1970s, maintains that aid has “positively and significantly correlated with investment and economic growth in Africa” (p. 1777). WB (1998) argues that financial aid works in developing countries with the right policy environment. Financial assistance, the Bank argues, results in “faster growth, poverty reduction, and gains in social indicators in developing countries with sound economic management” (p. 2). Clemens et al. (2012) argue that “aid causes some degree of growth in recipient countries” (p. 590). They, however, admit that the relationship between the duo is modest in terms of magnitude, significantly differ across recipients; and with high levels of aid, the effect on growth diminishes.

Hansen and Tarp (2000) in their re-examination of literature on aid-growth relationships, again claim to have found an emergence of “a coherent and positive picture of the aid-growth link” (p. 1). Aid, according to Hansen and Tarp (2000), “works, even in countries hampered by an unfavourable policy environment” (ibid). Again in their (2001) study, Hansen and Tarp conclude that “aid in all likelihood increases the growth rate, and this result is not conditional on ‘good’ policy” (p. 547). And both Lensink and White (2001); and Dalgaard and Hansen (2001) found causal relations between ODA and economic growth as well, without acceptable policy or high-quality institutions cited as a precondition for effectiveness. Other researchers who had negative results on aid effectiveness are Mosley (1980); Mosley et al. (1987); and Boone (1996) all of whom refutes the effectiveness of aid. Boone (1996) states that “aid does not significantly increase investment, nor benefit the poor as measured by improvements in human development indicators” (see abstract and pp. 24–26).

Whether in the existence or absence of a sound policy environment or good quality institutions, some scholars argue that ODA does not affect growth. For instance, Easterly (2003) finds zero “significant” relationship between aid and policy, thus refuting the idea that aid works in a decent policy environment (p. 27). Easterly et al. (2004) also argue that their findings contradict the conclusion that “aid promotes growth in countries with sound policies”. They caution that although their paper “does not argue that aid is ineffective”, however, with any additional data to the studied data, the doubts about “effectiveness of aid” increases (p. 779). Similarly, Djankov et al. (2006; 2008) find a negative impact regarding the relationship among ODA, economic growth and democracy promotion in developing nations. Evidence from the study conducted by Mosley et al. (2004) focussing on the ability of aid to reduce poverty, suggests that “positive leverage of aid donors on pro-poor expenditure”, but they went further to argue for the design of new forms of conditionality (p. F217).

In their study of sub-Saharan Africa’s aid experience, Moss et al. (2006) conclude that significant surge in the flow of aid in sub-Saharan Africa is likely to have “a harmful effect on institutional development” (p. 1). They again claim that states having the ability to mobilise substantial part of their revenue through ODA, do not have the incentive to be “accountable to their citizens” and they worry less about the “pressure to maintain popular legitimacy” (ibid). Also, sub-Saharan states with the ability to access large amounts of

revenue from the international community are less likely to have the motivation to “cultivate and invest in effective public institutions” (ibid, p. 1). Again in their study focused on sub-Saharan Africa, Bräutigam and Knack (2004, p. 266) observe that “higher aid levels are associated with larger declines in the quality of governance”, thus showing a deteriorating link between aid and governance on the continent.

To alter social behaviour, all the classical accounts on the determinants of social behaviours “emphasise structural and slow-moving features” instead (Humphreys et al., 2012, p. 11). Such findings note, King and Samii (2014) strengthen the notion about “how current societal patterns of cooperation are the accumulated product of major historical forces over decades if not centuries” (p. 742). Evidence suggests that a community’s ability to collaborate happens in “a slow and necessarily indigenous process” (Fearon et al., 2009b, p. 287). Thus, small-scale foreign aid supported interventions in developing country contexts are not likely to “substantially alter patterns of social interaction in a community” (ibid). Fearon et al. (2009b) state that “norms of social interaction are an outcome of long-run evolutionary mechanisms” (p. 287). Further, the scholars argue that institutional changes “have deep historical roots in critical junctures that reshape social relations”; and that building institutions “reflect relatively fixed characteristics of communities, such as ethnic heterogeneity or the distribution of wealth” (ibid).

2.3. Historical Context of Donor Funded Institution

Building/Development

In the business of foreign aid, the term institution and institution building got institutionalised in the 1960s when ‘modernisation theory’ took centre stage in the field of development studies (Moore, 1995a). At the core of modernization theory is the belief that positive social and political changes are the products of industrialization and economic development. Modernisation theory of development is a loose body of academic work with Third World development orientation. Having its intellectual origin in the ideas of a German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), the roots of modernisation theory could be traced to the abstract sociological concepts of “tradition” and “modernity” developed in particular by Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) (Moore, 1995a, p. 11). Weber believes in the gradual emergence of the modern state from feudalism, an irreversible process where socio-economic relations become institutionalised and

impersonalised. In Weber's view, while the development process of the Western capitalist system reflects economic modernisation, the emergence of the formal bureaucratic system displays the modernisation of the state, showing how the "two processes are causally interlinked" (Sager & Rosser, 2009, p. 1137). The understanding of Weber's modernization process got further enhanced by (S. N. Eisenstadt, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1968, 1968) with the re-examination of these ideas in contemporary sociological analysis and application to modern societies.

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) argues that "the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy" (p. 75). This classical article of Lipset, later elaborated in his book *Political Man* (1963) is considered a foundational text for modernization theory. In this article and or book, Lipset argues that democracy is the product of a sequence of profound social changes set forth by economic development. He shows that urbanisation, expanded middle class, greater social equality and mobility and higher levels of education are characteristics of more affluent societies together with sophisticated and varied means of communication. He demonstrates how all of these are associated with the emergence of functioning democratic political institutions. In this article Lipset (1959) shows that "in each case, the average wealth, degree of industrialization and urbanization, and level of education is much higher for the more democratic countries" (p. 75).

Another contributor to modernization theory was the Samuel Huntington in his 1968 seminal book "*Political Order in Changing Societies*". In this publication, Huntington (1973) acknowledges the power of economic development in unleashing profound social changes but not without incidental experiencing instability, even violent ones at times. However, with healthy political institutions (building of which is not only time consuming but complicated), Huntington (1973) argues, gains of economic development can be realised. His later works include (Huntington & Fukuyama, 1996b, 1996a). For modernisation theory, related works see (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997; Przeworski et al., 2000; Epstein et al., 2006). The distinction made by Philip Selznick (1984) between the concept 'institution' and 'organisation' in his '*Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*', is often cited as the origin of organisation-institution distinction (Moore, 1995a, p. 11; Selznick, 1996, p. 270). It seems the origin of institutional approaches in Third World development discourse is traced much early by H.S Bhola

(1976). In the opening paragraph of his 1976 article: 'Institutional Approaches to Innovation and Change: A Review of the Esman Model of Institution Building', Bhola (1976) writes:

During the last twenty years or more, institutional approaches to innovation and change have come to be a part of the prescription for developing the Third World. Social change, it is suggested, will come through changes within existing institutions and through building new institutions. (p. 3)

Despite its pros and cons, Israel (1987) argues that interest in institutional development has always been part of the strategies of development agencies and by no means a new idea. Israel (1987) confirms that both Rockefeller and Ford Foundations had programs that established public administration and management institutes in the 1950s and 1960s while USAID assumed institution-building initiatives in the 1960s and early 1970s (Israel, 1987, p. 1). For decades the technical assistance efforts of the USAID in developing countries Bhola (1976) notes was operating from the position that the best way to help the developing world is through giving them gifts that would continue to multiply. The phrase giving them gift means assisting them "in developing new and modernising institutions that would ultimately transform those societies from traditional to modernist, problem-solving systems" (p. 2). Modernisation theory conceived development as "a journey from 'tradition' to 'modernity'" (p. 3).

Part of this theory is Rostow's well-known stages of economic growth in development studies (Rostow, 1956, 1959). These stages of development include the following: traditional society; the preconditions for take-off; the take-off; the drive to maturity; the age of high mass consumption (See too W. W. Rostow, 1971; Walt Whitman Rostow & Kennedy, 1992). The trip is considered a difficult one for it is "believed to involve the wholesale replacement of 'traditional' values by 'modern' values" where development is all about changing values. Values are central in the context of modernisation development discourse. Instruments of development in this context are seen as "instruments for changing social values" (Bhola, 1976; Moore, 1995a, p. 11). Modernisation in this context Bhola (1976) believes "will be mediated through modernising institutional structures" (p. 3).

The centrality of value in the context of development discourse makes it easier for modernisation theorists to share Selznick's idea of bureaucracy (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 583). It's this idea that informed Moore's (1995a) formula for institution as: "'Institution' = 'Organisation' + 'Value'" (p. 11). Per this notion, an organisation will assume the title of an institution only when it is "doing something especially valuable to society-in this context, promoting 'social change' or 'modernisation'" (ibid). Thus, for Moore (1995a) institution is "an honorific" entity (ibid). From this conception, functioning institutions, either local or national, are imperative for sustainable development and governance, which makes institution developing or building a preoccupation of international aid agencies and their governments for decades now. The concept institution is both significant and popular in the social sciences. Despite this however there is no consensus on its meaning (N. T. Uphoff, 1986; Moore, 1995a). Despite its long history and widespread use in social sciences, "there is no unanimity" in the definition of the term institution (Hodgson, 2006, p. 1).

According to Moore (1995a) perhaps there is "no other area of development policy where so much money is spent in pursuit of an objective whose very name, as well as content, is subject to such basic and continuing dispute" (p. 9). And that since the concept's introduction in the arena of development policy or development aid activities, no consensus exists on its meaning (ibid). While Uphoff (1986) argues that social scientists continue to debate about "what constitutes an 'institution'" (p. 8) Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) argues that the concept "is subtle and thus subject to confusion" (p. 12). In general terms, as a concept, the word institution is described as formal and informal constraints or rules that shape or define human interaction both in a broader community or within an organisational structure (North, 1991, 1998). Institutional theorists such as North according to (Hydén, 2016) holds the idea that institutions that are useful for development "only emerge when informal rules, norms and values support and help engender formal institutions" (p. 9).

The general use of the word institution interchangeably with the term organisation contributes to the ambiguity and confusion of the concept (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). Uphoff (1986) identifies three such commonly used categories as (a) organisations that are not institutions, (b) institutions that are not organizations, and (c) organisations that are institutions or vice versa (p. 8). Almost all publications on the subject of institutions began

with an attempt to clarify the term institution. Majority of institutional definitions are descriptive and have included a variety of entities (Connor & Dovers, 2004). Colloquially, the concept has denoted some disparate entities such as national constitutions, LGActs, local government councils, VDCs/WDCs, banks, chieftaincy, hotels, insurance companies, religion, marriage, land tenure and so on. Such understandings of the term date back to centuries of theorising. Institution unlike organisation is more problematic as the term continues to be used in English language to refer to a range of phenomena.

At one end of the continuum Moore (1995a) argues, the term institution “is interchangeable with ‘organization’” (p. 10). For instance, one can validly describe both Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Department for International Development (DFID), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) and similar agencies as an organisation or an institution. At the other end of the continuum, Moore (1995a) holding a formal sociological view defines an institution as “any recurrent pattern of human behaviour” which further expands the range of potential applications of the term. Given this definition, “the celebration of Ramadan⁶ (...) the ‘English pub’, ‘the family’, Bangladeshi land tenure practices, and ‘law’” are all institutions (p. 10). It appears the concept institution means different things to different writers and has been used in a range of different ways and referred to several other things. Despite this, however, authors in a variety of disciplines (sociology, politics, philosophy, economics, geography etc.) have agreed that indeed “institutions matter” in particular for sustainable development (Williamson, 1998, p. 75).

Uphoff (1986) finds some degree of consensus in the literature concerning “what governments, donor agencies, and private voluntary organizations can do to support local institutional development (LID)” (p. 8). The need for an institution in societies is captured aptly by Hodgson (2006) with an argument that institutions are “kinds of structures that matter most in the social realm: [because] they make up the stuff of social life” (p. 1). While (Hydén, 2016) holds the idea that institutions “propel human action that transcends simple ends-means or structure-agency distinctions”. He goes further to argue that institutions are “composed of rules that are not enacted schemas but lived skills” and that they are “not constraints on action, they are made through action” (p. 8). The lack of clarity

⁶The ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed from dawn to dusk.

regarding the meaning of the word institution, Moore (1995a) thinks, emerged from: a) some crucial ambiguities in the English language; b) a marked preference for abstract conceptual debate and jargon-generation among some practitioners of the academic disciplines of sociology and organisation theory; and c) the frequent usefulness of unclear terms in political and policy contexts (pp. 9–10). The most important drivers for forming institutions throughout human history are to maintain order and reduce uncertainty in social transactions or exchanges (North, 1991, 1998). The “indigenous or diffuse” nature of institutions makes institutional-building/development challenging for technical or financial assistance (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 8). Having this understanding, Uphoff (1986) focuses his study of institutions on “organisational structures or channels which have been or could be, more readily institutionalised” (p. 8). This is an understanding of institution shared by this study.

Impact of Foreign Aid on Institution Building/Development

Since the 1980s, there has been a recurrent debate in the literature on aid and institution building/development. This lays bare the deficiency or ineffectiveness of foreign aid agencies in sustainable institution-building in developing countries (Israel, 1987; Moore, 1995a, 1995b; N. T. Uphoff, 1986, 1992; Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988). Recently, several impact evaluation reports from a variety of countries and program sites show that local institutions built/revamped through donor-funded CDDPs in almost all beneficiary countries failed to be durable beyond the funding periods (Casey et al., 2011; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). The institution-building and sustainability conception of CDD approaches is at fault for assuming that program inputs can “generate lasting and transferable change in attitudes and behaviour” within a few years. The proposition triggers much debate as it goes contrary to the long-held notion about social and institutional change that institution-building/development is a slow and time-consuming process (King & Samii, 2014, p. 740).

Owing to the substantial diversity in the form and complexity of institutions and the reciprocal relationship/influence institutions share with economic, social and political factors, Islam (2018) observes two defining characteristics of institutions: 1) their “persistence overtime” or general tendency “to change slowly”. To “design a new law, have community agreement on it, change it formally, and enforce it effectively”, Islam

(2018) observes “takes a long while”. It is related to the concept of “threshold effects or tipping points,” i.e. the idea that institutional change occurs only when “peoples’ support for change is stronger than is their support for maintenance of the status quo” (p. 13). Threshold effects could be political (degree of political repression in a country) or economic (magnitude of a price change) or change in information. Here the implication is that change is sought by people “only at intervals or be able to effect change only at (sometimes long) intervals”. 2) The requirement of “collective action of some sort” is yet another institutional change fact the initial impetus of which could be an individual initiative (Islam, 2018, p. 13). Such factors engender institutional change as innovation and discoveries, economic shocks and crises, indigenous/domestic political and social turmoil/change in leadership; knowledge and information, conflict and conquest, competition or cooperation, trade (in goods, services, information, capital), and population growth and demographic change (Islam, 2018).

The aim of both institution-building and local capacity strengthening is “inclusive problem solving and collective action”. However, the prospects for foreign aid-funded “fast track” institution-building and local capacity strengthening in fragile and post-conflict contexts failed the sustainability test (King & Samii, 2014, p. 740). King and Samii (2014) kind of ridiculed CDD program theory of change when they refer to it as a “fast-track institution-building” model. They argue that the idea that brief exposure of communities to program inputs of CDD has the potential of “generating lasting and transferable change in attitude and behaviour” is contentious and a debated proposition (ibid). Several convincing historical pieces of evidence exist from aid agencies themselves in support of this argument. The systematic ex-post evaluations findings of WB’s institutional development programs in the mid-1970s confirms that its institutional development components are less successful than those of the physical ones (Israel, 1987, p. 2). Moore (1995b) cited a couple of similar cases in which institutional building components woefully failed with each data set than the other elements. Such as the evaluation findings of USAID projects completed in 1985 and 1986 and an in-depth study involving five British aid projects, 15 evaluation summaries, and 50 project completion reports (p. 90).

In 2012, after analyzing the impact evaluation results of WB-funded CDD programs from 17 countries in three continents, between 1987 to 2006, a period spanning over 25 years, Susan Wong finds out that overall, evidence regarding social capital and governance was

mixed. Out of the impact evaluations that measured local governance, five “shows positive to mixed results”. Variables measured by Wong (2012) are: “attitudes toward governance, participation in other village assemblies, awareness of project information and other local civic activities, and spillover effects in terms of the way government officials and citizens approach and manage other development programs and civic activities” (p. 31). Out of the eight impact evaluations that measured social capital in relation “to greater trust, association, and collective action”, the most significant number of projects “have no impact on social capital, or at best-mixed impacts” (Wong, 2012, p. vi).

Evidence shows that CDDPs of Philippines, Zambia, and Armenia was “mixed”, whereas other programs like Sierra Leone, Indonesia’s KDP-BRA and UPP, Nepal, and Afghanistan “showed no impacts” (Wong, 2012, p. 31). Wong (2012) defines social capital as “the norms and networks that enable collective action” which are best driven by local institutions at the community levels (p. 28). Social capital refers to “the norms and networks” that facilitate collective action which is best driven by local institutions (Grootaert, 1998, 2004; Grootaert et al., 2002; Wong, 2012). King and Samii (2014) conclude that CDDPs are very successful when it comes to setting up CBOs, broadening community participation in local development, and availing community the opportunity to work together for their everyday goods. However, their findings show that largely CDDPs in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have “failed to increase the capacity for collective action in a way that is durable and transferable beyond the CDD interventions” (p. 740).

Commenting on the impact of aid flows in effecting institutional change, Islam (2018) argues that despite the growing number of research on the subject, literature remains underdeveloped with differing conclusions among studies. Aid may have improved or weakened institutional quality “either by affecting formal rules or informal ones, or by supporting incomplete institutional reform (for example, eliminating old institutions, but not replacing them with new ones)” (p. 24). It’s difficult to find any systematic proof of general improvements in institutions associated with development aid (Islam, 2018). It’s challenging empirically to identify the precise “impact of aid versus other factors on institutional change” (ibid, p. 24). Added to this are issues related to the timeframe for assessing the impact of aid on institutional change. As “the time for a particular

institutional change to become effective often extends far beyond the timeframe of the aid intervention and the related assessment” (ibid).

Moore (1995b) observed that in aid and institution building literature, two conventional arguments exist in favour of the negative findings on donor-funded institution building/development efforts. Each of these findings is related to the character of the donor agencies involved in the business of aid. 1) The operations of aid agencies as bureaucrats. The concern here is the relative rigidity and inflexibility in their approach, which focuses much on “blueprint” and large-scale activities, rather than on a “process’ mode” as the preferred standard formulas and approaches for institution development (p. 90). EuropeAid (2007) recommends that donor agencies “use instruments and modes of cooperation that are sufficiently flexible” to adapt to changing political and institutional environment and dynamics of reform process including future challenges and priorities (p. 33). 2) Aid agencies always perform worst because they are foreign bureaucracies with “limited understanding of, communication with, or empathy for the environment in which they operate” (Moore, 1995b, p. 90). Hydén (2016) disapproves of the conventional approach used by donors where local rules are replaced by “those derived from more advanced societies”. A technique where social change is the “result of borrowing or transferring effective institutions from places where they already work on the assumption that they will create a demonstration effect in their new setting that will trigger improved performance” (p. 9).

There are two other explanations concerning the institution-building failure of aid agency which relates to the nature of institution-building itself: 1) institution building is a low specificity activity which means it’s relatively imprecisely defined and lacking feedback mechanisms that could assist identify or reverse poor task performance in a quasi-automatic manner (Israel, 1987, p. 200; Moore, 1995b, p. 90); 2) aid projects with an institution-building component (which often fall under the “software” component of donor projects) tend not to enjoy comparable political support as aid projects with “hardware” components. Compare to the software, hardware components of donor projects always have individuals or groups with a clear interest in the progress and capacity, such as suppliers or contractors. They would exert influence to ensure completion with relative speed and enthusiasm and are less likely to receive the kind of attention and priority needed from decision-makers (Moore, 1995b, p. 91).

Institution-building is a low-specificity activity. For the fact that the idea of how institution building is best achieved is not very well developed, it lacks standard work plans that can be followed by those engaged in institution-building activities. Absent is the measuring techniques for the actual progress and the nonexistence of automatic mechanisms through which major, intense or immediate impact of poor performance or failures could be determined to stimulate investigation and corrective action. For instance, agents tasked to ensure the successful building of institutions and who are performing poorly wittingly or unwittingly, “will tend not to be held responsible; excuses can always be found for poor results” (Moore, 1995b, p. 91). The overall findings of WB's institutional development experience in sub-Saharan Africa in the second half of the 20th century show slow and uneven progress. However, some clear cases of success have been registered mostly in relatively higher-specificity areas or in points where specificity was stimulated effectively (Israel, 1987).

The cited relatively higher-specificity areas or cases are in airline sector-Ethiopian Airlines, telecommunications companies in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, power companies in Tanzania (TANESCO), and mining operations in Botswana and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo/DR Congo). The strength of institutions studied by Israel (1987) is found in “their technical core and (...) their ability to absorb technical assistance, concentration of professionals in them to the total in the country, and the corresponding accumulation of political power that protected them, within limits, from the vagaries of political change” (p. 86). The correlation between the institution-building success of a high-level specificity and a high-level commitment demonstrates that “low specificity gives more scope for ‘lack of commitment’ (...) [or] disagreements about objectives and approaches”, as in the parlance of the WB (Israel, 1987, pp. 86–87). Provided all other factors or circumstances remain the same, Moore (1995b) contends that “low specificity activities tend to be performed poorly” (p. 90).

2.4. Community-Driven Development

A technical consultation conference on decentralisation and rural development held in Roam from 16th-18th December 1997 by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) critically assessed rural development experiences. This two-day conference is credited to have heralded the emergence of what (Romeo, 2003) branded the third typology of foreign

aid agency financed ‘downstream’ projects in support of decentralisation reforms/CDD. It was during this conference when some basic principles underlying this new category of projects crystallised (Romeo, 2003). Included in this support is “a new generation of rural/area development projects that stress community participation in local-level resource allocations and establish demand-driven rural investment facilities” (ibid, p. 94). The practice of financing community groups through LGs is to ensure operational sustainability and durable involvement of LGs in community development. CDD according to Romeo (2003) “recognises the importance for communities to access the resources allocated through their own LG (as opposed to direct access to resources of the central government or external partners) as well as the need to strengthen the capacity of communities to hold local officials accountable” (p. 94).

It’s argued that CDD approaches are relatively the recent variants of CBD both of which are among the fastest-growing development assistance delivery channels (de Regt et al., 2013; Dongier et al., 2003; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Wong, 2012). Community development programs/projects scholars argue, have been variously labelled as CDD, CBD, Community Livelihood Projects (CLP), and Social Funds/Social Development Fund (SF/SDF). CBD is an umbrella concept which refers to projects/programs that “actively include beneficiaries in their design and management”. In contrast, CDD denotes projects/programs in which “communities have direct control over key project decisions, including management of investment funds” (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 1). The direct transfer of resources to communities through their own LGs, as opposed to central governments or external partners and the strengthening of community capacity to hold local officials accountable, are critical tenants of CDD approaches (Dongier et al., 2003; Romeo, 2003).

The actual impact of donor/CDD support projects on decentralisation according to Romeo (2003) is, however, contingent upon how the “relations between community groups and LGs are designed” (p. 94). He argues that in practice, however, projects supporting CDD approach just like mainstream approaches to downstream support to development such as SWAPs and SFs “are the exception rather than the rule” (p. 94). According to Romeo (2003), LGs are often involved in the financing of community development projects “only on the ground of the practical necessity”, that is, if such community-developed public infrastructure and services would later require operational costs and maintenance (p. 94).

Romeo (2003) maintains that direct donor financing of grassroots organisations or the rigid management of resources that are passed to them through LGs for the execution of development projects in which LGs are expected to provide or co-provide could potentially undermine the downward accountability of LGs to their constituents (p. 94). Having this understanding, Romeo (2003) calls for cautious optimism with regards to CDD projects in support of decentralisation and LG capacity building. CDD approach, according to Romeo (2003), “raises the question of whether the new type of rural development projects can contribute to strengthening LGs in a way that is consistent with decentralisation”. This is because the “projects are themselves the product of an evolution that attempted to overcome earlier inadequate attention to institutional factors” (p. 94). He argues further that:

If local governments are effectively bypassed and remain under-funded and institutionally under-developed, individual citizens and community groups will have no incentive to engage in the local political process and to demand transparent and accountable management of local public resources. Why bother to participate in a process that cannot deliver? (ibid)

Similarly, as part of issues and questions for further analysis on the WB’s Sahel CDD programs, Kumar (2003) makes the following concluding remarks:

In the Sahelian countries, the design and implementation of Bank CDD projects may not be giving adequate attention to the sociological context. (...) With CDD it is necessary to give careful thought upfront to the sociological details. The socioeconomic and political realities at the community level need to inform the design of the effort and set the pace for implementation. Currently, community-level realities, the complex web of relationships among actors and their varied interests, the implications of the existing hierarchy, and stratification for development interventions appear to get little attention in design and implementation. (p. 34)

Romeo (2003) presents United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) supported experimental ‘Local Development Fund’ (LDF) program as an alternative approach to CDD that provides “a more balanced approach to local government-community relations” (p. 94). He considers this to have provided better support to decentralisation and LG

capacity building than CDD approaches. Development programs and practitioners in support of local governance and decentralisation, Romeo (2003) advocates, should consider strengthening communities “as part of a broader effort to reconstruct the local polity and the local political process” (ibid). With such consideration, an effort to building community capacity to demand would as well consider strengthening local government capacity to respond. Romeo (2003) is firmly convinced that prospects for sustainable regional development seem to be better where local governments are financed. And provided with appropriate support and supervision for the “adoption of participatory practices that give communities access to local public sector resources (...) than relying primarily on direct central/external financing of local community groups” (ibid).

Since the 1980s to date the most popular strategy/approach employed by international development aid agencies to build/develop or reshape local institutions in fragile and post-conflict situations has been CDD (Casey et al., 2011a, 2011b; Fearon et al., 2009b; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). CDD is an approach to development that “gives control of decisions and resources to community groups” (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 303). Wong⁷ and Guggenheim (2005) also define CDD as an approach “that gives communities or locally elected bodies control over the decision making, management, and use of development funds” (p. 254). CDDPs are often designed with at least two critical sets of goals in mind: 1) improved service delivery/provision and enhanced socio-economic wellbeing of communities; and 2) improved governance institutions and social cohesion at the level of the community (Casey et al., 2011a, 2011b; Fearon et al., 2009b; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). As of 2012, WB alone supported circa 400 CDDPs in 94 countries valued at about \$30 billion and ten years before 2012, CDD investments of WB’s overall lending portfolio “represented between 5 and 10 per cent” (Wong, 2012, p. iv). Using a conservative calculation, Mansuri and Rao (2004) state that WB’s lending for CDD projects has “risen from US\$325 million in 1996 to \$2 billion in 2003-or from \$3 billion in 1996 to \$7 billion in 2003 when lending for an enabling environment for such projects is included” (p. 2).

⁷ She is one time the sector manager for the Social Development Department of the WB and WB’s Global Lead for Community-Driven Development (CDD)

Critique of the Findings of Institutional Development Component of CDDP

CDDP is today the most popular strategy among aid agencies in terms of building accountable, competence and inclusive institutions (Casey et al., 2011a, p. 7). Neira et al. (2016) affirm that the upsurge in WB's worldwide development funding, particularly in the area of CDDP was triggered by the confidence that foreign aid "boosts economic growth, reduces poverty and improves social indicators within good policy environments" (p. 31). It equally ignites the current interest in the concept of institutional sustainability in the national development agenda. Some of the CDDPs reviewed in West Africa and elsewhere included the following. The Hunger Project's (THP's) activities in Eastern Ghana (Baldwin et al., 2016), Community-Driven Reconstruction (CDDR) program of Lofa County, northern Liberia (2006 and 2008) in the communities of Voinjama and Zorzor Districts funded by United Kingdom's DFID through the WB (J. Fearon et al., 2008; J. D. Fearon et al., 2009b, 2009a, 2011, 2013). CDD in Nigeria (Daniel, 2014; Nkonya et al., 2012), CDD in Senegal (Arcand & Wagner, 2016), Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Humphreys et al., 2012), Afghanistan (Beath et al., 2013), Morocco (Nguyen & Rieger, 2014, 2017), Philippines (Labonne & Chase, 2011) (King & Samii, 2014a; Wong, 2012).

In their recent findings on the prospects of the donor-funded institutional building after a rigorous review of CDDP impact evaluation reports from four conflict-affected countries: Afghanistan, DR Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, coupled with their interviews with practitioners and academic researchers, King and Samii (2014) conclude that "the record of CDD in promoting institution building in conflict-affected contexts is positive in the short-term of the intervention but, on the whole, discouraging in terms of durable and transferable change" (p. 752). King and Samii (2014) conclude that CDD programs have been very successful when comes to the setting up of CBOs, broadening community participation in local development, and availing members of communities the opportunity to work together for the common goods. However, their findings show that largely, CDDPs in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have "failed to increase the capacity for collective action in a way that is durable and transferable beyond the CDD interventions" (p. 740).

In 2012, Susan Wong summarised and analysed the impact evaluation results of World Bank CDDPs from 17 countries in three continents, between 1987 to 2006, a period spanning over 25 years. Overall, evidence regarding social capital and governance was mixed. Five of the impact evaluations that measured local authority “shows positive to mixed results”. Variables measured are: “attitudes toward governance, participation in other village assemblies, awareness of project information and other local civic activities, and spillover effects in terms of the way government officials and citizens approach and manage other development programs and civic activities” (Wong, 2012, p. 31). Whereas out of the eight impact evaluations that measured social capital “related to greater trust, association, and collective action”, the most significant number of projects “have no impact on social capital, or at best-mixed impacts” (ibid, p. vi). Evidence shows that programs of “Philippines, Zambia, and Armenia were mixed, while other programs such as Sierra Leone, Indonesia’s KDP-BRA and UPP, Nepal, and Afghanistan showed no impacts” (ibid, p. 31). WB defines social capital as “the norms and networks that enable collective action” (ibid, p. 28).

Among the reviewed donor-funded CDDP evaluation literature, the only exception to the negative evaluation findings is Liberia’s Lofa county CDDP. Fearon et al. (2009b) “provides evidence that the introduction of new local-level institutions can alter patterns of social cooperation in a way that persists after the program’s conclusion” (p. 291). Fearon and colleagues further state that, “villages exposed to a community-driven reconstruction program exhibit higher subsequent levels of social cooperation than those in the control group, as measured through a community-wide public goods game” (ibid, p. 291). The striking part of the findings is that outside interventions such as the CDDPs can result in substantial changes in social cohesion over a short period and that this “can develop without fundamental changes either to the structure of economic relations or to more macro-level political processes” (ibid, p. 291). The findings of CDDP-Liberia show “powerful evidence that the program was successful in increasing social cohesion”. The evaluation team finds evidence that the program has “reinforced democratic political attitudes and increased confidence in local decision-making procedures” (Fearon et al., 2009a, see abstract). Sierra Leone and Liberia are in the same region with shared boundary, similar ethnicity, social, economic, political, cultural and historical contexts. It is puzzling that these two countries would both implemented CDDP (an intervention that employs the same approach to development) and produce contrasting evaluation findings. Most

importantly, the magnitude of mixed results found in some emerging CDD empirical evaluation literature on program outcomes on participation and collective action makes this finding stand out (King & Samii, 2014a; Wong, 2012).

What also makes this contrasting evaluation results in West Africa most thought-provoking is the fact that the theory of change of CDDP, its underlying philosophy, design and implementation model is very similar in both fragile and post-conflict affected situations. For instance, the program goals of The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia were to address weak governance in the modernised chieftaincy and local level governance system (Casey et al., 2011; J. Fearon et al., 2008; J. D. Fearon et al., 2009b; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013). On the contrary, in terms of measurement proxies of CDDPs, a common methodological criticism against CDDP evaluations is the considerable variation across CDD studies. CDDP evaluation is criticized for the fact that “there is no standard, or agreed upon, set of indicators for concepts like social cohesion and good governance” (King, 2013, p. 21), meaning evaluation design features and behavioural measures are applied by different studies differently.

The differences in the time frame between the cessation of conflicts and the implementation of the aid-funded CDDPs in Sierra Leone and Liberia are two explanations in the literature concerning the unique nature of Liberia’s evaluation findings. CDD programs of Sierra Leone and Liberia were implemented at different times in their respective peace processes and reconstruction. CDDP in Liberia was implemented in the latter years of their civil war (Casey et al., 2011a). At this time, Casey et al. (2011a) note, local institutions in Liberia could have faced more disruption compare to when CDDP was implemented in Sierra Leone. As demonstrated in the case of Liberia, Casey et al. (2011a) argue that perhaps efforts to craft novel institutions and norms and the adaption of new practices in local communities where formal structures are non-existent could face less resistance from community members. On the contrary, the Sierra Leone case shows that attempts to persuade existing authorities such as community chiefs for the crafting of novel institutions and norms and the adaption of new practices where formal structures are non-existent could face more resistance (Casey et al., 2011a, p. 6). In comparison, the lack of positive impact regarding participation outcomes in the Gambia’s CDDP was perhaps the result of “inertia in institutional norms and values which would need more than a three-year project to change them” (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 15).

All the reviewed CDDPs in West Africa as is the case in most donor-funded CDDPs in fragile and post-conflict contexts employs an indirect approach to *de jure* reform. In which, instead of using an explicit attempt to weaken community elites, the program only encouraged communities to become democratic and inclusive. In reality, according to Acemoglu and Robinson (2008), CDD's inexplicit approach to institutional transformation and norms, could have contributed to the program's failure to effect change in the identity of *de factor* local power holders. According to Casey et al. (2011a), although the program may have implicitly put the traditional authorities (chiefs) aside, however, VDCs were controlled by male elders and chieftom officials in communities where GoBifo CDDP was implemented.

Another issue is the findings' contradiction to the intense debate raging about the inconclusive empirical results on aid effectiveness on growth and development/interventions by outside agencies in developing nation and on which specific policy reform pathways would stimulate better and functioning institutions. Collective action capability in a community primarily through local development institutions occurs in a gradual process. Thus, a claim that small-scale foreign aid interventions such as CDDPs could substantially change patterns of social interaction in a community is subjected to series of questioning (Fearon et al., 2009a, p. 287). Bowles and Gintis (2004) show that norms of social interaction facilitated through institutions are products of extended evolutionary mechanisms. After comparing institution building/development to the process of how slaves were extracted from Africa, Nunn (2008) reveals that institutional changes are deeply rooted in critical junctures in the past. At the same time, Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) liken institution building to relatively enduring community characteristic like ethnic heterogeneity or the distribution of wealth.

Fearon et al.'s (2008; 2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2013) findings in Liberia and the fundamental principle of community-driven reconstruction (CDR)⁸ program that the exposure of communities to the practices of good governance in a couple of years is enough to alter social behaviour, contradict classical accounts about the determinants of social behaviour such as those discussed in Putnam (1993), Bowles and Gintis (2004), or Nunn (2008) (Humphreys et al., 2012, p. 11). To alter social behaviour, all the classic accounts on determinants of social behaviours "emphasise structural and slow-moving features" rather

⁸ Community-driven development/reconstruction (it's sometimes referred to as CDR in post-conflict contexts)

than a “fast track” process (Humphreys et al., 2012, p. 11). Classical accounts concerning the determinants of social behaviour noted, King and Samii, (2014) strengthen the notion that “current societal patterns of cooperation are the accumulated product of major historical forces over decades if not centuries” (p. 742).

Casey et al. (2011a, 2011b) while estimating the impact of GoBifo CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone concluded that: “We find positive short-run effects on local public goods provision, but no sustained impacts on fund-raising, decision-making processes, or the involvement of marginalized groups (like women) in local affairs, indicating that CDD was ineffective at durably reshaping local institutions” (Casey et al., 2011a, See the abstract). Humphreys, De La Sierra, & Van der Windt (2012) argue, that notwithstanding the popularity of CDDP model, “until recently there has been little evidence of the impacts of CDR programs” (p. 11). The evaluation findings of the GoBifo program show that the intervention has failed in its local institutional reform plan. GoBifo program of Sierra Leone failed to either reshape village institutions such as the VDCs, improve social cohesion/capital or fundamentally change collective action such as local decision-making processes, fundraising capacity, or even social attitudes and norms beyond the project lifecycle.

GoBifo program “did not trigger broader spillover effects on institutions and norms” (Casey et al., 2011a, p. 5). The evaluators find “no evidence” that the program resulted in any fundamental changes in the communities’ ability “to raise fund for local public goods, decision making processes or social norms and attitudes”. Women were no longer likely to participate, attend or voice an opinion at community meetings, despite the huge experience gained through their involvement in the management of GoBifo activities. In a nutshell there was no evidence that GoBifo has “reshaped village institutions, empowered minorities, or improved collective action beyond the activities stipulated by the project itself” (Casey et al., 2012, pp. 1760–1761).

The findings of the institutional reform goals of the Gambia’s CDDP show that the intervention has failed in its local institutional reform plan. It was unable to sustainably reshape village institutions (VDCs to be precise), empower minorities, or improve collective action beyond the specified project activities. CDDP of the Gambia “did not have a significant effect on increasing participation levels for households in CDDP villages compared to households in control villages” (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 15). This negative

outcome is associated with the “inertia in institutional norms and values which would need more than a three-year project to change them” (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 15). Fanneh and Jallow, also found out that CDDP “did not have a long-lasting impact on the likelihood that a household would take part in a kafoo⁹” (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 20).

CDDP and Local Governance Reform Programs

World Bank and other proponents of CDDP philosophy maintain that better and durable CDD outcomes are assured only “if the implementing country’s existing inter-government institutions are effective; or have a genuine commitment to decentralisation” (Adusei-Asante & Hancock, 2012, pp. 84–85). Thus, local governments are critical for the success and sustainability of CDDPs in a country. Regardless of the mode of CDD intervention, the form of CBO partnerships with local government, private support organizations, central government, or central funds (Dongier et al., 2003), local governments are a critical aspect for its success and the sustainability of its investments in both institution development/building, socioeconomic wellbeing and infrastructure components. According to Dongier et al. (2003), often local governments are well-positioned:

To facilitate coordination across communities and allocate resources. When local governments interact with communities and informal groups in a participatory way, it is possible to achieve economies of scale in producing and providing goods and services that could not be achieved by CBOs operating independently. Furthermore, in many cases, local governments are needed to support operation and maintenance of services, and for continuing funding of community groups. (p. 23)

The missing links in the literature on aid and institution building and in the component of CDDP evaluation on institution development are: the impact that the overall community development coordination responsibility of local government councils have on sustainability of decentralised local institutions; the impact that the local-level technical and supervisory support role of regional community development offices have on the sustainability decentralised local institutions; and the impact the collaboration between

⁹ “A kafoo is a group of households [or individuals] that come together for the purpose of taking part in agricultural [or other] activities. The aim is to provide labour for agricultural [or other] purposes and speed up work. There [could be monetary gain or otherwise and where there] is no monetary gain..., households that benefit from the kafoo activities are expected to take part when other households are in need of help on the farm” (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 13).

relevant stakeholders in the different sectors in development planning and implementation have on the sustainability of decentralised local institutions. Also, there is little or no specific findings on the impact of chieftaincy institutions (traditional authority, e.g. chiefs and village headmen or women) on the effective functioning and sustainability of local institutions of development within the overall local government system. Chieftaincy institutions have the traditional authority to perform community-level governance and development activities. Like resolving disputes and keep order, organising village and neighbourhood clean-ups, dealing with official and private visitors to the community be they on development mission or otherwise, and the directing of multiple-choice exercise such as local taxes and revenue collections, mobilisation of communal labour, commercial land leasing and so forth (Fanthorpe et al., 2011; Government of The Gambia, 2002). Among other factors, these could be crucial to both the structural and functional sustainability of local governance and development institutions.

Traditional Chieftaincy and CDDP

Modern representative local governments in West Africa are analogous to pre-colonial and colonial-era traditional systems of governance. In most African countries, traditional systems of local governance, through various acts of parliament, have been integrated into the modern representative democratic system of governance. Although with pockets of modifications, most local governance structures are prototypical of traditional chieftaincy institutions; a system of local governance dating far back into the pre-colonial era. Tribal peculiarities and variations characterized this system. Traditional paramount, district and village chieftaincy systems are an integral part of local governance in Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Ivory Coast, to name but a few (Yol, 2010; ACE Facilitators, 2011). Traditional rulers known as chiefs remain relevant in the communities of their jurisdiction for reasons of community mobilization for carrying out development project and the maintenance of law and order.

In most fragile and conflict-affected West African countries, the current interaction between local and global models of governance have given rise to a new configuration of power and actors. International interventions such as the CDDP, other forms of interventions, and global discourse on socio-political change continue to either accelerate or counteract processes of change within the local configuration of power and governance.

This novel political authority and local leadership have culminated into irreversible shifts in the traditional meanings attached to chieftaincy, authority and legitimacy and the control of land, tax regimes, customary laws and traditions. It has transformed the role of youth and women in domestic politics and social development initiatives from one of the marginal actors to increased participation and prominence (Højbjerg et al., 2013).

For about three decades now, community-driven development has been the most critical approach in the gamut of international development interventions particularly in fragile and post-conflict contexts as well as in regions experiencing poor bureaucratic track records of service delivery and post-disaster environments. The approach has been popular among governments because it puts less pressure on central government, line ministers and optimises the use of community actors and institutions such as the WDCs, VDCs and other community-based organisations to reach a large number of poor people. One key intended output of community development interventions in fragile and post-conflict situations in West Africa was to revamp local institutions where they already exist or build them where they were not or destroyed (Tanaka et al., 2006, p. 6). CDDP was implemented within the local government structures using local development institutions such as the WDCs and VDCs. It ensured adequate capacity is built, have sufficient monitoring of local investments, to build trust and social capital for collective action beyond the lifespan of the program.

2.5. Institution Building and Institutional Development the Big Debate

The unclarity of the term institution-building/development originates from 1) challenges in distinguishing ‘institution-building’ and ‘institutional development’; and 2) the debate about the differences between ‘organization’ and ‘institution’ (Moore, 1995a). While for Van Reenen and Waisfisz (1988) the terms institution-building and institutional development are different concepts (see also Goldsmith, 1992, pp. 583–584), for Bhola (1976) they are similar ideas with varied nomenclature. Although there is lack of consensus on the meaning of institution-building in the literature, however, according to Moore (1995a) it’s “not so problematic” among international aid agencies. As there is a broad implicit agreement concerning the general meaning of the concept among aid agencies (p. 9). While institution ‘building’ is about “creating new institutions from scratch”

institutional 'development' is concern with "improving existing institutions" (Moore, 1995a, p. 10; Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988).

In the 1950s and 1960s, institution-building it's said was the business of aid agencies in the newly independent countries. Self-consciously, aid agencies such as the USAID, the UNDP, and the Ford Foundation set out to do this (Goldsmith, 1992). During this period, institution-building usually meant setting up new or revamping the existing organisation. It's about role-orientation. The idea was to make institutions legitimate or have intrinsic value that would create "long-term, indigenous capacity to carry out essential public functions", and to extend the "activities at a single site, often carried out by a sister institution in a developed country" (p. 583). For Esman as cited in (Bhola, 1976) institution-building is understood as "the planning, structuring, and guidance of new or reconstituted organizations which (a) embody changes in values, functions, physical, or social technologies, (b) establish, foster, and protect new normative relationships and action patterns, and (c) obtain support and complementarily in the environment" (p. 5).

The typical components of institution-building in the 1950s and 1960s entailed free-standing technical assistance projects with more focus on "organizations, especially public sector and national-level organizations than on conventions" (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 583). The targeted institution-building activities of aid agencies included: technical support in terms of training, providing professional advice to governments, temporary augmentation of human resources or staff, collaborative research, financial support for facility improvements, design and testing of innovative programs, provisional budget support as well as the building of educational facilities like management training institutes and agricultural universities. These implemented activities lay the foundation for new and collectively legitimate organisations (ibid).

To better understand modern organisation building and sustainability in 1960, USAID funded a research project at the University of Pittsburgh conducted by Esman and his colleagues (Bhola, 1976). The product of which was the famous institution-building model which according to (Bhola, 1976) provided the "language of discourse for the universe of institution building" (p. 4). The intellectual basis of the Pittsburgh group is rooted in public administration and organisational sociology. The study focused on "role-oriented institutions" (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 583). The underlying assumption of Pittsburgh model was that progress in an institution "has to be protected and nurtured by formal

organizations” (ibid; for more on Esman/Pittsburgh Model of Institution Building see Bhola, 1976, p. 5).

The concept institution-building gave way to institutional development among aid agencies in the 1970s, due mainly to the suspension of institution-building projects which (Goldsmith, 1992) argues was because the first-generation issues that prompted institution-building were less common in the developing world. In Africa, for instance, at this time, many organisations were deinstitutionalized or had lost their value and stability (Goldsmith, 1992). Ideas like downsizing and reorientation of overgrown public bodies took centre stage while the need to work on intra-institutional relations took precedence over the founding of new institutions (ibid). In essence, it is the changing conditions in the newly independent countries in the 1970s, that have shifted the focus of development managers from upstream to downstream institutional building agenda. Thus, culminating “in a quest for participatory development strategies (...) [and] building grass-root collectivities into institutions” (ibid, p. 584).

The replacement of institution-building with institutional development in aid agency nomenclature happened when the second-generation problems in the newly independent developing countries moved to the forefront of foreign aid agenda (Goldsmith, 1992). For Schiavo-Campo (1994), the term institutional development is about “a move from a less efficient to a more efficient set of rules” (p. 4). Israel (1987) uses the terms institution-building and institutional development interchangeably. The introduction of institutional development terminology “marks a subtle change in emphasis” (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 584). It has shifted the focus from organisations as in previous institution-building projects to the second-generation ventures. Here the emphasis is on “nonorganizational behaviour” such as “conventions” or “rule-oriented” institutions instead (ibid).

In this era under WB’s institution development rubric, for instance, efforts were made to not only streamline internal structures, promote better financial and personnel management strategies, restructure economic sectors or subsectors but also to strengthen management systems, improve inter-institutional relations, amend legal frameworks and to enhance government regulations (Goldsmith, 1992). In the period of institutional development, the earlier concern with government ministries, state-owned enterprises were supplemented by greater attention to the problem of society’s rules. Nevertheless, Goldsmith (1992) maintains that institutional development “does not preclude organisational work, it just

concentrates on altering legitimate conventions (...) more than institution building usually did” (p. 584).

While acknowledging that to different people “institution development”, “institution” or “institution building” connote other things, Israel (1987) stands his ground that “institutional development is synonymous with institution building” (p. 11). The institutional development process, Israel (1987) observes can be generated within an institution by managers or induced, promoted or encouraged by either a government, an aid agency or an NGO. He describes institutional development as a “process of improving the ability of institutions to make effective use of the human and financial resources available” (pp. 1 & 11). Over the years, Israel (1987) discloses that institutional development concept has been defined differently and referred to by different names including institution-building, public sector management, public administration and so on. Goldsmith (1992) also identifies four broad labelling traditions in decades-long development agency literature, including “institution-building, institutional development, new institutional theory, and institutional sustainability” (ibid, p. 582).

No matter the name used, Israel (1987) maintains that the critical objective of institutional development is “to make effective use of a country's resources” for the common good of her population (p. 1). According to Israel (1987) broadly defined, an institution as a concept comprises of the following: local or community level entities, project management units, parastatals, line agencies/ministries in the central government, and so forth, and it may be part of/refer to a public or private sector or government-wide administrative functions (p. 11). Israel (1987) states that the typical concern of an institutional analysis or institutional development initiative is to enhance:

Management systems, including monitoring and evaluation; organizational structure and changes; planning, including planning for an efficient investment process; staffing and personnel policies; staff training; financial performance, including financial management and planning, budgeting, accounting, and auditing; maintenance; and procurement. Other issues, especially under a sectoral or subsectoral focus, are interagency coordination and sectoral policies regarding institutions. (pp. 11–12)

Institutional approaches aimed at effecting social change have considerably varied both in terms of scope and emphasis. The change inducing institutional approaches are changes that are either initiated “within existing institutions”, or modifications through “building new institutions”, or through “modernising institutional structures” (Bhola, 1976, p. 3). Some of these institutional approaches focus on designing “public administration and governance” institutions. In contrast, others pay special attention to “building institutional structures” suitable for managing “developmental tasks” whereas others “promote entrepreneurship within institutions” (ibid). The fervent trust is that such approaches “would lead to organisational innovation and improved productivity” (ibid). The interpretation of these institutional approaches have been broader enough to include “the transformation of the total set of political, social and economic institutions; and (...) narrowed down to focus only on the design of the human architecture of a particular organization” (ibid).

Moore (1995a) rejects the institutional definition proposed by (Van Reenen & Waisfisz, 1988, p. 17) in which they “deny the label ‘institution-building’ to any activity designed to develop a project-specific organization intended to last only as long as the (aid) project” (ibid, p. 9, the footnote). In some contexts, Moore (1995a) acknowledges the usefulness of making a distinction between institution-building and institutional development, especially when “‘building’ from nothing implies more concern with the supply of basic resources-staff, buildings, equipment, finance-than with ‘development’” (p. 10). Although in his literature he is not consistent in making such distinction himself as the difference between the two terms for him “does not appear fundamental or problematic” because some people use the terms interchangeably (ibid, p. 9). Moore (1995a) interchangeably used the two words “to refer to all points in the process” because according to him, after all in practice, international development or aid agencies are concerned with how to improve on the existing institutions, rather than building from scratch (p. 10).

For clarity, Goldsmith (1992) argues that “it is better to restrict institution building to refer to ventures to set up or overhaul official entities and to use institutional development to mean broader dealings with institutions, understanding that the pair of terms overlap” (p. 584). Moore (1995b) argues that the definitional disputes, debates and the wide disagreement have always been among academics, but they have not impeded practitioners from taking action. Experts, Moore (1995b) argues have ever since been working with

“implicit definition of 'institution-building' that has proved quite serviceable” (p. 92). For Moore (1995a) it is useful to focus on the “essences” which is “what do people seem to mean when they talk of ‘institution-building’ and ‘institutional development’ in an aid context” rather than emphasizing “definition and logic” (p. 12). Moore (1995a) states that:

Positively, 'institution-building' refers to attempts to improve the functioning of societies by creating, strengthening or changing 'institutional software' - the way people relate to one another in the context of public action and public activities. Negatively, 'institution-building' serves as a label for those development activities that do not centrally involve (only) physical construction, the transfer of physical and financial resources, or major policy changes. (ibid, p. 12)

About aid, institutional transplants and effectiveness, Islam (2018) confirms that donor agencies frequently support some sort of institutional transplants from aid-giving countries to the aid-receiving country. Usually, these are in the form of laws, rules, or regulations which “may or may not be adapted”. The effectiveness of such institutional transplants Islam (2018) states, “depend on how well they are enforced and how well complementary rules function” (p. 25). Another form of donor support to institution-building in aid recipient countries where factors necessary to complement institutional change are absent is through “piecemeal” institutional change in the form of requiring them to adopt legislation and regulatory reforms. Other instruments of change used by donors include “policy advice, demonstration of what works, technology provision, infrastructure provision with regulatory advice” (ibid, p. 26).

2.6. The Distinction between Institutions and Organisations

The words institution and organisation generally are used interchangeably, thus contributing to the ambiguity and confusion of the terms (N. Uphoff, 1992; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006; N. T. Uphoff, 1986; N. T. Uphoff & Esman, 1974). To avoid this confusion, North (1998) recommends institutional researchers to conceptually separate institutions from organisations. He requests scholars not to mistake the rules of the game for the players. Conceptually, rules “must be clearly differentiated” from the players (ibid, p. 4). Purpose of the rules, North argues is to state the “way the game is played” (ibid). And the objective of a team within the set rules is “to win the game by a combination of skills, strategy, and coordination; by fair means or sometimes by foul means” (ibid). The process

through which strategies and skills of a team (in this case organisation) are modelled is distinct from the process through which their rules (in this case institutions) are evolved, created and which consequences they have (ibid, pp. 4–5). Selznick (1984) argues that:

The terms “organisation” thus suggests a certain bareness, a lean, no-nonsense system of consciously coordinated activities. It refers to an *expendable tool*, a rational instrument engineered to do a job. An “institution,” on the other hand, is more nearly a natural product of social needs and pressures—a responsive, adaptive organism. (p. 5, emphasis as in the book)

The distinction between institution and organisation, according to Selznick (1984) is a “matter of analysis” rather than a “direct description” (p. 5). Thus, one must not view enterprises as “either one or the other” (p. 6). He insists that the nature of most living associations resist the distinction of being either an “ideal” organisation or “ideal” institution”, instead “they are complex mixtures of both designed and responsive behaviour” (ibid). In the article *Institutionalism "Old" and "New"*, Selznick (1996) talks about the distinction he made earlier between "organization" and "institution" in his book *Leadership in Administration* (1957). In this article, Selznick (1996) refers to the concept institutions as the established/adapted form of organisation, that is, when an organisation passes the test of “expendability”¹⁰ (p. 271). In other words, we talk about an institution when an organisation is “institutionalised”, that is, “tends to take on a special character and to achieve a distinctive competence or, perhaps, a trained or built-in incapacity” (ibid). The most crucial aspect of institutionalisation for Selznick (1984, 1996) is the “infusion with value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand” (ibid).

Good leadership is what matters for the task of nurturing the process of institutionalisation of an organisation, both its benefits and costs. Referring to it “as a neutral idea” Selznick (1996) also defines institutionalisation as “the emergence of orderly, stable, socially integrating patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, or narrowly technical activities” (p. 271). While to Groenewegen et al. (1995) institutionalization “is an (artificial) process of selection of (increasing) efficient and reasonable rules” (p. 469). Selznick (1996) concludes that “institutional theory traces the emergence of distinctive forms, processes,

¹⁰ “the readiness with which the organization or practice is given up or changed in response to new circumstances or demands” (Selznick, 1996, p. 271).

strategies, outlooks, and competences as they emerge from patterns of organizational interaction and adaptation. Such patterns must be understood as responses to both internal and external environments” (p. 271). The terms “distinctiveness”, Selznick (1996) cautions shouldn’t be taken too literally as it could be referring to a “certain kind of institution” (ibid).

Other institutionalisation processes identified by Selznick (1996) include “the creation of a formal structure, the emergence of informal norms, selective recruiting, administrative rituals, ideologies, and much else that results from a special history of goal-seeking, problem-solving, and adaptation” (p. 271). Selznick (1992) observes that human conducts are constrained in two main ways by institutionalisation: “by bringing it within a normative order, and by making it hostage to its own history” (p. 232). To ensure “stability and integration” is to create what Selznick (1992) calls “social entanglements or commitments” (ibid). Although actions of individuals in their daily life “is mercifully free and reversible”, however options become limited “when actions touch important issues and salient values or when they are embedded in networks of interdependence” (ibid, p. 232). In the theory of institutions Selznick (1996) emphasises that “values do have a central place” and what we need to do is to find out “which values matter in the context at hand; how to build them into the organization's culture and social structure; and in what ways they are weakened or subverted” (p. 271).

Uphoff (1986) identifies three commonly used categories where the word institution and organisation are used interchangeably: (a) organisations that are not institutions, (b) institutions that are not organizations, and (c) organisations that are institutions (or vice versa, institutions that are organizations) (p. 8). Institutions with organisational structure or organisations having the potential to become institutionalised, according to Uphoff (1986) include both role-oriented and rule-oriented approaches to institutions. It’s this last category where the studied decentralised village development institutions or VDCs fall. Rule-based institutions Uphoff (1986) notes are complicated to address and to deal with in development efforts. The role-oriented and rule-oriented approaches to institutional analysis have regard for the values and norms of individuals. This is because institutions are inextricably linked with normative considerations (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). For Uphoff (1984) an institution is nothing but “an organisation (or a role, a rule, procedure, a practice,

a system of relations) that is valued by persons over and above the direct and immediate benefits they derive from it” (p. 9).

One way to ponder over the degree to which an organisation qualifies an institutional status is to inquire: 1) whether both its members and non-members or direct beneficiaries would want such an institution back if it were to fade. 2) To what extent would they act or sacrifice to ensure the institution in question is preserved (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). Thus, the question as to whether an organisation has attained an institution status or institutionalised depends on how people evaluate it, i.e., “whether it is seen as having acquired value beyond direct instrumental considerations” (p. 10). To other people (N. T. Uphoff, 1986) states institutions are perceived negatively as “lethargic, aloof, ossified” (p. 10). An organisation attains such status when it has acquired sufficient “power and status” that would warrant it not to respond to the needs of the people (ibid). Institutions decline and become weak when they lose the legitimacy the public, accorded to them.

An institution cannot operate indefinitely without providing benefits-economic, social, political, ethical-that justify its continued existence. To the extent it enjoys institutional status in people’s minds, it will have more stability and capability for dealing with common problems over time than a less valued and less supported organisation would have. (ibid, p. 10)

Although in everyday usage things get classified as “either being or not being ‘institutions’”, however, Uphoff (1986) admonishes that the term institutionalisation “should be conceived as a matter of degree” because “in practice, transforming an organization into an institution takes time” (p. 10). Uphoff (1986) exemplifies three categories of the institution from the legal realm. He states that a new law firm, for instance, is an organisation that is not yet an institution; the ‘law’ itself exemplifies an institution that is not an organization, and the courts represent the examples of both organisations and institutions. In elaborating further on the overlapping and divergent nature of these concepts, Uphoff (1986) refers to organisations as “structures of recognised and accepted roles” (p. 8). These structures he went on are the outcome of roles interactions and can be elaborate or simple with more complex organisations having additional varied capabilities. Some organisations operate as formal while others as informal.

Organisations working on an informal basis do not have “legal or otherwise explicitly prescribed basis for the roles or for the authority and other resources associated with them” (ibid). To consider an organisation institutionalised to an extent according to Uphoff (1986) that organisation has to “acquired special status and legitimacy for having satisfied people's needs and for having met their normative expectations over time” (ibid). Through valued performance over some time, systems and relations or organised systems, as well as roles and practices, can also acquire the status of an institution. In general terms, institutions, according to Uphoff (1986) whether they are organisations or not are:

Complexes of norms and behaviours that persist over time by serving collectively valued purposes. Institutions can be concrete and specific like a nation’s central bank or quite diffuse and general, such as the institution of money. Some kinds of institutions have an organizational form with roles and structures, whereas others exist as pervasive influences on behaviour. (p. 9, the emphasis as in the original text)

Due to the relative ease of providing a formal definition to the word organisation Moore (1995a) claims the term is not as problematic as that of the institution. Organisation refers to “a structure within which people cooperate according to accepted and recognised roles” (p. 10). Most importantly, organisations such as football clubs, municipal administrations, companies and so on are easily recognised among things in the real world. Moore (1995a) identifies two forms of labelling disputes which are related to description and boundary. He acknowledges an occasional dispute erupting over the issue of describing organisations, for instance, whether a particular structure like a household can indeed be labelled an organisation or not. Other labelling disputes are more “boundary” in nature. For example “should a large network of closely related companies (or government agencies) be seen as a single organization or an 'organisational network'?” (ibid). Moore (1995a) states that disputes over the description of organisations are “marginal disputes, for the criteria used are clear in principle: whether a structure is an organization depends on how much ‘organisation’ it has” (p. 10). For Perrow (1993), the distinction between an organisation and an institution lies in the essential nature of institutions to the lives and livelihoods of the members of society. Some organisations note Perrow (1993) are:

Merely-rational tools in which there is little personal investment and which can be cast aside without regret. Others become institutionalized. They take on a

distinctive character; they become prized in and of themselves, not merely for the goods or services they grind out. People build their lives around them, identify with them, become dependent on them. (p. 167)

Schiavo-Campo (1994) argues that although some times one can improve organisations or even create “*ab nihilo*” (from nothing) however such improvements will not effect changes in the economic, social and political behaviour of actors “unless the rules and procedures change as well” (p. 5). The reverse, according to Schiavo-Campo (1994), is also true, which means “rule modification is unlikely to produce results *in an operationally meaningful timeframe unless* organizational improvements proceed apace” (ibid, emphasis as in the original document). Institutional reforms that do not produce results are more likely to be reversed, and a policy reform that neglects organisational requirements, Schiavo-Campo (1994) cautions “is usually lethal for the implementation of the reform” (ibid). Transition economies are faced with a massive challenge of institutional transformation both in terms of “institutional (regulatory and procedural) reform and organisational development” (ibid, p. 5). Institutions are described as a multiplicity of norms and behaviours that are used by a human beings to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions (Brown & Sonwa, 2015). Pain (2004) describes institutions as “rules that exist to govern or regulate the behaviour of individuals”. Rules exist both at formal and informal levels. At times informal rules may contradict formal rules deployed by states, and often informal rules are not written down or documented (p. 1). Hecló (2011) describes institutions as a priced human inheritance from the past. He argues that:

Institutions represent arrangements that we have inherited as part of the status quo and that are ours to lose. Institutions are smooth, well-worn handles by which people have historically held onto, and manage their social and political affairs. They must be some very powerful forces that could overcome our natural human aversion to loss, something able to make us inclined to distrust and let go of those handles. (p. 14)

Hecló (2011) identifies three broad categories of institutions-private, public and non-profit sectors (p. 15). He states that whenever we talk about “business enterprises, journalism, sports, higher education, the rule of law, or any social practice at its “truest and best,” we are talking about something real, that there really is an institutional soul to sustain or lose” (p. 9). And that the intended purpose of having institutions is “to serve the interests of the

people” (p. 12). Writing about market institutions that influence transactions, Islam (2018) operationalises the term institution as “rules and enforcement mechanisms that govern economic, social and political interactions” (p. 2). He identifies organizations or networks as “special type of institution” having “a set of rules guiding the interaction of the group and group members with each other and non-group members” (ibid). Abrutyn and Turner (2011) view organisation as a kind of “meso-level corporate unit embedded in macro-level institutional systems” and refer to institutions as “emergent, macro-level socio-cultural formations that constrain the operation of organizations, and vice versa” (p. 284). Whereas for Riker (1980) institutions are simple “rules about behaviour, especially about making decisions”, condensed “conventions” or “interpersonal rules” that “must affect social outcomes just as much as personal values” (p. 432).

Islam (2018) defines the concept “govern” in terms of exercising direction or restraining influence over/guide/control or hold in check (p. 2). Institutions can come in the forms of formal rules such as “codified, laws, regulations, decrees, written and enforced by a public legal authority” or informal rules like “societal norm-based rules, religious and traditional codes of conduct that govern interactions” (ibid, p. 3). Regarding an individual motivation for compliance with a contractual obligation or legal requirement Islam (2018) identifies three incentives: a) an individual must internalise norms in a shared belief system like honesty or sense of responsibility to their peers; b) existence of some form of social sanction in the form of societal intolerance/lack of acceptance to deviant action; c) the presence of an economic embargo in the way of fine, imprisonment, or denial of future business transactions (formal institutions focus on this incentive and its effectiveness depends on how strong is the economic sanction). Islam (2018) argues that “norm-based institutions can supplement or supplant laws and formal rules” (p. 3). The different rules enforcement mechanisms are police, jail, courts (these three are formal), reputational sanctions and various community/group sanctions. However, “formal enforcement mechanisms work properly when informal rules (e.g. social norms) are consistent with the formal rules” (ibid, p. 5).

In distinguishing between policies and institutions on the one hand and their relationship to governance on the other, Islam (2018) remarks that most often the terms “policies” and “institutions” are interchangeably used and at times used together without clarity on their differences. While policies are “goals or desired outcomes/directions a country wants to

take”, according to Islam (2018) institutions are those “rules that direct actions to achieve (or not) these goals or outcomes” (pp. 11–12; for similar distinction see World Bank, 2002). Like policies, Islam (2018) notes that often the term “governance” is “used together with institutions and sometimes, in lieu of them” (p. 12). Brown and Sonwa (2015) argue that institutions represent both “diffuse pattern of behaviour” as well as “function as organisations or structures of recognised and accepted roles that serve particular purposes” (p. 1). Borrowing the ideas of North, Schiavo-Campo (1994) distinguishes institutions from organisations referring to institutions as “a set of formal and informal rules, (...) distinct from the public organizations which emerge to administer and enforce them” (p. 4). Meaning institutions are rules (be they formal or informal) and organisations are the administrative and enforcement mechanisms through which institutions are implemented.

Institutional development Schiavo-Campo (1994) argues, is “a move from a less efficient to a more efficient set of rules” (p. 4). According to (Moore, 1995b) institution or organisation building requires the following: “patience and a long-time horizon; experimentation and willingness to admit and learn from mistakes; human skills and sensitivity rather than expensive hardware; and sensitivity to the particular cultural and political environment into which the institution is to fit” (p. 90). Pfahl (2005) a German Scholar arrives at an implicit understanding of institutions as “political or social organisations that are involved in policymaking or implementation”. In this context, she refers to the organisation as “an entity with legal personality” where its employed staff act on its behalf to enforce its rules and implement its goals (p. 82).

With a closer study of the initial operational definitions of institutions in such disciplines as sociology Pfahl (2005) observes that “institutions are more than just organisations” they are also instruments that aid “individuals to facilitate decision making in everyday life” (ibid). While operationalising their analytical criterion Spangenberg et al. (2002) reformulate their definition of institutions as “systems of rules” into three “organisations, mechanisms and institutional orientations” (p. 72). Institutions as organisations are the most tangible set of structures. Institutions as mechanisms are the “explicit or formal systems of rules” including “constitutive and regulative rules” (e.g. organisational or constitutional rules, associations, standing orders of government agencies, NGOs, unions, tax laws and written agreements). Finally, institutions as systems of orientation are the

“implicit or informal systems of rules”. Common among the three is to “structure the choices of actions of individual or collective actors within a society” (ibid, pp. 72–72).

Upon confirming the existence of political, economic, social and educational organisations, North (1998) describes organisations as groups of people that are connected with a “common purpose to achieve objectives” (p. 5). The underlying purpose of North’s theorising is to narrate a historical account of economics in which the primary actors are the firms (economic organisations). Given this understanding, Connor and Dovers (2004) don’t find any problem with North’s distinction between organisations and institutions. For Connor and Dovers (2004) North’s framework seems to provide scholars who engage in the discussion of public policy for sustainability with “a significant clarification in language as a crucial building block for an improved analytic theory” (p. 14). However, in light of “institutional language of a broad and cross-disciplinary public discussion” where such distinction is not often made, North’s differentiations according to Connor and Dovers (2004) do not “presents a challenge to consistency” (p. 12).

Powell and DiMaggio (1994) observe several notable differences between objects commonly thought to represent institutions, some of which are referred to as organisations and others not. While some seem more cultural, others are more structural. The vital commonality shared by institutional objects such as marriage, the contract, the corporation, voting, formal organisation, the handshake and so on, is that “all are variously ‘productive systems’, or ‘enabling structures’, or social ‘programs’ or performance scripts” (pp. 144–145). The institution is said to have represented “a social order or pattern that has attained; a certain state or property”, whereas institutionalisation “denotes the process of such attainment”. An institution means “a social pattern that reveals a particular reproduction process” and by “order or pattern”, it ranges from “conventional, to standardised interaction sequences” (ibid p. 145).

Uphoff and Buck (2006) argue that the unprecedented frequency witnessed in current economies in terms of merging or morphing of organisations with institutional qualities could mean that institutionalisation “may become more a matter of function than structure”. And for the fact that capacities (individual and collective) developed in one setting are easily transferred to other locations makes “*competence*” more than “*longevity*” “the hallmark of institutional capacities” (p. 36, emphasis, as in the original text). The higher possibility to transfer/application of individual and collective/organisational capacities such as decision-

making, resource mobilization and management, communication and coordination, and conflict resolution developed in one setting to various others makes it a reality. This possibility, according to Uphoff and Buck (2006), makes competences/experience and skills the essential organisational capacities rather than longevity. Institutional development in such a scenario could become “a matter more of developing such capacities than of developing ‘the institution’ per se” (ibid). In conclusion, Moore (1995a) doesn’t find any value in exploring the definitional distinction between “institutions” and “organisations” any further as in his words “even if one could identify clear differences in principle, this would be of little practical relevance” (p. 12).

On the contrary, however, North (1993) stresses the need to separate institutions from organisations “if one is to get a handle on the dynamics of institutional change” (p. 4). Drawing his famous sports analogy North (1993) emphasises that “institutions are the rules of the game and organizations are the players” (ibid). In support of a distinction between the two terms Schiavo-Campo (1994) faults the colloquial understanding of the concept “institution” as “organization” and “the challenge of institutional transformation” which “is the mis-specified as consisting of organizational reforms” (p. 4). In the scholarly literature of international relations, there are various types of international institutions such as treaties, organisations, regimes, conventions, and so forth.

Often the term is used to denote “distinctly different empirical phenomena, such as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international regimes, and sets of norms” (Duffield, 2007, p. 1). It is a concept that is understood differently by different scholars and policymakers. International institutions for some scholars are the “interstate regulatory agreements” (ibid, p. 1), or “formal international organisations” (ibid p. 3). Koremenos et al. (2001) define international institutions as “*explicit arrangements, negotiated among international actors, that prescribe, proscribe, and/or authorize behaviour*” (p. 762, emphasis as in the original text, see also Duffield, 2007, p. 2). They went on to explain that “explicit arrangements are public, at least among the parties themselves” (ibid). According to Duffield (2007), international institutions are: “relatively stable sets of related constitutive, regulative, and procedural norms and rules that pertain to the international system, the actors in the system (including states as well as non-state entities), and their activities” (p. 2).

Keohane (1988), defines institutions broadly as “persistent and connected sets of rules that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations” (p. 386). He also states that international regimes are particular types of institutions that involve states or transnational actors which are related to special issues of global interactions. Historically, international organisations (IOs) have the same meaning as an intergovernmental organisation (an organisation founded by states and whose members are states). The three definitions of IOs include the following: 1) using their composition (e.g., states or non-state entities, or other international organisations); 2) making references to how they are established (e.g., treaty or other instruments such as resolutions adopted by a conference of states); and 3) the idea of having or enjoying a separate legal personality under international law (Pronto, 1994, pp. 311–314).

The Report on International Law Commission (2011), No. 10 (A/66/10), Article 2(a) defines international organisation using a combination of the above mentioned three components as: “an organization established by a treaty or other instrument governed by international law and possessing its international legal personality. International organizations may include as members, in addition to States, other entities” (UN, 2011, p. 54). Similarly, in their attempt to distinguish the international organization from international institutions, Martin and Simmons (2002) define international organisations as “entities” and international institutions as “rules” (p. 326). For Mearsheimer (1994), institutions are “a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other. They prescribe acceptable forms of state behaviour and proscribe unacceptable kinds of behaviour” (p. 8).

2.7. Definitional Issues of the Term Institution

At the heart of donor-driven decentralisation and local governance are political and institutional change. Overall donor assistance in this area focuses on a set of programs, procedures, and routines that affect changes in the political culture by building new relations based on trust between citizens and their elected officials including a wide range of actors (EuropeAid, 2007). According to EuropeAid (2007), the characteristics of decentralisation reform programs are complex and politically sensitive. Hydén (2016) accuses academics and policy practitioners of placing “emphasis on the structural rather than the human aspects of institutions” (p. 8). According to Hydén, policy experts and

academic researchers “have treated institutions in a managerialist mode focusing on the needs of those who govern and their own desire for better results” (ibid).

Hydén (2016) refers to such approaches to decentralization a “rather slanted approach to institution-building” that overlooks two significant dimensions of institution-building relevant, especially in the local context of Africa (p. 8). The appropriate dimensions of institutions are that: 1) institutions are not monolithic rather often made up of loosely joined components that can be combined in different, but often unpredictable ways; 2) do not function in a social vacuum and to make them relevant and operative are recreated or reinvented using cultural resources (ibid). Fiorina (1995) describes the institution as “a formal or codified structure or an informal agreement or set of expectations” (p. 113). According to Fiorina (1995), functions of formal institutions among others include the description of actors’ resources, their rights and powers and so on. In contrast, an informal institution which is the norms and expectations provide “one possible explanation for why one equilibrium prevails over other logical possibilities” (ibid).

In academic literature, there is much disagreement about the definition of an institution and no sign of greater convergence yet (Moore, 1995b). The meaning given to an institution, according to Connor and Dovers (2004), depends to an extent on the study’s motive. Among the different institutional definitions provided by scholars, New Institutional literature Connor and Dovers (2004) trust, presents “a convincing analytical case for institutions” (p. 13). At the same time, Moore (1995b) maintains that rich alternative definitions of the institution are provided by a combination of English language and sociological theory. Institutional and organisational sociologists since Weber and Durkheim such as (Beckert, 2010; Berger et al., 1967; Dobbin, 1994; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 2012; Schutz, 1972; Scott et al., 1994; Zucker, 1977) have explained institutions in cultural terms. And in terms of a recurrent pattern of human behaviours that are socially valued. The evolution of institutions has been incremental, thus, “connecting the past with the present and the future” (North, 1991, p. 97).

The disagreement regarding the definition of an institution is not purely or just an intellectual matter; instead, it is because different meanings serve different purposes. For instance, according to Moore (1995b), the “role” definition suits the aid agencies because it provides appropriate justification for the bulk of aid activities implemented under the label institution building (pp. 92–93). Donor agencies are more concerned about the

building of specific organizations in developing countries such as government offices, universities, training colleges. Economists and scholars that are concerned with institutional issues in ex-soviet nations define institutions in “rule” terms. They describe the problem of an institution in terms of “patterns of behaviour, and the lack of (‘rules’) institutions of law, contract, property rights and similar issues” (Moore, 1995b, p. 93).

Besides, the definitions provided by aid agencies are those of academia. Groenewegen et al. (1995) argue that “a framework of behaviour” defines the institution. According to them “institutions direct, channel, or guide behaviour” while distinguishing values as “the underlying systems of belief about right and wrong from the more concrete institutional structure of norms, rules, and structures” (p. 467). Institutions Groenewegen et al. (1995) trust “are constraints as well as instruments” (p. 470). The diversity in the use of the term institution doesn't sound right for Ostrom (1986). Because according to her it “signals a problem in the general conception held by scholars of how preferences, rules, individual strategies, customs and norms, and the current structural aspects of ongoing political systems are related to one another” (p. 4).

For Schiavo-Campo (1994), both formal and informal rules and procedures, including “cultural habits and psychological variables” are all institutions (p. 4). For new institutionalist scholars like (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1994) norms, law, regulations, culture and belief system are an essential component in the study of organisations. Unlike formal rules that “can be changed overnight”, informal rules according to (Schiavo-Campo, 1994, p. 4) “cannot” be changed instantly, their change process is always slower. Moore (1995b) argues that some theorists that focus on institution-building in the developing world have defined institutions as “organizations that are ‘change-inducing, change-protecting, and formal’” (p. 92). Scholars, Moore (1995a) notes differently define the institution, from those who express the concept in “value” terms such as Milton Esman in 1967 to New Institutional Economists (NIE) who view the word as “sets of formal and informal rules” (pp. 11–12).

According to Moore (1995a), NIE scholars like (North, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1998) understands institutional development in the context of property rights as “a move from a less efficient to a more efficient set of rules” (ibid). The New Institutional literature understands institution as “rules providing the fundamental infrastructure of coordinated social action and thereby setting the stage for the emergence of other regularities such as

organisations” (Connor & Dovers, 2004, p. 13). Other new institutionalist scholars in the fields of sociology and organizational research includes (Ferris & Tang, 1993; Immergut, 1998; Koelble et al., 1995; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1994).

Goldsmith (1992) identifies two very distinct academic traditions which, according to him, use different definitions and talking past each other. While in social sciences, according to (Goldsmith, 1992; Moore, 1995b), the reality is that the concept institution has two principal meanings. In the fields of both management and organization theory, an institution usually denotes “a role or organisation”. In contrast, in economics and sociology, it is often about “a rule or convention” (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 582). With a closer look at the two definitions, one could realise a significant divergence between the role-and rule-oriented institutional labels. The role-oriented institution “resides in deliberately constructed human groupings” with “concrete reality”, whilst the rule-oriented institution “is diffused among a multitude of people” as “mental conceptions” (ibid). Broadly defined therefore an institution according to Goldsmith (1992) refers to “routines or standardised solutions to collective problems” (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 582; see also Moore, 1995b, p. 92).

There is a clear overlap between Goldsmith’s (1992) two meanings of the institution and would be extremely difficult for each to stand alone. For instance, often, roles/organisations would need rules/conventions to reinforce them, and vice versa. In Goldsmith’s (1992) words, both definitions “refer to repetition in the way people act. In either case, an institution is understood to entail stability and persistence” (p. 582). In analytical discussions, this overlap would be problematic for development managers who continue to find it difficult to be precise about which type of institution they mean when they discuss about institutions.

To deepen the obscurity, in the view of most experts, neither roles/organizations nor rules/conventions need to be institutions. According to Selznick's (1957) influential work on bureaucracy, to institutionalize is to infuse with value beyond the technical requirements of a task. Whereas some organizations and some conventions are rational tools with little personal investment, institutions are prized in and of themselves. The key is legitimacy, or a popular belief in something's rightness. Behaviour that cannot claim legitimacy (or that loses it), is apt to fizzle out over time, thus failing the test of stability and persistence. (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 583)

Moore (1995b) distinguishes institution as “a role or organisation” and institution as “rule or a convention” (p. 92). The example of an institution as “a role or organisation” is “a court system” (ibid). And that of the institution as “rule or a convention” is the “rule of law” (ibid). In an attempt to distinguish between the two in terms of institutionalisation, Huntington (1976) uses Harvard University and the newly opened suburban high school on the one hand and the seniority system in the United States (US) Congress and select press conferences of President Johnson on the other for demonstration purposes. He argues that although both Harvard University and the newly opened suburban high school are organizations, “but Harvard is much more of an institution than the high school” (p. 12). And that while both the seniority system in the US Congress and the select press conferences of President Johnson are procedures, “but seniority was much more institutionalised than were Mr Johnson's methods of dealing with the press” (ibid).

After identifying “rule-oriented” institution and “role-oriented” institution as the two types of institutions, Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) distinguish between the two in the field of Agriculture. The duo likens a rule-oriented institution in the field of agriculture to a “land tenure system” which are “codes of law or custom” while comparing role-oriented institution to a “legal authority established to adjudicate land tenure disputes” which are the “concrete organizations” (p. 12). Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) express the importance of keeping in mind the distinction between the two institutional types for the fact that “not all organizations are institutions, any more than all institutions are organizations” (p. 12). And that both rules-and roles-oriented institutions can become institutionalised with the “former as codes of law or custom, the latter as concrete organisations” (ibid).

The most cynical definition and perhaps the most useful one in aid agency practice on the institutional-building, according to Moore (1995b) comes from Goldsmith (1992). He defines an institution as “a leftover category for everything in foreign assistance that is neither financial nor economic” (Goldsmith, 1992, p. 584; Moore, 1995b, p. 93). While for Huntington (1976), institutions are “stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour” (p. 12). For Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) institutions encompass “rules or procedures that shape how people act, and roles or organizations that have attained special status or legitimacy” (p. 12). Inputting his definition in a more positive light Moore (1995b) explains that institution-building among aid agencies:

Has mainly comprised attempts to develop and improve the functioning of specific organizations-government agencies, education and training institutions, NGOs, etc.-by providing finance, buildings, equipment, staff training, or the services of technical assistance personnel. It also comprises a range of other miscellaneous activities that are directly oriented to human behaviour and interaction, rather than to finance or material provision (e.g. support for workshops and meetings of various kinds). (p. 93)

Douglass C. North (1991) a NIE scholar describes an institution as “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction” (p. 97). These constraints consist of both formal rules such as property rights, laws, constitutions and so on, and informal controls like taboos, sanctions, customs, codes of conducts, and traditions. North (1998) describes institutions as “rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” (p. 3). The ultimate function of an institution whether in an economy, society or politics is to structure incentives in human exchanges, reduce uncertainty in social interactions, and to provide the needed guidance in our everyday life (North, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1998).

For Hodgson (2006) institutions are the “systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions” such as “language, money, law, systems of weights and measures, table manners, and firms (and other organizations)” (p. 2). Parsons (1954) a sociologist regards institutions as “those patterns which define the essentials of the legitimately expected behaviour of persons insofar as they perform *structurally important roles* in the social system” (p. 239, the emphasis as in the original text). Lammers and Barbour (2006) view institutions as “constellations of established practices guided by formalized, rational beliefs that transcend particular organizations and situations” (p. 364). Ngwenya (2008) defines institutions as “processes that include a wide range of ‘arrangements’, which may be structured or unstructured, visible or invisible” (p. 17).

After reviewing the different sociological assumptions about institutions Pfahl (2005) concludes that among sociologists institution refers to any “permanent and internalised patterns of behaviour and orientations that implicitly assume a regulatory function” (p. 82). Keohane et al. (1993) define an institution as “persistent and connected sets of rules and practices that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity and shape expectations” (p. 4). Here their focus is on institutions that comprise organisations and collection of

organisations. They argue that their conception of the institution could be a form of “bureaucratic organisations, regimes (rule-structures that do not necessarily have organisations attached), or conventions (informal practices)” (Keohane et al., 1993; Pfahl, 2005, p. 83). Nichols (1998) describes institutions as “formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy” (p. 477). Such institutions have a more formal status than cultural norms; however, one that does not necessarily originate from legal as opposed to conventional, standing etc.

In politics or governance, institutions are analysed broadly as “rules by which political decision-making and implementation are structured” (Spangenberg, 2002, p. 107; Spangenberg et al., 2002, p. 70). The rules can denote such “social entities as actors as well as to systems of rules shaping their behaviour, including the mechanisms for rule enforcement” (Spangenberg, 2002, p. 107). The focus of political science approach is “politically relevant aspects” of organisational roles, processes of decision-making and orientations, the impacts and consequences of their actions or the contributions made to the systems (ibid). Actor orientations (define as preferences and perceptions) are treated in the framework of actor-centred institutionalism by (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1995; Scharpf, 1997) as a distinct theoretical category. In their conception of actor preferences at the minimum can be observed from two dimensions. On the one hand are the individual and organisational self-interest and normative obligations and aspiration which are internalised on the other.

According to Scharpf (2000) in organization-theoretic literature, the corresponding notion of their actor preferences conception is the “distinction between system maintenance and goal attainment” (p. 771). Where the general assumption is that in the cases of conflict, system maintenance takes precedence over goal attainment. Scharpf (2000) argues that by defining the role-specific content of conventional wisdom (generally accepted belief) and selective perceptions, institutional norms and incentives shape cognitive orientations as it does for actor preferences. Political science approach to institutions for sustainable development considers agents and structures as engaging in “dialectical relationship” in which they both can equally play a decisive role (Spangenberg et al., 2002, p. 70). Spangenberg et al. (2002) have identified two other scholarly descriptions of political institutions. One, as “systems of rules for authoritative conflict solution disposing of

mechanisms for rule enforcement”; and two, as “systems of rules for the development and implementation of mandatory, societal relevant decisions and organs of symbolically facilitating societal orientation” (p. 70).

Williamson (1998) notes that the principal interests of politics, social scientists and NIE are the “institutional environment” and “institutions of governance” (p. 75). Institutional environment is the “polity, judiciary, laws of contract and property” and institutions of governance are the “use of markets, hybrids, firms, bureaus” (ibid). In the context of game theory one could infer that in North’s (1998) institutional conception, an institutional environment refers to the “rules of the game”, and the institutions of governance the “players” of the game (p. 3). Huntington (1976) describes institutions as “stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour” (p. 12). Huntington (1976) argues that institutionalisation “is the process by which organisations and procedures acquire value and stability” (p. 12). Selznick (1984) looks at institutionalisation as value infusion beyond the technical requirements of a task it's expected to accomplish. The institutionalisation level of a political system can be measured using the following: “adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of its organizations and procedures” (Huntington, 1976, p. 12). The same criteria can be used to measure the level of institutionalization of an organization or a procedure (ibid). Huntington (1976) is confident that it is possible to compare the levels of institutionalisation of political systems and to measure increases and decreases in the institutionalization of organizations and procedures within a political system “if these criteria can be identified and measured” (ibid).

2.8. Community Development Institutions

Rural development efforts include the establishment of effective local government institutions for the implementation of rural development programs. Decentralised administration demonstrates that local government institutions of which VDCs are part of are shrouded in complex horizontal and vertical power relations. Decentralised arrangement in most developing countries is such that local governments are “simply an extension of the central government responsible for the implementation of central government projects at the local level” (France & Dipholo, 2017, p. 3). France and Dipholo (2017) stress that decentralisation ought to be understood as an evolutionary process which

is subjected to periodic changes in the balance of power between the central government and local government institutions though often in the interest of the central government.

Local Government Institutions

<i>National Level</i>	Institutions of decentralisation include, among others, the central government ministries and departments
<i>District Level</i>	They include, among others, the LCs, the district chieftains and the WDCs
<i>Village Level</i>	Institutions of decentralisation include, among others, the VDCs

Source: Author but information is from France and Dipholo, 2017

The central government in such an arrangement has the freewill to sometimes delegate its responsibilities to and at other times the centre recalls such duties from the local government institutions. As the central village institution responsible for all development matters VDC is mandated to coordinate the activities of all other village institutions such as Parents Teachers Association, women’s organisations and other voluntary organisations (France & Dipholo, 2017). Local institutions are structures operated for and by members of a particular community and norms that direct social interaction within them (France & Dipholo, 2017). Carloni (2015) identifies two types of local institutions: 1) “rules that govern intangible institutions” such as kinship, marriage, inheritance and sharing of oxen at the community level; and 2) “organizations that operate at the community level and are controlled by their members” (p. 22). France and Dipholo (2017) argue that an institutional framework for rural development “covers all organisations that have a responsibility for planning and implementation of rural development programs and projects” (p. 3). It comprises both national level institutions and local level structures located in district and village levels.

Findings of Walo’s (2016) study conducted in Guto Gidda district of Ethiopia isolate three different types of local institutions in the area: a) local government institutions, b) indigenous institutions; and c) the Farmers’ Cooperative Union (FCU). The preferred institutional type among local development actors Walo (2016) mentions is the indigenous/traditional institutions. This inclination is due to the easy accessibility of their services, less reliance/affiliation to the ruling party, social capital mobilisation capability, and ability to stimulate mutual collaborations in local livelihoods. Walo (2016) classify local institutions into three based on origin (community or state), degree of formality

(formal or informal) and (provided services) (p. 13). Jütting (2003) identifies three approaches to institutional classification in the literature which depends on: the degree of formality; different levels of hierarchy; and the area of analysis (p. 11). Put differently, De Soysa and Jütting (2006) describe the institutional classification into “speed of change (slow or fast-moving), the arena where they are situated (social, political, economic and cultural), and the degree of formality (informal and formal)” (p. 1).

Government-initiated institutions are “set up, funded and monitored by the government” and indigenous institutions are “those institutions the people voluntarily initiated and control” (Walo, 2016, p. 131). A formal institution is “a ‘hard,’ codified and written form of a system of government and governance” and informal institutions are “‘soft,’ tacit, and unwritten community institutions” (ibid, p. 122; see also Pike et al., 2015, p. 187). Pike et al. (2015) argue that formal institutions in local development include both the “system of government and governance” especially the nation-state whilst informal institutions encompass the “traditions of cooperative working between public and private sectors” (p. 186). The two forms of institutions which are in constant interaction are together the products of actors and conditions that regulate their agency. As effects of society such structures “influence rather than determine attitudes, behaviours and decision-making in ways that impart stability and predictability, and enable their (re)production over time and space” (Pike et al., 2015, p. 186). Pike et al. (2015) give charters, constitutions, contracts, laws, regulations, rights, requirements, regulations, rules and statutes as examples of formal institutions and attitudes, codes, conventions, customs, experiences, habits, networks, norms, routines, traditions and values as samples informal institutions.

Whereas formal institutions often are initiated and run by the government or state, informal institutions are often community-initiated institutions. As political institutions, government institutions determine both the exercise of political power and the social group that holds this authority (Walo, 2016). Informal local institutions as per the understanding of Brown and Sonwa (2015) are those “institutions or groups” that have an organisational structure but lacking legal status as per the law of their respective countries. Generally, they are formed around a common interest or need areas of members. Four types of legal entities/formal local institutions are identified by Brown and Sonwa (2015) including associations, common initiative groups (CIGs), cooperatives and public institutions (local agencies or arms of higher levels of government). Associations, cooperatives, and CIGs,

three of the four types of legal entities in Cameroon that can obtain a Community Forest “are governed by different laws and differ in their management structure”, all of which “must include the whole community concerned” (p. 1).

Government institutions, Walo (2016) argues “are rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official” (p. 122). Walo (2016) categorises FCU as a hybrid institution because it shares characteristics of both government and indigenous institutions in its activities. Although members of FCUs voluntarily organise themselves, governments strongly influence their management. Together, local government and traditional/indigenous institutions are crucial determinants of community development. Relatively informal institutions are essential in developing countries with less developed formal institutions. Informal institutions don’t only facilitate a transaction but “substitute for formal institutions” (Islam et al., 2001; Jütting, 2003, p. 11). Because of this, Jütting (2003) argues that “countries and communities can go a long way towards resolving information and enforcement problems without using their formal public legal systems” (p. 11).

Roles of Local Institutions in Community Development

Walo (2016)	Agrawal et al. (2008) (in Mitigating Climate Hazards)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure property rights of residents; • Create a friendly investment environment for wealth creation and employment generation; • Enhance social returns on investments; • Establish incentive frameworks that would discourage rent-seeking attitude and encourage profit maximization; and • Ensure efficiency in the rural development process by reducing the costs of transactions and advance competitive processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering and dissemination; • Resource mobilization and allocation; • Skills development and capacity building; and • Provide leadership and networking with other decision-makers and institutions.

As observed by Uphoff (1986), local institutions are not necessarily useful for all regional development tasks. The five critical rural development activity areas that the mentioned kinds or combinations of identified local institutions can most appropriately support.

Activity areas include a) natural resource management; b) rural infrastructure development; c) human resource development; d) agricultural development; and e) non-agricultural enterprise (p. 3). Institutions can be formal, visible or identifiable and usually having fairly clearly stated objectives such as the VDCs, WDCs, or other forms of organisations and associations like the village savings and loan schemes that are found in many communities (Carloni, 2015). Community institutions often overlap and may comprise of informal, unstructured social or socio-cultural institutions; or informal ‘rules of the game’ which exist inside formal, structured institutions and throughout the society. The existence of informal rules within formal structures/institutions creates a possibility for such “nested” institutions to undermine the formal objectives and effectiveness of modern institutions (Carloni, 2015, p. 22). Agrawal et al. (2008), identifies three sets of formal and informal forms of local institutions relevant to rural climate change adaptation (pp. 1 & 6).

Formal and Informal Forms of Local Institutions Relevant for Climate Change Adaptation

<i>Local institutions</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Local public institutions (bureaucratic agencies & local governments)</i>	Local governments, local agencies (e.g. Extension services and other arms of higher levels of government operating at local levels)
<i>Civil society institutions (Membership organisations & cooperatives)</i>	Rural producer organizations, cooperatives, savings and loan groups etc.
<i>Private/Market institutions (service organisations & private business)</i>	Service organizations such as ngos and charities, private businesses that provide insurance or loans.
<i>Informal institutions</i>	Institutions around labour sharing, indigenous information exchanges, savings societies, commons institutions, and indigenous knowledge institutions around migration and storage.

Source: Author created table from Agrawal et al., 2008, pp. 1–2

Factors that Promote Better Local Institutional Performance in Climate Change Adaptation

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Characteristics of Institutions</i>	Where organizational rules are simple and easy to understand; broad local involvement in the organization and its rules; fairness in resource allocation; clear mechanisms for enforcing rules; clear, broadly acceptable mechanisms for sanctioning rule infractions; availability of low-cost adjudication; accountability of decision-makers and other officials.
<i>Characteristics of the Context of Institutions</i>	Where mechanisms for the dissemination of new technologies and training in their use exist; favourable returns for products sold in markets; central governments facilitate the functioning of local institutions by creating adequate support for sanctions used by local institutions, provide necessary support in terms of information, finances, and skill development, develop indicators of performance against which institutions can be assessed over time; the network of institutions present in a context and their links with different social groups.
<i>Characteristics of Groups Served by The Institutions</i>	With clearly defined boundaries of the group; history of successfully shared experiences; the existence of social capital; appropriate leadership that changes periodically, young, familiar with changing external environments, connected to traditional local elite; interdependence among group members; heterogeneity of endowments among group members, homogeneity of identities and interests.
<i>Characteristics of the Ecological Context</i>	Which ensures a match between demands on ecological system and its output; information availability about the ecological system; possibility of storing benefits from the system; and group dependence on resources available from the ecological system.

Source: Author created the table from Agrawal et al., 2008, p. 4

Local institutions, Uphoff (1986) argues “range from the public sector to private sector channels of activity, with an intermediate sector of membership organisations that have both public and private sector characteristics” (p. 4). Uphoff (1986) identifies six distinct classifications of major local institutions.

Classifications of Major Local Institutions

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Description</i>
Local Administration (LA)	Local agencies and staff of central government ministries, accountable to bureaucratic superiors
Local Government (LG)	Elected or appointed bodies such as local or village councils having authority to deal with development and regulatory tasks and accountable to local residents in contrast to LA
Membership organizations (MOs)	Local self-help associations whose memberships may seek to handle: -multiple tasks, e.g., local development associations or VDCs, -specific tasks, e.g., water users' associations managing irrigation or health committees overseeing village programs, or -needs of members who have some specific characteristic or interest in common, e.g. mothers' clubs, caste associations, tenant unions
Cooperatives (Co-ops)	Kinds of local organisations that pool members' economic resources for their benefit, e.g., marketing associations, credit unions, consumer societies, or producer co-ops
Service organizations (SOs)	Local organizations designed mainly to help persons other than members though members may benefit from them. Eg. religious or charitable associations, service clubs, red cross or red crescent societies, etc., which run rural hospitals in several countries
Private businesses (PBs)	They are either independent operations or branches of extra-local enterprises engaged in or manufacturing, services and/or trade

Source: Author created the table from N. T. Uphoff, 1986, pp. 4–5

The six-alternative local institutional channels correspond to a continuum ranging from the public to the private sector are: the public, voluntary, and private sectors. A broader category of LOs covers the middle ranges of MOs, Co-ops and the SOs (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). In Uphoff and Buck (2006), LOs comprise of MOs and Co-ops. To a varying extent, the two categories can possess institutional characteristics. And are labelled as the voluntary/civic sector, a third, or middle sector or “*collective action* sector, the *participatory* sector, the *voluntary* sector, or the *membership* sector” (p. 5). The public sectors are the LA and LG; while the private sector includes SOs and PBs. The civic sector has some characteristics of both the public and private sectors (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, 1992; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006).

In the continuum of local institutions by sector, LA forms part of the bureaucratic institutions, while LG is part of political institutions. MOs, Co-ops, and SOs encompass the following: local organisations which are based on the principle of membership direction and control; and which can become institutions; whereas PBs form the profit-oriented institutions (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). LA and LG differ from other local institutions in that the state backs both in terms of law and provision of resources i.e, in an ideal situation. In other words, both LA and LG “operate with legal authority and can impose penalties or sanctions backed by governmental powers of enforcement” (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 6). Brown and Sonwa (2015) state that institutions do exist in public, private as well as in civil sectors either in the form of membership organisations or cooperatives. What sets LA and LG apart is not only that LA is a higher-level government arm or agency which operates at local levels. But that LA decision-makers or personnel have an upward accountability line/authority to political or administrative superiors at the higher levels of decision making. In contrast, LG represents an organisation whose representatives and decision-makers are accountable downward to constituents. Further, decision-makers of LG are responsible at least in principle, to a local constituency through elections or some other mechanisms. However, LG staff themselves may not necessarily be members of the local government (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, 1992; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006). LGs that have little financial or operational autonomy Uphoff (1986) argues “function for all practical purposes as LA” (p. 5).

At the public end of the local level, institutional continua are the LG and LA. In contrast, local service organisations and private businesses are found at the private end of the continuum. Together local service organisations and private companies produce benefits for both members and non-members of their organisation. Beneficiaries who are not members of the organisation are considered as either clients or customers and not members, meaning non-members don’t have the right to determine the activities of the organisation. Local service organisations and private businesses produce benefit for all. However, all do not have the right to decide their actions. Despite their likely subjection to some public regulations and access to some available funds through subsidies or contracts, both institutions are “private” (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 6).

The ultimate objective for the existence of both MOs and Co-ops is to serve the interests of their members. Despite sharing some features with both the public and private sectors,

LOs do have specific significant differences with them. The calculus of action in this “third sector” is “collective rather than individual”. Thus, the operations of LOs are more similar to public institutions than private. Since no state authority backs the decision-making processes of LOs, their procedure is primarily characterised by consensus and persuasion. Because of their flexibility and adaptive nature in terms of decision-making and activities compared to government agencies, LOs look more like private organisations. Yet, LOs are more public-oriented in terms of benefits than private for-profit enterprises (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). The key to the formation of MOs is to advance some common interests of its membership. And since their members commit only membership dues or other assets to the organisation, these institutions function both socially and politically just like companies in the economy with limited liability. Today, many MOs are called CBOs (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 6).

The existence of numerous possibilities for Co-ops to enhance productive economic activities makes them “represent a diverse category of LOs of special interest” (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 6). Co-ops, unlike MOs, function in the economy more like partnerships, with their members pooling their resources together. Thus, making them have a joint liability. Co-ops are of different types including marketing cooperatives, savings cooperatives, labour exchanges, consumer cooperatives or input-supply cooperatives and producer Co-ops. Through their membership cooperatives can pool together diverse resources ranging from products to capital, labour, purchasing power, and factors of production. In economic terms, partnerships and companies have dissimilar incentives and dynamics. Likewise, even though both cooperatives and MOs have direct accountability to their members or stakeholder groups but varied in their operations (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 6). In their expanded analysis of the different institutional sectors, Uphoff and Buck (2006) have considered SOs or not-for-profit organisations and PBs or for-profit organisations as part of the private sector. Not-for-profit or SOs comprises of NGOs, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), charities, trusts, foundations etc. SOs with membership whose managers and decision-makers are accountable to them is regarded as MOs or cooperatives. Whereas SOs, whose services or other benefit recipients are known as clients or beneficiaries instead of members are considered to be private enterprises operators (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006).

Private organizations are accountable to either their board of directors or individual directors who are at liberty to make independent decisions as they wish so long as these decisions are taken or fall within the ambit of the law. Particular recipients or expecting to benefit from the products or services of SOs that are not MOs are at much liberty to control their operational decisions as do the private for-profit business customers or investors. For instance, persons who disapprove of specific policies, products or services of a particular private enterprise are at liberty to go elsewhere for benefits or invest their resources. Beneficiaries of SOs, however, don't have the right to replace decision-makers at SOs even if they are not happy with the services and products they offer as opposed to members of MOs or cooperatives. Members of MOs or cooperatives have the rights to change their decision-makers when dissatisfied with them (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006). Uphoff and Buck (2006) argue that their categorisation of local institutions is just an ideal typology because specific organisations “can operate in a hybrid manner, having characteristics of more than one kind of institution” (p. 7). Uphoff & Buck (2006) identify the following hybrid type institutions.

- Service organizations that can have some commercial activities while remaining not-for-profit in their operations and objectives;
- Local governments that can have some local administrative responsibilities on behalf of the central government while still functioning mostly as agents of local constituencies; and
- Cooperatives that can move beyond their economic activities to undertake advocacy and function much like a membership organization.

In most of Africa, community institutions involved in local development processes, are categorised into two: traditional institutions and modern institutions (Serema, 2002; N. T. Uphoff, 1986). Uphoff and Buck (2006) admit difficulty in categorising NGOs as they sometimes are “membership organizations which are working mostly with non-members in a charitable, non-profit mode” (p. 7). In which situation “they have more in common with private businesses, serving clients or beneficiaries rather than customers” (ibid). Rural producer organisations are identified as falling in the category of hybrid form of institution that comprises an array of membership organisations, cooperatives, or private businesses (Brown & Sonwa, 2015; Uphoff & Buck, 2006). Organisations such as rural producer associations are characterised often as highly local, specific, and evolving structures whose functions depend on the area they operate (Brown & Sonwa, 2015, p. 1).

Characteristics of Rural Producer Organizations (RPOs)

- Having the ability to emerge in different activities;
- Having the aim to make profits, but perform multiple functions of which some are not profit-oriented;
- Produce and manage different types of goods, can be multi-sectoral;
- Can be organized in different ways and have varying degrees of [legal] recognition; and
- May operate at both micro and macro levels, and evolve (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 7).

2.8.1 Formal/Modern Local Government Institutions

In the context of Africa, post-independence community-level institutions such as the VDCs and WDCs are referred to sometimes as modern local development institutions. They are labelled modern because they are created after independence (Serema, 2002, p. 2). Uphoff (1986) calls current local institutions as entities “that have been assigned specific developmental tasks by the government” (p. 6). Other examples of modern institutions elsewhere in West Africa include the following: Village Health Committees (VHCs), Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), Village Literacy Committees (VLCs), Village Extension Teams (VETs), Mothers Clubs and other village voluntary organisations like Young Men’s or Women’s Christian Association (YM/WCA), Red Cross Societies, Council of Women (CW) and so on. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) define formal institutions as “rules and procedures that are created, communicated, and enforced through channels widely accepted as official” (p. 727).

Carloni (2015) finds out that CBO is a generic term that refers to community-controlled organisations which are broadly divided into two categories: community-level institutions that have public functions and CIGs that have “private” roles. Community-level institutions with public functions such as the VDCs and WDCs represent the interests of the entire resident population. At the same time, CIGs such as the women’s enterprise group or an association of water users or an association of farmers or a village savings cooperative represent the personal interests of their members (Carloni, 2015, p. 22). Carloni (2015) identifies the following types of CBOs and their descriptions:

Types of CBOs and Descriptions

<i>Types of CBOs</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>VDCs</i>	Organizations of collective governance of a village with responsibility for development. Collective governance of a community implies a set of accepted endogenous rules, i.e. The institutions of the community, and an organization responsible for the application of the rules and for organizing collective action of interest to all the members of the community
<i>CIGs</i>	Organizations of some members of the community that come together to achieve a common purpose. Users associations (UAs) [for instance,] are CIGs established to operate and maintain a facility constructed with public and/or private funds, with resources mobilized from the members of the association. Micro-finance institutions (MFIs) are community-level cigs specialized in savings and lending.
<i>Networks of CBOs</i>	These may join together VDCs or CIGs. The latter is more common. Federations of CIGs of various types are often classified as “Professional Associations”.

Source: Author created the table with information from Carloni, 2015, p. 22

Government-initiated modern local level institutions are those “set up, funded and monitored by the government” (Walo, 2016, p. 131). One notable significance of local government institutions is their ability to create an opportunity that would decentralise power, responsibility and resources to local institutions. Local government institutions have the authority to diagnose local development problems, formulate and prioritise development pathways/strategies by local realities, mobilise, pool and align resources and investments and finally evaluate the impact of their interventions. These modern institutions serve as vertical channels through which they represent a local voice in dealing with higher institutions and horizontally by coordinating and mobilising other actors at the local level in private, public and civic sectors (Walo, 2016).

Functional linkages between institutions such as common meeting schedules and forums are good at facilitating development by avoiding duplication of efforts and resources. They also encourage cooperative activities. Through collaborative works, the performance of each type of institution is improved. Effectiveness of government institutions Walo (2016) argues “is highly influenced by the societal norms and attitudes, and existing levels of social capital of the indigenous institutions” (p. 125). It’s recommended that modern local development institutions forge collaborative working relations with existing institutions

and possibly to imitate familiar and accepted patterns of responsibility, communication and resource mobilization strategies. After a literature review on LID, Uphoff (1986) affirms of not finding an institution that is “unwilling to engage in new development activities so long as the activities were ones which were beneficial and appreciated by members and so long as decisions were not imposed from outside” (p. 7).

For sustainable development, there is a successful institutional framework that encourages the interaction between modern and indigenous institutions as well as favourable operational conditions where the institutional framework could thrive. For sustainable local development to take root, Walo (2016) argues that “there needs to be a positive-sum interaction rather than a zero-sum relationship between the government and indigenous institutions” (p. 126). The findings of Helmke and Levitsky’s (2004) study observed four different kinds of institutional relationships a) complementary, b) accommodating, c) substitutive, and d) competing. While substituting and competing institutional relationships are found to have weakened local development processes, complementary and accommodating are identified as suitable for fostering local development. This is because the latter institutional relations types are able to better collaborate in the process of development (pp. 728–730).

Helmke and Levitsky (2004) further state that complementary interaction happens when indigenous/traditional institutions provide a solution to specific problems/issue that formal rules are unable to explicitly deal with through the use of values, norms, and other routines. Accommodating interaction is observed when an incentive is created by traditional/indigenous institutions to change the effects of formal rules. Although traditional institutions in this case don’t change the legal norms, they however violate the spirit of written/formal rules by mitigating their effects. Here efforts are made to reconcile the interests of key actors with the existing formal institutional arrangements. Competitive interaction between government and traditional/indigenous institutions occurs as a result of incompatibility between the two thus forcing actors to follow one rule and violate the other. Substitutive relationship between indigenous and government institutions happens when indigenous institutions succeed in attaining something for which the government institutions are designed to do but couldn’t achieve. Often this happens where state structures are weak or lack the authority/legitimacy in the eyes of the local communities (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004).

De Soysa and Jütting (2006) are convinced that the success of the Grameen Bank Mohammed Yunus illustrates the coexistence of informal and formal rules for effective development outcomes. However, situations also exist “where the opposite is true: formal and informal institutions work against each other with less happy consequences” (p. 1). De Soysa and Jütting (2006) observe that institutions are much confusing “when it also involves features, such as norms, morals, values, and attitudes embedded in culture” (ibid).

2.8.2 Informal (Traditional/indigenous) institutions

Traditional (indigenous, informal) institutions are entities that have “evolved and supported by rural people to deal with diverse problems-economic, social, cultural, religious, political, etc.” (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 6). Indigenous/traditional institutions are “those institutions the people voluntarily initiated and control” (Walo, 2016, p. 131). Traditional institutions in Africa, for instance, are those community institutions that predate colonialism (Serema, 2002). As an expression of existing social arrangements, Pain (2004) observes that informal institutions are mostly well understood, respected and obeyed. Informal institutions include customs such as gender division of labour, land inheritance practices, marriage practices, what women and men wear and so on. Water management and distribution system in a village between farmers in Pain’s (2004) view is a typical example of a village-level institution. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) define informal institutions as “socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels” (p. 727). Informal institutions refer to “rules governing behaviour outside official channels” (ibid). While for Dobler (2011) informal institutions are “values, beliefs, morals, convictions, norms, habits, and codes of conduct and the term is used as a substitute for culture” (pp. 15–16). To understand what informal institutions are or are not, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) argue for informal institutions to be distinguished from weak institutions, other informal behavioural regularities, informal organizations, and the broader concept of culture (pp. 727–728).

As a possible hub for reaching community consensus on development initiatives and encouraging participation, traditional institutions such as paramount chiefs, district chiefs, sub-chiefs, village headmen and ward heads are “critical links between communities and government authorities” (Serema, 2002, p. 2). In West Africa, a typical example of a

traditional institution is the chieftaincy systems of governance found both at the village and district levels. The two chieftaincy levels serve as a broker between their communities and the local and central governments. In the governance administrative hierarchy, the institution chieftaincy links the formal government institutions, the district and the village. In West Africa attempts are being made to transform chieftains into more inclusive and democratic institutions. Findings of Walo (2016) show that indigenous institutions aid rural development in multiple ways including the following:

- Strengthening of social capital for collective action;
- Bonding local actors into the existing behavioural patterns and relational social networks;
- Connecting actors at the local level to extra-local sources of growth and innovative practices;
- Promoting mutual help and family assistance;
- Providing credit and saving to members;
- Community-based insurance schemes; and
- Funeral services and so forth.

The basis for the establishment of indigenous/traditional institutions is social capital, whereas mutual trust among its members is the basis for group formation in the institutions. A critical strength of indigenous institutions, Walo (2016) argues is their tendency “to group people with either a similar background to create “bonding” social capital or with a different background together to create “bridging” social capital” (p. 125). Indigenous institutions are rooted in “socially shared rules, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of official sanctioned channels” (Walo, 2016, p. 123). Self-enforced mechanisms characterise indigenous institution like an obligation, expectations of reciprocity, internalised norm adherence, boycotting, threats and even the use of violence, among others. Indigenous institutions are essential for community development because of the influence they have on “the structure of economic incentives in society” (ibid). They can serve as economic institutions that wouldn’t only establish property rights but also facilitate transactions and allow for economic cooperation among various actors within the communities. Uphoff (1986) observes that often pre-existing institution parallel modern local institutions like bureaucratic institutions, political institutions, local organisations, and profit-oriented institutions which “can be quite modern in many respect” (p. 6).

Certain administrative roles, such as that of tax collector or registrar of land may have existed for hundreds of years and been incorporated into contemporary local administration (LA). Traditional chiefs or village headmen, sometimes acting in

conjunction with local councils of elders, may function as indigenous LG institutions. (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 7)

The above scenario is archetypal of the relations between chieftaincy institutions and the local government councils in most West African communities most especially in the Gambia and Sierra Leone (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004, 2009; Government of The Gambia, 2002). Uphoff (1986) argues that although they “may be hard to find or to work with” but traditional local institutions “almost always exist” (p. 7). Traditional local organisations (LOs) come in many kinds which include: age cohorts, secret societies, craftsmen’s guilds, and indigenous cooperatives which include entities like rotating credit associations or labour exchanges (N. T. Uphoff, 1986; Richards et al., 2004; Fanthorpe, 2007). Uphoff (1986) reveals that traditional manufacturing and commercial enterprises “can be found in most rural areas and often constitute an “informal sector” that provides goods and services. According to Uphoff (1986), it’s not uncommon for rural visitors to “find indigenous practitioners as private health providers” in communities. There are varieties of “traditional philanthropic organizations and roles” with some taking the form of what is called patron-client networks (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 7). Moreover, in the area of forest management, Uphoff (1986) finds several pre-existing service organizations.

Focusing on informal institutions that are endogenous to formal institutional structures, Helmke and Levitsky (2004) identify at least three reasons for the existence or origin of informal institutions. Actors create informal rules because of the incomplete nature of formal institutions, serving as an alternative best strategy for actors who prefer the formal institutional solution to their problems but cannot, to pursue goals that are not considered publicly acceptable (p. 730). Commenting on sources of informal institutional change Helmke and Levitsky (2004) identify formal institutional change experienced in terms of design and effectiveness, cultural evolution experienced in terms of change in societal values, change in distribution of power, resources (new rounds of bargaining) and updating of beliefs/mechanism for coordination (tipping) (pp. 731–733)

2.8.3 Village Development Committees

VDCs differ widely not just in their level of organisation and planning but in their management capabilities as well. VDCs in general according to Davis et al. (1994), are responsible for managing and mobilising village resources and providing a forum through

which agencies can mount programs in the villages. Evidence produced by Davis et al. (1994) in the Gambia suggests that “village committees remain highly diverse in terms of who establishes them, their structures, their activities and their effectiveness” (p. 260). Davis et al. (1994) refer to VDCs as “the institutional tier initiated by the government at the grass-roots level” that are tasked to “broaden participation and encourage rural communities to become more proactive in the development process” (p. 257).

As a local village development institution, some VDCs have excellent working relations with other village-level organisations while others have weak links with them. In part, the nature of these relationships, Ngwenya (2008) argues is “due to differences in their levels of organisational and management capabilities and part due to the relationship between the chief and the community development worker” (p. 13). As the lowest local level development planning institutions, VDCs are established to ensure local development initiatives and interventions are community-driven. The existence of VDCs make community members “agents of their own change” rather than external agencies, thus removing dependency syndrome (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 11). A donor agency institutes VDCs in West Africa on behalf of the communities or through the initiatives of communities themselves.

In the context of Botswana, Ngwenya (2008) describes VDCs as “a locality/village-based institution that has been established by a presidential decree to legitimise participation by ordinary Batswana in the implementation of the country’s decentralised development initiatives” (p. 17). For the authors of Local Self Governance Act, 2055 (1999) of Nepal, VDC is an entity “constituted as an executive of the Village Council in a village development area” tasked with development planning functions at village level (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nepal Office, 2001). VDCs, as stipulated in the Gambia’s LGAct 2002, refers to local-level institutions that are “responsible for all development planning at village level and (...) serve as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village” (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

For Sullay Sesay and co-workers who implemented the GoBifo CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone, VDC is a local level institution that “leads development efforts, co-ordinates and evaluates planned activities, and communicates with external partners” (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 22). Khanum and Watson (2016) argue that the purpose of VDC is “to spearhead social development within their respective communities” (p. 1). As one of the decentralised

institutions at village level VDCs are described by France and Dipholo (2017) as “elected bodies responsible for planning and overseeing village development in respective villages” (p. 3). As for Premchander (2012), VDCs are formed to “lead social changes in the chars villages” (p. 18). Haneef et al. (2014) define VDCs as “grassroots organisations intended to build social capital and serve as a form of governance within the community” (p. 11).

VDCs are defined by Carloni (2015) as “organizations of collective governance of a village with responsibility for development”(p. 22). Carloni further describes collective governance as “a set of accepted endogenous rules, i.e. the institutions of the community, and an organization responsible for the application of the rules and for organizing collective action of interest to all the members of the community” (ibid). Some scholars understand VDCs as village parliaments set up for “the purpose of implementing development programs in villages. It is responsible for all village development matters and coordinates all village institutions’ activities” (Serema, 2002, p. 2). Although there exist some subtle variations in the specific functions and activities of VDCs in their different communities, all VDCs (Haneef et al., 2014) note do share some key leadership roles to perform in their respective village development planning and execution.

Some of the generic responsibilities of VDCs include: to identify issues in their villages and draw plans for their solutions; to create an enabling environment that would encourage members of their communities to feel confident to raise problems or concerns with them; work to develop social unity in the community through conflict resolution between members of communities or groups and so on (Haneef et al., 2014). The functions/activities of VDCs are determined or shaped by contextual factors, the needs of their communities, and the objectives of a particular development program or the legislation that help set them up or revamped it. VDCs are voluntary local institutions or organisation. The tasks of VDCs that have been setup or strengthened through international development aid are “to ensure smooth and effective project implementation activities, along with partially to meet the other demands and needs of their community” (Yasmin, 2014, p. 12).

2.9 Social Capital, Origin and Understanding

In social sciences, the subject and concept of social capital have a long intellectual history (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). As used today, the origin of social capital could be traced back to the 1916 book published in the United States by Lyda Judson Hanifan (1879-1932).

In this book, Hanifan (1916) invoked the phrase social capital while examining the different ways in which neighbours could collaborate to ensure schools are run effectively (Keeley, 2007; R. Putnam, 2000). Woolcock (1998) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000) argue that many decades later in the 1950s, a team of Canadian urban sociologists, Seely, Sim, and Loosely (1956) reinvented the concept. In the 1960s, an exchange theorist, Homans (1961), and Jacobs (1961), urban scholars added their voice to the idea of social capital, and in the 1970s, Loury (1977) an economist also contributed to the concept (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 229; Agnitsch, 2003, p. 12). Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) a French writer is named among the initial writers of social capital while studying democracy in America in the first half of the 19th Century. Tocqueville (2010)¹¹ studied social structures of cooperation in America and attributed the social conditions that sustained American democracy to the ability of Americans in forming civic and political organisations (Glennerster et al., 2013; R. D. Putnam et al., 1994, p. 89).

The most recently influential publications that brought the concept into popularity include the seminal works by Bourdieu (1986); Coleman (1987, 1988, 1994) and Putnam (1995; 2000). The credit for the first contemporary systematic study of social capital goes to Bourdieu (1986) (1930-2002). Other recent authors through whose works social capital became an important concept for both researchers and practitioners include an eminent American sociologist Coleman (1987, 1988, 1994). A prominent American political scientist and an educator, Robert Putnam (1995; 2000) through his 2000 bestseller publication, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Putnam is also recognized for bringing the concept into popular imagination in the recent past (Gauntlett, 2011; Keeley, 2007; Portes, 1998). In this book, Putnam discusses how the lack of enough time had constrained Americans from joining voluntary organisations and community groups to socialise with their friends, neighbours and even family members.

As sociological researchers explore the concept of social capital there emerged tripartite definitions which view the idea as a source of social control; family-mediated benefits; and resources mediated but not by family networks (Portes & Landolt, 2000, p. 532). Neira et al. (2016) argue that majority of scholars who try to define social capital use such terms as “networks,” “trust” and “rules” or “norms” (p. 31). Reaching a consensus about the precise meaning of social capital proves problematic due to the unsettled debate among scholars

¹¹ Translated from the French by James T. Schleifer and Edited by Eduardo Nolla

in both sociology and political science. While introducing the concept of social capital, Hanifan (1916) makes it clear that the phrase does:

Not refer to real estate, or to personal property but rather to that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of a people, namely, good will, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit, the rural community, whose logical centre is the school. (p. 130)

Community gatherings such as public entertainments, picnics and so on affect the accumulation of social capital (Hanifan, 1916). For Keeley (2007), social capital refers to the “links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together” (p. 102). OECD (2001) refers to social capital as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (p. 41; also see Scrivens & Smith, 2013). This definition views networks as links between groups or individuals such as networks of families, colleagues, friends etc., as they exist in real-world. At the same time, shared norms refer to those unspoken and mostly undisputed societal rules. Values are those principles that bind every group together and maybe subjected to debate and questioning. Putnam (2000) refers to social capital as “connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). While in his (1995) publication, Putnam refers to social capital as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (para. 3). Ostrom (2000) defines social capital as “the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity” (p. 176). For Bourdieu (1986) social capital refers to “aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (pp. 15–29).

Bourdieu (1986) goes on to state that social capital is the accrued substantial or potential resources possessed by an individual thanks to his membership in a group. Membership of a group such as family, tribe, school, a party and so on ensures each member the access to a “collectively owned capital,” a form of licence which guarantees them to acquire a credit of any type (p. 23). He states that the only fuel that helps sustain social

networks/relationships is its practical existence in the form of “material and/ or symbolic exchanges” and with the application of shared names like family, tribe, party etc., these relationships are socially guaranteed and instituted (p. 21). As social relationships are institutionalised, they continue to design and inform members of the group through exchanges which eventually helps maintain and reinforce the social bond. Because social networks/relationships are founded on “indissolubly material and symbolic exchanges” proximity is presupposed to have supported their establishment and maintenance (ibid).

Bourdieu (1986), however, stresses that social capital is somewhat irreducible to neither physical or geographic proximity nor social or economic space. Thus, the quantity of social capital possessed by an actor is contingent upon the volume of the network of connections and the size of the economic, cultural or symbolic capital s/he can effectively mobilise and possess as an individual through each of his links. Bourdieu (1986) argues that social capital is relatively irreducible to the economic and cultural capital of an actor or a set of actors and their relations. It’s “never completely independent” of an actor or a group of actors and their relationships. This is for the fact that social exchanges that institute mutual acknowledgement are assumed to be based at least on a similar objective. And the point that economic and cultural capitals have a multiplier effect on social capital possession of an individual (p. 21).

Group solidarity is what makes membership of a group possible. Although they are not pursued consciously as such, the basis of this solidarity is the accrued profit thereof. Bourdieu stresses that networks of relationships are neither natural nor a social given. Which once constituted by an initial act of institution becomes “the product of an endless effort at the institution, of which institution rites (...) mark the essential moments and which is necessary to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 22). Bourdieu describes social capital as a product of individual or collective investment strategy that is done either consciously or unconsciously to institute either short or long term social relationships. It’s presupposed that the reproduction of social capital is an endless effort of sociability and strings of exchanges through which recognition is affirmed continuously and reaffirmed.

Writing about social capital, Coleman (1987, 1988, 1994) combines insights from both economics and sociological theories. This helped him make sense of the rational and individualistic models of traditional economics conception. Unlike Bourdieu, the approach

adopted by Coleman broadens the concept of social capital. It views it as creating value for “all kinds of communities” which includes both marginalised and powerful rather than only a “stock held [only] by powerful elites” (Gauntlett, 2011). Coleman (1988) defines social capital by its function. He argues that “it is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors-whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure” (p. S98). This definition implies that social capital is about any resource that expedites collective or individual action with the help of networks of associations, trust, social norms and reciprocity.

For Baker (1990) social capital refers to “a resource that actors derive from specific social structures and then use to pursue their interests; it is created by changes in the relations among actor” (p. 619). To Portes (1998) social capital is about the “ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (p. 6). Fukuyama (2001) argues that most social capital definitions refer to its manifestation rather than the concept itself. Thus, according to him, “social capital is an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals” (p. 7). In social capital, norms include: “a norm of reciprocity between two friends up to complex and elaborately articulated [in religious] doctrines” (ibid). Fukuyama (2002) argues that social capital includes “any instance in which people cooperate for common ends on the basis of shared informal norms and values” (p. 23).

Narayan and Pritchett (1999) define social capital as “the quantity and quality of associational life and the related social norms”(p. 872). Schiff (1992) describes the phrase as a “set of elements of the social structure that affects relations among people and are inputs or arguments of the production and/or utility function” (p. 160). While for Burt (2009) the term is about “relationships with other players (...) friends, colleagues and more general contacts through whom you receive opportunities to use your financial and human capital” (pp. 8–9). As oppose to Coleman’s (1988) understanding who put an emphasis on the presence of dense networks, Burt (2009) highlights the absence of dense ties or networks as necessary conditions for the rise of social capital. The model of social capital proposed by Coleman (1988) views the concept as one potential resources that an agent can use together with other resources such as human capital (their own skills and expertise), physical capital (tools) or economic capital (money).

Unlike other capitals, social capital is a resource which is available to people but not necessarily owned by them. It is instead a resource that is based on trust and shared values which develop through “weaving-together of people in communities” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 4). As highlighted by Coleman (1988), social capital is a useful daily source of norms, information and sanctions which can expedite some types of actions but restrict others. Coleman in his (1988) article ‘Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital’, singled out the effect of social capital on the creation of future generation’s human capital (p. 109). In all contexts, social capital hinges on peoples’ selfless actions in which they look beyond themselves and support others without expecting a reward or immediate reciprocity from their beneficiaries. Instead, are people driven by their conviction in doing good to others (Gauntlett, 2011).

Bourdieu’s definition of social capital decomposes the concept into two essential elements: social association and the quantity and quality of those resources. The social relationship component allows individuals to claim access to social capital resources that are possessed by their relations. Throughout his analysis, Bourdieu stresses the fungibility of the different kinds of capital and their eventual reduction into economic capital, which he refers to as “accumulated human capital” (Portes, 1998, p. 4). Although the outcomes of the possession of social and cultural capital insist Bourdieu, are ultimately reduced to economic capital, however, the processes that result in control of these forms of capital are not reducible to financial capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998).

Each of these forms has its subtleties comparative to economic resources. They are both typically more uncertain and less transparent. For instance, unspecified obligation, a possible violation of expected reciprocity and uncertain period are some of the usual features of transactions involving social capital relative to clear and direct market exchanges experienced in economic transactions. Bourdieu demonstrates the significance of social capital by stating that actors in possession of this capital can have direct access to financial resources. Such as investment tips and loans, for example, and can enhance their cultural capital through interaction with experts and individuals who embodied cultural capital or institutions of value. For Bourdieu, the deliberate investment of both cultural and economic resources is required to acquire social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998).

For the fact that social capital makes it possible for an agent to achieve certain kinds of things that would not be possible or extremely difficult to attain in its absence, makes

Coleman (1988) to view the concept as a productive resource like other forms of capital. For example according to him, “a group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish much more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness and trust” (ibid, p. S101). Social capital, like both human and physical capital, is not fungible; it could be exclusive in facilitating certain activities while useless or even detrimental to some other activities. Social capital, unlike other capital, inheres in the structure of social relations existing between and among agents in the community. It resides outside of both the agents themselves and the physical production tools. Agents here could be either a person or an organisation as Coleman (1988) argues that corporate agents just like persons can form social capital.

Obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures, according to Coleman (1988) are what constitute useful capital resources for individuals in social relations. Two essential elements are of the essence here: 1) how trustworthy is the social environment where the obligation is honoured; and 2) the degree to which real responsibility is held. Social structures, Coleman argues, are different in the dimensions mentioned above and actors operating within identical social networks are different in the second, which is about the holding of the actual obligations. He cites the operation of rotating-credit associations in Southeast Asia and other places as a case to demonstrate how important is the trustworthiness of an environment. He stresses that an institution would cease to exist in the absence of a high degree of reliability among the association’s membership. Thus, actors have access to more social capital when they find themselves in social structures that possess a high level of outstanding obligations at any given time (Coleman, 1988, p. S103).

In a social system, individual actors have a different number of unique “credit slips” which they could use at the time of need. Meaning that usually, no two persons in a society would have the same number of outstanding social capital obligations to draw. For instance, in a typical patriarchal extended family setting, the head of the clan wields an unusually large set of commitments at his advantage for use at any time he wants something done. A similar case is wealthy families in highly stratified traditional village settings, who because of their wealth, have accumulated extensive credits of obligations to be drawn upon at any time. An example could be found in parliamentary democracies. Here a legislator in the position of either a speaker or majority leader can build up extra resources or obligation

from his colleagues that he could call upon to ensure legislation that otherwise wouldn't be passed into law (Coleman, 1988, p. S103).

2.9.1 Social Capital, Forms and Sources

Bonding social capital refers to social networks or ties between homogeneous groups of individuals based on a sense of shared identity. People in this category are linked through a relatively high degree of network closure such as close friends, family and people sharing the same ethnic or cultural ties. It is often referred to as horizontal links between people within the same social groups and in local communities where members know each other. The typical characteristic of bonding social capital is the existence of strong norms, trust and mores with both positive and negative implication for social exclusion.

Although bonding social capital is good at provides solidarity, but in certain situations, it could be inadequate at ensuring useful network resources because many members have access to similar networks resources (Coleman, 1988; Keeley, 2007). Despite its drawbacks, however, bonding adds value to the lives and livelihoods of oppressed and marginalised groups. For example, the concept of bonding is applied as deliberate policy measures to form and uplift the status of indigenous people, farmer and women groups in rural communities to ensure equity through the provision of social safety nets. Bonding social capital concept such as family and kinship ties have been instrumental in providing social protection in post-conflict societies and in communities where states are fragile and cannot ensure essential services (Ferlander, 2007; Fukuyama, 2002; Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Panth, 2010).

Bridging social capital is about links between social groups or ties which cross social divides and stretch beyond a sense of shared identity. That is social networks between heterogeneous groups in society. This perspective places agents as different network groups such as distance friends, associates and colleagues where each has the chance to tap into the social capital resources of the other social group. Bridging social capital is sometimes described as vertical links that operate on formal hierarchical structures. Although bridging ties do not have many shared norms; however, the links may have been sustained by some form of trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; Keeley, 2007).

Because bridging social capital avails individuals and groups the possibility of accessing network resources different from those of their usual circles, it provides essential group and individual benefits (Coleman, 1988; Keeley, 2007). Bridging allows other social groups to share and exchange not only ideas and information but innovative concepts and practices as well as foster consensus among divergent groups with diverse interests and opinion. Bridging, unlike bonding, Fukuyama notes widens social capital with its “radius of trust”. And encourages inclusive institutional structure, thus promoting democracy which is essential for both political and economic development (Ferlander, 2007; Fukuyama, 2001, p. 8, 2002, p. 32; Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Panth, 2010).

Linking social capital ties individuals or social groups vertically, that is “further up and lower down the social ladder” (Keeley, 2007, p. 103). These kinds of links are found between people across the formal structure or institutionalised authority in society and are characterised by norms of respect and networks of relationships that are based on trust. Linking social capital argued Hawkins and Maurer, (2010, p. 1785) has much in common with bridging social capital (Coleman, 1988; Ferlander, 2007; Hawkins & Maurer, 2010; Keeley, 2007). Economic capital and human capital are respectively deposited respectively in the bank accounts and the heads of their owners. Social capital, as opposed to financial and human capital, inheres in the structures of social relations. A person must relate with others to possess social capital, and unlike other forms of capital, the real source of a person’s social capital resides in those he connects with and not himself. There is no uniformity in people’s motivation to make these resources available to others on concessionary terms. Instead, the motivations are categorised broadly into either consummatory or instrumental (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998).

a. Consummatory Motivation

Value Introjection-this happens because of norm introjection during childhood. People feel obliged to behave in a certain way in solidarity with others due to internalised norms. Internalised norms foster solidarity among members of a group or community and make certain behave possible. These introjected norms are eventually appropriable to other people within the group as a resource. Internalised norms ensure a high degree of trustworthiness in social environments where obligations are held and repaid (Castiglione et al., 2008, p. 182; Portes, 1998, pp. 7–9).

There exists a high level of obligation within the social structure due to internalised norms of reciprocity. Such as timely payment of debts, alms giving to the poor and the commitments to follow the community's rules and regulations. Such internalised norms benefit both individuals who advantage from these good things and the actual holders of social capital. Practical norms that inhibit criminality dispel fear among community members and instil trustful and saver social environment instead. In a society where norms are internalised, resources are made available to others with the expectation that the gesture will be fully reciprocated in the future (ibid).

Bounded solidarity- this form or source of social capital emerges from group consciousness. Such solidarity is triggered by the feeling of group identity as a group is faced with a typical situation where they must support each other's initiatives to have the desired change. Rather than norm interjection at childhood, such solidarity is the result of an emergent product of shared destiny. Solidarity among actors in a situation of shared future is because of the limits created by the community they are resident. Unlike actors in internalised norm situations, the altruistic disposition among actors in a case of bounded solidarity is not universal but restrictive (Castiglione et al., 2008, p. 182; Portes, 1998, pp. 7–9).

Such dispositions and the engagements that follow are the sources of social capital that other community members or groups can appropriate. Bounded solidarity is the source of social capital that encourages acts of anonymous donations among endowed or well-to-do members of the different community groups. And instil the sense of voluntarism among members of an oppressed group to engage in life-threatening community defence activities or take part in protest marches and strikes etc. This kind of solidarity serves as an influential motivational factor for people to identify themselves with others of their group, community or sect and sympathise with or support them (ibid).

b. Instrumental Motivations

Reciprocity Exchanges- refer to a system of exchanges that are based often on intangible social goods rather than tangible properties such as cash or material goods. Here transactions hinge on the principle of reciprocity as oppose to strictly market-based exchanges. Expectations for the repayment of one's performance of a task or donation are not time-bound instead based on self-expectation that social chits will always be repaid

fully in the future. This approach views social capital as an accumulation of obligation from other network members with repayment based on reciprocity principles (Castiglione et al., 2008, p. 182; Portes, 1998, pp. 7–9).

Unlike in economic transactions, obligations in social chits/receipts may be repaid with a currency different from which they were performed. There is a high possibility that the incurred debts are repaid through intangible gestures such as paying allegiance or the simple granting of approval. Another way in which accumulated social chits differ from economic transactions is that there is no specific timeline for the payment of the incurred obligation as opposed to market exchanges where schedule repayment exists (ibid).

Enforceable trust- refers to a situation where an individual acts not based on his own volition but motivated by group expectations. A person acts in unison with other members of a group based on the expectation of gaining an advantage or reward from the group. For instance, the motivation of socially mediated donor regarding the repayment of his debt is based on inclusion and benefits in a shared social structure rather than based on benefactor's knowledge of the recipient of the gift. The advantage of transactions embedded in the social system is twofold. 1) The expected returns of the benefactor is likely not to come from the beneficiary alone but the community or entire group membership. This can be in the form of either approval, honour or status. 2) The community as a whole or group serves as the guarantor to ensure that the incurred debts are repaid and in full (Castiglione et al., 2008, p. 182; Portes, 1998, pp. 7–9).

2.9.2 Social Capital, Foreign Aid and Development

In their study of the relationship among ODA, social capital and economic growth in Latin American countries, Neira et al. (2016) conclude that the impact of ODA on growth depends highly on the “level of trust that exists” (Abstract). Which means ODA will be more effective “when used in a “trust-rich” environment” (ibid). Balamoune-Lutz and Mavrotas (2009) in their analysis of the relationship between social capital, institutions and aid, contend that “aid may influence social capital” and that the interaction between foreign aid and social capital could impact positively on growth and stability (p. 514). It is believed that when foreign aid invests in conflict prevention, fight against corruption and in the promotion of “democracy and equal citizenship”, it can help “build social capital” and (...) further the economic objectives of growth and poverty reduction (...) through a more long-

term and indirect route” (Mosley et al., 2004 p. F219). Education, Balamoune-Lutz and Mavrotas (2009) argue is a critical channel through which social capital is strengthened. This supports the suggestion put forward by Easterly et al. (2006) who propose that education may be an “important policy lever for enhancing social cohesion” (p. 117). According to Easterly et al. (2006), education contributes to social capital development in the following three ways:

- Provides public knowledge about the very idea of social contracts among individuals and between individuals and the state;
- Provides the context within which students learn the appropriate behaviour for upholding social contracts, by providing students with a range of experiences in which they learn how to negotiate with people, problems, and opportunities they might not otherwise encounter;
- Provides an understanding of the expected consequences of breaking social contracts; indeed, it helps citizens understand and appreciate the very idea of a social contract. (p. 117)

With the involvement of scholars from other disciplines, political science, in particular, social capital is conceptually stretched and became an attribute of community. Putnam, a political scientist, is one of the leading scholars who extended the concept of social capital to include communities and nations and its subsequent structural effects on development (R. D. Putnam, 1995, 2000; R. D. Putnam et al., 1994). Unlike it does to a collectivity in this conceptualisation, social capital does not accrue so many benefits to an individual. Social capital accrues benefits to collectivity in the forms of engendering development, better governance, lowering of both official corruption and crime rates and so on. Community ties, for most sociologists, notably Coleman and Bourdieu, are important just for the “benefits” they accrue to an individual rather than an “attribute of the community itself” (Portes & Landolt, 2000, pp. 534–535). The “normative values and beliefs” shared by citizens in their everyday dealings with each other are the core of social capital. Tocqueville calls this “habit of the heart and the mind” (Hyden, 1997, p. 4). It is the habit that forms the rational bases for the different kinds of social rules. With this conceptualisation of habit, Hyden (1997) argues that “it is hard to imagine that constitutional arrangements, laws, and regulations would work without being embedded in, and reflecting particular values and norms upheld by groups and communities making up a given society” (p. 4).

Analytically, social capital is considered a category of its own which is independent of democracy or development. It is presumed that for a country to attain democracy and by implication development, it must invest in social capital. Present view about the relations between social capital and development, according to Hyden (1997) is fuelled by two different directions: 1) Experience about the failure of top-down development approaches. An experience which helps analysts to understand that the wisdom of development is lodged in “local communities and institutions” and not in “government bureaucracies”; and that “indigenous knowledge and popular participation” are vital necessities for development (p. 4). 2) Political apathy or the absence of organisation. Democracy it is believed will be nonexistence in the absence of organisation while lack of interest in public affairs means no organisation. There is a growing cynical, distrustful and disinterest attitude towards politics while politicians are faced with credibility issues around the world (Hyden, 1997). Putnam’s (1994) study of the civic values in the Northern and Southern regions of Italy is a great contributor to this view. The general differences in the historical development of the two areas are attributed to the differences in the existence of social capital.

The concept of social capital offers an opportunity to provide a theoretically richer and better understanding of development both economic and social, by bridging the gaps between economic and sociological perspectives. The reason being that, social capital perspective of development views “technical and financial soundness” as necessary but not sufficient condition “for acceptance of a project by poor communities” (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 242). Woolcock and Narayan (2000) categorise the research on social capital and economic development nexus into four distinct perspectives: “the communitarian view, the networks view, the institutional view, and the synergy view” (pp. 228–238). Communitarian view connects social capital to local organisations such as associations, clubs and civic groups. A connection described as inherently good and that the more, the better. At the same time, the perspective of the network emphasizes the importance of vertical and horizontal associations between individuals. It stresses on weak intercommunity ties and the strengthening of relations within and among organisational bodies like firms and community groups. Social networks and civil society, according to institutionalist, are mostly the products of the political-institutional and legal environments. Unlike communitarian and network perspectives, institutionalists treat social capital as a dependent variable rather than independent. This perspective contends

that the quality of formal institutions under which social groups operate determine the very capacity of social groups to act in their collective interests (Woolcock, 1998).

Synergy view attempts to integrate works from the institutional and networks perspectives. The most influential piece of this view came from the *World Development* of the WB (1996). WB views the synergy between the actions of a government and her citizens as founded on complementarity and embeddedness. Complementarity here refers to the relations of mutual support between actors in the private and public sectors as guaranteed in the legal instruments about the protection of rights to association and facilitation of exchanges among community associations and business groups etc. Embeddedness is about the kind and scope of ties that connect citizens and public officials (Woolcock, 1998). Woolcock (1998) demonstrates that different types and combinations of community capacity and state functioning culminates into a range of development outcomes. In his 'Bonds and Bridges: Social Capital and Poverty' (1999) publication, Narayan integrates core ideas from state-society relations and bridging social capital and recommends that the combinations of governance and bridging social capital in either a group, society or community requires different interventions. And that there is a likelihood for complementarity between economic prosperity, state and society and social order in a community where there is a high level of bridging social capital and good governance (Narayan-Parker, 1999).

The captivating analysis of the differences in term of efficacy between public-sector of Italy's newly created regional administrations by Putnam (1994) reveals that effective government are found in regions where there exists a greater degree of horizontal connectivity among the population. Putnam adequately documents that the more voluntary associations there are in an area, the higher the efficacy of that regional government. Narayan and Pritchett (1999) in their analysis of the relations between household income and social capital in rural Tanzania, find a link between the social capital of a village and households income in that village. They claim that this effect is "empirically large, definitely social, and plausibly causal" (p. 871). An influential group, which excludes other groups, emerges and dominates a society or a state, whose social capital inheres largely in primary social groups that are not connected (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

2.10 Local and Rural Distinction in Community Development

Making the demarcation of “what is local” is almost as complicated as determining “what is an institution” because the word local means differently to different people. The differences in the perceptions about the term ‘local’ by donor agencies and those of the rural residents are one fault line in development assistance, for instance (N. T. Uphoff, 1986). While ‘local’ is about “a *level* or *levels*”, the concept ‘rural’ is about “a *sector* that has both economic and geographic frames of reference” (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 5). In operational terms, the word rural generally refers to “non-urban areas” (ibid). The term rural offers a “geographic delineation” and despite its economic reference in general but certain economic activities mainly agricultural are mostly related to rural areas. However, with the increasing proliferation of urban farming concepts this characterisation/association of rural to agricultural practices is increasingly getting blurred. Although boundaries between the geographic delineation of rural and its economic definition are “becoming more permeable and less distinct” (ibid, p. 5).

Although according to Uphoff (1986) the concept “local” is more than one level of decision making and activity, in rural development discourse the term “local” level is most often associated with community-level decision making and activity (p. 10). Local-level encompasses decision making and activity at the levels of locality, community and group. Equating the local level with the community level is problematic, according to Uphoff (1986). It is because several collective actions are better undertaken at the group or neighbourhood level, a level below the community; while other activities could be better handled by a combination of communities-at the locality, i.e., a level above the community. Besides, an entity referred to as a community “may provide no substantial social basis for collective action. Rather it may be only a geographic entity labelled as a village or community by outsiders for their own convenience” (ibid).

Community institutions, according to Uphoff (1986), are “only one kind of local institution, not always the preferred kind and not always a feasible kind” (p. 10). The concept local refers to the following three distinct levels of decision-making and activity: -the group level, the community level, and the locality level. Institutions existing and operating above these three levels are: sub-district, district, provincial, national and

international levels. And below them are: individual and household levels (N. T. Uphoff, 1986; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006).

<i>Local Institutional Levels</i>	<i>Description</i>
Locality level	A set of communities having cooperative/commercial relations; this level may be the same as the sub-district level where the sub-district centre is a market town
Community-level	A relatively self-contained, socio-economic-residential unit
Group level	A self-identified set of persons having some common interest; maybe a small residential group like a hamlet, or neighbourhood, an occupational group, or some ethnic, caste, age, sex, or another grouping

Source: Author but the information is from N. T. Uphoff, 1986, p. 11

The possibility of a sustained “*face-to-face interaction*” and the existence of “*potential for collective action*” for possibly mobilisation of community and resources to resolve community problems that are beyond the ability of individual community members and their households are among the similarities the three intermediate local level institutions (group, community and locality) share at each level (N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006, p. 5). It is to argue that all three local institutional levels share face-to-face relationships and potential for collective action as common essential characteristics. Either above or below locality, community and group levels one no longer deals with “local” as described above. This so because “households and individuals are quite different units of decision making and activity as they are smaller and not confronted with the same kind of problems of ‘collective action’ as are evident at the group, community, and locality levels” (N. T. Uphoff, 1986, pp. 11–12). Similarly, “at higher levels, which are no longer local, qualitative differences arise because state authority and very large units of decision making and activity are involved” (ibid).

2.11 The Concept of Community in Development Discourse

Over the years, the sense of community has been on a rapid decline due to increased specialisation, centralisation, impersonal relationships, migration and so on. In reaction to this rapid decline in community, devotees of both rural and urban ways of life, community organisations and community development movements are increasingly concerned about

the development and preservation of community as a social unit. Of all the relevant concepts that are necessary for characterising, organising and constituting socio-political experiences of human beings, such as power, rights, authority, freedom, justice and democracy, “community seems to be the most neglected by social and political philosophers” (Plant, 1978, p. 79). To the extent that the concept has so many meanings that it has become “meaningless” (ibid).

Community development programs in developing nations are faced with the issues of local participation and organisation of residents for engineering collective/community action to meet the community development challenges. Typically, participatory development programs/projects are implemented in a unit referred to as a community. In most development policy literature, the concept community has been used without much qualification (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In their efforts to establish community programs, particularly in heterogeneous societies, community development practitioners and policymakers are faced with the tasks of how to navigate and incorporate the different stakeholder values, needs and policy preferences into development plans (Kaufman, 1959).

The concept community for decades has been a subject of intense debate. Hillery (1955), identified ninety-four different definitions of the term (Black & Hughes, 2001; Clark, 1973; Hillery Jr., 1959; Kaufman, 1959; Plant, 1978). The plentiful and inconsistent nature of the various definitions further compounded the confusion and ignited efforts among scholars to understand the concept. Some scholars such as Stacey, perhaps out of frustration argued for the writing-off of the concept community as “non-concept” while for some scholars the concept community confuses more than it illuminates the situation (Clark, 1973, p. 397). In the bulk of development policy literature, the term community means:

A culturally and politically homogeneous social system or one that at least implicitly is internally cohesive and more or less harmonious. Such as an administratively defined locale (tribal area or neighbourhood) or a common interest group (community of weavers or potters). (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 8)

Community is defined by N. T. Uphoff (1986) as “relatively self-contained, socio-economic-residential unit” (p. 11). For a similar meaning (see also N. T. Uphoff & Esman, 1974; N. T. Uphoff, 1992; N. Uphoff & Buck, 2006). In the participatory development

interventions of the WB, the term community is generally understood with three essential implicit characteristics: 1) a group of individuals who share broad development goals; 2) a unit where social behaviour and relationships are ruled by social norms expected to provide cohesion; and 3) an entity with boundaries where those who do not fit are excluded. The popularity of community participatory interventions at the WB is perhaps due to the assumption that members of a community are best placed to identify their own urgent needs and problems. Because often, they live together in a particular geographic area, sharing common interests and a set of governing norms (Kumar et al., 2003).

However, such a view about the community can be deceptive because it promotes the notion that all community members share common problems which through community consensus can be solved. This perception does not only distract the attention of development practitioners from recognising the inhomogeneous nature of the poor, their distribution in different geographic regions but away from diverse kinds of deprivation experiences the poor face. At the same time, each seeks another solution to alleviate poverty. In a nutshell, the idea tends to ignore the existing differences between members of the community in terms power relations, conflicts and diversity of interests which govern the daily behaviour of individuals and groups, and the impact these differences have on the effectiveness of CDD approaches, in particular its institutional development component. Besides, the expectation is that shared norms are community unifying mechanisms. However, these shared norms might turn out to be a hindrance to collective action capability of the community by dictating patterns of behaviours such as “deference to the elite”, which disempowers the poorest and the marginal groups in a community from effectively demonstrating their choice (Kumar et al., 2003, p. 5).

To use the concept community unqualified is problematic in two ways (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). 1) Whenever a community is defined either geographic or boundaries terms, it often makes it complicated and not easy to understand. This is because where administrative boundaries do not reflect or are distinct from the settlement patterns, managerial borders can be rendered insignificant. A similar thing happens where community boundaries have been transformed due to increasing mobility or temporary migrations. At times, this scenario is further complicated by ethnic, sectarian or religious identities. 2) Often an indeterminate use of the concept community at project design stage obscures local

economic and social power structures and dynamics that may have a probable impact on the outcomes (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

In the project design process, a unit labelled community is defined frequently as “an endogenous construct defined by the parameters of a project, by project facilitators, or by the nature of administrative or identity boundaries rather than an organic form” (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 8). Studies such as (Guijt & Shah, 1998; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2001) have indicated that unqualified use of the term community is problematic for the sustainability of participatory projects. Particularly those of CDDP intended to alter traditional power dynamics and empower marginalised, excluded or people without a voice through local development and governance institutions. An explicit understanding of local power structures is of paramount importance for effective participatory development strategies particularly for the durability of the institution building/development component of CDDP strategy. This is because local forms of power have both limiting and enhancing prospects for participatory development (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Most definitions of the term community fall within the framework of “social interaction within a geographic area” with common “goals or norms” (Black & Hughes, 2001, p. 1). In recent years, due to advancement in technology, communication and transport, the definition of a community has changed. The meaning of the concept has “included categories of people who engage in a particular purpose, task or function together” (ibid). Or individuals “who have some form of identity in common, though not necessarily associated with the same locality” (ibid). Thus, reducing or bundling the definitions of the community into two types: a community of location and community of interest. Communities of location refer to social interaction within a geographic area (districts, chiefdoms, cities, towns, villages, clans and so on), where citizens or residents have common goals or norms. Communities of interest apply to categories of individuals who together engage in some common purpose, function or task (co-workers, students, entertainment, sport, etc.). Or people who have some form of shared identity (occupation, ethnic origin, age, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation etc.), but do not necessarily share the same locality (Black & Hughes, 2001; Clark, 1973; Hillery Jr., 1959; Kaufman, 1959; McMillan, 1996; Plant, 1978).

Gusfield (1975) identifies two critical notions of community such as: communities of “territorial” and “geographical”; and community of “relational” (McMillan & Chavis,

1986). The above two classifications of the community are mutually exclusive. The territorial and geographical distinction relates to the community of location. Such as “neighbourhood [village, districts, chiefdoms, clans etc.], town and city”, while relational distinction which falls in the category of community of interest refers to “quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 8). Borrowing from Durkheim’s (1964) ideas about modern society, McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that, communities are developed around “interests and skills more than around locality” (p. 8). Hillery jr. (1955), defines community as a social unit consisting of “persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties” (p. 111).

Kaufman’s (1959) study reveals a consensus in at least three elements in the definitions of community: 1) a social unit of which space is an integral part; the community is a place, a relatively small one; 2) it indicates a configuration as to the way of life, together as to how people do things and what they want-their institutions and their collective goals; and 3) collective action. Persons in a community must not only be able to but regularly do act together in the common concerns of life (p. 9). Clark (1973) in his re-examination of the concept of community, identifies four conceptions: community as locality, as social activity, as social structure, and as sentiment (pp. 397–403). The explicit or implicit description of community in a good number of literature on community studies view it as “locality” (Clark, 1973). Although this notion of community is locality held by many contemporary sociologists, however, according Clark (1973) many scholars finds it erroneous. There are also scholars who are in favour “the spatial and environmental aspects” of community (Clark, 1973, p. 397).

To understand the community, Clark (1973) studies sentiment (“activity of mind like ‘attitude’” and “emotions such as ‘feelings’”) which uses psychological rather than sociological approach. For Clark (1973), a life devoid of community, would render men unable to have associational relations, thus to him, a community is neither a “circumscribed sphere of life”, nor merely economic, political, territorial, or visceral. It’s also not all these unique elements put together. Instead, a community is “the very life-blood of social life”. Ultimately, community “is a complex of conditioned emotions which the individual feels towards the surrounding world and his fellow (...). It is to human beings and their feelings,

sentiments, reactions, that all look for the fundamental roots of community” (pp. 402–403). Plant (1978) sums-up the conventional meaning of the term community as denoting:

Locality; interest group; a system of solidarity; a group with a sense of mutual significance; a group characterized by moral agreement, shared beliefs, shared authority, or ethnic integrity; a group marked by historical continuity and shared traditions; a group in which members meet in some kind of total fashion as opposed to meeting as members of certain roles, functions, or occupational groups; and finally, occupational, functional, or partial communities. (p. 82)

As far as Clark (1973) is concerned, there is nothing wrong with the divergent views, conceptions or expressions of the term community for the fact that all the diverse notions presuppose the core descriptive meaning of the term. For Clark (1973), it is only a social system that does not possess the two fundamental communal elements of “a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance”, that cannot be qualified for a community status (Clark, 1973, p. 404; Plant, 1978, p. 87). For McMillan and Chavis (1986), the focus of their analysis of community paid attention to both communities of territory (neighbourhoods) and communities of relations (professional, spiritual and so on). Several other authors such as (Bishop et al., 1997; Chavis et al., 1986; Chavis & Pretty, 1999; Chipuer & Pretty, 1999; Davidson & Cotter, 1986; Glynn, 1981, 1986; Hill, 1996; McMillan, 1996; Nasar & Julian, 1995), have argued the need to understand the sense of community beyond the idea of territory or locality and embrace the community of interest groups and so on.

Concerning sense of community/psychological sense of community, Sarason (1974), the pioneer and one of the first scholars to articulate Sense of Community¹², has defined the concept as a: “sense that one was part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness” (Bishop et al., 1997, p. 194; Chavis et al., 1986; Glynn, 1981, 1986). McMillan & Chavis (1986) define a sense of community as: “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (p. 9). Although there have been several definitions of sense of community,

¹² It is sometimes called psychological sense of community

it looks as if they all concur with the original description proposed by Sarason (1974). For instance, Newbrough and Chavis, (1986) argue that sense of community is:

Primarily psychological: It refers to the personal knowing that one has about belonging to a collectivity. There is an *I-you sense* that differentiates oneself from the collectivity, and there is a *we sense* of belonging together. These are reciprocal aspects of belonging, each requiring the other. (p. 3)

According to Glynn (1981), Nisbet (1962) describes the sense of community as a concept that is “closely woven into the fabric of tradition and morality as to be scarcely more noticeable than the air men breathe” (Glynn, 1981, p. 791; see also Cohrun, 1994). A sense of community, according to Glynn (1981), is associated with concepts like “homogeneity, interdependence, shared responsibility, face-to-face relationships, [and] common goals” (p. 791). A sense of community is described as a concept that hinges on conscious “awareness of belonging to a collectivity (...) or the desirable result of common bonds”, the absence of which is “associated with isolation and social dysfunctional” (Bishop et al., 1997, p. 194; also see Glynn, 1981). A sense of community, Plant (1978) argues “can only exist when people have certain intentions toward one another, have certain perceptions of each other, and value one another in certain ways”. Instead of “a strategy undertaken for self-interested rather than fraternal reasons” (p. 105). Within the ideological frameworks of Conservatives, Marxists and Liberal-social democrats, it is possible to “have a determinate and specific concept of community” (ibid p. 106). But due to variations in ideological positions in current social and political discourse, it is not possible and almost useless to strive for a consensus in the meaning of community across the ideological spectrum.

2.11.1 The Notion of Village as a Community

In today’s world, there are significant improvements in transportation and communication infrastructure and the resultant unprecedented expansion of daily living areas. Thus, an observation among some scholars is that spatially, human beings are limited in carrying out their daily activities. Leading to the notion of the community as “that area in which the greater majority of people live and make a living” a bit obsolete these days (Kaufman, 1959, p. 9). Unlike societies engaged in subsistence agriculture, it’s difficult today to draw boundary lines between residence, production and consumption, thus making it very

difficult to delineate modern community, especially in urban life. In modern urban communities, the locale of production is usually the “metropolitan region” or “large trade centre areas”. At the same time, the “suburb or the neighbourhood of the central city” is a community of residence at the urban level (ibid). At the rural level, it is both the “hamlet or the open country neighbourhood” which could serve both purposes (Kaufman, 1959, p. 9).

The difficulty in differentiating between localities and within localities in terms of size and complexity makes it problematic to distinguish community as a concept from non-community, which might be considered as one. All of these complicate not only today’s search for a more precise definition of the community but also the question of whether community includes “local society in all its inclusiveness” or not. The most common usage of community understood it as “the totality of social life in an area-all family living and voluntary associations, political and economic organization” (ibid). Many community researchers, Kaufman (1959) notes, increasingly recognise the dynamic nature of the community, and thus, beginning to conceive community as “an interactional field” (p. 10). There are four different categories in which scholars conceptualise community as an interactional field such as a) a group; b) an action analysis; c) the studies of local leadership and power structure; and d) a field, arena or situation (Kaufman, 1959, p. 10). According to Kaufman (1959), any action, whether community or otherwise has three essential analytical elements: 1) community actors or participants, (2) community groups or associations, and (3) phases and processes of community action.

In his community model where he catalogued a diverse set of developed and developing nations, and five different sizes and types of villages, HilleryJr. (1959) states that, community as a phenomenon is “what may be loosely referred to as the village” (p. 237). And that a village as a social unit agrees with the typical qualities of most community definitions such as: “a social group inhabiting a common territory and having one or more additional common ties” (ibid). HilleryJr. (1959) identifies five elements based on traits common to the five villages he studied. He states that all the villages contain Homan’s four elements of a group: “activities, interaction, sentiment, and norms” plus an additional part of “space” (p. 237). Similarly, this study also understands community in village terms which refers to a relatively self-contained social unit having collective development goals and as well sharing social norms that govern their day-to-day interactions. HilleryJr. (1959)

argues that, his model is different from that of MacIver and Page who treat large collectivities such as region, state and world as a community. Although there is “nothing wrong” with the practice of extending the concept of community to “every more-or-less socially inclusive and territorially oriented group”, but for Hillery Jr. (1959), the “only danger lies” in the fact that MacIver and Page have forgotten that there may be differences in “principles discovered” in the different kinds communities. And that it could be problematic in terms of the application of these principles from one community to another (p. 241).

For Hillery Jr. (1959), the community is “a vague and a haphazard” concept generally with excess definition, thus redefining the term does not add any value, instead to ensure clarity it has to be written as “hyphenated words: nation-community, village-community, household-community” and so on (p. 242). The term community, regardless of the approach used, “when used alone, has too wide a set of connotations to be understood” (ibid, p. 242). Although the most common approach often used in the study of community, is the study of social structures of groups such as institutions and concepts like status, role, and social class. However, some scholars also tried to understand communal life through detail description and analysis of dramatic occurrences or investigating social activities such as special events, ceremonies and customs (Clark, 1973, p. 402).

2.12 Understanding Sustainability in Development Discourse

The phrase sustainable development is an age-old concern for the world, particularly for governments and citizens of developing countries. It has been the same for international development agencies, academics and practitioners in the field of development studies and practice. Jones (1990) mentions that often researchers attribute the root causes of sustainable development problems “to the design and early implementation steps of a development interest” (p. 101) including the following frequently cited issues: (1) the lack of political commitment to the goals of the investment, (2) inadequate or inappropriate program strategies, (3) ineffective management systems, and (4) the absence of critical human resources. In their response, development professionals advocate for “process-oriented, organization development activities to guide the design and start-up of development efforts” (ibid). By all indications, sustainable development, according to

Spangenberg (2012), is both a “complex” and “a normative concept” (p. 107). The concept advocates for nothing less than:

A decent quality of life for all the earth’s citizens now and in future, to be provided within the limits of the environment’s carrying capacity. Its strategic core approach is the delimitation of responsibilities in space and time and the integration of policy domains for coherent strategies. (ibid)

The critical international policy documents on sustainable development include the Brundtland Report; Agenda 21; the Rio Declaration; the Johannesburg Plan of implementation, and monitoring; Millennium Development Goals; and Sustainable Development Goals. As per the critical international policy documents, sustainability as a concept has four dimensions, domains or objectives. These include environmental goals (respecting ecological limits), social standards (dignified life), economic conditions (competitiveness, often also growth), and institutional desiderata (e.g., participation, empowerment of communities and women, peace and justice) (Spangenberg, 2012, p. 107). Earlier in 2002, similar indicators were identified by Spangenberg and other sustainable development scholars (Spangenberg et al., 2002, p. 61). For “effective compliance” and for “sustainability characteristics such as justice or participation” to materialise or attained, economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development indicators “must be complemented by core institutional objectives” (Spangenberg, 2002, p. 103).

Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) find out that it was until mid-to the late 1980s when the issue of sustainability has become a “distinct and pressing concern” for policymakers and donor agencies working in developing countries (p. 9). From early 1990 the concept sustainability has entered in the fields of development discourse, particularly in primary health care and health sector in general. Between 1980 and 2008, a systematic review of empirical research on health sustainability has reported 84 studies which included 24 studies on the subject matter from the developing countries alone (Walsh et al., 2012). Jones (1990) defines the term sustainability beyond specific project activities or organisations when he refers to the concept as “the continuation of benefits and the capacity of the organizations involved to continue to grow and change in response to new needs and circumstances” (p. 102). For Uphoff and Buck (2006) sustainability often implies “something continues for a long time in the form that it exists” (p. 37). However,

with their 15 years of experience as researchers at Cornell (CIIFAD) institute with a focus on sustainable agricultural and rural development, Uphoff and Buck argue that in many situations if not all, sustainability “is highly dependent on the capacity to change” (ibid). And that sustainability:

Is not a result of intrinsic characteristics-of a technology, an organization, a culture-but of the extent to which that phenomenon (technology, organization, culture, etc.) is able to adapt to changing circumstances, given that such change is pervasive. It is the ‘fit’ between a phenomenon and its environment that enables the former to persist. Sustaining an institution in some ways, continuing as it is in the face of pressures and even opposition, resisting change, is sure to lead to unsustainability in a more fundamental sense. (ibid, p. 37, the emphasis, as in the original text)

Around the same time, Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) conducted a multi-year applied research project on institutional sustainability funded by USAID Bureau for Asia and the Near East. The research targeted cases from different geographical areas of the world where an international donor-funded intervention sought to develop sustainable institutions in agriculture and rural development (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Concern for sustainability is not only increasing but frequently encountered in a variety of arena. Some of the challenges that resulted in the growing concern for sustainability include the finite nature of the world’s natural resources and mushrooming of public budget deficits. Institutional failure in developing nations and increasing interdependence and complexity of public and private sectors relations in both developed and developing countries are other challenges.

Sustainable development from the perspective of Brundtland Commission is about humanity’s ability to ensure that development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (*Our-common-future.pdf* 1987, n.d., p. 27; Goldsmith & Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 10). The problem of sustainability in the agriculture and natural resources sectors is about the long-term effect of current farming practices on the global resource base. At the same time, widespread market distortions such as the ill-considered or politically convenient price regimes and the limit these have on increased production and employment in most developing countries are the sustainability concerns of economists (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990).

In the fields of development or organisational development, management experts are worried about sustainability in terms of meeting “recurrent costs” (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990, pp. 10–11). Added to this is the frequent capacity improvement for program implementation units for “an ongoing flow of goods and services” to project or program beneficiaries (ibid). Development administrators are concerned about capacity building for organisations for a sustainable supply of useful and valued outcome for beneficiaries beyond the lifespan of the projects/programs. For development project managers sustainability is about how to achieve planned targets within the defined period and budget. This entails responding more to the accountability obligations of the funding agency than to the capacity building requirements of the recipient country. Clientele rather than the implementing agency is the sustainability concern of health experts. Health experts understood the problem in terms of “promoting affordable preventative health measures, as opposed to curative care alone, measures that enable poor people to enhance their physical well-being over the long run” (ibid).

Project participants of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) understand sustainability as most often focussing on “the continuation of production gains and increased income streams” (Bhandari, 2009, p. 15). And that IFAD supported income-generating activities in the rural sector will be sustainable only “if IFAD strengthens private sector services, market functions and the enabling policy environment” (ibid). While for government participants sustainability is about “sustained funding and government takeover of the services provided by IFAD supported projects, as well as a continuous flow of capital and credit into rural areas” (ibid). IFAD also adds that sustainability entails determining “whether the results of the project will be sustained in the medium or even longer-term without continued external assistance” (ibid, pp. 14–15).

Despite its multiple and sometimes contested meanings in empirical research literature of health care, Walsh et al. (2012) identify “programmatic and financial” sustainability concerns. While health programs concentrate on maintaining “health benefits/programs (utilitarian) and (...) community capacity (empowerment)” (p. 3), sustainability in development programs is affected both by the description and implementation of projects, environmental factors and attributes of the organisational setting (ibid). Haneef et al. (2014) find out that the different definitions of sustainability are dependant on “the context; the needs of the community; and the objectives of a particular program” (p. 14).

Sustainability for donor organisation could mean local people having the ability to pay for project costs in the absence of further international aid. While to policymakers, it may mean the continuous reinvention and reinvigoration of initiatives to stand the test of time. It could also mean local stakeholders having the ability “to negotiate their respective roles in the pursuit of health and development, beyond a project intervention” (p. 3). As (Walsh et al., 2012) note, this can be achieved through the creation of enabling environments/conditions. An environment where individuals, communities and local organisations would be able to “express their potential, improve local functionality, develop mutual relationships of support and accountability and decrease dependency on insecure resources (financial, human, technical, informational)” (ibid).

2.13 Institutional Sustainability in Development Discourse

When Ingle et al. (1990) examined the nature of the relationship between project implementation performance and sustainability, they found two ideas that differ both in terms of concept and operation but related in project dimensions. Ingle et al. (1990) discover that “productive mobilization and use of resources” to accomplish specific investments have fostered project implementation. Added to this is their breakthrough that development projects are sustained through “continued production” of “sufficiently well-valued” “project-initiated outputs” which ensured “additional inputs are provided” (pp. 84–85). For Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development (NERAD) project, sustainability in the words of Ingle et al. (1990) is about the “valuing of specific outputs” of the project by the different stakeholder groups throughout the community “who support the continued production of these outputs following the project” (p. 85).

While analysing the sustainability issues of the training and visit extension system (T&V) of Philippines National Extension Project (NEP), Gustafson (1990) links institutional sustainability to “the success of a specific organization in providing a continuous flow of benefits sufficiently well-valued to ensure continued inputs, specific strategies for translating capacity into performance” (p. 196). In the perspective of Ingle et al. (1990) sustainability as an additive project dimension should have its independent objectives and strategy. All of which should be integrated thoroughly into the implementation of performance objectives and approach of the project, incorporating an appropriate plan that would enhance the three sustainability capacity types. According to Ingle et al. (1990) “an

initial set of project sustainability guidelines [(p. 86)] suggests that a project's sustainability objectives and strategy should, at minimum, include a combination of policy, structural, and management variables" (ibid, p. 87). Also discovered is the possibility "a project's evolution" seems to have on "the relationship between implementation performance and sustainability" (ibid).

Spangenberg (2012) describes institutions as not only "essential" but "indispensable" in the implementation of social, economic, and environmental objectives of sustainable development. Among the different definitions of institutions put forth by the other disciplines, the description provided by political science is the "most appropriate one in the sustainable development context" (p. 108). An in-depth analysis of institutional definitions shows that "political science focuses on what is essential for a normative concept, the conditions or rules of decision making, including the most familiar kind of institutions (i.e., organizations) but complementing them with mechanisms and orientations" (ibid). In contrast, "sociology and economics analyse two different directions of interaction (humans on organizations and vice versa), and historical analysis refers to organizations and cultural rules" (ibid).

Institutional dimension is critical to almost all issues related to the sustainability of development programs and their outcomes. However, it is rather unfortunate that the majority of the developing countries do not have the institutional depth required to carry out the complex and exciting responsibilities of the 21st-century development (Goldsmith & Brinkerhoff, 1990). The very fact that institutions by nature are described as "sustained patterns of social organisation" the phrase "institutional sustainability" in the real sense of the term becomes redundant (ibid, p. 13). In IFAD's strategic framework 2007-2010 (IFAD 2007) institutional sustainability is defined as "ensuring that the institutions supported through projects and the benefits realized are maintained and continue after the end of the project" (ibid, p. 14). And reports that institutional sustainability entails institutional support, policy implementation, staffing, recurrent budgets.

In the parlance of development practitioners and administrators, (Goldsmith & Brinkerhoff, 1990) argue that institutional sustainability often refers to those collective entities that fulfil one or more of the following criteria: 1) ability to recover part of their recurrent and other costs or for the entities to become self-financing; 2) ability to continuously supply benefits or services they are intended to provide; and 3) ability to

continue to live or exist over time, or sustain themselves as identifiable entities (p. 13). About what constitutes sustainability, Brown (1998) identifies four broad views such as (i) sustainability as continued benefit flows; (ii) sustainability as longevity/survival; (iii) sustainability as the ability to meet recurrent costs; and (iv) sustainability as institutional capacity and performance” (p. 57). Institutional sustainability, Brown (1998) argues, is:

About the capacity of an institution to generate a minimum level and quality of valued outputs over the long term (...). It is about continued effectiveness, about creating and maintaining an acceptable level of capacity, and then about converting that capacity into actual performance. (p. 62)

Scharpf (2000) notes that corporate and collective actors set their goals because of institutional rules. But the criteria for their success or failure is defined by both institutional and cultural norms. In all cases, the purposes of actors are influenced strongly by both the institutional rules and cultural norms. As a result of which the goals vary significantly between the various categories of actors. By contrast, commenting on useful procedures for institutional design and their “maintenance or survival interests” Scharpf (2000) argues for the following:

Ensuring adequate organizational resources, defending organizational autonomy, and (where institutionally relevant) achieving competitive success are likely to be more uniform and constant—which allows fairly general and reliable predictions of organizational responses to institutional incentives (and hence useful suggestions for institutional design). (p. 771)

For Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1992) institutional sustainability depends upon the following: “responsive output flows (high quality and valued goods and services); cost-effective goods and services delivery mechanisms (organization and management); and resource flows (recurrent costs, capital investments, human resources)” (p. 369). Sustainable institutions, according to Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1992), are those “whose strategies enable them to make the best of their capabilities and to capitalize on their surroundings” (p. 375). Unsustainable institutions, on the contrary, are those that lack strategies that allow them to use their capabilities effectively and where there exists “a mismatch between the organization and its environment” (ibid). Goldsmith and

Brinkerhoff (1990) describe the above three criteria of institutional sustainability as problematic.

Johnson and Wilson (2000) identify three critical determinants for the long term sustainability of institutions developed through donor-funded interventions: a) the ability of an intervention to actively involve the different community groups (civil society) in the internal workings of the intervention; b) following the processes to make sure that the intervention becomes a “normal” practise or habit, i.e., sequencing the intervention from demonstration to replication and finally to the institutionalisation of the replicated scheme; and c) for an intervention to graduate members of the community from participants in the system to community representation and general term to participate in social change (p. 314)

After an analysis of a five-country study of the sustainability of U.S. government-funded health projects in Central America and Africa, Bossert (1990) finds out that weak economic and political context inhibit sustainability of the African cases. Unfavourable economic and environmental factors are the lack of budgetary funding for projects during and after project implementation, which in part is due to the weakness of governmental revenues. Less institutionalized political infrastructure in African is another contributing factor. Findings show that government institutions in Africa “have less well-established administrative routines” (p. 1018). And the “skill levels of officials are lower, budgetary resources so limited that some basic governmental services have not yet reached many geographic regions within the countries” (ibid). Bossert (1990) argues that although the measure of political *institutionalisation* in terms of project sustainability is unclear, however, it “appears to be important” (p. 1018, emphasis as in the original text).

Increased government capacity to collect and distribute revenue to social development programs and the reduction of institutionalised corruption could be crucial too. One other contextual variable connected to sustainability is the strength of project implementing institutions. Bossert (1990) finds out that institutions that are “weak, fragmented (...) with competing objectives, poor leadership, low skill levels and unresponsive bureaucratic centralization” are less likely to manage projects sustainably (p. 1018). In contrast, robust and well-integrated institutions with “goal structures that were consistent with the project goals, and had strong leadership and relatively high skill levels” are more likely to manage projects sustainably (ibid). Foreign donors, according to Bossert (1990) often contribute

actively to the weak and fragmented administrative units of government MDAs due to the requirements imposed by donor “project activity”, such as the need that “their project be implemented by a separate unit” within MDAs and through the imposition of “separate reporting, budgetary and administrative routines” (ibid).

Findings of sustainability evaluation of Lesotho’s rural health development project show that a project is sustainable when the technical package is appropriate to the local conditions and capabilities of the institutions. Added to this is when the integration of training, supervision, management, and logistical requirements within the institutional structure of the parent institution is successful. This is because the parent institution ensures successful institutionalisation, government providing adequate annual funding for all operating costs. However, the charging of low user fees has been identified as a threat to long-term financial sustainability (Liebersson et al., 1987). In the study of factors affecting the institutional sustainability of Ponseti treatment in Uganda, Musoke (2011) finds zero significant statistical links between stakeholder participation and institutional sustainability. However, there is evidence of community involvement having positive affect on institutional sustainability. Another factor that has a substantial relationship with institutional sustainability is supportive leadership through partnership building with both the community, CBOs and NGOs, and human resource development.

In the context of development interventions, institutional sustainability is about the establishment of action and output enabling “norms, values and practices” in the course of the interventions that would continue beyond the formal life of the interventions (Johnson & Wilson, 2000, p. 302). Any type of intervention undertaken either by governments, other public or private organizations directed at “some shared notion of progressive social change” is considered development. In particular, they seek “to benefit poor and socially marginalized people” (ibid, p. 301). Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) using systems approach propose a definition which they call “simple and widely applicable” (p. 14). Institutional sustainability is gauged by an institution’s ability to “produce outputs that are sufficiently well-valued so that enough inputs are provided to continue production” (ibid).

As indicated by its proponents, the purpose of this definition “is analytic, not normative” or to judge sustainability in value terms. Sustainability in their understanding “only requires that someone value an institution’s outputs, so it may or may not be desirable for development” (ibid). Although Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) aren’t sure whether the

above-mentioned institutional sustainability criteria “are sufficient or even necessary”, but according to them, the longevity of an organisation by itself is undoubtedly a “dubious measure” (p. 13). Because the criteria fail to answer the question about “how long a period is required before an organization can be considered sustained” (ibid). One relevant concern identified by Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff (1990) is whether an institution has gone through a successive crisis or not or whether it has fulfilled “routinization of charisma” which would allow it to perpetuate itself regardless of the office holder (Ibid). The issue, however, is that it is not always likely to know *ex-ante* when leadership has taken root or not (ibid).

Institutional sustainability is supported in an environment where “structured process of social learning across social divides” exists (Johnson & Wilson, 2000, p. 303). Sondaal et al. (2019) surveyed 239 groups in Makwanpur, Nepal after the withdrew of support from the non-governmental organisation to understand their sustainability status and factors affecting the participatory learning and action (PLA) program. The factors that influenced the sustainability of PLA program are the following.

- The importance of the group locally;
- Continued acquisition of knowledge in topical areas beneficial to members;
- A unifying activity such as shared funding;
- A supportive social environment like a gathering place where members feel comfortable and confident to share information and have a sense of unity;
- A group having access to financial support; and
- The capacity of the leadership to manage the group (Sondaal et al., 2019).

After studying fourteen Dutch sporting programs funded within the National Action Plan for Sport and Exercise (NAPSE), Ooms et al. (2019) show that program adaptation, evaluation and the nature of the sports club (e.g. social aspect in program design) are the factors that facilitated the sustainability. While lack of program financing, high program costs and human resources (e.g. lack of volunteers) impeded the long-term program sustainability.

WB-funded Family Health Project (FHP) (1992–1999) in the province of Sindh in Pakistan analysed by Israr and Islam (2006) reveals that “meaningful community participation and “democratic” decision-making processes” within an existing health care system “could not be fully absorbed and sustained” (p. 313). The inability to cultivate a sense of ownership

of the project among important stakeholder groups like managers and operational staff because of “hierarchical structure and management process” is one of the unsustainability contributing factors. The failure to institutionalize the “training program for district-level health officials/professionals” and the “symbolic rather than forceful” community participation are another. Weak and diminishing skillset of project management team at the district level are counted as a sustainability bottleneck. The problem of institutionalising training programs is due to inadequate financial, political support, and the firm control the ministry of health has on the project at the local level (ibid).

In developing country context another questionable indicator of institutional sustainability issue is the self-financing issue because the clientele of many organisations that provide essential services in the context are poorly endowed financially. Most of these organisations indefinitely rely on overseas subventions to sustain services provision thus, making most public goods and service provider institutions functionally unsustainable. The question about the long-term flow of benefits is the lack of clarity about who an organisation’s beneficiaries are, local elites versus ordinary villagers. Unlike the collectivities of ordinary villagers, elite-oriented collectivities are more likely to supply their members with a stream of advantages sustainably (Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 13).

The essential purpose of an institution Spangenberg et al. (2002) argues, is to provide services or goods to one or more client groups. This means of success of an institution is dependent on maintaining closer contact with its customers. Whenever it falls-short in economically producing goods and services as expected, it will become vulnerable and decay. Political science considers both “social entities as actors” and “systems of rules shaping behaviour” (p. 21) as an institution. However, this aroused two sustainability features of institutions as a facilitator of “decision making” and “the implementation of such political decisions” (ibid). Hodgson (2006) while distinguishing between institutions and convention, argues that the resilience of an institution lies in its ability to ensure “stable expectations of the behaviour of others” (p. 2). It is through the imposition of “form and consistency” on human activities that institutions provide “ordered thought, expectation, and action” in society (ibid). Partly institutions depend on the “thoughts and activities” of people for their durability (ibid).

In the context of governance for sustainable development Pfahl (2005) argues that institutional sustainability is about the ability of an institution to facilitate “decision making and implementation of sustainability policies” through its activities (p. 83). To evaluate institutional sustainability, therefore, one must look at the coordinating competences of an institution in terms of facilitating “human interaction in order to achieve specific sustainability goals” (ibid, p. 84). Hodgson (2006) argues that it is the powers of the institution itself rather than the behaviours of its players what indicate the continued existence of institutions. Whenever an institution fails to exercise its powers “with sufficient frequency” such powers “may lapse, and institutional dispositions may fade” (pp. 2–3). Hodgson (2006) further argues that rules incorporate both “legal rules” and “norms of behaviour and social conventions” (p. 3). An institution in part constitutes people’s mental representations of itself or its rules. Therefore, the existence of an institution hinges on the willingness of individuals to have specific and associated “beliefs and mental attitudes” about it (ibid, p. 4). This, therefore, means that an institution ceases to exist when people fail to internalise its establishment and associate themselves with its rules.

As for Searle (2005) an institution “is any collectively accepted system of rules (procedures, practices) that enable us to create institutional facts” and it’s this institutional fact which is the “glue that holds society together” (p. 21). The structure within which an institutional fact is created is provided only “once an institution becomes established” (p. 10). The only way an institutional fact exists according to Searle (2005) is through collective acceptance that something has “a certain status, where that status carries functions that cannot be performed without the collective acceptance of the status” (p. 9). For an institution to be operational and effectively serve human needs, there is a need for a “collective intentionality” and the “assignment of function” with an individual “status” (p. 7). Finally, the assigned function and status have to be collectively accepted by a community (ibid, p. 11).

Political actors March and Olsen (1996) argue act and organise their activities in institutions, i.e., “rules and practices which are socially constructed, publicly known, anticipated and accepted” (p. 249). Such a concept of an institution denotes that for a rule, practice or an agency to assume an institutional status it has to have a shared meaning and practice. Which are not only accepted, and publicly recognised, but it also has to be rooted

or embedded in the socio-cultural norms and values of the society. In the words of Powell and DiMaggio (1994) institutions are “those social patterns that, when chronically reproduced, owe their survival to relatively self-activating social processes” (p. 145). Institutional pattern is produced, supported and sustained through “routine reproductive procedures” (ibid). This reproductive process is blocked or disrupted either by collective action or environmental shock.

2.14 VDC Sustainability Problem

To remain active once established is the goal of all VDCs, whether founded through funding from international development agencies, their local development partner organisations or the host country government. Haneef et al. (2014) argue that the sustainability of donor-funded VDCs is measured by their ability to “continue to contribute to village development” following the phase-out of donor-funded programs (*A study into the effectiveness and sustainability of Village Development Committees. 73 pp.*, p. 15). Evidence from the research conducted by Adhikari P. and Risal (2006) in Nepal shows that 95% of external agencies involved in the founding of VDCs expressed that the necessary part of their program was to ensure the sustainability of VDCs long after the phase-out of their programs. CBO members who partake in the research shared a similar view of staying in the organisation for a “‘long time’ or for ‘some years’” (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 11).

Adhikari and Goldey (2010) describe group sustainability as “the continuity and regularity of group activities, such as meetings, savings (if any), investment, repayment (if any), or other sector-related activities” (Adhikari & Goldey, 2010, as cited in (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 15)). Datta (2007) finds out that the power that lies within CBOs is a fundamental determinant of CBO sustainability (p. 48). Datta (2007) argues that the sustainability of CBOs is viewed as a “stage of empowering organizations where members are capable of planning and implementing their development initiatives independently” (p. 48). And that successful groups and village organisations are those that “had had strong leadership and were transparent in information-sharing and decision-making” (p. 50). Other features of successful groups and village organisations are the elections of “trustworthy and competent leaders” and assigning “specific quota for women’s membership of the committee” (ibid, p. 50).

CLP regards VDCs as sustainable “when they continue to contribute to village development, following the phase-out of CLP-2 programs” (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 15). In expanding on the VDC sustainability idea of CLP Haneef et al. (2014) add that a VDC will be considered sustained when: a group of some form remains in the village call the VDC after the end of CLP; meetings of group members occur at least on a ‘needs’ basis; continue with the annual plan formulated during the VDCs time with CLP, review progress in accordance to the plan and prepare new documentation once the current program ends; continue to identify and provide solution to the problems in the village; maintain links and co-ordination with levels of government and service providers; and maintain good communication relations with the community allowing feedback and whole community ownership of the group (p. 15).

In the collective opinions of participants of the implementing organisations (IMOs) workshop VDC sustainability means “the continuation of VDC activities as a result of their own initiatives after CLP phase-out” (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 16). To the IMOs workshop participants what matters regarding the longevity of VDCs is “the functionality of the committee” (ibid). Neither an increase nor a decrease in membership and their activities is essential for them (ibid). VDC activities referred in the above definition relates to the conduct of regular meetings, making decisions in a participatory manner, detection of problems, identification of solutions and self-evaluation. It may also include innovative ideas and their realisation (Footnote, ibid, p. 16).

After discussing the concept of active and non-active VDCs participants of IMO workshop define active VDCs as those “committees which are currently operating” and any committee that doesn’t meet functional VDC criteria below are categorised none-active VDCs. For participants of IMO, active VDCs are those that have an existing committee; with at least one person in the committee with designated responsibility. For instance, an executive member of the committee; and actively conducting a meeting on, at least, a needs basis and working together as a committee to identify and proffer solution to problems in the community (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 16). Walsh et al. (2012) argue that studies show that vertical programs “create unfavourable conditions for sustainability once donor funding ceases, and a decrease in community self-reliance” (p. 10).

Vertical programs are program delivery method that selectively targets specific interventions instead of fully integrated systems. The limited available evidence

demonstrates that vertical programs are useful only as a temporary, time-limited strategy. Although the dichotomy between vertical and horizontal program delivery measures is not as rigid in practice as in theory, however, “horizontal approaches are seen as fostering more holistic approaches [to service delivery and] (...) that are more aligned to local needs” (ibid, p. 10). Haneef et al. (2014) associate the sustainability problems of local institutions to the interplay of several intervening factors (p. 11). The establishment of CBOs by outside agencies is laden with some issues that inhibit institutional sustainability (Datta, 2007). Haneef et al. (2014) hold the view that “although social capital can be generated, it is difficult to sustain, once projects phase out” (p. 12).

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter presents the SCOPE conceptual framework, its related concepts and theories about institutional sustainability. It explains the two-key hypothesis or assumptions that undergird the framework and the three influential theoretical schools of thought that constituted the SCOPE, namely: the systems theory, contingency theory and political economy. The chapter discusses institutional approaches relevant to the study. The chapter also discusses the following: old institutionalism, the three variants of new institutionalist theories in political science namely, the historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. An account is given about the genesis of each view and their distinctive explanation of social and political issues. Attempts have been made to present how each school of thought construe institution-behaviour relationships and their account of the process through which institutions originate and change over time.

3.1 SCOPE Institutional Sustainability Framework

SCOPE is a generic framework designed to understand institutional sustainability in community development. The authors of the framework drew lessons from rural development sectors of agriculture and health. One advantage of SCOPE framework is its view of organisations as part of an extensive system and the ability to analyse them in a systemic context. The framework reminds researchers to always pay attention to the relations between institutions and their environment. The supremacy of SCOPE lies in the rich array of organisational or social system characteristics that are analysed by both the contingency and systems theories. Among these, two sets of factors receive prominence in terms of institutional sustainability, and these are: *technology* and *structure* (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992).

The exponents of SCOPE model, Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) make a disclaimer when they state that they “do not claim to have evolved a rigorous theory of institutional sustainability, one that emerges directly from a set of fundamental propositions. Rather,

SCOPE is a heuristic device, intended to provide a vocabulary and perspective that incorporates disparate ideas about sustainability” (p. 20). Notwithstanding, the fact that the three schools of thought pulled together have differing origins and propositions, Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) maintain that their conceptual framework is not “atheoretical” and that it is based on or concerned with theories that complement each other in the analysis of political systems (p. 20).

SCOPE framework is the product of a mixture of three influential theoretical schools of thought, viz.: the systems theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978), organisational contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967) and political economy (Zald, 1970). The precepts of these theories are “mutually reinforcing, not just a patchwork of ideas” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 20). The acronym SCOPE stands for the three constituent theories-S-Systems, CO-Contingency, and PE-Political Economy.

3.1.1 Synopsis of Theories that form Part of the SCOPE Framework

Systems theory is an analytical or a mental tool that helps to understand the interdependence of social and political life (Easton, 1971, p. 98). This theory is constructed on the concept that all institutions are systems and to better understand institutions, their operations and maintenance, inquiries into institutions must take a systemic approach. In Easton’s words, systems theory provides an economical way of organising disjointed “political data and promises interesting dividends” (Easton, 1957, p. 400). Again with its sensitivity “to the input-output exchange between a system and its setting”, it appears that systems theory offers a fruitful approach to the study of institutions (ibid). The method allows analysts to have a broader focus on a variety of socioeconomic, political, technical, managerial and other factors affecting institutional sustainability.

The importance of systems approach in the SCOPE framework is that: 1) it’s general enough to analyse sustainability phenomena in all kinds of institutions ranging from formal collectivities to informal codes of conduct; 2) it appeals to the analysis of not only internal processes of a system but also the system’s relationship with its environment; 3) it stresses the interrelationship between disparate elements, thus allowing analysts to merge different factors of sustainability (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Notwithstanding, systems theory is found to be unable to provide much “guidance about how to portray internal system

processes or external system relationships” (ibid, p. 20). A weakness that is taken care of in the SCOPE framework by the contingency theory.

Contingency theory is understood as “any variable that moderates the effect of an organisational characteristic on organisational performance” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 7). The fundamental premise is that “the optimal structure and management style for an organization is *contingent* on uncertain, exogenous conditions” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 22). With its emphasis on exogenous conditions, contingency theory has shared concern for the environment with the systems analysis. The sum or pattern of every human behaviour, contingency theory postulates, must be viewed with “the complex of outside forces that threaten or promote its survival and expansion” (ibid). Contingency theory provides an insight into how best institutions can reach congruence with their surrounding forces. At the core of contingency theory is the idea that “organisational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organisation, such as its structure, to contingencies that reflect the situations of the organisation” such as the environment, the size of an organisation and organisational strategy (Donaldson, 2001, pp. 1–2).

The three elements of structural contingency that also form the core of the paradigm are: 1) the relationship between contingency and the structure of an organisation; 2) contingency being the determinant of organisational structure, i.e., change in the contingency of an organisation would result in a change in its design; 3) fit affects performance, i.e., to each contingency level, there exists a fit of some level regarding the structural variable of an organisation (Donaldson, 2001). The consequence of this fit is higher performance, whereas lower performance is the result of a misfit. At the heart of contingency theory is the “fit performance relationship” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 7).

From the above lines of analysis emerged three fundamental propositions: 1) there is not a single universal, or one size fit for all organisational principles that are right for all situation, settings or environments; 2) an institution must have an “adequate fit with its environment” to be functionally durable; 3) to attain fit, an institution, among other things, must have appropriate structures and strategies, and be culturally suitable or apt. Settings differ in their mix of contingencies. Thus, a contingency that is suitable for one institution may not work for another, meaning an “organization has to be able to adapt to its environment-or find a favourable one in which to operate” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 23).

Political Economy is about “exchange of resources” thus providing a powerful tool in describing the structures and tasks performed by local development institutions. The emphasis of political economy is the “interplay of power, the goals of the power wielders, and the productive economic exchange systems” (Arndt, 1983, p. 47). The paradigm is integrative and unifying. It incorporates the primary economic and sociopolitical constructs in institutional analysis. Political economy is critical in the characterisation of crucial “dimensions of external environment” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 20). Among its several new streams, the SCOPE framework relies on the organisational approach version of political economy. Political economy deals with the government-economy relationships that promote a competitive market environment for both efficient resource allocation and production. The focus of welfare economists who use political economy in a normative sense is the pursuit of alternative policies that would benefit majority at the minimum cost possible.

Wamsley and Zald (1973) describe the political economy as the “the interrelationship between structure of rule (polity) and a system for producing and exchanging goods and services (economy)” (p. 64). The key political-economic variables or factors that determine organisational structure and change are the “structure of rule authority, succession to high office, power and authority distribution, division of labour, incentive systems and modes of allocation of resources” (ibid). The political economy framework permits comprehension of processes where local level decentralised structures are influenced by and adapted to environmental conditions (Stern & Reve, 1980). Political economy shares with systems theory the view that polity and economy are two different systems that influence each other. This understanding throws much light on how institutions interact with their environment, their constituencies or stakeholder groups.

The rich theoretical tools of the political economy make it useful when it comes to evaluating and interpreting the efficiency of institutions in fulfilling these tasks. Thus, “the best body of theory” capable of providing an apt explanation of the “facet of institutional sustainability” is the political economy (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 25). Political economy connects economic processes to the structure of organisations and the goals and influence of vital stakeholder groups (Arndt, 1983, p. 47). There are two primary systems in political economy framework-the internal political economy, which is concerned with the internal structuring and functioning of an organisation, and the external political economy-which

is about the operational environment of an organisation. Each of the systems has two components: the polity and the economy (Wamsley & Zald, 1973; Stern & Reve, 1980; Arndt, 1981).

3.1.2 Review Empirical and Theoretical Literature Relevant to SCOPE Framework

To understand institutional sustainability in the context of a donor-funded development program or project, according to Ingle et al. (1990) researchers need to search for answers from both the “conceptual” and “operational” vantage points. Within the operational viewpoint are “the planned and the actual” definitions of sustainability (p. 70). A trade-off between quick performance (by bypassing the structures/organisations), and the involvement and sharing ownership (which could result in more active understanding, commitment and support), throughout the project implementation helps avoid unnecessary tensions and the alienation of key individuals while guaranteeing approval instead of denial.

To prevent the initiation of opposing forces and attitudes in the host organisation is the critical issue here. Thus, the structure of project implementation process such as “which actors are involved, and which ones perceive themselves as benefiting or suffering in the early stages” determines sustainability (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 86). When the only rationale for the newly established systems and procedures is to support the project, “the procedures are likely to grind to a halt when the project ends” (ibid). However, “if these same procedures are built into ongoing operations, they are not seen as artificial behaviours. They can then modify existing practices, accommodating new needs. Thus, they may be sustained” (ibid).

Conceptually, institutional sustainability in SCOPE framework refers to “the ability of a system to produce outputs that are sufficiently well-valued so that enough inputs are provided to continue output production at equal or greater levels” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 71). In a project context, Ingle et al. (1990) refer to a system as a “project during its design and implementation or its investment period” (ibid). At the same time, they describe outputs as “the specific project elements generated during the investment period” (ibid) such as “products, services, programs, and ideas that are the outcomes of organizational action” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 21). Some outputs according to Ingle et al. (1990)

either “by design or redesign, are intended to be continued following the end of the investment period” (p. 71). SCOPE sustainability definition, according to Ingle et al. (1990), serves as the operational definition of project sustainability. Thus, project sustainability is:

Measured by the extent to which outputs produced during the investment period meet all of the following three sustainability conditions: Outputs must continue to be valued by external stakeholders, they must continue to be produced through some organization and management apparatus (though not a particular one), and they must continue to have financial and human resources provided during the return-on-investment period. (ibid., p. 71)

From an operational point of view project sustainability definition can be first viewed “from the planning perspective of the project designers and implementors” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 71). Which “often evolves considerably over the life of a project based on environmental changes and lessons of experience” (ibid, p. 73). Second, the definition can be observed: “in actual terms from the post-project investment period” (ibid). According to Ingle et al. (1990), the following are the three-actual project/program sustainability definition of Northeast Rainfed Agricultural Development (NERAD) project. “(1) The continuation of some key elements in each of NERAD's output clusters; (2) the continuation of organizations and management structures for producing valued output in the future; and (3) the continuation of resource flows associated with output production” (ibid, p. 74). Project implementation performance must be aided by adequate internal resources and good internal management to produce high-quality outputs in the lifetime of a project (Ingle et al., 1990).

Although it's necessary to achieve successful implementation performance; however, this is “not a sufficient condition for sustainability” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 85). Another vital sustainability factor is the marketing of the variety of high-quality outputs to key external supporters. Thus, “unless the value of outputs becomes recognized by powerful actors with influence over recurrent resources, then the probability of sustainability will remain low” (ibid). For development projects to have long-term value and generate the support necessary for the continuation of elements essential from the perspective of their stakeholders, it wouldn't be “enough to have a strategy targeted only to those activities and actors needed for successful implementation” (ibid). For sustainability, there is a need for

a “support from the political environment, and the most effective way of doing this is to disseminate and market the implementation performance success to political players and technocrats” (ibid).

Evidence from Jones’ (1990) study of activities of Private Enterprise Development (PED) project of Guatemala addresses two significant sustainability problems raised by the SCOPE model: the creation of a “favourable policy environment” and safeguarding of “availability of human and financial resources” (p. 107). Examining the credit component of the USAID-funded PDP in Indonesia, Brinkerhoff (1990) argues that “SCOPE highlights stakeholders and the value they attach to institutional outputs, factors that play key roles in rural credit. The framework also focuses attention on the complex and multiple exchanges between institutions and actors in the environment” (p. 90). The reasoning behind the construction of the SCOPE model is the outcome of an effort by development management practitioners: 1) to address the adaptation problem of organizations in the developing world “to the dramatically changing conditions of the 1990s”; and 2) to increase their understanding of “the dynamics of sustaining the benefit flows of key sectoral institutions” in these countries (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 33). The two influential contributions made by SCOPE framework to the understanding of institutional sustainability as identified by Morton and Lowenthal (1990) include:

The specification of the dual interacting processes mediating performance and capacity, and the organization and its environment, respectively. (...) The dialectic posited by the SCOPE framework is that organizations must develop a minimum productive capacity to grow and adapt, while at the same time demonstrating their utility to resource-providing markets or public. (p. 134)

Ingle et al. (1990) state that the SCOPE framework theorizes that the “conduciveness of the project’s proximate and distant political, social, and economic environment is directly related to its sustainability” (p. 81). The framework, they further argue posits “a contingency relationship between institutional sustainability, the type of management strategy, and the characteristics of an organization’s internal and external environment” (p. 82). For Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1992), sustainable institutions are those “whose strategies enable them to make the best of their capabilities and to capitalize on their surroundings” while institutions that “lack such strategies” are the unsustainable ones precipitated by the “mismatch between the organization and its environment” (p. 375).

Truong and Walker (1990) state that the SCOPE model “incorporates the political and bureaucratic realities of policy reform” (p. 116) where policy reform is understood as a process where one set/form of institutional arrangements is substituted for/replaced by another. Sustaining a policy reform process is “a complex undertaking” (ibid). It is natural to have advocates or stakeholders in an institutional change process who would continue to support the prevailing policy regime while resisting the alteration. For fear of losing some or all the benefits, they have accrued from the way the regime operates (ibid). SCOPE framework suggests that in any policy reform process, consideration needs to be given to “the nature of the goods and services involved. Such things as the "publicness" or "privateness" of the goods or service subject to impose restrictions on the design of efficient institutional arrangements” (ibid, p. 116).

Institutional arrangements Truong and Walker (1990) reveal denote a “full range of formal and informal rules, regulations, procedures, and incentives in the economic, political, and social spheres that guide human interaction” (ibid, p. 117). Again, reformers should ensure that the “new rules and procedures reduce transaction costs and produce sufficient incentives to elicit the desired outcomes” (ibid). This is because “if the transaction costs remain too high or incentives are inadequate, then the reform will fail at the outset” (ibid). For institutions/reforms to be sustained Truong and Walker (1990) argue that reform “outcomes must be valued sufficiently highly by stakeholders and beneficiaries to counter pressures to derail the reform” (ibid). Truong and Walker (1990) describe the transition from the policy design process to the implementation of reform programs as “not always straightforward” (p. 117). Partly due to the absence of exact knowledge as to how the newly introduced formal rules and procedures will interact with informal practices. In such a process, often the official rules and regulations are the usual policy handles accessible to reformers.

In the SCOPE framework “complexity and uncertainty mean that reform needs to be seen as an iterative process, with various rules and incentives modified over time” (ibid). The capacity of actors/stakeholders, which often either advances or opposes the progress made by the reform process is yet another critical issue that affects policy implementation. Evidence from their research on Fertilizer Sub-Sector Reform Program (FSSRP), the private fertilizer marketing system in Cameroon, Truong and Walker (1990) argue that to establish “new institutional arrangements does not necessarily mean they will be

effectively used. Thus, “privatizing importation will not lead to better results if private businesses lack the capacity to pursue importing activities in the first place. Awareness, knowledge, and skill are all aspects of capacity and cannot be assumed” (p. 117).

Some of the variables of the SCOPE institutional sustainability model are found to form part of the new institutional arrangements of FSSRP. And these include the design of incentives that are both reasonable and appropriate, new stakeholder enlistment, private sector capacity promotion and successful performance (Truong & Walker, 1990, p. 128). Additionally, FSSRP epitomises some key relationships that are theorised by SCOPE models such as identifying the existing inefficiency in the public monopoly at the highest level through the analysis of the incongruence between government’s public procurement system and the nature of fertilizer. Truong & Walker (1990) argue that:

The better prospects for sustainability of the privatized system stem from the fact that the new institutional arrangements would better reflect the requirements imposed by the nature of the good and the nature of the environment, and thus would be more efficient. (ibid, p. 128)

Issues such as program flexibility, incentives, and broader stakeholder engagement are identified by Truong and Walker (1990) as being of particular importance for long-term sustainability (p. 129). Truong and Walker (1990) in another statement mention that “it is already clear that continued high performance and ultimate sustainability will be achieved only if the program can continue to address issues related to institutional change, incentives, stakeholders, and capacity” (p. 128). To a more considerable extent, the success, efficiency gains, and the ultimate sustainability of FSSRP’s institutional arrangements are attributable to the flexibility/openness of its policy dialogue. In which the program included the private sector who are directly affected by the proposed reforms rather than limiting it to just the development agencies and the government as often the case. In this arrangement, the reform process including modifying rules and procedures is an ongoing and iterative process where dialogue continues throughout the program’s lifespan to guarantee the attainment of the desired outcomes in complex and changing environments (ibid).

The assertion that the private sector will carry on to have sufficient incentives to participate was the preoccupation of FSSRP throughout the design and implementation. The evidence

from benefit-cost analysis assumes that even with the removal of government subsidy farmers would have adequate incentives to purchase the fertilizer. The assumption flowed from the benefit-cost analysis shows significant gains from the purchase and application of fertilizer even at unsubsidized prices. The nonprice incentives that heavily influenced farmers' decision to purchase a fertilizer that was abundantly improved by FSSRP included timeliness, proximity, and quality. Again, to avoid the drying up of the demand level of farmers which would not only stall the entire marketing chain but threaten the sustainability of the privatized system, as well as access to cash or credit, was also prioritised. However, looking forward, Truong and Walker (1990) stress that "FSSRP needs to enlarge the number of stakeholders in the privatized system" for sustainability (p. 130).

The continued sustainability of Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (IAV) of Morocco is associated with its solid financial resource base and flexibility in terms of adapting to environmental changes. Added to these are having a relationship with key institutions within the country, external donors, and the institut's ability to forge collaborations with overseas institutions (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 142). Other important enabling factors that facilitated IAV's development and sustainability are the stability of Morocco's political and economic systems. The support it continued to enjoy from its patron, His Majesty Hassan II and "the "artificiality" of its environment" observed in terms of donor support for agriculture through employing IAV's graduates which are its "valued outputs" (ibid). To ensure post-project sustainability of IAV's achievements in the 1990s and beyond, the institute must find "ways to meet recurrent costs, to improve and diversify external relations, to reprogram certain project resources (...) and to perfect inter-institutional arrangements" (ibid, p. 143). IAV's ability to attract external resources other than those of the national government is another essential element of its sustainability (ibid, p. 144).

Using the overlay between a Weberian construct of bureaucratic organisational form and evolution (Weber, 1946) and the concept of organisational lifecycle driven from population ecology (Kimberly & Miles, 1987; Romanelli, 1989), Morton and Lowenthal (1990) add three different contributions to the SCOPE framework. Charismatic authority, according to Morton and Lowenthal (1990) is a critical variable in inducting institutional sustainability, especially at their early stages. It enhances the understanding of the dynamic interaction between capacity and performance, and the need to pay attention to an

institution's environment for growth at the earliest stage of the reform process (p. 145). For authors like (Sarason, 1989) according to Morton and Lowenthal (1990) "the pre-history of an organization has as much to say about its success and survivability, as its own particular history of adaptation does" (p. 146).

In the case of IAV, the role of the charismatic authority of the first director was a critical variable in creating a sustainable organizational form during its formative years. The director expressed his power through what Morton and Lowenthal (1990) describe as "forceful and articulate statement of the institution's purpose" to all stakeholders including the King, donors and those in the agriculture sector. Another method through which the director expressed this authority is observed in the form of his "authoritarian and unyielding commitment to institutional quality (...) [and] as a statement of what was uniquely responsive to the Moroccan agro-social context" (p. 146). While "the role of charismatic authority in mobilizing resources" cannot be overemphasised in a fledgeling organisation, the "routinization" of such an "authority is required" especially in a situation when an organisational complexity overwhelms a leader's management span (ibid).

Although new "institutions can be given a grace period to focus almost exclusively on capacity development, but that performance issues may have to be addressed sooner than first anticipated" (Morton and Lowenthal, 1990, p. 146). However, from the evidence of their research, Morton and Lowenthal (1990) state that "the failure to focus more specifically on performance issues, as defined by key resource providers, has threatened IAV's institutional sustainability" (ibid). Evidence from the IAV case illustrates that constant monitor of "environment, even if favourable or unhostile at the creation of an institution" is a must when designing long-term strategies for sustainability and they should be factored into organizational performance (ibid). One serious sustainability issue that faced IAV on the eve of the 1990s was the failure of the institute's administrators to address its critical financial problems earlier enough. Initially, within budgetary setting of Moroccan, and second, "in IAV's relationship with its key funding sources" (ibid, p. 146). Conceptually, Ingle et al. (1990) identify three possible reasons below that could cause a project element/output from the investment period to become unsustainable in post-project investment/during the return-on-investment period.

First, the element may not be targeted for sustainability during the investment period. Most projects contain substantial elements that are intended to end when

the investment period is completed. (...) Second, some negative environmental factor, such as unanticipated budget crisis in a project's host organization, may directly cause some project element to be discontinued and thus not sustained. Finally, the project's sustainability strategy may not be successful due to poor design, poor implementation, or some combination of the two. (ibid., p. 71)

There is no specific time in project/program implementation period when sustainability strategy could fail. A plan can fail either “during the investment period or return-on-investment period (...). Project activities in both these periods are influenced by, and influence, factors in the environment” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 71). Jones (1990) used the action-planning approach in addressing sustainability issues at the start-up stage of local consulting capacity development in Ghana and private enterprise development in Guatemala. Jones (1990) acknowledges that before the action-planning program workshop, local consulting capacity development in Ghana had “substantial external support” both from the government and UNDP, an external donor agency (p. 104). The Government of Ghana then was in the process of effecting “changes in the procurement regulations” intended to increase the contracting of Ghanaian consultants (ibid). At the same time, UNDP, an external donor agency kickstarted the consultations with the government for the design of a project to support the development of the consulting industry with two university-based consulting groups in mind (ibid). In essence, the action planning program workshop just exploited the existing climate of support. It helped accelerate the sustainable establishment of local consulting capacity development in Ghana by a) strengthening the relationship between consultants with government and donors, and b) contributing to the building of an independent and self-sufficient association.

In addressing the internal capacity issues of Ghanaian consulting industry, Jones (1990) argues that the critical part of the overall strategy was the establishment of a strong association to drive the capacity strengthening process. The action-planning program ensures the establishment of a significant and sustainable association through the inclusion of a wide range of consultants in the initiation. The unanimous support demonstrated in the establishment of the association by the workshop participants gave “it a strong mandate for action” (p. 106). The “perceived legitimacy of the association was such that the key external stakeholders attending the workshop immediately began treating it as an official body, representative of Ghanaian consultants” (ibid).

The workshop participants established six area action plan as part of the association's strategy. These include: *“(1) marketing, (2) training of members, (3) establishment of a resource centre, (4) creation of a consultants registry, (5) influencing government policy, and (6) developing an association constitution and code of professional ethics”* (Jones, 1990, p. 106). Among other activities, the constitution and code of ethics of the association were penned and ratified within four months after the workshop. The participatory workshop which established the consulting association and its agenda in Ghana helped avoid “much of the competition among consultants” (ibid). As they collectively identified their common interest and need areas and developed “programs that transcended their competitive differences” (ibid).

A high amount of uncertainty in the political environment including several conflicting groups whether democratically elected governments, or the military, the landless poor, leaders of the traditional private sector, and small scale business people and entrepreneurs is a significant issue affecting sustainability. The failure to ensure the direct representation or involvement of project beneficiaries in project planning and implementation is yet another sustainability threat. Some of the significant internal capacity and fit issues affecting sustainability include the lack of understanding among participants and the absence of specific roles and contributions of each organization in the project. Lack of collaboration among organizations; and lack of mechanisms to monitor, evaluate, and re-plan the design and implement project strategies are other sustainability issues (Jones, 1990, p. 107).

The participating organizations in the PED project had the much-needed external support from each other, thus, ensuring a favourable external environment for sustainability. Having brought together directors and vital technical people from diverse organizations to participate in a workshop together where they discuss, clarify and reached consensus on priority objectives of private sector development through the project helped establish a strong foundation of understanding and mutual support. The workshop set the inter-organizational working groups and an inter-organizational coordination council. These structures are tasked to address each of the identified objectives, identify strategies for achieving goals and drawing a one-year implementation plan. Including the regular follow-up meeting/workshops and the clarification of membership and responsibility of the council, all ensured an environment that favours sustainability (Jones, 1990).

The following intervening variables which have a possible negative impact on both performance and sustainability have been identified by (Jones, 1990) as affecting the success of the action-planning program in Guatemala. (1) The degree to which the entrenched interests and the plans of implementing organizations might help accomplish specific project targets, but might be counterproductive to the achievement of project objectives. (2) The absence of commitment to specific project strategies by critical organizations, and the consequent low level participation in planning and implementation. (3) The degree to which the ultimate beneficiaries of the change effort are not involved in its planning (p. 112). Action-planning program in Ghana was able to avoid intervening variables with a possible negative impact on both performance and sustainability. This was because the workshop was conducted before the project design and the tying of development funding to specific project outputs. Also, the leadership prospect of the program was high, and there was active support received both from the donors and the government. In the final analysis, Jones (1990) argues that the use of “action planning approach at this stage helped develop a set of institutional relationships and project activities that would be both effective and sustainable. (...) Nevertheless, follow-up monitoring and planning will be equally key to keeping this effort on track” (p. 113).

Prior to their analysis of data on FSSRP, Truong and Walker (1990) first studied the old institutional arrangements of public fertilizer monopoly established by the Cameroonian government. This was jointly managed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) and the rural development bank (FONADER). Evidence produced by Truong and Walker (1990) reveals that part of the sustainability problem of public fertilizer monopoly despite the relative efficiency of the private sector in their contractual task obligation was because the private sector actors involved in the marketing chain “were disconnected” (p. 119). Each was acting independently of the others “without connection or integration” except through FONADER contracts (ibid). With the application of SCOPE framework, Truong and Walker (1990) argue that the old institutional arrangements of public fertilizer monopoly “created a high level of centralization and effectively removed any flexibility from the system, resulting in numerous problems and inefficiencies” (ibid).

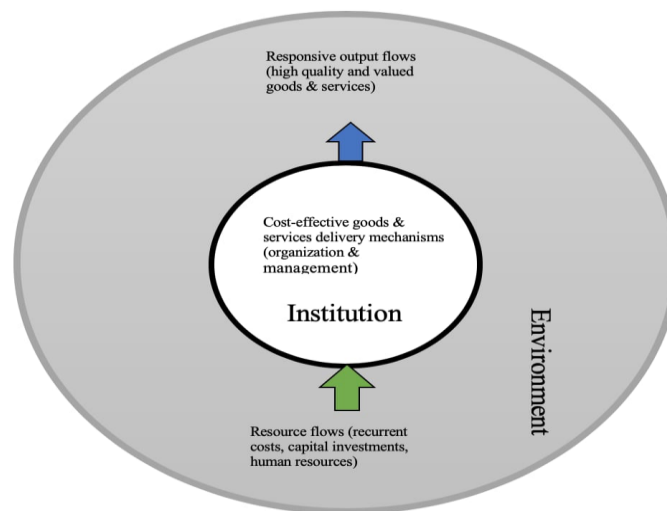
Also, the old institutional arrangements involved several ministries which “created both delays and opportunities for bureaucratic rent-seeking” (p. 119). With the “mismatch among the nature of the good, the environment, and the institutional structure”, Truong

and Walker (1990) are convinced that the existing “inefficiency” in the old institutional arrangements is “almost inevitable” (pp. 119–120). Truong and Walker (1990) maintain that centralised bureaucratic structures can perform specific responsibilities very efficiently; however, they have proven inefficient in performing others such as fertilizer marketing. As a result of the “fundamental incongruence between the mechanical rules and procedures of the public monopoly and the requirements of efficient fertilizer marketing” (p. 120).

To establish a solid foundation for sustainability, puts forth two recommends for development projects, especially those aimed at organisational development using the action-planning approach. He suggests that they: a) work in getting an-agreement on project objectives, stakeholder identification and involvement, analysis of strengths and problems as well as develop appropriate plan and strategic at the earliest time possible. The most comfortable time to involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders and the expertise needed to establish a solid foundation for improvement in a project is at the beginning. b) Ensure the action-planning process be iterative to give participants the chance to build on earlier assessments and decisions and continuously refine strategies for the attainment of the ultimate targets. Often plans are not finished blueprints rather strategy need to be continually revisited, reviewed and revised (p. 113).

Initiating actions to promote sustainability after the project implementation began can be substantially very difficult (Jones, 1990, p. 113). SCOPE analytical framework posits that institutional sustainability depends upon the continuation of “responsive output flows (high quality and valued goods and services)” (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 369). Added to this are the “cost-effective goods and services delivery mechanisms (organization and management); and resource flows (recurrent costs, capital investments, human resources)” (ibid). The sustainability definition of the SCOPE framework refers “to the ongoing production of goods and services sufficiently valued such that inputs continue to be provided” (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 96).

Figure 1: SCOPE Framework of Institutional Sustainability



After the analysis of the internal structure, technical and managerial complexities of the NFRAD project, Ingle et al. (1990) make the following observations. Besides being a highly complex project internally, structurally NFRAD with the aid of farming systems research and extension (FSRE) approach succeeded in integrating several government departments, local government units and farmers. Technically the project operated in numerous geographical sites under a wide range of agro-ecological conditions with the aid of different innovative practices. Managerially, over an extended period, NFRAD was tasked to produce three sets of outputs with its diverse staff of other technical specialities and nationalities (p. 83). The uncertain environmental condition of NERAD is observed in some critical areas including a) the lingering role confusion at the project outset about the appropriate role of one of its critical units, b) uncertainty about the project's real objectives a condition that lingered until the end and c) that during the initial implementation years of the project the external demand structure for its outputs was mostly unknown (ibid).

Brinkerhoff (1990) examined the credit component of the USAID-funded Provincial Area Development Program (PDP) in three sub-district credit agencies of Indonesia. And the evidence produced "shows that a decentralized, flexible, consciously experimental approach to discovering what works is particularly well suited to local institutional development" (p. 98). He further argues that a "flexible and experimental approach to design and implementation can lead to success" (p. 95). At the outset, PDP implementation focused on providing support to the sectoral agency community subprojects where the "provision of credit was subordinated", an approach which was later proven "to be

nonviable financially” (ibid). Subsequently, PDP’s objectives and institutional approach to credit provision got changed with an emphasis on the credit component and the viability of the credit institutions instead (ibid). Having the concern for appropriate institutional mechanisms capable of guaranteeing the financial viability and sustainability of PDP initiatives (credit component and credit institutions) resulted in the shift of focus to “lower risk client groups” away from the original priority beneficiaries-the rural producers in the sectoral subprojects considered as “high-risk borrowers” (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 96). A situation said to have underscored a critical issue for SCOPE institutional sustainability framework in terms of which stakeholder group “values the goods and services” and what their interests are. According to Brinkerhoff (1990), the answer to who values the goods and services produced and what their interests are could pose problems for sustainability “when the answer reveals conflicts between the valuation of the outputs and technical requirements for their sustained production” (ibid).

The nature of the technology employed in the provision of credit has mechanisms deemed necessary to maintain the input-output flow relations “without continuous injections of outside resources” (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 96). These mechanisms included having a lending criterion in place that limits the risks involved in credit provision and how to mobilisation savings. Others included “appropriate interest rates and rate spreads between loans and other accounts, administrative and supervisory cost containment” (ibid). Although important stakeholders failed to value the service modifications introduced by credit systems; however, emphasis on “short term loans to low-risk clients” and an “increase in the financial viability” contribute to the ultimate sustainability of the credit institutions (ibid).

In terms of the SCOPE institutional sustainability definition; however, an increase in the financial viability of the credit systems “lowered the prospects for sustainability” (ibid). The sustainability definition of SCOPE model “highlighted a conflict between the development objectives of PDP's credit component and the requirements for institutional viability and sustainability” which according to Brinkerhoff (1990) is due to incentive structures central to which are “socio-political considerations” (p. 98). Brinkerhoff (1990) states that “what leads to financial viability in the short term, may inhibit the achievement of sustainability and development objectives in the long term” (p. 97). PDP pursued the following three objectives while building BKK/LKP credit institutions: a) guarantee access

to credit for the rural poor identified as the PDP target group; b) cover the operations and management costs of the BKK/LKP systems and their units; c) provide for measured growth of services and of the system to meet future needs and demands. The first objective is identified as “development aim” (ibid). At the same time, Brinkerhoff (1990) refers to the remaining two goals as relating “more to the ongoing viability of the credit institutions” where different actors have their preferred priority objectives (p. 97).

The pursuance of “development objective of targeting loans to groups participating in sectoral agency subprojects” is identified as a leading factor responsible for the failure of the earlier PDP credit schemes (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 97). The “preferential treatment of a class of borrowers because of their involvement in a subproject led to misinterpretation of borrower obligations and high default rates” (ibid). According to Brinkerhoff (1990) “without loan repayment, the credit agencies could not remain viable lenders” (p. 97). In seeking for answers to India’s national agricultural research reforms in the mid-1960s, Goldsmith (1990) pinpoints “the sudden rise in demand for the research system’s output” (p. 173) and “the growing strength of two major stakeholder groups-agricultural producers and agricultural scientists” (p. 176) as two significant changes in the immediate external environment that is critical to institutional sustainability.

In narrating the revitalization story of Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI), its path to sustainability and the genesis of its Farming Systems Research and Development (FSR/D) project, Ingle et al. (1990) show that interactive project design and implementation management strategy coupled with structural flexibility are essential institutional sustainability factors. FSR/D project design and implementation according to Ingle et al. (1990) was characterized by “collaborative “learning by doing” (p. 183). In their words, flexible structure “combines elements of both “blueprint” planning and “learning process” efforts to build problem-solving capacity” (ibid). Ingle et al. (1990) value the approach for its ability to provide the “basis for the programmatic and financial accountability needed to attract resources from international donor agencies and developing country bureaucracies” (ibid). Similarly, “it facilitates an interactive management style that can take into account uncertain and changing environments and the values of the various actors” (ibid).

Ingle et al. (1990) note that CARDI staff, USAID, and a consultant team collaborated to identify and the design FSR/D project. CARDI staff, USAID, and a consultant team

“facilitated a match between CARDI's task environment and the way the institute was managed” (p. 192). A process referred to in the SCOPE framework as an interactive management strategy. Evidence from this project shows that source of institutional unsustainability needs not originate from development project mode itself as held by some scholars, instead it could come from “how projects are conceptualized (...), and how they are designed and implemented under various sets of conditions” (ibid, pp. 192–193). An important factor that contributed to the sustainability of research and development project activities of CARDI is the conduciveness of the host institution or proximate environment. In their analysis of FSR/D project in added to the standard project design and implementation process, Ingle et al. (1990) advocate for the paying of specific attention to “benefit flows to client groups, that are intended to continue after the project” (p. 193). Another crucial sustainability factors advocated for is the development of “institutional mechanisms or capacities” that would support the said benefit flows in the lifespan of the project.

The second project dimension recommends for “institutional development with sustainability as the objective, as contrasted to implementation performance” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 193). Besides the above-identified sets of sustainability factors, the need for experienced practitioners with practical techniques are the immediate need for policymakers and development executives to show “higher commitment and priority to the sustainability dimension of development efforts as evidenced in policy directives and resource allocations” (ibid). Ingle et al. (1990) provide the lack of sustainability plan for specific project elements during investment period; the unexpected budget crisis of the organisation hosting the project; the failure of project sustainability strategy because of poor design, poor implementation, or a combination of both as explaining the inability to sustain project elements in the return-on-investment period that were developed during the investment period.

According to (D. W. Brinkerhoff, 1990) “DSE used several technologies” before the implementation of USAID's Technical Consultants and Training Project. Many of these “technologies were relatively invariable and routine, and others which were not” (p. 155). Such as less routine and more variable and least routine and most complex (ibid). The technology involved in the projects are mechanical and routine with unvarying or routine tasks. Mechanical and everyday tasks are time-consuming given the accuracy requirement

in gathering information, cross-checking to confirm the authenticity and so on with fewer skill requirements to accomplish such activities. Less routine and more variable technology involves monitoring and collection of information on project activities and outputs. A variation is observed in the timetable, activities and outputs of different projects with some information more easily quantified, monitored, and assessed than others. Least routine and most complex technology focus on the end of project evaluation which is affected by the absence of standardized evaluation approach. In addition to ad hoc timing according to demand or opportunity, each evaluation task had different objectives and focus, purpose, clientele, evaluation methodology and so on. Added to the complexity are the methodological skills requirement for evaluation such as questionnaire design and interviewing and some social science knowledge, including monitoring skills (D. W. Brinkerhoff, 1990).

USAID's Technical Consultants and Training Project according to Brinkerhoff (1990) introduced several changes aimed at achieving a better fit between the DSE's technologies and its tasks, and between the technologies and skills. Two notable modification was introduced. Restructuring of routine technologies in budget tracking and reporting thereby making them more routine for increased efficiency and reduction of staff effort required for the tasks. Information collection form for each project was revised to prune out both redundant/repeated or already available information elsewhere and superfluous data items that were neither analysed nor used for any decision-making purposes. The reduction of information demands of the data collection form to the required minimum cuts down on the quantity of data processing and makes the form less onerous/burdensome/time-consuming to complete. At the same time, computerization of the treatment of the data collected increases the quality of data processing and free up staff time for the conduct of more analysis and less hand-copying of ledgers etc.

Another strategy is the modification of the M&E technologies to incorporate changes that ensured the pursuance of increased routinization through the identification of commonalities between monitoring and evaluation of information needs. Added to this is to clarify DSE's purposes for conducting monitoring and evaluation and priority setting where variation between M&E technologies was taking account of/acknowledged. Also developed are the standard procedures for each of the technologies, including sector-

specific subsets of procedures. While these changes were being done, according to Brinkerhoff (1990) states that:

Technologies were made more complex by introducing an analytic framework for implementation that explicitly dealt with environmental uncertainty, the need for flexibility and re-planning during implementation, and the need to achieve results. This change shifted the emphasis of the monitoring and evaluation technologies from focusing solely on deviations from official procedures to outputs, products, and results. (pp. 156–157)

Before the USAID's Technical Consultants and Training Project, the budget programming, monitoring, and the evaluation units of Haitian Ministry of Planning's "Direction de Suivi et d'Evaluation" (DSE) Office of Monitoring and Evaluation had a hierarchical structure and a small staff size relative to the high number of projects within their purview. Thus limiting the ability of the staff to “develop any in-depth knowledge about a particular project was haphazard at best, and non-existent at worst” (D. W. Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 157). As monitoring and evaluation are complex technologies, this limitation affected them the most (ibid). Brinkerhoff (1990) discovers that the Haitian public sector is characterised by centralised authority structure. This is manifested in the direct reporting obligations of the staff of the three functional units to the management unit comprising of DSE director and the two assistants regarding the approval or disapproval of project budgetary decisions, vouchers, and disbursements. Such a practice foster “a lack of initiative-taking by the staff, and a consequent overload on the office management unit” which he maintains is “another by-product of this structural pattern, common to many developing country public organizations” (p. 157).

The USAID's Technical Consultants and Training Project introduced a new structure for the DSE to ensure a fit between the system and the revised technologies and reframed responsibilities of DSE office and tackled the limitation of its staff. The change established what Brinkerhoff (1990) refers to as “sector-based structure” which assigned staff to a set of sectoral projects for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) purposes like infrastructure sectors, productive sectors, and social sectors M&E units while “budget programming unit remained as it was” (p. 157). The aim of the novel structure is “to allow staff to develop more in-depth M&E information about a selected number of projects than the functional structure permitted” (ibid). A unit head was created for each M&E unit, including the

budget programming, meaning the introduction of an element of decentralised administration. The intent was to reduce the management load placed on the director and his two assistants. With this innovation staff of each unit reports to their respective heads. Who also assumed the task of supervising the work of their separate divisions.

The SCOPE Framework concludes that the extent of the internal complexity of a system is determined jointly by its technology and structure. The lower the internal complexity, the less challenging is the technology and the simpler the organisation structure. Conversely, the level of complexity increases with sophisticated technologies and elaborate designs such as those of multi-sectoral integrated rural development projects or programs or decentralised governance structures. The following are the dimensions that specifically describe the complexity of systems structure: (a) the quantity of components or units a system has; (b) the degree of differentiation among the various parts of a system; and (c) the level of interdependence among the different components of a system (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 38). Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) sum up their theoretical account by stating that:

Systems with fewer components are less complex than those with more. Systems whose components are uniform in function or structure are also of lesser complexity when compared to ones with differentiated components. The same goes for systems whose parts operate independently of each other, as opposed to systems whose components are interdependent. (Interdependence can be thought of as situations where various components' outputs serve as inputs for other components). (ibid)

3.1.3 The SCOPE Model Explained

The SCOPE framework considers institutions as 1) functional systems in connection to their environments; 2) organised and managed entities whose administrative structures and processes must match the tasks, people, products, resources and the contexts in which they operate; and 3) having settings that are very much concerned with the exchange of resources where the relationships between the economy and politics are interlinked to generate varying power and incentive systems (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). The framework hypothesises that: 1) the internal capabilities of an institution and its external environment affect its existence over the long-run. Thus, to understand institutional

sustainability, it is imperative to look both inward and outward. 2) In this changing world, for an institution to retain its functional viability it has to develop a strategy or game plan and stick to it with a firm fit among its internal strengths and weaknesses and the external threats and opportunities. The framework posits that an institutional decline or demise is likely in a situation of a mismatch or misfit between an institution's internal capabilities and its external environment (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 372).

In the SCOPE framework, all factors classified as having a direct influence on the environment contribute to "relatively low levels of environmental hostility" (Gustafson, 1990, p. 204). In contrast "indirect influences of stability, flexibility, and distortion of the larger system vary with each project" (ibid). Gustafson (1990) notes that "none of the strategies the framework characterizes for translating performance into capacity is inherently better; the decision to emphasize one over the other is contingent upon environmental conditions and internal factors" (p. 201). Equally worth noting as stressed by Gustafson (1990), is to remember that "the four resulting strategies: mechanical, adaptive, reactive, and interactive represent continua, and not totally separate categories" (ibid). The fact that every system holds "both learning and reflective elements to some degree" means that differences in sustainability outcomes depend on which orientation is underscored under which conditions (ibid). SCOPE framework posits that "each strategy will lead to sustainability under different conditions of internal complexity and environmental hostility" (ibid, p. 202).

3.1.3.1 External Environment

A hostile environment has an inverse relationship with sustainability. All other factors held constant, the more hostile an environmental, the higher the improbability for an organisation to get a steady supply of its needed inputs and process for maintenance (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). The most substantial external influence on an institution is exerted by factors and product markets which can be either direct or indirect. An environment exerts three direct impacts/effects on the structures of an institution, its processes, inputs and outputs and these are: a) the number of demands that exist for the goods and services provided by an institution; b) whether the said goods and services are public or private; c) the economic status of institution's stakeholders. Stakeholders of an organisation are those individuals or groups having an

interest in or concern with the dealings of an institution. The variables of these parameters also create “a hostile climate for prolonged activity” (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 374).

The most critical among the direct environmental variables is probably the demand for goods and services provided by an institution. An institution experiences a high rate of decay that has resource-poor stakeholders, offers mostly public¹³ goods and services, demand for which is limited in supply (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). Variables of particular importance are the “shifts in the amount or valuation” of the “raw materials” and “finish products” of the institution. The tendency for individual behavioural incentives of “free-riding’ or shirking”, can make it difficult for an institution that delivers public goods to generate support for its output, a critical variable for its durability (ibid, p. 26).

Indirect influence occurs when environmental conditions, policies or incentives affect the internal processes of an institution. The indirect impact an environment has on a system which is very crucial for sustainability are classified into three types. These are **stability** (or the speed of external change), **flexibility**, (or the amount of openness to change) and **artificiality** (in the economic sense refers to prices of goods/services not reflecting market prices or in the political logic of lacking wide-spread legitimacy) (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). Environmental stability refers to the rate at which an environment changes. An environment’s level of stability injects greater assurances in setting up the internal processes of an institution. Institutions are subject to constant changes with a shift in their relationships with the elements in their setting. The proponents of SCOPE framework argue that a minor change in an organisational environment results in routine corrections in its internal processes. In contrast, a significant change prompts a series of system-wide adjustments that could be difficult for an institution to manage. Often even a moderate external change or instability causes institutions to stumble, i.e., the more unexpected and wrenching a change in an environment is, the harder it is for institutions to cope with (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

An environment’s level of flexibility or permissiveness is a crucial component of the indirect impacts it has on a system. For instance, in a rigid and intolerant environment, an

¹³ Public goods are those items that can be jointly consumed or nonexcludable items

effort to boost the performance of an institution through trying new patterns in its internal processes is thwarted, thus threatening the vitality of the system. This could be severe in an environment where cultural norms, for instance, do not encourage experimentation. It is difficult to maintain an institution's performance in an unstable, inflexible or impermissive environment because often the resources available for the institutions to develop coping mechanisms are inadequate or too meagre to have any impact. Environmental artificiality is concerned about the availability of external resources, i.e., resources that are not found in the immediate setting to an institution. An artificial environment can nurture the system only when it has a steady supply of extra external inputs. Encouragement for over expansion and external dependency are two profound implications endless supply of foreign aid has for institutional sustainability. Local development institutions whose operating expenses are paid from abroad, comparably perform better in the short run than those organisation financed from within the country. Often these donor-funded institutions “collapse once their foreign support is terminated” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 28).

Table 1: Factors Contributing to Environmental Hostility

	Factors contributing to low hostility in the environment	Factors contributing to high hostility in the environment
Direct influences		
Level of demand for system outputs	High level of extant demand; demand creation unnecessary	Low level of extant demand; demand creation necessary
Nature of system outputs	Outputs are private in nature, easily translated into value or inputs	Outputs are public in nature; hard to value or translate into inputs
Characteristics of stakeholders	Members of lower socioeconomic strata, unorganized, low demand-making ability; conflicting interests	Members of political, economic, or sociocultural elite; high demand making ability; nonconflicting interests
Indirect influences		
Stability	Environment is stable along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions	Environment is unstable along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions
Flexibility	Economic, political, and sociocultural features of the environment permit and/or support system change	Economic, political, and sociocultural features of the environment do not permit and/or support system change
Artificiality	Environment displays low levels of distortion along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions	Environment displays high levels of distortion along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions

Source: D. W. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1992, p. 375); D. W. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990, p. 30)

3.1.3.2 Internal Capabilities

Looking inward, the technology of an institution (i.e., production and decision-making processes), and its structure (i.e., the distribution of jobs or tasks among members), are the principal internal variables. Generally, there is an inverse relationship between complexity and sustainability, and the main issue here relates to complexity. All other things being equal, organisations that are difficult to sustain are those having elaborate structures and utilising intricate technologies. Local development institutions that are less management intensive are often functionally durable compare to several ambitious rural development institutions that are overburdened by complicated rules and procedures (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992).

The direct system-to-environment influence takes place in two scenarios: a) when extra resources are mined from the environment, b) when the outputs of a system are revalued by the environment. The effective fundamental mechanisms that could exercise such an influence are the various stakeholder groups of an institution. Persons or groups that are affected by or can affect an institution's actions and practices are its stakeholders. Stakeholders are institutions' customers or clients who consume the economic goods it produces, citizens who benefit from/use its political services, or socio-cultural elites who treasure its norms (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992).

The products of an institution are valued differently due to the diversity in its stakeholder groupings, in aggregate terms, however, stakeholders and their valuation of an institution's products "provide the means for the system to procure the inputs necessary to maintain itself" (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 29). Stakeholders' propensity to adjust their assessment of both the institution and its products, makes their valuation of an institution not constant rather subjects to fluctuation over time. Often the issues with internationally funded institutions in developing countries are the frequent underestimation of the degree to which they are dependent on "distant (that is, foreign) stakeholders" for survival, and the overestimation of "the support from more proximate ones" (ibid). According to the SCOPE framework its an institution's "proficiency in keeping its stakeholders happy, both at specific points in time and over an extended period" that determines its sustainability. One of the existing approaches used for the analysis of an institution's environment is the measure of its "degrees of 'influenceability'" (ibid, p. 30).

The indirect influence an institution has on its environment happens when internal institutional changes have a “second-order impact on external policies or incentives” or result into fundamental changes in public policy (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 31). In the SCOPE framework, interactions between the institution and its environment affect the overall environmental hostility in a mixture of influences rather than a single impact deciding the amount of environmental stress factors place on institutions. For instance, limited demands for the services of a public institution might not be much of an issue when the institution has influential and supportive stakeholders, coupled with healthy economic growth. However, “should stakeholders reassess their position or the economy slow down, it would change markedly the prospects for sustaining this sort of system” (ibid).

The prominent set of internal institutional factors in the SCOPE framework are technology and structure. In the SCOPE framework, the word technology is understood as the use of knowledge/skills (capacity) to solve practical problems such as how to boost an institution’s production or governments engaging or communicating with their citizens effectively and so forth. Technology has many dimensions that can affect institutional sustainability. Of these are: “variability, frequency, economies of scale, and informational asymmetries” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 32; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). Although whether these aspects of technology promote or hamper institutional sustainability is contingent upon other factors as well.

a. Variability and Frequency: in technological consideration, these are related. When inputs are used in an invariable technology, a similar technique is used over and over again to transform inputs into outputs, while variable technologies change each time, they are being used to transform inputs into outputs. The concept variability, as used here, refers to the degree to which a technology is standardised or routinised. In contrast, frequency is about the number of times a specific operation is executed. Technological sophistication is linked often to variability which means, “more complicated technologies, especially social ones that are only partially understood, are less amenable to routinization” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, pp. 32–33). With regards to the frequency of operations, some are done repeatedly while others only once. Although tasks are done regularly are challenging to supervise, but mastery of such tasks is easier for workers compared to infrequent tasks.

Despite their similarity, variability and frequency are two separable notions. Variable activities “tend to be performed infrequently, but they need not be. In either case, learning

and incentives are affected” (ibid, p. 33)—the repeated experience of performing a task results in highly skilled operational staff. Depending on the technical requirements of the job, it could create regular opportunities for officials to monitor and provide incentive. The invariability and frequency of a technology help facilitate an institution’s internal organisational cohesiveness. Thus, among other considerations, this goes to say that institutional sustainability results in part from a combination of repeated task experiences, operational skilfulness, regular monitoring or supervision, fitting or reasonable reward system/incentive package for tasks accomplishments and internal organisational cohesiveness.

b. Economies of Scale: because of this, certain socioeconomic activities are best performed when extensively done while others are undertaken more efficiently on a partial basis. The high operational costs of many rural development activities/institutions are the result of limited economies of scale. Economies of scale refer to the “declines in the unit cost of a product or service as the absolute volume per period increases” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 33). Balkanisation of development institutions and scattering of resources are potential sustainability problems. Given the dire resource constraints, the major challenge of institutions in developing countries, in general, is “to identify the relevant economies and diseconomies of scale and come up with the appropriate trade-offs” (ibid).

c. Information Asymmetrical: differences in access to information about technology among those utilising it, is yet another trouble concerning technology. Information asymmetry is a “major reason that institutions break down and perform below par” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 34). The discrepancy in technological information interferes with both planning decisions and supervision processes, and the enforcement of contracts, laws or policies. The so-called “‘moral hazards’ and ‘adverse choices’” are extensively discussed in political economy literature (ibid). The most striking “techno-informational” imbalance in the field of rural development is the principal-agent relationships or right holder-duty bearer situation, the two opposing parties to implicit or explicit contractual agreement. The issue of concern is not about how the principals (residents, members of a cooperative, and so on) ensure their agents (project officers, local leaders and so forth) fulfil their obligations toward them, but how to make sure the agents act in the interests of the principals. Often agents who are expected to work in the interests of their principals do

have other priorities that inspire them to subvert the interests of their principals. The unequal access to information, hence power relations between the agents and the principals, bringing the agents back to act on behalf of their principals is a considerable difficulty. The ensuing clash of interests of the principals and agents “has undermined many rural institutions’ sustainability” (ibid). Thus, the sustainability of an institution is at risk “whenever the parties to transactions have dissonant claims, and they lack full knowledge of and ability to control each other’s actions” (ibid).

The structure of an institution describes the possible range of its outputs production and as well sets the real borders around the process of producing these outputs. It denotes the setup of an institution such as its roles distribution, responsibilities; and individuals and groups relationships within it (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). SCOPE framework identified three significant reasons that make the structure of an institution necessary. 1) It does not only affect the incentives package but boosts certain kinds of actions and deters others. For instance, members of an institution are most likely to be disincentivised from participation fully and contribute to an institution’s activities and decision-making processes when the structure of an institution is cunningly prevented from working. Or when individuals within are not allowed to give their opinions, and actions are sanctioned/authorised that would require members to subscribe to the pre-set plans of powerful stakeholders/elites or supervisors of external funding agencies. The habit of persistent instructing or recommending a standardised technical package for local development institutions without consideration for its structures or ignoring the inputs of its members is a potential sustainability issue (ibid).

2) The influence of an institutional structure on information flow within the system. The scarcest resource in most systems is the acquisition of timely and usable information. Variations in the different structural arrangements of institutions affect their ability to acquire and use information effectively and efficiently. For instance, the formation of separate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units within sectoral type institutions often prevent M&E staff from getting reliable data, and the reports produced are often ignored by project managers or program designers. The potential incorporation of project outputs and progress reports into the management of goods production and service provision within an institution is blocked because of the separation of M&E from line operations (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

3) The transaction costs: - These are connected closely to information in human institutions, and in mechanical systems its equivalent is friction. There is a tendency for institutions to minimise their outlays (expenditures/disbursements) in terms of resources (financial, time, human and so forth) required for essential staff functions and the related activities. Such as planning, supervision, and evaluation performed by staff, all of which requires energy, though not necessarily result in instant productivity. Often nonviable structures are those that generate excess transaction costs, such as some very complex integrated rural development institutions. In the SCOPE framework, the essential structural dimensions are authority, formality, hierarchy, and centralization (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

a. Exchange versus Authority Relationships: what distinguishes exchange and authority relationships is that, in administrative or bureaucratic institutions, relationships rely on the “underlying authority patterns” whereas in “market and market-like institutions”, a relationship tied to “voluntary exchanges” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 35). Relationships in authority patterns take the form of “superior/subordinate, patron/client, and so forth” (ibid). The relationship pattern in most organisational structures reflects a mixture of exchange and authority and the sustainability of such a mix partly depends on the outputs produced. The efficiency of market-like institutions tends to lie more in the production and distribution of private non-public goods but having less strength in the production and distribution of pure public goods. Non-market structures are often more proficient in the provision of tangible public goods and the supply of those that everyone can equally use. However, the use of private goods as preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision by non-market structures can help strengthen them (ibid).

b. Degree of Formality: this is about the extent to which an institutional structure is stated in formal, written rules. High transaction costs both in terms of set up and maintenance are usually the reasons responsible for the failure of formal structures to take root in developing countries. Formal structures require “specialised training and familiarisation with new roles and so forth”; thus begging the need for periodic capacity building and series of follow-up refresher training to maintain proficiency and productivity (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 36).

c. Degree of Hierarchy: this is about “how ‘narrowly’ or ‘flatly’ a structure” is organized, planned, or arranged. There are several concrete manifestations of structural narrowness

or flatness such as the “number of organisational levels, span of control (how many subordinates a given supervisor is in charge of), degree of authoritarianism, and intensity of supervision” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 37). A high number of structural levels, limited spans of control, top-down authority relationships and tight supervision tend to be associated with narrow hierarchies. Whereas, few or a low number of levels, extensive spans of control, collegial decision making, and loose or slack supervision usually exhibit flat hierarchies. Vertical flow of information tends to be encouraged by the former, whereas the latter set is associated with the facilitation of horizontal flow of communication. The tendency among populist developmentalists, as a matter of principle is the preference for flatter hierarchies because of their propensity for a “more participatory and less bureaucratic” decision-making style. Although this affinity is similar to most global judgements about institutions, it has ignored the essential precept of contingency theory. Having many individuals “join in an activity is less necessary for some situations than others” (ibid). Thus, rather than have a sheer preference for one hierarchy above the other or trying to encourage participation or see a reduction in the level of bureaucracy, “the optimal degree of hierarchy (and associated bureaucratic rules) is conditioned by factors inside and outside of the system” (ibid).

d. Degree of Centralization: the distinction between centralised and decentralised institutional structures is the process of decision-making. Decision-making in a centralised system is restricted to a small number of individuals or entities, whereas decision making in a decentralised system is dispersed widely. Structures with concentrated authority do have the advantages of quick decision making, resources mobilisation and ensuring homogeneity. In organisation theory, one of the classic dilemmas is presented by centralisation (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Concentrated authority structures pay the price for being out of touch with peripheral, which is both threat and opportunity for an institution. Some institutions introduce aspects of decentralisation practices to enhance their capability for information accumulation and processing: namely deconcentration, devolution, delegation, and privatization. Decentralised structures, nevertheless, do have their challenges like lack of coordination, loss of control, and duplication of efforts, resources and so forth (ibid).

Table 2: Factors Contributing to the Complexity of Internal System Processes

	Factors contributing to low internal complexity	Factors contributing to high internal complexity
Technology	Output is a private good	Output is a public good
	Low or no variability in translating capacity into performance	High variability in translating capacity into performance
	Regular frequency	Irregular or unique frequency
	Principal-agent incentives reconcilable	Conflicting principal-agent issues
	Requires few units to produce	Requires many units to produce
	Tasks are simple, separable into independent subtasks	Tasks are complex and require coordination and integration
Structure	Formal	Informal
	Hierarchical	Non-hierarchical
	Centralized	Decentralized
	Relatively few units	Relatively more units
	Units perform similar tasks	Units perform different tasks
	Units operate relatively independently	Units are interdependent

Source: D. W. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1992, p. 373); D. W. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990, p. 39)

3.1.3.3 Institutional Strategy

In SCOPE framework, the standard conception of the term strategy is “restrictive” for the fact that it’s not all institutions, mainly those found “in the less formal sectors”, that have an official strategic plan. Further, even institutions that have official strategies often either ignore them or they “exist only as window dressing” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 38). Thus, in this model, a strategy is understood as “a discernible pattern of decisions made by key actors in a system” (ibid). For advocates of SCOPE framework, a strategy “needs not be deliberately thought-out or rationally consistent” as all institutions have a strategy irrespective of whether they are formal or informal. The existence of dynamic relations between “capacity and performance”¹⁴ make strategy a critical variable in the SCOPE framework and equally determines “how systems change, learn, and increase the likelihood of sustainability” (ibid, p. 39).

An institution’s maximum output determines its capacity both human and physical stock and how proficiency¹⁵ it’s. Having both latent and invisible qualities make the direct measurement of capacity difficult, thus the use of proxies such as “academic degrees or job experience of its workforce, or the amount and condition of its equipment”

¹⁴ Performance is the way capacity is translated into either concrete result, action or both.

¹⁵ This refers to a combination of these crucial assets-human and physical stock together

(Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 39). While the visible nature of performance makes its direct measurement possible to understand how much capacity exists or the lack thereof in an institution. It is also performance measures that indicate capacity availability or its absence thereof. The best available evidence to gauge an institution's latent production ability first-hand would be its "actual output" (ibid, p. 40). Unlike other systems, the capacity levels of most human institutions are variable. The process of learning or reflection on feedback from the performance can result in changes in the capacity of human institutions.

Practical capacity building efforts must focus on "elevating the performance of a system" (ibid, p. 40). Thus, without paying much attention to internal capacity development, "performance cannot be enhanced" (ibid). It would be impossible, therefore, to effectively build the capacity of an institution without efforts to elevate its performance. One possible conceptual distinction among strategies is their stance on institutional capacity-building or learning. Institutions have the option to either stress "active dimension ("doing things right"), or the reflective dimension ("doing the right things")" (ibid, p. 40). Critical decisions here are between an emphasis on efficacy, how to combine the available resources without much waste or focus on innovation and a mix of old and new resources that would change the capacity of an institution (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

A strategic dimension to be stressed by an institution facing new environmental challenges might change over time. Another unique feature of strategies is whether to focus purely on the internal or external environment of an institution. An institution with an internal oriented strategy tends to either believes or accepts the existence of an environment or takes it as a given and agrees with the conditions imposed by it. The critical choices available to such an institution are control and maintenance. In contrast, an institution with external orientation has more active engagement disposition with the environment by examining it and possibly even making moves to affect it (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The distinctions between active/reflective and internal/external dimensions are not dichotomous but continua because there are no single organisational decisions that "will ever be totally inward-looking or outward-looking" (ibid, p. 41).

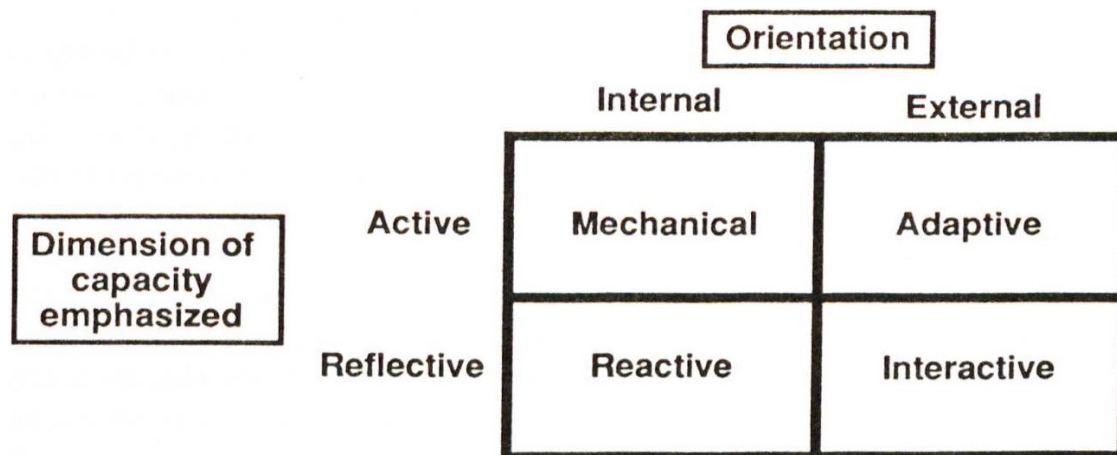
SCOPE framework proposes four generic institutional strategies, each of which stresses a different blend of reflection and environmental interaction. The four strategies comprise of mechanical, adaptive, reactive and interaction. These strategies according to the proponents of SCOPE model are just "ideal types" and don't totally correspond to "what

the key actors in real organizations are planning or doing at any given time” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 41). This is because according to them the “actual strategies waver back and forth, combining elements of each” of the four strategies (ibid). Instead, the purpose of this typology is conceptual “a tool that captures two of the most important strategic choices, not as a pigeonhole in which to stick any particular institution” (ibid).

Mechanical strategy: -Mechanical strategy is an approach that comprises of decisions that are internally focused and underscore active dimension. Mechanical strategy converts capacity into performance with a minimum reflection on either the skillset within an institution or its larger environment. The automatic strategy could encourage proficiency concerning precise task execution while disregarding changes taking place in the external environment that threatens it with obsolescence (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Since the strategy relies heavily on “repetition and specialisation”, strategies that are mechanically orientated, *ceteris paribus* are simpler to bring off or succeed compared to other ideal types (p. 42). Narrow efficiency may be the result of such strategies. The longevity and growth of an organisation having mechanical strategy are predicated partly on the repetition of its internal functions over and over and the stability of the market for its products.

Adaptive Strategy: -Activity at the expense of learning is the emphasis of an adaptive strategy. This strategy supports better adjustment to the environment due to its focus on the external environment, which permits it to select from its repertoire of old skills and techniques to encounter new challenges. In quantitative adjustments, i.e., a usual way of using more resources, one does not need the level of knowledge acquisition that is required when one makes qualitative changes, i.e., the use of novel ways of utilising resources (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). **Reactive Strategy:** -A system follows a reactive strategy when it emphasizes learning how to improve upon its internal operations and skill levels. Using this strategy, an institution response to external turbulence by looking inward for the use of innovative methods to meet challenges posed by the new environmental conditions. Internal dynamics of a system is the centre of attention in this case. **Interactive Strategy:** -The focus of this strategy is on reflection and learning in the environment. It’s the contrast of reactive strategy. The idea in this strategy is to reach out and influence its environment rather than just to accept and adjust to conditions imposed internally (ibid).

Figure 2: System Strategies for Translating Capacity into Performance



Source: D. W. Brinkerhoff et al. 1990, p. 41

The proponents of SCOPE framework hold the opinion that a real strategy combines the four dimensions of mechanical, adaptive, reactive, and interactive where the optimal mix is a matter of contingent decision. They acknowledge that none of their ideal strategy types or dimensions alone could be considered sweeping or best for institutions across the board. It's argued for instance, that learning is not only risky and time-consuming but equally pulls resources away from the performance required to generate the outputs necessary for institutional sustainability (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The amount of learning that could be considered appropriate is partly dependent on technology and structure (the two complex internal contingent elements) and the degree of external environmental hostility. Each of these factors differently affects activity and reflection. In SCOPE outlook, there exists no single "correct" strategy that fits all circumstances for the reason that a plan changes under different internal and external conditions while facilitating the process of transforming capacity into performance (ibid, p. 43).

Strategies are most likely to work in two situations. 1) Where internal complexity is low (i.e., the use of frequently performed technologies with private goods as their outputs) and where they make the direct conversion of capacity to act. 2) A mix of low internal complexity with the supportive environment (i.e., an environment that is not only artificial but stable, flexible), an environment that presents persistent demand and where with just a minimum amount of learning systems can flourish and be sustained. While a combination of internal and external conditions can perhaps help maintain an institution using mechanical strategies, internally complex systems are the extreme reverse, i.e., systems

using technologies with infrequent operational performance and often with high variability. Whenever such a system confronts a harsh environment, the viability of mechanical strategy is at stake or not likely. In a scenario like this, management pays much attention to the internal operations and external threats of the institution. As a result of insufficient administrative and entrepreneurial resources, it is improbable for the system to be able to cope with such a combination of pressures (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The SCOPE framework postulates a contingency relationship between institutional sustainability, the type of management strategy, and the characteristics of an organization's internal and external environment. An adaptive strategy, Ingle et al. (1990) state "is most appropriate for sustainability under conditions of high internal complexity and external uncertainty" (p. 82).

To increase the odds or chances for institutional sustainability, one of two things ought to occur. A) To ensure an institution's internal processes are efficient to the point that its management would focus its attention on the interactions between internal procedures and the environment. B) Or management finds solutions that would minimise external hostility and allow institution's leadership to pay more attention to managing the complex internal processes (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). In the first instance, the institution tends to move nearer to an interactive strategy while in the latter instance, it is getting closer to a reactive approach. Although it is often a fatal decision, however, that the usual response of an institution to a crisis is "by turning inward and relying on familiar routines becoming more mechanical" rather than by either turning attention to the environment or by employing (ibid, p. 44).

In most organisations in developing countries, it is unfortunate that the tendency in making strategic choices "is toward mechanical strategies that stress control, not reactive or interactive ones that emphasize learning" (ibid, p. 44). Projects funded through foreign aid "are no exception" in making such a strategic choice either. Most donor-funded projects are tainted by "major mechanical dimensions, dictated by the financial oversight and accountability demanded" of stakeholders of donor organisations rather than the local ones (ibid). With enhanced capacity, institutions in a developing country would have the ability "to scan their environments and take stock of their inventory of special skills and other resources" (ibid). Thus allowing them to "better able to set attainable, consistent goals, and to agree on steps to be taken to reach desired positions" (ibid). Internal variables, the

authors reiterated, “need not be givens, closed to managerial discretion and control” (ibid). The strategy holds control of structure and technology and brings inline both internal and external conditions. In the final analysis, Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) conclude that:

Formal, centralized, narrowly hierarchical structures and complex technologies do not lend themselves to strategies that emphasize learning. They may be suited to the active dimension of translating performance into capacity, but they hinder reflection, should this be called for. By the same token, informal, decentralized, and flat structures or simple technologies are, in theory, better adapted to learning. The downside is that this combination of structure and technology would appear to impede the translation of capacity into performance, and to require more resources to do so. (pp. 44–45)

In the case of the NERAD project, Ingle et al. (1990) illustrate the nature of the relationship between adaptive management strategy and sustainability under conditions of internal complexity and external uncertainty. They argue that to meet the surging pressure for sustainability, NERAD’s management team shifted its strategy gradually from a mechanistic to an adaptive management strategy throughout the project. NERAD’s management team emphasized, “centralization” with stress on “information gathering” from the external environment coupled with the practice of “horizontal communication” among its different units and other departments using an “integrated information system” (p. 83). Although the performance was more emphasised slightly, however, balancing task performance and problem analysis was at the centre of the NERAD’s internal strategy where problem analysis had an internal outlook at the start of the project and more external focused at the end. Proactive dissemination and marketing mechanisms were used to influence key political and technical stakeholders connected with the project’s several output clusters.

The close linkage between the project management team and employees of its different units, their direct connection with their line ministry and the use of a participatory approach to project implementation were critical elements of this strategy. The participatory approach involved representatives from different ministries, department and agency official at various levels. An emphasis on blueprint mode characterised the implementation of NERAD at the beginning but, “it later became a process of continual adaptation within a flexible framework, and achieved a considerable consensus on objectives, strategies and

means (...). To a large extent, worker performance was appropriately rewarded or sanctioned” (Ingle et al. 1990, p. 83). Ingle et al. (1990) argue that the adaptive management strategy of NERAD “emerged with three predominant features-information scannings and reflection, efficient production of outputs, and active dissemination and marketing” (p. 84).

Information scanning and active reflection features of adaptive project management strategy allow for continuous monitoring of changes taking place in both the external and internal environments as well as the adjustment of the internal production process of the project to respond to conditions of internal complexity and external uncertainty. Information scanning and reflection, and active dissemination and marketing features are “highly dependent on the development and nurturing of linkages between the project and its external environment” (Ingle et al. 1990, p. 84). The information scanning and active reflection feature of the project is described by Ingle et al. (1990) as the capacity that permits it to become “responsive to changing environmental conditions and demands” (ibid). Which is “directly related to the need to have project outputs continue to be valued by external stakeholders, the first sustainability condition” (ibid). The significant production of project outputs is yet another feature of an adaptive management strategy employed by NERAD through the development of high-quality internal planning and implementation systems from the project outset.

This feature is synonymous with the project's capacity for efficient and effective production of benefits. The capacity for production is directly related to the need to have project outputs continue to be produced through some organization and management mechanism, the second sustainability condition. (Ingle et al. 1990, p. 84)

At its final stages, one of the several features of an adaptive management strategy that was responsible for the overall sustainability of the NERAD project was the active dissemination and marketing of project outputs to stakeholders. The deployment of capacity to “actively generate political support” for the project is another sustainability condition that ensured that the project was provided with recurrent resources for the continuous production outputs (Ingle et al. 1990, p. 84). The strategy employed by DSE at the start of the project implementation emphasised: ““doing things right”” (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 158). Meaning the approach ensured the “projects followed the practices laid out

in the legislation governing the Haitian development budget” (ibid). With such a strategy, DSE regarded itself as a "policeman" that watches over sectoral ministries to ensure they implement activities and procedures as per the existing legal framework. DSE, for the most part, “pursued a mechanical strategy” at this stage. A strategy that emphasises what Brinkerhoff (1990) calls an “active dimension of performance (“doing things right”)” with an “internal orientation to the environment that stressed control, certainty, and an acceptance of the inherent "rightness" of the public investment management system” (ibid).

What reinforced this mechanical strategy was the perception of DSE staff that implementing a project is “a straightforward and mechanical task of faithfully translating plans into actions” (ibid). Added to this is their view that monitoring is equally straightforward and to a certain degree, so is project evaluation as well. The mechanical strategy holds the following two assumptions. That: “(1) the need for learning, since everything that needed to be known was considered to be in the projects' plans; and (2) external complexity and uncertainty, since what was viewed as most important was following proper ministerial procedures, as opposed to achieving development results” (ibid, p. 158). The previous policeman approach where the response of the staff was a rule enforcer only changed with the USAID funded Technical Consultants and Training Project. This project assisted “DSE shift to a technical assistance stance”, a strategy which better captures the realities of their parent ministry and other sectoral ministries in terms of limitations. A strategy that “stressed collaboration based on mutual interest” between stakeholders (D. W. Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 158). With a combined structural reorientation and the revision of the M&E technologies of DSE, the dominant operational strategy was also modified from mechanical to strategies that incorporate more learning and more external orientation. While budget programming tasks remained guided by mechanical strategy, M&E tasks are managed “via a mix of adaptive, reactive, and interactive strategies” (ibid, p. 159).

The change in M&E technologies stressed coping with uncertainty and learning as a key characteristic of implementation. This meant that the DSE, in conducting M&E, needed to be much more attuned to the external environment in tracking and analysing what projects were doing, why, and how well. Further, the increase in M&E complexity meant that DSE staff could not assume that the office knew all

there was to know about M&E; thus, an openness to learning was required. The intent was to expand the repertoire of the DSE's operating strategy beyond the only current one applied to all tasks, which in the past had led to weak performance and low capacity. (ibid, p. 159)

At the core of SCOPE, the various strategies used to translate capacity into performance over time “must be chosen based on the contingencies of the environment and internal complexity of the institution” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 207). The most valuable aspect of SCOPE framework in the analysis of training and visit extension system (T&V) of Philippines National Extension Project (NEP) is perhaps the strategies that translate capacity into performance (ibid, p. 198). The mechanical strategy of T&V stresses “doing a few things well, according to rigidly structured and well-defined patterns” (ibid, p. 201). It is often observed either during the early stages of the project or in a situation where there is a backlog of relevant technical advice that must be accomplished. Emphasis on satisfactory execution of a certain limited number of tasks in a highly structured manner has placed management strategy of T&V within the mechanical approach, a strategy that puts more emphasis on “action over reflection and an internal focus of attention” (ibid). With its facilitation of systematic interaction and information exchanges among farmers, researchers and extension officers, T&V also incorporates a “built-in learning process” (ibid). In the absence of “continuous interaction and learning” among the different stakeholder groups, the “mechanical aspects of the T&V structure will not foster institutional sustainability” (ibid, p. 205). Perhaps the project would not be sustained when it had relied on a “simple top-down delivery system” (ibid).

The mechanical strategy promotes institutional sustainability in “conditions of low internal complexity and low environmental hostility” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 205). The best situations for adaptive strategy are “medium environmental hostility and internal complexity”, and “medium environmental hostility and high internal complexity” are best for reactive strategy (ibid). The need for a reactive strategy heightens with a more significant “need for more complex technologies, and for continuous learning to alter the technological recommendations and adaptations” (ibid). The SCOPE model labels the reactive strategy as “one in which the system learns and reflects, but in which the learning is principally directed to improvements in internal operations or skill levels” (ibid, p. 202). At the end of his analysis Gustafson (1990) concludes that the sustainability of India’s early T&V

experience is linked to “a relatively less complex technology and low external hostility” as her agriculture was “characterized by homogeneous conditions and flat, irrigated terrain” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 204).

To the extent that environmental conditions remain stable and low technological complexity is applicable, the more mechanical nature of T&V will encourage institutional sustainability. As environmental conditions become more hostile, with greater instability along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions, or as the technology requirements become more complex, with tasks requiring greater coordination and integration, the mechanical strategy will not promote sustainability. (Gustafson, 1990, pp. 204–205)

The SCOPE model is limited in its focus on the “importance of both capacity and performance” (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 146). The framework fails to provide any guidance as to how the management of an institution should deal with dynamic tensions that may arise between the qualities of capacity and performance. For instance, it doesn’t have guidelines as to whether the qualities of capacity should take precedence over performance and vice versa. That is, when should managers transition from emphasizing one over the other, and which methods managers should use to understand whether the underlying resource mobilization problem of their institution has its roots in capacity or performance problem (ibid). One other notable limitation of the SCOPE model is its inability to “deal well with beginnings” of an institution as it does with “an existing organizational form” (ibid). The framework posits that with an effective organizational type, management can “manipulate to achieve organizational goals and purposes” (ibid). SCOPE framework, Gustafson (1990) observes “does not appear to deal with adequately- the issue of recurring costs”, (p. 207). This issue is closely related to sustainability for the reason that:

The four strategies imply different levels of resource requirements, mechanical being the lowest. Even this level, however, requires considerable human and financial inputs, perhaps higher than overburdened public bureaucracies can handle, regardless of the long-term payoff to farmers and society. (Gustafson, 1990, p. 207)

3.2. Theories of Institution

3.2.1 Old Institutionalism

The origin of the old institutionalist scholarship is traced to the 1920s (Fiorina, 1995). The initial focus of old institutionalist scholars was the structure of governance in which the behaviour of both the governed and the governing authority could be structured for a better society (Peters, 1999). In organization theory the source of old institutionalism is associated with Selznick's (1996) *Leadership in Administration* (1957) (p. 270). The concern such as "competing values, power and influence, coalitions, and informal structures" are at the heart of old institutionalism (Selznick, 1957; Greenwood et al., 2014, p. 1207). Old institutionalists scholars in economics include (Wilber & Harrison, 1978; Bush, 1987). Stinchcombe (1997) identifies (Bendix, 1956; Coase, 1937; Commons, 1924; Lipset et al., 1956; Schumpeter, 1939; Selznick, 1957; Veblen, 1934) as theorist that are central to old institutionalism.

For Peter (1999) individuals like Carl Friedrich, James Bryce, Herman and Samuel Finer are scholars "who were engaged in the old institutionalism and produced a number of works" (p. 3). Other Old institutionalist scholars include political thinkers like *Aristotle The Politics* (1996 edition), Althusius (John of Salisbury), Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Hooker (1965), Montesquieu (1989), Roher (1995), Fontana (1994) and so on. According to Abrutyn and Turner (2011), the "older conceptualizations of institutional domains" are the sources of the useful insights being generated by the new institutionalist scholars. They acknowledge the works of early functionalists scholars such as Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim and modern-day functionalists like Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann. Added to the above, are some "recent evolutionary approaches such as those developed by Gerhard Lenski, Jonathan Turner, and others" (p. 284).

Abrutyn and Turner (2011) describe the analysis methods of old institutionalist as being more comprehensive with a focus on the institution as a whole. Old institutionalists tend to view institutions from an organisational standpoint and thus, when studying organisations; they focus specifically on structural mechanisms, cultural properties and symbolic integration that affect the dynamics of organisations. The difference between the new and the old institutionalism lies in their problem definition, explanatory variables, and

methodology of inquiry. This corresponds to “governance structure”, “institutional environment, the individual” respectively and the “life of the governance structure on its own” (Groenewegen et al., 1995, p. 467). Instead of focusing on the “influence of a given set of institutions on economic behaviour”, the central problem of old institutionalism is about “understanding the process of institutional change itself” (ibid).

At the centre of the old Institutionalism’s explanatory variables is the “collectivistic point of view” (Groenewegen et al., 1995, p. 467). Old institutionalists, according to Groenewegen et al. (1995), recognise the “complex, functional, and interdependent” nature of both social and economic structures. And at the same time describe the structural dynamics as evolutionary (p. 468). The theory acknowledges the influences of “cultural forces” and “voluntaristic world of collective rules” on individual action (p. 469). The approach accommodates both “materialistic and collective institutionalism” and the “regulative and collective institutionalism” (ibid). All of which “assumes a man-made social order with a high degree of constructivism” (ibid). In terms of methodology, old institutionalism is “holistic, systematic, and evolutionary (...). The fact that the approach is open-ended and multidisciplinary makes it simultaneously rich in content and relatively low in rigour” (p. 470).

In describing his conception of the old institution, Stinchcombe (1997) remarks that he learnt then that institutions “shaped the creation and functions of units in market and the relations between them” (p. 2). Unlike the institutional conception of modern institutionalism, then “people ran these institutions by organizing activities on their behalf. Institutions were, in the first instance, created by purposive people in legislatures and international unions, and in pamphlets of business ideologists in Northern England” (ibid). According to Stinchcombe (1997), older institutionalists “did not assume that institutions were always there and always worked” (p. 5). And that the sensitive indicators of institutional effectiveness in old institutionalism are “success in creating roads, or law and order, or bargaining in good faith” (ibid).

The focus of old institutionalism scholarship according to Greenwood et al. (2014) includes the study of “competing values, power and influence, coalitions, and informal structures” (p. 1207, for a similar idea, see also Selznick, 1957). The earlier scholars of old institutionalism recommended good institutional design processes almost entirely in normative terms, which later formed the basis of institutional analysis in political science.

At the heart of old institutionalist scholarship is their concern about “law and the central role of law in governing” (Peters, 1999, p. 6). Thus, making legalism and legitimacy the initial dominant features of old institutionalism (Stinchcombe, 1997). The old institutionalist theory views law as both a “product of human agency”, and “an empirical reality” that expresses choices made through institutional means (p. 7).

In old institutionalists perspective “structure mattered” as it “determined behaviour” (Peters, 1999, p. 7). This makes structuralism yet another dominant trait of the theory. Structure of major institutions such as presidential, parliamentary, federal or unitary systems of government was the analytical focus of old institutional theorists holding the structural view. Their definitions of these political systems tend to often be “constitutional and formal” in nature (ibid). Old institutionalists place economic behaviour in its cultural context as they believe that human beings are the product of culture (Mayhew, 1989; Rutherford, 1995). Rather than understanding institutional development and functioning mainly in terms of efficiency and economic /rational individual behaviours, old institutionalists tend to involve many other social and political factors such as “status, group identity, ideology, and economic and political power” instead (Rutherford, 1995, p. 444).

A whole system study, instead of individual institutions within a system is another approach employed by old institutionalist scholars. The approach tends to be corporativists in nature, “holism” and “anti-formalism” (Rutherford, 1995, p. 444). Such descriptions of old institutionalism, according to Peters (1999) makes “holism” another of its main approaches. Old institutionalists assume that a society’s political system is embedded in the contexts of its historical development, economy and culture. This critical assumption of old institutionalists makes historicism yet another approach of old institutionalists study of institutions (Peters, 1999; Rutherford, 1995). Implicit in the historical foundation of old institutionalism is the assumption that to understand a country’s political system, it’s imperative to study the “developmental pattern that produced that system” (Peters, 1999, p. 10). Old institutionalists assume that the individual behaviour of political elites (the focus of their analysis) is the function of their “collective history” and the understanding of their political history (ibid).

As far as old institutionalists are concern the interaction between politics, social and economic environments is a vital development aspect of politics. The analysis of the old

institutionalism was characterised by “strong normative element” like their concern for “good government” (Peters, 1999, p. 10). One notable weakness of old institutionalism is its failure to fully recognise the “impact of individuals” within the government. Its scholars exclude the contributions of “exceptional individuals” in history (“great men”), people who greatly influenced the “course of events” in many governments around the world (Peters, 1999, p. 7). Another criticism is their failure to develop concepts that could capture other “structural aspects” of the political system and the functioning of the formal design of the systems. The theory focuses too much on formal features of the political systems which resulted in the masking of the significance of informal aspects of politics (ibid, pp. 7–8).

3.2.2 New Institutionalism

Despite the growing prominence of the term “new institutionalism”, in political science there appears to be a “considerable confusion” and “ambiguities” about its meaning, variation from other approaches and the kinds of issues it tackles. To dispel what they consider as “ambiguities surrounding” the term “new institutionalism”, Hall and Taylor (1996) recognise the concept as not constituting “a unified body of thought” (p. 5). There are “three different analytical approaches”/“schools of thought” developed “independently of each other” (ibid) and each of which fits the label of new institutionalism. These are: the historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. Despite their quite different interpretation of the reality about the political world, the three schools of thought/approaches were “developed in reaction to the behavioural perspectives that were influential during the 1960s and 1970s and all seek to elucidate the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes” (ibid).

In principle Hall and Taylor (1996) indicate that the term “new institutionalism in economics” a fourth approach could have been added. However, the massive overlaps of this school with rational choice institutionalism make it unnecessary to bundle it into rational choice (p. 25). Peters (1999) considers normative institutionalism as the root of the New Institutionalism. He treats rational choice, historical and sociological institutionalisms as different varieties and strands of institutional theories. He presents how the institution is used/explained in the different sub-fields of political science, their definition and perception about the institutional formation, operation and change as well

as the occasionally overlaps and sharp disagreement of the various stands in the analysis of political science.

3.2.2.1 Normative Institutionalism

The origin of normative institutionalism as an explicit school of thought could be traced to the 1984 paper published by March and Olsen (Thoenig, 2012, p. 6). Both (Peters, 1999; Thoenig, 2012) associate the initial coining of the term “New Institutionalism” to March and Olsen (1984, 1989, 1995, 1996) and the recent changes the school of thought made in the focus of political science scholarship. As for Greenwood et al. (2014), the origin of what is known today as ‘new’ institutionalism could be traced a series of innovative papers published in the “late 1970s and early 1980s” by the following organisational scholars (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1977). These papers “asked why organizations tend to look alike” (p. 1207). Hall and Taylor (1996) also view the development of their three new institutionalism schools of thought as “a reaction to the behavioural perspectives that were influential during the 1960s and 1970s” (p. 5). Fiorina (1995) traces “new institutionalists” to the 1960s. Peters (1999) labels normative institutionalism in political science as part of the “new” institutionalism (p. 26).

New institutionalist scholars such as Meyer et al. (1997); Nee (2005); and Powell and DiMaggio (1994) have focused their analysis primarily on “economic organizations influenced by the polity and legal sphere, and vice versa” (Abrutyn & Turner, 2011, p. 300). While Hall and Taylor (1996) argue that the new institutionalism school of thought is dedicated to explaining the part institutions perform “in the determination of social and political outcomes” (p. 5). The emphasis of new institutionalism is “on legitimacy, fields, templates, and schema, and latterly, institutional logics, institutional entrepreneurship, and institutional work” (Greenwood et al., 2014, p. 1207, see also Greenwood et al., 2008). In the normative institutionalists view, the law was regarded as an institution with some “capacity to spread a logic of appropriateness” (Peters, 1999, p. 7).

Abrutyn and Turner (2011) state that new institutionalism proclaims to have conceptualized organisational environment as “a field of other organizations, regulatory agencies and norms, and cultural ideologies to which organizations had to adapt” (p. 284). The authors accuse new institutionalists of selectively emphasising “specific dimensions of institutions” rather than “focus on the properties of institutions *as a whole* and, more

specifically, the mechanisms of structural and symbolic integration that affect organizational dynamics” (ibid, emphasis as in the original). While they claim not to have doubted the soundness of the essential points of new institutionalism that “environments of organizations consisted of other organizations and their cultures” yet, Abrutyn and Turner (2011) argue that “all of this new conceptual activity has not provided a clear definition of institutions” (ibid). The analyses of most new institutionalists Abrutyn and Turner (2011) stress are “restricted (...) to the economic domain and its relationship to polity and law” (p. 295). New institutionalism, according to Abrutyn and Turner (2011), has attributed “an inordinate amount of attention to political and legal regulatory pressures” (p. 301). And consider these as “the loci for power regulating corporate units in other institutional domains” (ibid). Whereas corporate units found in other domains such as a nation-state in Islamic Law “can, and often do, dominate and become regulatory forces in the environments of other corporate units” (ibid).

New Institutionalism focuses primarily on economic organizations influenced by the polity and legal sphere, and vice versa (...). That is, for New Institutionalists, the cultural environment of any corporate unit is heavily slanted toward the meta-ideology combining the ideologies of capitalism, political democracy, positivistic law, science, and education, whereas the structural formations and ideologies operating in other institutional domains are ignored. (ibid, p. 300)

The most profound concern of March and Olsen (1984) was the growing dominance of rational choice theory in political science, the lessening importance of “political values and collective choice” in the conceptual understanding of political and other social sciences as well as its gradual push to the peripheries of theorising. According to Hall and Taylor (1996), new institutionalism scholarship developed in reaction to the influential position behavioural perspectives is gradually gaining in political science. Simply put the replacement of “political values and collective choice” by “individualistic, and largely utilitarian, assumptions and methodologies” (Peters, 1999, p. 24). New institutionalism treats political institutions and individual players within as actors in the political arena. Institutions are conceived of as coherent and autonomous decision-makers which are “more than simple mirrors of social forces” (March & Olsen, 1984, p. 739). Political institutions “affect the distribution of resources, which in turn affects the power of political actors, and thereby affects political institutions” (ibid).

Although new institutionalists admit that the “large degree of autonomy” enjoyed by public institutions and their ability to “follow logics of their own” independent of external influences, but they also recognise that historical processes occasionally select inefficient organisational forms (Thoenig, 2012, p. 7). March and Olsen (1984) view individualistic assumptions as “inherently incapable” when comes to addressing the most pertinent questions of political life but are unable to “integrate individual action with fundamental normative premises, or with the collective nature of most important political activity” (Peters, 1999, p. 24). The central theme of the normative version of new institutionalism Peters (1999) argues, is closely related to the “idea of an institution as expressing a ‘logic of appropriateness’” (p. 27). People participate in integrative institutions because of their “commitment to the goals of the organisation” (ibid). Or at the minimum, for the “acceptance of the legitimate claims of the organisation (or institution)” (ibid).

To a greater extent preference of individuals/political actors are shaped by “their involvement with institutions” (Peters, 1999, p. 26). In this approach, institutions to a large extent “mould their own participants, and [more broadly] supply systems of meaning for the participants in politics, and in social life” (ibid). According to (Hydén, 2016) institutions are but “only partial guides to action, competing with other concerns and interests that human actors have. Life is complex and intricate and typically overflows institutions” (p. 8). March and Olsen (1984) argue that a state “is not only affected by society but also affects it” (p. 738). This statement refutes the dependency claim of an institution on society in favour of a situation of interdependency between autonomous political and social institutions.

The role of organisational “norms and values” are central to normative institutionalist in explaining behaviour. Organisational “myth and stories” are of greater significance in this approach’s definition of acceptable behaviour for members of organisations (Peters, 1999, p. 25). New institutionalists theorists uphold that “symbols, myths and rituals have more impact upon political and administrative events than immediate, narrow and selfish economic or power interests” (Thoenig, 2012, p. 7). Behaviours of political actors are more of the reflection of the values of their associated institutions rather than the results of their socialisation, psychological make-up or as utility maximisers. Rather than view individuals as atomistic actors, in this conception, they are viewed as actors embedded in a series of complex “relationships with other individuals and with collectivities” (Peters, 1999, p. 26).

3.2.2.2 Rational Choice Institutionalism

The initial interest of political scientist in rational choice institutionalism is said to have arisen from the study of “congressional behaviour” of United States of America (Hall & Taylor, 1996b, p. 10). The conventional rational choice assumptions were questioned by the “considerable stability” shown by the Congressional outcomes. To get a stable majority in the U.S. Congress to pass legislation despite the “multiple preference-orderings” of legislators and the “multidimensional character of issues” they deal with, question the assumptions of conventional rational choice theories (ibid). The failure of conventional rational choice assumptions to explain this discrepancy encourage scholars to began turning to institutions for answers. The availability of stable majorities for the passing of legislation according to many is associated with “the rules of procedure and committees of Congress structure the choices and information available to its members” (ibid, p. 11).

In the views of Hall and Taylor (1996), the idea “puts more emphasis on strategic interaction” (p. 25). Hall and Taylor (1996) view new institutionalism in economics and rational choice institutionalism as belonging to the same school which, according to them, is due to the massive overlap between them. While the rational choice institutionalism “puts more emphasis on strategic interaction”, the new institutionalism in economics “puts more stress on property rights, rents, and competitive selection mechanisms” (ibid). Two seminal articles ‘The New Economics of Organization’ by Moe (1984) and ‘The Industrial Organization of Congress’ by Weingast and Marshall (1988) are said to have influenced the analytical tools of rational choice institutionalists in political science (Hall & Taylor, 1996).

Moe (1984) attempts to provide political scientists with an overview of what he calls the “new economics of organisation” and the implication this concept has for the study of public bureaucracy. In this article, Moe (1984) emphasizes the significance of transaction costs, property rights and rent-seeking on the development and operation of institutions. While in their paper, Weingast and Marshall (1988) identify two components to legislative institutions-the goals or preferences of individuals seeking re-election and the relevance of transaction costs. Findings of Weingast and Marshall (1988) show that legislative institutions enforce attitude bargaining among legislators. It also proves that specific forms of nonmarket exchanges are superior to market exchange in legislatures in terms of

negotiation. It equally shows the limitation the committee system in legislatures has on the types of coalitions that may form on a particular issue. For similar arguments about the history of political institutions see (North, 1976) and for theories of agency with focus on institutional mechanisms see (Milgrom & Roberts, 1992; Pratt et al., 1985) where the authors discuss the monitoring rights and principals have on agents in terms of enforcing compliance in Congressional setting.

In his seminal works Riker (1980) state that the “structure of an institution is at least as likely to be predictive of socially enforced values as are the preferences of the citizen body” (p. 432). Riker (1980) demonstrates that “interpersonal rules” (institutions) and “personal values, opinions, and tastes” affect the “social outcomes” or “the content of social decisions” (ibid). He argues that the emphasis of social scientists’ analysis should focus on both the “interpersonal rules” (institutions) and the “personal values, opinions, and tastes” (ibid). McKelvey (1976) who studied voting behaviour on policy agenda and Ferejohn and Fiorina (1975) who developed a general theory of legislative action are cited among scholars who built the initial interest of political scientist in rational choice institutionalism. In his discussion of political institutions and the effects they have on social choice, Shepsle (1986) argues that institutions perform “a mediating role between the preferences of individuals and social choices” (See the Abstract). Shepsle (1986) goes further to state that:

Institutions prescribe and constrain the set of choosing agents, the manner in which their preferences may be revealed, the alternatives over which preferences are expressed, the order in which such expressions occur, and generally the way in which business is conducted. (See the Abstract)

A similar view is expressed in (Shepsle, 1989). Rational choice theorists according to Fiorina (1995) views institutions as both “causes and consequences” (p. 113). In research their first consideration is typically the “rational agency” (ibid) while taking “preferences as given” (p. 114) and they lean more towards “interests as opposed to those based on ideas” in providing an explanation (ibid). Rational choice theorists assume that individuals within an institution are not just autonomous in their actions but utility maximisers and entirely logical. Utility-maximising decisions of individuals are the analytical power of these theories (Peters, 1999). See also (North, 1990, 1991, 1993), a new institutional economist for more on institutions as formal rules such as property rights, laws, constitutions. Individuals or organisations are always viewed as “seeking to maximise their

material wellbeing” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 16). Institutions are developed (origin and change) because they are efficient in fulfilling the material needs of those who are behind/accepted their setup (ibid).

Rational choice theories to a very great extent are the antithesis to March and Olsen’s (1984) normative version of new institutionalism. Although in reality, new institutional economics trust that institutional environment influences preferences, but the focus of their analysis is the “utility-maximizing individual” (Groenewegen et al., 1995, p. 470). In explaining “economic, legal, and historical institutions”, new institutionalists do so “in terms of individual behaviour” (ibid). In a rational choice perspective, institutions are nothing but sets of rules devised to shape individual behaviour and their rational respond to the established institutional incentives and constraints. Rational choice institutionalism, according to Hall and Taylor (1996), has four different internal assumptions. First, relevant social actors act instrumentally to maximize the realization of their “fixed set of preferences or tastes” which are attained through strategic planning in the form of “extensive calculation” (p. 12). Second, the tendency to view politics as a sequence of “collective action dilemmas” (ibid). Third, the view that the strategic interaction of actors determines political outcomes. The assumption is that strategic calculus rather than impersonal historical forces are what drives the behaviour of an actor. Rational choice institutionalists posit that the fundamental importance of institutions is their ability to structure interaction among its members.

The final distinctive approach employed by rational choice institutionalism is their explanation of the origin of institutions. Rational choice institutionalists posit that institutions are created because of the values institutional functions produce for the actors that are affected by them. The assumption is that political actors build institutions “to realise the values” or “gains from cooperation” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 13). Often institutional creation process “revolves around voluntary agreement by the relevant actors; and (...) it survives primarily because it provides more benefits to the relevant actors than alternate institutional forms” (ibid). The principal-agent model, game-theoretic model, and the rule-based model are among the variety of rational choice institutionalism models use in the analysis of institutions. Although the models have some important internal differences, they share fundamental similarities too. Common to the different approaches is a shared assumption that individuals are the central actors in any political process and

that the motivation for individual action is rational maximisation of personal utility (Peters, 1999). Principal-agent models are considered for analysing the “interaction among institutions, and between individuals and institutions” (ibid, p. 50). Rational choice models are criticised for their wide oversimplification of the complexity of regulatory policy (ibid).

Institutions as rules in political science, according to Peters (1999) are often associated with the works of (Ostrom, 1986, 2002; Ostrom et al., 2002). Concerned by the multiple definitions of an institution, Ostrom (1986) expresses the need for consistency in the language of the institution “if public choice scholars are going to return to a major study of institutions” (p. 21). In her 1986 article, she discusses the terms rules to refer to institutions. The aim of this article according to Ostrom is to clarify the meaning of the term rules, show how they are different from “physical or behavioural laws”, their classification in a “theoretically interesting manner”, and in what way scholars can “begin to formalize rule configurations” (ibid). Ostrom (1986) describes rules as instruments that prescribe, proscribe and permit behaviour. Rules, as stated in Ostrom et al. (2002) “are prescriptions that define what actions (or outcomes) are required, prohibited or permitted” while sanctions are “authorised if the rules are not followed” to enforce compliance (p. 38). Ostrom et al. (2002) argue that rules are “contextual, prescriptive and followable” (ibid). All rules are either implicit or explicit effort “to achieve order and predictability among humans” (ibid). Hydén (2016) argues that rules are adjusted by individuals and are sometimes bent intentionally “to reflect the interests of those engaged in a certain common venture” (p. 8). Decision rules are an alternative view of the rational choice theory of institutional analysis where institutions are viewed as instruments for escaping the fundamental problem of collective action. Peters (1999) notes that institutions “provide a set of agreed-upon rules that map preferences into decisions” (pp. 48–49).

The game-theoretic version of rational choice institutionalism conceptualises institutions in terms of rule compliance. This model views institutions as “set of games played between actors” (Peters, 1999, p. 51). For instance, with the using of legislator and bureaucrat relational scenario, where legislators attempt to ensure compliance from bureaucrats while bureaucrats, in turn, continue to seek for greater latitude for action. At the centre of the analysis of game-theoretic and principal-agent models is the problem of compliance and the assumption that the task of legislators is to identify methods in which to avert defection/noncompliance by bureaucrats. The difference between the two models lies in

the way they conceptualise the process of compliance. In the principal-agent model, the process of compliance is conceptualised “as being performed largely through rules, with the activates of control being unidirectional” (ibid, p. 52). In contrast, in game-theoretic version, the issue is “more bilateral with both sets of actors attempting to commit the other to comply with the terms of their tacit bargain” (ibid).

Despite the never-ending internal debates within rational choice institutionalism and some differences in outlook, four notable features can be deduced from this approach. At the heart of rational choice, institutionalists explanation is a set of behavioural assumptions. The general theorising is that there is a stable set of preferences, values, opinions or tastes that important actors hold dearly and work strategically, presumably using an extensive calculation to maximise their attainment (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Shepsle and Weingast (1987) show that legislative committees are “able to enforce many of their policy wishes not only because they originate bills but also because they get a second chance after their chamber has worked its will” (p. 85). Rational choice institutionalists view politics as a sequence of “collective action dilemmas”, thus, outcomes that are “collectively suboptimal” in politics are likely to be produced when individuals are “acting to maximize the attainment of their own preferences” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 12). This means another outcome is expected to be produced “that would make at least one of the actors better off without making any of the others worse off” (ibid). In essence, rational choice institutionalists hold the lack of institutional arrangements that guarantee complementary/reciprocal behaviour by other individuals as preventing political actors “from taking a collectively-superior course of action” (ibid). Examples of such behaviours are demonstrated in classical publications like ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ by (G. Hardin, 1968), ‘Collective Action’ by (R. Hardin, 1982) and ‘Governing the Commons’ by (Ostrom, 2015) and others.

The third contribution of rational choice institutionalism and which Hall and Taylor (1996) refer to as “one of the great” is the theory’s emphasis on the “role of strategic interaction” in the determination of “political outcomes” (p. 12). In explaining how institutions affect individual action, rational choice theorists turn to the classical calculus approach. Rational choice institutionalists posit that it is the “strategic calculus” rather than “impersonal historical forces” that are likely to influence the behaviour of actors. And this calculus is as well greatly influenced by an actor’s expectations concerning the alleged behaviour of

others. Thus, the role of institutions is to “structure such interactions” and “allow ‘gains from exchange’” shared (ibid). Institutions do this by “affecting the range and sequence of alternatives on the choice-agenda” (ibid). Or by reducing the “uncertainty about the corresponding behaviour of others” through the provision of “information and enforcement mechanisms” (ibid). Such is what leads “actors toward particular calculations and potentially better social outcomes” (ibid).

Rational choice institutionalists link the origin of institutions to the function/roles they perform for their originators. The theorists posit that institutions exist because of the value they create for their actors while functioning, assuming that actors found institutions for the purposes or expected benefit to be driven from the values they will create for them for instance in the form of cooperation. Hall and Taylor (1996) posit that the institution-building process is usually characterised by “voluntary agreement by the relevant actors” (p. 13). But if it goes through “competitive selection” process, its survival depends “primarily because it provides more benefits to the relevant actors than alternate institutional forms” (ibid). The tendency is that “voluntary agreement” is associated with analyses that are focused on legislatures while “competitive selection” relates with those focused on economic institutions (p. 29). For instance, in the study of the organisational structure of a firm, reference is made to how it reduces “transaction, production or influence costs” (ibid, p. 13). Or “the benefits” accrued for shareholders while in explaining parliamentary/congressional rules, reference is made to “the gains from exchange they provide to members” (ibid).

3.2.2.3 Historical Institutionalism (Legacy of the Past)

From the accounts of (Nichols, 1998; Peters, 1999), the broader application of historical institutionalism in political science is attributed to Steinmo et al. (1992). Policy choices made at the institutional or policy/program design stage historical institutionalists observe have long-lasting effect and influence on the policy for a very long time (Krasner, 1988; Peters, 1999). Institutional choices or patterns persist due to the routinised nature of government activities. Although changing such a path is possible, it would, however, require a “good deal of political pressure” or a strong will for alteration (Peters, 1999, p. 63). Institutions or policies that do not have good initial choices either “find some means of adaptation” or “cease to exist” (Peters, 1999, p. 65). At the heart of politics, according

to historical institutionalists is the struggle for scarce resources among rival groups (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 6; Nichols, 1998).

Institutions are perceived in historical institutionalism as either “formal or informal rules or procedures embedded in formal organisations” (Nichols, 1998, p. 477). Hall and Taylor (1996) argue that institutions are “formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy” (p. 6). Institutions include either rules of constitutional order, standard operating procedures of a bureaucracy, conventions governing trade union behaviour or bank-firm relations. In the historical institutionalists view, institutions are related to “organizations and the rules or conventions promulgated by formal organization” (p. 7). Hall and Taylor (1996) identify four distinct features of historical institutionalism: 1) the tendency to conceptualise the relationship between institutions and individual behaviour broadly; 2) association of institutional development and operations with power asymmetries; 3) propensity to peg institutional development in path dependency and unintended effects; 4) concern particularly to integrate institutional analysis with inputs from contribution made by ideas to the outcomes of politics (p. 7). What makes historical institutionalism “eclectic” according to Hall and Taylor (1996) is the theory’s employment of both ‘calculus approach’ and ‘cultural approach’ while explaining how institutions affect individual behaviour or the “relationship between institutions and action” (p. 8).

Historical institutionalists using calculus approach view persons as need “satisficers” rather than “utility maximisers” (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 8). To a broader extent calculus approach tends to understand individual choices/actions as dependent on their “interpretation of a situation” rather than as purely out of “instrumental calculation” (ibid). This perspective to human behaviour argues that institutions affect the behaviour of actors primarily through the provision of either “greater or lesser degrees of certainty about the present and future behaviour of other actors” (p. 7). The provision of relevant information about the behaviour of others, provide mechanisms to enforce agreements and penalties for defection are some of the fundamental functions of institutions (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Nichols, 1998).

The **calculus approach** argues that institutions persist over time due to their embodiment of something similar to “Nash equilibrium”¹⁶. Individuals in an institutional setting usually follow regular patterns of behaviour due to the understanding that nonconformity will make them worse off than when they adhere to behaviours associated with institutions. Thus, for an institution to be more robust, it has to contribute more to the “resolution of collective action dilemmas” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 8) or the more possible gains, it can make from the exchange.

The cultural approach of historical institutionalism recognises human behaviour as purposeful. It stresses recognised routines, prevailing patterns, and worldview are things that restrict behaviour (Nichols, 1998). In the perspective of cultural approach, the provision of moral or cognitive templates for interpretation and action is the role of institutions (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Nichols, 1998). Institutions allow individuals to filter and make sense of information about the situation (Nichols, 1998). In this perspective “institutions persist because they are deeply ingrained and because they shape the choices that an individual makes about reforming institutions” (ibid, p. 480). Institutions persist because many conventions that form part of social institutions are not readily available as “explicit objects of individual choice” instead they are the “elemental components from which collective action is constructed” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 8).

Path dependency another perspective of historical institutionalism views institutions as a relatively persistent feature of historical landscape and one key factor that pushes “historical development along a set of ‘paths’” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 9). Fundamental to historical institutionalism is its emphasis on “historical ‘path’ taken during institutional creation and development processes. These “pathways” are characterised by “critical junctures, or cleavages, which present new paths or opportunities for change” (Nichols, 1998, p. 478). The influence of current ‘state capacities’ and ‘policy legacies’ on succeeding policy choices are some of the findings of early historical institutionalists analysis. Other scholars highlight the role performed by the “past lines of policy condition”

¹⁶ In economics and game theory this refers to “a stable state of a system involving the interaction of different participants, in which no participant can gain by a unilateral change of strategy if the strategies of the others remain unchanged”.

in directing the organisation of social forces in a particular direction instead of the others (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 9).

Critical junctures are those instants of considerable institutional change which resulted in significant turning point causing “historical development moves onto a new path” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 10). Or “a period of significant change”, which naturally occurs uniquely, and which “produce distinct legacies” in a country (Nichols, 1998, p. 478). An institution in this perspective is located in a “causal chain” which acknowledges the role for factors such as “socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas” or beliefs (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 10). Central to the analysis of how institutions operate in this perspective is its emphasis on “the role of power, competition, and coalitions” (Nichols, 1998, p. 478). Lasting institutional structures are the building blocks of both social and political life (Krasner, 1988, p. 67).

3.2.2.4 Sociological Institutionalism

The strand of sociological institutionalism of most significant interest to political scientists “arose primarily within the subfield of organization theory” a crusade that dates roughly to the end of the 1970s (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 13). The impetus for this theory began with some sociologists that challenged the traditional distinction made between certain parts of the social world associated with formal, rational modern organisational types and bureaucracy; and the part of social life related to culture. Since Weber, sociologists were concerned about how to establish efficient bureaucratic structures (see explanation below) that would perform different activities in modern society. Culture in this equation is seen as a distinct entity altogether (Hall & Taylor, 1996; Nichols, 1998). For sociological institutionalists, it’s the cultural factors that create institutions rather than utilities (Nichols, 1998).

Sociologists since the earliest periods recognise “the importance of values in defining the nature of institutions, organisations and individual behaviour within those structures” (Peters, 1999, p. 26). Efficiency in task performance in modern organisations, forms and procedures are the “result of the kind of processes associated with the transmission of cultural practices” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 14). Even the most apparent bureaucratic practices should be explained in cultural terms. Max Weber presents his idea of bureaucracy in the broader context of how human civilisation evolved. He observes the role of powerful universal forces as they support the emergence of “a rational, impersonal,

and modern state”, a state which is “organized and administered through a powerful bureaucracy” (Spicer, 2004, p. 97). Such a state in Weber’s view possesses a legitimate power to command its citizens “on legal-rational grounds” (ibid, p. 98).

Weber describes the bureaucratic state as having “legally established impersonal order” to which citizens owe obedience (Spicer, 2004, p. 98; Weber, 1946). A powerful bureaucracy is seen by Weber as crucial in running a state, a bureaucracy which has the technical capability to reach the highest degree of efficiency and the most rational in carrying out authoritative control over citizens (Weber, 1946; Spicer, 2004). Weberian bureaucracy is about a public servant that is not only professional, disciplined, rule-bound, and impersonal, but a hierarchically structured one. And where the appointment is based on a specific set of competencies and meritocracy (Weber, 1946; Ringer, 2004; Sager & Rosser, 2009).

The most important advantage of a bureaucratic administration in Weber’s view is the application of its indispensable technical knowledge, whether it operates within a capitalist or socialist economic system. Because of its proven track record as “the most efficient, the most calculable, (...) [and the] most rational means” through which formal authority has been exercised in all kinds of organisation, bureaucracy, in Ringer’s (2004) view is an indispensable tool in an administrator’s toolkit (p. 220). Sager and Rosser (2009) find modern bureaucracy as not only characteristically ideal but “the most rational and thus inevitable technical instrument for the organization of government” (p. 1137). As the very embodiment of impersonal rationalism, bureaucracy is seen by Weber as “characteristic of the modern state” (Spicer, 2004, p. 98). Weber sees bureaucrats as formally impersonal, without ill will, affection or enthusiasm. In a modern state “complete depersonalisation of administrative management” is seen by Weber as necessary for the full separation of public and private affairs (Spicer, 2004, p. 98; Weber, 1946).

For Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy, a rational public administration must be based on “written rules, an impersonal order, and a clear division of labour” (Sager & Rosser, 2009, p. 1137). And where the appointment of bureaucrats to administrative offices is determined by “their skills (meritocracy)” rather than “their ancestry” (ibid). Furthermore, education is an essential checklist in the recruitment criteria of public servants while recruiting highly specialized professionals is indispensable in the case of bureaucrats (Sager & Rosser, 2009). As defined by Ringer (2004) public servants are those:

Individual officials (not collegial bodies), recruited into a fixed hierarchy of offices on the basis of qualifications that may be ascertained by examinations and certified by diplomas. They are salaried and often pensioned, and they regard their work as a full-time career. (p. 183)

Sager and Rosser (2009) note that Weber especially in his later political literature, recognises the danger of the power possessed by modern bureaucracy “becoming overwhelming” (p. 1139). Weber is said to be “ambivalent” in the description of his position about this power. While casting “doubt about the influence of modern public administration”, he is said to be convinced that modern bureaucracy is “the only” inevitable and the ultimate desirable “rational form of organization” (Sager & Rosser, 2009, p. 1139; for similar ideas see Ringer, 2004, pp. 220–24). Thus, to mitigate against abuse of bureaucratic power and ensure efficient and rational state performance where the influence of public servants is controlled, Sager and Rosser (2009) call for “strict separation of the political and the administrative spheres seemed indispensable” (p. 1139). Despite the ubiquitous nature of Weber’s (1947) prediction on the spread of bureaucracy to everywhere in modern society, bureaucracy, however, doesn’t necessarily follow that a “bureaucratic model is advisable for all types of collective action” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 23). With an in-depth study of real organisations, researchers have discovered that the Weberian model is:

Generally efficient in mass-producing standardized goods or services. Marked by hierarchy, precisely defined roles, and functional specialization, this type of organization performed well in situations that were competitive (so it was important to produce at a low cost per unit of output), that were characterized by repetitive tasks (making it easier to divide up labour), and that used mature, stable technologies (meaning innovation was relatively unimportant). (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 23)

In contrast, however, the same Weberian model performed poorly under different conditions in “which cost was a less important consideration, in which jobs were not repetitive, or in which new technology had to be rapidly adopted. It was discovered that in this domain, less bureaucratic modes of organization were better suited” (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 23). For sociological institutionalists, institutions are “formal rules, procedures or norms, the symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that

provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action" (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 14). This theory gets rid of the conceptual split created by many political scientists between 'institutions' and 'culture' and portrayed them as two sides of a coin. Thus, collapsing the conceptual divide between culture and institutions. Sociological institutionalism follows 'cultural approach' in trying to understand the relationship between institutions and individual action as well as applies "distinctive approach" to explain the origin and change of institutional practices (ibid).

Included in the institutional description of sociological institutionalists beside "formal and informal rules and procedures" according to Nichols (1998) are "symbols, cognitions, norms, and any other templates that organize or give meaning to the human condition" (p. 483). In this perspective, a rule or pattern is considered an institution only if there exists "an unspoken sense that the rule or pattern must be followed or adhered to" (ibid). Institutional explanations in this theory are based on "organisational structures" while the cultural descriptions are based on the "understanding of culture as shared attitudes or values" (Hall & Taylor, 1996b, p. 15). The theory employs the "cultural approach" to explain the relationship between individual behaviour and institutions (Nichols, 1998, p. 484). In this view, institutions are believed to affect the behaviour of individuals who occupy particular institutional roles through the internalisation of the norms associated with their roles.

Sociological institutionalists hold the belief that individual behaviour is influenced by institutions through the provision of "cognitive scripts, categories and models that are indispensable for action" without which it would be difficult or even impossible for individuals to interpret the world around them and the behaviour of others (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 15). Through assigning meaning in social life, institutions "influence behaviour not simply by specifying what one should do but also by specifying what one can imagine oneself doing in a given context" (ibid). Suffice it to say that it is not only institutions that are affected by actors within them, but institutions also affect the "most basic preferences and very identity" of individuals as well. Many sociological institutionalists characterise the relationship between individual action and institutions as "highly-interactive and mutually-constitutive" (ibid). As for Nichols (1998), the relationship between institutions and individual behaviours is not only "mutually constitutive" but "mutually reinforcing"

as well (p. 485). Sociological institutionalism proffers “a cultural account” in terms of institutional origination and alteration (ibid).

Taking of action in this perspective is intertwined with interpretation. Whenever social actors are faced with situations, they use institutional “scripts or templates” to figure out how to recognise and respond appropriately to the case at the same time. The emphasis of sociological institutionalists is that what we may see as “‘rational action’ is itself socially constructed” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 16). This, however, does not in any way negate the “purposive, goal-oriented or rational” nature of individuals (ibid). Sociological institutionalists often see individuals as just “seeking to define and express their identity in socially appropriate ways” (ibid). On the contrary, however, they maintain that in a large number of cases, an organisation adopts novel institutional practices to enhance “the social legitimacy of the organization or its participants” (ibid). New institutions in this perspective are created or changed either because they confer “greater legitimacy” on the organisation or its members or the wide value they have created “within a broader cultural environment” (Nichols, 1998, p. 485). The acceptability of an institution is dependent on the consideration of its appropriateness. Institutions “once created or altered, (...) persist not because they are useful but instead because institutions constrain the manner in which individuals are able to consider changing institutions” (ibid, pp. 485–486).

Sociological institutionalism has a variety of approaches to explaining institutions including Population Ecology Models of Organisations, Institutionalisation and Isomorphism, Sedimentation and Organisational Archetypes. **Population ecology approach** compares an institution/organisation with a population of biological organisms. The central premise is that to understand institutions or organisations and their behaviour; one must study them within their context. Just like a biological ecology supports the survival of numerous organisms, an organisational environment is capable of supporting different structures (Peters, 1999). Organisational niche is a concept advanced in population ecology approach. It refers to a mixture of the right types of “resources” to ensure the survival of a particular “type of organisation” (Peters, 1999, p. 101). Resources such as the budget, legal mandates, official political support, and mass political support are some of the possible niches for the public sector. The combination of these resources could allow specific numbers and types of organisations to flourish while others wouldn’t. In population ecology model of organisations, organisational survival and extinction

processes are explained by several factors such as the age of the organisation (young and old) and the density of the population. The significant contribution of this approach to the understanding of institutions is said to be its view on institutional survival which it argues is dependent on the “environment, and their ‘embeddedness’ in society and economy” (Peters, 1999, p. 102). The approach equally points out that sometimes institutions compete with each other for resources and survival “whether they be in the market or the budgetary competition of government” (ibid).

The concept of **sedimentation** explicitly reflects the historical and accumulative nature of institutions. Rather than conceptualising institutional design and change as a one-off activity or event, proponents of this concept holds the view that institutional change involves the development of “new understandings and symbols that are not incompatible with those that were in place before” (Peters, 1999, p. 104). Unlike a more absolutist position about how values are changed or replaced according to sedimentation view, although the change could be relatively slow, but institutional change is possible. A new institution in this perspective represents “a succession of values”, some remnant of which persist into the present and the future (ibid, p. 105). **Archetypes of institutional forms** are a variation on the theme of **isomorphism**. Central to the use of archetypes argument on institutions is the view that change in institutions happens only from “one archetype to another” (ibid, p. 104). And that isomorphism pressures could make possible the formation of so many alternative archetypes (ibid). In this concept, one set of institutional structures is replaced by a new alternative. The change from one archetype to another includes the process of “deinstitutionalisation” followed by “re-institutionalisation” (ibid, p. 105). Change in an institutionalised structure argues Peters (1999), comprised the purging of “old structures (or systems of values and symbols)” and replacing them off with new ones (ibid).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter covers the discussion of the methodology used in this research from data collection through analysis and reporting. It begins with a discussion of the case study–mixed methods design, including the rationale for choosing the design. The chapter describes the purpose of selecting the case, including embedded case study design where the units of analysis come from multiple levels such as program, villages, districts, regions and staff within the areas and participants in the program.

4.1. Case Study Research Design

The research design refers to a plan of action that logically links empirical data sequentially to the initial study questions and the conclusions. It entails specific procedures, techniques, or strategies of inquiry that guides an investigator in the process of data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of observations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 4; Creswell, 2014, p. 12; Yin, 2014, p. 28). This study is a single case embedded design as it involves units of analysis that come from different regions, districts and villages. The case study design is a suitable research strategy for this investigation because the proposed empirical inquiry is to investigate current cases within their actual context, where no clear demarcation or boundary exists between the cases and their context. Also, the investigation is mainly exploratory with the researcher having no control over the studied cases while the research questions posed fall under “how” and “why” categories (Shakir, 2002; Yin, 1994, 2003, 2014).

“How” and “Why” questions are said to have “operational links” that require tracing over a period instead of a “mere frequencies or incidence” (Yin, 2014, p. 10). The method is also relevant for this study because the questions asked require an “extensive ‘in-depth’ description of social phenomenon” (Yin, 2014, p. 4; see also Gerring, 2007, p. 70). The study is an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary cases in-depth within their natural contexts using multiple sources of evidence (Bromley, 1990; Creswell, 2014; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2014). While discussing design choices, each of the following case study experts (Stake, 1995; McDonough & McDonough, 2014; Yin, 2014) identify different categories of case study types. Yin (2014) distinguishes exploratory,

descriptive and explanatory case studies while McDonough and McDonough (2014) classify interpretive and evaluative case studies, and Stake (1995) differentiates between intrinsic, instrumental and collective case study types.

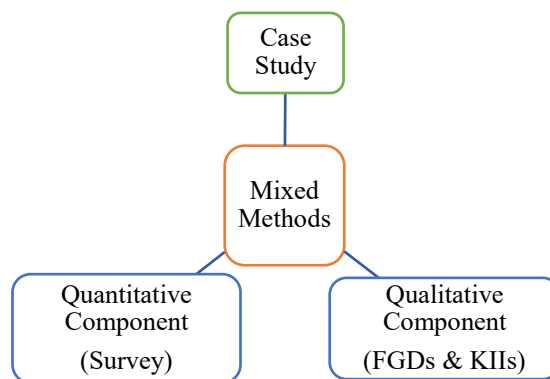
4.2. Case Study-Mixed Method Design

In an attempt to integrate case study and mixed methods designs, a researcher has at least two general design choices to make which are mixed methods-case study design and case study-mixed methods design (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018). Methodological design for this dissertation is the case study–mixed methods design. Case study–mixed methods design is a study design where “researchers employ a parent case study that includes a nested mixed-methods design” (ibid, p. 902). Upon confirming the increasing number of researchers that combine case studies and mixed methods design in their investigation, Guetterman and Fetters (2018) argue that such a design “if conducted systematically and thoughtfully, can yield a more complete understanding” of cases (p. 901). According to Guetterman and Fetters (2018) case study researchers who combine qualitative and quantitative methods “can benefit from recent innovations in mixed methods research” (p. 902). A meaningful integration of mixed methods design data will help “yield new inferences and a more complete understanding” (ibid). The following studies (Guetterman & Mitchell, 2016; Little et al., 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2010; Scammon et al., 2013) have used case study-mixed methods design in a variety of subject areas.

Creswell (2014), an expert in mixed methods research describes the design as a study that combines/integrates qualitative and quantitative research techniques during data collection, analysis and reporting. McKim (2015) takes the growing adoption of mixed methods research in theses as evidence for the worldwide appeal for mixed methods design. At the same time, Coyle et al. (2018) cite the rising number of funded mixed methods studies as another indicator for their broader application. Yin (2014) identifies the case study research method as a design that entails the study of one or more cases in a real-world context for an in-depth understanding of the case(s). Or to capture both the complexity and particulars of case(s) while for Gerring (2004) case study is “an intensive study of a single unit to generalize across a larger set of units” (p. 341). Case study research design could either be qualitative or quantitative or a combination of the two depending, however, upon the “sort of within-case evidence that is available and relevant to the

question at hand” (Gerring 2007, p. 36). One of the essential functions of a case study design in Gerring’s (2007) view is “the elucidation of causal mechanisms” (p. 122). Gerring (2004), and Guetterman and Fetters (2018) acknowledge the use of case study design in a variety of fields, including political science. Stake (1995) and Yin (2014) admit that case study research has a longstanding tradition of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data for a more comprehensive understanding of the case(s). In both single- and, multiple-case studies design analysis of the contextual conditions of the case is necessary (Yin 2014).

Figure 3: Case Study-Mixed Methods Design



Source: Adopted from Guetterman and Fetters, 2018, p. 901

4.3. Case Selection Approach and Rationale

Case selection is a technique through which cases targeted for intensive investigation are chosen (Gerring & Cojocaru, 2016, p. 394). For any research project, defining its population and selecting a sample from this population are essential exercises. Nature of the study population and the research problem determines the sampling methods. In a case study design, the question(s) posed, together with the purpose of the research control the selection of case(s) (Gerring, 2004; Guetterman & Fetters, 2018; Yin, 2014). Guetterman and Fetters (2018) argue that “cases are typically selected because they represent a phenomenon of interest” which in Stake’s (1995) terminology would be instrumental case study (p. 904). For Stake (1995), cases typically are selected because they are instrumental to the study. Gerring (2007) notes that case selection goals must be attained through a procedure known as purposive (non-random) selection (p. 88). Yin (2014) argues that the choice of embedded units of analysis can be made using sampling or cluster techniques.

For design quality and to provide study audience with the necessary context to judge the justification for the case selection process, case selection activities must be methodical rather than haphazard. The selection process must be justifiable, fully documented, and activities reported (Gerring, 2007; Gerring & Cojocaru, 2016; Seawright & Gerring, 2008; Yin, 1994, 2014).

A collective case study (Stake, 1995) design intends to identify, describe and explain the sustainability problem of foreign aid financed institution building/development efforts in developing countries around the world. This study selected CDDP among the institutional building or development interventions of international development aid agencies. The reason being that from the 1980s to date, CDDP has been the most popular strategy employed by international donor agencies notably the WB to build, develop or reshape local institutions in fragile and post-conflict situations (Casey et al., 2011b, 2011a; Fearon et al., 2009, 2011, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; Wong, 2012). WB's Africa region CDDP has been selected among the different international aid agency programs that are engaged in institutional building or development in fragile and post-conflict contexts. The justification being that in December 2000, the Africa Region of the Bank launched its new CDD vision with an explicit focus on community empowerment with support to decentralisation or devolution of powers and responsibilities to local governments with local development planning institutions as the cornerstone of this new strategy (N. Kumar, 2003).

To facilitate the identification of case selection strategy for this study, the researcher applied the three-cluster framework of Shakir (2002). Out of Patton's (1990, pp. 169–186) sixteen purposive sampling strategies, Shakir (2002, p. 193) develops three-cluster framework which included the following different strategies for case study selection: significant vs. ordinary, different vs. similar, and predetermined vs. ad hoc. This classification framework, Shakir (2002) argues, is proposed to “facilitate the identification of a suitable strategy or a combination strategy for the case research inquiry” (p. 194). In making choices among sampling strategies, I negotiated through an iterative process between one of the two ends of each of the three clusters. Any approach that is adopted, Shakir (2002) maintains must meet the two appropriateness conditions of “a fit to both the purpose of research and the phenomenon of inquiry” (Shakir, 2002, p. 193 see also; Kuzel, 1999; Miles et al., 1994; Patton, 1990). While arguing that Patton's (1990, pp. 169–186)

purposeful sampling strategy “is one approach in achieving the appropriateness condition” of case selection, Shakir (2002) states that, to satisfy the appropriateness issue, a researcher needs to answer the question about “how to sample cases” (p. 193).

The application of the three-cluster framework in this study resulted in case selection strategies that integrate typical case sampling strategy, different cases with maximum variation and random purposeful sampling strategies, and prior theory determined cases criterion. The strategic choices made are justified as follows: first, the study is exploratory and an embedded case study design, i.e. single-case study involving more than one unit of analysis. The purpose of selecting one or more typical cases, Patton (1990) argues, is to “describe and illustrate what is typical” about institutions that are either built or developed in fragile and post-conflict contexts through donor-funded programs/agencies with regards to their sustainability problem. The study selected typical cases of donor-funded institution building/development programs like WB’s West Africa CDDP with embedded units/cases at multiple levels including GoBifo CDDP of Northern, Sierra Leone and the Gambia’s CDDP. Selecting typical cases is to “better explore the causal mechanisms at work in a general, cross-case relationship” which “may lead toward several different conclusions” (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 299).

The two programs are selected for their instrumental value in that they represent the typical context of West Africa, the interest of the study questions and purpose. West Coast region of the Gambia represents a non-post conflict fragile community with poor track records of service delivery within the bureaucracy. In comparison, Bombali district of Northern Sierra Leone presents a weak and post-conflict society with poor track records of service delivery within the bureaucracy. Two typical features that typify the West Africa region and by extension sub-Saharan Africa as a whole or the entire developing world. WB’s West Africa CDDP and its embedded units of analysis are selected because they are representative or typical cases of donor-funded institutional building/developing programs. Which, according to Yin (2009) is one of the conditions under which both the single-case holistic designs and those using embedded units of analysis are justifiable.

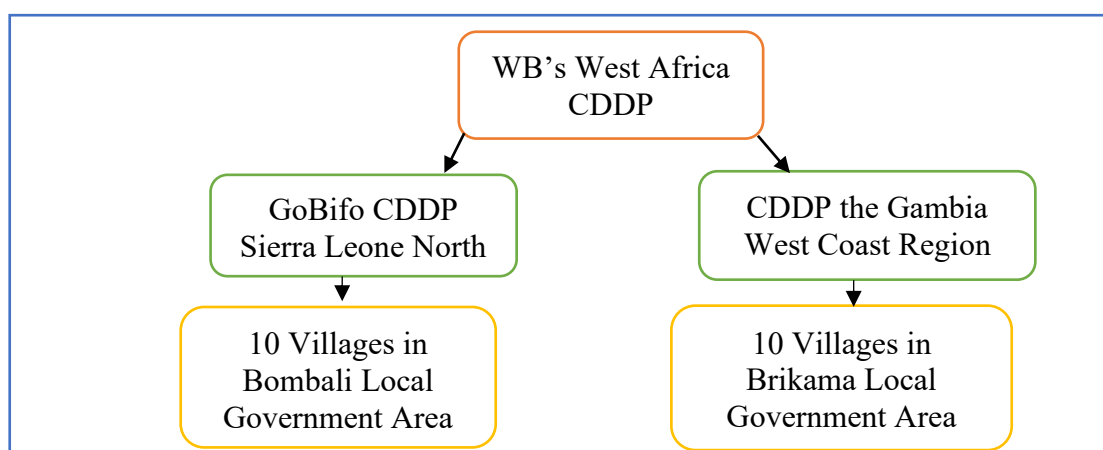
In the second sampling strategy, VDCs (decentralised village development planning institutions) are selected because in most cases are institutions built/developed by donor-funded programs. This sampling strategy is applied to tackle the problem of maximum variation with the hope of capturing and describing the “central themes or principal

outcomes that cut across a great deal” of case variation (Patton, 1990, p. 172) or to capture “important common patterns that cut across variations” (Shakir, 2002, p. 193). Although the difference between individual cases/heterogeneity can sometimes be considered a problem, however, maximum variation sampling strategy turns this apparent weakness into a strength. Patton further argues that “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts” of the cases (p. 172). Third, for quality assurance purposes, this study uses priori theory determined criterion sampling strategy to select different VDCs from two other communities “because they meet some predetermined criterion” of importance (Patton, 1990, p. 183; Shakir, 2002, p. 193).

The research selected VDCs among the empirically carefully chosen CDDP treatment village samples that were field matched with comparison villages and validated during the baseline surveys and impact evaluation of CDDP (Arcand et al., 2010; Casey et al., 2011b, 2013; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013). The fourth sampling strategy used is the different case random purposeful sampling strategy where villages/VDCs are selected using purposeful random sampling strategy from empirically tested villages. The aim here is to capture the diverse ethnolinguistic and religious composition of the regions and for the inclusion of both hard-to-reach/off-the-road/remote and on-the-road settlements. In each village, the study purposefully selected households and respondents within households at random for the survey. This was for the “purpose of increasing credibility” of the research findings (Shakir, 2002, p. 193) and to decrease “judgment within a purposeful category” (Patton, 1990, p. 183).

The purpose here is to document or identify common patterns that cut across the different cases about institutional sustainability problem. To get an in-depth information about decentralised village development planning institutions, CBOs are pulled together in small groups for discussion about issues around their functioning and sustainability problem. They are selected for FGD because they have a similar background, knowledge and experiences when it comes to VDCs and their community development functions. To ensure information is collected from a wide range of individuals, another set of individuals called key informants are selected for an in-depth interview using purposive random sampling strategy. These individuals are selected because of their first-hand knowledge about VDCs and their development planning functions.

Figure 4: Selected Case and Embedded Cases



4.4. Data Collection Methods

The study is convergent mixed-methods multiple case study designs. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) identify three core mixed-method designs which include explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, and convergent. As part of the description of the above, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) define convergent designs as a single-phase study in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected together as well as analysed and integrated usually to compare or link findings from two research types. The researcher uses mixed methods research in this investigation. The reason being that either qualitative or quantitative method alone wouldn't be sufficient to capture the complexity of factors that contribute to the sustainability problems of donor-funded CDDP institutions. Added to this is the fact that data collected using the two approaches would provide a complete picture of the research problem.

Guetterman and Fetters (2018) argue that “integration is a critical and defining feature of mixed methods that may occur at many levels of the research process” (p. 903). Ideally, it's at the design stage that a researcher develops “a plan for collecting both forms of data in a way that will be conducive to merging the databases” (Fetters et al., 2013, p. 2140). A researcher using mixed data collection methods “mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a *single* study” (Yin, 2014, p. 65, the emphasis as in the original text). Equally, to encourage

“serendipity and openness to new ideas”, Brewer and Hunter (2006) advocate for a creative meshing of data collection methods (p. 69).

The complexity of the sustainability problem of donor-funded institution building/development programs in fragile and post-conflict contexts compels the use of embedded, multiple-case mixed methods design. The researcher integrates qualitative and quantitative data purposefully to understand and explain which external environment and internal organisational factors contribute to the failure of decentralised village development planning institutions to participate actively in the multi-level planning processes after the donor-funded program that helped established them phased-out. Yin (2014) and Gerring (2004), two well-known case study experts and mixed methods experts like Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) all recommend the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in research. Application of a mixed-method design in case study provides clarity to the case study while the integration of data sources ensures a complete understanding of case(s) (Fetters et al., 2013; Guetterman & Fetters, 2018).

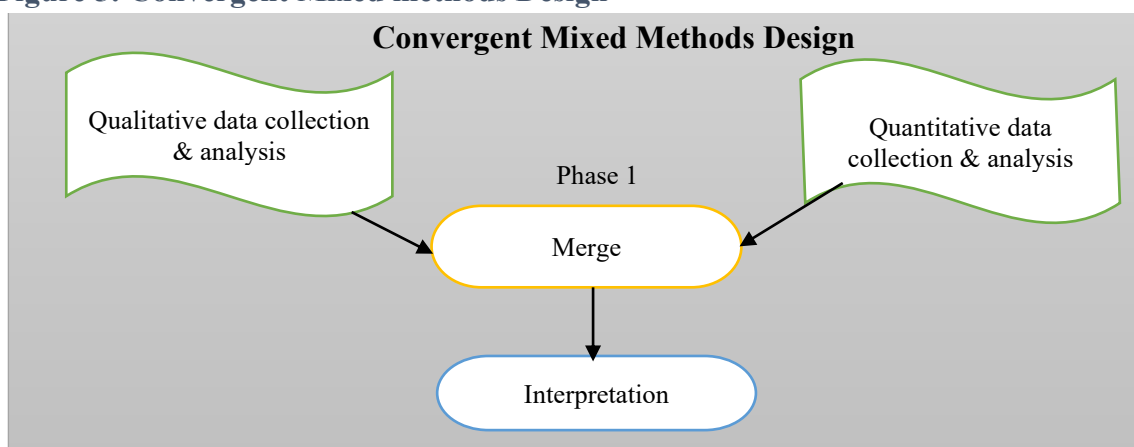
This dissertation combines both survey-closed ended (quantitative) information collection method using a questionnaire and open-ended (qualitative) information gathering techniques using KIIs and FGDs. This combined method allows the researcher to collect data that best answer the research question(s). It is argued that a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods as oppose to either of the two data collection techniques only, in some way, provides a complete picture of the research problem (Brannen & Halcomb, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The researcher was able to engage the services of some credible and experienced research assistants in both Sierra Leone and the Gambia through the support of the local partner organisations of ChildFund International, the researcher’s former employer.

The research assistants have unhindered access to the study sites with vast fieldwork experience and knowledge of data collection techniques, the local languages and the CDDP. Research assistants in both countries assisted in selection of embedded cases (villages) and the administration of data collection tools/instruments. The unique point of departure for the assessment of the sustainability problem of the selected decentralised village development planning institutions for this research is its longitudinal perspective. The contracted data collection assistants are either former field staff of the donor-funded CDDP that setup/revamped the said institutions in the identified communities or the CBOs

staff that worked with or part of the program at more than one point in its development. This long-term association is advantageous as it provides more insight into the dynamics of VDC sustainability problem than would have been possible through a one-point-in-time engagement with the cases.

Among the field assistants were former CDDP field coordinators, former research assistants to those who conducted the baseline study and end of project impact evaluations of the studied CDDP and staff of CBOs who have been working and researching in the districts, chiefdoms and villages for years. Patton (1980) argues that “the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (p. 197). This standard is employed to ensure only well-trained and credible field researchers with both contextual knowledge, language skills and the necessary data collection skills are engaged. The researcher worked with the field assistants to identify and sample villages for the administrations of questionnaires for the surveys, select CBOs for the focus groups discussions and participants for the KIIs.

Figure 5: Convergent Mixed methods Design



Source: Cook, L., Kamalodeen, V. (2019) Mixed Methods Case Study Research. In: MMIRA Webinar, 2019-2020 Conferences

a. Primary Data Collection

Access and Permissions

A half-day training was conducted for the research assistants on data collection focusing on the survey questionnaire, KII and FGD guides. During the session, a strategy was developed on community entry procedures, how to administer the three research instruments/tools including a selection of villages/VDCs for the surveys and KIIs and

institutions and organisations for both the KIIs and FGDs. The sampling strategy for the household survey was also discussed and agreed once the team got in the villages. For access and permissions, letters of introduction were written and sent first to village chiefs and VDC chairpersons through the research assistants a week before the visit, informing them of the researcher, the research purpose and the intended day of visit and participants. According to Stake (1995) “in requests to district (...) the nature of the case study, the sponsor, the activity intended, the primary issues, the period, and burden to the parties should be made known” (p. 57). The letter serves as a consent form for both the village chiefs to permit us to interview in their village and VDC chairpersons for access to the VDC membership including permission to record their responses for analysis. This is different from the interview consent form for individuals identified for the interviews. This is because, according to Stake (1995):

Although individuals often immediately acquiesce if a superior has granted permission, a brief written description of the intended casework should be offered. Usually, a couple of paragraphs will suffice, but extensive plans should be available if requested. Plans for distribution of the report should be indicated, with any intention or opportunity for review of the drafts by actors. Expectations of any plan to anonymize should be expressed. (p. 57)

To ascertain the level of preparedness introductory letters were followed by telephone calls a day before the visit to each village. A village was also identified, and consents of the village head/chief and VDC chairperson sought for a day’s pilot testing of the research tools. This was followed by minor revision/adjustment of the data collection instruments and the printing of final documents. Where possible members of the VDCs (through their chairpersons) and WDCs (through the district councillor who chairs WDC) were either informed through phone calls or a letter sent to the village chiefs. Other KII respondents including heads of institutions, council and staff, central government staff at the regional level and other participants were also contacted either through a phone call, a letter or both to get their consent to be interviewed and to agree on the date and time.

The few of the most cumbersome, time consuming and expensive part of the data collection are the contacting of KII participants. It required persistence and a lot of negotiation on the part of the research team. Similarly, CBOs were contacted through a letter followed by a phone call to get their expressed consent for participation in the FGDs. Because they are a

bit structured contacting and getting their expressed permission wasn't that difficult except the negotiation for a transport refund and refreshment for the participant and the cost of the venue for the discussions. Stake (1995) states that "if there is funding, a line-item for meals and refreshments for informants and hosts is a legitimate field expense" (p. 59). In the letter of introduction to CBOs and heads of villages, institutions and organisations, the researcher indicated why each was selected and expressed how significant their contribution to the research was valuable.

As a protocol, the first day of the team's visit to each village begins with a courtesy visit on the village chief (head), his council of elders and members of the VDC. This was to formally introduce the research team, its mission and seek for their expressed consent to conduct both the household survey and the KIIs for members of VDCs. Stake (1995) points out that institutions usually have different permission procedures that researchers should follow (p. 58). And that "it is essential to obtain special written permission" from respondents themselves directly where applicable, or the authorities of the institution responsible for them were required or both (p. 57). To be discreet such meetings were punctuated by the presentation of a gift/token of appreciation to the village chief. This was to show our respect by the custom. Stake (1995) confirms that "some fieldworkers like to offer something in exchange for the favours; for the intrusion" (p. 59). For additional description of the exemplary entry, behaviours see (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

i. Quantitative Data Collection

Survey Data collection

A survey is a research approach where a group of methods such as questionnaires, interviews or forms of published statistics are used with the emphasis on quantitative analysis of data (large or small unit of population) using statistical techniques. Stake (1995) argues that "quantitative interviews parallel quantitative observations: They seek to aggregate perceptions or knowledge over multiple respondents" (p. 65). Statistics Canada (2010) argues that survey is "*any activity that collects information in an organised and methodical manner about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures, and compiles such information into a useful summary form*" (p. 1, italic as in the original).

The survey questionnaire combines both closed-ended and open-ended questions with households as the target population unit. After understanding the low literacy rate in the countryside, an interviewer-assisted method was used to administer the questionnaire. Interviews were conducted using a paper-based method called Paper and Pencil Interview (PAPI) (Statistics Canada, 2010). The target population for this survey consists of individuals age eighteen (18) and over living in villages, including adult male and female and youth male and female. From the hitherto CDDP beneficiary villages of Kombo East and Central districts of Western Gambia, ten (10) villages were selected and ten (10) villages from Bombali district of Northern Sierra Leone. Villages were chosen purposefully to ensure ethnic and religious diversity in the sample.

In each of the villages, ten (10) households were selected at random using odd numbers. Respondents of five (5) households of the tenth (10th) selected village of Bombali district were used as a pilot to test the research tools to reduce cost. Thus, reducing the total survey sample size of one hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents. This includes one hundred (100) respondents from the Gambia and ninety-five (95) from Sierra Leone. Respondents within households were purposively selected at random to ensure the inclusion of all gender and age categories-adult males, women and youth (male or female). For instance, when an adult male is interviewed in the first household, an adult woman or a youth (male or female) is selected in the following household and so forth.

This sequence continued until the final interview. Generally, survey interviews were conducted in the local languages understood by the respondents. Each of the interview sessions lasted for about thirty minutes to one hour. After getting the expressed approval to conduct the survey and KIIs from the village head and his council, the research assistants would explain the sampling procedures of the study after which the village chief would assign someone to assist us in the sampling households and participants. Since the people in the villages have their daily schedules, this was an essential step as it gave each family the chance to know who was to stay at home for the interview while the rest went on with their day's activities. Research assistants recorded the interviews in handwriting and by filling the questionnaires. Each day, the research assistants would collate all the filled questionnaire and any notes taken and handed them to the researcher.

ii. Qualitative Data Collection

This researcher conducted KIIs and FGDs in which participants were purposefully selected. General interview guide approach is one of the three basic qualitative data collection approaches through open-ended interviews identified by Patton (1980). The pride of a qualitative researcher is to discover and portray “multiple views of the case” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). During KIIs and FGDs research assistants were aided by an interview guide containing topical issue areas and relevant questions under each. However, research assistants were at liberty depending on the participant(s) to vary the wording or order of questions. According to Patton (1980) “the issues in the outline need not be taken in any particular order, and the actual wording of questions to elicit responses about those issues is not determined in advance” (p. 198). The reason for the interview guide is to ensure “common information [is] obtained from each person interviewed (...). The interviewer is thus required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to specific respondents in the context of the actual interview” (Patton, 1980, p. 198). According to Stake (1995) a qualitative interviewer should have “a short list of issue-oriented questions” (p. 65). And for Patton (1980) an interviewer should have a “basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered” (p. 198).

Research assistants who conducted FGDs in Kombo East and Central Districts were three in total, whereas in Bombali district they were two. Assistants in both cases have the experience and are proficient in the local languages and familiar with the socio-cultural setting of the locality. The FGD team divided tasks among themselves. While one facilitated the discussions the other took note manually and recording using electronic recorders. The researcher observed the sessions and took his notes as well, which he used to give feedback to the FGD team in preparation for subsequent sessions. The discussions were recorded verbatim. In the case of the Gambia, there were two note-takers and a facilitator. In Sierra Leone the team comprised of a gentleman and a lady whereas in the Gambia all are men. Each FGD sessions lasted about two to three hours, and a small stipend equivalent to the cost of a meal and transport was paid to each participant to compensate for their time and transport. Using the FGD discussion guide, the team produced a field reports days after the FGDs highlighting critical observations from the deliberation, and jurisdiction reports later.

Key Informant Interview (KII)

KIIs are qualitative in-depth face-to-face consultative meetings to collect data from individuals who in the researcher's estimation know or have first-hand knowledge of the problem that is being investigated and can provide information about the issue and proffer possible solutions. Critical informants interview is defined by (Marshall, 1996, p. 92) as "an expert source of information" while Kumar (1989) refers to it as an act of "interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject" (p. 1). This research has three categories of KII respondents: VDC members, WDCs and a category labelled other stakeholders (a mixture of various stakeholder groups). Each KII session lasted for about thirty minutes (30). Each session began with reintroduction and explanation of the intended purpose of the research. Researcher assistants took notes and where necessary used mobile phones to record and later transcribed to produce their jurisdiction report.

1)-KII for VDCs

In Kombo East and Central districts, Western Gambia, a total number of three (3) VDC members were interviewed in each of the ten (10) villages. That means a total of thirty (30) respondents. While in Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone a total number of four (4) VDC members were interviewed in nine (9) villages totalling thirty-six (36) respondents. In Bombali District, interviews were conducted in nine (9) villages because the tenth (10th) village was used to pilot test the research instruments. In total sixty-six (66) VDC members were interviewed in the two CDD program sites. In each village, KII targeted vital members of the VDCs such as the chairperson, and women and youth representatives.

2)-KII-for WDCs

In Sierra Leone, a total of twenty-one (21) WDC members were interviewed from eight (8) different wards. The data collection team of the Gambia deemed it not necessary to interview WDCs due to the nature of its membership composition. WDCs composed of VDC representatives and the councillor. Some of the VDC members that were interviewed form part of the WDCs while councillors are captured in the mixed stakeholder group category.

3)-KII-Other Stakeholders

In the mixed/other stakeholder categories, seven (7) individuals were interviewed in Northern Sierra Leone and ten (10) in the West Coast region of The Gambia. Included in these interviews were staff of the central government at both national and regional levels, local councillors, chairpersons and staff, and NGOs representatives in the region.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGDs refers to “data collection techniques that capitalise on interaction within a group to elicit rich experiential data” (Asbury, 1995, p. 414). Asbury (1995) argues that focus group is “a set of procedures for the collection and analysis of qualitative data that may help us gain an enlarged sociological and psychological understanding in whatsoever sphere of human experience” (ibid, pp. 414–415). Rabiee (2004) states that focus group is ““a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being ‘focused’ on a given topic”” (p. 655). In each of the program sites, four (4) CBOs were targeted for FGDs. There were four separate discussion groups in each program sites; each included a mixed-gender group of five (5) to eight (8) CBO representatives. There are two (2) CBOs in Bombali District that is unable to meet the mix gender requirements.

b. Secondary Data Collection

The literature reviewed for this dissertation includes peer-reviewed or publications by independent researchers and non-peer-reviewed journals. The research analysed both academic and non-academic literature to provide context for the investigation. The focus of the review included impact evaluations of WB-supported CDDPs and other community projects funded by various NGOs, governments, and international donors all over the world. Peer-reviewed literature was incorporated to serve as an added layer of quality control and to make sure the study methodology is vetted and reviewed for appropriateness and technical soundness. Non-peer-reviewed literature is added to allow the researcher to access potentially rich sources of data such as the administrative data. Administrative data “includes all data collected through existing government Ministries, programs and projects” (World Bank, n.d.,

https://dimewiki.worldbank.org/wiki/Secondary_Data_Sources). Sometimes such data is in paper format only with restricted access and can often be accessed through visits to government ministries, departments and agencies. For instance, unlike GoBifo CDDP of Sierra Leone, much of the information on the Gambia's CDDP is not available online or published. The researcher has to make use of the Department of Community Development office in Banjul, its regional office in Brikama and the Ministry of Local Government and Lands (MLGL) office.

Overall, much of the contextual and program information about GoBifo CDDP of Sierra Leone was obtained online. However, the researcher paid a visit to the offices of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) to conduct an interview with the former coordinator of GoBifo CDDP and to access specific materials. When granted access, the researcher conducted a series of desk reviews of available national and project documents on CDDP. Such as project appraisal documents (PADs), operations manuals, project task plans and implementation completion reports (ICRs), baseline survey reports, contractual agreements, national decentralisation acts and development plans among others. This is useful to understand design choices that were made, desired outcomes envisaged, and to get information on the country contexts. Apart from the requirement of SCOPE institutional framework, a detailed description of case contexts included in this research is justified by the following.

When multiple cases are used, a typical format is to provide detailed description of each case and then present the themes within the case (within-case analysis) followed by thematic analysis across cases (cross-case analysis). In the final interpretative phase, the researcher reports the lessons learned from the analysis. (Harling, 2012, p. 2)

To develop vicarious experiences for the reader, to give them a sense of "being there," the physical situation should be well described (...) (Stake, 1995, p. 63). There are other contexts besides physical (...) the economic context (...) historical, cultural, or aesthetic. (...) political contexts of decentralization. (ibid, pp. 63–64)

Data Quality Control

During the surveys and KIIs, the researcher conducted spot checks and random phone calls to individuals said to have participated in either the survey or KIIs to ascertain their participation. During FGDs, the researcher served as an observer to ensure quality is maintained throughout data collection. Also, the researcher pilot-tested all research instrument and provided one on one training sessions on the research instruments to avoid misunderstanding of tools by data collectors. The researcher recorded the survey data on Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the qualitative data on MAXQDA. At the data entry stage, data were double-checked for accuracy.

Data Processing

Data processing entails all activities related to data handling after collection. The process transforms responses obtained or data collected through KIIs, FGDs or surveys into a form that is suitable for tabulation and analysis (Statistics Canada, 2010). At the close of every activity, the researcher checked to ensure the necessary information was received, and the data legibly recorded. He studied for errors and inconsistencies, including observation notes if taken by the interviewers. He also took part in the different sessions to ensure all protocols are observed to ensure quality data.

With regards to the survey data, activities such as coding of questionnaire data, mainly answers to open-ended questions that were not pre-coded were also done by the researcher himself. Although in some instances there are variations, however, to a more considerable extent, a similar coding strategy was used to categorise data from the survey, interviews and focus groups. Statistics Canada (2010) defines coding as “the process of assigning a numerical value to responses to facilitate data capture and processing in general” (p. 199). Data processing is followed by the capturing of survey data into SPSS software. In contrast, KII and FGD data were captured in MAXQDA software, a process referred to as the “transformation of responses into a machine-readable format” (ibid, p. 202). The data was edited in detail and stored for analysis when it was inputted in the different analysis software, an activity Statistics Canada (2010) refers to as an “application of checks to identify missing, invalid or inconsistent entries that point to data records that are potentially in error” (p. 202).

4.5. Data Synthesis and Analysis

Among other considerations, the added value for the use of mixed methods is to boost the validity of the research findings through data triangulation. From inception, this research has combined quantitative and qualitative methods. The two approaches are linked from the data collection stage through to analysis and reporting. Data analysis began with the survey data where the researcher uses few elementary and intermediate statistics to describe the observed units, interpret tables and charts, including various summary measures like frequency distributions and graphs. For data triangulation, survey data was used to complement data from FGDs and KIIs. During analysis, findings from the different categories of KIIs (VDCs, WDCs & the mixed stakeholder group), FGDs and the survey data from each region were pulled together first and at level to those the two regions were pulled together and similar findings identified. Findings were triangulated to facilitate validation of data through cross verification from the three data sources-surveys, KIIs and FGDs.

Data integration is followed shortly by merging the analysed survey data with those of KIIs and FGDs with the help of the following data analysis software: SPSS, MAXQDA and Excel. Fetters et al. (2013) identify merging, connecting, and building as the common approaches to the integration of methods (p. 2139) and argue that “*integration* through merging of data occurs when researchers *bring the two databases together for analysis and for comparison*” (ibid, p. 2140, the emphasis as in the original publication). Merging according to Fetters et al. (2013) typically “occurs after the statistical analysis of the numerical data and qualitative analysis of the textual data” (ibid). At the analysis stage, the researcher tries not only to outline overlapping and the distinct aspects of the sets of primary data from the regions but equally elaborated his findings with contextual data from similar research findings. To expand potential findings and uncover inconsistencies and contradictions between results based on different methods, Pat Bazeley (2009a) argues that although triangulation was:

Originally employed in the context of validating conclusions through seeking confirmatory evidence from at least two sources (...), it is now also widely used to include the practice of seeking data from at least two sources with complementary

strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses, such that data from one source complements or extends the other. (p. 89)

To explore the possibility for deeper insights and to answer the research questions, the researcher compares and integrates multiple data sourced from the embedded cases for the two regions at different stages. Data analysis and synthesis were conducted to have an in-depth understanding of the cases and to provide a more compelling findings base on program assessment and judgement. An investigator in mixed-method research design, collect and analyse data. Equally, sh/e integrates findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Pat Bazeley, 2012; Patricia Bazeley, 2009b; Brannen & Halcomb, 2009). According to the following authors (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003; Patricia Bazeley, 2009a; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) integration of qualitative and quantitative methods could happen at every stage throughout a mixed-method study. This is because the two approaches are interdependent when it comes to building a coherent whole in attaining the purpose of thorough research. For Yin (2006), combining qualitative and quantitative approaches at every stage of a study should be a matter of general principle. Mixed methods researchers, Bryman (2007) argues should “analyse, interpret, and write up their research in such a way that the quantitative and qualitative components are mutually illuminating” (p. 8).

Data Synthesis

Realising that there was no need to separate quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher decided to integrate the two sets of data earlier enough to avoid significant loss of opportunities to enrich the analysis. Pat Bazeley (2009a) argues that “applying a common conceptual framework to varied data sources is an important first element in synthesising data at a group level” (p. 93). Initially, the two sets of data were analysed separately using two separate software. However, for the ease of pattern observation of subgroup findings, certain cases or groups of cases were sorted and brought together in the forms of tables and graphs using Excel software. Charts and tables were generated from the data to provide a visual display for interpretation and presentation.

Pat Bazeley (2009a) argues that data are often “gathered and recorded only at a group basis” (p. 94). However, “where there is the possibility of finer-level matching of data,

there exists an opportunity for a fine-tuned synthesis or comparison, or even blending of different forms of data” (ibid). Thus, placing survey, KII & FGD data into a standard matrix or database does not only allow for comparison but another opportunity for the researcher to observe patterns that were not captured during isolated quantitative or qualitative data analyses. Unexpected relationships were discovered in the process, as well. Almost all research methods compare data as an essential strategy for data analysis to facilitate the following outcomes:

Identification of subgroup characteristics; showing the behavioural or ideational correlates of scaled scores; showing the pattern of relationships between different constructs or variables; discernment of new dimensions within or related to a concept; validation of scale scores; and identification of outlier or deviant cases for further analysis. (Patricia Bazeley, 2009a, p. 96)

Beyond the intuitive assessment of survey responses and separate piles of verbatim quotes from KIIs and FGDs, in addition to Excel software, the researcher used specialised quantitative and qualitative data analysis software for analysis. SPSS and MAXQDA software allowed for the entry of numerical, categorical and text data and the capacity to sort and re-sort data. The two analysis software helped the researcher to put the data of the two former donors-funded CDDP sites side-by-side and observe the existing patterns. To facilitate description during analysis, the researcher transformed KII and FGD data using frequency counts, from purely qualitative to a mix of qualitative and quantitative data and integrate them with those of the survey.

The researcher uses counts to illustrate the number/percentage of participants who mentioned something or the global frequency with which something is said. Rather than rely on numbers, percentages or frequency counts to present the findings, the researcher provides sufficient contextual information to help readers interpret or adequately make sense of the results. Counting themes or categorisation in a qualitative database “constitutes a very simple form of conversion of data from textual to numerical form” (Patricia Bazeley, 2009a, p. 102). Notwithstanding the argument that frequency and importance are not necessarily synonymous, Bazeley (2009a) holds the view that the:

Use of counts communicates more effectively and reliably than does use of vague terms to indicate more or less frequent occurrence of some feature in the text (...).

Counts can be viewed as reflecting the importance of various emergent themes (...). Counting summarises patterns in data, allowing interrelationships to be more easily identified (...). It helps to maintain analytical integrity (as a counter to biased impressions) and can be used in verifying a hypothesis (...). (p. 102, the use of count in analysis is also supported by the following scholars; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sandelowski, 2001; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003; Morgan, 1993)

In addition to the dedication of a chapter to the analysis of secondary data about the case contexts, analysis of primary data was done at two distinct levels. The initial part of primary data analysis presents a separate analysis of the data gathered through primary data sources (survey, KIIs and FGDs) from GoBifo CDDP beneficiary communities of Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone and CDDP beneficiary communities of Brikama Local Government Area, West Coast region of The Gambia. Here the researcher focuses on variables that are deemed relevant to the understanding/explanation of the sustainability problem of decentralised development institutions used as cases. The data was categorised into factors of internal administrative structure and processes and general and task environments of the institutions. In the second part, a distinction is made among the findings of each community based on internal administrative structure and processes factors of the institutions and environment factors.

4.6. Reporting

In reporting the results, information was brought together from both qualitative and quantitative sources, including secondary data, where necessary, it included numerical data and explanatory text relating to each concept. An effort was made to blend long wieldy narratives and the use of diagrams, figures and tables necessary to capture and summarise the findings. It's hoped that this would enhance readers' understanding of the results. Emphasis is on the transferability of causal propositions to similar contexts rather than a generalisation from the studied cases to a broader set of cases. At the explanatory stage, the researcher observed relationships and patterns, looked for new propositions and tried to identify additional evidence from similar research findings to either test the propositions or elaborate on them. Rather than putting forward mere description of attributes, the

explanation triangulated¹⁷ the three collected primary data (survey, KII & FGD) with sourced secondary data elsewhere in the world. This helped the researcher to confirm answers to the descriptive questions, checked and strengthened answers to the identified causal questions.

The discussion section combined evidence from the findings of the two CDDP beneficiary communities that are categorised into unsustainability factors of the internal administrative structure and process and those of the general and task environment of the institutions. These are factors considered to have provided a plausible explanation for the sustainability problem of the decentralised local development planning institutions in fragile and post-conflict West Africa. Evidence produced in this section is the combined findings of the secondary data collected on the local government environment and the CDDP contexts of the Western Gambia and Northern Sierra Leone and those collected through primary sources. The in-depth analysis and description of WB's West Africa CDD Program and the two embedded case contexts present the researcher with an excellent information that would help understand the dynamics of institutional sustainability problem of local development planning institutions within the decentralised framework as expounded in SCOPE framework.

¹⁷ “The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment. Note: by combining multiple data sources, methods, analyses or theories, evaluators seek to overcome the bias that comes from single informants, methods, observers or single theory studies”. (OECD-DAC definition, 2010)

CHAPTER 5: CASE BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter introduced an overview of West Africa's social, political, and economic contexts (the general environment) followed by an explanation of the CDDP of West Africa in general and those of the Gambia and GoBifo of Northern Sierra Leone in particular. Part two of the chapter presents an extensive review and analysis of the local government environments of The Gambia and Sierra Leone with particular focus on the regions where the selected cases/villages are located. This chapter describes the general and task environment of the decentralised village development planning institutions called the VDCs as required by the SCOPE institutional sustainability framework. The description of the local government environment of the two communities demonstrates the nature of the task environment of the decentralised development planning institutions including that of the VDCs. This is very important in analysis using SCOPE framework which puts much emphasis on both general and task environment of an institution.

The secondly, the study is a case study embedded design. In writing about the use of case study design, Harling (2012) states that "a typical format is to provide a detailed description of each case" (p. 2). Stake (1995) in writing about the description of case contexts in his 'The Art of Case Study Research' argues that "to develop vicarious experiences for the reader, to give them a sense of "being there," the physical situation should be well described (Stake, 1995, p. 63). There are other contexts besides physical (...) the economic context (...) historical, cultural, or aesthetic. (...) political contexts of decentralization" (ibid, pp. 63–64).

5.1. Overview of Social, Political and Economic Contexts of West Africa

The most profound community development challenges of the 21st Century West Africa are state fragility and post-conflict situations. There is a perpetual lack of necessary political stability and social capital/cohesion sufficient to engineer collective action for meaningful development and inclusive growth. The region is characterised by high levels of abject poverty, marginalisation of vulnerable communities and minority groups, unequal

distribution of resources, corruption and rampant deterioration of welfare outcomes. Institutions of governance and development are weak and sometimes illegitimate, and thus, unable to better manage change, conflicts, and to tackle the issues of abject poverty and social exclusion. There is a constant fear in post-conflict communities about the possible re-emergence of violent conflict. In contrast, perpetual anxiety of looming violent conflict including pre-and post electoral violence continues to paralyse non-post-conflict communities in the region. This anxiety is fuelled by the erosion of institutional quality, weak social cohesion, and the growing number of insecurities, marginalised and vulnerable groups with no easy fix (de Regt et al., 2013).

Many scholars argue that the causes of state fragility and the outbreaks of civil conflicts in Africa and in particular West Africa are associate with institutional failures. Such as an extreme version of neopatrimonialism politics, incompetence and elite domination of both the central governments and traditional chieftaincy systems (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2016; Bellamy & Williams, 2011; Bøås, 2001, 2014; Bryden et al., 2008; Ekiyor, 2008; Lianyang, 2014; Odobo et al., 2017; Sampson, 2011; Tejpar & de Albuquerque, 2015). Rural communities in West Africa like elsewhere in the developing world are characterised by variations in socio-economic, cultural, political, geographical and historical contexts both within and between communities. this variation is a potential recipe for both conflict and a source of cooperation (Tacoli, 2002).

Conflicts never occur in a vacuum; instead, they take place in institutions or/and the organisations of those institutions. Some specific institutions where conflicts frequently occur in the countryside of sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the Africa West and which also sustain the region's fragility include the following. The conflict within and between political parties and civil society organisations; between state and society, and pastoralists and farmers; gender-based disputes (between men and women), inter-generational conflicts (between youth and seniors), religion-based conflicts and ethnic conflicts. The causes for these conflicts could be embedded within modern institutions or in the archaic cultural traditions, mainly due to corrupt practices, unequal distribution of opportunities, power and resources between individuals and among groups (Changwa, 2009).

Initially, the dire conditions of the urban youth were linked to the outbreak of civil wars that ravaged Mano River Union countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Ivory Coast) most especially those of (Sierra Leone -1991 to 2002 and Liberia-1999 to 2003). However,

the importance of rural context has been very prominent in recent research. The majority of the fighting that took place happened mainly in the countryside with rural youth as the key perpetrators. Recently, the war has been modelled as an “agrarian revolt” because it mirrors layers of entrenched inter-generational agrarian tensions and the breakdown of rural institutions (Richards, 2005). For instance, Richards et al. (2004) argue that the Sierra Leonean civil war was caused by the “failure of the chiefdom governance” while Richards et al. (2005) maintain that at the core of the conflict in Liberia was the result of the “failure of rural institutions” (p. 26).

Similarly, youth perpetrated the revolt against Sir Dawda Jawara’s People’s Progressive Party (PPP) government in the Gambia in 1981 and the subsequent military coup in July 22nd 1994, that ended the administration. Again the April 10th 2000, student demonstration against Yahya Jammeh’s authoritarian administration of Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) was led by the youth. A literature review has shown that intergenerational tensions characterised rural West African communities, youth are being marginalised to the extent that they do not have faith in the local institutions. Institutions such as the administration of justice, marriage, education and markets have all failed them (Richards, 2005; Richards et al., 2005). These are preserved through the control elders have over access to land, marriage and labour institutions of the young men and women. Politically, youth, strangers and women, in the rural communities are marginalised, and a clear-cut division between the ruling “lineage and the rest” of the community exists (Richards et al., 2004).

Although reports have it that fragility indicators of the Gambia from 2007 to 2017, “have steadily worsened” overall, according to Kemayou et al. (2017) West African sub-region is “somewhat more stable” (p. 11) now than ever before. Erosion of public institutions caused by mismanagement of resources and neglect of responsibility have worsened Gambia’s fragility. The country’s deteriorating fragility indicators are caused by low public administrative capacity, pervasive political and petty corruption, alongside the legacy of arbitrary and undemocratic governance. Following decades of authoritarian rule, at all its levels, the Government of the Gambia lacks both “strong institutional processes for deliberation and collaborative policy-making”, and the absence of “shared political norms that underpin democratic governance” (ibid, p. 13).

The marginalisation of youth and women is responsible for the intergenerational tensions which characterise much of West Africa's rural communities. Youth in the region have lost faith in the institutions of justice, marriage, education and markets. In some countries such as Liberia for instance, the idea of community is deeply contested due to engrained historical inequalities in the areas of "access to land" and the divisions between people considered as "civilised" and "aboriginal" (Richards et al., 2005). Equally, Sierra Leone's rural areas are characterised by divisions between "ruling lineages and dependent lineages, and migrant "strangers". This is preserved through elders having control over access to institutions of land, marriage and labour of the young men and women. Politically, youth, strangers and women, in the rural communities have been marginalised with a clear-cut division between the ruling "lineage and the rest" of the community (Richards et al., 2004).

In rural Gambia, there exists discriminatory social institutions and practices. In the institution of marriage, for instance, women have limited control over their reproductive health and sexual rights due to traditional gender norms. Discriminatory social norms and practices often deprive women and girls of accessing resources and opportunities. Discriminatory social norms and practices limit women and girls' control over decision-making both in the households and in the communities. This limited decision-making capacity results in unequal access to productive assets, opportunities for capacity building and access to community support. The inability of public institutions to protect and adjudicate property rights effectively has limited access to land, whereas shallow financial markets restrict access to capital for socio-economic development.

Both unemployment and underemployment rates are not only high among the youth but pervasive. The country although slowly could be credited for ongoing changes in social norms about gender empowerment, however, women's access to land, healthcare, education and productive resources, continues to be restricted by discriminatory cultural practices (Kemayou et al., 2017). Another critical source of fragility in the Gambia like all other countries in sub-Saharan Africa is the uneven distribution of economic opportunity within and between communities due to weak and non-functioning institutions and weakened civil society.

5.2. Decentralized Local Governance Environment

5.2.1. The Gambia Local Governance Environment

Local Government Administration

For local administration and governance, the Gambia is divided into regions, areas, cities, and municipalities. Each local government area is divided into several wards and villages. The demarcation of wards disregarded any consideration of the ethnic origin of inhabitants rather consideration was given to factors such as population density; geographical features; the boundaries of existing local government areas; and economic potential. Economic potential refers to “the ability of a Local Government Area to provide the basic infrastructure and other developmental needs from human, financial and other resources generated in the area” (Government of The Gambia, 2002, Article 6(2)). As of 2016, elections to select local government councils are held every four years. A local government council is dissolved ninety days before the next local government elections. Until the day preceding the first meeting of a council after the local government elections, the President of the Republic appoints an Interim Management Team, for each local government area, to perform the functions and exercise the powers of a council (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009). As of December 2018, the Gambia comprises of two municipalities and five (5) administrative regions and six (6) local government councils.

The two municipalities are the Banjul City Council and Kanifing Municipal Council, while the five administrative regions include West Coast Region (Brikama), Lower River Region (Mansa Konko), North Bank Region (Kerewan), Central River Region (Janjangbureh) and Upper River Region (Basse). Each region is governed by a governor appointed by the President to represent her/him and the central government and is answerable to the Minister of Local Government and Lands. The local government councils include Banjul City Council; Kanifing Municipal Council; Brikama Area Council; Mansa Konko Area Council; Kerewan Area Council; Janjangbureh Area Council, Kuntaur Area Council; and Basse Area Council. A directly elected chairperson heads the local government council.

i. West Coast Region (Brikama Area Council)

West Coast Region (where cases this research were selected) is one of the seven administrative regions and by geographical area the fourth largest part of The Gambia. The

total area of the region is about 1,764.25 km² miles and as per 2013 census, the most populous region of the country (The Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The region borders on the South by the Casamance Region of Senegal, Lower River Region to the east, to the North lies River Gambia and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The region comprises of a local government council (Brikama Area Council), nine administrative districts with each headed by a district chief. The area is sub-divided into nine districts/chiefdoms four of which are among the largest district administrative unit in the Gambia.

The administrative districts of the region are Foni Bintang-Karenai, Foni Bondali, Foni Brefet, Foni Jarrol, Foni Kansala, Kombo Central, Kombo East, Kombo North and Kombo South. The region is an essential link between the Gambia and the southern Senegalese region of Casamance. Brikama, the regional capital, is the most massive provincial capital in the Gambia. Other principal towns of the West Coast region are Bwiam, Kalagi, Sukuta, Gunjur, Tanji, Busumbala, Katong and so on. In the 2013 census, the region recorded the largest population with an estimate of about 699,704 people, representing 37.2 per cent of the total population. Most of the growth in population is associated with the establishment of new housing estates, internal or in-country migration to the Kombo North, Kombo South and Kombo Central districts in recent years. Brikama Local Government Area is the most densely populated area in the Gambia (The Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

ii. People of the West Coast Region and Governance

West Coast is an ethnically diverse region with about ten tribal groups which include: the Mandinka, Wolof, Manjago, Jola, Fula, Serer, Serahule, Laibe, Aku, Mauritians and others with Mandinka speakers being the largest group followed by those of Wolof. The religious complexity is marked in the West Coast Region. Islam is the predominant religion plus a large Christian minority (Protestants and Catholics) and several Pagans. Due to the long tradition of inter-marriage between Mandingos and Jola ethnic groups, until recently with divisive political strategy by former president Yahya Jammeh, they have been very close allies and worked closely together for the common good. Chiefdoms/district in the West Coast were tribal in origin and composition but not anymore. In all the nine districts, one can find at least two principal ethnic groups forming a combined significant majority. Rigid compartmentalisation of society along with traditional norms and land issues are the

leading complex concerns in West Coast. Small scale business, fishing and farming are the main economic activities of the people resident in the region.

Institutional Context of Decentralisation

The initial attempts to decentralised authority were initiated in the Gambia in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Precisely from 13-22 January 1986 when the Gambia Government together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (Alam & Athreya, 2009, p. 28) or in another version the Gambia Government, the Management Development Institute (MDI) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (Khan, 2009, pp. 50–51) organised a high-level national workshop on decentralisation. In the early 1990s, a study was commissioned by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to make recommendations on decentralisation in the Gambia. The report of this study was submitted to the government in 1993 and 1994, together with other ministries concerned. The Ministry of Local Government presented a joint paper which was approved by the Cabinet in April 1994. However, due to the change of government in July 1994, the issue of decentralisation stalled until the coming into force of the 1997 Constitution when an attempt to decentralised governance through the new government regained momentum (Alam & Athreya, 2009, p. 28; Khan, 2009, p. 50).

The 1997 Constitution of the Gambia, the LGAct 2002, Local Government Finance and Audit Act 2004 and their subsequent amendments are some of the key legal instruments that provide the institutional context for local governance, decentralised administration, planning and capacity building in The Gambia. These legal instruments provide the framework that established democratic structures at regional, ward and village levels in the country. Equally established are the traditional chieftaincy authorities both at the district and village levels. Several other national policies such the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Vision 2020 and Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE)-The Gambia 2012-2015 and other sectoral policy instruments have completed the institutional landscape of the country's local governance and decentralisation reform agenda (Ministry of Finance & Economic Affairs, 2011, p. 96).

a) National Level Local Governance Coordinating Institution

In the Gambia, the MLGL and its department of community development are responsible for harmonising local government administrative matters relating to the central

government initiatives, policies and the provision of technical guidance to the LCs. As part of its mandates, the Ministry is tasked to inspect and monitors the activities and performance of local government authorities and ensures they act within the scope of the 1997 Constitution, LGAct 2002 and any other relevant enactments. The Ministry coordinates and advocates on behalf of LCs at the level of the Central Government about issues affecting them (Government of The Gambia, 2002). Besides ensuring that LCs become transparent, accountable and compliant, the Ministry coordinates and provides advice to individuals and organisations in matters relating to projects/programs that involve direct relations with LCs. In the case of capacity problems, it is the job of the Ministry to provide LCs with technical assistance services and take swift steps to develop the necessary capacity of the councils. Equally, it is the role of the Ministry to promote participatory processes in the local development planning of the councils and encourage the inclusion and involvement of citizens in their governance processes (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

b) Regional Level Institutions

i. Office of the Regional Governors

In the Gambia, under the 1997 Constitution and the LGAct 2002, regional governors are appointed by the President to represent the central government in the region. As the chief administrators of the local government areas, they are answerable to the MLGL. Governors exercise executive powers and co-ordinate central government administration and services in the regions. They also coordinate all activities of decentralised structures of all government departments and to ensure proper devolution of power to appropriate levels. Governors perform the role of an adviser to the MLGL on matters of national interest, on council-central government relations or plans or programs for the region. Governors are tasked to monitor and inspect the activities of LGAs and carry out any tasks assigned by the President or prescribed by the National Assembly (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009).

ii. Development Planning Framework at Regional Level

Local Technical Planning Committee

Although there is no ambiguity in the LGAct 2002 of the Gambia regarding who has the project planning and implementation authority in the local government areas, however, LCs while carrying out this mandate, are requested to work with the central government through its various MDAs staff at the regional level. The regional staff of the different departments are authorised to provide the necessary technical service support and ensure councils are accountable to their various stakeholder groups. For the ease of critical technical services provision in the course of multi-level development planning and implementation process at the local level, regional level government department staff are grouped into two: the TAC and MDFT (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

MDFTs compose of extension workers from line institutions; NGOs that are operating in the area; and CDA from the DCD. These teams provide direct support and guidance to the villages and wards during the project cycle management and serve as coaches or facilitators during the implementation of village and ward development projects (ibid). TACs compose of regional governors representing the president; the chief executive officers of councils; the regional heads of government departments; heads of local government technical services; and representatives of the NGOs operating in the region. TAC members provide technical advice to the councils, WDCs and VDCs within the local government area of their jurisdiction. And functions as the body that endorses village and ward strategic development plans (SDPs) to ensure that local projects conform to national standards, policies and priorities (ibid).

c) Local Government Institutions

i. Composition Local Councils

The LCs compose of a council chairperson and ward councillors elected through universal adult suffrage of all eligible voters in the local government area. Included in the councils are representatives of traditional authorities called chiefs. Except in the City of Banjul-a Seyfo (district chief) representative is selected by all the district chiefs (Seyfolu) and in the case of a municipality, an Alkalo (village chief) representative is chosen by all the village

chiefs (Alkalolu) in the municipality (Government of The Gambia, 2002). The composition of LCs includes a nominated youth who represents the youth in the area; a nominated woman who represents women's groups in the area whenever more than two-thirds of the members elected are male; and nominated members, consisting of not more than one-fifth of the elected members of a council, representing local, commercial and social interest groups. Nominated members are proposed by the civil society organisations or interest groups they represent and appointed by the chairperson with the concurrence of the MLGL (ibid).

ii. Powers and Functions of Local Councils

For local administration, LGAct 2002 of the Gambia has established local government councils to preside over the administration of demarcated geographical boundaries. Each council is a corporate body with the appropriate name of either “Area Council”, “Municipal Council” or “City Council” and are vested with both executive and legislative powers. These powers are exercised to facilitate their functioning. The legislative power is exercised in the form of passing local bills into bylaws within the local government area. These laws have to be consistent with the Constitution of the Gambia or any other laws passed by the National Assembly (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009).

At the same time, executive powers allow councils to mobilise financial, human and material resources and capacity from the central government, its agencies, national and international organisations, and the private sector to promote and support productive activity and social development in their area. Each council has a perpetual succession and a common seal with power to sue and be sued in its corporate name. LCs are empowered to acquire and hold movable or immovable property, to dispose of such property and to enter into any contract or other transaction. LCs are answerable/accountable to their electorates and the MLGL. At the regional level, LCs in the Gambia are responsible to the regional governors as the central government representative (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009).

Roles and responsibilities of Local Councils in the Gambia

General roles and responsibilities

- A local council is the planning authority for its area plan and implements programs or projects that would develop the infrastructure, improve social services, develop human and financial resources for the general upliftment of the community.

Specific roles and responsibilities

- Prepare a comprehensive and uninterrupted development plan for its area incorporating all ward plans;
- Co-ordinate all donor support;
- Approve all project agreements;
- Adopt such processes and procedures that would ensure communities are involved in the conception and execution of development plans;
- Provide the overall oversight of community development fund and determines the total budget envelop for the fund.

Central Government technical departments operating within the area of jurisdiction of every council is to provide support to the development process of the council through extension workers operating at ward and village levels (Local Government Act 2002).

iii. Local Council Administration

In the Gambia, the head of local government administration is called the CEO. Local Government Service Commission appoints the CEOs in consultation with the council chairperson, and their office serves as the office of the Local Government Service. CEOs perform the role of the secretary, executive and administrative heads of the councils and are responsible for the day-to-day administration and management, including all financial, human or material resource. CEOs implement all lawful decisions of the council, supervise and coordinate the activities of all departments and staff. The officeholders assist and advise chairpersons in the discharge of their roles and ensure accountability and transparency in the management and delivery of services. CEO is the accounting officer and the custodian of all documents and records of the council. In managing the affairs of the councils, they are answerable to the council and are subject to its direction and control and reports to the council chairperson. CEOs serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the council (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

iv. Chairperson/Mayor/Mayoress of the Council and Functions

Besides supervising the general administration of the areas, chairperson of a LC deals with council rules, regulations and taxes, and upholds the country's constitution, council's bylaws and other laws of the land. The first business of the council chair is to preside over council meetings. Alongside the chair's monthly status report responsibility on the progress made on activities, decisions and policies implementation to the general membership of the council, chairperson also submits an annual report to the MLGL on the state of affairs of their local government area. Council chairperson supervises the CEO and ensures the preparation and submission of the annual development plans and budgets of the council for approval. S/he also implements council decisions, resolutions, the proper management and control of the financial affairs of the council. Ordinary council meetings are convened by the chairperson at least once every month, which is open to the public with the exception of committee meetings.

v. Duties of Ward Councillors

In the exercise of their functions, ward councillors are to maintain close contact with their ward residents. They are required to hold periodic consultative meetings with their electorates, collate their views, opinions and proposals on issues of concern for presentation and discussion at the council level. Ward councillors also report back to their voters on the decisions reached and the actions taken by the council to solve problems or how the council plans to deal with issues raised by the electorates. Ward councillors are to promote communal and other development activities in their areas. They are the chairs of the WDCs (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2009; Government of The Gambia, 2002).

vi. Local Councils and Development Planning Functions

LCs are the planning authority for their localities and are required to ensure development plans are prepared and implemented. Development plans form the basis for councils' budget include any program or project that would develop the infrastructure, human and financial resources, improve social services and the general upliftment of the community. In the process of drafting the plans councils are urged to consult residents, agencies of government, non-governmental and international organisations working in the locality. Besides coordinating all donor support in their locality and granting approval to project

agreements, LCs are authorised to adopt processes and procedures that would ensure communities are involved in the conception and execution of all development plans (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

The plan of all councils must be compatible with the national development plan adopted by the central government and must incorporate all village and ward plans as well. Technical departments of the central government operating within the councils' jurisdiction areas are urged to support the councils' development process through extension staff working at ward and village levels (ibid). The technical departments have been grouped into TACs and MDFTs to provide better technical support to the community development planning and implementation processes.

vii. Financial Matters/Provisions

LCs have autonomy over their financial matters, at least on paper. Councils source their finances from the collection of revenue, funds/grants from the central government to implement devolved functions and from transfers for services delegated from government ministries. Other sources include income from local taxes; rates; licences; fees; share of mining revenues where applicable; interests and dividends. These revenue and funds are spent on the administration, development and welfare of the inhabitants within their jurisdiction. Every year LCs receive tied grants to discharge their devolved functions and to cover their administrative costs. Grants and transfers are paid directly into the bank accounts of LCs by the Ministry responsible for finance (Government of The Gambia, 2002, Financial Provisions Section).

In the Gambia twenty-five per cent (25%) of the development budget of the councils is provided by the central Government. Although financial affairs of all councils are regulated under the Local Government (Finance and Audit) law, however, all LCs possess the power to levy rates and taxes as prescribed by the National Assembly. In addition to Local Government (Finance and Audit) law, in the Gambia rates are charged and collected under the provisions of the General Rates Act of 1992. LCs are accountable to the electorates for all money accrued from them, and to the National Assembly for all money appropriated to the council from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the nation, or otherwise. In terms of expenditure, LCs have the mandate to invest any portion of their

money in stocks and bonds etc., and can use its assets to generate income (Government of The Gambia, 2002, Financial Provisions Section).

d) Traditional District Authorities

Also established under the local government authority by LGAAct 2002 is the National Council of Seyfolu (district chiefs). According to Khan (2009) this council was established in 2007 (p. 53). As the apex body of traditional authority, the council consists of the Paramount Seyfo (district chief) who serves as the Chairperson; and all the Seyfolu (district chiefs) in The Gambia. The Council is responsible for settling disputes affecting chiefs in the country; and the administration of justice, and social, developmental, cultural and traditional issues. The President appoints the paramount chief from among the chiefs in the country for two years on a rotational basis. The supreme chief presides over the meetings of the council of chiefs (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009).

i. Seyfolu (District Chiefs)

The Seyfo (district chief) and all the Alkalolu (village chiefs) within each district constitute the District Authority with the district chief serving as the chairperson. In consultation with the MLGL, the President appoints the district Seyfo. Qualifications of the position of a Seyfo include being a citizen of the Gambia and have at least 30 years of age and above, and be a resident in the district to which a Seyfo is to be appointed; and be knowledgeable in the customs, traditions, culture and customary laws of the district.

Powers and Functions of a Seyfo

- The chair of District Authority;
- Promote order and stability in the district;
- Preside over the District Tribunal and hear and determine matters over which according to the law they have jurisdiction;
- Promote the general well-being of the district;
- Safeguard the traditions, customs and culture of the district and promote the well-being of its people;
- Keep a register of every village in the district; and
- Perform other duties assigned by the Council or the Governor (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009).

ii. Alkalolu (Village Heads/Chiefs)

Each village in the Gambia has an Alkalo (village head/chief) who is the head of the village. In consultation with the regional governor and Seyfo the MLGL appoints an Alkalo under the traditional lines of inheritance in the village. Qualifications for the post of an Alkalo include being a citizen of the Gambia; born and resident in the village; and is knowledgeable in the customs, traditions, culture and customary laws of the village.

Responsibilities

- Promote good order;
- Peace and stability in the village;
- Promote the general economic development of the village;
- Safeguard the traditions, customs and culture of the village and promote the wellbeing of its people; and
- Carry out any other functions and powers assigned to it by the Council or District Authority.

Powers

- Exercise all powers vested in the village head by any other law;
- Enforce all rules of the national assembly;
- Implement all regulations and by-laws of the council;
- Promote environmental health and sanitation;
- Protect and preserve the environment of his or her village; and
- Promote sports, culture and other social activities (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

e) Ward Development Committees

LGAct 2002 mandates LCs to ensure ward committees are established in each ward within their locality. WDCs meetings are chaired by an elected ward councillor who is also responsible for presenting the recommendations and proposals of the committee to the council. Ward committee regulates the procedure for its meetings. LGAct 2002 doesn't only authorise councils to form WDCs but, equally allows them to dissolve any ward committee by a resolution approved if in the opinion of the council the committee is ineffective or not operating in the best interest of the ward. Ward chairperson can convene committee meetings at any times, and places deem expedient for the conduct of its business. LGAct 2002 allows the ward chairperson to summon special ward committee meetings at the request of any ex-officio member or at least five members on a matter of urgency (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

WDC Composition

- The Councillor for the Ward as Chairperson;
- One male and one female representative from each VDC elected by the VDC;
- Representatives of organisations involved in development activities at ward level.

Roles and responsibilities***General roles and responsibilities of a WDC***

- Co-ordinating and prioritising all development planning at ward level, preparing ward development plans for approval by the Council, and co-ordinating development assistance to the ward.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the WDC

- Reviewing village plans with a view to identifying shared priorities and concerns;
- Identifying and prioritising ward needs and formulating ward plans;
- Prioritising solutions and alternatives to identified problems;
- Serving as entry point for all outside assistance;
- Co-ordinating development activities at Ward level;
- Establishing criteria for prioritisation of development projects by villages;
- Prioritising development projects between villages;
- Collaborating with donors in preparing project proposals for the Wards;
- Mobilising community participation at ward level;
- Mobilising human, material and financial resources for Ward projects and accountable for such material and financial resources; and
- Promoting Ward interests to the Council and the donors (LGAct 2002)

f) Village Development Committees

As village institutions, VDCs are established in the Gambia by the Local Government Act 2002. Every VDC is a registered entity with the area council and the council may make by-laws for: -the registration and monitoring of the activities of VDCs; the proper management and audit of VDC resources; and for any other matters as it may deem necessary. The chairperson of the VDC has the power to invite any person to attend their meeting when he or she thinks that person could add value to their deliberations. Each VDC representative is to remain a member until such a time that the group that he or she represents deems it necessary to provide a replacement. However, a member can also “be expelled from the committee for good reason or just cause” by the community members and replaced as soon as possible. VDC can be dissolved by the area council when it is deemed to be “ineffective or not operating in the best interest of the village”, and in such

an event, membership would be replaced by the bodies that appoint them (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

The tenure, term or periods of office of representative members of a VDC in the Gambia is determined by the groups that selected them. As per the provisions of the Gambia's Local Government Act 2002 as amended, the times, places and the intervals of VDC meetings are the prerogatives of the committee "as it may deem expedient for the conduct of its business" (ibid). The chairperson has the responsibility to convene the meeting at any time as deemed necessary. Minutes of each meeting is captured by the secretary of the meeting. The procedural rules agreed by VDCs must not contradict the rules of procedures prescribed by the council. In the exercise of their functions, each VDC may operate a bank account and appoint a treasurer to manage its resources. VDCs are at liberty to have different sub-committees based on the nature and needs of their activities (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

VDC Composition

- Chairperson selected from among the members of the Committee;
- One male and one female representing each kabilo (clan) in the village, selected by the kabilos (clans);
- One male and one female representing each community-based organisation;
- A representative of youth groups in the village;

Advisers of a VDC

- The Alkalo (Village Head/Chief) of the village;
- Representatives of Central Government Departments operating at village level, and
- All extension workers working for any organisation involved in development activities in the village.

Roles and responsibilities of VDC in the Gambia

General roles and responsibilities of a VDC

- Responsible for all development planning at village level and serve as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the VDC

- Identifying local development needs in consultation with the community;
- Prioritising such development needs consultation with the community;
- Developing appropriate plans for addressing local needs in consultation with the community
- Raising, co-ordinating and managing financial resources at village level and accountable for all the financial and other resources;
- Mobilising community participation in development activities;

- Implementing and managing such development plans and projects as the Council may approve for implementation at village level;
- Supporting and strengthening all development oriented sociocultural groups within the community. (Government of The Gambia, 2002)

5.2.2. Sierra Leone Local Governance Environment

Local Government Administration

To facilitate community development and service delivery, LGAct 2004 makes LCs the highest authority in the locality¹⁸ (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004). LCs are corporate entities with full executive and legislative powers. The LGAct 2004 established the traditional chieftaincy authorities both at the district and village levels. Among a host of other functions, LCs are mandated by Section 20 of the LGAct 2004 to promote local development initiatives and better the welfare of their constituents under the available resources at their disposal. The Act established 19 LCs (Government of Sierra Leone, 2010, p. 2). In 2006, the Act granted five towns with city/municipal status in addition to Freetown.

The Local Government Ministry is tasked to inspect and monitor LC activities and ensures they act within the scope of the LGAct and other relevant laws of the land (ibid). As of 2017 Sierra Leone had a total of 3 Province (Northern, Eastern and Southern), 12 Provincial Districts and 154 Chiefdoms. In the Northern Province there are five (5) provincial districts with fifty-four (54) chiefdoms. The provincial districts are Bombali, Port Loko, Kambia, Koinadugu and Tonkolili. In the Eastern Province, there are three (3) provincial districts with forty-six (46) chiefdoms. The districts include Kenema, Kono and Kailahun. In the Southern Province, there are four (4) districts with fifty-four (54) Chiefdoms. The provincial districts are Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba and Pujehun (GeoPostcodes-Sierra Leone, 2017).

¹⁸ i.e., “administrative area of a local council and includes a district, town, city or metropolis” (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004, pp. 2–3)

i. Bombali District, Northern Region

Bombali is one of the fourteen (14) districts and by geographical area the second largest district in Sierra Leone. It has a total area of 7,985 km² or 3,083 sq. miles and the second most populous district in Northern Province of Sierra Leone (Taylor, 2011, pp. 50–51). Historically, Bombali was part of Karene District. The district borders on the north by the Republic of Guinea, Koinadugu district to the east, to the south lies Tonkolili district, and Port Loko and Kambia districts to the west. Bombali is situated in-between the central lowlands and north-eastern hills of Sierra Leone and until 2017 it comprised of thirteen chiefdoms. The district lies adjacent to the southern localities of the Republic of Guinea. It is an essential link between Sierra Leone and Guinea. Makeni the district capital is the fifth largest city in Sierra Leone and the largest city in the north. Other principal towns of Bombali district are Kamakwie, Kamabai, Karina and Binkolo (Turay, 1973; Taylor, 2011).

Bombali district is governed through a directly elected district council. The district has two councils: the Makeni City council and Bombali District council. The district is headed by a chairperson, the highest local government official who is tasked to manage the affairs of the people of Bombali. Bombali District is sub-divided into thirteen chiefdoms namely: Biriwa, Bombali Shebora, Gbanti Kamaranka, Gbendembu Ngowahun, Libeisaygahun, Magbaiamba Ndowahun, Makari Gbanti, Paki Massabong, Safroko Limba, Sanda Loko, Sanda Tenraren, Sella Limba, Tambakha. Chiefdom government is the third level of the administrative unit in Sierra Leone. Chiefdoms in the district of Bombali are tribal in origin and composition (Turay, 1973, pp. 24–25).

Out of the 13 chiefdom administrative units, it is only Makari Gbanti and Sanda-Lokko where one can find at least two principal ethnic groups forming a combined significant majority. For instance, Limba and Temne formed a combined majority in Makari Gbanti chiefdom, while in Sanda-Loko chiefdom, Loko and Temne formed a combined majority. Four chiefdoms have a Temne majority of the total population, while the Loko and Limba each form majority in three chiefdoms, whereas the Susu are preponderant in one. Rigid compartmentalisation of society along with traditional norms and land issues are the leading complex concerns in Bombali. Small scale mining and farming are the main economic activities of the people residing in the district (ibid).

ii. People of Bombali

Bombali district has an ethnically diverse population with about ten tribal groups including Temne, Limba, Lokko, Susu, Fullah, Mandingo, Mende, Creole, Kuranko and Sherbro. The largest ethnic groups in Bombali district are Temne and Limba. The religious complexity is marked in Bombali. Islam is the predominant religion plus a sizeable Christian minority (Protestants and Catholics) and several pagans. Due to the long tradition of inter-marriage between Temne and Limba ethnic groups, they have become very close allies and work closely together for their common good (Turay, 1973, pp. 24–25; Taylor, 2011, pp. 50–51).

During the civil wars of the 1990s, Bombali was a rebel stronghold and went through bitter experiences, considerable destruction of life and property, displacement of its residents and trauma. Although significant progress has been registered in terms of the restoration of state authority, however, the district continues to face a social capital problem, inadequate social service provision and economic recovery. Cities and townships continue to lack 21st Century necessities of life such as clean portable water, stable electricity supply, good road networks, security and proper sanitation among other constraints (Taylor, 2011, p. 51).

Institutional Context of Decentralisation

The LGAct 2004, the Chieftaincy Act 2009 and relevant constitutional provisions are crucial legislations that helped establish Sierra Leone's decentralised local governance system. It was after the 2002 national elections when elected LCs were re-established laying the necessary foundation for local governance and decentralized administration in the country. Prior to this, there was no provision in the country's 1991 Constitution about decentralisation, nor was there any decentralisation policy or LGAct to guide the process. MLGRD relied on policy pronouncements to kick-start the process. A national decentralisation policy was prepared in 2010, which harmonised all policy pronouncements and paved the way for decentralised local governance (Government of Sierra Leone, 2010).

The principal aim of reintroducing decentralization in 2004 is to “promote good governance and democracy, accountability and transparency, improve service delivery and develop the local economy” (Government of Sierra Leone, 2010, p. 2). The LGAct 2004 did not only usher in the restoration of LCs and decentralised administration but, it

consolidated and streamlined all laws related to local government and decentralization in the country. The Act gives effect to devolution of powers, functions and resources from the centre to the regions. It stipulates the modalities for local elections, financing of LCs, their administrative and political set-up. It also defines the decision-making processes within the decentralised governance system. The ultimate aim is to promote the principles of good governance and ensure unhindered participation of community members in the democratic and decision-making processes of their regions (ibid).

a) National Level Institutions

MLGRD and its department of community development are tasked with harmonising central government initiatives, policies and matters relating LCs and the provision of technical guidance to the LCs. The Ministry is responsible for the inspection and monitoring of activities and performance of local government authorities and to ensure they act within the scope of the LGAct 2004 and any other relevant laws. The Ministry coordinates and advocates at the level of the central government about issues affecting LCs (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004). In the event of capacity problems, it's the job of the Ministry to provide LCs with technical assistance services and take swift steps to develop the necessary capacity of the councils.

The Ministry has the mandate to perform the roles of a mediator in case there arises any problem, uncertainty or dispute between two or more LCs in the event that parties to the conflict are unable to resolve their issues amicably by themselves. It also mediates in case of problems between an LC(s) and a particular ministry or other agency of government including a matter relating to the delegation of powers or functions; or an LC(s) and a national organisation. Where the said ministry is unable to resolve the problem, uncertainty or dispute to the satisfaction of the parties, it is urged to report the matter and make a recommendation to the Inter-Ministerial Committee of its decision (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

b) Regional Level Institutions

i. Offices of Provincial Secretaries and District Officers

In Sierra Leone the chief administrative officers of each region/province comprising several districts and chiefdoms are the Provincial Secretaries (PSs). District Officers (DOs) are the principal administrators and the top central government representatives in the districts. As the chief representative, DO is the authority in each district, the focal point to disseminate government policies and facilitate their implementation, coordinate the non-devolved functions of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and facilitate the devolution of specified tasks to the LCs (Public Sector Reform Unit, Government of Sierra Leone, n.d.). DOs also serves as a vital link between the government, LCs and chiefdom administrations; facilitate the activities of the LCs by creating the necessary enabling environment for them to discharge their duties; monitor the activities of departments, agencies and LCs. DOs chair the monthly meetings of District Co-ordinating Committees which comprises all heads of departments, agencies and LCs in the districts. They would receive a briefing on the activities of the various departments and ensure the minutes are forwarded to the provincial secretary, the permanent secretary, MLGRD, the Secretary to the President, the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service and the relevant ministries (ibid).

ii. Development Planning Framework at Regional Level

Local Technical Planning Committee

LGAct 2004 of Sierra Leone assigns LCs as the project planning and implementation authority in the local government areas. Despite having the mandate, LCs are requested to work with the central government through its various MDAs at the regional level. Each council through the Local Council Chief Administrator (CA) is mandated to put together a Local Technical Planning Committee (LTPC) before the commencement of development planning processes at the regional level. Ward councillors are required to hold periodic consultative meetings with their electorates, collate their views, opinions and proposals on issues affecting the ward for presentation and discussion at the council level (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

c) Local Government Institutions

i. Composition Local Councils

A LC constitutes a council chairperson and ward councillors elected through universal adult suffrage of all eligible voters in the local government area and representatives of traditional authorities called chiefs. The composition includes a paramount chief selected by the paramount chiefs in the locality to represent their interests in the council. However, this applies only to localities that have a paramount chieftaincy system (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

ii. Powers and Functions of Local Councils

Local government councils are established by LGA 2004 for local administration and to preside over the administration of demarcated geographical boundaries. Councils are a body corporate with perpetual succession with a seal and can sue and be sued in their corporate names. Councils can acquire and hold movable or immovable property, to dispose of such property and to enter into any contract or other transaction. At the local level, LCs are answerable/accountable to their electorates, to the Local Government Ministry at national. In contrast, at the regional level, they are liable to the DOs as the representative of the central government (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004). LGAct 2004 empowers LCs with both legislative and executive powers to allow them discharge any of their functions.

Legislative power permits LCs to legislate or enact laws that are consistent with the Constitution or any other laws passed by the Parliament to facilitate their functioning. Legislative power is exercised in the form of passing local bills into by-laws. Executive power is exercised in the form of mobilising financial, human and material resources and capacity. This power allows LCs to mobilise resources from national and international organisations, the private sector and the central government and its agencies. The aim is to encourage and support productive activity and social development in their area (ibid).

Roles and responsibilities of Local Councils in Sierra Leone

General roles and responsibilities of a Local Council

- Promote the development of the locality and the welfare of the people in the locality with the resources at its disposal and with such resources and capacity as it can mobilise from the

central government and its agencies, national and international organisations, and the private sector.

Specific roles and responsibilities of the Local Council

- Mobilise the human and material resources necessary for the overall development and welfare of the people of the locality;
- Promote and support productive activity and social development in the locality;
- Initiate and maintain programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provide works and services in the locality;
- Responsible for the development, improvement and management of human settlements and the environment in the locality;
- Initiate, draw up and execute development plans for the locality;
- coordinate and harmonise the execution of programmes and projects promoted or carried out by public corporations, other statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations, in the locality;
- Cooperate with relevant agencies to ensure the security of the locality;

Development Planning

- Local councils ensure the preparation of a development plan to guide the development of the locality and a draft of which is made publicly available.
- Local councils consult residents of the locality, agencies of Government and non-governmental and international organisations that have interest in working in the locality before approving or reviewing a development plan. (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004)

iii. Local Council Administration

CA is the head of local government administration and is appointed by the Local Government Service Commission in consultation with the council chairperson. The office of CA functions as the office of the Local Government Service responsible for the day-to-day administration and management, including all their financial, human or material resource. By their position, CAs perform the role of a secretary, executive and administrative head of councils. CAs implement all lawful council decisions, supervise and coordinate the activities of all departments and staff.

The officeholders assist and advise chairpersons in the discharge of their roles and ensure accountability and transparency in the management and delivery of services. As the accounting officer, CA is the custodian of all documents and records of the council. In managing the affairs of councils, CAs are answerable to the council and are subject to its

direction and control and reports to the council chairperson. CAs serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the council (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

iv. Chairperson/Mayor/Mayoress of the Council and Functions

Beside their supervisory function of the general administration of the areas, chairperson of each LC deals with council rules, regulations and taxes. S/he upholds the bylaws of the council, Constitution and other laws of the land in her/his area of jurisdiction. Presiding over council meetings is the first business of any council chair alongside their monthly responsibility of giving a status update/progress report on activities implementation, decisions and policies of the council to members of the council. Council chairperson also submits an annual report to the Local Governments Ministry on the state of affairs of their local government area.

The chair of the council supervises the CA and ensures that the annual development plans and budgets of the council are prepared and submitted for approval. Chairperson equally guarantees the implementation of council decisions, resolutions and the proper management and control of the financial affairs of the council. Ordinary council meetings are convened by the chairperson at least once every month. All council meetings are open to the public with the exception committee meetings (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

v. Duties of Ward Councillors

Ward councillors are task to maintain close contact with the residents of their respective wards. They are required to hold periodic consultative meetings with their electorates, collate their views, opinions and proposals on issues of concern for presentation and discussion at the council level. Ward councillors also report back to their voters on the decisions reached and the actions taken by the council to solve problems or how the council plans to deal with issues raised by the voters. As the chairs of the WDCs, they are to promote communal and other development activities in their areas (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

vi. Local Councils and Development Planning Functions

LCs are the planning authority for their localities and are required to ensure development plans are prepared for the locality and implemented. The basis for councils' budget is their

plans which include any program or project that would develop the infrastructure, human and financial resources, improve social services and the general upliftment of the community. In the process of drafting their plans, councils are to hold consultative sessions with the residents, agencies of government, non-governmental and international organisations working in their locality (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004).

Besides coordinating all donor support in their locality and granting approval to project agreements LCs are authorised to adopt processes and procedures that would ensure communities are involved in the conception and execution of all development plans. The plan of all councils must be compatible with the national development plan adopted by the central government. The guidelines for designing projects in Sierra Leone are issued by the Ministry responsible for the development and economic planning. Before the commencement of planning processes, councils appoint LTPC to provide the needed technical support (ibid).

vii. Financial Matters/Provisions

Each LC has autonomy over financial matters at least in law. Councils source their finances from the revenue they collect, and funds/grants received from the central government to implement devolved functions and transfers for services delegated from government ministries. The sources of income for LCs include local taxes; property rates; licences; charges; share of mining revenues where applicable; interests and dividends. These revenue and funds are applied to the administration, development and welfare of the inhabitants within their jurisdiction. Yearly, LCs receive tied grants to discharge their devolved functions and to cover their administrative costs.

Grants and transfers are paid directly into the bank accounts of LCs by the Ministry responsible for finance. Local Government Finance Committee recommends the amount of funding to be allocated to each council. In contrast, guidelines that determine the levy of rates and local taxes are issued by the Ministry of Finance (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004, Financial Matters Section). LCs are accountable to their electorates for all money accrued from them and Parliament for all money appropriated to them from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the nation or otherwise. In terms of expenditure, LCs have the mandate to invest any portion of their money in stocks and bonds etc. and can use its assets to generate income.

d) Traditional/Chieftom Administration

As stipulated in LGA 2004, traditional authorities are to perform both governance and development roles in collaboration with their LCs. They are mandated to interact extensively with LCs to facilitate sound socioeconomic and cultural development of the people within their areas of jurisdictions (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004, 2010). The principal legal framework that established the institution of Paramount Chieftaincy as per the customary law and application is the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone (Act No. 6 of 1991, section 72, subsections 1 to 5). Section 74 subsection 1a of the Constitution caters a seat for Paramount Chiefs (one per district) in the Parliament.

As per, Sierra Leone's Chieftaincy Act of 2009, a "chief includes a chief, other than a Paramount Chief, a Headman and such other chief as is by customary law the Councillor or assistant of any Paramount Chief". Whereas "Paramount Chief means a chief who is not subordinate in his ordinary jurisdiction to any other chief but does not include an acting chief or a regent chief" (Government of Sierra Leone, 2009, p. 2). Other legal frameworks include the Chieftaincy Act 2009 (Act No. 10 of 2009) which documents the qualifications, functions, election, powers, removed from the office of a Paramount Chiefs and other chieftaincy related matters (Conteh, 2013, p. 25; Government of Sierra Leone, 2009). The head of each chieftom is the Paramount Chief who is elected by Chieftom Councillors.

Except in exceptional circumstances such as lawful removal and forceful resignation due to subversive or similar conducts that contradicts the spirit of good governance, once elected Paramount Chiefs rule for life (Conteh, 2013, p. 46; Government of Sierra Leone, 2009). The Paramount Chieftaincy institution in the countryside is governed by the concept of traditional ruling-house which means candidates are allowed to contest for the position of a Paramount Chief only when they hail from known and established ruling houses before 1961. Chieftom Council is the administrative wing of each chieftom, and it comprises of the Paramount Chief, councillors, sub-chiefs plus other elected officeholders. The positions include a chieftom treasury which manages finances, whereas local court chairpersons, duly appointed by Chieftom councillors settle minor disputes and dispense justice. Among a host of functions, a Paramount Chief serves as an agent of development in her/his chieftom (Conteh, 2013; Government of Sierra Leone, 2009).

e) Ward Development Committees

LGAct 2004 mandates LCs to ensure ward committees are established in each ward within their locality, but, it is silent about their dissolution. An elected ward councillor chairs the meetings of WDC who also presents the recommendations and proposals of the committee to the council. Ward committee regulates the procedure for its meetings. In general terms, WDCs in Sierra Leone serve as the voice of their people, help the council in revenue mobilisation, perform an oversight role in development activities and community mobilisation.

Composition of WDC

- Elected councillors;
- Paramount Chiefs in the case of localities with a system of chieftaincy; and
- Ten (10) other ward residents at least five women.

General roles and responsibilities

- Mobilise ward residents to implement self-help and development projects;
- Provide a focal point to discuss local problems and needs and take remedial actions or make recommendations to the LC accordingly;
- Organise communal and voluntary work, especially with respect to sanitation;
- Make proposals to the LCs for levying and collecting rates for special projects and programmes; and
- Educate residents on their rights and obligations in relation to local government and decentralisation, for example paying tax.

Specific roles and responsibilities

A. Voice of the people

- Collate the views, opinions and proposals of ward residents (women and men) and present them to the District Council;
- Report back to residents the general decisions of the District Council and the actions being taken to solve problems raised by residents;
- Maintain close contact with residents and consult them on issues to be discussed in the District Council; and
- Provide both technical support and information to their ward residents to enable them to take informed decisions in local-level development planning processes.

B. Revenue mobilisation

- Collate the views, opinions and proposals of residents and present them to the District Council;
- Educate residents about paying taxes, in collaboration with chieftom administration;

- Liaise frequently with organised, productive economic groups and other people in the ward;
- Ensure transparency and the effective use of mobilised resources.

C. Oversight of development activities

- Collate the views, opinions and proposals of residents and present them to the District Council;
- Monitor all development activities in the ward;
- Link various project activities with appropriate line ministries;
- Ensure efficient use of inputs received from development partners.

D. Community mobilisation

- Collate the views, opinions and proposals of residents and present them to the District Council;
- Mobilise residents to participate actively in development activities;
- Raise awareness in wards;
- Ensure sustainability of projects;
- Take part in communal and development activities; and
- Promote community ownership. (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004; Sesay et al., 2010, p. 27)

Specific WDC responsibilities assigned by GoBifo CDDP

- Analyse and appraise VDPs before they are submitted;
- Endorse VDPs or to request modifications;
- Forward endorsed VDP to the LC with a recommendation for approval and funding;
- Identify shared concerns and priorities from the VDPs, and capture those activities proposed by villages that should be promoted to ward level because they will have broad coverage and impact;
- Prepare the WDPs for submission to the LC;
- Use the same participatory tools as the village-level planning process;
- Ensure that WDPs complement DDP; and
- Ensure that WDPs are submitted to the council for endorsement and approval. (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 28)

f) Village Development Committee (VDC)

The Local Government Act 2004 of Sierra Leone did establish the ward development committees (WDCs), but it failed to establish VDCs or mention them as part of the established decentralised local institutions (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004). This, however, doesn't mean that VDCs don't exist in Sierra Leonean communities. In their recount of the story of GoBifo CDD program of Northern Sierra Leone, Sesay¹⁹ et al.

¹⁹ Sullay Sesay, a staff of Local Government and Rural Development Ministry of Sierra Leone, who also coordinated the GoBifo CDD program

(2010), confirm the existence of VDCs in some villages prior to 2005²⁰, when GoBifo CDD implementation began. Sesay and his colleagues unequivocally stated in their book that:

Community-based structures like the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) usually already exist and may only need training on their roles and responsibilities to play a more effective role. Communities that did not have VDCs and WDCs now have them. (p. 15)

On a separate page, Sesay et al. (2010), again point out to the prior existence of VDCs before the implementation of the GoBifo CDD program, when they argue that CDDP's "Frontline staff members facilitate the formation of VDCs in communities where they do not already exist, and train them on their roles and responsibilities. They also strengthen existing VDCs" (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 22).

VDC Composition

- Women representative
- Youth representative
- Representatives of existing community groups

Roles and responsibilities of VDC in the Gambia

General roles and responsibilities of a VDC

- The VDC leads development efforts, co-ordinates and evaluates planned activities, and communicates with external partners (including GoBifo).

Specific roles and responsibilities of the VDC

- Represents GoBifo at village level;
- Leverages the resources needed to undertake project activities, including mobilising and raising awareness with the community's traditional leadership, community-based organisations and other donors;
- Facilitates the compilation of all Village Plans;
- Ensures that the VDC Secretary presents the Village Development Plan (VDP) to the WDC so that they can endorse it;
- Works closely with project staff and supports the Village Facilitators;
- Co-ordinates both implementation of the action plan and the development efforts of local organisations;
- Manages soundly, on behalf of the village, the funds made available to the project;

²⁰ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTJSDF/Resources/EB-FINAL_Sierra_Leone_Jan5.pdf

- Keeps community members informed about all activities, ensuring public transparency and accountability;
- Evaluates the action plan implementation; and
- Co-ordinates and supervises monitoring and evaluation, and learning activities within and across teams, including the submission of timely reports to the ward facilitator. (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 22)

5.3. CDD Program Objectives, Components and Environment

5.3.1. World Bank's Africa Region and CDD Strategy in West Africa

In December 2000, the Africa Region of the WB launched its new CDD vision with an explicit focus on community empowerment. For more than a decade earlier, the strategy of the Bank in this region was to support community-based approaches to development (Kumar, 2003). At the heart of the key principles of community empowerment as articulated in the vision paper of the Bank's Africa Region program is to give communities access to untied funds and authority to choose their priorities areas of development and implement them. This approach is expected to develop social capital at the local level, gives voice to the voiceless, safeguard against social exclusion and elite capture and ultimately encourage participatory and demand-driven development. For sustainable development, decentralisation or devolution of development planning responsibilities and powers to local development institutions and local governments were made the cornerstones of this new strategy (ibid). The WB Africa Region's December 2000 CDD strategic vision was to empower the:

Poor communities; enabling the local government to provide support, coordination, and resources for community programs; enabling the local governments and communities to demand technical, managerial support from sectoral agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector; and strengthening the accountability of all actors to the local population. (Kumar, 2003, p. 5)

The underlying expectation of the development objectives of the evolution of WB's participatory approaches, in particular, its Village Community Support Programs in West Africa is that community participation in development processes would:

Strengthen local governance in rural areas and promote social and economic empowerment of the local population to promote long-term development. By completion, local communities and their representative local governments are expected to have developed the capacity to plan and manage their own infrastructure and service needs, as well as the ability to mobilize and use transparently the resources necessary to finance their establishment and maintenance. (Kumar, 2003, p. 9)

In the case of West Africa; however, an extensive review of the literature shows that the evolution of the Bank's CDD approaches hinges on decentralisation reforms and community participation²¹. Community participation is seen as a vehicle to achieving the diverse CBD/CDD project objectives. The principal expectation is that putting communities in charge or actively engaged in the planning and management processes of their development programs/projects will harness the requisite social capital to improve livelihoods. In general, two kinds of activities characterise World Bank's Sahel projects "those aimed at capacity building and those that support basic infrastructure development and similar investments. (...) Support for capacity building, in most cases, is both at the local (often village) level and at the central government level" (ibid, p. 10).

Looking at the distribution of WB's CBD/CDD portfolio as per region, Africa has the highest number of projects (31.5 per cent) between the fiscal year 1989-2003 (Kumar et al., 2003, pp. 16–17). When CDD Anchor was established by the Bank in 1996 and began to keep a record of CBD/CDD activities, the Bank in the Sahel Region had approved 4 CBD/CDD projects in 10 focus countries in the fiscal year 1996, 9 in the fiscal year 2000, 7 in the fiscal year 2001, and 18 in the fiscal year 2002 (Kumar, 2003). The entire CBD/CDD lending portfolio of the Bank "(including investments for building an enabling environment for CDD) in the 10 countries is projected to increase from 21 per cent of total lending in 1996 to 47 per cent of total lending for fiscal 2003" (ibid, p. 6).

When the Bank's support for CDD is broken down by type of CDD activities over five years when information began to be available. The largest CDD type is community control without direct management of investment funds (or collaboration). This is followed by an

²¹ World Bank (1996) defines participation as "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources that affect them" (Kumar et al., 2003, p. 3).

enabling environment for CDD and community control and management of investment funds. However, it was not only in the fiscal year 2002 and 2003 when the Bank's investment significantly increased in the CDD type: Community Control and Management of Investment Funds (ibid). The performance of WB supported portfolio in the Sahel was reviewed using data from Operations Evaluations Department (OED) and Quality Assurance Group (QAG) using ten country cases.

Findings from OED data show that “outcome and institutional development impact of CBD/CDD projects in the ten countries has been better than that of all closed [non-CBD/CDD] projects in the ten countries” (ibid). A discovery that is consistent with the earlier OED reports that “drew similar conclusions about the performance of community-based and community-driven projects in comparison with all Bank projects” (ibid). However, these findings are not consistent with the previous OED review. In which “the sustainability of the CDD projects is less likely when compared with sustainability of all closed projects in the [ten] countries, all closed non-CBD/CDD projects in the [ten] countries, and all projects Bank-wide” (ibid, p. 7). Quality Assurance Group (QAG) data was used to assess whether empowerment in a CDD approach which shows changes in procedures, design and implementation of Bank's funded projects would improve sustainability. Findings show that out of four ongoing projects in the sample:

Two of them are rated marginally satisfactory and two are rated satisfactory. Both assessments for the marginally satisfactory projects express concern about the likelihood of achieving the stated development objective of institutional development impact. Further, both assessments rate sustainability as unlikely. The assessments also express concern about the partnership arrangements with other donors and the adequacy of sector and country knowledge underpinning the projects. (ibid, p. 8)

5.3.2. CDD and Institution Building/Development

Since the 1990s in furthering their institutional development agenda, WB and other foreign aid agencies have been funding CDDPs in fragile and post-conflict contexts in West Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. In their West Africa programs, VDCs and WDCs were either formed or revamped within the decentralised local governance structure. This was not just to aid CDDP implementation process, but also for institution-

building/development (Casey et al., 2011a; Diop et al., 2013; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; King & Samii, 2014; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; Sesay et al., 2010). CDDP provided communities with technical and financing supports and guidance to implement small scale projects as well as enhanced project planning and managerial skill sets of community groups like the VDCs and WDCs within the decentralised governance framework. At the heart of CDDP strategy is the support to decentralisation reform programs, the building of local government capacity and formation/reshaping of a local institution (de Regt et al., 2013; Dongier et al., 2003; Grootaert et al., 1999; Klugman, 2002; Mansuri & Rao, 2002, 2004; Wong, 2012). For Kumar (2003) CDD is not only associated with community empowerment, but the approach also facilitates “collaboration, where control over decisions and resources is shared with the community” (p. 5). Kumar (2003) classifies CDD into fourfold including:

The diverse players of CDD include the central government or central funds, local or municipal government, the private sector, and the civil society and the exact roles of its different players vary (Dongier et al., 2003). Dongier et al. (2003) identify the following three broad set of alternative institutional arrangements that provides critical support to CDDP.

- a. Partnerships between CBOs and elected local or municipal governments;
- b. Partnerships between CBOs and private support organizations (NGOs or private firms); and
- c. Direct partnerships between CBOs and central government or a central fund, including other, higher-level governments and funds, for example, states or provinces in federal systems. (p. 308)

Partnerships between CBOs and elected local or municipal governments gained momentum in many countries because of its ability to link CDD with the decentralisation program. This option is preferred in contexts where there is a commitment to genuine decentralisation (a context where the central government devolves resources and functions to elected local and municipal governments) (Dongier et al., 2003). Partnerships between CBOs and elected local or municipal governments “can strengthen the national system of intergovernmental transfer of resources, allows resource allocation decisions to be accountable to local priorities (...), and provides a sustainable source of CBO funding” (ibid, 308).

The appropriateness of institutional arrangement for CDDP depends on “the specific circumstances of that country or region or location” in which the program is implemented (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 315). In the setting of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) the most critical aspect of CDD is the selection of the most appropriate national and sub-national program implementing agency (de Regt et al., 2013). WB scholars further put forward some guidelines to assist development practitioners in choosing options for the different developing country contexts. The favourable contexts for the institutional arrangement “partnerships between CBOs and local or municipal governments” is an environment where:

- A decentralization framework exists;
- Local governments have the potential to develop reasonable capacity;
- Central government is willing to facilitate community empowerment; and
- Mechanisms exist (or are being established) to foster organized community voice and participation in local government decision-making. (Dongier et al., 2003, pp. 315–316)

Adusei-Asante and Hancock (2012) identify the following as World Bank’s indicators for measuring a country’s decentralisation: existence of decentralization law that create local government structures with autonomy in resource management; periodic conduct of local elections; fiscal decentralization and; devolution of service delivery. In their opinion, these indicators are “imprecise and have the potential of impacting negatively on implementation and outcomes of CDD programs” (p. 83). And further, recommend for the institutional arrangement guidelines of CDDPs to “look beyond constitutional provisions and one-dimensional indicators” in making choices in developing countries (ibid).

Having an appropriate institutional arrangement in FCS “can be one of the biggest determinants of success for a CDD program” (de Regt et al., 2013, p. 18). The most important choice to make at the national level is to identify an agency with ultimate authority. Such choice could either be “within existing government ministries or a (semi) independent non-state agency” (ibid). Institutional arrangement choices are influenced by such national-level factors such as the “context, mandate, capacity, neutrality, and power” (ibid p. 20). In FCS, it is prudent to ensure the agency in charge of CDD program implementation has “the capacity to deliver, has the neutrality and “power” to protect the program, as well as the ability to scale-up and transition the program” (ibid).

At the minimum de Regt et al. (2013) recommend six program design questions when making design choices and actors for CDDP institutional arrangements at the sub-national level. These include the following: Who plans? Who decides? Who controls/manages funds? Who implements? Who maintains projects? And who monitors? Answers to these questions will help ease the division of roles between local government units (LGUs) and community organizations. The possible actors identified by de Regt et al. (2013) include community organization, NGO/agency, LGUs, or a combination by any or all of these actors. There is a huge potential to combine design at the sub-national level and a high prospect for an “appropriate “hybrid” of community and LGU arrangements” (p. 21).

Contextual factors CDD program design need to take into consideration include how homogeneous or heterogeneous communities are in an LGU or whether there exists an intense polarization along ethnic or class lines (p. 22). After analysing several successful large-scale CDDPs together with series of consultations with leading development practitioners (Dongier et al., 2003) have identified ten principles for policy formulation and program design (See also Nalini Kumar et al., 2003, p. 11). The ten principles (Dongier et al., 2003) trust, when considered, will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of CDD program outcomes in fragile and post-conflict contexts.

Principles for Supporting Sustainable and Effective CDD

1. Establish an enabling environment through relevant institutional and policy reform;
2. Make investments responsive to informed demand;
3. Build participatory mechanisms for community control and stakeholder involvement;
4. Ensure social and gender inclusion;
5. Invest in capacity building of CBOs;
6. Facilitate community access to information;
7. Develop simple rules and strong incentives, supported by monitoring and evaluation;
8. Maintain flexibility in design of arrangements;
9. Design for scaling up; and
10. Invest in an exit strategy. (Dongier et al., 2003, p. 321)

5.3.3. The Gambia CDD Program

CDDP of the Gambia was implemented between November 2007 and 2012. The intervention aimed not only at poverty reduction but, to revamp local development institutions where they already existed and build new ones where they didn't (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 4). The program was co-financed through the WB by International Development Association (IDA) contributing about USD\$ 12.3 million and the Program

for Human Resources Development (PHRD) of the Government of Japan to the tune of about USD\$ 4.8 million and a counterpart contribution of about USD\$ 1.1 million from the Government of the Gambia. The total amount of funding was approximately USD\$ 18.2 million (Department of Community Development, 2010, p. 3). Although the program agreement got signed in 2007, its implementation began in the following year.

The treatment villages received funding between 2008 and 2010. The yearly fund disbursement to the villages was done at random (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 4). The purpose of the program was to “support the [Gambia’s] rural communities in planning, implementation and maintaining their priority social and economic investments in partnership with Local Government Authorities” (IDA, 2007, p. 5). It is stated in the ‘Final Version of CDD Project Implementation Manual’, October 16, 2007, that the objective of developing the project was “for rural communities, in partnership with Local Government Areas (LGAs), to plan, implement and maintain their priority social and economic investment” (Government of The Gambia, 2007, p. 3; a similar idea is expressed in IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

CDDP was implemented using experimental design/randomised control trial (RCT) approach. Meaning a team of researchers oversaw the process of selecting beneficiary/participating villages before the program implementation. RCT was employed to ensure that the observed program outcome, whether positive or negative, could be attributed to the intervention. All the five regions of the country participated in the program, excluding the two municipalities-Banjul and Kanifing (Arcand et al., 2010; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013). The six hundred (600) villages that benefitted for the grants spanned all the five regions on the two banks of the River Gambia. Villages were randomly assigned into two equal groups of Treatment and Control groups (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 5). In each of the chosen villages, households were selected at random for a survey. The use of RCT was to mitigate the issue of endogeneity that characterised the majority of non-experimental studies of CDDPs (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013). After the division of villages equally into control and treatment groups of 300 each, a test means covering aspects such as social and infrastructure, economic indicators, empowerment and governance development priority were done to confirm if there existed any variations between the two groups (Arcand et al., 2010; Fanneh & Jallow, 2013).

A) Components of CDDP

CDDP of the Gambia used bottom-up development approach that focused on community participation and the use of existing local capacity. The program encouraged villagers to choose the projects that they think would enhance their lives for funding. The program consisted of three core segments: community development facility (includes Good Governance grant/facility); strengthening capacity for community development; and project coordination and monitoring (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

Community Development Facility: This component provided the participating communities with sub-grants to finance their priority community development and good governance sub-projects. The facility empowered communities to gain hands-on experience with participatory planning methodology, procurement procedures, development project design, participatory budgeting, implementation and management. The facility also provided participating villages and wards with an open menu to apply for any social and economic development projects of their choice including capacity building and income-generating activities for funding (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006). About five per cent (5%) of Community Development facility budget was earmarked for annual good governance grant opened for Gambian CSOs operating at the decentralised level to apply (World Bank, 2006, p. 3).

Strengthening Capacity for Community Development: This part of the program was dedicated to capacity strengthening of village and ward committees, local government authorities, the decentralised staff of different government departments and other stakeholders. VDCs and WDCs were instituted and capacitated where they didn't exist and where they existed their capacity was strengthened. The ability of village and ward committees was maintained through periodic refresher trainings to ensure are equipped to undertake participatory strategic planning, resource mobilisation and allocation, community mobilisation for development, project management including accounting for finances and procurement procedures as well as project monitoring and evaluation

(Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

To assure the sustainability of community development initiatives, local government councils also benefited from capacity strengthening projects. The training module of LC staff included project planning, implementation, monitoring and supervision, financial management and procurement procedures and appraisal of project environmental and social impacts. This was aimed at enhancing their technical, fiduciary and reporting oversight roles of community development projects (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

The capacity of other stakeholders, such as MDFTs members, was strengthened to guarantee a robust operational capacity in rural communities. MDFTs comprises among others the extension staff of the different government departments in the region. The ability of MDFTs was enhanced on how to assist villages and wards in identifying, appraising and implementing community sub-projects. The team is tasked to provide technical advisory services, goods and other necessary skills to communities for sustainable development. In addition to rehabilitating local government area offices, the capacity of critical sectoral agencies was built to ensure they continue to provide the needed services to the communities sustainably (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

Program Coordination and Monitoring: This part ensured the availability of operational support to the program coordinating team. It better prepared the team to coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate CDDP effectively. The team benefitted from pieces of training, technical advisory services, goods and budgetary support to cover its operational and other related costs (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

B) Sustainability Strategy

As noted in the Gambia's project appraisal document developed by the WB dated May 24th, 2006, the purpose of implementing CDDP within the institutional arrangement of decentralised governance administrative structure of the country is to guarantee the sustainability of the investment gains of the program. Henceforth what is required from

the Government was a genuine commitment to decentralised governance practices and a strong political will to ensure the Local Government Act (LGAct) 2002 is implemented to the letter. CDDP gains were hoped to serve as a building block for sustained decentralised development and service delivery beyond the program funding (World Bank, 2006).

The sustainable strategies factored in the CDDP implementation arrangement and structure as elaborated in the design documents were focused on three programmatic pillars. The grounding of the program design and implementation arrangement in the LGAct 2002; avoiding the setting up of parallel coordinating and implementing structures by integrating the activities of the existing government department staff operating within the region. Local-level civil servants and decentralised extension workers of the different line ministries, departments and CSOs working in the area were integrated into the CDDP implementation arrangement and structure. Added to this was the capacity strengthening of local government authorities, ward and VDCs to ensure enhanced skill set for civil servants and citizens at large. The allotting of part of the funds from the Community Development Facility for prospective operations and maintenance needs of identified sub-projects during project appraisal phase was another sustainability mechanism factored in the program design (World Bank, 2006).

C) Organisational Structure for CDD Program Implementation

Overall the Ministry of Local Government and Land (MLGL) through its Department of Community Development (DCD) was responsible for coordinating the implementation of CDDP. Its implementation structure comprised of a Program Steering Committee (PSC), Program Coordination Team (PCT), field staff including Community Development Officers (CDOs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and the extension workers of the various government agencies operating at the regional level grouped into Multi Disciplinary Facilitation Teams (MDFTs). MDFTs refer to the extension staffs of the different government departments in a particular region with the regional governors as the coordinator (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010; World Bank, 2006).

1. Central Level Arrangement for Policy Guidance

1.1 Program Steering Committee

The PSC provides the setting for policy guidance at the central level and the periodic review of program implementation strategy. It is a multisectoral body members of which were drawn from various government ministries, departments, agencies and CSOs. All committee members are based at the central government level. The committee composed of a staff of MLGL; Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Water Resources and Environment; Ministry of Education; National Nutrition Agency (NANA), Women's Bureau, Social Development Fund, NGOs that are operating in The Gambia including The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO) and Gambian Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA).

The Permanent Secretary, MLGL chaired the committee with CDDP coordinator serving as the secretary to the committee. Apart from endorsing the participating villages in the program at the project inception and providing the overall policy direction and oversight of program implementation strategy, critical responsibilities of the PSC included: to review and approve the annual program implementation work plans, and budgets of a program coordinating team; review of quarterly and yearly project reports; approval of subsequent updates of the following documents: project implementation manual (PIM), field guide, the financial and administrative manual and the procurement handbook; and the issuance of policy recommendations regarding the CDD program strategy (Government of The Gambia, 2007, p. 5; World Bank, 2006, p. 8).

1.2. Program Coordination Team

The PCT was housed at the DCD, MLGL. MLGL is the Government institution mandated to lead the decentralisation reform processes and community development matters in the Gambia. PCT reports to the Permanent Secretary, MLGL. PCT was tasked to oversee and coordinate the daily implementation of the entire CDDP. It served the technical, social, environmental, administrative and fiduciary oversight roles as well (Government of The Gambia, 2007, p. 5; World Bank, 2006, p. 8). Specific tasks assigned to PCT included to

identify participating villages within LGAs, prepare annual work plans for the program, manage program finances, procurement and periodic reporting.

PCT was also tasked to undertake awareness-raising sensitisation campaign, community development planning and diagnostic exercises. Subsequently, the reports from community development diagnostic exercises served as the reservoir for the preparation of village strategic development plans. This team comprised of the following: program coordinator, community development facility manager, capacity building manager, procurement specialist, financial management specialist and monitoring and evaluation specialist, administrative assistant and an accountant (ibid).

2. Local Government Area Level Arrangement

2.1. Community Development Officers (CDOs)

The coordination of field activities of CDDPs was executed by the field staff of the DCD of MLGL. CDOs are the regional DCD heads who supervise CDAs and report to the ministry through the Community Development Facility Manager of their parent department. CDOs are responsible for the overall coordination of CDDP activities at the ward and village levels. They accomplished this through annual work planning, reflection, capacity enhancement activities and activity support at the ward and village levels (Government of The Gambia, 2007; World Bank, 2006).

2.2. Community Development Facilitators (CDFs)

The CDFs were six in number trained by the CDDP to act as roving mentors and advisors to other field staff. The operational base of the CDFs is the program facilitation units at the regional offices of DCD. Their tasks include providing continuous training to the field staff; supporting MDFTs in strategic development planning, implementing sub-projects; monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning processes; assist the team-building efforts of MDFTs; coordinating the planning process at the villages level; and reporting to the CDOs periodical about the implementation status of program (Government of The Gambia, 2007; World Bank, 2006).

2.3. Community Development Assistants (CDAs)

The CDAs are the staff of the DCD, MLGL posted in the different wards throughout the country (although by the time this researcher conducted interviews/collected data in the field not all wards had CDA). CDAs lead the MDFTs to assist villages and wards to not only assess development needs but, to help develop plans and implement sub-projects as per the approved ward/village strategic development plans. MDFT refers to a group of government agencies extension workers based in the different regions tasked with the responsibility to help address development needs and issues of villages and wards in their respective areas of operation (Government of The Gambia, 2007; World Bank, 2006).

2.4. Environmental Focal Points (EFP)

Each local government area has a set of EFPs appointed among MDFTs to ensure sub-projects meet both social and environmental standards. The EFP of the PCT was the Community Development Facility manager. EFPs help conduct ecological impact assessments of the different sub-projects at the level of the community (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010). Although it's not clear whether EFPs are environmental experts qualified to give such an specialist advice or conduct ecological impact assessments or not.

2.5. Local Government Authorities

LCs are the administrative arms of the central government in each of the regions tasked with the day to day administration of the area. The overall administrative heads of each region in the Gambia is the Governor appointed by the President. At the same time, Chairpersons are the political heads of the LCs and mayors/mayoresses the political heads of municipal and city councils while the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) as the administrative heads. Each region has a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of extension workers of technical departments of the central government. At the ward and village levels, are MDFTs and representatives of locally involved NGOs (Government of The Gambia, 2002, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

2.6. Fiduciary Management: Financial Controller (FC)

The program recruited a financial controller in each of the six LGAs who was housed at the area council premises. Financial controllers worked with the council CEOs in managing the finances of the program. Each financial controller is tasked to provide technical assistance in the areas of financial management and budget control and ensured council's compliance with financial management regulations and conditions as enshrined in PIM and financial agreement document. LCs, through their TACs reviewed and endorsed village and ward strategic development plans and supervised the implementation of sub-projects at both village and ward levels. Broadly, TAC is tasked to ensure LC, ward and village plans conform to national development policy priorities and standards and meet environment protection standards (Government of The Gambia, 2002, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

Each council opened and managed a sub-account for community development facility where they disbursed grant allocations towards and villages. Upon approving the sub-projects, each LC signed a contractual agreement with either the VDC/WDC as the case may have been before funds were disbursed and subsequently monitored the sub-project implementation. Through the CDAs/CDOs, LCs were also responsible for certifying sub-project implementation reports. In contrast, financial controllers (appointed for the period of CDDP) and CEOs of the councils disbursed finances for the execution of village and ward sub-projects as well as monitor the spending process and endorse their financial reports. The councils also had a sub-committee that monitors and evaluates sub-project (Government of The Gambia, 2002, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

2.7. Planning and Coordination Structures

2.7.1. Ward Development Committee

Each ward constituted a development committee with representation from VDCs within the ward headed by an elected councillor. The ward committee reviewed village development plans (VDPs) for onward submission to the council for approval and the release of funds for sub-project implementation. WDCs were tasked to prepare ward development plans (WDPs) after they reviewed the different village plans. They are equally tasked to mobilise the community, its traditional leadership, civil society

organisations and private sector to support community development efforts (Government of The Gambia, 2002, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

With the support from CDDP field staff, WDCs led the identification, implementation, coordinate and monitor of development activities of their respective wards. WDCs managed funds for the implementation of their plans. Each committee established and maintained an executive body, different sub-committees, including that of monitoring and evaluation, they also opened and maintained a bank account with adequate records through sound accounting practices. WDCs ensured the availability of progress reports on the status of the sub-projects as well as the fulfilment of operational and maintenance requirements (ibid).

2.7.2. Village Development Committee

Each village constituted a development committee which could be dubbed the village parliament and the entry point for all community developments at that level. These committees were responsible for preparing the strategic development plans for the village and spearhead their implementation and monitoring. With the support from CDDP field staff, VDCs led the identification, implementation, coordination and monitoring of development activities of their respective villages. VDCs were equally tasked to mobilise the community, its traditional leadership, civil society organisations and private sector to support community development efforts. VDCs managed funds for the implementation of village plans. Each VDC established and maintained an executive body, different sub-committees, including that of monitoring and evaluation. They opened and maintained a bank account and adequate records through sound accounting practices as well as ensuring the availability of progress report and fulfilment of operational and maintenance requirements (Government of The Gambia, 2002, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

2.7.3. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Good Governance Facility was dedicated to the participation of Gambian CSOs or NGOs in the CDDP. CSOs were invited to file in project proposals to strengthen community accountability and transparency (Government of The Gambia, 2007; IDA, 2007; MASDAR UK Ltd, 2010).

3. Flow of Funds

The LGA were responsible for the disbursement of funds for development activities using formula-based grants at ward and village levels. Each LC has established a special sub-account designated for receiving project funds which is later disbursed as grants to support community projects. The disbursement of funds from LCs to the lower development institutions such as the VDCs and WDCs was based on a tripartite agreement signed between the VDC/WDC, the LC and the CDDP coordination unit. This agreement included the village/ward development plan, and an indicative list and cost of sub-projects. The financial management and procurement responsibility of the grant allocations lies with the VDCs and WDCs (World Bank, 2006, p. 9).

It is the VDCs and the WDCs who have the mandate to request for the replenishment of funds from their respective LCs based on certification of physical progress made in the implementation by either the CDA or MDFT. The local Project Financial Controller and the CEO are responsible for effecting the disbursement to the VDCs and WDCs. For LGAs to access funds to replenish or honour the requests for funding by the VDCs and WDCs, the project financial controller would have to submit the request to the PCT with a detailed schedule for resource use. The purpose of a schedule is to help facilitate the vetting process by the MDFTs who identify development activities to be funded, facilitate fund transfers to VDCs and WDCs to implement development initiatives (ibid).

4. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) is one key component of the CDDP implementation process in the Gambia and elsewhere in the region. The system tracked the key outcomes and results of the program. The MEAL system is result-oriented and considered as a management tool used by both the program staff and the participating communities. The orientation of CDDP MEAL system included: the monitoring of due diligence with a focus on how compliant is the implementation process with the PIM; to monitor and evaluate the rate at which the set development objectives and outcomes are being achieved; assess how sustainable are the program outcomes; evaluate the impact of the program on local governance and decision-making; evaluate the empowerment level of the marginalised groups such as women and youth. It also monitors compliance of the

various sub-projects to the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) (World Bank, 2006, p. 9).

M&E was conducted at various levels of program implementation structure and by different stakeholder groups using multiple methods. To ensure compliance with the PIM procedures, fiduciary and technical audits were undertaken using samples from participating villages. In anticipation for the conduct of end of program impact evaluation, before the implementation of the program activities, a baseline data was collected by a third party from both the treatment and control villages (World Bank, 2006, p. 10). This data was later compared with the end of the program impact evaluation findings to measure the overall impact of the program (see the findings below). At the national level, the overall program M&E activities were supervised by the M&E specialist in the PCT. Part of his/her responsibilities was to ensure quality control measures are observed or complied to concerning how data is collected and compiled at the decentralised levels. S/he also took the leadership role in data compilation for timely quarterly and mid-term reporting. All fiduciary data are compiled and analysed by the Finance Manager of the PCT. The Management Information System (MIS) was used to capture both the technical and financial data (ibid, p. 9).

The focus of M&E at the LGA level was on fiduciary matters, with particular attention paid to the monitoring of how effectively funds were used at village and ward levels. The Financial Controller in each LGA was tasked with the responsibility for this aspect of the monitoring arrangement. In contrast, it was the responsibility of the Capacity Building Manager to monitor the technical aspects of the program implementation such as the capacity building at the LCs, wards and village levels. The performance outcomes of the TACs with regards to their leadership function in terms of program coordination at the level of the LCs is monitored by the program staff (World Bank, 2006, pp. 9–10).

Participatory M&E was used at the village and ward levels by members of the communities themselves to track sub-project implementation progress and to measure whether the desired outcomes and results they have identified in the village/ward development plan document were being met. With the necessary technical guidance from the CDAs, M&E at this level was self-standing as it was managed entirely by the members of the communities themselves using community scorecard approach of data collection. The CDOs coordinated data collection at village and ward levels. CDOs conducted

intermediate outcome evaluation and filing of periodic reports to the PCT for management and reporting purposes (ibid, p. 10).

5. Program Impact Evaluation Findings

The CDDP report 2013 of the Gambia indicates that household members of the treatment villages expressed interest or willingness in volunteering whenever there is construction activity in their villages. It shows that there is a willingness on the part of villagers to take part in activities organised by either the ward or VDCs. Compared to the control villages, Fanneh and Jallow (2013) argue that there exist no statistical differences between the CDDP treatment households and control households when it comes to the willingness to volunteer which means CDDP had no impact in this regard. In terms of participation in decision-making processes by families in CDDP participating villages at the ward committee level and council meetings, CDDP did not result in any changes.

The result shows that CDDP did not result in any changes regarding the attendance of WDC meetings by households, except an observed increase in female attendance. The result demonstrates no difference between control and treatment households except the fact that women in CDDP treated families have more tendency to run for positions and be elected in WDCs compared to women in households in control villages. This finding, Fanneh and Jallow (2013) maintain could be ascribed to the fact that the “bulk of the projects implemented are of greater benefit to women than men, thus giving them an incentive to take part in WDC meetings and take a more active role in these committees” (p. 11).

About LC meeting attendance, the end of the project impact assessment report shows that CDDP did not increase the likelihood of households in the treated villages to attend LC meetings. Fanneh and Jallow (2013) conclude that “CDD project did not have a significant effect on increasing participation levels for households in CDDP villages compared to households in control villages” (p. 15). This finding Fanneh and Jallow (2013) noted “is akin to no significant difference in participation levels” of CDD program treatment households and control households. Perhaps the lack of positive impact regarding participation outcomes is the result of “inertia in institutional norms and values which would need more than a three-year project to change them” (p. 15). Fanneh and Jallow

(2013) also found out that the “project did not have a long-lasting impact on the likelihood that a household would take part in a kafoo²²” (p. 20).

The findings from the village level FDGs show that despite the successful implementation of CDD program in terms of infrastructure provision, the program failed to factor in the maintenance costs for equipment. This resulted in the disuse of several broken-down pieces of machinery in villages provided for through the program. Some were even broke down before the end of the program implementation period (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 26). The finding from FDGs both in the baseline survey (Arcand et al., 2010) and impact study Fanneh & Jallow (2013) demonstrate that majority about 80 per cent of communities are happy with their VDCs and WDCs (p. 25). Findings of both baseline survey (Arcand et al., 2010) and impact study (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013) show that social cohesion was strong in communities. Also, both male and female, as well as youth, participated in community meetings where decisions are made (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, pp. 24–25).

However, the fact that similar sentiments were shared in control villages demonstrates that CDDP had no significant impact on participation and cohesion in Gambia communities (p. 25). Fanneh and Jallow (2013) find out that “CDDP had significant effect” concerning participation in WDC and VDC activities. Households in CDDP villages have higher predisposition “to attend WDC and VDC meetings and be more likely to be elected. This was true for women within these CDDP households” (p. 26). Whereas the Gambia’s CDDP was found to have insignificant effect on measures such as health, wealth, volunteering and cohesion, the program is said to have succeed in “procuring and delivering infrastructure to the treatment villages. The treatment villages were happy with the public goods provided but the problem of maintenance of the infrastructure” (ibid, p. 27).

5.3.4. GoBifo CDD/R Program Description, Northern Sierra Leone

The “*GoBifo*²³” CDDP was financed by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) at a sum of US\$1.88 million. The MLGRD implemented it between January 2006 and July

²² “A kafoo is a group of households [or individuals] that come together for the purpose of taking part in agricultural [or other] activities. The aim is to provide labour for agricultural [or other] purposes and speed up work. There [could be monetary gain or otherwise and where there] is no monetary gain. . . , households that benefit from the kafoo activities are expected to take part when other households are in need of help on the farm”(Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 13).

²³ *GoBifo* in Krio language of Sierra Leone means “forge ahead”

2009 (Casey et al., 2011a, pp. 11–12, 2012). Managers and field facilitators of the project worked with Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), an international consultancy group to design the project. The staff worked with LCs to implement this project in 124 villages and 27 wards in northern Sierra Leone. In the district of Bombali, 84 villages and 19 wards participated and in Bonthe district 40 villages and 8 wards benefited from the program (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011, p. 13). Regarding budgetary allocations, US\$896,000 or 47 per cent of the total program budget was dedicated to village-and ward-level block grants. The GoBifo village projects were funded from this block grant budget (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011; Casey et al., 2011a, 2012).

Capacity enhancement at village-and ward-level planning consumed US\$589,732 or 30 per cent of the overall budget, while US\$255,320 or 14 per cent was allocated to project management and contingencies. The budgetary allocation to project M&E amounted to US\$177,300 or 9 per cent (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011; Casey et al., 2011a, 2012). Construction of local public goods had the largest share of about 43%. Out of this percentage, construction of community centres or sports fields for the youth was 14 per cent; followed by education (repair of primary schools) 12 per cent; water and sanitation (latrines) 10 per cent; health (including traditional midwife posts) 5 per cent; and roads 2 per cent. The remaining amount of the budget was allocated as follows: agriculture (seed multiplication and communal farming) was 26 per cent, livestock (goat herding) or fishing was 14 per cent, and 17 per cent was allocated to small business development initiatives and skills training (carpentry, soap making, blacksmith) (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011; Casey et al., 2011a, 2012).

1. Components of GoBifo CDDP

GoBifo CDDP had three main components that were implemented simultaneously at the ward-and village-levels. These are: a) development planning, b) building of local institutions and; c) development project implementation. The goal of GoBifo program is threefold: a) extend decentralisation to the lowest possible level in the communities-i.e., the villages; b) institutionalise self-help approach to development; and c) encourage more inclusive decision making at the local level, in particular, the involvement of women and youth, the most marginalised groups. Overall, GoBifo CDDP was set to “strengthen social capital by enhancing the capacity of villages and local governments to design and

implement strategic development plans at the village and ward levels” (Casey et al., 2011b, p. 8).

The GoBifo CDDP note Sesay et al. (2010) has many goals of which are: increased participation of women, youths and marginalised groups in village and ward development planning and activity implementation; a capacitated community for project planning and execution that meet village development needs; increased advocacy capacity of communities for their priorities needs during ward and district development planning process; a skilled community for project implementation and improved livelihoods; and enhanced transparency and accountability in decision-making at village and ward levels (p. 15).

These goals are broken down further into the following objectives: enhanced participation of women, youth and other marginalised groups in decision-making, planning and implementation processes of village and ward developments; enhanced project planning and implementation capacities at the level of villages/communities; increased advocacy capacities of communities so that they could advocate for the inclusion of their priorities in both ward and district development plans; improved livelihoods skills of community members and; increased transparency and accountability at the levels of the village and the ward (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011, p. 15).

1.1. Building Local Development Planning Institutions

Where applicable in this component the project formed or strengthened village and ward-level institutions called VDCs and WDCs respectively. These are the two lowest administrative units of local governance and development planning in GoBifo CDDP. These institutions serve as the focal point for development interventions at the level of the villages/wards. In partnership with ward committees, line ministries and donors, VDCs coordinated and advocated for development interventions in their areas. The implemented projects enhanced the capacities of VDCs on how to prepare VDPs, which later fed into the WDPs and final into the existing LC plan. Inclusion of vulnerable groups in these committees was pivotal throughout the planning process (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011; Casey et al., 2011a, 2012).

The capacity of VDCs and WDCs were developed to manage block grants and community-driven initiatives. VDPs and WDPs were translated into sub-projects which got funded through the block grants or development grants. Projects which were delivered in phases prioritized the inclusion of the poor and marginalized communities from planning through implementation. Block grants facility gives participating villages the chance to develop projects based on their priority needs. To ensure linkages between vertical decentralisation structures, VDPs designed by VDCs were submitted to the WDCs who reviewed, endorsed and transmitted plans to the district councils for approval. After projects have been approved, VDCs, project management team and LC would sign the financial agreement before funds were released for project implementation (Baltissen & Manyeh, 2011; Casey et al., 2011a, 2012).

1.2. Sustainability Strategy

Each community project has as a condition that each beneficiary villager has to contribute either in the form of cash/material, skilled or unskilled labour. This was to ensure GoBifo outcomes are sustainable. The rationale for factoring in community contributions in the project design and implementation is that with the contribution of their time and resources, communities will develop a greater sense of ownership for the projects. This measure was taken as an incentive for long-term maintenance of investments in the areas of buildings, structures, income-generating activities. Community contributions significantly saved the cost of CDD funded projects when compared to similar government-initiated or NGO projects. As part of the same plan CDDP setup/reinforced community institutions, built their project planning and management skills and strengthened their organizational structures.

The CDDP facilitated the formation of VDCs in communities where they did not exist and capacitated them by training them on their roles and responsibilities while strengthened them where they already existed with emphasis on the inclusion of women and young people in the committees. The program also activated and mobilised WDCs and built their capacity through funding and training. Contrary to what is mentioned in the LGAct 2004, “WDCs do not get a lot of support from the District Council. In 2006, when the GoBifo project started, they were mostly inactive and had no funding for meetings or development activities” (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 26). According to Sesay et al. (2010), CDDP model is “self-sustaining, in that profits from income-generating projects implemented by the

community are deposited in the community's bank account to fund future development endeavours" (p. 66). To create revolving funds, some communities included income-generating activities as part of their village plans. Which, according to Sesay et al. (2010):

Enhances sustainability by supporting future development activities. Communities with fishing projects use the proceeds to finance other community development activities. Others opted for skills-training projects like soap making, carpentry, and tailoring that ended up as income-generating projects for their communities. (p. 45)

2. CDD Program Governance Structures

2.1. Program Management Team

PMT for the coordination of the GoBifo CDD program was based at the MLGRD. The Ministry and its community development department are the government institutions mandated to lead the decentralisation reform processes and community development initiatives. The National Program Coordinator is a staff of the Ministry and reports to its Permanent Secretary. PMT includes the program coordinator and the different managers. Managers and field facilitators of the project worked for hands in gloves with KIT Royal Tropical Institute, an international consultancy group to design the project. The PMT ensured the day to day administration of the CDD program. The tasks of the PMT is to identify participating villages within each district, draw annual work plans, financial management, procurement and reporting periodically (Sesay et al., 2010).

Local Government Authorities

Each council has a development planning, budgeting and finance committees. The staff of KTI Royal Tropical Institute, an international consultancy group, worked with LCs and GoBifo staff in Freetown, Bonthe and Bombali Districts to design, implement and conduct field visits to project sites. Districts councils are responsible for vetting the VDPs sent to them by the WDCs for approval alongside the district development plans (DDPs) and approving funding to implement the yearly activity plan for each village and ward (Sesay et al., 2010).

Ward Development Committee

About the implementation of GoBifo CDDP, WDCs did have the following specific responsibilities: analyse and appraise VDPs before they are submitted; endorse VDPs or to request modifications; forward approved VDP to the LC with a recommendation for approval and funding; identify shared concerns and priorities from the VDPs, and capture those activities proposed by villages that should be promoted to ward level because they will have broad coverage and impact; prepare the WDPs for submission to the LC; use the same participatory tools as the village-level planning process; ensure that WDPs complement DDP; and ensure that WDPs are submitted to the council for endorsement and approval (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 28).

Village Development Committees

Each village has a parliament called the VDC which served as the focal point for all village developments activities. The tasks of the VDCs are to identify village problems and needs and from which they prepare the village strategic development plans for funding. Upon securing financing for their projects, VDCs lead the implementation and monitoring processes. VDCs are responsible for community mobilisation for development activities, requesting the support of their traditional leadership, civil society organisations and private sector to support community development efforts. VDCs managed funds for the implementation of village plans. Each VDC establishes and maintains an executive body, different sub-committees including that of monitoring and evaluation, open and maintain a bank account, adequate records by sound accounting practices as well as ensure the availability of progress report and fulfilment of operational and maintenance requirements. Although the LGAct 2004 does not establish VDCs, however, Sesay et al. (2010) who participated in the GoBifo CDD program implementation acknowledged the existence of VDCs at least in Northern region of Sierra Leone, while (Fanthorpe et al., 2011; Richards et al., 2004) found them elsewhere in the country. Sesay et al. (2010) have identified both general and specific roles and responsibilities of VDCs.

GoBifo CDDP VDC Composition

- Women representative;
- Youth representative; and
- Representatives of existing community groups.

Roles and responsibilities

General roles and responsibilities

- The VDC leads development efforts, co-ordinates and evaluates planned activities, and communicates with external partners (including GoBifo).

Specific roles and responsibilities

- Represents GoBifo at village level;
- Leverages the resources needed to undertake project activities, including mobilising and raising awareness with the community's traditional leadership, community-based organisations and other donors;
- Facilitates the compilation of all Village Plans;
- Ensures that the VDC Secretary presents the Village Development Plan (VDP) to the WDC so that they can endorse it;
- Works closely with project staff and supports the Village Facilitators;
- Co-ordinates both implementation of the action plan and the development efforts of local organisations;
- Manages soundly, on behalf of the village, the funds made available to the project;
- Keeps community members informed about all activities, ensuring public transparency and accountability;
- Evaluates the action plan implementation; and
- Co-ordinates and supervises monitoring and evaluation, and learning activities within and across teams, including the submission of timely reports to the ward facilitator. (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 22)

Program Impact Evaluation Findings

The impact of GoBifo CDDP was evaluated by the Evaluation Unit of the Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project (IRCBP). Katherine Casey, the Evaluation Specialist at IRCBP, led the impact evaluation with technical advice from the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL), Innovations in Poverty Action (IPA) and the U.C. Berkeley Centre for Evaluation of Global Action (CEGA). The objective of the assessment was to measure the impacts of the project “on the creation of local institutions, connections between villages and ward-level government, the stock and quality of local public goods, general economic welfare, social capital, and participation in local governance” (Casey et

al., 2011b, p. 9). Before the GoBifo project got commissioned in 2005, an evaluation team and the GoBifo managers conducted a baseline survey.

The survey focused on the program's expected areas of impact. 1) How the project is to be implemented, or the activities are to be delivered in communities; 2) the expected short-term effects of building local public goods and how financial resources are to be injected into communities; and 3) the possible social change, i.e., whether GoBifo experience will trigger change or not in the area of institutional building such as how members of the communities will interact and make development decisions (Casey et al., 2011b). After determining the requirements, including the eligibility criteria for villages to be included in the baseline, a random lottery was carried out to select communities among eligible and the control groups for the survey. This was followed by two end line surveys, one conducted in May and the other October 2009.

Besides the baseline and end-line surveys, extensive fieldworks using qualitative methods such as "open-ended interviews, focus group discussion, and participant observation [were used] (...) to develop and refine a set of quantitative survey measures for data collection" (Casey et al., 2011b, p. 20). Analysis of the implementation process of the GoBifo program shows that majority of the beneficiary communities confirmed that projects were successfully implemented. In general, according to Casey et al. (2011b) "community members have a positive opinion of GoBifo" (p. 33). About infrastructure development outcome, they conclude that "communities are better off in very tangible ways due to their participation in GoBifo" (ibid, p. 36). Concerning institutional and social change, Casey et al. (2011b) argue that their findings were both critical and troubling for the long term impacts of the GoBifo program.

Communities' GoBifo experiences "did not lead them to take advantage of the new collective action opportunity presented by the building material voucher program" (Casey et al., 2011b, p. 38). Program evaluation findings suggest that "GoBifo created immediate positive benefits for the community", however, "it did not send the communities onto a stronger development trajectory that would continue to accrue benefits beyond the life of the project" (ibid). Also, the program did not have any positive impact on the "role of women and youth in local decisions, nor on the transparency and accountability of decision-making more generally" (ibid).

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Introduction

The SCOPE institutional sustainability model is the theoretical framework used in the analysis of data and reporting of the findings. This model views institutions as systems. When studying the long-term sustainability problems of an institution, the framework postulates that it is critical to characterise critical dimensions of its internal administrative processes (technology and structure) and factors of its external environment (social, cultural, political, economic, and technical and others). In this perspective, an institution becomes sustainable when it can “produce outputs that are sufficiently well-valued so that enough inputs are provided to continue production” (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990, p. 14). The chapter is divided into two key sections: the analysis and interpretation, and the discussion, each of which is further divided into two parts.

Part one of the analyses and interpretation section presents an analysis and interpretation of data gathered through primary sources (survey, KIIs and FGDs) from the former GoBifo CDDP (2006-2009) beneficiary communities of Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone and the former CDDP (2007-2012) beneficiary communities of Kombo East and Central Districts of Brikama LGA, West Coast region of the Gambia. Here similar findings from the three different primary data sources of each of the two former CDDP beneficiary communities are brought together and reported thematically. Issues reported are those deemed relevant to the sustainability problem of VDCs.

Part two of the analysis and interpretation section presents a report of the findings gathered through primary sources (survey, KIIs and FGDs) from each of the two former CDDP beneficiary communities-Northern Sierra Leone and West Coast region of The Gambia. However, here findings from each of the former CDDP beneficiary communities are combined and reported in light of SCOPE framework per location. Evidence from each of the former program sites is sorted and presented based on the critical dimensions of VDCs’ internal administrative processes (technology and structure) and factors of their external environment (local governance system) that are deemed relevant to their sustainability problem.

The initial part of the discussion section presents a combined evidence from the findings of the two former CDDP beneficiary communities. Results are categorised into factors of the internal administrative structure and process of VDCs and their general and task environments (local governance system) considered to have provided plausible explanation for their sustainability problem in fragile and post-conflict West Africa. The second subdivision of the discussion section presents unsustainability characteristics of VDCs in light of SCOPE model. Here, factors in VDCs' general and task environments relevant to their unsustainability are presented, followed by those of their internal dimensions (structure and technology) and issues related to the strategy. This section is sealed by indicating some of the challenges encountered in the study that could have limited it.

Also included in this subsection is a brief discussion of the introduction of bottom-up/decentralised and multilevel planning process in West Africa subregion in the wave of donor-funded decentralisation reform programs. Discussed too are the application the strategies of SCOPE model to the multilevel planning process of VDCs and a discussion of multilevel planning in the context of CDDP and an illustration of VDCs relations to other decentralised institutions and organisations. It's worth noting that evidence produced in this section on, is the combined findings of the primary data presented in part one and two of analysis and interpretation sections above. Added to this is the preliminary data sourced specifically about the understanding of VDCs and CDDPs evaluations documents. And the secondary data sourced about the local governance issues of the Gambia and Sierra Leone presented in case background and context chapter. Finally discussed are the implications of research findings for donor-funded CDD institution building/development approach in fragile and post-conflict contexts.

6.1. Part One: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

This section presents an analysis and interpretation of data gathered through primary sources (survey, KIIs and FGDs) from the former GoBifo CDDP beneficiary communities of Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone and the former CDDP beneficiary communities of Kombo East and Central Districts of Brikama LGA, West Coast region of The Gambia. Here similar findings from the three different primary data sourced in each of the two

former CDDP beneficiary communities are brought together and reported thematically. Issues reported are those deemed relevant to the sustainability problem of VDCs.

6.1.1. Bombali District/Local Government Area

i. Development Planning and Implementation

This section evaluates whether VDCs have continued to coordinate the multilevel development planning process and served as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village years after the donor-funded CDDP phased-out. Findings show that VDCs in the Bombali District have not in the past five years or so preceding the data collection period of this research been frequently engaged in active community development planning and implementation process. Far less than 50% of the 94 survey respondents reported that their VDCs had not participated actively in multilevel planning process. There are a few development activities that VDCs are occasionally engaged in though. Overall, they were either rarely or never involved in the majority of the types of development activities they have gained experience in planning and implementing during donor-funded CDDP.

Table 3: Participation in village development initiatives

How often over the past five years or so have you or any of your family members participated in any of the identified village development initiative that organised by your VDC/heard that your VDC has initiated any of the following?		Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Nonresponse	Sample Size
Bombali District Council Survey	Organize road brushing	37%	39%	0	22%	0	1%	94
	Dig or repair a well or water hand-pump	9%	55%	2%	28%	2%	4%	
	Re-grade a local road	7%	22%	2%	62%	3%	3%	
	Increasing agricultural productivity/services	6%	41%	23%	24%	1%	3%	
	Provision of social services	5%	24%	35%	28%	3%	4%	
	Rebuild a church or mosque	4%	56%	5%	26%	3%	5%	
	Capacity building	3%	31%	24%	31%	5%	5%	
	Rebuild a primary school or health clinic	2%	35%	6%	44%	7%	5%	
	Natural resource management services	2%	19%	31%	36%	7%	4%	

ii. Organising Decision-Making Meetings

Results concerning the frequency of decision-making meetings organised by VDCs five years or so before collecting data for this research in which the respondent, her/his family member or a neighbour was invited to participate, illustrate that VDCs do occasionally sermon for a meeting, but not regular. Evidence shows that less than 25% of respondents

mention that neither themselves nor a family member or a neighbour regularly attended any meetings at the behest of their VDCs. Evidence shows between 40% and 77% of respondents reported occasional participation themselves, a family member or a neighbour in a forum at the request of their VDCs.

Table 4: Participation in decision-making meetings

Over the past five years or so, how often has your VDC organised any of the following meetings in your village in which you, a member of your household or your neighbour was invited to participate?		Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Nonresponse	Sample Size
Bombali District Council Survey	A consultative meeting	15%	67%	9%	5%	1%	3%	94
	Selecting a committee for a task	21%	65%	2%	10%	1%	1%	
	Meet a visiting government or NGO agent	14%	52%	10%	20%	3%	1%	
	A project or program planning or feedback meeting	16%	68%	5%	10%	0%	1%	
	To select members of the VDC	11%	40%	7%	12%	3%	27%	
	Information sharing or advocacy meeting	10%	77%	2%	11%	0%	1%	

iii. Partnerships with other Institutions/Agencies for Village Development Initiatives

In most part, VDCs in West Africa by design can participate actively in the process of community development planning and implementation sustainably only in partnership with other institutions/organisations. To understand if partnership ventures have been explored frequently by the VDCs or not, survey, KII and FGD participants were quizzed about whether such partnerships exist between VDCs and other institutions/organisations. Findings show that less than 30% of the 94 survey respondents reported having witnessed or made aware of any regular partnerships between VDCs and other institutions/organisations. The results show between 40% and 50% of projects occasionally executed in communities were planned and implemented without the involvement of VDCs. At the same time, the few partnerships that were forged are described as either rarely or never.

Table 5: Village development initiatives organised by the VDCs in partnerships with other institutions/organisations

		Listed are some of the institutions/organisations that could initiate any of the above village development project. Could you tell me which of institutions/organisations initiated development in your village and how often in the past five years or so ?	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Sample Size
Bombali District Council	Survey	Partnerships between VDCs and NGOs and donors	27%	15%	24%	28%	1%	94
		VDC members themselves	12%	51%	5%	24%	1%	
		NGO/Donors development projects without involving VDCs	10%	46%	0%	32%	9%	
		Partnerships between VDCs, local government and other supportive institutions	4%	9%	41%	38%	2%	
		Partnerships between VDCs and local governments	4%	5%	40%	43%	2%	
		Partnerships between VDCs and supportive state institutions	4%	17%	34%	36%	1%	
		Local government projects without involving VDCs	4%	5%	33%	45%	7%	
		Government development projects without involving VDCs	4%	47%	0%	37%	6%	
		Partnerships between VDCs and parallel structure (CBOs)	3%	35%	9%	43%	3%	
		Partnerships between VDCs and the central government	1%	11%	26%	51%	2%	

Relationships between VDCs & other Local Government Institutions			Percentage	Sample Size
Bombali District Council	KII	VDCs have both cordial & working relations with village chiefs	56%	64
		VDCs have no cordial relation with other local government structures	30%	
		VDCs have cordial but no work relations with the council, WDCs & district chiefs	28%	
		Local council, councillors & WDC members don't work with VDCs	17%	
		VDCs have no cordial relations with the council & central government	16%	
		VDCs have cordial but minimal/no work relations with local council	11%	
		VDCs have no relations with CBOs	3%	
	FGD	VDCs have both cordial & working relations with village chiefs	50%	4
		Local council, councillors & WDC members don't work with VDCs	50%	
		VDCs have cordial but minimal/no work relations with local council	25%	

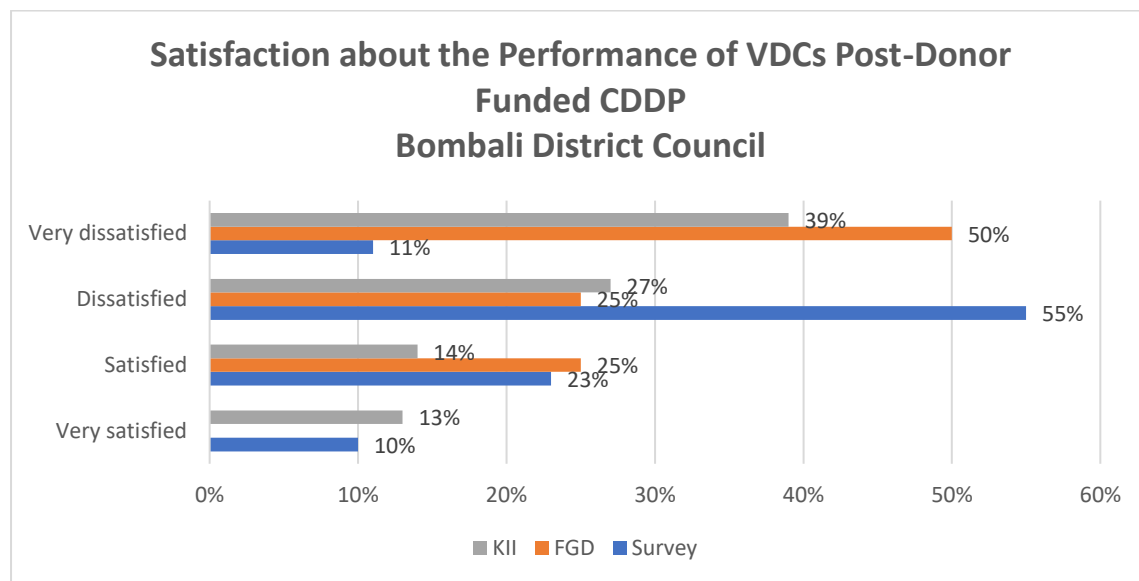
Findings from the 64 KII respondents, as shown in the table above illustrate that more than 50% of the respondent reported that VDCs have cordial working relations only with their village chiefs. And 30% clearly state that their VDCs don't have friendly functional ties with other local government structures. After ruling out an animosity between VDCs, the Council, WDCs and district chiefs, 28% acknowledges that VDCs don't have a working relationship with these institutions. Findings from the 4 FGD sessions show that 50% of participants confirm cordial working relations between village chiefs and VDCs while another 50% report that the Council, its councillors and members of WDCs don't work with the VDCs instead work independently of them.

iv. Performance of VDCs in Multi-level Planning Processes

Regarding individual satisfaction with the performance of VDCs, findings show that about 55% of the 94 survey respondents are dissatisfied with the level of participation of their VDCs in multilevel development planning and implementation process. Out of the 4 CBOs that took part in the FGDs, 50% are very dissatisfied with the performance of VDCs in the

locality whereas 27% of the 64 KII respondents feel dissatisfied and 39% very disappointed. “Villages may end up not having VDCs because everyone is busy doing his separate work instead of working for the VDC” (Ward Councillor, Gbanti Kamaranka, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 7th February 2018). “My feelings about VDCs’ recent performance is unsatisfactory” (District Coordinator, Care International Makeni, Bombali Northern SL, KII, 15th February 2018).

Figure 6: Satisfaction about the Performance of VDCs Post-Donor Funded CDDP



v. Activeness in Multi-level Development Planning Processes

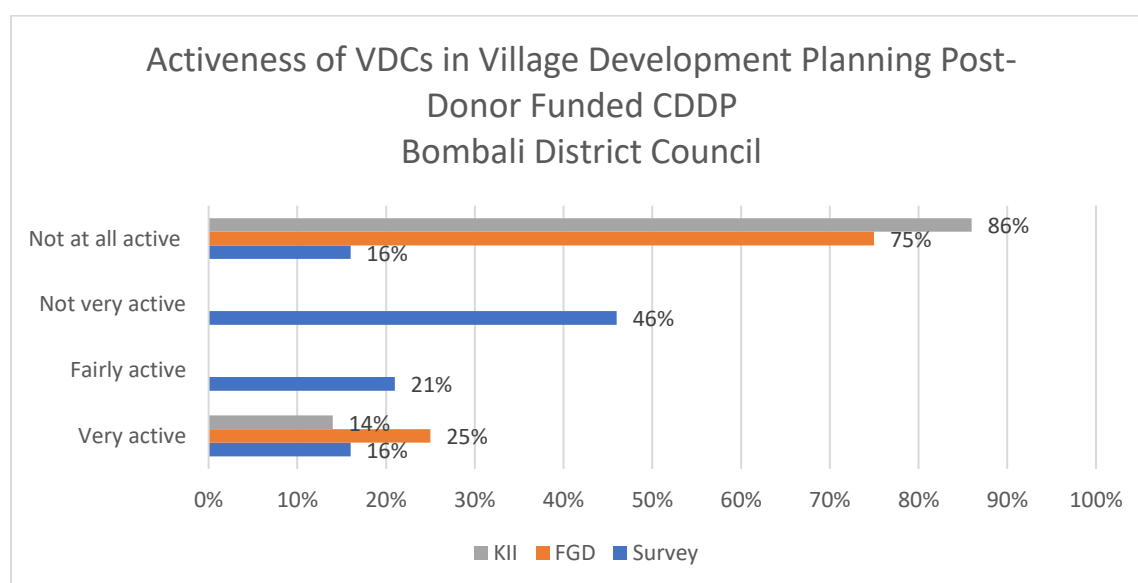
Concerning the active participation of VDCs in multi-level planning processes, findings from the household survey show that 46% of the 94 respondents perceive their VDCs as not very busy. In comparison, 16% state that VDCs are not at all active. Findings from the FGDs show that 75% of the 4 CBOs observe that VDCs are not active at all whereas 86% of the 64 KII respondents recognise that VDCs in the locality are not at all functional. “VDCs do perform their role but not as effective as during the time they were receiving the grants” (WDC member, Word 108, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 10th February, 2018)

VDCs were not capacitated enough to undertake community-driven development programs after the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP. Most members become less active due to a lack of financial and other incentives. During the donor-funded project, they were 99% active, but now their performance is about 20%. Everyone

is busy with his/her activities than working with the committee; they only show up when an organisation comes to the community. Most CBOs don't work directly with them, but they are beneficiaries to most projects undertaken in the community. (Women Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WoFohd), Bombali District, Northern SL, FGD, 9th February, 2018)

VDCs are no longer effective in performing their roles; that was why, in the beginning, I said they are partially active. Minor activities that do not need fund can be done but for those that need funding cannot be done without the help of outsiders. (Councillor, Sella Limba Chiefdom, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 29th February, 2018)

Figure 7: Activeness of VDCs in Village Development Planning Post-Donor Funded CDDP



vi. Weaknesses: Council and the Practice of Multi-level Planning

Regarding the weakness of the Council in the practice of multi-level planning in the district and the active involvement of VDCs in the process, 28% of the 64 KII respondents reported inadequate funding for council, 27% mentioned insufficient revenue to fund community development projects. Whereas 19% of respondents state the limited capacity of the council in conducting effective monitoring of community structures and projects, 11% mentioned human resource shortages and the failure of the council to engage communities

and 9% observe information sharing or exchange problem. “The council are reactivated recently, and it doesn’t have adequate funds to support institutions/communities adequately” (Programs Manager, Defence for Children in Makeni, Bombali District, SL, KII, 13th February, 2018).

The problem with the council is money. In the absence of revenue, there is no way you can implement development activities. Funds from the central government are tied to activities which the council cannot change and is also limited; therefore, effective support to communities cannot be enhanced. (Ward councillor in Bombali district, Northern SL, KII, 11th February, 2018)

Table 6: Weaknesses of LCs in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes

Weaknesses of local councils in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes		Percentage	Sample Size	
Bombali District Council	KII	No adequate funds for institutional support	28%	64
		Capacity to manage/supervise VDCs	28%	
		Inadequate revenue to fund community development projects	27%	
		Capacity to effectively monitor community structures & projects	19%	
		Timely & quality project implementation	13%	
		Shortage of human resources	11%	
		No community engagement	11%	
		Information sharing/exchanges problem	9%	
		Not involving VDCs in community dev. planning processes	8%	
		No/inadequate means of transport for councillors & staff	8%	
		Unable to meet community demands	6%	
		Resource allocation problem	3%	
		Disconnect between the councillors & the people they represent	3%	
		Failure to provide the needed leadership & support to VDCs	2%	
		Bombali District Council	FGD	Inadequate revenue to fund community development projects
Resource allocation problem	100%			
Capacity to effectively monitor community structures & projects	50%			
No/inadequate means of transport for councillors & staff	50%			
Capacity to manage/supervise VDCs	50%			
No community engagement	50%			
Shortage of human resources	50%			
Information sharing/exchanges problem	50%			
Disconnect between the councillors & the people they represent	25%			

Findings from FGDs as illustrated in the table above show that all the four participating CBOs affirm that inadequate revenue for community development projects and resource

allocation problem are two critical weaknesses of Bombali District Council. This hinders the maintenance of multilevel planning process and the active involvement of VDCs. Again, 50% of the CBOs reference the limited capability of the council in conducting effective monitoring of decentralised community development structures such as the VDCs, inadequate means of transport facilities to aid ward councillors and council staff in carrying out their functions of engaging lower level decentralised structures, councils' limited capacity to manage and supervise VDCs, lack of community engagement by the council, human resources shortage of the council and the problem of information sharing or exchange. About 25% of CBOs associated the failure of the council to continue with multi-level development planning process after the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP and to maintain the active participation of VDCs in it to the disconnect between the ward councillors and their constituents. "Weaknesses of the council include poor supervision, no capacity on how to manage VDCs, poor monitoring of projects, the bias in project implementation" (Munafa M'Patie CBO, Bombali district, Northern SL, FGD, 10th March 2018).

The council lacks vital information sharing ability with communities, councillors who are representing the people in the council don't reach out to them. They don't visit communities and don't know their problems. Government delays in the disbursement of funds. Inadequate distribution of resources due to limited funds allocation to projects in the council. (Develop Salon (DESAL) CBO, Bombali district, Northern SL, FGD, 10th February, 2018)

vii. Challenges: Council and the Practice of Multilevel Planning Process

With regards to challenges facing the Council in the practice of multilevel planning, findings, as shown in the table below, indicate that 60% to 82% of the 94 survey respondents identify inadequate financial resources, shortage of logistical support for the LC and corruption as some of the challenges faced by the Council. Together they make the practice of multi-level planning processes difficult for the Council. While 38% reported about the inadequate human resources of the council, 34% observe political interference and 27% the interference of the central government in the affairs of the council challenges worth mentioning.

Table 7: Challenges LCs face in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes

Bombali District Council	Challenges local governments face in sustaining the practice of multi-level development planning and implementation processes		Yes, it applies	No, it doesn't apply	Don't Know	Total
	Survey	Limited financial resources		82%	11%	2%
Shortage of logistical support			78%	10%	1%	
Corruption			60%	29%	1%	
Inadequate human resources			38%	48%	1%	
Political interference			34%	49%	1%	
Interference by the central government			27%	60%	3%	

Challenges local councils face in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes			Percentage	Sample Size
Bombali District Council	KII	Limited amount of funds allocated to local councils	20%	64
		Delay in funds disbursement from central government	11%	
		Lack of support/cooperation from communities	5%	
		Meager central gov't allocations to local councils	3%	
		Lack of financial support for community dev. programs	3%	
		Failures of chiefs to follow up village development activities	2%	
		Hard to reach villages and distance	2%	
		Wide coverage/catchment areas of the local council	2%	
		Revenue source of local councils under control of central government	2%	
		Untimely payment of taxes & rates	2%	
FGD	Delay in funds disbursement from central government	50%	4	

Findings from the 64 KIIs as shown in the table above show that 20% of the respondents mention limitation in the number of funds allocated to the Council by the central government whereas 11% fault the delay in fund disbursement from the central government as the fundamental challenges. Also, 50% of the 4 CBOs that took part in the FGDs identified the delays experienced in the allocation of funds from the central government to the Council as a challenge affecting its capability in instituting multi-level planning processes and ensured the active involvement of VDCs. “Councils neither get the required government support nor do their MPs advocate on their behalf in the parliament” (Village chief from Bombali district, Northern SL, KII, 31st January, 2018). “Although the council gets quarterly funding support from the central government, these allocations do not come on time for activities to be implemented and even when they come; they do not serve the whole district” (Ward councillor, Bombali district, Northern SL, 1st February, 2018).

viii. Challenges: VDCs and Active Participation in Multi-level Planning Processes

Concerning challenges resulting in VDCs' failure to sustain active participation in multilevel planning processes, results show that 44% of the 64 KII respondents reported lack of program/project funding as a challenge that hinders the active involvement of VDCs. VDCs' lack of capacity to mobilise community labour and funds is mentioned by 38% as a challenge whilst 20% observed the long distance between Council and most of the VDCs especially those located in hard-to-reach localities, lacking transport network and limited logistics or means of transport. VDCs lack of strong institutional support from either the LCs, NGO community or the private sector is mentioned too.

About 50% of the 4 CBOs that participated in FGDs reported a lack of necessary information for planning and the abandonment of multi-level planning processes by the Council. "VDCs do not have finances for development programs, planning and implementation of activities are somehow difficult, especially when everyone is busy with farm work. Most VDC members also have their farm work; calling for meetings is sometimes difficult" (A female VDC member, Mayorthan Village, Gbendembu Ngohahun, Bombali District, SL, KII, 30th January 2018). "VDCs find it difficult in getting community people to undertake development activities. They lack finances for development programs and the failure of political heads to lead development in our community" (A village Chief, Sanda Loko, Bombali District, SL, KII, 27th January, 2018). "After the phase-out of the GoBifo program that founded these committees, less interest was shown to them by the council even though they know they are existing bodies in these communities" (Develop Salon (DESAL) CBO, Bombali district, SL, FGD, 16th March 2018).

Table 8: Challenges VDCs face in sustaining their active participation in multi-level development planning processes

Challenges VDCs face in sustaining their active participation in multi-level development planning processes		Percentage	Sample Size	
Bombali District Council	KII	Lack of program/project funding	44%	64
		Limited community labour or fund contribution	38%	
		Distance between councils & VDCs	20%	
		Poor transport network & limited means of transport	20%	
		Weak supporting institutions (Councils, NGOs, private)	20%	
		Local councils abandoned multi-level planning process	9%	
		Perception that VDCs is donor project support institutions	6%	
		Environmental & Land tenure system	3%	
		Lack of technical support for planning	3%	
		Lack of information for planning	3%	
		Limited human & financial resources of VDCs	2%	
		Limited awareness on the importance of VDCs	2%	
		FGD		Lack of information for planning
Local councils abandoned multi-level planning process	50%			

ix. Weaknesses: VDCs and Active Participation in Multi-level Planning Processes

Findings show that 42% 64 KII respondents mention inadequate financial resources as a weakness of VDCs, 38% identify limitation in VDCs’ planning capacity while 28% talk about the lack of remuneration for VDC members to defray the time and energy spent on community development work. About 22% reference the low attendance of meetings and activities organised by VDCs as some of the weaknesses that hinder the sustainable activity/involvement of VDCs in multi-level planning processes. “VDCs lack capacity and not financially equipped to function effectively. Most of us lack interest, thinking it was a paid job, or we will have special benefits as committee members” (A male VDC secretary, Bombali district, Northern SL, KII, 1st February, 2018). “VDCs are presently facing mobilisation problems as many stakeholders are not taking part when they call for a meeting and even some youths” (A village chief, Bombali, Northern SL, KII, 30th January 2018).

VDCs are weak in getting the community to undertake a community-driven development program. Mobilising communities is difficult, especially when they have no financial benefit from it. VDCs cannot initiate community-driven programmes. Most committee members were active thinking it is a paid job, but

when they got to know that there is no benefit attached, they care less. (Village Elder, Gbom-Kasongo Sanda Tainderen, Bombali district Northern SL, KII, 29th January 2018)

Table 9: Weaknesses of VDCs in Multilevel development Planning Process

Weaknesses of VDCs in continuing coordinating multi-level development planning processes at the village level		Percentage	Sample Size	
Bombali District Council	KII	Inadequate financial resources	42%	64
		Inadequate planning capacity	38%	
		Services rendered/work done is not remunerated	28%	
		Poor attendance of meetings/activities	22%	
		Poor resource mobilisation capacity	5%	
		Too much reliance on outside support	3%	
		Limited skills in lobbying funding	3%	
		Poor community mobilisation skills	2%	
		Inadequate criteria for VDC selection	2%	
		Not holding periodic meetings	2%	
	Lack of deliberate institution sustainability strategy	2%		
	FGD	Inadequate planning capacity	75%	4
		Not Legally registered	50%	
		Limited skills in lobbying for funding	50%	
Services rendered/work done is not remunerated		50%		
Poor attendance of meetings/activities		25%		
Poor resource mobilisation capacity		25%		

Findings from the 4 FGDs show that 75% of CBOs cite VDCs' inadequate planning capacity as one significant weakness affecting their active involvement in multi-level planning processes. About 50% report VDCs' limited lobbying skills for project funding from the council and other development partners, their lack of legal status and lack of remuneration for the services of their members as some of the weaknesses. Yet, 25% of the CBOs identify defects such as the low attendance of VDC meetings, other activities organised by VDCs and the inadequate resource mobilisation capacity of VDCs. "Some weaknesses of VDCs are poor member capacity, poor meeting attendance, and lack of fund-raising ability" (Munafa M'Parti CBO, Bombali District, SL, FGD, 10th March 2018)

The GoBifo CDD project formed VDCs, they were not well equipped to perform their roles, and therefore they are not sustainable. They lack techniques about how to lobby development organisations for community development funding. VDCs

are not registered and therefore do not have legal status, that would have enabled them to operate as an independent body and be able to source funds from everywhere to support their communities. (Develop Salon (DESAL), Bombali district, SL, FGD, 10th February, 2018)

6.1.2. Brikama Local Government Council

i. Development Planning and Implementation

Here the researcher tries to establish whether VDCs have continued to coordinate multilevel planning and serve as a local entry point for all development assistance to villages after donor-funded CDDP phased-out. Overall, reports show that VDCs do not frequently organise development activities in villages. Less than 30% of the 100-survey respondents report about the regular initiation of village development interventions by VDCs, less than 40% state that their VDCs do this occasionally. This shows that VDCs in the locality of Brikama are not active when it comes to development planning and implementation on their own.

Table 10: Participation in village development initiatives

How often over the past five years or so have you or any of your family members participated in any of the identified village development initiative that organised by your VDC/heard that your VDC has initiated any of the following?		Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Nonresponse	Sample Size
Brikama Area Council Survey	Provision of social services	25%	29%	12%	11%	1%	22%	100
	Rebuild a primary school or health clinic	24%	28%	14%	27%	7%	0	
	Natural resource management services	22%	31%	10%	23%	11%	3%	
	Dig or repair a well or water hand-pump	17%	35%	23%	20%	3%	2%	
	Organize road brushing	16%	32%	26%	21%	4%	1%	
	Rebuild a church or mosque	14%	27%	21%	23%	11%	4%	
	Increasing agricultural productivity/services	12%	19%	22%	32%	13%	2%	
	Re-grade a local road	6%	39%	29%	21%	4%	1%	
	Capacity building	6%	24%	24%	26%	14%	6%	

ii. The Organisation of Decision-making Meetings

Findings concerning the frequency of decision-making meetings organised by VDCs five years or so before collecting data for this research in which the respondent, his/her family member or a neighbour was invited to participate, show that VDCs do occasionally call for meetings but not regular. Evidence shows that less than 35% of respondents state neither themselves nor a family member or a neighbour attended VDC meetings regularly. Again,

between 33% and 46% of respondents testify to have either occasionally attended a VDCs meeting themselves, a family member or a neighbour.

Table 11: Participation in decision-making meetings

Over the past five years or so, how often has your VDC organised any of the following meetings in your village in which you, a member of your household or your neighbour was invited to participate?		Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Nonresponse	Sample Size
Brikama Area Council	Survey							
	A consultative meeting	23%	46%	13%	14%	4%	0%	100
	Selecting a committee for a task	33%	33%	15%	14%	3%	2%	
	Meet a visiting government or NGO agent	18%	36%	25%	15%	4%	2%	
	A project or program planning or feedback meeting	16%	43%	14%	20%	5%	2%	
	To select members of the VDC	21%	39%	27%	9%	3%	1%	
Information sharing or advocacy meeting	30%	35%	12%	15%	3%	5%		

iii. Partnerships with other Institutions/Agencies on Village Development Initiatives

With regards the frequency of village development partnerships between VDCs and other institutions/organisations, findings show that less than 30% of the 100 survey respondents reports that their VDCs often partnered with other institutions/organisations to initiate village development activities. Less than 40% of respondents mention that such partnerships were occasional when it comes to planning and implementing villages development programs. Overall, the findings show that VDCs are not frequently involved in any bilateral or tripartite partnerships for village development.

Table 12: Village development initiatives organised by the VDCs in partnerships with other institutions/organisations

Listed are some of the institutions/organisations that could initiate any of the above village development project. Could you tell me which of institutions/organisations initiated development in your village and how often in the past five years or so ?		Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Not applicable	Sample Size
Brikama Area Council	Survey						
	VDC members themselves	32%	33%	18%	7%	4%	
	NGO/Donors development projects without involving VDCs	26%	36%	22%	8%	1%	
	Partnerships between VDCs and NGOs and donors	25%	38%	20%	11%	3%	
	Partnerships between VDCs and supportive state institutions	22%	38%	24%	8%	3%	
	Partnerships between VDCs, local government and other supportive institutions	20%	26%	34%	11%	6%	100
	Partnerships between VDCs and local governments	17%	38%	21%	16%	4%	
	Partnerships between VDCs and parallel structure (CBOs)	14%	19%	28%	19%	11%	
	Government development projects without involving VDCs	10%	23%	44%	16%	2%	
Local government projects without involving VDCs	9%	23%	33%	25%	2%		
Partnerships between VDCs and the central government	3%	23%	22%	33%	15%		

Relationships between VDCs & other Local Government Institutions		Percentage	Sample Size	
Brikama Area Council	KII	VDCs do report to WDCs. WDCs are dormant & don't monitor VDC activities	58%	40
		VDCs have limited support from other local government institutions	45%	
		VDCs have cordial but minimal/no work relations with local council	45%	
		VDCs have infrequent work relations with other local government structure	25%	
		District chiefs are not aware of all the activities of VDCs	20%	
		VDCs report to WDCs & are monitored by WDCs & district chiefs	20%	
		Village heads/chiefs are members of the VDC executive	20%	
		VDCs lobby funding for their projects from NGOs & not WDCs	10%	
		VDCs don't have cordial relations with other local government structures	5%	
		VDCs have cordial but no work relations with council, WDCs & district chief	3%	
FGD		WDCs are controlled by/answerable to the local councils but VDCs are not	100%	4
		VDCs are answerable to/controlled by district & village chiefs	100%	

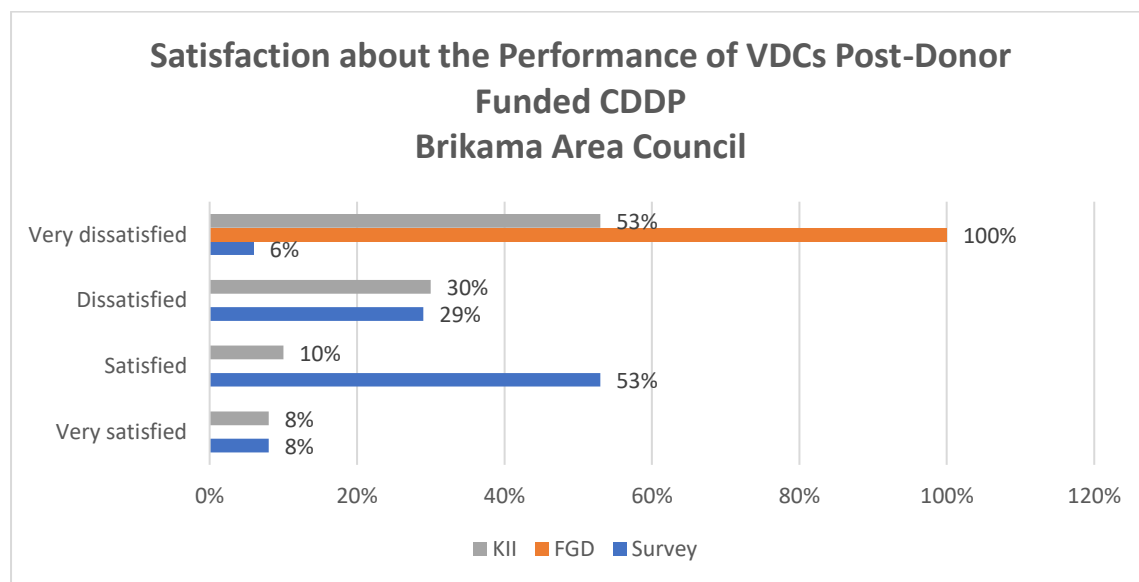
KII findings show that 58% of the 40 KII respondents report about the absence of any kind of partnerships between the VDCs and WDCs concerning community development. WDCs are said to be dormant, neither do they monitor the activities of VDCs nor do VDCs report to them. About 45% of the respondents affirm that VDCs get limited support from other local government institutions. Although there exists a cordial relation between VDCs and the Council, nonetheless the two institutions have minimal/no development work relationships. Further, all the 4 CBOs who participated in the FGDs reports that WDCs are controlled by/answerable to the Council while VDCs are not and that VDCs are accountable to/governed by district and village chiefs instead.

iv. Performance of VDCs in Multi-level Planning Processes

The measure of satisfaction about the performance of the VDCs post-donor funded CDDP shows that 53% of the 100 survey respondents are satisfied while 29% express dissatisfaction. The possible explanation for the over 50% satisfaction rating for VDCs in Brikama Area Council as captured in the interviewers' notes is that the general understanding among members of the community is that their VDCs can only become active participants in multi-level planning process when they get support (financial, human and material) from the Council and the central government. This is because they don't have full revenue collection authority and could not generate enough income to finance village development programs. The two institutions (council and the central government) that possess revenue collection and distribution powers and other institutions/organisations working in their communities should provide the needed support.

On the contrary, findings from the FGDs and KIIs portray a different image as both sets of respondents aren't satisfied with the participation of VDCs in the community development. All the 4 CBOs that partook in FGDs and 53% of the 40 KII respondents feel very dissatisfied with the performance of VDCs. "The performance of some VDCs are abysmal whilst others are not at all functional instead are dormant" (CEO Brikama Area Council, West Coast Region, GMB, KII, 29th June 2018). "Few VDCs have abysmal performances whilst others are trying, and others are not functional but instead are dormant" (Program Coordinator, NACOFAG, Brikama, West Coast Region, GMB, KII, 28th June 2018).

Figure 8: Satisfaction about the Performance of VDCs Post-Donor Funded CDDP

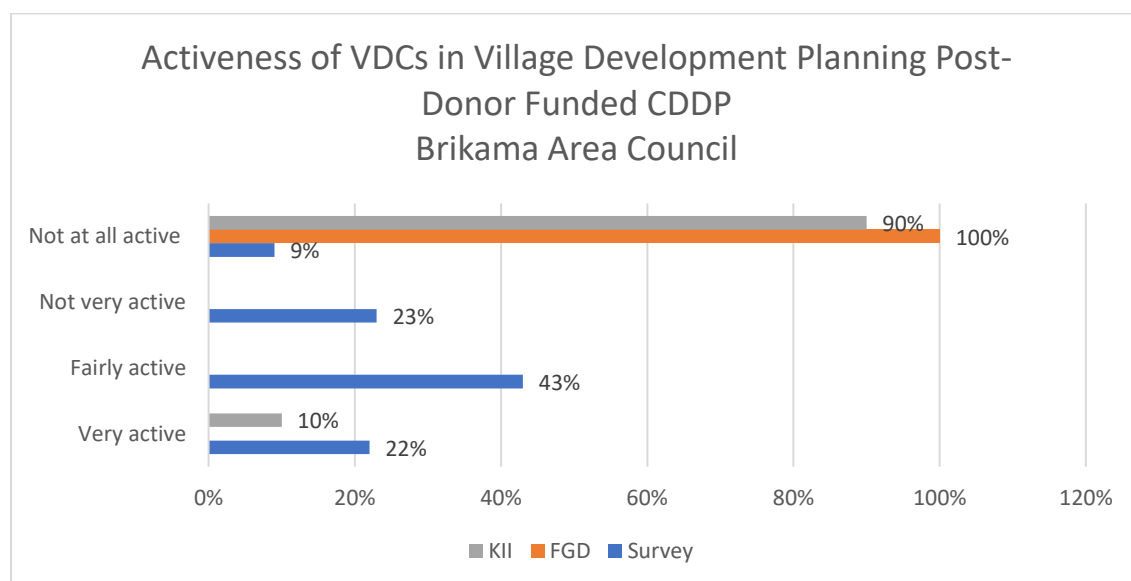


v. Activeness in Multi-level Planning Processes

Findings regarding the activity of VDCs in multilevel development planning and implementation years after the donor-funded CDDP phased-out show that 43% of the 100 respondents find their VDCs active although fairly. While 23% state that their VDCs have not been very dynamic (the explanation given for the survey respondents' high satisfaction rate above applies here too). About 90% of the 40 KII respondents and all the 4 CBOs FGDs confirm that VDCs are not at all active. "After the completion of donor-funded CDDP projects, VDCs have become dormant and non-functional except that they exist by name only" (Darussalam Social Service Centre, Kombo Central district, GMB, FGD, 3rd June 2018 & 4th June 2018). "Our VDC is active but not very functional as members serve voluntarily, thus making people relax in their duties in the VDC" (VDC Member Kassa

Kunda village, West Coast Region, GMB, KII, 23rd April 2018). “Our VDC once mobilised community labour and local resources and embarked on a feeder road rehabilitation work” (VDC Public Relations Officer (PRO), West Coast Region, GMB, KII, 22nd April 2018). “As a committee, we can perform our roles as expected, but our performance can be rated average as project availability is limited” (VDC Treasurer, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018)

Figure 9: Activeness of VDCs in Village Development Planning Post-Donor Funded CDDP



vi. Weaknesses: Council and the Practice of Multi-level Planning

Findings show weaknesses on the part of Brikama Area Council in practising multilevel development planning with the active participation VDCs. Evidence shows that more than 40% of the 40 KII respondents identify the following weaknesses: human resources shortage, inadequate revenue to fund community development projects, inadequate community development planning skills, and limited logistical capacity to engage its community structures effective and monitoring their activities. Other weaknesses identified by 20% to 28% of KII respondents include the failure on the part of the Council to provide VDCs with the right leadership and support, lack of control over good revenue source by the Council and its weak tax law enforcement capacity other notable limitations. “The LC has a lot of villages to oversee with a limited number of staff and inadequate financial resources” (A female VDC vice-chairperson, Giboro Ward, Kombo East District,

GMB, KII, 23rd April 2018). “Council’s failure to monitor the activities of VDCs and to involve VDCs in the planning processes has affected the involvement of VDCs in development processes in this locality” (A male VDC vice-chairperson, Kombo East, GMB, KII, 25th April 2018).

Table 13: Weaknesses of LCs in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes

Weaknesses of local councils in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes		Percentage	Sample Size	
Brikama Area Council	KII	Shortage of human resources	48%	40
		Inadequate revenue to fund community development projects	48%	
		Inadequate community development planning skills	45%	
		Capacity to effectively monitor community structures & projects	43%	
		Failure to provide the needed leadership & support to VDCs	28%	
		Inadequate revenue source under the control of local councils	28%	
		Weak tax law enforcement capacity	20%	
		Poor resource mobilisation skills	8%	
FGD		Shortage of human resources	100%	4
		Inadequate revenue to fund community development projects	100%	

Findings from the 4 FGDs show that all the participated CBOs report human resources shortage and inadequate revenue to finance community development projects as weaknesses of the Council. “Council has a lot of VDCs to cover and has a limit resource base both in terms of human, material and financial” (Darsilami Social Service Centre, Kombo Central district, West Coast region, GMB, FGD, 3rd June 2018 and 4th June 2018).

vii. Challenges: Council and the Practice of Multi-level Planning

Findings show that more than 50% of the 100 survey respondents mention inadequate financial resources, shortage of logistical support, and insufficient human resources as challenges faced by the Council in the practice of multi-level planning. About 46% of the respondents cite political interference, while 24% talk about the interference of the central government.

Table 14: Challenges LCs face in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes

Brikama Area Council	Challenges local governments face in sustaining the practice of multi-level development planning and implementation processes		Yes, it applies	No, it doesn't apply	Don't Know	Total
	Survey	Limited financial resources	92%	2%	1%	100
		Shortage of logistical support	69%	16%	8%	
		Inadequate human resources	68%	25%	2%	
		Corruption	62%	26%	6%	
		Political interference	46%	45%	4%	
		Interference by the central government	24%	63%	7%	

Challenges local councils face in sustaining multi-level development planning and implementation processes			Percentage	Sample Size
Brikama	KII	Wide coverage/catchment areas of the local councils	48%	40
		Revenue source of local councils under control of central government	25%	
		Untimely payment of taxes & rates	20%	
	FGD	Wide coverage/catchment areas of the local council	100%	4

Findings from the 40 KII respondents show that 48% identify extensive coverage or catchment areas of the Council as a challenge to its practice of multilevel development planning. In contrast, 20% and 25% of respondents observe challenges such as the control of the most important revenue sources of the councils by the central government and the untimely payment of taxes and rates. Results from the FGDs show that all the 4 participating CBOs reference the comprehensive coverage or catchment areas of the Council as a challenge to implementing multi-level planning processes.

Inadequacy of funds as many of the lucrative revenue collection sources of the councils are taken over by the central government. The failure of communities to pay their rates and taxes on time is another challenge faced by councils. (Village Extension Worker (VEW), Department of Agricultural Services, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 26th June 2018)

viii. Challenges: VDCs and Active Participation in Multi-level Planning Processes

Findings show that 35% of the 40 KII respondents report the division within the ranks of VDC membership on the political party line and the abject poverty or dire economic situation of communities as challenges affecting their active participation in multilevel

planning processes. About 28% of the respondents identified lack of strong institutional support from the councils, NGOs or the private sector whereas 25% state limited community labour supply or contribution of funds and the capture of VDCs operations by certain political elites. At the same time, 23% reference the frequent socio-cultural events in communities as a challenge. “VDCs lack funds and technical support for planning including capacity building on leadership, management & other skills”. (VDC Chairperson, Kombo East district, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018). “Besides challenges related to widespread poverty/dire economic situation of rural people, communities are also divided politically. There is also a challenge related to unavailability of land for project implementation due to land tenure system” (VDC Secretary, Kombo East, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 23rd April 2018).

Table 15: Challenges VDCs face in sustaining their active participation in multi-level development planning processes

Challenges VDCs face in sustaining their active participation in multi-level development planning processes		Percentage	Sample Size
Brikama Area Council	KII	Political/division on political party line	40
		Economic situation/poverty	
		Weak supporting institutions (Councils, NGOs, private)	
		Limited community labour or fund contribution	
		Political elites capture the operations of the VDCs	
		Social/cultural/frequent social events	
		Environmental & Land tenure system	
		Limited human & financial resources of VDCs	
		Lack of technical support for planning	
		Lack of program/project funding	
		Problem of enforcing policies and regulations	

ix. Weaknesses: VDCs and Active Participation in Multi-level Planning Processes

Findings show that about 45% of the 40 KII respondents reference the holding of multiple leadership posts by VDCs members in the villages as an issue. And VDCs’ lack of adequate financial resources of their own to finance their projects and operations as another significant weaknesses that affect their active participation in multilevel planning process. At the same time, 30% to 35% identify inadequate planning capacity of VDCs, lack of remuneration of the services rendered by the members of the VDCs (i.e. the voluntary nature of the work done by members of the VDCs), the irregular holding of meetings and untimely filing of the report to its development partners as weaknesses.

Moreover, about 25% of the respondents identify defects such as low attendance of VDC meetings/activities and poor resource mobilisation capability of the VDCs. “Poor resource mobilization to ensure funding for community projects. Forging a partnership with NGOs is difficult and at times not at all possible due to differences in the area of interest between the two organisations” (A female vice-chairperson, Giboro ward, Kombo East district, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018). “Monitoring of intervention programs, limited involvement of villagers in program planning and implementation”. (A female vice-chairperson, Kombo East district, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 23rd April 2018). “Untimely reporting and infrequent holding of meetings. Inadequate financial resources and lack of adequate capacities for VDC members” (A male VDC vice-chairperson Kombo East district, West Coast region, GMB, KII, 25th April 2018).

Table 16: Weaknesses of VDCs in Multi-level development Planning Processes

Weaknesses of VDCs in continuing coordinating multi-level development planning processes at the village level		Percentage	Sample Size	
Brikama Area Council	KII	Members holding of multiple leadership positions in the village	45%	40
		Inadequate financial resources	45%	
		Inadequate planning capacity	35%	
		Services rendered/work done is not remunerated	33%	
		Irregular holding of meetings	30%	
		Untimely reporting to partners	30%	
		Poor attendance of meetings/activities	25%	
		Poor resource mobilisation capacity	25%	
		Lack of term limit/prolonged term in office	18%	
		Poor project monitoring skills	15%	
		Poor community mobilisation	15%	
		Non-responsiveness to community demands	15%	
		Not involving villagers in their activities	10%	
		Inadequate criteria for VDC selection	10%	
	Unlimited mandate of VDCs	10%		
FGD	Services rendered/work done is not remunerated	100%	4	
	Weak management skills	100%		
	Poor leadership skills	75%		
	Weak project monitoring skills	75%		
	Poor resource mobilisation capacity	25%		

Evidence from FGDs shows that all the 4 CBOs reference the absence of remuneration package for members of the VDCs for the services they render to the community as an issue. And the weak management skill of VDCs as some of the weaknesses that hinder

their active participation in the multilevel planning process. About 75% mention poor skills in terms of leadership, project monitoring and low capacity in terms of resource mobilisation. “VDCs lack transparency and members demand high remunerations whenever they are invited to be involved in any activity” (Darsilami Social Service Centre, Kombo Central, GMB, FGD, 3rd June 2018 and 4th June 2018). “VDCs are weak in resource mobilization, management and leadership skills to name but a few” (Giboro Family Helper, Kombo East, GMB, FGD, 12th June 2018 and 13th June 2018).

6.2. Part Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation Combined

Introduction

This section presents a report of the findings gathered through primary sources (survey, KIIs and FGDs) from each of the two former CDDP beneficiary communities-Northern Sierra Leone and West Coast region of The Gambia. However, here findings from each of the former CDDP beneficiary communities are combined and reported in light of SCOPE framework per location. Evidence from each of the former program sites is sorted and presented based on the critical dimensions of VDCs’ internal administrative processes (technology and structure) and factors of their external environment (local governance system) that are deemed relevant to their sustainability problem.

6.2.1. Bombali District

6.2.1.1. Environmental Factors of Decentralised Development Institutions that Explain their Unsustainability

Table 17: Local governance environment factors

Local governance environment factors explaining the failure to sustain the active participation of lower-level decentralised institutions in multi-level planning processes		Percentage
Bombali District Council KII	Delayed and inadequate disbursement of development budget to local councils	55%
	Inadequate logistics and infrastructure to monitor and supervise decentralised planning structures	31%
	Limited practice of multi-level planning processes	19%
	Understaff local councils with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants	9%
	Inadequate revenue sources to finance multi-level planning processes	8%
	Total Sample Size	64
Bombali District Council FGD	Inadequate logistics and infrastructure to monitor and supervise decentralised planning structures	100%
	Delayed and inadequate disbursement of development budget to local councils	50%
	Understaff local councils with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants	50%
	Limited practice of multi-level planning processes	25%
	Total Sample Size	4
Survey	Limited financial resources of local councils	82%
	Inadequate logistical support to local councils	78%
	Human resource shortages in local councils	38%
	Total Sample Size	94

The combined findings of environmental factors show that 55% of the KII respondents, 50% of FGDs participants and 82% of survey respondents reference that the sustainability problem of decentralised development institutions in this case VDCs is explained by the inadequate financial resources support to the LCs. This is because VDCs that were either formed or revamped by donor-funded CDDPs in fragile and post-conflict West Africa were designed within the decentralised governance system. Thus, making their sustainable functioning in the multilevel planning process linked to their ability to mobilise financial support from their local governments. Closely related to the issue of financial resource inadequacy according to 8% of the KII respondents is affected by the hostility to the full devolution of revenue collection authority to LC. Although considered as part of the inadequacy of the financial resources, it's worth having this a standalone issue in the analysis of the decentralised policy environment for clarity and its importance in terms of ensuring financial security for LCs when comes to effective development planning. Having it as part of the broader heading of fiscal issues could risk losing sight of it while making policy decisions.

Another external factor is the scarcity of logistics and its attendant infrastructure, which is mentioned by 31% of the KII respondents, 100% of FGD participants and 78% of the survey respondents. Again, 19% of KII respondents and 25% of FGD participants mention the resistance to the full devolution of functions, assets and personnel to LCs by ministries, departments and agencies. Human resources as an external factor are referenced by 9% of KII respondents, 38% of the survey respondents and 50% of FGD participants indicate human resources inadequacies concerning understaffed technical support staff at the level of the council, the ministries, departments and agencies to support multi-level planning process.

6.2.1.2. Internal Organisational and Management Factors of Decentralised Development Institutions that Explain their Unsustainability

Table 18: Internal capability and strategy factors

Internal capability and strategy of VDCs explaining the failure to Sustain their active participation in multi-level planning processes		Percentage	
Bombali District Council	KII	Lack of economic activities to generate funding for development planning & incentive for members	42%
		Inadequate development planning capacity (knowledge & skills)	41%
		Lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances	28%
		Infrequent meetings, organisation and attendance, and inability to exercise oversight role of coordinating all interventions in villages	23%
	Total Sample Size	64	
FGD	Inadequate development planning capacity (knowledge & skills)	75%	
	Lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances	50%	
	Infrequent meetings, organisation and attendance, and inability to exercise oversight role of coordinating all interventions in villages	25%	
	Total Sample Size	4	

The findings of internal institutional process factors pooled together show that 42% of the 64 KII respondents link the failure to maintain the active participation of VDCs in multilevel development planning process is due partly to VDCs' lack of economic activities that would generate the necessary financial resources for use as a precondition to acquiring leverage for development planning and at the same time incentivise their membership to continue their support to the institution. About 41% of KII respondents and 75% of FGD participants mentioned the inadequate capacity of VDCs both in terms of knowledge and skills as the reason for their inactive participation in development planning. About 28% of the KII respondents and 50% of the FGD participants reported the lack of prescribed remuneration for individual members of VDCs as a factor that discourages them from participating and contributing fully to the activities and decision-making

processes of the institution. At the same time, 23% of the KII respondents and 25% of the FGD participants reference the inability of VDCs to exercise their oversight role of coordinating all interventions that happen in their villages.

6.2.2. Brikama Area Council

6.2.2.1. Environmental Factors of Decentralised Development Institutions that Explain their Unsustainability

Table 19: Local governance environment factors

Local governance environment factors explaining the failure to sustain the active participation of lower-level decentralised institutions in multi-level planning processes		Percentage	
Brikama Area Council	KII	Inadequate logistics and infrastructure to monitor and supervise decentralised planning structures	95%
		Limited practice of multi-level planning processes	73%
		Delayed and inadequate disbursement of development budget to local councils	48%
		Inadequate revenue sources to finance multi-level planning processes	28%
		Understaff local councils with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants	25%
		Total Sample Size	40
Brikama Area Council	FGD	Understaff local councils with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants	100%
		Delayed and inadequate disbursement of development budget to local councils	100%
		Inadequate logistics and infrastructure to monitor and supervise decentralised planning structures	100%
		Total Sample Size	4
Brikama Area Council	Survey	Limited financial resources of local councils	92%
		Inadequate logistical support to local councils	69%
		Human resource shortages in local councils	68%
		Total Sample Size	100

The collated findings of environmental factors show that 95% of KII respondents, 69% of survey respondents and 100% of FGD participants identify shortages in logistical support to the Council and the associated infrastructural bottlenecks as hindering the sustainable involvement and/ or activity of VDCs in multilevel planning process. Personnel/human resources issues and the attendant assets are mentioned by 73% and 25% of KII, 68% of survey respondents and 100% FGD participants. Issues related to human resources inadequacy are captured in two essential categories for the purpose of clarity. The first category deals with the resistance to full devolution of functions, assets and personnel to LCs by MDAs, and the second one deals with the general shortage of experienced planning staff in both the councils and at the institutions/agencies mandated to provide technical services during the decentralised planning process by local government laws.

The third critical decentralised environmental factor that explains the failure to sustain the active participation of VDCs in multilevel planning process is the insufficient financial

resources. This is mentioned by 48% and 20% of KII respondents, 92% survey respondents and 100% FGD respondents. Here too the issue of financial resources constraints is partitioned into two for clarity and for future policy design-one related to opposition to the full devolution of development budget to LCs and the other hostility to fully devolve revenue collection authority to the LCs by MDAs of the central government.

6.2.2.2. Internal organisation and management Factors of Decentralised Development Institutions that Explain their Unsustainability

Table 20: Internal capability and strategy factors

Internal capability and strategy of VDCs explaining the failure to Sustain their active participation in multi-level planning processes		Percentage
Brikama Area Council KII	Infrequent meetings, organisation and attendance, and inability to exercise oversight role of coordinating all interventions in villages	98%
	Inadequate development planning capacity (knowledge & skills)	70%
	Lack of economic activities to generate funding for development planning & incentive for members	45%
	Lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances	33%
	Total Sample Size	40
Brikama Area Council FGD	Lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances	100%
	Inadequate development planning capacity (knowledge & skills)	100%
	Total Sample Size	4

Findings of the internal administrative processes of VDCs show that 98% of KII respondents say that the failure to sustain the active participation of VDCs in multilevel planning process is partly due to VDCs' inability to exercise their oversight role of coordinating all development interventions at their localities. About 70% of the KII respondents and 100% of the FGD participants identified inadequate capacity (knowledge and skills) of VDCs in the area of development planning and implementation. Another 45% of KII respondents referenced VDCs' lack of engaging in economic activities to generate financial resources that could be used as a precondition to acquire leverage for development planning and serve as a source of incentive to sustain the activity of their membership. At the same time, 33% of KII respondents and 100% of the FGD participants mention the lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances stopping individual members of VDCs from participating and contributing fully in the development planning and implementation activities and decision-making processes of the institutions.

6.3. Discussion of Research Findings

Introduction

The initial part of the discussion section presents a piece of combined evidence from the findings of the two former CDDP beneficiary communities. Results are categorised into factors of the internal administrative structure and process of VDCs and their general external and task environment (local governance system) considered to have provided plausible explanation for their sustainability problem in fragile and post-conflict West Africa. The second subdivision of the discussion section presents unsustainability characteristics of VDCs in light of SCOPE model. Here, factors in institutions' general and task environment relevant to their unsustainability are presented, followed by those of their internal dimensions (structure and technology) and issues related to the strategy.

Included too in this subsection is a brief discussion of the introduction of bottom-up/decentralised and multilevel planning process in West Africa subregion in the wave of donor-funded decentralisation reform programs. It also present an application the strategies of SCOPE model to the multilevel planning process concerning VDCs and a discussion of multilevel planning in the context of CDDP and an illustration of VDCs relations to other decentralised institutions and organisations. Planning and decision-making relationships between VDCs, central government, other decentralised planning assemblies and organisations sealed the chapter. It's worth noting that evidence produced in this section on, is the combined findings of the primary data from West Africa region. These data are sourced on the sustainability issues presented in parts one and two of analysis and interpretation sections above and primary data sourced specifically about the understanding of VDCs, and CDDPs evaluations documents. Added to these are secondary data sourced about the local governance issues of the Gambia and Sierra Leone presented in case background and context chapter.

6.3.1. Factors of Local Governance Environment Explaining the Sustainability Problem of Decentralised Local Development Institutions

a. Inadequate Logistics and Infrastructure to Monitor and Supervise Decentralised Planning Structures

As per the provisions of the LGActs, it is the LCs that have the institutional mandate to promote decentralised development (planning, execution and supervision) in The Gambia and Sierra Leone while the Ministry of Local Government has the directive to regulate and provide the support they need. Unfortunately, according to ministry staff, the local government promotion and monitoring units of the two ministries continue to lack the required workforce and resources to promote, monitor, regulate and support local governments as per the mandates outlined in the LGActs and related laws. VDCs in West Africa by design can be sustainable not as entities but in terms of active participation in the multilevel planning process and exercise their oversight role of coordinating development planning and implementation activities at the village level only when supported by other institutions/organisations. Logistical support is one such support that they require to function as expected. Logistical support must be adequate for the conduct of periodic monitoring, supervision and even evaluation of the activities of decentralised development institutions.

LCs are the nerve centre of the decentralised planning system. Evidence, however, shows that LCs find it extremely difficult to conduct regular monitoring and supervise the existing projects and programs in their various localities and not to talk of reaching out to VDCs or institute multilevel planning process. There is a gross lack of logistics in terms of vehicles, experienced monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) staff, and motorbikes to name but a few. Inadequate logistical support to monitor and supervise the activities of decentralised structures by LCs is an issue. It is one critical decentralised environmental factor that contributes or explains the failure to sustain the active participation of VDCs in the process of multilevel development planning and implementation in West Africa after the donor-funded CDDPs phased-out.

All councils have a large coverage area in terms of the number of villages within their catchment area compare to the resources (human, financial and material) available at their disposal. No council in this country can have the necessary

logistics to sustain the multilevel development planning process, and project implementation practised during CDDP. The issue of limited logistics constrains us; otherwise, we would have continued with the excellent practice. (Former Chairman of Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 27th June 2018)

Lack of funding for transportation of the council staff and its councillors continue to hinder their frequent movement within the community for planning and activity implementation as required by the Local Government Act of 2004. The council has very few roadworthy vehicles and moto bikes. Considering the bad road network of the locality, I would discourage the use of motorbikes while on an official function. There exists no insurance cover in case of an accident which is very rampant now. Council cannot hire vehicles to conduct monitoring and supervision to collect information necessary for planning either. You are talking about the council to conduct multi-level planning as was the case during GoBifo CDDP, that is a farfetched dream looking at the human, and material logistical situation of our councils in this country. Councils would need big-time support to do participatory planning as was the case during GoBifo. (Munafa M'parti CBO, Bombali District, FGD, 10th March 2018)

Another dimension to the bottlenecks faced by LCs in their monitoring and supervision functions which relates to the issue of logistics refers to poor infrastructure notably bad road network, costly communication, and risky riverine access to specific hard to reach communities. LCs are overwhelmed by the sheer number of villages in which to conduct program planning and implementation. Frequently cited issues in this area are the lack of funding for transportation, poor monitoring and supervision capability, councils' failure to conduct frequent community visits due to the problem of extensive coverage area i.e. the councils having a lot of VDCs to cover in terms of planning and the failure of councils or their agents in making follow-ups on some of their previous community initiatives.

The large district size, the limitation of the councils in terms of resources and their lack of effective monitoring mechanisms are common environmental issues affecting LCs in their ability to maintain multi-level planning processes and to ensure the active involvement of VDCs. Some problems that have been mentioned many times include the councils' lack of adequate skilled personnel to provide supportive monitoring in a large number of communities and the lack of transportation to support the few staff that are employed.

These issues affect the LC's conduct of multi-level planning with the active involvement of VDCs. Poor road network and communication infrastructure is a real hindrance for all LCs regarding the conduct of frequent monitoring and supervision of decentralized structures.

Our LC has a serious logistical weakness to ensure participatory development planning for all communities as we used to do during GoBifo CDDP. Resources in terms of workforce, finance and materials such as vehicles, motorbikes and so on were then available, but now it's a different ball game altogether. My chiefdom is 55 miles off the road. This year the council considered only those chiefdoms that are closer to the council and on the road due to logistical problem. Had it been that the council is equipped to facilitate the movement of its councillors, we would have covered our areas of jurisdiction and collect the information necessary for planning. Fund allocation by the central government for the district cannot serve the needs of communities in the whole district. (Councillor, Sella Limba Chiefdom Bombali District Council, SL, KII, 29th January 2018)

LCs have a lot of VDCs to cover in terms of planning and execution of those plans, and they have serious limitations in terms of logistics such as bikes, vehicles, fuel cost, and the problem of maintaining quality experienced workforce to lead the planning processes. We understand that councils are finding it very difficult to maintain the few bikes and vehicles they have in good form. They need external support either from the government or donors to ensure proper planning which is not forthcoming. In a nutshell, councils have a limit resource base both human and financial. (Kombo Darsilami Social Service Centre, a CBO in Brikama Area Council, GMB, FGD, 3rd June 2018 & 4th June 2018)

After evaluating World Bank's Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) in Mumbwa, a rural district in Zambia, Walsh et al. (2012) find out that the absence of infrastructure makes the institution sustainability gains of World Bank Zambia program not to be sustained for long. The findings of Walsh et al. (2012) show that poor physical infrastructure (roads and bridges) are issues hindering CBO sustainability. This results in the lack of access to possible markets nearby or limits more comprehensive market access for CBOs to sell their produce from the income generating activities (IGAs), thus, forcing them to depend on

small markets within the village; and the importance of support systems and linkages for CBOs (pp. 6–9).

b. Delay and Inadequate Disbursement of Development Budget to LCs

Part VII. the Financial Provisions of the Gambia's LGAct 2002 mandates the central government to "provide twenty-five per cent of the Council's development budget". In Sierra Leone, each year central government pays tied grants which form part of the national budget to LCs to discharge devolved functions and to cover their administrative costs. However, the total amount of funding for each council can change with the recommendation of the Local Government Finance Committee. Regarding the spending of untied grants, it is the Parliament instead of the councils which has the mandate to specify their functions (Part VII–Financial Matters of Sierra Leone's LGA 2004). "One major challenge faced by our LC is the late disbursement of funds from the central government, and when funds are disbursed, they are never enough to support project planning and implementation in all chiefdoms in the district" (Ward Councillor, Gbanti Kamaranka, Bombali District, SL, KII, 7th February 2018).

We do interact with councillors and staff of the council sometimes, but what they often complain about is the delay they always experience regarding the disbursement of funds from the central government. Because the council is faced with the inadequate distribution of resources, it allocates limited funds to projects in the council. (Women Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WoFohd), Bombali District, SL, FGD, 9th February 2018)

MDAs are accused of opposing the idea of full devolution of development budget to LCs. Hostility to LCs having full control of their development budgets is cited by many as a serious challenge to achieving total fiscal decentralisation. This has hindered councils' capability to continue on with the practice of participatory development planning as experienced in the course of donor-funded CDDP. Development budget of LCs in the two countries is yet to be fully devolved; thus, undermining councils' capability to finance multi-level development planning and implementation processes.

I think the constraints faced by our LC stems from inadequate funds allocation by the central government. Funds allocated by the central government doesn't meet the

planning needs of all the communities in the district. The other challenge is that government often delays in providing these periodic funds to councils for timely activity implementation. (A female Project Manager, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR), Bombali District, SL, KII, 12th February 2018)

The problem with the council is money. In the absence of revenue, there is no way you can implement development activities. Funds from the central government are tied to activities which the council cannot change and is also limited, therefore effective support to communities cannot be enhanced. (Ward councillor in Bombali district, Northern SL, KII, 15th February 2018)

Often transfers made by governments to finance the execution of devolved functions are limited to non-salary and non-interest recurrent expenses which do not support recurrent activities like multilevel planning process. The continued receipt of management directives and the payment of salaries of local civil servants by their parent MDAs instead of LCs weakens the loyalty of locally situated civil servants to the elected local governments under whose jurisdiction they are placed under. The multilevel development planning efforts of LCs is affected also by the delay experienced in the disbursements of funds from the central governments. “Although the council gets quarterly funding support from the central government, these allocations do not come on time for activities to be implemented and even when they come; they do not serve the whole district” (Ward councillor, Bombali district, Northern SL, during KII, 20th February 2018). “Government delays in the disbursement of funds. Inadequate distribution of resources due to limited funds allocation to projects in the council” (Develop Salon (DESAL), Bombali district, Northern SL, FGD, 10th February 2018). “Inadequacy of funds as many of the lucrative revenue collection sources of councils are taken over by the central government. The failure of communities to pay their rates and taxes on time is another challenge faced by councils” (Village Extension Worker (VEW), Department of Agricultural Services, West Coast region GMB, KII, 26th June 2018).

In Botswana, Ngwenya (2008) identifies inadequate government financial support or threats of withdrawing government funding for VDC projects as a threat or constraint to a sustainable future of VDCs. Often the hostile behaviour of the local elites is reinforced by the aggression of national or provincial governments and administrative bureaucratic or from political parties who fear competition from autonomous organisations. Using legal

means such as the slow and foot-dragging of unenthusiastic bureaucrats in policy implementation and allocation of resources, governments and administrators may resist local organisations (Esman & Uphoff, 1984).

c. Limited Practice of Multilevel Planning Process

Findings of this study indicate that MDAs are resisting the full devolution of functions, assets and personnel to LCs. There is a failure to fully transfer/integrate the tasks and place locally situated civil servants having development planning and implementation responsibilities under the jurisdiction of elected local governments. This is one ongoing policy, legal and regulatory challenges found in the decentralised governance environment in FCAS of West Africa, which is said to have contributed to the failure to sustain VDCs. Overall, results show that the devolution processes of functions, assets and personnel from the central governments to LCs in the sub-region is poorly designed. Local government ministries of the two nations are accused of failing to provide the necessary policy leadership and oversight to ensure other ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) grant local governments the full mandates as enshrined in the decentralised governance legal and policy frameworks. Thus, limiting the practice of multilevel planning. “There are policies and enforceable regulations in place that support local initiatives and laws that protect community rights, but the problem is enforcement as those who are supposed to provide policy leadership and oversight for local governments failed us” (VDC Chairperson, Sawulia village, Bombali District, SL, KII, 1st February 2018).

Decentralisation policies, regulations and laws are in place and known to the community, but we only wish they are respected by the leadership and put into actions, then development planning and management can be decentralized, thus enhancing sustainable development planning and implementation. (VDC vice-chairperson Bafuloto village, Kombo East District, Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 25th April 2018)

Often there is the perception of unwillingness on the part of the central government the staff to involve the decentralised structures in development planning and implementation process. Frequently cited issues in this respect are the failure to integrate the functions, processes and activities of certain lower-level personnel of government departments fully into the local government systems, processes and activities. However, it is crystal clear

that the actions being implemented by some of those MDAs personnel are devolved functions of the councils. It is also not uncommon to find the person of the government at the regional level standing aloof of any activities being implemented by the councils even if they are mandated to provide technical support services. “There are laws, but the implementation of these laws is a problem” (KII Ward Councillor, Sella Limba Bombali District, SL, KII, 29th, January 2018). “If decentralisation laws and policies are respected and adhered to VDCs would have been very productive and functional” (Kafuta Family Helper, Brikama Area Council, GMB, FGD, 10th June 2018 & 11th June 2018).

The two clear examples of such practices of resistance by MDAs are the setting up of District Ebola Response Centre in the case of Sierra Leone and regional disaster management offices created by the National Disaster Management Agency of the Gambia. These departments are instituted and well equipped with well-paid staff instead of having the LCs assume the responsibilities and ensure all resources and capacity building training earmarked for such programs are channelled through them. Incorporating such initiatives under the purview of LCs would have empowered them to take part in policy decisions, planning and implementing programs or activities with vigour. The fact that colossal sum of valuable resources is sometimes channelled through these structures undermines the authority and capability of LCs to assume their leadership role in ensuring participatory development planning and implementation in partnerships with VDCs.

The responsibility to coordinate and advocate on behalf of local government authorities on policy issues affecting them fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Local Governments (LGAct 2002 of the Gambia and LGAct 2004 of Sierra Leone), however, among the key informants, the most commonly cited challenge facing LCs is the lack of support from this ministry. Members of parliament are also accused of disregarding their role of launching an advocacy campaign to ensure LCs assume their core functions of implementing participatory community development programs. The failure of the local government ministries to coordinate and advise persons and organisations concerning projects involving direct relations with LCs have exacerbated the challenges faced by the LCs to maintaining multi-level planning processes.

In essence, local government ministries have failed to monitor and supervise the operations of LCs in promoting and fostering adherence to all the provisions of decentralisation laws, regulations, policies and guidelines. “LCs cannot provide leadership and guidance needed

to support VDCs in terms of capacity building, financial & technical support” (Kombo East, VDC Treasurer, Sohm, village, Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018). “LCs cannot involve decentralised structures in their plans and planning processes” (Vice-chairperson Bafuloto village, Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 25th April 2018). “There is no government support and advocator for LCs in parliament”. (VDC Treasurer, Sawulia village, Bombali District, SL, KII, 1st Feb 2018). “Government has low interest over us, no advocator for development programs “(VDC Chairperson, Bombali District, SL, KII, 1st Feb 2018).

Ministry of Local Government and its Department of Community Development are mandated to provide LCs with the requisite technical services and advice. They are to ensure local governments and other relevant stakeholders adhered to the decentralised planning processes have failed to deliver on their legal and regulatory mandate. As one VDC Chairperson of Kombo East, the Gambia puts it “LCs are not being monitored to ensure the involvement of VDCs in their plans and planning processes” (KII, 23rd April 2018). For instance, The Gambia’s Department of Community Development is one government departments which has a cadre of well-trained community development facilitators at all levels of the decentralised structures.

However, these staffs are still not under the supervision and the payroll of the councils. This continues to impact LCs and their efforts to sustain the active participation of VDCs in multi-level planning process. Alongside the struggle to coordinate and incorporate the different sectoral plans into a single program under the LC, the field workers of the Community Development Department of Sierra Leone continue to lack the necessary working facilities. Also affecting the conduct of multi-level planning in the decentralised environment is the lack of understanding of the role expectations between staff the MDAs and their local level community development staff. “Government lacks adequate personnel to provide technical services and supportive supervision/monitoring in the communities, lack of transportation to support the few staff that are employed, lack of adequate funds to support project activities in the communities” (Development and Planning Officer, Bombali District Council, Northern SL, KII, 19th February 2018).

The conflict between government and VDCs concerning the ownership and control of VDC houses and meagre remuneration are found by Ngwenya (2008) as a threat or constraint to a sustainable future of VDCs in Botswana. These findings have been

supported by those of Esman and Uphoff (1984). Esman and Uphoff (1984) conducted an extensive statistical analysis of 150 case studies on rural membership organisations in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. After this analysis, they identify some significant obstacles to sustaining local development organisations “beyond the immediate tasks that precipitated them” or after the phase-out of programs/funding that established them. Esman and Uphoff (1984) who named their findings as vulnerabilities have grouped them into five categories, one of which is labelled “resistance”. They argue that local organisations of the rural poor encounter resistance both active and passive from several sources such as local and regional elites, leaders of the national government and administrators at all levels, rural residents and other organisations with opposing interests.

d. Understaff LCs with Limited Jurisdiction Over Locally Situated Civil Servants

This investigation reveals that there is slow progress in the devolution process of placing locally situated civil servants with planning and implementation skillset under the direct responsibility of LCs. This continues to weaken the full implementation of administrative decentralisation in the region and to ensure capable LCs. The devolution of human resources from the centre to the LCs is still constrained. The fact is that certain local civil servants placed under the jurisdiction of elected local governments by the roles they perform have their payrolls, promotion and demotion administered by their parent ministries, departments and agencies. At the same time, some devolved personnel continue to be accountable and answerable not to the LCs, somewhat to their parent ministries, departments and agencies. This raises genuine doubts as to the existence of a comprehensive human resource management policy to guide staffing issues in the decentralised administration in West Africa. “LCs have inadequate staff to work with their communities. I am answerable and accountable to my ministry and not the LC. No one in the council can supervise the work I do. They don’t have the expertise” (Crops Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Bombali District, SL, KII, 13th February 2018).

LCs have a lot of VDCs to cover with a limit human resource base they should be supported by their ministry to appoint more staff. Or the government should link them up with other departments to support them. May be NGOs can help if they ask them for help. (FGD Kafuta Family Helper, a CBO, GMB, FGD, 10th June 2018 and 11th June 2018)

LGActs of Sierra Leone and The Gambia have identified LCs as the development planning authority of their areas of jurisdiction. They can plan and implement any programs or projects that would uplift the development of their communities. In the process, the technical department staff of the central government that operate within their jurisdiction are authorised by the same LGActs to provide the needed support to the councils' development process through their extension workers working at the ward and village levels. The apparent reluctance of MDAs to embrace the idea of decentralised governance policies in the area of personnel and to implement the relevant provisions of the LGAct still challenge the institutionalisation of multi-level development planning and implementation process in West Africa. "LCs lack adequate personnel to provide supportive services in all of their communities. Our coverage area is huge for us to plan yearly without support from other agencies. As you can see, I have very few colleagues here" (Development & Planning Officer Bombali District Council, SL, KII, 19th February 2018).

LCs have a lot of villages to oversee compared with the limited number of qualified planning staff they have. They cannot cover all the villages unless they get support from other extension officers or they appoint many people. They only have more duty and rent collectors in the daily and weekly markets, but not much planning staff. (VDC Chairperson, Kuloro village, Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 23rd April 2018)

The locally situated civil servants tasked with the responsibilities to drive the multilevel development planning, and project implementation process within the decentralised administrative system continue to receive directives from their parent entities. This has weakened their loyalty to the LCs as the key custodians of the CDD planning process. FGDs participants cited instances when personnel were even transferred from one region to another or recalled to the headquarters without notifying the council. Staff turnover as a result of the unfavourable working environment in the rural communities also results in the shortage of experienced development planning personnel in certain regions even for consultancy services; thus, creating a setback to council activities.

LCs have inadequate staff and lack development support service professionals in all of their communities. Unlike say our ministry or the ministry of agriculture, we have a good number of regional/local staff. I work directly with my ministry

through my regional directorate, and that is where I receive my salary, promotion and directives. (Supervisor of Schools Ministry of Education, Bombali District, SL, KII, 13th February 2018)

Lack of personnel to collect information for planning especially at the pre-planning stage of the multilevel planning process has reflected in the findings. Gathering of information at this stage is usually facilitated by community development experts at the regional level with backstopping from the national level staff. Information on villages about their existing and previous development interventions, current development plans, special regulations, statistics, the entitlement of essential services or even the conduct of a household survey to establish a baseline for the planning process all need critical capacity and staff. “Lack of information sharing for planning and periodic community visits by both the elected council and staff is partly caused by inadequate staffing which unfortunately results in the lack of development planning support in communities” (Supervisor of School, Ministry of Education, Bombali district Northern SL, KII, 13th February 2018)

As community representatives at the council, the calibre of councillors and their failure to visit communities periodically and share vital planning information with development planning department staff of the LCs make planning a little bit problematic and further deteriorate the staff shortage. (Develop Salon (DESAL) a CBO, Bombali District, Northern SL, FGD, 10th February 2018)

Walsh et al. (2012) after evaluating World Bank’s Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) in Mumbwa, a rural district in Zambia find out that CBOs’ lack of information about funding sources available to them as an issue hindering CBO sustainability.

e. Inadequate Revenue Sources to Finance Multi-level Planning Processes

The continued resistance of MDAs to fully devolve revenue collection authority to LCs is one of the frequently cited challenges. Decentralised environment in terms of access to fiscal resource contributes to the inability of LCs to sustain the active participation of VDCs in multilevel development planning and management process post donor financed CDDP. In both the Gambia and Sierra Leone, LCs have the power to levy rates and taxes. However, some lucrative revenue categories still remain in the hands of the central government agencies. In the Gambia, it’s only the National Assembly that can reassign

such revenue streams to the LCs (LGA 2002 of the Gambia, Part VII. Financial Provisions). In Sierra Leone, it's the Finance Minister that can reassign such revenue streams to the LCs (LGA 2004 Part VII–Financial Matters).

In the two countries, national-level institutions such as the national revenue authorities, tourism boards and road authorities are well-known agencies that are often assigned with the revenue collection functions. This attitude of the central government undermines and weakens the revenue generation capacity of LCs. The review of the LGActs of the two decentralised environments shows that apart from locally generated revenue collection, LCs have two other principal sources of revenue which include grants from central governments and donors. “LCs have inadequate revenue sources because the central government takes over many of the lucrative revenue collection areas. The failure of communities to pay their rates and taxes on time is yet another cause of councils’ weakness” (Village Extension Worker - Department of Agricultural Services (DAS), Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 28th June 2018).

The problem of the council is money, where there is no revenue, there is no way you can implement development programs. Revenue coming from the central government are tied to activities which the council cannot change and is also limited therefore effective support to multi-level community development planning and implementation processes cannot be enhanced. (Ward Councillor, Sanda Loko, Bombali District Northern SL, KII, 29th January 2018)

Revenue sourced from the central government includes administrative and devolved sector grants (these grants are tied to specific devolved activities), unconditional block grants and the local government development grant, sectoral development grant and discretionary grant. The lack of a conducive environment for private sector development, job creation problem in most LCs and LCs’ inability to mobilise resources from development organisations operating within their localities inevitably account for the councils’ weak revenue base.

District and village chiefs are not following up on rate collection to help LCs augment their funding capability for participatory community development planning and implementation. Funding given to councils by the central government

is meagre for any meaningful planning processes. (VDC Secretary, Sawulia village, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 1st February 2018)

Findings of this investigation show that LCs' source of revenue is barely enough to cover their administrative expenses; thus, they can finance very few CDD programs including their planning process. The payment is not enough to invest in multilevel development planning and implementation processes. Multilevel development planning and implementation processes require resources (human, financial and material) as it entails such essential functions as data collection, information management, record keeping and communication. In practice, it was reported that at times certain devolved funds would be disbursed to LCs while the formal procurement function of the transferred funds remains with the parent ministries, departments or agencies. Building the capacity of local governments, according to (Dongier et al., 2003) is critical to sustainably incentivify them to meet the demands of community groups such as the VDCs.

LCs do get financial support from the central government quarterly, but this funding does not come on time for activities implementation and even when they come; they do not serve the planning needs of the whole district because villages covered are numerous. (Ward Councillor, Sella Limba Chiefdom, Bombali District, SL, KII, 29th, January 2018)

f. Existence of Well-equipped Parallel Local Structures with Weak links to Decentralised Development Planning Institutions

The creation of well-equipped parallel local structures to VDCs and the shifting of the coordination authority of decentralised local development institutions to similar local institution or organisations is cited as one such most unfortunate attitude of central government agencies, CBOs and NGOs in the communities. The rampant nature of such practices by different stakeholder groups in local communities is said to have explained the inactivity of VDCs in community development planning and implementation. Such acts within the decentralised environment have been widely mentioned in the findings of this research as yet another environmental factor responsible for the dampening of the spirit of ward councillors, administrative staff and the lower level structures of LCs in terms of initiating or sustaining multilevel planning processes.

Table 21: Existence of Parallel Community Development Structures

		Existence of parallel community development structures to decentralized development institutions	Percentage
Brikama Area Council	KII	Parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	58%
		No parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	30%
	Total Sample Size		40
	FGD	Parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	100%
Total Sample Size		4	
Bombali District	KII	No parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	48%
		Parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	39%
	Total Sample Size		64
	FGD	Parallel development institutions exist alongside decentralized development institutions	100%
Total Sample Size		4	

Often these parallel structures perform functions that fall under the purview of institutions within the local governance system like the councils, WDCs and the VDCs. Evidence reveals three institutions/organisations that usually form parallel structures at the community level. A) Those created by central government MDAs to execute certain decentralised functions. B) Parallel systems instituted by NGOs to provide relief or other services to communities. C) Those formed by longstanding informal clubs/associations or CBOs. What all have in common is the by-passing of councils and their lower level decentralised structures, undermine their authority and their access to the resource.

Table 22: Existence of Longstanding Traditional Village Associations

		Existence of Longstanding Village Informal Clubs/Associations	Percentage
Brikama Area Council	KII	There are longstanding informal clubs/associations in the villages	98%
		Total Sample Size	
	FGD	There are longstanding informal clubs/associations in the villages	100%
		Total Sample Size	
Bombali District C.	KII	There are longstanding informal clubs/associations in the villages	100%
		Total Sample Size	
	FGD	There are longstanding informal clubs/associations in the villages	100%
		Total Sample Size	

One example of a government-initiated parallel institution in Sierra Leone is observed at the onset of the Ebola virus outbreak in May 2014. This period witnessed the initial diminishing and eventual termination of the role played by the District Ebola Task Forces that were formed by LCs aimed at bringing key stakeholders together to prepare roadmaps and strategic interventions to deal with the outbreak. This happened when Ebola Operation Centre (EOC) and District Ebola Operations Committees (DEOCs) were set up which later were transformed to the District Ebola Response Centre (DERCs) whose coordinators were appointed by the President.

Local Councils saw the creation of the DEOC/DERC as a parallel structure through which resources were channelled and which undermined the Councils' authority and ability to play their expected local leadership roles effectively. The setting up of the parallel structure affected the level of Local Council involvement, 39 and dampened their enthusiasm and morale in taking part in policy decisions, planning and implementing programs or activities to tackle the EVD. (Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone, 2015, p. xvi)

Respondents and discussants alike argue that it is not uncommon to witness an instance when LCs and their community structures are bypassed and marginalised by CBOs, NGOs and ministries, departments and agency staff while implementing devolved services in communities. They cited instances where donor agencies provided funds to other CBOs/longstanding village associations or create their own organisations to undertake activities already being assumed in communities by the LCs or supposed to be conducted by them. Some CBOs and NGOs expressed unwillingness to neither work with the council nor the VDCs and constituted their committees. Such practice continues to affect the efforts of LCs and their decentralised structures in trying to exercise their oversight role of coordinating all interventions taking place in their localities. Most of the NGOs and CBOs despite knowing that VDCs are the entry point to communities in terms of development would refuse to go through them to facilitate coordination of their interventions. Some of the challenges decentralized structures face due to the existence of parallel community development institutions include the following:

- Unnecessary duplication of efforts/projects and funding;
- Difficulty in forging partnerships between similar structure and decentralized structures;
- Competition between parallel structures and decentralized structures for limited resources;
- Lack of cooperative work environment between parallel structures and decentralized structures;
- Lack of coordination and delay in providing relief or essential services in the communities;
- Discouraging VDCs from having legal status due to the unwillingness of some development partners to work with them;
- Creation of tension within communities between parallel structures and decentralized structures and interfere with their activities.

In expressing his dissatisfaction about the perpetual marginalisation of LCs and the ward councillors by MDAs in their community interventions, the ward councillor of Sella Limba Chiefdom, Bombali District Council complains that:

Most community development support coming to my ward is not known to me, and this affects my performance greatly. I encounter community members implementing a development activity in my ward and attempt to enquire for the source or attempt to participate. The usual response is we wouldn't tell you anything, would put to me that since I do nothing for them, they are not obliged to inform or solicit for my participation whenever they secure support elsewhere. (Ward councillor, Sella Limba, Bombali District SL, KII, 29th, January 2018)

It's argued that for local development institutions such as the VDCs to become sustainable beyond the duration of the project that initiated them, they must have a strong link with mainstream organisations and leaders who share similar agenda (Premchander, 2012, p. 21; Haneef et al., 2014, p. 9). When VDC members have links to the councils, other organisations and the private sector service providers, they would have access to essential services and resources. Equally, they will have support systems that could provide vital supports to their communities, necessary fuel for their durability (Haneef et al., 2014). A similar finding was made by Esman and Uphoff (1984) when they argue that resistance faced by local organisations comes from organisations that compete with them for membership, resources or authority to operate in a particular locality. Inter organisational disputes can range from a series of hostile propaganda among would-be members, sabotage of the efforts of each organisation to outright violence.

g. Weak Role Differentiation between VDCs & Traditional Chieftaincy Authorities in Community Development Promotion

The modern representative local government system in West Africa is analogous to pre-colonial and colonial-era traditional systems of governance. In most African countries, traditional system of local governance has been integrated into the modern representative democratic system of government through various acts of parliament. Although with pockets of modifications, most local governance structures are prototypical of traditional chieftaincy institutions. A method of local governance that dates far back into the pre-colonial era characterized by tribal peculiarities and variations. Traditional paramount,

district and village chieftaincy systems are an integral part of local governance in Sierra Leone, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Ivory Coast, to name but a few countries in West Africa sub-region (Yol, 2010; ACE Facilitators, 2011). However, due to conflicting laws and procedures, there is a weak differentiation of community development promotion roles between modern local level decentralised development planning institutions and traditional chieftaincy authorities. This role differentiation problem of VDCs and traditional chieftaincy authorities is identified as a significant limitation of the decentralised environment that contributes to the failure to sustain the active participation of VDCs in multilevel development planning processes.

In West Africa, traditional rulers known as chiefs remain relevant in their communities for reasons of community mobilization in support of development projects and the maintenance of law and order. As the closest and entrenched governance institution to the communities and the custodians of traditional authority, chieftains for decades have direct contact and trust of their people when comes to the matters of tradition, culture, social cohesion and the promotion of village-level development. Chieftaincy institution, despite its shortcomings, has been recognised in this role for centuries. And donor-funded CDDP philosophy is accused of taking “a more indirect approach to de jure reforms” of this institution by “nudging communities to become more democratic and inclusive without explicitly attempting to weaken elites” in this institution. In reality CDDPs in West Africa have not been able to “change the identity of de facto local power holders” such as the chiefs in West Africa (Casey et al., 2011, p. 5). The setting up of VDCs with no explicit attempt to weaken the powers of the chieftaincy authorities makes it one of the decentralised environmental factors impacting the sustainable functioning of VDCs.

In the context of West Africa, a chief is a traditional ruler or authority found either in a village (village headman/woman) or a district (district chief). In the Gambia, a village chief/head is called “Alkalo” and “Seyfo” for district chief (Part VIII: Traditional Authorities LGAct 2002 of The Gambia). As par 2009 Chieftaincy Act of Sierra Leone, a “chief includes a chief, other than a Paramount Chief, a Headman and such other chief as is by customary law the Councillor or assistant of any Paramount Chief”. Whereas “Paramount Chief means a chief who is not subordinate in his ordinary jurisdiction to any other chief but does not include an acting chief or a regent chief” (Government of Sierra Leone, 2009, p. 2). Traditional authorities (district chiefs and headmen/women) are still

prominent in rural development and the maintenance of law and order. The two institutions are legally recognised both by the constitutions of the Gambia and Sierra Leone and their LGActs. The promotion of community development and people's welfare is at the heart of the traditional chieftaincy system of administration. In both the Gambia and Sierra Leone, there exist development planning relations between the traditional authorities (chiefs and village heads) and VDCs in the villages.

Village chiefs and VDCs share the role of promoting the general economic development of their villagers; the promotion of sports, culture and other social activities; and community mobilisation for participation in village development activities (Government of The Gambia, 2002). It is confirmed that in Sierra Leone, traditional authorities (district chiefs and headmen) besides also convene development committees to help organise village and neighbourhood clean-ups and to deal with official and private visitors to the community (Fanthorpe et al., 2011, p. 37). In most instances, the first port of call for NGOs and development partners in villages and districts are the chiefs instead of VDCs or WDCs. This hampers the exercise of VDCs' oversight and coordinating role of all development interventions taking place in their villages.

As a result of their ability to strengthen social capital for collective action, traditional chieftaincy authorities continue to serve as the most critical link between communities, NGO and government authorities. The continued formal recognition of development planning functions of chieftaincy institutions culminates into the by-passing and marginalization of VDCs as the decentralised village development institution responsible for all development planning at village level and their position as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village. The authority vested in LCs to assign development functions and powers to either the VDCs, WDCs, or chiefs coupled with the performance of similar tasks by these institutions in no small way contributes to the failure of sustaining VDCs.

LGAct 2004 of Sierra Leone stipulates that traditional authorities are to perform both governance and development roles in collaboration with their LCs. They are mandated to interact extensively with LCs to facilitate sound socioeconomic development of the people within their areas of jurisdictions (Government of Sierra Leone, 2004, 2010). The powers and functions of a Seyfo as the chair of District Authority include to promote the general well-being of the district and its people; and perform other duties assigned by the council

or the governor (Government of The Gambia, 2002; Khan, 2009). The powers and responsibilities of an Alkalo (village chief in the Gambia) include the following: to promote the general economic development of the village and its people; protect and preserve the environment of the village; and promote sports, culture and other social activities; and carry out any other roles and powers assigned to it by the council or district authority (Government of The Gambia, 2002).

All the above developmental process have been given to the VDCs too. Traditional chieftaincy authority over the years has gathered considerable social capital, power, strong local leadership skills. Its actors have acquired vast experience in coordination, information gathering and sharing mechanism in their areas of jurisdiction, thus, making it difficult for the VDCs to compete them. Chieftaincy institutions are allocated a particular portion of tax and rate revenue while VDC and WDC aren't. A clear testimony of mistrust and the existence of bad blood that characterise the relationships between members of the VDCs and traditional chieftaincy authorities (the Alkalo-Village head/chief in this case) due to weak role differentiation is illustrated in the findings of the Faraba Banta Commission of Inquiry Report of The Gambia. The report is about the standoff between the villagers of Faraba Banta and the officers of the Police Intervention Unit (PIU) on 18th June 2018 over the granting of a sand mining licence to Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. on 10th July 2017 in the Gambia (Thegambiatimes, 2019).

The LGAct 2002 as amended of the Gambia mandates the Alkalo to work closely with VDCs and to provide them counsel where necessary. Findings from the Faraba Banta case show that “there was little or no consultations between the Alkalo and the VDC in matters affecting the community”(Thegambiatimes, 2019). The Alkalo attested that VDC doesn't consult him “on their activities and (...) were ‘doing things on their own’” (ibid). Members of Alkalo's council of elders testified that the VDC was “not consulting nor listening to anyone except themselves and did not have respect for the Council of elders”. In this case, Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. were granted a licence to mine sand in Faraba Banta village without the company making a proper consultation with the VDC and the villagers but only with the Alkalo who was supported by his council of elders (ibid).

Based on the National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Geological Department regulations, before Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. could obtain a licence to mine sand in the locality, the company should have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) with the VDC of Faraba Banta. However, both institutions have flouted their own regulations and issued Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. with approval to mine sand. Instead of signing an MOU with the VDC, Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. signed an MOU with the Alkalo (village head/chief) with the conviction that the Alkalo was the representative of the village. Both the company and the village head refused to do any proper consultation with the VDC. With the signature of the village chief, officials of NEA and the Geological Department recognised the authenticity of the MOU and granted a licence to Julakay Quarry and Mining Ltd. and disregarded the legitimate concerns and the legal roles of the VDC in the process (ibid).

Esman and Uphoff (1984) identify local and rural elites who control local government and have not only commercial but political connections with both the local and national seats of power as “the most usual and most intractable opponent of rural associations” (p. 183). Local and rural elites view local organisations as a threat to their economic and political control and often as potential subversive agitators from the outside. Often in Africa, when community organisations are newly formed, traditional chiefs sensing a threat to their power would do everything possible to undermine the elected leadership of these entities. According to Ngwenya (2008) in Botswana, the withdrawal of support chiefs have for VDCs threatens the institutions’ long-term sustainability.

h. Incoherent Policies and Overlapping Mandates of State and Local Level Institutions

Evidence from this investigation reveals a severe lack of policy clarity and overlap of some Local Government Ministry, its Community Development Department mandates and those of LCs. As per the relevant provisions of the two LGActs, an elected LC chairperson has the supervisory power over the Chief Administrator (CA) in the case of Sierra Leone and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in The Gambia. However, while LC chairperson has the supervisory power over CA/CEO, it’s the Local Government Service Commission an entity that forms part of the Public Service Commission that appoints CAs/CEOs and other key administrative staff of the councils instead. Thus, leaving the accountability line of authority for the CA/CEO hanging in the balance. Unlike the LC chairpersons who get their positions or mandates through elections and whose loyalty and accountability are to their constituents, being appointees of Public Service Commission, CAs/CEOs are naturally most likely to be accountable and loyal to the political leadership and top

bureaucrats. They hold the strings to their hiring, firing and promotion to higher positions in the government.

The analysis shows that LGActs of both the Gambia and Sierra Leone bestow LCs with the executive power to mobilise financial, human and material resources and capacity from anywhere possible to promote development planning and implementation. However, the same LGActs give the Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) (LGAct 2002, Part VI, 115-118 of the Gambia and LGAct 2004 PART VI, 35-43 of Sierra Leone) which forms part of Public Service Commission, the mandate to provide councils with the necessary positions and staff for the proper discharge of their functions. Such lack of clarity in terms of leadership in the LGActs results in overlapping mandates/roles of public institutions under the central government and LCs, thus, raising the question as to who truly has the ultimate mandate to staff and resource of LCs.

Such an ambiguous policy decision according to (Adusei–Asante & Hancock, 2012) is a potentially fertile ground for manoeuvring for politicians to have a firm grip on what LCs should and shouldn't do for their political gains. A genuine attempt by LCs to assume their policy/executive and leadership role of coordinating development planning and program implementation through the lower level decentralised institutions in their respective localities is often discouraged by political interference of the central government. Again a clear example happened during the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Sierra Leone when the President of the republic despite knowing fully that the passing of bylaws falls within the mandate of the LCs requested for Paramount Chiefs to prepare bylaws without the involvement of LCs. Ironically, LCs were expected to support community compliance of the said bylaws.

Though Local Councils have the power to make bylaws, the President called for Paramount Chiefs to prepare bylaws and the national chiefdom bylaws were prepared without the involvement of the Local Councils, a concern that was raised by the Chairman of the Association of Local Councils. Thus, the Local Councils did not exercise their statutory legislative responsibility in making bylaws. However, they were expected to support community compliance with these bylaws to stem the spread of the EVD [Ebola virus disease]. (Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone, 2015, p. xvi)

The above practices demonstrate that decentralised governance administration in the Gambia and Sierra Leone is still evolving at a snail's pace. Progress registered thus far in terms of implementation of decentralisation reforms continues to be slow even though the necessary foundational legal and administrative frameworks are in place. Sectoral devolution of roles and responsibilities and de-concentration or delegation of powers from the centre to the regions as mandated by LGActs of the two nations remain limited. The government of Sierra Leone maintains the positions of the Regional/Provincial Secretaries and District Officers in local governance administration. At the same time, the government of the Gambia strengthens the local administrative functions of the office of the Regional Governors. This attitude makes one to question the commitment of the two governments to decentralisation reform both in letter and in spirit. Regional/Provincial Secretaries and Governors are the Chief Administrative Officers in their respective regions/provinces which comprise several districts and chiefdoms.

In contrast, District Officers (DOs) are regarded at all times in Sierra Leone as the principal administrators and the top representatives of the central government in the districts. DOs serve as a vital link between the government, LCs and chiefdom administrations and facilitate the activities of the LCs by creating the necessary enabling environment for them to discharge their duties; monitor the activities of departments, agencies and LCs. This shifting of the coordination authority of LCs to other structures/departments in their districts hampers LCs' efforts to exercise their oversight function of coordinating all interventions taking place in their localities and thus affecting their effective practice of multilevel development planning and implementation with the active involvement of VDCs in the process. "People's expectations are high, and the councils can't do much before I joined politics, I thought that councils are empowered to provide services to their people, but when I entered the field of politics, I was surprised that I have to face such problems" (Ward Councillor, Bombali District Council, Northern SL, KII, 29th January 2018).

LCs continue to have limited powers with much of the administrative powers still vested in the officers of the MDAs. The local administrative system remains fraught with significant capacity and resource challenges. Perhaps the most notable shortcoming of the available national blueprints is their limitations in addressing issues of functional mandates between the central and local government councils and the incorporation of long-term

funding and capacity building plans of decentralisation structures. The Commonwealth Secretariat (2009) while writing about the status of decentralisation reform process of The Gambia states that:

Although decentralisation constitutes a key part of the government's development plans, and implementation started relatively well, it now seems to be slowing down. But, again, this is not unusual for any country implementing a reform process with insufficient capacity at national and local levels. (p. 2)

Again, in trying to characterise the challenges experienced in the decentralisation process of Sierra Leone, the Draft Report of the LCs Association of Sierra Leone, MLGRD, June 2015 made available by (Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone, 2015) sums up the challenges of LCs when it states:

Though notable progress has been made in deepening decentralisation, the decentralisation process continues to face many challenges, including (...) slow progress and weak implementation of devolution, especially human resource devolution (...) still with the MDAs coupled with the fact that the payroll is still with the devolving MDAs and devolved personnel still accountable and answerable to their parent MDAs; (...); (...) lack of a comprehensive human resource management policy; (...) weak functioning of ward committees and tensions with chiefdom governance impede anchoring of decentralisation at the grassroots; (...) weak financial base including poor terms and conditions of service and poor local revenue generation capacity. (p. ix)

The progress of most regional and local level institutions in the Gambia according to Jallow and Dang (2018) is "hindered by the incomplete process of decentralization" caused by insufficient budget allocation and activity planning support by higher-level agencies (p. 19). Similarly, LCs Association of Sierra Leone (2015) argues that "the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralisation (IMC), the highest policy oversight body over the decentralisation process had been virtually dormant (...) [for] four years (...); [while MDAs] (...) lack (...) a comprehensive human resource management policy" (p. ix).

i. Reduction of LCs to Partisan Political Battle Fields

Contrary to the evidence produced by this research, the general expectation is that with the advent of decentralised local governance systems where chairpersons and councillors are elected through universal adult suffrage, LCs will be non-partisan in the conduct of their business of development and governance. However, local governance systems in the two countries and elsewhere in the West Africa subregion turn out to be highly politicised. Findings reveal instances when government policies have been reduced to partisan politics where an LC headed or dominated by an opposition political party would be accused of not welcoming government policies as would have by members of the ruling party.

Politically, our community is divided along the party line, and the signal we get in the little interaction with our area councillors is that this has been reflected in the way LCs are being administered. We observe there is little cooperation between the opposition councillors and those who are there on the ruling party ticket; we get information that they hardly get along on prioritising our issues and prescribing solutions which are creating a problem for us as members of the VDCs as well. (VDC Secretary, Brikama Area Council, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018)

In June 2010 for instance, Sierra Leone did witness a case where the then opposition, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) (now ruling party) kicked against the reinstatement of the office of District Officers (DOs) by the then governing All People's Congress (APC) mainly on political grounds (Abadi, 2010). A move also opposed by the civil society who have written a policy paper expressing their concern for the reinstatement of DOs, stating that the policy lacks coherence and directly contradicts principles enshrined in the LGAct 2004. The policy paper further argues that the policy lacks transparency and accountability because the proposal isn't supported by any policy document that explains the rationale for such a move. The paper suspects that the action could have an ulterior political motive as the argument advanced by the ruling government doesn't stand up to the test of scrutiny (Fanthorpe, 2010).

On the final page of the '(DRAFT) Civil Society Position Paper', its authors put forward two counterarguments said to have been advanced by the opposition parties. The first one was aired in the then opposition SLPP-supporting press (now ruling party). It states that "the APC government will use the re-introduction of DOs to place its supporters into

positions of unaccountable power in the districts, bringing opposition-controlled councils to heel and enhancing its chances of winning the 2012 elections” (Fanthorpe, 2010). The other one is alleged to have come from unidentified opposition parties who voiced that “the APC government is reviving DOs to enhance their power over chiefs and ensure that they deliver votes to the governing party in 2012” (ibid).

LCs are only interested in partisan politics instead of local development, only talking about the opposition SLPP and the APC government. In my view members of political parties in Salon [Sierra Leone] have reduced government policies to partisan politics. Heads of political parties in the LCs fail to lead development efforts in our communities and instead only how to win elections and stay in power. It’s sad, my son; I had hoped that the younger generation of politician will change but seems not. (Village Chief (headman), Bombali District SL, KII, 1st February 2018)

In 2013, it was reported that the Chief Administrator of Pujehun District Council in Sierra Leone closed the toilet and disconnected the electricity of the District Office allegedly because DO’s office failed to pay a certain percentage of the local tax revenue collected the year before to the council (Lebbie, 2013). An act DO views as not only irrational, unethical and a violation of all administrative protocols, but also politically motivated. He accused the CA of tarnishing his image in the district with the baseless and malicious allegation that he embezzled the local tax percentage meant for the LC. DO, however, faulted the CA of being ignorant of section 59 of the 2004 LGAct. The act according to DO requires LCs instead of the DOs to notify chiefdom councils in their administrative areas “not later than two months before the end of each financial year” to pay a certain percentage of the local taxes collected to them (ibid).

In February 2019, President Adama Barrow of the Gambia launched a road network and sewage system construction project to rehabilitate the City of Banjul. Critics alleged the President of the Republic of side-lining the City administration from participating in the project planning process and implementation. An action many political analysts associates with the President’s bid to score a political point in the run-up to 2021 elections against the Mayoress who belongs to a different political party.

[Mayoress Lowe] (...) repeatedly complained about being marginalized by the government on the Banjul multi-million dollars rehabilitation project. Lowe says she had no paperwork before her office about the said project. She felt that a project of such nature can not be executed in her city, without her council being part of it. (Mbai, 2019)

Sections 90 and 91 of the Gambia's LGAct 2002 stipulate that LCs are the project planning and implementing authority in their respective LGA. And the role of the Government through its various MDAs is to provide the necessary technical service support and ensure councils are accountable to their different stakeholder groups. Instead of allowing the City Council and its decentralised structures like the VDCs to lead the project planning process, the Ministry of Works was assigned to design and supervise the project.

In May 2019, when Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC) imported waste disposal trucks into the Gambia to help ease waste disposal within the Municipality, the Municipal Council was refused custom duty waiver by the Ministry of Finance and had to pay a sum of 13.1million dalasi. A privilege, LCs have enjoyed since the First Republic. Many political analysts viewed the decision to break the customs duty waiver for KMC by the Finance Ministry under President Barrow and the stand-off that followed between them as a political strategy and a scheme by the President to frustrate the efforts of the young mayor and disallow him from scoring a political point because they belong to a different political party.

We must separate politics from development. We must learn to recognize, accept and work for the public interest, rather than narrow political and partisan interests. The recent decision by the Ministry of Local Government not to support KMC's application for a duty waiver and of the Ministry of Finance to deny such a waiver is a shameful act of politicizing human development. The only reason that duty waiver was not granted is that Mayor Talib Ahmed Bensouda chose to remain loyal to the United Democratic Party, rather than sell his soul to President Barrow, as others have done. (Jarsey, 2019)

The review of literature, however, revealed that such a weakness of the local governance system is not peculiar to the Gambia and Sierra Leone alone. Adusei-Asante and Hancock (2012) made a similar observation in the case of Ghana when they state that:

While constitutionally mandated to be the hub of development at the local level, the operations of Ghana's DAs [District/Municipal Assemblies] offer many loopholes for political machinations. Even though Article 248 (2) of the Constitution requires that DAs be non-partisan, the system is highly politicised. (p. 86)

Just as Adusei-Asante and Hancock (2012) argued in the case of Ghana, it seems the status quo of the local governance system in West Africa “offers politicians the convenience of political manoeuvrings at the local level” (p. 87). It is evident that to ensure the active participation of VDCs in multilevel development planning, and implementation process in the region, the citizens, civil society groups and perhaps the development aid agencies must take a firm stand and mount a sustained pressure on or condition politicians to enforce decentralisation laws and policies. Interference by partisan political affiliations/political factionalism and adverse influence of non-residents vis-à-vis residents in village politics argued Ngwenya (2008) are some of the threats or constraints to a sustainable future of VDCs in Botswana. The over-exploiting of VDCs by government department staff for their benefits and personal aggrandisement/self-serving agenda of individuals aspiring for high political office in the land is another sustainability constraints (pp. 75–76).

6.3.2. Internal Administrative Processes and Structural Factors Explaining the Sustainability Problem of Decentralised Local Development Institutions

a. Infrequent Meetings, Organisation and Attendance and Inability to Exercise Oversight Role of Coordinating all Interventions in Villages

In both the Gambia and Sierra Leone as the lower level decentralised co-ordinating structures, VDCs and WDCs were created in former donor-funded CDDP beneficiary communities to get multilevel planning process off the ground. As per the LGAct, 2002 of the Gambia VDCs are responsible for all development planning at village level and serve as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village and in Sierra Leone as per the account of (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 22), VDCs in Northern Sierra Leone and Bombali District, in particular, are formed with the intent to lead development efforts, co-ordinate and evaluate planned activities and communicate with external partners. However, findings of this research show that VDCs in both countries no longer coordinate development activities or participate in multilevel planning process as they used to before the donor-

funded CDDPs phased-out. In essence, VDCs have not been exercise their oversight role of coordinating all interventions taking place in their localities.

Unlike in Nepal and Botswana, evidence shows that VDCs in the Gambia and Sierra Leone don't have a fixed meeting schedule instead their chairpersons can convene meetings at any time as s/he may deem fit. In contrast, VDCs in Nepal (Nepal Local Self Governance Act, 2055 (1999)), Chapter 4, Section 23 (1) and Botswana (Bothoko, 2020) hold meetings at least once a month. VDCs have limited involvement of villagers in the area of project/program planning and implementation. CBOs are represented in VDCs and sometimes attend VDC meetings; however, their activities are not coordinated by the VDCs. VDCs have not been given any specific timeline to convene meetings by LGAct 2002 in case the Gambia and LGAct 2004 in case of Sierra Leone. The failure to hold/organise periodic meetings was mentioned several times in the findings as hinderance to VDC sustainability. Another subject said to have problematised VDCs' ability to coordinate its activities, including conducting regular meetings is the lack of term limit of the committee members.

Table 23: Challenges CBOs Face Working with VDCs

Challenges CBOs face working with VDCs	
Bombali District	KII
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor attendance of meetings Request for incentive (sitting/transport allowance, food etc.
Bombali District	FGD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor attendance of meetings Poor documentation Seasonal nature of VDC activities Poor activity reporting

Although VDCs in The Gambia are expected to appoint a secretary at their meetings to take minutes, however, minutes of the few meetings conducted suffer from untimely reporting for appropriate and timely action. Findings reveal that although VDCs are supposed to report to their communities periodically, they fail to respond positively to this particular demand. Some respondents link this to the prolonged-term of office of VDC members as people who are in positions are not often available to perform their duties. VDC chairpersons are accused of not calling regular meetings to discuss development issues of the villages; however, members are equally faulted for not attending the few meetings called by the chairpersons regularly. Busy with farm work is the usual excuse

given by VDC members for their failure to attend committee meetings, thus making it difficult for the chairperson to decide on the appropriate time that would suit all to a sermon for meetings. The expectation that food and refreshment would be provided at the meetings also discourages some chairpersons from calling for meeting as VDCs do not have funding for such rather some of them would cater for it at their own expense.

Table 24: Challenges Encountered by Community Development Stakeholders Face Working with VDCs

Challenges community development stakeholders encounter working with members of VDCs	
FGD	Poor documentation & reporting
SL KII	Mistrust/suspicious that educated people are corrupt
	Misunderstanding/difficulties in understanding certain concepts
GMB KII	Poor documentation & reporting
	Misunderstanding/difficulties in understanding certain concepts

Ward councillors also complain of the difficulty in getting the needed cooperation from the VDC membership in activity planning and implementation. Getting VDCs to become proactive in village development issues is reported to be problematic as members instead of working on village development issues or the common good tend to concentrate more on their personal gains. Too much political interference in the management and operations of VDCs is a common complaint lodged by several KII respondents concerning low meeting turnout. Many respondents appeal for VDCs to be left under the supervision of their villages and not directed by politicians. Some suggest the need to improve the present VDC model and to move their operations entirely out of the political system. It is hope that would contribute to solving their problem of inactivity in coordinating community development planning and implementation.

I visit and hold meetings with the WDC representatives of my constituency, where we discuss development issues once in a while. The representatives, in turn, go back to their various villages to share whatever we discuss with their villagers. One of the challenges I often encounter in such visits is poor attendance and representation of meetings. (Councillor, Sanda Loko, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 29th January 2018)

Among the key obstacles to achieving VDC sustainability in North-West Bangladesh, according to Haneef et al. (2014) are organisation and attendance at meetings or decrease in the frequency of the meeting. The reasons for which include the removal of support VDC used to benefit from the agency behind their formation, declining interest or laziness of members, migration/relocation of VDC members and that belief that all VDC targets have been achieved. The effects of donor funding phase-out and the expectations of financial incentives was another obstacle to the sustainability of VDCs. The lack of someone willing or able to take on the responsibility of organising and facilitating meetings affects the village committees after the phasing out of donor funding. Lack of an identified meeting place is also linked with the committees not holding meetings.

Findings of Haneef et al. (2014) in North-West Bangladesh also show that poor to no documentation following the end of the support from the donor agency that established VDCs as the perceived institutional weakness of the VDCs. Haneef et al. (2014) realise that finding time to attend group meetings, especially for female VDC members, is an obstacle to the sustainability of VDCs. The “idea that someone would have to host meetings was seen as an inconvenience and would place a lot of responsibility onto that person” also exacerbates the situation (Haneef et al., 2014, pp. 27–28). Financial incentives in terms of “the removal of a budget for snacks meant that no member wanted to take on the responsibility of holding the meeting” (ibid). This implies that “other members may continue to expect the provision of snacks from the inviting member and this was not a responsibility anyone was willing or, indeed, able to take on” (ibid). Lack of financial resources stopped VDCs from carrying out their planned activities.

b. Inadequate Development Planning Capacity

High transaction costs both in terms of set up and maintenance are usually the reasons responsible for the failure of formal structures to take root in developing countries. Formal structures require “specialised training and familiarisation with new roles and so forth” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 36). Therefore, to maintain the proficiency and productivity of VDCs, there is a need for a periodic capacity building and series of follow-up refresher training. Evidence shows that in the course of donor-funded CDDP implementation VDC members received trainings to help them plan, implement, monitor and evaluate project and programs. They were capacitated on how to mobilise both the community and resources for development purposes. This process was expected to happen periodically

after the phase-out of the donor funding, but unfortunately, it was cut short. Equally, to help develop accountability of local governments downwards and for community groups to express demands on LCs, (Dongier et al., 2003) recommend capacities building/strengthening for community groups. Some respondents have argued that VDCs aren't only weak in monitoring but equally management and leadership skills. Staff of one CBO argue that:

When the CDD funded projects formed VDCs, they were not well equipped to perform their roles and therefore, they are not sustainable. They lack techniques of lobby organisations for help in their communities; they did not register their committees so that they can operate as independent entities and be able to source funds from everywhere to support their communities. After the faced out of the founders of these committees, less interest was shown to them by the council even though they know they are existing bodies in these communities. Most members thought it was a paid-up job, but when they learnt it is not they lose interest. (Women Forum for Human rights and Democracy (WoFohd), Bombali District Northern SL, FGD, 9th February 2018)

Findings have shown an overwhelming evidence of VDCs having inadequate capacity to be able to participate actively in multilevel development planning and implementation process. Several respondents have mentioned that VDCs have limited ability to monitor development projects/programs, skills to mobilise community members to participate in self-help initiatives and in raising resource to finance community projects. While some report that VDCs have capacity gaps in project proposal development to source for external funding. It is mentioned that VDCs don't have the techniques to lobby for development projects from government and NGO stakeholders. The high rate of illiteracy among the ranks of the VDCs, limited exposure of their members to smart community development solutions and their lack of skills to meet and lobby people for help are difficulties VDCs continue to encounter. The fact that CDD (require skills such as information collection and the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, VDCs are said to have lacked the skills needed to embark on such initiatives.

VDCs are challenged by limited community mobilisation skills to execute development projects. They also face severe challenges mobilising funding for their prioritised projects both at the village and district level. The skillset needed

for both community and fund mobilisation are issues of most VDCs. Most VDCs cannot write a funding proposal and find it difficult to mobilise members of their communities to provide labour when you NGOs bring projects for them. (A female Project Manager, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR), Bombali District, SL, KII, 12th February 2018)

Evidence from World Bank's Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) evaluated by Walsh et al. (2012) in Mumbwa, a rural district in Zambia shows that the lack of training for VDCs makes the program's institutional sustainability gains not to be sustained for long. Over time the links between health facilities and communities got improved; however, the skills levels of volunteers had reduced. The study concluded that although WB espouse the idea of sustainability in their Zambian program strategy, the concept, however, remained on the periphery. The study highlighted the need for capacity building of "existing CBOs and community structures, rather than creating new mechanisms" (p. 1).

Evidence from the research conducted by Haneef et al. (2014) shows that capacity building problem of members through either regular pieces of training, workshops or exposure visits to comprehend the vision of the group and their roles and responsibilities affect the sustainability of CBOs. In North-West Bangladesh VDCs' capacity limitations in terms of identifying development problems in the villages and the perpetual shortage of the right set of skills and capability for VDC executive members are some of the perceived institutional weaknesses in the VDCs that result in their sustainability problems (p. 30).

c. Lack of Economic Activities and Power to Levy Taxes, Impose Service Charges or Charge Fees to Generate Funding for Development Planning & Incentive for Members

The usual issue with internationally funded institutions in developing countries is the frequent underestimation of the degree to which they are dependent on "distant (that is, foreign) stakeholders" for survival, and the overestimation of "the support from more proximate ones" (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 29). The efficiency of market-like institutions tends to lie more in the production and distribution of private non-public goods and have less strength in the production and distribution of pure public goods. Non-market institutions are often more proficient in the provision of tangible public goods and the supply of those that everyone can equally use. However, the use of private goods as

preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision by non-market structures can help strengthen non-market institutions (ibid).

VDCs are local institutions that produce and distribute pure public goods (development planning and implementation) where the relationship is expected to rely on authority patterns (superior/subordinate, patron/client) as in administrative or bureaucratic institutions. However, the relationship within VDCs is tied to voluntary exchanges as in market and market-like institutions while the opposite is the case/true within the decentralised planning system/multilevel planning framework they operate. To help strengthen VDCs and ensure their long-term survival as non-market institutions that rely on voluntary exchanges and the production of pure public goods, they would require the use of private goods as preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision. Unfortunately, the sustainability plans of VDCs in West Africa have not factored in the use of private goods as preconditions to gain leverage for public goods provision after the phased-out of donor-funded CDDP.

Other findings suggest the underestimation of VDCs dependence on donor-funded CDDP for survival and the overestimation of their support from more proximate stakeholders such as those of the local government councils, MDAs and the private sector. VDCs in West Africa are not set up as independent, autonomous institutions that would be able to sustain themselves without external support. Comparing VDCs in this sub-region and those of Nepal, for instance, one realises that they lack an essential institutional sustainability component which is a stable source of funding to support development activities. VDCs in this region don't have economic activities and the power to levy taxes, impose service charges or charge fees etc. to generate the necessary funding for development planning and to provide incentives for members.

The only mentioned VDC sustainability strategy in GoBifo CDDP documents of Northern Sierra Leone, as shown in the review is the project period strengthening of VDCs' organizational structure and to ensure their project management capacity is built. It is thought that by the time the projects phased-out, local institutions like the WDCs and VDCs would have enough capacity (knowledge and skills) to carry out community development forgetting or ignoring the fact that capacity is like an engine that require periodic servicing for proper and sustainable functioning. Monitoring and evaluation systems were designed in such a way that VDCs are involved as users, clients or citizens

throughout the project design and implementation periods. Villagers were used in selecting the information needed for the projects, during data collection and analysis, and in making decisions to change project strategies and approaches. In the course of the project, the project team continuously negotiated and shared their understanding with local people about some critical project development and management knowhows to ensure sustained corrective action (Sesay et al., 2010). All such practices ended with the phase-out of donor funding.

It has been reported in project documents that all villages that benefitted from income-generating projects in Northern Sierra Leone have opened a special bank account to deposit all monies generated to sustain the initiative and finance future development projects. The nature of the income-generating activities that are factored in the village plans to serve as revolving community funds were private rather than public. Thus, cannot be used to finance public projects beyond the project period. Some of these income-generating projects were fishing projects and skills-training projects like soap making, carpentry, and tailoring that some individual community members benefitted and for community groups like those of women to increase their economic security. Some used the proceeds from such ventures to pay for the school fees of their children and provide soft loans to group members.

With the rampant calls among Bombali District respondents for VDCs to be given grants to invest in income-generating and self-reliant ventures to enhance their capability to finance village project, it's clear that these revolving community funds were not meant to enhance VDCs' sustainability. "VDC members should have a saving scheme involving the community for any community-driven activity that they might want to undertake" (Youth leader, Mayorthan Village Bombali District SL, KII, 30th January 2018). "Community should do monthly contributions to support community-driven programmes with or without the support they will be able to support themselves (VDC Chairlady, Mayorthan Village Bombali District, SL, KII, 30th January 2018). "VDC needs the intervention of stakeholders and themselves to solve their financial problems. They can create activities that can earn them money and used these funds for the development of their communities (Project Manager, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR), Bombali District, SL, FGD, 12th February 2018). "VDCs should go out and seek funds for their communities, do fundraising activities, established village farms and make monthly contributions for

community projects they will want to undertake” (Crops Officer Ministry of Agriculture (MAFFS), Bombali District, SL, KII, 13th February 2018). “VDCs should engage in activities that will earn them money to develop their communities” (Supervisor of Schools Ministry of Education, Bombali District, Northern SL, KII, 13th February 2018).

As elaborated in the program design documents, the sustainable strategies of the institutional building component of CDDP in the case of the Gambia, was the program implementation arrangement and structure. This was focused on three programmatic pillars: the grounding of the program design and implementation arrangement in the 2002 LGAct; avoid having parallel coordinating and implementing structures; and by integrating the CDDP activities with those of the existing government department staff operating within the region. Locally situated civil servants and decentralised extension workers of the different line MDAs and CSOs operating in the region were integrated into the CDDP implementation arrangement and structure. Added to these was the capacity strengthening of local government authorities, ward and VDCs to ensure civil servants and decentralised development planning institutions would have their knowledge and skills enhanced (World Bank, 2006) rather than support VDCs to operate some economic activities to finance their recurrent costs.

The limited funding for CBOs earmarked for initiating income-generating activities (IGAs) is identified by Walsh et al. (2012) as an issue that continues to hinder CBO sustainability. VDCs’ lack of income-generating activity (IGA) or generating their own income is another financial incentive that inhibits their durability. Findings from the research conducted by Haneef et al. (2014) in North-West Bangladesh show that one major internal weakness of CBOs that affects their sustainability after the phases-out of the project that funded their set up or revamped them include the lack of financial capital by local-level institutions. Haneef et al. (2014) show that the lack of financial resources stopped VDCs from carrying out their planned activities. Non-core participants from a non-active VDC village informed Haneef et al. (2014) about the existence of a sustained village savings and loans group (VSLG) in the village. According to the participants, this ““box meeting²⁴ (...) in the village (...) is still running (...) because there is an income. Everyone works for income. There is no money in VDCs, so they do not conduct meetings”” (p. 29).

²⁴ This is the name they give to Village Savings and Loans Group

Haneef et al. (2014) are convinced that “it is important that VDCs find a source from which they can generate their own income” (p. 29). Haneef et al. (2014) find out that VDCs in North-West Bangladesh have a sustainability problem because of their lack of a fund-raising strategy/no access to a financial source/no avenue to generate an income. In North-West Bangladesh Haneef et al. (2014) identify the shortage of funding and corruption as factors that affect the sustainability of the federations of VDCs. Another sustainability factor is the absence of a ‘phase-out plan’ to guide committees on how to operate independently of the organisation that established them (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 12). Walsh et al. (2012) identify weak sustainability plan as an issue that hinders CBO sustainability.

d. Vision, Objectives and Functions of VDCs Set by External Stakeholders

It is argued that the structure of an institution has an effect on the incentive package and that it has the propensity to boost certain kinds of actions and deters other forms. Three identified scenarios are likely to disincentivise members of an institution from full participation and contribution in an institution’s activities and decision-making processes. These happen when an institutional structure is cunningly prevented from working; when individuals within are not allowed to give their opinions; and when activities are sanctioned/authorised that would require members to subscribe to pre-set plans of powerful stakeholders/elites or supervisors of external funding agencies (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The vision, objectives and functions of VDCs in The Gambia and Sierra Leone were sanctioned by authorises other than members of the VDCs and their communities. In the case of the Gambia it is the central government through the LGAct 2002 that authorised the activities or functions of the VDCs while in the case of VDCs in Northern Sierra Leone and Bombali District, in particular, it is the supervisors of an externally funded program called GoBifo CDDP that sanctioned their activities/functions.

The formation of most VDCs in Sierra Leone was facilitated by the frontline staff of donor-funded programs. Findings of this investigation in Sierra Leone are supported by (Richards et al., 2004; Sesay et al., 2010). Richards et al. (2004) argue that in Sierra Leone most of the VDCs “seem to have been induced by humanitarian assistance. (...) ‘NGOs have particularly encouraged the formation of these committees to mobilize local resources and labour for self-help activities’” (p. 24). “Our VDC was set up by an organization called GoBifo CDD Project” (a VDC Chairlady, Bombali District, a KII respondent, SL, KII, 27th January 2018). “The VDC was established in April 2003 by the villagers with support from

the Brikama Area Council” (a female VDC Vice-Chairperson, West Coast region, KII respondent, GMB, KII, 24th April 2018). Sesay et al. (2010) acknowledge the formation of some VDCs by the GoBifo CDD program.

Frontline staff members facilitate the formation of VDCs in communities where they do not already exist and train them on their roles and responsibilities. They also strengthen existing VDCs, emphasising that the committees should include women and young people. (p. 22)

As stated in Part V of LGAct 2002, although VDC representatives are selected by the various stakeholder groups in The Gambia, the establishment (Section 92. (1)), criteria (Section 92. (2)) and dissolution (section 96. (1)) of VDCs “for each village or cluster of villages” is to be determined LCs. Even the determination of rules of procedure for VDC meetings are subjected to “such rules of procedure as the Council may prescribe” (ibid, Section 97. (4)). The responsibilities of VDCs are prescribed in Section 98. Subsection (1) of LGAct 2002 Part V. In the two cases, VDCs are required to subscribe to the pre-set plans of powerful stakeholders/elites or supervisors of external funding agencies. Thus, partly explaining the failure to sustain the active participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process.

This practice is reported to have not only undermined the capability of VDCs rather discourages their membership from assuming a sense of ownership and responsibility. This culminated into individual committee members becoming disincentivised from full participation and contribution in VDC activities and decision-making processes. Another obstacle that challenged the sustainability of the VDCs in North-West Bangladesh, Haneef et al. (2014) find out is the dearth of understanding the roles of VDCs among its members and the general public. Thus, highlighting the necessity of having a phase-out plan which would give guidance to the VDCs once the external funding ends or donor ceases to operate in the area (ibid, p. 30).

e. Lack of Prescribed Remuneration and Meeting Allowances

In the SCOPE institutional sustainability framework, among other considerations, institutional sustainability results in part from a fitting or reasonable reward system/incentive package for tasks accomplishments and internal organisational

cohesiveness. The tendency for individual behavioural incentives of “‘free-riding’ or shirking”, can make it difficult for an institution that delivers public goods to generate support for its output, a critical variable for its durability (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 26). Wamsley and Zald (1973) argue that the critical political-economic variables or factors that determine organisational structure and change are the “structure of rule authority, succession to high office, power and authority distribution, division of labour, incentive systems and modes of allocation of resources” (p. 64).

Some respondents associate the poor community mobilization performance of VDCs in West Africa to the membership expectation of getting incentives for activity they are involved in instead of working for free. For most members of the VDCs, it is reported, don't participate in VDC sanctioned activities due to the absence of direct individual benefits. A secretary to one of the VDCs in Bombali District area confessed that most of them lack interest in taking part in VDC activities. This is because they initially thought it was a paid-up job or that they expected to have gotten unique benefits as committee members. And realising that there is no financial benefit for participating in VDC activities, most members become disincentivised. This statement is corroborated by a village elder from Gbom-Kasongo village, Sanda Tainderen, Bombali District who remarked that “most committee members were active thinking that the services of a VDC member are a paid-up job, but when they get to know that there is no benefit attached, they careless” (SL, KII, 29th January, 2018).

In the case of Botswana, VDCs have a fixed 12-month sitting allowance (Bothoko, 2020) and in Nepal VDC chair and Vice receive remuneration with a prescribed meeting allowance for members for each meeting attended. Below is an excerpt of the roles, tasks and requirements of a VDC Chairperson in the project cycle management of Brikama Area Council as written in the Council's strategic plan of November 2015. S/he is expected to render these services mostly on a voluntary basis with little or no remuneration.

The VDC Chairperson on planning, monitoring and evaluation play a crucial and central role in the process; he or she will receive training on a variety of issues and act as a focal point for project activities. The Chairperson should be a knowledgeable and respected person from the village, a volunteer selected or elected by the Village Development Committee (VDC) to whom s/he will be answerable.

Especially during the planning process, the Chairperson will be needed to guide work in parallel sub-groups and support the MDFT during plenary meetings and for reporting. The Chairperson will receive general training from the MDFT; complementary training will be done through learning by doing. (Brikama Area Council, 2015, p. 18)

The failure to factor in some kind of allowance for members of the lower decentralised development institutions is mentioned as a source of discouragement for most members to continue working for free when they could use that time and energy in some gainful initiatives. A CBO in Bombali District also confirms that initially most VDC members thought serving in the committee was a paid job, but when they learnt that participation in CDD activities is purely on voluntary basis most lost interest. It is contended that in the absence of an incentive package to defray for their services, committee members lose money for the time spent in running errands for the village. Such times could have been utilised to earn money which could be used to enhance the upkeep of their families or fulfil their obligation towards them. “For VDCs to perform better we have to give them incentives for activities undertake” (Ward Councillor, Gbendembu Ngohahun, Bombali District, SL, KII, 30th January 2018). “Beside capacitating VDC, and provide them with the necessary information for planning what happens next is to help them with incentives to function (WDC member, Sanda Loko Chiefdom, Bombali District, SL, KII, 1st February 2018).

To ensure sustained active participation of VDCs in community development, alongside the constant capacity building, VDC members should have incentive packages for their participation in development activities as they too have families to feed and children to look after. (VDC Treasurer, Brikama Local Government Area, GMB, KII, 25th April 2018)

The termination of sitting allowances for VDC members is seen by Ngwenya (2008) as a threat or constraint to a sustainable future of VDCs in Botswana. In North-West Bangladesh, Haneef et al. (2014) argue that the expectation of financial incentives from members of the institutions to keep the groups running is an internal weakness of CBOs which affect their sustainability. They identify the phasing out effects of donor agency on VDC sustainability for instance, where the committees lack someone willing or able to

take on the responsibility previously held by the CDO²⁵ of donors, to organise and facilitate meetings due to the expectations of financial incentives for committee members. The “idea that someone would have to host meetings was seen as an inconvenience and would place a lot of responsibility onto that person” made matters worst (pp. 27–28). The “removal of a budget for snacks meant that no member wanted to take on the responsibility of holding the meeting” affects the incentives necessary for sustainability (ibid). This is because “other members may continue to expect the provision of snacks from the inviting member and this was not a responsibility anyone was willing or, indeed, able to take on” (ibid). A related financial concern that was raised by the community is the diminution in the welfare benefits for family members of VDCs due to their attendance of village functions without compensation (Haneef et al., 2014).

Haneef et al. (2014) were told by the core participant in a village with active VDC that “VDC members ‘need to be called regularly, they cannot work for free. They have a family to maintain. They cannot maintain it if they keep working for the committee. So financial assistance should be put in place’” (p. 27). The sustainability problem of VDCs, according to IMO workshop participants, is that their committee members are driven by personal interest (Haneef et al., 2014). Similarly, quoting from an unpublished draft base-line report of the CARE-Sierra Leone rights-based food security project in Central Sierra Leone about VDCs conducted by Richards et al. (2004), shows that:

Most people seemed relieved they did not have to pay toward the costs of the hospitality required. In general, then, these data tend to confirm the induced nature of VDCs and that there is a long way to go to develop a more comprehensive sense of ownership. An obvious problem demanding solution is that only village elites have the time and resources to invest in civic action of this kind. CDD is time-consuming, but there is no clear reward structure, or agreed basis for defraying the expenses of such activity. Most people seem to adopt a wait-and-see attitude; if anything, good eventuates then fine, but meanwhile, it seems inappropriate to interfere. (p. 26)

²⁵ Community Development Officer

f. Limited Trust in VDCs and their Leadership

Few respondents also mentioned that some members don't have trust in VDC leadership, and as a result, many do not participate in the project activities because of the feeling of lack of ownership. There is a rampant report of lack of transparency within the ranks of VDCs. It is reported by CBOs that VDCs would ask to be paid allowances whenever invited to attend or be involved in their community development activities. According to CBOs, this attitude of VDCs caused mutual mistrust and discourages them from frequently engaging them in their programs. Out of the 194 survey respondents, 27% identify the lack of trust among the existing members of VDCs and would-be-members, while 26% identify misappropriation of development funds as factors of the institutional sustainability problem. Also 16% associate the inactivity of VDCs to the lack of cooperation from traditional elites both tribal and religious and some other local leaders, political interference in the affairs of VDCs and unfamiliarity of the present VDC structure and procedure to the inactivity of the institution.

About 12% of 104 KII respondents identify communities' lack of trust/confidence in their VDCs as a sustainability issue. Findings from the 8 FGDs show that 50% of the CBOs identify communities' lack of confidence and trust in their VDCs as an obstacle to their sustainability. In North-West Bangladesh, Haneef et al. (2014) argue that low accountability and lack of unanimous acceptance by the community are some of the perceived institutional weaknesses in the VDCs. In Botswana Ngwenya (2008) identify some threats or constraints to a sustainable future of VDCs including poor accounting and book-keeping procedures resulting in the embezzlement of funds of VDCs; poor productivity among committee members; absence of trust between members of the VDCs and communities.

6.4. Internal Institutional Characteristics and External Environmental Factors Explaining their Unsustainability in Light of SCOPE Framework

6.4.1. Environmental Dimensions

Introduction

SCOPE institutional sustainability framework considers an institution's environment as a critical aspect of its sustainability. A hostile environment has an inverse relationship with institutional sustainability. All other factors held constant, the more hostile an environment, the higher the improbability for an institution to get a steady supply of its needed inputs and processes for maintenance (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). An environment in this framework is understood in two contexts: 1) task environment which comprises of the external organisations and conditions that affect an association's principal operations and technologies such as clients, competitors etc.; and 2) the general environment which entails policies, laws, systems, and governance processes and conditions that have a long-range impact on an organisation and its tasks, for instance, the economy, political system, state of scientific knowledge, or national culture within which an institution operates (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, pp. 21–22). The SCOPE framework theorizes that “the conduciveness of the project's proximate and distant political, social, and economic environment is directly related to its sustainability” (Ingle et al., 1990, p. 81).

The discussion below apply SCOPE framework to decentralised development planning institutions, one of the outputs of donor-funded CDDP institutional building/development component in West Africa in the context of multilevel planning process. Applying the framework to the case helps understand the dynamics of sustainability problem of institutions built/developed through the efforts of donor agencies. The analysis looks into both the conceptual and operational aspects of these planning institutions. With regards to the operational aspect, attempts have been made to look into both the planned and the actual.

6.4.1.1. General and Proximate/Task Environments

6.4.1.2. Policy Level

Local/decentralised development institutions' sustainability is an integral dimension of WB funded CDDP design throughout West Africa particularly those implemented in fragile and post-conflict communities of the Gambia between 2007 and 2012 (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013, p. 4) and Sierra Leone between 2006 and 2009 (Casey et al., 2011a, pp. 11–12, 2012). The expectation at the end of each program is that outputs of the institutional building/development component of the program's beneficiaries would be institutionalised and widely adopted in the different countries and the region as a whole. The program outputs include LCs, WDCs and VDCs. The capacity of local government ministries and their departments of community development and arelated gencies were also strengthened. The general environment of decentralised village development planning institutions called VDCs entails policies, laws, other decentralised planning institutions and processes and local government councils. It slao encompasses conditions that have long range impact on them and their task accomplishment such as the economy, political system, state of scientific knowledge, or national culture and tradition within which an institution operates.

Evidence from a review of secondary and primary data illustrates that the amount of openness to change in the full implementation of decentralisation policy and legislation is limited in West Africa. Essential factors that enable or facilitate the development and sustainability of these institutions include “political and economic stability” of the country (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 142). Gustafson (1990) argues that “with greater instability along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions” the more the conditions of the environment become hostile (pp. 204–205). Issues such as understaffed LCs with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants; weak role differentiation between VDCs and traditional chieftaincy authorities in community development promotion; incoherent policies and overlapping mandates of ministries and local level institutions; and the reduction of LCs to partisan political battlefields are all hostile factors of the decentralised environment that have an inverse relationship with VDC sustainability.

Observably, there exists a limited amount of flexibility in terms of robust central government control of the formal sector. There exist progressive local government laws in the two countries aimed at de-emphasising political control, yet they still have highly bureaucratised and inefficient public sector, and a centralised governance authority with

little commitment to devolution of resources and functions to the local level. The strong unwillingness of high-level civil servants and local elites to accept changes in social patterns as espoused by local government and related legislations demonstrate the level of environmental hostility in the studied contexts. The crucial component of the impact an indirect environment has on an institution; it is argued relates to the flexibility or permissiveness of an environment (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). In a rigid and intolerant environment, an effort to boost the performance of an institution by trying new patterns in its internal processes is thwarted. Thus, threatening the vitality of the system. It is difficult to maintain the performance of an institution in an unstable, inflexible or impermissive environment because often the resources available for the institutions to develop coping mechanisms are inadequate or too meagre to have any impact (ibid).

VDCs in West Africa do not have the necessary capacity, resources and skills to either initiate meaningful development planning process or proactively disseminate and market their performance or functions to political players and technocrats as well as to profit and non-profit organisations successfully. These are initiatives that would actively generate political support for their continued active participation in the multilevel planning process and to serve as the entry point for all village level development interventions as provided for by local government legislation and related laws. Development projects must have a potential long-term value from the perspective of their stakeholders to generate the necessary support for the continuation of their essential elements. It wouldn't be "enough to have a strategy targeted only to those activities and actors needed for successful implementation" at the task environment. Instead for sustainability, these achievements should be followed-up by the gathering of "support from the political environment, and the most effective way of doing this is to disseminate and market the implementation performance success to political players and technocrats" (Ingle, Schmidt, & Pisone, 1990, p. 85). Thus, VDCs must be proactive in having mechanisms through which to disseminate and market their outputs to influence critical political and technical stakeholders connected with their several output clusters to ensure their operational sustainability. The close linkage between VDCs and their ward councillors, LCs, MPs, and the use of the participatory approach in engaging their communities, their direct connection with their line ministry and the different MDAs official at various levels are key functional sustainability elements or strategy. As this will actively generate political support for their

activities, enhance their capacity and most importantly ensure their outputs continue to be provided with recurrent resources for sustainability.

Multilevel development planning and implementation process operate well in an environment where elected local governments are responsive to the development needs of their constituents and where they are empowered to serve them and in a decentralised local governance environment where the following exists: intergovernmental arrangements for financial flows to local governments and decentralised development institutions; a conducive legal and regulatory framework that support the actions and financing of local development institutions like the VDCs; and clear sector policies with well-defined financing rules, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in each development planning sector (de Regt et al., 2013; Dongier et al., 2003, p. 321; Kumar, 2003; Mansuri & Rao, 2004, 2013). In general terms, local governments are more effective and responsive in leading multilevel planning process with the active participation of VDCs in a genuine political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization environment. Unfortunately, the findings reveal a contrary situation in the case of LCs in West Africa. Generally, due to their position in the decentralisation framework, local governments are considered more responsive and effective in providing sustainable funding for the active participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process and development management at the village level. The position occupies by local governments in the governance framework makes them critical to the sustainability of CDDP in general and its investments in particular. There is no doubt that local governments are the most well-placed structures to facilitate the durability of VDCs in multilevel development planning and implementation process. Local governments thrive in an environment where there are supportive legal frameworks and decentralised governance policies together with an active ministry in charge of policy leadership and oversight of local governments and community development. The expectation is that LCs would be in a strategic position to access the necessary resources (human, financial and material) to deepen, expand and facilitate the role of VDCs in multilevel development planning and implementation process. However, the contrary is the case in West Africa.

Findings of this investigation tends to oppose this idealised notion of policy reform of the early 1980s, “when donor attention first turned to structural adjustment and policy dialogue” (Truong & Walker, 1990, p. 116). The idealised idea about policy reform

“conceived of policy reform as rapid to design, essentially self-implementing, and self-sustaining” (ibid). However, the policy reform process is found to be both “lengthy” and “time-consuming”, and a procedure that doesn’t end with the promulgation of new policies; instead, it continues throughout their implementation. The policy reform process is said to be “inherently confrontational” requiring “continued monitoring and intervention to become sustainable” (ibid). Evidence shows that in West Africa, there is an apparent failure of local government ministries in terms of deepening decentralisation, mitigate against slow progress and weak implementation of devolved tasks. The reasons being their failure to provide the necessary policy leadership and oversight for local governments despite the availability of legal framework and policies for decentralized governance and thus making it increasingly more apparent/evident that the idealized view of the policy reform process is overly simplistic. Critics blame idealised view for paying too much attention to the “pitfalls inherent in the implementation of reform efforts” while overlooking “the deeply political nature of policy reform” (ibid).

While presenting the case of a USAID project that aimed at improving the performance and capacity of Haiti's planning ministry, Brinkerhoff (1990) argues that the case illustrates one of the fundamental precepts of the SCOPE framework, namely that “system environments can themselves be treated as systems” (p. 150). Politically, despite the availability of legal framework and policies for decentralized governance, local government ministries in the two cases except for some notable progress in the transfer of policy and legislative powers to democratically elected autonomous LCs from the central government (at least on paper), have failed to tackle the slow progress and weak implementation of decentralisation policies especially the transfer of locally situated civil servants with appropriate technical capacity necessary for multilevel planning and placing them under the jurisdiction of elected local governments. The findings show a lot of hostility from the staff of MDAs notably in the transfer of personnel and their payroll to LCs which continue to affect the long-term sustainability of decentralised village development institutions/VDCs. The scenario ranges from the failure to completely transfer locally situated civil servants to LC to partial transfer while their payroll still remain with their respective parent MDAs. It’s reported that locally situated civil servant personnel are still accountable and answerable to their parent institutions instead of the LCs. Added to this is the failure to accord LCs with substantial revenue and expenditure autonomy, including the full power to levy taxes and to charge services and user fees in all

areas under their jurisdiction. The frequent bypassing and marginalisation of LCs and weak functioning of WDCs in terms of allocation of funds and logistics in favour of well-equipped parallel local structure/agencies, weak financial base and poor local revenue generation capacity of LCs, poor terms and conditions of service of local civil servants at community level and the tension between VDCs, WDCs and the chieftaincy authorities partly due to weak role differentiation all contributes to the hostile environment of VDCs.

As evident in the studied cases, the virtual dormancy of the inter-ministerial/agency committee, the highest policy oversight body over the implementation of multilevel planning and decentralisation process, in general, is part of the hostile environment of VDCs. Donor funded CDDP introduced inter-ministerial/departmental committee that linked and fostered interaction between and among different MDAs, NGOs and civil society that oversaw the program implementation hoping the committee will be institutionalised when donor funding ends. Evidence from the analysis of secondary and primary data about the dominant forces in the VDCs' more distant environment shows that the conduciveness of this environment changed from reassuring to discouraging. The inculcated behaviours and attitudes during CDDP investment periods among locally situated technical, managerial and administrative civil servants and policymakers at the central level are also not institutionalised. Evidence suggests that both locally situated civil servants, top bureaucrats and policymakers don't accept some of the changes introduced by both the donor-funded CDDP and the local government legislations. Factors of hostile environment like the unavailability of logistical support due to the absence of necessary finances and technical capacity and the creation of well-equipped parallel local structures alongside VDCs and the shifting of the coordination authority of decentralised local development institutions to similar local assembly outside the local governance system are also worth taking noting of.

The continuous relevance of traditional authorities known as chiefs in their communities for reasons of community mobilization in support of development projects and the maintenance of law and order equally affects VDCs' position as the entry point for all development interventions to the villages and their sustainable involvement in development planning and management with particular reference to multilevel planning. All of these contributes to the environmental hostility and the functional sustainability problem of VDCs. The financial support to LCs is often limited and where available funds

are usually untimely disbursed. Often funds provided are not adequate to finance recurrent costs of activities like multilevel planning process. In summary, as explained in the detail discussions of specific findings above, although at varying degrees, the conduciveness of both proximate and distant environment has influenced the sustainability of decentralised development planning institutions in West Africa.

6.4.1.3. Decentralised Planning Level

The decentralised local governance system is the proximate environment of the lowest decentralised development planning institutions known as the VDCs. Institutions and organisations at the local governance level are the LCs, WDCs, locally situated civil servants, traditional /chieftaincy authorities (village and district chiefs and their council), NGOs operating in LCs' jurisdiction and CBOs. Task environment comprises of the external organisations and conditions that affect an association's principal operations and technologies such as clients, competitors and so on.

Task Environment of VDCs in West Africa

- Local-level departments and agencies of the various ministries;
- Offices of regional governors in the case of the Gambia;
- Offices of regional/provincial secretaries and district officers in the case of Sierra Leone;
- Local government council;
- Ward development committees (WDCs);
- District authorities or traditional authorities-the chieftaincy authority such as the district chiefs, paramount chiefs/section chiefs (where applicable) and village chiefs/heads; and
- CBOs and NGOs that operate within the districts.

All the organisations/institutions above-mentioned operating within the task environment of the VDCs have a continuous and robust influence on these institutions planned and the actual active participation in community development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, thus their functional sustainability problem. Key political actors in the local governance system include the ward councillors, members of parliament (MPs), regional/provincial governors/secretaries and district officers, central government ministers, in particular, finance and those of local government. In contrast, the locally situated civil servants of MDAs and the LC staff form part of the main bureaucratic actors. Thus, the procedures and practices of these actors, locally situated civil servants of MDAs

and council staff contributed to the level of flexibility of the general and task environments of VDCs. The flows of resources to lower level decentralised planning institutions and lack thereof from MDAs, LCs and NGOs have a direct impact on the degree of the artificiality of their operating environment.

At the same time, their staff are critical stakeholders in ensuring the active and continued involvement/functioning of the lower level decentralised development planning assemblies in the multilevel planning activities and outcomes. An open/flexible environment refers to a condition where the “economic, political, and sociocultural features of the environment permit and/or support system change” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 31; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 375). In contrast, inflexibility, rigid or intolerant environment is experienced where the “economic, political, and sociocultural features of the environment do not permit and/or support system change” (ibid). Evidence shows that the economic, political, and sociocultural features of West Africa’s environment do not permit and/or support institutional change introduced by donor funded CDDP.

While the former contributes to low environment hostility, the latter contributes to high environment hostility. In the economic sense, artificiality occurs when the prices of goods/services do not reflect market prices. Whereas in the political sense it refers to the lack of wide-spread legitimacy (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). In other words, low artificiality refers to a situation when an “environment displays low levels of distortion along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 30; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992, p. 375). At the same time, high artificiality occurs when an “environment displays high levels of distortion along economic, political, and sociocultural dimensions” (ibid). While the former contributes to low hostility in the environment, the latter contributes to high hostility in the environment. Brinkerhoff (1990) argues that “in the public sector, staff and budget are the major inputs an agency or a unit needs to continue functioning” (p. 155). These are the exact inputs that are lacking and in sufficient quantity and quality in the operating environment of the local and central governments and in particular the lower level decentralised planning institutions of West Africa.

Issues such as environmental flexibility, incentives, and broader stakeholders engagement are identified by Truong and Walker (1990) as being of particular importance for long-

term institutional sustainability (p. 129). According to Truong and Walker (1990) “it is already clear that continued high performance and ultimate sustainability will be achieved only if the program can continue to address issues related to institutional change, incentives, stakeholders, and capacity” (p. 128). Other essential sustainability elements of institutions in transition include their “flexibility in adapting to a changing environment”, most notably the support it continues to enjoy from its patron/supporters and “the “artificiality” of its environment” especially donor support for their “valued outputs” (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 142).

Structured flexibility combines elements of both "blueprint" planning and "learning process" efforts to build problem-solving capacity (...). This approach provides the basis for the programmatic and financial accountability needed to attract resources from international donor agencies and developing country bureaucracies; at the same time, it facilitates an interactive management style that can take into account uncertain and changing environments and the values of the various actors. Collaborative "learning by doing" characterized the design and implementation of the FSR/D project. (Ingle, Schmidt, & Clarke, 1990, p. 183)

In addition to the cooperation of traditional/chieftaincy authorities, local communities, foreign donors/NGOs operating in communities and CBOs, the coordination and planning roles of local government, and MDAs as mandated by the local government legislation and other legal frameworks are necessary for the sustainable participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process in West Africa. Equally paramount for the significant and continued performance, funding and capacity of VDCs are the intergovernmental arrangements for financial flows from the central government to local governments and their decentralised development institutions, notably the VDCs and WDCs. To a broader extent, the failure, setbacks, inefficiency and the ultimate sustainability problem of VDCs' institutional arrangements are attributed to the inflexibility of their policy environment as well. This includes development agencies, government, non-profit and for-profit/private sector which are directly affected by the proposed reforms.

In complex and changing environments like those of West Africa, decentralise governance reform process is never suppose to be a one-off process; instead, it should be an ongoing and iterative modification of rules and procedures, as was the case during donor-funded CDDP. During the lifespan of donor-funded CDDP, the reform process was characterised

by continues dialogue of stakeholders and capacity building to guarantee the attainment of the desired outcomes. The decentralise governance system/ institutional arrangements within which local institutions like the VDCs operate at the end of donor funded CDDP tends to be highly centralised and inflexible thus, resulting in numerous problems and inefficiencies. Additionally, not having the locally situated staff of MADs and their operational financial arrangements under the control of LCs doesn't only create delays but opportunities for bureaucratic rent-seeking. The mismatch among the nature of the goods produced by VDCs, the environment, and the institutional structure of VDCs and the lack of monetary incentive for committee members for the services all makes their existing inefficiency and sustainability problem almost inevitable.

Jones (1990) argues that for organisational development projects using an action-planning approach to establish a solid foundation for sustainability, they must accomplish two processes. A) To work in getting an agreement on project objectives, identify and involve different stakeholder groups, analysis strengths and problems as well as put in place an appropriate strategic plan at the earliest time possible. The most comfortable time to ensure the involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and the needed expertise to establish a solid foundation for improvement in a project is at the beginning. And b) to ensure the action-planning process be iterative to give participants the chance to build on earlier assessments and decision and continuously refine strategies for the attainment of the ultimate targets. Often plans are never finished blueprints rather a strategy that needs to be continually revisited, reviewed and revised.

It's worth noting that the amount of community support for VDCs post-donor-funded CDDP is affected by the institutions' demonstrable flow of goods and services to their diverse beneficiary groups and the status of their stakeholders. After the end of donor funding, there is a noticeable shift in the amount or valuation of the "raw materials" needed for the participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process and the "finish products" provided by VDCs. This is experienced in the limited availability of human/technical, financial and material resources and the low-level involvement of VDC's in the production of village-level development plans, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and in serving as an entry point for village level development. A public institution having a limited demand for its services might not be much of an issue provided it has influential and supportive stakeholders plus healthy economic growth (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990),

indispensable sustainability features the operating environment of lower level decentralised planning assemblies of West Africa don't have.

Thus, considering the weak and resource-poor status of VDCs' stakeholders and the unhealthy and unstable financial circumstances of governments of West Africa, to sustain VDCs and other decentralised planning institutions would require a serious commitment from the bureaucrats and strong will from the political leadership. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) argue that "should stakeholders reassess their position or the economy slow down, it would change markedly the prospects for sustaining this sort of system" (p. 31). The proximate environmental condition of VDCs has changed from being conducive during donor-funded CDDP implementation period to obstructive after the funding ended. The most critical among the direct environmental variables is probably the demand for goods and services provided by an institution (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

In terms of clientele, VDCs, especially those in the rural communities, tend to serve people of lower socioeconomic strata who are often poorly organised with low demand-making ability. The goods and services provided by VDCs are limited, mostly public, and the recipient stakeholders are characterised by dire resource poverty, it wouldn't be surprising therefore for these institutions to experience a high rate of decay. In a climate where the demand for goods and services provided by a development institution is limited, the delivered goods are mostly public, and the recipient stakeholders are characterised by dire resource poverty; it wouldn't be surprising to experience a high rate of institutional decay (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992). Goldsmith (1990) pinpoints two significant changes in the immediate external environment of an institution that is critical to their sustainability. These are "the sudden rise in demand" for the outputs an institution produces (p. 173) and "the growing strength" of its major stakeholder groups (p. 176).

Evidence suggests that VDCs' diverse stakeholder groupings valued differently the products they produce, which include the village development plan and serving as the entry point for village-level interventions. In aggregate terms, stakeholders and their valuation of an institution's products "provide the means for the system to procure the inputs necessary to maintain itself" (D. W. Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 29). Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) argue that the issues with internationally funded institutions in developing countries are the frequent underestimation of the degree to which they are dependent on "distant (that

is, foreign) stakeholders” for their survival, and the overestimation of the support they get “from more proximate ones” (p. 29). As the evidence demonstrates, the limited trust in VDCs and their leadership by the communities they serve goes to show that these institutions have not been proficient in keeping their influential and supportive stakeholders with influence over resource flows (recurrent costs, capital investments, human resources) happy after the phaseout of donor-funded CDDP. An institution’s “proficiency in keeping its stakeholders happy, both at specific points in time and over an extended period” is what determines its sustainability. In other words, the sustainability of an institution depends on the degree of their “influenceability” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 30).

Another critical environmental issue that is relevant in terms of increasing VDCs’ sustainability is the recognition of their development planning role and position as the entry point of all development assistance to the villages. This acknowledgement must not only be done by government/MDAs, but also donor agencies, their local partner NGOs/CBOs and the private sector. However, recognising these roles in the form of having them enshrined in the local government laws alone is not enough. Rather these actors must be willing to work with or engage lower level decentralised planning institutions within their operational jurisdictions in the entire project/program cycle as partners or assist them as appropriate. The failure of the actors to comply with the provisions of local government laws regarding their relations with the VDCs heightens the hostility of VDCs’ operating environment thus, having an inverse relationship with their sustainability. All other factors held constant, the more hostile an environment, the higher the improbability for an organisation to get a steady supply of its needed inputs and process for maintenance (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1992).

In recent years besides the periodic democratic shifts in governing parties in the subregion whose policy orientation often differ markedly, the general environment in which VDCs operate is relatively stable in terms of change in the form of government as was decades ago, when military coups were the order of the day. Proponents of SCOPE framework argue that a stable environment injects greater assurances in setting up the internal processes of an institution (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Evidence however suggests that the relative political stability being enjoyed in West Africa doesn’t result in the sustainable functioning of lower level decentralised planning institutions. Findings show show that a

moderate external change or instability like the phase-out of donor funding causes these institutions to stumble. The unexpected and wrenching change VDCs in West Africa have experienced in their environments after the phase-out of donor funding for their participation in the multilevel planning process make it harder for these institutions to cope.

The operating environment of VDCs after their set up/revamping was characterised by a high level of artificiality caused by the availability of external resources, i.e., resources that are not found in their immediate setting rather from external donors. An artificial environment can nurture the system only when it has a steady supply of extra external inputs, a reality facing lower level decentralised planning institutions today with the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The large number of VDCs spread across the length and breadth of each West African country with limited financial, human and logistical resources is a sustainability risk. Added to this, is the operational dependence of VDCs on the steady supply of foreign aid or external agency funding. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) note that local development institutions whose operating expenses are paid from abroad, comparably perform better in the short run than those organisation financed from within the country. Often these donor-funded institutions “collapse once their foreign support is terminated” (ibid, p. 28). Although LCs are expected to inject financial and other resources into VDCs to ensure their sustainable functioning in multilevel planning process and development management; however, LCs are themselves constrained by weak revenue collection and taxing capacity among a host of others.

The evidence from the analysis of secondary and primary data on the proximate environment shows that the local government institutions and CBOs either put-up an indifferent attitude towards the conduct or providing support to the multilevel planning process or through practices such as the alienation of VDCs in development planning and management. Thus, frustrating the active participation of VDCs in village development in general and their legally mandated oversight and coordinating roles of multilevel development planning and implementation process at the village level. The large number of VDCs within the jurisdiction of a single LC compare to the resources (human, financial and material/logistical) available at their disposal or considering their resource-poor nature add to the environmental hostility. LCs, find it extremely difficult to reach out to all VDCs in a year or within the four-year tenure of office of a set of councillors.

Hostile environmental factors such as inadequate logistics and infrastructure; inadequate development budget; understaff LCs; and insufficient revenue sources to finance multilevel planning process tend to suggest high operational cost of maintaining the active participation of lower level decentralised development planning institutions in the multilevel planning process in West Africa. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) find that increased operating costs of many rural development institutions are as a result of limited economies of scale, defined as “declines in the unit cost of a product or service as the absolute volume per period increases” (p. 33). Balkanisation of development institutions, as observed in the case of VDCs and the resultant scattering of limited resources in terms of development planning and management, are considered potential institutional sustainability problems especially in a developing country setting with competing demands or priorities on meagre resources. Given the dire resource constraints, the major challenge of institutions in developing countries, in general, according to Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) is “to identify the relevant economies and diseconomies of scale and come up with the appropriate trade-offs” (ibid).

Table 25: Summarised Direct Influences on the VDCs’ Task Environment in West Africa as of 2020

Level of demand for VDCs’ outputs
Communities have a high level of espoused demand for multilevel planning and project implementation outputs for sustainable CDDPs, provision of services and goods at the local level. However, the actual level of demand by LCs, MDAs is highly variable. As evident in the findings, there is a less real demand for VDCs outputs by top bureaucrats and politicians.
Nature of VDCs’ outputs
Outputs are public in nature such as preparation of VDP, community and resource mobilisation for development, coordination of multilevel planning process, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of planned activities, and communicating with external partners. It is very problematic to assign costs or to assess the value of these outputs. VDCs depend highly on input sources that are beyond their control and capacity as lower level decentralised local development planning institutions to produce most of these outputs effectively. Input sources include LCs, MDAs and donor agencies.
Characteristics of stakeholders
Top bureaucrats, NGOs and political stakeholders have high demand-making ability and a high degree of control over resources that VDCs need for effective participation. In contrast, poor and voiceless community-level stakeholders don’t have high demand-making capability. Interests between community-level stakeholders and top bureaucrats, NGOs and political stakeholders are conflicting; this makes it difficult to assess real versus espoused interests in this situation. Top

bureaucrats, NGOs and political stakeholders tend to be comparatively well organised than poor and voiceless community-level stakeholders. VDCs have little control over and influence on the stakeholders.

6.4.2. Internal Dimensions

Introduction

The SCOPE Framework posits that the extent of a system's internal complexity is determined jointly by its technology and structure. The lower the internal complexity, the less challenging the technology and the simpler the organisational structure. However, the level of complexity increases with sophisticated technologies and elaborate structural arrangements such as those of multi-sectoral integrated rural development projects or programs or decentralised governance system (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The following are the dimensions that specifically describe the complexity of a system: (a) the quantity of components or units a system has; (b) the degree of differentiation among the various parts of a system; and (c) the level of interdependence among the different components of a system (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 1990, p. 38). Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) summed up their theoretical account when they state that:

Systems with fewer components are less complex than those with more. Systems whose components are uniform in function or structure are also of lesser complexity when compared to ones with differentiated components. The same goes for systems whose parts operate independently of each other, as opposed to systems whose components are interdependent. (Interdependence can be thought of as situations where various components' outputs serve as inputs for other components). (p. 38)

6.4.2.1. Structure

The structure of an institution describes the possible range for the production of its outputs. It sets the real borders around the process of producing these outputs. It denotes the organisational setup of an institution such as its role distribution, responsibilities, and internal individuals and group relationships. Structure refers to "enduring relationships among individuals, groups, and larger units" (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 22). SCOPE framework identifies three significant reasons that make the structure of an institution

essential. First, the arrangement of a system does not only affect the incentives package but also boosts certain kinds of actions and deters others. Second, the influence an institutional structure has on information flow within the system. Third, the transaction costs which are closely connected to information in human institutions, and friction in mechanical systems (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

The first principle of the multilevel planning process as identified by Sundaram (1997) is function-sharing, a principle that is critical in ensuring harmony and effectiveness in a decentralised planning system. Clear-cut division of planning functions among the various area/territorial levels with differentiated planning activities among partners must be part of the initial steps of a multilevel planning process. Such a practice is said to help avoid unnecessary competition and overlapping functions while foster mutual supportive environment. A closer study of the decentralised planning system in which VDCs are part of and the first principle of multilevel planning process suggests a high internal complex system and/or method implying a sophisticated technology and elaborate organisational structure. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) identify multi-sectoral integrated rural development projects/programs and decentralised governance structures as complex systems that have sophisticated technologies and elaborate designs. Taking into consideration the number of components there are in the multilevel planning process/decentralise planning system, the degree of differentiation and the level of interdependence among its various parts, there is no doubt that its a complex system with sophisticated technology and an elaborate organisational structure.

Although the function-sharing principle within the decentralise planning system partly relates to lower level decentralised planning institutions' task environment, however, it has links with the internal processes of these institutions, in particular the structural aspects such as the role distribution, powers, responsibilities, individuals and groups relationships within them. VDCs can be described as having a high degree of formality justified by the stating of their structure in formal, written rules as provided for in the LGActs and related legislations. High transaction costs both in terms of set up and maintenance, according to Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) are usually the reasons responsible for the failure of formal structures to take root in developing countries. Formal systems require "specialised training and familiarisation with new roles and so forth" (p. 36). It is a process that begs

for periodic capacity building and a series of follow-up refresher training to maintain proficiency and productivity.

The diverse nature of representation in the VDCs in terms of age, gender and professional groupings coupled with the nature of their functions, sustaining their continued participation in the multilevel planning process would require a substantial amount of financial, human and material resources. A significant amount of resources, both social, technical and economic, are necessary to conduct periodic meetings, capacity building workshops, logistical support and for paying allowances or remunerations. Systematic capacity building for effective planning and facilitation of the planning process also requires human, financial and logistical support in terms of technical assistance from MDAs and other organisations be they NGOs or private sector.

The internal issues of VDCs such as the infrequent organisation and low attendance of meetings, their inability to exercise oversight role of coordinating all interventions in the villages; inadequate development planning capacity; lack of prescribed remuneration or meeting allowances are the result of insufficient resources in terms of human, time, financial and logistics. Added to these issues are the elaborate structure of multilevel planning process and glaring weakness in the intergovernmental financial flow and technical support system. Activities such as periodic capacity building, monitoring and follow-up/refresher trainings, which help maintain proficiency and productivity of formal structures and ensure they take root in communities result in high transaction costs in terms of maintenance.

For a sustainable VDC model, Yasmin (2014) recommends the following five areas: organization development, choosing appropriate activities, capacity building training, creating linkages, supportive supervision and follow-up. As part of the organization development, Yasmin (2014) recommends for the formation of VDCs in formal constitutional terms with an enforceable annual review of membership, registration of VDCs as “trust” under a legal framework. Having an official legal identity, according to Yasmin (2014) is beneficial to VDCs in terms of creating “greater and easier access to government and non-government resources and services” and for greater motivation for members “to continue contributing to community development” (p. 11). See also (Khanum & Watson, 2016, p. 3) for similar recommendations. The third recommendation under organisation development is the establishment of VDC meetings and building of public

infrastructure where such meetings are held as well as ensure that the duration of sessions is shortened considering the composition and the voluntary nature of the institutional membership. She also recommends for each VDCs to have a calendar for its monthly activities/work plan. Finally, she expresses the need for VDCs to run some economic activities to generate their own funds to finance their activities.

Evidence from this investigation indicates that instead of villagers it is the external stakeholders that set the vision, objectives and functions of VDCs in West Africa. In the case of the Gambia it's the country's 2002 LGAct that prescribed the vision, goals, powers and functions of VDCs while in the case of Northern Sierra Leone, it's the donor-funded GoBifo CDDP and other donor agency elsewhere in the country. For instance, in its humanitarian work from 1999-2001, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International, set up VDCs in Kamajei and Fakuniya chiefdoms of Sierra Leone (Richards et al., 2004, p. 24). Members of an institution are most likely to be disincentivised from full participation and contribution in the activities and decision-making processes of an institution when the structure of an institution is cunningly prevented from working or when individuals within are not allowed to give their opinions. And when actions are sanctioned/authorised that would require members to subscribe to the pre-set plans of powerful stakeholders/elites or supervisors of external funding agencies. The habit of persistent instructing or recommending a standardised technical package for local development institutions without consideration for its structures or ignoring the inputs of its members is a possible sustainability issue (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Similarly, Haneef et al. (2014) argue that "formulating objectives is key to a committee sustaining" (p. 18).

In their study of sustainability of VDCs established by Chars Livelihoods Program (CLP) in the chars of rivers Jamuna and Padma in north-west Bangladesh, Haneef et al. (2014) express the significance of VDCs taking the lead in formulating their vision, objectives and functions. Haneef et al. (2014) while recounting the processes that followed after VDCs have been established in north-west Bangladesh state that VDCs "form their own set of objectives based on their expectations for their committee" (p. 18). They are confident that "if VDCs have specific goals, then they are more likely to stay together to reach these goals" (ibid). Their findings suggest that the "majority of VDCs had very clear, multiple objectives for their committee" which were later matched with the overall

objectives of the donor-funded program (ibid). The second proposal on Yasmin's (2014) sustainable VDC model is the choice of appropriate activities for VDCs. For VDCs to remain sustainable entities and meet the needs and demands of the villagers post donor-funded programs, Yasmin (2014) recommends the following strategies for selecting appropriate activities for VDCs.

A) As voluntary organizations, activity menu for VDCs should not include almost everything, rather the list should be short and focused on the needs and priorities of the village. Further, within this menu, VDCs should be at liberty to develop and choose the most relevant activities for their village (p. 12). B) Identify one mandatory/regular activity for each VDC that would keep the VDC 'active and alive' round the year and contribute to the social capital building. C) To carefully identify economic activity for VDCs to meet the committees' recurrent costs. In Yasmin's (2014) view every organisation/CBO needs to "operate some economic activities to generate its own funds (...) to meet" its recurring costs (ibid). See also (Khanum & Watson, 2016, p. 3) for similar recommendations. Again, findings from this investigation illustrate that VDCs in West Africa were not at liberty to develop and choose the most relevant activities for their villages; instead, these institutions have been handed a standardised technical package to deal with without any financial and technical muscle to support unpack the parcel. Also none of the studied VDCs has a mandatory/regular activity that would keep them 'active and alive' the year-round and contributes to social capital development or economic activity that is buoyant and profitable enough to meet their recurrent development planning and implementation costs.

As non-market structures the outputs of VDCs tend to be public in nature, i.e. the provision of tangible public goods and the supply of good that everyone can equally use. Multilevel planning outputs such as the VDPs are in the form of services with varying degree of difficulty in translating in value terms. Non-market structures, according to Brinkerhoff et al. (1990), are often more proficient in the provision of tangible public goods and the supply of those that everyone can equally use. However, the use of private goods as preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision by non-market structures can help strengthen them (ibid). As already stated, VDCs do not have economic activity that is buoyant and profitable enough to serve as preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision.

The “key principles” of identifying economic activities for VDCs as recommended by Yasmin (2014) in her sustainable VDC model, is to choose “appropriate activities” (p. 12). This proposition agrees with Brinkerhoff et al.’s (1990) notion of using private goods as preconditions to acquire leverage for public goods provision by non-market structures. For Yasmin (2014) operating economic activities is the domain of the private sector and entrepreneurs. Thus, to choose and establish economic activities for public institutions like the VDCs as she recommends for businesses that would not:-

- i) cause ‘conflict of interest’ with existing private sector service providers operating in the village, and ii) aim to meet a ‘need’ or fill a ‘gap’ in the market by offering a service which is not currently available to villagers, thus acting as a ‘public good’ service, and iii) the economic activity does not become the main function and purpose of a VDC. (p. 12).

Unfortunately, VDCs in West Africa lack economic activities and power to raise revenue through taxes or impose service charges or fees as in the case of Nepal (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nepal Office, 2001; Government of Nepal, 1999). Lack of these capabilities makes it difficult for VDCs to generate funding on their own to finance development planning and provide incentives for the membership. The structure of VDCs tends to usually exhibit flat hierarchies with few or lower numbers of levels, extensive spans of control, collegial decision making, and loose or slack supervision. They are poorly organised and no proper supervision with low demand-making ability. Richards et al. (2004) find out that VDCs in off-road locations of Sierra Leone “ran the show more or less unsupervised” (p. 24). The structure tends to facilitate the horizontal flow of communication. On the contrary, the decentralised system within which multilevel planning process occurs and the multilevel planning process itself exhibits a highly formalised structure with transparent reporting, supervision and monitoring lines of authority, at least on record. The national territory is split into small regional/local units to facilitate the multilevel planning process, which together forms a system and subordinate systems, the number of which depends upon the size of the country, its administrative, geographical and cultural settings.

Advantages of the Multilevel Planning Process

- a) Logical and rational system that shares planning and development functions among several actors and at different administrative levels;
- b) Ensures efficient, productivity and sustainability use of the resource;
- c) Cost-effective in its approach;
- d) Facilitates the effective participation of people in development; and
- e) Fosters more significant equity in the distribution of development gains country-wide (Sundaram, 1997).

The decentralised administrative/governance system and the multilevel planning process tend to be associated with narrow hierarchies due to their high number of structural levels, limited spans of control, top-down authority relationships and tight supervision. The structure within the national planning system, its subordinate institutions and the multilevel process tend to encourage the vertical flow of information. The ministry responsible for local governments serves as the linkage/liaison between LCs and the central government. At the top of the local government planning system is the LC followed by WDCs in the middle and VDCs at the bottom with locally situated civil servants, NGOs and CBOs providing technical support. Within this system is the chieftancy system of administration in the case of West Africa. Multilevel planning process goes through a set of formal procedures and technical recommended practices all of which add a layer of complexity that impacts the sustainability of lower level planning institutions such as the VDCs.

In single-level planning, both planning and decision making is centralised at the national level where the lower-level administrative units are involved only at the project implementations stage. In contrast, the national territory is divided into small territorial units in the multilevel planning where development plans are formulated and implemented at each of the decentralised levels. In the multilevel planning context of the studied cases, the central government constitutes the first and foremost level followed by local/district government, the ward and then the village. Together these levels form a system and subordinate systems with every unit constituting a system of their own. While the lower level planning systems provide the bases for the higher-level planning, the higher-level plans provide the basic framework for the lower-level plans as well. Following the essential precept of contingency theory, the degree of hierarchy in terms of institutional sustainability is contingent on other factors. Having many individuals “join in an activity is less necessary for some situations than others (...). The optimal degree of hierarchy (and

associated bureaucratic rules) is conditioned by factors inside and outside of the system” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 37). This begs the question whether it necessary to have VDCs and WDCs as part of the planning process despite having the chieftaincy structures for centuries both at district and village levels.

Equally, while elaborating on creating linkages which is her fourth recommendation for sustainable VDC model, Yasmin (2014) expresses the necessity to make a connection between VDCs and government and non-government agencies. Brinkerhoff et al. (1990) argue that the earlier integrated rural development projects were sustained because of the ability of their leadership in forging links with patrons occupying critical positions in the government. Another reason for the failure of the second-generation projects is the absence of “maintaining bridges to the larger political arena” (p. 43). In creating such linkages, VDCs don’t only need to be given the information about the services and resources or support they can access from these agencies, but could also learn about how to approach them including the processes and the required documentation. To fulfil such a linkage, Yasmin (2014) recommends for a well-structured systematic training plan adequate to “equip the VDCs with enough knowledge and capacity in this regard” (p. 14). To ensure VDCs get to the “desired level with respect to creating effective connections”, it is critical that such a training is “followed by hands-on training through joint visits by VDC and CDO” (ibid). Unfortunately, findings of this investigation show a contrary practice in the two cases. See (Haneef et al., 2014, p. 40; Khanum & Watson, 2016, p. 3) for a similar recommendation for VDC sustainability post-donor-funded program.

Although VDCs in West Africa do have identifiable positions in their structures, however, compare to longstanding VDCs elsewhere in the world such as those in Nepal and Botswana, don’t have comprehensive job descriptions for each of the identified positions. Similarly, their functions and responsibilities are not elaborate enough to mitigate against the problem of role differentiation between VDCs and traditional chieftaincy authorities in terms of community development promotion. The structure of VDCs in this respect could be characterised as decentralised, where decision making is mostly consensual. In each case committees have a membership count of about ten (10) including at least the position of a chairperson, secretary and a treasurer. The few tasks assigned to the chair include convening meetings at any time deem necessary.

The lack of prescribed meeting schedule for VDCs in West Africa region unlike other established ones like the case of Nepal and Botswana is yet another significant sustainability issue. The secretary takes the minutes, and presents the village development plan (VDP) to the WDC for endorsement; the treasure keeps records including a financial and material account of VDC. As part of her model for VDC sustainability (Yasmin, 2014) recommends for each VDC to have a calendar for its monthly activities/work plan, including meeting. Unfortunately, VDCs in West Africa do not have any such calendar instead the chairperson is mandated to convene meetings at any time deem necessary. On behalf of their communities, VDC chairpersons, secretaries, and treasurers sign the financial agreement and reports to the community on development matters. In case of project implementation, they file reports to the funding agency where necessary. Theoretically, each is responsible for exercising its function as required.

Another structural feature that has impacted the functional sustainability of VDCs is related to the voluntary nature of the institutions' membership which has no prescribed remuneration or meetings/sitting allowance for its members. The time-consuming nature of CDD activities, including multilevel planning process and the absence of a clear reward structure or agreed basis for defraying the expenses of such activity, is hostile to the sustainability of VDCs in West Africa. CBOs in the villages are represented in the VDCs and do attend VDC meetings at times, however, VDCs do not coordinate their activities. VDCs have huge responsibilities that don't match with their structure, the voluntary nature (lack of remuneration/allowance), size and composition (educated and uneducated members). Thus, it would be challenging or nearly impossible for these committees at their present structure to have the ability to function durably. Members are not willing or interested to develop in-depth knowledge about each of their functions and to assign the necessary time and effort needed for their proper functioning due to the voluntary nature of the institutions.

Complex technologies of monitoring and evaluations which require methodological skillset and recurrent budget are the most affected. Other threats to VDC sustainability include their lack of initiative-taking, overloaded functions and expectations, and family obligations of members. Challenges of decentralised structures like lack of coordination, loss of control, and duplication of efforts, resources, monitoring, and so forth also affect the sustainable function of VDCs in development planning and management. Supportive

supervision and close follow-up are the fifth recommendation made by (Yasmin, 2014) to address VDC sustainability problem concerning their self-governing. For VDCs to maximise benefits accrued from donor-funded reforms programs and actions, Yasmin (2014) suggests that the committees be accorded support “that is practical, appropriate and frequent with close ‘handholding’ by CDOs” (p. 16). For this reason, she further recommends that “CDO and VDC ratio will be 1:10” where one CDO should “look after 10 VDC and pay a bi-weekly visit to each VDC” where they strictly followup their vistation work plan for meaningful impact (ibid). Unfortunately, the findings of this investigation illustrate the contrary in the two cases.

Internally, VDCs are not highly complex, however, structurally they have combined many social, religious, age and gender groups with each segment having differing capabilities, work schedule, and professional/group needs and priorities. Collectively, thus, these make the scheduling of meetings and other activities, organisation and regular attendance of meetings, committee management and decision making a little cumbersome, disorderedly and time consuming sometimes. This investigation finds VDCs in Brikama local government area to be composed of the following representatives: youth groups, clan, CBO/NGO and civil/public servant resident in villages while representation in VDCs of Bombali District of Northern Sierra Leone includes: a resident of a village, someone who has resources (time, finance and material) to volunteer for the village and a transparent person who has never misappropriated public funds/property. One notable common feature of VDCs in both cases is gender, religious, ethnic and age cohort representation. Managing people of different ethnic, language, age, and religious orientation can be a little tricky, especially when it comes to prioritising development projects where diverse interests are at stake.

The provisions in the Gambia’s LGAct 2002 outlines the following critical formal procedures/criteria for the selection/representation in VDCs: a) one male and one female representing each kabilo (clan) in the village, selected by the kabilos (clans); b) one male and one female representing each community-based organisation; c) a representative of youth groups in the village. The Act identifies the following three individuals as advisers to the VDCs (a) the Alkalo (village head) of the village; (b) representatives of central government departments operating at the village level, and (c) all extension workers working for any organisation involved in development activities in the village. Richards et

al. (2004) state that VDC members in Sierra Leone are “chosen or endorsed by the community because they were well-connected members of the village elite who had the time, resources, knowledge and contacts to handle CDD processes” (p. 25).

6.4.2.2. Technology

Technology is the second internal component of the SCOPE model. It is about the use of capacity (knowledge/skills) to solve practical problems. Technology, as defined by Brinkerhoff et al. (1990), refers to “methods and processes (mental, physical, mechanical) for transforming resources into outputs” (p. 21). An institution’s maximum output is determined by its capacity both human and physical stock and their proficiency (the combination of these crucial assets together). Capacity has both latent and invisible quality which makes it difficult to be measured directly without using proxies such as academic degrees, job experience of the workforce, or the amount and condition of the equipment. Performance is the way capacity is translated into either concrete result, action or both. Capacity availability or its absence thereof is indicated through performance measures. The best available evidence to gauge an institution’s latent production ability first-hand would be its “actual output” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 40).

Whether the different dimensions of technology promote or hamper institutional sustainability is contingent upon other factors. It’s difficult to characterise the technology of lower level decentralised planning institution such as the VDCs in multilevel planning process using SCOPE framework because of their inactivity status after the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP. However, judging from the roles performed by VDCs in the multilevel planning process as described in donor funded CDDP implementation and evaluation documents, technology in terms of capacity necessary (Fanneh & Jallow, 2013; Sesay et al., 2010) could be labelled as relatively standardized and routine. VDCs used an invariable technology during donor-funded CDDP to participate in the multilevel planning process and created outputs in the form of VDPs, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and so on Inputs used by VDCs in the above planning method (resources such as raw materials, money, people, information, and knowledge) were obtained mostly from distant environment/abroad. The same method was used over and over again to transform inputs into outputs until the phase-out of the donor funding.

Evidence from the review of donor-funded CDDP evaluation documents in West Africa shows that during donor-funded CDDP, VDCs were responsible for all development planning at village level and served as the local entry point for all development assistance to the villages. VDCs led all community development efforts, co-ordinated and evaluated planned activities, and communicated with external partners and their LCs. Some of the technologies used by VDCs during this period could be described as relatively invariable and routine while others like monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning were not. With the end of donor-funded CDDP, these relatively invariable and routine technologies that VDCs have severely rehearsed to solve practical problems of their various villages were seldom built upon or practised. This prevented VDCs from producing the needed outputs that would be valued by the villagers, the LCs and other stakeholders.

Evidence shows that since the phase-out of donor-funded CDDP in both The Gambia and Northern Sierra Leone, village committees have not benefitted from any specialised or refresher trainings to ensure familiarisation with their functions. Although young institutions such as the VDCs Morton and Lowenthal (1990) argue “can be given a grace period to focus almost exclusively on capacity development, but that performance issues may have to be addressed sooner than first anticipated” (p. 146). Evidence produced by Morton and Lowenthal (1990) shows that “failure to focus more specifically on performance issues” threatens an institution’s sustainability (ibid). Similarly, evidence from this investigation suggests that lower level decentralised planning institutions in West Africa have performance issues related to capacity limitations which are not being addressed. Again, evidence from the IAV case illustrates that constant monitor of “environment, even if favourable or unhostile at the creation of an institution” is a must (ibid) if one is to design long-term strategies for sustainability and factor them into organizational performance. Again, evidence indicates the contrary in the case of VDCs in West Africa subregion as neither the local nor the central government bureaucrats and politicians are scanning or demonstrate an interest in monitoring VDCs’ environment to understand issues that affect their non-performance.

Commenting on the capacity building training component of her sustainable VDC model, Yasmin (2014) identifies capacity building for VDCs “as one of the major needs in the phase-out process” of donor funding in developing nations (p. 13). Yasmin (2014) identifies some critical training needs for VDCs such as organization development and

leadership; agenda development, resources available for them from their LCs and the process of approaching the councils to access such funding; introducing VDCs to government and non-government agencies and so on. However, she argues that to maintain the “overall discipline of the broader phase-out plan”, it would be critical to have “a structured and mandatory timeline for executing the training programmes” (p. 14).

As per the findings of this investigation, none of the above recommendations by Yasmin (2014) happened at the phase-out stage of donor funding in the reviewed West African cases. Results have shown overwhelming evidence of VDCs having inadequate technical capacity to be able to conduct development planning and participate actively in multilevel development planning and implementation process. It is mentioned that VDCs don't have the techniques to lobby for development projects from their local governments, NGOs and other stakeholders. The high rate of illiteracy among VDCs membership, limited exposure of their members especially new ones to smart community development solutions and their lack of skills to coordinate meetings are sustainability threats to VDCs.

Evident in the findings is that VDCs in the West Africa sub-region have limited capacity in terms of organizational development and leadership, agenda development, resource mobilisation, partnership building with other institutions and organisation. Limited also is to develop processes to professionally organise themselves to lobby for technical and financial support for their projects and conduct regular meetings that would attract attendance. Most important are the limited political participation and civic engagement capacity of VDCs as observed in the institutions' inability to mobilise communities through political and non-political actions to influence the selection of public officials and speak against the actions and inactions of a nonperforming public official(s) concerning issues affecting their villages and to promote the quality of their communities. VDCs' inability to exercise their oversight role of coordinating all interventions in villages, including development planning, is exacerbated by their capacity deficiency.

Due to their lack of financial capability or failure to engage in economic activities, VDCs cannot prescribe remuneration and offer meeting allowances to members. Equally, VDC in West Africa unlike those of Nepal (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nepal Office, 2001; Government of Nepal, 1999) lack legal mandate or power to levy taxes, impose service charges or charge fees to generate funding for development planning and incentive for members. The failure of IAV institute's administrators to address its critical financial

problems earlier enough was one serious sustainability issues that faced IAV on the eve of the 1990s ((Morton & Lowenthal, 1990). IAV institute's administrators should have address its vital financial problems "first within the Moroccan budgetary setting, and second, in IAV's relationship with its key funding sources" (p. 146). After the phase-out of donor funding that supported the formation and/or restoring of VDCs in West Africa, neither the LCs, nor MDAs have shown any demonstrable efforts to address the critical financial problems of VDCs either within the government budgetary setting or in their relationship with other funding sources.

The multilevel planning process is not functioning as envisioned by the donor agencies that financed the establishment or strengthening of VDCs and introduced them such a planning methodology through learning by doing. The mandate given to VDCs as the legally sanctioned local planning institutions is the coordinating of all development planning and interventions at village level and function as the local entry point for all development assistance to the villages. Provided VDCs' technology for transforming resources into outputs are frequently used, the relatively invariable and frequent technology they used the multilevel planning process would enhance the internal organisational cohesiveness of VDCs provided they have been actively involved in the process. The invariability and frequency of technology help foster an institution's internal organisational cohesiveness and eventually their sustainable performance (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990).

As per their legally mandated functions, powers and responsibilities, some activities of VDCs are supposed to be done repeatedly, i.e., frequently while others only once. However, due to certain proximate environmental conditions such as inadequate financial, human and logistical resources post-donor-funded CDDP, VDCs' technology has not been in operations frequently as envisaged. Provided VDCs have been in regular operations; committee members would have quickly mastered the tasks associated with their roles; in particular, those of multilevel planning process due to routinisation. Mastery of the following repeated tasks would have been more effortless for members of VDCs compare to infrequent tasks: the identification of local development needs, prioritising them, developing appropriate plans to address them, raising, co-ordinating and managing financial resources at the village level, mobilising community participation in development activities, implementing and managing development plans and projects, and supporting

and strengthening all development-oriented sociocultural groups within villages and so forth.

Because of the difficulty associated with the supervision of tasks done regularly such as monitoring, supervision and evaluation requirements, local governments in West Africa considering their present poor human, financial and logistical resources capability would have still find it difficult to sustain the participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process. Additionally, the fact that VDCs are many and spread across communities characterised by poor road network and communication infrastructure would have also made supervision/monitoring difficult and costly. Repeated experience of performing a task often results in highly skilled operational staff. Among other considerations, institutional sustainability, it is argued, results in part from a combination of repeated task experiences, operational skilfulness, regular monitoring or supervision, fitting or reasonable reward system/incentive package for tasks accomplishments and internal organisational cohesiveness (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). Regrettably, all these are challenges impacting the sustainability of lower level decentralised planning institutions in West Africa.

Technically, VDCs are widely spread across their respective countries in the region. They have been set up in almost every village located on the highways, feeder roads as well as those settlements that are off-the-road and difficult to access or hard-to-reach including villages in riverine areas. Added to the wide distribution of VDCs are the problems of poor road and communication network. Review of the tasks assigned to VDCs in the regions shows that these functions, powers and responsibilities are complex in terms of technical requirements and variability in terms of activities for a voluntary institution with a mix of literate and non-literate members. It's worth mentioning that despite assuming multiple rural development or regulatory responsibilities, VDC membership, until the conduct of this research, is voluntary in West Africa sub-region with no prescribed remuneration what so ever. The membership composes of individuals of varying age groups, gender, level of affluence, and education. Members neither have a prescribed monthly, sitting or meeting allowance nor remuneration to defray the services or time they render to their communities.

Information asymmetries in terms of differences in access to technological information is another aspect of VDCs' technology concerning their continued active participation in multilevel planning that is worth exploring. As the two opposing parties to decentralised

development planning and management, the relationship between VDCs as the principals/right-holders on the one hand and the LC staff, councillors, chieftaincy/traditional authorities and locally situated civil servants as agents/duty-bearers on the other is imbalanced. Upon interacting with the principals throughout this research, my team and I have realised that VDC members are fully aware that the authority to act held by the agents is theirs. However, the ranks of VDC membership is bedevilled by low level of education and awareness, abject poverty, deteriorating relationship between them and their councillors, trust issues among the educated and uneducated members of the VDCs, trust issue between VDCs, other groups in their communities and the chieftaincy authorities, and community mobilisation problems. All of these are preventing VDCs and their villagers from acting in concert to ensure their agents would not only fulfil their obligations toward them but make sure they work in their interests and ensure VDCs lead development efforts, co-ordinate and evaluate planned activities, and to communicate with external partners.

Often agents expected to act in the interests of their principals do have other priorities that inspire them to subvert the interests of their principals. Thus, the fact that LCs after benefiting from donor-funded CDDP in terms of planning capacity are now contracting individual consultants or firms to develop strategic plans for their councils as observed in Brikama Local Government council rather than continue on with the practice of multilevel planning process is questionable. The unequal access to information, hence imbalanced power relations between the agents and the principals, bringing the agents back to act on behalf of their principals is a considerable difficulty. Such discrepancy in technical information interferes with both planning decisions and supervision processes, and the enforcement of contracts, laws or policies. Information asymmetry is a “major reason that institutions break down and perform below par” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 34). The ensuing clash of interests of the principals and agents “has undermined many rural institutions’ sustainability”. Thus, the sustainability of an institution is at risk “whenever the parties to transactions have dissonant claims, and they lack full knowledge of and ability to control each other’s actions” (ibid).

Other technologically related issues contributing to the failure to sustain the functioning of VDCs are related to the mechanical and routine nature of some of the tasks they perform. Some of these tasks are time-consuming, such as reporting, information collection and

dissemination. As stated above activities carried out by VDCs are neither remunerated, nor there is an existing mechanism to defray/compensate for their time and energy. Other less routine and more variable activities such as monitoring of project activities and outputs are equally cumbersome, resource-intensive and time-consuming. Variable technologies change each time; they are being used to transform inputs into outputs. Technological sophistication is often linked to variability which means, “more complicated technologies, especially social ones that are only partially understood, are less amenable to routinization” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, pp. 32–33).

Variable activities “tend to be performed infrequently, but they need not be. In either case, learning and incentives are affected” (ibid, p. 33). Added to this is the evidence that some VDC members are active and more assiduous than others at fulfilling the functions assigned to them as members such as attending VDC planning meetings/activities or in contributing their labour/finances. Discontinuation of periodic workshops, reviews and other meetings where monitoring and evaluation skills building take place including those of project planning and management for VDCs is another threat to their sustainable functioning. Project evaluation though one of the most complex and least routine technologies of VDCs requires methodological skills such as questionnaire design and interviewing plus other social science knowledge.

A high amount of uncertainty in the political environment including several conflicting groups whether democratically elected governments, or the military, the landless poor, leaders of the traditional private sector, and small scale business people and entrepreneurs is a significant issue affecting sustainability. The failure to ensure the direct representation or involvement of project beneficiaries in project planning and implementation is yet another sustainability threat. Similarly, some key internal capacity and fit issues affecting sustainability are: the lack of understanding among participants and the absence of specific roles and contributions of each organization in the project; lack of collaboration among organizations; and lack of mechanisms to monitor, evaluate, and re-plan the design and implement project strategies (Jones, 1990, p. 107).

6.4.3. Strategy

Introduction

The SCOPE framework posits a contingency relationship between institutional sustainability, the type of management strategy, and the characteristics of an organization's internal and external environment (Ingle et al., 1990). In SCOPE framework, strategy is understood as “a discernible pattern of decisions made by key actors in a system” which “needs not be deliberately thought-out or rationally consistent” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 38). Every institution irrespective of whether it is formal or informal has a strategy (ibid). The dynamic relation between “capacity and performance” makes strategy a critical variable in the SCOPE framework. Strategy determines “how systems change, learn, and increase the likelihood of sustainability” (ibid, p. 39). Gustafson (1990) notes that none of the strategies (mechanical, adaptive, reactive and interaction) characterised by the SCOPE framework for the translation of performance into capacity is inherently better. The decision to emphasize one strategy over the others “is contingent upon environmental conditions and internal factors” (p. 201). The core of SCOPE framework is the choosing of different strategies “based on the contingencies of the environment and internal complexity of the institution” (ibid, p. 207).

6.4.3.1. Application of SCOPE Model to VDCs’ Strategies in Multilevel Planning Process during donor-funded CDDP

Applying SCOPE model to a highly structured multilevel planning, a process which stresses effective execution of a specific set of tasks would require lower level decentralised structures like the VDCs to possess organisational management strategy within the mechanical approach. The mechanical strategy could encourage proficiency concerning precise tasks execution while disregarding changes in the external environment that threatens it with obsolescence. The longevity and growth of an organisation using mechanical strategy are partly predicated on the repetition of its internal functions and the stability of its products market. Thus, demonstrating a match or an agreement between the organization and its environment. Most likely, a similar mechanical strategy is bound to fail under a different climate or circumstance.

A Mechanical strategy is an approach that comprises of decisions that are internally focused and underscore active dimension. The approach fosters the conversion of capacity into performance with a minimum reflection on the skill sets or the foundation/environment of the system (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990). The capacity of VDCs in West Africa can be best measured through their performance outputs in the form of VDP development, projects or activities implementation, monitoring and evaluation; mobilisation of community labour, material and financial resources for community development and so on. The emphasis of mechanical management strategy suggests “action over reflection and an internal focus of attention”, a sort of “mechanical bureaucracy” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 201).

The multilevel planning process involves phases and mechanisms aimed at harmonising top-down planning with bottom-up planning levels and assures subsidiarity in decision-making. The approach fosters a necessary/common understanding about what should and should not be included in the different levels of a development plan (Sethy, 2002, p. 61; Sundaram, 1997; Vayunandan, 2003). As per its technical requirements, multilevel planning approach as practised during donor financed CDDP in West Africa entails the following components: pre-planning, village diagnosis and planning, endorsement of development plans (village and ward), financial governance and monitoring and evaluation (Sesay et al., 2010). There is a recommended set of activities and technical procedures that must be followed at each level of the multilevel planning approach.

In the context of the multilevel planning process, VDCs are public sector agencies operating within the decentralised planning system with the legal mandate to undertake certain activities and operations. The strategy VDCs employed during donor-funded CDDP can be described as ““doing things right”” (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990, p. 40). The program ensured that VDCs and other decentralised institutions to plan, formulate and implement practices laid out in the CDDP institutional arrangement of partnerships between CBOs and local or municipal governments, concepts and principles of multilevel planning process and the legislation governing the intergovernmental arrangements for fiscal flows to local governments and CBOs as well as development budgeting principles.

One can safely argue that during donor-funded CDDP VDCs pursued a mechanical strategy, for the most part. A kind of strategy that emphasises an “active dimension of performance (“doing things right”)” coupled with an “internal orientation to the

environment that stressed control, certainty, and an acceptance of the inherent “rightness” of the public investment management system” (Brinkerhoff, 1990, p. 158). A strategy, Brinkerhoff (1990) describes as a “policeman approach” where the response of VDC membership, the LC staff, locally situated civil servants and CDDP management and staff was a role enforcer only. Programs that use a mechanical strategy that stresses “doing a few things well, according to rigidly structured and well-defined patterns” are often observed during the early stages or in a situation of a backlog of relevant technical advice to be accomplished/followed (Gustafson, 1990, p. 201).

Similar to what Brinkerhoff (1990) observed in the case of a USAID project on improving the performance and capacity of Haiti's planning ministry. It is the perception of VDC membership, the LC staff, locally situated civil servants and CDDP management and staff that multilevel planning process composes of tasks that are uncomplicated, simple and mechanical. The process can help VDCs to: identify local development needs; prioritise them; develop appropriate plans to address them; raising, co-ordinate and manage financial resources at village level; mobilise community participation in development activities, and implement and manage development plans and projects.

Added to this is their view that monitoring is equally straightforward and to a certain degree, so is project evaluation as well. While describing community monitoring and evaluation (CM&E) during CDDP implementation period (Sesay et al., 2010) argue that “CM&E involves local people (as users, clients or citizens) in designing and implementing the system, including selecting information needs, collecting and analysing data, and making decisions to change strategies and approaches” (p. 30). The assumption that supports such a mindset about mechanical strategy is the perception that there is no need for learning since the concepts and practices of multilevel planning and CDDP philosophy are considered to have contained everything needed to be known for plan formulation and implementation. And rather than focus on external complexity and uncertainty to achieve development results, what is most important is to follow the proper procedures of the multilevel planning process and CDDP.

About issues closely related to institutional sustainability, Gustafson (1990) argues that in terms of resource requirements, mechanical has the lowest among the four strategies identified by SCOPE framework. Despite this, the strategy “requires considerable human and financial inputs, perhaps higher than overburdened public bureaucracies can handle,

regardless of the long-term payoff to (...) society” (p. 207). Evidence from this researcher shows that LCs and by extension the central governments in West Africa find it extremely difficult to conduct periodic monitoring and supervision of the existing projects and programs in their various localities and not to talk of reaching out to VDCs or institute multi-level planning process. There is a gross lack of financial, human and logistical resources in terms of vehicles, experienced monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) staff, and motorbikes to name but a few.

In addition to the mechanical characteristics of the multilevel planning process within the decentralised planning system is the multilevel planning system’s incorporation of a built-in learning process for all participants through participatory decision-making, information sharing and effective collaboration. This learning process is confirmed by Sesay et al. (2010) when they argue that the multilevel planning cycle is “a real learning cycle for everybody involved, from the moment stakeholders begin their training and start to measure and analyse progress towards goals and objectives” (p. 30). VDCs provide leadership for multilevel planning process at the local level. The approach embraces other key community players such as the traditional heads, opinion leaders, youths, women, children and representatives from existing community groups and structures right from the beginning of the process to ensure ownership, responsibility and trust in the process (Sesay et al., 2010).

To ensure the success of the system over time, “it must rely on other characteristics embedded in its philosophy of action, such as continuous learning” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 201). For the multilevel planning process to be successful over time, it must continue to learn from community level institutions like VDCs. Other key community players to learn from includes the traditional heads, opinion leaders, youths, women, children and representatives from existing community groups and structures, and feeding such information about their problems and constraints into the development plans. However, evidence produced through this investigation shows that VDCs haven’t been actively exercising their functions, powers and responsibilities in the planning process following the phased-out of donor-funded CDDP.

Legally, VDCs are responsible for all development planning at village level and to serve as the local entry point for all development assistance to the village including the coordination and evaluation of planned activities and to communicate with external

partners. While executing these functions, they are expected to do things right and ensure the available planning and financial governance legislation and procedures are followed. Evidence reveals that committee members are very clear about their general functions as the legitimate leaders/coordinators of all development planning and implementation efforts at the village level. However, LCs on their part failed to institute the multilevel planning process after the end of donor-funded CDDP. Meaning that VDCs can neither engage in interactive learning process anymore, nor are there any opportunity for them to search for new technological solutions to meet the changing condition of their hostile environment. The SCOPE model posits that with effective organizational type management can “manipulate to achieve organizational goals and purposes” (Morton & Lowenthal, 1990, p. 146).

The absence of funding for VDCs to continue to lead or co-ordinate development planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation efforts and communicate with external partners at village level makes it difficult to apply adaptive strategy in the analysis. SCOPE model labels the reactive strategy as “one in which the system learns and reflects, but in which the learning is principally directed to improvements in internal operations or skill levels” (Gustafson, 1990, p. 202). Again, with the available evidence on VDCs’ inactive participation in the multilevel planning process, interactive strategy too cannot be applied due to the emphasis it places on “influencing change in the operating environment” (ibid). With the end of donor-funded CDDP VDCs have lost their mix of adaptive, reactive and interactive strategies which were incorporated with continues learning by doing/practice and external orientation. While mechanical strategy promotes institutional sustainability in “conditions of low internal complexity and low environmental hostility” the best situations for adaptive and reactive strategies are “medium environmental hostility and internal complexity” and “medium environmental hostility and high internal complexity” respectively (Gustafson, 1990, p. 205).

6.4.4. Study Limitations

This study is inept at providing a generalised conclusion about the sustainability problem of donor-funded institution building/development approaches or programs different from donor-funded CDDPs, institutional arrangements dissimilar from partnerships between

CBOs and local governments, CDDPs in contexts that have different characteristics from West Africa. Theoretical or analytic however, generation is possible.

Cases selected for this study are those of Anglophone West Africa instead of a mix of Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone, the three dissimilar governance or administrative systems or styles practised in the sub-region owing to their different colonial legacies. The selection of cases from the former donor-funded CDDP beneficiary communities sharing similar experiences alleviated this limitation. The selected communities also exhibit three archetypal characteristics common to West African context namely poor bureaucratic service delivery, institutional fragility and post-conflict contexts irrespective of administrative traditions. While all selected cases share similar experiences of poor track records of bureaucratic service delivery, the context of the Gambia is fragile, but not post-conflict, and that of Sierra Leone is both fragile and post-conflict.

Timing of the study regarding the interval between the conduct of the investigation and when the donor programs that financed the studied institutions phased-out or when the studied institutions last participated actively in decentralised planning activities is yet a probable limitation. The relatively long period between the study and when the institutions ceased to participate in the multilevel planning process actively may not be precisely suitable for some respondents in terms of the exact recollection of some events. Added to this is the difficulty experienced in trying to reach out to some key informants or staff of MDAs, and LCs and members of VDCs and WDCs who could provide rich information. This is caused by either retirement, travel/migration or change of job. Obtaining data from mixed sources and engaging research assistants who were frontline staff of CDDP in the selected communities when VDCs were being set up/revamped helped mitigate this limitation. Although the strategy of using the former frontline staff of CDDP as research assistants could result in biased responses/recording, however, the use of different data sources again tackled this issue.

The timing of the study in terms of pre-and post-election events or activities in the two communities could have an impact on the findings. In Sierra Leone, data collection coincided with presidential, parliamentary and local government electioneering period while in the Gambia data was collected immediately after presidential, parliamentary and local government elections. Some distinguished ward councillors, VDC and WDC members in Northern Sierra Leone were not willing or available for interviews because of

politicking. In contrast, almost half of the ward councillors, VDC and WDC members interviewed in the two districts of Kombo (East and Central), West Coast region of the Gambia were new in their positions due to regime change which significantly transformed the composition of local councils and staff. Almost all the key staff of MDAs and LCs were new in their positions and not very familiar with the local governance system partly because of the involvement of many civil and public servant in politics in the previous regime. Therefore, some were relieved of their positions and weren't willing or available to participate in the study.

There was limited time allocated for data collection due to financial constraints and the busy schedule of some respondents. Individual interviews and focus group discussions would have been more in-depth; provided there was significant funding for data collection. To collect data with scarce financial resources or tight budget can compromise the quality of the study results in communities that, for decades are used to being rewarded by NGOs for attending training workshops. Or for just participating in their programs. Or where qualified research assistants are used to working with or for NGOs with huge budgets. To hire qualified research assistants in multilingual and ethnically diverse communities for a reasonable period just to ensure quality data is collected or to simply reward respondents with gifts for participating in the study represent a substantial limitation. To tackle the issue of limited finances, the researcher engaged his former colleagues at ChildFund International. They prevailed on the staff of their local partner organisations in the identified regions with data collection skills and years of experience to assist with the available budget. Since the identified staff lived and worked in these communities, they used their cordial social and working relations to influence the staff of the MDAs, council, councillors, members of the VDCs, WDCs and community leaders into accepting to take part in the data collection activities.

Identifying research gaps about donor-funded institutional building/development and try to address them was hindered at the beginning of this investigation by difficulties experienced in accessing relevant literature. For instance, it was only after collecting data that the researcher had accessed a specially designed SCOPE questionnaire. The researcher utilised the institutional sustainability framework in the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data. There exists a very insufficient credible data about VDCs in West Africa in general in particular the Gambia and Sierra Leone. Additionally, unlike GoBifo

CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone, the majority of literature on the Gambia's CDDP are offline instead are filed at the national and regional offices of Department of Community Development. The researcher had to travel to the Gambia and go through numerous official protocols to access rich information about the Gambia's CDDP. The researcher made a similar visit to the community development section of Sierra Leone's Ministry of Local Government to hold a lengthy discussion with the former national coordinator of GoBifo CDDP. This seriously delayed the researcher's identification or understanding of gaps of donor-funded institutional building and development early enough. The age of some of the secondary data available presents another limitation. The researcher tackled the issue of data scarcity on VDCs in West Africa by collecting primary and secondary data on the evolution of the concept of VDCs, their powers, roles and responsibilities in West Africa sub-region.

6.4.5. Bottom-Up/Decentralised/Multilevel Planning Introduction in West Africa and Strategies adapted

By and large, in West Africa before the 1990s and early 2000, the task of development plan formulation was mostly carried out by the central governments through top-down national or sectoral planning. Other planning levels involved such as institutions are the local or district councils, wards and villages in the development process only at the implementation stage of the plans. For the most part, it was only in the 1990s and early 2000, that most West African countries with the technical and financial support from their international and bilateral donor agencies amended their constitutions and passed into law local government acts and related legislations. Thus, paving the way for an attempt to practice multilevel planning in most parts of the sub-region.

Sesay et al. (2010) associate the late introduction of bottom-up/decentralised/multilevel planning in the sub-region to challenges associated with the development of "systems for the village and ward planning that can be applied countrywide with guidance from district and town councils" (p. 20). The reason being the apparent "inefficiencies and contradictions between different local plans (...) at a higher planning level" and the double-edged nature of village planning, in that the process must concurrently "empower communities" and "lead to improved plans and services from local authorities and other agencies" (ibid). The need for communities participation or involvement in the

administration of the state was what informed the introduction of decentralised local governance administrations in West Africa. Thus, warranting the transfer of some central government functions to the LCs and the recognition and the bestowing of more development planning powers and responsibilities to the lower level planning institutions like the WDCs and the VDCs.

For the greatest part, with the support of international donor agencies, decentralised structures were introduced through learning by doing/practice to the formulation and implementation of development plans and the provision of financial resources and technical services. With the realisation of the inappropriateness of national or sectoral plans everywhere and to avoid communities harbouring the feeling of being bypassed, by not taken into account their specific problems or priorities, a mechanism was created in the decentralised administrative system in the form of the multilevel planning process. The objective was to harmonise the top-down planning 'stream' with bottom-up planning 'stream', and assure subsidiarity in decision-making and foster common understanding about what must and must not be included in the different levels of development planning systems and sub-systems (Sesay et al., 2010).

In West Africa, donor-funded CDDP supported the introduction and rehearsing of multilevel planning strategy and the building/development of local-level institutions that would coordinate the process at the village level (Sesay et al., 2010). The essential aspects of multilevel planning strategy include the assigning of development planning and management functions to various tiers of administration in a country together with powers and responsibilities and the connection of these functions at sub-national to the central levels. VDCs are one such decentralised structures created and assigned with functions alongside powers and duties to co-ordinate multilevel planning process at the village level and to link the development planning and management at the sub-national levels to the central level.

In essence, village committees are tasked to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate village development activities, leverage the needed resources to undertake project activities and to communicate with external partners. For planning to be more effective in terms of regional and local distribution of investments and the choice of producing alternatives, and to avoid creating gaps between the scheduled activities and the realities on the ground, the process has to share decision-making functions appropriately with sub-national levels

through a system. In addition to the fact that such a system must be adapted to a country's needs and characteristics as well as covers a range of regional and local conditions, key actors within the system must have a visible pattern of decisions making process called a strategy.

Functional sustainability of VDCs is measured in the context of their serving as an entry point to all village level development interventions and their active participation in the multilevel planning process, a planning system that “involves sharing of planning and decision functions at different sub-national levels and devising mechanisms and procedures for effective flows of information for planning and interaction between and among the sub-national levels” (Sundaram, 1997, p. 51). At the heart of multilevel planning process is decentralisation which involves the sharing of planning functions, powers and responsibilities at different area levels and putting mechanisms and procedures in place for adequate information flows and interactions between and among the area levels. Sundaram, (1997) stresses the adherence to the following principles as forming part of the essence of the multilevel planning process: function-sharing; financial decentralisation; administrative decentralisation; public participation; iteration principle (the relay-relay process); and nesting and integration of plans (p. 55).

6.4.6. Multilevel Planning in the Context of CDDP

Multilevel planning process is a planning system that “involves sharing of planning and decision functions at different sub-national levels and devising mechanisms and procedures for effective flows of information for planning and interaction between and among the sub-national levels” (Sundaram, 1997, p. 51). The term multilevel regional planning is described as ““planning for a variety of regions which together form a system and subordinate systems”” (Drishti IAS, n.d.). Attempts to encourage multilevel planning in developing countries involves a) decentralisation of planning to several discrete sub-national levels; b) organising a two-way planning process; c) the building up of capabilities to plan and implement development functions at each one of the decision-making levels; and d) managing planning and development with people's participation (Sundaram, 1997, p. 52). The multilevel planning process according to Sundaram (1997) has the following principles: function-sharing; financial decentralisation; administrative decentralisation;

public participation; iteration principle (the relay-rerelay process); and nesting and integration of plans (p. 55).

a. Pre-planning Level

At this stage, the multilevel planning process entails the collection of information about the village using reports on existing and previous development interventions. Utilised also are the existing development plans, special regulations, statistics, the entitlement of essential services and any other useful information for problem diagnosis and planning phase. The stage as well included the conduct of a household survey to establish a baseline. At this stage community, facilitators perform a crucial and central role and serve as the focal point for the planning process (Sesay et al., 2010). Community facilitation team guides the planning process in parallel sub-groups in different villages and wards. The unit supports ward and community level planning during the plenary meeting and in reporting. Community facilitators are answerable to the VDCs/local leadership who monitored their performance. Incentives package for community facilitators, their roles and responsibilities are jointly discussed by the ward facilitator and community leaders/VDCs. The position is not a full-time, year-round job; however, at times, tasks consume the entire time of the candidate (ibid), thus requiring compensation.

b. Village Diagnosis and Planning

Planning process kicks off with an information-sharing meeting at the village level. The planning facilitation team discusses the different roles and responsibilities and ensured villagers are committed to the full planning cycle. Communities are trained on the conduct of social mapping, Venn diagrams, semi-structured interviews, listing problems and opportunities, and using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. Communities would be asked to identify ten-to one-year goals and then pick one-year goals and translate them into community plans for implementation with funding from the block grants (Sesay et al., 2010). VDCs spearheaded the village planning processes. During the process, key stakeholders consulted include the traditional heads, opinion leaders, youths, women, and children. Embraced in the process also are the representatives from existing community groups and structures such as the Village Facilitation Teams (VFTs) and Project Management Teams (PMTs). The function of ward facilitators and VFTs in the planning process is to provide technical development services to villages. Just like in the village

planning process, WDCs also used participatory tools to produce ward development plans (WDPs) (ibid).

The positive influence and contributions of youth groups during planning and implementation makes them a vital player in the planning process. Youth groups don't only mobilise but, equally encourage and educate their peers to cooperate with the planning process facilitators at both the diagnosis and planning stages. To ensure an effective planning process, Sesay et al. (2010) stress the need for collective action both at the multi-stakeholder consultative phase of the planning process and during project implementation stages. Fair distribution of financial resources among as many interest groups as possible helps to reinforce further the idea of collective action and broader involvement of villagers in priority setting and project selection (ibid). Due to the limitations of both bottom-up and top-down planning it is argued that:

In planning it is important to create mechanisms where the 'stream' of top-down planning can be harmonised with the 'stream' of bottom-up planning, thus assuring subsidiarity in decision-making. There should be a common understanding about what should and should not be included in the different levels of a development plan. (Sesay et al., 2010, p. 20)

Planning Issues at Different Levels of Multilevel Planning Process

A village plan is about common issues that cannot be dealt with or resolved individually, and it creates an enabling environment to deal with 'individual issues.' The plan also makes clear which issues will be dealt with at higher levels. A village plan is for all the members of the village.

A ward plan deals with issues such as roads, bridges and watershed management that cannot be resolved by individual communities and it creates an enabling environment to deal with 'village issues.' The plan also makes clear which issues will be dealt with at district level. A ward plan is for all the communities and villagers.

A district plan deals with ward issues that cannot be dealt with or resolved by individual wards, such as secondary schools, major roads, and hospitals, and creates an enabling environment to deal with 'ward issues.' The plan also makes clear which issues will be dealt with at national level. A district plan is for all the wards, communities and villages.

Complicating factors are sector-wide plans (for example for agriculture, health, education) that are not well integrated into either area-based plan (village, ward, and district) or plans to reach specific target groups. (Sesay et al., 2010, pp. 20–21)

c. Endorsement of Village Development Plans (VDPs)

One of the crucial stages of a multilevel planning process of CDDP is the endorsement of VDPs. Upon completion, VDCs present VDPs to WDCs for discussion, and verification and who ensures plans are in line with the district development plan (DDPs) before ratification. Although the process is not automatic, once VDPs are ratified, WDCs would endorse and forward them to the district council for approval. The council would also study the VDPs together with DDPs to ensure complementarity between the two plans. According to Sesay et al. (2010), “ward plan will not be the sum of all the village plans, because the responsibilities and scope for planning at ward level are different” (p. 20). The following parameters are used by WDCs to thoroughly scrutinise the village plans: feasibility, relevance to the community, and linkage with the DDPs. In case WDCs find a non-compliance issue(s) in the VDPs, they would send the plan back to the VDCs for correction. The plan endorsement criteria used by WDC in the analysis of the VDPs include:

Standards use by WDCs to Analyse and Endorse VDPs

- Coherence of the VDPs with DDPs;
- Reflection of village development priorities;
- Conformity with GoBifo funding criteria;
- Assurance that any infrastructure project is not to be more than 50% of the total block grant; and
- Inclusion of specific activities for women and youths. (ibid, p. 24)

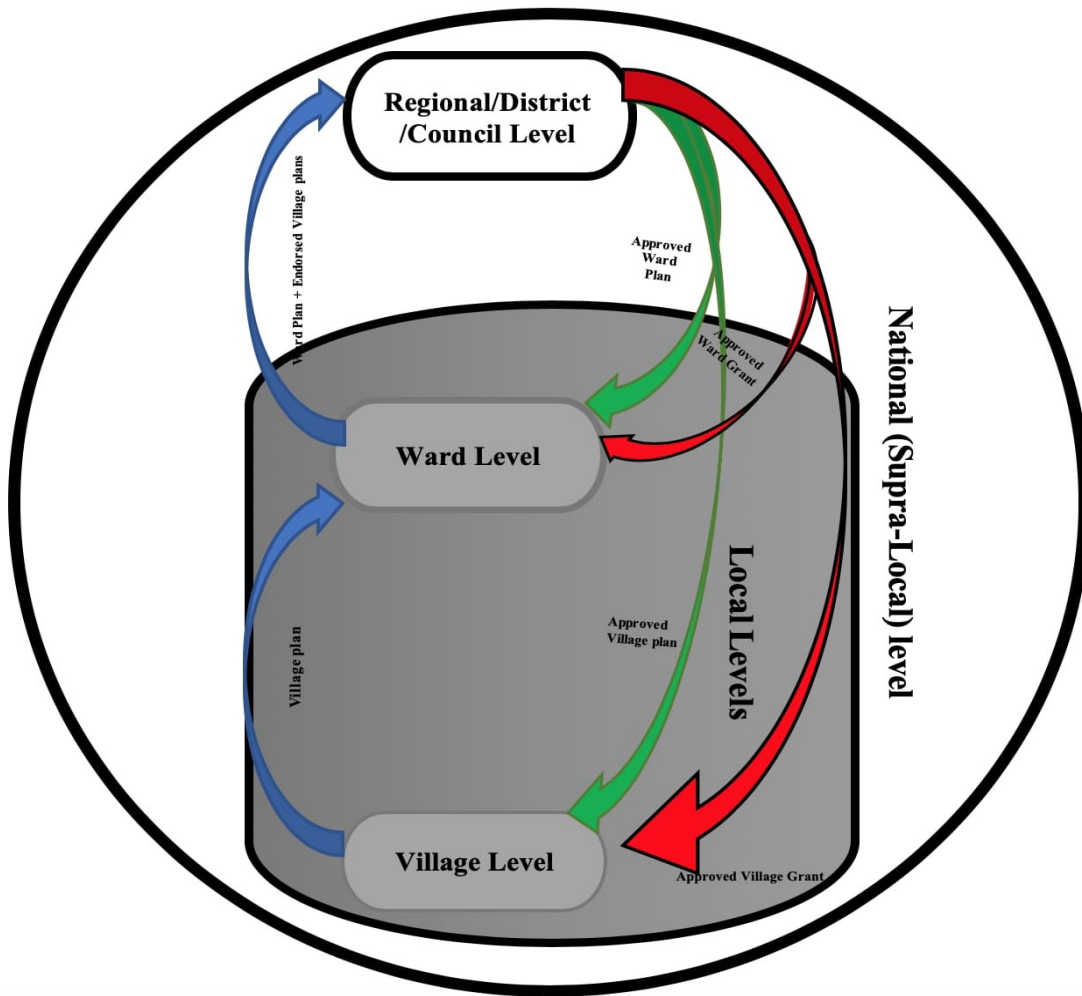
After meeting the above criteria, the ward councillor would submit the VDP to the LC on behalf of WDC for approval and funding. The council has to either endorse and approve the VDPs in which case it will notify the VDCs through a village endorsement letter or rejects it with an explanatory note and ask the VDC(s) in question to modify the non-compliant aspects. A Field Guide is provided to all WDCs with consistent endorsement forms. LCs meet bi-monthly to approve VDPs using the criteria as follows:

The Criteria used by LCs to Approve VDPs

- Conformity with government standards, policies and priorities;
- Conformity with the DDP;
- Participatory approach; and
- Relevance of the project to targeted communities.(ibid, p. 25)

A VDP that meets all the criteria is endorsed and submitted to the district council for approval. At the council level, the approval team comprises the council chairman, sectoral heads and line ministries.

Figure 10: Multilevel Village Development Planning, Endorsement, Approving Institutions and Functions



Although modified to suit the purpose of this dissertation, the idea of the diagram is borrowed from Sesay et al. 2010.

d. Financial Governance

Funds are released once the VDPs are endorsed by the WDC and approved by the district or LC. The financial agreement specifies the following:

Components of Financial Agreement between LCs and VDCs

- The amount to be granted,
- How much will be paid and when,
- The use of funds for the different activities contained in the VDP,
- The responsibilities of each party,
- The timing and methods of payments, and
- The audit and reporting procedures. (Sesay et al., 2010)

As a crucial component in the planning process, the signing of the financial agreement involves all key stakeholders:

Key Stakeholder who Sign Financial Agreements on behalf of VDCs and LCs

- On behalf of the community by the VDC Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer;
- On behalf of the government by the LC Chief Administrator and the Chairperson; and
- On behalf of the CDD project by the Field Office/Coordinator.

The process of depositing funds into community development accounts (CDAs) is often set in motion with the co-signing of the cheque by the LC authority and the CDDP Field Office/Coordinator of each district. The cheque is then made accessible to the signatories at the level of the community who deposit it in a commercial bank. The community procurement officer then requests payment for the purchase of materials for the project(s) (ibid, pp. 29–30).

e. Monitoring and Evaluation

CDDP in general used two different monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the progress of project activities and which are: community monitoring and evaluation (CM&E) which is more qualitative; and results monitoring framework (RMF) which uses quantitative analysis indicators. CM&E are adapted to local strategies and approaches and used to collect the opinions of community members. It avails communities the opportunity

to learn about project management and implementation. In contrast, RMF satisfies the monitoring needs of the government and the donor agency, in this case, the World Bank (Sesay et al., 2010, pp. 30–33).

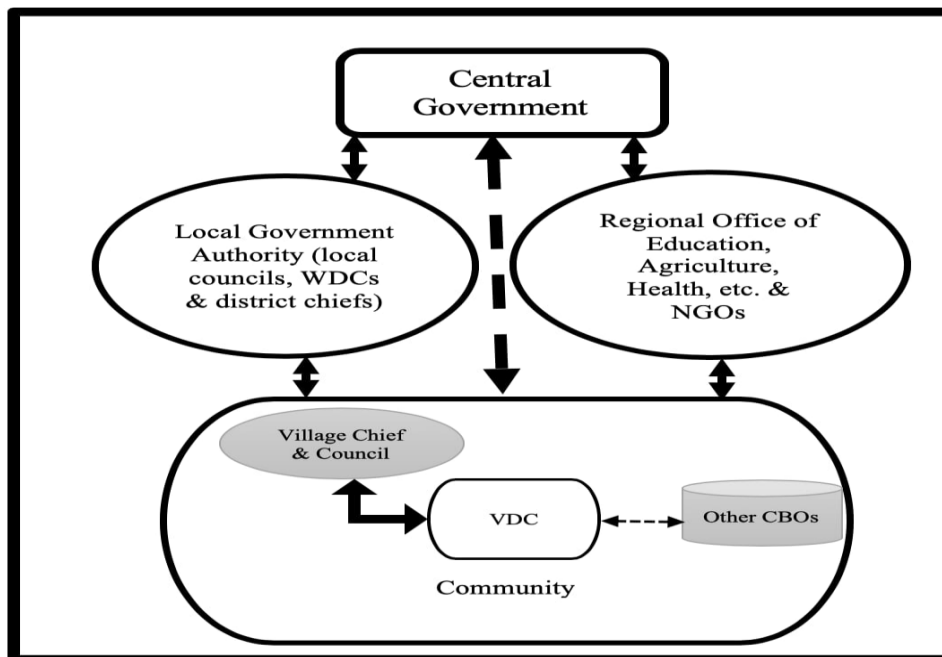
6.4.7. Planning and Decision-Making Relationships between VDCs, Central Government, other Decentralised Planning Assemblies and Organisations

In both the Gambia and Sierra Leone, alongside the central government, there are three tiers of sub-national decentralised structures. The various planning and decision-making levels are central government, local council, ward and villages. At the lowest level of sub-national planning and decision-making level, are the VDCs and immediately above them are the WDCs in the middle and at the higher level are the local, city and municipal councils. In terms of jurisdiction, there are significant variations between VDCs, WDCs and LCs. On average VDCs serve and represent relatively small population followed by WDCs, which are a cluster of VDCs. LCs are essential with regard to jurisdiction both in terms of geography and topography. Variation in geography and topography jurisdiction of VDCs, WDCs and LCs, have different implications in terms of technical, logistical, fiscal and human resources capability. By law, VDCs are subordinate to both WDCs and LCs, and to a large extent are functionally dependent on both of them most notably the LCs. In terms of planning decisions and reporting relations, VDCs in the Gambia as per law have an advisory relationship with the village chiefs and their council, although instances exist when village chiefs attempt to control their VDCs. This relationship is not very clear in Northern Sierra Leone, since VDCs are not recognised in the LGAct 2004. Some village chiefs are so much involved with their VDCs that it becomes difficult to understand their relations while others maintain an advisory role.

VDCs have periodic reporting, representation and feedback relationships with their communities. The Committee comprises of the representatives of different age, professional, gender, religious and clans. The committee serves as a liaison between their village and development agencies/visitors on development-related matters. They also mobilise communities for financial contributions and voluntary development works and relay feedback to the members of their village anytime they meet others/attend programs on their behalf. Some CBOs, despite having representation in the VDC, have a loose

relation with the VDCs in terms of partnerships and reporting. In a nutshell, no direct working or reporting obligation is found between other CBOs and the VDCs. VDCs are assigned the role of supporting and strengthening all development-oriented sociocultural groups within their community. The expectation is that all CBOs operating within the village would be providing periodic updating to VDCs on their activities while VDCs help facilitate their actions when necessary or requested.

Figure 11: VDC Relations with Other Decentralised Institutions



VDCs don't have any direct link to the central government rather any planning decisions and reporting matters between the two are communicated through either of the two channels. The local government authority or locally level civil /public servants of MDAs who work directly with VDCs. Local government authorities and locally-based civil or public servants of MDAs perform the function of a liaison officer between the VDCs and the central government. The mandates of LCs in their relations with VDCs are: to establish and dissolve VDCs for each village or cluster of villages; keep a register of VDCs and make By-laws; the register and monitor their activities; to ensure the proper management and auditing of their resources; and so on. Again, as the planning authority for their areas of jurisdiction, LCs are required to adopt participatory processes and procedures that would ensure VDCs are involved in the conception and execution of development plans. This

includes developing the infrastructure for the ease of communication, improving social services and the development of human and financial resources.

The representatives of WDCs beside the ward councillor and representatives of CBOs involved in development activities at the local level, members are selected from among the VDCs. Ward committee review village plans and identify shared priorities and concerns. They also establish criteria for villages to prioritising development projects and how to prioritise development projects between villages. In the process of mobilising ward residents to implement self-help and development projects WDCs bridge that gap between VDCs and the LCs and thus provide the necessary linkages necessary for development. In the village planning process, VDCs work with key community players such as the traditional heads, opinion leaders, and representatives from existing community groups and other structures.

Locally situated central government civil servants/technical departments operating within the jurisdiction are mandated through their extension workers operating at ward and village levels to support of VDCs in their development planning process. The regional staff of the different departments are authorised to provide the necessary technical service support and ensure councils are accountable to their various stakeholder groups. Some regional staff provide direct support and guidance to the villages and wards during project cycle management and serve as coaches or facilitators during the implementation of village and ward development projects. While other members provide technical advice to the LCs, WDCs and VDCs within the local government area of their operational jurisdiction and function as that body . They help endorse villages and wards' strategic development plans (SDPs) to ensure that local projects conform to national standards, policies and priorities. Ward councillors are required to hold periodic consultative meetings with their electorates, collate their views, opinions and proposals on issues affecting the ward for presentation and discussion at the council level. They also relay feedbacks to their issues and concerns of the people they represent either directly to a VDCs concern or through the WDCs.

There exists a community development relation between the traditional authorities (chiefs and village heads) and the VDCs in West Africa. Evidence reveals that among their respective functions, village chiefs and the VDCs both share the role of promoting the general economic development of the village; the promotion of sports, culture and other social activities; and community mobilising for participation in village development

activities. Traditional authorities (district chiefs and headmen/women) are still prominent in rural development and the maintenance of law and order. These institutions are recognised by both the national constitution and the local government and chieftaincy acts. The data produced by Fanthorpe et al. (2011) on public perceptions of traditional authorities reveal that majority of the respondents (80.2%) confirmed hearing about chiefs and headmen convening development committees, meaning working with them. When asked to name activities that are conducted by committees formed by chiefs and headmen, “80.8% of respondents agreed that they resolve disputes and keep order, 73.9% agreed that they organized village and neighbourhood clean-ups and 74.6% agreed that they dealt with official and private visitors to the community” (Fanthorpe et al., 2011, p. 37). These are just a few activities village chiefs cannot carry out in the absence of VDC support.

In the current decentralised planning setup, all extension workers, including the staff of NGOs involved in development activities in the village, are supposed to serve as advisers to the VDCs within their catchment areas. Some NGOs partner with VDCs to plan, implement and evaluate community development programs, others setup parallel groups alongside VDCs, while others source funding to enhance the capacity of VDCs and other community institutions. Other NGOs work in tandem with VDCs to identify priority project areas before execution. In contrast, there exist others who would come to villages with their already set programs, with little or no inputs from the VDCs. To promote community development and the welfare of localities NGOs in an ideal situation, are expected to work with VDCs. The expectation is that NGOs would mobilise resources and enhance the capacity of VDCs on their development roles and responsibilities.

Fanthorpe et al. (2011) researched four districts of Sierra Leone (Bo, Bombali, Kono and Western Area Rural District (WARD)) to assess residents’ knowledge of, and satisfaction with, the services provided by NGOs, central government, LCs, and traditional authorities. Evidence from this research shows that “personal knowledge of NGO projects was affirmed by 73% of the sample, followed by central government (60.5%), LCs (59.5%) and traditional authorities (26.6%)” (p. 35). The findings demonstrate that NGOs are significant partners of VDCs at the village level. About the satisfaction with the performance of agencies that deliver development and services at the level of community, the data presented by Fanthorpe et al. (2011) show that “NGO’s scored 60.6% in the moderately and very satisfied categories, followed by traditional authorities (46.9%), LCs

(40%) and central government (37.9)” (ibid, p. 35). The measure of local participation in development planning also exhibits that “NGO-led meetings scored highest among planning meetings attended (51% of multiple-choice responses), followed by VDC meetings (46.8%), meetings convened by chiefs and headmen (39.6%) and meetings convened by LCs (38.2%)” (ibid).

6.4.8. Implications of Research Findings for Donor Funded CDD

Institution Building/Development Approach

Institution building/development is one key goal of donor financed CDD program in fragile and post-conflict West Africa. The program does this by promoting the active involvement of elected local governments and their lower level institutions in development planning and intergovernmental fiscal flow arrangements at the centre of which are multilevel planning and participatory decision making. CDDP provides financial resources and technical assistance to build/develop participatory and inclusive local institutions. Compared to central government institutions, local governments by virtue of their proximity to communities are better suited to allocate public resources across different community groups as well as guarantee the maintenance and operations of development infrastructure and services better than community groups (Dongier et al., 2003; de Regt et al., 2013; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). The actual impact of donor funded CDD support projects on decentralisation is, however, contingent upon how the “relations between community groups and LGs²⁶ are designed” (Romeo, 2003, p. 94).

Evidence produced through this study questions the effectiveness of certain strategies/approaches employed by donor agencies through CDD programs to build/develop sustainable institutions in fragile-and post-conflict West Africa. Evidence shows that donor financed CDDP as implemented in the Gambia and Sierra Leone seems to have partially disregarded the development planning and implementation arrangements enshrined in the LGActs of the two countries. This is reinforced by the outcome of the review of CDDP literature and discussions held with former staff of the program, the local governments and those of their line ministry.

²⁶ Local governments

In the Gambia, the MLGL through its DCD was responsible for coordinating the CDD program implementation. The program instituted multisectoral PSC at the national level to provide policy guidance and periodic review of program implementation. It also formed PCT and task it to oversee and coordinate the daily program implementation. At the local level the program setup activities coordination structures that run the program. The institutional arrangements of donor funded CDDP at the different program implementation and management levels appear to be a bit detached from the local governance system, expensive to maintain and cumbersome as practiced in West Africa both in terms of administrative control reporting jurisdiction or line of authority and financing.

The GoBifo CDD program of Northern Sierra Leone also instituted PMT based at the MLGRD and a staff of the Ministry as the national program coordinator and. The PMT ensured the day to day administration of the CDD program. Project managers and field facilitators worked with KIT Royal Tropical Institute, an international consultancy group to design and implement the project. The staff of KIT Royal Tropical Institute and GoBifo staff that worked with LCs at both national and the district levels to design, implement and conduct project field visits are to a large extent detached from local governance system of administration as practiced in Sierra Leone. This happened both in terms of administrative control and reporting jurisdiction or line of authority and financing. Thus, after the end of project funding neither the ministries nor local government councils of the two countries are able to maintain most of the institutional arrangements instituted by the CDDP, its skilled program managers and field staff that were hired or continue to motivate the ministries and LCs staff involved in the program.

Evidence gathered through discussions with staff of the two ministries, and ex-CDDP staff reveals that the local government ministries of the two countries couldn't maintain all the entities after the CDD program funding phased-out. Due to the enormous operational costs involved and the lack of necessary budgetary allocations to cover their operating and related expenses. Another issue is the high staff turnover rate and the difficulty experienced in maintaining the staff of PSC and PMT due to the vast differences between the government pay scale and which was offered by the CDDP.

Another issue identified is capacity building problem of members through regular training, technical advisory services, and workshops as was the case throughout the CDDP. The lack of adequate operational support to decentralisation program results in ineffective

coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as was the case during CDDP. Another area where the actual role and impact of donor funded CDDP raises serious question is the sustainability of decentralised support/facilitating structures for multilevel/stakeholder involvement in planning and capacity building of local institutions. The community development department of the local government ministries has a reasonable number of community development officers and assistants at the regional level to support multilevel planning process. However, to effectively coordinate the field activities of CDD/multilevel planning process, the available staff and capacity wouldn't be enough.

It is challenging for donor-recipient countries to sustain the incentive package allotted by donor-funded CDDP for the maintenance of structures such as PMU/PSC, pay for salaries and periodic capacity building activities of national and community level staff and compensate for community facilitators, finance the planning process and provide block grants for community projects. This researcher, during the discussions with the staff of the community development staff at both national and regional levels, learnt that most of the donor-funded CDDP multi-level planning coordinating structures are non-existent. While most of the trained and experienced staff both at the field, regional and national level, are no longer within the system. This is partly because the structures, capacity and staff are too costly to maintain by the ministries while other organisations offer them better salary and condition of service.

As part of the fiduciary management system, CDDP created the position of a financial controller (FC) parallel to the office of council CEOs in the case of the Gambia. While in Northern Sierra Leone, the position of a Field Office Coordinator was created for the GoBifo CDDP to perform the role of FC at the council level. Both the Field Office Coordinator and FC are neither council staff nor answerable or reports to LCs. Instead, they only worked with the councils to manage the finances of the program. Therefore after the phased-out of donor funding, the said positions and their holders no longer exist within the local governance system, which means the capacity that was built is lost too. The direct transfer of resources to communities through local governments, as opposed to central governments or external partners and the strengthening of community capacity to hold local officials accountable, is critical tenants of CDD approaches (Dongier et al., 2003; Romeo, 2003). See also Romeo (2003) on the impacts of sector-wide approaches (SWAPs)

and Social Investment Funds (SFs) projects on CDD approach and local government accountability (p. 94).

Donor funded CDDP has failed in following through its learning by doing philosophy by not building the capacity of LCs to the point of trust and give them full access and control of project implementation, funds and disbursement. As anytime the LCs wanted to replenish project funds or honour requests filed in by VDCs and WDCs, the councils would have to go through the local level CDDP finance officers instead of the dictates of local government finance and audit act. The disbursement of funds from LCs to the lower development institutions such as the VDCs and WDCs is based on a tripartite agreement signed between the VDC/WDC, the LC and the CDDP coordination unit. Instead of depositing funds to the main account/development account of councils, councils were asked to open a particular community development sub-account where CDDP funds were deposited and disbursed to ward and village structures.

Project funding requests made to councils had to go through project FC who would, in turn, submit a request to the PCT/PMU with a detailed schedule for resource use. Romeo (2003) is firmly convinced that prospects for sustainable local development seem to be better where local governments are financed and provided with appropriate support and supervision. And “for the adoption of participatory practices that give communities access to local public sector resources (...) than relying primarily on direct central/external financing of local community groups” (p. 94). Donor financed CDDP rather than following the existing modalities in the local government finance, and audit act or equivalent legal and procedural instruments or provisions for similar transfers tends to have created a parallel system. CDDPs appointed an M&E specialist at the national level who was in charge of M&E activities instead of strengthening or building the councils’ M&E system.

Proponents of CDD posit that if development partners empower communities, they can manage their development process according to their own needs and priorities. It would as well decrease their dependence on outside donors in providing a solution to their development challenges and enable them to pursue community development even after the depletion of donor funds. Evidence puts in doubt the notion that empowered community/increased social capital is a catalyst for people to take charge of their development process and to promote long-term development in rural and deprived communities. The studied CDDPs have applied the program approach recommended for

fragile and post-conflict contexts. The methodology entails the adoption of multilevel planning which involves communities throughout the planning process from project identification and prioritisation to the selection of contractors and implementation, including community monitoring and evaluation. Strategies used increased the chances of communities through necessary skills transfers to achieve self-sufficiency and encouraged them to device ways and means to initiate projects independently.

However, findings from West Africa show that introducing communities to learning by doing hasn't diminished their need for outside support for their development issues. For rural and deprived communities to promote long-term development planning after the end of donor funding, capacity building/skills training must be long-term. CDDP adherents identify areas such as development planning, budgeting, proposal writing, management, project design and organisational skills necessary to implement projects in their communities. This proposition is consistent with the findings of this study as capacity building and skills transfer for VDCs ceased with the end of donor funding thus contributing to their unsustainable functioning in the CDD.

According to the proponents of the CDD approach, collective action within social organisations is strengthened through development approaches that are participatory and transparent. Such features of social organisations include collective decision-making, trust, gender and social cohesion and inclusiveness. And that availability of information and effective communication can improve the efficiency of communities, facilitate coordination and shape the quality and quantity of community interactions. Evidence also obscure the idea that just by ensuring that marginalised groups benefit from and participate in donor-funded CDDP would develop the level of cohesion and culture of volunteerism necessary for a communities to pursue development objectives in the future.

CDD proponents argue that exposing communities to a high level of transparency over time such as mandating a bank account for each community where block grants were deposited and requiring V/WDCs to disclose all funds and expenditures publicly before project implementation would improve trust and sustainably encourage participation in the community development process. Evidence doesn't support this notion as the studied communities have fulfilled all the requirements during the CDDP implementation period. Contested again is the idea that linkages created by donor-funded CDDP between citizens, local and central government institutions during the program implementation period will

continue to enhance coordination between the different levels of the decentralised governance system and ensure stable funding for local development institutions. The idea among CDD adherents that linkages/interaction created between government and communities through donor-funded projects would help strengthen nascent democracies and advance decentralisation efforts is also obscured in the studied communities.

In the two cases, CDDP compiled ward and village development plans within the context of the overall district development plans where members of the local government and communities worked together to advance the development process. The experiences gathered in the interaction have neither increased the participation of citizens in local governance nor enhanced the opportunity for communities to petition their WDCs/councils to support more projects within their community. It doesn't improve the capacity of local governments to respond to the requests of its constituents either. Equally quizzed is the idea that exposing communities to the principles of accountability and transparency inherent in CDD approach would provide communities with the knowledge and familiarity of the development process necessary to hold leaders accountable for delivering results. Findings show that the status quo before CDDP where the community had little interaction with their local councillors/representatives remain unchanged. After the phase-out of the CDD project, community members note that they no longer have close relations with their local government, an allegation proven by the absence of current village development plans approved by LC/WDC.

The idea that CDDP approach promotes more sustainable development outcomes is equally contested by the evidence produced in this research. The idea is that promoting community contribution both in terms of time and resources (money, skilled or unskilled labour, and/or local materials) would enhance the feeling of ownership over the project and make it more likely to maintain their investments in the long term. For instance, in Brikama Area Council, villagers contribute "at least ten per cent (10%) of the project cost in cash and/or in-kind shall be taken into account and agreed on at this step. Wards will equally contribute a matching grant of 10%" (Brikama Area Council, 2015, p. 20). The logic of creating or strengthening WDCs and VDCs by CDDP is that after going through intensive experiences in development governance, the stakeholders will continue to have the capacity to organise themselves to create long-term development plans.

However, evidence shows that these structures are inactive, dormant and unsustainable and some of investments made by CDDP are left fallow and dilapidated. CDD principles and approaches such as effective communication and information-sharing with communities and different stakeholder groups for better and shared understanding also ceased to exist with the end of donor funding. Although community development institutions continue to exist as identifiable entities with the representation of women and youths, this hasn't encouraged the participation of community-based structures in development planning. It has neither increased the understanding of their roles and responsibilities nor those of their development partners sustainably. There are no much records of improved linkages between community-based structures and development partners, including the LCs or successful project planning and implementation structures. Equally, there exists no effective monitoring and evaluation, transparent, and accountable mechanisms that are driven by local institutions.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses a brief overview of the study, essential conclusions drawn and recommendations. The summary part discusses the findings in a condensed form and processes leading to these findings. At the same time, the conclusion section restates not only the thesis statement but also highlights to the readers the critical points of this research. The conclusion explains the importance of this work and how it contributes to the field of foreign aid institution building/development efforts in fragile and post-conflict contexts and development studies practice in general. Recommendation section provides suggestions for future studies based on the findings. It also highlights strategies to strengthen or enhance the sustainable active participation of decentralised development institutions such as the VDCs in multi-level development planning process and community-driven development as a whole.

7.1. Summary

7.1.1. Local Governance Environment Factors and those of the Administrative Processes and Structures of Decentralised Village Development planning Institutions Explaining their Unsustainability

In seeking to have a complete understanding of the sustainability problem of foreign aid driven institution-building or development initiatives in fragile and post-conflict contexts, this study integrated case study with mixed-method research design. The research involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (FGDs, and KIIs) data. Since the 1980s to date, CDDP is the most popular strategy employed by international development aid agencies to build, develop or reshape local institutions in fragile and post-conflict contexts. The studied local development institutions are selected from two West African communities that benefited from donor-funded CDDP: the 2007 to 2012 CDDP of the Gambia and 2006 to 2009 GoBifo CDDP of Northern Sierra Leone.

Studied decentralised development institutions included ten VDCs from Kombo East and Central of Brikama local government area, West Coast region of the Gambia and ten VDCs from Bombali local government district, Northern Sierra Leone. In this research, besides having an existing committee including at least a person with a designated responsibility such as an executive body, VDCs are considered sustainable when they continue to actively meet, at least on a need basis, serve as an entry point for village development, and participate actively in the multilevel planning process. Where they work together as an institution and in partnership with other decentralised institutions and other agencies, be it public, for-profit or non-profit to identify and provide solutions to community development problems.

The analytical framework used is the SCOPE, a unified conceptual model of institutional sustainability framework. This model was developed by (Brinkerhoff et al., 1990) with the selection of cases from all over the developing world where an international donor-funded intervention sought to create a sustainable institution. This framework draws upon constructs from three theoretical schools of thought: the systems theory, the contingency theory and the political economy. The model views institutions as systems and postulates that to study the long-term maintenance of an institution, it is critical to characterise critical dimensions of its internal administrative processes (technology and structure) and factors of its external environment (social, cultural, political, economic, technical and others). Findings of this research considered to have provided plausible explanation for the sustainability problem of local development planning institutions like the VDCs in fragile and post-conflict West Africa have been categorised into internal administrative structure and processes factors and local governance environment factors.

The general and task environments of VDCs in West Africa are rigid with unstable legal and policy implementation environment. The involvement of several MDAs in the multilevel planning process at both national and local levels demonstrates a high level of decentralisation in VDCs' operational environment. Decentralised structures, nevertheless, do have their challenges like lack of coordination, loss of control, and duplication of efforts, resources and so forth. There exist political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation in the sub-region where policy and legislative powers are transferred from the central governments to democratically elected autonomous LCs and their lower-level assemblies. However, planning and implementation responsibilities transferred to locally

situated civil servants is limited. At the same time, local governments are accorded with partial revenue and expenditure autonomy. Weak implementation of local government legislation and slow progress in human, technical and financial resources devolution; however, continue to challenge the process of deepening decentralisation reform in the sub-region.

LCs in West Africa sub-region are struggling with a small number of staff who possess the requisite planning capacity and skills. At the same time, the most capable locally situated civil servants with development planning and implementation responsibilities are yet to be entirely placed under the jurisdiction of elected local governments. They are still with the MDAs together with their payroll. These staffs are still accountable to their parent MDAs instead of LCs. Local governments continue to wallow in weak local revenue generation capacity. They do not have substantial revenue generation and expenditure autonomy, including the full power to levy taxes and user charges in their areas of jurisdiction. At the same time, essential development planning, monitoring and evaluation functions such as data collection and management, information, communication and records management are yet to be fully devolved to LCs to enable them to fulfil their leadership and development roles at the local level. Although these critical sustainability factors of decentralised development planning institutions are espoused in both legal and policy documents, however, in practical terms their implementation/enforcement is still a tall order yet to be materialised in West Africa at the moment.

The fact that locally situated staff and financial resources necessary for effective and efficient decentralised planning are not often under the total control of local governments doesn't only create delays but serves as an opportunity for bureaucratic and political rent-seeking. The indirect environment of VDCs is unstable and inflexible. Coupled with the retirement/high turnover rate of most highly trained and competent central and local government officials within the task environment who often go for better opportunities elsewhere all explains the unsustainable status of VDCs post-donor-funded CDDP. VDCs themselves aren't immune to such instability issues as their members especially the youth, often abandon their villages and migrate to the cities, growth centres or abroad in search of better rewarding jobs or better education. These coupled with the evident lack of full dedication to the course of VDC as an institution among the ranks of its membership justified by the fact that some members are active and more assiduous than others in

fulfilling their functions also explain the unsustainable status of decentralised village institutions in West Africa.

The three-actual sustainability problems of VDCs in the communities of West Africa as evident from this investigation are a) existence of VDCs' organization and management structures although with limited capacity, linkages with other formal and traditional institutions and inputs sources to produce valued outputs in the form of multilevel planning process coordination, communicating with external partners and serving as the entry point for all village level interventions as was the case during the investment periods of donor-funded CDDP; b) discontinuation of their crucial development planning, implementation and M&E powers and responsibilities; c) discontinuation of functional linkages between them, government and non-governmental institutions, cessation of resource flows, periodic capacity building and technical assistance associated with output production.

The mismatch between the nature of the outputs and services of VDCs and their voluntary nature makes their existing inefficiency and sustainability problem almost inevitable. The shift in the number of inputs needed for the sustainable involvement of VDCs in decentralised planning cycle and the changes in the valuation of the outputs they provide in particular among top bureaucrats, local elites and political class, all limits the sustainability prospects of VDCs without external resource and technical assistance. As a non-market structure, VDC is proficient in providing tangible public goods and services that everyone can use equally. The continuous provision of such goods and services by public sector institutions like VDCs without their own reliable funding source(s) would require external funding or have preconditions in the form of providing private goods for profit that would help acquire leverage for public goods and services provision. None of the studied VDCs has a single mandatory/regular activity that is being funded to keep them active and alive the year-round and contribute to further social capital development. Nor does any of them is engaging in profitable economic activities that are enough to meet their recurrent development planning and implementation costs/expenditure.

For capacity strengthening, resource flows and technical assistance, decisions of top bureaucrats and politicians, except in extraordinary circumstances, are key to the sustainability of established public sector institutions like the VDCs. It appears that VDCs are unable to maintain their networks created during donor funded CDDP, forge political or personal connections with top bureaucrats, politicians and non-profit leadership both at

local and national levels. These are critical factors that explain the unsustainable participation of VDCs in the decentralised development planning system. The decentralised development planning process requires unique resources, technical assistance and the use of sophisticated technology. To sustain the active participation of public sector institutions like VDCs in this process, national governments and their development partners including NGOs, CBOs and private sector agencies must be capable and willing to commit all necessary inputs, build capacity and provide the needed technical assistance to democratically elected local councils and their lower-level assemblies. It's not only enough to have in place an accountable national system of intergovernmental transfer of resources. But that which is committed to providing a sustainable source of funding and technical assistance to VDCs coupled with national and local government bureaucrats and politicians who are committed to the practice of CDD concept.

In terms of both methodology and technological requirements, a multilevel planning process is inherently a development approach that is complex, management and financial intensive. The process entails more interdisciplinary and inter-organisational teamwork and field activities. VDCs lack methodological skills required for evaluation such as questionnaire design and interviewing (one of the most complex and least routines VDC technologies), and other social science knowledge for project planning, implementation and monitoring. The internal complexity of decentralised planning process and its need for a recurrent budget for planning, in general, has an inverse relation with sustainability. Other sustainability issues include the following: a shortage of experienced practitioners with practical techniques and the absence of policymakers and development executives that are highly committed to prioritising the sustainable participation of VDCs' in the multilevel planning process. This is evident in the foot-dragging attitude among top bureaucrats and political elites to fully implement the local government laws and related policy directives and inter-governmental resource allocation framework.

Complexity of multilevel planning process and decentralised governance system with sophisticated technologies and elaborate structures observed in the system's quantity of components or units; the high degree of weak role differentiation among the system's various stakeholders; and the level of interdependence among the different parts of a system. Lack of practical, appropriate and frequent supportive supervision, capacity building and close follow-up by CDOs/CDAs and the problem of CDO to VDC ratio.

Although VDCs in West Africa do have identifiable positions in their structures, however, compare to some longstanding VDCs elsewhere in the world such as those in Nepal and Botswana, they don't have comprehensive job descriptions for each of the identified positions. Similarly, their functions and responsibilities are not elaborate enough to mitigate against the problem of role differentiation between VDCs, NGOs, other CBOs and traditional chieftaincy authorities in terms of community development promotion.

There are high transaction costs in maintaining VDCs as functioning decentralised village development planning institutions in West Africa. Due to the high degree of formality justified by the stating of VDC structure in formal, written rules as provided for in the LGActs and related legislations of the different countries. Formal assemblies require specialised training and familiarisation with new roles among others in the forms of periodic capacity building and series of follow-up refresher training to maintain proficiency and productivity. Establishing decentralised development institutions will not lead to their active participation in the multilevel planning process and serving as the entry point for all village level development interventions. There is a need to continue injecting inputs and capacity into these institutions so that they can carry out their tasks. Awareness, knowledge, and skills are all aspects of capacity that must be built/enhanced periodically especially as members of such institutions is voluntary which is prone to high turnover rate or can dissipate at critical stages or can lack continuity.

The recurrent activities of donor-funded CDDPs helped built the capacity of LCs and their lower-level assemblies. Thus, termination of activities like periodic workshops, reviews and facilitating regular meetings of different stakeholder groups where project planning, management and M&E skills are enhanced is another threat to the sustainable functioning of VDCs. These capacity limitations prevent VDCs and their villagers from acting in concert to ensure their agents would fulfil their obligations toward them. And make sure they work in their interests i.e. by allowing VDCs to lead development efforts, co-ordinate and evaluate planned activities, and to communicate with external partners.

The transaction costs of maintaining VDCs in West Africa is too high for government to support, while the incentives for membership participation are inadequate. The outputs produced by VDCs are mostly public, while the majority of their community stakeholders are characterised by dire resource poverty and capacity limitations. Outputs of institutional reforms are not valued sufficiently highly by bureaucratic and political stakeholders and

beneficiaries at the level of the community to exert pressures to ensure the active involvement of VDCs in the multilevel planning process. Unlike VDCs' community-level stakeholders who by nature are limited in terms of power, influence and support they could provide, there is limited demand among top bureaucrats and political actors for the outputs produced by VDCs thus, contributing to the unsustainable activity of VDCs.

The vision, objectives and functions of VDCs in West Africa are set/sanctioned/authorised either by the central government through legislation as in the case of the Gambia or by donor agencies/funded programs as in the case of Northern Sierra Leone without paying much attention to the fact that the institutions are much reliant on volunteer efforts. VDCs are not at liberty to develop and choose the most relevant activities for their nature; instead, they have been handed a standardised technical package. The fact that most activities of VDCs are pre-set plans of powerful government stakeholders/elites and frontline staff of external funding agencies with no incentive package attached to defray committee members time, energy etc., disincentivises most members from participating in the activities of VDCs after the end of donor funding. The voluntary nature of the institutions' membership and the absence of any form of prescribed periodic remuneration and activity, meetings or sitting allowances are yet another structural features that have negatively impacted the functional sustainability of VDCs. The time-consuming nature of CDD activities including multilevel planning process coupled with the absence of a clear reward structure or agreed on a basis for defraying the expenses of such activity is hostile to the sustainability of VDCs in West Africa.

Among other considerations, institutional sustainability, it is argued, results in part from a combination of repeated task experiences, operational skilfulness, regular monitoring or supervision, fitting or realistic reward system or incentive package for tasks accomplishments and internal organisational cohesiveness. The wide distribution of VDCs across the length and breadth of the different countries add to the complexity and resource-intensive nature of the decentralised planning system. This adds a level of complexity as it creates access problems to all VDCs due to logistical issues, poor infrastructure, road and communication networks linking the different villages to the growth centres where their LCs are located. Information asymmetry between VDCs as the principals/right-holders on the one hand and the LCs' staff, councillors, chieftaincy/traditional authorities and locally situated civil servants as agents/duty-bearers on the other, is an imbalance.

VDCs lack full knowledge of and ability to control the actions of their agents, and the ensuing clash of interests also add to the complex relationships within the decentralised planning system. The deteriorating relationship between VDCs and their ward councillors, trust issues among the educated and uneducated members of the VDCs, trust issues between VDCs and other groups/CBOs within their communities including the chieftaincy authorities, NGOs and community mobilisation problems all explains the functional unsustainability of VDCs. Some mechanical and routine tasks performed by VDCs are time-consuming. The absence of fitting remuneration or mechanisms to either defray/compensate for the time and energy VDC members spend on such functions like reporting, information collection and dissemination is a considerable threat to the long-term sustainability of VDCs. Equally cumbersome, resource-intensive and time consuming are other less routine and more variable activities such as monitoring of project activities and outputs.

7.1.2. Proximate Environmental and Internal Institutional Factors Explaining the Sustainability Problem of Donor Funded Decentralised Village Development Institutions

Table 26: Summarised Proximate Environmental and Internal Institutional Factors Explaining the Sustainability Problem of VDCs

Hostile Factors of Local Governance Environment	Administrative Processes and Structural Factors of VDCs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inadequate logistics and infrastructure to monitor and supervise decentralised planning structures -Delay and inadequate disbursement of development budget to LCs -Weak role differentiation between VDCs & traditional chieftaincy authorities in community development promotion -The limited practice of multi-level planning processes -Inadequate revenue sources to finance multi-level planning processes -Existence of well-equipped parallel local structure with weak links to VDCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Infrequent meetings, organisation and attendance, and inability to exercise oversight role of coordinating all interventions in villages -Inadequate development planning capacity -Lack of economic activities and power to levy taxes, impose service charges or charge fees to generate funds for development planning & incentive for members -Vision, objectives and functions of VDCs set by external stakeholders -Lack of prescribed remuneration and/or meeting allowances -Limited trust in VDCs and their leadership

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reduction of LCs to partisan political battlefields -Incoherent policies and overlapping mandates of state and local level institutions -Understaff LCs with limited jurisdiction over locally situated civil servants 	
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The failure in sustaining VDCs post-donor-funded CDDPs is due to certain factors in the three complementary forms of the decentralised environment (political, administrative and fiscal) in fragile and post-conflict West Africa. Outcomes from the local governance context have shown that to sustain the active participation of VDCs in the multilevel planning process as was the case during donor-funded CDDPs efforts must go beyond the simple transfer of policy and legislative powers to democratically elected autonomous LCs. Equally, elected LCs must be responsible for the locally situated civil servant with the development planning and implementation responsibilities under the jurisdiction. Thirdly, there should be in place functioning inter-governmental fiscal transfer mechanisms where LCs are accorded substantial revenue and expenditure autonomy, including the power to levy taxes, rates, and user charges.

Notably, findings show that LCs in West Africa do still have the legal mandate to exercise their legislative power in the form of passing local bills into by-laws over their LGAs in the discharge of any of their functions. At the same time, their executive power would allow them to mobilise financial, human and material resources and capacity from the government MDAs and both national and international organisations, and the private sector to promote and support productive activity and social development in their localities. Still, both the Gambia and Sierra Leone don't repeal their decentralisation laws and policies. Such as the LGAct 2002 of the Gambia and LGAct 2004 of Sierra Leone that created their LCs; instituted periodic council elections, and ensured councils have autonomy in resource management and so forth.

Functional still in the two countries are their respective ministries of local government and departments of community development that housed the CDD program management team (PMT) in the case of Sierra Leone and program steering committee (PSC) in The Gambia. The permanent secretary offices of the ministries that chaired the committees and the offices of the department of community development that coordinated the CDD programs

during donor funding periods all still exist with a powerful institutional memory of multi-level development planning and implementation processes²⁷. Most importantly, the local government ministry and its development of community development are still the constitutionally mandated institutions in each nation that lead the decentralisation reform processes and community development initiatives. At the same time, the two countries continue to have their three-tier sub-national decentralised governance structures intact. At the lowest of which are the VDCs. Followed by the WDCs in the middle and at the higher level are the local, city and municipal councils.

Despite all the above, evidence shows that the failure to sustain VDCs in the decentralised governance environment of fragile and post-conflict West Africa is broadly explained within the framework of the lack of willingness on the part of the political leadership and its top bureaucrats in the MDAs. They both fail to enforce the relevant provisions of their respective LGActs fully. The unwillingness of some NGOs, CBOs, private sector and international development partners to work with the LCs and their decentralised development institutions such as the VDCs and WDCs add to the sustainable participation issues of decentralised institutions in the development processes of their localities. In essence, the results of this investigation have shown serious weaknesses and challenges existing within the decentralised reform policies and the technical oversight structures in terms of their willingness to carry out their mandates effectively.

Multilevel planning entails some level of preparation and pre-conditions that the coordinating institutions must meet to ensure sustainable processes and the active participation of stakeholders and institutions. Sufficient human resources and technical planning capacity are two such requisite conditions for multilevel planning. Both as shown by evidence from this research don't exist at the desired level in the local government environment to sustain multilevel planning and the active involvement of decentralised development institutions like the VDCs. Not having sufficient specialised technical expertise for multilevel planning would mean that councils will have to procure from the public or private sector. Or request from deconcentrated sectoral extension workers of line ministries, department and agencies, all of which require adequate financial resources which the councils don't have. Evidence indicates that LCs have inadequate financial

²⁷ While collecting data, the researcher had a personal chat with the former coordinators of CDDP and their assistants who were based at the ministerial and departmental level and some key former staff at the regional offices.

resources to support multilevel planning process and to finance strategic development plans and projects in the absence of funding/budget line earmarked for such services. The cost of such services could be determined by the scope, time frame, resources, associated risks and the size of the project at hand. Associated costs include logistics for M&E and operations and maintenance (O&M) of certain types of community investments to ensure sustainability.

Multilevel planning entails a robust administrative and management system for significant activity and process monitoring and end of project evaluation. Monitoring in project planning and management often refers to a series of activities taken to measure progress made by an on-going project and to take corrective actions where and when necessary. For effective monitoring, there is a need for a management system that is flexible and receptive. Monitoring is a management tool design to provide stakeholders with timely information about project activities and processes for the taking of promptly and necessary actions. M&E processes demand thoroughness, consistency and organisation, thus making M&E activities costly not only in terms of finances but also time and effort. Findings of this investigation show that LCs have weak administrative and management system to ensure effective activity and process monitoring and end of project evaluation. Other factors in local governance environment that don't support the sustainability of VDCs are logistical issues such as communications, electricity and transport infrastructure.

Attitude of central government agencies, CBOs and NGOs in the communities like the creation of well-equipped parallel structures to VDCs and the shifting of the coordination authority of decentralised local development institutions are part of the institutional sustainability problem. One of the decentralised environmental factors impacting the sustainable functioning of VDCs is the weak role differentiation between VDCs & traditional chieftaincy authorities in community development promotion. This is mainly due to the setting up of VDCs with no explicit attempt to weaken the powers of the chieftaincy authorities. The lack of clarity in certain provisions of the LGActs also explains the incoherent policies and overlapping mandates of state and local level institutions. This and other decentralisation policies and the attitude of political stakeholders of reducing LCs to partisan political battlefields are among the important factors of the local government environment that affect the sustainability of decentralised development institution.

The other set of factors that contribute to the sustainability problem of donor-funded decentralised institutions in fragile and post-conflict contexts are those associated with the internal administrative structure and processes of institutions themselves. Another issue cited several times in the study is the failure of VDCs to hold/organise periodic meetings to discuss, share information, develop village strategies and source for funding for their projects. VDCs lack of ability to exercise their oversight role of coordinating all development interventions within villages and demand for their involvement in the multilevel planning process are two capacity related internal factors that explains the sustainability issues of decentralised planning institutions.

Capacity issues of VDCs are yet another sustainability problem. Since the phase-out of donor-funded CDDPs, VDCs haven't benefitted from periodic capacity enhancement which resulted in inadequate capacity to be able to initiate or participate actively in multilevel development planning and implementation process. Some of the cited weaknesses of VDCs said to have contributed to their sustainability issues are their inability to drive the strategic planning process and monitor development projects/programs. Added to which is their lack of skills to mobilise community members to participate in self-help initiatives and in raising resource to finance community projects. VDCs don't have the power to levy taxes, impose service charges and fees. Or engage in economic activities that would generate funding to finance their development planning and provide an incentive for members.

The institution is structured to depend on other institutions for its survival and continuity. The sanctioning of VDC vision, objectives and functions by authorises other than members of the VDCs and their communities as per their capability is an internal institutional sustainability threat. VDCs lack prescribed remuneration or meeting allowances to defray/compensate the time and energy their members spend in working on community development issues is yet another threat to the sustainability of decentralised institutions. The problem of trust within the ranks of VDCs and between VDCs and the communities and other stakeholders is another explanation given about the sustainability problem.

7.2. Conclusions

CDDP has been the most embraced program-based approach used to deliver international development aid beginning the last decades of the 20th Century. It is the single most crucial

institution-building or development approach for most foreign aid agencies in fragile and post-conflict settings. Today CDD is one of the mechanisms among the repertoire of development programs used by aid agencies to assist build/develop institutions in weak or fragile contexts, in post-conflict states, and post-disaster environments or in communities that have bureaucracies with poor track records of service delivery. Despite the centrality of institution-building or development agenda among international donor agencies that operate in developing countries for decades, the debate is still intense as to the sustainability of institutions established or revamped through foreign aid financing. To understand the functional sustainability failure of institutions built/developed through donor funding, this investigation looks at one of the decentralised development planning institutions at village level. Often when donor funding phases out, these institutions cease to either exist as entities or effectively perform their functions.

Over the years, evidence gathered concerning factors responsible for the sustainability failure of institutions built/developed through aid agencies funding in developing country context mostly focus on the character of donor agencies engage in this business and the nature of institution-building itself. Missing or not prominent in the literature are the flaws in the internal structure and administrative processes of these institutions and the factors of their external environment both general and proximate. It's thus imperative to study the internal structures and administrative processes of local development institutions formed/revamped through donor financed CDDP and their external environment factors for a possible explanation of their sustainability issues. With the use of an integrated case study-mixed-method research design and SCOPE institutional sustainability framework, local development institutions were selected from West Africa focusing on two former donor-funded CDDP beneficiary communities for study.

Evidence shows a widespread preference for and use of institutional sustainability practices like partnerships between local development institutions and elected local or municipal governments. This is an alternative institutional arrangement recommended by adherent of donor funded CDDPs to promote institutional sustainability in fragile and post-conflict contexts. The failure of this institutional arrangement despite its widespread use and popularity among international donors notably the WB makes this investigation timely and justifiable. Evidence from CDDP evaluations reports consistently shows that local development institutions that were built/developed through these programs are not

sustained beyond the intervention period at least in functional terms. Here sustainability is viewed in terms of functionality rather than the mere existence of an institution as an entity. Partnerships between local institutions and elected local governments are said to have the ability to provide a sustainable source of funding for decentralised development institutions like the VDCs and offers critical support to CDD.

With its focus on environmental factors and internal structures and administrative processes of local development institutions, the findings of this investigation regarding the sustainability problem of donor-funded local institutions would add a fresh perspective to foreign aid and institution building/development literature. Understanding the sustainability linkage between the internal competences of local development institutions on the one hand and their interaction with the various stakeholders and institutions/organisations in the local governance environment on the other would no doubt contribute significantly not only to donor-funded institution-building and decentralisation literature but to development theory and practice in general.

Evidence produced by this study will help improve the quality of the CDD program design strategy and how it operates in the decentralised local governance context in fragile and post-conflict contexts. It will also enable supra-institutions that fund institution building/development programs to have a clearer understanding of the kind of support needed for sustainable local institutions both structurally and functionally long after the end of their funding. Evidence produced by this study would contribute immensely to the on-going quest in the scholarly literature to better understand the appropriate pathways to sustainable local governance reforms. In terms of which factors-environmental, individual or organisational and so forth are paramount to ensuring broad-based institutionalised local participation in development decision-making.

7.3. Recommendations

To get the multilevel planning off the ground and sustain the process, besides having responsive, decentralized local governments and intergovernmental frameworks there is a need for not only the creation of co-ordinating structures such as VDCs and WDCs but having a recurrent budget or stable source of funding for the process. Added to the above are a strong political and bureaucratic willingness and the availability of a quality number of technical and administrative staff that would support the process. Preparation for

multilevel planning entails the building of a critical set of capacity not only at the level of the LCs but of frontline staff members and the training of committee members of decentralised planning structures to help them plan, implement, monitor and evaluate projects.

When local government directorates of planning and development do not have the requisite technical expertise and human resources within, they will have to procure from other public institutions or the private sector. Otherwise they will have to request the assistance of sectoral extension workers and the expertise of MDAs for appropriate training of stakeholders and the facilitation for development planning. All of which is costly and calls for a secure funding source or budget line. The need for specialised external technical assistance may extend beyond the strategic development plan (SDP) preparation stage to include project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL).

All the following activities at the pre-planning level of multilevel planning process demand capacity, logistics and sustained funding: multi-stakeholder consultations, information collection, community-based and district-level meetings, training of decentralised planning structures on their roles and responsibilities and incentives for both the ward and community level facilitators. Furthermore, village diagnosis and planning activities like the use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools to train decentralised community structures on social mapping, Venn diagrams, semi-structured interviews, problems and listing of opportunities, goal identification and the production of strategic development plans (SDPs) for funding and implementation all are costly and time-consuming undertakings. These and other necessary prerequisites for quality planning process require technical and sometimes specialised knowledge and skills that must be available within the reach of any institution assigned to provide leadership or perform a coordination role in multilevel planning process. That is if the process is to be sustained and ensure the active participation of all key stakeholders and entities.

Evidence produced in this research demonstrates that the core functions relevant to the conduct of multilevel planning and to ensure the sustainable participation of decentralised development institutions like the VDCs are by law devolved to LCs in the Gambia and Sierra Leone. The effective performance and adherence to these functions as enshrined in the LGActs and other laws by the staff of MDAs, would in no small way put the LCs in an advanced state of preparedness to institute multilevel planning. The commitment of MDAs

in West Africa to the full transfer of the devolved functions of LCs by law would help avoid the existing systemic challenges that continue to effectively hamper their practice and financing of multilevel planning process.

It is not enough to have autonomous elected lower-level assemblies and LCs and legally transfer policy and legislative powers to them. Nor is it sufficient to transfer development planning and implementation responsibilities to locally situated civil servants without placing them under the full jurisdiction of elected local governments and accord LCs with limited revenue and expenditure autonomy to fund their activities. It is recommended that local civil servants are placed under the full jurisdiction of elected local governments to ensure the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable multilevel development planning and the active participation of decentralised development planning institutions like VDCs. Added to this is to accord LCs substantial revenue and expenditure autonomy, including the full power to levy all taxes, impose services and user charges and provide resources to LCs on a timely manner.

Overall, LCs are held back from continuing with process of multilevel planning post-donor-funded CDDP mainly due to shortage of external funding and their weak local revenue generation capacity. For LCs to initiate any serious development intervention and sustain it, central governments in West Africa must provide them with grants necessary to fund program development and implementation. Also donor-funded agencies and their local partners must willing to work with or through LCs and their lower level decentralised development institutions. Governments and their development partners must desist from channelling community development funding through structures outside of local governments and encourage organisations working at the local level to coordinate their activities with LCs in whose jurisdiction they operate. Organisations should be strongly encouraged to help mobilise resources, finance training and other initiatives and work through LCs and their decentralised structures.

Policy, Legal and Regulatory Environment

The local government ministry should activate multi-stakeholder program management unit (PMU)/program steering committee (PSC) that existed during the donor-funded CDDP. Or an inter-ministerial committee on local governance/decentralization be instituted to support LCs and ensure they perform a lead role in multilevel planning and

the execution of their development planning mandate in their localities. As the highest policy oversight body over the decentralisation and multilevel planning process, part of the tasks of the PMU/PSC would be to ensure full devolution of human resource and payroll of local civil servants to local governments under whose jurisdiction they operate.

The Committee/Unit should guarantee that locally situated civil servants are accountable and answerable to LCs rather than their parent MDAs. The Committee/Unit should realign regulations and organisations that have impeded the proper and effective transfer and performance of devolved development planning and implementation responsibilities to locally situated civil servants. The various MDAs of the inter-ministerial committee should ensure clarity in the development planning and implementation functions of LCs within the decentralisation framework vis-à-vis MDAs. This effort should be complemented by resources such as financial, human and material/logistics.

Fiscal Decentralisation, Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfer and Multilevel Planning

Local government ministries in collaboration with the ministry of finance should determine the actual costs of conducting multilevel planning process, project implementation and the delivery of devolved service by each LC and thus, allocate adequate resources in a timely manner to meet these needs. Ministry of finance should make sure the national system of intergovernmental fiscal transfer of resources is strengthened and that there is sustainable funding for LCs and their decentralised development institutions like the VDCs. Grants or budget lines earmarked for such functions should be allocated and disbursed timely to LCs. While putting in place mechanisms that would ensure local government directorates of planning and finance become proactive and responsive in submitting their monthly, quarterly and yearly financial returns without delay. To expand the revenue base of LCs, local government ministry in collaboration with the ministry of finance must enhance their revenue generation capacities, encourage them to serve as the engine of economic growth within their areas of jurisdictions. And create a favourable environment for private sector development, investment and job creation, and resolve any revenue sharing or collection conflict between LCs and MDAs/central government.

Collaboration and Coordination between LCs and other Community Organisations

The function of the PMU/PSC/inter-ministerial committee should include the strengthening of LCs' coordination function within their localities. And ensure all development interventions are harmonised and make sure LCs instead of any other institutions take charge in building synergies with other institution operating within their jurisdiction. Besides capacity building, ministry of local government should realign the mandate of LCs with the following: proper resourcing and strengthening of local level institutional structures, encourage the rearranging of activities of all locally situated civil servants, institutions and agencies including NGOs to those of LCs and their lower level institutions. This will enable LCs to serve their local level policy oversight roles sustainably and give direction to local development efforts. Efforts should be made to have in place the necessary human resources, equipment/logistical and financial resources for sustainable performance of multilevel planning by LCs and the active participation of local development institutions.

The role of LCs usurped due to the failure to actively involve their decentralized structures and the creation of well-equipped parallel community level structures with well-paid officials by both governments and donor agencies in West Africa must be revisited. Efforts to stop or discourage all practices that would continue to dampen the spirit of LCs and their lower level decentralised structures in their local development coordinating roles due to the bypassing of the existing democratically elected autonomous LCs and their lower-level assemblies in development planning and implementation must be prioritised. Such an apparent bypassing, marginalisation and support for NGOs and other CBOs without regard for LCs are rampant among international donors despite LCs being legally responsible for implementing the transferred multilevel planning functions and the activities of locally situated civil servants placed under their jurisdiction. It's not uncommon for donor agencies or their locally funded NGOs to demonstrate an unwillingness to support national/public sector groups directly and instead provide funding for parallel institutions or organisations. Such happens despite these organisation undertaking activities which are already being undertaken by LCs and their decentralized structures, often citing challenges such as the nonexistence of local capacity, red tape or insufficient funding for any meaningful capacity building.

An anonymous author who published in The Guardian on Monday 15th June 2020 “The aid sector must do more to tackle its white supremacy problem” argues that four years after the 2016 Grand Bargain agreement “international organisations continue to work in spite local structures, rather than with them” (Anonymous, 2020)²⁸. The author suggests a radical rethink about how to tackle such an approach due to its prevalence. And encourage the international development community to fund community development programs through LCs and their decentralised structures. Efforts should be made for donor agencies and their local partner organisations to increase the role of LCs and the lower level assemblies and to place more excellent value on their expertise and knowledge where appropriate and help strengthen their capacity where necessary. Rather than create well-equipped parallel development structures locally with well-paid officials, donor agencies and their local partners should integrate their development plans into LC processes and activities and channel their development funds to decentralised systems.

Remuneration, Meetings and Allowances

As community level co-ordinating structures and considering the support VDCs and WDCs perform in ensuring the multilevel planning process takes off the ground, there is an urgent need for a legally prescribed remuneration for selected VDC positions or to defray their time spent in certain activities. Such a policy should consider at least 12-month prescribed meeting allowance to members for taking part in the meeting/activities. This will go a long way to make sure the operational sustainability of the groups guaranteed and their active participation in the development planning and implementation process of their communities. It will not only serve as an incentive but defray and compensate the time, energy and other resources members spend on volunteering for their community. Instead of leaving open the times, places and intervals of VDC meeting and to the decision of its membership, for the sustainable activity and participatory village development decision-making, their should be legally mandated VDCs meeting for at least once in a month.

²⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/15/the-aid-sector-must-do-more-to-tackle-its-white-supremacy-problem> (10th August 2020).

Coordination, Funding and Capacity Building

As decentralised village development institutions with legally sanctioned functions, duties and powers, VDCs should be supported to become economically viable and functionally competent to ensure sustainability. VDCs should be assisted to engage in income-generating activities, the proceeds of which could be used to finance their activities and incentivise their membership. Based on their proximity to communities and contextual knowledge, VDCs are better positioned to efficiently and effectively exercise and coordinate some LC revenue collection powers and activities on their behalf at the village level. Some of the present LC functions such as the imposition of service charges at the village level, charging of fees and levy of certain taxes and rates could be delegated to VDCs for ease of coordination with the councils performing their oversight function of monitoring and supervision. Donor agencies and their local partner organisations should be strongly encouraged to channel funds for village projects through VDCs and together with LCs help build their capacities in areas where they demonstrate deficiencies. NGOs and other CBOs should be encouraged very strongly to collaborate with VDCs throughout the project cycle management. At the same time, LCs and local level civil servants must be enabled to also abide by the directives given in the LGAct and other decentralised governance laws.

Further research/Study Areas

It would be of policy, legal and regulatory interests to research on the potential institutional sustainability threat of the keeping regional governor offices in the case of the Gambia and Provincial Secretaries and District Officers in the case of Sierra Leone. These are some of the remnants of British colonial legacy of indirect rule system of governance. In terms of administrative expenditure it would be important to understand the impact of maintaining these institutions have support for the operations and maintenance of services of local governments, their functions of monitoring and inspection activities of local authorities, the exercise of executive powers, advisory role and coordination of all administrative activities and services of decentralised structures and all local level staff of MDAs, and the continued funding of decentralised development institutions like the VDCs.

The maintenance of certain features of colonial administrative legacy such as offices of regional governors/provincial secretaries and district officers have a heavy financial

burden and gross administrative bottleneck on post-colonial local governance system of West Africa. Similarly, the upholding of indigenous chieftaincy political-administrative unit has a potential threat on the responsiveness of decentralized local governments and intergovernmental fiscal transfer frameworks. The government's maintenance of this old political-administrative arrangement alongside LCs and their decentralised development planning structures has rendered them weak in terms of their performance in community development. The by-passing and marginalisation of the decentralized systems by NGOs, CBOs and governments also contribute to the poor devolution design and other numerous challenges. Again, the funding of parallel-structures by donor agencies to undertake activities which are already being undertaken by the LCs and their decentralised structures on the ground add insult to injury.

Traditional authorities such as the district/section/paramount chiefs in the eyes of national-level politicians are both politically and socially significant and influential than the LC chairpersons. In fact, for most national-level political and bureaucratic figures chieftain council is the most legitimate and recognised governance and development institution at the local level compared to the LCs. And just like the British colonial/political officers, modern-day national-level political figures and bureaucrats maintain an advisory relationship with the chieftaincy political and administrative unit more than the local government organisational unit. Further research into all of these would be necessary to understand the extent to which the upholding of the old political-administrative setup/unit has on the adequate financing and performance of LCs and the sustainable active participation of decentralised development institutions in CDD.

It would be of policy relevance to research the sustainability threat the opposition of traditional chieftaincy elites to VDCs' coordination role of multilevel planning process and serving as an entry point for all development intervention at the village level has on VDC sustainability.

There is a need to comprehend how the bypassing and marginalising of LCs and their decentralised structures in favour of traditional authorities/chiefs impact the sustainable exercising of their statutory legislative and executive responsibilities. And how it affects LCs' sustained support for the operations and maintenance of services and continued funding of decentralised development institutions like the VDCs.

Understanding the potential sustainability threat, the creation of a well-equipped parallel structure with well-paid officials have on decentralised development institutions like the VDCs, and WDCs is a significant policy interest worth researching on.

Understand the potential sustainability threat the existence of longstanding village development institutions have on VDCs as modern decentralised development institutions is yet a vital policy interest worth researching on.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Survey Questionnaire

Survey Identifier Information			
Q1. Household ID	County/region:		HH Name:
	District/ WDC:		Village Name:
Q2. Date/Time of Interview:	a. (DD/MM/YY)	b. (24 hr clock)	
Q3. Enumerator's Name	First Name:	Last Name:	Tel#:

Q4. Name of respondent	First Name:		Last Name:		Tel:
Q5. Sex of respondent	M	F			
Q6. Age of respondent	a. 15-25	b. 26-35	c. 36-45	d. 46-55 5. 56-65	e. 66 and above
Q7. Religion	a. Christianity	b. Islam	c. African Traditional Religion	d. Other	
Q8. Highest level of education achieved	a. Never	b. Prima	c. Junio	d. Senior	e. Tertiary Edu.

	been to school	ry Edu	r Sec. Edu.	Sec . Edu.	
Q9. Current Marital Status	a. Never Mar.	b. Marr.	c. Livin g toget her	d. Wi do we d	e. Divo rced/ Separa ted
Q10. Ethnic Group	a. Mandi ngo	b. Fula	c. Wolo f	d. Jol a	e. Sarah ule
	f. Manja go	g. Other (ment ion)			
Q11. How long have you been living in this village?	a. Not born here, but living here for less than 10yrs			b. Bor n her e and nev er mo ved	
	c. Not born here, but living here for			d. Ca n't rem em ber (C	

	more than 10yrs			R) or Do n't Know (DK)	
Q12. Occupational/Professional Situation	a. Driver	b. Trade r	c. Tailor	d. Ho use wif e	e. Farme r
	f. Mason	g. Carpe nter	h. Other		

A: Understanding the Village Development Committee (VDC)			
A13a. Does your village currently have a Village Development Committee?			
a. Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. No <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. Don't Know (DK)/Can't Remember (CR) <input type="checkbox"/>			
A13b. (IF YES) How long does the VDC exist?			
a. 0-10 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. 10-15 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. 15-20 yrs. <input type="checkbox"/>			
d. 21yrs. and above <input type="checkbox"/>			
e. Other (mention) <input type="checkbox"/>			
f. DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A14. Who initiated the VDC in your village?			

a. CDD project <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. Village head and his council of elders <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. An NGO <input type="checkbox"/>			
d. People of the village <input type="checkbox"/>			
e. Local government Council <input type="checkbox"/>			
f. Central Government <input type="checkbox"/>			
g. Other (Specify)			
h. CR/DK <input type="checkbox"/>			
A15. What was the initial reason(s) for the institution of the VDC in your village?			
a. Respond to a seasonal or onetime problem/emergency relief <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. Facilitate the implementation of a donor funded project <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. Fulfil the requirement of the Local Government Act <input type="checkbox"/>			
d. For village development planning and the local entry point for all development assistance to the village <input type="checkbox"/>			
e. Other (Specify)			
f. DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A16. How are members of the VDC Selected?			
a. Nomination by clan/constituent/group being represented <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. Election by residents of the village at a meeting <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. Selection by the village head <input type="checkbox"/>			
d. Selection/nomination by residents of the village at a meeting <input type="checkbox"/>			
e. Other (Specify)			
f. DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A17a. Are executive of your VDC elected?			
a. Yes <input type="checkbox"/>			
b. No <input type="checkbox"/>			
c. DK <input type="checkbox"/>			
A17b. (IF YES) Is there usually just one person standing in the election for a particular post or are the polls usually contested, with more than one person standing?			

Usually one person <input type="checkbox"/>			
Usually contested <input type="checkbox"/>			
Varies/depends <input type="checkbox"/>			
No election took place yet <input type="checkbox"/>			
DK <input type="checkbox"/>			
A17c. (IF YES) How is the election conducted? <input type="checkbox"/>			
Secret ballot <input type="checkbox"/>			
Open ballot <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other [Specify]			
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A17d. (IF YES) Who conducts the election?			
The village chief and council of elders <input type="checkbox"/>			
Electoral commission <input type="checkbox"/>			
Local council staff <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other (Specify)			
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A17e. (IF NO) How are leaders Selected?			
Nomination by VDC members themselves <input type="checkbox"/>			
Selection by the village head <input type="checkbox"/>			
Selection by the councillor/Local Council <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other (Specify)			
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>			
A18. This table lists the composition and representation of certain VDCs in some countries. For each of the identified composition and representation listed, could you tell me whether or not it applied to your VDC?			
	A p p l i	Do esn 't app ly	D K

	e d		
Selection of VDC members			
a. One male and one female representing each clan in the village			
b. A representative of youth groups in the village			
c. One male and one female representing each community-based organisation			
Composition of VDC Members			
d. Chairperson selected from among the members of the committee			
e. Secretary selected from among the members of the committee			
f. Vice chairperson selected from among the members of the committee			
g. Treasurer selected from among the committee members			
h. Other (mention)			
A19. This table lists some qualifications required for selecting representatives for VDC membership in different nations. For each of the identified qualifications listed, could you tell me whether or not it applied to your VDC?			
	A p p l i e d	Do esn 't app ly	D K
a. Come from a leading lineage/prominent family			
b. Resident of the village			
c. Have time and resources & willing to work for the village			
d. Can read and write in English Language			
e. Civil/public servants in the village			

f. A staff of CBO/NGO based in the village			
g. Persons who owe no taxes and rates arrears			
h. Persons not been held to have misappropriated public fund/property			
i. Other (mention)			

A20. This card lists some of the functions of Village Development Committees (VDCs) elsewhere in the world. For each of the identified functions listed, could you tell me whether or not it applied to your VDC?			
	A p p l i e d	Do esn 't app ly	D K
a. Identifies village development needs			
b. Prioritises village development needs			
c. Implements and manages development plans and projects			
d. Raise, co-ordinate and manages financial resources at village level			
e. Mobilise community for participation in development activities			
f. Develops appropriate plans for addressing local needs			
g. Supports and strengthens all development oriented sociocultural groups within the community			

B: VDC & Inclusive Representation & Decision Making
B21. Could you tell me, over the past five years or so, how often has your VDC organised any of the following meetings in your village in which you, a member of your household or your neighbour was invited to participate?

	Oft en	Oc cas ion all y	Rarel y	Ne ver	N o t a p p l i c a b l e
a. Called for/organised a consultative meeting					
b. Organised a project or program planning or feedback meeting					
c. Selecting a committee for a task					
d. Select members of the VDC					
e. Meet a visiting government or NGO agent					
f. Information sharing or advocacy meeting					
B22. I would like you to tell me, the statement that best describes your views about the attitude of your VDC members regarding participatory and inclusive decision making?					
	Agr ee stro ngl y	Ag ree	Disa gree	Dis agr ee stro ngl y	D K

a. All people in the village have been permitted to take part in important decisions, even if they don't understand the issues or are new to the community					
b. Only those who understand the issues very well have been allowed to take part in important decisions.					
c. Women do not have equal rights and do not receive the same treatment as elderly men in making important decisions					
d. Youth do not have equal rights and do not receive the same treatment as elderly men in making important decisions					
e. Only men community leaders have been allowed to take part in important decisions					
B23. I am going to read out some social groups found in a typical village setting, all of which should have a representative in your VDC. I would like you to tell me, from the card which statement best describes your view about the nature of representation in your VDC.					
	Ag ree stro ngl y	Ag ree	Disa gree	Dis agr ee stro ngl y	D K
a. Youth groups represented					

b. Ethnic minorities /all ethnic groups represented					
c. Strangers/migrants represented					
d. Differently able people					
e. Women groups represented					
f. Religious minorities/all religious groups represented					
g. Other (specify)					

C: VDC Participation and Performance Under Donor Funded CDD Institutional Building/Strengthening Program					
C24. Now I'd like us to talk about the participation and performance of VDC during foreign aid CDD program some years ago. I would like you to tell me which of the statements on the card best describes the roles played by your VDC during this period in this village.					
OUT	Applied	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. Community mobilization					
b. Resource mobilization					
c. Design and planning					
d. Monitoring					
e. Evaluation and reflection					
f. Project implementation and management					
g. Other					

C25. Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your VDC's performance during foreign aid CDD activities carried out in this village some years ago?					
Very satisfied []					
Satisfied []					
Dissatisfied []					
Very dissatisfied []					
Other (SPECIFY) []					
DK/CR []					
C26. Would you say your VDC was...					
...very active, []					
Fairly active, []					
not very active []					
Or, not at all active at finding solutions to village development issues/problems?					
C27. (IF ACTIVE) I would like you to tell me which of the statements on the card best describes your views about the key features of donor-funded CDD program institutional building initiatives, which resulted in the sustained participation and performance of your VDC in village development during this period.					
	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	DK
a. Funding for small scale community projects					
b. Community participatory designing and					

planning of projects					
c. Transfer and control of projects resources to the community					
d. Community contribution of labour or funds in the implementation of projects					
e. Community management and supervision of contractors of the projects					
f. Community operation and maintenance of completed projects					
g. Methodical monitoring and evaluation of program processes and outcomes					
h. Invest in appropriate capacity					

building of community representatives & CBOs					
i. Rules governing communities' access to resources are simple, clear & transparent					
j. Access to information on market opportunities, available support resources, and on their productive and efficient use by communities					
k. Key actors at all levels are rewarded for performance					
l. Availability of temporary program and institutional support services					

j. Other (Specify)					
-----------------------	--	--	--	--	--

D: VDC Participation and Performance in Village Development Initiatives without Donor Funding

D28. Could you tell me, how often over the past five years or so have you or any of your family members participated in any of the identified village development initiatives that could be organised by your VDC/heard that your VDC has initiated any of the following?

	O ft en	Occasion ally	Rar ely	Ne ve r	N ot ap pl ic ab le
a. Rebuild a primary school or health clinic					
b. Organize road brushing					
c. Re-grade a local road					
d. Dig or repair a well or hand-pipe for water					
e. Increasing agricultural productivity/services					
f. Rebuild a church or mosque					
g. Capacity building					
h. Natural resource management services					
i. Social services					

D29. This card lists some of the institutions who could initiate any of the above village development projects. For each of the possible initiators listed, could you

tell me who often initiates development in your village or how often development is initiated in your village?

	O ft en	Occasion ally	Rar ely	Ne ve r	N ot ap pl ic ab le
a. VDC in partnership with local government and other supportive institutions					
b. VDC in partnership with the local governments					
c. VDC in partnership with other supportive institutions					
d. VDC members through another parallel structure (state) ^[] _{SEP}					
e. VDC members direct to government ^[] _{SEP}					
f. VDC members direct to NGOs and donors ^[] _{SEP}					
g. VDC members themselves					
h. Government just brought the development					
i. NGO/Donors just brought the development ^[] _{SEP}					
j. The local government just brought it					
k. Other (Specify)					

D30. This table lists some of the agents of development. For each of the agents listed, could you tell me who is responsible for ensuring that development in your village takes place?

	A pp lie d	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. Central Government					
a. Local Government					
c. Member of Parliament					
d. NGOs					
e. Community through VDC					
f. Political leaders					
g. Other (specify)					

D31. This table lists some of the possible development challenges. For each of the challenges listed, could you tell me which challenges are facing development in this village?

	A pp lie d	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. Inadequate money					
b. Interference by central government					
c. Inadequate human resources					
d. Political interference					
e. Corruption					
f. Inadequate council support					
g. Other (specify)					

D32. This table lists some of the possible agents of development. For each of the agents listed, could you tell me the one you think is responsible for tackling the above development challenges facing this village?

	A pp lie d	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. Government					
b. Member of Parliament					
c. Community members					
d. Political leaders					
e. NGOs					
f. Other (specify)					

D33. This card lists some of the possible roles/function of VDCs in development in your village. For each of the listed functions, could you tell me the one you think has been the role of your VDC in village development so far?

	A pp lie d	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. Community mobilization					
b. Resource mobilization					
c. Design and planning					
d. Monitoring					
e. Evaluation and reflection					
f. None					
g. Other (Specify)					

D34. This card lists some of the possible agents/agencies that could monitor/supervise the activities of VDCs in development in your village. For each of the listed agents or agencies, could you tell me the one who monitors the VDC

throughout the project cycle management to ensure proper usage of resources and quality execution of work?					
	A pp lie d	Doesn't apply	DK		
a. District assembly officials					
b. NGO and donors					
c. Government Departments					
d. MPs/NAMs					
e. Community members					
f. WDCs					
g. None					
h. Others (Specify)					
D35. For any supervisor above, how frequent was their monitoring visits?					
a. Daily <input type="checkbox"/>					
b. Monthly <input type="checkbox"/>					
c. Weekly <input type="checkbox"/>					
d. Once in a while <input type="checkbox"/>					
e. Once <input type="checkbox"/>					
f. Never <input type="checkbox"/>					
g. Other (Specify)					
h. Do not Know <input type="checkbox"/>					
D36. Do you think the VDC is doing enough to initiate sustainable developments?				Ye s	N o
D37. (IF NO) What improvements should be made?			Ap pli ed	D oe sn 't ap ply	D K
a. They should involve community at all levels					

b. The development should be demand driven					
c. They should not be interfered by ^{[[]]} politics ^{[[]]}					
d. They should intensify monitoring					
e. They should ensure that there is no theft of operational resources					
f. Other (Specify)					
D38. Would you say that the VDC performance in ensuring village development has been better than you expected, about the same as you expected, or worse than you expected since the end of donor-funded CDD project?					
Much better <input type="checkbox"/>					
Better <input type="checkbox"/>					
Same <input type="checkbox"/>					
Worse <input type="checkbox"/>					
Much worse <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK <input type="checkbox"/>					
D39. As a quasi-formal community institution or civic group to raise village development needs or problems, how much efforts in the past 5 years would you say your VDC has taken to raise issues of concern to the village ...					
...a lot, <input type="checkbox"/>					
some, <input type="checkbox"/>					
very little, <input type="checkbox"/>					
or none at all? <input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (SPECIFY) <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>					
D40. Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you your VDC's performance now?					
Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (SPECIFY) <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>					

D41. Would you say your VDC is now...					
...very active, []					
Fairly Active, []					
not very, []					
or, not at all active at finding solutions to village development issues/problems? []					
D42. (IF NOT ACTIVE or NOT VERY ACTIVE) This card lists some of the challenges mentioned by some people as to why VDCs might not be able to durably participate/active in development planning at the village level now. For each of the reason listed, could you tell me whether or not it applied to your VDC?					
	Ap pli ed	D oe sn 't ap pl y	D K		
a. Absence of or weak supporting institutions (public, private and NGO)					
b. Shortage of necessary technical, managerial and financial skills					
c. Insufficient financial resources					
d. Lacking legal revenue & taxing powers and control over revenue allocations					
e. Committee members preoccupied with searching for income opportunities to meet family obligations					
f. Lack of wages or allowances to defray/compensate the time and energy of members					
g. Infrequent interaction among local administrative units (VDCs, WDCs and local councils)					

h. Unsuitable planning, procedures and management function for the existing VDC capabilities			
i Resistance or lack of cooperation from traditional elites (tribal, religious) and some local leaders			
j. Limited availability of dynamic civil society able to engage effectively with local government			
k. Insufficient comprehensible information on local council use of tax resources			
l. VDC structure and procedures are unfamiliar, alien and imposed on villages			
m. Mushrooming /setting up of parallel development committees			
n. VDC is often understood as a seasonal organisation to respond to a seasonal problem			
o. Illiteracy and inadequate capacity building			
p. Weak leadership structure and holding of multiple leadership positions			
q. Overlap in organisational function between VDC and other government bodies			
r. Misappropriation of development funds			
s. Lack of trust among members or would-be members			
t. Political Interference			
u. Other (Specify)			
D43. (IF VERY ACTIVE, or FAIRLY ACTIVE) This card lists some opportunities/good situations/solutions mentioned by some people as necessary conditions for VDCs to durably participate/become active in development planning at the village level. For each of the solutions/situations/opportunities listed, could you tell me whether or not it applied to your VDC?			
	Ap pli ed	D oe sn 't	D K

		ap pl y	
a. Availability of Supporting institutions (public, private and NGO)			
b. Availability of necessary technical, managerial and financial skills			
c. Sufficient financial resources			
d. Having legal revenue & taxing powers and control over revenue allocations			
e. Committee members have access to income opportunities to meet family obligations			
f. Put committee members on either wages or allowances to defray/compensate the time and energy of members			
g. Frequent interaction among local administrative units (VDCs, WDCs and local councils)			
h. Suitable planning, procedures and management function for the existing VDC capabilities			
i VDC members getting cooperation from traditional elites (tribal, religious) and some local leaders			
j. Availability of dynamic civil society able to engage effectively with local governments			
k. Sufficient comprehensible information on local council use of tax resources			
l. Simplified VDC structure and procedures that is familiar/similar to functional village institutions/association/clubs			
m. Discouraging the setting up of parallel development committees in villages			
n. VDC to be understood as a permanent organisation to respond to a recurrent village problem			

o. Constant literacy and adequate capacity building program			
p. Strong leadership structure and selection of VDC members not holding multiple leadership positions			
q. Clear organisational function between VDC and other government sectors in the region			
r. Prudent and transparent management of village development funds			
s. Building trust among members or would-be members of VDC			
u. Other (Specify)			

SECTION III: Membership of an Informal Village Institution/Association					
H44a. Are there any informal clubs or associations in this village?					
labour sharing club <input type="checkbox"/>					
religious association <input type="checkbox"/>					
trade-union <input type="checkbox"/>					
sports club <input type="checkbox"/>					
staff association <input type="checkbox"/>					
No, there is none <input type="checkbox"/>					
credit & savings association <input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>					
entertainment club <input type="checkbox"/>					

H44b. Are you presently a member of any of these clubs/associations?					
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>					
No <input type="checkbox"/>					
H44c. Have you ever been a member of any of these clubs/associations?					
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>					
No <input type="checkbox"/>					
H45. How long has the identified informal club or association existed in your Village?					
1-10 years <input type="checkbox"/>					
11-20 years <input type="checkbox"/>					
21-30 years <input type="checkbox"/>					
31 and above <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>					
H46. In general terms, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your club or association?					
Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK/CR <input type="checkbox"/>					
H47. Would you say you are ...					
...very active, <input type="checkbox"/>					
...fairly, <input type="checkbox"/>					
...not very, <input type="checkbox"/>					
Or, not at all active in the club/association? <input type="checkbox"/>					

H48. Have you ever held any office, been on any committees, been a delegate, or held any other official position in the club or association?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>					
No <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK <input type="checkbox"/>					

H49. For each of the clubs/associations that you are a member, could you tell me whether or not most members regularly attend meetings or events of such a group? Would you say most of you take part in...

...all the club's/group's activities? <input type="checkbox"/>					
...most of the club's/group's activities? <input type="checkbox"/>					
...a few of the club's/group's activities? <input type="checkbox"/>					
...none of the club's/group's activities? <input type="checkbox"/>					

H50. What were the main reasons that you first became involved with this club/association? (PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM)

a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					

H51a. Are the leaders or office holders of the club/group elected

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>					
No <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK					

H51b. (IF YES) Is there usually just one person standing in the election for a particular post or are the elections usually contested, with more than one person standing?					
Usually one person					
Usually contested					
Varies/depends					
DK					
H52. Would you say that this club/group has been better than you expected, about the same as you expected, or worse than you expected when you first became associated with it?					
Much better <input type="checkbox"/>					
Better <input type="checkbox"/>					
Same <input type="checkbox"/>					
Worse <input type="checkbox"/>					
Much worse <input type="checkbox"/>					
DK <input type="checkbox"/>					
H53. What are the functions or activities of your club/group?					
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
H54. I would like you to tell me which of the statements on the card best describes your view about the reasons for a high participation rate in your informal village organisations.					
	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	DK
a. Failure to attend/participate is sanctionable					

b. Transparent and accountable funds management system					
c. Creation of mutual obligations and mutual benefits					
d. High social and cultural embeddedness of its mode of operation					
e. Local community ownership-idea evolved endogenously					
f. Rule enforcement and monitoring is based on agreement of community					
g. Responsive to informed demand that is to solve participants own needs					
h. Fits local conditions, cultural values, and available					

operation and maintenance capacity					
i. Organisations have control over resources					
j. Endogenous functional and structural arrangements					
k. Other (Specify)					

Appendix Two: FGD Guide for CBOs

Knowledge of the Existence of VDCs

Q:1. Existence of VDCs

Q:2. Composition, selection processes, qualifications and different positions in the VDCs?

Q: 3. Do you know the functions/roles of VDCs? Please mention them

Inclusive Decision Making & Representation

Q: 1. Are VDCs representative of all the different social groups in villages?

Q: 2. Are VDC meetings where important decisions are made usually participatory and inclusive?

Q: 3. Do VDCs interact with other CBOs during village development activities (planning, execution and monitoring)

Assessing Participation & Performance of VDCs under Donor Funded Programs

Q: 1. What were the roles played by VDCs during donor-funded CDD intervention some years ago?

Q: 2. (IF THE ANSWER TO THE ABOVE QUESTION IS YES) Why were VDCs active during CDD program intervention?

Assessing sustained Participation & Performance of VDCs in Village Development

Q: 1. In the past 5 years or so/after the end of donor-funded CDD program, are the VDCs able to perform their roles effectively?

Q: 2. What other roles do you suggest VDCs to do to satisfy the developmental needs of villages and as well become active?

Q: 3. Do you/other community organisations work with the VDCs and how?

Q: 4. What are the weaknesses of VDCs in this district?

Q: 5. What are the problems faced by the VDCs in sustainably participating in/initiating community-driven development?

Q: 6. What are the challenges that you/other institutions or CBOs face as you/they work with VDCs?

- Q: 7. In your opinion, who is the cause of these challenges?
- Q: 8. How can you solve these problems?
- Q: 9. How do you think these problems are affecting your performance?
- Q: 10. In your view, how do you think could these problems be solved?
- Q: 11. Who should be responsible for handling these problems?
- Q: 12. What are your feelings about the performance of VDCs?
- Q: 13. Give any advice that you may give to the VDCs to become effective?

Interaction among Local Administrative Units

- Q: 1. How is the relationship between VDCs and other local government structures (the council, WDCs, district chiefs and the village chiefs)?
- Q: 2. Which support services do local councils provide for the sustainable functioning and participation of VDCs in development?
- Q: 3. What are the weaknesses of the councils in community development support to VDCs?
- Q: 4. What are the challenges faced by the local councils in fulfilling these functions?

Principles for Institutional Sustainability and Effectiveness

- Q: 1. Are there policies and enforceable regulations in place that support local initiatives and laws that protect community rights?
 - Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 2. Do councils/other organisations engage in capacity building/enhancement of VDCs to ensure they undertake the necessary tasks?
- Q: 3. Do VDCs have institutionalised leadership structures and functions for continuity?
 - Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 4. Do VDCs have access to vital development planning information?
 - Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 5. Do VDCs have access to transparent and straightforward grant acquisition processes?
- Q: 6. Does the membership of VDCs have strong and consistent incentives for performance?
- Q: 7. Do VDCs benefit from constant monitoring and coaching either from the councils, other community institutions or NGOs?

Q: 8. Has there been any deliberate sustainability strategy in place for VDCs after being set up or revamped?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Party Affiliation

Q: 1. Do you think VDCs are affiliated to a specific party?

Parallel Structures

Q: 1. Do you have parallel structures to VDCs in villages in this district?

Q: 2. How do you work with them?

Q: 3. What challenges are you facing because of their existence?

Literacy of The VDC Members

Q: 1. Do you know educational qualification considered in selecting VDC members?

Q: 2. Do you have challenges in working with people who are illiterate in the VDCs?

What are they?

Membership of an Informal Village Institution/Association

Q: 1. Are there any longstanding informal clubs or associations in villages of this district?

Q: 2. What are the reasons that people join these clubs/associations?

Q: 3. Are these clubs/associations participatory and inclusive?

Q: 4. What are the functions or activities of these clubs/groups?

Appendix Three: KII Guide for Mixed Stakeholders

Knowledge of The Existence VDCs

Q: 1. Are VDCs in this district active and functional?

Q: 2. Do you know the composition, selection processes, qualifications and different positions in VDCs?

Q: 3. Do you know the functions/roles of VDCs?

Q: 4. To which structures do VDCs report?

Q: 5. As an organization/institution, do you recognize the existence of VDCs?

Inclusive Decision Making & Representation

Q: 1. Are VDCs in this district representative of all the different social groups in villages?

Q: 2. Are VDC meetings in this area where vital decisions are made usually participatory and inclusive?

Q: 3. Do VDCs interact with other CBOs during village development activities (planning, execution and monitoring)?

Assessing Participation & Performance of VDCs Under Donor Funded Program

Q: 1. What were the roles played by VDCs during donor-funded CDD intervention some years ago?

Q: 2. Why were VDCs active during CDD program intervention?

Assessing sustained Participation & Performance of VDCs in Village Development

Q: 1. If you know the roles of VDCs, in the past 5 years or so/after the end of donor-funded CDD program, are VDCs able to perform these roles effectively?

Q: 2. What other roles would you suggest VDCs should do to satisfy the community's developmental needs of villages and become active as well?

Q: 3. How do you work with the VDCs in this district?

Q: 4. In your opinion, what do you think are the challenges of VDCs in this area?

Q: 5. How do these challenges affect you as you work with the VDCs?

Q: 6. Who is the cause of these challenges?

Q: 7. What do you think are the difficulties faced by VDCs in terms of sustainable participation in/initiation of community-driven development programs?

Q: 8. In your opinion, how can these problems be solved?

Q: 9. How do you think these problems are affecting your performance?

Q: 10. In your view, who should be responsible for handling these problems?

Q: 11. What are your feelings about the performance of VDCs now?

Q: 12. Give any advice that you may give to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of VDCs?

Interaction among Local Administrative Units

Q: 1. How is the relationship between the VDC and other local government structures (the council, WDC, district chiefs and the village chiefs)?

Q: 2. Which support services do local councils provide for the sustainable functioning and participation of VDCs in village development?

Q: 3. What do you believe are the weakness of the councils in community development?

Q: 4. What are the challenges faced by the local councils in fulfilling their functions?

Principles for Institutional Sustainability and Effectiveness

Q: 1. Are there policies and enforceable regulations in place that support local initiatives and laws that protect community rights?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 2. Do councils/other organisations engage in capacity building/enhancement of VDCs to ensure they undertake the necessary tasks?

Q: 3. Do VDCs have institutionalised leadership structures and functions for continuity?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 4. Do VDCs have access to vital development planning information?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 5. Do VDCs have access to transparent and straightforward grant acquisition processes?

Q: 6. Does the membership of VDCs have strong and consistent incentives for performance?

Q: 7. Do VDCs benefit from constant monitoring and coaching either from the councils, other community institutions or NGOs?

Q: 8. Has there been any deliberate sustainability strategy in place for VDCs after being set up or revamped?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Party Affiliation

Q: 1. Do you think VDCs are affiliated to a specific party?

Emerging Parallel Structures

Q: 1. Do you have parallel structures to VDCs in villages in this district?

Q: 2. Do they work directly work with the VDCs?

Q: 3. What challenges are you facing because of their existence?

Literacy of the VDC Members

Q: 1. Do you know educational qualification considered in selecting VDC members?

Q: 2. Do you have challenges in working with people who are illiterate in the VDC?
What are they?

Q: 3. Have you ever or another CBOs/NGOs provided training on management of VDCs? If yes by whom and when?

Membership of an Informal Village Institution/Association

Q: 1. Are there any longstanding informal clubs or associations in villages of this district?

Q: 2. What are the reasons that people join these clubs/associations?

Q: 3. Are these clubs/associations participatory and inclusive?

Q: 4. What are the functions or activities of these clubs/groups?

Appendix Four: KII Guide for VDC Members

Knowledge of the Existence of VDC

- Q: 1. Is your VDC active and functional in village development?
- Q: 2. When was your VDC set up and by who?
- Q: 3. What is the composition, selection processes, qualifications and different positions in VDCs?
- Q: 4. As one of the VDC members, do you know your roles
- Q: 5. To which structures do your VDC report?

Inclusive Decision Making & Representation

- Q: 1. Is your VDC representative of all the different social groups in the villages?
- Q: 2. Are your VDC meetings where important decisions are made usually participatory and inclusive?
- Q: 3. Does your VDC interact with other CBOs during village development activities (planning, execution and monitoring)?

Assessing Participation & Performance of VDCs Under Donor Funded Program

- Q: 1. What were the roles played by your VDC during donor-funded CDD intervention some years ago?
- Q: 2. Why was your VDC active during CDD program intervention?

Assessing Sustained Participation & Performance of VDCs in Village Development

- Q: 1. Since you know the roles of your VDC, in the past 5 years or so, are you able to perform these roles effectively?
- Q: 2. What other roles do you suggest VDC should do to satisfy the community's developmental needs and become active?
- Q: 3. Which group of people, individuals, government departments, NGOs and many more do you work with? NGOs, individuals.
- Q: 4. As a member, what do you think are the weaknesses of your VDC?
- Q: 5. What are the challenges that you encounter as VDC as you do your work?
- Q: 6. In your opinion, who is the cause of these challenges?

Q: 7. How do you think these problems are affecting your performance and sustainability?

Q: 8. What do you believe are the problems faced by your VDC in terms of sustainable participation in/initiation of community-driven development programs?

Q: 9. How do you think could these problems be solved?

Q: 10. In your opinion, who should be responsible for handling these problems?

Q: 11. What are your feelings about the performance of your VDC?

Q: 12. Could you give any advice for the effectiveness of your VDC in our community.

Interaction among Local Administrative Units

Q: 1. How is the relationship between your VDC and other local government structures (the council, WDC, district chiefs and the village chiefs)

Q: 2. Which support services do local councils provide for the sustainable functioning and participation of your VDC in development?

Q: 3. What do you believe are the weaknesses of the councils in community development?

Q: 4. What are the challenges faced by the local councils in fulfilling these functions?

Principles for Institutional Sustainability and Effectiveness

Q: 1. Are there policies and enforceable regulations in place that support local initiatives and laws that protect community rights?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 2. Does your VDC benefit from capacity building or enhancement activity from either your local council/other organisations to ensure you undertake the necessary tasks?

Q: 3. Does your VDC have institutionalised leadership structures and functions for continuity?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 4. Does your VDC have access to vital development planning information?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Q: 5. Does your VDC have access to transparent and straightforward grant acquisition processes?

Q: 6. Does the membership of your VDC have strong and consistent incentives for performance?

Q: 7. Does your VDC benefit from constant monitoring and coaching either from the councils, other community institutions or NGOs?

Q: 8. Has there been any deliberate sustainability strategy in place for your VDC after being set up or revamped?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Emerging Parallel Structures

Q: 1. Do you have other emerging parallel structures in the village that do not directly work with your VDC?

Q: 2. What challenges are you facing because of their existence?

Party Affiliation

Q: 1. To which political party are you and the VDC affiliated?

Literacy and Capacity of VDC Members

Q: 1. What educational qualification is considered in selecting VDC members?

Q: 2. Do you have challenges in working with illiterate people? What are they?

Q: 3. Have you ever been trained in the management of VDC? If yes, by whom?

Membership of an Informal Village Institution/Association

Q: 1. Are there any longstanding informal clubs or associations in your village?

Q: 2. What are the reasons that people join these clubs/associations?

Q: 3. Are these clubs/associations participatory and inclusive?

Q: 4. What are the functions or activities of these clubs/groups?

Appendix Five: KII Guide for WDC Members

Knowledge of the Existence of VDCs

- Q: 1. Are the VDCs in this district active and functional?
- Q: 2. Do you know the composition, selection processes, qualifications and different positions in VDCs?
- Q: 3. Do you know the functions/roles of VDCs?
- Q: 4. Could you describe the reporting structures of the VDCs?
- Q: 5. As a WDC member, do you recognize the existence of VDCs?
- Q: 6. As WDC do you have a representative in the VDCs?

Inclusive Decision Making & Representation

- Q: 1. Are VDCs in this district representative of all the different social groups in villages?
- Q: 2. Are VDC meetings in this area where vital decisions are made usually participatory and inclusive?
- Q: 3. Do VDCs interact with other CBOs during village development activities (planning, execution and monitoring)

Assessing Participation & Performance of VDCs Under Donor Funded Program

- Q: 1. What were the roles played by VDCs during donor-funded CDD intervention some years ago?
- Q: 2. Why were VDCs active during CDD program intervention?

Assessing Sustained Participation & Performance of VDCs in Village Development

- Q: 1. In your own opinion, are VDCs able to perform their roles effectively, in the past 5 years or so?
- Q: 2. What other roles would you suggest VDCs should do to satisfy the community's developmental needs of villages and become active as well?
- Q: 3. How do you work with the VDCs in this district?
- Q: 4. In your opinion, what do you think are the challenges of VDCs in this area?
- Q: 5. How do these challenges affect you as you work with the VDCs?

- Q: 6. In your view, who is the cause of these challenges?
- Q: 7. What do you think are the difficulties faced by VDCs in terms of sustainable participation in/initiation of community-driven development programs?
- Q: 8. In your opinion, how can these problems be solved?
- Q: 9. How do you think these problems are affecting your performance?
- Q: 10. In your opinion, who should be accountable for handling these problems?
- Q: 11. What are your feelings about the performance and sustainability of VDCs now?
- Q: 12. What advice would you give to ensure effectiveness and sustainable participation of VDCs?

Interaction among Local Administrative Units

- Q: 1. How is the relationship between the VDC and other local government structures (the council, WDC, district chiefs and the village chiefs)?
- Q: 2. Which support services do local councils provide for the sustainable functioning and participation of VDCs in village development?
- Q: 3. What do you believe are the weakness of the councils in community development?
- Q: 4. What are the challenges faced by the local councils in fulfilling their functions?

Principles for Institutional Sustainability and Effectiveness

- Q: 1. Are there policies and enforceable regulations in place that support local initiatives and laws that protect community rights?
- Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 2. Do councils/other organisations engage in capacity building/enhancement of VDCs to ensure they undertake the necessary tasks?
- Q: 3. Do VDCs have institutionalised leadership structures and functions for continuity?
- Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 4. Do VDCs have access to vital development planning information?
- Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?
- Q: 5. Do VDCs have access to transparent and straightforward grant acquisition processes?
- Q: 6. Does the membership of VDCs have strong and consistent incentives for performance?

Q: 7. Do VDCs benefit from constant monitoring and coaching either from the councils, other community institutions or NGOs?

Q: 8. Has there been any deliberate sustainability strategy in place for VDCs after being set up or revamped?

Q: a-What impact does this have on performance and sustainability?

Party Affiliation

Q: 1. To which political party is your WDC affiliated?

Q: 2. Do you think VDCs are affiliated to a specific party?

Emerging Parallel Structures

Q: 1. Do you have parallel structures to VDCs in villages in this district?

Q: 2. Do they work directly work with VDCs?

Q: 3. What challenges are you facing because of their existence?

Literacy of the VDC Members

Q: 1. Do you know educational qualification considered in selecting VDC members?

Q: 2. Do you have challenges in working with people who are illiterate in the VDC?

What are they?

Q: 3. Have you ever or another CBOs/NGOs provided training on management of VDCs? If yes by whom and when?

Membership of an Informal Village Institution/Association

Q: 1. Are there any longstanding informal clubs or associations in villages of this district?

Q: 2. What are the reasons that people join these clubs/associations?

Q: 3. Are these clubs/associations participatory and inclusive?

Q: 4. What are the functions or activities of these clubs/groups?

Appendix Six: Curriculum Vitea

Personal Information



Full Names	CEESAY Lamin O.
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Telephone number(s)	+(49)15219267804
E-mail addresses <small>[L] [SEP]</small>	lamin21@yahoo.com/laminoceesay@gmail.com
Date of Birth	09th September, 1979
Place of Birth	Kerewan, North Bank Region, The Gambia
Nationality	Gambian
Civil status	Married
<i>Education and Training</i>	
10/2016-Date	Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany
Specialisation/Study Programs	Doctoral Candidate
10/2012-08/2014	Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany
Specialisation/Study Programs	International Affairs and Public and Non-profit Management
Degree awarded	Master of Public Policy
Thesis Title:	Youth Migration-Motives for a Shift from Predominantly Intra-West Africa Brain and Skill Circulation to European Exodus: Ghana as a Case Study
07/2014	
10/2004-01/2008	University of The Gambia

<p><i>Specialisation/Study Programs</i></p> <p><i>Degree awarded</i></p> <p><i>Thesis Title:</i></p> <p><i>01/2010</i></p>	<p>Development Studies & Sociology</p> <p>BA (Hon) Development Studies and a minor in Sociology</p> <p>Impact of Private Sector in the Attainment of the Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020 Objectives from 1996-2020</p>
<p><i>Professional Trainings</i></p>	
<p><i>10/1999-06/2002</i></p> <p><i>Specialisation/Study Programs</i></p> <p><i>Qualifications</i></p> <p><i>Obtained</i></p> <p><i>Thesis Title:</i></p> <p><i>06/2002</i></p>	<p>School of Education, Gambia College-Brikama Campus</p> <p>Major in English Language and minor in Agricultural Science</p> <p>Higher Teacher's Certificate</p> <p>The Interference of Mandinka in the Learning of English Language (a phonological case study of students in The Gambian Schools)</p>
<p><i>Additional Trainings/Qualifications</i></p>	
<p><i>01/2016</i></p> <p><i>Qualification</i></p> <p><i>Obtained</i></p>	<p>ChildFund International the Gambia</p> <p>M & E Training on M&E system and data collection and analysis</p>
<p><i>Work Experience</i></p>	
<p><i>03/2015-09/2016</i></p> <p><i>Position held</i></p> <p><i>Main activities and responsibilities</i></p>	<p>Child Fund International the Gambia-Radio Gambia</p> <p>Road Kanifing North PMB. No. 2 Banjul-The Gambia</p> <p>Technical Specialist-Grants and Partnership</p> <p><i>Capacity building & Research</i></p> <p>-support building of capacity & strengthening capabilities or skills of relevant staff in various functions through mentoring, training, knowledge/information exchange, experience sharing and technical expertise</p> <p><i>Institutional relations (Partnerships and Grant proposal writing)</i></p> <p>-Cultivate partnership with key institutional donors and with potential ones for new resources; promoting networking, collaboration and engagement with relevant platforms and processes within the national office programme initiatives</p>

-Support the intelligence gathering, positioning of NOs, rapid response to competitive bids, and general project development and negotiations with donors in support of grant acquisition and management

Strategy and planning, Research & Development

-support CSP and ASP processes, in addition to providing technical expertise on concept papers, programme pipelines and proposals development

-support focus on new core programme areas and life stages through working very closely with the Programs and Grant Acquisition and Management (GAM) team and staff in a team approach providing relevant, timely and effective support as required

06/2010-03/2012

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-The Gambia), 105 South Atlantic, Fajara P.O Box 2252 Serrekunda

Programs Officer

Position held
Main activities and responsibilities

Project design and Management & M&E:

-Responsible for program design, budgeting and implementation

-Prepare, submit and follow up on the status of project proposals to donors

-Participated in project evaluations and trainings in collaboration with consultants

-Conducted monitoring visits to project sites to assessed project progress and utilization of project materials

Reporting

-Regular and timely writing and submission of reports (monthly, quarterly and annual) on project implementation, including details of monitoring and evaluation

Financial Management and Supervision

-Maintained adequate records of all financial transactions during programs implementation

	<p>Office Management, Visibility & Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -provided technical support to communities and WANEP-Gambia network members -Managed the WANEP secretariat in the absence of the National Network Coordinator
<p>07/2008-05/2010</p>	<p>SOS Children’s Villages International the Gambia Trust National Office Bakoteh P. O. Box 3269, Serrekunda</p>
<p>Position held</p>	<p>National Administrative and Human Resources Secretary</p>
<p><i>Main activities and responsibilities</i></p>	<p>Office Management, Partnership, Visibility & Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National Administrative Work and follow up on reports, plans and compiling reports, -Writing proposals, MOUs, letters, news articles and correspondences - liaison with all projects, embassies, ministries, partners, visa and license applications -Responsible for logistical matters such as meetings and workshops <p>Staff Management & Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintained and updated the HR database of SOS Children’s Villages the Gambia -Liaised with project heads in preparation of contracts and job descriptions
	<p>Community /Voluntary Work(unpaid)</p>
<p>07/2014-02/2015</p>	<p>Engagement Stiftung and Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, Germany funded</p>
<p>Position Held</p>	<p>Project Coordinator for Commitment Project Award (a community driven project-in Gambia)</p>
<p><i>Main activities and responsibilities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure proper implementation of the project and sustainability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regular and timely writing and submission of project progress reports including details of monitoring and evaluation -Provide technical and advisory support to the community -Maintain adequate records of all financial transactions during program implementation -Liaised and maintained regular communication with Engagement Stiftung and Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, Germany -Conduct monitoring visits to project sites to assessed project progress and utilization of project materials
<p>10/2013-03/2014</p> <p><i>Position Held</i></p> <p><i>Main activities and responsibilities</i></p>	<p>EU-Nopoor Policy Research Project- Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany</p> <p>Policy Consultant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Research and report on EU policy need with regards to poverty alleviation in Africa -Develop appropriate and workable poverty alleviation strategies for EU in Africa -Develop policy advocacy/dissemination strategies in Africa -Provided consultancy support EU-Nopoor Project Researchers on Africa <p>DR. Edgar Aragon-Project Coordinator-Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany- http://.nopoor.eu/ earagon2020@gmail.com</p>
<p>02/2014-03/2014</p> <p><i>Position Held</i></p> <p><i>Main activities and responsibilities</i></p> <p> </p> <p><i>1994-2002</i></p>	<p>NGO Affairs Agency-the Gambia, Banjul</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation Intern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supported in the design of monitoring 2nd quarterly plan -participated in monitoring visits of NGO activities and facilities -report writing -drafted proposal for ICT support for the office <p>The Gambia Red Cross Society</p>

1999-2002	Lend A Hand Society	
	<i>Personal Skills and Competencies</i>	
<i>Language Skills</i>	Mandingo	Mother tongue
	English Language	Full Proficiency
	German	Limited working proficiency
	Arabic	Very Limited Proficiency-Reading
	Wolof	Working Proficiency
<i>Computer Skills</i>	Microsoft Office Tools	Advanced command
	SPSS & MAXQDA	Basic skills
	Mac Operative system	Good command
<i>Social skills</i>	multicultural & multi-religious work experience	
<i>Organizational/soft skills</i>	Robust supervisory abilities and demonstrated capacity of teamwork and of coordination with the relevant actors; sturdy analytical and practical problem-solving skills; very good inter-personal and writing communication skills; ability to organize work efficiently and deliver assignments in a timely manner often under time constraints.	
<i>Technical skills</i>	Software proficiency, Technical writing, Project management, Data analysis.	
<i>Awards and Honours</i>	-African Muslim award-BA -DAAD award MA & PhD -Willy Brandt School of Public Policy Commitment Project Award 2013	
<i>Leisure/Hobbies</i>	Reading, Volleyball, Watch TV, Jogging	
	<i>Field Research Experiences</i>	
<i>01/2016-06/2016</i>	Outcome assessment + Growth & Continuation analysis- Aflatoun International on Youth Social and Financial Education in partnership with ChildFund The Gambia https://aflatoun.app.box.com/v/AflateenFinalEvaluation-Global	

Roles

- Ensure incoming data it is of high quality
- Conduct focus group discussions and key informant interviews (KII)
- Work with MEAL Technical Specialist to support field staff
- Work with the MEAL TS to generate regular briefing report for the national Director and program team

Publications

<https://www.amazon.com/Intraregional-African-Migration-Toward-Europe/dp/3960671253>
<https://www.springerprofessional.de/en/the-influence-of-supra-institutions-in-policy-making-in-developi/16647900>

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