



Assessing Sustainable Development Interventions by Non-Governmental Organizations in the Gushegu Municipality of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

In the development world, there is little doubt that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a crucial role in improving the lives of recipient communities. In the delivery of support to developing countries such as Ghana, these organisations are perceived as more credible and transparent. All development practitioners are increasingly emphasising the importance of project sustainability. A development intervention is considered sustainable if it continues to have positive effects and lasts longer than the initial timeframe, transcends the original spatial dimensions, and is independently adopted or adapted by the local population. The sustainability of NGO-led interventions in the Gushegu Municipality has undoubtedly been questioned due to the influx of NGOs operating in the Municipality, as more than 20 NGOs operate within the Municipality. Many of these institutions are faced with challenges such as socio-cultural, economic, and national regime issues, as well as donor circumstances. Therefore, the study assessed the Sustainability of Development Interventions by Non-Government Organizations in the Gushegu Municipality. To achieve the research goal, the mixed method approach was adopted. Research tools and techniques, including questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, were employed as data-gathering instruments. Respondents, on the other hand, were observed and engaged using open-ended questions in open dialogues in order to get further insights and draw inferences about their viewpoints and conclusions.

Findings show that the efforts of Non-Governmental Organisations within the research area's authority have not produced the expected results, as some have even collapsed a few years after the project organisers' departure. Also, Non-Governmental Organizations are concerned with sustainability; however, the government institutions, such as decentralized agencies, led by the District Assembly, and other parastatal agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Health, among others, have had no substantial impact on sustainability, considering the wanton duplication of initiatives in most of the rural communities. The attitudes and socio-cultural values of political regimes toward NGO-led development activities were not entirely neutral. It was determined that current economic conditions, donor strings attached, and the way NGOs create groups all hinder the sustainability of development activities. The study recommends a synergy among NGOs to avoid duplication of initiatives in communities and to foster stakeholder participation across all dimensions of the transformation agenda, and the avoidance of extreme government interference and partisanship in the discharge of their duties.

Keywords: Government, Intervention, Organization, Sustainable Development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a consensus that NGOs have been progressively recognised as indispensable development partners in the effective delivery of aid at the local, national, and international levels (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). This recognition is rooted firmly in the fact that they strategically positioned themselves as trusted and reliable institutions before the sponsor community. Moreover, fighting fiercely to ensure that the interests and voices of the vulnerable and

marginalised groups are heard in the discourse of social, political, and economic dimensions of a country globally (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Undoubtedly, NGOs are conspicuous in the local, national and international environment and engaged in diverse activities such as the mobilisation of the grassroots, empowerment of community members, micro-finance, and the provision of humanitarian relief. Other roles include building and strengthening democracy, conflict management and resolution, and being very active in providing emergency assistance (Bank & Hulme, 2012)

The 1980s experienced a sharp increase in the number of NGOs across the globe due to the paradigm shift in development from top-down to a human-centred approach in international development cooperation. NGOs have been recognised as the third significant players in the development landscape of Indonesia, India, Thailand and Sri Lanka's rehabilitation efforts. They became instrumental following the tsunami calamity of 2004 in the international campaign 'Poverty Must Belong to History' and other assistance, likewise trade reforms (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). The astronomical increase in the number of NGOs directly responded to the adverse effects and failures of some government policies or state actors that had not received wide administrative consideration (Bank & Hulme, 2012). In Africa, the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has increased, intended to reduce the societal cost of governments across the continent executing the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) (Heidhues & Obare, 2011).

It was generally considered a poor people's advocate and marginalized in society, as they were positioned to address SAP's social impact, implemented then across African countries (Heidhues & Obare, 2011). According to Lewis and Kanji (2009), one million non-governmental organisations are working worldwide. This figure includes both formal and informal organizations. In contrast, a casual setting organisation embodies the social structure of an entity as against its official structure. It consists of a network of links formed by employees relative to their functions or departments to quickly attain the set targets (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993). The UN in 2000 estimated that there were approximately 35,000 large established NGOs worldwide. It is worth noting that their existence is never an African or developing country's thing, but is equally vital in the more advanced nations. Against this backdrop, they consistently augment governments' efforts and the collective interest of persons toward holistic human development. In the quest of NGOs to complement governments' efforts regarding basic service delivery and the protection of the interests of the vulnerable people, they unfold as charities, foundations, associations, non-profit corporations, and voluntary organisations (Lewis and Kanji 2009). They are especially critical in situations where government funds are limited, political situations are fluid, natural disasters occur as a result of predictable and unpredictable environmental conditions, ethnic strife is common, and per capita income severely restricts the ability to purchase needed goods and services – social, educational, and economic (Asamoah, 2003). According to USAID (2009), Ghana has 4,463 registered Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), with the number growing every year. Bornstein (2002) affirmed that before the emergence of such organisations, “missionaries were at the forefront of offering agriculture assistance, education, and self-help programmes for Africans where colonial states did not”. Empirical evidence shows that there are twenty-eight (28) locally and internationally recognised NGOs serving various purposes to promote the constituents' well-being in the Gushegu Municipality in the Northern region, alone, including Community Life Improvement Programme (CLIP), World Vision Ghana (WVG), World Vision, URBANET Ghana, FORD Ghana, among others, are involved in providing hand-dug wells, boreholes and education on hygiene issues in the Gushegu area. The significant NGOs' growth and influence in the Municipality sparked increased interest in their significance in ensuring long-term development.

1.2 Problem Statement

Development programs are initiated and executed by the government as one of its core responsibilities to the state and people across the globe, including Ghana. However, due to resources and logistics constraints, most nations, especially the Developing Nations, sometimes falls short of providing the needed development interventions to their people, including the provision of social infrastructure (such as road construction), education, agriculture, and health needs, thus, paving the way for Non-Governmental Organizations involvement in activities in most communities, which are evident throughout the country. Non-governmental organizations are private groups that engage in initiatives to alleviate suffering and promote the poor's interests, preserve the environment, provide basic social services, and conduct community development (World Bank, 1996). Such organizations include charities, foundations, associations, non-profit corporations (NPOs), and private voluntary organizations (PVOs). In general,

their responsibilities span from disaster assistance to environmental conservation to development programs to fighting governments for issues of human rights. United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), African Union (AU), multinational organizations, and powerful countries, NGOs are seen as not bad, saintly, not corrupt, focusing on the poor, and above all, the "third eye" (National Centre for Policy Analysis, 2002). In 2012, the Economic Cooperation and Development Organization (OECD) countries provided about \$17 billion in direct and indirect aid to developing countries (Aldashev 2017). Despite the preceding, temporary NGO-led development interventions in the Gushegu Municipality are available. The interventions are often in the form of projects with a set lifespan. Their effects, however, are predicted to be long-lasting (Gushegu Municipal Assembly, 2020).

Recent events in the municipality have called into question this position. Many people have questioned whether NGO-led development efforts are progressive enough to assure long-term growth. A careful examination of the current situation in the districts in the Northern Region and Gushegu Municipality particular, demonstrates that these entities, like government institutions with whom they interact, have little impact on the Municipality's long-term development. As a result, the Municipality's development practitioners are focused on examining the works of organizations and transforming them into effective bodies responsible for the long-term development of societies. This concern is generally agreed upon because national governments and international donor organizations invest millions or billions of dollars in project implementation for the benefit of recipients.

In 2004, NGOs were expected to be expending about \$US23 billion in overall aid, or roughly one-third of total ODA (Riddell, 2007). According to numbers quoted in the 5 September 2005 edition of Newsweek, development assistance delivered through NGOs climbed from 4.6 per cent in 1995 to 13 per cent in 2004, while total aid volume increased from US\$59 to US\$78.6 billion during the same period. While some NGOs are well-funded and wealthy, others live on a shoestring budget, barely scraping by from one year to another (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). Some NGOs employ highly qualified personnel, while others rely mainly on volunteers and supporters. However, failure to ensure that their projects are sustainable in the Municipality persists. In light of this, the focus of this study is to influence the long-term development interventions of NGOs in the Gushegu Municipality.

1.3 Overarching Objective

To assess the Sustainability of Development Interventions by Non-Government Organizations in the Gushegu Municipality.

1.4 Research main Question

How sustainable are the NGO-led Development Interventions in the Gushegu Municipality?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The work of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is multifaceted. NGO tasks can be split into three categories: implementer, catalyst, and collaborator. The implementer's role ensures adequate resources are mobilized in order to provide goods and services to their rightful beneficiaries to satisfy their needs. NGOs provide services in a variety of disciplines, like health, microfinance, agricultural extension, disaster relief, as well as human rights issues. This function has grown as governments and financiers have increasingly engaged NGOs to execute some specified duties in exchange for payment as part of governance reform and privatization agendas. It has also become more popular as NGOs provide humanitarian aid in response to man-made or natural calamities.

The ability of NGOs to inspire, enable, or contribute in order to improve thought and action and promote social transformation is termed the catalyst role in the development discourse. Based on the United Nations Development Index (2000), NGOs assisted in accelerating and achieving basic human development in the areas of education, health, politics, disaster response, and many other areas. World Bank (1996) postulates that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) typically have a continuous link with the poor, and enable them to support this group of people directly. They are suited to assist them in determining the most important challenges and their requirements to elevate their living standards. The native knowledge, skill, and capacity to develop and

support people's engagement offer them significant comparative advantages as well as make them valued and seasoned allies.

In this context, NGOs' flexibility, ability to innovate, grassroots mobilization, humanitarian versus commercial goal perspectives, non-profit status, dedication and commitment, as well as recruitment philosophy, are all significant benefits. A substantial number of NGOs are constituted with volunteers who are so dedicated to their cause, they are willing to go through hardships and receive no monetary recompense in executing their plans (Asamoah, 2003). NGOs can assist in motivating and involving community-based organizations whose constituents may be the primary beneficiaries of a larger project, serve as advocates or ombudspersons, and are in a unique position to share communication both horizontally and vertically while also supporting innovation (Asamoah, 2003). Against this background, development practitioners such as the government, bilateral and multilateral donors, beneficiary communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will find the study useful. It identified elements that affect project sustainability, which all interested parties in various intervention areas must address to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study aided development practitioners in designing and implementing responsive and long-term interventions in the understudied communities in order to transform beneficiaries' living standards and livelihoods. The study's findings will assist donors in choosing which areas of intervention should be emphasized to achieve the desired growth and development, which is the goal of Official Development Assistance (ODA). It would be particularly useful in informing development practitioners about the essence of stakeholders in the development debate, working together. This will prevent duplication of interventions in communities by NGOs and government agencies and offer beneficiaries in the study area the opportunity to achieve equity and meaningful social and economic development.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Non-Governmental Organization Intervention Spheres

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are crucial in the development scene and are recognized in negotiations for their advocacy activities regarding the rights of individuals, peace, and related environmental concerns. They are equally concerned about the effectiveness, accountability, and legitimacy of governments worldwide (Tortajada, 2016). The indispensability of NGOs is realized in situations where public-service delivery has been ineffective, thereby making the emergence of varied non-state or non-market establishments, specifically non-governmental organizations (NGOs), crucial in the transformation chain (Werker & Ahmed, 2008). It is estimated that India, for instance, is home to over three million (3 m) NGOs, which outnumber its public facilities such as hospitals, schools, and the police force, among others (Anand, 2017). There has been a significant paradigm shift in development approaches, with a strong importance relative to the role of NGOs in today's development chain. Lewis and Kanji (2009), NGOs' roles can be divided into three categories: service delivery, catalyst, and partnership. These three elements can be incorporated into an organization's actions. NGOs play three significant functions: Relief, welfare, basic skills, and other services are provided. Also, educational provisions such as basic skills and social environment critical analysis. They equally engaged strongly in public policy advocacy in their countries of operation. International Nongovernmental Organizations are prominent and significant in almost all developing countries, receiving considerable sums of money and other valuable resources from donors to deal with humanitarian aid and development projects, with increasing influence as actors in policy discourse and instrumental in worldwide governance of and Ghana is not an exception (UNDP, 1997).

2.3 NGOs and Service Delivery

Undoubtedly, water and sanitation, education and training, health, agriculture, food security, and, in most cases, energy are all areas where NGOs are actively working across the globe (USAID, 2009). NGO activities in various contexts include community development, humanitarian and disaster relief aid, natural resource and conservation projects, and a variety of other sectoral activities. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are usually professionally staffed groups that strive to alleviate human suffering and transform developing countries (Streeten, 1997). They accomplish this aim variedly such as sponsoring projects, providing services and capacity building, raising awareness, and encouraging various groups to self-organize. Carroll (1992) undeniably, service delivery by NGOs is immeasurably critical because a reasonable percentage of many people in developing countries are confronted with a

variety of problems, essential basic services are lacking in some cases poor quality in communities where they are available. This has been the impetus for the upsurge in NGOs' growth and recognition in service provision. The position of the neoliberal development policies, which emphasised a shift from the state as the sole service provider as a result of the mass state failures and corruption in the developing countries, therefore, NGOs are recognized by international donor community such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund or governments of advance nations as the best option to accomplish the desired global transformation through NGOs of all forms and capacities to fill the void that has been left (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). The role of non-governmental organizations in service delivery has been widely established by pointing out that in the event of a natural disaster, they are critical in providing emergency relief services without invitation and with a nonprofit objective. In war situations, they are essential to providing relief and protecting women and children from war crimes and other negative consequences. They are equally important and sensitive to the challenges of meeting the health needs of developing countries, giving technical expertise on illness prevention and cure, and assisting governments in researching permanent ways to avoid disease spread and finding and caring for the less fortunate and disadvantaged in society (Ezeoha 2006).

2.4 Non-Governmental Organizations as Catalysts to Development

This is an agent that facilitates change to bring about the desired results. NGOs in the development realm aim to transform through advocacy and seek influence, innovating and applying fresh approaches to development issues (Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

2.4.1 Advocacy

Advocacy connotes a strategic pathway in which individuals and private entities use credible information to influence government practices and policy orientations in order to democratize power imbalances in society (Jordan and Tuijl, 2002). According to (Najam, 1999) NGOs keep policy honest," by playing the whistle blowers' role in situations whereby certain policies remain unimplemented or weirdly carried out, and equally scan the policy horizon to possibly establish variables that could inhibit future policy development and implementation. NGO advocacy is a pragmatic tool that gives the poor and the marginalized groups the opportunity to contribute their quota in the development trajectory. NGOs take a stand against the government through advocacy by acting as watchdogs, lobbying, and openly supporting groups impacted by government policy, and keeping the government accountable for the status quo concerning social injustice to defend human rights and systemic causes of inequality; accelerate democratic governance (Coates and David 2002). It was generally considered that proponents of the poor and marginalized in society, and better positioned to address the Structural Adjustment Programs societal impact, which African countries have introduced (Heidhues & Obare, 2011).

2.4.2 Innovation

Non-Governmental Organizations are globally recognized as innovative bodies in their quest to alleviate and relieve the marginalized people from suffering, enhance the poor people's interests, provide essential services, and protect the environment in order to facilitate societal transformation (Cleary, 1997). The capability to innovate is generally considered a special quality and a comparative advantage of NGOs over other organisations, usually government agencies. Furthermore, the claims of innovation are one of the most important underlying reasons of NGOs as the appropriate alternative for long-term development (Bebbington et al., 2008). According to (Clark 1991), Non-Governmental Organizations have been able to innovate because they are less constrained by conformist notions and institutions than traditional aid organizations and governments. NGOs certainly have been innovative regarding the mobilization of the grassroots, commercial goal alignment, and the provision of responsive humanitarian relief in various needy situations (Ezeoha, 2006). This is normally accomplished through advocacy by opposing the state as well as being watchdogs, lobbyists, and publicly supporting groups, to ensure that policymakers are held accountable (Thomas, 1992). This role burdened the NGOs to properly and effectively appraise the development interventions on the beneficiaries, including both planned and unexpected impacts.

2.4.3 NGO-State Collaboration

The increasing pace of demand of the citizenries in the world, especially the developing countries, makes it practically impossible for the state to provide needed goods and services solely; which makes it imperative for the growth of NGOs to complement the delivery of such vital services, thereby making the state and NGOs inseparably important in the development process of every developing nation and beyond (Lekorwe & Mpabanga 2007). In a more concretized

manner, NGO-state relationship in the liberalist perspective establishes three significant dimensions that they can complement, reform, and/or challenge the state, ensuring effective and efficient implementation of development policies in that they carry them out as implementers (Lekorwe & Mpabanga, 2007). They are more prominent in situations in which the public purse is very meagre or low, policy-making conditions easily changeable, non-man-made calamities are common due to environmental elements that are both predictable and unpredictable, tribal conflicts exist, and so on (Asamoah, 2003). More importantly, Lewis (1998) revealed that the so-called relationships between NGOs and government agencies indicated in project documents were more a result of opportunities for obtaining external funding than any type of complementarity or functional logic. Sustainability factors in Development Interventions, the difficulty of ensuring sustainable development has prompted research into what factors may influence the long-term viability of development efforts.

2.5 Factors Militating Against the Sustainability Of NGO-Led Development Interventions

2.5.1 Sustainable Development

Undeniably, the rudimentary principle regarding sustainable development is to amalgamate social and economic concerns relating to all aspects in making decisions (Emas, 2015). Thus, the concept of sustainable development “aims to mitigate and moderate... the paradox between the two” concepts – development and sustainability (Jabareen, 2008). Also, sustainability has been considered twofold: a goal in development projects and a policy and programmatic approach (Eckman, 1993). Sustainable development, according to the Brundtland Commission (1987) is meeting current demands without risking future generations' ability to meet their needs. Premised on the above, sustainable development has been considered a cardinal paradigm for ensuring proper community development (Nikkhan & Redzuan, 2010). Sustainability has traditionally been associated with environmental concerns, particularly in developed countries (Bradshaw & Winn, 2000). However, the ultimate goal of long-term development is to strike essential among three key dimensions of community transformation: such as social, economic, and environmental perspectives (Sneddon, 2000). As a result, sustainability for long-term development entails integrating critical environmental protection issues with expanded employment possibilities and improved people's livelihoods (Serageldin, 1996). Development projects are those that have long-term positive effects beyond the stipulated period and transcend the borders of the intended geographical scope of any designed intervention (Eckman, 1993). The program in question ought to deliver appropriate and continuous benefits over a long time after the exit of the project organisers.

2.5.2 Socio-Cultural Factors

According to Hosain (2001), integrating a programme with its users' social and cultural surrounds and operational settings becomes even more important if the activity is not rejected once support ends. Furthermore, systems that attempt to work in ways that are incompatible with local conventions or that assume behavioral changes are guaranteed to fail. Working through local communities makes it easier to take advantage of traditional organizations and indigenous practitioners and benefit from their knowledge of what works and what doesn't in society, which can help to promote sustainability by establishing a base of support and encouraging a sense of local ownership of programs (OECD, 1987). Donor agencies imported the concept of non-governmental organization in reaction to African states, making civil society inward-looking and less active when it comes to policy issues to promote development (Lekorwe and Mpabanga, 2007). Without consulting any African authority, the system was enforced unilaterally (Duffield, 1992). Donors are shifting their finances away from governments and toward NGOs as the system advances, and NGOs are taking on duties previously held by governments. The latter carries out programs that are incompatible with community settings (Lekorwe&Mpabanga, 2007)

2.5.3 Influence of Donors

Without a doubt, the nature of NGOs' reliance on donor financing to carry out their initiatives has a significant impact on their effective administration. The most prevalent result of NGOs' financial dependency on donor money was that they folded when funds dried up when donors stopped contributing (Lekorwe & Mpabanga, 2007). The major problem confronting the NGO operations and the discharge of their mandates is the continuous fraying of funding, which often compels many of them to scale down their activities. NGOs frequently fit themselves into areas where finances are readily available, such as Human Immune Virus/Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome, climate-related changes, and other concerns very appealing to these entities, making it impossible for NGOs to specialize sector-wise rather than changing their areas of focus in some situations (USAID, 2009). In comparison to the United States and

Europe, Africa and other developing economies are far behind in such discussions (Kuzey&Uyar, 2017). According to Fowler (1991), the World Bank funds the majority of community-oriented initiatives in Africa, whereas bilateral assistance agencies prioritize modernization projects like basic health care delivery, birth-related control, as well as credit. It is maintained that modernization-related interventions, which focus on economic material progress, benefit both the very poor and the comparatively wealthy members of Third World communities (Clark, 1991).

2.5.4 Government Policy

Irrefutably, all development projects must fit into the national policy framework worldwide. This makes the harmonization of policies essential to avoid conflicts in the development spectrum (Hosain, 2001). There is a two-dimensional and critically rooted mistrust between state players, as the government continually entertains fears that NGOs can potentially erode their political power. On the other hand, NGOs are in a dilemma as to what spurs government officials in the development trajectory (Fowler, 1992). As a result, when the efforts of these state and non-profit entities are not in sync, achieving sustainable development will be extremely difficult. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), unique contextual elements such as the type of non-governmental organizations' objectives as well as methods, the region of interest, the attitude of the financiers, the posture as well and the focus of the nation's regime all influence the ties between NGOs and government. Nonetheless, Lekorwe (1999) claims that state financing is used to control civil society and interest groups. Because of their reliance on government money, they cannot publicly criticize and confront the government in the pursuit of sustainable development.

2.5.5 Non-Governmental Organization Management Capacity

Managerial experience is crucial in developing long-term intervention projects and programmes. When projects are within an organisation's administrative and managerial capacity, they can churn out lasting benefits that invariably enhance the sustainability of the gains made (OECD, 1989). That notwithstanding, the main shortfall of NGOs in Africa stemmed from unsuitable organisational structures, which influence the direction and impact in which NGOs execute their fundamental mandate (Molomo & Somolekae, 1999). Moreover, Schiavo-Campo and Sundaram (2001) found that some NGOs lack the time and ability to run all sponsored initiatives, let alone secure complete community participation. This was found to impact NGOs' ability to offer sustainable development. Programs whose benefits are directly linked to the local people make their effective involvement extremely critical to ensuring sustainability. Therefore, the local people's participation in all the stages of projects is indispensable to guarantee the sustainability of NGO development interventions.

2.5.6 Regimes in which NGOs Work

The liberal, social-democratic, corporatist, and statist governments are among the regimes. These regimes significantly impact the interest areas of the non-governmental organization's activities in any particular situation (Swilling & Russell, 2003). The liberal regime favoured limited government spending connected to a pragmatic non-profit sector in the transformation ladder. It is supported by a robust middle class that values the advancement of society led by not-for-profit bodies. On the other hand, the social-democratic system imposes a significant financial burden on societal transformation and has a minimal not-for-profit sector. The system is effective in a circumstance when the middle class is strong and has obtained political power to promote growth, and this state parallels the South African state in several ways. The third form, the corporatist polity, is one in which government collaborates with the non-profit motive sector to provide essential facilities to the public. When power elites must accept NGOs, this regime frequently emerges.

2.6 Non-Governmental Organizations Management Approaches to Sustainable Development Interventions

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been increasingly embraced and credited in global development against the backdrop that greater attention has been paid to manning the NGOs, whose usual nature was said to be 'participatory' (Sheehan, 1998). Chambers (1995), assert that, all development agencies must flatten and soften their organizational structures to eliminate the institutional challenge of developing a culture of participatory management, to ensure inclusive recruitment by integrating different professionals who are versatile, to develop and promote methods, conventions, and incentives that allow and drive more people to participate across all the levels of any development intervention. The uncertain emergence of examining NGO management brought about a discourse on how well NGOs can be organized and managed (MacKeith, 1993). There is one big vacuum created in the realm of NGOs relative to which management model generally suits all intents and purposes; however, the cardinality of management is widely recognized in terms of concepts and methods (Campbell, 1987). This leads to the reality that

NGOs all over the world must possess unique managerial approach. The thinking emphasizes the fact that NGOs are volunteer organizations and, as such, should follow volunteering principles (Billis & MacKeith, 1993). Alternatively, the management style necessary in NGO contexts is sensitive. Similarly, development management ideas and practices should have a significant impact on NGO management (Korten, 1980).

2.6.1 Development, Power, and Discourse Management

Historically, all development policies in the form of interventions are usually crafted externally for the beneficiary countries and normally preclude the input of the indigenous people. This supply-driven approach is the fundamental reason for the failure of many developing countries to accomplish long-term development (Bleckley, 2008). This sparks the debate against this paradigm and seeks more inclusive development strategies (Earle & Simonelli, 2000). Inclusion in the development discourse connotes a balance of power (Smith-Nonini, 1997). Undeniably, power is a cardinal sustainable development striving in communities crossed the globe (Alinsky, 1971). Projects and externally provided programmes are usually imbalanced because power is held by the development organization instead of the beneficiary's society (Bleckley, 2008). This unilateral power maintenance denied the beneficiaries the opportunity to make decisions and act independently; hence, sustainability depends on their actions. Therefore, power balance is a prerequisite in community development for participating in a discourse (Chambers, 1997). Oppression or uneven dissemination of authority emanates in a completely devoid dialogue between two interesting bodies, while liberation (balanced power) is realized through dialogue, which means dialogue is a recipe for liberating the development process (Freire, 1970).

2.6.2 Participatory Development and Management

Participatory approach is a multi-faceted paradigm to development in which the beneficiaries take centre stage in the development process and pragmatically build their capacity to take charge of their future (Kemp, 2003). According to Bleckley (2008), Participatory development is a paradigm that involves all stakeholders in all stages of the development process, including project design, planning, execution, review, and assessment. According to Bleckley (2008), some people see participatory development methods as a solution to the long-term and power balance issues that come with development efforts imposed on the beneficiaries. Many scholars argue that a participatory management strategy is ideal for NGOs whose work entails increasing beneficiary engagement and empowerment (Campbell, 1987; Chambers, 1995). This managerial approach, according to Chambers (1983), is more in line with bottom-up development or participatory development. NGO workers require a new level of professionalism based on fundamental reversals in their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour.

Carroll (1992) establishes how an open collaborative administrative approach fosters beneficiary assurance and reliance while also supporting organizations. To ensure responsiveness and flexibility to a continually changing reality, NGOs must build problem-solving structures with decentralized and participative decision-making strategies instead of a management strategy based on a predictive blueprint (Fowler, 1987). NGO workers are typically passionate, devoted, and committed to executing their intended plan activities due to the same values and beliefs about the societal change purpose incorporated in executing their assigned responsibilities Clark (1991). He asserts that an autocratic approach would not ensure the long-term viability of development efforts.

2.7 Focus Areas for Non-Governmental Organization Development Interventions

NGOs have built actual programmes with verifiable socioeconomic benefits for their recipients to alleviate human suffering. These initiatives are designed to empower and develop the poor and marginalized in society's ability to meet their own needs.

2.7.1 Community Empowerment for Long-Term Sustainability

Empowerment refers to a person's ability to gain a social, political, economic, or psychological advantage in information, knowledge, skills, decision-making, individual self-efficacy, community engagement, and perceived control (Rappaport 1987). Baccaro (2001) shows how a combination of microcredit, awareness-raising, and other social services can help the disadvantaged, particularly women. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seek to promote long-term community development through promoting activities that promote capacity building and self-reliance (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010). Langran (2002), NGOs help communities develop through building capacity through microfinance, community capacity building, and self-reliance as part of a "bottom-up" strategy for community development. According to Finger (1994), the bottom-up method stresses community engagement, grassroots

movements, and local decision-making. It was also claimed that community participation and grassroots activities enhance participatory decision-making and local self-reliance.

2.7.2 NGOs and Beneficiary Capacity Building for Sustainable Development

A process in which capacity-building approaches are systematically incorporated as an important element of good practice, and a goal in and of itself, to enable others, from individuals to government departments, to have a higher capacity to collaborate to solve challenges (NSW, 2001).

In terms of NGOs' functions, Langran (2002) opine that capacity building is the ability of one group (NGOs) to improve the development capabilities of another group (local communities) through education, skill training, and organizational help. Empowerment is frequently used to characterize one of the motivations for and outcomes of community capacity building.

2.7.3 Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Self-sufficiency for Long-term Development

Self-reliance implies that inhabitants of a particular community depend on their resources without surviving or relying on external funding (Kelly, 1992). He argued that self-reliant approaches depend on the beneficiary community's willingness and ability to drive their maximum satisfaction from their resources and technology that is within their capacity. Relying on the state may be required in the short term, it should not be a long-term aim; community change should eventually lead to self-sufficiency. More importantly, relying on foreign resources will cause the community to lose its autonomy and independence. Furthermore, independent communities can only exist if they are not reliant on outside forces. Ife and Tesoriero (2006), community workers such as NGOs and community groups must analyse their potential and look for ways to attain self-sufficiency, and creatively turn that potential into sources of revenue for the community's development.

2.7.4 Non-Governmental Organizations and Microfinance for Sustainable Development

Microfinance encompasses all practical efforts to improve poor or disadvantaged people's access to loan facilities and savings services (Shreiner 2001). Microfinance has increasingly been recognized as a viable approach for alleviating the sufferings of the disadvantaged and marginalized in society. Cheston and Kuhn (2002), the cardinality of microloans to empowering people, especially women, is well recognized in underdeveloped nations. Nikkiah and Redzuan (2010) micro-credit schemes provide small loans and savings opportunities to persons who have been excluded from commercial, financial services. As a development inclusion strategy, microfinance programs encourage women's economic engagement to improve overall financial efficiency within national economies. Microfinance, which gives financing to disadvantaged women who are typically barred from official credit institutions, is one of the most popular ways of economic empowerment for women (Cheston and Khan, 2002).

2.8 Theoretical Framework

2.8.1 Collective Action Theory

The study appreciably fits well into Collective Action Theory, which is a voluntary activity conducted by a group of individuals (either directly or through an organization), who spend their time and energy to achieve common goals (Markelova et al., 2009), encompassing a wide spectrum of social phenomena in which social actors collaborate to provide and demand common goods. He opines that no single individual can achieve the collective good only by his or her means. The collective good can only be attained through the independent, interdependent, or coordinated contributions of many people. Meinzen-Dick, Di Gregorio, and McCarthy (2004), the fundamental components of collective action are the involvement of a group of individuals with shared interests, and common and voluntary acts to promote those shared goals.

The outcomes of collective action are highly dependent on the kind of relationships required, much as institutional courses of action are established at the local level (Vanni, 2014). Thus, collective action might be initiated by a local organization or organized and strengthened by a regional or national governmental authority. Following this logic, Davies et al. (2004) recognized two types of collaborative action: cooperation and coordination. Coordination is a top-down or state-led collaborative effort, while cooperation is a bottom-up or local-to-local collective action. Ostrom (2004) urges wider consideration of informal collaborative arrangements, in which community systems or groups build and encourage community action envisioned to achieve their desired aims.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.1 Study Area

Gushegu Municipal Assembly is one of the sixteen administrative districts in the Northern Region of Ghana. The municipality is found in the North-Eastern Corridor of the Northern Region. The Municipality is located in the North-Eastern corridor of the region, bordering eight (8) other Districts: Savelugu, Nanton, and Karaga to the west; Saboba and Chereponi to the east; East Mampurusi and Bunkurugu/Yunyu to the north; and Yendi and Mion to the south. It covers an area of approximately 2,674.1 square kilometers, with 395 communities, with its capital in Gushegu, which is approximately 114 kilometers from the regional capital, Tamale (Annual Progress Report, 2020). The total population of the Municipality is 139,662, comprising 68,434 males (49%) and 71,228 (51%) females, using the Municipal growth rate of 2.3% (Population and Housing census, 2010).

3.2 Research Design

A study design is the logical structure of an investigation that displays the overall plan, dictating what data should be collected, why, and how (Denzin, 2011). To better understand the initiatives of non-governmental organizations in Gushegu and their sustainability measures, a case study technique was employed. "The case study technique allows researchers to keep the holistic and significant qualities of real-world events such as individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood development, school performance, international interactions, and industry maturity" (Yin, 2013). Since the target population is diverse, an approach that caters for different dimensions suits the study.

3.2 Sample

A sample is a smaller group of people (participants) chosen from a larger group for research (Mohsin, 2016). The target demographic for the campaign of the study consists of respondents from diverse backgrounds in the Gushegu Municipality. They included registered project implementers (Non-Governmental Organizations), key stakeholders in each project, such as Chiefs, Assembly persons, opinion leaders, project focal persons at the Assembly and project beneficiaries. These sample was chosen because it was practically difficult to interview all persons involved in projects as respondents, considering limited time and resource constraints; thus, a representation of the entire population was sampled for the study. A qualitative study of this nature needs to consider convenient and purposive sampling. Agrawal (2003), the requirements for a probability or representative selection of cases are typically quite time-consuming. For two key reasons, the purposive sampling strategy was adopted

3.2.1 Determining the Sample Size

$$z^2/E^2 N=p/(100-p)$$

N is the minimum sample size required.

P is the probability of a situation or condition occurring.

E is the required maximum percentage error.

The value Z corresponds to the required level of confidence.

3.2.2 Techniques for Sampling

The study's respondents were chosen using a non-probability sampling technique. The lack of a sample frame of the target population influenced this technique. Again, the study required multiple stakeholders, including development partners, beneficiaries, project consultants, and the project focal persons at the municipal assembly. Given the diverse nature of these target populations, purposive, convenience and snowball techniques appeared appropriate and accurate to select respondents. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies can benefit from targeted sampling. The method's intrinsic bias helps its efficiency, and it remains robust even when subjected to random probability sampling. The purposive sample chosen is critical to the quality of the data acquired; hence, the informant's dependability and competency must be ensured (Ilker, 2016).

3.3 Data Type or Sources

Both primary and secondary data were used in this investigation. Primary data was obtained from the field after employing data collection instruments, i.e., data collected for the first time and Secondary data from scholarly

literature reviewed, relevant to the study topic. Without a doubt, data gathering is an essential component of statistical analysis.

3.4 Tools for Data Collection

3.4.1 Questionnaires

For qualitative data, an interview guide with open-ended questions was employed and Semi-structured questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions for the quantitative data. Usually, data collection forms the bedrock of any responsive survey, and the success of it lies in the efficient and effective design of a questionnaire.

3.4.2 Interview

Interviews mean a face-to-face interaction to obtain information. In terms of planning, monitoring, and evaluation, interviews are arguably the most used instrument. They can be conducted with a single person (individual interview) or with some individuals (group interview) (Simister, 1992). Individual workers from the NGOs that have begun operations within the municipality were interviewed informally.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

This is a group of persons (participants) who were randomly selected from a broader target population and interviewed in an open session for the study. Project beneficiaries were sampled and engaged in open discussions to obtain information on interventions by non-governmental organizations they benefited from and to ascertain the viability of sustainability mechanisms by these development interventions. Three Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in electoral areas, including Kpatinga, Gushegu and Zinindo, within the Municipality. They include two female-dominated and one male-dominated group. Members were between 6-12 persons.

3.7.4 Key informant interviews

Researchers interviewed a member of the traditional authority, the leader of a women's group, the District Coordinating Director, the Planning Officer, the Presiding member and the Assembly member as key informants, considering their roles as key stakeholders and leaders in the Gushegu Municipality. Their inputs were key regarding projects implemented by non-government development partners; thus, information from these groups was vital for the study.

3.8 Data analysis technique

The data collection and analytic procedures were used simultaneously. Qualitative data were analyzed using the content and thematic approach, while Quantitative data were done the use of SPSS 21. Right after each interview, the field's records were entered and done with the data collection process was completed. The discussions were recorded word-for-word from the audiotapes by the investigators.

4. 0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Age and Educational Attainment of Respondents

Of the 31 respondents, the majority, representing 80% were between 30-44, while the remaining 20% were 28 years and below. Concerning educational attainment, the majority 71% hold a first degree and a diploma certificate, 20% Master's degree and 9% are illiterates. This means the majority of the respondents understand the work and operations of Non-Governmental Organisations. In terms of NGOs' official staff, there is complete male dominance. However, the donor recipients in terms of the male and female ratio show the opposite. Although men dominate the NGOs' workforce, women outnumber men in the benefit categories.

4.2 Non-Governmental Service Intervention Areas

The research uncovered service-related interventions as well as their delivery. Water and sanitation, health care delivery, child support, education, skills and training, climate challenges, relief, and financing, all of which are designed to improve the lives of their respective beneficiaries. Education is the all-encompassing service in which practically all NGOs are concerned with improving access and quality as the fundamental foundation for accelerating growth and development. This is in line with USAID 2009, Baccaro, 2001, and Carroll 1992, who stated that sanitation, agriculture, health, food security, skills and training, and energy-related concerns are the most active areas of NGOs' concentration in Ghana. Because developing countries lack a diverse range of important services, there is a

strong desire to assist in their provision. NGOs in the Gushegu Municipality are equally focused on the relevant societal impetus to growth, such as community mobilisation, grassroots organisation, and the processes involved in the establishment of successful groups toward the achievement of stated objectives. These factors cause the implementation of their project to become more responsive to their beneficiaries, particularly through capacity building, technology diffusion, community empowerment, and entrepreneurial activities, all of which result in improved diffusion of technology, community empowerment, and entrepreneurial activities living standards of the people. NGOs' efforts centre on inspiring beneficiaries and public institutions to create capacity and generate passion for the desired transformation among community members. NGOs have been able to influence local environments by establishing mutual operational ties between beneficiaries and institutions, resulting in increased efficacy and independence, accelerating long-term growth and development. Furthermore, it is discovered that dropping educational standards, poor health conditions, low agricultural productivity, marginalization, and donor finances adequacy were among the causes that progressively motivated NGO interventions in communities in the research area.

4.2.1 Advocacy, Literacy and Financial Empowerment

Beneficiaries also noted that NGOs working within their jurisdictions are heavily involved in service delivery in areas like water and sanitation, education, agriculture, health, child support, skills training, environmental management, and microfinance, through which they receive effective capacity building training and technology transfer, allowing them to be more responsive to their needs and aspirations.

However, the beneficiaries' differing perspectives on what they want could be a driving force behind NGO interventions in service delivery. They noticed that:

The financially weak nature of states and that of the local authorities across the third world countries to meet their demand had necessitated NGOs to augment the weak efforts of the state to provide essential services to better the living standards of the citizenries (key informant interview, Field Officer). We have accepted the reality that the government alone cannot provide us with all our needs. The NGOs are even considered as our government regarding the kind of enormous contributions they are offering us, and without them, we would not have known what our fate could have been (FGDs, community member Gushegu)

This situation was the same in Kpatinga, Galwei, and Nawugu as members opined that:

It is not possible for the government alone to provide us with our needs. Without the contributions of the NGOs, a lot of services would have been in a very bad situation. Are they helping a lot in our communities (Assembly Member)

This supports Carroll (1992), Werker and Ahmed (2008), Bank and Hulme (2012), and Lewis and Kanji (2009) assertions that NGOs are critical in-service delivery, since many people in third-world countries are in desperate need of basic services, which are either inaccessible or of low quality where they are offered. Against this context, a slew of NGOs springs up to help with service delivery. Because neoliberal development paradigms also emphasised the state's decreasing role as a direct service provider, government services have been withdrawn in many parts of the poor world under World Bank and other donor-imposed constraints, leaving NGOs of various forms and capacities to fill the void. At the FGD meetings, it was observed that NGOs in the municipality are not connected to a specific position or action. They genuinely combine a number of initiatives and do not stray from their basic mission. These sporadic modifications are made throughout time to tackle the complexities of the development problem and exploit possibilities to effect genuine change in communities.

The vision fund (adakabila) in the local dialect, It is the brainchild of World Vision Ghana International in the study area. It is the most reliable local source of funding for the beneficiaries, which is in the form of groups. Members contribute weekly according to their means. Loans are then made available to whoever wants them, proportional to their total contribution at a time. They said such an intervention's effectiveness is abundantly clear as it helps them at their respective farms and petty trading (community members, Kpatinga).

The above supports Lewis' (2007) assertion that NGOs used microfinancing aid to improve the lives of beneficiaries in their regions of operation as part of their responsibilities or interventions. The vision fund helps them meet some of their financial demands by boosting their agricultural and minor commerce enterprises. The money is held in a box with sophisticated padlocks (3), and the keys are distributed among three members of the gang. The box cannot be opened until all three persons are there, which reinforces the group's security concerns about the money's protection.

Agriculture and Agribusiness

Agriculture remains the mainstay of most rural communities in Ghana, and Gushegu and its environs are not an exception. Findings reveal that about 80% of the inhabitants rely on Agriculture and its related activities as a source of livelihood. Therefore, NGOs are playing a leading role in farmer and agro processing training for local farmers in the Gushegu Municipality. A respondent at Zinindo community adds;

The agricultural activities in the municipality have been transformed largely due to the sensitisation programmes on the importance of agricultural extension services, irrigation farming, rearing of animals, linking up farmers to purchase modern farm equipment and implements, which ensures food security in the study area (community members, Zinindo community).

The above was reechoed at Nawuhigu;

A significant number of these organizations are immeasurably touching our lives in the agricultural sector. The Christian Children Fund of Canada (CCFC), World Vision International (WVI), and ADVANCE Ghana are instrumental in this regard. Aid in providing livestock to their sponsored children, provision of irrigation facilities and promotion of dry season farming (vegetables), sensitising beneficiaries on the best practices by these organisations respectively (community members, Nawuhigu).

As a result, Bornstein (2002) corroborates the findings when he asserts that missionaries were at the forefront of assisting African communities in the agricultural sector and self-help programs long before the introduction of NGOs. In fact, faith-based international NGOs account for two of the three organisations identified by respondents.

4.3 Factors Militating Against the Sustainability of NGO-Led Development Interventions

Non-Governmental Organizations are usually a diverse group of organizations made up of people with a strong zeal to support the left-behind groups, including the socially and economically excluded, who are mostly vulnerable persons, since the mantra is 'leave no one behind'. They are non-profit organizations with a wide focus on humanitarian and rural transformation. Persons belonging to these organizations mobilize resources, including human and financial, to reach the people in need. Being a rural place, Gushegu Municipal has received a quantum of support from NGOs. However, the operations of these organization have been hit with several challenges, most of which form the basis for their non-sustainability in the Gushegu area. To unearth the challenges, a Likert scale was developed to ascertain the notions and opinions of NGO project beneficiaries, as seen in Table 4.1

Table 4-1: Factors Affecting NGOs' Development Sustainability

Factors Affecting Sustainability	Scale
✓ Socio-Cultural	1
✓ Economic Conditions	1
✓ Donor Demands	2
✓ Political Regime	1

Scale: Strongly agreed = 1, Agreed = 2, Strongly disagreed = 3 Disagreed= 4, Neutral =5

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4-1 displays the key elements and their respective relationships or scale representation of respondents' perceptions concerning the factors that affect the sustainability of the various intervention projects. The above was realized through the use of pairwise ranking as follows;

4.3.1 Socio-Cultural Situation

Table 4.1 shows that NGOs are extremely responsive to the demands of local communities. It has been proven that there is a common tension between traditional beliefs and project intervention adaptation, which can diminish the interventions' long-term advantages. Table 4.3.1 shows what the respondents said, with 1 indicating that it cannot be ignored at all. It was proven in the field during the study that social values must be carefully considered while designing development interventions. The above has been affirmed by the beneficiaries as follows:

The NGOs integrate the values of the people into the design of their interventions instead, replacing them, which has a high tendency to breed conflict, rejection, and eventually affect sustainability across time and space. Therefore, their interventions are not completely exogenous to the local value systems, making them highly acceptable to the beneficiaries (key informant, Gushegu).

At a Focus Group Discussion across the zones of NGOs' operations, participants intimate.

We do not compromise at all regarding what makes up our very existence. Any help that seeks to deny us our identity would be rejected outright. Our great-grandfathers lived longer than us meanwhile, they depended on their traditional systems, thereby making it very difficult for us to embrace an entirely different lifestyle. We really like their projects, but any attempt to overhaul us would not succeed (FGD members across the four zones).

The above is in tandem with Hosain (2001), who found that programmes that preclude local authority dimensions or entail transformations in behaviour patterns of the beneficiaries stand a higher chance of failing. However, it deviates a bit from Lekorwe and Mpabanga (2007), who postulated that not-for-profit organisations are exogenous to the African people, hence, inwardly looking and less engaging in policy decisions in aid development.

4.3.2 Political Situation

As shown in the table above, NGOs are immune to political manoeuvring and policy shifts. Their intervention allocation was not influenced by political considerations. That is the instinct of politicians when it comes to allocating projects to their supporters. People saw politically influenced projects as a recipe for unsustainable intervention delivery because they rarely go through due diligence processes and are delivered solely based on political whims and caprice; as a result, after the projects are completed, the beneficiaries do not perceive the need to continue involvement. It was awarded a score of 1, indicating a strongly agreed position of respondents that politically aligned groups and organizations have the potential to derail NGOs' attempts to improve people's lives. Furthermore, there is a tendency towards animosity between NGOs and the government.

Furthermore, at the Kpatinga community, antagonism between NGOs and political authorities was formed, which might potentially thwart NGOs' work.

The beneficiaries said:

The small-town water system in the community was unnecessarily delayed because of the attitude of the district chief executive then. He managed and squandered the funds that were meant for the completion of the overhead tank, and the situation was so bad that NORST officials nearly arrested him. As we speak, one of the toilets that was part of the package has been left uncompleted at the market square in Kpatinga (FDG members Kpatinga).

The interventions carried out had little effect on the political fortunes of the ruling government. However, the community's difficulty arose as a result of the government transition. This supports Fowler's (1992) claim that there is

deep mistrust between governments and NGOs, because governments fear that NGOs would weaken their political authority, while NGOs distrust government officials' goals.

This misunderstanding frequently leads to NGOs' funding sources becoming frustrated, causing them to abruptly scale back or terminate initiatives without a suitable exit strategy to secure their continuation. In the long term, NGOs' continued involvement in activities that contradict governments' developmental benefits sees the state's power descend on them to ensure they are disabled, eroding their political clout (key informant).

The majority of beneficiaries from all the selected communities agreed with the NGOs' viewpoint, indicating that political and social beliefs have no bearing on how they will continue to intervene to reap the anticipated benefits.

They noted:

NGOs are always neutral in discharging their mandate and aligned not to any political tradition, which made their activities generally accepted by all manner of persons across the municipality. The efforts of the organizations tilt towards the demand-driven paradigm through which beneficiaries are willing to take charge of their own affairs to ensure better livelihoods. Therefore, making NGOs motivated to work with the beneficiaries (Field officer, CCFC Kpatinga).

This undoubtedly led to high potential for project sustainability

However, the interaction with the community members yielded a contrary view that:

Political interference significantly affects the sustainability of interventions. They were specific on the fact that the small-town water system that was provided in 2013 is on the verge of collapse after the 2016 elections. Because the trained staff and board were chased away by the new regime just to meet the weird demands of some of their political elements, who wished to be the staff and board members. The system was one of the best performing ones, which supplied the community with water 24/7 now supplies for only two hours or less every day. They seized without the requisite knowledge, understanding, and skills, hence our woes (FGD members Kpatinga).

The above was reechoed in Gushegu.

We are in a water crisis because of the attitude of the politicians. They always allowed their supporters to mess with essential facilities in the town. The political dissolution of the water board in 2009 was the foundation of the water problem in the municipal capital. These leaders seized such facilities and handed them over to people who are not trained, and they end up mismanaging the systems (key informant member, Gushegu).

4.3.3 Current Economic Situation

The economic environment in which NGOs operate has a significant impact, as it is typically influenced by the government's current fiscal policies. The state machinery's economic management externalities frequently impair its ability to perform its obligations. The economy's instability, particularly the rate of inflation and unfavorable trade and exchange rates, was identified as one of the factors impeding the length of intervention required to assure sustainability. These circumstances reduce the availability of finances and the institutions' operational capacities to engage beneficiaries efficiently and effectively on concerns identified during project conception to ensure project sustainability.

As a result of the economy's poor performance, the cost of products and services has increased. Management severely lowered the quality of interventions provided by reducing the strength of activities that would generate interest and encourage community members to take responsibility for interventions so that the intended advantages can continue to be realized after the project organizers have left. Respondents assigned 1 to the statement that economic factors are to blame for the municipality's inability to continue development efforts. In a case where there is insecurity after the project has taken off, the dynamism of the project environment can frequently lead to cost overrun. It can have an impact on both the quality of work and the long-term viability of a project.

An official asserted that:

The unstable inflation rates adversely lessened their resilience to adopt, maintain, and run projects that need voluminous monetary commitment, like construction works, repairing of broken parts of water facilities, facilities for storage, essential equipment, and buildings or facilities handed to the local people by the project organizations (field officer).

At the beneficiary's level:

The continuous increase in the prices of goods and services is seriously affecting the sustainability of some of the interventions that require routine maintenance, such as school buildings, warehouses, boreholes and others (FDG member, Nawugu)

Without a doubt, the high cost of operations and maintenance consumes a significant portion of the capital investment made by NGOs, resulting in the expected advantages of such interventions being short-lived in the studied area. This, however, contradicts Fowler's (1991) claim that NGOs are proliferating in poor countries due to unstable economic systems. Despite the fact that this makes sense in principle, their operations are substantially impacted when developing countries experience difficult economic conditions.

4.3.4 Donor Requirements

Some of the money allocated to NGOs to use in implementing their activities have stringent conditions attached to it. As a result, certain projects are being implemented that do not satisfy the needs of the local community. Because the commitment and assistance in terms of money are insecure, NGOs in the municipality function with a great deal of uncertainty. It was determined that ambiguity reduces the extent to which staff engage beneficiaries to operate without changing donor policy, which prohibits resources from being used to cover areas where interventions have already been undertaken.

Donor money is accepted as a key mandate by NGOs; however, they are frequently restricted by donor constraints that are restrictive and permit no program flexibility. Situations that arise during implementation make it difficult for beneficiaries to adjust to the intervention, leading to a clash with donor policy, which is usually non-negotiable. As a result, beneficiaries only accept projects that are completed, and once they are completed, they are less likely to adopt the intervention, posing a challenge to long-term sustainability.

Further, beneficiaries indicated that:

We sometimes feel demotivated because of the way things are always done due as donor conditionality has an impact on how quickly we can resume interventions

Beneficiaries consider donor conditions as their making, even though they are frequently beyond the control of NGOs. As a result, NGOs must explain why they are adamant about adjustments in interventions proposed by beneficiaries throughout implementation. This confirms that conditions imposed by project financiers on recipients have a significant impact on NGO operations (Lokorwe and Mpabanga, 2007).

4.3.5 Formation of Groups

In all levels of development interventions, grassroots mobilization is essential. In order to conduct responsive interventions, NGOs heavily involve local people in mobilizing them to achieve the intended objective and guarantee that strong groups are formed. These groups were frequently given interventions in the form of projects or loans. The groups disintegrate as soon as the interventions are over. Interventions that involve group effort are abandoned, and beneficiaries are unable to reap the anticipated benefits when the initiative ends. NGOs play a key part in group creation, making recipients believe the group belongs to the organizers, and when their help ceases, the groups disband. Beneficiaries remarked on this phenomenon, saying:

Because beneficiaries do not sense ownership of the group or the interventions being delivered, the lead role played by NGOs in group formation does not contribute to the sustainability of interventions. Individuals have become

'Intervention entrepreneurs' as a result of this, changing and looking for the next possible intervention within their sphere of influence to pounce on (key informant member Kpatinga).

The above was reiterated at Zinindoo community as a member expressed:

We do not always fancy the processes through which they are put into groups. They determine the number of males and females anytime an intervention is to be implemented (FDG member)

The fact that they have already primed themselves to undertake their own self-help groups founded before NGO interventions, has been observed to function with or without external aid, and hence their sustainability will continue with or without NGOs.

Beneficiaries noted that:

Groups with higher male composition are easily disbanded, unlike female. But those with high female membership often remain solid and continue to perform after the exit of interventions due to commitment on their part.

The finding serves as a caution to NGOs about how much control they exercise on group formation processes so that their interventions are effective and live beyond their exit points. This means the whole process should be demand-driven and self-help, making the beneficiaries own projects and keen to sustain them.

4.4 Non-governmental Organizations' Management Approaches to Delivering Sustainable Development Interventions

Non-Governmental Organisations in the municipality choose management models that aren't overly complicated and bureaucratic. This was created to increase decision-making flexibility and innovation in order to ensure the long-term success of initiatives.

4.4.1 Models in Managing Interventions

This section discusses the management approaches used by NGOs in the research region to achieve realistic and appropriate long-term initiatives.

The management approach of NGOs in the study area was to administer development in a way that encouraged greater engagement so that employees and beneficiaries could roll out measures that allowed for extensive managerial choice. When necessary, though, stay basically directive.

This is consistent with the argument that the participatory management strategy is by far the most appropriate for NGOs that promote beneficiary engagement and empowerment (Campbell, 1987 & Chambers, 1995). It was discovered that the majority of NGOs in the study area used a participatory management style, with roughly seventy-three percent (73%) of the respondents agreeing.

Participatory management methods were appropriate management styles to assure project sustainability rather than developing a unified authoritarian strategy to manage personnel, beneficiaries, and interventions. This strategy was noted to present NGOs with a variety of actual options, opportunities, and suggestions for improving their effectiveness and efficiency in delivering interventions (key informant interview, December).

Clark (1991) underlined that the autocratic method would simply not work in the long run. This management technique fosters apathy among employees about decisions that they were not involved in making. NGOs should develop decentralized and participatory decision-making structures and use a problem-solving rather than a predictive blueprint approach to management to maintain flexibility and the ability to adjust to constantly changing realities (Campbell, 1987& Fowler, 1987).

By striving to develop an emotional bond between employees and beneficiaries, management uses the affiliative management style to foster unity and harmony in the organisations and communities. Instead of disparaging the environment in which beneficiaries live, staff were encouraged to build on their indigenous knowledge and to be a part of and enjoy it. During the implementation of the intervention, this interaction between management, staff, and beneficiaries was reported to generate a friendly, cohesive, and trusting environment. Respect for employees and beneficiaries also results in improved organizational performance and long-term solutions (Sheehan, 1998).

4.7 Areas of Emphasis for NGO Led Development Interventions

The study unearthed many involvement sectors of the NGOs within the geographical scope of the study. Out of these, some of the interventions ought to be promoted as they meaningfully impact people's lives in the short and long run. Through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and others, the respondents grouped these interventions according to their degree of responsiveness in their lives. The interventions were ranked based on highly, moderately, and minimally. All the interventions that fell into the category of highly were marked as those most emphasised, followed by moderately and minimally, so that NGOs' resources can be judiciously used. This is illustrated in the figure below.

Table 4.2 Priority of Intervention Areas in The Municipality

Degree of Responsiveness	Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Education ✓ Agriculture ✓ Health ✓ Sanitation and Water 	Highly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Micro-Credit Facility ✓ Education and Training 	Moderately
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support of the Child ✓ Relief Services 	Minimally

Source: Field survey, 2021

As contained in the table, the following are the responses given by the respondents

The following responses fall under highly emphasised:

We would wish that more and more is done in order that education reaches every individual, as it has the propensity to bring about permanent transformation in the lives of people. It bridges the gap between the very poor in our locality as well as across the country for a happy living. Education is unarguably the best in our lives (key informant interview).

Agriculture is by far our main occupation. Our lives are absolutely dependent on it by virtue of that we are urging all to as a matter of urgency, aid us in whatever ways possible to boost our annual production. This will largely turn around things for us and generations yet unborn (FGD, Kpatinga community).

Undoubtedly, an economically, socially, and politically successful humanity resides in a healthy body. NGO activities that promote our health are crucial to our existence since they form the foundation for our forward march. The provision of mosquito nets, the indoor residual spraying, construction of clinics, among others, help in mitigating and curbing associated challenges of malaria and other communicable diseases in our communities is worth noting and must be promoted (key informant interview).

The water systems we have in our communities are largely provided through donor funding. The water system in Gushegu was funded by the World Bank, the small-town water system in Kpatinga was funded by NORST, and the NGOs provided many other boreholes and limited mechanised systems across the municipality. The NGOs have extensively used the community-led total sanitation (CLTS) in the small communities, which served as a prerequisite

for the provision of water systems. ZORI, Gumonaayili, Nayugu, among others, got their limited mechanised water systems for sticking to CLTS practices, and such communities are the cleanest, which hitherto were the dirtiest (key informant interview).

The following responses are moderately emphasised:

Though it is laudable to access microfinance opportunities, the most important thing is engaging in activities to sustain a lifestyle. These packages are often considered as first aid in the financial ladder, while education serves as a key to solidifying the financial backbones of everybody (FGD members, Gushegu)

A well-designed educational system embodies effective skills and training, which is why we do not add it to the first category. The technical and vocational training (TVET) is now given priority so that people can be useful even without a certificate, in other words, self-employed (key informant interview).

These responses do not deviate entirely from USAID 2009, Baccaro, 2001 & Carroll 1992 assertions that the most active area of NGOs' focus in Ghana embodies sanitation, agriculture, health, food security, skills and training, and energy-related issues.

Responses that are in line with minimally emphasized:

A well-resourced parent has all it takes to provide the needed support to the ward without waiting and anticipating any help from any quarters. Oftentimes, children of less-endowed parents suffer most regarding child abuse, child labor, dropouts, and many other. Therefore, it is very rare for the child of an educated person or a successful person to suffer from those child-related menaces in the study area (Chief Linguist, Kpatinga community)

Relief support is only cardinal in societies where the majority of the people are poor and where natural disasters are frequent. Even though nobody rejects help genuinely in our societies, but is not always palatable for one to be anticipating such support to be comfortable, since such normally delayed in times of dire need, which is why we consider it as part of this category (Unit Committee Member, Gushegu community).

4.8 Non-Governmental Organisations' Management Approaches to Delivering Sustainable Development Interventions

It was established from the field that the participatory management approach was the main strategy used in managing development interventions. Also, the autocratic style of management was discovered to be unfit for their development process.

Finally, the knowledge of the local people was extensively tapped in the development processes in ensuring the acceptability of interventions implemented by the NGOs in the study area

5.0 CONCLUSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

1. The operational areas of the NGOs in the Gushegu Municipality include education, water and sanitation, health, and agriculture. These sectors experience crisscrossing by all the organisations operating in the study area. The study uncovered that NGO interventions are of varying degrees of responsiveness in the lives of the beneficiaries. Even though some of them are highly impactful in their lives, there are others less sensitive to the transformation agenda in the area.
2. There is improvement in the agricultural sector via the NGOs' various help, making their presence agriculturally friendly. Organizations' activities immeasurably positively affect the lives of the people and will even on the lives of the next generation. However, political interference affects the sustainability of service intervention in the study area, particularly water services, as two pipe systems in the Gushegu township are

functioning below optimal levels due to the intuitive political dissolving of boards and their formations alongside the sacking of trained staff to satisfy their foot soldiers.

3. The vocational training centre constructed by WVGI and Action Aid Ghana (AAG) at the witches' camp in Kpatinga has never been used at all, regardless of the huge capital investment. This is partly due to the non-involvement of community stakeholders including traditional authorities, youth, and women, among others. The people see the facility not one of the pressing needs of the community, and local people have the strongest fear of mingling with the 'witches' for fear of being harmed by the superpowers of the witches.
4. The rising levels of underdevelopment, such as falling education standards, low agricultural production and productivity, poverty, sickness, and the like, are all indicators. The state's weakening posture in service provision provides fertile ground for the growing number of NGOs to fill the void in the nation's development ladder that the current trend has created. As a result, the necessity of reevaluating how NGOs generally work in the research area is significant to remove any potential roadblocks to development in the execution of their specific initiatives.
5. Much more essential is the growing awareness of the intricate web of overpowering environmental elements that will determine whether or not NGO-led interventions succeed. Indeed, NGOs are often acknowledged as effective agents of sustainable development. In the development debate, they remain indispensable and credible. The participatory development approach must certainly be the model and operational focus to improve the design and execution of interventions at all levels. The involvement of the district, regional, and national levels is extensive. Their organizational systems are adaptable and innovative to deal with the growing developmental changes in the subject field.

5.9 Recommendations

1. Governments are responsible for the delivery of essential services such as water, healthcare, agricultural extension, employable skills, security and credit facilities, among others, and should show political will to accelerate the provision of those services. This will allow NGOs to focus on adopting interventions that will increase access to these services, but not take a lead role.
2. A Community-NGO-donor network should be established to ensure the sustainability of essential services. This should be accomplished through implementing participatory management approaches at the organizational and beneficiary levels to guarantee an increase in local participation, as well as ensuring that these interventions broadly reflect beneficiary requirements long enough to provide the desired benefits. To guarantee that operating and maintenance costs do not prevent beneficiaries from continuing interventions, very cost-effective interventions must be offered. As a result, NGOs should implement interventions that are compatible with local technology and within the skills of local artisans, so that maintenance and operating costs are affordable to beneficiaries, ensuring that they continue to benefit from the interventions to their full potential.
3. Non-governmental organisations in Northern Ghana, especially Gushegu Municipality, should work together effectively to avoid duplication of initiatives in communities and to foster stakeholder participation across all dimensions of the transformation agenda. Platforms for development interventions should be established within the municipality to improve NGO to NGO and NGO-State interface or partnership to ensure mutual understanding between partners on the cardinalities of partnership, based on the belief that both players have limited resources and must pool these scarce resources for the benefit of beneficiaries and the municipality as a whole.
4. NGOs should also concentrate on their core competencies to position themselves functionally in the delivery of interventions that are tailored to the needs of beneficiaries. Instead of amassing a series of interventions with no specialization, which could lead to the delivery of unsustainable interventions, these functional competences will

strengthen NGOs' reputation in getting money in that intervention area over time. In order to achieve long-term growth and development, NGOs should hire independent evaluators to examine individual interventions and their unique sustainability challenges. This will allow them to address the unique sustainability concerns of each intervention.

5. Moreover, the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), supported by World Vision International, locally known as the 'Vision Fund', is a well-designed and financial responsive intervention that caters to the needs of a wide range of people, including women, youth, and farmers should be extended to all areas in the municipality.

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