Role of Community Level Facilitators and other Stakeholders in the Formulation and Implementation of Natural Resource Management Plans

R8090 Research Report 1 Revised

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Who Can Help the Peri-urban Poor? (Boafo Yɛ Na)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAG	ActionAid Ghana
AEA	Agricultural Extension Agents
AGRITEX	Agricultural Technology Exhibition
CBUD	Centre for Biodiversity Utilisation and Development
CEDAR	Centre for Development Areas Research
CEDEP	Centre for the Development of People
CLF	Community Level Facilitator
CLW	Community Livestock Worker
COMBAT	Community-Based Anti-Violence Team
COVE	Corporate Village Enterprise
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	District Assembly
DCD	District Co-ordination Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFID	Department For International Development
DPO	District Planning Officer
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FM	Frequency Modulation
GoG	Government of Ghana
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Co-operation
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
KPUI	Kumasi Peri-Urban Interface
MLGRD	Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agricultural
MP	Member of Parliament
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
NBSSI	National Board for Small Scale Industries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRSP	Natural Resource Systems Programme
PEA	Participatory Extension Approach
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
	Programme for Rural Action (Normally written with GTZ)
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REDP	Rural Enterprise Development Project
REV	Rural Education Volunteers

SSS   Senior Secondary School
TDC   Town Development Committee
TRS   Training and Research Services
UK   United Kingdom
UN   United Nations
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
VIP   Village Infrastructure Project
WATSAN   Water and Sanitation
WCARRD   World Commission on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Years of research by teams from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Centre for Development Areas Research (CEDAR), Royal Holloway, University of London in the Kumasi Peri-Urban Interface (KPUI) has revealed a grotesque picture of degradation of the natural environment within the KPUI. In addition, there is glaring increase in the impoverishment and marginalisation of many residents in the KPUI. The problem is exacerbated by the influx of "new entrants" to the KPUI. Apart from increasing the population in the peri-urban communities, many of the "new entrants" take up part of the land which otherwise served as a source of livelihood for the indigenous people to put up their dwelling places.

As part of the efforts to mitigate this deplorable state of affairs, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) in collaboration of researchers from KNUST and CEDAR facilitated the formulation of plans for implementing natural resource management strategies in a manner that will benefit the poor in the KPUI in 2001. The Natural Resource Systems Programme (NRSP) of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) sponsored this project under DFID R7995. Twelve pilot communities participated in the plan formulation process. The plans formulated were based on sustainable livelihood activities that take into account the effective management of natural resources within the KPUI. After the successful formulation of the plans, the NRSP is again sponsoring CEDEP and its collaborators to facilitate, on an experimental basis, the implementation of some of the plans formulated within the 12 selected communities under DFID R8090 ("Boafo Yɛ Na" or BYN).

Very often professionals (normally outsiders) facilitate most community development initiatives. However, the effective implementation of any community project requires the "presence" of a team that can serve as an "eye" for the project. The involvement of people and/or groups at the grassroots, the most important social capital, can, therefore, not be overlooked if one is to be successful in implementing a project which is people-centred. The development of the community level facilitator (CLF) concept for the implementation of livelihood projects that benefit the poor and which take into account the effective management of natural resources in the KPUI is an outcome of this need for peoples' participation in grassroots projects. CEDEP as an organisation was guided by its believe in the value of the individual, power of collective action and community initiative and its participatory approach to action in evolving the CLF concept as an effective tool for community mobilisation and action during the plan preparation process.

The CLFs are individuals within the communities who serve as the conduit between the communities and CEDEP, the District Assemblies (DAs), Rural Banks and other stakeholders and assist in community action during the plan implementation. During the past two and a quarter years, CEDEP and its collaborators have observed, monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of the CLFs in performing the roles assigned to them. The outcome of this assessment is the subject of this report.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to document the structure, operation and performance of the CLFs and to evaluate their collaboration and linkages with other stakeholder institutions.

The key issues addressed are the following:

- *The conceptual framework for the development of the CLF approach, the selection of the CLFs and the building of their capacities*
- *The role and performance of CLFs in facilitating community development initiatives in the peri-urban interface (PUI)*
- *The extent to which CLFs are able to operate as an effective interface between their communities, DAs and other stakeholder institutions*
- *The opportunities and constraints of using CLFs to facilitate development initiatives in the PUI*

Methodology

The pieces of information included in this report are based on a combination of research methods. Baseline studies (using questionnaires and focused group discussions) and needs assessment of the communities offered an opportunity to understand the situations in the communities with respect to community mobilisation and development before the initiation of the pilot livelihood projects. Frequent monitoring visits to the communities to observe livelihood activities and interactions with the CLFs and stakeholders provided information on the changes that have taken place. Some information was extracted by studying reports of stakeholder workshops, livelihood training programmes, quarterly, annual and mid-term reports of both R7995 and R8090. Recent visits to DAs by collaborators and project staff have also helped in obtaining some information for this report. SPSS as well as Le Sphinx lexical analysis tools were used in the analyses of the data from the baseline studies.

Selection and Capacity Building of CLFs

Since the CLFs were expected to play an important role in the plan formulation and implementation processes, their selection was based on well-defined criteria. These criteria were: they should be resident in the communities, they should be available to the project, they should be able to read and write, there should be gender balance in their selection and they should be democratically selected. The selection of CLFs was a community affair and to a large extent the communities followed these selection criteria and this enhanced community acceptance of the CLFs.

Once the CLFs were selected, they were taken through a series of training programmes meant to develop their capacities. The training programmes included those meant to enable them understand and appreciate the nature of the work they were supposed to do (orientation on the project) and their roles as community leaders (facilitators) with enhanced confidence in leadership. They were also given training in some technical areas such as project tracking and business plan preparation. Additionally, they took part in training programmes on different livelihood projects.

Performance Criteria

In order to be able to access the performance of the CLFs with time, some criteria were developed for the evaluation of their performance. The criteria were developed along two main lines: those related to principles of operation of the CLFs and those that have to do with their actual roles. The following are the essential components of the criteria.

(a)   Criteria based on principles of operation:

    (i)   Ensuring participatory approach where the poor in the peri-urban communities make and act on decisions with the backing of critical actors.

    (ii)   Keeping the poor in the peri-urban communities in focus and initiating decision-making processes with them

    (iii)   Ensuring that plans are livelihood based and use natural resources available in the communities concerned

    (iv)   Ensuring a good balance between the participation of people from across all ages and reducing gender inequalities whenever they exist

    (v)   Ensuring collective action and group work

    (vi)   Respect and equal opportunity for the individual regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, race and religion

(b)   Criteria based on roles

    (i)   Inform communities and groups about the project activities

    (ii)   Promote the emergence and strengthening of community groups , which are able to address their problems

    (iii)   Assist communities in analysing their situations and problems, identifying opportunities and options, prioritising the options and help groups prepare business plans

(iv)   Assist the project staff in implementing the project
(v)   Assist communities and community groups implement, monitor and evaluate their activities

Evaluation of the CLFs based on these criteria indicated that whereas some CLFs are performing creditably, others are struggling to find their feet. It was also found that no single CLF meets all the performance criteria. This means the need for constant re-orientation reminders by / from project staff.

Lessons on Performance of CLFs

The development of the capacity of the CLFs became an opportunity of enhanced human capital for the implementation of local level plans. Below is the summary of some of the key lessons related to performance of the CLFs. These lessons are based on both the selection and performance criteria:

- Democratically selected CLFs perform better.
- Committed CLFs do catch up in terms of the technical aspects of their work. For example, some older and less educated CLFs initially had difficulties understanding the business plan preparation process but because of their commitment to their roles as CLFs, they gradually picked up the techniques.
- Younger CLFs are more active than the older ones.
- Younger CLFs are better able to reach out to the younger community members. Similarly, female CLFs are able to enhance the participation of more female community members.
- There is a tendency for CLFs to start seeking benefits. This means it is important not to take their spirit of volunteerism for granted.
- Some CLFs have the tendency to favour relatives and close associates.
- Previous leadership roles of CLFs can influence their performance positively.
- It is important to give the CLFs the right information at the appropriate time if they are to perform creditably.
- CLFs have been able to promote a 'fine' involvement of 'ordinary' community members and community leaders in this socially hierarchical context.
- An initial lower start-up capital allocations is important for drawing in the poor and vulnerable groups for assistance
- A structured training and mentoring system for volunteers (CLFs) is crucial for promoting a strong project presence in peri-urban communities.
- A blend of CLFs of different age and sex is necessary since community members are more drawn to CLFs of the same sex or age as them..

Linkage with District Assemblies and Other Stakeholders

One of the roles that the CLFs were expected to play was to serve as a conduit between the District Assemblies, Rural Banks and other stakeholders and the communities. It was believed that if the CLFs play such a role well, it could lead to opportunities for support from these institutions for community livelihood projects. This could then enhance the chances of sustainability of the projects. The CLFs have not been very successful in playing this role.

Conclusions

The main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- Community level facilitators, when formed, properly trained, monitored and given the required frequent technical backstopping, can serve as an effective tool for community mobilisation and action for development.
- The use of criteria and principles in the selection of the CLFs was very useful because it made them more acceptable and more responsible to their communities. Evidence from this study however, shows that the selection of the CLFs can be more complicated than merely using selection criteria.

- The involvement of CLFs can help to ensure the sustainability of a community project and the replication of such a project within the wider community.
- The participation of CLFs in a project is useful in keeping the maintenance cost of the project down.
- With their knowledge of the community, CLFs are capable of identifying any conflicts that can be detrimental to a project for the necessary remedial action.
- The CLFs can be an effective link between a community and other stakeholders in a development process.
- The development of CLFs to serve as community level facilitators demands that they are committed, tolerant, patient and have the spirit of volunteerism towards the development of their communities.

Recommendations

The CLF concept is an innovative approach at its experimental stage. So far, it is clear that it can succeed if refined based on experience from practise. It is recommended that the concept be further tested in order to definitely establish its usefulness for community development.

The most difficult link to establish in the implementation of the peri-urban livelihood projects is that between the communities and the major stakeholders such as the District Assemblies and the Rural Banks. Whilst the input of a micro finance expert has played a major role in making possible the linkage with rural banks, the linkages with some district assemblies and traditional authorities appear rather difficult and need to be strengthened.

2   INTRODUCTION

2.1   *Background*

This report examines the role of Community Level Facilitators (CLFs), and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of livelihood improvement strategies on the Kumasi Peri-Urban Interface (KPUI). The document is based on the implementation of a project by the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and sponsored by the Natural Resource Systems Programme (NRSP) of the UK's Department of International Development (DFID). Specifically, the report shares the experiences in the use of CLFs in community development projects: what worked, what did not work, reasons why they worked or did not work, steps taken to improve what did not work and recommendations for future users of the projects that would like to involve local people in planning and implementing livelihood improvement activities, with the support of other stakeholders in their communities.

CEDEP, a leading Ghanaian development NGO, in collaboration with researchers from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Centre for Development Areas Research (CEDAR), Royal Holloway, University of London, has been facilitating and observing the implementation of natural resource management plans by twelve communities in the Kumasi Peri-Urban Interface (KPUI). These plans were formulated through extended interaction with principal stakeholders[1], commencing in 2001 under the precursor project, R7995, Natural Resource Management Strategies Implementation Plans (NaRMSIP) for the Kumasi Peri-Urban Poor.

The aim of the current DFID R8090, also known as the Boafo Yɛ Na (BYN) project, is to reduce poverty in the KPUI through the improvement of the livelihoods of people who have been affected by urbanisation. After a number of years of interaction with the communities, they proposed to improve their livelihoods by implementing three action plans as follows: ***Non-farm natural resource based livelihood activities; Farm-based livelihood activities; and Processing of products from the first two.***

The complexity and record of failed research and development interventions, which is also characteristic of previous projects on the KPUI and which left communities demonstrating signs of research fatigue drew attention to the need to fashion out a workable strategy that would instigate more community involvement and deepen ownership. In the process, the Community Level Facilitator (CLF) concept was introduced as a novel strategy for working with communities. The CLFs, who are mostly democratically elected (see section 3.3 below) to liaise between communities and the project team, in addition to facilitating the development of natural resource strategies implementation plans, continue to play key roles in the development and testing of participatory project implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes for livelihood improvement. To date, over 422 households in twelve communities in five districts have been trained and supported to undertake traditional and non-traditional livelihood activities such as; the rearing of grasscutters, rabbits and snails rearing, *Alata* soap[2] production, mushroom cultivation, petty trading, and subsistence farming.

In an attempt to document the structure, operation and performance of CLFs and to evaluate their collaboration and linkages with other stakeholder institutions in the KPUI, this document addresses four key issues as follows:

- ▪ ***The conceptual framework for the development of the CLF approach, the selection of the CLFs and the building of their capacities***
- ▪ ***The role and performance of CLFs in facilitating community development initiatives in the PUI***
- ▪ ***The extent to which CLFs are able to operate as an effective interface between their communities, DAs and other stakeholder institutions***

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[1] The poor who were targeted to benefit from the planning and implementation of natural resource management strategies on the peri-urban interface

[2] A local organic soap used in West Africa and made from soft seed oils (mainly coconut, and palm kennel) and alkali from burnt cocoa pods and other plant products

- ***The opportunities and constraints of using CLFs to facilitate development initiatives in the PUI***

Normally experts and other professionals (often outsiders) facilitate most community development initiatives. The use of CLFs is an alternative strategy, which ensures that local people take facilitation into their own hands, and operate as an interface between their communities, facilitating NGOs, rural banks, District Assemblies (DAs) and the Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCC). This report discusses the CLF concept as an innovation in the peri-urban context, which is crucial for improving the participation of ordinary people in decision-making at the local level.

Section 2 discusses selected literature on social and human capital. Sections 3 and 4 look at the background, development, structure and operation of the CLF concept. The report also discusses the performance of CLFs against the stated principles and roles from the point of view of the project, community and stakeholders in Chapter 5. Then Chapters 6 and 7 look at institutional linkages and the opportunities and constraints of using CLFs within the KPUI, and finally the report ends with the major conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

1.2 Methodological Processes

a. Introduction

For the past ten years or so the people in the KPUI have become part of number of research projects, which have yielded minimal reciprocal benefits to the communities involved. It became necessary therefore to address the research fatigue and the need to implement projects, which will bring direct benefits to the communities in the implementation of any future research based projects in these communities. These factors were taken into account in the planning of Boafo Yɛ Na (DFID R8090). The next two sub-sections discuss the process of data gathering and analysis for this research report.

b. Selection of Communities

Twelve[3] of an initial fifteen communities within the KPUI (in the Ashanti Region of Ghana) were selected to participate in this research project (see Map below). The selection was based on functional and locational considerations with respect to the city of Kumasi, which resulted in two types of peri-urban communities - urbanised and rural peri-urban communities. This is important as it makes room for comparisons between the performances of the CLFs in mobilising community members towards the implementation of the project in the two types of communities.

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[3] Swedru, Asaago, Adagya, Ampabame II, Abrepo, Apatrapa, Esreso, Duase, Maase, Okyerekrom, Behenase, Atafua

Map of Project Communities
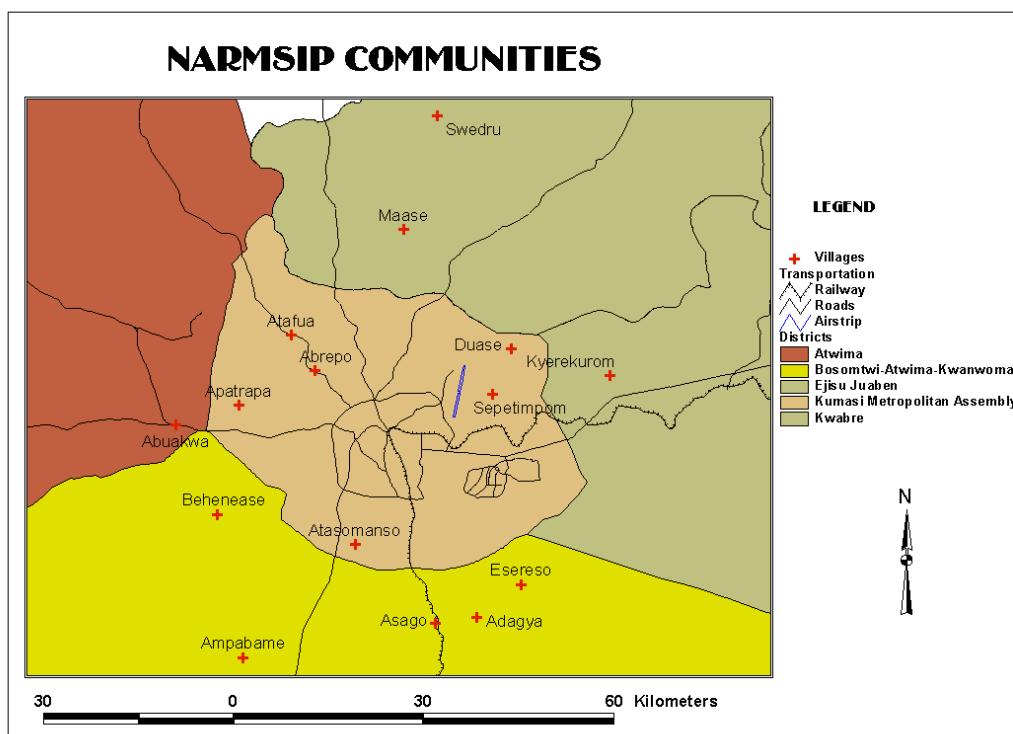
c. Data Collection Methods

Data for this research theme were carefully collected through a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which include the use of participatory approaches, interview guides and questionnaires, observations and focus and group discussions as well as extraction of information from existing project documents.

i. Interview Surveys

Baseline data were collected using structured and unstructured questionnaires. The questionnaire covered areas including;

- livelihood systems of the individuals and the communities,
- implication of livelihoods for natural resources and natural resource management,
- competency and risks in livelihood activities management and implementation,
- market potential and
- structure, operation and performance of Community Level Facilitators (CLFs).

The research team was made up of the following:
- Team leader and project staff from CEDEP
- Collaborators from universities
- Field assistants from the universities
- CLFs

ii. Key Informant Interviews

Key informants including chiefs and elders, queenmothers, unit committee chairpersons, assemblypersons, headteachers and pastors responded to additional set of questions. Their part

was to provide additional but detailed information about the social, economic, and political dynamics of the communities.

iii. Focus Group Discussions

As part of the data gathering for the baseline studies, there were a few focus group discussions that were used to gather in-depth qualitative data, using PRA tools. Some of these tools include:

- Community resource mapping
- Wealth ranking
- Livelihood systems analysis
- Poverty analysis
- Social Mapping

iv. Participatory Observation

Observing the project implementation over a period of time provided important information about the processes and impact the project is making on the community members. These 'silent' but important sources of information were relevant for the triangulation of data obtained from the baseline survey and from other sources in the community.

v. Extraction of information from project reports

Some relevant information were drawn from final the technical report of the previous project (DFID R 7995) as well as field and monitoring reports of the current project. Other important information were extracted by studying reports of stakeholder workshops, livelihood training programmes, quarterly, annual and mid-term reports of both R7995 and R8090.

d. Data Analysis

The data gathered was analysed using the computer packages SPSS and Le Sphinx. The qualitative data was used as narratives to explain some of the quantitative information. Community members did some of the qualitative analyses, such as poverty analysis on the field during the process of data gathering.

3   THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN COMMUNITY MOBILISATION TOWARDS PERI-URBAN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

2.1   Introduction

Community development has become a major concern to governments, development partners and NGOs. The role of community members, grassroots agencies, and local institutions has been rhetorically acknowledged as being important for this development process. In practice, however, the commitment to the involvement of these grassroots agencies has been minimal. The involvement of these grassroots groups requires mobilising them for action. Previous approaches to development have been narrowed to project-community interactions without the active involvement of the other stakeholder institutions. Sometimes even the project-community interactions have only served the interests of the project implementers especially when the projects are research-biased. In an attempt to break away from this approach, CEDEP and its collaborators adopted a multi-sectoral approach, which brings in other major stakeholders like the local government institutions, rural banks, etc., which operate within the communities.

This section examines the involvement of stakeholders in the mobilisation of the poor towards peri-urban natural resource management.

2.2   The Conceptual Background of Stakeholders Participation in Natural Resource Management

The peri-urban interface is a zone of multi-faced conflicts: rural versus urban, agriculture versus built environment, traditional versus modern, subsistence versus commercial, informal versus formal. A similar observation was also made by Mbiba (2001), confirming the complexity of the peri-urban interface. This multifarious nature of the peri-urban system makes its analysis complex, thus a one-in-all solution is not possible.

Traditionally, the analysis of urbanisation and development processes has been structured around such dichotomies as urban-rural, modern-traditional, formal-informal, etc. Within this framework, the Peri-urban Interface (PUI) constitutes an uneasy phenomenon usually characterised by loss of rural values (such as agriculture as a prime source of livelihood, belief in large and extended families, the role of the elderly, the role of nature, etc.) and deficit of 'urban' characteristics (such as low densities, lack of accessibility, lack of services and infrastructure, etc.) (Allen, 2001). Such diminishing values in the PUI, makes community mobilisation and group development difficult. Yet it has been established that development efforts could make greater impact and ensure sustainability when stakeholders are adequately represented and involved. In the KPUI, Insight (2002) cites McGregor on how localised action can be a vehicle for community management of a watershed in peri-urban Kumasi.

A close look at modern-day development literature reveals a crucial role played by groups and associations (what is often referred to as community based organisations- CBOs) in development. This has come at the time when there is much watering down of the debate on the market and the state and the need to find alternative development strategies. In previewing Bowles and Gintis' defence of social capital, Durlauf (2002) argued that communities could provide less costly solutions to various principal agents and problems of collective goods than can markets or government interventions.   State involvement in community development traditionally entrenches political controls and reinforces the power of village elites. This is particularly critical in urban contexts where a good number of people are learned and/or have access to political power.

The new social capital paradigm, in its purist application, aims at de-politicising project interventions in communities by utilising the local associations and groups. Several advantages in areas of adequate longitudinal and latitudinal representations make project implementation easier, producing greater faith for sustainability and replication. Consequently, the above has led to the conclusion made by Fine (1999)

that since 1993, "social capital" has become one of the key terms of development lexicon, adopted enthusiastically by international organisations, national governments and NGOs.

Crucially to note also, is that it is not only in groups and in associations that social capital finds expression, but also even as individuals we live in a social milieu, which moulds and supports our actions. In the United States, Coleman (1998) has shown how individual achievement is affected by family or other aspects of the micro-social environment, readily interpreted as individual possession of social capital.

The weakening of rural character of the peri-urban interface, the difficulty in conceptualising the *local community-* (as with shared identity and interests), and the diversity in the socio-political milieu present a challenge of gaining some form of social compact, if not overall consensus (Simon, 2003). In situations like these, it is important to understand the crucial role of the social capital offered by church groups and associations, trade and cultural groups and sub-district institutions of the new decentralised structure of the Government of Ghana (GoG). This is stronger on the peri-urban because of the local preference and drift of human capital to the urban area. Fine (1999) has stated that scores of studies in rural development have shown that vigorous network of indigenous grassroots associations can be as essential to growth as physical investment; appropriate technology etc.

In Ghana, like many developing countries, the overarching local government machinery also provides essential social capital and to some extent, controls other social capitals. In the social capital mix, governments tacitly set the framework for both forward and backward relationship between the state and the people (including chiefs and tribal leaders). In reality, however, not all groups are uniformly represented and therefore not all groups enjoy similar gains from the fruits of social relationships. Governments in one sense use the poor to win political points and donor support, but the local government is underrepresented and do not receive reciprocal attention. This creates mistrust and makes mobilisation difficult. King *et al.* (2001) report the problems faced by assembly members in Kumasi whilst mobilising their communities and assigned several reasons to this state of affairs. One such reason is that the assembly member is a representative of the formal institution, which has historically excluded the poor and other marginalised groups. The poor therefore do not easily identify with that local government institution but use informal institutional networks for pressing for their needs.

Central to the interventions of CEDEP and its collaborators on natural resource management are participation and inclusiveness. Participatory planning means empowering communities to define areas of intervention, to be an intrinsic part of the decision-making and to own the process (Brooks *et al.*, 2002). In this intervention, some stakeholders are beneficiaries of the projects (e.g., the poor, landless and jobless residents) and others are service providers (e.g., the rural banks, governmental institutions and agents such as district assemblies, planning officers, agricultural extension officers, etc.). Traditional authorities represented by the queen mothers, chiefs and their elders constitute another category of stakeholders whose approval of and/or participation in peri-urban projects may guarantee the peace and stability necessary for the smooth implementation of these projects and their sustainability. The different actors within the peri-urban communities can bring different strengths to the projects within the PUI if these strengths are identified and carefully utilised.

Conceptually, participation by all stakeholders and the poor and marginalised in particular, is seen as an attempt to instigate trickled down dialogue that not only lead groups to achieve specific project goals but also to identify other cognate intervention areas that will broaden the gains of the project. In Ghana, the need for people's participation has been implicitly emphasised in all development plans since 1950 (UN, ECA, 1989). The starting point of any meaningful participatory process is the acknowledgement of the fact that people within any community (literate or non-literate), possess knowledge (Archer and Cottingham, 1996) and have the creative ability to transform their own situations if provided with the proper tools and opportunities (Freire, 1974). Harnessing and developing this knowledge together with them form the basis for a dialogue, which leads to trust and empowerment.

Some of the questions that often arise in relation to participation in development include "whose participation", "what kind of participation" and "how should the participation take place"? Different approaches have been used in addressing these questions. As a follow-up to World Commission on

Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), the FAO initiated what was called "popular participation in rural development through self-help organizations" as a means of addressing these questions. In Ghana, two pilot projects at Wenchi and Begoro (in the 1980s), which were offshoots of this FAO initiative, were organised along those lines (UN, ECA, 1989). The "ujamaa village" approach, which was practised in post-independence Tanzania, has some semblance of that approach (*ibid*. 1989). These projects showed that, given the opportunity for involvement, people in any community have the capacity to influence their own development.

Alive to the fact that the first step in any development is community mobilisation and social development (Brooks *et al*., 2002), several attempts have been made in Ghana by other projects to involve community members in facilitating access of the deprived to social services. Examples of the above include the following:

1. *Multipliers* of the GTZ/MLGRD[4] Programme For Rural Action (PRA), which includes staff of decentralised departments of some pilot districts in Ghana. These were trained outside of their main disciplines to explain the decentralisation concept to staff of the sub-district institutions and then to people at grassroots levels GTZ/PRA Manual (1999).
2. The National Livestock Systems Project (NLSP) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) in Northern Ghana: In the face of shortage of qualified veterinary officers, MoFA trained and equipped interested volunteers to administer prescribed services to livestock farmers. These volunteers, called *Community Livestock Workers* (CLWs) were found to be better substitutes for self-prescriptions (DFID, 2000).
3. In a similar manner, ActionAid Ghana (AAG), tried an innovation on education. In this innovation, Senior Secondary School (SSS) graduates who could not make their grades were trained to become teachers; known as *Rural Education Volunteers (REVs)* in the junior grades. During their period of teaching they studied to better their grades in order to further their education (ActionAid Ghana, 2002). REV teachers, coming from the communities showed greater motivation and their outputs were phenomenal in bettering the performance of pupils and personal development of the REV teachers themselves. This is a good strategy drawing from the fact that in an un-quantifiable manner senior brothers and sisters and other relatives play a crucial role in helping school children catch up on things they could not understand in school. The period of engagement also further empowered the female REVs, causing them to defer marriage in pursuant of higher career goals.

4. *Community-Based Anti-Violence Team* (COMBAT) is a group of volunteers, trained by CEDEP to mediate, arbitrate and facilitate the administration of sanctions for the perpetrators of domestic violence in a pilot community in Atwima Nwabeagya District, called Kwanfinfi. A nation-wide study on violence against women and children found that violence against women is an issue that too often goes unreported (Coker-Appiah and Cusack, 1999). A baseline study in the pilot community indicated that community members do not report rights violation and violence cases to state agencies; neither do they adequately use the community power structures to settle such cases. The consensus was to come out with this Community-Based Anti-Violence Team (COMBAT), which has so far received community acceptance in the pilot community.

The Community Level Facilitators (CLFs) concept is the product of a careful appraisal of the above concepts of involvement of community members by CEDEP and its collaborators (see section 3 for further details). The CLFs were entrusted with the task of social development and community mobilisation. They were also to act as the interface between the communities on one hand, and CEDEP and the other stakeholders on the other. Rather than being mere agents for concepts, they were to become catalysts; assisting communities achieve the goals they have collectively defined for themselves (AGRITEX, 1998). In helping communities to plan, implement and monitor actions, they are expected to be learning, documenting records of these lessons at every stage and trying out new ideas that will benefit the communities.

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[4] Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD)

In less uncertain terms, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) underlies the importance of empowering community groups and individuals. This is largely in line with the need to create more space for community members to influence discussions and decisions affecting their well being. Participation and empowerment are the underpinning concepts behind the new sectoral, regional, and district development planning effort. This lesson has come from successful experiences of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working with groups in communities, in a number of poverty focused interventions. In Langa, a high-density township in Cape Town, South Africa, a strong development forum comprising elected members from the communities and other voluntary membership had a high degree of accountability and inclusive practices (Lyons *et al*, 2001). The CLFs concept is built around these potential fruits of group-led interventions in communities. Hitherto, there have been many relevant lessons to be learned.

It is important to note, however, that there can be some problems associated with such community action groups. In the AGRITEX Participatory Extension Approach (PEA), a problem arose with some leaders (men) dominating (women) at meetings or not attending meetings. These are potential pitfalls, which if not detected early could even worsen the circumstances of the poor. There is also the tendency for group members to demand remuneration before they work.

Table 1: Similarities and Differences between the CLF and Other Concepts

Concept	Similarity	Difference
GTZ/MLGRD Multiplier	▪ Dwells on the facilitating ability of staff of sector departments. CLFs also facilitate. ▪ These staff receive training from time to time to facilitate information sharing with staffs of sub-district institutions, for onward transmission to those at the grassroots. Regular training is an integral part of CLFs development.	▪ Have good educational background; most of them have tertiary education and even university degrees. CLFs have relatively low education. ▪ Employed and receive monthly salaries. CLFs are volunteers. ▪ Have workplace facilities like motorbikes to help them carry out their activity. CLFs do not have access to such facilities.
Community Livestock Workers (CLW)	Ordinary people in communities, mostly self-employed, involved in livestock production and trading in livestock products. CLFs are also mainly ordinary people. Provided with skills training to facilitate effective implementation of their assignment (Cf. above for CLFs)	CLWs have a defined area of animal health issues. Operations of CLFs cut across a wide range of livelihood-based areas.
Rural Education Volunteers	Use of available human capital in rural communities for improving education service delivery. The CLF concept also utilises available human capital within the communities for service provision	Certain age cohorts were used as criteria (school leaving youth - between 17-20 years). CLFs come from varying age groups and different social backgrounds.
Community Based Anti Violence Team (COMBAT)	Voluntarism underlies the work of both COMBAT and CLFs.	The individual team members of COMBAT are professionals with experience in an aspect of what is required in their sphere of work. CLFs are not necessarily professionals nor experienced people in their fields of operation.

Source: Compilation from this and other similar projects.

The differences and similarities between the CLF concept and the examples provided earlier are summarised as in Table 1 above:

The CLF concept in the PUI context can be considered to be a novelty. The peculiar nature of the PUI brings with it the problem of how to mobilise community members to embark on a development project. The point of similarity with the antecedent concepts as pointed out in the table lies with its volunteering nature. It, however, diverges where the criteria that were set by the project and the community members, on one hand and where emphasis has been laid on the community's own choices rather than being handpicked by the project, on the other. Information on predecessor concepts is quite anecdotal but the enthusiasm generated so far and the strength of the CLF group from the 12 researched communities amply demonstrate how successful the concept has been in group mobilisation in a peri-urban context.

The importance of active involvement of stakeholders has been presented in this section of the report. The reviewed works suggest that organised groups and associations can be essential in promoting community-based projects in the same manner as new technologies can be for development. The value of participation has been identified by the reviewed works as the central point for groups' strength and the involvement of stakeholders as crucial for sustaining the spirit of cooperation among groups. Belonging to a group in a development process is an empowering process for an individual within the group as the individual learns about events and processes that affect their livelihoods. In Ghana some projects have, as their main focus of operation, used groups and associations (technically constructed as social capital) as a strategy to galvanise local support that could work towards influencing policy change. The use of CLFs in a peri-urban setting in Ghana is a novelty. However, they are being used with the understanding that the collection of these individuals, carefully selected by their communities, would be able to bring together the loosely knitted individuals and groups towards achieving sustainable livelihood for the peri-urban inhabitants.

4   STRUCTURE, OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNITY LEVEL FACILITATORS

3.1   Introduction

The Community Level Facilitator (CLF) concept was initiated in the year 2001 in a DFID project (DFID R7995), dubbed Natural Resource Management Strategies Implementation Plans (NaRMSIP). During that project, plans were prepared for implementing natural resource management strategies that benefit the poor in the KPUI. The CLFs are individuals who live in the project communities and were expected to be democratically elected (see section 3.3 below) to liaise between the research facilitators and the communities within the project. The CLFs, both male and female, are currently being used by DFID R8090, which succeeded the NaRMSIP Project (R7995). The Boafo Ye Na Project (R8090) is facilitating the implementation of plans prepared during R7995. In both projects, the CLFs were/are important tool for facilitating multiple interactions at the community level with principal stakeholders. Within the context of this innovative approach to community mobilisation and facilitation, the CLFs were supposed to be elected, developed and their activities monitored and evaluated.

This section explains the structure, operation and performance of CLFs in the implementation of R8090 activities.

3. 2   Background to the CLF concept

From the perspective of the national decentralised planning framework, several projects in the recent past have fashioned out their implementation mechanisms to reflect community level participation of the stakeholders in decision-making and resource mobilisation (with some difficulties though). Such attempts are supported by the fledgling democratic governance the country is enjoying now. The role of the private sector and civil society groups has amply been stressed in the recent GPRS document. Though becoming more like a cliché, the involvement of grassroots in policy formulation and implementation has come to stay with regards to activities of government and private organisations. In practice, some organisations have managed to implement projects (see Table 1) in line with this philosophy in different circumstances and contexts. The CLF concept is a derivative from this new paradigm but is being applied in peri-urban context where there is a dynamic flow of people, material, information and communication.

3.3   Criteria for selecting CLFs

The Community Level Facilitators (CLFs) had a special role to play in the NaRMSIP for KPUI project and also in the communities they represented. The use of distinct selection criteria is to ensure that the selection of CLFs is not an ad-hoc activity but a well-structured one. These criteria were to be stated in the simplest form as possible so that anyone could remember them. It was decided that the selection of the CLFs was to be entirely a community affair, without any interference from the project. The project did not go in for community leaders or people already in leadership position because such persons could be seen as taking sides in case of conflict. Besides, they may be influential community leaders whose involvement could easily jeopardise the project.

Based on the above, the following criteria were considered as appropriate in the selection of the CLFs:

- Being expected to be the hub of the project in facilitating the involvement of the poor in the planning process, the CLFs needed to be people who were resident in the targeted communities and have enough knowledge about these communities. The appropriate word referred to in this criterion is '**resident**'.
- It was explained that the CLFs should not be people who are so busy with other responsibilities that they would not have time for the community members, especially the poor. The condition was, therefore, given that they must be people who were **readily available** in the community.

- The project documents were in English and the CLFs were to form the link between the academic community at the university level and the ordinary person in the community. Although, CEDEP and collaborators were facilitating in vernacular, it was important for the CLF to have a minimum level of literacy defined as the ability to **read and write fairly**. It was assumed that the communities could identify those who could read and write. Some of them had been used in the past as translators when they received visitors who could not speak the local language; some had read Bible texts at church; some were classmates of some community members, etc. and thus knowledge about who could read or write in the communities was not an issue for the residents.
- As gender has implications for poverty and anti-poverty strategies, an attempt was made to have a fair representation of male and female CLFs. Thus communities were asked to select **male and female** representatives. They were not asked to present them in any specific proportions.
- Further, because the CLFs were going to work for the community and with the people, they must be individuals who the **majority would accept**. Thus it was necessary for them to be **accepted democratically**.

There was a discussion on the number of CLFs each community could have. In every community, there are individuals who, for one reason or the other, will not like to work with certain individuals. Consequently, the number of CLFs was to be more than one, in case the above problem or any other, crops up. This is coupled with the fact that if they were more they could complement each other's efforts and pool strengths together. Besides, there were indications from the preliminary discussions about the project that three action plans were to be developed and hence in addition to pooling strengths, one CLF could be responsible for each action plan. Hence each community was to select **three** CLFs whose names were to be presented to the project.

3.4   Selection of CLFs

Having developed the selection criteria for the communities, it was presented to each of them for further discussion and its acceptability at a forum. With a final and approved criteria therefore, the communities were ready to select their CLFs. After the initial fora, six of the communities, viz Maase, Swedru, Okyerekrom, Behenase, Abrepo, Atafoa, Asaago and Adagya met to select the CLFs. The remaining communities could not meet to select their CLFs. These are Ampabame II, Duase, Apatrapa and Esreso. At Duase, the community members who led the group work during the community re-entry forum[5] were asked by their Unit Committee[6] members to become the CLFs. At Ampabame II the contact person, who was also a Unit Committee member, nominated himself and invited two of his relatives (male and female) to join him as CLFs. They were, however, accepted by their community and therefore served as CLFs. This, of course, cannot be described as democratically selected but the project accepted them because their community approved of that arrangement. In the remaining four communities, the Unit Committees just presented names of CLFs without indicating how they were selected. Once the communities did not protest about the CLFs who were presented during the subsequent meetings, the project accepted them. Although all 36 CLFs expected were obtained, there is gender imbalance, with the males dominating in all the communities. Okyerekrom, Behenase and Asaago, for example, do not have any female CLFs. These communities claimed that the women were not initially interested to become CLFs. Some of the women later changed their mind and joined in as CLFs.

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[5] The first community fora were also re-entry fora because the project continued from a previous research, which was in most of the communities.

[6] The Unit Committee is the local Government Structure at the community level - the lowest level within the decentralised local government structure in Ghana.

3.5   Community performance in selection process against selection criteria

This section critiques the communities' selection of the CLFs against the criteria provided by the project.

3.5.1   Are the CLFs Residents?

All CLFs are residents in their communities. For the past three years in which CEDEP and collaborators have been working with the CLFs, only one (a female) CLF has left the community. The communities, therefore, to a large extent, satisfied the residency criterion during their selection process. One important indicator of the stability of CLFs in the communities is their property base. Of the total number of CLFs (36), about 29 representing 80.5% (CEDEP, 2001) own some form of property in the communities, giving credence to the fact that they reside in the communities (refer to Table 2).

Table 2:   Profile of CLFs

a. Property Base	
Property	Number of CLFs
Land	11
Building	13
Shops	4
Crops/Livestock	23
b. Educational Qualification of CLFs	
Qualification	Number of CLFs
MSLC/BECE	26
O'Level	5
City and Guilds	4
Post Secondary	1
c. Family Sizes of CLFs	
Number of Children	Number of CLFs
0	3
1-3	11
4-6	13
7-9	6
13	2
d. Pre-Existing Community involvements by the CLFs	
Involvement	Number of CLFs
Chief/elder	2
Unit Committee member	12
WATSAN/PTA/TDC	5
Youth/Church group member	9
Association members	10
Without portfolio	3

Source: Adapted from Final Technical Report, NaRMSIP Project(DFID R7995)

There have been cases where CLFs of one community have gone to other communities to assist the CLFs of that community. For example, at the first trial of participatory business plan preparation, CLFs from Okyerekrom and Duase grasped the process faster and hence were invited by their counterparts from Adagya, Esreso and Asaago to assist them. This is a very positive development, showing a spirit of initiative and mutual assistance in taking forward the project's objectives.

After the departure of the female CLF from Abrepo, the only remaining CLF also decided to resign from the position because he could not withstand the pressure of work. A volunteer from one of the livelihood projects (i.e. grasscutter rearers group), decided to act as a CLF for Abrepo. He performed creditably on some activities but was found wanting in others because he had not been part of the training process. He, therefore, invited CLFs from Atafoa, the nearest project community, to assist him in the plan preparation. These CLFs assisted the Abrepo community in the vetting process as well. Again, this use of initiative

can be viewed as positive, although it might have been better for Abrepo to follow some community process in replacing the original CLFs.

3.5.2 Literacy levels of CLFs

As can be seen from Table 2, each of the CLFs has a minimum qualification of Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) or Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). However, most of such people can best be described as semi-literate, since they cannot be engaged in any work involving serious reading and writing.

The training and operation of CLFs was conducted in Twi[7]. However, all handouts prepared to assist the CLFs in performing their functions are in English. Though many of them can be considered semi-literate, the methods used required little reading and writing and hence they are able to participate in the discussions and understand the notes.

3.5.3 Distribution of CLFs by gender

From Table 3, out of the 36 CLFs, 27 (75%) are males, only 9 (25) females. This gives a male: female ratio of 3:1. This is not unexpected. Within the Ghanaian society, there is still male dominance in leadership. This is even more so in rural communities. Since the peri-urban communities are not far from being rural, they exhibit this male-dominated characteristic. Secondly, from the total number of CLFs expected (3 CLFs in each community for 12), one gender was expected to dominate. The initial understanding of an overall balance could not be realised as it came to light that male dominance is still an issue even in the urban setting. This suggests that in future, a clear positive discrimination or a balanced selection approach should be used to improve women's participation.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of CLFs in communities

Community	Number of Males	Number of Females
Asaago	3	0
Okyerekrom	3	0
Behenase	3	0
Apatrapa	2	1
Ampabame II	2	1
Adagya	2	1
Esreso	2	1
Maase	2	1
Duase	2	1
Atafoa	2	1
Abrepo	2	1
Swedru	2	1
Total	27	9

Source: Final Technical Report, DFID R7995

3.5.4 Availability of CLFs

The CLF is a volunteer and is expected to be available for consultation by the community members. They should also be available for the project for the purpose of meetings and to foster linkages with other institutions. It has been found that, at the KPUI, not all people who are resident in communities are available. There are people who, by the nature of their jobs, only sleep in the communities. Such people

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[7] Twi is a common vernacular language spoken in a number of regions in Ghana

though may not be completely ruled out, would have to show demonstrable evidence that they could combine personal work and community voluntary work. For example one of such persons, a security worker, was selected for one of the communities and was found very helpful as would be seen later.

It turned out that the fairly literate people who were available in the communities were the pensioners, security persons, self-employed and unemployed people. The pensioners, aged and inactive, could not work as hard as the younger CLFs but they are more available. One security person from Okyerekrom, who works at the Crops Research Institute (CRI), could easily rearrange shifts with other colleagues in order to attend meetings. Another CLF (one of the best CLFs the project has) works with a private security agency. He seems to have a more secure job as a supervisor. He has a high level of literacy and was able to grasp the plan preparation and project tracking concept very fast. He combines his office work with the project work, passing through CEDEP in the morning before going to work or during break with information from the community. This is because he has access to company vehicles (a motorbike or van).

Before the CLFs were selected, most of them were already serving in other capacities in their communities or elsewhere (refer to Table 1). Some of them made themselves available for other community assignments in other capacities before and after becoming CLFs. It appears that their levels of commitment to their communities underpin their availability for the project because most of them had been (or are still) involved in community activities, a common feature in many rural communities in Ghana.

The family sizes of the CLFs have implications on the way they operate. Apart from being community–spirited people, most of the CLFs are responsible family members. At the time of their election, two CLFs were single and had no children and one was married but had no child. The rest were either married or single but had children. The average number of children per CLF was 4 (refer to Table 1).

The CLFs who were young but had some skills or training and were unemployed turned out to be more unreliable. They were available only so long as they remained unemployed. As soon as they obtained temporary appointments, they became difficult to find. One of the CLFs of Okyerekrom, for instance, is a driver and was available so long as he did not have a vehicle. As soon as he gains the use of a vehicle, the project would not see him until he loses it again. Another CLF at Duase was available until he got a teaching appointment at a private school. A young man at Apatrapa, who was jobless at the time he became a CLF, was very active. He later started his own business as a drinking bar operator and his availability dwindled. All these examples underscore the need for the CLFs to be properly motivated if they are to remain available to the project. On the whole, pensioners and entirely self-employed CLFs who carried out their own livelihood activities, such as farming and masonry, are the most available. It was also observed that the young unemployed individuals were unreliable and, therefore, could not be entrusted with such community responsibilities. They were noted to be individuals who would rather be engaged in anything that will keep them occupied until such time that they find what they are actually interested in or have the skills to do.

3.5.5 Mode of selection of the CLFs

Selection of CLFs was either done by election or appointment. The selection was, however, complex in some communities because some communities acted contrary to the laid down criteria. In one community, the unit committee member who received the invitation letter and facilitated the first community forum turned out to nominate himself and then called others to join him. Later these CLFs were not talking to each other while other community members complained that they were all from one family. This suggests that the cooperation required for them to work as a team was not possible. The lesson one can deduce from this is that it is important for community members to go by the criteria where the community members select their own CLFs, rather than having them imposed on the people. It was also observed that some of the female CLFs could not cope with the work because of their household responsibilities. One of them who dropped out mentioned the above as the main reason for dropping out. Perhaps women with fewer responsibilities at the household level could be more appropriate for this type

of community work, and not young mothers with responsibilities. There were instances in some communities where the CLFs nominated themselves, against the laid down criteria. In one particular case, a CLF from one community participated in the nomination of someone to be a CLF in an entirely different community. There has not been any reaction to that yet by the community members. This is certainly interference in the process in a different community and residents may revolt against that later. While this demonstrates some willingness of some of the CLFs to assist in other communities, this may also create a problem since this idea is completely against the laid down criteria for the selection of CLFs because it raises the question of legitimacy and responsibility, in a context where CLFs are explicitly supposed to be selected from within, and not appointed from outside.

In another community, a CLF invited his wife to become a CLF. The two of them appear old but have been reliable in attending meetings although the woman sleeps a lot during the meetings. Another CLF attempted to make his son, who was still in school, a CLF. However, for the fact that the project insisted that the boy should be in school, he would have been a CLF, spending part of his school time attending CLF training programmes.

A chief of one of the communities was not happy with the nomination of his family members because there was a family conflict, but other members of the community accepted them. At Duase, yet another community, there is a conflict among the chiefs. The CLFs elected were from both factions of the chieftaincy divide. They have been able to work together as people from different factions but with some difficulty. One party was always serving as opposition and putting the other faction on its toes. Though this may be considered as unhealthy in one sense, it could also be seen positively in another, since it compels the CLFs to be active about their responsibilities.

During the selection of CLFs at Abrepo, the queenmother who was not present at the time did not agree to the nominations and quickly made a telephone call CEDEP to protest. A project staff member went to verify the situation, only to realise that the queenmother made a mistake about the one she thought had been selected. The action of this queenmother underscores the crucial role of the chiefs and the power they wield in community project management in the KPUI. They support and organise people for activities in the communities and, therefore, any attempt to sidestep them can have a negative impact on the project. Implicitly, they wield a lot of power.

3.5.6 Community Acceptance of CLFs

Democratically selected CLFs have no problem being accepted to represent their communities. To date, the communities have not come out to state their dissatisfactions about any of the CLFs or openly called for resignations. Two persons from one of the communities often complained informally about the behaviour of one of the CLFs that they thought was unsatisfactory. They have also, for example, asked whether a CLF who is not performing could be removed and they have been given the answer 'yes' but democratically. The above points to the gap in the approved criteria, which does not make provision for replacing or removing CLFs that are not performing.

But for the popular acceptance of the CLFs, mobilising communities would have been very difficult, given that almost all communities have been factionalised due to chieftaincy and land dispute problems plaguing KPUI communities. The CLF concept has been able to break the barrier of factions, which would have been a problem if chiefs had been used as facilitators. In Duase, for instance, CLFs from both factions of a chieftaincy divide have been able to mobilise the whole community. The CLF concept has also minimised the dictatorship and imposition of the prominent individuals in the communities. The CLF concept presents a new and neutral ground for community action in the KPUI communities.

Notwithstanding the above, some of the project beneficiaries have regarded the activities of CLFs as prying into their privacy. They did not like the idea, for instance, of being asked details of their business, which the CLFs were supposed to do as part of their tracking. The above can partly be attributable to certain inherent practices and cultural beliefs that make individuals feel insecure in disclosing information about themselves, particularly about their earnings, which also raises the general question of accountability in the Ghanaian society.

4.   CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR CLFs

4.1   Introduction

As community leaders who represent the interests and preoccupations of their communities, the role of the CLFs require analyses in terms of several issues. The initial focus of capacity development was therefore directed at inculcating in the CLFs the qualities of good facilitation and dialogue, taking into account the need to strike the right balance between involving people and accomplishing the task, without being directive, rude, or all-knowing. This is also bearing in mind that the CLFs are adults who are expected to work with adults too. As the conduit between the communities and CEDEP (and perhaps other organisations/institutions) the CLFs are required to understand developments within the project at anytime. This is important if they are to liaise effectively between the communities and CEDEP.

As part of capacity development activities, therefore, forums (in the form of short sessions) for CLFs of the different participating communities to provide updates of activities in the communities they represent were organised. These updates, which were normally outside the subject matter of the scheduled programmes, worked very well in three ways:

- For sharing best practices and experiences among different communities with one objective;
- For CLFs to review each community performance; and,
- For performance appraisal of CLFs.

On a few occasions, such sessions were also used to resolve conflicts.

4.2   Initial Capacity Development Activities

Initial capacity development activities were carried out as part of DFID R7995. These activities were designed to enable CLFs to perform their roles as facilitators.

4.2.1   Orientation for CLFs

Orientation of CLFs started with the development of a good rapport between the CLFs, project staff and collaborators. This rapport was necessary because KPUI communities perceived CEDEP and its collaborators as academics (i.e. "possessing all the knowledge") and saw themselves as semi-literates and "unknowledgeable". Carefully planned 'getting started' workshop sessions were able to break this myth which made it possible for the CLFs to relate to the project staff and outsiders on equal levels in terms of discussions and cooperation.

The next activity was a programme aimed at ensuring a clear understanding of the project by the CLFs. The project team and the CLFs tried to understand the logical framework of the project by translating key terminologies of the project into *Twi* - the local dialect. The facilitators used a dialogue approach to solicit the equivalent Twi meaning of the English terminology in a brainstorming exercise. This resulted in accepting the most appropriate Twi meanings of the terms.

The next session of the orientation focused on the role of CLFs. Since the roles were already written in English, they were read out and translated into the local dialect. More explanation was given to further clarify these roles where necessary. To test the level of understanding of CLFs on their roles, an evaluation was carried out. This exposed areas that needed further explanation, as well as CLFs that have difficulties with the concepts and approach.

4.2.2   Facilitation

To help the CLFs to understand the main task of facilitation, a two and a half day workshop, facilitated by the Training and Research Services (TRS), a unit in CEDEP, was held. The workshop discussed facilitators' main tasks and responsibilities (refer to Box 1).

Box 1: Facilitators' main tasks and responsibilities.

- **To inform** local communities and groups about the NaRMSIP project activities
- To promote the **emergence** and **strengthening of community groups** able to address their problems.
- **To assist communities** in analysing their situation and their problems, in finding solutions to their problems or on other opportunities and in prioritising possible activities.
- To **support** communities and groups in preparing **project proposals.**
- To assist the NaRMSIP project staff to **mobilise other CLFs** from community-based institutions and actors.
- To assist communities and community groups to **implement, monitor** and **evaluate** their activities.
- To monitor group performance and activities and report back to CEDEP
- To liaise with NaRMSIP project staff to organize community activities
- To make friends with the communities in favour of the project
- To help local communities **establish links** with groups and with institutions which may be able to support them

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For effective facilitation, guiding principles were developed for the CLFs. These are presented in Box 2.

Box 2: Guiding Principles

- Ensuring a participatory approach where the poor in the KPUI make and act on decisions with the support of critical actors
- Keeping the poor in focus and initiate decision-making processes from them
- Ensuring that plans are livelihood-based and employ natural resources available in the communities concerned in a suitable manner
- Ensuring a good balance between the participation of people from across all ages and to reduce gender inequalities whenever they exist
- Promoting collective action, ensuring that people act in groups
- Ensuring respect and equal opportunity for the individual regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, race and religion

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Good facilitation depends very much on attitudes but attitudes are very difficult to change abruptly. The CLFs were, therefore, given another two and a half day training in Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA), to bring out issues related to participation, which touched on attitudes. An exercise was given to the CLFs to facilitate the preparation of a community map of their community by primary school children. This was to help them listen to schoolchildren and make sense out of their reasoning. The presentation of the results of this exercise attest to their ability to use PRA tools to facilitate group discussions, especially among school children who are normally considered as difficult to control.

4.3   *Emerging Capacity Development Needs*

This section looks at the unique training needs of CLFs for specific assignments outside their original role as CLFs.

4.3.1   Capacity development to address weaknesses

Part of the role of CLFs is to monitor the activities of the project at the community level and project tracking was part of monitoring. A series of workshops were therefore organised to enhance the role of CLFs in participatory project monitoring and evaluation. In one of these workshops, monitoring was defined in Twi by the CLFs from the project's point of view as follows:

> "Hwe, susu, na twere na fa boa dwumadie no nkoso"

In English the above literally translates as: "Observe, measure and record and use the results to improve upon the work"

The CLFs discussed and agreed to monitor the process of the beneficiaries' businesses. The steps involve monitoring the process, which includes the resource inputs and outputs, activities, risks, place (peri-urban interface), location (specific site) and size of project. Together with the CLFs, a comprehensive tool was developed to assist them in monitoring. A trial of the use of the monitoring tool was undertaken, after which the weaknesses and strengths of the tool were identified. To correct these weaknesses, a project-tracking training was conducted. At the time of organising this training, networks, made up of individual livelihood activity interest groups (e.g. mushroom growers and rabbit rearers) had been formed around some livelihood activities. Executives of these networks were included in the training so that they could offer a helping hand to the CLFs in the monitoring activities.

4.3.2   Capacity development for special assignments

Although the main aim of the NaRMSIP project was to facilitate the preparation of plans for implementing natural resource management strategies that benefit the poor at the KPUI, plan preparation was considered a special assignment because it was highly technical. A special training session was, therefore, organised for CLFs and Junior Researchers and project staff on plan preparation. The facilitator of the training took participants through the stages of plan preparation.

The CLFs were to use their facilitation skills to moderate discussions of community problems at group level. Each group was to elect a leader, who was fairly literate, to represent them at the community level discussions. At the community level, a problem tree was developed and used to facilitate discussions of causes and effects of the problems and they can be solved using participatory approach,

The preparation of the business plan was a difficult exercise, given the short time and the technicalities involved. The CLFs, Junior Researchers and CEDEP, who were highly committed to the task, managed to complete the exercise in all the twelve communities within a reasonable time period. In addition, three action plans were produced as a result of the discussions at various levels.

After the needs assessment of the Boafo Yε Na Project (DFID R8090), it became obvious that the people needed assistance to assert themselves for start-up capital for livelihood improvement activities. Once again, the CLFs were identified as the best facilitators for this exercise. They were, therefore, invited and made part of the learning process and the formulation of a business plan.

Initially, business plan preparation was not part of the roles of CLFs. However, it was found to be a critical aspect if the participating community members were to be assisted in developing livelihood activities. CLFs were used to sensitise the communities in business plan formulation and creating awareness on the newly developed business plan format and business plan formulation.

## 5   THE PERFORMANCE OF CLFS IN THE KPUI

5.1   Introduction

The performance of CLFs is critical to obtaining new knowledge in the implementation of livelihood activities in the KPUI. In this section, the performance of CLFs has been measured against stated principles and roles. Additionally, the role of the CLFs in the implementation of the livelihood activities has been assessed. These are then followed by the extracted lessons on the use of the CLFs in community mobilisation and group development.

5.2   Performance of CLFs against stated principles

a. Ensuring a participatory approach where the poor in the peri-urban communities make and act on decisions with the backing of critical actors.

While implementing the NaRMSIP project (DFID R7995), the CLFs helped in the community mobilisation process by summoning meetings, talking with groups at the community level and facilitating group's discussions on problems identified. Coming as they were from the communities, the CLFs helped the project to win the confidence of the poor as well as the critical actors at the community level. The level of confidence that the community members have in the CLFs is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows that about 62% of the community members would like to see no changes in the current constitution and roles of the serving CLFs while 37% feel there is need for change, indicating that there is still room for improvement in the performance of the CLFs.

Figure 1: Community acceptance or otherwise of the current constitution and roles of CLFs
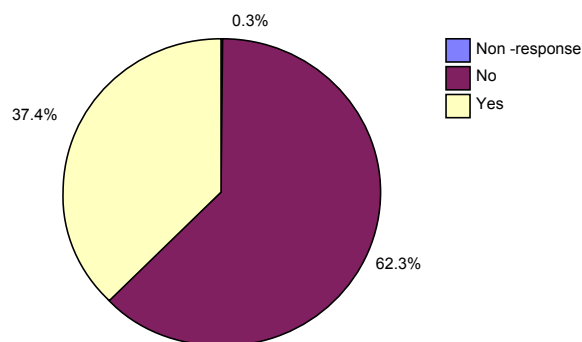
The plans of DFID R7995 constitute a set of decisions made by the communities for improving their livelihoods. In R8090, some of these decisions are being experimented with, but the backing of some critical actors seems to be lacking. In the past, chiefs and elders led community actions. Interventions by district assemblies and their agencies normally went through these existing powers within the communities. The role of the CLFs seems to have taken away some key roles of the existing authorities, and this might explain why there is minimal involvement of some of the critical actors, such as the traditional authorities and District Assemblies. Any latent power struggle between the critical actors and the CLFs is unhealthy for the effective implementation of the project. The reduced involvement of the chiefs, for instance, has implication for the land-based activities within some livelihood plans. The Chief of Abrepo, for example, approached the project office and offered to make available about 18 acres of

land to be used for the implementation of some livelihood activities. Paradoxically, however, the CLFs in the community had difficulty in getting even a small site for mushroom cultivation and beekeeping.

The district assembly should play an important role in the development of communities within their jurisdiction and CLFs could take advantage of this. As part of the GPRS, the poor can access a number of poverty-focused project funds. However, the frustrations that community members normally face when accessing support from the district assemblies could explain why CLFs have been unable to mobilise support from the assemblies for this project. Related to this is the fact that an expectation of a BYN start-up fund may have blinded the CLFs (and the communities, for that matter) to thinking about possible support from the assemblies.

The foregoing analysis underscores the need for CLFs (as the mouthpiece of the communities) to develop effective public relations practices, which should enable them to relate better with the key actors who can promote the success of the project.

b. Keeping the poor in peri-urban communities in focus and initiating decision-making processes with them

There are obvious signs that some beneficiaries of the project are indeed poor, as intended. The fears of the people, the utterances and behaviour of some beneficiaries show that many of the people the project is dealing with normally have little reserves, have limited access to natural resources, are socially excluded and have little confidence in themselves. In a situation like this, there is the tendency for the poor to be excluded from the project. During the initial training for beneficiaries, it was observed that the chiefs and elders, church leaders and unit committee members attended the first training on grasscutter rearing, took part in mushroom training and wanted to be part of other training programmes too. In consultation with the CLFs, project staff identified this as potentially a threat to the principle to include the poor and the vulnerable and subsequently came out with a condition that anyone could attend only one livelihood-training programme.

There was an occasion where the money meant for a particular group got into the hands of one group member, who used it because he was overwhelmed by immediate needs. This man took the money under the pretext of buying materials for the group, however, he later tried to tell the group members that he lost the money but when pressure mounted on him from all sides from the CLF and other project beneficiaries, he decided to give the money back to the owners. This is a clear and very positive example of CLFs ensuring that the poor really benefited from the project, while at the same time making sure that monies meant for groups is properly accounted for.

Figure 2a: Distribution of plans in all project communities at the start of project
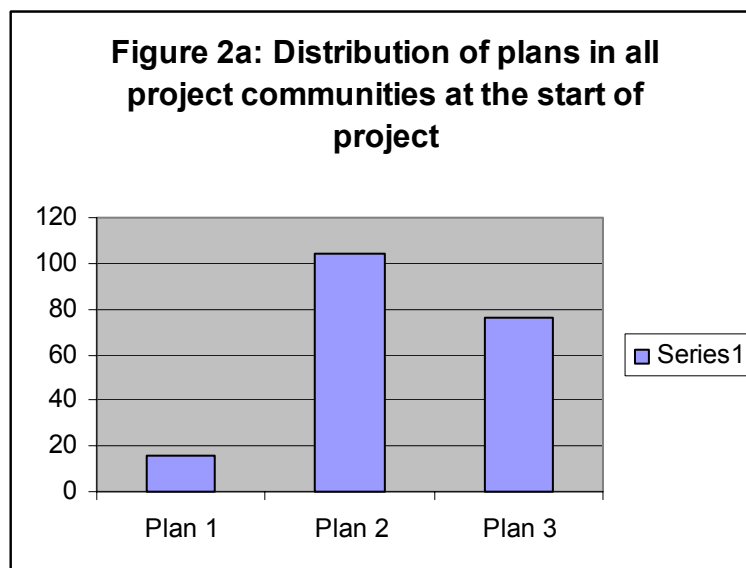
Again, many women have expressed gratitude for being involved in the livelihood improvement training. One said that if it were not for the CLFs, no one would ever have selected her to represent the community at such training, being an illiterate.

The participation of middle class people has been found to be useful. These people have clearer objectives and would either continue or drop out of the project at its early stages. Those who continue, do it with such seriousness that their participation enhances the success of the livelihood activities for the benefit of the poorest.

c. Ensuring that plans are livelihood-based and use natural resources available in the communities concerned.

The plans prepared and those being implemented are natural resource and livelihood based. An analysis of kinds of livelihood activities implemented at the beginning of the project (Figure 2a) against those in progress at the mid term (Figure 2b) demonstrates an interesting lesson. In the figures, Plan 1, Plan 2 and Plan 3 stand for Non Farm Livelihood Activities, Farm-based Livelihood Activities and Processing of farm and Non-Farm Livelihood Activities respectively.

While the growth in the number of non-farm-based livelihood activities could be linked with the training and start-up capital that were provided, it could as well be linked with the influential role of CLFs in promoting discussions at community level regarding the relative potential for the activities for livelihood improvement.

The need to conserve and preserve the natural resource base was the central point for promoting non farm-based livelihood activities, which include beekeeping, mushroom production, grasscutter rearing, snail rearing, alata soap production and rabbit rearing.

Figure 2b: Number of Livelihood Activities Under the 3 Action Plans at Mid Term of Project
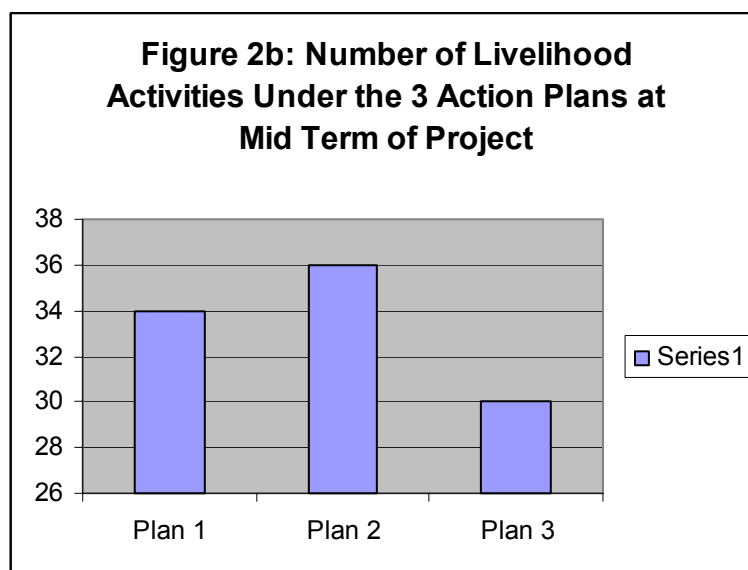
During the project inception, the CLFs and community members noted that the natural resource-based livelihood activities were reducing in the peri-urban interface (especially in the more urbanised communities) and so the project should allow other livelihood activities like "hairdressing, masonry, fitting mechanic and charcoal selling" to be included in the livelihood improvement portfolio of the project. This, however, could not become a strong component of the Boafo Yɛ Na project because of the focus of the project facilitators. The project focus was based on the knowledge that the promotion of these livelihood activities has the potential to sustain the sources of livelihood of most community members whilst at the same time protecting the natural resource base. A typical example is the promotion of beekeeping and grasscutter rearing in some communities in northern Ghana, where bushfires have been minimised because people on one hand, no longer hunt for wild honey, and on the other, check on the activities of rodent hunters who cause bushfires. An important lesson learnt here is that the project's focus

on natural resources made it impossible to think of other possible alternatives that could equally protect the natural resource base of the communities. This was a weakness in the initial thinking of the project. The above suggests that any such future project should involve the beneficiaries in thinking through all possible opportunities and alternatives, which also confirms the views expressed in other NRSP projects where it is believed that if people are engaged in livelihood activities that are non-natural-resource-based, the tendency to get involved in activities that damage existing natural resources will be minimised.

d. Ensuring a good balance between the participation of people from across all ages and to reduce gender inequalities whenever they exist

In this study, both men and women were found to participate at different levels, with men dominating at the initial planning stages compared to the women who came in during the implementation stages. Despite the fact that both men and women participated at the initial stages of the project, the men were found to be dominating at the beginning but the women gradually took over as time progressed. This finding, which is illustrated in Figure 3 below, confirms a similar finding by Sanginga *et al.* (2000). A number of micro-finance studies have also confirmed the above.

Figure 3: Participation of men and women in the project
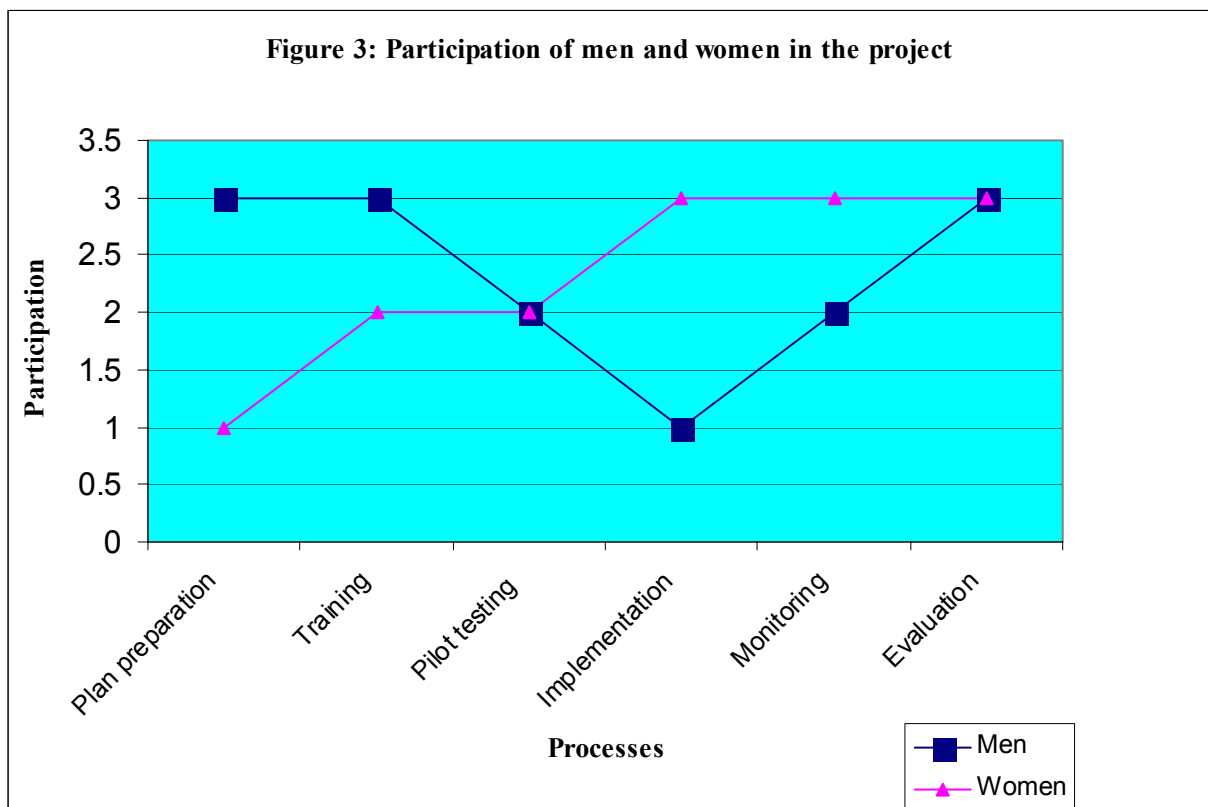
Source: Extract from existing Boafo Yɛ Na report

Figure 3 shows the distribution of participants by gender at various stages of the project. The explanation to this trend is attributable to the size of capital at different stages of the project. At the latter stages of the project, it was found necessary to reach out to more beneficiaries and this resulted in the project having to reduce the size of capital offered to beneficiaries. From then on it was found that more women became beneficiaries. This confirms the general notion in Ghanaian society that men need to work with huge capital outlay as start-ups. A further explanation bears on the type of activities being carried out. Evidence in Ghana shows that men are interested in activities that yield quick and high profits within a short period of time and therefore natural-resource based activities could not have been that attractive to them (King, 1999). An observation of hawkers at an urban centre in Kumasi, Ghana further reveals that wares hawked by men are capital intensive. For instance, whilst men hawk vehicle parts, tools, spare

parts, and electronic gadgets, women hawk cosmetics, second-hand clothing, water and foodstuffs. The men in the 12 communities are however prepared to lend support to the women working on the project, again a normal behaviour of men on similar project in the country. A number of micro-finance studies have also confirmed the above.

Figures 4 and 5 below show the trend of male-female participation before and after the mid-term review of the project. The Micro Finance Expert, who was engaged to advise the project on micro finance issues, brought the importance of the size of micro-credit for the pilot experiments to the fore. The ceiling of start-up for the project was subsequently brought down from ¢1,000,000 to ¢500,000. This attracted critical beneficiaries who were targeted originally - the poor. The outcome was that about 85% of applicants who got the lower start-up capital after mid-term were women as in Figure 5 below. This trend is understandable judging from the arguments made earlier. One can also say that the poor are now getting on board because the capital outlay is within what they can manage. The poor are normally hesitant to take up large capitals as loans, which appears to them to be a big risk.

The crucial role of the CLFs in ensuring that the marginalised were adequately represented is another factor worth discussing. The greater involvement of men at the initial stages of the project is connected to the greater mass of planning and decision-making, which is the usual role of men in the Ghanaian society. However, the apparent rise in the participation of men at the latter stages is connected to their involvement in monitoring and vetting committees rather than actual implementation of livelihood activities (Figure 3).

Figure 4: Beneficiaries by sex at Midterm

Figure 5: Beneficiaries by sex after mid-term
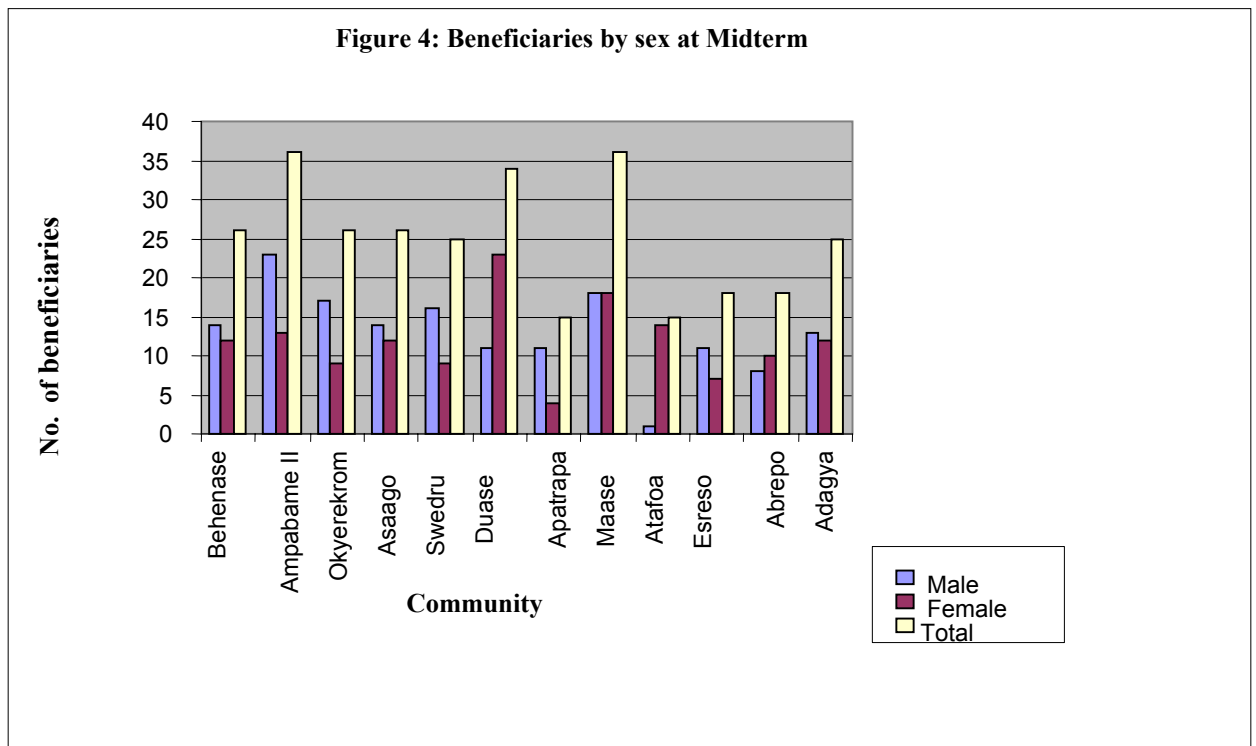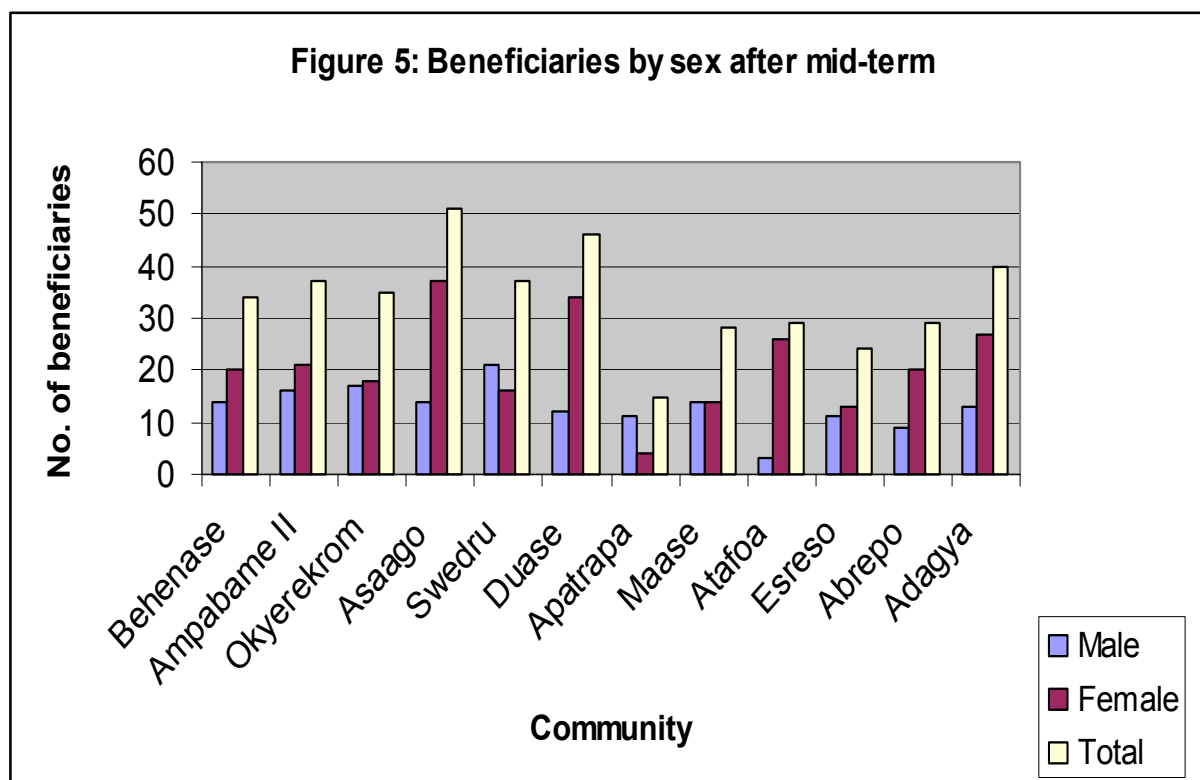
Source: Field data, June 2004

The explanation of the large number of female beneficiaries on the project can be attributed to several factors. First, it is an indication that the CLFs have worked hard enough to ensure the participation of women on the project. More especially, it has been observed that, in communities where female CLFs are hard working, the number of female beneficiaries has significantly increased. The female CLF at Atafua, for example (who also encouraged another at Abrepo to become a CLF), has impacted positively on the number of female beneficiaries in the two communities (See Figure 5 above). This is an important illustration of the dialectics between gender and poverty and the value of empowering women to support other women.

The need for more female CLFs has been stressed by the communities. In the above observations and a lexical analysis[8] (refer to Table 6 below) of responses from the baseline survey, there is a clear need to increase the proportion of female CLFs. In Table 6 below the word **'more'** appeared most frequently on the question of what changes respondents would like to see in the CLFs. **'More'** in this case was associated with two key phrases: **more women** and **more visits by the CLFs**. This indicates how community members want to see greater role played by women.

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[8] The lexical analysis (i.e. actual analysis of actual words used by respondents) is an output form Le Sphinx Survey, which was used to analyse the baseline questionnaire.

Table 4: **Changes community members would like to see in the CLFs**

WORDS/CAT.	Apatrata	Atafoa	Ampabame II	Asaago	Abrepo	Kyerekrom	Duase	Maase	Swedru	TOTAL
more	3	3	4	6	8		3	5	1	1	34
People	0	1	3	2	0		2	1	3	1	13
work	1	0	2	0	4		0	0	2	0	9
community	0	0	2	1	2		1	2	0	0	8
Improve	0	3	0	1	0		0	0	1	2	7
performance	0	4	0	2	0		0	0	1	0	7
activities	1	2	0	0	0		1	1	0	1	6
CEDEP	0	0	1	0	1		1	1	1	0	5
involved	0	1	0	0	0		2	2	0	0	5
time	0	0	0	1	2		0	0	1	1	5
active	1	0	0	1	1		0	1	0	0	4
hand	0	0	0	0	4		0	0	0	0	4
members	0	0	2	0	1		0	1	0	0	4
training	1	0	0	0	2		1	0	0	0	4
CLFs	0	0	0	0	2		0	1	0	0	3
women	0	1	1	0	0		0	1	0	0	3
able	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	2	0	2

NB: The table gives the frequency for each word and each value label of 1.Community.

e. Ensuring collective action and group work

This has been the most difficult task for the CLFs. The livelihood groups formed have deteriorated and intra-community group linkages appear weaker than inter-community linkages, i.e. there is more cohesion among members of the various livelihood networks than between members engaged in the same livelihood within the same community.

Generally, people seem to be individualistic even in the rural areas where the social system is normally stronger. This individualism appears to be even stronger in the KPUI where many people are settlers and are part of a nuclear rather than extended families. This has been the greatest challenge that the CLFs have had to grapple with in keeping the livelihood activity groups within the communities together.

Under the present arrangement livelihood projects are located in one person's property (land or house) even though they are owned by groups. This study has found that the host would want to be the sole owner of the project and hence would tend to put impediments in the ways of other group members. Instead of the other group members trying to ensure group ownership of the project, they also tend to behave as if they wished the project were their private property, in which case they would be the ones exercising control.

Poverty has been identified as another cause of group disintegration. This is because the poor person is always on the run for his/her daily bread and would not take part in anything that would not bring immediate benefit. The extreme poor have nobody to rely on; they have to, for example, carry concrete, buy and sell oranges, mangoes, cook fresh maize and sell, or sell water to earn their daily bread. The above has been confirmed by other studies in the country (King *et al,* 2001)

The PUI has a number of new entrants who spend a small proportion of their time in the community, thus do little to support the growth and maintenance of public goods and services of these communities, and have little time for group work. Evidence from a survey on the contribution of new entrants to the development of peri-urban communities conducted in June 2004, indicates that 60% of new entrants are hardly seen during the day, whilst 30% are seen half of the day. Only 10% of the new entrants are always around.

f. Respect and equal opportunity for the individual regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, race and religion

Generally, in selecting beneficiaries, attempts were made to include people, regardless of age, sex, race, religion etc. Ensuring that this principle is followed rigidly is necessary for the full participation of all, particularly the poor and vulnerable who are the primary targets of the project. Respect for the elderly is an aspect of Ghanaian culture and CLFs have had no problem with it as per feedback obtained by the project from the communities. There are however, a few instances where CLFs have demonstrated bossy attitudes. A CLF of Maase, for instance, is normally called 'chef' by the community members ('chef' literally connotes a boss in Ghana). This may not be good for the image of the project that tries to minimise things that have to do with hierarchy in the social system.

As mentioned earlier, there are instances of biased selection of beneficiaries by CLFs. Some CLFs selected family members who were not necessarily poor and vulnerable to qualify as beneficiaries. This was done in some places under the pretext that there was the need for some kind of positive discrimination in favour of those who can repay loans for the pilot. This is obviously against the selection criteria and the underlying philosophy of the project which is to help the poor and the vulnerable out of poverty. It appears some of the CLFs make attempts to utilise the project in order to build personal support and clientele. More generally, it can be seen as the deployment of the 'best first' approach rather than the 'worst first'; the former, it

appears, is associated with notions of 'trickle down' while the later is intended to work from bottom up, but not associated with the 'trickle down'. To forestall the above challenge, the project constantly stressed the need to focus on facilitating the inclusion of the poor in the project. Where the CLFs come across a genuine applicant with weaknesses such as inability to read, laziness, analytical, etc. their role is to help the applicant overcome them.

5.3   Performance against stated roles

In this section, CLFs performance on the project is discussed according to the roles assigned to them by the project.

a. Inform communities and groups about the NaRMSIP/Boafo Yɛ Na project activities

The CLFs were mandated to provide feedback to the communities on interactions with CEDEP, collaborators and other stakeholders on things, which did not happen in the communities.

The CLFs are the major carriers of information about the two projects to the communities. The analysis of data from the baseline study (see Figure 6 below) indicates that a number of the people have little or no knowledge about the two projects. This is not surprising in the peri-urban interface of Kumasi where families and individual people (new entrants) settle regularly. For those who know of the projects, majority indicated that the CLFs provided them with the information.

Figure 6: Knowledge about NaRMSIP and Boafo Ye Na
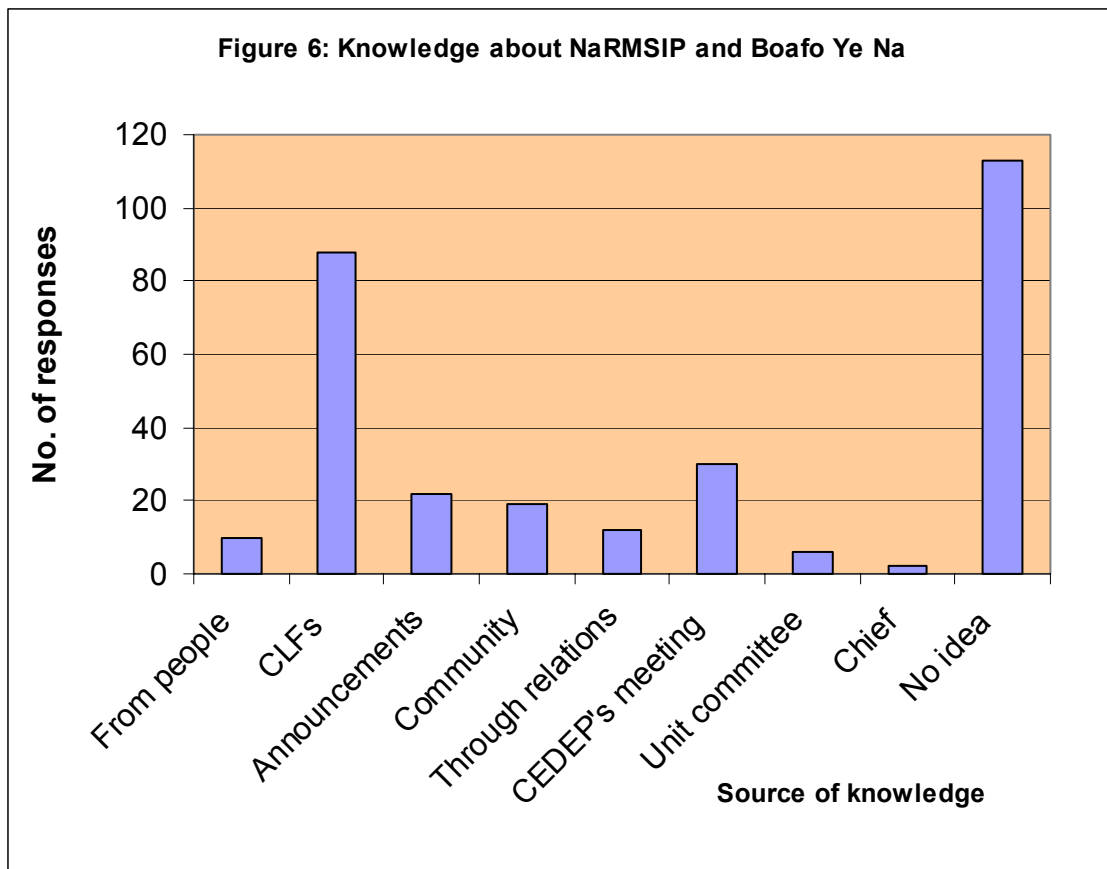
Source: Baseline data, 2002

The CLFs have been entrusted with the task serve as effective conduit between the project implementers and the community. According to the field reports some of the CLFs give feedback about the project activities to the communities, especially when asked to do so, but others do not. At the inception of NaRMSIP, for example, some communities were paying the transport cost of the CLFs whenever they attended training programmes. Leaders of such communities normally expected feedback from the CLFs. Analysis of results from the baseline survey indicated that 57.1 % of respondents received feedback from the CLFs (see Table 8). Observations of communities and discussions with beneficiaries also showed that the CLFs continue to give feedback.

Table 5: The extent to which CLFs pass on information to the communities

Feedback to the Community	Number of Responses	Percent
Non-response	2	0.7
Yes	165	57.1
No	122	47.2
Total	**289**	**100**

Source: Baseline Survey, August 2002

During the community and district level hearing of plans, the CLFs and the project team had ample opportunity to inform the communities about the project. In fact, at the district level, the CLFs themselves presented their plans to the stakeholders of their districts.

In one community, however, one of the CLFs kept information from the project to himself and did not even inform his two other colleagues. This was due to a conflict between these CLFs, which was later resolved. The above indicates that there could be a break in communication flow when there is tension among the CLFs that can prevent them from closely working together. There was another instance in another community, where the CLFs collectively agreed not to inform the community leaders about an activity for fear that they could be denied the opportunity of attending a durbar, which was a forum for chiefs to discuss the plans before sending them to the district level.

Some historical trend in the implementation of the Boafo Yε Na project created a problem of communication within the communities for the CLFs. Due to research fatigue, it became apparent that it would be useful to carry out some development projects within the communities. That was the initial understanding of the communities about the DFID R8090 project. Against this backdrop, plans were prepared to give start-up loans for community members to try livelihood improvement project. However, since NRSP's focus is on research, implementation of these development projects within the communities did not quite agree with NRSP's mandate. The long discussions that followed between CEDEP and NRSP on the need to combine development with research in the project design meant that the CLFs were not sure about what to communicate to the community members.

These discussions led to the trimming down of initially designed development projects. The CLFs who had to go back to explain the need for the trimming down incurred the displeasure of their community members who felt that the CLFs were not being honest with them. It must be admitted that the low rate of literacy in the communities, coupled with the use of the participatory approach, which is slow and time consuming, could make it difficult for community members to appreciate the amendments made to the plan. It is therefore not surprising that some CLFs and project incurred the displeasure of the communities. For example, a CLF complained that she could not keep her head high within her community because it was perceived that the project did not deliver on its promises. Others were able to maintain their integrity because they followed what was happening at CEDEP and were able to defend and diffuse any misconceptions. It could also be interpreted that project

implementers did not help CLFs to appreciate the difficulties and how to communicate these to the communities. This development is a challenge that has to be taken into account in the implementation of similar projects in future.

b. Promote the emergence and strengthening of community groups, which are able to address their problems

As part of their roles, CLFs are to support community members to form new groups and strengthen already existing groups. They are also expected to facilitate problems identification and group approach to problem solving. CLFs started forming livelihood activity groups before the implementation of plans prepared. Some of these groups did not survive because of the hold-up in the project implementation described earlier.

The CLFs themselves attempted to form an association. This association did not survive because it was based merely on welfare arrangements for the CLFs themselves.   The welfare objective inherent in this association was not strong enough to bring about the required cohesiveness within the group. Again, it could also be explained that the groups did not survive because there were better welfare groups within the communities in which the CLFs domiciled. The CLFs could also have picked some best practices from these welfare groups. A CLF from Ampabame II, for example, was able to form two groups, one in his community and another in Kotwi, a nearby community. The group in Ampabame II was a football club for boys. The one in Kotwi community was a petty traders' association. He formed and nurtured these groups to the extent that the Kotwi group was able to get a loan from a Rural Bank. This is an indication of the role the CLFs can play in organising community members and facilitating access to relevant institutions for support.

c. Assist communities in analysing their situation and problems, identifying opportunities and options, and prioritising the options and help groups prepare business plans

On several occasions the CLFs have assisted in analysing who is poor, and hence qualifies to be a beneficiary. On other occasions, they have helped in analysing who is benefiting from the project, the impact of the project on beneficiaries and the environment at large.

At a workshop, organised for all CLFs before the administration of the second round of start-up capital, the question of what should characterise beneficiaries to the project was discussed. In an attempt to address these issues, a definition of poverty was given to serve as a basis for characterising the poor. The box below captures the key characteristics of poverty identified.

Box 3. Characteristics of poverty

Poverty was defined as inability to afford the basic necessities of life, such as food shelter and clothing. The following were identified as characteristics of poor people in their communities.

Poorly fed: imbalanced diet, children malnourished, poor drinking water

Poorly sheltered: Not protected against sun, rain, insects, wild animals, property etc. Not enough space for every family member, insecure sleeping place, poor homes,

Poorly clothed: Poor sandals, same clothes for every occasion, shares the same clothes with children, one sponge and towel for the whole family

In addition, the poor cannot provide **basic health needs** to themselves and their households. They have little or no access to health facilities, cannot buy prescribed medicines, would normally refuse or jump admissions at hospitals, resort to self-medication and look sickly.

It was also observed that poor people are unable to provide **basic education** for their children. They can be identified by the following: their children normally get withdrawn from school for non-payment of school fees, wear worn-out school uniforms, walk long distance to school, and become school drop outs

To come out with the above poverty analysis, the CLFs were assisted by project staff, junior researchers and collaborators in order to identify the real poor who the project intervention is targeted at. The same analysis was also done during the business plan preparation as it was found to be helpful in the process of identifying the real poor. Box 5 and Photo1, for example, are illustrations of how the CLFs helped the beneficiaries in analysing their situation.

Box 4: Income and expenditure analysis

Household sources of income
     Animals oo **(2)**
     Crops ooooo **(5)**
     Ice water ooo **(3)**
     Hair dressing o **(1)**
     Remittances o **(1)**

Household sources of expenditure
     Health oo **(2)**
     Education oo **(2)**
     Social functions o **(1)**
     Food and clothes ooooo **(5)**

Photo 1: Livelihood Systems Analysis

Source: Community business plan preparation, 2003

The poverty analysis of applicants was very important in the sense that poverty in the context of the beneficiaries is very complex and, therefore, cannot be understood without a thorough analysis. For instance, a pensioner may appear poor, but if such a person has children who send remittances then he/she is better off than a single parent whose children are in school.

d. Assist the project staff in implementing the project

The original plan of the CLF concept was to continue mobilising as many CLFs as possible from the participating PUI communities. The rationale for this was for the work of facilitation to be done by many more and new CLFs. When the CLFs were selected, the work required that they were trained. However, the workload for the plan preparation made it impossible for the project to continue mobilising new CLFs but rather required a focus on continued development of existing CLFs. The training given to beneficiaries has however, turned some of them into helpful facilitators. Adagya, Abrepo, Duase, Esreso and Okyerekrom have some hard-working and brilliant beneficiaries who are assisting the CLFs to carry out their activities. At Adagya and Duase, for instance, two of these beneficiaries are already very instrumental in business plan preparation.

Some of these beneficiaries have also been used as resource persons in some other cases. A beneficiary from Ampabame II, for example, was used extensively as a resource person during the early stages of the grasscutter-rearing livelihood project. He assisted the project to mobilise the parent-stock and also to stock the pens of communities. In another instance, a CLF from Atafoa helped mobilise other CLFs for Abrepo. In summary, in the absence of recruiting new CLFs, the existing ones acquired additional skills that capacitated them to be doing more than were expected and hence became assets in their communities with regards to facilitation.

*e. Assist communities and community groups **implement, monitor** and **evaluate** their activities*

CLFs assist communities to use the participatory business plan preparation tool developed by the project to prepare simple business plans, detailing the process of the proposed business, the inputs and outputs, sales and expenditure forecasts, cash flow and the repayment plan. This tool helps the loan applicant to think through the business, the CLF (who facilitated) to have benchmarks against which to monitor, and the project to have a fair idea of what the applicant intends to do and how repayment would be made.

To make the work a bit easier for the CLFs, the project designed a participatory monitoring and evaluation system. This is used for managing the start-up capital at the community level. A nine-member vetting committee in each community helps in the selection of beneficiaries and monitor their performance. An independent member of the community who has not taken a loan or does not intend to take a loan chairs the committee. Other members of the committee are- five beneficiaries (one from the five livelihood activities, i.e. *Alata* soap, grasscutter- rearing, rabbit- rearing, mushroom production, and snail- rearing groups) and the three CLFs from that community. This committee issues the start-up capital to the applicant and has the responsibility to ensure that loans are paid back. The fact that the vetting committee (with membership of non-participants in the community) disburses moneys collected from CEDEP to the community members/ beneficiaries makes them also responsible for ensuring that these moneys are repaid.

5.4 Lessons on Performance

5.4.1 Democratically Selected CLFs perform better

In a general assessment of community performance during the mid-term review of the project, the research findings indicated that communities where CLFs were democratically selected were also the best performing communities.

In places like Maase, where CLFs were selected democratically, community's response to gong-gong beating, which is the call to community gathering, has been encouraging. This is not the case in some of the other communities such as Ampabame II, where CLFs were largely appointed. Groups in Ampabame II have only been mobilised, with difficulty though, through individual calls from house to house. In recent times, however, communities (such as Abrepo and Atafoa), whose CLFs were also democratically elected, have also picked up tremendously in performance, because of the community's acceptance of their chosen CLFs.

The discussion in Section 3.5.5 on mode of selection of CLFs provides evidence in support of this finding. Where CLF appointed themselves or interfered in the process of selection, there were several complaints from the community members. At Duase, for example, the replacement of a female CLF by another female CLF, led on one hand, to complaints of forced removal from the replaced CLF and on the other hand, indifference on the part of the community.

The case of a CLF, who invited his wife to become a CLF in another community, provides a downside argument. Not applying the criteria for selecting CLFs, it is no wonder that the two of them, although regular at meetings, perform poorly in carrying out project activities. The community could have made a better choice if the election criteria were applied.

Despite the dissatisfaction of the chief about Atafoa of the nomination of his family members due to a family conflict, other members of the community accepted them because they were democratically selected. Thus after overcoming the initial doubts as to whether the project should work with a community whose chief has not given his support, Atafoa quickly rose to become one of the leading communities in the implementation of project activities. Similarly, at Duase, although there is a conflict among the chiefs, the CLFs selected from both factions of the chieftaincy divide have managed to work with people from both factions, an accomplishment, which none of the chiefs alone could have achieved.

In conclusion, it could be said that democratically selected CLFs are more acceptable and can, therefore, perform better since they rarely had problems with the community members.

Table 6: Assessment of community performance at mid-term of the project

Community	Selection Process	Mobilisation	Delivery	Participation	Adoption	Total	Recommendation
Esreso	n/d*	2	2.5	2	0	6.5	Encourage sharing with others
Adagya	d**	0	1	2	2	5	CLF rapport needs improvement.
Asaago	d	2	3	2	1	8	Share with others and take proper care of grasscutters.
Ampabame II	n/d	1	1.5	1.5	1	5	Improve environment and security for snails.
Behenase	d	2	2.5	2	1.5	8.5	Encourage others to go on their own.
Maase	d	2	3	2	1	8	
Okyerekrom		1.5	3	2	2	8.5	Repay their loans.
Swedru	d	2	2.5	1.5	1	7	Encourage sharing with others.
Duase		2	2	1.5	2	7.5	
Atafoa	d	1	1	2.5	0	4.5	
Abrepo	d	1	2.5	1	0	4.5	Discourage the domination of one CLF and his relations.
Apatrapa		0	1	0	0	1	

Source: Final Technical Report on NARMSIP (R7995), 2002

For explanation of Table 6, refer to Appendix 1
*n/d = not democratically selected, **d = democratically selected.

5.4.2   Relationship between Commitment and Learning

It was observed that in this particular project there was a direct relationship between commitment and ability to learn on the part of the CLFs, irrespective of their educational background. The reverse may also be true. There are cases where the less educated CLFs have out-performed those with higher educational background. A case in point is the Adagya CLF who has emerged as a resource person for mushroom production having adopted mushroom production as part of his livelihood even though he is a middle school leaver (basic

education). The commitment of this CLF is seen from the standpoint of adoption and sustenance of mushroom production in Adagya. He was able to continue mushroom production from the pilot training offered to CLFs of all communities during NaRMSIP (DFID R7995) project. Other classic examples are two CLFs from Asaago and Behenase, whose commitment is demonstrated by the adoption and promotion of grasscutter production in their respective communities. The dramatic improvement in performance at Atafoa and Abrepo, for instance, could be partly attributed to the commitment of two female CLFs., who worked diligently to ensure the success of their project. CLFs with stronger educational background, however, grasped the project concepts faster. Despite the above observation, with repeated training, those with weaker educational backgrounds were able to catch up too, provided they are committed to the course of the project.

5.4.3 Influence of Gender and Age of CLFs in the identification of Beneficiaries

Another observation on this project was that different age groups of CLFs attract like age group of beneficiaries. Young CLFs in the same age groups and working together in a community attract beneficiaries of similar age groups. The same applies to the older CLFs too, who also attract older beneficiaries of similar age group as them as shown in Box 6 below.

Similarly, the gender of CLFs also matter. Female CLFs are more likely to attract female beneficiaries and the same applies for the men too. In summary, it can be said that this is crucial for the project which seeks to bring all categories of the poor on board. Thus, a good balance of age and sex should inform the selection of CLFs

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Box 5: The Experiences of Young and Elderly CLFs.

A young CLF from Okyerekrom is one of the most active CLFs. This CLF is the strength behind the success of Okyerekrom in mushroom production. Okyerekrom was the first community to produce mushrooms under the project. He also became a resource person for promoting mushroom production in other communities. Later he had the opportunity of being trained in snail rearing before his other colleagues in other communities. This happened when the District Chief Executive of the Ejisu-Juaben District linked the CLFs of Okyerekrom up with a training workshop organised by centre biodiversity utilisation and development (CBUD (at Bunso in the Eastern Region of Ghana. He managed to start snail rearing by himself at his backyard and was able to assist two other communities- Swedru and Aboabogya (Aboabogya is not a project community) to start a similar project.

A young CLF of Ampabame II was very active in assisting the project to monitor and provide back up support to other communities. Another young CLF of Behenase was very active in Alata soap production. In addition to being part of the group trained, he joined CEDEP in the monitoring rounds. Besides, as already mentioned, it is rare to find a young CLF sleeping during training.

An elderly CLF from Abrepo (a pensioner) found his responsibility as CLF a difficult task. He was always found sleeping at meetings. He could not rally the younger community members together and could not deliver assignments on schedule. In fact, he could not produce the business plans and decided to give up. Another elderly person within the community volunteered to become a CLF. A young lady CLF at Atafoa was able to attract another young lady at Abrepo to join the one who volunteered. The volunteer from Abrepo had earlier been tasked to look for more CLFs but he failed. The new young lady, who was almost the age of the daughter of the volunteering CLF, did not consider herself capable of being a CLF. Probably, she never dreamed she and someone of her father's age could serve the community in the same capacity as CLFs until she was invited to do so.

5.4.4 Tendency for CLFs to start seeking Individual Financial Rewards

The issue of rewarding CLFs was extensively discussed at beginning of the project. The final decision was that because financial rewards were not sustainable, the CLFs should be given training in some livelihood activities and supported with start-up capital. Training programmes were organised for the CLFs in mushroom production and beekeeping. They were then provided with the necessary technical backstopping, such as purchase of equipments e.g. bee suits, beehives, smokers and follow ups by resource persons.

When the livelihood activity training programme for R8090 begun, the original idea was that the CLFs themselves would not participate in the training. Their role will be to facilitate the selection of trainees in a manner that involved the poor but they insisted on taking part in these programmes with the explanation that they were also poor.

Figure 7: Participation at at the maiden livelihood training: Grasscutter Workshop
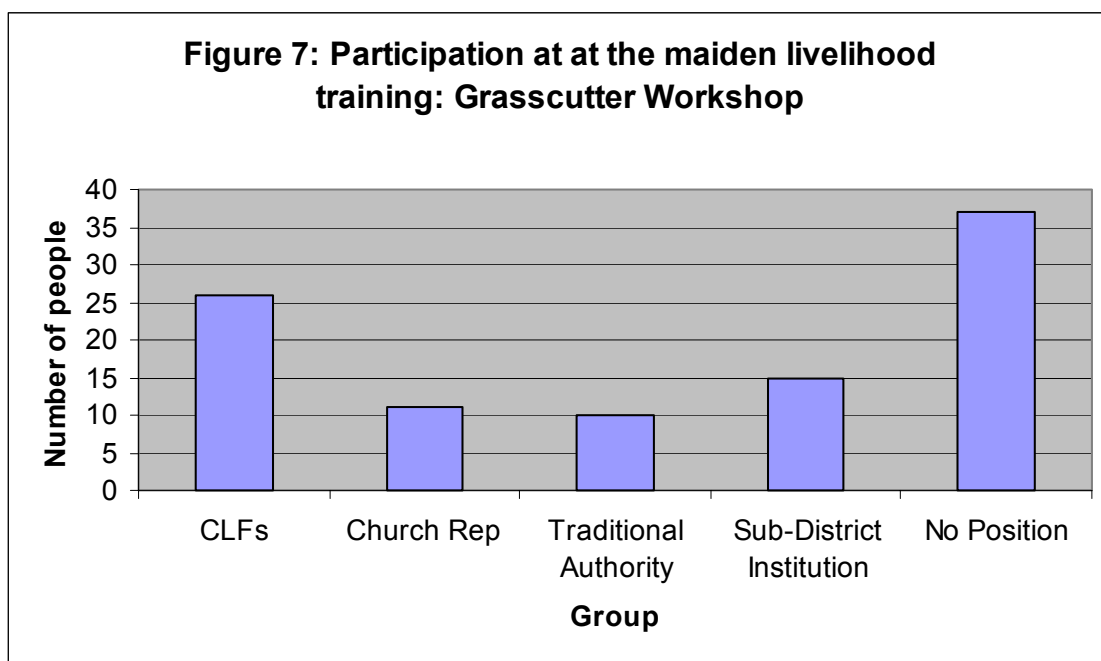
Source: Boafo Yɛ Na Workshop Report, 2002

The project, however, realised that the CLFs and other community leaders were significantly represented in the maiden livelihood improvement training (see Figure 7). Against the background that the CLFs had already received some livelihood training, which they did not practise, the project felt that the CLFs were more interested in the training (without practising it) because the training was always associated with some tangible benefits such as good meals and transport allowances. The project was concerned as this attitude was going to block the chances of the poor who were the main target of the project. Realising this, the project introduced a regulation that no one should be allowed to join the training programmes more than once. Contrary to the belief that CLFs would be motivated by being allowed to take part in the livelihood improvement activities as community beneficiaries, they continued to ask for rewards, illustrating that they were more concerned with the monetary benefits for their services than anything else. There were cases, for example, where CLFs have charged community members for preparing business plans for them.

This project shows that there is a limit to which people would volunteer. This was illustrated in the number of times the CLFs kept pressing for rewards for the services that the communities have selected them to perform. Further, the fact that only a few of them took up

some of the livelihood activities again demonstrates their lack of interest in the activities. Evidence showed that only two out of thirty-six of them took up the livelihood project.

5.4.5 Tendency to favour relations

It was observed that there is a tendency for CLFs to introduce favouritism into the concept of CLFs if not properly monitored. An example was cited where a beneficiary came to report at CEDEP that all the plans approved in their community belonged to one CLF; his wife, children and relatives. Other examples also show that CLFs select their relations for livelihood improvement activities. This is questioning the project slogan, 'who can help the peri-urban poor?' The CLFs however argued that they have the duty to select people whose integrity they can defend but this does not also imply that the opportunity offered the poor should be abused.

The problem of who to select to attend workshops is gradually being solved using a different approach of selection of workshop participants, with the increase in number of workshops and the emphasis placed on new faces for each new workshop. The success of networks arising from these workshops became a challenge to the CLFs. The networks will now serve as the monitoring mechanism against the negative practices of the CLFs. Now committee members of the various networks being formed, coming to CEDEP on their own account to meet and carry out assignments which is a healthy sign of sustainability of their livelihood activities.

The associations being formed are also becoming pressure groups on CEDEP on one hand and on the other, the CLFs. This helps in making the selection process for beneficiaries more transparent and acceptable. The Grasscutter Association, for example, recently pressurized the project staff for the rest of their payment towards the business. They demanded that '*if it is a loan, then it must be in our accounts'* which is a good indication of their empowerment as a result of this project.

5.4.6 Provision of Regular Technical Backstopping

CLFs are not professionals in any of the assigned activities. They are not planners, business advisors, nor resource persons for any livelihood activity but ordinary people who have received training, to facilitate these functions. Several activities they have performed confirmed that most CLFs have not been involved in any form of academic work since they left school many years ago. Some of them complained that sometimes the project became too academic and compelled them to read and write. Given that most of the tasks they perform required higher technical expertise, regular monitoring reviews are necessary to ensure quality control. The first time the CLFs were taken through business plan preparation, for instance, most of them did not grasp the process. Through the combined effort of CLFs who understood the process, project staff and junior researchers, more CLFs became conversant with the business plan preparation.

When the CLFs were trained to keep bees, all the five communities which selected bee keeping experiment for their pilot project had difficulty in attracting colonies. For each of the communities which had colonies, it was only one hive that was colonised. The way to improve colonisation of bees according to an expert was to monitor the hives to be sure that other insects and ants do not go into the hives first, otherwise the bees will not colonise them.

The initial attempts by CLFs who took the first training in snail rearing to train other community members was successful until the snails hatched and then the problem of housing the numerous young snails arose. The community involved, could not nurture the young ones when they hatched due to lack of technical knowhow. Though, the CLFs were able to transfer the technology for constructing the hutch; stocking, feeding and watering, they did not have the skills for looking after the young snails. Similarly, it was discovered in one project site that a cannibal snail was killing the young snails, which was not seen until the project monitoring team visited the beneficiary. With regular backstopping these oversights could have been corrected earlier for better results, but it came to the notice of the project only when the issues started arising. The project could, therefore, be described as a learning process for CEDEP too when it comes to training. It could also be that the training was not thorough enough because it did not involve practical hands-on experience.

The above shows that in training at the community level in future, no step in the process should be taken for granted. Participants should also be made to go through practical hands-on learning on the job, through attachments. This process must not be rushed, but gradual because the results are slow to see and so are the benefits. Thus, training should not be restricted to the classroom.

5.4.7 Information Flow

On several occasions the project put the CLFs in invidious positions that affected their reputations for honesty due to poor flow of information to them. There was a time when the CLFs were asked to facilitate the formation of committees for managing community finance as in the NaRMSIP (DFID R7995) plans. They did the facilitation with a promise that the committee members were going to be paid sitting allowances. This was the understanding at the project design stage. It was subsequently realised that there would not be enough funds to pay sitting allowances. Given the realisation that it would be difficult to sustain such a process, the committee, which had been elected for the above purpose, was dissolved. It was difficult for the CLFs to explain to every community member about the new decision. Thus, it appeared as if it was the CLFs who did not provide the right information. Similar circumstances arose because plan preparation and plan implementation were undertaken by two separate projects.

The CLFs, therefore, blamed the project for saying one thing and then changing it. Consequently, on another occasion the project asked the CLFs to pass information to the communities but some CLFs did not do so. When asked why, they indicated that they were waiting to see if the information would be changed before passing it on

Project implementers should only engage CLFs and communities only when they are clear and sure of what information to give them. Thus, the bulk of the work as to which information to give, how to do so and the time to do it without causing mistrust, lies with the implementing agencies.

5.4.8 Leadership Influence

The CLFs reported that any time they attend meetings with colleagues from other communities they had the upper hand because of the training they received from the project. One CLF, for example, attended a workshop with a relation of one of the project staff on another community assignment related to education. The relation reported to the project staff that the CLF was very outspoken at that workshop. Faced with these challenges, the CLFs appear to have done well to maintain some cohesive groups in some of the communities. A

lexical analysis of how community members see the performance of CLFs as part of the base line survey yielded a 'good' for the CLFs. Asked to present the performance of CLFs in a number line at a workshop, a section of beneficiaries rated CLFs as 50% efficient in overall performance, notwithstanding the difficulties they encounter as enumerated earlier.

5.5 CLFs and Institutional linkages

The project has suffered many setbacks in establishing linkages between some district assemblies and the communities. Experiences of CEDEP have shown that as one moves into the rural areas from the urban centres, reception by district assemblies for NGOs and community activities alike, as well as poverty alleviation programmes in general, become warmer and better because communities at the grassroots receive very little attention from the state.

It was assumed at the initial stages of the project that the CLFs, having received training, would be in a position to link community members to other institutions and agencies after the expiry of the project as a way of sustaining what the project had began. Unfortunately, this did not materialise during the lifespan of the project. However, it seems this was an ambition beyond the capacity and capability of the CLFs since they were not given enough skills for this for this purpose. It has been noted that it is less difficult for the CLFs to work with institutions such as the rural banks than the district assemblies that are to superintend development at the local level. The rural banks for example, as part of their outreach programme, have been visiting communities as a strategy to increase their client base. They have responded positively to invitation by the project to visit the groups and livelihood activities in the project communities. The same is not the case for the district assemblies. For example, attempts to facilitate interaction between the communities and the district assemblies received different responses. It was noted that the larger the district assembly the more difficult it becomes for CLFs to work with them. For instance, meetings planned with two district assemblies outside Kumasi came on at first attempt. However, three separate appointments with the Kumasi metropolitan chief executive, which could not come on. This is not surprising because other studies have shown that it is always difficult for the poor to have access to those in authority for their voices to be heard (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999; King *et al*, 2001). This is also a challenge for the project to try and break through this age-old trend in future.

Perhaps, one of the areas CLFs and communities could be further trained in future is on awareness of other forms of support and potentials that are non-monetary that they can tap. This could then be incorporated into the work of CLFs to help disabuse the minds of community members of seeing financial support as perhaps the only approach that is more welcome and critical in sustaining their livelihood activities.

6   OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF USING CLFS

The environment within which the CLFs operate is replete with social, economic, political, geographical and environmental factors that influence their operations. These influences present both opportunities and constraints, and invariably affect the output of the CLFs.

This section discusses some of such opportunities and constraints and their impact on the performance of CLFs.

6.1   Opportunities

a.   *Urban attraction to human capital*

The availability of such facilities as electricity, potable water, good access roads, etc. leads to the attraction of human capital to the urban centres. Consequently, many skilled people move to the urban centres in search for jobs. Many of these people reside in the peri-urban areas due to two main reasons, namely;

    i.   availability of affordable accommodation at the peri-urban; and
    ii.   availability of land for property development,

as one moves further out of the urban areas. The above attractions lead to an increase of human capital at the peri-urban, suitable for use as CLFs.

b. People already involved in community leadership

The profile of the CLFs (Table 3) indicates that about 93% of them already held leadership positions and/or belonged to some associations before becoming CLFs. This could imply that they have access to local decision-making institutions and crucial stakeholders for livelihood improvement activities. It also suggests that they understand the dynamics of their communities. Thus, assigning them with new responsibilities becomes a normal routine for them.

c. Have some level of education and can access information

With some level of education, the CLFs are able to access potential sources of relevant information from local authorities, community, rural banks, resource persons and CEDEP. With this background, some CLFs, have been able to build up their knowledge base and are now facilitating training programmes as resource persons in their communities (see sections 3.2 and 3.4.2). Their involvement as CLFs has, therefore, helped in further empowering them (i.e. CLFs).

d. Resident in the communities

The 36 CLFs are resident in the 12 communities and provide invaluable morale and technical backstopping to groups in the communities in which they reside. There have been cases where some CLFs have gone to other communities to provide support in livelihood development activities. At Adagya, for example, a CLF trained a community member and two other people in Bosomtwi Atwima Kwanwoma district (BAK) in mushroom production. This is significant in the communities as in most cases the resource persons for the various livelihood activities are not always readily available.

e. Opportunity to empower greater numbers of people

Following from the fact that they reside in the communities, the CLFs naturally also have greater opportunity to identify and empower the poor and marginalised. In reality, there are good cases to support this. There have been cases of inter-community interactions, which provided support and empowerment for some beneficiaries. Examples of such cases are the initiation of the project activities at Aboabogya, which is outside the selected project communities and invitations from churches outside the project communities that are interested in the project to provide training of their members to undertake similar projects.

6.2   Constraints

There are some constraints associated with the use of CLFs on the KPUI. While a number of them have already been discussed above, there are two more that need to be highlighted here.

a. Peri-urban distractions

The PUI presents myriads of working opportunities, which in themselves constitute constraints to the project. For example, CLFs in the more urbanised communities, such as Apatrapa, have more access to urban jobs and have therefore devoted less time to their role as community facilitators. In this community, for instance, one CLF is operating a drinking bar, another is a hairdresser, and the third, a plumber. Their involvement in these activities has made it difficult for them to devote enough time for the project. This is having a negative impact on the commitment of beneficiaries and the success of the project. Not surprisingly, Apatrapa ranks lowest in performance, as shown in Table 6. Other CLFs working in other professions have been distracted by their regular jobs, which include security work outside the community and driving, leaving the facilitation work for only a few CLFs to carry out. These distractions sometimes create conflict among the CLFs.

b. Behaviour of CLFs

The behaviour of some CLFs impact negatively on the project and frustrates their role in mobilising the beneficiaries. Good rapport between CLFs and the community members is very essential for the project. This has not been forthcoming in some communities. There are known cases of some CLFs withholding information from their fellow CLFs and from community members at large. This is evident from Table 5 above where about 42% of community members feel that CLFs do not report to them relevant information about the project.

7   CONCLUSION

7.1   Introduction

This concluding section focuses on key findings and conclusions. The key findings relate to the four key issues that this report sought to address. These are:

- The conceptual framework for the development of the CLF approach, the selection of the CLFs and the building of their capacities
- The role and performance of CLFs in facilitating community development initiatives in the PUI
- The extent to which CLFs are able to operate as an effective interface between their communities, DAs and other stakeholder institutions
- The opportunities and constraints of using CLFs to facilitate development initiatives in the PUI

7.2   Key Findings

The downsides of community action groups are the factors that exclude the poor and vulnerable from participating in community programmes. A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. In the first place, the study shows how CLFs have managed to scale down or remove barriers that exclude the poor and enable the co-involvement of ordinary community members and powerful community leaders in the formulation and implementation of natural resource management strategies. It also highlights the challenges encountered in the process.

Studying the role and performance of CLFs in facilitating community development initiatives in the KPUI, the research revealed the following:

- Under normal circumstances, ordinary people in communities would not readily join anything that their leaders (chiefs, elders, priests etc.) are part of. In the KPUI, this is even exacerbated by the numerous chieftaincy and land disputes. But for the CLFs, mobilising communities would have been a nightmare for the project implementers. The CLFs have been able to break the barrier of factions arising out of chieftaincy and land disputes, which the chiefs and other regular facilitators of community action would have found difficult.
- A strong project presence in the communities promoted by CLFs, made possible the selection of beneficiaries, preparation of business plans, monitoring of activities, and general community project management. Their participation minimised project cost at the community level because they worked as volunteers.

In summary therefore, it can be said that community members find it easy relating to people on equal levels with them.

The underpinning conceptual framework for developing the CLF approach is a novelty in that

- A democratic selection of CLFs guided by purposely-designed criteria galvanised a strong support base for a project situated in the peri-urban interface where group mobilisation is known to be difficult.

- A comprehensive training programme, which made room for planned and emerging capacity needs contributed to the effectiveness in performance of CLFs.

Additionally, the concept yielded the following lessons:
- Communities where CLFs were democratically selected were also the best performing communities.
- Commitment of CLFs is as important as academic qualifications since committed CLFs who were slow in absorbing project concepts managed to catch up with time and performed very well.
- Younger CLFs are more active but less reliable. A related lesson is that CLFs of different age categories and sex attract beneficiaries of same age categories and sex as them.

In summary, it can be said that the CLF concept is an innovation that has been of benefit to project beneficiaries, CLFs and the community members in terms of capacity enhancement and empowerment.

The KPUI presents the following opportunities and constraints for using the CLFs:

- Many skilled people move to and remain in the urban centre due to attractions from urban facilities.
- The quality of human capital in the KPUI makes it possible to develop resource persons from CLFs.
- However, one major constraint to the operation of the CLF concept in the peri-urban interface is urban and rural distractions arising from the possibility of being pulled by opportunities on both sides.

On facilitation of linkages between stakeholders and communities, the study found that

- As one moves into the more rural from the urbanised communities, reception by district assemblies for NGO and community activities alike, and poverty alleviation programmes in general become warmer and better.
- The CLFs are critical promoters of micro-finance services. This is crucial for establishing and strengthening linkages with rural banks and necessary for sustainability of project effects.
- The CLF concept works better in projects with more than one community participating. Under such arrangements CLFs of all the communities come together at forums for sharing best practices, for peer review and appraisal.

In conclusion, it was noted that the CLF concept as an innovation has worked to the benefit of community members and project beneficiaries. The use of criteria and principles in the selection of the CLFs was very useful. The findings of the research also show that CLFs can be handy in peri-urban urban communities. They easily pick up, adapt and apply new skills in livelihood improvement strategies in peri-urban communities. They serve as intermediaries in project implementation and, therefore, serve as assets for their communities. The development of CLFs to serve as community facilitators, however, demands that they are committed, tolerant, patient, and a have spirit of volunteerism towards the development of their communities.

Evidence from the study has, however, shown that the selection of the CLFs can be more complicated than merely using selection criteria. This is mainly attributable to the dynamics at the community level, level of empowerment of certain individuals in the communities as against the others and a silent but strong undercurrent of speculation of possible gains that can accrue from projects to CLFs. These are all areas that one may need to further explore in a similar project in future. It was also noted from this research that livelihood activities thrive better in a conducive and peaceful environment.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Criteria for assessing Communities performance and CLFs

Factor	Criteria	Maximum Marks
Mobilization	• CLF rapport (1) • Enthusiasm of the people (1)	2
Delivery	• Efficiency of the group (1) • Skilfulness of group (1) • Commitment to the livelihood activity (1)	3
Participation	• Groups still intact (1) • Relations; involvement of different households (1) • Age and Tribe (1)	3
Adoption	• Sharing with others (1) • Readiness to bear risk (1)	2