

***AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN GHANA***

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by

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a Public University in Ghana**

ABSTRACT

While universities provide quality education, they also offer a range of social, economic, and cultural activities to their host communities. In Ghana, University Community Engagements are part of the government's initiatives aimed at the redistribution of privilege nationality, educational inequalities and eradicating poverty. However, not many studies have been carried out on community engagement in this part of the world, as most studies have concentrated on faculty and students.

This is a seven week ethnographic study of a village in Northern Ghana focussing on stakeholders understanding, participants concerns and power relations in an engagement programme. The study aims at understanding the shift in dispositions that enabled students to advocate eradication of poverty, network with colleagues and future leaders from different disciplines, to research and present prioritized proposals by the villagers. Seven weeks were spent following eleven students and four subsequent weeks in the community. Participant observations, interviews and documentary evidence were employed. Semi structured interviews were later conducted with nine university leaders and two District Assembly staff representing the Assembly as a stakeholder located outside the village. Key arguments engaged regarding participation include providing empowering strategies to community to give voice, eradicate poverty and power relationships that challenged and support emancipation.

The key findings of the study from a thematic analysis indicated varying degrees of understanding amongst stakeholders and asymmetric power relations that affects the entire programme. Based on these findings, and consistent with the wider literature, recommendations are that the engagement should be based on equal partnership among all stakeholders to encourage full cooperation and effective participation. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to increased participation and a greater stakeholder involvement. The research may also lead to programme restructuring and ultimately a review of the relationship between the university and other stakeholders. More importantly, it may influence policies to address the increasing disparities and poverty which affect community participation in the engagement process.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Father, Mother, Wife and Kids particularly my last son Ramadan Naani who was born whilst I was in the United Kingdom. May Allah (SWT) grant them long life and good health.

“With higher education institutions facing increasingly straitened economic Conditions, attracting and retaining students, satisfying and developing them and ensuring they graduate to become successful, productive citizens matters more than ever”.

(Trowler, 2010, p.2).

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other university for the award of a degree.

SIGNATURE.....

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASHE	Association for the Study of Higher Education
AUCEA	Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCES	Centre for Community Engagement and Services
CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CDD	Community Driven Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEP	Community Engagement Programme
CFAT	Carnegie Foundation for Advance Teaching
CGCE	Centre for Global Community Engagement
CIC	Committee on Industrial Cooperation
COE	Community of Engagement
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUPP	Community University Partnership Programme (Brighton University)
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DEPI	Department of Environmental and Primary Industries
ESRC	Education and Scientific Research Council
FBO's	Faith Based Organisations
GHS	Ghana Health Services
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HERI	Higher Education Research Institute
IAPP	International Association for Public Participation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JHS	Junior High School
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs	Ministries, Metropolitan and District Assemblies
NCCPE	National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement

NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PACE	Participate and Community Engagement
PCE	Public Community Engagement
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
Pro-VC	Pro-Vice Chancellor
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SRC	Student Representative Council
SWOT	Strength Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TTFPP	Third Trimester Field Practical Programme
UDS	University for Development Studies
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
USDA	United States Department for Agriculture
USADF	United States African Development Foundation
UUK	Universities, United Kingdom
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WHO	World Health Organisation

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGIES AS USED IN THE STUDY

1. ***The University***: This refers to the University whose programme has been explored. The use of the word university is for the sake of anonymity.
2. ***University Leaders***: This refers to University management that I interacted with and interviewed including the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Lecturers.
3. ***District Assembly***: It is the second tier of the administrative subdivision below the level of the region. This is the pivot of the decentralisation system in Ghana. It came into existence as a consequence of the local government reforms of the 1980's. There are a total of 216 District Assemblies currently in Ghana. These are referred to as Councils in the United Kingdom and may be used interchangeably. See Appendix 4 for further understanding of the decentralisation concept in Ghana.
4. ***An Assembly Person***: The Assemblyman or Woman in the Ghanaian context is someone who has been popularly elected by universal adult suffrage to represent the community at the local government (District Assembly) level. So he/she has a considerable amount of goodwill amongst the community members.
5. ***Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP)***: this is the name of the community engagement programme of the University held during the third trimester of each year where students are sent to rural and deprived communities for eight weeks to live and carry on research.
6. ***Coordinator***: These are appointed Academics who are assigned a number of communities to supervise students whilst they are on the field for the entire seven weeks. It is their duty to visit, guide, assess and score them. They also take students grievances if any back to the university and serve as liaison between the community and the university.
7. ***Provisions***: This refers to petty daily items such as soap, toothpaste, sugar, milk that are needed in households and procured from time to time. They are sold in small supermarkets or kiosks in most African communities as is done in off license stores across the United Kingdom.

8. **Petty Trader:** A term that refers to women and men who engage in trading on a small scale as a result of low capitalisation. Rural women in West Africa, who do not have access to resources sometimes engage in buying and selling small items such as toiletries and essential items such as sugar, milk, tea and batteries.
9. **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA):** is considered one of the popular and effective development strategies to enable local communities to conduct their own analysis, plan and take action (Chambers, 1992). It has been found to be an effective tool for gathering information in rural areas. It was developed in early 1990s to move away from the top-down to bottom-up approach (Cavestro, 2003).
10. **Community Reports:** These are usually community profiles that are prepared and presented by the students in each community detailing areas for developmental interventions to be submitted to the District Assembly at the end of their stay in the community.
11. **Stakeholder.** A stakeholder, as the name implies, are persons or groups with a “stake” in the community programme. Generally this includes those persons or groups that are directly affected by the programme and also those who are indirectly affected or have an interest in the programme such the Community, Students, University leaders and the District Assembly. Participants in the study were selected out of the stakeholder population. Therefore all participants belonged to stakeholder groups and were stakeholders themselves.

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CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

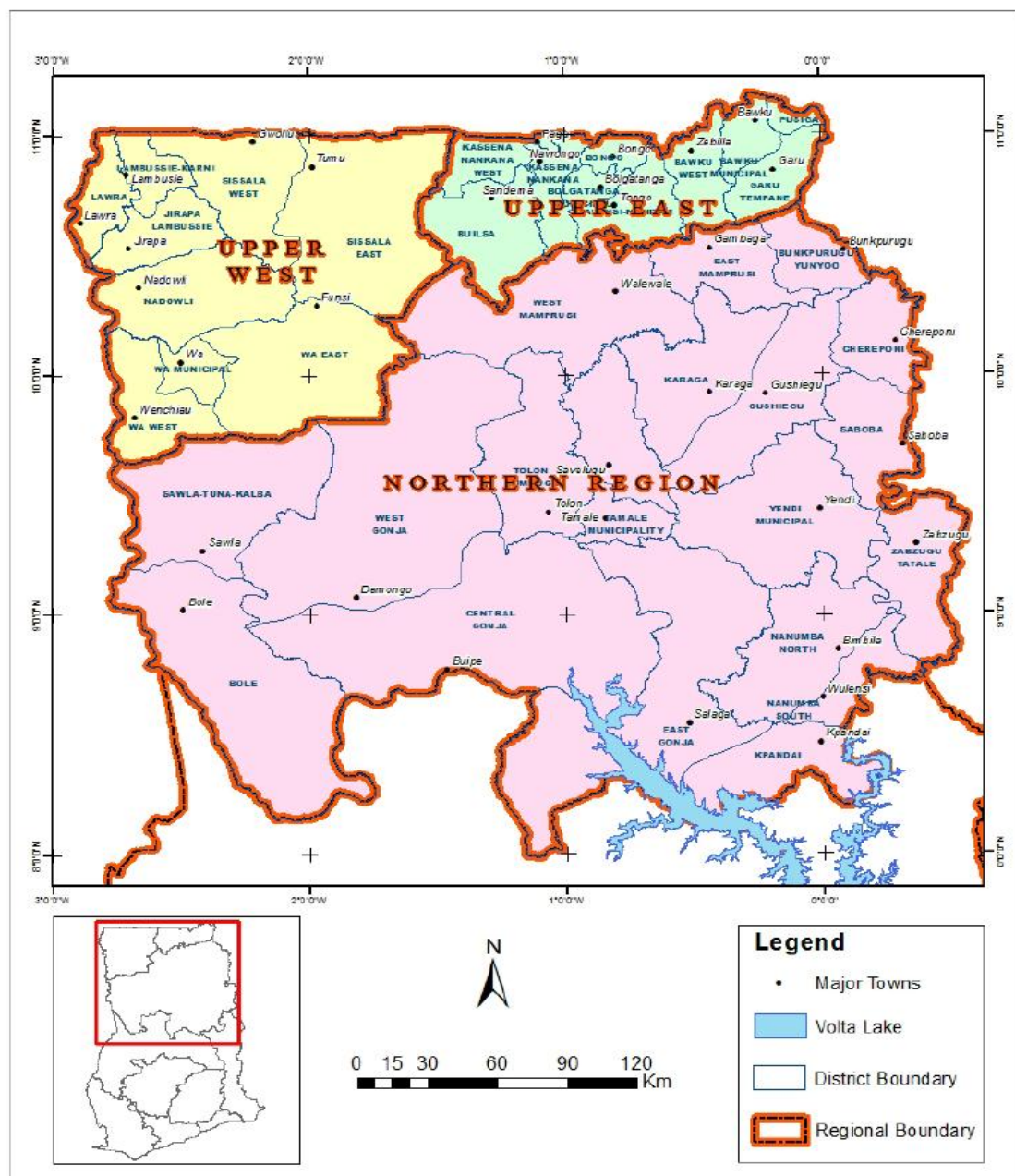
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This research is an ethnographic case study of a community project in Ghana comprising a Village, University leaders, students, the District Assembly. This ethnographic study is one of the validated community engagements programme located in one village in Northern Ghana. It is part of a larger community engagement programme and the programme is followed in this village and about 500 other communities across Northern Ghana which forms one third of the land mass of Ghana. It is also the bread basket of the country producing all the cereal, legumes and animals for meat (Songsore and Denkabe, 1996). (See page 2 for Map of Northern Ghana). It is an engagement that spans a period of seven weeks where students are sent to live in rural deprived communities of Northern Ghana, to interact and write a report profiling the community and prioritizing their most urgent problem for future interventions by either governmental or non-governmental agencies. Northern Ghana historically refers to a part of Ghana that was largely ignored and undeveloped during the colonial periods of Ghana.

The North first attracted the colonial administration as a “reserve of slaves for the transatlantic slave trade business complex” (p.1) and a labour reserve for the plantations that paid for the richer lifestyle of the colonialist in the South (Wumpini, 2015, p.1). It is the part of the country 100 years behind the rest as far as education and development are concerned and was mainly regarded as a labour pool for the rest of the country. In recent times these state of affairs have been aggravated by the breakdown of the agricultural industry as a result of the World Bank policy of subsidy removal. Agriculture has over the years been the mainstay of the people (Songsore and Denkabe, 1996). This and other push factors “such as poverty, the interplay of natural phenomena such as erratic rainfall and human agency such as bushfires have created a monstrous rural urban drift of the youth from the north to the south in search of better opportunities” (Opare, 2003, p.1, Awumbila et al, 2008, 2014).

Geographically, the north occupies a landscape formally referred to as the northern territories by the colonial administration. The geographic north comprises three regions namely the Northern region, Upper East and West regions as seen below in fig 1.

Fig. 1.1: Political Map of Northern Ghana.



Source: www.nation.online.org

The poverty of the North was one of the instrumental reasons that qualified Ghana for Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status in 2000 where the country had its debt cancelled in order to lift the debt burden (Wumpini, 2015, p.1, World Bank, 2011b). This community programme therefore feeds into the broader agenda of Ghana Government's policy of bridging the development gap between the North and South aimed at ensuring social justice and eliminating inequality (Effah, 2002). This is referred to as the North-South dichotomy in development parlance (Songsore and Denkabe, 1996) where the north lagged behind in development and the gap has increasingly being widened despite attempts to close it. Student's studies on campus were aimed at developing them as experts, because they came from different disciplines and by facilitating them to work together on a community programme saw them as future leaders who could develop networks and gain straightened understanding of joined up thinking across different fields of society to aid joined-up policy thinking. Also their experience in the community was to help them understand how they could use their expertise to eradicate poverty and address the participation gaps that exist between the North and South of Ghana. I am referring here to the gaps in terms of a comprehensive education for all in Ghana that will fully prepare citizens for full economic participation, cultural participation and political participation including providing all citizens with knowledge, skills, experience required confronting corruption and being drivers of social change.

The research was conducted in two phases. The first seven weeks was an ethnographic study in the community with the eleven students posted to a village with a population of about 1700 as part of 500 communities in Northern Ghana. The second phase was an ethnographic stay back in the community for four more weeks to gain additional insight and perspectives and to further interact with the different hierarchy of community groups namely, the youth, women, men, opinion leaders, chief and elders and Assemblyman. Thereafter, I conducted semi structured interviews with nine university leaders comprising selected principal officers and community coordinators and two members of the District Assembly because they were outside the community. There was also a documentary analysis of University policies, Student community report and Field notebooks. The engagement programme, as it operates in Ghana, is

aimed at progressively addressing the issues of socio-economic imbalances in deprived communities, particularly in the impoverished regions of Ghana.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In Ghana, the promise of accelerated economic growth and social transformation at the time of independence from Britain led to the setting up of a variety of tertiary institutions which were mainly located in the south (Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007). Universities were established in part to promote the vision of rapid socio-economic development through industrialization, but this was “curtailed several decades later as a result of sporadic changes in government and inconsistent policies, including those regarding higher education” (Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007, p.2).

For almost the entire history of the Gold Coast, the north had lagged behind the south. Hence, at independence in 1957, the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, instituted free education for Northern Ghana to address the developmental gap that had existed (Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007). However, subsequent governments did not pursue this agenda meaningfully, and the North continued to lag behind (Ibid). In the area of education, most Northerners had to move to the South to obtain higher education, further exacerbating the situation ((Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007; Songsore and Denkabe, 1995b). Consequently there had been ongoing debates as to whether the aspirations set at independence were being achieved with the kind of Universities that existed (Effah and Mensah Bonsu, 2008) and these eventually led to debates about the need for the establishment of the University whose engagement programme is under study. In 1993, the Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC) government in spite of contrary advice from the World Bank and the opposition politicians who thought the country did not have the resources to run a fourth public university, took a decision to give the people of the North a University, but with a different focus and mandate, specifically, to help address the developmental problems of the north. According to Kaburise (2006), the University and its community programme has, over the years, become popular as a result of its “direct relevance to the government’s decentralization programmes, which enjoin District Assemblies, local government departments,

agencies and local communities to initiate, plan and implement their own development programmes” (p.3).

The University was “borne out of new thinking about higher education which emphasizes the need for Universities to play a more active role in addressing problems of the society, particularly in the rural areas” (Effah, 1998 p.2). The University was therefore set up by the Government of Ghana to “blend the academic world with that of the community in order to provide constructive interaction between the two for the total development of Northern Ghana, in particular, and the country as a whole” (PNDC Law 279, Section 279). It was modeled on the land grant Universities in the United States of America established by the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1890 with the sole aim of “service to society”. The land grant Universities were legally required to “provide public service in return for federal aid”, although in the long run, they came to regard their “communities as clients and rather focused on fulfilling contractual obligations just to ensure the flow of federal dollars” (Bunning et al., 2006, p. 126; Land Grant College, Encyclopaedia Britannica online, 2004). The University was meant to support rural people and provide them with pathways to economic wellbeing (Kaburise, 2003). More importantly, the University programme was created not only to solve community problems but indeed, to “restructure development and governance priorities in a unanimous and concordant way” (Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007, p.2). It was to ameliorate the North-South dichotomy by addressing the poverty of the north, thereby bridging the developmental gap. Therefore, the community engagement programme integrates the University’s mission with the overall governance agenda of the country (Kaburise, 2003).

As a result, the University, by its mandate has a pro-poor focus aimed at facilitating and leading the development of Northern Ghana. This agenda is reflected in its tripartite methodology of teaching, research and outreach services (Kaburise, 2003). The specific emphasis on practically-oriented research and field-based training has the ultimate objective of contributing towards poverty reduction in order to accelerate national development (Statutes (NCTE), 1993). Such a focus has necessitated a partnership between the

University and community and, since its inception; it has continued to engage in meaningful ways with the communities within its catchment area, bearing in mind its mandate. However, the aims and purposes of the engagement are yet to be fully appreciated because most communities still do not see themselves as active participants both at the levels of conceptualization, planning and implementation, and therefore, community members sometimes feel alienated and left out of the management of the program (Kaburise, 2003, Brunning et al., 2006).

The University's principal objective is to address and find solutions to environmental problems and socio-economic deprivations that characterize Northern Ghana, in particular, but which are also found in most rural areas throughout the country, and in this process, generate knowledge that could help accelerate the process of development (Third Trimester Field Practical Programme (TTFPP) policy, 1993). Accordingly, the University under study consciously and systematically runs programmes that are designed to prepare individuals to establish their own careers in specialized areas. Furthermore, it equips these practitioners with the requisite knowledge to enable them to live and function in any deprived community in the country (University Statutes, 2011) and to help them take advantage of their different disciplines to form networks that could benefit them in future (Emefa, 2014).

When I got the opportunity to pursue a PhD, I initially wanted to focus on something directly related to University administration. However, following a series of difficulties related to the availability of literature, ethical issues and others, that plan was abandoned and I returned to my current area of interest; University-Community collaborations where the university is legally mandated to constructively interact with adjoining communities and assist in their socioeconomic transformation. Initially, I wanted to study the leadership aspect of the entire programme, but along the way, my emphasis shifted to the entire processes of the programme with a focus on objectives, benefits and issues of participation, influences and power. These are key themes which draw from the objectives of the study and Ghana government policy regarding a focus on the poor (Kaburise, 2003). The first two areas were chosen essentially to address

the needs of the University, which was partly sponsoring me, and therefore expected to benefit from my thesis by gaining a deeper understanding of the community project. Besides, along with the other areas, it is hoped that an examination of these processes will contribute to the enhancement of the programme. It would also ultimately advance the frontiers of knowledge in the area of University community engagements and, thereby contribute in advancing the pro-poor focus of governments' decentralization programme advanced by the District Assembly concept and the overall development of Northern Ghana in particular and Ghana as a whole. The objectives of the decentralisation programme occasioned by the local government reforms of 1988 in Ghana by the Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC) law 207 which later become the Local Government Act 462 in 1993 aims at devolving powers to grassroot communities.

I completed a comprehensive literature search and read articles and online/electronic books on the subject of University community engagement, specifically: Boyer (2000); Furco (2012); Dempsey (2010); Bringle and Hatcher (2002); Brunning et al. (2006); Winter et al. (2006); Kaburise (2003, 2006); Bernardo et al. (2012); O'Brien (2008); Hall (2009); Watson (2008); as well as the "Higher Education Community Engagement Model: Final report and Analysis" (Russell group, 2003). I also looked at a number of case studies of University community engagement programmes of universities across the globe such as Bradford and Brighton Universities in the United Kingdom, Ottawa University in Canada, Rhodes University in South Africa and the Association of University Community Engagements in Australian (AUCEA, 2008). I was especially struck by the work of Gunasekara (2000), who, in the process of continuing the theorization of the role of the University draws on the "triple helix model of University, industry and government" postulated by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1999) developed two main categorizations, which he labeled "generative" and "developmental". However, after an extensive literature review, I prefer to regard the triumvirate of teaching, research and community service as the basic roles of Universities worldwide whilst focusing my research on the aspect of community service.

It is within this context that I started researching the community engagement programme of this Ghanaian public University. My research questions were derived both from the literature and from my experience with the University community engagement. The literature review pointed me in the following directions:

- I. Understandings of and approaches to community engagement;
- II. The impact of community engagement on the partners and the wider World;
- III. Participants' involvement, participation and issues of power.

The University under study, like other public Universities in Ghana, serves the three Northern regions of Ghana, where there is a high incidence of poverty as its focus. It has a pro-poor vision aimed at “addressing the conditions and structural causes of poverty in Northern Ghana” (Kaburise, 2003, p.4). It also focuses on running a “community-technical interface programme” whereby it combines an academic and community-based field practical work during some period of its academic year (TTFPP Policy, 1993, p.1). The University operates a trimester system in each academic year with the third term solely devoted to community work. The community engagement programme therefore constitutes an integral part of the curriculum and ensures that faculty, students and staff work “closely with disadvantaged and marginalized people in the communities with a focus on poverty reduction” (p. 2). The programme requires the commitment of both faculty and students and, by virtue of its legally mandated pedagogical approach of blending on campus academic work with practical community work, appointment of academic staff is based on acceptance and understanding of the programme whilst there is a subtle but positive discrimination in admissions of students from the poor backgrounds (<http://www.uds.edu.gh.html>, 2011).

The curriculum and pedagogical style have been designed in a manner that aims to generate and also to provide students with the essential theoretical knowledge and practical application, tools and skills to effectively grapple with development and poverty-related issues at the grassroots level (Kaburise, 2003,

2008). The approach is to afford students the opportunity to look at community problems and opportunities in a cross disciplinary manner through the perception and appreciation of such problems from various perspectives. This connects with networking opportunities on which students can draw when they are potentially in leadership positions in the future for the benefit of Ghana in achieving goals including eradicating poverty. It also connects with promoting education and encouraging children, particularly girl children to go to school in accordance with the millennium goal two (UN.org, 2015). In addition, the approach was envisioned to help widen the horizons and experience of students through enriching interaction with each other and the local communities. In tandem with the vision of the University, the programme is community-centered split into a seven week per year for two years and involves an active and practical collaboration between the students and the communities to work towards solutions to developmental problems (Kaburise, 2003, 2008). At the end students are assessed through criteria that involve peer reviews which encourages collaboration amongst students rather than competition.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Centers for Disease Control in the United States of America (CDC, 1997, p.9) argued that the most effective way to achieve developmental targets, especially the elimination of disparities in socio-economic status, is to “actively engage those experiencing the problems in every aspect of addressing them”. Community engagement, therefore, means engaging members of the community in all stages of a programme, “from identifying the relevant issues and making decisions about how to address them, to evaluating and sharing the results with the community” (NCCPE, 2011, pp. 39-40). Community participation therefore has become a condition of accessing donor funding for critical social infrastructure especially from the World Bank (Mansuri and Rao, 2004, World Bank, 2003).

The programme therefore aims at designing specific measures to address particular aspects of socio-economic inequalities in the deprived communities. As a result, an integrated team of students comprising a mixture of disciplines such as agricultural technology, development studies, nursing, planning, applied

mathematics, community nutrition, development education, early childhood education, management studies, applied science and real estates were sent to the community because of the perceived complexities of rural problems. The admission and inclusion of many female students is actively encouraged in conjunction with the University's gender mainstreaming programmes such as its bridge-in programmes for girls who do not have basic requirements in some core subjects like mathematics and English Language to allow them admission into the University. These policies fit in well with the national education policy of increased access for deprived communities and for girls in particular (Vision 2020, 1996). In addition to these measures, students from urban areas are included in the teams to ensure that they experience rural life and therefore understand the depths of deprivation faced by Northern Ghanaians for decades after independence in 1957 (Manu, Gariba & Budu, 2007). The programme also aims at addressing the perennial problem of young graduates from cities refusing deployment and postings to deprived rural areas (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008).

In this study, the argument is made that addressing inequalities should begin with examining how involved rural actors are in crafting solutions to their problems. How local people and communities carry out practical measures, such as policy design, and their participation in the development by locating and re-examining the extent of social injustice or inequities in the system, is of the utmost importance (BCEC, 2007, DESA, 2009). This should be accompanied by resource allocation through the decentralization process because without resources no policy or participation will make a difference. Hence the creation of the District Assembly Common funds (DACAF) where 7.5 percent of the national budget is allocated to the District Assemblies (King et al, 2003). This is because it leads to narrowing the inequalities and afford them opportunities to access resources to implement action plans to meet basic needs such as access to drinkable water in the villages and also gives them a sense of ownership. In the process of this community engagement, many stakeholders are involved, and each of them is critical to the success of the programme. Therefore the success of the engagement depends on many factors; notable

among them is the participation of all stakeholders, particularly staff, students and community members.

The University therefore acts in conjunction with rural people to shape and articulate their problems and more importantly their ability to be part of the solution through the participatory research approach adopted throughout the engagement which ideally facilitates some form of dialogue and resource allocation from the District Assembly. The dialogue between the University and the local community based stakeholders is akin to what Freire (1973, p.7) called “critical dialogue”. But this cannot be achieved without each side establishing trust which is only possible if the level of involvement is appreciable, all voices are allowed and resources are allocated with palpable outcomes. Fanon (1968, p.3), in looking at the alienation that stems from noninvolvement, argued that, when people are marginalized and “alienation remains basically at the surface of consciousness, it results in... passivity, submission and anxiety, and when it becomes conscious, it provokes anger, aggression, hostility, frustration and fear” and perhaps this sometimes could be what accounts for the occasional instability in Northern Ghana” (cited in Songsore and Denkabe, 1996). Hoyle and Wallace (2005, p.124) cited in Bush (2011, p. 87) argues that participation “offers opportunities for staff members and students to engage in the process of institutional decision” making which includes the community programme because it leads to effectiveness and enhances democracy; therefore, it should be afforded to any legitimate stakeholder only if there is funding to enable the participation and suggestions for problem solving to be realised. The extent to which these stakeholders see themselves as influencing the process of engagement and therefore being involved in the programme significantly affects their level of participation in and support for the programme. Increased participation aims at giving community members voice which in itself enables community members to advocate for change and resources that would enable the change.

The community programme is funded by the government of Ghana and therefore for such an enterprise to meet stakeholder expectations of socioeconomic transformation and spur social development, the programme is

periodically reviewed (Kaburise, 2003). Thereafter, adjustments are made to enhance its operations and curtail problems that might derail its bid in getting students to cultivate favourable attitudes to rural communities, carry out research and assist in the development of the communities with the ultimate aim to empower them. In recent times there have been debates among the Ghanaian media, the general public and some stakeholders about the usefulness of the programme and the way forward. It is in the light of these discussions that this study is apt and compelling. Furthermore, since the World Bank funds a proportionate amount of projects of the Ghana Government, (US\$M 75.50 Global Partnership for Education Fund Grant Project for Ghana to improve the planning, monitoring and delivery of basic education services in deprived districts and \$156 million for the Ghana Secondary Education Improvement Project in 2015 alone) they have indicated that they want to see more community participation (World Bank, 2015).

It is therefore important to look at the level of stakeholder participation in this community programme. There is also a dearth of literature regarding Community Engagement Programmes in Ghana so this study is going to make an important contribution to new knowledge. A recent programme review at a stakeholder's conference reported that, apart from adopting an integrated approach because of the complexities of rural problems, there is a need to look at the issues of the involvement and levels of participation of all of the stakeholders in the entire process of engagement (TTFPP Newsletter, 2005). My position however in this study is to try to keep an open mind. Although I have these ideas that curb my open mindedness, I have been really careful not to allow my prejudices and fears to curb the exploratory approach that I took. Throughout the research I did not have difficulties receiving different ideas; I was flexible and adaptive to new experiences on the field and was ready to change my views when presented with the facts and evidence.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS RESEARCH

From its inception, the purpose of the University was to meaningfully engage communities in its catchment area to solve development problems that confronted them (Kaburise, 2006). Northern Ghana had lagged behind the

South in development as a result of policy failures to address the long-standing deprivation of the north; the most part of which had not had western education which came quite late (Songsore & Denkabe, 1995). Northern Ghana has had to contend with supplying labour to the cocoa and mineral industries of the South which depletes the human resource of the region and therefore affects participation of able body men and women in the development of their communities (Songsore & Denkabe, 1995, Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007). Songsore(1996) buttressed this assertion by arguing that Northern Ghana's present underdevelopment is the product of many years of policies relegating the North to serve as a labour reserves for the interests of southern towns, coupled with neglect by past governments, which have aggravated the poverty, thereby widening the dichotomy between Southern and Northern Ghana.

Available statistics about Ghana indicate that the country as a whole has a high incidence of poverty, but that it is worse in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions which constitute Northern Ghana. Whilst the national average rate of poverty is estimated at 39 percent, that of the Northern Region is 69 percent, the Upper East Region is 88 percent, and it is 84 percent in the Upper West Region (Abagali, 2008, Ramatu & Diao, 2007, GSS, 2013). Dempsey (2010) argues that Universities face mounting pressure to address the social needs that arise as a result of high incidence of poverty, state neglect or the inaction of market actors, and that engagement with communities is increasingly being seen as the ideal mechanism for addressing the negative social impacts of neoliberal economic policies.

The decentralization programme that was rolled out to address this deprivations and development needs however suffered a number of setbacks. Prominent among them is the lack of any reliable fiscal transfers by the Central Government despite the presence of Article 252 of 1992 Constitution of Ghana which provided for the setting up of a District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) "to serve as a mechanism for the transfers of resources from the central government to the local authorities (the MMDAs)" (King et al., 2003, p.2). The provision in the above article is "that 7.5% of Ghana's total revenue should be paid into the fund for distribution to local level authorities, mainly to undertake

development projects and some specific programmes” (King et al. 2003, p. 2), Above all, it was “intended to ensure equitable development of the various Assemblies across the country” (Commonfund.gov.gh, 2014). Notwithstanding this provision, governments have had the difficulty of timely release of the stipulated amount to the District Assemblies and this together with the fact that the three Northern regions are poor further widens the poverty gaps that have existed since independence (King et al., 2003, p.2, Songsore, 1996). Secondly as argued by Danica (2000) the objective of the governments’ decentralisation efforts to “bring governance to the grassroots through a wide-ranging decentralisation system created a parallel administrative body in the person of the Assemblyperson” (p.50) a liaison between the people of the village and the District Assembly, whose legitimacy is from the people through a universal adult suffrage. Although this was meant to be complimentary and not antagonistic, the election of the Assemblyman ended up in creating problems in many communities (Danica, 2000).

In spite of the introduction of the position of the Assemblyperson to represent the community, which was a novel intervention, Wegerberg (2011) argues that the position of chiefs as the social and cultural leaders with their “authority sanctioned by custom” (p.16), still play crucial roles in the socioeconomic transformation of these communities. Therefore the chief of the community and his elders remained important links in the process of the engagement. The University was therefore legally mandated and charged to advance the aims of the decentralization process and this is operationalised through the community engagement programme to raise community consciousness and get community members actively participating in their own socioeconomic transformation to ultimately bridge the North South divide (Kaburise, 2003).

However, the University, in the face of declining subsidies from central government and a weak internal basis for the generation of funds to run the community programme as a result of soaring cost due to increasing student numbers and the widening of geographical coverage, requires a significant slice of the University’s annual subvention from central government to execute. Affirming this observation, Kaburise (2003) points out that the outstanding

success of the community engagement programme notwithstanding, there are emerging challenges. The major difficulty is the “increasing disjuncture between the rapidly growing student numbers and the inadequacy of resources available to run the programme” (p. 9). There has, therefore, been a call for a more proactive District Assembly involvement and participation” (p.10), especially with regard to financing. Kaburise’s (2003) revelations expose the problems confronting the engagement programme, especially at the levels of involvement and participation by some stakeholders and the threatened lack of funds. It is in this regard that the study is very important and makes a significant contribution to new knowledge, since it is intended to illuminate stakeholders perspectives and understandings of the aims and purposes, benefits, influences, patterns of participation and involvement of stakeholders particularly community based stakeholders and most importantly, power relations and the way forward especially the allocation of more resources to the district Assembly and the university.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were therefore crafted to address the statement of the problem and the aims of the study;

1. How do the different stakeholder groups understand the aims and purposes of the Community Engagement Programme?
2. How do different stakeholder groups consider the benefit to themselves and the wider benefits of the Community Engagement Programme?
3. What patterns of influence and power underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme?

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The study consists of seven chapters which include this introductory chapter. The seven chapters are outlined below:

Chapter 2 covers the range of literature underpinning the conceptual framework which is deemed relevant to this research. Key issues related to the investigation have been explored. These include various conceptualizations of community engagement and its necessity. Also reviewed are community

participation and involvement in the processes of engagement, and issues of power and power relations. The professional challenge was to improve participation in the villages in Northern Ghana to give citizens a voice so that they can be empowered to gain human rights in line with the law and the constitution and thereby gain citizen power and eradicate power and corruption.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study, including the approach adopted and the justification for its selection, population and sampling techniques, access, trustworthiness, the role of the researcher, and the power relations inherent in the study. It also discusses the procedure of data collection, data management and processing. Ethical challenges encountered are spelt out. The ethnographic data collected from the various stakeholders are presented and analysed in three empirical chapters 4, 5 and 6. Emergent themes are discussed using the qualitative technique of thematic analysis. Chapter 4 maps the understanding of the students and University leaders beginning from week one in the community to week seven using week one as baseline to map the shift in student attitudinal change and discusses the understanding of the other stakeholders. Chapter 5 presents the findings in respect of benefits of the community engagement from the perspectives of the stakeholders, whilst Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study regarding participation and power relations situating various segments of the community and participants on the Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation where he categorise participation into eight clusters. Embedded in these presentations are the comparisons and contrast of the evidence with literature. These may lead to the development of new theories of participation and power share and make a new contribution of knowledge. Finally Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and lays out the implications of the study for policy and practice as well as recommendations for further and future research. General limitations and challenges of the research and the researcher's reflections on the doctoral journey are also discussed here.

1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The chapter discussed the context (widened development gap and inequality and disparities between the North and the South) within which the university

under study was established, to constructively engage rural communities in partnership with District Assemblies in their effort to address their development problems by engaging students in participatory research that seeks to build their capacities and set them up in networks that would benefit them in future when they find themselves in leadership positions. These subsequently informed the development of the conceptual frameworks of understandings, benefits and power and participation and the choice of ethnography to address the research. These also set up the literature review that is coming next.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one outlined the problem of how previous, Ghanaian public universities were detached from their communities and did not assist in their socio-economic transformation within the context of widespread deprivation, marginalization and inequitable development across Northern Ghana including decolonialization which however is not a focus of this research. The particular university under study in northern Ghana is one that has attempted to bridge this divide. Also, chapter one presented the research questions, which focus on gleaning various stakeholders' understandings of the aims and purposes of the university's engagement programme, its benefits, participation, and power relations. In this chapter I now examine key literature that shed light on the research questions and informed my conceptual framework. A systematic robust review of literature is a quality dimension of research since arguments are drawn from empirical research that in turn have quality dimensions that enables the researcher to critically examine the warrants.

This review covers three main domains, namely, the conceptualizations of university community engagements, benefits of such programmes, power relations that enable or constrain meaningful participation, and finally, regarding the empowerment of stakeholders to further enhance the impact of this programme although it must be accompanied by the provision of resources. Whilst reviewing the relevant literature, attempts are made to look at the focus and benefits of university community engagement programmes across the globe. The literature review led me to refine my research questions in an iterative way eventually leading to the conceptual framework.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

This section reviews various understandings of community engagement around the world. Community service, often referred to as the third mission of universities, has more recently come to be known as community engagement, signifying a shift from the traditional emphasis on the twin roles of teaching and

research (Bernardo et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2008). Brunning et al. (2006) refer to this metaphorically as the “town gown¹ relationships”, a term that denotes the relationship between universities and their adjoining communities (Fitzgerald, 2012), and trace the divisions between society and universities to medieval times, when universities sought to protect the morality of their students by keeping them away from the corrupt society. In recent times, however, many institutions have come to recognize the benefit of engaging their communities and have attempted to integrate the university into the community in order to address inequities through the engagement (Brunning et al., 2006). However, very little research has been done on university community engagement programmes in Ghana, probably because it was not institutionalized until the establishment of the university under study. This university modeled its programme on the land grant universities in the United States of America established by the passage of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 with the sole aim of “service to society” (Hamilton, 2004). The aim was that they would serve the communities in which they were situated (Kaburise, 2003).

O’Brien (2008) writes that engagement is a concept popularized by the late Boyer (1990), a prominent American educationist, who expanded the traditional (Western) notion of scholarship as solely comprising research and the discovery of knowledge, to include the teaching, integration and the application of knowledge. Boyer (Ibid), in his work “Scholarship of Engagement”, linked research, teaching and activism to fostering individual, institutional and community change (Colbeck & Michael, 2006; Harvey, 2006). Supporting Boyer, reports such as HERI, (2009), Lindholm et al., (2005) and NSSE (2007) show that a substantial majority of university faculty members globally hold the belief that generating and nurturing collaborations with local communities is an utmost priority for their institution. The study argues that universities must work in partnership with communities; universities should be seen as contributing significantly to and aim to provide service to the community by producing knowledge to inform socioeconomic transformations of communities.

¹ Gown represents the academia, the university, and town symbolizes the community. Therefore it about the relationship between the University and the community.

According to Glassick (1997, 1999), engagement refers to the collaboration of academia and other public players in scholarly activities in which together they strive for, share, apply and preserve the knowledge related to social concerns such as poverty, social mobility, inequality and empowerment. Further to this, O'Brien (2008) cites the Association of Commonwealth Universities' definition of engagement as an active, thoughtful and challenging interaction with the non-university world in setting university objectives and priorities and, more importantly, in relating teaching and learning to the wider world. This entails a symbiotic relationship between researchers and practitioners who are required to take on fuller responsibilities as neighbours and residents (Van-Wyk and Higgs, 2004, p. 200). It is significant that although Van-Wyk and Higgs stress the university's aims and priorities, they concede that these must be related to the wider world, and this makes their arguments relevant to the study.

The issue of engagement has received more attention as a result of the growing disenchantment worldwide with trends showing that universities are beginning to operate within neo-liberal market forces and changing funding streams, coupled with a trend towards operating as for-profit businesses rather than as a public good that invests surpluses back into enhancing the educational opportunities it offers to the public (Ball, 2014). In line with the above assertion, Furco (2010, p.2) observes that "colleges and universities have begun to reaffirm their civic commitment and therefore increased investments in initiatives that better aligned their work with the needs of the contemporary society". He affirms that much of this work involves fostering campus–community partnerships that would help incorporate the needs of the local and broader community into higher education's academic priorities. The Ghanaian strategy reflects this by aiming to bridge the equity gap between the North and the South of the country that exists as a result of long standing disparities in investments in infrastructure and the economy and access to education and opportunities for social mobility (Songsore, 1996).

Furco (2010), citing Holland (2001, pp.378-380), further argues that a new philosophy emerged as a result of the challenges that confronted the initial rush to engage communities. This is underpinned by the belief that the realization of

higher education's civic purposes, which had long been seen as implied within the academy, is best achieved when civic goals are addressed purposefully and clearly. Furco also opined that this viewpoint was centered on the belief that engaging with communities, an exercise that had long been regarded as complementary to the core work of the academy, thrives when it is incorporated into the structure of the institution. He states that overall, the emerging philosophy considered community engagement as not only something that primarily benefits the local community or society at large, but is also critical for the survival of the academy (Furco, 2010). Furco's arguments are in line with studies such as Holland (2001), Sandman & Weerts (2006) and Kaburise (2003), who all argue that community engagement should be an integral part of universities' mandates, and that universities should partner with communities in their catchment areas.

Based on the approaches to and views on community engagement presented above, several definitions of this term and concepts associated with it have been selected to provide more background. They will also help focus this study by shedding more light on the idea and setting the parameters of what constitutes engagement, what it seeks to achieve and what benefits it offers. Since it is the objective of this study to reveal the various stakeholders' understandings of community engagement, the various conceptualizations presented here will help readers to make connections between their understandings and the broader and global perspectives.

I begin with the definitions developed by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation's (CIC) committee on engagement. The CIC is an academic consortium of 15 institutions in the USA that are members of the "Big Ten"² conference and undertake joint efforts in a variety of academic enterprises, including but not limited to faculty networking, diversity initiatives for students and faculty, course sharing, information technology, and study abroad programmes. The CIC and others seek to relate the trinitarian functions of

²The Big Ten Conference is a union of world-class academic institutions who share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service. (<http://www.unl.edu/about-unl/big-ten/2015>)

universities to addressing critical social concerns and the overall public good, which are the benefits most commonly associated with community engagement programmes in the literature.

The CIC (2005) defines engagement as a combination of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors in a partnership to deepen learning, research and creative activity. Such partnerships have the effect of improving upon the curriculum, teaching and learning, and preparing engaged and refined citizenry who eventually reinforce “democratic values and civic responsibilities” (p.1) aimed at addressing important social concerns, thereby contributing to the public good. In the above definition, the CIC sees public good as referring to benefits to the public. The definition talks about partnership between universities and communities promoting both scholarship and civic responsibility, and by so doing, leading to the socio-economic transformation of the community, among other things. The definition bears similarities with that of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) (2006, 2008), which defines Community Engagement as encompassing the various kinds of collaboration between institutions of higher education and their communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources within a framework of cooperation and mutuality.

The definitions of both CIC and CFAT address the issue of partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and their communities, which involve sharing knowledge and addressing critical social issues, a thread that runs through all of the various conceptions of engagements. In a pilot study measuring community engagement, Goedegebuure and Van-der-Lee (2006) located engagement within the context of the trinitarian functions of the university, namely, teaching, research and service. According to them, community engagement can be defined as the machinery through which universities accomplish the objectives they have enunciated regarding specific communities in terms of these three basic functions either at the institutional level, or within the context of a project. They further add that the significance of engagement is to produce outcomes that recreate new and more equitable

futures for communities in their catchment areas (Goedegebuure and Van-der-Lee, 2006).

Holland & Ramaley (2008) argue that the most widely used definition and understanding of engagement is the one put forward by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in 2006, in which engagement refers to a mutually beneficial collaboration amongst HEIs and the wider society characterized by the give-and-take of information and resources "...within the context of partnership and reciprocity" (CFAT, 2006 p. 2). However, recent market forces have created competition amongst universities, centered in particular in an effort to be placed in Ivy League tables, and such rivalry makes these collaborations problematic because it leads universities to channel their resources towards improving research agendas, capabilities and innovations, to the detriment of community collaboration (Tsey and Mayo, 2009). Grant and Leslie (2007, p.2) therefore argue that "real social change happens when universities go outside their own walls and find creative ways..." to partner with others. The Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) (2008) stressed that engagement, although an academic programme, must seek to address community needs and the general good of the public, alongside practicalising university programmes. According to the AUCEA (2008):

University-community engagement is a specific method for academic research and teaching that necessarily involves external communities (business, industry, schools, governments, non-governmental organizations, associations, indigenous and ethnic communities, and the general public) in collaborative activities that address community needs and opportunities while also enriching the teaching, learning and research objectives of the University (p.13).

All of the above definitions discuss the issue of partnerships as ways of addressing critical social issues. Levidow (2002), however, argued that within the context of an evolving neoliberal economy of market competition and league tables, where universities have been commoditised and must mass-produce to meet the growing demand for higher education, the possibility of addressing critical social issues hangs in the balance. Nonetheless, higher education

institutions must strive to work towards these aims because access to higher education still needs to be expanded to widen access. Sandman (2008) describes engagement as a reciprocal approach that moves away from the historical image of universities as inaccessible 'Ivory towers' or from the negative experiences that some communities may have had with universities whose relations with them were limited to academic research without any beneficial outreach or engagement. Weerts and Sandman (2008, p. 2) add that in recent times, engagements have sought to shift the model of the university away from an exclusive domain for specialists to that of a more cooperative space for generating and sharing information in mutually beneficial ways.

According to a magazine, Bolton Council (BC) (2007, p.5), Community Engagement entails evolving and supporting a relationship between the university and one or more communities, to ensure that they both understand and take action on the needs or concerns experienced by the community. In spite of the above view, there are different framework of university community engagement “ranging from simply informing people or helping them help themselves” (BC, 2007, p.5). The university under study like all universities have a different understanding and role, and therefore different framework to community engagement. The university draws on a pedagogy that explicitly engages students in communities for a period in order to increase student understanding and application of scientific knowledge to indigenous knowledge.

At the beginning, Universities operated in isolation from their surrounding communities. Martin, Philips and Smith (2005, p.3) writes that “Universities promoted themselves as elite bastions of information and knowledge” (p.3) and that Universities were often “viewed as walled off cities with narrow interest and little concern for communities around them” (University and Community, 2012, p.1). With time in the 1980's and 90's, communities begun to express their dissatisfaction with the large financial allocations and tremendous power being wielded by the universities, Kysiak (1986, p.1) noted that “citizens perceive them [universities] solely as large powerful, non-taxpaying entities that soak up city services and provide little in return” thereby seeing them as detached from communities (Strier, 2010). However in recent times and with the use of public

monies, universities have an obligation to connect and to make meaningful contributions to the welfare of their communities.

Therefore, universities have begun partnering their surrounding communities instead of isolating themselves from or competing with the local communities (Davis 2013, p.6). Universities which traditionally have not been closer to local people in terms of their involvement of local people in its existing structures and decision making mechanisms (BC,2007) have begun reaching out to communities in different forms. Universities all over the world have different values and approaches to community engagement and do organise their frameworks of engagement around these values. The most notable models for building community partnerships that has generated considerable interest regarding the relationship between universities and communities are presented by Davis (2013, p10-12) as;

1. The **C**ommunity **A**dvocate **M**odel (CAM) Partnership Model postulated by Bubank and Hunter, (2008) developed at the University of Utah in the United States. This model presents us with “opportunities for establish reciprocal relationships between parents from historically disadvantaged communities and the university” (p.1) by connecting families, communities and the university resources, which enables them to have direct links and access to university resources including exchange of knowledge. Here the avenue for partnership is a few community members who are eventually used to access the entire community.
2. The second model consist of the Sanders and Lewis (2005) Model which advocates that universities prioritize, permit time and promote community ownership. Here a relationship develops gradually over time and may take years to evolve.
3. The third model developed by Hamel-Lambert and Murphy (2009) who advocate the building of trust, participatory process and respecting the culture. This models call for a three pronged approach to engagement “involve, build trust and create a participatory process and respect the culture and climate” (Davies, 2013, p.12) of the community being engaged

The university community engagement under study combines bits of all the three models and was meant to feed into the local governance system of Ghana and to respond to the challenges of development and therefore fit for purpose. A table of evidenced based small scale university community engagement globally is summarized as appendix 5 to make clearer how the Ghana experience/approach to community engagement compares to different experiences. The different models of community engagement have evolved over time based on the values of teaching, learning as well as research and equal participation and mutual benefit. The OECD (1998, p.1), like the Carnegie foundation and Scotland (2005) see engagement as “joint and shared activity and experience” (p.1) and refer to these as “third stream alongside the universities function of teaching and research” (p.1).

There has therefore within the past decade been an upsurge in the “third stream activity in community engagement by Higher Education Institutions both within the United Kingdom and internationally (Melisa, 2007). The responsibility of a university toward its community and its contribution to local development therefore features in key debates of the unique role of higher education (HEPI, 2006 cited in Melisa, 2007). A number of noteworthy small scale consortiums have been discussed in a table and attached as appendix 6 for the purpose of this thesis.

A common thread about the focus of universities is evident in all of the definitions, underlying the various ways universities collaborate with communities, whether social interaction or outreach, in the process of teaching and learning, and how such collaboration benefits the university community as well as the wider society, as addressed in the next section. The various definitions, encapsulating the aims and purposes of the various conceptions and approaches to engagements, therefore resonate with that of the objectives of a number of community partnership programmes globally, such as the University of Brighton Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP), the University of Bradford Partnership, and the University of Rhodes in South Africa.

The CUPP aims at ameliorating disadvantages and supporting sustainable development through partnerships with communities. It involves communities in knowledge exchange activities which bring together members of local communities and faculty members to share their understandings of and perspectives on issues of mutual interest. The CUPP adopts a dynamic approach to problem solving targeted at achieving ideal outcomes for both community and university partners by working together to identify and meet community needs in a sustainable way. This is mainly achieved through addressing disparities and disadvantages, and by fostering durable partnerships between local communities and the university (CUPP, Brighton, 2014, p.1).

The University of Bradford Partnership programme also aims at facilitating connections and providing a range of opportunities through events, programmes and meaningful collaborations with different stakeholders across the region (Bradford Community Partnership (BCP), 2014). The programme is particularly interested in connecting with community based organisations and businesses that share similar values, offer mutual benefits and undertake activities that add value to both partners (BCP, 2014). Similarly the Rhodes University community engagement programme in South Africa aims at equipping students, through various community partnerships, with the skills to render them well-rounded graduates and dynamic citizens. It also has the objective of helping community members improve their lives and strives to create an environment that supports the realisation of each individual's full potential (Rhodes University, 2014).

Building on previous understandings of community engagements, Mabizela (2011, p.1), in line with the vision of Rhodes University, argues that the entire process of engagement is important and consists of initiatives and practices through which institutions' resources in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community. He adds that community engagement is a two way process of learning because staff and students of the institution are continuously developing as they interact with the external community. He further postulates that community engagement serves two main purposes: social and academic. For him, social community engagement refers

to the work which students by themselves “initiate in societies and residences as volunteers and also the involvement of students as volunteers placed with community partner organizations” (p.1). Academic community engagement refers to community projects which pertain to the scholarly work of universities, such as studies that are carried out in communities (Mabizela (2011). The latter involves the application of teaching and research tailored to community needs in a mutual interchange for the good of all involved. However, it must be noted that there is a thin line between these divisions and that engagements tend to blend the social and academic, as is the case with many of the community engagement programmes mentioned above. Nevertheless, Mabizela regards the social role where networks are built (Emefa, 2014) as a byproduct of the engagement.

The obligation to serve communities is based on the argument that there is a social contract between the university and society. Macfarlane (1998), however, is of the view that in order to achieve this social contract, the notion of service to community by the university needs to be explored. He further observes that the role of the academic is seldom described as encompassing service; it is usually limited officially to the dual core of teaching and carrying out research. However, to him, community service is far more than what he terms administration³, as it involves taking part in community activities, informing policy and the organization of youth activities, thus widening the frontiers of engagement (Macfarlane (1998).

Reinforcing the above arguments, Watson et al. (2011) see the enterprise of engagement as including an “array of efforts to directly apply university resources to the communities and societies in which they are located” (p.2). They further state that there is a widespread call for increased university civic engagement and a redefinition of the purposes of universities and colleges in modern society. Debbie et al. (2008, pp.3-5) argue that the third mission of university community engagement is to involve universities in non-academic spheres, such as facilitating urban and rural development and raising the socio-

³ Offering of local government services such as giving policy directions and organising community youth for action.

economic status of their communities. This study adopts the position of Debbie et al. (2008) that through community engagement, universities can become vehicles for the socio-economic transformation of communities in their catchment areas. However Universities can produce knowledge to support efforts for socioeconomic transformations only in so far as governments and the economy makes available resources because participation only has power when it is associated with resources and funding. The next section would explore the benefits that include socioeconomic transformation, and reviews the literature on the benefits of community engagement to stakeholders.

2.3 BENEFITS OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO STAKEHOLDERS

A number of the studies conducted on the benefits of community engagement have examined them solely from the perspective of the university (Kite, 2010). However, O'Connor et al. (2011) identified the benefits of community engagement to all of the various stakeholders, including the university, students, community and the socioeconomic transformation of the wider society, and this approach shapes the ensuing review. University community engagement offers substantial benefits both to the stakeholders themselves and to the wider society (Bunning et al., 2006 and Watson et al., 2011). A study by the National Coordinating Council of Public Engagement (NCCPE) concluded that public engagement offers a number of benefits to the university community and the society; engagement allows universities take full advantage of their interactions with society thereby helping them to be “abreast of public concerns and expectations and to support real-world problem solving” (NCCPE, 2014, p. 1).

The benefits of community engagement identified by the NCCPE constitute the many ways in which higher education institutions and their staff and students can connect and share their output with the public. If properly executed, it produces shared values that enable all parties to learn from each other through the exchange of knowledge, skills and services. This connects with the multicultural dispositions that are developed with shared key values such as inclusion and respect (Taysum and Slater, 2014) which is discussed in the next

section. In the process, trust, understanding and partnership can be built and lead to a rise in the sector's importance to, and impact on, civil society (NCCPE, 2011, p. 2) as explored in the ensuing review. The ensuing reviews therefore explore the benefits of community engagement to the various stakeholders.

2.3.1 *Benefits to Students*

One of the most critical motives of university community engagement is to provide opportunities for students to acquire skills and knowledge in real life situations in communities in the form of service and experiential learning which leads to attitudinal changes. Students are then able to contribute to socio-economic transformation, ensuring sustainable, cohesive, inclusive communities, by addressing poverty (Watson, 2006). Community engagement enables students to develop themselves through active participation in carefully planned experiences that “align to actual community needs where they move beyond mere identification of social problems and blaming the victim” towards concrete solutions to pressing concerns (Willis-Cain & Keitsmeier, 1991, p.17). Attitudinal change to acquire multicultural views is key to community engagement and effects socio-economic change because those who attend HEIs tend to be ignorant of the poverty and deprivation faced by less fortunate people. It is therefore important for them to develop multicultural worldviews to enable them to appreciate other cultures including those that are not cash rich but culturally rich and function effectively as agents of change to eradicate poverty and or implement national strategies to realise social justice such as equitable access to education, social mobility and other human rights associated with the constitution. This will be explored and critiqued later in this section. Therefore the immersion of students with different dispositions to participants in local communities is vital to this quest. A number of frameworks have been advanced to explain the attitude shifts that lead to multicultural outlooks, as these represent a visible benefit that serves as a basis for other benefits to accrue. These include frameworks of Taysum and Slater (2014) developed from two different frameworks of Banks (1991, 1998), Kelman, (1993), and Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000).

Taysum and Slater (2014) applied Banks and Banks (1991, 1998) framework to postgraduate researchers including a teacher leader and a principal and further developed as education system leaders and researchers. They designated stage one as Cultural Psychological Captivity wherein the leaders or researchers hold some negative beliefs about their own ethnic or cultural group and avoid interaction with other members of the group or cultural community. They refer to the second stage as the Cultural Encapsulation Stage, where leaders are not exposed to other cultural groups and only understand themselves in relation to the in group. The third stage, which they refer to as Cultural Identity Clarification, is where leader has self-acceptance and thus the beginning of acceptance of others and begin to clarify their personal attitudes and cultural identity, reduce internal conflict, develop positive attitudes towards their cultural group and learn to accept both the positive and negative aspects of their culture.

The fourth stage is called Bicultural Disposition, where a leader is capable of functioning in two cultures in a healthy way, has enhanced appreciation of their own cultural identity and has a strong desire to operate in other cultures. Lastly, the fifth stage is Multicultural Disposition, where a leader is able to function in a number of cultures with an appreciation for values. He/she develops a reflective and positive attitude about their own and other cultures. Skills needed to operate in other cultures are developed and they consequently go through a careful critique of the new knowledge and then choose which of the new principles and behaviour they would adopt or leave out. By so doing they are able to operate/function in different cultures by aligning to key values such as inclusion and respect, and appreciating different values. This enables them to appreciate the value of others, celebrate difference within legislative frameworks, whilst maintain their own integrity.

Kelman (1993, p.1) also put forth a three-prong framework of Compliance, Identification and Internalization. Compliance, according to him, “can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence⁴ because he hopes to achieve a

⁴ The ability to live and share with others from a different culture

favourable reaction from another person or group". Identification occurs when an individual accepts influence because he wants to "establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or a group". Lastly, Internalization occurs "when an individual accepts influence because the content of the induced behaviour- the idea and actions of which it is composed- is intrinsically rewarding". Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000) also provided a framework very similar to Kelman's classification, but with the labels such as Shock, Normalization and Engagement.

Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000) studied university undergraduates in a community engagement programme and argued that "individuals progress through three distinct stages of development" (p.4) in terms of attitudinal change. In terms of shock, they concluded that some individuals, particularly those from upper middle class backgrounds, expressed awe at the similarities and differences they encountered in another community. Their first close encounter is usually a shocking experience. In the second stage of Normalization, the shock wears off and students begin to stabilise. This usually occurs by the second and third weeks of their community experience, at which point they began to "feel comfortable" and "develop relationships" with colleagues and community members, and the reference to people other than us as "others" gives way to familiar portrayals. In the third stage, engagement, Kluegel & Smith (1986 cited in Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000 p.19) argued that students begin to "seek answers to the casual questions" by "focusing on external factors in their journals" which links to the original difference between them and the community that led to shock and asking questions about why this community is in poverty. This usually occurs by the fourth week or fifth week, at which time they begin to look for answers in the "structural attributes of social actions such as discrepancies in the economic system, lack of political power, educational inequalities and job discriminations" (p.19).

Taysum and Slater's (2014) first stage in their framework of attitudinal change is similar to the first stage of Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000), as the students

at this time not only see the other side differently but struggles to reconcile the similarities and differences they are confronted with. In many respects the frameworks of Kelman (1993) and of Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000) also bear some similarities except at the beginning, where Kelman argues that individuals begin to change or comply as a result of complimentary reactions from social partners, whilst Rockquemore & Schaffer (2000) posit that change occurs when people are confronted by different and unique scenarios or circumstances which shock them into having a better understanding of the truth which sets them unto a journey of discovery and choices. Whilst community engagement aims at fostering attitudinal changes among the student participants, other benefits further accrue to students as well.

In this thesis, Rockquemore & Schaffer's (2000) framework was used. The choice of this framework was based on the fact that it is the most helpful for understanding student attitudinal shift from entering a community engagement project to leaving it and therefore it was appropriate to use as an analytic framework for this study. The literature or reviews has further helped in the understanding of the research question one. In addition to student attitudinal change, skills such leadership and team building are developed as processes and practices that lead to participation in decision making. The leadership skills and team building skills that enable participatory research to occur can be applied to other contexts. The study further states that community engagement can "transform the educational experience of the students" (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000, p.3), and argues that a large majority of staff and students believe that they have an obligation to explain their research and its social and ethical implications to the general public. This can be achieved through outreach and collaborations.

Another NCCPE (2012) study reveals that one very critical benefit of community engagement to students is experiential learning. Dewey (cited in Glassman, 2001) states that the situations of people are improved when they engage in the everyday mundane activities of their "social community in a thoughtful and positive ways to the point where they are able to change that community through the force of their own actions" (p.4). Strand et al. (2003), building on

Dewey's treatise, further posit that "education is where democratic participation is best learned" (p.6). They argue that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are challenged to move beyond the traditional programmes that they currently run to more focussed ones to help equip students for "democratic citizenship" (p.6). Strand et al. (2003) contend that experiential learning, which necessitates some form of involvement in communities, is "increasingly becoming the most widely promoted strategy for citizenship education and has been most typically in the form of service learning" (p. 3). Experiential learning may actually lead to a plug in where scientific knowledge comes face to face with indigenous knowledge and students unite the two for development. As a result of the various development approaches, especially the top down models of development implemented in developing countries, indigenous knowledge has in recent times received attention in academic circles. However several development agencies are yet to come to a common appreciation of the presence of indigenous knowledge. Warren (1991) and Flavier et al. (1995) present definitions of indigenous development and overlap in many respects. Whilst Warren, (1991, p. 3) suggest that:

Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. It is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural communities.

Flavier et al. (1995, p. 479) also indicates that:

Indigenous Knowledge is the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic, and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems.

Although these two dimensions are similar in many respects, they present very controversial conclusions in a number of aspects such as the uniqueness of indigenous knowledge and its dynamism. In a public debate on Indigenous knowledge, different writers touched on different aspects of indigenous

knowledge and covered only a part of it. In contrast, Ellen and Harris (1996, p.1) provide ten comprehensive and conclusive features of indigenous knowledge. These are:

1. "That Indigenous Knowledge is rooted at the local community encompassing a set of experiences
2. It is orally transmitted through imitations and demonstration
3. It is a consequence of practical engagement in the everyday mundane life of the people
4. It is empirical rather than theoretical because its oral nature invalidates theorization
5. It is repetitive, retentional more because it is oral
6. It is fluid and transformative always in a constant flux
7. It is greatly shared than other forms of knowledge
8. It is fragmentary in distribution because it does not exist in one repository, but delivered in the practice and interactions of intentions
9. Indigenous knowledge is based on non-functional actions
10. Indigenous knowledge is situational within broader cultural arenas".

According to the World Bank, (1997, p. 2), the significance of this knowledge paradigm in the emerging global knowledge economy lies in the fact that:

In the emerging global knowledge economy a country's ability to build and mobilize knowledge capital, is equally essential for sustainable development as the availability of physical and financial capital.

Consequently the World Bank (1997) concludes that the basis of any country's knowledge system is its indigenous knowledge which comprises "the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood" (p.1). Therefore, before the universities enter or engage communities, they already have a corpus of indigenous knowledge which eventually blends with the university's scientific knowledge to help transform these communities. Ellen and Harris (1996, p.1) argues that "significant contributions to global knowledge have originated from indigenous people", especially in the areas of traditional medicine, crop farming and livestock rearing, resulting from an "intimate understanding of their environments" (Ellen and Harris, 1996, p.1). Indigenous knowledge is "developed and adapted continuously to gradually change environments and passed down from generation to generation and closely interwoven with people's cultural values" (Ellen and Harris, 1996, cited in World Bank, 1997, p. 2). Summing up,

indigenous knowledge also constitute the social capital of the poor, their main asset that they 'invest in the struggle for survival either to produce food, to provide for shelter or to achieve control of their own lives" (World Bank, 1997, p.2). From ages Indigenous knowledge has been an integral part of the lives of the rural poor and their entire livelihood depended almost on specific skills and knowledge essential for their survival World Bank, 1997, p.2).

At the level of development and within the development Agenda of Ghana and most developing countries, Indigenous knowledge has been critical and manifest at three levels namely the local community in which the "bearers of such knowledge live and produce" (Warren, 1991, p.2). · Development agents such as CBOs, NGOs, governments, donors and local leaders who "need to recognize it, value it and appreciate it in their interaction with the local communities" (World Bank, 1997, p.1). Lastly, indigenous knowledge forms an integral part of the global knowledge with a value and relevance in itself that can be "preserved, transferred, or adopted and adapted elsewhere" (World Bank, 1997). In developing countries more often than not, development processes interacts with indigenous knowledge, the World Bank (1997) therefore argues that in the process of designing or implementing development programs or projects, three scenarios should be observed; "the approaches to development should either rely entirely or substantially on indigenous knowledge, override it or, incorporate indigenous knowledge" (p. 2) in its entire framework.

Therefore, Kaburise (2003) argues that in this community engagement programme, the community's indigenous knowledge plugs into the University's scientific knowledge and this synergy creates an entirely different corpus of knowledge that later informs the review of the universities curriculum. At the community level indigenous knowledge is acquired and used by the students during the community engagement. By living and working in the communities, the students have access to indigenous knowledge which they are able to compare with what they learned in school and then they are able to use this to identify their development needs and strategies to meet the needs of the community and the programme. Back in their classrooms, students are able to demonstrate their knowledge of the indigenous knowledge in the various

subject areas as a way to bring development to the university's communities. Additionally, community engagement leads to the honing of students' personal and professional skills, such as inter-personal communication, teamwork and presentation skills (Green, 2010; Deeley, 2010; Astin and Sax, 1998; Eyler and Giles, 1999). All of these are critical to participation in the wider society.

In another study, Roger and Robinson (2003, p. 3) found that community engagement promotes employability and can spur economic growth within communities where the interaction occurs. According to them, community engagement builds strong networks amongst students and communities, and these ties to peers, colleagues and others offer job leads, strategic counselling and a range of information, all of which contribute to the socio-economic improvement of the community. For the researcher and Emefa (2014) these networks, which are formed through community engagement, contribute significantly to the growth and development of the communities in future. Roger and Robinson (2003) further argue that "networks are particularly important to the marginalized and can help them overcome obstacles to social mobility" (p.2), since students and community members, including other stakeholders, still continue to relate, communicate and offer assistance to each other long after the engagement has ended. Supporting this assertion, Eyler and Giles (1999) and Brewis et al. (2010) argue that community engagement provides a basis for shared socio economic transformation. All the above benefits ultimately ensure personal growth for students and pathways for the development of communities, the value of which are immeasurable to the communities and to the wider society. The next section discusses the benefits of community engagement to universities.

2.3.2 Benefits to the University

An important benefit of community engagement to universities is that it assists in the sensitisation of HEI's and their staff and students to social and ethical issues while enabling them stay in tune with wider social concerns. It is argued that academics should listen more to the voices of ordinary people by seeking to discuss issues with the public and involving them in crafting solutions which reflect their aspirations (NCCPE, 2011). According to the NCCPE (2011)

community engagements enable universities to buy into long term strategic plans and national priorities of governments and society through interactions with the public which demonstrably improve the quality and content of the engagements. They contend that in the process of engagement not only do the public encounter, deepen and widen academic discourse, but programmes that have been identified and investigated in partnership with the public always lead to greater effects and relevance by making a difference in their lives. The NCCPE (2011) further argue that, by making community engagement an integral part of their mandate, universities are better positioned to respond to social needs locally, nationally and globally, and therefore to contribute more significantly to social justice. This includes the right to equitable treatment, support for human rights, and an advocacy for a fair allocation of resources to communities (TCE, 2006). By so doing, universities devise additional pathways to effectively support people to make a difference in their life and those of their constituents.

Another significant finding of the NCCPE (2011) study is that community engagement helps participants to take full advantage of the drift of knowledge and learning between HEIs and the community. The study argues that universities, with their staff, students and other resources, possess enormous potential to induce learning and innovation in the wider society. Therefore strategic investments in community/public engagements helps in the realisation of the full potentials of these programmes by focusing attention and support for the range of ways in which universities can assist their communities. The benefits to the community and wider society are discussed next.

2.3.3 Benefits to the Community and Wider Society

Regarding the benefits of community engagement to the respective communities and the wider society, Department of Environmental Policy Initiative (DEPI) -Victoria (1996, 2000) indicates that successful engagements constitute avenues that can build more robust interactions with communities and reap immense benefits. It is argued that community engagements can:

...lead to the identification of mechanisms for building a community's strength and its ability to join with government and other stakeholders in dealing with complex issues and change (p.1).

Furthermore, DEPI-Victoria (1996, 2000) argues that when properly focused and well-thought-out, community engagements can provide prospects for a range of voices to be heard on issues which matter to communities. The role of the university is in engaging with community participatory research, in reporting the findings to the government or local government and then relating the authorities' ability to meet community expectations and the funding required in doing so. In addition, the community's expectations are taken into account, and they are given feedback on the central government's ability to meet those standards. In such instances communities are able to recognize their priorities, and this could lead to greater ownership of solutions to current problems, which would allow plans to be created which include the community in decision-making and given it a greater obligation for creating the future (DEPI, 1996, 2000). However, owning projects and participating in decision making needs to be accompanied by realistic budgets and resources; otherwise, it remains a discourse and will not enable change.

Community engagement can foster a sense of belonging in communities, and this produces considerable benefits from working together on behalf of the whole community. This ultimately leads to empowering individuals to become "proactive with regard to issues that affect them" (DEPI, 1996, 2000). Eyler and Giles (1999, p. 179), however, cautioned that adopting the community as a laboratory instead of working with the community on mutually beneficial projects may ruin the development of partnerships that offer continuous benefits to both parties. This could result in skewed priorities and imbalances in the general outcomes of engagement, as indicated in the introduction.

Hardwick and Coffey (2010), Stoecker and Tyron (2009), and Brewis et al. (2010) affirm that community engagement has the potential to meet the expressed needs of the public while increasing the skills and knowledge of community partners. They further argue that for the community and wider

society, engagement can improve the policies being developed, making them more practical and relevant to the community's aspirations. It can also ensure that services are delivered in a more effective and efficient way for the communities. Community engagement can also explore and promote ways in which government agencies, such as District Assemblies and decentralized agencies and the community could work more closely on issues of concern to the community. Engagements that lead to the discovery of issues of concerns and draws realistic budgets and resources put the central and local government agencies in a better position to deal with the issues in a proactive way. This represents a favourable alternative to knee-jerk reactions to community anger stemming from disillusionment due to government neglect because community voices have not been heard (DEPI, 1996, 2000).

Building on the argument above, Head (2007, p. 443), citing Reddel and Woolcock (2004), argued that in recent times there has been a drive towards supporting communities to identify strategies for social and economic transformation and for building their capabilities so that they can effectively initiate their own development. He further contends that at the local level, it is increasingly being appreciated that there is the need to involve local communities, more importantly, how these communities mobilise resources, either single-handedly or in partnership with other stakeholders, and build infrastructure that enables change to occur, is crucial. Stressing the appropriateness of engagements for local governance, Roger and Robinson (2003) indicate that community engagement offers a platform for community participation, and that this is at the core of the local government's agenda for the development of communities.

Therefore, scaling up involvement is seen as crucial for supporting the acceptability of policies at the grassroots level, shaping community leadership and refining the delivery of services. This calls for innovative forms of community engagement strategies, which are driven by a combination of indigenous internal factors, such as the need to develop holistically and in response to calls from policy makers to involve communities in the

decentralization process. Having discussed the benefits of community engagement, I now turn to stakeholder participation and power relations in the community engagement process.

2.4 PARTICIPATION AND POWER

In the preceding discussion of conceptualizations and benefits of community engagement, the issue of participation power emerged as a common theme (Wegerberg, 2010; Lund 2007; Lentz, 1998). This section, therefore, discusses the various understandings and theories of power and how it affects issues of participation. Power itself is a highly contested concept (Luke, 1974 and 2005; Connolly, 1983). Allen (2005, p.1) argued that “there is no doubt that the literature on power is marked by deep, widespread, and seemingly intractable disagreements over how the term power should be understood.” A number of the definitions that have been offered are considered here. Most simply, power has been defined as ‘the potential to influence others’ (Beli et al., 2008, p. 2). Another theorist, Dahl (1957) defined power as substantially located within social relations, making it evident in university community engagement. He further postulated that there are two types of power, the first of which is “power over”, which occurs with tokenism and in this case what the universities have. Dahl (1957) illustrated this kind of power as “A has power over B” in a relationship to the extent that A can get B to do something that he/she would otherwise not do. The second type, “power to”, refers to what he terms “outcome power”, or the power to enact results. He went on to explain that “power over” refers to the “social power that exists and is exercised within the context of a social relationship between people” (p.2) and stipulated that outcome power helps, whilst social power acts to change inactive situations or outcomes, as engagements seek to do. According to Dahl (1957), “power to” and power over” are both aspects of a comprehensive understanding of power. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Luke (1974), who initially criticized Dahl’s definition as simplistic, eventually adopted a variation of it.

Contrary to Dahl's notion of power, power relations in university community engagements are expected to be balanced by the university. However, practically, both types of powers are held by the universities, who have control

over the resources and therefore dictate the terms, having both “power over” and the “power to act”. Allen (1999, p. 27), whilst supporting Dahl's theories, stated that power means having “the ability of a collective to act together for the attainment of an agreed upon errand or series of errands”. She argued that power is also exercised by “the ability of an actor or a set of actors to constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors” (p. 27). Luke (2005, p.2) similarly argued that “power is not necessarily intentional since it can be exercised in other ways by actors who are unaware of the power”, such as poor community members who may not be aware that they have power, but do exercise power in different ways, for example, by determining who represents them at the District Assembly and at the national level.

The concept of power therefore permeates all human endeavors. In the participatory approach to development projects, the intended beneficiaries should take active roles in decision making and should be consulted in all aspects of the design, execution and evaluation of the programmes (Freire, 1970, Mansuri & Rao, 2004). According to Bush (cited in Morgan, 1997), the outcomes of complex decision-making processes are likely to be determined according to the relative power of the people, bodies and interest groups involved in any given discourse. Power can therefore be defined as:

the medium through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved. Power influences who gets what, when and how . . . the sources of power are rich and varied (pp. 170-171).

Having considered Dahl's (1969) notion of power, Luke (1974) postulated that power is a product of conflict between actors and largely depends on who gains and who loses (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). This is significant considering the fact that people perceive universities as ivory towers seeking to treat communities as “pockets of needs and laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise”, to be used and dumped (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 503-4).

I argued earlier that there are different conceptualisations and aims for community programmes with regard to knowledge production, and its

application to communities the university serves. These are, however, determined largely by the power relationships between universities and their communities. This means that there is a nexus between the concept of power relations and how the process of an engagement is practiced and understood. O'Brien (2008), writing from South Africa, notes that the problem of "inequitable power relationship and erratic participation has posed serious challenges to the effectiveness and sustainability of engagement initiatives" (p. 29) and concludes that the "relationships between power and participation characterizing many university community engagements are dynamic" (p. 29). These uneven levels of participation are occasioned by a myriad of challenges, external and internal, such as lack of adequate information, clarity in guidelines and the setting of clear expectations, as well as power imbalances. While one partner in the engagement may exert power over the other, the nature of the power relationship and how balanced it is impact the direction, control and success of the programme.

Consequently, community-based development initiative is rooted in the active involvement of local people from a community in the design and implementation of a project (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Participation therefore is an essential component of any community engagement effort. Armah et al. (2009) argue that participation as an ideology received prominence as a result of the failure of development projects in the 1950s and 1960s, which spurred social workers and development practitioners to advocate for the inclusion of affected populations in the design and implementation process of projects that concerned them. To Armah et al. (2009), this was because, at that time, the prevailing belief was that projects failed on account of the exclusion of local populations from the decision making process, a state of affairs which had the tendency to perpetuate inequality. In fact, the literature abounds with cases where development projects helped to perpetuate inequality rather than alleviate it (e.g. Sisitka and Burt, 2006). Reid (2000, p.3) defined a participating community as one in "which many people are involved in the activities of the community, which is inclusive, with power and responsibility decentralized and all citizens well-informed and receptive to ideas." Reid's study underscores the significance of community participation and involvement, which is vital to the

success of an engagement process. Nonetheless, the study argued that receptivity to ideas does not guarantee that everybody would agree to a proposal or project.

While Khwaja (2004) noted that the lack of participation by local communities could perhaps be a possible reason for the failure of most programmes in developing countries, he argued that since the 1980s, there has been an upsurge in advocacy for participatory or community-led development as a vehicle to organize people to get involved. As evidence that community-based approaches to development have become the fastest growing mechanism for development assistance, Khwaja (2004, p.427), citing Mansuri and Rao (2004), quoted the World Bank's (1996) estimate that Community Driven Development (CDD) projects rose from £325 million in 1996 to £2 billion in 2003. Narayan (1995) and Ishan et al. (1996), cited in Khwaja (2004, p.428) therefore asserted that there is enough evidence to indicate that participation by local communities constitutes a critical requirement for positive project outcomes and sustainability. In spite of the call for more increased participation, it has largely remained at the level of placation and tokenism (Arnstein, 1969). This means that communities just participate but have little power to effect change. Development practitioners have therefore begun to re-examine the effectiveness of the strategy since a number of community features may inhibit or facilitate participation, such as the complexities of the social arrangements and the composition of the community, the level of social acceptability, and identification with the change-agent or organization driving the change (Wandersman, 1984).

In spite of the fact that the World Bank makes community participation imperative and a requirement for funding, sometimes is not the case because of the conditionalities set by the World Bank (Gaventa, 2008). The growing importance of community participation and the use of it as an indicator of programme success by some institutions like the World Bank have sparked various debates about understanding it and the conditions under which it flourishes (Khwaja, 2004). Khwaja (2004) cautioned, however, that community participation may not, in fact, be desirable in situations where development

interventions in communities require complex skills and a quantum of resources, which community members may not be able to provide. However, participation is critical where relatively more local input and knowledge are required and also to give legitimacy and community ownership to programmes. This connects to proponents of neo-liberal markets who insist that supply and demand should be left to determine the prices of goods and services and that government has no business doing business. These arguments fail to see the necessity of community partnership, ownership and participation in prioritisation and in the actualization of projects (OECD, 2014).

Further analysis of the concept of power and community participation by Mansuri and Rao (2003) and Gillespie (2004), cited in Khwaja (2004), suggested that community participation may perhaps lead to interventions based on the needs of the marginalized, enhancing the provision of public goods and services and above all turning out a more informed and participative citizenry. In clarifying a situation in which community participation may not be considered desirable, Khwaja argues against a return to the top-down autocratic approaches of the past, which denied communities voices in certain decisions. Rather, she contends that she only wants to make the point that there may be, at times, too great a tendency to view community participation as a panacea to all the shortcomings of development because people may participate but and yet still may lack the power to change anything.

Botchway (2001) in a case study from Northern Ghana", critically reflected on participation as the basis for empowerment in the context of a joint Canadian-Ghanaian rural water project. He concluded that development practitioners do recognise that the "process of social development is facilitated if the intended beneficiaries participate fully in the making and implementation of decisions that affect their lives or what they perceive as development" (p.1-7). He cited a World Bank (1996) publication which argued that the Bank had been "taking steps towards incorporating the people's perspective into projects they supported so as to narrow the gap between project implementers and those they sought to help" (World Bank, 1996, p.1). Botchway concluded that, for the Bank, taking into account cultural and behavioural factors such as beliefs and

customs, coupled with attitudes, illiteracy and listening to members of the communities affected by projects, is critical to effective development. Rowland (1996, cited in Botchway, 2001), pointed out that empowerment must involve the destruction of negative social structures; so that affected people can come to the understanding that it is their right to act and influence.

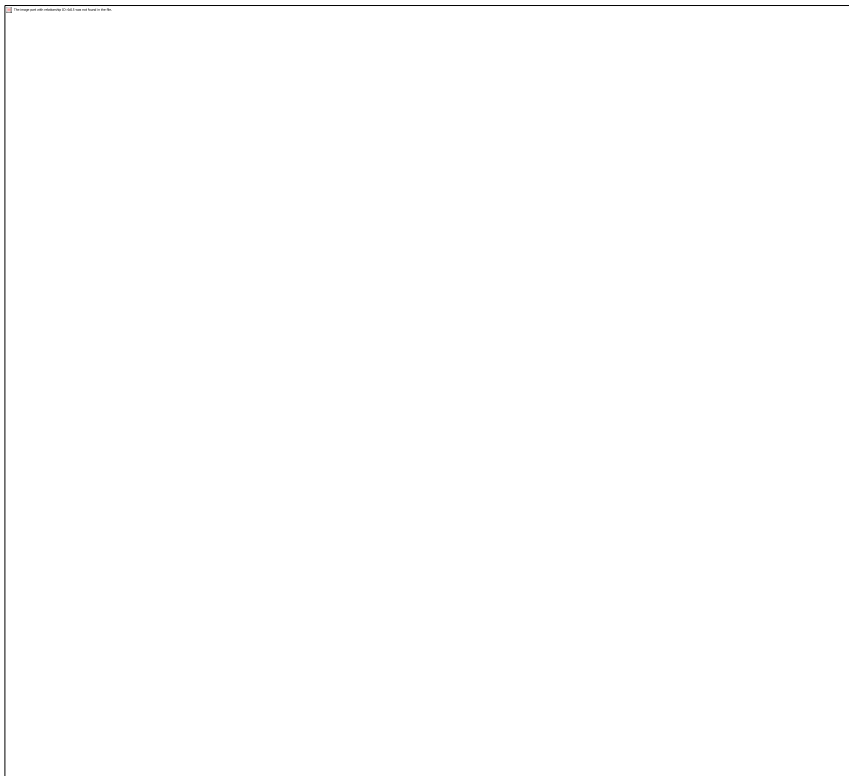
Following from the above, the World Bank (1996, cited in Mansuri and Rao, 2004), outlined the participatory approach in the context of development cooperation and argued that this is best achieved when the various actors can identify a mutual interest. This is played out in the process of pair wise ranking, a participatory technique used to gain agreement on priorities. In situations where everybody will benefit from the development process, an inclusive approach is adopted in which problems are considered and decisions are taken collectively. Mansuri and Rao (2004, p. 13), however, conceded that forging such a consensus and ensuring inclusivity is a daunting task when the cooperation is aimed at “benefiting marginalized and impoverished communities left impoverished by decades of exploitation and neglect” to the extent that they are no longer assertive. They further argued that most community engagement programmes are usually not initiated by the main beneficiaries themselves because they lack the capacity and resources and this thus connects to the issue of power. In such situations, there is a risk of the project being designed to promote the interests of the powerful implementing organizations such as the university (World Bank, 2003). The World Bank further cautions that the interests of the beneficiaries may be overlooked and therefore, in order to target the needs of the community, a different participatory approach is needed to bring all players on board and smoothen inequalities.

Having established that community participation is essentially laced with power, it is necessary to define participation in this context. USADF (2013) sees “participation, in the development context, as process through which all members of a community or organization are involved in and have influence (power) on decisions related to development activities that will affect them” (p.1). Here participation is seen as a process of restructuring power to enable the marginalised who are “presently excluded from the political and economic

processes, to be deliberately included in the future” (p.1). Whilst USADF (2013) refers to all members of a society, Schlossberg and Shufords (2005, p.19) emphasise those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale and this connects with being at the bottom of the ladder yet to be discussed. Wiedemann and Femers (1993) emphasised full participation by the public in terms of decision making, accessing information and defining interests and determining agendas. Whilst Dorcey et al. (1994) emphasised consensus seeking, advice and consultation with stakeholders so that they do not feel excluded. Conner (1988) emphasised consultations and joint planning with stakeholders, with feedback throughout. This study argues that both the marginalised and the more resourceful need to forge partnerships in order to determine community interest and fast-track the development agenda from conceptualisation to the end of the programme, while ensuring sustainability.

In a seminal study on participation, Arnstein (1969) set out to distinguish different levels of participation in relation to stages of, or access to power and therefore power relations (Collins and Ison, 2006). She postulated a typology of eight levels arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the outcome of engagement, from non-participation to tokenism right through to citizen power. She viewed participation as essentially a power struggle by citizens of any community to move up the ladder and control their own destiny as shown in fig.2.1

Figure 2: Ladder of Citizen Participation



(Source: Arnstein, 1969, p. 217)

Arnstein (1969) referred to these citizens as including ordinary people and experts, community members, public officials, and development practitioners and agencies. She argued that any of these groups could be at the bottom or at the top, but practically it is the powerless that always find themselves at the bottom. Nevertheless, depending on the interplay of factors and the level of incentives, outcomes, benefits and conscious efforts at inclusion, any group of persons could find themselves at any level of the hierarchy. There is therefore no hard and fast rule as to where on the ladder stakeholders ought to be at any particular moment. Participation often “spans a range of levels from low participation to high participation” (Arnstein, 1969, p.10), such as taking part in decision making (CPA, 2009).

At the bottom of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder is manipulation and therapy where there is no participation but attempt to cure or educate. In such situations the aim is to perpetuate a kind of hegemony where the motive is not to allow people to participate in planning or conducting a programme but rather the top-down

edification of the participants (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). The second classification progresses to “tokenism” which includes “informing”, “consulting” and “placating” citizens. This allows people to have some audience and to have a voice, such that they hear and are heard, but “they may lack the power to ensure that their views may be heeded to by the powerful” (p. 217). Therefore, there is no assurance that, this kind of participation changes the existing inequalities that abound in the community. She further asserts that placation, the fifth in the rung, is a higher level of tokenism where spaces are created for participants to give input, but those who wield the power still hold the right to decide (Arnstein, 1969).

At the next level, which is partnership where people are granted a much greater influence in the process of decision-making. They can forge relationships that enable them to “negotiate and participate in trade-offs with traditional power holders as a strategy for distributing social capital (Gate & Stout, 1996, p.5). At the peak is delegated power and citizen control where poor, marginalized people obtain more avenues of decision making or maximum managerial power to be able to own and direct their own affairs (Arnstein, 1969). At this stage citizens can influence local and national governments decision making and this can impact upon equitable access to resources and social mechanisms that enable this. The CPA (2009) submits that Arnstein’s (1969) model suggests that “more ‘genuine’ participation” is limited to the upper levels of the ladder (p.13) which may perhaps be false.

Arnstein argued that “citizen participation” is an aspect of “citizen power” (p. 216). She emphasised that there should be a policy whereby the marginalized are given the opportunity to determine “how information is shared and policies are crafted, resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out” (p. 216). Laswell (1958) described situations where this is not the case as “clientelism”, defined as a system that determines who gets what in society riding on the back of political bureaucracy, which breeds corruption. This ultimately leads to the dissipation of the scarce resources and curtails the reallocation of social capital since clientelism promotes cronyism and ultimately perpetuates inequality.

Arnstein (1969) cautioned against an “empty ritual of participation” as opposed to granting community members “real power to affect the outcome and process” (p. 217). Arnstein’s eight levels of participation are referred to in the analysis of influence and patterns of participation in the university community engagement in the study.

Arnstein’s ladder is not without criticism. One very clear critique by Gate and Stout (1996) is that the classification “creates a wedge between the powerless and the powerful and by so doing tries to highlight fundamental divisions which may not be consistent although both groups may hold a host of divergent views and competing vested interest” (p.5). It is important to note that Arnstein (1969) may have developed this ladder to theorize findings from her research although it may be used to classify where people are located in the power struggles. Others have argued that it is possible even without classification to redistribute social capital and therefore enable transformation that will be revealed through re-categorization.

Arnstein (1969) pointed out some of the limitations of her classification herself, such as its failure to account for “racism, poverty/socioeconomic structures, illiteracy, gender, inadequate communication, and resistance to power redistribution to achieving significant participation rooted at the top of the ladder” (p. 217). These are factors that contribute to locating people in particular categories. It may well be that all these factors are subsumed within the three main areas of the ladder. The potential outcome of this restructuring of affluence may lead to narrowing gaps between the marginalized poor and the wealthy reducing the disparity. Finally, she asserts that her classifications are also over simplistic (Arnstein, 1969). However the justification for using such simplistic abstractions is that in most cases the ‘have nots’ really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic “system” and power holders actually do view ‘have-nots’ as a sea of “those people” with little comprehensions of the class and caste differences among them. Therefore the rationale for making these simplistic categories is because that is how people within them perceive the situation.

Based on the limitations of the Arnstein typology, Bishop and Davis (2002) put forth a model spectrum of appropriate participation levels, ranging from minimum participation, comprising information, consultation and partnership, to maximum participation of delegation. Bishop and Davis (2002) argued that each move towards a higher level of participation has a prerequisite stage. Their typology informed the work of the International Association for Public Participation (IAPP) (2007). Head (2007, p.444) critiquing the (IAPP) (2007) model argues that much of the literature on forms of participation and community involvement in public issues have been summarized, and usefully categorized, in the IAPP's five point refined scale, which includes the following levels of participation:

1. Informing by "providing community with balanced and objective information";
2. Consulting by "obtaining community feedback on analysis and alternatives and decisions";
3. Involving by "working directly with the community throughout the process to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered";
4. Collaborating by "partnering with community in each aspect of decision making including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solution" and
5. Empowering citizens by "placing the final decision making in the hands of the community" (p. 445).

However, the similarities between the two typologies by Bishop and Davis (2002) and the IAPP are at the peak, where for Bishop and Davis (2002), partnerships and delegation occur, whilst in the IAPP, this stage is characterized by collaboration and empowerment which is about control. Head (2007) cautions that, in view of the diversity and inequalities in the capacities of groups and individuals in the community which is what Arnstein also refers to, "it would be unrealistic to expect equal capacity for participation" (p. 446). This claim connects to the 'glass ceiling' that inhibits the empowerment of a segment of society i.e. women. Still, Heads' classification similarly ranges from informing

to empowering. Carpentier (2011) supports the positions of both Arnstein (1969) and Head (2007), arguing that power considerations are key to all theories of participation. For him, “the balance between people’s inclusion in the implicit and explicit decision-making processes within these fields, and their exclusion through the delegation of power (again, implicit or explicit), is central to discussions on participation in all fields (p.170). In view of all of these considerations, I adopted Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation as criteria for evaluating the different forms of influence, participation and power, since it provides useful criteria by which to define and appraise people’s participation in community partnerships. This helped to locate the various individuals, groups, and stakeholders and the extent to which each of them are involved in the engagement process.

2.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter comprised a review of the literature on the various conceptualizations of community engagement, its benefits and power and participation in the engagement process. The review, whilst covering various conceptualizations of university community engagements around the world, revealed a dearth of research in Africa, and in Ghana in particular. Upon examining the relevant studies on engagements, very little has been done on the different perceptions and perspectives of stakeholders. This research aims to fill this gap and thereby contribute to knowledge. There also seems to be a consensus across the literature regarding the necessity of community participation in engagement programmes and the existence of complex power relations, both of which are all the more crucial in the case of universities in developing countries such as Ghana. The next chapter enumerates the research methodology and design adopted in carrying out this investigation

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the literature in the areas of University community engagements specifically, the various conceptualizations of community engagement, the criticality of engagement, community participation and involvement, influence and power relations in community engagements and developed a conceptual framework, the next challenge was to select an appropriate means for carrying out this investigation; this brought me to the design of the research. This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted by the study in data collection and analysis. Various concepts of methodology as discussed by Bryman (2008), Morrison, Cohen & Manion (2012) Denscombe (2011), Dey (1993) Thomas (2011) and Miles and Huberman (1994) have informed this chapter and therefore this methodology section deals with the entirety of my research design including theoretical as well as practical concerns and the specific techniques used to accomplish the methodology (Brewer, 2000).

The objective of the research was to carry out an ethnographic study of a Community Engagement Programme of a public University in Ghana. I followed eleven students in a small village with a population of a little over 1700 comprising three key geographical suburbs with people with the same rights to power, resources and socioeconomic groupings where there are power differentials. The community programme takes place during the third trimester of the academic calendar of the University. It begins in late-May to mid-July every year when students are sent to rural communities for seven weeks to live and interact with community members based on a week by week programme. This is to enable them to address the aims of the university programme that are discussed in the findings. It also aims at affording the students the opportunity to carry out research to eventually profile the community through a consultative process to find out what the community priorities are for future intervention by the District Assembly and other agencies (Kaburise, 2003). During the students stay in the community, an appointed Coordinator from the Third Trimester

directorate supervises the students by periodically visiting and guiding them and also carrying their concerns back to the directorate. At the end of the seventh week stay, a group of lecturers go there to assess the students before they exit the community. In addition to students and this selected community, the population of this study includes the University and the District Assembly. However a sizeable number comprising nine university staff, some identified members, groups in the community and two members of the District Assembly was selected as a sample for investigation.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND ITS RELEVANCE

In adopting an interpretivist approach, I believe that the social world is not simply objective and independent; rather the social reality is based on interaction, reflection, meaning, action and interpretation (O'reilly, 2010, Livesay 2006, Bryman, 2008). As an interpretivist, the human being is central when it comes to studying any phenomenon that involves him or her. Therefore, human behaviour should be understood within the context of the society and the culture that regulates and defines individuals' behavior and values. Behaviour should also be understood by how different people and groups influence the environment and culture in which they are born and raised (Lewit, 2013). Angen (2000), Garfinkel (1967), Cohen and Crabtree (2006, p. 2)) argue that interpretive approaches rely heavily on "naturalistic methods such as interviewing, observation" and examination of existing manuscripts and that they ensure an "adequate dialogue between the researchers and those with whom they interact in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (p.2). Cohen and Crabtree, (2006, p.2) further reiterate that in ethnographic studies meanings are emergent from the research process and therefore are mainly located within the interpretivist approach. This is because they are "based on particular moments, located in a particular context or situation and time and open to reinterpretation and negotiation through conversation" (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006, p. 2).

Adoption of the interpretivist approach is also required to examine many perspectives of the individual (thoughts and feelings) within the engagement programme in relation to their participation, involvement, influences, power,

belief, values, aims and the impact of the programme (Bryman, 2008). Based on an interpretivist position I undertook an in-depth analysis of the process of engagement which involves social phenomena which does not lend itself to quantitative measurements (Crotty, 1998, Bryman, 2008). Hammersley and Atkinson locates ethnography within the interpretivist tradition and draw on Mafza (1969, p. 5) and describes it as naturalistic, a philosophical view that remains true to the environment of the phenomenon being studied. This viewpoint assumes that social behaviour of human beings are basically different from inanimate physical phenomenon in that they are socially shaped and constructed by social actions of human beings which are turn shaped by structures such as policy and infrastructure For Brewer (2000 cited in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, p. 6) human beings are creations of their own social world rather than mere respondents to external stimuli. Brewer's argument is cogent because the structure that creates human beings in turn structures their behaviour and potentially their values. However not all individuals have the same access to constructing the structure. Naturalistic approaches to research assume that social phenomenon rather like inanimate objects may be researched by "scientific positivist methods when concern is more on enumeration, generalization and notions of external objective realities of the phenomenon rather than its significance and meaning to those involved in its creation" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989, p. 6).

Apart from theoretical reasons, practical reasons also accounted for my adoption of the interpretivist approach. The fact that this was a social phenomena; it provided me a focus and also allowed the use of penned portraits as used by Pollard and Filer (1996) to understand the community. This coupled with the fact that my fiscal resources were limited and having to traverse a wide area was problematic. The phenomenon under study take place in a village within a specific period that was tailored to my data collection period, I choose this community that would allow an in-depth study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). My worldview as an African who believes in a dual world of the seen and unseen and a multiplicity of nature with each having an influence on the other makes me belief that people do not just behave in a vacuum, behavior is influenced and guided by some forces seen and unseen including our

interaction with fellow human beings (Mbiti, 1990). Therefore the world is a co-construction of our interaction with our fellow human beings and nature. It is therefore important that to know what is happening we need to look at relationships, activities, events, personal dispositions over time to bring the unseen to light where possible to generate new understanding or new knowledge. Clarke (1999) however cautions that paradigms, in spite of their importance, may come along with difficulties because over dependence on paradgms “suppresses new lines of inquiries... or stifle creativity” (p.37) This study therefore takes an interpretivist approach premised on interpretivist assumptions of subjective and multiple realities of the world asking not only what but how and why.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN-ETHNOGRAPHY

3.3.1 *Rationale*

When this study was conceived, I critically looked at various approaches such as survey, case study, mixed methods and their philosophical underpinnings and how each of them could adequately address my research questions. After weighing the suitability of each of these approaches I made a decision to use ethnography and therefore deselected survey questionnaires, case studies and mix methods approaches. People’s behaviour cannot be properly measured using surveys questionnaires which can only measure perceptions of those behaviours and not the deeply inherent meanings that people attach to these perceptions (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p.9, Babbie, 1995, Fink, 2003). Ethnography offered me the opportunity to observe, describe and analyze the beliefs, values and behaviour patterns of community members which will be identified through data analysis (O’Reilly, Fetterman, 1998). I therefore adopted an ethnographic approach but I was interested in using the ethnographic research not only in investigating the community engagement programme but also in identifying inequalities of power and influence among different stakeholder groups as they relate to the purposes, processes and benefits of the community engagement. Ethnography as we have it now emerged from the field of anthropology and was meant to save cultural diversities and largely preserve exotic and dynamic cultures (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p.24). Malinowski (1884) and Brown (1881) are credited as pioneers of ethnography

(Adler et al., 2008). They helped open up the discovery and study of many new cultures. However, presently it is difficult to do an anthropological ethnography because there is literature on the cultures. A number of inspirations guided the study as discussed in the next segment.

3.3.2 Key Literature that Shaped and Informed the Design of the Study

The appropriateness of ethnography as my main strategy was practically driven by ethnographic accounts in the works of number researchers such as: Whyte (1993), Lacey (1970), Hargreaves (1967), Ball (1981) and Pollard and Filer (1996). Whilst Whyte (1993) carried out an ethnographic study of a street corner and lived for years in an Italian community of Connorsville in Boston researching in social relations of street gangs in a slum, Lacey's (1970) ethnographic study was based in a high town grammar school. He provides an "analysis of a school as a dynamic system of social relations through an intensive study of the internal processes of the day by day behavior in the school, laying bare the social mechanism within the school that might explain poor performance of working class children in grammar schools as part of the societal pressures (Lacey, 1976, Whelan, 2011).

Similarly, Hargreaves (1967, p.1) ethnographic study was school based. He looked at "Social Relations in a Secondary School" where many working class pupils allocated to lower streams felt that as a result of being assigned to low streams they had been denied formal academic status within the school and responded by developing powerful anti-school peer groups in the lower streams where they sought to regain their status informally by misbehaving and opposing teachers' authority (Earlham, 2005). On the same trajectory Ball's (1981) study was also school based. He carried out an ethnographic study at "Beachside Comprehensive School" through a combination of classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires and some teacher comments on children in different bands established that some of the detrimental effects of streaming which had existed in both Secondary, Modern and Grammar schools persisted in Comprehensive schools notwithstanding the obvious "commitments of supporters of comprehensivisation to greater equality of opportunity than had existed under the system of tripartite secondary education. Pollard and Filer

(1996) in an educational ethnography also presents a detailed account of three children for three years in a primary school drawing on observation, diaries kept by parents, and interviews with teachers, parents and children. According to Pollard and Filer (1996, p.2) “the primary goal of an ethnographer is to create an accurate description of the perspectives, social practices and behavior of the people on whom he or she focuses.” Therefore they shaped and informed my choice of using penned portraits in understanding the community as done in Pollard and Filer’s study where Sarah and two others were followed and used to tell the story of the social world of pupils. All these educational researchers applied ethnography in different educational and sociological settings and their approaches and ethnographic techniques shaped my ethnographic techniques whilst undertaking the research.

In addition to the above influences, I was also largely guided by ideas of researchers such as Hammersley and Atkinson (1990, 1996, and 2007), Harris & Holmes (2000), Agar, Fetterman (1998), LeCompte and Schensul, (1999). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1990, 1996, 2007) ethnography is a study that focuses on a prolonged study of a distinct location or setting and concerns a full range of social behavior within the location event or setting. It involves the use of a wide range of methods which places emphasis on the understanding of social behavior from within the location, event or setting. It also places premium on data that moves from detailed descriptions to identify themes and theories grounded in the data collected. Hammersley and Atkinson, (1994) further posits that ethnography is a theoretical tradition that seeks to place importance on the significance of “situated meaning and contextualized experience” (p.6) and thus highlights meaning and action of every day events. It is a systematic and proposed account of the social world but with an explanation that identifies the “subjective reality of the experience as a basis for explaining and understanding social behaviour” (p.6). Therefore Hammersley and Atkinson (Ibid) argue that central to ethnography are situations which shapes, limits and in some instances define social action as central to explanations and understanding of that action. Davidson and Layder (1994) similarly argue that ethnography belongs to the tradition of approaches which makes “central the importance of understanding the meanings of cultural

practices of people from the standpoint of everyday setting” (p.165) in which they take place. They affirm that ethnography also emphasizes a rigorous research “where the complexities of the location are of greater importance rather than the overreaching trend of generalization” (p. 3).

Harris & Holmes, (2000) are of the view that ethnography enables researchers to directly study a particular cluster through direct participation and other means of data gathering tools such as observations and the use the data as a “basis for a theoretically informed account of general or particular aspects of that culture” (p.2). Agar also defines ethnography as both a product and process of research. He argues that the product is a “written manuscript of one's observations of the culture under study and that the “process involves sustained observation of a group such as nurses, physicians or surgeons” (Agar, 1980, 1996, p. 53).

Whilst Agar (1980, 1996) and Harris and Holmes (2000) suggest the focus on a particular group, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.3) on the other hand look at the daily lives of people within a location or setting in general and argue that it is usually a direct or an indirect participation of the researcher in the everyday lives of people for a period of time. Where he/she cautiously observe what transpires, listens to their conversations and probes by interrogating them informally or formally, and collects documents and other forms of data available to further explain issues that are the evolving focus of investigation. Fetterman's (1998, p.1) on the other hand emphasizes ethnicity and exoticism and adds that the phenomena should be contextually bounded because ethnographers seeks to portray the mundane daily lives of people.

In all these definitions, the various writers have talked about the suitability of observations, informal conversations and a prolonged engagement in the lives of a people, setting or event in studying what accounts for behaviour, attitudes and perceptions and ultimately assigning meaning to contextualized experiences. I therefore made a decision to employ ethnography as my research design and stayed and conducted the study in the context of where the engagement occurred. The design enabled me to understand the

behaviours, culture, daily lives and other critical incidents that occurred during my fieldwork. Aided by the arguments and practical accounts of previous ethnographers above, one community was specifically chosen for the purposes of the study.

In spite of the suitability of ethnography as my main research design, it nonetheless attracts some criticisms. A number of researchers (Lewis, 1985, Silverman, 1970, Bryman, 2008) have described ethnography as lengthy, and raise issues of validity, claiming that its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. They have also argued that its format for reporting can be problematic and its write up could be burdensome. Sweetnam (1997), like other critics, argues that ethnography is unscientific, not generalizable, biased and unrepresentative, hence making little contribution to understanding wider social issues since it is both time and space bound. He however argues that those who prefer ethnography over other approaches have agreed that all these condemnations are compensated by the “value of dense observations of real life” (Sweetnam, 1997), p.3). Similarly, Hammersley (1998, cited in Brewer, 2000, pp-25-26) criticizes ethnography of being perceived as unscientific and therefore not replicable, “lacking precision” and “subjective”, “relying on small samples and therefore not generalizable”. For those who do not prefer ethnography as an approach, their principal concern relate to the kinds of knowledge it yields (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1990).

Positivist researchers have criticized ethnography of imprecision, where language used is descriptive and is seen to lack rigour, the tendency to describe and characterize events rather than qualifying them. They also raise the issue of subjectivity in interpretation. It must be said that these criticisms are seen as technical and challenges about the relevance of knowledge and not methods (Brewer, 2000). Atkinson and Hammersley (1990) argue that ethnographers do not claim that their research can meet basic positivist characteristics since such benchmarks are largely irrelevant to the core of ethnography (p. 6). However, inbuilt mechanisms in ethnographic studies such as ensuring trustworthiness, the use of multiple sources of data (observation, interviews, documentary evidence), the understanding that human behaviour

and attitudes cannot be studied completely without bias and therefore may not always be replicable, and also the fact that widespread generalization is not the ultimate goal of this ethnography makes these condemnations untenable and reinforces the validity of my ethnographic findings (Hammersley, 1998, pp.10-12).

3.4 SELECTION OF RESEARCH SITE

Since the study focused on a phenomenon consisting of a number of stakeholders, I contacted the director of the engagement programme of the University who sent me a list of all the communities in the programme under study and offered suggestions on suitable sites. The selection of the community was based on some criteria such as the population, which is slightly above one thousand and seven hundred per the 2011 population census and its accessibility. I wanted an ideal site that would enable me gather relevant data, therefore this community was selected because it is located on the main trunk road and therefore accessibility was no problem. I spent a period of eleven weeks in the community. Seven of the eleven weeks were spent with the students as they stayed in the community for the engagement programme. However, because students come and go but the community would be there forever, I remained (behind) for the next four weeks where I observed and explored the community based participants to help me get a complete and independent insight into what the engagement really meant to the community members.

3.5 ACCESS: ENTERING THE FIELD

Once a potential field site had been selected the next process was for me to begin to negotiate access by seeking permission to gain entry (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Negotiating access or entry to a research site, although sometimes complicated, sets the tone for the rest of the ethnography. Reeves (2010, p.315-316) argues that for the researcher to access and observe a study area “in a way that allows them to explore the daily lives of the population living or working in that site, entry has to be carefully negotiated”. Hence after gaining clearance from the University and pre informing the director of the programme, who placed a call to the community coordinator to inform him about my

research, I set off to the community. Upon arrival at the community, as Whyte did in Connersville (Whyte, 1993), I first of all met some elders who introduced me to the students who in turn introduced me to a young man called Alhaji Ganema (pseudonym). It was this young man who assisted me in looking for and contacting the Assemblyman of the community. He later became my gatekeeper/key informant.

The Assemblyman, in most jurisdictions acts as a bridge between the chief and local people and the central government through the decentralized local government structures in the District. The issue of access to the chief and the acceptance of the people did not pose too many problems for me. Access for me was relatively easy due to the shared commonality of language and culture (Merriam et al. 2010). At the meeting with the Assemblyman, I disclosed to him my entire research objectives of examining the aims and purposes, influence, participation and power relations in the community engagement programme. I also informed him about how long I was going to stay in the field and the kinds of assistance that I would require such as facilitating meetings and initiating conversations for me in field because, there may be instances that it may not be prudent, that I ask, engage or participate directly (Whyte, 1993). I also conveyed to him the extent of the “social intrusion or anticipated disruption” in the daily lives of community members and asked that they bear with me (Marshall and Rossman, p.3, 1995, Whyte et al, 1996, Shah, 2004).

It is very important that in the process of negotiating access, one gets credible gatekeepers who are central prerequisites of access, are in good standing and relate well with community members. Initially there was a dilemma of where to start from or who to contact to initiate inquiries to facilitate the access (Lecompte & Preissle, 1993). Informed by these cautions from Burgess, cited in Ball (1985) and also by Whyte (1993, p. 292), I verified their credibility and went ahead to make friends with the Assemblyman, whilst staying with Alhaji, my key informant sharing my research aims with him. I quickly assimilated with the local people and this made them occasionally assist in arranging water and food for me. Another task for me was to be careful not to wholly associate with high ranking participants like the chief, elders and the opinion leaders in the

community which may alienate low ranking participants like the youth and school children (Whyte, 1996) that I would require. Fetterman (1989, p. 44) also argue that although it is prudent to select an “integral and powerful” member of the community such as the Assemblyperson, this sometimes has some ramifications such as the risk of alienating the less powerful of the community and the risk of being tagged an appendage of the powers that be.

I initially intended accessing the community through the Assemblyman who I got to know through the young school leaver and the students but cautions by Ortiz (2004) that “gatekeepers could be assets or liabilities for research depending upon their personal dispositions on the validity and value of the study, as well as how they feel about the people under their control” (p.3). Owing to this therefore I made a decision to use the young school leaver as an additional informant because I thought he “might have the understanding and contacts that I needed to successfully access and integrate into the community (Whyte, 1993). However, I still regarded the Assemblyman as a crucial gatekeeper/informant since in most cases the Assemblyperson is a trusted and credible persona and could help the researcher gain the trust of the indigenes in so far as he is convinced of the credibility of the researcher.

In relying on the Assemblyperson as a gatekeeper/key informant, I was always open to the views of others and tried to find out more on issues. This was done through formal conversations with other individuals that I identified in the community in order to ensure that data collected was credible and trustworthy (Fox, 1998, p.15). However, since it was very important and necessary that I maintain my independence as a researcher and I did not completely rely on the Assemblyman who happened not to be available all the time because he is a teacher, a farmer and was responsible for overseeing the adjoining community.

3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

The community engagement programme under study is spread across Northern Ghana which covers three administrative regions (See Map of Northern Ghana in Chapter 1, p. 2). One of the communities within these geographical areas was selected for the purpose of an in-depth ethnographic case study. Most

communities in Northern Ghana share similar geo-political, economic, cultural and agricultural characteristics and are quite similar in respect of their cultural, demographic and social orientations except for a few migrants and nomadic Fulani herdsmen who enter and leave periodically. In spite of these, the findings from this ethnographic case study will not be generalized. However some forms of generalizations such as analytic and naturalistic generalization could be made of the study by readers who may identify some findings as relating to their situation or circumstance (Yin, 1994, Stake, 1995).

I employed a purposive sampling procedure to identify appropriate participants informed by Bryman (2008) and Maxwell (2005, p.12) who argue that decisions that we make about the location of an intended study and whom to include are very important aspects of any research. More specifically, a deliberate sampling technique of using the eleven students to reach out to the over one thousand seven hundred community based participants in the community (Punch, 2005), after which nine University leaders and two District Assembly officials were also selected for a semi structured interview outside the ethnographic fieldwork. My decision to employ purposeful sampling stemmed from the fact of convenience and the typicality of the community which is small in terms of land mass but can boast of diversity of individuals and their activities (Creswell, 2002, pp.194-196, Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.178, Maxwell, 2005, p.89). However, Paton cited in Maxwell (2005, pp.88-89) cautions against the unbridled use of purposive sampling as a convenient form of sampling, he argues that “convenience and cost should be the last factors to be taken into account...” when “...strategically deliberating on how to get the most information of the greatest utility...” But for this study these reasons were compelling, therefore, the eleven students posted to the community were selected and observed alongside the community based participants in the ethnographic study.

Earlier on before I stepped into the field, I had done a pilot study with some University leaders and analysed the University policy documents on the engagement and got the views of the University leaders about these policies documents. This gave me the understanding of the project and provided an agenda to help me address my research questions. Later again after the

ethnographic study in the community, selected University leaders and staff of the District Assembly were engaged in semi structured qualitative interviews. The decision to select eleven (11) student's participants and nine (9) University management and two (2) District Assembly staff as the sample to be observed alongside some selected members and groups within the community for seven (7) weeks was taken because the whole process of the University community interface revolves around the students and the community and so they were very relevant to the research, therefore I could not overlook them. Also, due to the fact that no additional funding was allocated for fieldwork, a sample that was easily accessible had to be selected.

The community based participants were equally critical in this sampling decision because of the wider relevance of this qualitative research and issues of readers connecting with the findings (Yin, 1994). All community members were part of the ethnographic study particularly in events but I focused on some selected members to help me understand particular activities. Therefore these community members with whom I had a high level of interaction were used as portraits to represent the entire community in the analysis and presentation of the findings. Like Sarah's story by Pollard and Filer (1999), I use these portraiture and voices of a few community members from my ethnographic study (See Table 3.2 in p.59) to enable readers get to know the particular individuals in greater detail. The voices are able to tell the story of the community which gives the reader an understanding of their various perspectives because it is simply not possible to tell all the stories. I therefore focused on a few people to tell a story that can illuminate what was happening in the village. These people were studied in-depth during my seven and four week stay in the community. I had significant interaction with them, and by virtue of the facts that members of the community have a shared cultural and social understanding, I view them as being representative of the community. It was gathered that the community had 213 houses and 251 households⁵. Regarding occupations and skills in the community, the student reports indicated that 65 percent of the communities were involved in farming whilst the

⁵ Household refers to the number of people who eat from the same pot.

rest were into trading and fishing (Student Community Report, 2013). The people were predominantly Muslim (54.38%) Christians (13.50%) and adherents of Traditional African Religion (13.46%) and others (18.66) (Student Report, 2013). Table 3.1 and 3.2 below provide a summarized description and further and better characteristics of the sample.

Table 3.1: Summarised Description and Characteristics of Community Based Sample

<i>STUDENT PARTICIPANTS</i>	<i>IDENTIFIABLE COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPANTS & GROUPS</i>	<i>UNIVERSITY LEADERS</i>	<i>DISTRICT ASSEMBLY</i>
<p>1. Student 1. (Alhaji-Male) Agricultural extension.</p> <p>2. Student 2. (Male) Applied Science.</p> <p>3. Student 3. (Female) Management Studies</p> <p>4. Student 4. (Female) Health Education Studies</p> <p>5. Student 5. (Male) Management Studies</p> <p>6. Student 6. (Male) Development Studies</p> <p>7. Student 7. Female Development Studies</p> <p>8. Student 8.(Male) Nursing Studies</p> <p>9.Student 9.(Female)</p>	<p>1. Chief & Elders</p> <p>2. Assemblyman/gatekeeper</p> <p>3. Young school leaver/ key informant</p> <p>4. Opinion leader</p> <p>5.Women [Garri processor Food Vendor, Charcoal burner, Traditional Birth Attendant, Petty trader, (Selling simple products such as toiletries and essential items like tea, sugar, battery, etc.) Local floorers]. Local Koko (porridge) Seller</p> <p>6. Two identified Farmers</p> <p>7. Youth group</p> <p>8.School teachers</p> <p>9.Pupils & other out of school children</p> <p>10. Local imam,</p>	<p>Vice-Chancellor</p> <p>Pro-Vice-Chancellor</p> <p>Director of Engagement Programme</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>Community Coordinator</p> <p>*(Community Coordinators are lecturers appointed to supervise students in their respective communities and act as a bridge between the community and the University. Each coordinator has a cluster of communities under his jurisdiction to oversee)</p>	<p>District Chief Executive /District Coordinating Director.</p> <p>The Administrative head of the district (A civil Servant)</p>

Development Education 10. Student 10. (Male) Mathematical Science 11. Student 11. (Male) Community Nutrition	11. Bicycle Mechanic 14. Two unemployed Youth 15 Other non-identifiable individuals & groups within the community		
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Source: Authors own construction.

Table 3.2: Further and Better Descriptions/Characteristics of Community Based Sample

Chief	Traditional overlord of the community, responsible for the total well-being (social and spiritual) of the entire community. Adjudication of cases, and rallying point of decision making in the community.
Elders	A group of elderly people (Male) responsible for advising and assisting the chief in decision making. Assist chief to execute mandate including receiving visitors and performing assigned roles for the chief on behalf of the community.
Assemblyman	42 year old male, elected representative of the community to the District Assembly. Acts as liaison between the District Assembly and the community. Mouthpiece of the community politically and articulates their developmental concerns at the Assembly. A teacher by profession, a farmer, and also responsible for the adjoining community who lost their Assemblyman.
Key informant. (*Note that two others were relied on as informants- Assemblyman and opinion leader)	A 23 year old young male senior secondary school leaver, born and bred in the community and knows his way around the community, knows almost everyone in the community.
Garri Processor	A young hardworking middle aged woman approximately about 40 years old, with 4 children, one married, one assisting her in her business and two others in primary school.
Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA)	She is the local midwife of the community with long standing experience, aged 60 or perhaps more, adopted into the mainstream health delivery system, trained and equipped to help reduce maternal and neonatal deaths aimed at meeting the MDG goal.
Food Vendor	Sells cooked rice, beans and porridge by the road side and the village square. This is patronised by community members very early in the morning before they depart for their daily activities. She has been in this business for the last ten years. She is 30 years old.
Charcoal Burner	A woman aged 56, who has been undertaking charcoal burning for the past twenty years, She claims she learnt it from her mother and has since been engaged in this business from which she takes care of the family.
Young Farmer	A young man aged 37 years old, very serious with his farming activities and is never around except early in the morning and late evenings. Does not see the importance of the community engagement project and hardly participates in student organised programmes.
Community Head teacher (male)	The head teacher of the village school, very unassuming, friendly, hardworking and open, Middle aged, about 43 years old. Very important personality in the community and

	doubles as secretary to the chief.
Youth Group	A group of young men who usually assemble under a shady tree to play a local game and discuss and argue among themselves about general issues. A mixture of young and middle aged men with ages ranging between 16 to 40 years.
School pupils	These are little boys and girls between the ages of 9 to 12, who come around to run errands and help student participants, they are in turn taught a lot of things. Very enthusiastic, supportive and quick to learn.
The Chief's Wife	She is the local queen mother, quite aged and rallies other women to undertake communal activities including flooring. She is estimated to be in her sixties.
Women Group (Florist)	These are a distinct group of women in the community who always mobilise and engage in communal activities such as flooring, harvesting, attending outdoorings and funerals. They are mobilised by a woman leader called " <i>Magajia</i> ".
Phone Charger	A young man aged 30, who although not directly resident in Community, his activities nevertheless impacts on the community because of the lack of electricity in the community.
Petty Trader	An agile woman petty trader who deals in assorted items required mostly by community members such as soap, matches, batteries, needles, thread sugar and ingredients such as pepper, spices, salt etc. She treks to other nearby community markets to sell. She is in her late thirties.
Opinion Leaders	This group comprised of the chief Imam, the local family headmen including the settler farmers and Nomadic cattle rearers.
Bicycle Mechanic	A young robust and exuberant man aged 27 and has been in the business of repairing bicycles ever since he was a boy. Inherited skills from his father. Very useful and sometimes assisted me with information and clues.
Two unemployed men,	One is very gentle and organised, always looking smart, although he does menial jobs to survive. The other quite ruffled and unkempt hangs around the market square and assists strangers, he has been to the south before and can speak a number of languages.

Source: Authors own construction.

Marshall and Rossman (1995, p, 2) have argued that good sampling decisions aid in “making logical arguments and presenting a rationale for decisions” (p.2). Hence, having been confronted with the task of studying the views of stakeholders in a phenomenon such as University community engagement from the perspective of the stakeholders, I looked at the general interactions between community members and students, interactions amongst students, their community report and their field notebooks with their consent and approval. Fetterman (1989, p.42) argues that it is important to “move from a few people to the generality focusing on specific portions of the population” under study especially with a sizeable population like that of the study community. Based on this therefore, the study selected and interacted with some identified members of the community and events based on the research questions which sought to explore participants’ descriptions and understandings of their involvement, benefits, participation and power relations in the process of engagement.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The study aimed at exploring stakeholder understandings, benefits, participation and power in a community programme by observing and interacting deeply with community based stakeholders, observing the behaviours and everyday lives of the residents to understand the perspectives of the community that fit in with the requirements to understand community perspectives in community participation projects throughout the time frame that I was in the community (Rao and Mansuri, 2004, Woods, (1994) in order to address the following research question:

1. How do the different stakeholder groups understand the aims and purposes of the Community Engagement Programme?
2. How do different stakeholder groups consider the benefit to themselves and the wider benefits of the Community Engagement Programme?
3. What patterns of influence and power underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme?

Data to address the above was collected from late-May through to August 2013. The fieldwork involved three phases of data collection involving the use of interactionist approaches (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

The First phase of the data collection was the participant observation for seven weeks which I purposively had with individual participants to be used as opportunity to interact and to collect data. This was in line with the requirement of ethnographic immersion where ethnographers are required to do a prolonged stay in a setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1986, 1990). The second phase involved staying back in the community for four more weeks when the students were gone to engage and interact solely with community members for their independent perspectives. The Third Phase which complements the ethnographic approach was mainly the conduct of in-depth semi structured interviews with a few strategic members of the District Assembly and University Management involved in the programme after the researcher had left the field. These were considered major stakeholders in the engagement process but who do not reside physically in the community. Their perceptions and views were considered critical to the engagement process and needed to be sought.

Below in the next page is a table of the kinds of data, where they were collected and how.

Table 3.3: Kinds of data, where and how they were collected and from whom

Types of Data	Activities	Where Data was Collected	Methods of Data Collection	From whom was data collected
<p>Observations. Participating with Self Analysis</p> <p>Critical incidents</p> <p>Stories</p> <p>Meetings</p> <p>Hang outs</p> <p>Durbars</p> <p>Casual conversations</p> <p>Hands on participation</p> <p>Informant /Respondent interviews</p>	<p>Researchers Field notes</p> <p>Formal visits</p> <p>Economic- Farmers, Garri processor, Charcoal burner, Petty trader, and Bicycle mechanic, Shea butter processing.</p> <p>Social-games, Community durbars, Communal flooring</p> <p>Educational activities- Visits to school, Interaction with school children, Adult literacy, outreach.</p> <p>Health- Traditional Birth Attendant, Knowledge transfers and exchange</p> <p>Cultural- Ceremonies- Naming ceremonies, Trip to riverside, Leisure games like Wali /Oware</p> <p>Environment/Agric- Charcoal burner, Visit to farms</p>	<p>In the Community at Various sites and suburbs</p> <p>At homes</p> <p>At the school, Market Square, Riverside</p> <p>Youth "Ghettoes"</p> <p>Trade centres</p>	<p>Field notes of Observations</p> <p>Audio Recordings of Informants and Respondents</p> <p>Conversations</p>	<p>A cross section of Community Members (see sample in page 53)</p> <p>11 Students</p>
<p>Semi Structured Interviews</p>	<p>Scheduling and Arranging Interviews</p>	<p>University and District Assembly (Post 11 Week Community Stay)</p>	<p>Audio Recordings</p> <p>Transcripts</p>	<p>University Leaders</p> <p>Community Coordinators</p> <p>District Assembly Staff</p>

Policy Documents	Seeking permission to Use Documents	University	Programme policy Documents University Statutes (with Approval to use)	University Leaders
Students Documents	Seeking permission to Use Documents	At the Community	Field note Books Community Reports (with Approval to use)	Eleven (11) Students

Source: Author's own construction.

Table 3.4: Breakdown of Ethnographic data

Activity/Interaction	Formal Visits	Forms of data
Economic activities	Farmers, Garri processor, Charcoal burner, Petty trader, and Bicycle mechanic, 6. Shea butter processing.	-Observations, Conversation, Fieldnotes -Observations, Conversations, Field notes -Observation, Conversation, Fieldnotes -Observations, Conversation, Fieldnotes -Observations, Conversation, Fieldnotes Observations, Conversation, critical incidents
Social activities	Football Games, Community durbars, Communal flooring Hung outs	-Observations -Observations, Fieldnotes, descriptive incidents -Observations, Fieldnotes , descriptive incidents -Observations, Conversations, Field notes
Educational activities	1.Visits to school, 2.Interaction with school children, 3. Adult literacy, outreach.	-Observation, student fieldnotes, -Fieldnotes, Student Field note books -Fieldnotes, Student Field note books,
Health activities	1.Traditional Birth Attendant	-Conversation, Fieldnotes
Cultural activities	Naming ceremony Funeral ceremony, Trip to riverside, Leisure games (Wali /Oware)	-Descriptive/critical incidents -Descriptive/critical incidents -Conversations, Descriptive/critical incidents -Observations, Descriptive/critical incidents
Environment/Agricultural activities	Charcoal burner, Visit to farms	-Observations, Conversations -Observations, fieldnotes

Source: Author's own construction

I was interested in the purposes and direction of the community engagement programme and what scope there is for different groups in the community to be involved and influence the state and direction of the community engagement programmes.

3.7.1 Phase One

In the first phase, I followed the eleven students in the community, closely observing and engaging them in informal conversations. The table below shows the data collection tools that were employed in addressing the research questions on the field;

Table 3.5 Research Questions and Methods of Data Collection

Research Questions	Methods of Data Collection
RQ1	Participant Observation/ Field notes -Informal conversations/in-depth qualitative interviews -Student field notebooks, Community Reports Semi structured Interviews -Documentary Analysis of University Policies
RQ2:	-Participant Observation/-Field notes -Informal conversations/ in-depth qualitative interviews -Student field notebooks & Community Reports - Semi structured Interviews -Documentary Analysis of University Policies
RQ3:	- Participant Observation/ field notes - Informal conversations/ in-depth qualitative interviews - Student field notebooks & Community reports - Semi structured Interviews Documentary Analysis of University Policies

Source: Authors own construction.

3.7.2 Fieldwork

Participant observation comprising interactions and informal conversations were employed in the field since in community ethnography the use of multi methods is required (Flick, 2006). These is addressed in the next segment;

3.7. 2.1 Participants Observation

The first of my data collection tools - participant observation is aligned with the interpretivist viewpoint (Punch, 2005). Although Bryman (2008) calls for a prolonged stay in the setting or community, for a small scale doctoral study that has a time frame of three years and requires travelling across two continents and has financial constraints, eleven weeks was thought to be adequate. O'Reilly (2005) notes that, although time is of the essence, periods such as the eleven (11) weeks in the case of this study, when well-structured and focused with a targeted and purposive sample can afford the participant observer an opportunity to make vital contributions to their study. He also argues that fieldwork should not be necessarily long, for example exceeding a year and more. As a researcher, I stayed, ate, laughed and accompanied students and community based participants to their farms thus entering their lives for a while, for the period of eleven (11) weeks that I stayed there to understand what they do from their perspective (Hammersley, 1998). McCall and Simmons (1969: 1) describe the variety of methods involved in the participant observer role. They maintain that:

....participant observation is not a single method but rather a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques – observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing and participation with self-analysis.

In the first few days I followed and observed students undertaking what Arathi et al. (2012) calls community scoping which entails the use of participatory approaches such as mapping to observe the surroundings and capture images mentally, including transect walks which entail walking casually through the nooks and crannies of the community for a researcher to familiarize themselves and to be seen by people. The students further undertook a wealth ranking

exercise to assess the economic status of the community and a census to map out the demographic profile of the community and undertook the pair wise ranking technique to prioritise the needs of the community. Students needed this data for their community profiles, but it gave me a clue about the patterns of participation, power and influence in the community. All these are Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approaches (See glossary of terminologies) and are often an integral part of ethnographic fieldwork and largely adopted by Whyte (1993) and Ball (2011) in their respective ethnographic studies. Although the community scoping by itself did not necessarily address my research questions and do not form part of my methodology and therefore tools of data collection, they nonetheless acted as a launch pad for my observation and helped me to get acquainted with the research community. Practically, this is an aspect of community entry where researchers, after negotiating entry, take a casual walk and survey the geographic landscape of the community to familiarize with the terrain.

After the initial scoping by students where I was a participant observer, I was guided by Spradley's (1980, p.78) framework of what kinds of things could be observed and recorded such as; the physical place or places, the people involved, a set of related acts people do, the physical things which are present, single actions that people do, a set of related activities that people carry out, the sequencing that takes place over time, things people are trying to accomplish, and the emotions felt and expressed" (p.78). My ethnographic techniques and data collection, especially participant observation, therefore proceeded along the lines of the above table to help the reader understand what was done and why.

The fact that ethnography differs from other methodologies because of the depth and intimacy of work made it imperative for me as researcher to get closer to research participants. I spent some time with them in their daily lives, talking to individuals, groups, and families in the community and interacting with them on broad issues of the study. Whilst in the community I employed some of Ball's (1981) styles of observation such as actively participating in the daily activities of the participants such as *garri* processing, charcoal burning, playing

games and walking to the riverside and other nearby communities with the key informant and students to buy provisions and charge their phones. Ball's role in the Comprehensive School research buttresses the fact that participant observation is very vital to the understanding of social phenomena and this helped me significantly. Participant observation as a data collection tool requires the focus of data collection to be a small sector of the world, in this case a single community like the study community (Bryman, 2008, Fetterman, 1993 & Basit, 2010). Data was collected through field notes and an audio recorder.

In terms of the physical environment and time, periods spent in both the community with students and without students at two different times of 7 and 4 weeks both constituted different worlds with different foci. In this study the initial process of immersion was not easy since I had to leave my family and travel to the community for the first time but, with time and a commitment to show respect, I came to be acquainted with life in the village, made friends with a cross section of individuals and groups, and steadily got along well. This was also experienced by Whyte (1993, p. 294) who, although stayed longer than I did, realized his aims by only staying physically in Connerville and gaining acceptance by the community. The critical issue here is the physical presence of the researcher for an extended period. In most African societies the experience of identifying community members and addressing them by their appropriate names and titles endears strangers to local people and can engender trust and make you a part of the community.

I therefore stayed in the community and employed my good interpersonal skills such as being affable, open and good communication skills such as attentiveness and clarity to enhance my data collection. Fetterman, (1989) suggests that the researcher should live in the community and synchronize his/her questions, queries and observations and go on to take a sharp focus on the daily patterns of events as they occur. Hence my stay in the community gave me an opportunity to interact with them on a daily basis and I eventually got to understand the daily routines of the various participants and groups in the community and this enabled me to rehearse and re-strategize in terms of the

queries and observations. I occasionally asked the gatekeeper together with my key informant and participants, to provide me with further explanations about issues as employed by Whyte (1993) and Ball (1981) in their respective studies. They initiated some reactions or actions that benefited me and enabled me to gain a fuller grasp of issues that I had difficulty in understanding. However, as a researcher, I was mindful of manipulations by gatekeepers such as the Assemblyperson who could use the request for access and the bid to establish rapport to seek to control and influence the research (Russell, 2005, O'Reilly, 2005).

Whilst in the field my gatekeeper sometimes raised issues about the engagement project for the sake of initiating a discussion and also for a proper understanding, for instance who controls the engagement, how do they see themselves in the scheme of things, what the engagement holds for them and what the impact of the engagement is. This afforded participants the chance to express their views on how they perceived the programme and also how it operates. It also generated discussions during our interactions and this helped me to understand their perspectives better. I had very cordial relations with other key informants independently of the gatekeeper so that the gatekeeper did not feel that his authority was being undermined. They also provided me with in-depth information about my research. These persons complemented the efforts of the gatekeeper and helped others understand what I was doing in the Community. O'Reilly, 2009, McKenna et al, (2011) argue that they also serve as alternatives to the gatekeeper and provides a conduit for very vital information about the study as Siegel (2002) puts it, key informants know the "inside scoop" and can assist researchers identify "participants who have valuable information" (p.10).

I undertook a perceptive and keen observation of events that went on in the community, joining and participating in some community activities. One of such events of the men playing a popular Ghanaian local game called "*Wali*" or "*Oware*" as seen in a critical incident in chapter 4. These instances were therefore of utmost importance for interaction and rapport building during the research. I therefore took advantage of this game and went there frequently

with one or two students who also participated. There, a lot of gossip and idle talk went on and I got to learn a lot about what they thought about the programme, their attitudes towards the students and eventually become free and close with some of the community members who frequented the spot.

A number of women were also engaged in petty trading and other income generation activities such as Shea butter extraction and par boiling of rice, garri processing and charcoal burning for consumption and sale (See Table 3.2). I occasionally visited these women either alone or with student participants and in all these instances we engaged them in conversations. The experiences of these women therefore as they relate to the engagement process were explored by interacting closely with them via the students and on my own. Other social activities such as festivals, (drumming and dancing) naming/outdooring, initiation ceremonies and funerals, that occasionally took place was used as informal opportunities and natural focus groups and interact with the community members with a view to gaining deeper insights into the sociocultural issues. I therefore looked for relationships, linkages and functions in the daily affairs and interaction of community members in order to understand why they participated, their perspectives on the programme and how they appreciated the engagement through my dialogues with them. For me to get credible data, as feasible, I asked about issues related to my research questions whilst at the same time allowed community members themselves to say or suggest what is important by their words and actions. In this way findings “can be richer and deeper than those produced by traditional research methods” (Zemliansky, 2008, p.1).

As an integral part of the observation, I occasionally made notes with the consent of participants after I had read out the contents of the consent form to them and they agreed to participate. But in order not to disrupt the flow of whatever interaction and contaminate the “richness of a setting” this was done with care. It is sometimes quite daunting and looks unusual and distractive to be seen writing (Fox, 1996). This also prevented a situation where participants were made uneasy so I sometimes declined to take field notes on the spot and rather recorded what I saw and heard when I was alone in my room or was with

the key informant. I kept a field note book and occasionally made entries to reflect on experiences that I came across during each outing or hang out (Li (2008, p.104). I subsequently learnt to “jot at inconspicuous moments” such as intermittently taking permission to visit the gents which Gibbs, (2012) calls the “*weak bladder technique*”. I was also informed by Whyte (1993, p. 334) and sometimes “managed to make a few trips to the men’s room” and did most of the mapping from my memory after I had gone home and later returned to my lodging. My own position therefore was to adopt all these techniques on the field depending on the practicalities and realities that I encountered on the field, I always took permission from participants before writing or noting down anything to show respect but felt that these notes were important because human memory is not perfect. In the ensuing segment I present how I conducted my post fieldwork semi structured interviews.

3.7.2.2 Semi Structured Interviews with University Leaders and District Assembly Staff

Aside from observations, interviewing is one of the most critical tools and data gathering techniques for ethnographers (Kvale, 2007). The interviews were part of the ethnographic study but could not take an ethnographic approach for pragmatic reasons and were located in the University and District Assembly outside the community. My approach to interviewing was to adopt an in-depth semi structured informal technique (Silverman, 2010, Flick, 2006). Schensul et al. (1999) have asserted that semi structured interviews constitute the “most challenging and, at the same time the most innovative and exciting form of ethnographic interviews...” The interviews were meant to get the perspectives of stakeholders who do not reside in the community i.e. the University management and staff who are directly related to the engagement process and the District Assembly staff and to also throw light on issues observed in the community in terms of the processes, aims, benefit/ impacts participation and levels, and spaces of power created by the engagement process (Gaventa, 2006) and how “all these relate ultimately to the larger questions asked by the study (Schensul et al. 1999, Mason, 2002). In interviewing University leaders, I purposively selected members of the University management who made decisions about the programme and were responsible for implementing them

i.e. Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Director of the programme. I also selected some coordinators (lecturers involved in running the engagement agenda).

One on one in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted after my eleven week stay in the community with staff of the University and District Assembly where I explored issues of aims and benefits, power, influence and participation in relation to the programme. Each interview lasted for about one hour to one hour thirty minutes. In all nine interviews were held with University and the District Assembly staff. (Please find Interview schedules/guides as Appendix 5). Two weeks after I had left the field/community and rested enough, I began to schedule appointments within respondents whose perspectives I thought were critical and crucial to the understanding of the engagement process within the University and the District Assembly. Here to, in line with the sampling requirements of my study, purposive sampling was employed to choose respondents across the stakeholder groups. According to Schensul et al. (1999) “although representation is not the purpose of in-depth exploratory interviews, when selecting key informants, ethnographers should take into consideration any major factors such as ethnicity, class, or age that might have significant bearing on the perspective of the respondent”, hence I took care to select respondents whose perspectives of the engagement programme had what they call “breadth of perspective”. I therefore sent out letters to the following respondents in the University whom I regarded as vital to my study:

1. Vice- Chancellor
2. Pro-Vice Chancellor
3. Director of Community Engagement Programme
4. A Coordinator (liaison between students/community and the university)
5. Five (5) other Coordinators of the programme

For the District Assembly I sent out letters to the following officers but could only interview the DCD. The DCE had travelled outside the country:

1. District Chief Executive
2. District Coordination Director (DCD)

These were all followed up with phone calls to get clearance and approvals and to agree on appointments. After weeks of negotiations through phone calls and face to face meetings dates were proposed and agreed on. I then began the interviews in mid-August, 2013. At each interview, after formally making a full disclosure of the aims and purposes of my research and assuring each respondent of confidentiality, anonymity, alerting them of their rights including the right to withdraw from the interview at any point in time. I gave them a consent form to read and sign if they agreed to give their informed consent freely. Although I had initially secured ethical approval from the University through the Registrar, this was to ensure that I rekindled my purposes for the study in order to refresh their memories because they were very busy people and also to ensure I still had their informed consent to collect data. They all read through and signed the forms for me (See as Appendix 3 for sample consent form). I then went ahead with the interviews. Each interview last for a minimum of 25 minutes and a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. I made sure I created rapport and put all interviewees at ease because it has been argued that the integrity of the researcher and how he relates with respondents is critical in ensuring the credibility of the information and the trustworthiness of ethical decisions made in the inquiry (Kvale, 2007).

The interviews with university leaders all went on well in their individual offices without any problems except for the Director of the Community Engagement Programme, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor who I got after countless and fruitless visits to their offices. They all agreed to be recorded and be quoted and to be used in my thesis and any future publications. As the interviews progressed from one respondent to another more issues were raised and in subsequent conversations these were followed up in order to generate new information. So before I finally got to the Vice-Chancellor- the Chief Executive Officer (Administration and Finance), I had a lot more to discuss with him. Walford (2011, p.1) has stated the inherent difficulties and problems in researching the powerful because they are those who wield much power to “initiate and sustain change within the educational systems”. Walford (2011) further adds that it is sometimes difficult to research or interview powerful people and that they have the propensity to derail research timelines especially

if it has to do with policy, ideological and religious issues. These were therefore anticipated and I braced myself to endure any difficulties that may arise by scheduling the appointments early enough as soon as I got to Ghana to begin the fieldwork in May 2013. I had an audio recorder with me and always sought permission from my participants before the interview begun. I included the request for permission to record and to use the contents for my thesis in the consent form which respondents read and signed. After the interview I re-played parts of it to the respondents to reassure them of what I had captured on the tape.

In creating and spreading the questions in the interview schedule and protocol, care was taken to explore the main domains in the study, i.e. the aims, processes, benefits/ impact, patterns of participation and power and other related factors that may emerge. In these kinds of conversations which measures the emotions felt and expressed, I was mindful of asking sensitive questions which have been known to have affected some ethnographic studies (Whyte, 1993). Participants have been known to withhold information and in some cases have been angered by or frowned at the questioner. My decisions in this instance were informed by Whyte, (1993) who cautions researchers to be circumspect in the kinds of questions they ask. As a researcher from a similar culture I was careful of the sort of questions asked and sometimes excused the participants when I thought the question I was about to ask might look offensive and choose my words carefully. Issues such as the logic behind denying strangers direct access to the river an example of such and was handled with circumspection. The next piece of data is documentary evidence which I discuss in the ensuing segment.

3.7.2.3 *Documentary Evidence*

It is worth pointing out that observational data from the researcher's field notes alone would not necessarily comprise just what data was collected in the process of observation but may include data such as documents like community reports where students identify community priorities and make proposals about how to solve them, and field notebooks of students that I made copies with their kind permission (Fox, 1998, p.13). The students' field notebooks were used

(with their explicit approval by signing consent forms) to help triangulate or corroborate what data might emanate from my observation and participation in the daily lives of the students in their interaction with their colleagues and the community members. I was therefore aware that the field note books in which students jotted down their daily routines whilst in the field for the entire seven (7) weeks could constitute a very credible source of data for my research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994, p. 248). Macdonald & Tipton (1993, cited in Helm, 2000, p.1) have argued that documentary evidence in social research “provides a record of the social world”... because they are socially produced” and reflects society at the time of publication and therefore appropriate source of data in research. These include public records produced independently, privately or by the state, reports, papers and other documentations such as the student reports and field note books I found valuable (Macdonald & Tipton, Ibid). Once I was examining perspectives and exploring a phenomenon, daily records of the students and their final report on the programme was quite significant as a source of data. It supported my observations because I could not be with all the students at the same time almost everywhere and so the field note books for instance filled the gap for me. Excerpts of these were used to support my analysis as done by Pollard and Filer (1999) in the “Social World of a Pupil Career”.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Although it is argued by Cohen et al, (2011) that ethnographies do not normally have the external checks and balances like other designs, they nonetheless demonstrate some forms of validity and reliability. To ensure quality and rigour which embodies validity and reliability and therefore trustworthiness, the entire aims of my research were explained to participants to win their trust. I was frank about my research intentions because there was a danger that some participants might see “our relationship as based on academic necessity rather than personal affinity” (Macleod, 1996). Since I have a positive duty as an observer and interviewer to be open to participants about what I observed, reported and might publish. I assured all participants that they will be shown the contents of the final report for them to validate and endorse as a true reflection of what transpired during the observation and interviews, to allow them see

whether my accounts resonate with theirs (Hargreaves, 1973. p.199). Basit (2010) however cautions against informant validation because of the obvious risk of losing very credible data despite guarantees of anonymity. Basit's position, notwithstanding, the findings of the study were reviewed and improved with participant's comments. The interview venue, mood of respondents and the nature of interactions were all carefully considered to ensure that no participant felt coerced, bribed or manipulated to take part in the study (ESRC, 2005, p.7, Bryman, 2008, pp.118-30).

In the process of the entire research from data collection to analysis, I employed and applied a number of strategies meant to enhance trustworthiness in the research. These were keeping all my raw data, such as rough field notes, recordings, road maps, student field note books, community reports and schedules, ensuring they remained intact (Gulati et al, 2011). I also kept a diary of my personal reflections on my role, including how I managed impressions that participants had about me in the field. I also spent a substantial period of eleven weeks in the field (Krefting, 1991). During the analysis I, as much as possible provided detailed methodological and contextual procedures that guided the analysis of my data. Additionally, I employed direct and verbatim quotes to support my findings in the analysis (Creswell, 1998). Multiple methods including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques and audio recordings of informal conversations were employed in the field (Creswell, 1998). Finally the techniques of code-recode were scrupulously adhered to and I revisited data occasionally and recursively during analysis phase to ensure that all concerns had been addressed and captured (Krefting, 1991).

3.9 ETHICAL CHALLENGES

Mindful of the fact that there is growing literature to the effect that many research endeavours may have negative outcomes for respondents and for communities (Benatar, 2001), I went into the field fully aware that I may encounter some challenges. This became more compelling in the case of a study that is premised on the need for a prolonged contact with the community. Cervone (2007) argues that in approaches like ethnography "relationship with the people being studied presents major ethical issues" (p.3). Therefore

responding to ethical challenges which sometimes are complex, difficult to negotiate and need adjustment accordingly, was very crucial to the study. As far as possible, ethical decisions and issues were considered and explored in the design of the research. Before proceeding with the research, it was necessary to obtain full ethical clearance and this involved carefully outlining every stage of the research project and detailing how ethical considerations would be negotiated and addressed. Informed by Burgess (1989, p. 8) I appreciated that ethical dilemmas cannot be solved but must be acknowledged and hold the position that “ethical adequacy is fundamental to questions of validity and reflexivity” and therefore trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012, Lincoln, 2009, Ginsberg, 2009). Therefore, before the beginning of the study I applied to the University of Leicester Research Ethical Committees and secured ethical approval. I also gained clearance from the University whose community engagement programme I was exploring. Both processes were quite similar and expected me to address similar issues of ethics. Therefore I operated within the confines of the two frameworks and these legitimized my study in the eyes of the participants.

On the issue of informed consent, I abided by the University of Leicester ethical framework for research which is aligned with guidance from the Economic and Social Research Council Research Ethics Framework (ESRC-REF) the United Kingdom data protection act (1998), and BERA ethical guidelines (2011) by ensuring that I got the informed consent of all participants before proceeding to engage them. I made participants aware that they had the right to agree or disagree to participate on the basis of information that I provided to them in the consent form (Bryan, 2010). In the community I read out the consent forms to the few literates and translated for the illiterates and asked them to sign or use a thumb print. I also notified them that they had the right to withdraw or refuse to interact with me at any time if they so wished. For the over 1700 community participants in this study, in addition to gaining individual consent, additional collective consent was sought at some level through the chief of the community. For the University leaders and District Assembly staff, the University of Leicester consent form was given to them to read and sign. This document set out the rights or prerogatives of participants and also requested their permission

to record interviews and to use quotes from the interview in future publications that may emerge from the thesis.

Participants were also informed they would be invited to look through, and approve the initial and final draft of the thesis. In the case of student participants in the community, I requested for ethical approval from the University in Ghana, then from their Coordinator, in addition to the students themselves to make copies and use their community reports and field note books. In African societies the chief is the embodiment of the soul of the community, custodian of all there is in the community and holds everything in trust for the unborn, the living and the dead (Ngugi wa' Thiongo, 1992). By securing the chief's blessing, it was therefore assumed that I had the express and collective consent of the people. However, before dealing with any individual his or her consent was also sought because individuals have their own have rights and preferences which I respected. In a few cases finger prints of community members were taken. A section of the community such as women, children and the disabled, in our part of the world are sometimes marginalized. In this study I made sure they were respected and included (O'Reilly, 2010, Lareau and Shultz, 1996, Fetterman, 1989).

In terms of confidentiality, I ensured that for both students and community members, any information regarding them was kept confidential and their dignity maintained. I made sure an open and friendly environment was created to ensure that participants felt safe enough to openly give their responses and be protected. However, relating well with the students presented me with a dilemma. Students saw me as a senior member and referred to me as "Sir" just because their supervisor addressed me as his colleague. They were therefore apprehensive that some of the thoughts they had shared with me about the running of the programme and the deplorable conditions in the community would be leaked to management and the consequences could be dire. For example student revealed how discriminatory postings to communities where done. I had to act responsibly with discretion and a feeling of utmost sensitivity to these unequal power relations between the students and I in order to win their trust so they could feel confident in sharing valuable information with me.

Whilst in the field, students were briefed about my research with assurances of confidentiality. I verbally explained to them about the purpose of the study and reassured them that their responses would only be used for the purposes of the research and would not be used in any way in connection with their academic assessment. Throughout the study, I constantly assured and reassured students of my initial pledge to protect them and ensure confidentiality and this therefore put them at ease.

On the issue of anonymity, I ensured that the identity of the participants, name of institution and community researched has not been displayed and also participants' rights have been protected and their identity not made known to anyone. I maintained utmost privacy, names and places were fictionalized and coded when it becomes necessary, I labeled data and kept field notes and recording safely hidden to ensure that the security of the data collected was guaranteed and the University and other stakeholders would not be privy to the content of all that I had gathered (Beyond, 1988). In the process of data collection, I requested for permission in respect of the use of a camera and audio recorder that I carried with me when it became necessary to capture relevant data, like photographs, of my interactions and some scenes. In the analyses of my data I have endeavoured to be impartial by anonymizing respondents and engaging in a data driven analysis and above all I valued the privacy of participants by not altering and disclosing data that could cause irreversible damage to participants (Creswell, 2010).

In addition to issues of ethics other challenges also played out. A dilemma that I had to deal with was how close and helpful I was supposed to be to the students and community members and sometimes in terms of request for assistance, especially related to the first aid supplies that I carried to the community. Occasionally I had to give students in particular some assistance when they were in need or when they had completely run out of provisions. As part of the "reciprocal relationship between researchers and participants" (Patrick, 2012, p.2) I felt obliged to assist participants and this informed my occasional assistance. However this inevitably presented a dilemma as to whether it was appropriate to give such assistance and gifts, especially given

the fact that this was a research rather than a friendship as exchanges of gifts might suggest (Patrick, Ibid). This might be viewed as unethical but, due to my sustained and frequent contacts with the participants, which had developed into a more lasting relationship I felt obliged to them. I next discuss how I analysed my data in the ensuing segment.

3.10 METHODOLOGY OF DATA ANALYSIS

This study relied on thematic analysis, in which key themes were identified based on repetition and forcefulness after painstakingly reading through the data and doing an open coding after repeated analyses of the field notes and transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Owen, 1994, Joffe and Yardley 2004). Dempsey, (2010), Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that regardless of one's "theoretical perspective, all forms of qualitative analysis seems to be based on three procedures, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. My data analysis was therefore informed largely by Miles and Huberman (1994) where a three pronged approach influenced the analysis. I also drew on other qualitative researchers such as Creswell (2007) who suggested a linear but iterative approach to analysis, Dey (1993) who also suggests a spiral and iterative analysis. In addition, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) argue that since ethnographic studies produce three basic types of data comprising information about what participant said, what they did, and documentary evidence in the form of student field note books and community reports, the process of reducing this data and arranging these data into concise and meaningful information constituted my analysis (Wolcott, 1988, Goetz & LeCompte, 1978). I cover next how I reduced my data.

3.10.1 Data Reduction

Whilst in the field, I delayed coding until the middle of the observation period because I thought I would be denying myself new ideas if went ahead to code early and permanently. I could have lost "valuable alternatives and sometimes explanations of an action, event or the phenomena" as a result (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999, p. 97). Miles and Huberman, (1984) however advocate that coding should be done as early as possible, and so I adopted a middle way, by writing out short memos of my observations as a prelude to the open coding

whilst on the field. Therefore, I began the analysis as I went along, and the analysis informed where I went in the community regarding the data collection and what I observed. Below is how the major forms of data collected were reduced during and after the field.

3.10.1.1 Fieldnotes (Participant Observations)

The first practical steps in my data reduction were the reduction of field notes into short memos since this ethnographic study produced so much data. The sheer volume of data produced posed some challenges in the organization of my data. I had a dossier of field notes, pictures, field recordings, student field notebooks, student community report/ profile, and the qualitative interviews which I conducted post fieldwork. The process of coding the field notes therefore started with short memos of field notes which acted as data preparation and reduction that, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) assists in arriving at the classifications and ultimately the themes. Glaser cited in Miles and Huberman (1994, p.72) argue that memos are largely “conceptual and that apart from just putting out the data, they as well tie different pieces of the data into recognizable clusters”. I therefore, at the beginning of the analysis process, organized the field notes into short memos out of which pre-set domains emanated from my conceptual framework and research questions were applied to seek out themes. The memos, some analytic, were summaries of interactions with individuals or groups of persons, events, activities, encounters, scenarios and scenes from which I generated my themes. These were considered as “critical aspects of effectively analyzing qualitative data ... and can help immensely in writing results (Impact, 2013). Below is an example of a memo from an informal conversation with a community participant that enabled me to elaborate on concepts, and themes that I initially identified.

Researcher: How do you see your interaction with the students?

Garri Processor good, Yes I do interact with them when they come around, and sometimes when I meet them anywhere in the community, some of them come to me to learn how to make Garri, but because I am busy all the time looking for what I would use to feed my family and

pay my children's school fees I hardly have enough time to talk converse with them].

Memo: The Garri seller's answer suggest a cordial relationship with students, she mentions ***instances of her interaction and involvement*** with the student participants. She hints on the ***learning and sharing of knowledge*** and also subtly hints of ***poverty and issues of livelihood*** that seem to ***constrain or limit her participation*** and suggest the ***contribution of mothers to childcare*** in rural communities. [Bold Italics refer to themes emerging in memos].

These memos together with the interview transcripts and documents such as student field note books, community report and policy documents were key methods contributing to the ethnography and basically provided the basis of my analysis that ended up in the summarized findings.

3.10.1.2 Coding of Semi Structured Interviews

The next set of data to be coded after the field notes was the semi structured interviews that I conducted with the University leaders. After I had completed transcribing them, I generated over one hundred pages. I played and replayed the tapes, read through, corrected and edited all the transcripts. I practically began reducing and labelling the data in the transcripts and mapping it back to my research questions (See Appendix 2a+2b).

3.10.2 Data Display

According to Miles and Huberman (1984), data display is the next key drift of the analysis activity involving classifying and pulling together information that allows conclusion drawing and action. Therefore after I had finished with the analysis of my post fieldwork qualitative interviews with University and District Assembly staff, which I transcribed verbatim, a process of open coding was done in relation to issues emerging from the data. The initial domains for identifying the themes were informed by my research questions that sought to address various understandings of the aims and purposes, benefits and the patterns of participation and power relations in the programme whilst at the same time driven by my data. Therefore taking each question I proceeded to break it down in measurably bits such as found in the Initial domains column.

Table 3.6: Measurable Issues in addressing Research Questions

Question	Domains/Categories
1. How do the different stakeholder groups understand the aims and purposes of the Community Engagement Programme?	Aim and Purposes: Student Aims & Purposes Community Aims and Purposes Uni. Aims & Purposes District Assembly Aims & Purposes
2. How do different stakeholder groups consider the benefit to themselves and the wider benefits of the Community Engagement Programme?	Benefits Benefits for Students Benefits for Community Benefits for Uni. Benefits for District Assembly Benefits for Wider Nation
3. What patterns of influence and power underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme?	Influence Participation and Power: Participation Involvement Consultation Decision Making

Table adapted from Taylor & Renner (2003).

3.10.2.1 Display of Interview data (See Appendix 2a & b)

In searching for themes from the interview data, I drew and used a table comprising respondents in the rows and themes in the column. Taking each respondent, I read through the transcripts and picked out the issues raised in the transcript and put them in the themes column. Other issues that did not have any affiliation to the original domain were categorized as new or emerging theme. At the beginning of the coding, I read line by line, picking out issues pertinent to answering my research questions. I started to look for and identify constructs that mapped to my initial domains or themes and also sometimes induced themes from the text itself (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). According to Foss and Waters (2003, p. 2) the “specificity and concreteness of the research question tells you what you are looking for as you progress your research questions suggest what pieces need to be coded and what to leave by the way side for another question” (Ibid). I looked for labels and general indicators in the data during this stage that assisted me to account for any claim or conclusions from the data that I intend to make. I took into consideration

Foss and Water's admonition that "researchers should code with some amount of open mindedness by asking questions such as do the data really say this? Can I explain this to any other person outside the study to make sense to him/her" (p.2). They add that when we do analysis we co-create and construct with data and not a discovery of a narrative.

3.10.2. 2 Stage One of Thematic Coding

In the first stage of the thematic coding of Interview Data (See Appendix 2a), I used the colours below to represent the issues in the process of the open coding:

Table 3.7 Colour guide and domains for thematic coding

<i>COLOUR</i>	<i>DOMAINS</i>
Pink	Aims and purposes
Blue	Benefits
Green	Participation/ Involvement in Decision Making

Source: Author's own Construction

Themes appearing in individual interview text were itemised in a table below and thereafter "classified and reclassified on the basis of an active search for confirming and disconfirming evidence in the interviews", and interrogating data by comparing it with claims from literature iteratively (Kvale, 2007, p.3). Throughout the analysis I ensured that I related to the interview data back and forth iteratively and tried to understand participants from their perspective. This approach was adopted by Hargreaves in a study in 1994 where he interviewed 40 teachers (cited in Kvale, 2007).

3.10.2.3 Stage Two of Thematic Coding

In the second stage of the thematic coding of interview data I next rearranged and grouped the data according to appropriate parts of the thematic framework or domains to which they related and reformed the table based on key subject areas or themes with entries for the various respondents. This stage also set out to develop themes from the interview data and memos of field notes by organising and listing all codes of similar labels or closely related labels and classifying them together and again relabeling them with either a word or a

phrase that had a close bearing to my research questions (Foss & Waters, 2003, Bryman, 2008, Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each domain was kept separately in a file and a comprehensive examination carried out on them to ensure that every single category had a relationship with the domain I had set. Having been satisfied that this was achieved, I went ahead to collapse those that had some similarities and those that I estimated to be significantly related to my labels or research question ensuring that the original classification was adhered to.

The key to qualitative data analysis is that the process is inductive and iterative so this study I engaged with the analysis and then turned to the literature review and returned to the analysis and then back to the literature review. Arguably one can never come to research without constructs, as researchers we all bring our identity that is shaped by many experiences that consciously and subconsciously shape our understanding, and responses to events and theory. Therefore the literature that addressed my research questions was painstakingly explored and this gave me a starting point to begin to analyze my data. The codes that fell within the initial domains and other emerging issues were then categorized and used to do further coding to further step up the analysis. Direct quotes from semi structured interviews and from the informal ethnographic conversations held in the field were used in the analysis and discussion of the findings in order to draw conclusions and verify findings in the next empirical chapter.

3.10.3 Drawing Conclusions and Verifying

This was the third phase of my analysis process. Here I presented the key findings from the perspectives of stakeholders and proceeded to, interpret and discuss them alongside in the light of my conceptual framework, literature and some related theories and previous studies. Because of the nature of my design I analysed, interpreted and discussed data as I presented the findings. I drew conclusions considering the patterns and, possible linkages and tried to verify and reflect in conclusions. I also affirmed or disagreed with some issues, thereby ensuring the trustworthiness of the data and more significantly to ensure that the study can be replicated given the same setting, context and

methods. At this stage the process was interactive and iterative necessitating movements to the interview transcripts, reflections on field notes back and forth like a spiral (Miles and Huberman, 2004, Lofland and Lofland, 1995, Dey, 1993, Chamaz, 2002).

3.11 MY ROLE, IDENTITY AND REFLEXIVITY

My status as a cultural insider because I come from the same geographical area and can understand and speak the languages spoken in the community was clearly articulated in addition to addressing the ethical issues and negotiating access. (Mercer, 2007, Costley, 2010, Shah, 2004). In this ethnographic study my role and identity changed as the observation progressed. The initial distance and uneasiness that characterized my initial days because I was yet to get familiar with the participants eventually gave way to openness and camaraderie. Informed by Whyte's (1993) transition in the "Street Corner Society" my understanding of the social relations of the community developed and was enhanced as the fieldwork progressed and this helped me greatly in my study and had an effect on the credibility of data.

Informed by Russell (2005) who calls for different ethnographers to adopt diverse positions and roles within the field depending upon their research aims, focus, their personal experiences and dispositions, I stayed in the community in a different role for four more weeks taking a completely new identity. Since community members for the entire seven week identified me with the student participants, it was important I rebranded and came back with a different identity. Since my first research question sought to measure participants' understanding of the aims and purposes of the engagement programme, with the second looking at the benefits of the programme this amounted to some appraisal of the study. Staying back for four more weeks allowed me to gain a clearer picture of the processes taking place within the community and the independent views of community members without any hindrance (Lacey, 1970, p.35). Based on the fact that I shared a similar culture and shared understanding with those of the community members and spoke their language, it placed me in a position to respect their sensitivities in respect of boundaries, limits and privacy.

The failure to appreciate how you are perceived and identified by participants may inhibit, distort or cloud your perception of events (O'Reilly, 2010). Therefore, I encouraged participants to be relaxed and feel free to talk to and deal with me by being open to them about the study. Whilst in the field, I was accommodated closer to the students because, within the first seven weeks, my focus was on the students in particular and their interaction with the community in general. I carried some food items and beverages to the field and also occasionally bought and ate food that was available for sale in the community. I also ate any food when invited or provided as is the norm in local communities in northern Ghana where the people are hospitable and treat strangers and visitors with care and respect. I was however mindful of the failure to reciprocate kind gestures which could estrange participants from the researcher, but weighed this carefully since acts of assistance could be a double edged sword (Mercer, 2007). I did carry some basic first aid both for the students and myself and other community members to enhance rapport. Since the community had no health facility this was a good and harmless gesture without any strings attached. It was of considerable assistance to the community in terms of first aiding. The requirements of the university of Leicester ethical framework were fully complied with and were very applicable to the Ghanaian context. It fit well with what I sought to achieve. It did not present any difficulties basically because of the shared understanding and culture that I had with the community especially my mastery over the spoken languages of the community.

3.12 ISSUES OF POWER

As a senior member of the University coming into the community with students around, there was bound to be issues of power relationships in the process of my fieldwork. Ball (1993, p.12) affirms that this “status could breed resistance” because it implies “an upward social trajectory that” the community members do not have access to”. On my first day I was dropped by a colleague with a saloon car so I essentially had to manage the perception of power about me. Therefore managing power implications was quite crucial. Having been perceived as a “big man”, I had to approach them with respect, modesty and simplicity. I dressed modestly and did not look condescending; I treated all participants as

equals and colleagues. I accompanied my gatekeeper to his farm just to erase the initial impression they might have formed about me. Although the beginning of my immersion, like most ethnographic researchers was a bit lukewarm, this eventually gave way to one of confidence and respect (Macleod, 1996), I become acquainted with students and community based participants and related well with them. Consequently my interactions in their social activities increased and I become closer with a number of them.

Another challenge was my stature as a researcher and at the same time senior university staff which put me in a fix sometimes. I tried as much as possible to manage the tensions between “power and disadvantage” (Lecompte, 2002, p. 289) where the students regarded me as a senior member and referred to me as “Sir”. This dilemma was solved by being more accessible to everyone of them, opening up and stepping up my interactions. I introduced myself to them, and asked them to just address me as “Mr. Iddrisu” and not the “Sir” they had begun referring to me. I also took time to explain and make them understand that I was there in my capacity as a student researcher but not the “big man from the University administration” that they come to know me because their coordinator and other staff who came to supervise and assess the students related with me as a colleague. Further intimacy with the students was pursued by discussing with them the aims and objectives of the research and a full disclosure of what the research was to be used for. This helped in putting both the students and community based participants at ease to interact more with me and they felt free and voluntarily shared information and therefore this helped to bring out credible data. I also created a congenial atmosphere for them to interact with me. To make sure I heard their stories and other hidden voices of the marginalized (Dower, 2005) and therefore get credible data, I took time to build on the rapport created by the students with the community. My experiences align with Dickinson-Smith et al. (2007) and McLain and Madrigal (2009) who have argued that self-disclosures enhance bonding, give credibility to research, increase the level of trust and understanding and create an enabling environment that eventually open doors to getting information.

Discussing how the data will be used, participants were told emphatically that the research was going to be used for my doctoral thesis and also possibly to feed into a strategy for community improvement, and for the programme improvement. In ethnography, data is a social construct of the research process, (Ball, 1993) therefore, I placed a high premium on the ethnographic techniques such as creating rapport, engaging in informal conversations, probing and recording of events as they occur. As a result of issues of power, I tried to study the community unaffected by my presence as possible (Whyte, 1993) by not meddling in the personal and internal affairs of the community. Throughout the period of the fieldwork, I was aware of my own bias and prejudice as both an insider and a young northerner yearning for rapid socio economic transformation of the north. I therefore kept an open mind and ensured that this did not influence the collection and interpretation of data. Nonetheless, since the researcher is part of the process, whilst attempting to stay out, one is inextricably linked (Mehra, 2002) I also tried not to influence participants monetarily or otherwise and did not accept any leadership positions within the community. Nevertheless I remained friendly and courteous throughout the ethnographic fieldwork.

3.13 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter discussed my methodology, dealing with issues such as my philosophical underpinnings, my techniques, population, samples and sampling techniques, trustworthiness of study, a step by step enunciation of how data was analyzed largely influenced by the frame work of Miles and Huberman (2004) and finally ethical issues and power relations arising out of the study. The next chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the first research question, mapping the understanding of participants across the seven week community stay and beyond.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN FINDINGS
(1) STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE AIMS AND PURPOSES
OF THE COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter and the two that follow present the findings of this ethnographic study of university students in Northern Ghana engaging with a community. Thus this chapter is a presentation of the data collected through participant observation and informal conversations with stakeholders both in and outside of the community, interviews, student community reports and their individual field notebook entries, and university policy documents to which I was granted access. The findings have primarily been informed by the voices and perspectives of the participants, as gleaned during the eleven-week observation and in post fieldwork semi structured interviews. Of the eleven weeks, seven were spent following the students and four weeks were spent with the villagers who took part in the engagement.

The data collected in the study were subjected to a thematic analysis, as described in the methodology chapter. The findings pertaining to each of these themes are described in this chapter. The first section addresses the university's written policy on community engagement and the perspectives of university leaders about the objectives of the programme. The second section maps the understandings and shifts in students attitudes over the seven weeks whilst the third section reveals community and district Assembly participants understandings of the programme.

4.1 THE POLICY AS TEXT (UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY)

In addressing the first research question, which concerns the aims and purposes of the community engagement programme, it is important to begin by examining the basis of the university's policy on community engagement as text and thus as discourse (Ball, 2008). The university policy on the programme is shown below in document 4.1.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES
<p>The proposed General objectives of the integration concept of the field practical programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Helping to develop favorable attitudes towards working in rural and deprived communities.▪ Exposing students practically to the nature of development problems of the Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Brong Ahafo Regions in particular and the nation as a whole▪ Providing useful services to Ghanaian rural communities through the exchange of knowledge and its application to address the felt needs and aspirations of these communities.▪ Generating data for further research into problem solving development issues and other purposes.

Document 4.1: Policy Text: Policy/General objectives of the engagement programme, 2013

This policy lists the following as an objective of the programme: “Fostering favorable attitudes in students towards working in deprived communities by exposing both students and lecturers practically, to the nexus of development problems of deprived communities in Ghana and particularly in Northern Ghana” (University Policy, 2013, p.1). The programme also aims to promote multiculturalism to develop favourable attitudes among the students in order to erase misconceptions about some parts of the country for the sake of ultimately promoting active and constructive interaction between students and staff of the university and local communities. Such interaction should facilitate socio-economic transformation during the programme through building networks and initiatives to eliminate poverty (University Policy, 2013). The community engagement further aims at “tackling disadvantage and promoting sustainable development” (CUPP, 2013, p.1) in collaboration with communities in its catchment area for the purposes of improving the socio economic status of the local people.

This policy document informed the tasks listed in the field guide which students were expected to perform in the community, and therefore the field guide agrees with the policy as a text document.

It is helpful to articulate the objectives encompassed in the policy objective above as a reference point for the discussions on the stakeholders' understandings of the aims and purposes of the engagement. In the ensuing section, I discuss the perspectives of university leaders with respect to policy as text and policy as discourse as it plays out in the community. These findings were derived from the semi-structured interviews that I held with the university leaders after I left the community.

4.2 UNIVERSITY LEADERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE CEP

All seven university leaders who participated in the study affirmed what was laid out in the policy as text as the aims and purposes of the engagement. Since the university has a template (document 4.1) that lists the aims and objectives and, therefore, the purposes of the engagement, semi structured interviews with university leaders revealed that working and adapting to rural life is a critical objective in relation to the aims and purposes of the programme. Quotes from the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Programme Director, Community Coordinator and the three Field Coordinators, who comprise the university leadership, indicate that they all took the position that the programme fostered favourable attitudes towards working and living in deprived and rural communities. The university policy of engagement states, inter alia, that the programme aims to bring about attitudinal changes in the students so that they could become catalysts for the socio-economic transformation of poor and marginalized communities.

The university policy, which serves as policy as text, articulates one of the objectives as:

helping to develop favourable attitudes towards working in rural and deprived communities and exposing students practically to the nature of development problems... gathering data for further research into problem solving development issues... (Policy as Text).

The Vice-Chancellor stated the following with regard to the programme aims and purposes, which affirms his concurrence with the policy as text:

First and foremost is to keep students in rural communities for attitudinal change... orient students and inculcate into them favourable attitudes towards living and working in deprived and rural communities of Ghana for the ultimate socio economic transformations of those communities... Of course we send students to communities who do not have the same facilities and experiences like the students in their homes, such as pipe-borne water, electricity, good sanitation... but we send the students there to interact and share with the community members whatever there is in the community... (Interview with Vice-Chancellor, 26 August 2013).

These two quotes express agreement with the university policy objectives of cultivating favourable attitudes towards rural life and exposing students to the nature of deprivation in rural communities. It further illustrates that the policy as text has been scrupulously translated into discourse. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor similarly stressed this position, and referred to the university mandate, which has the force of law. He stated that the university must:

Blend academic work with fieldwork, and this is part of the mandate that the university must blend academic work with community stays, i.e. sending the students to acquire favourable attitudes towards living and working in deprived communities and contributing to the development of these communities. (Interview with the Pro Vice Chancellor, 25 August 2013).

The Director of the Community Engagement Programme also reiterated the same position with the following statement:

We have been able to get our students to the communities to live and work there for seven weeks and it is an exposure period where we allow students to develop favourable attitudes in understanding rural life and problems, so that after graduation they would be better placed to help develop these deprived communities. (Interview with CEP Director, 16 August 2013).

The Coordinator for the community also stated that:

I think a critical outcome of this community engagement programme is to ensure that students get used to living and working in deprived rural communities so that when they start working they would not refuse postings to rural areas, and would take up appointments to help bridge the rural-urban gap in development. (Interview with Community Coordinator, 20 July 2013).

From these five representative quotes, with no dissenting view, it is clear that the programme primarily seeks to bring about changes in the students' attitudes

towards supporting the socioeconomic transformation of deprived communities, which is important, as stipulated in the policy manuscript below. The policy as text, which is the legislation of the university, was provided above, and the leaders of the university offered statements revealing their affirmation of the policy as text.

The following quotes express the views of two other Coordinators:

Our students are sent to communities they have never even heard of, some very remote, but they find their way there and stay for the seven weeks. By the later part of the seven weeks when we visit them, they have become so much a part of the community. (Interview with Community Coordinator 1, August 2013).

When we send our students to these communities, most of them blend so well that when everything is over they feel reluctant to go home; they make friends in the process of gathering data around the community... (Interview with Community Coordinator 2, August, 2013).

The position of the university leaders therefore reflects the stated goals of the programme in the official university policy document. Exposing students to the hardships that are prevalent in rural areas and their success in acclimating to such conditions, make it easier for graduates to develop different mindsets following their seven weeks' stay in the community. This is envisaged to contribute significantly to the development of Northern Ghana within the larger development agenda of the Ghanaian government aimed at bridging the gap between the north and the south (Songsore & Denkabe, 1996; Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007). The next section explores students' understanding of the aims and purposes of the programme and how they perceive it within the context of their experiences (discourse) and learning (text).

4.3 STUDENT PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The analysis under this section focuses on the students' understanding of the engagement programme and provides a detailed record of how the eleven student participants spent each week of the university community engagement

programme. The study found that the engagement programme has more than one purpose, e.g. facilitating the instilment of multicultural worldviews amongst the students, whilst also increasing their understanding of rural, deprived communities, practical learning and diagnosis of community problems, building capacity, and changing attitudes towards the rural areas. Included in the analysis and tracking of the shifts in attitude and understanding of the students from the baseline is an examination and diagnosis of community problems. This analysis incorporates both to illustrate how, as the students learn more about the communities' problems and as they collaborate with community members to develop diagnoses, they also attain new worldviews and develop a disposition towards multiculturalism. The field guides below detail the journeys of these students for the seven weeks that they stayed in the community.

Table 4.1: Programme Field Guide: Task and Work Plan (2013)

<p><i>TASK</i></p> <p>During their stay in the community students are expected to:</p> <p>Go through the community entry process.</p> <p>Collect Information/ data on all aspects of the community.</p> <p>Analyse Information/data and write a comprehensive group report on problems and potentials of the study community and present a draft copy for assessment in the field and a final type written copy in the second week of 1st trimester of year 2.</p> <p>Keep a notebook in which he/ she will make daily entry of activities undertaken and the results.</p> <p>Orally present the results of community studies, individually and in groups, to assessors to the communities.</p>
<p><i>WORK PLAN</i></p>
<p><i>Week One</i></p> <p>Travels, settling, registration in communities (two days)</p> <p>Community Entry</p>
<p><i>Week Two to Four</i></p> <p>Prepare for data collection. Instruments, target groups, schedule responsibilities etc.</p> <p>Intensive data collection: Quantitative sample and specimen collection</p> <p>Problems and potential analysis using tools: problem tree, tanking etc.</p>
<p><i>Week Five</i></p> <p>Data Analysis and synthesis</p> <p>Validation of Findings with Community Members</p> <p>Report Writing</p>

Week Six and Seven

Finalization of report

Preparation for Final assessment

Final Assessment

Editing of reports to include comments of assessors and presentation of field reports

Departure from communities

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Expected output of each group will be a written report covering the following:

Detailed profile with quantitative information, diagrams, maps and picture etc. (reflecting changes and filling data gaps)

Development Problems: new information identified in community

Develop potentials reflecting suggested interventions

Source: (Programme Field Guide: Task and Work Plan, 2012)

The first four weeks of the students' stay in the community essentially focused on their induction into the community, mapping of the community and identifying community problems, which were then prioritized using pair wise ranking analysis and other participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques (Chambas, 1997) as methodologies for their data collection. A tracking followed that, and an explanation of how the remaining three weeks were to be focused on collecting data and developing a proposal for possible intervention by the district council or other agencies (based on five mechanized bore holes), and data validation. A more detailed plan and tracking with each subheading based on week 1, then week 2 and then week 3 to week 7 with subheadings followed.

The findings that was analysed presented patterns of a shift and I used Rockquemore and Schaffer, (2000) to theorise these findings on a weekly basis because the field guide similarly details their tasks on a weekly basis. It was therefore appropriate to map these changes back to the policy as text, as in the field guide and, more significantly, the research questions, which explored students' understandings and possible shifts in their dispositions towards greater multiculturalism in order to bring about a socio-economic transformation in Northern Ghana.

Field guides, presented above (See document 4.1), are discussed at the orientation organized for students at the university before they leave for their

communities and serve as handbooks during their stay. A sample field guide was used in this study as a policy as text evidence to further the analysis. The field guide stipulates the work plan for the students' entire seven week stay in the field, and within its broad framework students engage and interact with the stakeholders, particularly community based participants, who are the focus of the university-community interface.

The field guide underlines that a specific objective of the CEP is to introduce students to community studies through living in and working in disadvantaged communities and equipping them with the tools required for community studies. Secondly, they assist students in applying the techniques and acquiring the experiences necessary to collect and analyze relevant data. On the basis of these data, they then must write a detailed community profile for submission to the District Assembly for possible intervention either by the District Assembly or by other non-governmental or community-based organization (Field Guide, 2012).

The programme which this research covered began on 27 May 2013 and ended on 14 July 2013.

Table 4.2 Duration of Community Program for 2013 (27 May to 14 July)

<i>Week 1</i>	27 May	28 May	29 May	30 May	31 May	1 June	2 June	Arrival Week
<i>Week 2</i>	3 June	4 June	5 June	6 June	7 June	8 June	9 June	
<i>Week 3</i>	10 June	11 June	12 June	13 June	14 June	15 June	16 June	
<i>Week 4</i>	1 June	18 June	19 June	20 June	21 June	22 June	23 June	
<i>Week 5</i>	24 June	25 June	26 June	27 June	28 June	29 June	30 June	
<i>Week 6</i>	1 July	2 July	3 ^r July	4 July	5 July	6 July	7 July	
<i>Week 7</i>	8 July	9 July	10 July	11 July	12 July	13 July	14 July	Departure Week

For each week, I explore the activities of the students and present them as evidence for the data analysis. The basis of this exploration is the observed incidents, conversations, and field notes from my time in the community. Thus, this part of the chapter is organized by week of the community programme, with subheadings for each section, to facilitate a systematic presentation of the findings regarding how the students completed each task and internalized the policy and, therefore, the task set for them. Through this careful presentation of the evidence, students' attitudinal changes are mapped using Rockquemore and Schaffer's (2000) three stage attitudinal change process of Shock, Normalization and Engagement. This framework was adapted to demonstrate how students moved from a position of shock to building relationships at the stage of normalization, and becoming multicultural during the final stage of engagement. Week one of the community engagements is presented and analysed next.

WEEK ON

Table 4.3: Work Plan for Week One

<i>WORK PLAN</i>
<i>Week One</i> Travels, settling, registration in communities (two days) Community Entry

The data collected in week one served as the base line data for locating students within Rockquemore and Schaffer's (2000) three-stage process. I obtained a copy of the field guide and read through the first week's plan. During this time, students were to undertake "travels, settling in, registering in their community, and undertaking the community entry process" (Work Plan, 2012, p.3. Policy as text). Upon arrival, the students commenced interacting with community members, participating in activities, questioning and interviewing community members, walking around, mingling with the youth, and visiting landmarks and sites such as the river, the school, and farms. They also attended functions and community events, such as naming ceremonies, funerals and playing games with the school children, while bearing in mind the clear task and objectives set out in the field guide.

Week One - Day One

Translating the policy as text into policy as discourse begins with the community entry, during which students and their accompanying community coordinator are dropped off by a university bus in the selected community. They are met on arrival by the District Assembly representative of the community, who has been previously informed by the university. This was explained by the Community Coordinator as part of the community entry:

Mr. Assemblyman, these are your students, they will be under your jurisdiction for the next seven weeks, they have been told what to do as the weeks roll by. As previously discussed, we would entreat you to monitor and assist them in whatever capacity you can. Do not hesitate to report any of them for misconduct... thank you. (Ethnographic notes, Community Coordinator quote, 25 May 2013).

The narrative from my ethnographic notes indicates that the University Coordinator in charge of a cluster of communities, including the one under study, officially handed over the students to the Assembly representative on the day of their arrival:

They were officially welcomed by the Assemblyman who later led them to the chief's palace. The Assemblyman then acted as liaison and introduced them to the chief and community members who were around. Thereafter they retired to their accommodation and the next day set out for community mapping and scoping (Ethnographic Field notes, 25 May, 2013).

For the next three days the students go on a transect walk⁶. This is intended to acquaint them with the community geographically and socially, as evidenced in my field notes:

Students walked together casually cutting through the principal road and major paths across the community, taking note of the architecture, the type of trees, crops cultivated, the animals and the

⁶A PRA tool that is employed by researchers to systematically walk along a defined path (transect) across the community together with the local participants to explore, in order to describe and illustrate the location and spread of resources, topographies, scenery, and main land uses, houses, animals, architecture, and the water and sanitation conditions, by observing, asking, listening, looking and producing a transect diagram (ZEEUW & WILBERS 2004).

farm implements and other strange and fascinating features of the community... (Field notes, 26 May 2013).

The casual walk described here was part of the transect walk and also constituted the first stage of the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique. This is also evidenced by the report written by the whole team of students for assessment which was later presented to the District Assembly by the university.

This walk was taken across the community together with the community member that gave them information (guide) for the purpose of familiarizing the group with the community and enabling the group to observe so as to get explanation to the development issues and events during focus group discussions and personal interviews. (Student Community Report, p.2, 26th, May, 2013).

Med, a student, indicated this in his field notebook as shown in document 4.2.

On 01-06-2013 Friday
We continued the transect walk the following day which helped us to draw the map of the community which contains the mosque, forest, churches, schools, roads and other landmarks, like the river and the forest. We also visited with certain key personalities in the community. Entering the community we first met..... or..... lying to the right and from..... Coming is the which is to the left hand side of the road.

Document 4.2: Med's Field notebook (2013)

The task for students in the policy text for week one specifically stated that students were to travel to their communities, settle, register and undertake the community entry process. Therefore, after being led by the Assembly representative to pay homage to the chief on the first day of their arrival, they set out to appraise the community. For the purposes of my ethnographic study I followed the student participants' from the chief's palace to their accommodation and observed them plan for the second day of week one, which was designated for community appraisal. The notes I made at this time in my field notebook captured the essence of the community engagement.

Specific activities that were to be undertaken in line with the mandate of the university were clearly articulated to them and so they tried as much as possible to work according to the university policy or

template: to introduce students to community studies through living in and working with communities. Students should marry traditional knowledge with scientific knowledge in their community studies... (Field notes, 2June 2013).

The policy template clearly delineated students' daily and weekly tasks, but left them free to exercise personal initiatives, such as organizing and playing games like football and "Wall". Whilst the Muslim students attended congregational prayers, the Christian students went to the small church to seek fellowship with the Christian worshippers. Although not necessarily part of the weekly task, these were at least partly social and educational processes which their personal interests as students from various disciplines directed them towards. In these processes, student disciplines such as nursing, community nutrition, education, agriculture, development studies and planning all of which contribute to development and are critical to the socio-economic transformation sought by the programme, are allowed to flourish. At the same time they work within the remit of the university policy template. Both the template and their extracurricular pursuits enabled them to interact and engage with community members within the ambit of their data collection.

Using the three stage calibrated engagement, I divided the eleven students into three distinct groupings based on the pace of their adjustment in relation to their attitudinal change. These classifications emerged from my evidence by the end of week one and crystallized as the study progressed to week seven. This enabled me draw my conclusions in a systematic way. Table 4.4 below shows the classification of the eleven student participants and their characteristics, which formed the basis for my analysis of the students' understanding and attitudinal shifts from week one to seven in terms of their understanding of the programme.

Table 4.4: Classification of Students in Ethnographic Analysis

Group One Students. Pseudonyms	<i>Characteristics</i>
	<i>Their attitudes changed rapidly and more than the others. They felt comfortable because they were all Muslims from the north (like the community members) and had mutual understanding with the community members.</i>
Alhaji	Age 30, male, pursuing agricultural extension, comes from another part of northern Ghana, de facto student leader, very interactive, affable personality, the oldest and most mature, Muslim
Med	Age 28, male, pursuing applied sciences, also from northern Ghana, easygoing and very interactive, Muslim.
Budali	Age 27, male, pursuing management studies, affable, talks a lot and also easygoing. Muslim, from the north.
Malia	Age 26, female, pursuing health education studies, friendly and warm and very interactive, the only Muslim woman from the North.
Group Two Students	<i>They had a gradual shift in attitudes They were all Christians from the South</i>
Geshon	Age 25, male, pursuing management studies, youthful, open and a bit reserved initially, but warm and affable. Christian, from southern Ghana.
Saha	Age 24, male, pursuing development studies. Very active but cautious. Gentle, talks only a little. Christian, from the south.
Eric	Age 23, male, pursuing development studies, gentle, open, interactive and often quiet, Christian, from the south.
Mary	Age 21, female, pursuing nursing, youthful and bubbling with energy, very neat and organised. Likes playing with kids. Christian, from the south.
Abah	Age 20, female, pursuing development education, very religious, loves cooking and reserved. Christian, from the south.
Faith	Age 20, female, pursuing Mathematical sciences, loves music, gentle and neat and fashionable. A bit reserved. Christian, from the south.

<i>Group Three Student</i>	<i>Consistently found it difficult to change and get used to the community for the entire seven week period.</i>
Wofa	Age 22, male, pursuing community nutrition, snobbish, likes eating and being alone most times, loves fidgeting with gadgets like tablets, ear phones and mobile phones. Christian, from the south. A rich student from a privileged background.

Source: Author's own construction.

The group consisted of four students, and as indicated, they came from communities with similar cultures to that of the study community. Therefore, from day one in the community, these students were quite comfortable and interacted freely. They talked to the young men and women, asked them questions about the community, about places to get food, about life and the people in the community, and so on. In this way they immersed and assimilated themselves with the community. The way they readily mixed with community members caught my attention very early during the course of my fieldwork, and I asked one of them whether he had been there before. In a conversation with two of these group one students, Med and Alhaji, they stated,

For us this place is like home, the same food, the same culture, and the same values. (Conversation 27 May 2013).

There were six students who were in the habit of walking together, and all of them spoke Twi, a widely-spoken language in Southern Ghana. They were all Christian students and were quite hesitant about leaving the compound on their own. Lastly, there was another student who was aloof all the while and did not seem to talk and interact much. I asked all of them their names and introduced myself as a researcher joining them to study the community engagement programme. At the end of the first day we all retired to bed exhausted.

Week One - Day Two

On the second day of the first week, the Muslim students, Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia, joined a small group of Muslim worshippers in congregational

prayers and exchanged greetings with the community members whilst introducing themselves:

We are Alhaji, Med, and Budali [pointing to each of them] and there is our sister Malia, we just got here yesterday from the university. (Alhaji, 28 May 2013).

A vignette from my ethnographic fieldnotes stated:

They were wholeheartedly embraced by the small group of worshippers. Their faces beamed with smiles and a sense of brotherhood, an outsider would have thought that they had known each other intimately for quite some time although the community members recognized they were strangers. They exuded confidence and early identification of the names of community members demonstrated that Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia felt motivated and were beginning to build relationships with community members. They exchanged greetings and introduced themselves by mentioning their names and where they come from and told the community members they were in the community to socialize and learn from them...

Box 4.1 (Ethnographic field notes, 28 May 2013).

In a conversation later, Budali said:

I stayed on after the prayer to observe the reactions of community members regarding us- the new students in order to familiarize with the community members and get to know them better. Budali, 28 May 2013).

Budali's statement above and the following statement by Alhaji further underscore the fact that they shared an understanding of the culture and, more significantly, a desire to want to understand the community better. Alhaji also noted in his field note book that:

As we walked around the community and asked questions and also learnt about some of the taboos of the community we realized that things were quite similar to our own environments, some of the rituals, such as making purifications before Shea fruits can be picked and eaten and also the prohibition of cutting down specific trees in the community could be found in our communities as well. (Alhaji's field notebook, 28 May 2013).

Whilst members of this group were busy building relationships with community members, the other six students were struggling to cope with life in the

community. They sweated and mopped their faces several times with their handkerchiefs as a result of the moist and humid conditions at that time of year. They mostly kept to themselves for the first two days, staying in their rooms, which they rushed back to immediately after every group task. They expressed surprise at the profound similarities and differences between their own communities and this community, where they were expected to live and serve for seven weeks:

As we entered the community for the first time I was afraid these small mud rooms might fall with these heavy rains, when we got to the community I was scared we would be housed in one of them. I have never slept in a mud house roofed with thatch. (Faith's field notebook, 28 May 2013).

As we went round I observed the mud houses, I am told the rooms are very cool and wind resistant. I would love to sleep in one of them just to see how it feels. Sorry these people cannot afford iron sheets to roof their houses. We have similar types of buildings in our area for very poor people... (Eric's field notebook, 28 May 2013).

Faith and Eric were surprised at the mud houses and thatch roofs; although they had similar architecture where they were from, it was not as widespread as in the north. But both had very different reactions towards them.

As for Wofa, the solitary student, he revealed his feelings to me when he said:

Wow, my first few days have been like hell, how on earth am I going to be here for seven weeks? The Assembly man better get me a nicer room or else I would tell "Codi" (Coordinator) to let me go and stay with the teachers in their quarters. I just could not sleep last night in the room we were allocated... (Conversation with Wofa, 28 May 2013).

Wofa looked dejected and quiet but complained at every opportunity, "expressing shock and disbelief" about the environment he was to stay in for the next seven weeks (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000, p.16). Back in their accommodation, the students continued to talk about the community whilst I went off to my own room. All the while I had been closely observing the

movements and friendship pattern of the eleven students, which helped me categorise them in week two.

Week One - Day Three

From day three to days 4 and 5 of the week, all of the eleven students were involved in practical events as a means of getting closer to the community. On the third day the entire group went round from house to house greeting people and introducing themselves through the facilitation of an exuberant young (22 year old) school leaver who acted as a key informant during the community entry process and also for my project. This was the beginning of relationship building. We came across a group of women engaged in garri processing. Going through the community, this was a dominant economic activity and this initial contact in week one was essential to identifying places for data collection and information gathering and in preparation for further exploration in weeks 2 to 4. The women narrated to us the steps involved in processing the product, hinting at the difficulties involved and indicating her reliance on old and laborious ways of processing the product:

We wash the tuber, peel it, wash it again and grate it. The grated cassava is then put into sacks, squeezed, tied and placed on a clean cemented surface. Load in the form of stones, blocks and heavy metals are placed on the sack to add weight to enable the rest of the water to be drained out. It is left for almost a week and taken out. This is then sieved to separate the fine grain from chaff. It is then fried on a wide surface with burning firewood underneath. You keep turning and turning until it is cooked dry. (Ethnographic notes, Conversation with Garri seller, 29 May 2013).

Students intermittently asked questions for clarification. She told us how much she earns per bag, which amounted to a pittance. On a good day she takes home about fifteen Ghana cedis, the equivalent of five dollars, but on average she makes about eight or nine cedis a day. It could be inferred that she had difficulty with her accounting since she hesitated before settling on these figures as her daily sales. The students therefore arranged to teach her some basic bookkeeping at a later date. Although the amount was quite small she insisted it was better than idling, because she uses the income to supplement her family's food budget and pay the school fees for her two children. The Garri is heavily

patronized by students and low income families. *Garri* is eaten with sugar and milk or with sauce or palm oil and beans, and is popularly called “*Red Red*”. I probed further about how much she makes per fry but she was unable to say exactly because she did not keep a record of her sales. Alhaji, Med, Budali, Malia and I then tried for ourselves to fry the *garri*. Whilst the first group comprising Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia were doing the frying, the second group consisting of Geshon, Saha, Eric, Mary, Aba and Faith entered the woman’s house to learn more about the initial processes of grating, bagging, squeezing and pressing. Although students were not yet collecting data during week one, the sight of the *garri* processor caught the attention of the group, as two of them had never seen this process. Wofa, the solitary student, only stood by and watched in surprise. He later told me,

“Garri is not one of my favourite foods and also I don’t like the environment in which it is made. I was expecting a clean environment” (Group three Student).

I noted in my field notes about the group one students Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia:

Students could be seen chatting happily amongst themselves, with the key informant, cracked jokes, laughed and ate some of the *garri* and took turns stirring the hot *garri* and quite enjoyed it whilst also chatting with the woman and her daughters. (Ethnographic field notes, 29 May 2013).

It was clear that whilst the first four students who shared a similar culture with the community members had already become used to the community by virtue of the similarities in habits and values. During the first few days, they were already interacting and talking with community members, even joining them for congregational prayers and eating with them. They also took turns try their hands at the *garri* frying. They chatted heartily with the *garri* seller, and took photographs of the process with their mobile phones. As this was going on, I noted that:

Curious bystanders looked amused and laughed at the antics displayed by the students and the dexterity with which they fried the *garri* (Ethnographic Field notes, 29 May 2013).

It was evident that this group of students was engaging and had begun building relationships with community members and therefore normalizing (Rockquemore and Schaffer, (2000). However, group two, comprising Geshon, Saha, Eric, Mary, Aba and Faith, who had gone into the house to observe the initial processes, returned at a later stage to try their hands at, when they had begun to leave the shock phase of harbouring some reservations about the community members and shed the feeling of supremacy of their own cultural group. Geshon stated, and was supported by Saha, Eric, Mary, Aba and Faith who nodded in agreement:

Ei!! Today we are seeing a lot of strange things and hearing strange stories... we also have taboos but these ones are so hard, and I hear the gods would visit instant punishment on any one breaking them, and the primary school building, it was just an eye sore, I wonder whether the pupils sit in those classrooms during these torrential rains, gosh!!... (Ethnographic notes, Geshon's comment, 29 May 2013).

Look at garri, which I like eating so much, I did not even know how it is produced. So tedious yet the price is so low. Imagine all the hard work for days. I pity these women, how much at all do they make? (Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Mary, 29 May 2013).

At this stage, I observed that Geshon, Saha, Eric, Mary, Aba and Faith, displayed a mixture of surprise and nonchalance and were visibly in a state of shock. They looked perplexed, stunned and completely lost, trying to reconcile the differences and similarities of their own cultures and environment to that of the community (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). This resonates with Rockquemore and Schaffer's framework because the students expressed awe at the energy put into producing garri and, conversely, the low price it is sold for, similar to the reactions found in their research. We then left to rest and prepare for the next day's task.

Week One - Day Four

The next day, which was the fourth day of the community stay, the students visited the riverside with the key informant after making their usual rounds. When they got to the bank of the river, the key informant told them that:

It is a taboo for strangers to be allowed to wade in the water alone (Ganima, Key Informant, 30 May 2013).

Walking in close proximity to the students, I observed that some of them showed some consternation in their faces; they were completely amazed and stunned. Faith, one of the six students from the south, wanted to know the reason behind this taboo. Ganima, a key informant, replied that he learnt from the elders that:

the river god is hostile to strangers and that only indigenes were permitted to wade into the water. (Ganima, Key Informant, 30 May 2013).

I found this curious, took note of it and probed him further, since there was a possibility that the rule kept strangers out of a valuable resource and therefore this could be about power and perhaps amounted to domination. He then added that, personally, he thinks that it is more of a safety measure to protect people from crocodiles and accidents. Safety may well be the explanation because many strangers do not know the tide or areas that are dangerous in the water and could drown or be injured. On this occasion the group one students, who were accustomed to these kinds of taboos, easily understood and were quite comfortable. Whilst they were laughing and attempting to push each other towards the river, fear gripped the six students from the south. They were scared; looked cold and perplexed, and hastened to ask why strangers could not wade even before the key informant could explain. They were clearly trying to get used to the new culture and events unfolding in their new environment.

Although I am afraid, come to think of it, there must be good intentions and reasons for some of these taboos, as time goes on I may come to understand these reasons. (Abah, 30 May 2013).

The students and I left the riverside and strolled to our accommodation looking very tired. That evening, the discussion was centered on the river and the taboos. Students in group two thought it was anachronistic and needed to be looked into, while those in group one thought traditions must go on. In the midst of all these discussions Wofa was already in his room listening to his music with earphones in his ears. This effectively ended the third day.

Week One - Day Five

Early in the morning on the fifth day, I met and spoke to Alhaji. He had been selected as the de-facto leader of the eleven students because of his advanced age, modesty and piety. In addition to these qualities, his interpersonal skills, such as his ability to relate well with all the students, and the respect he commanded from community members placed him in a position to speak not only on behalf of his group but occasionally on behalf all eleven students. Additionally, he was the most fluent in the local language of the community. He summed up the understanding expressed by all the eleven students succinctly. When I wanted to know his impression about the first three days and the aims of the programme, he stated that:

the main purpose of our stay in the community is to learn how the rural people do things and also get used to rural living... In a nutshell this is what we were told at the orientation. (Informal conversation with Alhaji, student leader, 31 May 2013).

This assertion reflects the students' views of the programme policy, which tasks students with developing a favourable attitude to rural living. On day after the students had undertaken a transect walk to take stock of landmarks in the community, I noted the following:

Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia, the four Muslim students, split into two pairs, Alhaji and Med went over to join a group of young men from the community to play the local game called "*Wal*", the other two, Budali and Malia were seen chatting, with the local women, buying shea fruits and nuts from women passing by who balanced pans on their heads. They later lingered endlessly in the community square building up their knowledge of people and events. Meanwhile the other group, made up of Geshon, Saha, Eric, Mary, Aba and Faith, went back to their community hostel where they quietly entered and shut their rooms.

Box 4.2 (Ethnographic Field notes, 31 May 2013).

Their action of remaining indoors indicated that their recent experience may have had a “sharp emotional and psychological jolt to their perceptions of reality”, as described by Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000, p.16). Whilst the first four students were engaging, the second group were isolating themselves and disengaging. The third student occasionally engaged minimally but most of the time did not engage at all. He was socially isolating himself as a result of the differences in culture, or the new environment with which he was not familiar. In a short while, after they had entered their room, Saha, a female student belonging to the second group of six, came out and sat with me, and we began talking about the community experience. In the process, she related to me some of her experiences. According to Saha, before she came to the community she had heard unpleasant stories about the community engagement programme:

I had mixed perceptions when I came to the community, even though I am not somebody who is completely inexperienced when it comes to rural life. Although I looked forward to very fruitful and exciting interactions, I was initially discouraged by some students who had previously been to a community, some of whom narrated unpleasant stories about their communities, such as snake bites, mosquitoes, no toilets and bad accommodation. I [was] therefore anxious and begun to ask myself whether there would be potable water and the kinds of communicable diseases we were likely to encounter, will it affect us? Can we get some provisions to buy when we run out of supplies? These and a number of questions kept running through my mind, we always talked about these issues... (Conversation with Saha, 31 May 2013).

Some of the other students in her group later corroborated this report by sharing similar experiences with me:

Before we came here, I tried to find out from senior students who had been to the community before. They had some of their experiences, some pleasant and some unpleasant. I was eager to come and also taste the rural life. One particular student told me they were given a room which was leaking and anytime it rained they had to be up scooping water. (Conversation with Faith, 31 May 2013).

Some students told me how difficult it is to be in the village, some of the villages have no roads except small paths, and to get there one has to walk carrying your bag for a mile or two. So as for me when we

were coming I just packed a few things but luckily our community is just on the trunk road and very accessible. (Conversation with Mary, 31 May 2013).

These quotes are representative of the sentiments of the six students comprising group two. At this early stage, the distinct group of southern students did not mingle with community members, they only interacted with their inner circle, talking mostly to the friends they came with and doing things in common. After the mandatory rounds or assignments, they came back to their room and seldom ventured out until they were required to undertake a joint task or go somewhere. Wofa, the solitary student, strolled across to the verandah of their house, grabbed a chair and sat gazing around absent-mindedly without any reaction. He simply stated:

I am feeling very tired, the village is boring. (Comment by Wofa, Group 3 student, 31 May 2013).

Wofa's quote indicates he was failing to move out of the shock stage, and at the same time he was still not enthusiastic about activities in the community because of the apparent lack of some basic amenities and the generally quiet life of the community. By the fifth day of week one, the first four students had made friends with some community children, and the children were beginning to stream into the student accommodation. They sent them on errands and took part in some activities such as football:

As I sat at the entrance of the student accommodation I saw these school children go in and out of the accommodation, they would normally bend down to greet me, as is the custom of the community. I later see them fetching water and running errands for the student participants, who in return give them exercise books and pencils and crayons.

Box 4.3 (Ethnographic Field notes, 31 May 2013).

The students, in many instances, also used the children as messengers for relaying information to their parents about meetings at the chief's palace and at various venues. The first four students had begun implementing the policy and engaging with the aim and purpose of adapting to rural life and, by extension, enhancing understandings of the programme and enhancing their multicultural dispositions. They were beginning to appreciate the life of the community members, and in fact noticed similarities with their own values, like respect for

elders, inviting others to share meals, and adding titles like “brother”, “sister”, or “uncle” to the names of community members.

The other six students, who came from a different culture, although still reserved, began to relate to children by finding out from them a few things about the community such as what kinds of food were available, who was the richest, the best farmer, the most popular people etc., and asking them for directions to some key places in the community in a bid to enhance their understanding. As they began to get into routines that they accepted, they began forging satisfying relationships with members of the community who had previously been regarded as “others” because they related very little to them (Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000). At this point, there were considerable variations in the level of immersion of the first categories of students. Whilst the first four had already assimilated into the community by virtue of their shared values and culture, the second six were still at the fringes, asking questions for clarification.

The lone student Wofa, a student from the south, was still finding it difficult to come to the realization that he was in the community to stay for seven weeks. He was still in the shock state. According to him:

This is my first time living in a village, I did not really know what to expect when we were coming, I thought there would be lights, pubs, gyms, I now realize that it is not what I was expecting. I think I am in for a shock, and shudder to think that I would be staying here for seven whole weeks. (Wofa, Group three student, 31 May 2013).

Wofa’s statement is revealing and suggests his unawareness about the poverty and deprivations they faced. I observed that he was quiet most of the time and asked his fellow students to accompany him even when he was walking across the bush to the lavatory. The next two days were the weekend, and nothing much was done by the students; they washed their clothes on Saturday, rested and later went to play football, while the women played the game of ludu. Two women, Mary and Aba, accompanied by the key informant, headed to the nearby port town to charge their phones and make calls because there was no telephony reception in the community. The next day, which was Sunday,

Geshon, Eric, Mary, Abah, Saha and Faith headed to the small church in the community to join the handful of worshippers to pray. It is significant to note that the six students in group two as well as Wofa were Christians; therefore, they were also learning about religious coexistence and tolerance in addition to multiculturalism. They later returned to rest and get ready for the next week's task.

The baseline data for the first week revealed that whilst Alhaji, Med, Budali and Malia were already engaging, Geshon, Saha, Eric, Mary, Abah and Faith were still transiting from shock to the normalization stage of building relationships, and Wofa remained in the state of shock, grappling with how to come to terms with the conditions he was confronted with. These observations formed the baseline data that was used to map the students' shifts over the subsequent weeks.

WEEK TWO

The specific task for week two is shown in table 4.5

The preparation of data collection instruments, identifying target groups, schedules, assigning responsibilities amongst group members, intensive data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, problem, and potential analysis using PRA tools, such as problem tree, SWOT, pair wise ranking, etc. (Field guide, 2013, p. 3).

Table 4.5: Specific Task for Week Two.

Through a detailed and careful observation and analysis of the data from the first week, I identified that there were different groups, as described above. This categorization was used to track their attitudinal changes in relation to the processes and tasks of the community engagement programme, drawing on the classifications that emerged from my observations.

Week Two - Days One & Two

At the beginning of the second week, all eleven students held a meeting in which I was present to schedule activities for the next four days. Activities on the fifth day, which was usually a Friday, were minimal to allow the Muslim students to join the community members for prayers. Week's two to four were to

be the busiest of the weeks, so they met to allocate roles and tasks amongst themselves. Students were to collect data on the natural resources of the community, the environment, and the population characteristics.

The meeting commenced at 10 a.m. with a Christian prayer for God's guidance and protection in the field, after the students had their breakfast. Since this was an experiential learning process, all eleven decided to undertake the data collection together so that no one missed out on any detail. Techniques such as the transect walk, personal interviews, observations, sampling, focus group discussions and pair wise ranking⁷ were adopted by students in the data collection. They used random, purposive, and snowball sampling procedures, and were at times assigned by the group leaders to tasks based on subject specialism. The itinerary for the four weeks of data collection designed by the students at the meeting is shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.6: Policy As text (Programme Field Guide, 2013)

Weeks	Task
Week Two (2)	Natural Resources and Environment, Population Characteristics
Week Three (3)	Social Development - water & sanitation, transport, Education and Health, Culture Economic development History and Local Government
Week Four (4)	Community Problem Identification (Using SWOT) and Potential identification. Analysis of Community needs and identification of priority needs using pair-wise ranking

Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives.

After having brainstormed and prepared the schedule, I followed the students, who set out to collect data on the natural resources, environment and population characteristics. This took us across the entire community. The students started from the centre of the village and went diagonally, from north to east and south to west. Students observed and spoke to individuals, with the

⁷ Pairwise Ranking is a PRA technique where problems are ranked by being placed vertically and horizontally and are paired consistently through a vote until one emerges as the most pressing. This was a student data collection technique.

aid of the gatekeeper and the Assemblyman, about the geology, relief, drainage, vegetation and soils. They spoke to people we came across going about their daily business and elders, who had vast knowledge of the community. Data was collected on agriculture, climate, and vegetation. They also collected data on household numbers, births and deaths, and conducted a census. By the close of the second day, the students had gathered a large quantity of data which served as a baseline survey of the community:

We went round the community observing and asking questions about the weather, topology, drainage, roads, soil structure, and noted the kinds of crops grown and animals around. (Student Field notebook, June 2013).

The assignment for the day ended at 3.p.m, and the students and I returned to their accommodation to enable them to prepare their evening meal. Alhaji and the other three group one students joined the community members at the *wali* site, whilst the group two students did their own cooking because they were not yet used to the community food. Wofa was in his room playing with his computer. A student from group two became ill on the second day, and the others had to assist this student to a clinic nearby for treatment.

Week Two - Day Three

On the third day, the students came together and selected Alhaji and Med, agricultural science and applied science students, respectively, to contact the meteorological and survey departments for data on rainfall, locations and the agricultural potential of the community. The rest of the students continued their community rounds, observing and collecting data on the vegetation, noting that only trees with economic potential, such as the Shea tree, “*Dawadawa*”, and Neem, were seen throughout the community. The rest had been destroyed by bushfires and logging for firewood and charcoal burning. Students therefore arranged to meet the woman involved in the burning and selling of charcoal on the 4th and 5th days of the week. After collecting data on the vegetation they retired to their hostel to do the washing, whilst others slept. I had a conversation with Faith and Aba of group two about the seriousness of deforestation, and

they agreed that something ought to be done to slow the rate of deforestation in Northern Ghana.

I think that something should be done about this rampant felling of trees for charcoal burning, I am so alarmed, I think the university has to do something, perhaps tie it together with this idea of climate change. Seminars and open fora could be organized to sensitize our local people to the effects of the felling. (Faith, during a conversation, 5 June 2013).

You are right; maybe we should also take it upon ourselves to educate the rural people about this problem as we go around. Anytime I see a lorry loaded with charcoal, I feel ashamed and alarmed. The problem is that we are not planting trees to replace the ones we burn or fell. (Abah, during a conversation, 5 June 2013).

We lamented the issue of the environment until we all felt tired and I said goodbye to them and left for my evening prayers, effectively ending the day.

Week Two - Day Four

On the fourth day, the students decided to collect more data on the environment and also agreed to visit and interact with the woman engaged in charcoal burning. The students, especially those of group two, were surprised to learn that this woman had been in the business of burning and selling charcoal for use as fuel for cooking in the towns and cities for close to two decades. The students and I engaged the woman in a conversation about her occupation, particularly its effect on the environment, since the students were collecting data on vegetation and the environment. She initially sought to defend her activities, but as our interaction with her progressed, she came to terms with the harmful effects of her business. However, she remarked:

Even though I now know that my business is destroying the environment, I have no alternative since I am not educated and have no other business for survival. My husband too is poor and we need to send our children to school. (Conversation with Charcoal Burner, 6 June 2013).

I tried to find out whether she and her colleagues in the business had ever considered replanting the trees they were cutting for the charcoal since trees were renewable natural resources. She said,

we do not need to replant the trees; they have always sprouted by themselves. (Charcoal Burner/ Seller, 6 June 2013).

This incident with the charcoal dealer is not just about identifying problems and making a diagnosis, it was also about relating to her as a person with shared common ground. As we observed, charcoal burning is one of the predominant economic activities in the community, and any remedy would need to address it as such. Environmental issues of bush burning and deforestation and others which occur on a micro scale, such as the use of fossil fuel or alternatives, are beyond the reach of most rural communities. The students explained to the woman that if she and others do not replant there would come a time when there would be no trees, but her expression indicated that she did not fully believe what she was being told and shrugged it off. Abah and Mary of group two stated:

When we first got here, we thought that since community members had arable lands, they could easily make it, we were not fully aware of other impediments or problems they were facing. We thought they were not aware of their situation, but now we do know that the system has not helped them, they have been marginalized, like us. I just wondered how long this community has been in this situation. (Abah, 7 June 2013).

This business is affecting the environment but as she has just told us, she has no alternative livelihood. But how long can she continue cutting and burning these trees? I think the government has to find ways of empowering these woman and her likes in other communities or else the environment would be in danger. But the people need to live as well. (Mary, 7 June 2013).

The above quotes serve to illustrate how students of group two saw community members as real people and not study subjects, and how they began to make attributions, assign reasons for issues, and appreciate the structural and educational inequalities. Those of group one were already fully aware of these because they shared a similar background with community participants (Kluegel

and Smith, 1986). Relationship building was thus enhanced at this stage, and the students of group two began to make adjustments to their mindsets and orientations. Students of group two were now recognizing and accepting the positive aspects of the community, having constructive experiences and cultivating a healthy sense of identity. During these busy periods, group one students were already engaging and fully immersed, and had already reached the third stage of the engagement process, namely, developing positive attitudes. They had assimilated into the community and could be seen to relate seamlessly with community members:

In my usual rounds I came across Budali, Med and Malia busily chatting with the youth at the ghettos⁸, with Alhaji busily playing the wali game in such a way that it would be hard to recognize him as a stranger. The community members were struggling to have their turns with him since he was quite competent in the game. One community member beckoned me to come and see how my student was playing. "Your student is defeating us but we would not allow him to go undefeated". (Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 5 June 2013).

The students at that point showed a greater urge to participate outside of the task assigned. They forged personal relationships and visited their new-found friends when they were less busy. Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000) refer to this stage as the "engagement" phase and argue that "students at this stage begin to seek answers to their questions" (p.3). As students of group one above were enhancing their rapport with community members in the process of data collection, and comparing the locals' situation to their own, students in group two were coming out of the shock stage (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000).

I realized that most students from group two began to open up, interact more with the community members during the data collection process. They rise up early and move from house to house to catch the men and youth before they rush to their farms. They interview elders, speak to the women and attempt speaking a few words of the local language. This creates some laughter from the local people who feel happy at the efforts of the southern students to learn the language. (Field notes, 6 June 2013).

⁸ A term that refers to a base where the youth gather to discuss general issues during their leisure time.

They left behind them the level of shock they experienced in the first week of their community stay, which was partly due to the revelation that the community had fewer resources than their own communities in the south. Evidence of this recognition was found in the fact that students in this group thanked God for the most basic privileges they had in their own lives. Faith wrote:

I thank God for the bounties he has bestowed on us down south which we have taken for granted in my life. I feel sad at some of the things I am seeing here. (Faith's field notebook, 6 June 2013).

They began to become accustomed to the kinds of things they saw as strange and the fear in them began to evaporate.

They could now walk through the community alone, go to the market square, nearby bush, in singles and started to learn a few Gonja and Dagbanli words, such as "what is your name", "good morning", "how are you". (Ethnographic field notes, 6 June 2013).

They started viewing life in the community and certain social events as normal (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). Students in group two had now begun to feel comfortable, laughed, played games, such as football, with community members and began building relationships, and the "otherness began to give way to personal descriptions" (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). Aba, Mary and Saha all agreed with their other three colleagues who made the following comments:

After the initial boring week, I think I am now beginning to enjoy the community, it was just the language barrier, but now I can understand a few words of the local language and those that I don't understand I gesticulate and this makes the people laugh and attempt to teach me. (Faith, 6 June 2013).

I now think there is some sense behind some of the taboos like "don't sweep in the night", we were told because there is no electricity, and one might end up sweeping something valuable away. I now see the wisdom behind some of them, initially it was just boring to hear "we don't do this here", "this is a taboo". I think we have a few similarities in with my own culture. (Eric, 6 June 2013).

For some time now I have not been myself but I feel great today talking with the charcoal dealer, she was quite interesting. I am

beginning to enjoy the community, especially the serene atmosphere with the birds chirping. (Geshon, 6 June 2013).

While the first group of students was quite comfortable and engaged by building more relationships, the second group of students was almost normalized by accepting and understanding the local culture. They were beginning to break out of their shells. The two encounters with the women engaged in the garri and charcoal businesses seemed to have had a profound impression on these students in group two. Back at their accommodation they sat on their veranda and discussed at length the procedures involved in garri processing while enjoying some of the product, which the woman had given them. They laughed about it instead of shutting themselves in their rooms. They also lamented the rate of deforestation caused by the charcoal woman's business. They were almost at the point of normalizing with the community by trying to establish reciprocal relationships with community members through intensified interactions and opening up.

I observed community members filing in one after the other to say hello to the students in return for visits the students had carried out. The chief sent them some tubers of yam and some guinea fowls to formally welcome them to the community. Students thanked the messenger and Alhaji, their leader, gave the messenger a two cedi note, as was the custom, this is a reciprocal gesture when a messenger delivers a gift in Northern Ghana. (Ethnographic Field notes, 6 June 2013).

Students resolved to carry out education on the environment in the community, and they continued to argue and discuss other issues until it was late and they retired to their rooms.

Week Two - Day Five

On the fifth day of the second week, whilst on their rounds collecting data, all eleven students had planned to visit one cottage industry. Therefore, they selected a group of women actively involved in the Shea butter extraction processes. These activities were chosen by the students, as part of the directives from their field guide to participate and engage in any activity that would enable them collect credible data and bring them closer to the

community. Such participation also helped them in developing favourable attitudes towards the deprived rural communities, understanding the current conditions and presenting a proposal for the socio-economic transformation of the communities. Shea butter extraction, garri processing, charcoal burning and petty trading constituted the main occupations in the community. Therefore, these economic activities contributed data, as seen in the types of data I provided in the methodology section. My observation and subsequent rounds with students indicated that women dominated these activities, constituting the majority involved in Shea butter extraction and garri processing. Other activities on a lesser scale were food vending and the parboiling of rice. These activities were dominated by women; only charcoal burning was not entirely monopolized by women. By engaging practically in some of these routine community activities and seeing how energetic, determined and hardworking these rural women were, students came to appreciate values such as perseverance and hard work from community members. Faith stated:

I like the determination and perseverance of these rural women, they work hard in the face of so many difficulties, I think these are values worth emulating. With these kinds of hard work we can help develop our communities and the nation. These rural women are simply wonderful. I respect them. (Faith, Group two, 7 June 2013).

Speaking to both Eric and Mary of group two, this is what they said:

How I wish I could get some assistance for these women in their income generating activities. I think in the future I may go into micro financing for rural women to help in their suffering, remember when we spoke to the garri seller and she complained of low capital, and the charcoal dealer also complained about low income. (Ethnographic conversation with Eric and Mary, both in group two, 7 June 2013).

Alhaji of group one stated:

Sometimes I just can't help but admire our mothers, these rural women, like my mum works so hard despite the odds. The little they make, they are able to manage with it. My mother, like these women is always able to squeeze and make some savings. (Alhaji, Group One, 7 June 2013).

As for this Shea butter extraction, it has been done this way since we were born, some women come from the south with the pretense to assist them with credit but they end up exploiting and cheating them. (Malia of group one, 7 June 2013).

Alhaji and Malia's quotes, which are representative of the sentiment in group one, are evidence that members of the group had backgrounds that are similar to those of the community and therefore easily identified with their predicament, and were therefore engaging (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). Those of group two, as evidenced by the quotes of Eric and Mary, came from different cultures but were benefiting from being exposed to the development problems of Northern Ghana and had almost normalised and were beginning to engage (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000).

However, Wofa, the lone student of group three, was indifferent to everything that was happening. He simply sat and watched sternly how the women were doing it. He was still in the shock stage (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). He could not understand why the women would sit on the bare floor and just sat gazing at them.

This is in line with aims of the programme, through where students are exposed to the development problems of the north. These revelations suggest that the students were actually seeing the enormity of the deprivations and underdevelopment of the north, and this resonates with the aims of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, which focuses on the components of human development with targeted measures to improve the population's access to basic amenities such as primary education, safe water, and improved health and environmental sanitation (GPRS, 2007). These aims formed the core of the national decentralization policy and were beginning to sink into the students. Participation in these community activities by the students further enhanced their understanding of these issues and afforded them a better perspective from which to work to overcome the inequities of the system after graduation, as indicated in tracer studies of graduates of this university (Abagale, 2010). I used the weekend of week two to visit my family whilst the students continued to acclimatize in their various stages of attitudinal change.

WEEK THREE

Table 4.7: Work Plan for Week three

- Intensive data collection: Quantitative sample and specimen collection.
Social Development-water & sanitation, transport, Education and Health, Culture
Economic development, History and Local Government

Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives.

Week Three - Day One

The students and I visited the local primary school; I witnessed and participated in a meeting with the head teacher and staff of the local primary schools.

At this meeting the student participants exchanged pleasantries and informed the head teacher they were there to ask some few questions about the school, such as enrolment and retention figures, boy/girl ratio, pupil performance and number of teachers, etc. This encounter was necessary to give the students an idea of where to intervene. (Field notes, 9 June 2013).

The head teacher set the tone and reiterated his desire for assistance. He stated:

We are happy you people are here, the students who were here last year helped us a lot and we pray that this year you would also offer us not the same but more. As you can see, the number of teachers is inadequate, we don't even have all the classrooms and the children loiter about because the teachers, who mostly come from the big town, are not frequent and punctual. So you are welcome... (Head teacher, 9 June 2013).

After the meeting it turned out that the school did not have the full complement of teachers. Students in groups one and two, led by their leader, informed the head teacher that as students, some of them happened to come from deprived communities whilst others come from well-resourced communities. The student leader therefore pledged their assistance to the community school.

We have taken note of the situation of the teacher inadequacy and will try to help whenever we are free, we will discuss it among ourselves and see how we can schedule ourselves and make up for the shortfall in teachers.(Alhaji, Student Field notebook, 9 June 2013).

This provides evidence of attitudinal change by students in both groups. They had normalized and were engaging. The student participants consistently indicated in their field notebooks the numerous occasions they went to the school to teach or organize extracurricular activities, such as sports and recreational activities and practical gardening. A second student participant from group one wrote the following in her field notebook on day 4 of week 3, confirming that the community was benefiting from services such as teaching and extracurricular activities.

The group went to the school to help in the various classes by teaching, and those of us who were regulars gave class tests and marked them and gave them back to the pupils and asked them to write our comments about their work on a flip chart we provided and we later played football with the pupils. (Malia, field notebook, 9 June 2013).

Another student from group one indicated that the whole group fit with the school and met the head teacher and staff in a meeting:

The team therefore took over from the various class teachers and subject masters in the classrooms. I personally went to class four and taught almost three subjects before break. I also went to the JHS and taught social studies, and the school closed at exactly 2 p.m. (Budali, field notebook, 9 June 2013).

The evidence of Alhaji, Malia and Budali is indicative of the other student in the first group. Members of group two supported this assertion. One wrote in her field notebook:

Early in the morning after personal activities, the coordinator once again visited us, we interacted and he warned us about our mistakes. After that we went to the school. Our mission of going to the school was twofold, one group was to teach and the other group was to talk to the head about the classrooms, staff accommodation, enrolment and retention. (Eric, Field notebook, 9 June 2013).

Faith, a second student participant from group two, wrote this in her field notebook:

We visited the Community Primary school for data collection. We then went to greet the head teacher, after the group visited the head

teacher; I stayed to teach the children. I taught mathematics and another colleague taught religious studies and moral education, we later helped in the school garden sharing with them mulching and some techniques of gardening. Whilst we taught, we also gave pupils motivating messages. (Faith, Field notebook, 9 June 2013).

Abah, also of group two, recorded in her field notebook in relation to this that:

I went to the school to teach religious and moral education and also gave inspirational speeches to the kids. I asked them to aim high and work hard, some of them said they wanted to be nurses, pilots others wanted to be doctors, teachers, drivers etc. and I tried to encourage them to work hard. (Abah, Field notebook, 9 June 2013).

The quotes above reflect the position of the other three students in group two as well. The whole day was spent at the school interacting with teachers and pupils until it closed, at which time the students decided to continue their outreach. In the process of carrying out outreach, the issue of education was still paramount. A student participant had this in his field notebook indicating advocacy for girls' education:

The group went to Bator and Gao, suburbs of the community, to collect data. There were only three girls attending school in the whole suburb. We decided to dedicate our time to educating them on the need to send their female children to school. (Mary, Field notebook, 9 June 2013).

Both students of group one and two, by teaching and carrying out outreach, were engaging with community members and building the capacity of the community to improve the quality of schooling. Arguably, literacy levels are quite low in Northern Ghana and therefore the university, as part of its social responsibility to the people in its catchment area, ought to be assisting them in improving literacy levels and contributing effectively to national development. This engagement phase therefore enabled students of both groups one and two to interact more with the school and furthered their attitudinal change. Throughout these encounters, Wofa just sat quietly in a corner of the school reading a novel. Students later retired to their accommodation to rest and continue the next day.

Days Two to Three

On the second and third days of week three, the student participants and I revisited the women engaged in Shea butter extraction. Students in group two, especially the women, who normally used the butter for their hair, had no idea how it was produced and watched in amazement. They ventured to try it for themselves:

Aba, Mary and Faith bent forward and felt a sample of the Shea butter the women had provided, smelt it and also touched the pulp from which the butter was produced, they exclaimed that the smell was not too good. One of the female students rubbed some into her scalp. She further sat down on a piece of rag akin to the sitting position of the other women and begun to beat the pulp, in the process spilling some on her classmate. (Ethnographic notes, 10 June 2013).

It was an exciting and fascinating scene. The community women were happy seeing the university students sit down and participate in the process; it even drew the attention of bystanders. Students in group two were normalizing (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000).

Mary ran to a woman seated, sat down close to her and began gesticulating and throwing her arms just like the woman was doing and suddenly dipped her hand in the pulp and begun to do the same as the woman was doing, and this drew some laughter from the women. (Ethnographic notes, 10 June 2013).

They were enjoying what they were doing and this endeared them to the community women:

They beat the pulp, to the admiration of the women, who laughed and hailed them. All the six students in group two took turns to try their hand at some of the procedures. The women gave them some of the fresh shea fruits and they seemed to be enjoying them. (Ethnographic notes, 10 June 2013).

The group two students were developing the skills needed to participate in the culture and were eager to learn the culture of the community. Part of this process was learning about the Shea butter processing. Shea butter is made from the nuts of shea trees. The nuts are of significant economic value. Apart

from fetching foreign exchange for the government through export for the cosmetics market, it is used locally as cooking oil and for rubbing on the skin against the cold, dry weather in Northern Ghana from October to April. Community women form groups and process the shea nuts into butter. They do this in turns, assisting each other. Whilst students from group two were busily participating, I got closer and engaged them in a conversation. Whilst watching the procedures, one of the women involved in the extraction process narrated:

The nuts are first boiled, cracked and roasted, and then they are manually broken into pieces with a piece of wood shaped like an hourglass drum, or alternatively, crushed by an electric powered grinding mill. After this, we put the paste into pans, sit close to it, add boiling water and with our hands we beat it to a pulp until we separate the oil-like substance from the residue. We then put the oil-like substance into a pot and boil until the oil is separated from the sediments. We then separate the oil from the sediments and leave it to cool off forming into a thick paste of Shea butter which we then take to the market for sale. (Conversation with women in Shea butter extraction, 10 June 2013).

Since this was an all-female activity, Malia, the only woman in group one, had a shared understanding and was already familiar with the activity. She joined the women and participated normally. She already knew how to do it because of the shared understanding she had with them.

On the 3rd day, after the previous day's encounter with the Shea butter extractors, this is what Faith, a female student from group two, said to me:

My stay in this community and interaction with the local people has taught me some lessons that would spur me into action after completion to strive to better the lot of rural people. (Conversation with Faith, 12 June 2013).

Aba, another student in group two, stated:

In fact what I have seen and experienced here has taught me a lot, from here I would consider lobbying NGOs to help some of the communities, especially in the areas of microcredit and education. (Conversation with Abah, 12 June 2013).

Saha, also of group two, added:

These women work so hard even under deplorable conditions, see how they were sitting on their floor with flies all over. There was no proper shelter except for the shade of the tree; at least some sheds should be constructed for these enterprising women. (Conversation with Saha, 12 June 2013).

The other three members of group two could not but agree with the sentiments of these three above. Although this reveals an intention to lobby for the community and thus connects with the potential contribution towards socio economic transformation, it is an attitudinal change brought about by a deep understanding of another culture, as similarly expressed by other participants at this stage. The students were beginning to engage and develop strong desires to function beyond their own communities. This falls in line with the policy objective of exposing students to the nexus of development problems of the north and enabling them to build resilience to rural deprivations. This places them in strategic positions to be able to frame and implement policies in the future that would address these deprivations. To further underscore this shift, Eric, a student in group two, whom I observed closely on account of his gentle manners when he first came, affirmed what the others said. He admitted that:

It is lovely to be with these rural dwellers, especially the kids; you learn a lot and appreciate your privileged position or your own difficulties in life. For me the modesty and tenacity of purpose displayed by the villagers made me reflect on my own circumstances, having seen their level of poverty. I instantly felt the urge to do something in the future to alleviate the deplorable situations in these communities. (Conversation with Eric, 12 June 2013).

These findings are unique in many respects, emanating from the shock stage into the normalisation stage (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). The state of the village caused a number of the students to offer unsolicited reflections on the poverty and suffering of rural people:

In fact, had I not come to the community I would not have realised the extent of poverty in the rural areas, the quality of life is so low,

no portable water, sanitation and toilets. (Mary, group two, reflects in her field notebook, 12 June 2013).

These shock-induced inquiries and reflections (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000, p.17) were most frequent for students in group two. They revealed the tensions and inner conflicts associated with the normalisation stage. The whole third day was spent at the Shea butter extraction site, because it raised very critical issues of women's empowerment, rural poverty and the need for micro-financing for these women. The students therefore participated, and in the process, documented the steps in the production chain. They also took photographs for their community report. The day ended with discussions about the importance of promoting the shea tree as a cash crop for the north.

Week Three - Day Four

On the fourth day of week three (13 June 2013), the field guide indicated that students were to intensify data collection. Therefore the students set themselves the task to gather data on "population characteristics" (Student Community report, 2013, pp. 5-11). They went round from house to house and held meetings with landlords and segments of the community to collect data on population characteristics and household sizes. In the process of gathering all these data, the first group was already engaging because they were able to identify with the lives and culture of the community, by virtue of a shared culture and understandings. As a result, they were now enjoying and coping with the community (Rockquemore and Shaffer, 2000). It offered the prospect of making good grades when the assessors came to assess them on the last day, in addition to whatever dividends they would gain from the community programme. Students normally do a presentation of the research they have undertaken for the past six weeks that they have been in the community. They are graded as a group and also as individuals, who are asked questions in turns after the group presentation. There is also a peer to peer assessment, where students grade their classmates in terms of the level of interaction and contribution to the research report.

The second group of students was, by now, beginning to crystallize the changes in their attitude. The experiential and practical knowledge they were acquiring was beginning to increase the tempo of their engagement:

I realized that some group two students would normally move to join the community youth at their bases (known as ghettos) and whilst a few others would walk leisurely and sit and converse with the bicycle mechanic. At times they would be seen sitting with the petty trader or the food vendor, some honored invitations to community members and were treated to local meals. I personally observed these and some were recounted to me after their return.

Box 4.4 (Ethnographic Field notes, 13 June 2013).

The group had normalized and was beginning to immerse and function within both their world and the world of the community, as indicated in my field notes:

The students in group two particularly asked for bicycles from community members and began to learn how to ride. Mary and Eric were seen today teaching each other how to ride; they were aided by a young man from the community who offered them his bicycle. Bicycles are not common in the south because of the improved roads and transport systems, such as buses and trains, but are popular in the north because of the existence of feeder roads for carting foodstuff to local markets. Two of the women, Saha and Faith, from group two, were also seen with the women in Shea butter processing to further learn the procedures involved. One other person in group two, along with group one, remained at home to do cooking following the recipe for a local dish they had learnt the previous day.

Box 4.5 (Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 13 June 2013).

On the fifth day of week three (15 June 2013), I followed the students around as they gathered further data on the population characteristics. We came across a noteworthy gathering. This scene was captured in my field notes as:

This is a celebration of the final funeral rite of a deceased community member. It is characterized by drumming and dancing. This is to bid farewell to the departed soul of the deceased. The young men and women are robed elegantly in bright traditional colours and fabrics in pomp and pageantry. The event is characterized by the sound of flutes, responded to with intricate dance patterns. The community dancers are responding to the sound of the drums with deft movements with finesse. The students, especially, those who do not hail from the north, are visibly ecstatic and jump onto the dance floor uninvited but it nonetheless raised a lot of laughter from community members.

Box 4.6 (Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 15 June 2013).

The students later discussed the ceremony and what they saw on that day, recounting how they enjoyed it and eventually jumped in ecstatically to dance. All of the students in group two were enhancing their relationship building, which is crucial to learning and therefore to attitudinal change. Now their relationships with community members were based on common human bonds as opposed to pity (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). In a conversation with Geshon, he stated:

In fact now we see the community members as friends, as human beings, contrary to when we first arrived. We initially thought these community members must be super human to survive in the state we first found them. Now everything seems normal to us and we see them as normal people. (Conversation with Geshon, 15 June 2013).

Students in group two eventually came to recognize the humanity of the community participants and developed empathy and began to share by giving the community children gifts of biscuits, cakes, and pencils. These actions are encompassed by Rockquemore and Schaffer's (2000) normalization stage. Aba, a student in group two, remarked;

Next year when we come I am going to bring all my childhood reading books for the community children. (Conversation with Aba, 15 June 2013).

On the same day, as part of their usual rounds to elicit data, the students came across a naming ceremony.

These, like most African ceremonies, are interspersed occasionally with drumming and dancing. The students and I sat in to witness the process. The ceremony began with bringing out the new born baby, the recitation of the Muslim call to prayer (Azzan) and some Quranic verses in his ears and the mention of the name that had been selected by his father and mother earlier, after the religious leader had submitted a number of names to them. It was later followed by cooking in large iron pots for distribution to invited guests, kith and kin.

Box 4.7 (Ethnographic field notes, 15 June 2013).

In all of these ceremonies, the clothing of the community members and the different ways they did things were somehow strange to students from group

two and to Wofa, who all came from southern Ghana. The students in group two were particularly anxious to see how the procedure differed from that of the south, which is mainly Christian. The students in group one, on the other hand, were used to the customs and traditions of the community and nothing looked strange. Wofa, the lone group three student, in addition to the unfamiliarity of the rites, was also bored and wanted them to move ahead and finish for the day. Students in the first two groups looked excited and took to the floor to dance; although out of rhythm, it nevertheless caused a lot of laughter amongst the village folk, who were happy to see the students participating. These quotes from three of the students from group two underscore the fact that they were now fully immersed in the community:

I really love the semicircular sitting pattern of the community elders who had come to name the child and the gender segregation where women were at the cooking section whilst men did the naming. A surprise was the shaving of the baby's hair and the circumcision; I was later told it is a traditional ways of breaking the link between the baby and the world he came from. (Conversation with Eric, group two, 15 June 2013).

Aba stated:

I felt so happy seeing the dancers in their traditional regalia and their swift and perfect movement to the drums, I am so excited and will learn some dance movements before I leave this community. (Conversation with Abah, group two, 15 June 2013). Yet Saha, another student from this group, said:

Initially when we got to the community, everything was quiet, I did not for a moment think this community was this lively, I just love the local music, and the Assemblyman must help me record it. (Conversation with Saha, 15 June 2013).

Faith said:

I wish I had a video camera to record these dancers. I enjoyed the scene so much, the *Gonji* music and dance is just exciting, the way the community members wriggled their waist was simply nice, I hope we have more ceremonies. (Conversation with Faith, 15 June 2013).

Students in this group tried to practice some aspects of the culture, such as music and dance and the preparation of local dishes, as evidenced by their participation in garri processing. Eric stated:

I went to the garri processing site to help peel cassava, and later in the evening we had football training with the community team and later held a group meeting. (Eric, Field notebook, 15 June 2013).

Clearly their relationship building had moved to a higher level within the stage of normalization and was moving towards the engagement stage within the framework of Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000). The above quotes indicate that Eric, Saha, Abah, Faith and the other two members of the group were making progress in terms of enhancing relationship building, and were about reach engagement. The responses from Eric, Saha, Abah and Faith were indicative of the other two students from group two. Most of the students in group two were adapting to their new circumstances, they were building their rapport and getting accustomed to new ways of life, experiences, the glaring poverty and deprivation (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). They were now very comfortable and building more relationships with colleagues and community members, thus overcoming the initial shock that the new environment presented (Rockquemore & Schaffer (Ibid). They ate with their new friends, shared live experiences and accepted gifts of vegetables from community members. The first group were already in the third stage of engaging, and they continued on that tangent. Conversely, the lone student in group three was still reeling in the shock stage.

After the ceremony, whilst on our way to the accommodation, students in group two and I visited a local *koko*⁹ seller to acquaint ourselves with the processes involved in making the *koko*. The seller was a popular woman in the vicinity and knew everybody and their households. Since I could easily enter certain local networks because of my fluency of both languages spoken, I had previously established a rapport with the *koko* seller and her assistants in the community. This had become the main breakfast for most of the students, so the students

⁹Koko is a form of porridge made from fermented maize, millet or guinea corn flour.

and I visited the *koko* seller one early Saturday morning to have a first-hand view of how it is prepared.

At the *koko* sellers place;

We saw huge earthenware, aluminum pots and pans filled with soaked maize and millet. We also saw some of the millet mixed with spices like ginger and pepper ready to be sent to the only grinding mill in the community. Some of the flour had just returned from the mill and was being processed with a first step of sieving using a thin white material that held up the chaff. They listened attentively as the woman took them through the steps in the preparation of the *koko*.

Box 4.8 (Ethnographic field notes, 15 June 2013).

Some of the students asked questions about the kinds of spices normally added to the flour, and the *koko* seller asked her daughter to bring samples of ginger, black pepper, and some other spices called “*mosuro and Kanafrī*” in the *Dagbanli* language, one of the languages widely spoken in the community. Some of the students, especially the women in group two, obtained permission from the woman to join her in the sieving, about which they were very excited. One of them said,

Oh, I drink *Koko* once in a while on campus, but I have never seen how it is made, it's so cumbersome (Geshon, group two, 15 June 2013).

Whilst with the *Koko* seller, I noted the reactions of the student participants, which I captured in the following ethnographic fieldnotes.

It was full of fun especially for those from the southern sector who had never witnessed the process. They laughed together with the *koko* seller at the way a student was practicing the sieving but she persisted. This participation and hands on assistance was gradually endearing the students to the community members. In the end the woman thanked the students and asked them to come for some *koko* the next morning. The students were visibly elated for having just learnt how to prepare *koko* and indicated that they would come back to the woman when they were less busy to polish up their skills and then try preparing it before they leave the community.

Box 4.9: Ethnographic field notes, June 2013

As we departed, they kept discussing the process and the taste of the spices used. This encounter of learning how to make *koko* and the yearning to come back on a later day signaled the shifts in the attitudes of the students and their readiness to learn the culture of others. Later in the evening, the students spent time discussing the euphoria they had felt that day. The student participants retired early to bed, looking forward to the weekend and the following week, when they would begin a new area of data collection.

WEEK FOUR

The following was the work plan for week four in the field guide:

Table 4.8: Work plan for Week Four

- Intensive data collection: Quantitative sample and specimen collection Problem and Potential Analysis using tools such as SWOT, Problem Tree and Tanking (Field Guide, 2013, p. 3)

Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives.

Week Four - Day One to Two

During the fourth week, the students were tasked with performing problem and potential analyses of the community. Students were to carry out an overview and analysis of the problems of the community using PRA techniques such as the problem tree, the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and pair wise ranking which were only part of the community engagement project and not ethnographic research tools. This is in line with the university policy as text, which requires the “practical learning and diagnosis of community problems, and building capacity in northern Ghana” (Policy document, 2013). Students therefore organized a group discussion with community members on the Monday of the fourth week. This was done through the Chief, the Assemblyman, the key informant, and an active woman organizer whom the students had identified in the previous week. They also invited anyone they met while moving around by word of mouth:

On that Monday at about 3 p.m., the chief’s palace was packed to capacity and overflowing. Students had informed community members about the agenda and invited the village drummers to spice up the occasion, so even as people strolled in; others were busy dancing to the sound of drums. At around half past 3, the chief signaled the drummers to pause for the discussion to proceed. The Assemblyman first addressed the gathering,

followed by the chief and the leader of the students, who spoke the language of the people, which he later translated for his colleagues. He told the gathering that as university students they had a duty to work together with community members to come up with their most pressing problem and thereafter write a proposal to the District Assembly for possible intervention. He reiterated that they were in no position to undertake the projects themselves but would make the proposal available to the District Assembly, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community based organizations (CBOs) who might come to their assistance.

Box 4.10: Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 17 June 2013

This was a significant event for locals to discuss the problems of the community, and it was quite lengthy and heated. One participant said:

Our main problems is electricity, it looks like we are not part of Ghana, in fact when I go to the city at night I feel happy and at the same time underprivileged and marginalized when I look back to this village. So lights are our number one problem. (Garri Processor, 17 June 2013).

A number of people supported him and clapped and applauded. A few others disagreed and mentioned other problems which in their view were more pressing. (Ethnographic Field notes, 17 June 2013).

Another participant sprang up and disagreed. According to him:

Our number one problem is portable drinking water, this river serves everybody; we compete with animals for drinking water and when it gets dried up during the dry season, our women have to suffer trekking long distances in search of water. (Teacher, 17 June 2013).

Another woman got up and said that for her:

The community needs a market where we can sell our wares and foodstuff which usually gets rotten in the farms. Carrying our wares and foodstuffs to ... other markets is usually a burden. From the market we can raise money to connect the light and drill boreholes. (Petty trader and farmer, 17 June 2013).

These drew the loudest applause and laughter, with many others disagreeing with the suggestion. Others, like the farmer again, mentioned fertilizer and farm inputs, and a new primary school building. After a back and forth discussion the

student leader thanked the community members and asked that the problems be ranked in a certain order.

My brothers and sisters, uncles and aunties, fathers and mothers, fellow students, at this juncture we are going to put the problems that have been mentioned to a vote in a particular way which I will explain... (Referring to the pair wise ranking method) (Student leader, 17 June 2013).

Using the pair wise ranking technique, he wrote on a flip chart: Water, Electricity, and Market, Fertilizer/Farm inputs, and School building (using rows and columns), and paired one problem with the others horizontally and vertically. Community members then voted until the last pairing. Potable water emerged as the most pressing problem of the community. The chief thanked everyone including the students and they dispersed, arguing as they each took the path to their houses.

The next few days witnessed discussions and arguments about the choice of the problem. Some wished that they had chosen electricity; others wished it were a market, and others also felt a modern school block was important. In any case what was evident in their faces and arguments was that everybody was quite happy, although some would have wished for electricity or a school or market.

Box 4.11: Ethnographic field notes, 18 June 2013

I think the pair wise ranking went well; I personally enjoyed it, especially seeing the concept practicalised. (Student field notebook, Budali, Group One, 18 June 2013).

It was so nice to hear the community members argue as to which problem was most pressing, the one who preferred a market to water made his point so passionately... (Student field notebook, Saha, Group two, 18 June 2013).

A certain awareness of the diagnosed community problems had been created, and the discussions continued for the next few days, as evidenced in the quotes above. Students were visibly happy having just implemented and witnessed the working of the PRA technique of pair wise ranking. Thompson (2010) advocates the use of pair wise ranking (as employed by the students) as a

group design making mechanism that is inclusive, transparent and fair and undertaken in a manner that prioritise and ranks community needs in an iterative process of comparison (p.1).

Therefore this process was an apt occasion for a democratic participation by community stakeholders. A follow up meeting was held by students and focus groups on 22 June, a week later, to firm up the details of the problem and potentials of the population, and particularly water and sanitation, which had emerged as the most pressing problem of the community. After the community meeting to do the pair-wise ranking, students retired to their accommodation, and later, went different ways, whilst I stayed to reflect on my field notes.

Week 4: Days Three - Four

On the third and fourth days of week four, the students concentrated on gathering data on agriculture, health and rural industry, still in line with the university policy as text, which enjoins students to undergo:

Table 4.9: Specific University engagement policy driving plan for week 4

Practical learning and diagnosis of community problems, and... promoting an active and constructive interaction of both students and staff with local communities to facilitate socio economic transformation (Policy document, 1993).
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Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives.

Student organized themselves into three new groups of 4, 4, and 3 to gather data on the above areas. These groups differed remarkably from the original groups that emerged from my observation and which I used in the mapping process in this chapter. The second groupings had students with particular disciplines placed with a group in their respective related area (See Table 3.1 and 2, in the methodology chapter). The students identified areas of strength and accordingly assigned roles to themselves. For instance, Alhaji, the agricultural science student and two others, Med and Faith, were to be responsible for collating information on agricultural and science related issues. Eric, Wofa, and Malia, nursing, nutrition and health education students, respectively, took care of health and nutrition, whilst Geshon, Budali, Saha and Abah, the two management science students and development studies students, respectively, dealt with social and cultural issues like transportation, social amenities and participatory aspects of the data collection.

I followed Alhaji's group, who were to gather data on Agriculture, and so they identified a farmer and we visited him, after holding discussions with him, they offered to accompany him to his farms closer to the village. It was one of his rice fields and he was so delighted to have the students with him. Whilst at the paddy field, two scenarios were particularly noted by the students and me. This was the use of music produced by children hitting empty cans and scarecrows to scare away birds on the rice field.

Box 4.12: Ethnographic field notes, 19 June 2013

The farmer described some other local techniques used on their farms:

We normally even use cow dung and other animal droppings to sprinkle on crops in backyard gardens to prevent animals from chewing the leaves of the crops. You know animals do not like the scent of their droppings. (Community farmer, 19 June 2013).

Everybody burst out in laughter; later students recounted and praised these unconventional but effective techniques practiced by the local farmers. (Ethnographic Field notes, 19 June 2013).

Later in the day, I then left this group and caught up with the second group, looking at health. In line with the field guide's guidelines for collecting data on health and the policy document objective of conducting research and gathering data for community diagnosis, this group arranged to visit the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA). Observing and interacting with the TBA of the community, I noted the following:

The TBA demonstrated considerable experience and expertise in the area of deliveries. When I probed her further she pointed out the indigenous and local signs of labour to us and told us that she delivered almost all the children in the community in the last 15 years except a few difficult ones, whose mothers had complications and had to be sent to the next village to be delivered by a trained midwife. She displayed practical knowledge of the process of labour and delivery, which she later told us were reinforced at workshops organized by the Ghana Health service in which she was a participant.

Box 4.13: Ethnographic Field notes, 19 June 2013

The students were learning some indigenous knowledge from this woman, and this tied in with the policy objective of building capacity and changing attitudes to foster a deep understanding and more humanity, and by extension, facilitating the development of multicultural worldviews by the students. After this encounter, I moved to join the third group who were gathering data on

transportation, communication and social amenities. The group were talking to and interviewing a number of community members. They found that:

...the community lacks a lot of social amenities and infrastructure like a post office, telephones and bus stops, and that the community was linked by a network of footpaths that connects the whole community. The village had one rickety truck that ferried the women to nearby markets. (Student Community Report, pp.12-13).

The three new groups later shared their findings with their colleagues at their usual evening “post mortem”, which were periods they used to review their daily task before going to bed. The understandings of both group one and group two students were growing, and they were now engaging intensely by discussing issues like poor water and sanitation, high population growth, and early marriages that had come up in their interactions with community members, and thinking about what could be done. At the same time they were reconciling some of the theoretical things they had learnt on campus with what they were discovering in the process of data collection (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). The practical act of prioritizing the most pressing problems of the community through the “pair wise ranking technique” brought out the nexus of theory and practice (Day, 2008) clearly to the student participants. The outcomes of this are mutual benefits to both the students and the community in a feedback loop (Trowler & Wareham, 2007).

They were becoming assimilated into the community and appreciating the way of life and traditions. They could now eat the food of the community comfortably without any stomach cramps, they roamed the length and breadth of the community alone, rode bicycles to nearby communities to charge their phones and to buy some items they needed. They organized football matches with their colleagues in other communities and with the school children. They walked to the school in their own time to teach and organized literacy classes at night for the youth. They began to interact more with community members, went out by themselves to play games, take strolls and make new friends.

Box 4.14: Ethnographic Field notes, 19 June 2013

By day one to day three, the students, especially those in group two, who had long passed the period of adjustment in the preceding three weeks, were engaging and had become used to the new life they had been thrust into. These

groups came home at different periods, coming and going freely in a manner that indicated they viewed this place as their home, and they were very comfortable to come and go as they pleased, whilst ensuring they completed their programme task.

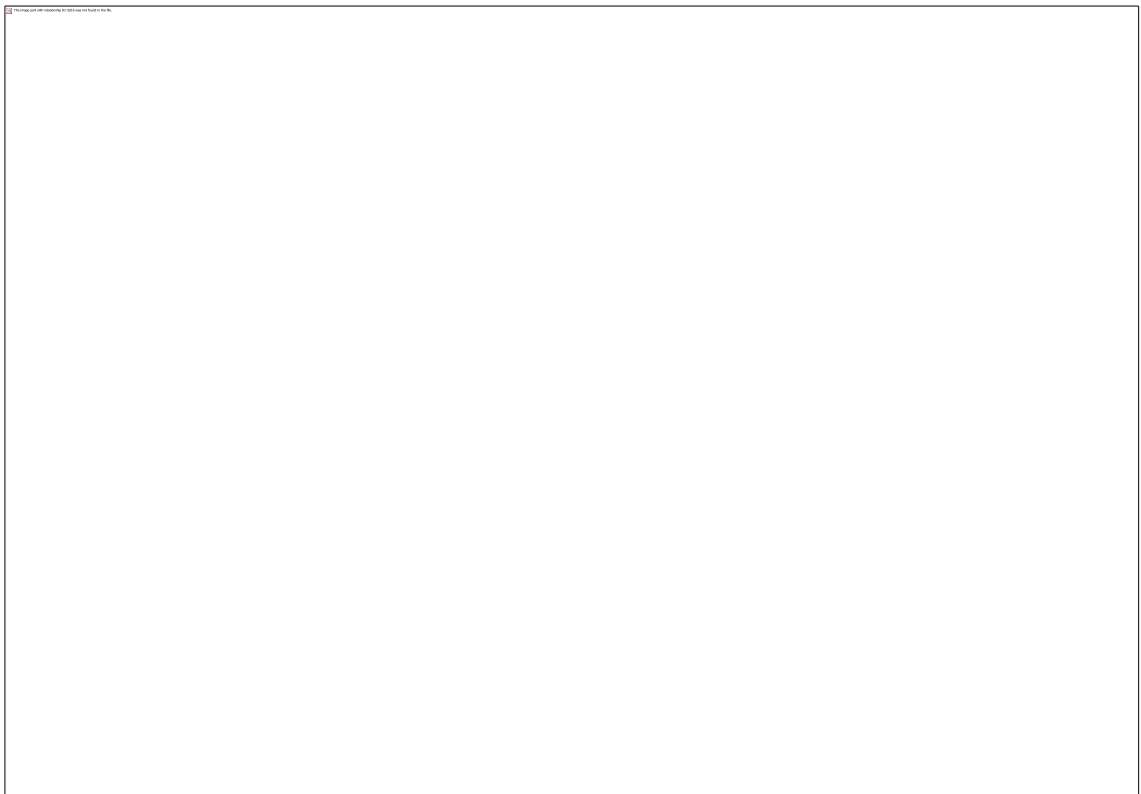
Week Four - Day Four to Five

The task assigned to students by the field guide and the policy objective of building their capacity and diagnosing community problems led to an increase in the rate of immersion because they needed to interact intensely with community members and build more rapport in order to gather the data they wanted. At this stage, three male group one students were often seen, following their officially assigned tasks, joining community members to play a game called *Wali*, referred to earlier as a pastime of the male community members.

At this stage the student data collection had slowed down considerably since much of the data had been collected. Since the students needed to complete their report for the District Assembly and the university, the remaining data had to be collected from the Assembly at the district capital. Therefore, on day five, 21 June 2013, all six members of group two were assigned to travel to the district capital to source technical data from the District Assembly on the cost involved in the construction of five boreholes to enable them write their project and build their budget estimates. They were also to source data from the Meteorological Department on rainfall patterns in the area. All the six in the original group two had to go to the capital anyway because they also needed to buy some toiletries and other items like sugar, batteries and tea from the big town. Although the villagers provided them with some food, they still needed to prepare their own breakfast and sometimes to satisfy their preferences. The trip coincided with the sitting of the Assembly and so the students were elegantly attired in their various traditional costumes and it was delightful to watch. This scene is key to developing them as future evidence informed policy makers who can use research and have a deep understanding of the problems of the rural populations in the North of Ghana because they have worked and lived with them. They created a multicultural and diverse atmosphere at the sitting. They returned late and immediately went to bed.

Week Four - Day Six

After the previous meeting with the community where they selected the most pressing problem, a meeting was again scheduled to further deliberate on the issues that had emerged at the first meeting and to clarify the pair wise ranking. Evidence of this exercise, as recorded in a student field notebook, is shown below:



Document 4.3 Student Field Notebook (2013)

Table 4.10 (Typed doc.-student field notes, 2013)

<p>Date: 22 June 2013 Day: SATURDAY DAY 34 <u>ACTIVITY</u> Continuation of soliciting views from the stakeholders. <u>Procedure</u>: We had a meeting with the Assemblyman, unit committee members and two social groups in the community to discuss the problems and potentials on the population characteristics. Among the problem were 1. High dependency ration 2. High levels of school drop out 3. High population growth</p>	<p>Some of the interventions identified are as follows Educating the communities on the importance of education Advise communities on the effects of early marriage. We also discussed on water, health and sanitation problems and potentials <u>Problems on water</u> Insufficient portable drinking water Defecating around wells <u>Solutions</u> 1. Provision of boreholes 2. Cleaning around wells 3. Curbing indiscriminate waste disposal</p>
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Source: Student Field note Book.

On 22 June, the students again met with community members at the chief's palace, and they discussed at length the issues of water and sanitation and the population dynamics of the community. Students took the opportunity to educate the community on good sanitation practices and spoke at length on open defecation and its health hazards. But the community members argued that:

We don't have toilets, so what do we do? The only option is to defecate in the bush. (Community participant, 22 June 2013).

Alhaji agreed with the community members but called on them to go very far and dig to cover the faecal matter. He also asked the Assembly man to impress on the District Assembly to provide toilets for the community. (Ethnographic field notes, 22 June 2013).

It must be noted that this was part of the remit of the health students in the group; they had an obligation to educate the community about issues of health and sanitation to give meaning to the multidisciplinary composition and nature of the student team. At this follow up discussion, ten of the students showed some enthusiasm, appeared happy, smiled and interacted quite openly with community members they met at the chief's palace and were meeting for the second time or, for some, more. However, Wofa, the lone student, also witnessed the process but showed no visible signs of enjoying it or having

experienced anything. The group two students were by now conversant with the community in their own way, and they began to address community members in the village by their correct names and titles, whilst some community members were becoming closer and making friends with them by coming to their accommodation to greet and chat with them. They were now seriously engaging (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000).

Abah, a female student who hails from Southern Ghana, had this to say:

I can now say that I have learnt a lot practically about some cultural explanations relating to some farming practices, particularly the case of sprinkling cow dung and animal droppings to prevent animals from chewing crops in the backyard garden and the use of music and scarecrows to ward off birds from eating the unharvested rice on the field. I think going forward it would help me in the future in my development education work. (Conversation with Abah, group two, 22 June 2013).

The changes in attitudes were clearly visible although gradual, as the students reviewed their own cultural beliefs and behaviour in relation to other cultures and began to “broaden their cultural responsivity to other cultures” in the community (Zion & Kozleski, 2005).

Whilst those of group two were increasingly becoming excited, at the same time they were reflecting on the sad state of the infrastructure in the community. Nonetheless, Wofa, from group three, continued to be nostalgic and kept reflecting back to the beginning of his seven week stay, recounting his early experiences. After the community meeting, the students and I returned to meet Wofa alone at the accommodation. Apparently he had left earlier. At this stage the feeling of the changes in experience could be seen in the faces of the students. It was evident for all of the students with the exception of Wofa. He said:

When I got to the community, I knew nobody, other students and I had to ask our way to the Assembly man’s house, he welcomed us and tried to put us at ease but I was not ease. I began to look around, the sight of the round huts, roofed with thatch seemed to attract my attention and amazed me; it was completely different from

the rectangular mansions and flats that I was used to. I was going to live here for seven weeks; I thought it would be exciting and at the same time challenging and difficult at the end. (Wofa, Student from group three, 22 June 2013).

The seven weeks have been so hard for me, how I wish time would just fly and I can get packing, honestly I am bored here, although it is nice to be with other students though, but I think I am just not enjoying the village. (Conversation with Wofa, 22 June 2013).

Evidence in the quotes above suggests Wofa was still pessimistic and felt that the past four weeks had been long and boring. Although he was then paired with others to collect data, all he did was providing some stationery and other support and stay back:

As I stood with Wofa trying to find out what I need to do to make him interested, a community based participant comes along and after exchanging greetings tells me that this student is always acting like a stranger, "As for this man, he is always alone and looks like a stranger although his friends are very active in our community. (Ethnographic field notes, 22 June 2013).

To the extent that some community members recognized Wofa's nonchalant attitude and apathy or disinterest in the affairs of the community indicates that some students go through the entire seven weeks without, unfortunately, fulfilling the obligations imposed by the programme policy of cultivating a favourable attitude towards working and living in rural communities, developing multicultural worldviews and also building their capacity to be useful leaders to the nation in the future.

I really don't see how staying in this village adds to our studies and life, I mean, apart from the fact that we need to score some marks and also the fact that it is compulsory, I would have opted out. (Conversation with Wofa, 22 June 2013).

This quote makes Wofa's position very clear. In my conversations with him throughout week four, there was ample evidence that he still had difficulties coming to terms with the engagement, as evidenced in the quote above. I then said good-bye to the students to go back to the city and visit my family for the weekend and returned to start week five.

WEEK FIVE

The task in the field guide for students in week five was essentially for them to analyze the data and compile their report, as seen in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Schedule for Week Five

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Analysis and synthesis• Validation of findings• And writing of Report
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Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives

This is in line with the policy objective of gathering data for problem solving and diagnosis of community problems, and for further research. Students therefore came together to synthesize their data and begin to write their report. At this stage, apart from Wofa, the students from the first two groups admitted, in a conversation with me, that one of the aims of the programme was to enable the inculcation of “favourable attitudes to working and living in rural communities” while at the same time “exposing students practically to the development problems of Northern Ghana” (Student Community Report, 2013, p.1). In the process of compiling and analysing their data, I had a conversation with the students about what they thought about their journeys so far. This is what Eric, a group two student, told me in a conversation, which demonstrates a shift in his position from week one and is indicative of the other students’ views in group two:

...at the orientation the emphasis was for us to be able to change our attitudes towards the rural communities so that in the end we can appreciate their problems and together with them we can design solutions to them, and really we are now becoming a part of the community. (Conversation with Eric, 24 June 2013).

Saha, another student in group two, affirmed Eric’s position. He said:

We now roam alone in singles and consolidate our friendships with community members, tell them about ourselves and our hometowns and ask community members about their lives and their families... (Conversation with Saha, 24 June 2013).

This understanding is meant to foster in students the need to work effectively in any rural and deprived setting in the future, and to orient students to take a look at the governance structures and how they affect grassroots participation and development as well as their role in spurring socio economic transformation in rural areas. Above all, students' attitudinal changes could lead to their reconciliation and engagement with the scope of structural inequalities in rural and deprived communities (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). This could cause them to reframe their perspectives and beliefs thereby becoming the genesis of the socio economic transformation of Northern Ghana and beyond (Willis-Cain & Keitsmeier, 1991, p.17). Besides all of the data collected and the time spent in writing their report, they were also interacting with community members on a daily basis. Whilst some students followed community members to their farms, others busied themselves by visiting the various income generation activities, such as garri¹⁰ processing and Shea butter extraction.

WEEK SIX AND SEVEN

The task for weeks six and seven, from 1 July to 14 July 2013 are shown in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Schedule for Weeks 6 and 7

Finalize report Prepare for Assessment Undertake final Assessment • And Depart

Source: TTFPP Policy Objectives

Week Six

At this stage students were writing and compiling their reports and also preparing and practicing for their group presentations. I was still observing and interacting with them during this period. Out of the eleven students, the first group of four had fully engaged right from the start of week one and were very happy and used to life in the community. This was evident in their high level of participation, discussions about events in the community and their interaction with the youth of the community. They spent time organizing and playing games

¹⁰ This is a processed food made out of grated cassava widely consumed in parts of West Africa.

with the young men and children of the community. For the second group of six, the shift in attitude was not as fast as it was for the first group of four. At the commencement of the engagement, the students in this group had a few misgivings. However, they eventually, by the third to fifth and sixth weeks, fully developed favourable attitudes towards living in the community. Conversely, Wofa in group three, contrary to what I observed about his colleagues in groups one and two and what they shared with me, suggested that life in the community was not easy for him. He stated that he was frightened and scared for his health and also lamented the absence of electricity, potable water, and some types of food, telephone reception, internet connectivity, and entertainment facilities. He felt it was a great challenge to live without these things. He confirmed this in his statement:

...the isolated and boring lives of the community, where you can't even get bottled water and other necessities to buy. (Conversation with Wofa, group 3 student, 1 July 2013).

When some students complained about the accommodation, the Community Coordinator responded;

Students, having to live in such conditions themselves are part of the scheme of making you appreciate the conditions under which people in rural and deprived communities live and to help you develop dispositions towards resolving them in future. (Conversation with Community Coordinator, 3 July 2013).

The two quotes above give an indication of Wofa's experiences and reactions to the programme and the position of the Coordinator, who worked for the university and described the kinds of objectives that the programme seeks to achieve. The sense of deprivation experienced by some of the students, probably in response to the lack of certain basic amenities as mentioned above, suggests that a student like Wofa was yet to acquire the immunity system that these rural dwellers had built over the years. Evidence across week one to five suggest that the attitudinal changes did not all occur at once. Whilst they occurred rapidly for group one, by virtue of these students' having shared understandings and a similar cultural background, the shift by group two was

gradual and they gained much, whilst that of Wofa of group three was very slow and, in fact, did not change at all. However, it could be surmised that although Wofa was the least interactive and isolated on account of his different worldview, he might be the one to attain power in the future to influence policy, because people who are highly connected with the rich and powerful tend to be the ones to gain positions of power in most African countries, and Ghana is no exception (Shepherd et al., 2004). His background became apparent in the second groupings, at the specialized data collection stage, when he distributed money for his colleagues to travel to the district capital while he stayed back in his room. However, the other students might also attain powerful positions based on their connections, networks and on their own merit.

The data revealed that the student's trajectories for change were different (Trowler, 2010) in terms of "notions of directions and magnitude of the trajectories" (Macleod, 1992, p.60). Students in group one and two could therefore take the opportunity present by the community programme to learn about power and influence in the country by gleaning more about what Wofa thinks about the future socio-economic transformation of Ghana. Wofa stated that it was nice to be with the students, indicating that positive relationships between him and them had either developed on campus prior to meeting in the village or were developed in the village.

During the sixth week in the community, usually between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. after supper had been eaten, the students would gather and talk about a variety of issues related to their stay. On one of these nights, they discussed the hospitality in the community, the desire of community members to share even the little they had, and how that was amazing and worth emulating:

Sometimes, I am so amazed at how the community members are so kind, I can see they don't have enough yet they cook and serve us, and when we decline they feel offended, so what can we do, we just have to eat. I wish I could help some of them. I pray that I pick up this good habit of kindness and care for people. (Abah, 3 July 2013).

I was particularly not enthused just by looking at the dilapidated school building, but deep inside me I knew I wanted to make a

difference and impact on the educational system in the community whilst in the community. (Saha, 4 July 2013).

This community deserves a better deal from the government, they work hard and contribute to the agricultural sector of the country, yet they are left to suffer, they do not even have basic necessities like water, toilets, a market and a good transport system. (Med, 4 July 2013).

In the view of Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000), such statements reflect shifts and are characteristic of the engagement stage of reflecting, reconciling, asking inner questions and making attributions to such discrepancies, reconciling them with the scope of structural inequalities, and beginning to think of advocacy and challenging society, which in the long run serve as fertile grounds for their cognitive growth (Eyler and Giles, 1999). In the last days, whilst those of group one were already fully immersed in the community, the students of group two also began to internalize the objectives of the programme, as observed through their behaviour of deep immersion in the community. They articulated the values of praising and identifying with the norms that they encountered (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000). As the university policy indicated, the experience inculcated into them favourable attitudes towards working and living in deprived communities and a commitment to advocating for the impoverished and marginalized villagers, such that they could work together to eradicate poverty and work for equity. Members of group two were now fully immersed and interacted broadly and confidently and were virtually part of the community. On the last day of week six, the Coordinator came around and distributed materials including flip charts, markers, pins and pens to the students so that they could prepare their presentations.

WEEK SEVEN

During the last week of the programme, the student in groups one and two expressed the desire for an extension in their stay and sadness about leaving the community. This signified a real shift in their behaviour and attitudes.

I am going to miss my best food in the community, this food vendor is just too kind, sometimes when I don't have money she kindly serves

me, I don't know what to say to her, I think in the future I have to come back and look for her. I owe her. (Faith, 6 July 2013).

In fact, how I wish we could stay a bit longer, now that we are enjoying the community we have to leave, I now have a lot of friends in the community. (Eric, Group two, 6 July 2013).

After thanking the chief and his elders and all of the community members for attending the event which followed the assessment, the Coordinator took a copy of the report and stated:

This copy will be forwarded to the District Assembly for their consideration. It is now left to the Assembly representative to follow it up. The university and students on their own will check at the Assembly whenever the opportunity arises to see whether they have responded to your plea. (Coordinator, July 2013).

The submission of their findings to the District Assembly is strategic because it constitutes crucial evidence of the students acting as advocates for change for their peers and also of their attitudinal change and fulfillment of the requirements of the university policy. The quotes and evidence above from the previous weeks suggest a shift in understanding and indicate that they now see the university engagement programme as worthwhile, as they prepare to leave. The students have actively participated in community activities such as naming ceremonies, funerals, group discussions and a number of income generating activities undertaken by the women in the community, as shown in tables 3.2 and 3.3, pp. **60-62** of the methodology chapter.

However, the student in group three, who had already begun arranging to be picked up by his parents, was always indoors and looked scared because of the taboos, stories of snakes, crocodiles and mosquitoes bites in the community. He was restless and wanted to leave because he was not enjoying his stay. I observed that his process of adjustment had been affected by these unfamiliar customs due to his worldview and the many frightening stories he heard, which influenced his refusal to identify with any of the various categories of people in the community. Wolf & Hart (2014) of the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) at the University of Brighton assert that “students come to

the university not just for education but they come for the student experience” (p. 2).

Therefore, the university, working in partnership with all of the stakeholders, aims at positively impacting both the students and the communities. One major effect that the study revealed was that the students emerged as different from those at the beginning, with some life-changing experiences, as evidenced in this chapter. Cognitively, students’ attitudes altered to varying degrees and within different time frames in the field. The community-based participants related very well with the students, recognized the presence of the university, and began to appreciate the programme through their level of participation.

The student participants readied themselves and anxiously waited to hear from their Coordinator when it would be their turn to be evaluated by the assessment team during the week. In week seven, the students prepared their flip charts, and wrote their final community report containing the community profile. They washed their clothing and got ready for the final assessment. During the assessment, their reports were marked according to specified criteria and their field notebooks were also marked. These, together with their individual and group marks, were the basis for their final grades. Following the assessment, the Coordinator cautioned the students to exit the community properly by implementing the exit strategies they had been taught at the orientation programme prior to their departure to the community. Depending on when they were assessed, they came together and undertook a community exit by going through the community, beginning from the chief’s palace to the Assemblyman’s house through all the prominent people to thank them and say good-bye. As I witnessed this process, community members were sad to see the students leave. After this community exit strategy, they packed and took their luggage to the district capital via a mini bus they had arranged, and from there they went in different directions to their home towns. Wofa’s parents met him at the village square and picked him up. In the next section, the community’s understanding of the aims and purposes of the engagement programme is discussed.

4. Community Participants' Understanding of the Aims and Purposes of the Community Engagement Programme (CEP)

I will now present the data that emerged from the ethnography from the 7 weeks during which the students were in the community and from the 28 days that I spent with the community after the students' departure. The evidence addresses how the community participants understood the aims and purposes of the University Community Engagement Programme. I carefully present the evidence to represent key individuals such as the Assembly representative, the Chief and his elders, the bicycle fitter, the head teacher, the opinion leader, the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), and the different sub groups of the community that include the farmers, the unemployed, the women who produced and sold garri, and Shea butter, and the women who were charcoal burners, food vendors, or petty traders, as well as school children. I also collected my data whilst hanging around in the public places of the community, taking walks, and sometimes I sought out particular people to speak to. I draw upon these experiences to provide an ethnographic account to address research question one.

The community's Assembly representative, one of the important gatekeepers and an informant, said to me in an informal conversation outside his house:

Since last year, I have been working with the students in this community and the adjoining community. I was informed by the university authorities that the students are here to learn our way of life so that it won't be difficult for them in the future and... to assist our community to identify our biggest problem so that they can forward it to the Assembly. (Conversation with the Assemblyman, 29 May 2013).

Upon further probing to ascertain the depth of his understanding of the aims and purposes of the programme, the Assemblyman revealed that:

Whenever the university staff come, I meet them and we go to meet the community elders and chief and they tell us that (they are here to)... find out about the problems of the community and the environment and how best they can contribute in helping us figure out how we can solve some of the pressing issues of the community, so that it would help them write about the problems that exist in the

various communities. (Conversation with the Assemblyman, 29 May 2013).

The understanding displayed by the Assemblyman contrasted starkly with that of others, such as a young farmer who stated:

As for me I don't quite understand this programme, the university is just coming to use our community to do what they want and disappear because we have not seen anything (any change for the better) ever since they came. (Farmer/community member, 2 June 2013).

The programme does not meet this farmer's aspirations of tangible development projects. The petty trader, in a conversation with me, expressed a similar opinion:

When these students came and we were invited to the chief's house, I had to sacrifice my time to attend but I did not understand all that they were saying, that they were here to learn something or what, I just could understand the head and tail of their message, I even regretted (going because it was) wasting my time. (Petty trader/community member, 5 June).

Whilst some members of the community did not quite understand the programme and were of the view that it does not have any particular prospects, the Assemblyman indicated his conviction that it could help address some of their challenges in the near future, especially regarding the mindsets and attitudes of the younger generation towards rural communities.

At least, if for nothing else, these young men and women, by the time they leave here, they would understand how villagers do things so that in the future they would understand us when in positions and dealing with our problems. (Conversation with Assemblyman, 6 June 2013).

The above comment resonates with the university policy objectives, which state that the programme aims at "exposing students practically to the nature of development problems of the Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Brong Ahafo Regions in particular and the nation as a whole" (TTFPP Policy, 2013). This is an indication that he was well-informed of the aims and purposes of the

engagement, one of which is to make the students better appreciate the situation of rural dwellers. Since he was the main intermediary between the university, the government and the community, his understanding of the programme was quite enhanced. After an exchange of pleasantries, the chief of the community shared with me his understanding of the engagement. In the course of this visit, “*Ewura*” (meaning chief in Ngbanyito¹¹), as he is popularly referred to, informed me that he was happy to have the students in his palace. According to him, he was happy that the university had brought the students to his community and praised them for coming and mentioned some of the things they had done.

Since they came here to study what we have in the community and add it to what they are learning at the university, they are also learning how life is in the village, they are quite interested, some of them are beginning to speak our language and also learning how to eat our food. (Conversation with the Chief, 15 June 2013).

He added:

So far they have been disciplined and going about their studies, they are very curious and like to learn about the local culture. For my sons and daughters from the south, our culture is completely different and we are poor people, but I tell you that we have a rich culture and strong values they would learn. (Conversation with the Chief, 15 June 2013).

The above quote indicates that the Chief understood the programme. According to him, he was reliably informed that some of the students, as they went about their data collection, asked and obtained explanations about certain practices and behaviour that were different from that of their own culture. The chief, in explaining his understanding of the aims of the programme, referred to the policy that the university authorities had shared with him, as well as what he saw the student do and engage in.

The university big men told me that these students are here to study our problems and write a book about our community needs. So the

¹¹ The language of the Gonja people of the Northern Region of Ghana who inhabit that part of the region.

Assemblyman normally would assist the students in the effort to study our problems. As for problems, there are many as you yourself can see, no toilets, no lights, look at our school over there, in fact we don't even have good water to drink. Anyway it is my hope that our relationship with the students would prove positive. As they interact with community members they are also learning a lot. (Community Chief, 15 June).

This reinforced the theme of promoting active and constructive interaction with the local community, which helps students to attain different worldviews and develop multicultural dispositions. The learning undertaken on the university campus together with the knowledge they acquired through their engagement with the community gave them insight into the poverty of rural communities in Northern Ghana. Students use this new knowledge to advocate for change at the District Assembly. In addition to this, they are developing the potential to effect socio economic transformation as drivers of social change in their future employment. Students may also draw on the networks they have developed with students from different disciplines in the course of the community engagement programme to optimize their effectiveness as agents of social change. This is similar to Emefa (2014), who argues that learning communities, as in the case of the university community engagement programme, create “networks and relationship resources” (p.1) which enables intersections and connections in primary knowledge that eventually build leadership capabilities. The chief described the students in the following ways.

They are very interested and eager to learn about our cultural values, they are always curious to know and would pester you until you tell them everything, some of the questions they ask... anyway, I forgive them because most of them are from the south and do not know our culture. (Conversation with the Chief, 15 June 2013).

I see the young men and women as my children, I have told them that if they have any problem they should let me know so that I can quickly find solutions for them. (Conversation with the Chief, 15 June 2013).

The fact that the chief was very open and regarded the students as his children revealed a tolerance for people from different cultures. He did not mind being asked ignorant and sensitive questions by the students as long as he saw

students making an effort to learn about the indigenous culture of the community. The Chief's positive assessment of the students in our conversation elicited interjections from one of the community elders. He was of a different opinion. According to him, contrary to what the chief thought about the students, some of the female students had initially behaved as if they had never stayed in a village. So his initial thoughts were that these ladies would not stay long in this community, but later his attitude changed after the students had acclimatized and were engaging. This signified a move towards the realization of a broader and fuller engagement by the elder:

I am really very surprised to see these university ladies now mingling and walking with our local women, the other day I heard they were talking to them about family planning, interesting... (Village Elder, 15 June 2013).

The elder's quote is further evidence of the fact that the students had begun to normalize. As time went on the students became fully acclimatized to the weather and other aspects of the community and begun to accelerate the process of adjustment, and some of their behavior changed. Mannerisms like wiping their faces with a handkerchief and spitting, which some community members perceived as disdainful, ceased. The elder added that there had been significant changes in the attitudes of the student participants.

I am so surprised that these young men and women who arrived and sometimes behaved as if they could not stay in our village now like the village so much and do a lot of things with us, sometimes I cannot even differentiate between them and our children... (Village Elder, 3 July 2013).

Reflecting on the position of the elder, I also observed this in the first few days of the arrival of the students when they were just beginning to acclimatize and adjust, especially with the heat. Temperatures are quite high at that time of year, and the women were responding to the heat, which was apparently misconstrued as trying to say that others or their surroundings were not neat. The initial dispositions of some of the student participants might have portrayed the sort of condescending attitude that many city dwellers have towards rural people, whom they feel live in squalor and disease. One integral aim of the

programme, as legally mandated and explained by university officials, therefore, is to promote multiculturalism among the students in order to erase this misconception and abandon their demeaning attitudes, if they have any. One aim of the programme thus is to enable them appreciate the rich culture of the villagers, develop similar dispositions, and look critically at their own culture. Thereby they can develop a synthesized culture from the two. The manifestation of that aim was in the students' initial behaviour compared to their later attitudes, when they had changed positively.

Several community members initially affirmed the sentiments of the elder, but in the end, after the students had left, the community members confessed that they had been proved wrong because the students had adapted quickly. The Assembly representative, the official spokesperson of the community, indicated that within the space of seven weeks:

I had to change my mind after the sixth week when students were preparing to leave; they had completely changed and were no more seen as strangers. They were down to earth and interacted very much like the local people, except the one student who never changed. (Assemblyman, 17 July 2013).

This view was held by a significant proportion of the community whom I interacted with during the four weeks that I stayed on after the students' departure from the community. This was particularly significant coming from the Assemblyman, the official representative of the community. The attitudinal change in students of the first two groups was clearly admitted by community members at the end of their stay. A farmer in the community indicated after the students had gone:

The students accompanied us to our farms and also those from the south learnt how to ride bicycles, greeted and responded to greetings in the local languages. (Farmer, 17 July 2013).

This quote suggests that the farmer's understanding of the community programme had grown and also that students were engaging and endearing

themselves to community members. Comments made by an opinion leader¹² further reinforced the fact that community members understood the programme.

The programme has allowed us to meet different students from different parts of the country; I now know the names of a number of towns these students come from. (Opinion leader, 18 July 2013).

Since one aim of the engagement was for students and community members to share knowledge, this encounter was appropriate, as it led to the sharing of knowledge. This is connected to a major policy objective of the programme: “Providing useful services to Ghanaian rural communities through the exchange of knowledge and its application to address the felt needs and aspirations of these communities” (TTFPP Policy, 2013, p.1). The findings of the NCCPE (2011) study, which argued that community engagement enables participants to take full advantage of the drift of knowledge and learning between HEI’s and the community, affirm those of this study and reinforce my view that there was attitudinal change on the part of both students and community members as a result of the knowledge exchange between them. Informal conversations like the above with community members indicate a more enhanced appreciation of the objectives of the engagement programme. Nevertheless, a few community members took different positions regarding the programme. Abaako (pseudonym), one of the unemployed youth in the community, had earlier on downplayed the significance of the programme and made the following comments:

I have tried to understand this programme and all I have come to know is that the student participants just roam around asking people questions... I don’t really know what it is they want... no matter what, these people cannot stay in villages like here, and they cannot get used to this place. (Ethnographic interview with Abaako, 20 May 2013).

¹² An opinion leader is a respected person in a community by virtue of wealth, family size or religious leadership or age.

From my interaction with him, this was partly as a result of a lack of communication or as a result of the daily struggle for survival borne out of the increasingly prohibitive cost of farming coupled with the erratic rainfall. His comment is noteworthy, because it brings to the fore the perception of people that the rural area is not a comfortable place to live, and that people used to living in the more developed urban areas find it difficult to live in such communities because they lack basic amenities, such as potable drinking water. This situation has increased the resolve and desire of rural dwellers to seek improvement in their lives through migration elsewhere, as he further lamented:

What are these students coming to do; they cannot change anything about themselves or the community. Life is not easy here and some of us are thinking about leaving the community, as I speak to you some have already left, especially the young girls and boys. (Ethnographic Interviews with Abaako, 20 July 2013).

Abaako's comments are evidence of the worrying phenomenon of the mass exodus of unskilled and uneducated young women and men, as well as those who have some limited schooling, from communities in the rural north of Ghana to the cities in the south to work in the informal economic sector (Ahlvin, 2012). Another unemployed youth I had a chat with in one of my usual hang-outs said:

When the students arrived, I thought a good project like schools or toilets was going to be constructed but it has since remained the same, I even thought they were new teachers posted to us, but all that we see is pickup trucks come and go. (Conversation with an unemployed youth, 21 June 2013).

Adam, a young, community based participant who was also unemployed, supported this position. I had noticed for some time that he was always idling and hanging around the lorry park but seldom engaged with students, and for those reasons, he attracted my attention. When I engaged him in a conversation, apart from showing little interest in the programme, he also did not see its importance:

I think that they should be providing us with lights, water and toilets and not just walking round and asking people questions. (Community ethnographic interview with Adam, 25 May 2013).

Furthermore, he dismissed the ability of the programme to contribute to a change in the attitudes of the student participants:

...We shall see whether these educated people can live here for the period they say they are staying. (Community interviews, Adam, 25 May 2013).

However, a number of participants, particularly Baba, aged about 34, a farmer I later met on his way to the farm, took a different position about the aims of the engagement. According to him, although he understands that they (student participants) were in the community “to learn about rural life, in order to change their behavior towards the villagers,” but he did not know much about them nor what it was they were learning (Interview with Baba, farmer, 23 June 2013). Upon reflection and further probing, he told me that he spends most of his time on the farm and does not really care much about the engagement. This may have accounted for his dearth of information about the aims and purposes of the programme. Whilst he showed some apathy to the programme, another farmer I later spoke to took a different position and reaffirmed his understanding of the programme. He admitted that:

The programme aims to make the students understand the kinds of life people like us in rural communities live, the other day some of the students accompanied me to my farm just to see what we do. (Ethnographic interview with a farmer, 23 June 2013).

The position of this farmer reinforces the potential of the programme to foster multicultural understanding and appreciation, especially attitudinal changes, in both community members and students. The impression I got from interacting with this farmer was that he thought that the students were government representatives or from a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or a Community Based Organization (CBO), and therefore he was expecting the execution of some projects. He did not consider the social role of change in attitude and multiculturalism and felt that the students may never come to enjoy the village.

In laying out the context for the study in Chapter 1, the community engagement programme was envisaged to help reduce the refusal of graduates from the south to be posted to deprived rural communities in the north and their ignorance about the north, in order to change their attitudes and promote a multicultural disposition within them. A specific objective of the programme, as enshrined in the policy as text, is:

To help develop favourable attitudes towards working in rural and deprived communities, and exposing them to the nature of the developmental problems of northern Ghana. (TTFPP, policy Objective, 2013, p.1).

In an informal conversation with an opinion leader in the community concerning the aims and purposes of the programme, he indicated:

Initially when the students came and were going round the community with books and pens, I thought they were coming to put up some projects. But long after they settled into the community I am yet to see any project. All I now hear that they are here to study and collect some information. (Conversation with Opinion leader, July 2013).

His quote reveals a lack of understanding about the programme. He also felt that the programme was meant to provide tangible development projects to the community but there was nothing to show for it. However, this view, and the assertive and frank manner in which it was expressed, differed to that of a number of community participants concerning the aims and purposes of the programme. The prevailing impression was usually that the students were there to study the life of the people and to ask questions about the community. This was also clearly a misunderstanding of the reasons for community engagement, and it indicated that a number people in the community were similarly inadequately informed. This cast doubt on whether participation and involvement in the programme was widespread.

The woman charcoal burner revealed that:

When I interacted with the students at the site of where I produce my charcoal, they educated me on some of the effects of my business. But I really do not know what they are here to do. Maybe

they are here to teach us something. (Conversation with Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

The woman garri seller similarly stated:

The day before the students came; we were invited to the Chief's palace to be informed that some visitors would be coming to stay here in our village for about two months. That they were going to do some studies about our community, but I don't know what it is. Anyway they normally come to my shop to buy garri and sometimes to learn how to make the Garri. (Conversation with Garri seller, July 2013).

The Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) told me:

When the students came to me for some discussions, I asked them what they were in the village to do and they told me that they were here to find out something about our community, but as for what they are learning, I don't know except that some of them came to ask me about my work. (Conversation with TBA, July 2013).

These quotes from women in the community indicate the perceptions of the women of the community generally and constitute evidence of the level of their understanding of the programme. Although they each identified a critical objective of the study, research and data collection, knowledge sharing, outreach and education and service, they were nonetheless cynical and demonstrated minimal understanding of the programme. Another woman petty trader made this comment:

We hear about these students in other communities but we never hear they have done anything or brought any changes, everything is still the same, they always come and go and yet we see nothing, you are here doing nothing, you know what you want. (Conversation with Petty trader, 20 June 2013).

The cynicism of the petty trader and the other women seems to suggest that there was a gap in communication as far as understanding the aims and purposes of the programme on the part of members of the communities. I came across other community members who displayed little understanding about the programme. Although they clearly dissented from the power-holders in the

community, this was an indication that a segment of the community still did not fully understand the aims and purposes of the programme. The following incident reinforced this notion:

Whilst hanging out as I normally did in the evenings between the hours of 4 to 6 p.m. around the village lorry park, where buses that travel from the north to the south stop to pick up and drop off passengers, I tried to engage a young man in his thirties, one of the young men who normally sit at the “Ghettoes” smartly dressed, who ostensibly was attending an occasion, judging from how smart he looked. He was reluctant to talk to me and this was clearly shown, he seemed to be unenthusiastic about the community engagement programme. My interaction with him produced a reality that I had not thought about. Like the two farmers, the petty trader and the unemployed youth I spoke to, he also seemed not to be abreast of the aims and purposes of the programme. According to him:

This programme is a complete waste of the youngsters’ time, there was nothing tangible to show [for it]... and they are also not going to change. (Conversation with a young man, 26 June 2013).

He signaled another passer-by, who incidentally happened to be the village bicycle repairer, popularly called “fitter”, to come join the conversation. Upon being briefed about our discussion, he disagreed with the youth on his stance about the engagement. It then turned into an argument about the various understandings of the programme, especially what the young man’s perception of the programme was. The second community member, the Mechanic, said that the mere presence of the students had changed the atmosphere of the community, making it more multicultural. The other young man thought that: It adds nothing to our lives, these university people are just looking for what they want and not the welfare of community members. (Conversation with Young man, 26 June 2013).

The Bicycle mechanic disagreed with the assertion of the second man. The mechanic admitted that he had been present at the chief’s palace when the students came to visit the chief, as they always did to discuss their progress.

I have met these students individually and they all come from different towns, but for them I never even heard about the names of some towns. At the chief’s palace, they all talked about their different way of doing things, I think the purpose of the programme is a good one, they normally come to sit at my shop and we talk about a lot of different things, they normally come to me and tell me

they are here to investigate some issues in our community and to help us identify our most serious problem so that they can help talk to the Assembly for us. (Conversation with Bicycle mechanic, 26 June 2013).

This quote suggest that the mechanic was abreast of the aims and purposes of the programme, and from his interaction with the students, the evidence revealed that he was also changing in terms of knowing more about other parts of the country and his attitude to strangers. It became apparent that the first young unemployed man did not have enough information regarding the engagement; hence, his lack of understanding and appreciation of the aims and purposes of the programme. I realized that the young man and the mechanic held opposing views, probably because one was a farmer and the other an unemployed youth struggling to survive, while the bicycle mechanic was at home all the time and was connected to the chief by virtue of his presence at the palace any time there was a summons. These power differentials in terms of clout or access to information may have accounted for the different positions and values. This may be the reason that some community participants, like the chief, elders, the Assemblyman and the fitter were aware of the aims of the programme, whilst the farmers, unemployed men, petty traders and others, such as Shea butter processors, charcoal burners, and the birth attendant, were skeptical of the programme. We parted ways and I promised to talk to them again. I then hurried back to my room to jot down some notes.

The next section examines the understandings of the District Assembly participants in relation to fostering favourable attitudes towards living in deprived rural communities and enabling dispositions of multiculturalism among community members and student participants as a critical aim of the community engagement. AUCEA (2008, p.3) stated that “nationally, community engagement has proved to be an effective way” of scaling up diversity within and amongst various populations because the nature of engagement requires universities to be responsive to the contextual characteristics and issues of the communities, hence the Involvement of the District Assembly.

4.1.4 District Assembly Participants' Understanding of the Aims and Purposes of the CEP

In an interview with an official of the District Assembly about his perceptions regarding the aims and purposes of the engagement, he said:

Yes, normally the students come to stay in our communities... They learn how to live in rural areas so that one day if they graduate and start work and are posted to a village they won't refuse... and bringing with them different cultures since they all hail from different parts of Ghana. (Conversation with District Assembly Participant, 13 August 2013).

He took a similar position to that of community members such as the Chief and the fitter, who maintained that the engagement affords participants the chance to learn about each other's cultures and therefore leads to changes in attitude and multicultural dispositions. The District Coordinating Director summarized his perception and understanding of the aims and purposes of the engagement programme further when he lauded the programme thus:

This programme has done us good; as a District Assembly it helps us to fashion policies towards eradicating poverty and bringing about development in our communities. It brings future policy makers in direct confrontation with the problems of rural communities, even as they profile the communities they see the challenges that we as an Assembly face. Interview with the DCD, 13 August 2013).

In the above quote the critical role of the community engagement in the process of profiling (determining the characteristics of a community, including the potentials, prospects, challenges and location) the community as a purpose of the programme. The Coordinating Director further made the following comments, which revealed his tacit understanding of the aims and purposes of the community engagement programme:

Yes, I am aware they come to the communities to learn to live just like the community members. Later when they identify problems and begin to write a proposal for intervention after they have identified, discussed and prioritized the problems of the community, they come to us to ask for some information about the communities, probably the population figures... the poverty statistics which they use to prepare

their report and interventions for the action plans. (Interview with DCD, 13 August 2013).

He further expressed his understanding of the programme by mentioning that student participants appreciated the community stay and had a completely different orientation when they reached the seventh week and were about to leave. He commented:

The practical experiences and difficulties that the students go through in the communities prepares them to better appreciate the suffering of rural people so that in the future, when they are positioned, they may be able to understand and work towards improving the lot of the marginalized rural folk. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

In illustrating his point, he shared with me how he came to know about the programme, his encounter with staff and students while he was in the Regional secretariat, where he had previously served, and how the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) assisted the University with transportation. The RCC constitute the second tier of the local government administration after the national level, followed by the District Assembly in the decentralized system. They encouraged the districts under their jurisdiction to support the community engagement programme. At the end of the conversation, he reported that he was happy with the programme and had asked the various districts to give it the backing it deserves and assist the university in whatever capacity they could to make it a worthwhile enterprise:

You know, I was at the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) and I realized that anytime the director of the programme... was around, he used to come there to request entry and we gladly obliged because we had come to understand the aims and objectives of the programme. We even encouraged our districts to give the programme the needed support and ensure that it succeeds... my brother; we are glad that the elites and leaders [of] tomorrow are getting closer to rural people and deprived communities. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The Assembly representative underscored the positive effect of multiculturalism on graduates and the spillover effect on the overall development of the nation.

His assertion fell perfectly in line with the policy of the programme as text. This feeds into the “increasing calls on universities to show responsibility and commitment to the socio economic development of their communities” (Nduna, 2007). This must, however, ensure, as O’Brien (2009, p. 32) argues, that community voices are brought to bear on the policy making arena to ensure that the sustainability initiatives of both of the communities and higher education institutions thrive to meet the objectives of the nation state to eradicate poverty. This connects to Ghana’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS 1) which aims at identifying and addressing issues within thematic areas, which include production and gainful employment, human development and basic services, special programmes for the vulnerable and excluded, and good governance (GPRS 1, 2007). Students therefore ensure that all voices are heard when they collect data and represent all voices in their report to the District Assembly.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Whilst identified student cohorts went through the programme of seven weeks resulting in various levels of attitudinal change, community members understanding was also graduated with pockets of misunderstandings, resistance and mixed expectations. Hearley et al. (2014) affirms this in their study that these tensions are normal in engagements because stakeholders have “conflicting priorities” and different agendas amid different perspectives and drives at the individual, communal and institutional level. Whilst community members held different understandings and therefore different attitudes and agendas towards the programme, evidence from the study also suggests that even within student participants there were significant variations in the process of student understanding. The evidence revealed they understood the programme as policy as text and eventually realised the aims of the programme as a discourse. Whilst the first group of students cultivated favourable attitudes to working and living in the rural community quite quickly, the second group was slow in changing their attitude. The third group of one unfortunately went through the programme with any attitudinal change to rural living (Rockquemore and Schaffer, 2000, Kelman, 1993 and Banks, 1991, 2004).

This finding is consistent with studies carried out by Fredericks, Blumfield and Paris (2004, pp.62-4), who identified three dimensions of student engagement: Behavioural, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement. Findings of this study confirm their study by revealing that there can be a negative or positive dimension, as in the case of the lone students who experienced a negative dimension. Trowley, (2010) in her research on student engagement affirm my findings in relation to variations in understanding and attitudinal change amongst students and did admit that it is not possible for all students to follow through one direction; they could oscillate between dimensions from time to time. Students came out of the community with enhanced skills in research and data collection including identifying, profiling and suggesting solutions to rural problems. Students participants generally, with the exception of one, admitted that the programme had reshaped their orientation towards deprived rural communities and that substantial learning had taken place in the community, This finding is in line with Mahoney in Gibbs, (2010, p.2) who asserts that tertiary education must offer its products avenues to transform themselves whilst at the same time making a meaningful contribution to, their immediate environment, wider society and the economy. Studies such as Strand, (2000), Kellog, 1999, Furco and Holland, (2004), Howard, (2001) and Banks (1991, 2004) whose five dimensions of multicultural education include “knowledge production” and “prejudice reduction” have all affirmed this finding. The next chapter discusses what benefits accrue to the stakeholders and the wider society.

CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN FINDINGS (2)
(BENEFITS TO STAKEHOLDERS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Further to the presentation and analysis of ethnographic findings regarding participants' understandings of the aims and purposes of the engagement programme in the previous chapter, this chapter reports the key findings in relation to research question two, "What do different stakeholder groups consider to be the benefits to themselves and the wider society?" In this section I present and critically analyse the following key benefits which were identified through the analysis of my data: 1. Useful services to the community, which include teaching in schools, educating community members about environmental sustainability, e.g. about deforestation, and about equality for girls; 2. Knowledge sharing and learning, which includes new farming practices and local architecture and housing; 3. Opening up communities and giving them a voice at the District Assembly; 4. Input into the strategic planning of District Assemblies; and 5. Inspiring the youth of the community by serving as role models. This discussion presents the perspectives of different stakeholders on each key finding whilst considering the similarities and contrasts in them. The stakeholders are, In addition to the community and the District Assembly, the university, which as an entity is represented here by both the leadership and student participants. This discussion is the outcome of a triangulation process where multiple data sources were drawn on to derive the foundational themes (Cohen et al., 2011).

I have opted to present selected portraits (see Table 3.2) of the ethnographic community and the ways in which they represent the narratives of the villagers, which I do not have the scope to present in detail. For pragmatic reasons of closeness and enhanced contact, I chose particular people as portraits. For example, I always passed by the Garri Seller, the Bicycle Mechanic and the food vendor on the way to the village centre. The first of the themes are discussed in the next section.

5.2 USEFUL SERVICES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

One of the most important findings relating to benefits of the programme to participants, and therefore the local community, was that of useful services, such as teaching in schools, and promoting the education of girls and sustainable environmental practices. The ensuing is a discussion of these benefits from the perspectives of the various stakeholder participants.

5.2.1 Perspective of Stakeholder Participants

Regarding the offering of useful services to the community, a visit to the palace, where interaction with the chief and his elders took place, revealed that they were very appreciative of, and acknowledged the services rendered by the student participants. The chief mentioned that:

I have personally sent requests to the district Education office to give my community more teachers and I have been promised, but till date no additional teacher had shown up to the school... I am therefore very happy that your students are taking care of our children in the school. (Conversation with Chief, June 2013).

The way the student participants stepped in and managed the classroom in the absence of the regular teachers helped to mitigate the perennial shortage of teachers. This may not be the fundamental reason for the engagement programme but it is welcomed as a blessing and did indeed make the programme popular among the locals, thereby serving as an unanticipated benefit. The chief was happy to note that the community school had been a beneficiary of the programme. He made this comment:

We have only a few teachers in our primary school, but the students when they come always go to help the school, two of them told me they were trained teachers and I always feel happy when I visit the school and see them engaging the pupils even when their teachers are not in. (Conversation with Chief, June 2013).

A number of elders surround the chief, and one, who was sitting close to the chief, stated that they were happy that the students were helping out in the school, as the children always “run back home saying their teacher has not shown up” (Elder, June 2013).

One of the chief's wives' interrupted and noted that the young men and women saved them from having to continuously send their children back to school. According to her:

At least these children no more loiter about and other children are joining them because of the football and games being organised by the university participants after the classes. (Chief's wife, June, 2013).

All those present at the chief's palace seemed to acknowledge the useful services condensed by the student participants to the community. All of their responses suggested that schooling was a community priority, and they were delighted to be getting assistance with it. The chief and his elders asked the Coordinator and me to convey their gratitude to the university and told us that even they, as adults, were gaining a lot from the adult literacy classes being organised by the students in conjunction with the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education. However, he added that they were not happy that the community does not have electricity to facilitate the literacy classes, as a result of which they were using lanterns:

Please tell your big men (referring to the VC) that next year they should bring us more students, especially for our schools, we need them. I always feel bad when these children roam about without teachers. They would have been useful in our farms yet we have sacrificed to put them in school yet the lack of teachers and the truancy of a few teachers are threatening our investments. (Conversation with Chief, June 2013).

On several occasions I witnessed the chief paying unannounced visits to the school and complimenting student participants for filling the gap left by the teacher inadequacy. The Assemblyman, a key informant for this study, who was himself a teacher, corroborated the evidence of the chief and elders in an interview I had with him. According to him:

Some of the student participants helped or offered assistance to our schools by way of teaching, marking and organising some extracurricular activities. They did quite a lot of supply teaching and the children were usually very happy because they are very

humorous... so I think it encouraged or motivated the children... (Conversation with Assemblyman, June 2013).

At the premises of the Junior High School, students were seen teaching in the classrooms, and the Coordinator informed me that the Assembly had told him:

We are very grateful for this singular service rendered by the students. Before they came along to this community, there were many occasions (on which) some of the teachers did not show up. These days when they do not show up, your students step in and engage the kids, we are really excited about this. (Conversation with Assemblyman, June 2013).

The Assemblyman, further commenting on the tangible benefits that accrue to the community as a result of the community engagement, added that:

The students even showed more dedication to teaching when they took up the lessons in the classes... and the children seemed to enjoy their teaching and admired them... I can say that attendance has increased since they came to teach. (Conversation with Assemblyman, July 2013).

Reinforcing the admission of the Assemblyman, a woman petty trader I spoke to one-on-one said that the presence of the student participants was blessing. She explained:

My sister complains that her children normally go to school and return to wander or loiter about with the excuse that no teacher came to school. Sometimes they play and play and make their uniforms so dirty that the little money she makes for food, she is forced to use it to buy soap. (Petty Trader, July 2013).

This evidence supports what the elder earlier said about children loitering in the absence of their class teachers. On one occasion, when I visited the head teacher of the local primary school, I was told he had gone to meet the Shea butter producers to talk to them about a micro credit facility. This demonstrates that the head teacher was helping the villagers with their enterprises in terms of secretarial and translation services. The student participants similarly helped the villagers with their enterprises, for example, by teaching the garri producer

some basic bookkeeping. This was a tangible benefit as well. I took the opportunity to reach him whilst he was with the women.

As I exchanged greetings with the head teacher and informed him I was in his house, he told me a microfinance company had contacted him to introduce them to the community women, and that he had scheduled a meeting with the women to brief them about the microcredit facility, as he thought they might be interested in it to improve their businesses. He then thanked me for the assistance the students were rendering to the community. I responded that he should direct the gratitude to their community coordinator when he came around since I was a student researcher too. The women joined our conversation and one of them added: "Your students are hard-working, they came to us to see how this Shea butter is produced and on that same day they again went to the school. I was informed by my son that they were at the school the same day. He actually said they like the way they teach and that they are also very lively and play football with them." (Shea butter producer)
The traditional birth attendant, who was also extracting the Shea butter oil in the absence of a delivery, contributed to the discussion and said that: "Ever since the university students came to this community, the children's interest in the school has heightened". According to her, two children in her house who did not want to go to school suddenly began to attend school because "the university students make the school lovely and would not allow you to join the football game if you don't like attending school". (Traditional birth attendant)

Box 5.1: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversations with Shea butter producer and TBA, July 2013

Later in the day when I passed by and interacted with the Garri processor, we discussed a number of issues, among which was the issue of schooling in relation to her 12 year old daughter. The Garri producer stated that she would be happy if her daughter became a nurse in future, especially now that the students had impressed her with their hard work, especially by teaching at the school;

I always felt happy when the female university students came to me, I pray that one day my daughter will also go to the university to become a nurse, at least she can inject me when I am sick.
(Conversation with Garri Producer, July 2013).

This quote from the Garri seller, who I studied in-depth and who shared a similar understanding with most community women, suggested that a number of people in the community indeed recognised and took the position that they were benefiting from the community engagement through the provision of teaching

services by the student participants. She further mentioned that the students occasionally bought her garri, and she reduced the price for them in appreciation of their hard work. The garri producer, who clearly wanted the best for her daughter and wished for her to attain the best education to become a nurse, considered the voice of a pupil of the local primary school to be important. The quotes of these women and other community portraits, such as of school pupils, are all connected in terms of the findings of the ethnographic study of the villagers and their views. When I visited the school to observe the lessons given by the student participants, I spoke to a number of pupils about how they thought were the programme benefited the community. This is what transpired:

During the lesson, the teacher asked the pupils what they would like to be in the future and hands shot up, teacher! teacher! teacher, me, I, I first! The student teacher pointed his stick to one of the pupils whose voice rang high. Yes you! What do you want to be in the future? He shot up and replied quickly, a teacher, sir! The second pupil said he wanted to become a doctor, the third, a policeman and the fourth a nurse. They went on and on until the whole class had selected an array of professions that mattered to them. The teacher then exhorted them to learn hard, to take their mathematics and English Language and all homework seriously so that they can go to the senior secondary school, and pass on to universities to achieve their aims. It was threatening to rain and since the school had a leaking roof, the teacher ended the lesson and the head teacher dismissed the class. All this while I was standing by the window and observing the lesson. As the pupils rushed and struggled to see who could come out first, I called one of them and asked her what she thought about the presence of the university students, and she said: "Sir, they are our teachers," and another pupil said, "Sir they help us with our homework", a third pupil answered "Sir they give us books, pencils and erasers", and a fourth one said, "Sir we play football with them after school".

Box 5.2: Ethnographic Field notes at school with Pupils. July, 2013

The evidence above suggests that a service like teaching was recognised as one important benefit to the community to the extent that even school children appreciated it. Reinforcing the evidence gathered during my observation at the school, the next day, a pupil who I had met going to school told me the following when I enquired about the importance of the students in the community:

The ladies from the university are very nice and teach us well when they come to the school. One of them gave me a school bag and helped me to do my homework. They are so free with us and make

us learn. I want to be like them one day... (Conversation with school pupil, July 2013).

Later at a meeting with the permanent teaching staff and the head teacher of the local primary school, the latter recalled that he could not hide his feelings when student participants indicated that from time to time they would offer teaching and other services to the school. This is what transpired at the meeting:

The head teacher, after greetings and a prayer, welcomed me to the premises of the school, He told me, "you are very welcome at our school, although it is not beautiful like your university, we hope you would appreciate what we have and would talk to the big men about the nature of our building. He continued: "we were very happy that the students came here to help, as I have said already our staff strength was woefully inadequate, so their presence was just timely and also a blessing. We cannot pay them, but at least, it is more a blessing to give than to receive, I mean God would reward them." He continued at length about the need for the university to send more students next year and also suggested that the programme should focus more on teaching. He remarked: "Please tell the University big men that next time that they send 11 students, 6 of them should solely be designated as teachers for my schools so that the rest can do the research they want them to do." (Head teacher, July 2013). The teachers present were also grateful for the services the student participants rendered and shared with me their gratitude: "In fact some of us have to trek from the city to this community a distance of 45 miles every day either by bus or motorbike. We spend at least fifteen cedis¹³ because there are no adequate quarters to contain the entire teachers, so the coming of the students to help in the teaching was quite important. At least when we were not at school or came late they stood in for us. Apart from this, there are some subjects without teachers, such as social science and cultural studies, which the students helped in teaching." (Teacher at local primary School, July 2013). One of the school teachers also added his voice and mentioned that he had made a similar call to the university through the coordinator.

Box 5.3: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Head teacher and teacher, July 2013

The meeting with the staff of the school raised a number of issues. An OECD report (2012) stated that despite the great effect of teachers on pupils' performance, disadvantaged schools like this village school are not always staffed with the requisite number and caliber of teachers. The OECD therefore advocates for policies that would increase the number of teachers and their

¹³ fifteen cedis is equivalent to about 3 pounds at the rate of 5 cedis to a pound

quality for such disadvantaged schools by providing teacher education to ensure that teachers are adequate in terms of the “skills and knowledge they need” (p.12). They argue that in addition to teacher adequacy, supportive working conditions, such as adequate financial and career incentives to attract and retain teachers could increase teacher retention at impoverished village schools. The reference of the head teacher to the deplorable state of the school building and apparent lack of adequate accommodation for teachers in the community therefore contributed to teacher absenteeism as suggested by the OECD (2012) study.

Another vignette involving my landlord in the village affirms community members’ suggestions about the importance of the services rendered.

Whilst reclining on his sofa at night, my landlord, in a conversation, informed me that initially, he honestly thought that the student participants were teachers posted to the community. He thought the student participants were national service personnel who are also normally posted to rural schools to do a mandatory one year of national service. He surmised that if the university authorities would just make the community engagement solely a teacher supply conduit or programme it might be worthwhile. According to him it would help raise the standard of education in rural communities. He summed up by saying that: “Even though these young men and women are not paid for the teaching at the moment and it is just voluntary, we really appreciate what they are doing, I wish the programme was made to be a second avenue of supplying teachers.”

Box 5.4: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with my Landlord, a Farmer, July 2013

In a community discussion that was organised by the student participants to educate the community members on the need to take education seriously and to encourage enrolment in the schools, it was very clear that community members knew the importance of education in taking them out of the impoverished conditions in which they lived. The community members showed some enthusiasm at the meeting.

*Community members turned up in large numbers; apparently the presence of the students in the community had stimulated the community response to schooling issues. A number of opinions were expressed about the strategic role of the student participants in raising standards. An Opinion Leader indicated:
We are appealing and suggesting to the student participants to increase the*

number of times they assist in teaching at the school. We know they are busy and have other things but we still appeal to them to really help.

A farmer who was also present contributed and remarked that:

Although I have a problem with educated people because they have not helped in solving the numerous problems confronting us and always remain in the city, nonetheless I think that the presence of the students in the school would help the children to score better marks and also go to universities, at least one of them could become useful to the village one day.

The garri seller, who was quite interested in educational issues, also contributed and mentioned that:

I would be very happy If you can please put yourselves into groups so that at any point in time, some of you would be at the school. As parents we would also do our best to get children to school.

Community members spoke at length about the importance of education and the students chipped in intermittently to reinforce and encourage them to take the education of their wards serious. "You owe it as a duty to yourself, your children and your community to ensure that your children get the best education possible, especially the girl child" (student). I sat quietly and listened to the villagers argue amongst themselves. One woman lamented how she had done everything she needed to do but her son still did not like going to school. I advised her to keep talking to him and encouraging him. He might change one day. One of the students advised her to observe the boy to see whether he had any special talent. It was getting dark and the women needed to go and cook so they asked for permission to leave, and the meeting came to an end.

Box 5.5: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Opinion leader, Farmer and Garri Seller, July 2013

The excerpts from this meeting contrast with an earlier finding by an OECD (2012) study, which argued that parents from disadvantaged communities tended to be less involved in their children's schooling for multiple economic and social reasons (p.12). This study, however, reinforces the OECD's (2012) suggestion that more policies need to be made to ensure that disadvantaged schools "prioritise their links with parents and communities and improve their communication strategies to align school and parent efforts" (p.12). Other community members also added their voice on the benefit of the students' teaching. The bicycle mechanic was always at his shop in the middle of the village, and he often interacted with the student participants by virtue of his location. During one of my frequent conversations with him, he related the following:

My son tells me that the students were good teachers and they helped them with homework. They even gave them pencils. He is always eager to visit them at their accommodation. I am happy because I did not get the chance to go to school and that is why I ended up as a bicycle mechanic. I do not want my son to be in this mess one day. (Conversation with Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

Although the mechanic saw his job as low class, referring to it as a mess, he was, surprisingly, connected to the chief in terms of familiarity, a clear indication of status. In any case, he was optimistic that education holds the key to upward mobility for his children, and in fact, it has been found that “children’s life chances are strongly influenced by the quality of their education” (OECD, 2012, p.14).

Apart from teaching, students also took the time to carry out outreach programmes on other issues, such as sustainable environmental practices and the education of girls in the community, and these are examples of other useful services they provided. While interacting with the chief after the students had left, he indicated that he had come to appreciate the outreach services that the students were carrying out besides teaching in the school.

I made it to the chief’s palace early in the morning on that fateful day. The chief welcomed me and we exchanged pleasantries. In the presence of two elders the chief was very relaxed and shared some cola with me. This shows trust and friendship in most rural African communities. The chief said to me:

I was told at the briefing that the students would from time to time talk to the community on some issues. Indeed they did come to talk to us about family planning, the environment and about the importance of sending our girls to school and.... So I have been pressing on the community members and made it a policy that every parent should send his/her girl child to school, I am in the process of mobilizing community member to create a scholarship fund to help brilliant but needy pupils of the community. When we create this fund we will call on you my friend...

Box 5.6: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Chief, July 2013

Later at the palace, my interactions with community members and their demeanor further indicated that they appreciated the outreach the student participants were carrying out. Students elicited their responses and involved them in discussing the issues they were being educated on. The garri seller,

who I visited on an almost daily basis because she happened to operate right on my way to the village centre, also mentioned on one occasion that:

The students told me about the importance of ensuring that my two girls who are already in school to go high school. Hmm!! There is no money but I would do all I can to see them through to the college. I have already started saving something small every day from the sale of my garri. My daughters do help me after school. I have even reduced the time they spend here so that they can concentrate on their books. (Conversation with Garri Seller, July 2013).

Her assertion underscored the effectiveness and significance of the outreach regarding girls' education that the students had been carrying out whilst doing the data collection. In my usual rounds, I encountered the woman charcoal burner at the outskirts of the community. She was engaged in an activity which was obviously harmful to the environment in the long run, and the students had engaged her previously and informed her of this. In a chat with me she made the point that although the students had educated her on the negative effect of charcoal burning, she had no other livelihood:

This is my only skill, we grew up to meet our grandparents burning this charcoal for sale, so I learnt it from childhood and this is what we have been doing to survive.(Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

This was an important quote from a woman who was in the business of burning and selling charcoal for use as fuel for cooking in the cities. Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), an alternative cooking fuel, is expensive, so most Ghanaians use firewood and charcoal. I engaged her in a conversation about deforestation, which is the immediate effect of her business, and she was initially reluctant to talk, but she opened up when I assured her of confidentiality.

This business could be harmful to the environment but as I said that is my only source of livelihood, or else I have to also join the young girls and move to the south. (Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

The charcoal burner is doing what generations of her family have done before. This is social reproduction that education could interrupt and offer alternative futures through empowering the villagers and giving them access to further and

higher education. UNESCO (2012) indicate that the “education offers alternative pathways for the acquisition of basic skills for employment and prosperity” (p.1). They further add that a lot of the poor and marginalized uneducated “miss out on vital skills for the future” (p.1) that “women are the most in need” (p.1). UNESCO (2012) concludes that these women need education and training particularly in “business and marketing to find opportunities beyond farm work and reduce the obligation of migrating to cities in search of a job” (p.2). The charcoal burner references the connection between the lack of education and skills in most rural, deprived communities and the worrying phenomenon of rural-urban migration from the underdeveloped and rural areas of the north to seek assured income in the southern cities (Ahlin, 2012). This affects participation in the programme because many inhabitants of the community who otherwise would have been available to participate are unavoidably absent. She further added, upon probing:

I have no alternative livelihood since I am not educated and have no other business. This is the only thing I was taught to do from my childhood. (Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

The evidence suggests that education might enable the community to develop a local economy to replace charcoal burning and other unsustainable or low income generating jobs, such as the bicycle mechanic. Education can enable people “acquire the basic skills and relevant training they need to earn a living, live in dignity and contribute to their communities and societies (UNESCO, 2012), it can secure “a productive workforce and enable economic growth” (OECD, 2012, p.25). This connects to the Ghana government’s policy and the objectives of the university engagement policy of widening access to underpin social mobility and increasing the literacy level of communities to be able to understand the constitution and engage with their legal rights, improve life chances and raise their aspirations. I tried to find out whether she and her colleagues in the business had ever considered replanting the trees they were cutting for the charcoal since trees were a renewable natural resource. She replied that she and the others in the local community could not bear the cost of reforestation. But she said:

We don't replant any trees because when it rains, the trees sprout again by themselves. Since time immemorial we have always cut these trees but they spring up and grow when the rains come... (Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

She also revealed that economic trees were protected and not felled to produce the charcoal. She enumerated the challenges of reforestation in rural communities. I advised her to begin to look for an alternative livelihood or she would risk endangering the lives of others. Local people in the community like this woman are seen as destroying the forest and creating deserts, perhaps the recommendation is to back current "domestic lumber laws with trade sanctions" in order to make it obligatory for importers to "improve forest sustainability around the world without upsetting the national sovereignty of exporting nations" (Pearce, 2012, p.2). Pearce (2012) further argues that although there are laws to regulate deforestation in Ghana, these laws simply "benefit powerful business interests without helping local communities or the forest" (p.2).

From the perspective of the District Assembly, the Coordinating Director recognised that student participants were providing useful services such as teaching, to the community. He mentioned that he had been informed by the District Director of Education that the student participants were helping the communities in their schools, and that this had significantly reduced the perpetual request for more teachers, especially during periods that the university is in the community. He asserted:

Yes, I am aware your students are doing a wonderful job as far as our schools are concerned. I am told they supply teaching and the community members are very happy. They even organise extracurricular activities like football and athletics. The other day the "honourable" (a title used for Assemblymen) confirmed to me that they do not have any problem with teachers as long as the students are in the community. (Interview with District Coordinating Director (DCD), August 2013).

The District Assembly participant mentioned that it had been confirmed to him by the District Director of Education that the provision of services such as teaching by the students was indeed having an impact. He expressed the belief

that soon, enrolment and retention in rural schools where the community engagement takes place will rise:

When I paid visits to some communities, the enthusiasm with which the students were teaching amazed me. If we could get graduates with the kind of orientation this programme is offering, the problem of teachers refusing posting to rural communities would be a thing of the past. Although we have provided one or two teachers' quarters, I admit that it is not enough for all the teachers. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The study largely affirms the participants' assertion that if the government could compel all universities to adopt the community engagement approach to graduate training, it would be tremendously beneficial as it may among other benefits redress the perennial shortage of teachers in rural areas because the engagement is not aimed at developing teachers, rather it is aimed at developing different professionals from different disciplines who, whilst they are in the CEP, with its own aims, engage with educative activities. Although the community at this stage want teachers, that is their priority and understandably so. The CEP offers a unique opportunity for schools to be supported with additional teachers, who do not intend to be teachers on graduation, but this is a step in the right direction to supporting community children access to higher education through gaining role models, networking, and building local communities as the head teacher was doing.

Realistically the CEP may not facilitate some of these top graduates to be posted to rural areas, it may however make significant differences in developing District Assemblies, and knowledge exchange that may help change policy. This in turn may grow local economies, which will then have more money to pay teachers, and give them more decent local accommodation where they want to stay, as we recall teacher's articulation about local accommodation and the journey to and from the village earlier. This widespread failure of teachers to accept postings to rural areas undermines the country's "educational system and contributes to a decline in performance of rural schools and especially efforts to address patterns of unbalanced deployment" (Gottelmann-Dunef and

Hogan (1998), Hedges (2000), cited in Mulkeen and Chen, Eds, 2008, p.2). The DCD went on to say:

The presence of students in the community constitutes a big relief to us in terms of cost and also improvements in results (test scores). Although students stay just close to two months, the enthusiasm with which they teach and the fact that they are resident in the community, unlike some of the Ghana Education Service teachers, who are frequently absent, make the seven weeks eventful.(Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The District Coordinating Director was of the opinion that literacy levels were rising and that enrolment and retention were improving:

As I said, the information we have is that as a result of the presence of the students in our communities, enrolment and retention are rising, and the literacy classes laced with education are also improving the literacy levels and lifestyles of the people. The students have been good role models; I wish the students could stay longer than the seven weeks. (Interview with the District Coordinating Director (DCD), August, 2013).

Whilst most community members and the District Assembly participants were appreciative of the useful services rendered by the student engagement, university leaders were unequivocal in declaring that the teaching services rendered by student participants were helping the communities to manage the lack of teachers. Therefore, the CEP was assisting the communities considerably:

Yes I think there are some benefits such as providing direct services, like assisting in teaching, assisting in the running of some community clinics, etc., services like teaching have led to an increase in enrolment in rural schools, although it has not been proved yet. (Interview with Community Coordinator, 27 August 2013).

The evidence points to the fact that the direct provision of services, such as teaching and outreach on environmental sustainability and girls' education, was at the core of community appreciation for the programme. This evidence connects with previous quotes and further reinforces the findings of teaching as a benefit. The coordinator further added that:

Some community members were openly excited and happy that the student participants were very diligent in what they were doing at the school and that their wards said nice things about the students. (Interview with Community Coordinator, July 2013).

Although this service of teaching was quite appreciated by community members, the coordinator cautioned students not to hijack the school from the appointed teachers, as this could breed professional jealousy and endanger their good intentions. He thus advised the students:

I appreciate that you make time to teach, as you can see the kids are happy, I am told they no more loiter about. But please conduct yourself and make the university proud and also try to cooperate with the regular teachers, make sure you go into the classes with their permission. (Conversation with Community Coordinator, June 2013).

In relation to the offer of useful services to the community by student participants, the OECD (1982), cited in Kite (2010), in examining potential university contributions to communities, looked at it from the point of view of the stakeholder rather than an institutional offer. The offer of teaching services by the university students happen to be both a community need and at the same time an institutional offer where a social stakeholder need has been met (OECD, 1982) as articulated by community members. The same study (OECD, 1982) affirms the findings when it classified university services rendered to communities, and amongst them spelt out the delivery of service to the community which was clearly articulated by both community and the university participants as a critical need. This is because a core role of the universities is to grow people, whilst also enabling those people to help the growth of people in the communities of Northern Ghana. Evidence across conversations with community participants suggests that schooling is a community priority, since it can contribute to social mobility and, by extension; contribute to the development of the local economy. Affirming this finding, Watson (2007) argues that in recent times, interest in how universities contribute to society has increased, as evidenced in the partnership between local government structures and the university in this study in the drive to work together for mutual benefit. The next key finding that the community engagement opened up and revitalized

the local community, thus giving villagers an additional voice, is presented below.

5.3 OPENING UP COMMUNITIES AND GIVING THEM A VOICE

One of the key findings of the study was that the programme opened up the community and offered community members a voice in their development agenda, with student participants acting as advocates for the community. The students worked together with community members to create a profile of the community, thereby enabling the locals to decide and prioritize their own needs through the pair wise ranking technique where community members provided rational reasons for their choices in the face of competing needs (Russell, 2007, CASLGuide, 2015). Advocacy entails taking actions to assist people in articulating their views, protecting their rights, representing their interests and obtaining the services they need (Advocacy Charter, 2002). This programme therefore gave the community an extra avenue to articulate their concerns and decide their own priorities, which usually was not the case. The following sections look at the perspectives of stakeholders in relation to this finding.

5.3.1 *Perspectives of Stakeholder Participants*

The village's Assembly representative was a gatekeeper and a key informant during my four week stay in the community after the programme, I always discussed issues with him before stepping out into the community. When I spoke to him concerning the benefits of the programme, he said:

Yes, we will benefit a lot from this programme, I know that when the students leave, they leave behind a document with the District Assembly, with what they have to do and all the assistance that the community needs inside. The District Assembly then further gets to know our problems and hears us loud and clear through the student's document. (Interview with Assemblyman, 16 June 2013).

Further in our conversation, the Assemblyman indicated that even before the start of the Assembly's Social and Works Committee's deliberation, the leadership of the Assembly had already been informed of the problems of the community:

The presiding member told me that the students had made a compelling case for the community in their report and that the Assembly had decided to prioritize their water needs. (Interview with Assemblyman, 16 June 2013).

His statements are evidence that through the democratic, transparent and participatory approach of the pair wise ranking (Russell, 2007) the engagement programme enabled the community to voice their needs through the students' community reports, which are normally copied to the District Assembly for possible intervention by the Assembly, NGOs or civil society development oriented organizations. The chief of the community underscored this when he told me that an FM¹⁴ radio station in the city came to interview him about the community programme and how it helps in articulating their concerns.

The chief narrated to me that one day after the students had left, he was resting when a car pulled up. After exchange of greetings, the visitors said they wanted to speak to him about the university programme and how it is helping the community. According to him, he pointed out to them that their presence alone tells the story, and that had it not been for this programme they would not be there to interview him. He further told them that the voice of the community has gone far and that at least the central government now knows that their main headache is potable drinking water. He said "We are battling with water-borne disease, drinking from the same river as cattle. You can see we have a number Guinea worm cases here."

Box 5.7: Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Conversation with Chief, July 2013

The above excerpt provides evidence that the community engagement programme attracted the attention of the media, therefore enhancing the advocacy the programme for eradicating poverty. There is a strong belief that the power of the media to promote a community's agenda and aspirations cannot be underestimated (Bobo et al., 1996). Bobo et al. (1996) argued that media advocacy addresses issues beyond the individual, such as poverty alleviation and a community development agenda, and that in addition to other avenues several community based organizations employ media advocacy to draw attention to their case.

¹⁴ FM station refers to a local radio station set up by the government and private persons for education, entertainment and information.

A key informant amply demonstrated this when he highlighted the importance of the report:

The student community report actually makes our community problems well known. It enables the Assembly to know our exact priority, and whenever they have plans they immediately come to our aid. Our problem now is potable drinking water; I hope they are able to help us. (Conversation with Ganima, School leaver, July 2013).

The Bicycle mechanic, replying to an inquiry from me, said this concerning the impact of the programme:

Yes at times the students call meetings and we share information, all the community members come around and we meet the university people. We tell them a lot about our problems and hope they pay attention to them... they normally write down our concerns and assure us that they will convey them. Yes, we benefit a lot, the coming of the students is making us to be heard, FM stations come and interview us and this is all as a result of the presence of the students. We would be happy to receive them again next year. (Interview with Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

After leaving the mechanic to continue my usual stroll, I passed by the garri seller's shop and greeted her. After she responded, we sat to have a chat;

I had come to forge a friendship with the garri seller, who was an elderly woman. She was much steeped in the culture of the community and knew almost everyone. I started a conversation and asked her what she thought about the benefits of the programme. She replied by mentioning, among other things, that:

"This community programme has made people know more about our community". She also added that:

"Recently the Assemblyman informed us that the boreholes we selected during the community meeting (pair wise ranking) were receiving attention from the Assembly. So in actual fact the programme made the Assembly aware of our basic need as a community. In addition to the Assemblyman, the student document submitted to the Assembly is yielding positive results..."

Box 5.8: Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Conversation with Garri Seller, July 2013

Another woman whom I occasionally spoke to, anytime she did not travel a nearby market and so was in town, was the petty trader:

During in interactions at her shop whenever I went there to buy some items, we had a chat about her views concerning the programme. She narrated how the name of their community was mentioned in the news because of the presence of the university students: “The other day I overheard the students discussing the community’s water problem on radio”. She also told me how she was surprised when one of the students made her up in the city. According to her, “all this shows that the programme is beneficial, and I hope that these would yield positive results for the community”.

Box 5.9: Ethnographic Fieldnotes Conversation with Petty Trader, July 2013

The evidence of the garri seller and the petty trader suggests that students had actually supported the community to speak up about what they wanted. The university, represented by the students, worked in partnership with community members to ensure they could influence resource allocation decisions and therefore access important amenities like water from the District Assembly. The students generated awareness about the community problems through their meetings, during one of which they undertook the pair wise ranking. Although there were major obstacles, such as the lack of appreciation of the issues, the students’ engagement helped raise community awareness. Together with community members, they engaged with the issues. Even after the students had left the community, they still continued to be ambassadors, carrying out advocacy for the improvement of the communities.

These quotes and vignettes show evidence that the entire community had become popular and the voice of the people was being articulated well outside its borders. The research therefore argues that by engaging more fully with members of the community, members of the academic and the larger world can come to better understand the issues that are of the utmost concern to the general public and to advocate for, and present empirical findings from the research that is critical, respectful, inclusionary, searches for truth, committed to generation of knowledge, in short using a disposition of the academy (Taysum and Slater, 2014) to provide independent judgement to local council (TTFPP, 2013).

The District Coordinating Director further admitted that the programme contributed to the development of the area in terms of pushing the community agenda and offering community members an avenue to articulate their views:

Since the Assembly is a stakeholder in the programme, we have over the years, contributed to and supported the programme, and at the end of the day, we have been the winners, I can tell you communities have become very visible through this engagement. The student presence in these communities has made our prioritizing easier; their voices are echoed in the reports they give, this adds to the lobbying done by the Assemblyman. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The District Coordinating Director (DCD) indicated that he came to know some of the communities under his jurisdiction through the programme:

I did not even know all the communities under this district, if not but for this university programme... (Interview with DCD, August, 2013).

According to him, some of the communities were so remote that he had never thought of visiting them, but through the CEP he had physically visited some communities and also read a lot about the history, geographical location and structure of other communities. This connects with the Ghana Government decentralisation programme which enables policy makers to be closer to the masses who are the beneficiaries of development policies (Ahwoi, 2000) and also the objectives of the community programmes of closing the gap between communities and partners in development. According to him:

One important benefit for us as an Assembly is that the programme has opened up the community and made it visible. I think all the Assemblies who receive students have been very pleased and impressed by your presence. When they come, they come and make life lively in our hitherto quiet communities, very enthusiastic... (Conversation with DCD, August 2013).

He further was of the view that if the university could allow the students to do presentations at the Assembly's sitting this would further enhance the Assembly's appreciation of the development problems and issues of the communities and put the Assemblymen in good stead to articulate the concerns

of their people. Overall, the Assembly participants corroborated the evidence of other stakeholders that the community programme gives voices to and acts as an advocacy platform for the communities in which they take place. The DCD further stated that:

When the university eventually sends us the student report containing the profile of the community and a project proposal for the community's most pressing problem, not only do they act as an advocacy tool, but they also serve as an additional voice for communities to articulate their needs, and in the long run we strive to get them addressed, either directly when we have funds or through the intervention of NGOs and CBOs. (Interview with Community Coordinator, July 2013).

This DCD's quotes above are evidence that communities benefit from advocacy by the students. The community profiles developed by students in their community reports help to generate awareness of the communities and thus give them an additional avenue to be heard. From the perspectives of community and District Assembly stakeholders, like the university leaders in chapter four, the programme aims at mobilizing communities in order to work closely with the university, which acts as catalyst for communities to examine their challenges and work to overcome or address them (O'Brien, 2008). Overall it suggests that the programme played the role of adding impetus to the voice of the people and succeeded in eloquently presenting the community at the highest decision making body within lower echelons of the decentralised system in the country (Effah, 1993). Making rural communities desirable places to live depends on the economic opportunities in the area. In recent decades, rural communities with social amenities like potable water and electricity tend to draw and retain people (CRA, 2015). This theme was regarded as very important and kept recurring throughout the research. The perspectives of participants in relation to the theme of knowledge sharing are presented next.

5.4 KNOWLEDGE SHARING BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of new knowledge by the participants was evident in the imparting of both theoretical and indigenous knowledge, and this emerged as a

key finding of the study. Both community-based participants and non-community based participants were embroiled in the process of knowledge sharing with the university represented by students. Critical incidents that were witnessed, such as the explanations of the various architectural designs, social and communal activities such as traditional flooring, and interactions with the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), the garri processor, the farmers and with the chief and elders, all presented instances of knowledge sharing that had a positive impact because it enabled people to give and receive understanding in search for truth and generation of new knowledge and built relationship underpinned by respect and inclusion, thereby enhancing participation and self-efficacy. This in turn built networks between the community, the students who may have positive influence (Emefa, 2014) and that provides the programme to meet the Government strategy to eradicate poverty (Ahwoi. 2000). These networks have the potential to be sustained, and offer opportunities to hear more voices and optimize advocacy (Emefa, 2014). Through sharing knowledge all participants were moving closer to multicultural identities (Taysum and Slater, 2014) built on key principles of inclusion and respect combined with education, provides a foundation for communities to develop out of poverty. The following are the perspectives of stakeholders in relation to these findings.

5.4.1 The Perspectives of Stakeholder Participants

In relation to knowledge sharing leading to the acquisition of new knowledge, as soon as the students stepped into the community and began their transect walk, what caught their eyes was the local architecture. A few houses in the community were rectangular, built with cement blocks and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. However, the majority of the houses were round, built with mud bricks and roofed with thatch. The explanation for this was either the owners' poverty or, according to the Assembly representative, that round rooms can absorb the impact of strong windstorms and were cooler when the temperature outside was hot. Therefore, this style was preferable for the villagers because the block houses and iron sheets are normally hot and relatively less stable.

Our great grandfather preferred the round rooms to the rectangular ones, because, I am told, they can withstand the impact of storms more than the rectangular houses we build these days. As for the roofing sheets, they came with the advent of the coming of the Whiteman. Although the iron sheets last longer, the thatch is cooler and more economical. (Assemblyman, July 2013).

This was new knowledge to the students. They learnt that, around the world, various architectural features are influenced by the weather and the geographical location, apart from economic reasons. Haider et al. (2015) argue that “both the deployment of already existing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge are based on processes of interaction which derive from the interplay between actors” (p.1) in this case students and community members interacting to bring out an understanding.

Similar sentiments were shared by the women participants who were working on traditional flooring when I encountered them. This connects with the understanding on architecture above. Haider et al. (2015) further affirms that “knowledge is not simply transferred but is generated in action” (p.2) and within a social interaction with communities, which then “creates a common context in which the creation and sharing of knowledge take place” (p.2).

When I came across some community women engaged in community flooring with small, hand-held wooden spatulas, their conversation with me revealed that this was a communal activity that was undertaken by the village women. They sprinkled some brownish water that apparently was the product of soaking the bark of the Dawadawa tree. This liquid acted as a binding substance. According to them, a student (referring to the applied sciences student who apparently had some chemistry background) decided to take notes in order to test the Dawadawa tree in the future to determine the binding component, and this amazed the village women. One stated: “I was surprised that the students took interest in the particular tree whose bark was soaked to produce the brownish water that we sprinkled to keep the floor firm. The student advised that we could also mix a small quantity of cement to make the finishing neat. I think I buy this idea. We later implemented it and it was so nice.”

Box 5.10: Conversation with Womn Engaged in Flooring, July 2013

Similarly, when the students had left and I encountered the garri processor, she confirmed to me that she had learnt something from her interaction with the

students. She told me that when they realised her shortcoming in record keeping, they went ahead and taught her some basic bookkeeping:

When the students asked about how much I make in a day, I could not exactly say, so they later came back and gave me a notebook and taught me and my primary school daughter to always record our sales at one side and what we spend at the other side so that at the end of the day we know how much we made and how much we spent. This helped me so much. At least these days I am able to say how much I make in a day thanks to the students. (Conversation with Garri seller, July 2013).

The charcoal burner and the food vendor all also indicated that they had interacted positively with the students and had benefited immensely through the sharing of knowledge about their respective trades. In the case of the charcoal burner, I had previously interacted with her as I followed the students, and again on my usual strolls during my four week stay in the community following the programmes. On one occasion, during the discussion of the programme and its benefits to the community, including her, she said:

I taught the students that there are some trees which unless you “cut” (prune) them or burn them they would not sprout, so over the years it is such trees that we cut. We do not cut the Shea tree or Dawadawa tree, we benefit from these two trees. When your students visited me, I pointed to them the economic trees that we always leave standing. We only cut the trees that have no economic value. (Conversation with Charcoal Burner, July 2013).

It is important to state that, in the said interaction with the students, I made students realise that she only cut what needed to be cut to enable the trees to grow and sprout and that the enemy of the forest is not these village women who on do it to make a living but the big logging companies that use the wood for the world to make a profit. So for the village woman she needs to find an alternative livelihood to be able to feed her family and herself. From the quote of this woman, it could be seen that some learning beneficial to both the student participants and the woman had clearly taken place. While the students, particularly the agricultural science and development studies students, learnt some indigenous knowledge from her, she also learnt about the effects of deforestation in the environment from the students. Affirming this finding, an

NCCPE (2013) study on “how public engagement helps to maximise the flow of knowledge and learning between HEIs and society” found out that “Universities, through their staff, students and facilities, possess huge potential to catalyse learning” and change in the community and wider society, and that there was the need to make strategic investments in public programmes, such as the community engagement programme, as they provide “multiple and often informal” platforms to enrich the lives of people.

While investigating the benefits of the programme, I spoke to the food vendor, who was seated at the village market square. Supporting the admissions of other community members, she said:

In fact there is still a lot for us to learn and experience. I have learnt new ways and approaches of doing things from the students. My knowledge about different types of food preparation and preservation has been enhanced. I have also discovered new spices and methods of food preservation. Because we do not have electricity and therefore cannot have refrigerators, my food goes bad whenever I am unable to sell it all, and I get indebted... The female students who came to teach me also learnt some local methods of preservation and enjoyed my local spices such as dawadawa¹⁵.

Box 5.11: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Food vendor, July 2013

The evidence above suggests an exchange of knowledge related to architecture/engineering and food, nutrition and health. It was therefore connected with the different students' disciplines. These quotes suggest that some knowledge sharing had taken place both ways in the community. Whilst students were learning the indigenous knowledge of the community members about, amongst others, food preservation, weather, architecture, and the environment, which constituted experiential learning for them, community members were also learning a lot about modern approaches to food preservation, flooring and biodiversity conservation all instances of knowledge sharing which broadens the understandings and builds the multicultural dispositions of both students and community members. It offers the opportunity

¹⁵ Dawadawa is a local spice produced from nuts of the dawadawa tree; it is a very popular spice in Northern Ghana often used in preparing soup and rice.

for the university participants to gain knowledge about local issues and how these fits into their knowledge base, thus effectively removing the physical and social barriers that often separate elites and rural people (Bunning et al., 2000).The NCCPE (2014) asserts that in recent times, “students are ‘looking for a higher education experience that is relevant’ (p.2) to their aspirations by engaging with this programme they engage with the aims and it may potentially help them built their careers to meet their aspirations, whilst possibly changing their aspirations because eventually they may opt for career path that positions them to advocate for the eradication of poverty which they now have first-hand experience of.

During an encounter with a farmer on his farm, as I accompanied him to do some weeding, he shared with me some indigenous knowledge.

When we put these sticks and put on them some dresses. It scares away these birds that come to suck our rice, and the monkeys who come to break our cobs and destroy our maize. We also sprinkle cow dung at the sides of the farm and this scares away cattle that come to chew our maize. You know nobody likes the scent of feaces... when I shared this information with the students, especially those from the south, they were excited and took specimens of the herbs... the students also taught me some new and improved farming practices, like how to replenish the soils we have been farming for a long time and this further enhanced our knowledge.

Box 5.12: Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Conversation with Farmer, July 2013

The farmer’s quote further serves as evidence of knowledge sharing as a key finding and confirms the assertions of university leaders as, revealed earlier in chapter 4. These quotes suggest that both academics and regular community members have different knowledge bases that ought to be brought together to expand the knowledge of both, and this occurs through the knowledge sharing that goes on in a community engagement. The engagement then becomes the arena where the different stakeholders harmonize the different knowledge bases into one that would enhance the development of both the students and the community and ultimately would benefit the entire nation (Mabizela, 2011).

Whilst community members and university leaders all agreed that knowledge sharing was a very critical benefit of the community engagement, an interview

with the District Assembly participant also revealed his similar position. The District Coordinating Director recognised that the programme was geared towards knowledge sharing, and he indicated that there was a degree of knowledge sharing occurring even between the Assembly on one hand and the community and the students on the other. The Coordinating Director informed me that on several occasions the Assembly had assisted the students with some data or statistics on projects or in relation to their report:

Normally, the students come to study a particular thematic area, so any information they need relating to the community and even beyond, they come to us, for instance, about some inputs into the profile of the community... so from the planning officer they are able to get all the information that they need from us. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He further stated that:

The Assembly has become a reference point for students to gain data on technical knowledge in the preparation of budget estimates and the design of complex projects for the community. The Assembly supplied the expertise which enabled the students to prepare their proposals. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

These quotes are evidence that the Assembly also helps the students with data to construct the community profiles, which are, in turn, submitted to the Assembly for inclusion in its strategic plans. This is, therefore, a form of knowledge sharing. In this respect the Assembly recognised that knowledge sharing was a critical component of the engagement programme. Knowledge sharing as a key benefit of university community engagement was explored in the United Kingdom as far back as 1867 when a form of university-community outreach was initiated in Cambridge (Charlton, 2015). Charlton affirms the findings of this study when he argues that “communities, businesses and individuals can draw on the knowledge and expertise of universities to address ‘real world’ issues, while engagement initiatives can shape university research agendas and enhance student learning” (p. 4). The next section presents the theme of students as an inspiration to the community youth.

5.5 INSPIRING THE YOUTH OF THE COMMUNITY (Students as Role Models)

Another important key finding was that the student participants were seen as role models who inspired the youth of the community, children and even the elderly. This inspiration may lead to changes in the attitudes and mindsets of the villagers. Community members had a high regard for the students, and all indications were that they were positively impacting the community. The following are the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the finding that the students served as role models and inspired the youth and children of the community and therefore motivated them to greater heights.

5.5.1 Perspectives of Stakeholder Participants

Also the students motivate the rural kids to aspire to get to the top, for the children of this community, the way the students conducted themselves really impressed them. And for mothers and fathers, many have resolved to send their children to school to become nurses, agriculturists, architects and doctors. (Conversation with head teacher, July 2013).

In relation to the issue of students being role models to the community's children, the head teacher of the local primary school admitted that the engagement had indeed won the admiration of community members. This is supported by other community members below. A community participant said to me in a conversation in the field:

The students act as role models and inspire our rural boys and girls to look up to going to the university. (Conversation with Fitter, the Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

The engagement allowed the community to meet vibrant and exuberant young men and women who were attending university and gave them a foundation upon which to imagine that their own children could be like the university students someday. This study revealed that the student participants emerged as role models and real ambassadors for the university, and were regarded as such by the community members. The students indeed served as valuable role models for pupils who might not have considered further education.

In one of our usual chats during my four week post-engagement stay in the community:

The Bicycle mechanic, a good friend of the student participants and of mine, in a reply to a question I asked him about what he sees as the impact of the university students on the community, indicated:

Well, they were hard-working, jovial and above all, disciplined. I think the community youth and children admired them and now aspire to be like them, gain admission to the university. Med, one of the students, was very good and disciplined, I made my son to copy a lot of things from him, and my son always says he wants to be like Brother Med.

(Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

In the course of our interactions, another community member who joined us agreed that the student participants, through their presence in the community: ...helped to open the eyes of our youth. Some of them helped or offered invaluable assistance to the youth. The small children also admire and see them as role models and would like to be like them by going to university, so I think it would encourage or motivate the children to go to school and to aim high like going to the university or a training college.

(Opinion leader, July 2013).

Box 5.13: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Bicycle Mechanic and Opinion leader, July 2013

In one of my usual visits to the garri seller, she praised the students and stated:

Oh these students were very respectful. They want to know everything. My daughter was so impressed that she said “Ma I would like to grow up and be a nurse like this sister, so that when you fall sick I can treat you because there are no doctors in our clinic”. I think they should come every year so that it would encourage our children to dream and aspire. (Conversation with Garri Seller, July 2013).

This is connected to chapter 4, where it was reported that the Garri seller talked about her daughter becoming a nurse so that she would be able to inject her. The garri seller and her daughter have dreams that have been ignited by the presence of the university students. This is positive; however, the poor schooling infrastructure could be a hindrance to these aspirations. Contrary to these positions, the petty trader, whom I approached as she readied her luggage to board the truck to a nearby market, appeared indifferent. She stated:

As for me, my child is still small, less than two years, so I do not see how the students can impact her. I have not always been around so I

don't know much about them. (Conversation with Petty trader, July 2013).

The petty trader may be right because she was out of town peddling her merchandise most of the time. For the ceremony at which the students made their presentation for assessment, the chief, elders, opinion leaders, youth leaders and women's groups were invited to the school, the venue for the occasion. I therefore took the opportunity to engage them in a chat concerning what they thought about the programme. Supporting the finding that students were role models for the children and youth of the community, this is what one of the elders said:

Oh we are very happy about this programme, we are sad that the students are leaving. They really were good examples for our children, their presence had a positive impact on our children, and right now our children talk about aspiring to go to the universities like the students. (Conversation with Elder, June 2013).

Community members, having realised the impact of the students' behaviour, were therefore concerned about the sustainability of the partnership, as the chief hinted:

Because of the way they conducted themselves and the kinds of assistance we had from them, especially whipping up the interest in schooling in our children, we pray for more partnerships with the university". (Conversation with Chief, July 2013).

Arguably, the university, through the students, ignited the interest of the community in the engagement, especially the children. The Chief of the community wished and prayed that the programme would continue unabated.

Similarly, university leaders, when interviewed, took the position of the community members. Since they regarded the student participants as ambassadors of the university, at the orientation programme they cautioned them and impressed upon them the importance of conducting themselves well and leading exemplary lives in the community. The study revealed that the student participants did indeed live up to these expectations and were sources

of inspiration to the children and youth of the community. Most universities in the United Kingdom and elsewhere have student ambassadors who share a passion for their institution and feel able to inspire and encourage other young people, such as these community children, to consider higher education (Andrew, 2015). The community members held them in high esteem after they had left and had fond memories of them. The Community Coordinator mentioned that he was pleased to be told by the Assembly representative that the students had conducted themselves very well, and that many of the community children had visited them after classes:

The Assemblyman openly confessed to me that the community children are beginning to like the students, and always go to them, they ran errands for them. They look up to them; they want to be like them in future. The children like them and are always happy to see them. (Interview with the Community Coordinator, July 2013).

In addition to what the Assemblyman told the Community Coordinator, I personally talked to the kids, and they indicated that they felt very happy whenever they saw the student participants.

I like our teachers, they dress better than the old teachers, and they look smart and like teaching us sports, like playing football. (Conversation with community child, July 2013).

I noticed the smiles on their faces as they narrated to me their experiences and interactions with the student participants. It showed clearly that these were kids who had found new friends and hoped to follow in their footsteps one day. Unfortunately, however, the poor schooling infrastructure coupled with poverty may be their bane and may prevent them from attaining their aspirations. This evidence is related to long distances that the permanent teachers travel to the village from the city and also the lack of living quarters for the teachers and their families. In spite of these odds, the faces of the children told me they were determined to emulate the students by getting into the university. Evidence from the students' field notebooks in relation to inspiring the community children suggested that the students recognized that they were role models to the community youth:

I gave them inspirational messages just to let them know that no matter where you come from, no matter your background, you can make it. I also taught them that as pupils they should know how to manage things, even in terms of pocket money given to them and also know how to take care of things, such as their uniforms and books. (Student field notebook, 5 July 2013).

Owing to this revelation, I had a chat with a few of the young girls in the community who visited the female students as a result of their admiration for them:

I asked them: Why do you normally come to the university ladies? And they replied: We come to them because we like them and see them as our big sisters or mothers. I probed further: Any more reasons? And they responded: Yes, also because I want to be a nurse in future, the sister that I come to is a nurse, and I want to be a nurse to be able to take care of my mother. One of my friends says that the other sister¹⁶ is a science student and she also wants to be a science student.

Box 5.14: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Children, July 2013

Similarly, in my interviews with the District Assembly participant in relation to this finding, he expressed the view that the presence of the university in their communities was having an effect on the enrolment and retention figures.

The Assembly participant mentioned that the Assemblyman had informed them that the community engagement was one of the best things that ever happened to his community:

Our children look up to the university students as role models, especially the female students. They are inspiring parents, especially mothers, to take the girl child education serious and stop sending only boys to school, so I would be happy if the Assembly can officially express our appreciation and support for the community engagement programme. (Interview with the DCD, August 2013).

The perspectives of the District Assembly participants on the girl child are particularly notable, DFID, (2005) have affirmed that there are “still 58 million girls worldwide who are not in school...” (p.1) and that the “...majority of these

¹⁶Sister is used as a sign of respect from younger boys or girls to their elderly sisters. In this part of Africa respect for age counts.

girls live in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia” (p.1). DFID add that a” girl growing up in a poor family in sub-Saharan Africa has less than a one-in-four chance of getting a secondary education” These grim pictures makes it imperative for a campaign to get more girls in school. Aggrey, a Ghanaian scholar, educator and missionary has said that “If you educate a man, you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation” (Nyamidie, 2015). The DCDs views are similar to the views held by all of the other stakeholders and stemmed from the occasions on which they had contact with the students. For example, when students came to request statistical data and when one Assembly participant paid visits to some of the communities where students were engaged. The feedback he obtained from various Assembly representatives and their experiences dealing with the students strengthened his views about the community engagement in relation to this finding. He indicated:

In fact I learnt that quite a number of women and little girls in the communities were enthused and motivated about the presence of the university ladies... (Interview with the DCD, August 2013).

5.5 INPUTS TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

Another key finding of the study is that the community engagement programme contributes to the District Assembly’s strategic planning and advocacy for intervention by development oriented organizations. This emerged from the data analysis, and the literature is replete with assertions that engagement programmes have immensely assisted universities to enact change and development in their communities (O’Brien, 2008; Boyer, 2010). An examination of stakeholders’ perspectives in relation to this finding is undertaken in the ensuing discussion.

5.5.1 Perspectives of Stakeholder Participants

Regarding programme benefits to the community as a stakeholder, a key finding of this study is that engagement offers the communities practical avenues for conveying their needs to the District Assembly, in particular, the

input of the profiles submitted by the students. The chief of the community had this to say:

I got to know the Coordinating Director and the District Chief Executive (the political head) of our district only because of this programme (Conversation with the chief of the community, June 2013).

I think the university is offering us a platform, as it were, to further relate to the Assembly. I appreciate the role the programme is playing in identifying some of our pressing problems. The student profiles save the District Assembly a lot (of effort). (Conversation with Assemblyman, June 2013).

The garri seller also described to me the visit from officials from the District Assembly:

Before the students came I had never seen the big men of the Assembly here in our community. They were last here after the students left to discuss our water problem. The Officer said they got a clear picture about our water crisis from the student document. (Conversation with Garri Seller, July 2013).

These quotes indicate the community engagement is generally successful in bridging the gap between communities and the university within the larger structure of the decentralisation programme of Ghana. According to Kaburise (2003, p.3), universities are often “perceived to be elitist and/or neo-colonialist centres of privilege, far removed from the national effort to find solutions to the problems of development”; therefore, there was the need to create the necessary ambiance for universities to constructively engage with communities and play much more significant roles in society’s (Kaburise, 2003). In a conversation with the bicycle mechanic, he shared with that on the last day the students were in the community, after the assessment:

I overheard the Coordinator telling the Chief that a copy of their community profile was going to be given to the District Assembly. But I was wondering what they would do with it or what it would add, because the Assemblyman has already been conveying our problems to the Assembly and yet we see nothing. When I confronted the Coordinator wanting to know the effect of giving the Assembly a copy, I was told that it is detailed and spells out how

much the water system would cost and how it would be sustained, so it helps the Assembly to draw up plans. (Conversation with Fitter/Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

Whilst the mechanic was happy that the student proposal would become part of the district-wide strategic plans, he was apprehensive about its benefits as far as securing potable drinking water for his people. The Chief of the community similarly stated at a later time:

I have been petitioning the Assembly to provide us with these boreholes for a long time, but the presence of the students and their agitation for potable drinking water for us, supported by the community's commitment to rank it as our number one priority, rather hastened and pressured the Assembly to accede to our request. It is now receiving favourable attention. (Conversation with Chief of the Community, July 2013).

The portraits of these people from my ethnographic study represent the positions of the villagers and suggest that the socio-economic changes sought by the programme can only be achieved by universities partnering with the communities who constitute the grassroots, and thus, the pivot of decentralisation in Ghana. However the inadequacy of funds derails the effectiveness of the decentralization process in terms of the transfer of funds. Although 7.5 % of the total revenue is set aside as the District Assembly Common Fund (DCAF) to serve as mechanism for transfer of resources from the central government to the local authorities (King et al., 2003) mainly to undertake development projects and some specific programmes (King et al., Ibid, p.2). This provision notwithstanding, there has been a problem of timely release and this further worsens the poverty dynamics of Northern Ghana and widens the gaps that have existed since independence (King et al, 2003, Songsore and Denkabe, 1995). The NCCPE, (2014) in its report on "Universities: engaging with local communities" aptly captured this when they argued that "Universities enrich their local communities through a variety of activities and facilities, including living and working with local regions". This assertion lends credence to the claim that communities gain a lot in terms of interfacing with local government agencies through interacting with universities.

The District Assembly's sanitation officer was here last week and promised us that our problem was receiving attention. According to him the report that the students submitted to the District Assembly was receiving attention and that as soon as money is released we would get our water. (Conversation with head teacher, July 2013).

How I wish we had some boreholes, at least I could do some dry season gardening. Anyway the Assemblyman informed me that the book that the student wrote about our village is putting pressure on the Assembly to hasten the construction of our boreholes. (Conversation with a farmer, 2013).

The evidence above indicates that the community profiles that were submitted to the Assembly indeed yielded some dividends. The Coordinator provided further evidence:

The Assembly has earmarked the construction of some boreholes for the community as a consequence of the "pair wise ranking" procedure which made it a community priority. (Interview with Coordinator, July 2013).

Since community profiling helps to define the degree to which decision-making processes include or exclude stakeholder groups, it helped to clarify the attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics of both the CEP stakeholders and the community with respect to priorities, thus allowing the university to engage in meaningful discussions once they understood community stakeholders and their concerns (Forest and Hill, no date).

In relation to the finding that the outcome of the programme, in the form of a community report, which serves as the basis upon which the District Assembly draws up plans, the Vice Chancellor was of the view that students' input to the District Assembly's strategic plans makes the university a critical partner with the government. In fact, the law mandating university engagement with the communities is quite clear on the role engagement should play in the governmental decentralisation process, of which the District Assembly is the pivot;

The good thing is that the District Assemblies do recognise that the engagement programme is important and it is helping them... the university has an important role to play in the overall decentralization process through the stimulation of rural communities... and

practically through our student report. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

This revelation by the VC indeed points to the fact that District Assemblies support the programme knowing that it has the potential to assist them in hastening the development of rural communities, which is essential to the overall national development policy. This confirms Bailey et al.'s (1999) findings as well as those of Holder (2004), cited by the National Coordinating Council on Public Engagement (NCCPE) (2014), who noted that "public participation can result in improved quality and social legitimacy of the decisions and outcomes..." (p.4) of decentralized bodies in governance. Still discussing the benefits of the engagement to the Assembly, the VC added:

We have been able to prove beyond doubt that it is effective. The District Assemblies have realised that our students, when they come, they help them to draw up their development programmes, and of course, it actually helps the communities economically. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

Interestingly, whilst emphasizing the utility of student participants and the programme's impact on the communities, the Vice Chancellor further indicated that the community profiles submitted to the Assemblies contain areas that need immediate or priority attention, and this sometimes puts pressure on the Assembly with communities following up frequently with the Assembly. In some cases, Assemblies may not yet be prepared to respond, and this creates tension between the communities and the Assemblies. The director of the programme also expressed a view similar to that of the Vice Chancellor. According to him, although no conscious or elaborate study has been done,

In fact, a few years back when medium-term development planning was instituted, the primary data that most District Assemblies in Northern Ghana used was from the community engagement programme. I know of one of the districts, such as..., where the first batch of Faculty of Integrated Development Studies (FIDS) graduates helped. They came out with nice Medium Term Plan (MTEP) because of the involvement of our students. (Interview with Coordinator, August 2013).

His assertion clearly suggests that student input into the strategic planning of District Assemblies is indeed a benefit of the community engagement programme. To the extent that student input was instrumental in the medium-term plans of some Assemblies, as indicated by the Director, reveals that stakeholders are collaborating and mutually benefiting from the engagement. The idea is that students do not just become passive learners, as in Freire's (1970) banking system of learning, but challenge knowledge by applying it practically in solving developmental problems. The programme director provided further evidence in support of the position of the Vice Chancellor regarding the practical benefits of the community engagement to some District Assemblies. He stated:

I can give you an example of *Kpansi* where they used our students to do their strategic planning and also used data generated by our students. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

These quotes suggest that, apart from the use of data generated by the students, some of the Assemblies go further to use the students as resources for drawing up their strategic plans. In addition, students play an advocacy role by lobbying the Assemblies to get projects for their communities. The Director shared some instances of this with me:

I will give you one or two examples from *Safara*¹⁷, a village in the Tuoso district. Students profiled and lobbied to get a Junior High School for a community which had been struggling with another community to get a school. We were called to participate in the opening of the school. Our student got a nursery built in Zarago village. Our data has been captured in the development plans of many of the districts we go to do advocacy. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

When I tried to further find out from the director whether he could state that, based on the students' profiles, there have been some interventions. He went on to say:

Yes, but I cannot pinpoint one community in this regard, but I do know that the students' reports have been indicating the lack of toilet facilities, electricity, water, schools, markets in certain communities

¹⁷ All names of people and villages used are pseudonyms

and because of that we are doing a lot of these in the communities, say water. We are developing for them boreholes. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

The Director provided tangible evidence of the criticality of the students' input to the local Assembly's strategic planning. As White and Strom (2013) succinctly stated, the inputs and outcomes of community engagement raises awareness of the key needs of many people in the community and offers them support for accessing resources.

The Director of the programme further mentioned that:

At the Tamale Teaching hospital, on many occasions, our students consistently reported the high prevalence of fistula cases, so eventually a fistula centre was constructed for the hospital. The centre has been of enormous assistance to the people of Northern Ghana and beyond. Off course, we are yet to carry out a comprehensive review of the programme to see the tangible benefits, but this is one of the many success stories of the programme." (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

The Coordinator for my study community indicated to me that he concurred with the Coordinating Director, who conveyed the Assembly's appreciation for the programme in an interview:

The District Assembly expressed appreciation to the University for the Assistance that the students offered the Assembly in the creation of its strategic plan. The students from the planning department actually guided the Assemblymen during the process and wrote the document, and they did not need to pay for any consultancy, and this saved the Assembly a lot of funds. (Interview with Community Coordinator, July 2013).

The above evidence from the different perspectives of the villagers and the university staff depicts the student community report, including the profile, as a direct contribution to the overall development of the communities of Northern Ghana. The District Assembly, in advancing the frontiers of the government's decentralization agenda which arguably is constrained by the lack of funds, is required to, among other things; ensure stakeholder and grassroots participation in both decision making and the formulation of solutions. It is in the

light of this that the role of the university in mobilising and facilitating a process of pair wise ranking for communities to consider their problems carefully and prioritize them for solutions becomes so compelling.

I later interviewed the District Coordinating Director about the benefits that accrue to the Assembly from the engagement process. He was quick to state that the District Assembly, and by extension the larger society, benefit significantly by virtue of the contribution of the engagement to the Assembly's strategic plans. He mentioned an example of student involvement in the creation of the Assembly's strategic plans:

We normally have a four year development plan. The last one was drawn in 2011 with great input from the students, in terms of data they gave us through their community profiles; it assisted in the strategic planning of the District Assemblies. (Interview with District Coordinating Director, 13 August 2013).

The District Assembly is legally mandated to work towards full implementation of the country's decentralisation programme; however, as a result of the emergence of "overt public criticisms of universities in the 1980s for being out of touch with the development realities of the country" (Kaburise, 2003, p.1), the new university was therefore mandated to partner with the District Assemblies in the drive to achieve sustainable development in Northern Ghana and beyond. Consequently, the local District Assembly and the university were to explore ways to connect the development agenda of the communities to their mandates and ensure that research and development are ultimately integrated in the process of teaching and learning (Kaburise, 2006).

The DCD further showed me stacks of community reports/profiles that they had received since the entry of the university in the District. The director referred to this pile as constituting a pool of credible data that made it easier for them to prioritize development initiatives in terms of meeting the needs of communities equitably in a bottom up approach. He admitted that the Assembly indeed benefited immensely from the community engagement:

It does because some information that the Assembly did not have, probably the problems of these communities would be unearthed

there or probably some updates for us to add to our database, and these are very vital to our development programmes, it is important. (Interview with District Coordinating Director, 13 August 2013).

He went on to say that:

We are in the process of drilling some boreholes for a few communities as a result of the interface last year. (Interview with District Coordinating Director, 28 August 2013).

This anticipated intervention was an outcome of the community report submitted by the students, which contributed to the District's strategic plan and therefore was receiving some attention. The students' seven week stay in the community enabled them to conduct research on the development challenges confronting the inhabitants of these communities and proffer solutions to them in the form of a project proposal embedded in a community report. Community profiling, which resulted in the report, constitutes active community involvement, which enabled the students to write a more accurate and comprehensive description of the community. This then formed the basis for an action plan that was forwarded to the Assembly (Skinner, 1997). The community profile is an important part of the wider process of community development as a means of improving the quality of life in villages in Northern Ghana. It enabled the students to identify issues, priorities and the actions to be taken, which then enabled them to set goals (Packham, 2008). Community members also benefit positively through their experiences by way of "building their capacities and also having a better sense of their own potential" (p. 9), beyond the data collection by the students and the submission of their profile to the Assembly (Hawtin & Percy-Smith, 2007).

5.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The research identified several benefits both to individual participants and the constituencies they represent. Whilst community members indicated that they had benefited immensely from the useful services the students provided, including teaching in local schools, outreach on topical issues such as the environment, improved farming practices, and girls' education, as well as from increased community visibility which resulted from the students' profiling and, most importantly, from expected developmental dividends, such as the new

school block under construction. The university was also successfully churning out a new crop of students with mindsets that are responsive to the needs of rural communities (Kaburise, 2003, Abagale, 2010). Students broadened both their knowledge and their horizons through experiential and practical learning, which afforded them the opportunity to share and gain new knowledge, build their capacity in research, and change their attitudes and orientations towards rural people. They developed more favourable attitudes towards living in deprived communities and became more multicultural, as revealed in chapter four. The Assembly, among other things, benefited from the students' community reports, which contributed significantly to the preparation of their strategic plans. The university succeeded in engaging the community constructively and involved them in knowledge creation and finding solutions to their developmental problems. In terms of increased awareness and the involvement of rural communities in development planning, increased enrolment and retention in rural schools through the Engagement programme of seven weeks every year, Northern Ghana in particular and Ghana as a whole got some benefits.

Although there have been a number of studies that examined the benefits and impact of community engagements, they have mainly solely considered the perspective of the university and not that of other stakeholders (Kite, 2010). Most studies have also looked at University outcomes to the detriment of community outcomes (Robinson, 2000). Robinson (2000) asserted that very little research has been done about the "value of universities to their communities beyond economic impact" (p.6). He is, however, quick to point out that "there is some evidence to suggest that the major beneficiaries of university-community engagements, or partnerships, are the university, its staff and students" (p.6). Therefore, a study in relation to the benefits of this programme to the various stakeholders and its impact on communities in Northern Ghana in particular was apt. This chapter looked at the benefits of the programme to stakeholders, the patterns of participation, and the inherent power relations in the programme are explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN FINDINGS (3)
(Patterns of Participation and Power)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the key findings of the study in respect to patterns of participation and the power relations that underpin the community engagement process. The discussion of the findings draws on Arnstein's (1969) framework of participation (See page 38) which entails locating the various stakeholder groups on a ladder and bringing to light their perspectives through community conversations, interviews and specific observed insights, referred to as incidents. The key findings related to research question three were that the university dominates the programme, there were inadequate consultations and unequal levels of influence, and this led to variations in the patterns of participation, so that they ranged from non-participation which comprises manipulation and therapy to citizen power. There were also cases of exclusion and low participation as a result of factors such as rural-urban migration by the youth, manifest poverty and push factors, such as the lack of social amenities, and the structure and process of planning. This made it impossible to address the power imbalances that undermined the value of the engagement.

Generally, the findings suggest that although the university was thought to be wielding more power, which Shamblin (2011) corroborates, there were elements of power sharing with regards to the pair wise ranking which in this project's case identified water as a community priority for decentralised funds administered by District Assemblies. However the findings reveal that there are significant powers issues in getting the government to release the funds and building the boreholes agreed upon by the community. Using the ethnographic evidence, I have structured the chapter to present first those with the least power, and therefore with low participation and even evidence of manipulations, and I progress to citizen power, the highest form of participation according to Arnstein's (1969) ladder (Fig. 2.1 p.42).

6.2 PERSPECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDERS REGARDING PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION AND POWER

This analysis discusses the perspectives of stakeholders regarding the key findings outlined above and draws on the framework of Arnstein's (1969) ladder to analyse the patterns of participation and therefore, power. The research question was to examine the patterns of participation and the power relations inherent in the programme through stakeholders' views. Arnstein's eight classifications have been grouped into three main levels of participation: non-participation, tokenism and citizen power (Fig.2.1 p 42).

In the analysis here, I begin with cases of non-participation, then tokenism, and then I move to instances of citizen power by taking penned portraits from my ethnographic study to explain how they relate to other village members with similar characteristics. Therefore the various portraits that I have previously used in the preceding findings chapters to illuminate the patterns of participation and power in the community programme are used here as well. Through vignettes that I use, the themes that emerged can be clearly understood and situated.

6.2.1 *Non Participation (Manipulation and Therapy)*

In this classification, citizens are 'manipulated' by being made to be seen to be participating, because their participation is needed to legitimise the project. It is not going to change any outcome and their views are not considered (Arnstein, 1969). In the case of 'therapy', participation is equal to a kind of treatment. The lack of participation is equated to mental illness where participation cures the participant of some worrying inhibitions. Here the reality is that participation does not solve the real problems but to achieve a certain aim that the implementers or power holder has (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein describes it as 'invidious' because it brings no change. In this category I begin with the perspective of the Assemblyman, who is the liaison between the community and the university. This is a representative quote revealing evidence of manipulation and therapy and therefore non-participation:

Although I take part in the programme, the university controls everything, from the beginning to the end. We are only sometimes involved when there are problems to sort out. It would have been nice if the university organised a briefing of all Assemblymen in District Assemblies in one of our sittings or in a workshop so that we adequately understand the programme, but as it is now the university brings the programme and decides all that should happen. (Conversation with Assemblyman, July 2013).

The Assemblyman, who himself was actively engaged in the programme, pointed out that the community was not fully involved and that non-participation resulted partly from an inadequate understanding of the programme. This suggests that community members are merely interacting with the programme, and in actual fact are not participating, but are only being used as accessories. The programme being clearly labelled as an academic programme places them in the position of manipulation. Participation cannot be genuine if stakeholders have few or no prospects to appreciate the repercussions and the effects of their opinions. Such “non-genuine 'participation' often merely disguises what is actually the manipulation of participants because the fundamental requirement of genuine participation is ensuring respect for participants’ views” (UNICEF, 2015, p.5). In the case of the community engagement programme, the community’s voice is hardly sought before the university enters.

Aside from the Assemblyman, the influence of the university in bringing community members together to discuss their problems and thereby giving them some relief as it were. This leads to ‘curing’ the community members as indicated by a number of community participants, such as the Bicycle mechanic. He said:

This programme is brought to us by the university. We see the university vehicles come and go, they talk to the Chief; a few elders and the Assemblyman and they go. Later we see students. To be honest, all that we know is that they are from the university and that they are here to study. We interact with them, but we have no control over them and have no say in what they do on a daily basis. (Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

Although the community members participate, they are only being told about the programme in order for them to participate and assist the students in achieving

their objectives. The university does not do enough to enable them to actively participate but only seeks to 'cure' them. The Mechanic added:

The university decides all that takes place in the programme, we do not have the power to change or decide how the programme progresses. We are only informed by the Chief to cooperate with the students, that we should give them the information they need, if they ask us. (Bicycle Mechanic, July 2013).

The community members are merely tutored and cured through the investigations the students undertake, as described in chapter four, and this amounts to manipulation (Arnstein, 1969). The inability of the university to include the other stakeholders, particularly the community, in the decision-making process brings to the fore the issue of inclusiveness. Prilleltensky (2003) argues that including community members in programmes has the potential to be "action to promote wellbeing and reduce power inequalities" (pp.195-202). From my observations and interactions with community members, their responses reveal that as stakeholders, they do not have the capacity to effectively participate because the aim is not to enable them to, and as a result, they do not have ownership. Thus it can be understood by extension that the programme lacks inclusivity. One participant stated:

Sometimes they just go to see the chief and the Assemblyman and leave, we don't know what they tell them, later we are called and told something. Won't it be better if we hear directly from them? So we are just interacting with the students, we do not really know all the facts about their stay here, they could be here for something either just as students. (Unemployed Youth, 10 July 2013).

The evidence suggests that community participants feel that the programme is superimposed on the community. They are seen to be participating, whereas they actually are not given the capacity to effectively participate. This quote is evidence of manipulation and affirms Short's (1989) argument that "community needs are easily manipulated or distorted by powerful interest groups and that the political context within which community needs are recognized, articulated and mobilized is the most important issue for community participation" (p.1). The data also reveal that the levels of influence and participation varied from

individual to individual. There were some misunderstandings which affected the participation of some community members in the programme. A community member who did not turn up for a group discussion organised by the students later informed me in a conversation that:

I thought the issues that were going to be discussed at the chief's palace had no direct bearing on my survival, so I chose not to go, because it does not add anything to my life, these university people are okay so they can have all the time on earth. I need to go find some work to do. (Unemployed Youth, July 2013).

This quote is evidence of manipulation of the community by the university since the unemployed youth was pessimistic about the outcome of the programme and felt it did not offer much for him. Affirming this observation, Brown (2015) asserts that manipulation implies a relationship in which a person attempts to have an effect on others, or on a situation, without being affected in return. In my interaction and observations in the community, the locals' demeanour and reactions showed that rural people have, over the years, come to understand that merely participating in programmes does not give them the capacity to affect the outcome of the process. Some of them felt that they were just being used by the university to achieve its own ends:

Well, I don't really see any importance to this programme, I go off to my farm early and come back late. Students come and go since the programme started but for me I think that we are just being used by the university, I do not see any tangible benefit of the programme. All that we see is that the students come and roam around and go back. (Conversation with Farmer, June 2013).

In my usual hang-out I came across a number of the community youth, and as usual we discussed issues surrounding the programme. The following account indicates that for the youth, participation was only superficial for the sake of simply participating. They did not really have the capacity to appreciate the programme, and therefore, they were being manipulated:

I am just interacting with the students because I see them as brothers and sisters and they are very interesting but I don't think their presence is going to change our lives. We lack so many

amenities, we are poor and they cannot change these things. So we are just participating because of our opinion leaders, Chief and the Assemblyman. (Conversation with Unemployed youth, June 2013).

The unemployed man mentioned above also stated:

We hear from some communities that these students come and go every year and they are even tired, because they keep repeating the same things, asking the same questions, I do not think ours would be different. (Conversation with Unemployed Youth, July 2013).

The following incidents reinforce the notion that some community members feel that they are just being manipulated and that taking part in the programme neither educates them nor cures them (Arnstein 1969) but is just a means of obtaining the community's support for the programme:

Incident No 1

Strolling through the community, I encountered some women involved in Shea butter extraction, which is one of the income generating activities of the community. Here, the women in groups of two's and three's sat around basins filled with paste from the roasted and ground Shea nuts, beating it until the oil paste separated from the residue. The residue is then transferred into an aluminium pot sitting on stoves with huge logs burning to turn the paste into oil. In a one-on-one dialogue with one of them, I asked her whether she had ever interacted with the student participants, and thereby participated in the programme. She replied "I only see them sometimes coming to buy food around my house but I have never attended any of their meetings". She admitted she was busy most of the time and sometimes felt like minding her own business. I further asked her why she has not even been to their meetings and she admitted she sometimes either did not get the information early or simply just felt that it was a sheer waste of time because nothing tangible was going to happen and she could not affect anything. I could see the apathy and therefore her lack of participation from her actions. It was clearly indicated because from time to time she ignored me and went back to her basin of paste. She was one of the community members whose participation falls within the rungs of manipulation... the reckoning that one's participation could not change the outcome of the processes (Arnstein, 1969, p.3).

The following critical incident is further evidence to illustrate this finding:

Incident No 2

With the absence of students, on a typical day, apart from visiting the chief or the Assemblyman, I usually went round meeting community members as they sat in clusters or individually in their homes and "bases", which the youth called

“Ghettoes¹⁸”. The latter were always characterised by arguments, noise, hooting, yelling and, on rare occasions, ended in fisticuffs. These ‘bases’ had evolved with the advent of multiparty democracy in the country and were usually associated with a political party, but in small communities like this one it was usually constructed under a very shady tree where the youth came together to relax and talk after a day’s hard work or on occasions when they had no farm work. It is usually very busy during the dry season but hardly busy during the rainy season. Since this was during the rainy season, the students and I had previously used it as a meeting point for their group discussions. So in their absence I occasionally interacted with the youth who frequented it. On one occasion when my gatekeeper and I were at the “Ghetto”, there was an argument on who wields influence and power as far as the programme was concerned. Was it the community or the university? This was at my instigation. I asked the gatekeeper to initiate the debate. A community member pointed out that the university was powerful because they had more money and resources, imposing buildings, cars and its faculty looked healthy and well dressed. Community members too wielded considerable power unknowingly because of the kinds of social capital they have. The Assemblyman and I were absorbed in the arguments and did not realise it had attracted the attention of some women and children who stood by to listen. One of them interrupted, “Ah how can you people compare our small village to the big university? We cannot be as powerful as the university that is why you have brought your programme to us.” It was clear that the community saw the university as a big entity and more powerful, who brought and controlled the programme.

Later in the day I had another encounter at my usual hang-out with a young farmer who was on his way to the farm. I tried to find out whether he had been frequently participating in the meetings called by the students, and whether he had had a one-on-one interaction with any of the students, as this constituted the minimum of participation in the programme:

I am not too sure about contacts or meetings with the students, even though I see them quite often and exchange greetings. I have not interacted or spoken to them closely. I also have not attended any of their meetings partly because I am trying to deal with weeds on my farm. (Conversation with young farmer, June 2013).

This need to seek out their livelihoods affected the participation of many of the community-based participants, resulting in manipulation because they lack the time which is a resource to participate and therefore cannot influence any

¹⁸These are wooden seats the youth have constructed from pieces of discarded boards and tree trunks on which they normally sat to discuss issues of common interest and also topical issues such as politics and the economy. It is a popular venue in the community where the youth gather to relax and also became a place where students often met with community for group discussions.

change with their absence. With regard to exclusion and low participation, the lack of critical social amenities coupled with the chronic rural-urban drift of young boys and girls in Ghana as a result of the breakdown in the agricultural sector were a significant contributor to self-exclusions and for that matter lack of participation with the attendant risk of these young people travelling to the city on their own because they cannot earn a living, if their livelihood revolves around charcoal burning which is being stooped. This connects to the recent controversial plant breeder's bill in Ghana, which if passed, would allow "corporations to exploit farmers, capture profit and push genetically modified seeds into the country's food system" (Walker & Tickell, 2014, p.1). At one time the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama lamented how African agriculture was being affected by the policies of Bretton Wood institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF through the removal of subsidies and large for profit multinational companies who outsource to Ghana and undermine Ghana's farming industry and Gross domestic product which impacts on the power of the local economies, because the large International organizations that are for profit do not have a moral obligation to ensure that communities where they operate have minimum wages and also issues of tax evasions, repatriation of capital out of the country and also environmental pollution (Myjoyonline, 2014).

The decline in the agricultural sector has driven many young men and women to the south in search of jobs, and this migration has massively impacted on the future of the community and its local economy and aims to develop out of poverty and therefore an impact on the future of food production and rise of slums in urban areas. The rest of the community members are left to struggle on a daily basis for their livelihood and this affects their level of participation, as evidenced by this observation in my field notes:

At the north end of the village, where the community bus terminal was located, on a daily basis, I observed most of the community women board a rickety vehicle to markets in nearby communities to sell assorted wares or to trade in grains, cereals and legumes. The rest were involved in one form of income generating activity or another. The children either went to school or accompanied their parents to the farm or loitered about. (Ethnographic Field notes, June 2013).

The women petty traders and men, who go to their farms and the youth who leave for greener pastures in the mines, farms and as head porters, were clearly excluded from the programme and therefore fell within the range of non-participation (Arnstein, 1969). This is partly as a result of their personal schedules or the lack of space for participation. Apart from the issue of mass migration and the inadequacy of spaces for participation, there was also an indication that some other community participants were not participating adequately because of insufficient information about the programme and/or a lack of appreciation for the programme.

Probing further regarding the fact that as a social programme, everybody in the community should have been included, I observed that some community members seemed apathetic to the programme. One community member, whose house was just a few yards across the “*ghetto*” and also about half a kilometre to the Chief’s palace, was nevertheless conspicuously absent from the meetings. For this reason I went to his house to engage him in a conversation. I asked him why I hardly met or saw him in the community and at students’ meetings that I had attended. He replied:

Most of the time I am not invited and I try to mind my own business.
(Conversation with a Community member, June 2013).

I informed him that I was made to understand that there is usually a public announcement and not individual invitations. He jokingly told me that some people are too big to be invited publicly. Being an insider I agreed that a certain category of community members require a special invitation, as is the norm in many Northern communities. I thought he had a point. He agreed to attend next time if the right courtesies are extended to him. (Field notes, July, 2013).

The indication of minding his own business, when pitched against his participation, there is a significant difference between minding his own business and advocating for his rights through participation by lobbying the district Assembly, having a connection with students who can advocate on behalf of the whole community for their rights. However, the dynamics of the community and a suspicion of being snubbed by powerful community members such as the Chief and Assemblyman oftentimes led to some resistance and disillusionment.

A compelling argument for public participation therefore is that involvement is “contingent upon a meaningful and rewarding outcome” (Bickerstaff & Walker, 2001, p. 2). People need to believe that participation could make a difference, change their situation or bring them immediate rewards. When community members “invest their time and resources in attending meetings, they expect that outcomes or returns must be tangible and verifiable” (Bickerstaff & Walker, 2001, p. 2). It is also about not being snubbed by powerful community members. This issue of unequal participation in the community project is within the village and needs addressing. The Bicycle Mechanic lamented that the quest for livelihood can have an effect on participation and lead to non-participation:

You can see I am always at my shop repairing the few bicycles that come my way. I am even planning to move to the repair of tricycles because they are virtually taking the place of bicycles. I have to be here every day apart from Friday; I have five children who are in school that I have to provide for. Sometimes I see you people having an interaction somewhere and I want to come but my job would not allow me, if I leave it and go to attend the function nothing much changes. (Conversation with Bicycle Mechanic, June 2013).

These accounts are evidence of manipulation situated within the realm of non-participation. Also, for some participants, issues of livelihood take precedence to community participation in the programme. The incident below reinforces my argument that poverty can make communities liable to manipulation by powerful agencies such as the university. The lack of resources for the District assembly to meet the needs of these communities and brought to the fore by the aid of the university, leaves the community unable to effect any change by themselves. This therefore leaves them on the rungs of manipulation. It is important that community members however transit up the ladder as the engagement progresses.

Incident No 3

During one of my usual hang-outs, I approached a young man with his family coming from their farm at around 4 p.m. I greeted the man and asked why he did not invite me to the farm. He laughed and sarcastically said that I was not cut out for the farm, implying that with my status, I would be unwelcome at the farm. I asked why I had not seen him around at the students' meeting. He

replied: Because you have solved all your problems you do not know others are struggling... You want me to leave my farm to attend your meetings that I don't really understand and later struggle... you wait, when I finish with my farm work and you are still there, I would come.
(Field notes of conversation with Farmer, July 2013)

What he meant was that at the end of the day, he loses by participating in the engagement instead of gaining something. This is evidence of manipulation of the village youth by university:

As they dragged themselves along the path to their house looking very exhausted, I kept thinking about what he said. Was it the fact that the programme is taking place during the farming season or the issues of livelihood that were at play or a combination of both. (Field notes, July 2013).

Northern Ghana has two seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season is a busy time for rural people because they are basically agrarian and this was a reason why I did not meet the Assemblyman at home on my first day because the issue of livelihood and survival are paramount. Like the students and the District Assembly, community members also believed that the university determines the period of commencement and ending of the programme without any input from the other stakeholders. According to two members of the community:

The university did not even consult us on the timing of the programme; you can see it is taking place in the rainy season when most people are always away at their farms. It should have been in the dry season so that many people would be free to interact with the students. I think you should convey this message to the authorities so that they can shift it to the dry season when we have finished our farm work. (Ethnographic Field notes, Bicycle mechanic, July 2013).

People are less busy during the dry season and that is normally a best time to roll out programmes in rural areas if the aim is for full participation. Another incident in the community that I was personally involved in illustrates how the issue of livelihood directly affects participation and results in manipulation:

Incident 4

On another day I made my way to the lorry station early one morning, it was a market day of the biggest community around. This happened to coincide with an important forum organized by the students, in conjunction with the palace, in support of girls' education. A number of the women petty traders were preparing their wares and luggage to board the dilapidated wooden cargo truck enroute to the market. I jokingly told them the market day had elapsed. And this sparked off laughter and a lot of noise. They shouted; "no! no! no! We can't miss this important market". I asked them whether they had information about the engagement programme and they all answered in the affirmative. I further wanted to know why they were not taking part in the impending discussions on girls' education. And they all laughed and told me that they needed to make some money and a living first before they can send the girls to school. These were women whom I thought would be very ready to sacrifice the market for their daughters but they happened to have placed their livelihood first. (Field notes of conversation with Petty traders, July 2013).

The above incidents are evidence that situates participants like the petty trader on the rung of manipulation as a result of their preoccupation with their livelihood and their lack of a proper understanding of the community programme. When people put all their energies into surviving and cannot engage in realising their rights within the constitution then veritably they are being manipulated. Here manipulation is hidden in the prevention of participation through the struggle to survive and those in power do nothing to enable the authentic full participation of these people in the crafting of their laws. When people relationship with the economy is based on external agents outsourcing to them and exploiting them, or stealing their future heritage through deals that they are not aware of and would not sanction then they are indirectly being manipulated.

This implies that implementing agencies like NGOs and local government agencies normally manipulate the process to appear as if the local people are participating, yet in reality their limited knowledge and involvement amounts to non-participation (Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2014, p.1). This perception led to the emergence of participatory development approaches such as pair wise ranking (Chambers, 1998). The next rung on the ladder is 'Informing' through education and sharing of knowledge, and the consultation in the development of political dispensations such as the growing democracy in Ghana or prioritising

water, or roads or schools through pair wise ranking. The Assembly representative therefore stated that:

The University should consider organising at the level of the Assemblies some fora for all Assemblymen to educate us more on the issues of the engagement so that they become informed and can, in turn, educate more community members. (Conversation with Assemblyman, July 2013).

Based on the above evidence, it is critical to appreciate and challenge the operation of power relations among the stakeholders, particularly between the university and the community, when looking at programmes that seek to mobilise communities for development. My interactions with some community members revealed that there had been no widespread consultation of community-based stakeholders regarding the whole programme prior to the pair wise ranking which was a turning point brought about some form of consultation that was facilitated through the programme. Before this, consultation was limited to the Chief, the Assemblyman and a few opinion leaders, with the aim that they would then spread the message. More often than not, the average locals did not get sufficient information about the programme before the students arrived. Although “information giving and consultation are often wrongly” misconstrued as participation by some development partners (Wilcox, 1994), their neglect can breed disillusionment among community members, making them see themselves as being manipulated. Clarity at the beginning of a programme is critical to its success and greater degrees of participation. Responding to my probes regarding the issue of inadequate consultation, the Vice Chancellor said:

I think there is a limit to how far we can go to consult or involve the community members. If you identify a community, you do not go from house to house talking to everybody; you actually deal with the opinion leaders or elders to... trickle down to every member of the community... Yes, some community members may be complaining that they see people, strangers, around and do not know what they are doing and what they are there for; you should expect this from some individuals. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

These deficiencies in communication often lead to a misunderstanding of the aims and purposes of the programme and create tension between the

community and the university. Community members who have little information about the programme tend to view it with suspicion and begin to see themselves as powerless. They then show symptoms of frustration and disillusionment, a hallmark of a manipulated community (Pretty, 1995; Bishop and Davies, 2002). As a result, the long-standing divide between the university and the community is reinforced and further exacerbated. I probed the Vice Chancellor further as to whether there had been any tension between community members and the university as a result of the perceived manipulation. He replied:

Of course, as a human society, there are bound to be tensions. Apart from the perception by some community members that they are being used, some of our students are sometimes deviants, and once in a while they may go out and involve themselves in certain things that are not good. When we get the reports, we take appropriate action and sort things out with the community. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

These tensions, inevitable as they may be in a social programme of this nature, must be managed and directed for positive outcomes so that community members do not feel manipulated. Whilst the university may be apprehensive about losing control if they allowed optimum participation, it may be that the community feels disempowered because they are unable to achieve what they aspire to, constituting manipulation by the university. Wilcox (2014) argues that understanding participation involves understanding power, and therefore, the decision to hold on to control of the programme, coupled with inadequate consultation, may be the cause of the non-participation of some members of the community, leading to tension and disillusionment.

A key finding of the study is that powerlessness on the part of local people, caused by factors such as the difficulties of securing a livelihood in rural communities and the structure of the programme, often breeds frustration connected to non-participation and manipulation. Although Ghana's robust economic growth in the last two decades was praised by many around the world for helping to reduce poverty in the country from 52 percent to 29 percent, a report by the United Nations on Ghana's development stated that the three

northern regions which constitute Northern Ghana “still harbour the poorest of the poor” (cited in Yahaya, 2014, p.1). The same report also pointed out that the “incidence of poverty in the area over the same period declined slightly from 63 percent to 52 percent. In the Upper West, poverty remained at 85 percent, while in the Upper East it actually increased from 67 percent to 70 percent.”(p.1). The UNDP’s data reaffirms that poverty in the north is “not an abstraction, but a real thing, existing in a real context with a real history” (Yahaya, 2014, p.1). This situation makes the rural poor prone to manipulation. Hinting at the economic status of the community and therefore some of the factors affecting community participation and how he influences it, the Chief stated:

You see sometimes our villagers do not take things seriously and also because of the poverty and hardships people go off looking for what to survive on. You know we are farmers, so people go off to their farms but when I tell them to try and be at a gathering, they know it is me so it is an important function and so most of them would make time to attend. (Chief, July 2013).

The level of deprivation in rural communities like this one is quite high, as recounted earlier by the UNDP report. This negatively affects the participation of community-based stakeholders and therefore places them on the level of manipulation and therefore, non-participation. The Chief of the community told me:

Our community is a very poor one, we live from hand to mouth, we depend on rains to farm, and this sometimes fails us. Fertiliser and tractor services are also too high beyond our reach. Government used to support us but these days the support no longer comes. For instance last year our yields were very poor. As you can see many of our young men and women have left to the south for greener pastures. So the rest of us left have to work hard that is why you do not see us all the time in some of your meetings. (Conversation with Chief, June 2013).

Thus it is clear that, like the rest of Northern Ghana, this community is poor. It has been established that preoccupation with their livelihood excluded a number of community participants from the programme. They had to go to their farms, trades and vocations in order to make ends meet, which was their utmost priority. The District Coordinating Director (DCD) emphasised the poverty of

rural communities by saying that even the average yield from their farms was nothing to write about. According to him:

For these communities, even food security is a big problem, so I understand that although the programme is a laudable one, not all community members may be actively engaged in it. Especially since it does not distribute hand-outs like micro credit schemes do. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He further added,

As an Assembly, we have rolled out a number of programmes to the communities and the picture has always been of low participation by community members. It is only in programmes such as micro financing and capacity building, where sometimes there is a lot to eat and drink, that participation is high. My brother, I know some of the problems that this programme is facing. But it all boils down to the poverty levels in the communities. Sometimes if programmes are not packaged to deliver instant or immediate benefits, the attendance and participation suffers, but I don't blame them too much, they have their farms and issues of livelihood to contend with. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He reiterated that the mere perception by local people that such programmes come with lots of economic benefits but that the organisers are not giving them their due could make community members shun the programme or tag it as political:

You see some community members may even see these programmes as political. Especially if they perceive that you are working with the Assembly or they have identified a leader of the programme to be associated with any political party, they may exhibit a lukewarm attitude to the programme and their participation may be low. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

Finally, on the issue of poverty as a disincentive to participate, he indicated that he was happy that the Assembly had intervened in some communities based on the students' proposals, because this would reduce further instances of manipulation:

This, in my view, is helping to engender confidence in the community engagement programme of the university. Testimonies of some communities about how student proposals about their problems helped them to get assistance make the rounds, and this may lead to

a possible increase in participation by community members. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The university participants were also well aware that poverty levels in Northern Ghana are quite high. In fact, this was the main reason the university's mandate includes engaging communities constructively with regard to their development agenda. However, the poverty of the north makes the villagers liable to be manipulated by development agencies. As the Vice-Chancellor put it:

Northern Ghana, although it has a lot of potentials, they remain untapped, and this has been the bane of its underdevelopment. You can see that most of the communities we go to do not even have motorable roads and that adds to our cost of maintenance. We have frequent breakdown of our vehicles. In the lean seasons the villagers can barely make ends meet. This is real. My brother, life can be so unbearable and that is why the young girls and boys find their way to the south to look for money to come and solve their problems, such as getting married. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

I tried to further probe implications of poverty on participation, where my interest lies, and he admitted that in all respects, a poor man would have little time for a programme that does not immediately address his felt needs. So it is not surprising that sometimes community participation is low and local people are manipulated, because they are simply preoccupied with procuring their livelihoods. The Director of the programme, in an attempt to drive home his point on the issue of poverty and its effect on participation in the programme, stated:

In some communities, students even have to share their meals with community members close to them. This sometimes makes it difficult for people to leave what they are doing to come and participate in the activities of the engagement programme. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

Poverty makes communities powerless to challenge certain development assumptions that might not be in their favour. The CEP Director added:

The poverty levels in some communities are so dire that there is virtually no minimum accommodation such as even a mat or a floored room for students to lay their heads. In some communities

even basic requirements such as accommodation are lacking. We have had to accommodate students in school blocks, sometimes dilapidated ones. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

I discussed this issue with the programme's community coordinator, who agreed that poverty significantly affects participation. The youth, most of whom have lived mainly in poor conditions in the rural communities of the country, are people who could easily be manipulated. Tunrayo (2009) reported a similar finding in a study on the effect of poverty on community participation. He concluded that "poverty normally has the effect of narrowing the horizons of possibility. In addition to the debilitating effect of poverty, the structure of the programme contributed to the exclusion of a number of community-based participants, and therefore, their non- participation. My interactions with the students revealed they, like other participants, had also come to the realisation that the high poverty levels in the community affected the participation of the local people in the programme. A student participant told me in a conversation:

There are times that we had to virtually reschedule planned activities because community participants were busy with their livelihoods and could not attend. (Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Students, July 2013).

Another student recounted the visible signs of poverty in the community in his field notebook:

The foods we see the community members eat are not too good, most of the children are malnourished and suffer from *kwashiorkor*¹⁹. What touched me was when I saw the level of deprivation in the community and how they are managing their survival, this was a huge challenge. (Student Field notebook, Week 3, June 2013).

I asked the student what he would tell the District Chief Executive of his community if he met him face to face. He replied:

¹⁹a syndrome occurring in infants and young children soon after weaning. It is due to severe protein deficiency, and the symptoms include edema, pigmentation changes of skin and hair, impaired growth and development, distention of the abdomen, and pathologic liver changes (Ghanaian word now international) (Keane, M (2003).

I would tell him that the a majority of the people in the rural communities are wallowing in abject poverty in the midst of abundant resources and that some practical steps should be taken to bring them out of this quagmire. They are just being manipulated by all these CBOs and NGOs parading as development agencies. (Conversation with Student Participant, July 2013).

Certain indicators that students noted in their report give a vivid picture of the poverty situation of the area and how this affected locals' participation in the programme. Townsend, cited in Emanuele et al. (2013), argued that "poverty denies people the opportunity to participate fully in society and that a rapid decline in participation observed at lower incomes provides the basis for developing methods of fixing a poverty line" (p. 4). He further maintained that levels of participation are closely linked to earnings, with participation declining along with income. A student wrote the following in his field notebook to illustrate the extent of poverty in the community:

There are no health facilities in the community. Sick people always have to travel a long distance before receiving treatment. The school buildings lack facilities such as tables and chairs. Some of the buildings are in a deplorable state; the community does not have any electricity. In the light of this, the community falls in total blackout, which makes movement very difficult at night. The school lacks trained teachers and even teacher's accommodation. (Student field notebook, 29 May 2013).

All of these indicators suggest an impoverished, marginalised society, which invariably affect the level of participation and makes them prone to manipulation. Overall, the students admitted that the poverty level was high in the community, making the locals prone to manipulation, and that this was what led them to intensify the outreach on education. According to them, education is the key to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and the underdevelopment of rural communities in Northern Ghana.

In an interview with the Vice Chancellor, I asked him if the process of the engagement in its current form addresses the power imbalances and the process failings which threaten to undermine the value of the engagement, to the extent that resulting outcomes or decisions are worse off due to low

community involvement. He was of the view that the university needs to do a lot more regarding the processes of the programme so that community members can genuinely participate, which entails appreciating the effects of their opinions (UNICEF, 2015). According to UNICEF (2015), non-genuine 'participation' often merely disguises what is actually the manipulation of participants because the fundamental requirement to genuine participation is ensuring respect for participants' views (p.1). The VC further indicated that steps have been taken to scale up the involvement of community participants and the District Assembly:

In line with strengthening the process and re-aligning the structure of the programme, we are beginning to put in place a number of measures such as placing the control of the students' movement under the community. Students would need to inform the Chief and the Assembly members about whatever activity they wish to undertake either as a group or at the individual level. In addition, suburbs of the community will be allocated to students so that they become responsible for ensuring greater participation by the community. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

The Vice-Chancellor also hinted that the university was in the process of empowering the community engagement directorate to use the media in disseminating the outcomes and processes of engagement to facilitate widespread debate on the programme, including its structure. Regarding issues of structural and procedural inadequacies of the programme, which seem to be affecting participation and therefore excluding and alienating some participants, the Vice Chancellor had this to say:

I think it has come to the stage where we need to sit down and look at what we have been doing, including the structure of the programme, where we are and where we intend to go. This programme was designed many years ago and the university is now 20 years, so certainly that is a long journey, it is about time we sit down and do a comprehensive review, especially as we are working with multiple stakeholders. We should sit down and do a comprehensive review, particularly about the processes and structure, and based on the information we get, we can chart a new path. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

Throughout the study, the issue of structure and timing was repeatedly mentioned as a disincentive to participate. University leaders are quite aware of

this problem and have been making efforts to align the programme to the leisure time of community members, i.e. during the dry season, when the harvest is over and community members are resting at home.

The findings on exclusion and the consequent minimal or non-participation were derived from the perspective shared by participants across the board, and can therefore be regarded as legitimate (Becker & Geer, 1957). Exclusion and minimal participation placed most of the local participants on the lower rungs of the ladder, in the category of non-participation. It is argued that issues of power, voice and representation are central to discussions of community participation in social and political interactions; therefore, the indication that there were issues of exclusion and low participation amongst community members did not come as a surprise.

The evidence suggests that the mass migration of the community's youth to the resource-rich south affected participation in significant ways. One unemployed youth told me in a conversation:

It is unfortunate that we were not able to participate in your programme; we had to go down south to look for some work to earn money and come back. Sometimes life in this community is just not interesting, no water, and no electricity. (Unemployed Youth, July 2013).

Moving with the students around the community in one of their efforts at community mobilization for a group discussion, I realised that the students had to go to the house of a particular community participant. I was informed by the students that they had previously sent a message to the said opinion leader about the date, time, and venue:

We are meeting to do a pair-wise ranking of the community problems. We sent out a verbal invitation through the chief, opinion leaders and the children who come to us. (Conversation with Student Leader, June 2013).

I later learnt that for some community opinion leaders, it was necessary for the students to go to their house and escort them to the meeting grounds.

Otherwise, they might not attend. Having been in the community for some time, the students and I had come to understand these subtle requirements, and we exploited them to get the opinion leaders to attend meetings. This was evidence to suggest the connection of culture to participation, because in this society, respect for elders is *sine qua non* for reciprocity. As a result of the deference shown to the Chief, the students hosted most of the important community interactions at his palace. One student participant confirmed to me that:

Once the Chief announced that there would be a gathering in his house, the attendance was always good, but as we realised, still not everybody would attend. Even up till the very last week when we were leaving the community, a few people were still not familiar to us. They either were mostly not attending our meetings and interactions or they simply went unnoticed because they were not talking. Others normally go to fetch water from a borehole in another community, and others complain that they go to the adjoining community to charge their mobile phones. (Conversation with student participants, June 2013).

For others, because the initial introduction of the programme was done at the Chief's palace with just a handful of community members, the lack of information about the programme resulted in low or, in some cases, non-participation. As described later in the discussion chapter, some community members would refuse to attend a function at the Chief's palace out of resistance to authority or as a result of personal differences. Although the Chief, the Assemblyman and other opinion leaders who were present informed me that they spread the message, the communication chain seemed to have watered down the real gravitas of the programme, leading to exclusion and low participation by some locals. The study argues that power is inherent to research and other social activities, and therefore the issues of influence and power in the community engagement programme must be taken into account. It is indeed a reality and is manifested in many forms, such as though the conversations between university representatives and community participants. The university, through the faculty and students, intrudes on the community's broader social and cultural life, which of course, is an issue of power (Christensen, 2005). Christensen further argues that "power is not necessarily nested in categorical positions but rather in the social representations that we

make, negotiate, work out and work with in social life” (p.167). Therefore, per his analysis, the issue of community representation and therefore power has been linked to community participation in this research.

6.2.2 Tokenism: Informing, Consultation and Placation

Evidence from the research reveal there was a shift in community members’ position on the ladder when they were informed by the students and did attend the pair wise ranking activity. Ethnographic encounters in the community, such as the “lessons” given to the garri seller and to the women flooring, and conversations with the Charcoal Burner and the TBA, related in chapters four and five, constitute evidence of Informing, i.e. instructing them in a balanced and objective way, which Arnstein describes as a “one way flow of information” (p.7). The local head teacher had this to say:

The fact that the university gives the students instructions on what they do daily just tells you that they own and control the programme, at least we should have been involved in determining what goes on in the programme so that we can monitor and help supervise the students. (Conversation with head teacher, July 2013).

In a conversation at the garri seller’s shop, she indicated to me that the students come to the community already knowing what they need to do:

As it is, the students come with their instructions on how to go about their work, so we cannot change anything. They rather teach us a lot of things, although we also try to tell them a few things when they show interest... do they really need what we tell them? (Conversation with Garri Seller, July 2013).

Arnstein (1969) argued that informing is the first step toward enhanced and legitimate citizen participation since information is power, although community members with information still cannot influence the programme design and management. The meetings and dialogues with the university, represented by students, were often one-way avenues for communication. Although there may be channels for the locals to provide feedback, the power to change their situation is unavailable (Arnstein, 1969). The quotes above further reinforce the finding of university dominance and therefore, tokenistic participation by other

stakeholders. The Assemblyman shared his view of this when I, as promised, paid him a surprise visit:

I made my way through the meandering path that took me to his end of the community. It was early in the morning because I wanted to meet him before he left the house since he was a very busy man. My trousers were wet with dew from the grasses that covered the footpath. Whilst we sat exchanging pleasantries, I asked the Assemblyman what he thought about the level of influence and participation of various community members, to which he replied:

In fact, if you look at the opinion leaders, youth leaders, and some identified women, the chief and his elders, because we are the leaders of the community, I think we all participate more intensely. Some members of the community do think that it is our responsibility to see the programme succeed, so they do not take the programme seriously, they just walk their ways, doing their own things, as if there is nothing going on. I think some of them also think nothing has so far come out of the programme and so there is no need to waste their time participating.

Box 6.1: Ethnographic Field notes, Conversation with Assemblyman, July 2013

This is evidence that although the Chief's participation is characterised as collaboration with the university and therefore a partnership, in which he negotiates with the power holders (Arnstein, 1969), his participation was in fact consultative and therefore tokenistic. At the same time, participation of the chief, elders, opinion leaders and the Assemblyman could also be transitional and fall within the rungs of consultation and partnership based on Arnstein's topology. This is because of indications that a few community members, such as the Chief, seemed to have a voice but no muscle to change the status quo. It is argued that non-participation may not necessarily be due to lack of capacity among community residents, as is often thought, but rather it is a normal answer to deal with daily life (Kite, 2010, p.4).

Another university leader shared his views on the issue of influence and power in answer to my query as to who amongst the four stakeholders, in his candid opinion, takes decisions regarding what happens in the engagements. He stated that:

Although we have other stakeholders, the decision is ours, I mean the university's, through the third trimester committee and the

directorate and the coordinators. We have some guidelines concerning criteria for selecting communities, but even here the communities have a say as to whether they take students or not, the student representative council and national union of students are represented in the Community Engagement Programme committee but, the community and the District Assembly are not involved in the final decision in terms of how the programme is to be run. (Interview with CEP Director, August 2013).

The Director seems to be suggesting that both the Assembly and the students shared in the control of the programme by virtue of having a voice and being part of some committees in the case of the students. This is evidence of placation, the highest form of tokenism, which according to Bishop and Davies (2002) “allows citizens to advice or plan but retains for power holders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice” (p.13). The director of the programme, replying to a question about who controls the programme or who determines what should go on or not in the engagement process, further said:

Ok. In that case it has to do with the university, represented by the Directorate, the Faculty and Coordinators. Before we go to the community we carry out an orientation and give specific questions or areas [template] to carry out research, so in my view the programme is directed and controlled by the university, although the community and students have representation in some committees on the ground. (Interview with CEP Director, 2 August 2013).

Whilst some of the community participants were excluded and others participated minimally (Carpentier, 2011), the study revealed that the Assembly’s participation in the entire programme fell within the second categorization, namely, tokenism (informing, consultation and placation). A District Assembly participant admitted that the Assembly ought to have participated more than was currently. The DCD attributed the low participation by the Assembly to the lack of serious exchanges and of the Assembly’s non-involvement in the conceptualisation and planning of the programme. According to him:

the District Assembly was only brought into the picture when the university was requesting access to the various districts and when they were sending students to the communities.(Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He further stated that, apart from this occasion, the only time they interacted with students was:

when students either needed some technical information concerning their budget estimates as part of their proposal or when the university was submitting a copy of the community profile to them. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He was, however, emphatic that their participation could be scaled up if the level of consultation and involvement of the Assembly could be increased to the level of partnership. When I probed further about the presence of the Assemblyman, he admitted that he was more of a representative of the community than of the District Assembly, and as far as he was concerned, he served the purposes of the community rather than those of the Assembly during the arrangement of the programme. He reiterated this point, thus placing the Assembly representative on the transitory level:

It is only when they are bringing the students that they come to tell us, but after the students have come and left and when the university is doing a review programme, we are not involved... the Assemblyman may be seen to be representing the Assembly, but I tell you he fights specifically for his community when the interests of the two rise, so essentially, I see him as a community stakeholder. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

I asked him whether he thinks the Assembly could increase its participation, if consulted and involved by the university. This was what he said:

I think probably in the selection of the communities, if the university seeks our opinion that they want to send this and that student to this and that community, we can collaborate in that direction and maybe we can make the selection of the communities much easier for them. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

The DCD, who lives in the district, suggested that the inclusion of the District Assemblies in the selection of the communities would enhance their level of participation and make the programme more inclusive. However, this suggestion would still only place the Assembly between the categories of consultation and placation. In addition to the community and the District

Assembly, the university leadership also admitted that many community members were excluded from the programme partly because of the way it was packaged as an academic programme. Tagarirofa and Chazovachii (2014) in their study similarly quote respondents who were quick to say that, “Organizations are not sincere and that they preach participation on paper, yet in practical terms it is non-existent (p. 4). The indication of the Coordinating Director, that consultation between the university and the District Assembly was only at the stage of access, reinforced Tagarirofa and Chazovachii’s (2014) conclusion.

The DCD was clear that the design and planning of the programme did not adequately factor in the District Assembly, reiterating that their involvement was only at the level of implementation. Beyond this, the Assembly had no say in where the students should go and when they arrive or leave the community, thus further situating them on the tokenistic rung of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder. The District Assembly participant was emphatic and repeatedly emphasised that the Assembly is not consulted to the extent that they ought to be regarding this programme:

Just imagine that at the end, the buck stops with the Assembly. The university gives us a copy of the community profile with the understanding of the community. They whip up the enthusiasm of the community, and they in turn wait patiently with the hope that at least the Assembly would intervene or get some organization to intervene. Just because the consultation has been adequate, we have to bear the brunt of the communities who see us as inefficient. If we had adequate consultation we would factor in the difficulties the Assembly is facing, and this could go a long way to lower the expectations of various communities. Imagine we have about 50 communities and they all would be expecting us to immediately solve their pressing needs. That is normally far too much for our budget to bear.

Box 6.2: Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Conversation with DCD, August 2013).

In addition to this, the Coordinating Director alluded to the understanding that exists between the students and the Assembly. The students come to the Assembly for information when they are compiling the profile of the community and need some technical data to help them prepare their proposals:

Some of the students come to us for technical and expert advice. For instance, some of them come to us when they are making estimates for an identified project, say a public toilet... I refer them to the appropriate area for the appropriate expertise and also offer some advice. Sometimes they even need data which we provide for them.

Box 6.3: Ethnographic fieldnotes, Conversation with DCD, August 2013).

In a similar conversation I had earlier with the petty trader, I asked her whether community members take part in the programme's planning committee meetings, and she answered in the negative. When I probed further, she said:

If the programme is for us, why then does the university exclude us from the proceedings? (Ethnographic Field notes, Petty trader, July 2013).

However, one key participant from the university, the Pro-VC, in response to issues of exclusion, conceded that it is a social programme as well and ought to be inclusive:

It is not only a technical programme; it is also a social one, so that communities feel happy to have hosted the students, we do recognise that there is the need to widen the scope for more interactions. (Interview with Pro-VC, August 2013).

This connects to the university's goals of fostering attitudinal change amongst its graduates and of enabling communities to interact with the future leaders of the country. The expectation, therefore, was that steps would have been taken to ensure inclusivity and widespread understanding of the programme, but certainly many of the community-based stakeholders were inadvertently excluded. I further questioned the Pro-Vice Chancellor about apathy which I suspected amongst some community members, which conveyed a semblance of low participation and therefore exclusion. The university leader replied that:

It is not fatigue but unmet expectations. That is the problem communities have with the District Assemblies. Students, in their activities, make it clear that the reports will be sent to the District Assembly. Upon their arrival in the community, the locals were told

clearly that the students are not bringing any tangible developmental projects but just to come and profile and sell the community. Well, since it is the students who send the report, the community expects them to follow it up... and for the Assembly to execute their mandate of providing whatever it is that the students have written out. (Interview Pro-VC, August 2013).

According to the Pro-VC, if there are exclusions at all, he thought it was not as a result of lack of information, ego, or personal honour, as suggested by some of the community participants, but rather due to the inaction of the District Assemblies because with the pair wise ranking where people were consulted and had control over the recommendations to the district Assembly, The district assembly now need to provide transparent budgets to say where the funding from the central government is going and when the village will get their boreholes:

I think the tensions which result in the exclusions are between the communities and the Assemblies, because the students identify problem areas that need to be addressed immediately, and they present a report to the Assembly. The community, in contributing to the selection of their priority need, expects that there would be action, but the District Assembly is not prepared to respond now, and that has created a problem between community members and their Assembly. Some Assemblies do bend over backwards to respond to communities' needs, but largely, many District Assemblies do not; and that brews tension. (Interview with Pro-VC, August 2013).

A programme Coordinator thinks otherwise. He enumerated the factors that, in his view, account for the exclusions and low participation of some community-based stakeholders. The Coordinator reiterated the evidence given by a number of participants:

The long dry season and the lack of social amenities like electricity, potable drinking water, entertainment facilities etc., are all motivating factors for the youth, especially the young boys and girls who idle and sometimes move south to work as porters and as labourers on the cocoa farms and mines. (Interview with Coordinator, August 2013).

Disadvantaged communities are commonly underrepresented in community programmes and decision making, and as a result they have little control over

the decisions that affect them. Consequently, this lack of a voice in shaping their own conditions makes them vulnerable to neglect (McDougall, 2010). More importantly, the “wealth gap between the South and the North has widened since independence”, in spite of “government initiatives over the decades to promote economic development in the three northern regions. In fact, the disparity has worsened, as the regions remain trapped in unrelenting poverty” (Yahaya, 2014, p.1). The Vice-Chancellor was, however, optimistic. He felt that on the contrary, the inclusion of many stakeholders was increasing through greater involvement and interaction. He pointed out that the programme had expanded as a result of higher student numbers, and so has participation increased as well. However, the emerging problems of the programme, such as inadequate consultation, still exclude a segment of the community participants and other stakeholders:

Yes, I think stakeholder participation, especially of the District Assembly, could be increased, and a segment of the communities is not too keen to participate. Yes, you may say so. In the beginning when there were fewer students, Assemblies and communities were deeply involved, but because it is cyclical and we have gone back several times, over and over, the interest has waned. It is only in recent years that we have not involved the community so much. But the fact is that some of the community members see the students as project implementers who have brought in projects. Another reason why the communities do not fully participate is because of the university's lack resources. The expenditure keeps bulging every year and it becomes difficult to rope in everybody in the community. (Interview with University leader, August 2013).

In spite of the fact that the university's effort to engage community members in the basic processes of planning although was highly successful by developing a researcher disposition in students and its consequential benefits of knowledge generation which consequently led to the pair wise ranking activity that produced recommendation for the Assembly.

In relation to this finding, the evidence suggested that students were in the category of high participation and fell within the rungs of consultation and placation. Students were given representation in the engagement committee but faculty representations intimidated them at meetings and they were most

times unable to articulate their views. Also the legal machinery that set the engagement in process made the participation of the students mandatory. Having accepted the admission meant that student had tacitly agreed to a placement in a rural village and this was a form of citizen control with agreement to a contract. However it still remains that student participants did not have the power to determine which community they should go to and how many weeks they should stay:

Our participation in the programme is mandatory; we do not even have a choice of where to go. But because it is part of the assessment towards our graduation we must participate, we do not even determine where we go.... (Student Participants, June 2013).

This reinforces the notion that they were not adequately consulted on issues of the engagement, and therefore their participation was somehow under duress. Although they signed up for this university with the knowledge that they would be placed in communities, that does not preclude a solicitation of their views on where to go or not.

Oh how I wish students could be given the power to determine where, where we want to go and how long we should to stay. I hear in some universities, community participation is voluntary and students determine the full package and focus of what they want to do. Unfortunately ours is mandatory. (Conversation with Student Participant, July 2013).

Another student expressed the view that although the University claims that students are represented in the community engagement committee, it is just a facade:

The so-called SRC representation in the engagement committee is designed to look as if we have input in the decision concerning the community engagement, but most of the time the university is overpowering. Even when you have genuine concerns about not being able to participate, they still force you to come to the community. I think students should be given some form of control about where they want to go and what they want to do. (Conversation with student participant, 3 July 2013).

Further on the issue of inadequate consultation and tokenism as a result, one community participant said:

Even the times of the meetings and the timing of the programme does not allow many to attend. It appears community members are not involved or consulted at the design stage or planning of the programme, obviously for reasons that the programme is an academic one. There is therefore very little or no broad consultation and involvement of all community based stakeholders. (Head teacher, July 2013).

Where community participants and other stakeholders, such as the District Assembly, are invited to participate by the university, this invitation merely constitutes placation and is therefore tokenistic. It offers them only the semblance of participation in decision-making (Arnstein, 1969) since their voices are normally not factored into final decisions. Ideally, the most appropriate idea would be for a decision-making arena to be created for all of the “less powerful actors such as the community and its participants from or against the power holders” (Gaventa, 2008, p.11), in this case, the university. Shamblin, (2011 cited in Davies, 2013) argues that “Universities hold all the power and money... These unequal balances of power in university in university and community relationship generate tensions over control” (p. 8) a” and decision making

However, the pair wise ranking scenario in Chapter 4 presented evidence of consultation undertaken by the university with the community. The event which was a student methodology afforded community members the opportunity to work with the university (represented by the students) to determine their most pressing concern. The students acted as facilitators assisting community members in a bottom up approach to determine their priorities. Although consultation still falls under tokenism, it nonetheless provides the university with public feedback (IAP2, 2007) on their situation through what Bishop and Davies (2002, p. 21) refer to as an interest group or town hall meetings. The pair wise ranking process is an indication that situations can be created for the enhanced participation of all stakeholders, whose alternative perspectives could be used as a spring board in the future. The pair wise ranking process constituted a form

of genuine participation because the outcomes, which were influenced by the input of the community in many instances, were of benefit to the local people. Nevertheless, the opportunities that had been created and open for participation did not ensure the equal consultation and participation of all stakeholders in the various processes of the programme. Regardless of the variety of interests different stakeholders have in the community engagement programme, they do not need to bring equal shares of expertise and resources to the table; nonetheless, they need to “trust each other and share some commitment” (Wilcox, 1994, p.3), which can be achieved by being consulted and involved in decision making.

Regarding the tensions within some communities and between some participants and students, which the director had previously alluded to, the Vice Chancellor remarked:

Certainly as it is now, a number of participants, even within the stakeholder group are not carried along. Going forward we need to ensure that no voice is marginalised. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

According to him, although some members of the community do not share in the aspirations of the programme partly as a result of misunderstanding the aims and purposes, perhaps it is more largely as a result of lack of consultations, as the evidence suggests. I asked the Vice-Chancellor further whether the university would be willing to invite one or two community-based stakeholders to the level of committee meetings, which, although still tokenistic, would move the community’s participation higher. He replied:

We wish we were able to do so and we hope to have them in future. But the structures and the meeting times are such that getting the District Assembly to come over to the meetings is a problem, for the structures we have in school, the normal academic sessions, and we would need to find suitable times when students can attend and we also need to find a time when community members can come... In fact getting all the three other stakeholders together is normally a challenge. There are issues of logistics, time, that is the issue. We would love to have them in future. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

Some members of the community felt they were not adequately sensitised and involved in the programme. They believed that the chief, elders, a few opinion leaders and the Assembly representative were the ones always consulted by the university and therefore participated more. Therefore, they can be placed on the middle rung of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, tokenism. In most African societies the Chief and elders wield substantial power and command great respect; therefore, most people in the community look up to them for direction and that places them on a higher level. It is perhaps for this reason that the Chief became the pivot of community mobilization, by virtue of which he is in partnership with the university. Nonetheless, the Chief felt that the level of his involvement could be deeper if consultations could be extended further to include more community members and groups.

6.2.3 Citizen Power: Partnership, Delegated Power and Citizen Control

The university's directions perceived as dominance of the engagement programme fit well into the third categorization of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, which comprises partnership, delegated power and citizen control. Interviews with university leaders provided evidence to suggest that although this is perceived as being influential and therefore wielding power, the university is rather trying to implement an intervention to meet the course aims and the aims of government. Therefore in reality the University does not have the power to make district assemblies implement the high quality recommendations that have been developed in partnership with the students and the community, and which the community had ultimate control over because they set the priority. Even with the allocation of funds the University lacks the capacity to ensure it is released. This status locates them on the upper rungs of the ladder, i.e. partnership, delegated power and citizen control:

Well, we are a training institution, but the community is not. So although we go to them to discuss the content of the training, we tell them this is what we want our students to come and learn from you, so the community would say fine, bring them and if they come we would help them with a, b, c, d... So although there is community input, that is after we have set the parameters. But After everything the buck stops with the District Assembly... (Interview with VC, August 2013).

I probed further in order to discern the level of power and therefore participation of the other stakeholders, such as the community and the District Assembly. The VC stated that:

In terms of decision making, the District Assembly and the community have not been too involved. As to how the programme is run judiciously, this remains the primary duty of the university. (Interview with VC, August 2013).

When I posed this question to the CEP Director, he said:

Well, then it has to do with university management. (Interview with CEP Director, 2 August 2013).

In terms of running the programme, evidence reveals that the university has met its objectives; the issue now is what the District Assembly does with the recommendations. They as part of government have the power, if the Central government do not transfer the limited funds. Although the pair wise ranking totally shifts the whole power to the community, they still are constrained in some respects because they lack the resources to realise their needs. The universities role in the community in terms of facilitating real participation firmly places the university on the rungs of partnership and delegated power, which together constitute citizen power in Arnstein's (1969) scheme. The inability of the university to adequately involve all of the stakeholders and make them owners of the programme creates power issues, which, in the view of Mannarini (2000, p.1), can be both "visible and subtle" and can affect the quality of participation. The quotes of the VC are evidence of the high level of participation of the university leaders, therefore suspicions of some rural dwellers about officialdom or the elite affect the degree of their own participation. As Tommasi (2001, p.2) argued, "the risk of manipulation, as well as the emergence of populist tendencies are real".

From my observations in the field, participation was skewed towards the university, as demonstrated by the various incidents and perspectives illustrated earlier. These underscore the university's position of "delegated power and

partnership” on Arnstein’s (1969) ladder. The participation of the university leadership, namely the Vice-Chancellor, the Director and the Coordinator, is categorised as such by virtue of the fact that Arnstein’s (1969) ladder reflects the way that power affects and determines the mode of participation. Power is redistributed through the dialogue that goes on between these university leaders on the one hand and the Chief, elders and Assembly representative on the other. The participation of these representatives of the community leads to their dominance in the affairs of the programme. They called and presided over meetings and were the first point of call for the university whenever its representatives were in the community. Still, the final decision making powers rested with the university and remained their prerogative, despite their consultations with other stakeholders and the input solicited from them. Corroborating the statements of the director and community coordinators, the Vice-Chancellor expressed the following sentiment:

The engagement programme is an educational or academic programme, so the final decisions lie with the university, but of course they are not taken unilaterally. [Decision making] is done in close collaboration with the communities and even students, but who makes the final decisions is always the university. (Interview with VC, 25 August 2013).

When I questioned the Vice-Chancellor about whether the university has thought of involving the community in the early stages of planning the programme, he said:

Yes we recognise that we need to involve them, but the cost implications are what have prevented us from doing so. If we invite the communities and the District Assemblies (DAs), and they come to tell us that we stay too long or too briefly or come at unsuitable times when we are busy in the rainy season, come during the dry season, what do we do? If you bring people to a meeting at that level you should respect their views. So how do we build all these concerns into our framework? Those are some challenges of a deeper involvement of the community based stakeholders. It should not be lip service; if you build such crosscutting platforms it means that you have to give equal stakes to all players so that if they come out with an issue you have to respond, but has the University that capacity to respond? That is my worry. (Interview with VC, 25 August 2013).

The VC's assertion indicates that the university aims to move to the top rung of the ladder, i.e., Citizen Control, but no evidence has corroborated this. The Vice-Chancellor argues that this desire has cost and other implications for the university. One of the experienced programme coordinators endorsed the assertion of the other university leaders in an interview concerning influence and stakeholder participation in the programme. According to him:

Although the influence and control of the programme, as far as participation is concerned, lies with the university, there is some level of consultation, but final decisions are taken by the university. (Interview with Coordinator, August 2013).

He was, however, quick to admit that:

Apart from the Chief and a few community participants, participation was generally quite superficial and not deep enough for the majority of the community participants. (Interview with Coordinator, August 2013).

This is evidence to indicate that the university normally brings on board community members and other stakeholders, but not at a deeper level. This study, however, argues that the real objective is not to consider the views of the local people in the shaping of the programme but just to satisfy the requirement of consultation. Interviews with District Assembly participants similarly confirmed the dominance of the university in the running of the community programme. The District Coordinating Director expressed the same view, that the university was in the realm of citizen power, and that consultation is inadequate and only present at the level of implementation, in order simply to gain entry and to enlist the community's and DA's support. Beyond the minimal engagement to discuss bringing students, DA's have very little input in how the programme is run. The process of consultation was meant to invite their opinion, but according to Arnstein (1969), that by itself is meaningless until it occurs along with other types of participation, since it offers no guarantee that their concerns and thoughts will be taken into consideration (Gate and Strout, 1979, p.7). This is what the Coordinating Director said:

When I was at the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), the Coordinator used to come there to request a regional entry through the RCC, and when I was there, any time he came with the letter, we replicated the letter to the districts. But since I came to this district about a year ago, I have not seen such a letter, but they still come to seek permission from the District Assembly to bring the students. So you see, strictly speaking, although we are consulted prior to bringing the students, we are not part of the decision-making; we just receive the students into the district and offer them the assistance we can. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

He added that:

In fact, decision-making regarding the programme is the prerogative of the university because they have told us that although it has other social, economic and political benefits; it is an academic programme first and foremost, so we as an Assembly do not interfere that much. Ours is to offer any assistance either directly or through our Assembly persons. (Interview with DCD, August 2013).

This quote is evidence that the participation of the university falls within the third pattern stage of partnership, delegated power and citizen control. The last quote of the District Assembly participant suggests that although the university was in control, which gave credence to the theme of unequal levels of stakeholder influence, it nonetheless places the university firmly in the position of delegated power. Although the effective participation of community members is recognised as very critical to the decentralisation policy of the central government of Ghana (Ahwoi, 2000), the study asks the question whether community members' access to and interaction with other stakeholders really amounts to participation (Carpentier, 2011).

6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Overall, a significant number of community participants were aware and indeed agreed that the programme was a university programme in which they had to participate. The university sets the agenda for whatever activity takes place in the community as far as the programme is concerned. At the beginning of the programme It was found that the majority of community's participation could be situated as the first categorization of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, and could be described as non-participatory or, at best, tokenistic. The only exception was

the Chief, his elders and the Assemblyman, whose level of participation although consultation and placation could sometimes be characterised as partnership. As the programme progressed the level of community participation increased and reached its peak with the pair wise ranking activity. Quotes from the Chief, the Assemblyman and a host of community members provide evidence to suggest that the university directs the engagement programme in its entirety because it is mainly an academic programme.

Wegerberg (2011) corroborates the findings of the study, as he argues that “community participation strategies tend to underplay both local iniquities and power relations (p. iii)”. This situation was demonstrated in the community engagement programme. It is therefore critical that development practitioners and institutions, such as the university, do not underrate, trivialise or downplay the influence of power in their bid to assist in the socio-economic transformation of the communities in which they find themselves. On the basis of this empirical study, a number of variables were found to be responsible for the variations in participation by various groups and interests in the community engagement and for the external influences that permeate the process of participation. In the literature review and conceptual framework that underpinned this study, a theoretical overview of power was provided. This chapter set out the findings regarding how it is perceived by various actors in the community’s development, how it is produced, and how various spaces conspire to affect the participation of different stakeholders. In the field, the theories of power were manifested in the levels of participation of the different stakeholders, which could be clearly identified with the rungs of Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation.

In this study, power was seen to play out in the existing structures in the community, such as gender segregation and gendered roles in terms of occupations, as well as in the traditional hierarchy and perceptions of authority and legitimacy in the community (Wegerberg, 2011). Whilst universities primarily provide access and pathways to knowledge and expertise, they are also better placed to make available opportunities and spaces for people to discuss and articulate their different concerns for intervention by central governments and NGOs. Universities, through engaging their outlying

communities, can act as “facilitative leaders” and agents to foster open and dispassionate discourse and thus mobilise people together on neutral ground (Robinson et al. 2012). Marsden (1991, p. 31), however, argued that universities often assume that communities are similar and cohesive units struggling for fairness “against powerful external forces”; however, the study revealed and reinforced the existence of a diverse environment where individuality has come to replace communality, and different interests are at play, all motivated by different goals. In relation to this, Wegerberg, citing several researchers like Sawyer (1995), Williams (2004), Mohan & Stoke (2000) and Chapman et al. (2002), argued that most communities have within them “subgroups and that there are often economic, ethnic and social factions in every society” (p. 26). Therefore, in the community engagement programme there is a struggle for power in terms of authority, legitimacy and control of resources, and in decision making (Haugaard and Clegg, 2008), the net effect of which is substantial issues of power and power imbalances within communities and between the university and communities.

In this study, two main types of power relations were revealed. At one end, there were power imbalances between members of the community, and at the other end between the community and state agencies and institutions, such as the university and the District Assembly. Each of these classifications had an effect on the patterns, types and level of participation (Gaventa, 2008). The data revealed some mistrust amongst the community members and the university, and in subtle ways between some members of the community and some power players, such as the Chief and Assemblyman. Cornwall (2008) argues that participation is essentially political in nature and that “participatory mediations or strategies can alter power or become tools in reinforcing domination and control” (p.81). Therefore, the ability of stakeholders, particularly community members to participate effectively was characterised by subtle efforts to either “maintain, negotiate or change power relations in the community” (Wegerberg, 2011, p. 28).

The study generally revealed that the community participation is multileveled and a complex process (Byrne & Henderson, 2003). As powerful stakeholders,

influence the decision making process and therefore influence the actions that take place as well as the outcomes. The high incidence of poverty in Northern Ghana has sometimes reduced the community members to mere recipients, and they are usually unable to challenge the status quo. Their participation was therefore largely manipulative and tokenistic at the beginning of the programme. Some community stakeholders, especially the Chief, the elders, and the Assembly representative, only participated either for the purposes of placation or to give a semblance of credibility to the programme. Their voices, although heard, were given little weight in terms of effecting change, in spite of the fact that the World Bank Group has reiterated that communities offer “fresh perspectives and can see problems in different ways” (p.2), and that their involvement helps to “deliver programmes which more accurately target local needs” and are more acceptable to them (Hudson and Marvin, 2015, p.2).

Throughout my interactions and informal conversations with all of the stakeholder groups, the general level of participation was satisfactory but occasionally characterised by apathy and aggravated by issues of livelihood and survival, rural urban migration, and inadequacy in communication resulting from poor orientation of partners on the community engagement programme (Kaburise, 2006). Generally the passion to participate varied based on personal interest, the perceived usefulness of the programme and what was at stake for individuals and the community (Brandon & Fukuyama, 2013). A segment of the community, who showed apathy as a result of the lack of proper appreciation of the aims and objectives of the programme, although small, nonetheless needs to be brought on board and carried along if the programme is to have the desired and maximum impact. Although it must be acknowledged that participation in itself does not alter power, nor does it change the status quo (Gaventa, 2006, 2007), the university needs to scale up the participation of all stakeholders by looking at the social, political and economic processes through which power is manifested by those whose voice is heard and those whose are excluded (Ebyen, Harrison and Petit, 2006).

Thus, this study agrees with similar studies and accounts of researchers who “believe that real or perceived power differentials can impair campus-community

relationships” (Freyer, 2012). This is connected to the university strategy that is intended to bring about a shift in students’ attitudes, leading to the development of a multicultural identities, and includes respecting and celebrating every identity, e.g., the identity of the Ghanaian villagers of both low and high socio-economic status, the identity of the Ghanaian students from both low and high socio-economic backgrounds, and possibly the identity of the researcher who critically analyses knowledge and uses new knowledge to contribute to democratic discourses. The latter might include the students conducting research and writing reports, the villagers in the pair wise ranking, the District Assembly with their statistics of the village, and how the development of a multicultural identity could optimise participation in the community programme. These ultimately aim to enhance participation and close the poverty gap underpinned by an exchange of cultural, economic and political knowledge.

The study therefore argues that participation fosters the development of a multicultural identity, which in turn brings about benefits to those who participate, and this includes role models who demonstrate the possibility of social mobility. Participation also affords the taste of a power shift, which might motivate the disempowered to agitate for a greater share of power with an understanding of a strategy for making this happen through education. The next chapter draws conclusions, offers recommendations and reflects on the researcher’s doctoral journey.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents a summary of the main findings and their implications for theory, recommendations for policy and practice, and suggestions for further research. This conclusion chapter also highlights the limitations and challenges of the study and presents a personal reflection on the doctoral journey. This ethnographic study explored the understandings of different stakeholders of the aims and purposes of the community programme, what they consider to be the benefit of the programme to themselves, its wider benefits and the power that underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme in Northern Ghana. The CEP is part of the government's initiative to address the growing inequality between the North and the South of the country while engaging those experiencing deprivation in every step (CDC, 1997), including more proactive stakeholder involvement (2003). The community engagement programme has the following objectives:

To help develop favourable attitudes towards working in rural deprived communities, exposing students to the nature of development problems of Northern Ghana, providing useful services to rural communities in Ghana through the exchange of knowledge and its application to address the felt needs and aspirations of communities, and lastly generating data for further research in problem solving development issues and other purposes (Policy text, 1993, p.1).

It also seeks to promote the tenacity and fortitude of students as well as an attitude of common understanding and coexistence, and patriotism in terms of assisting other players in implementing and sustaining government decentralization policies “to support those communities to move towards equity” (Kaburise, 2006, p.3). Most importantly, the programme is intended to build the students' capacity to become agents of change and perhaps influence policy and scale up advocacy for deprived communities in the future should they find themselves in positions of responsibility. Additionally, it will help students to build networks across different disciplines.

In general, there is a dearth of literature on engagements in Africa, particularly Ghana. As a result of the gap in the literature on university community engagements, this study attempted to fill the gap in the understanding of these engagements in the Ghanaian context and how such programmes may contribute to the overall socioeconomic transformation of communities in particular and the nation in general. The study addressed the following three research questions:

1. How do the different stakeholder groups understand the aims and purposes of the Community Engagement Programme?
2. What do different stakeholder groups consider to be the benefit to themselves and the wider benefits of the Community Engagement Programme?
3. What patterns of influence and power underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme?

This study drew on interpretivism, specifically adopting an ethnographic approach using participant observation and documentary analysis alongside semi structured interviews with university leaders and District Assembly participant who were outside the community. Data was collected in a seven week ethnographic study in the community following students as they undertook their own data collection and other tasks assigned them. This was followed by another four week stay in the community after the students had left for an independent examination of the community's perspectives for deeper insight. The data were derived from ethnographic field notes comprising participant observations and informal conversations, transcripts of the semi structured interviews, university policy documents, student field notebooks, and the students' community report, which I was granted permission to access. A thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data and present the findings. Appropriate steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness, and ensuring the rigour of the study's findings including accounting for personal biases which may have influenced the findings (Shenton, 2004).

Below is a table of the key findings as presented and analysed in the previous three empirical chapters: four, five and six.

Table 7.1: Summary of the Key Findings of the Study

1. How do the different stakeholder groups understand the aims and purposes of the Community Engagement Programme?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudinal Change and Adaptation to Rural life • Useful Services to Local Community • Advocacy, Education and Outreach • Knowledge sharing Indigenous/ Practical Knowledge/Theoretical Knowledge
2. What do different stakeholder groups consider to be the benefit to themselves and the wider benefits of the Community Engagement Programme?
<p>Useful Services to local community, e.g. Teaching in schools & Outreach programmes on the environment and girls' education</p> <p>Assist in drawing up of District Assembly's strategic plans</p> <p>Opening up communities and contributing to development agenda/ Advocacy for communities.</p> <p>Inspiration to the Youth/ Role Models/Children looking up to student participants</p> <p>Knowledge sharing with community members</p>
3. What patterns of influence and power underpin the participation of different stakeholders in the Community Engagement Programme?
<p>Patterns of Participation and Power Relations</p> <p>Manipulation, Therapy/Cure (Non-Participation)</p> <p>Informing, Consultation, Placation- (Tokenism)</p> <p>Partnerships and delegated power- (Citizen power)</p> <p>Great University Control, Unequal levels of influence of stakeholders.</p> <p>Exclusions and low participation caused by factors such as rural-urban migration (<i>Kayaye</i>) and Lack of Social Amenities</p> <p>Inadequate Information</p> <p>Powerlessness caused by factors such as Poverty & Structure of programme</p>

Source: Author's own construction.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

7.2.1 Research Question One

Chapter four explored the various stakeholders' understanding of the aims and purposes of the community engagement. Overall the evidence showed that university leaders and District Assembly participants were both unequivocal that the programme has the key objective of giving students the opportunity to cultivate favourable attitudes to working in deprived rural communities and making them agents of change and drivers of the socio-economic

transformation of those communities. This is in line with Baker, Koliba, Kolodinsky, Liang, McMahon, Patterson, & Wang (2009), who affirmed that a critical requirement for higher education leaders is to ensure a “balance in the contending demands for practical knowledge and socio-ethical capabilities by crafting civic engagement strategies and community problem solving developmental opportunities”(p.6) that go beyond academic disciplines. The evidence suggests that most university leaders bought into the policy as text and endeavoured to effectively see its implementation as discourse to achieve the set targets. The programme policy, as enunciated by university leaders, is also seen as a pathway to help change “intergenerational cultures of social disadvantage and therefore has the potential to create a collaborative partnership between universities, their local partners” and other stakeholders, such as the District Assembly, to work towards positive outcomes (Scull & Cuthill, 2010, p.1). The students’ understandings, which resulted in attitudinal changes in most cases, were tracked from week one to week seven, revealing the different pace of attitudinal change and shifts towards multicultural dispositions in the various students and how the programme was enhancing their capacity to contribute to and become drivers of change in rural deprived communities.

7.2.2 Research Question Two

Chapter five examined the engagement in relation to research question two, on the benefits of the programme to stakeholders. The key findings were that useful services were rendered by the students, such as teaching in schools, which constituted a short-term stop-gap measure to compensate for the shortage of teachers in the community. This finding is also consistent with Robinson et al. (2012), who concluded that most higher education institutions offer learning packages and activities across communities in the United Kingdom through the medium of outreach. Students offer services such as teaching and outreach, which have the potential to drive school improvement processes, albeit on a supplementary basis. The data suggest that for the period that the student participants engaged with the school, apart from teaching, they arranged extracurricular activities for the children such as sports and gardening. Such activities reduced truancy while also preventing the kids

from loitering after school. As indicated by the head teacher of the local primary school, some of the students normally went to the streets to beg, which was also curtailed by the students' engagement. Furthermore, the students undertook to educate the community on the value of girls' education, falling perfectly in line with UNICEF (2012), which argued that there is strong evidence suggesting that the attainment of other human development objectives is reliant on "women and girls' empowerment and access to power, resources, services and opportunities" (p.9). It is also in line with the Millenium Development Goal 2.

Another benefit revealed by the study is the positive contribution of the programme in terms of contributing to the strategic plans of the Assembly through the profiling of the community. This brought in its wake a number of dividends, such as infrastructural development to some communities. The community profiling, done with active involvement of the community, led to the action plan created by the students to provide boreholes for the community. It also formed a basis for future development-oriented research for the socio-economic transformation of the community, consistent with findings of Christakopoulou et al. (2001) and OLW (2014). In the process of profiling the community, the students enhanced their capacity for research and data collection. Their ability to carry out research in rural settings was improved, as a result of which they stand a better chance to contribute to the economy through their employment. Indeed, a tracer study of the university's graduates from 1998 to 2010 indicated that they were highly marketable in the job market when they graduated (Abagale, 2010). Rogers and Robinson (2004), in a similar study, concluded that community engagement can "stimulate employment and spur economic development" (p.2), which affirms the findings of this study.

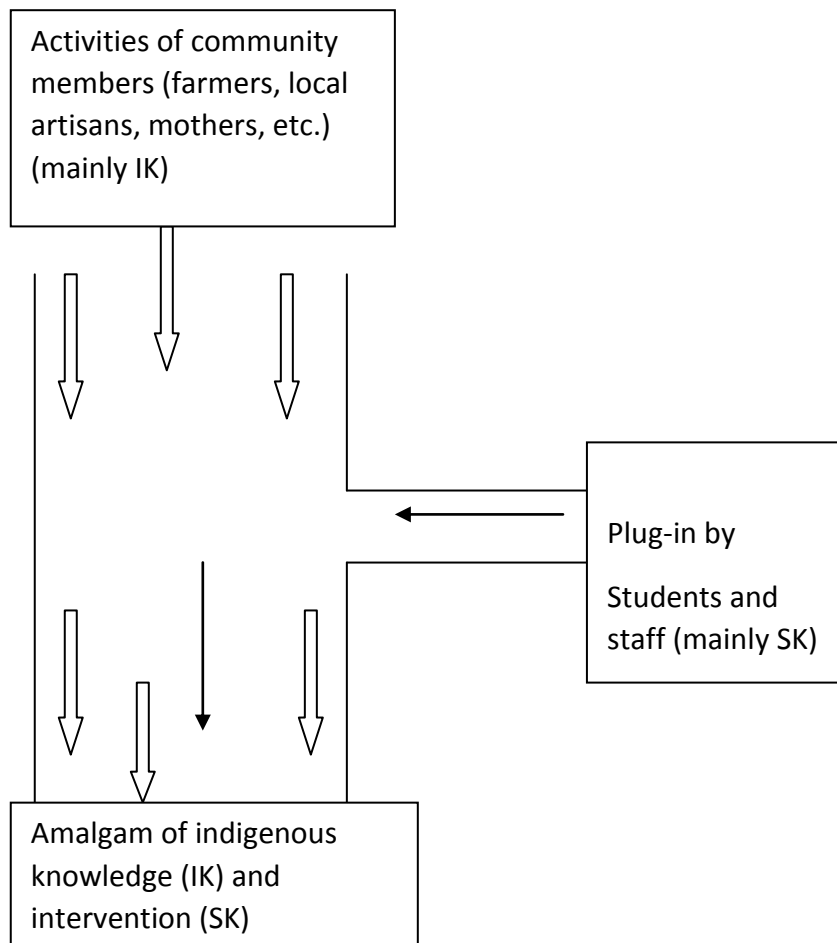
However, a segment of the participants in this study, contrary to other studies by NCCPE (2014), Roger and Robinson (2004), and Bringle and Hatcher (2002), revealed that some community-based stakeholders, did not see any benefit, to them from the programme. This is because their understanding was that the programme was meant to bring tangible benefits, such as water, schools, or roads. The study revealed that this misunderstanding was largely a result of inadequate consultations and the lack of an in-depth briefing of the

various stakeholders about the objectives of the programme by the university. The study also determined that some stakeholders like the District Assembly and the university leadership, reported substantial gains or benefits either personally, institutionally, or collectively from the programme. Bournier (2008) argues that students can significantly contribute towards universities playing pivotal roles in the socio-economic transformation of the wider community. According to him, in situations where students put their efforts and talents at the disposal of communities, they are more likely to contribute to fulfilling the service aspect of the university's tripartite mission of teaching, research and service (Bournier, 2008). Supporting my findings, Bournier (2008) similarly affirmed that when students undertake to offer community service and engage in "social activism" (p.1), they engage in ways that empower them to be directly relevant and to bring about social good, oftentimes by enabling change in people's lives in order to realise better public outcomes.

Although the examination of stakeholders in the process of engagement revealed benefits to both individuals and collective groups, it nonetheless recorded less positive findings as well in a number of interactions. For example, a section of the youth unfortunately perceived the engagement as not having any consequential value and therefore not worth participating in. For them it did not bring in any tangible benefit either to them personally or to the community at large. This appears to be a consequence of the lack of adequate information about the aims, purposes and processes of the community engagement. The NCCPE (2014), citing Mason et al. (2010, p.2), carried out a study on community engagement and the development of graduates attributes, noting that previous research clearly indicates that learning and teaching while engaged with communities provide a range of opportunities for building "graduates' attributes in areas of citizenship, employability, resilience, problem solving and self-motivation". The very basis of this study was the fact that universities are required, as a matter of social contract, to engage and galvanise communities, whether geographical or professional, into action in terms of thinking through their problems and finding solutions to them. Therefore the impact of this programme on the university curriculum over the years has been significant. Whilst students interactions with community

members reveal a plethora of indigenous knowledge systems such as architecture, agriculture, flooring, post-harvest loss prevention etc. which are locally rooted and “constitute a set of experiences generated” by the indigenous people who use them” (Ellen and Harris, 1996, p. 2), they have led to a plug in between indigenous knowledge systems and rural community needs vis avis the scientific knowledge of the university as graphically shown by Kaburise, 2007) in Fig. 7.1 below:

Fig. 7.2: Knowledge Plug In



Source: Adopted from Kaburise (2006, p. 5)

A summary of the key findings with respect to participation and power are presented next.

7.2.3 Research Question Three

Chapter six presented the key findings regarding influence, participation and power within the engagement and illuminated the substantial power imbalances in the programme. It also showed the dominance of the university that occasioned some exclusion partly as a result of the structure, timing, poverty and ownership of the programme. To succinctly illustrate the case of participation without the redistribution of power as revealed in this study, Arnstein (1969) referred to a print by exasperated French students that translates as, "I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate...they profit" (p. 3). This depicts a scenario where "communities 'participate,' experts make decisions, and the interests of organizations", such as the university, are served' (Arnstein, 1969, cited in Godana, 2004, pp.232-233). This findings are therefore consistent with Wegerberg (2011), Bamberger (1986), Kaufman and Alfonso (1997). They found that community participation was affected by power issues and further exacerbated by other complications, such as internal differences and the impact of national structures and programmes.

Whilst the university had influence on the programme as a result of the fact that it was regarded as an academic programme, community members and students called for some space to be able to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting the engagement. Although university leaders regarded the programme as both academic as well as social, very little was done to deepen the involvement of the District Assembly, whose participation remained largely tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969, and Bishop & Davies, 2002). Gamble & Weil (1995) underscored the importance of community participation, seeing engagement as a voluntary partnership of individuals and groups aimed at effecting changes to challenging conditions and impacting policies and programs that significantly affect their welfare and that of others. Therefore, the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly the community, is of utmost importance in addressing bottlenecks that stand between them and policies meant to address inequities in their communities (UNICEF, 2012). The study therefore concludes that inadequate participation by local communities in the policies and programmes that affect their livelihoods and social spaces can "result in insignificant

transformations and further marginalization” (DESA, 2009. p.1). Developing participation can build networks that support economic development (Emefa, 2014).

The study also observed the existence of various individuals and groups in the community like the women groups, the youth, school children, and opinion leaders, farmers who all play various roles in the socio-economic activities of the community and participated at various levels. However, their level of participation was affected by circumstances such as poverty, rural-urban migration, and the lack of social amenities. The combination of these factors creates limited space for participation, particularly for community-based stakeholders and District Assembly participants. The study therefore revealed subtle symptoms of tension based on whose voice is heard and whose is not. This was also because some community members viewed it as a university programme, and as a result, some of them did not feel that they had ownership of the programme, which is a critical requirement for the success of programmes in the context of development (World Bank, 2004).

The study revealed some variations in the patterns of participation. Whilst community members such as the garri seller, the charcoal burner, the bicycle mechanic, the Shea butter producers, the traditional birth attendant and some of the youth interacted considerably with the students, other members in the community had minimal contact. This was clearly the result of power dynamics and the factors mentioned earlier, including some level of misunderstanding leading to mistrust that affected the programme. Whilst a few people did not go to the Chief’s palace for meetings, they attended the open community discussions with the students. Others preferred to be specifically invited and reminded about the meetings, and even escorted. It was ascertained that some of the community members “see it as an option more than an obligation to participate” in issues related to the socio-economic transformation of their communities (Wegerberg, 2011, p. 47). Although the policy of decentralisation imposed on the Assemblyman the difficult responsibility of meeting, consulting and aggregating the concerns of community members, the study revealed that this responsibility is heavily affected by the mass exodus of able-bodied young

men and women to the more developed south (Ahwoi, 2010; Aryee, 1995). A recommendation is therefore made for a redefinition of the programme including its boundaries to allow for new reflections and initiatives. The theoretical implications of the findings are presented next.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

The emerging paradigm shift in higher education in Ghana emphasises that universities should be seen to be driving the development of communities in their catchment areas. In this regard, the community engagement programme has emerged as a successful programme. Coupled with the decentralization policy of Ghana, the programme seeks to involve the communities themselves in the forward march to growth and prosperity. However, the evidence from the study and from other studies such as Macfarlane (1998, 2000), Kaburise (2003, 2006) and Brunning et al. (2008) seem to suggest that universities have not yet been able to ensure high levels participation of their communities. Segments of the populations still see the “town gown” divides and see the university as an ivory tower. The result of this is suspicion of the elite, which although reduced significantly, still lingers. Therefore the first original contribution that this thesis makes to university community engagement is that Universities ought to do more to bridge the gap between them and the general public. This community engagement has drawn the university closer to the communities in Northern Ghana but a lot still remains to be done to completely erase the lingering suspicion between powerful institutions like the University and poor rural communities such as the village studied.

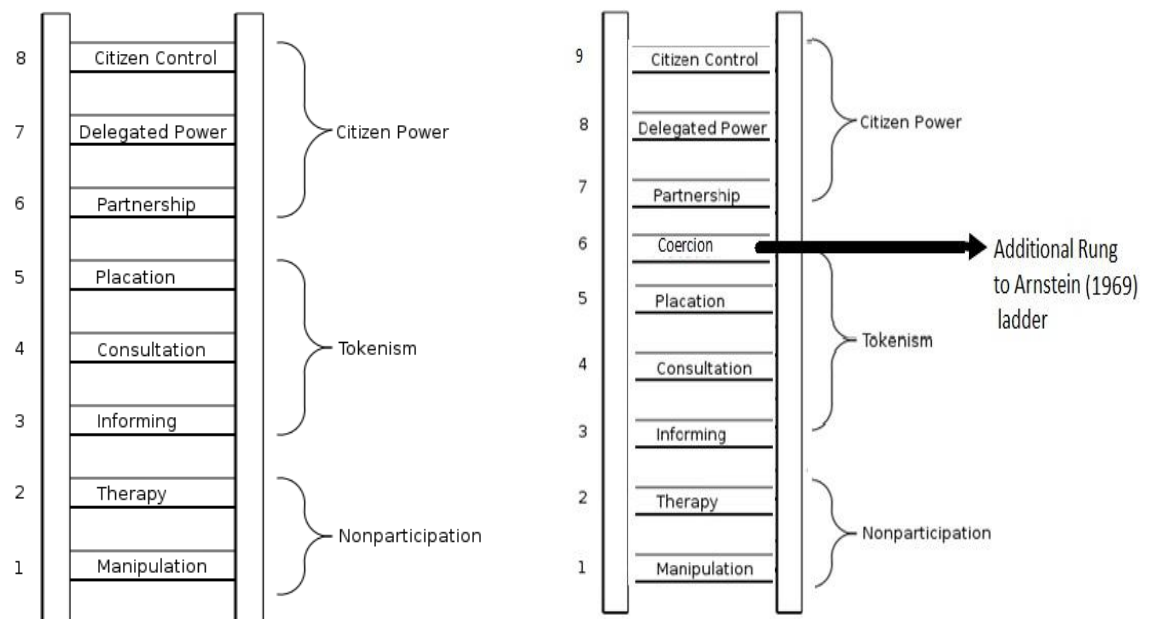
The empirical findings from the study indicate that although stakeholders participated in the engagement programme, the levels of their influence were not satisfactory. Nonetheless there was a shift in the level of participation as realised from the beginning and midway through the pair wise ranking activity. Consequently, as a second contribution there is the need for policy review of the programme to ensure a partnership of mutual benefit and to increase community participation so that the voices of the community and students could be heard Roger and Robinson (2004, p. 4) stressed that universities should create conditions that would “bring the view of citizens to bear on the

development of public services” as evidenced in the pair wise ranking activity. This could be achieved by identifying and deepening activities that benefit both the university and the community “in ways in which the asymmetries between them are to some extent smoothed away” (Kite, 2010, p. 2). Of course, this may take time because of the governance structures and mandates of universities. However, the processes of engagement could be further enhanced by making universities to depend on resources provided on the basis of community engagement, as is done in some countries in Europe and the United States of America, where universities that engage more have access to more funding.

Thirdly, an original contribution of the study is that it shapes our understanding of university community engagements in other parts of the world particularly in Northern Ghana. The research has shown that the engagement is beneficial to stakeholders and meets most of the objectives legally set for the university. Most important is the shift in attitude of students who become multicultural and create networks for future prosperity. Methodologically, a major contribution is the effectiveness of ethnography in bringing out the different perspectives of stakeholders both within and outside the community. More importantly it has helped bring out the voices of local participants who are the intended beneficiaries of the envisaged socio economic transformation that may likely result from the programme.

As a final point this thesis makes a contribution to theory by demonstrating that apart from the various types of participation by Arnstein (1969), Bishop and Davies (2002), IAPP (2007) people may also participate under duress or against their wish. In community programmes such as this some community based participants get involved because the chief of the community say they should participate. This has been demonstrated in interview responses of students and community participant concerning why they participate. Students are forced to participate in the engagement programme because it is a graduation requirement and therefore they are obliged to comply. Therefore with reference to Arnstein’s (1969) eight rung Ladder, I create this visual representation of my adaptation to her model by adding one more rung at the base under manipulation.

Fig. 7.2: Arnstein (1969) and Iddrisu (2015) ladders of Participation



Source: Arnstein, (1969)

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

On the basis of my literature review, findings and conclusions presented above, the following recommendations are presented. In this programme, the point of contact and emphasis at the community, referred to as the theatre of the engagement, has always been on the opinion leaders, chiefs and Assembly representatives. University authorities, as a matter of urgency, must widen participation to include all members of the communities, who may not be leaders but could hold very important views for the engagement. Additionally, there should be greater and deeper consultation with all of the stakeholders, notably the community and the District Assembly, at the conceptualization and planning stages, since the evidence showed that some of these stakeholders were only consulted at the implementation stage when students are brought to the communities.

Another recommendation that emerged out of the study is that all of the community members should be made to feel part of the programme. As it is, many of them are passive participants, and this sometimes creates hidden tensions between the community participants and university, and should therefore be re-evaluated. This study proposes that, to make the engagement

more rewarding, worthwhile, and appealing, it would be expedient to invite community leaders such as Assembly representatives or opinion leaders, for periodic reviews of the programme on the university campus. The engagement programme should be re-designed to encourage the maximum number of people in the community to participate, and such involvement should give the stakeholders optimal inclusion in the design and implementation of the activities of the programme in order to create consensus, ownership, and action for change (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Practically, the programme should include people and groups and avoid the exclusion of any individual. This suggestion is in line with Russell's (2008) study, which affirms that "...arousing interest amongst a wider range of people and, in particular, involving people that have so far been excluded, overlooked or have excluded themselves... or those who have so far been 'interested onlookers' and engaging with particular groups and building bridges, between them and particular agencies/service providers corresponds to different levels of involvement" (p. 23).

Further to the issues of participation, evidence also emerged to suggest that the timing of the programme affected broad participation because the programme takes place during the rainy season, when community members are out in the fields cultivating their crops. Since the mainstay of most rural communities is agriculture, for any programme to be successful it ought to coincide with their leisure time, which is the dry season. During these months, they have harvested their crops and are resting at home. In the northern savannah the dry season is the best time for social interaction. Since many of the villagers preferred to go to their farms because the programme did not hold any short-term, tangible benefits for them, it would be prudent for the university to redesign it to take place in the dry season.

The study indicated only limited participation by the District Assemblies; they should therefore be encouraged to increase their participation because the Assemblies constitute critical partners in the engagement. The study suggests two actions that could be employed to increase the participation of the District Assembly. First, the university should organise workshops for all of the Assembly representatives in the various districts they wish to engage, to take

them through the aims, purposes and processes of the engagement. Second, at the end of the programme, the students should give presentations of their community profiles and the project proposals they have written to the various District Assemblies in the presence of all the political leadership, rather than simply dumping the community profiles and proposal at the District Assembly.

My last policy recommendation is that arrangements should be made for the students to be hosted by families instead of staying together in one accommodation provided by the community exclusively for their stay. In this case, the students would become active observers of community living. Living together, separated from the community, makes them strangers to the people, who would then keep some information from them (Bohannon, 1966).

7.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The debate on how far the university should go to engage communities and the nature of the engagement has lingered on for some time, whilst literature in the developed world suggests that university community engagement has grown tremendously across the developed world (Brunning et al., 2006; Furco, 2010; and Watson, 2007) However the same cannot be said about developing countries like Ghana, where earlier universities in the south have contributed immensely to inequality and further widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots (Manu, Gariba, & Budu, 2007). Therefore more universities like the one in the study which aims to narrow the gap and widen access to higher education should be set up. A number of gaps were identified from the findings, there is therefore the compelling need for further studies on university community engagements to close and smooth the gap between universities and their outlying communities.

This study sought to explore the topic in light of the views of various stakeholders, specifically the university leadership, students, community members and District Assembly staff involved in one community engagement. As wider generalisation is not the aim of this study, it would be prudent to extend the coverage of future studies to include communities in all the three regions of Northern Ghana, the Brong Ahafo and Volta regions so that a meta-

analysis of the findings could be done to reveal broader, cross-regional implications (Khan, 2012).

Giving the opportunity, further research could also be carried out in the following areas:

- How power is a barrier to effective participation and engagement with community based stakeholders.
- Engagement with industry, commerce and other professional and service related areas, like law and political parties in Ghana.
- Student preference or perceptions of communities and the influence of this on their participation in the programme. Sustainability of community engagement programmes, so that community engagement does not just turn out to be a one stop programme but a sustainable one.
- Strategic linkages created between students and community members as a way to ensure sustained relationships and bonding between past students and community members.
- The relationship between community engagement and the employability of student participants.
- Finally, the suitability or otherwise and the effect of the community stay on students from different social-economic classes (deprived and privileged).

7.6 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

This study, like any other doctoral study, whilst examining the issues of influence, participation and power, also presented an evaluative perspective of the understanding of the aims, purposes and benefits of the university community engagement programme in Ghana from the perspectives of the various stakeholders. The initial stage of settling on an approach was problematic; I finally opted for an ethnographic case study. This actually served to increase my understanding of the various methodologies and prepared me to undergo the ethnographic study. As an ethnographic case study, the exploration of the various issues faced some challenges. Whilst I was a direct participant in the activities of the community, I could not be present at all places and at all times. Time had to be apportioned between all the stakeholders. The distance

between the community and my place of residence also posed challenges since I had to occasionally take a few days during the weekends to visit my family.

Another important challenge was the issue of analysing data whilst in the field. A balance should have been sought by me in meeting the two issues of data collection and initial analysis simultaneously whilst in the field. I must admit that I concentrated more on observing and collecting data and put little importance on simultaneously analysing and reflecting on the data. My analysis would have been much smoother and it would have helped to progressively develop my focus, identify key informants, and determine the kinds of data I needed before I left the field. My most significant problem was experienced during the data analysis stage. Inundated with a large quantity of raw data from the interviews, observations, student reports, field notebooks and casual conversations, I had to make decisions to refine them and tie them together. The decision to either use a computer package (NVIVO) or perform a manual analysis was on the table. After weighing my options including resources and time, I opted for a manual analysis because NVIVO cannot identify codes and pseudonyms, so manual coding was determined to be more beneficial. Informed by Straus and Corbin (1990), Miles and Huberman (2004), Creswell (2009), Lecompte and Schensul (1999, 2010), Bryman (2008), and advice from my supervisors, I got to work. It must be said that future researchers should pay particular attention to how they will perform the analysis of their data even before they venture out into the field, as the nature and type of data collected could alter the nature and mode of analysis. In any case, harmonising your analytical tools and styles with the envisaged data is quite conducive to research.

There was also the problem of time. I mentioned that this study was time bound and tied to the official university academic calendar, which allots seven weeks from mid-May to mid-July every year for the students' stays in the communities for their practical studies. If more time was required beyond these seven weeks, it would have to wait until the next academic year. Last but not least was the issue of funding. Each year my sponsors delayed sending my funds, and this had a significant impact on my will to complete the study.

7.7 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE DOCTORAL JOURNEY

The four years that I spent in the United Kingdom began in October 2011, when I arrived in the beginning of winter for the commencement of my PhD programme. As a senior university administrator of a public university in Ghana, I was initially keen on looking at aspects of university administration, such as the role of the committee system in decision making, the role of the Vice Chancellor, and/or the effect of networks on decision making and distributed leadership. All of these eventually remained at the conceptual stages, and I finally settled on the topic that was to take me through the three years of research. After exploring the issue of university community engagement, I came to appreciate the enormous responsibility the university has for driving the development of its communities, whether geographical or professional. I have also come to the realisation that there are substantial issues of power in such engagement programmes, and if not managed properly, these issues could perpetuate the already existing inequalities and disparities in development and therefore reinforce the hegemony of the elite represented by institutions like the University.

Regarding research methodologies, the PhD made me realise that qualitative research was more critical and more suitable for unearthing the multiple realities of human relations and endeavours. It has taken me through a process of critical thinking and the need to be more sophisticated in my thinking and writing, a process I would cherish forever. I came to recognise that the kind of educational system in Ghana that produced me does not push students to be critical, forceful or assertive, and I now have a personal campaign to ensure that critical thinking and writing becomes part of the curriculum at my university. The ethnographic exploration of the university community engagement programme has raised a number of concerns in my mind, especially the deprivations in relation to schooling and the extent of abject poverty in some rural communities. As Moulaerts (2000) and Byrne (1999, cited in Kite, 2010, p.12) noted:

Socially excluded communities are excluded in two ways, which locks them into negative situations from which it is difficult for them to

escape. Firstly they are disconnected from wider economic, political and social structures, which severely limit opportunities for community members. Secondly these communities are fragmented and have little capacity to challenge these external structural weaknesses to improve their own situation.

I have pledged to promote university community engagement post Ph.D. through publications and advocacy for more community participation in university programmes, having come to appreciate the enormous resources and power that universities wield and how they can help to bring about holistic development in adjacent rural communities.

7.8 CONCLUSION

The ultimate focus of this thesis has been to advocate for processes that will empower community members and other stakeholders in the drive towards equality in partnership with the university in the process of engagement. Based on the new thinking that universities ought to be at the forefront of community and national development, the university at the centre of this study is on course to achieving this vision, as indicated by evidence from the community engagement programme. Although the University Community Engagement Programme is fraught with a number of power issues which impinge on the total involvement of all of the stakeholders and perpetuate the dominance of the university, the findings of this study may motivate university management to take practical steps to address them. These would include reviewing the operations of the programme in such areas as planning, processes and consultation, as well as scaling up participation.

Such steps could ensure real participation, giving faculty and students more opportunities to explore their innate abilities whilst at the same time meeting the academic requirement of the programme. This thesis suggests that certain underlying problems, such as widespread poverty, the lack of social amenities and the breakdown in agriculture, ought to be considered and addressed; otherwise, community participation initiatives to bring about socio-economic transformations in rural communities “can risk reproducing uneven or repressive/ exclusive power relations instead of challenging them (Wegerberg,

2011, p.11). In spite of the challenges confronting the programme, theoretical and policy reviews by university management and the general public in relation to the perceptions and impact of the programme, show that the programme could contribute significantly in transforming communities in Northern Ghana and beyond if given the necessary support. A field study by Abagale (2010, p. 37) on the impact of engagement programmes on graduates' job performance showed that such programmes contribute to success on the job.

In support of Abagale's (2010) findings as well as my own, Wallis, cited in Gill (2009), proposed that collaboration should extend beyond communities to industry. According to her, "...initiatives can be worked on in collaboration with industry/NGOs and community through partnerships that are mutually beneficial to both parties" (p.1) because they may provide the resources with which to meaningfully engage.

Concluding the thesis, I urge all leaders of Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) to reflect on the statement of Bruns et al. (2011):

Today's higher education leaders find themselves at a difficult and important decision point. A coalescence of political, social and economic pressures may push higher education institutions to consider disengaging from their communities as they must find ways to reduce staff, consolidate programs, and focus energies on particular legislative agendas. However, we posit that a more comprehensive level of engagement between the University and its many communities will foster stronger support from multiple sources for the future of higher education and society. This will encompass new forms of diverse partnerships across the breadth of the economic, social, educational, health and quality of life societal concerns that exploit and enhance our discovery and learning expertise. We also posit that this imperative to make engagement a more central feature of higher education is perhaps strongest for public and land grant institutions (p. 4).

Appendix 1: Political Map of Ghana



Source: www.nation.online.org.

APPENDIX 2A: 1st PHASE OF THEMATIC CODING OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS (R= Respondent)

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4	Issue 5	Issue 6	Issue 7	Issues 8	Issue 9	Issue 10	Issues 11
R. 4	Introduce students to rural communities to acquire favourable attitude to living in deprived communities	Blend Academic work with practical field work, student generate data	Some decisions are collectively taken by University, community and Assembly and student leadership	Community and District Assembly are involved in how the engagement programme is run, through for a, focus group discussions and durbars	Communities have not properly understood the engagement programme	Some community members see the engagement as a project implementation programme	District Assemblies collaborate with students, assist student in the engagement	Constraints in resources and non-availability of funds	Communities own programme and actively take decisions and guides student movement and activities	Sometimes tensions / conflict between community and University arises	Various levels of participation by community members must be ensured
R. 5	Sending students to rural communities to interact and get exposed to rural life and together expose	Found life after graduation easier because we could manage any difficulty we encounter and were	Chiefs, opinion leaders/ Assembly man and other people of the community had a significant impact on	Lecturers and coordinators/ supervisors (the University management) control the programme	To be able to work with communities on projects beneficial to them	Bottom up approach to development planning is better than top down	Community /rural people are amiable and receptive to changes	Learning to write proposals, profile community, data collection and research using the PRA technique	Timing of the programme is a challenge, net of interaction, widen emphasis at orientation to include the masses	Programme should be seen as one to educate / conscientising and empower	Programme is overly social and favours those of the social sciences and humanities more

	their problems for possible intervention	quite used to life of deprivation	our lives	e				es		rural communities	
R. 6	Students offer useful services to our communities, e.g. filling our schools as teachers	Community members should increase their support for student stay in communities	Assembly participation in DM concerning the engagement is limited in some case not involved at all	Assemblies are ready to participate or step up their participation provided they are availed more the spaces, e.g. in the selection of communities	The engagement offers the Assemblies vital information or data that helps in their strategic planning and future intervention	The engagement serves as wake up call to the district assemblies regarding the myriad of problems confronting rural dwellers	Impact of programme is positive, opens up the Assembly and puts communities on the limelight making them popular	Exposes students to real life experiences and economic realities and give them the ability to cope with uncertainties, also a requirement for graduation	Challenges such as transport, growing number of students, inadequate consultation with Assemblies, inadequate accommodation in some communities		
R. 7	University staff meet with community reps to	Communities offer support to the engagement	The District Assembly benefits through	Student call meetings to discuss and share	The community is small so everybody knows what	Sometime before my involvement I did not know why	Students are happy and very interactive and get	Engagement is very beneficial to	Students should be integrated into homes in community	Students experience and learn to	

	discuss engagement and share information about the processes and objectives of the engagement	nt through the provision of accommodation and assistance with feeding	the submission of community reports of profiles and research findings on problems	information or data collected with community members	the students are there to do	they were in the community (contrast with earlier assertion that everybody knows what the CEP is about.	involve in most social activities of the community and are eager to participate more provided more spaces are created	community and community members enjoy their stay. students offer useful services such as teaching, acting as role models and motivators of community kids	a kind of homestay to enrich the CEP	appreciate how rural people live their lives	
R.8	Students stay and work in rural communities to appreciate and understand the nature	Going through the programme we refined our earlier perception about life in rural	We get to relate theoretical knowledge to the practicalities and realities of indigenous knowledge	The university controls the programme as the most important stakeholder and	Students also have a voice because whilst in the field our concerns are carried to the authorities	We need mechanisms such as websites and workshops, blogs to discuss our findings and profiles of	Involvement in the programme is mandatory and students acts advocates both for	Offer services such as teaching and engaging community in some	Within students, some participate minimally, and idle a lot whilst some engage at the maximum	We learnt positive values such as Hard work, Fortitude, honesty	Sometimes we are appalled by the level of deprivation in the community

	of rural problems	communities and people		initiator of the programme	and we see them addressed	communities whether sporadic or formal	the university and community	games such as football at our leisure		and modesty	
R.9	It is a university academic programme put in place and managed by the university	Reports of coordinators and assessors after the programme serves as feedback and input in decision making	Not all students and staff fully understand the community engagement programme	Logistics and transportation are the main challenges	It is the central management not faculties that control the programme	The reports of findings of students from the communities are not disseminated/ should be disseminated	Management of the CEP/directorate should be open and accessible to all students and staff all year round not when it is time for assessment	A full course on the Community Engagement programme should be taken by each student in the first year before the programme starts	The university should invite one rep. each from communities and District Assembly reps biennially for a review conference	Websites/ Blogs should be created for students to share their experience in the communities	Academic staff should be oriented to see involvement and participation as service to community and nation and tied to promotion

APPENDIX 2B: 2nd PHASE OF THEMATIC CODING OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

	Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4	Issue5	Issue 6	Issue7	Issue8	Issue9	Issue10	Issue11
<i>Theme. 1 Aims and Objective s of the Engagem ent</i>	Expose students to rural community life. Deprivations	Break boundaries between university and community social and academic programme	Sensitize and involve community in prioritizing problems	Expose students to the practical nature of development problems of northern Ghana	Students lobby district assemblies for communities & assist district assemblies in drawing development plans	To be able to work with communities on projects beneficial to the	Introduce students to rural communities to acquire favourable attitude to living in deprived communities	Sending students to rural communities to interact and get exposed to rural life and together expose their problems for possible intervention			
<i>Theme 2 Patterns of Participati on/ Influence in decision making</i>	final decision regarding the engagement rest with the university	opinion leaders supervise students /communities have a say in the engagement	Fatigue or disillusionment by some community members	Final decision lies with the university, academic programme but work in close collaboration with other stakeholders	There is some kind of arrangement for representation for all stakeholders	Community is involved in the supervision of the engagement	Communities do not fully understand aims and processes of engagement	Community misunderstanding of aims and purposes of engagement	The University set the agenda and involve community	The university should invite one rep. each from communities and District Assembly reps	Community involved at planning and implementation level

				ers						biennially for a review conference	
Theme 2	Sometimes before my involvement I did not know why they were in the community (contrast with earlier assertion that everybody knows what the CEP is about.	Students are happy and very interactive and get involved in most social activities of the community and are eager to participate more provided more spaces are created	Engagement is very beneficial to community and community members enjoy the stay. Students offer useful services such as teaching, acting as role models and motivators to community kids	University staff meet with community reps to discuss engagement and share information about the processes and objectives of the engagement	Communities offer support to the engagement through the provision of accommodation and assistance with feeding	The university controls the programme as the most important stakeholder and initiator of the programme	Students arrange meetings to discuss and share information on data collected with community members	The community is small so everybody knows what the students are there to do	It is a university academic programme put in place and managed by the university	Reports submitted by coordinators and assessors after the programme serves as feedback and input in decision making	Not all students and staff fully understand the community engagement programme
Theme.2	Assembly	Assemblies are	Some decisions	Community and	Communities	Some community	District Assemblies	Lecturers and coordinators/	Communities	Sometimes	Various levels

	participation in DM concerning the engagement is limited in some case not involved at all	ready to participate or step up their participation provided they are availed more the spaces, e.g. in the selection of communities	are collectively taken by University, community and Assembly and student leadership	District Assembly are involved in how the engagement programme is run, through for a, focus group discussions and durbars	have not properly understood the engagement programme	members see the engagement as a project implementation programme	collaborate with students, assist student in the engagement	supervisors (the University management) control the programme	own programme and actively take decisions and guides student movement and activities	tension s/ conflict between community and University arises	of participation by community members must be ensured
<i>Theme 3 Benefits to and impact on stakeholders</i>	Students offer useful services to our communities, e.g. filling our schools as teachers	We get to relate theoretical knowledge to the practicalities and realities of indigenous knowledge	Students stay and work in rural communities to appreciate and understand the nature of rural problems	Going through the programme we refined our earlier perceptions about life in rural communities	The engagement offers the Assemblies vital information or data that helps in their strategic planning and future intervention	The engagement serves as wake up call to the district assemblies regarding the myriad of problems confronting rural dwellers	Impact of programme is positive, opens up the Assembly and puts communities on the limelight making them popular	Exposes students to real life experiences and economic realities and give them the ability to cope with uncertainties, also a requirement	Programme should be seen as one to educate/ conscientising and empower	The District Assembly benefits through the submission of community reports of	Students experience and learn to appreciate how rural people live their

		ge		ies and people				for graduation	er rural communities	profiles and research findings on problems	lives
Theme 3	Offer services such as teaching and engaging community in some games such as football at our leisure	Within students, some participate minimally, and idle a lot whilst some engage at the maximum	We learnt positive values such as Hard work, Fortitude, honesty and modesty	Expose students to rural life for adaptation	Profile the community and write a proposal/doing advocacy for community e.g. fistula case in TR hospital	Inculcate into students favourable attitudes towards living in rural/deprived communities	Generate data for further research and offer useful Services to communities, teaching, advocacy, sensitization and education on current issues	Blend Academic work with practical field work, student generate data	Help district assemblies in drawing strategic development plans	Unmet expectation on the part of communities	Students acquire favourable attitudes towards living in deprived/ rural communities

Theme 3	Found life after graduation on easier because we could manage any difficulty we encountered and were quite used to life of deprivation	Chiefs, opinion leaders/ Assemblyman and other people of the community had a significant impact on our lives	Learning to write proposals, profile community, data collection and research using the PRA techniques								
Theme 4. Suggesti	We need	The reports	Management of the	A full course	New agenda/way	Websites/Blogs	Academic staff should	Community members	Students	Involve all	

ons for Improve ments	mechanisms such as websites and workshops, blogs to discuss our findings and profiles of communities whether sporadic or formal	of findings of students from the communities are not disseminated/should be disseminated	CEP/directorate should be open and accessible to all students and staff all year round not when it is time for assessment	on the Community Engagement program me should be taken by each student in the first year before the program me starts	s of tertiary education training	should be created for students to share their experience in the communities	be oriented to see involvement and participation as service to community and nation and tied to promotion	should increase their support for student stay in communities	should be integrated into homes in community , a kind of homes stay to enrich the CEP	stakeholders and seek their inputs	
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Theme	Representation/Domain	Colour
1	Aims and purposes of Engagement	Yellow
2	Patterns of Participation. Influence on Decision Making in Engagement	Cyan
3	Benefits to and impact on stakeholders	Red
4	Suggestions for improvements	Dark Magenta
5	Challenges of Engagement	Green
6	New emerging Issues	Olive

Sources for Colour coding: http://www.w3schools.com/html/html_colornames.asp

Appendix 3: Consent Form for Interview

School Of Education, University Of Leicester.

[An Ethnographic Study of a University Community Engagement Programme of a Public University in Ghana]

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
<i>Taking Part</i>		
I have read and understood the project information sheet dated DD/MM/YYYY.		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.		
I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and recorded (audio or video) ^a		
I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.		
<i>Use of the information I provide for this project only</i>		
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.		
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.		
<i>Please choose one of the following two options:</i>		
I would like my real name used in the above		
I would not like my real name to be used in the above.		
<i>Use of the information I provide beyond this project</i>		
I agree for the data I provide to be archived at ... ^b		
I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		
I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.		
<i>So we can use the information you provide legally</i>		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to [Iddrisu M. Tanko].		

Name of participant.....SignatureDate

Researcher.....SignatureDate

Project contact details for further information: Iddrisu Mahamadu Tanko

Phone: 0244297711(Ghana), 0447459161003 (UK)

Email addresses: mti2@le.ac.uk,tanko1968@gmail.com

Adapted from UK Data Archive (2011) 'Managing and Sharing Data: Best Practice for Researchers (available at <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/media/2894/managingsharing.pdf>).

APPENDIX 4

Levels of Decentralization (Local Government) System in Ghana

Levels of Decentralization (Local Government) System in Ghana

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT		
President		
Council of Minister		
Council of State		
Unicameral Parliament		
REGIONS (10)		
Regional Coordinating Council, RCC		
Regional Ministry		
LOCAL GOVERNMENT		
METROPOLITAN	MUNICIPAL	DISTRICT
Metropolitan Assembly	- Municipal Assembly	- District Assembly
- over 250 000 inhabitants	- over 95 000 Inhabitants	- Vast geographical areas, consist of both rural and small urban areas
		- over 70 000 inhabitants
Sub-metropolitan district council	Zonal council	Urban/Town/Area councils
-Town council		
Unit committees:		
In urban areas about 1500 inhabitants		
In rural areas about 500–1000 inhabitants		

Adapted from Peltola (2008)

APPENDIX 5

Some Global Scale Small Community Engagement Programmes

University or Consortium	Focus	Location
1. Talloires Network now comprising 247 universities worldwide started in 2015.	Commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility to communities. Engage communities in scholarship and diversity in experience.	Globally
2. Centre for Global and Community Engagement-	Aims at tackling disadvantage and prioritizing sustainable development through partnership.	University of Maryland
3. Community University Partnership Programme- (CUPP).	Community Partnership responsive to the needs of its communities.	University of Brighton
4. Centre for community Engagement.	Consortium committed to creating effective partnerships with its stakeholders.	University of Bradford
5. Australian Universities Community Engagement Association (AUCEA).	Revitalization of West Philadelphia neighbourhood, urban renewal and Planning.	Across Australia.
6. University of Pennsylvania Centre for Community Partnership – 1992	Social interventions, employer assisted housing programme.	Pennsylvania
7. Howard University in Washington-1995	Housing, community and economic development, strategic planning and fund raising.	Washington
8. Winston-Salem State University.	To establish civic engagement in partnership with the corporate world. Encourage community service in addition to teaching and learning.	Winston-Salem
9. Russel Group of universities, UK.	Student Volunteerism and internship and Community Partnership forums, community outcomes experience, service learning.	UK
10. Office of Community Engagement University of Minnesota	The Centre seeks to connect academic learning and community involvement in order to develop students' skills and values relating to civic engagement and social justice. Primarily it enables student to serve and learn in the community and above all sustain partnerships with a variety of	Minnesota

11. Centre for Community Engagement University of Seattle.	community based and not for profit organizations in order to promote a more just and humane world. The Unit is committed to achieving a sustainable engagement with its local community in a constructive and mutually beneficial way. It aims to facilitate experiences that further enhance knowledge and skill sharing with local stakeholders. It aims to further make students' think of local issues and community Agenda.	Seattle
12. University of Nottingham Community Engagement. Centre.	The This centre supports the delivery of its community engagement programmes. It shares and exchanges knowledge and skills including research. The unit also opens up the physical environment and resources of the university to its communities.	Nottingham
13. The Big Ten Conference	This is a union of world-class academic institutions who share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service	U.S A

Source: Authors own Construction

APPENDIX 6

Interview/Conversation Schedules/Guides

Questions on Perceptions of Understanding of Aims and Purposes (For all Stakeholders)

1. What is your general understanding of this engagement programme
2. How has it been going on, what has been the progress of the engagement
3. What have been your hopes and expectations?
4. How does the programme relate to and improve your degree studies
5. Can you just tell me more about that, any details of how the programme is ran
6. Who are involved in this programme
7. Is community based learning an essential component of the university?
8. Is the community engagement acknowledged and valued?
9. Is there an official policy for the engagement?
10. Is community engagement aligned with the vision of the university?
11. Is the community engagement a high profile effort on campus?
12. Do you think community engagement include:
 - Community partnerships
 - Student and faculty orientation
 - Community needs
 - Community and student capacity building
13. Is there student and faculty awareness of the community programme?

Questions on Benefits and Impact of Programme (for all Stakeholders)

1. Does the community recognise the engagement programme?
2. Can the community access the institutional resources?
3. Do you feel you have impacted the community?
4. Have you taken anything positive from the community
5. At the beginning of the programme what were you looking forward to in relation to this programme?
6. Would you recommend this experience to other students?
7. What are the good things about this programme?
8. If you were asked to point out one outstanding achievement what will it be?
9. In your point of view what has been achieved?

Questions of Influence, Participation & Power (For all Stakeholders)

1. Tell me about your participation?

2. How much influence or say have you had in all these?
3. Who have been the key people you've interacted with?
4. How do you rate your level of participation?
5. What about the programme have you agreed or disagreed with?
6. What do you think your role has been?
7. Are there opportunities for community partner voice and leadership?
8. Is there a mechanism in place for community partner contribution?
9. Do you think you have been at the centre of decision making or at the fringes/periphery?
10. If no, tell me about your experience or point of view?
11. Are there any motivations for participation or formal mechanisms to encourage participation?
12. What is the level of student involvement in community activities?
13. Is there any policy making board or committee at the University to run the engagement?
14. Are you a member of this committee?

During the four weeks stay after the Close of Student Participation

Formal Conversations with Community Members

1. What were your worries, anxieties about the presence of students during the seven weeks?
2. What do you think was the purpose of the community programme?
3. How does your participation in this programme contribute to your socioeconomic transformation?
4. How did you see the behaviour and role of students?
5. How does your participation in this programme contribute to the development of the country?
6. Do you see the programme as having any benefit for your community?
7. What will you tell the university authorities after the students have left the community?
8. What will you tell the district Assembly after your stay in the community?

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