An alternative drive to provision and maintenance of basic school infrastructure: A multi-stakeholder approach in West Mamprusi District of Ghana

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ABSTRACT
The provision of education especially at the basic level has always come with its related complex infrastructural challenges which demand sustainable solutions. Thus many believe such challenges can be tackled through the convergent capacities of all, no matter how resourceful and skilled individuals are. If such potentials cannot be coordinated in line with group goal, progress is improbable. It is in the light of this that, the West Mamprusi District and related development partners adopted the multi-stakeholder engagement concept as a 'panacea' to the challenges that threaten the progress of basic education. This paper was aimed at finding out how useful the multi-stakeholder engagement approach has been in the enhancement of school infrastructure provision and maintenance in the District. It adopted the mixed approach with specific reference to descriptive and explanatory surveys. The outcome is that, the approach provides resources and managerial skills for enhancing the provision and maintenance of basic school infrastructure. It further identified inadequate resources, poor communication, poor cooperation as well as limited commitment among stakeholders as the main challenges that confront such engagement processes. The study concluded that, among other things, there is the need for a proper resourcing multi-stakeholder platforms, strengthening cooperation and commitment among stakeholders, ensuring effective communication, and promoting facilitation in organizing such engagements in the District.

INTRODUCTION

The demand for the provision and maintenance of basic school infrastructure and other relate resources have been a developmental challenge to many governments in most developing countries (Capriello and Fraquelli, 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa alone, it is reported that US$ 30 billion is required to meet the shortfall in supply of physical facilities at the basic school levels (Leathes et al., 2011). Meanwhile, primary school enrolment in Africa is known to have increased dramatically since the beginning of the millennium, averaging between 56 and 73% (UNESCO, 2010).

Heyneman et al. (2009) report that, Ghana's gross enrolment rate for basic schools between 2003 and 2006 increased from 87 to 94%. The authors further documented a positive enrolment trend at the junior secondary school level which is observed to range between 73 and 77%. The completion rate for primary schools is observed to be high (85%) compared to the junior secondary schools (65%). The continuous rise in
enrolment in the public basic schools has however, not seen a corresponding increase in classroom and other physical facilities to provide the required quality education (Fiske, 2000). Thus, if basic school enrolment rates are not responsive to local school infrastructure, government efforts towards increasing access to schools will have very limited impact on the overall education (Handa, 1999). The increasing enrolment therefore, demands more resources to provide the required school facilities which are beyond what government alone can bear (Education International, 2009). According to the 2010-2013 District Medium Term Development Plan (DMTDP) of the West Mamprusi District (WMD), increasing basic school enrolments in the area, necessarily goes with an increasing demand for classroom accommodation to solve the challenges of congestions in classrooms and help in the elimination of schools under-trees. Thus, as a panacea to this situation, many are of the view that, the Multi-stakeholder Engagement (MSE) approach is the best alternative to reducing state burden of funding and maintenance of resources such as public basic school infrastructure (UNDP, 2006). Therefore, the need for engagement platform involving multi-actors partnering in the delivery of basic school infrastructure projects and services as proposed by Clarkson (1995) is a clarion call. Thus, engagement among multi-players is not only seen as collusion of economic resources, but also as an effective and responsive maintenance approach (Hanashiro et al., n.d). This is elicited by the cross-cutting roles of various players including the government, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Donors, and civil society groups, who are essential in the provision and sustainable management of public basic school facilities (United Nations, 2007).

It is for this reason that the West Mamprusi District Assembly (WMDA) adopted the multi-stakeholder engagement approach by collaborating with communities and NGO/Donors as a strategy to tackling its numerous basic school infrastructural challenges. However the actual impact of these engagements is little felt as many basic schools are still faced with worsening classroom infrastructural situation (West Mamprusi District Assembly, 2010). From this stand point, a study was undertaken to determine how useful the multi-player approach has been in overcoming the basic school infrastructural challenges in the WMD over the years.

THEORITICAL OVERVIEW

This section discusses the main concepts-stakeholder, multi-stakeholder engagement, basic school infrastructure among others. It guided in the quest to explaining multi-stakeholder engagement as it relates to the provision and management of basic school infrastructure. The chapter therefore, serves as the conceptual framework that helped situate the study within scholarly discussions and provided a roadmap for critical analysis.

Stakeholder

The concept “stakeholders” was borne out of the idea of shareholders of corporate organization (Ellsworth, 1998) and was first acknowledged in 1708 as ‘a person who holds the stake or stakes in a bet’ (Pomeroy and Douvere, 2008: 818). In 1984, however, Freeman, a student of business administration and corporate management, came into the limelight when he referred to the term ‘stakeholders’ as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objective (Freeman, 1984; Coleman et al., 2007). Thus, stakeholder encompasses a great range of actors which can directly or indirectly, negatively and/or positively influence an organization (Kantanen, 2007). There and then, the concept has grown and now goes beyond the field of business organizations to include, international relations, policy development, resource management, among others (Ramirez, 1999) which has led to varied understanding across practice and academia regarding its real meaning.

It is sometimes taken to mean those who will bear the outcome of change (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2002). This may be narrow as it does not take into account the doers of the change who are very important when it comes to decision making. Rikkola et al. (2005) for instance, argue that, any actor; be it a person or group of persons, an agent, institution or state, or community, whose activities directly or indirectly affects or be influenced by an organization’s goal or objective could be classified as a stakeholder. This view puts the concept in a broader perspective (Halcro, 2008) as it covers a wide range of actors whose influence can impact the development issue at hand. Thus for example providing and managing basic school infrastructure will need the involvement of all whose activities can have a bearing on such facilities. It is in the light of this, Peterson (2009) opines that, stakeholders must be extended to include other groups such as the community, pressure groups, government and so on. To this extent, they should not just be members of communities or non-governmental organizations alone as some people may think. They are said to include those who are influential and/or could be influenced by activities, services and associated performance with regard to issues to be addressed (Accountability, 2011).

Stakeholder expand to include, organizations and groups; the academic community; political actors, public sector agencies, interest groups, civil society members, religious leaders, and users/consumers (International
Financial Corporation, 2007). In this study, stakeholders therefore include; District Assembly, Ghana Education Service (GES), NGOs/Donors, School community, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs) among others (Ministry of Education, 2009). All these may have interest and can be affected given a school infrastructural situation. They involve among others, actors who can influence the issue of school facilities at stake and hence have an impact as each of them, for instance, possesses a unique character and/or potential regarding resources and managerial skills (Gray, 1989; Hemmati, 2002). As to how these unique potentials are pulled together for the common good calls for understanding multi-stakeholder engagements.

Multi-stakeholder engagement

The term multi-stakeholder engagement has been intensively discussed in literature with various descriptions such as, collaboration, participation, cooperation, network, alliance, among others (Huxham, 1996). Thus, all these terms signify bringing together different players who have an interest in a problem situation and engaging them in processes of dialogue which can bring about innovation, resource mobilization, decision-making and action towards solving the problem at hand (Woodhill, 2007). However, the varied background to a larger extent leads to a range of different ideas expressed as what really constitute a multi-stakeholder engagement process and the purpose in organizing such activities.

Steins and Edwards (1998) for instance emphasized that, multi-stakeholder engagement can be generally understood as either formal or informal decision-making mechanism made up of varied and complex players but collectively perceive the same resource management problem; realizing their interdependence for solving it; and coming together to agree on action strategies for solving them. As a network approach, the purpose is to bring on board unified vision, driven by collective problem solving, and hence designing strategy to overcome challenge (For example, inadequate basic school infrastructure) under consideration. Such plat forms can equally serve as tools for creating and building confidence as well as trust among different actors and thus serve as mechanisms for providing mutually acceptable solutions agreed by all (UNDP, 2006). This will mean that, the approach will provide solution that is satisfactory to all.

Latham (2009) asserted that, engagement can lead to partnering between the state and other sectors. This implies multi-stakeholder’s collaborative process in public basic school infrastructure for instance must not be limited to only group of actors in the public sector. In this way, a platform should provide a sound ground where the state can draw partners from other sectors such as NGOs/Donors, and communities, to enhance the provision and maintenance of school infrastructural facilities. Thus, multiple actors or agents are likely to have distinct approaches to education infrastructural provision and management emerging from their own histories as well as their economic motivations (Fennell, 2007). In such situations the partners have varied targets, but have a shared understanding that there should be division of labour and that collaboration can help overcome differences as a result facilitating common activities to achieve unified goals. This usually involves processes and practices embarked upon with a broad range of people working together to achieve a shared goal and who are guided by a common commitment to address problem they face. Simply put, it is “working with ‘stakeholders’ to accomplish better programs, policies, activities and decisions than if you were working without them” (Coleman et al., 2007:6).

In terms of basic school infrastructural provision and management, this will mean pulling funds and managerial capacities from diverse individuals, groups and/or organizations across the various divides with the ultimate goal of ensuring resource mobilization and efficiency in the building and maintenance of the basic school facilities (Simpungwe, 2006). It is within this context that, this paper considers multi-stakeholder engagement in basic school infrastructure to mean the collaboration of Government (District Assemblies; GES: - Deputy Director in Charge of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation; Circuit Supervisor; Heads of basic schools; and Teachers), Donors/NGOs (EU, World Vision etc.) and Community (PTAs, and SMCs) to enhance the provision and maintenance of basic school infrastructure.

Usefulness of multi-stakeholder engagement approach in basic school infrastructural provision and maintenance in Ghana

Scholars argue that, collaborations in education have been motivated by the need for more resources to run deficient school systems as well as the need to improve quality provision through raising management standards (Fennell, 2007) and that, by pooling resources and skills together more can be achieved with less (Bailey et al., 1995). Therefore, the multi-stakeholder engagement strategy helps Governments of Ghana to provide appropriate school buildings to facilitate teaching and learning (Daviet et al., 2011).

Thus, in Ghana the solution to the challenges faced by Government over the years to finding funds for the provision of infrastructural facilities at all levels of education (NDPC, 2010) had a boost with the adoption of the MSE as a management approach which has been captured in its Education Strategic Plan (Ministry of
Education, 2003). The initiation can be understood in the following words of one of its area of focus and policy goals:

...There will be emphasis on the principles and practice of decentralization with greater involvement of civil society and the private sector in general and especially, school management through a review of current partnership arrangements. The Ministry recognizes that there needs to be an inclusive framework for financing education, one that embraces equity principles, medium term financial development planning within a set of agreed costed minimum national standards and which should involve cost sharing and cost recovery where practicable. This has to satisfy local and international imperatives and to enhance co-operation between those engaged in the delivery of education...

This reflects in various engagements of government and its related outcomes. In terms of Ghana Government-Donor collaboration, the share of donor funds mainly for primary education, for example, rose from 68.8% in 2003 to 72.7% in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2003). Between 1989 and 2001, the World Bank support to the non-wage education sector ranged between 4.5 and 69.4% of government expenditure and averaged 33% per year over the period. That apart, bilateral support to education sector facilities ranged between 6.5 and 155.3%, averaging 41% per year (World Bank, 2004: 61). Casely-Hayford et al. (2007) also argue that, at the start of the 1990s, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, initiated a US$35 million Primary Education Project (PREP) spanning 1990 to 1995, while the World Bank implemented the Primary School Development Project (PSD) (1993-98).

The successes of the multi-stakeholders engagement has also been shown in the initiation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme where collaboration existed between Ministry of Education and Funding Agencies. According to Sawyerr (1997), the then Minister of Education Science and Sports, the kind of engagement led to the collective efforts of all relevant stakeholders. This provided a solid ground for a long-term success story of ministry-funding agency collaboration as recommendations derived from this did not only point out a continuing and serious demand for basic school infrastructure but also geared towards mobilizing resources to overcome those challenges. For instance, in terms of resources mobilization, engagements between donors and government in basic education resulted in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) making a grant of US$3 million to help government achieve two strategic objectives which brought about 330 model schools, three in each of the then 110 districts in the country (Sawyerr, 1997; Casely-Hayford et al., 2007).

The European Union on its part made a grant of 1.25 billion cedis for the rehabilitation of school buildings and the provision of library books for basic education schools. This then shows the potential of the collaborative approach to solving the problems of poorly financed or material resourced basic school infrastructural facilities.

That apart, engagement between Ghana government and the US government [Millenium Development Authority (MiDA)] has led to the provision of basic school infrastructure in some beneficiary communities. The initiative has resulted in the reconstruction, rehabilitation, or expansion of schools, and provision of new facilities (MiDA, 2010). Therefore collaboration can serve as an instrument that can improve both educational infrastructural policies and expansion of school facilities.

In a similar vein, USAID (n.d) have explained how Catholic Relief Service (CRS) under the infrastructure component of the school feeding programme, collaborated with communities where the said communities had to assume the responsibility of providing all labor whereas CRS financed the roofing of the building in support of the programme. In some instances, CRS/Ghana supported the construction/rehabilitation of 260 classrooms blocks, 21 teachers’ quarters and 2 community libraries while 134 schools were provided with classroom furniture (ibid). Also significant is community collaboration especially between the School Authorities and Parents (PTA). Thus, the PTA has significantly played a major role in enhancing basic school facilities in Ghana (Dunne et al., 2007). This of course helps in relieving government of resource burden regarding school infrastructural provision and management.

Challenges of multi-stakeholder engagements

The multi-stakeholder approach brings to bear serious managerial challenges (Heydenreich, 2008). It is highly uncommon to see people, organization, or agents with heterogeneous background having it smooth when they engage with each other. The differences in values, interest or aspirations, power, and resources will definitely pose diverse challenges which need to be managed in order to achieve the desired group goal. Therefore, the complexities and challenges related to engagement relationships have been acknowledged by many scholars, related literature and practitioners (Kanter, 1994; Comfort, 1999; Savas, 2000).

Warner (2004), for instance, contended that, the “prospects of consensual decision making and action in a multi-stakeholder platforms are threatened by social, economic and political gaps. Then, there is also the possibility of MSP being driven by opportunity, which is exploited by the state or powerful individual(s) rather than the entire society (Simpungwe, 2006). This notwithstanding incorporates diversity or pluralistic approach to
multi-stakeholder platform, which could lead to loss of predictable control, and may face the difficulty of resolving issues contended by multiple heterogeneous voices and interests (ibid). Connotatively, involving multiple identity groups may not serve the interests of everyone involved. This is in consonance with the view of Freeman that power variation among different actors may not allow for a leveled ground for different stakeholders. This therefore may have negative consequences on decisions arrived at during the process (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholder engagement may also face challenges in terms of cost as well as time. This is because, one may require resources to effectively organise a larger platform (Coleman et al., 2007). It then means that, in a given situation where the scope of the stakeholders involved is relatively large, it could be a challenging potential in terms of the resources needed to organize and manage such engagements. Dentoni et al. (2012) also argue that, in real sense, managing multi-stakeholder activities in terms of resource needs poses numerous challenges. This is because; organizers need resources and managerial skills to ensure multi-player interaction.

That apart, though multi-stakeholder engagement approaches have much positives, their voluntary basis can also be a source of weakness, especially with respect to resource mobilization and management, as there are no readily legal consequence that may hold those involved when they go against their agreed roles and responsibilities. Some authority however argue that, in the absence of such laws, monitoring and evaluation become key for both accountability and learning in the whole process of an engagement (Marriott and Goyder, 2009).

**METHODOLOGY**

The study relied specifically on descriptive and explanatory sample survey of stakeholders in the basic school infrastructural sector. Questionnaires and interview guide as well as observation were used to collect data from the various categories of stakeholders. These stakeholders included the District Development Planning Officer, Assembly Members, Deputy Director (in Charge of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation), Donors/NGOs, Circuit Supervisors, SMC Chairpersons, PTA Chairpersons, Heads of Schools, and Teachers in the West Mamprusi District.

The District was selected due to the varied nature of stakeholders in the area of basic school infrastructure. Secondly, because of the collaborative approach the district adopted over the years as well as the serious challenges associated with basic school infrastructure in area (WMDA, 2010). The study design also helped to collect both qualitative and quantitative data by finding out 'who', 'what', 'where', how, 'how many', or 'how much' of the data needed (Yin, 2003). The design equally helped to triangulate information from different data sources.

The study adopted stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. This was to ensure that all units of the heterogeneous targeted groups of the population were reached (Peil, 1995), so that, accurate and general views could be expressed about multi-stakeholder engagement activities in basic school infrastructure in the district.

The District was stratified into twelve (12) based on the Educational Circuits designed by the West Mamprusi Education Directorate's 2012 enrolment report. That is, Walewale Central, Walewale East, Walewale West, Kpasekpe East, Kpasekpe West, Janga, Kparigu, Tinguri, Yagaba East, Yagaba West, Kubori and Wungu circuits (Mamprusi Education Directorate, 2012).

The lottery method was used to randomly select two (2) basic schools and two (2) teachers per school from each circuit. This technique was also used in selecting twelve (12) Assembly Members (AM) across the circuits. In the case of the PTA and SMC Chairpersons, because the number of schools sampled were more than the number of the Chairpersons, simple random technique was further used to sample twelve (12) schools where the chairpersons were drawn to represent the twelve (12) PTAs and twelve (12) SMC Chair persons.

In addition, key informants were purposively sampled. They included, 24 Head of Schools, 12 Circuit Supervisors (CS), 5 Donors/Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the area of educational infrastructure, the District Development Planning Officer (DDPO), as well as the Deputy Director in Charge of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DDCPME). Table 1 indicates the composition and sample methods used.

**Data collection**

Data was collected from both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data sources included published and unpublished books, reports, articles, journals, District Assembly Development Plans and the internet. The primary data on the other hand was collected through field survey using Questionnaires, interviews, as well as observation of physical basic school infrastructure. The questionnaires were administered after pre-testing, to collect data from the CS, HS, NGOs/Donors, Teachers, PTAs and SMC Chairpersons, and AM. Specifically, different categories of questionnaire were designed with both close and open-ended questions to enhance the collection of specific data from the various respondents. For the purpose of triangulation and to help enhance the quality of the data, the DDPO and the DDCPME were granted separate interviews. These were possible with the help of an interview guide that was structured in line
with the objectives of the study. Physical infrastructural facilities of selected schools were observed, photographs of such facilities were taken, and their conditions recorded when necessary.

**Statistical analyses**

The data obtained from the survey was analysed using the statistical software package SPSS Windows 18.0 (Norusis, 2010). Frequencies and percentages of responses were determined. Correlation analysis was also performed to determine the relationships among engagement platforms, Public Basic School infrastructure providers and management.

**RESULTS**

The results of the study is presented in five themes which include forms of Stakeholder Engagements, Purposes of the Engagement Process, Contributions of the Engagement Processes, Correlation between Multi-stakeholder Engagement and Basic School Infrastructure in the District, as well as the Main Challenges of the Engagements.

**Forms of stakeholder engagements in West Mamprusi District**

This is to show the kinds of collaborations in the management and provision of basic school infrastructure in the District. From Figure 1, it is clear that stakeholders engagemore with government (For example, DA and GES) and NGO/Donor agencies (For example, EU and World Vision International), (24.2%). Figure 1 also indicated that, the next prominent kind of collaboration is the one designated as ’all inclusive’ (20%). That is to say engagement between government, NGOs/Donors, and communities. Further, 18.3% of respondents mentioned collaborations between government agencies or institutions and communities such as PTAs. The fourth most dominant form of collaboration for school infrastructural delivery and management involved communities and NGOs/Donors (12.5%). It is equally clear that, least collaborative institutions towards enhancing basic school infrastructure existed between intra-government agencies (For example, DA and GES). In fact, similar assertions were made about these forms of engagements or collaborations by the DDPO and the DDCPME when they were interviewed. Generally, the results showed a relatively stronger collaboration between government agencies and NGOs/Donor in the District. This of course can be described as very good fertile grounds for enhancing the school infrastructural provision. However, given the few number of NGOs/Donors involved in the basic school infrastructural sector (West Mamprusi District Assembly, 2010) in the district, all stakeholder need to be brought on board to promote commitment, ownership, and sustainability in the sector. This will not only enhance the government effort at decentralizing basic education but also drawing both human and financial resources towards promoting infrastructure development (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

Measuring the positive effects of the multi-stakeholder engagement on the basic school infrastructural facilities called for identifying the various reasons behind the engagements. As shown in Table 2, the main purpose for such platforms is to "mobilize resources and take decisions" (25.8%) on basic school infrastructure in the District. This did not reflect much on the ground considering the kind of infrastructural challenge associated with the District. Thus, stakeholders need to be more committed to pulling resources together in order to bridge the gap.

The outcome of study also indicated that, “sharing managerial skills and taking decisions” (23.3%) was the next in terms of specific purpose of engagements;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample composition</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Type of sampling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (T)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Simple random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of schools (HS)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA Chairpersons</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Simple random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMC Chairpersons</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Simple random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circuit Supervisors (CS)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly Members (AM)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Simple random</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of NGOs/Donors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDPO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDCPME</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (sample size)</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
followed by “mobilizing resource, sharing managerial skills, and “taking decisions” (17.5%); whiles the least score (2.5%) was associated with respondents who felt MSE was meant for “mobilizing resources” only. Generally, the results show that behind any engagement among the stakeholders in basic school infrastructure, there is a specific purpose (Adam et al., 2007). The main purpose of engaging stakeholder in the basic school infrastructural provision and management is therefore to “mobilize resources and take specific decisions” which goes to satisfy the believe that, multi-stakeholder engagements in educational sector are mostly motivated by decisions to pull resources (Fennell, 2007) and to serve as formal or informal decision-making mechanism (Steins and Edwards, 1998).

Specific contributions of the engagement processes to basic school infrastructure in West Mamprusi District

A higher percentage of respondents (89.2%) agreed that, engagements contribute positively to the school infrastructural delivery and management. The survey findings also show that, the NGOs/Donors, DDPO and DDCPME hold the same view. These results emphasized that, engagement contributes significantly to improving school infrastructure in the District. Specifically, 54.2% indicated that, collaborative activities yield both “improved managerial efficiency and resource mobilization”. The next dominant (25.2%) contribution is “improving only resource mobilization” for basic school infrastructure. The

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**Table 2. Specific purpose of the engagement processes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobilize resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share managerial skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take decisions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilize resources and take decisions</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilize resources and share managerial skills</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share managerial skills and take decision</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilize resources, share managerial skills, and take decisions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Idea</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Correlations between multi-stakeholder activities and basic school infrastructure in West Mamprusi District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MSE</th>
<th>BSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSE</td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSE</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSI</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.767**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSI</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at p=0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Main challenges of engagements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor commitment of some stakeholders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited facilitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited cooperation among stakeholders</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay in decision making</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor communication and commitment of players</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate resources</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Idea</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

least who represented 10% said engagements “improve only managerial efficiency”. Considering the general view however, the platform for engaging stakeholder goes to improve the management and resource for basic school infrastructure in the District. This follows Woodhill’s (2007) argument that, collaborative platforms can improve innovation, resource mobilization and enhance decision-making as in the case of basic school infrastructure in the West Mamprusi District.

**Correlation between multi-stakeholder engagement (MSE) and basic school infrastructure (BSI) in West Mamprusi District**

Table 3 shows the results of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis of MSE and BSI in the District. The coefficient 0.767 implies a strong or marked correlation. This means that, there is a stronger positive relationship between MSE and BSI in the district. Therefore, an improvement in the multi-stakeholder activities will help to enhance the provision and management of the basic school infrastructure in the area. This follows the argument that, multi-stakeholder collaborations between communities, government, and the civil society has not only contributed to resource mobilization and management but also resulted in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of basic school infrastructural facilities (Hartwell et al., 2004; Kendall, 2006). The engagements therefore provide a framework for the stakeholders to partner each other towards a common goal (Katz and Kahn, 1978) of enhancing basic school facilities.

**Main challenges of the engagement processes**

The main challenges of engagement processes are expressed in frequency and percentages in Table 4. Though the result of engagement activities portrayed some positive impact on school infrastructure in the District, there still exist some challenges. This is indicated by the majority of respondents (25.8%) agreeing to the fact that there are “inadequate resources” for engaging stakeholders in the provision and maintenance of the school infrastructure. The claim is supported by the DDPO and DDCPME as they emphasized in separate interviews that, resources to hold regular engagement activities is always insufficient. Also 21.7% of respondents hold the view that, “poor communication and commitment among stakeholder” is also a serious challenge that hampers engagement activities. Interestingly, the majority of the NGOs/Donor community (80%) rather saw the “poor communication and commitment among stakeholders as the main
challenge.

The results further showed that, 14.2% respondents identified “limited cooperation among stakeholder” as the main challenge. This implies that, all efforts need to be put to alleviating this challenge since limited cooperation has the potential of damaging the spirit of togetherness and jeopardizing cooperate action. This is consistent with Simpungwe (2006) who asserted that, despite incorporating diversity or pluralistic approach to multi-stakeholder platform, loss of control could lead to difficulty in resolving issues contended by multiple heterogeneous voice and interest groups. Thus, involving multiple identity groups may not serve the interests of all. Providing an avenue that will yield the most productive corporation or collaboration among the various actors at the ‘table’ is needed to enhance the joint resource management skills required for basic school infrastructure in West Mamprusi District.

From the Table 4 “limited facilitation/coordination” scored the least (4.2%). This is consistent with the assertion that, multi-stakeholder collaboration raises significant managerial challenges (Heydenreich, 2008). Though this challenge seems to be comparatively marginal, the significant role played by facilitators in resource provision and management platforms such as basic school infrastructure calls for attention. In line with this, Coleman et al. (2007) argue that facilitation is the most important to successful multi-stakeholder collaboration. Thus, in any effort aiming at bringing together a group of people to address a common goal such as school infrastructural provision and management, strong facilitation is essential to ensuring that the platforms is well-run, well thought out, well prepared and achieve the desired outcome. The need is therefore to design or adopt mechanisms that can help overcome this challenge. However, as shown in Table 4, “inadequate resources” for organizing the multi-stakeholder engagement processes are the most occurring challenge that faces platforms in the District. This goes to confirm Coleman et al. (2007) argument in terms of economic cost associated with multi-stakeholder engagements. It is not out of place to say that, given the challenges in question, the frequency of organizing such activities is going to be poor which in turn has serious consequences on school infrastructural delivery and maintenance as portrayed in the basic school infrastructural challenges discussed above. Organizers of such platform must therefore take a serious look at the entire challenges and more especially the issue of resources for multi-stakeholder engagement platforms in basic school infrastructure in West Mamprusi District.

Conclusion

The outcome of this study has yielded much regarding the positive contributions of multi-stakeholder platforms to school infrastructural delivery and management particularly in the West Mamprusi District. It came out that, multi-stakeholder activities in school infrastructure can be felt especially in basic school infrastructure in a form of resource delivery and improved management. It specifically highlighted the mobilization of resources and managerial skills towards promoting basic school infrastructural delivery and maintenance especially in the District. It is however clear that; there are various kinds of challenges that are militating against multi-stakeholder platforms in the area. Much references were given to poor cooperation, poor communication and commitment, delay in decision making, with the most serious challenge being inadequate resources. Thus, the full benefits of such collaborations cannot be realized if the encountered challenges are not checked.

It therefore mean, given the inadequate resources as a main hindrance to engagement activities across the WMD, the District Assembly with the support from the District Education Directorate as part of ensuring the effective organization of such engagement, need to design a funding strategy that will be geared toward providing the required resources needed for Engagement Platforms.

Issues of cooperation and commitment among the various stakeholders need to be improved. It is important to note that, the whole concept of engagement is governed by the kind of cooperation and commitment among players at the platform. An effective collaboration will deem not to be probable in an environment of poor cooperation and commitment and so will not yield any positive result (Hawkins and Stedman-Bryce, 2009).

Enhancing communication will equally play a vital role in the engagement process. The poor communication among stakeholder has the potential of worsening the effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder platforms in the District. Organizers of the processes at either the schools or District levels need to ensure effective communication before, during and after collaborative activities.

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