



# Evaluating the Contribution of Development Communication on the Sustainable Shea Value Project in Garu-Tempene District, Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

Effective communication stands as the linchpin for successful project outcomes. In the realm of development initiatives, communication becomes the exclusive avenue through which project beneficiaries take centre stage. This study thus delved into the role of communication in bolstering project efficacy, specifically examining its impact on the Shea value project in Ghana's Garu-Tempene District. Employing both qualitative and quantitative research designs, the study used purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select key figures from the Presbyterian Agric Service (PAS), Garu, alongside opinion leaders and project beneficiaries. Semi-structured interviews guided data collection, aiming to validate the correlation between development communication and project success. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data, while T-tests and percentages were employed in the analysis of quantitative data. This paper affirmed that community meetings, interpersonal communication, and community radio are widely utilized in information dissemination and possess a moderate influence. Moreover, respondents expressed willingness to sustain the project. The paper underscores the imperative for effective communication between project implementers and community members, stressing its pivotal role in securing success and ensuring the project's enduring impact and sustainability.

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## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between communication and development is crucial, with each supporting the other's success. According to Adedokun, et.al., effective community participation in development hinges on recognizing their contributions.<sup>1</sup> Development Communication (C4D) aims to amplify voices, facilitate engagement, and drive societal change by empowering individuals. It involves using communication methods to support development efforts, requiring development communicators to understand both the development process and effective communication strategies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. O. Adedokun, C. W. Adeyemo, and E. O. Olorunsola, "The Impact of Communication on Community Development." *Journal of Communication*, 1(2), (2010); 101–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0976691x.2010.11884775>

<sup>2</sup> June Lennie and Jo Tacchi, "Researching, Monitoring and Evaluating Communication for Development: Trends, Challenges and Approaches," *United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Communication for Development, UNICEF*, 2011.

The Africa Centre for Development Communication highlights that development communication is vital for organizational success, necessitating the development of communication techniques.<sup>3</sup> Development agencies increasingly see C4D's potential to improve outcomes and aid program effectiveness. Effective development programs need beneficiaries to become primary contributors, underscoring the importance of development communication. The FAO describes development communication as the intentional use of various communication channels to incite social change, stressing the need for inclusive participation to ensure sustainability.<sup>4</sup>

Project failure is a significant issue, with the Project Management Institute noting a 37% failure rate.<sup>5</sup> In Kenya's water sector, Wanjohi found that C4D effectively enhanced reforms through stakeholder engagement and strategic information dissemination.<sup>6</sup> However, in Ghana and Nigeria, there is confusion around C4D, hindering its theoretical and practical application. Owusu's study in Ghana revealed a lack of comprehensive understanding and application of development communication.<sup>7</sup>

The primary aim of the Sustainable Shea Value project is to enhance the livelihood security of vulnerable women in Northern Ghana by creating a sustainable environment. The project's objectives include increasing women's production and productivity through the adoption of best practices for quality shea, improving women's access to guaranteed markets, and training them on optimal agronomic practices. Additionally, the project focuses on promoting shea tree conservation and implementing health and safety practices. The project supports sustainable shea picking and butter processing within the value chain by effectively mobilizing shea groups and cooperatives, providing capacity building, and constructing warehouses. This paper examines the role of development communication in project effectiveness and the impact of information dissemination on the Shea value chain project in Garu Tempene District.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Communication

Communication is an essential discipline that holds great significance across various domains, spanning from the personal realm to professional settings. It is paramount to initially comprehend the concept of 'communication'. Diverse interpretations can be formulated to capture the essence of communication, yet it is crucial to acknowledge that no singular definition can be deemed absolute, rendering all others incorrect. The plethora of definitions of communication highlights the multifaceted nature of its objectives, methodologies, and functionalities. Esteemed scholars within the field have proposed numerous definitions to encapsulate the essence of communication as a discipline. Despite the existence of varied interpretations, these definitions possess certain shared elements such as the notion of 'information exchange', 'transference', 'interaction', and 'sharing with others'.<sup>8</sup>

Lunenburg defines communication as the sharing of information to foster mutual understanding among individuals.<sup>9</sup> This definition underscores communication as a process aimed at achieving understanding among people or groups through information exchange. Keyton similarly characterizes communication as the transmission of information and shared comprehension from one person to another.<sup>10</sup> Lunenburg reinforces Keyton's perspective by emphasizing that communication hinges on attaining mutual understanding via information exchange.<sup>11</sup> Hence, effective communication plays a pivotal role in ensuring successful comprehension of messages. Furthermore, Panos regards

<sup>3</sup> Africa Centre for Development Communication, "Communicating For Advocacy," 2010, <http://www.acdc.co.ke/communicating-for-advocacy/>.

<sup>4</sup> P. Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication Strategy Design: A Handbook* (FAO, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Project Management Institute. *A Guide to Project Management Body of Knowledge*, (6th ed.) (Newtown Square, PA; Project Management Institute, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> E. Wanjohi, "Communication for Development to Strengthen the Water Sector.," in *Presentation at the Kenya Water Week* (KICC, Nairobi., 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Esther Owusu, "The Role of Communication in Sustaining Development Projects. The Case of Ejura Sekyedumase Municipality, Ghana" (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> O.B. Akoth, "Contribution of Development Communication on Project Effectiveness: A Case Study of the Water Resources Sub-Sector in Kenya" (United States International University-Africa , 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Fred C Lunenburg, "Communication: The Process, Barriers, and Improving Effectiveness," *Schooling* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–11.

<sup>10</sup> J. Keyton, *Communication and Organisational Culture: A Key to Understanding Work Experiences* , 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Lunenburg, "Communication: The Process, Barriers, and Improving Effectiveness."

communication as a dialogue-driven process involving the exchange of information and resources, coupled with the capacity to negotiate and reach decisions.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Mefalopulos sees communication as the act of transmitting information and messages.<sup>13</sup> Warnock introduces a new dimension by defining communication as the ability to provide information, express oneself, and participate in discussions and debates.<sup>14</sup> Communication, as Quarry et al. suggest, is a crucial element in promoting good governance.<sup>15</sup> This entails governments being responsible, accountable, and efficient in carrying out their duties with the active involvement of civil society. For good governance to prevail, citizens must have transparent access to information regarding the state and public services, which will enable them to monitor the government's performance. In the context of sustainable development, supporting communication does not solely involve providing the poor with more information but providing them with a "voice." In doing so, they can actively participate in various communication processes. However, this can only be achieved through a dialogue in which those in positions of power listen, respect, and utilize the knowledge and opinions of the poor.<sup>16</sup>

Aruma posited that communication serves as the conduit through which individuals within a community are interconnected to achieve a shared objective of enhancing their standard of living within the collective community.<sup>17</sup> Communication, as a potent tool, plays a pivotal role in group dynamics and coordination of activities in social settings within the human sphere. Onah asserts that group dynamics, coordination, and transformation cannot be realized without communication in human organizations within society.<sup>18</sup> Aruma clearly articulates that communication is the lifeblood of human culture, which is characterized by multifarious activities.<sup>19</sup>

Undoubtedly, communication, serving as the vital essence of human civilization, is demonstrated in a multitude of human endeavours and institutions, spanning from individuals to the family - recognized as the core social entity - villages, towns, communities, societies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), establishments, and religious institutions, particularly churches, among others, within the societal context of the modern global landscape. Essentially, communication can be compared to the human heart, responsible for circulating blood throughout the human body, as it is essential for sustaining life and enabling efficient service provision for each individual and organization in social environments within the contemporary global context.<sup>20</sup>

Mefalopulos discerned four distinct forms of communication by emphasizing their purpose and primary functions in development organizations, namely corporate, internal, advocacy, and development communication.<sup>21</sup> Corporate communication entails disseminating information to audiences regarding an organization's mission and activities through media channels. Internal communication, on the other hand, involves exchanging information amongst an institution's staff to ensure that all pertinent matters are duly acknowledged. Advocacy communication seeks to effectuate positive transformations in people's lives by employing appropriate and effective mediums. This is typically achieved through the participation of influential individuals such as opinion leaders, chiefs, religious leaders, and Community-Based Organizations. In contrast, development communication focuses on driving change in society by involving the relevant stakeholders. In light of the preceding discourse on communication, this paper adopts Aruma's definition as a practical working definition.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Panos, "Speaking Freely, Being Strong: HIV Social Movements, Communication and Inclusive Social Change – a Case Study in South Africa and Namibia," 2006, [www.panos.org.uk/speakingfreely](http://www.panos.org.uk/speakingfreely).

<sup>13</sup> P. Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide* (World Bank Publications, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> K. Warnock, E. Schoemaker, and M. Wilson, *The Case of Communication in Sustainable Development* (Panos London, White Lion Street London N1 9PD United Kingdom, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> R. Ramirez and W. Quarry, *Communication for Development, a Medium for Innovation in Natural Resource Management* (FAO and IDRC, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Ramirez and Quarry, *Communication for Development, a Medium for Innovation in Natural Resource Management*.

<sup>17</sup> E O Aruma, "Roles of Communication in Community Development," *International Journal of Network and Communication Research* 5, no. 1 (2018): 1–10.

<sup>18</sup> F.O. Onah, *Human Resource Management*, 4th ed. (Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Aruma, "Roles of Communication in Community Development."

<sup>20</sup> Aruma, "Roles of Communication in Community Development."

<sup>21</sup> Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*.

<sup>22</sup> Aruma, "Roles of Communication in Community Development."

## Project Communication in Community Development

The significance of communication in project success cannot be overstated. Various scholars, researchers, and professional institutions have offered their perspectives on project definition.<sup>23</sup> assert that projects consist of a series of diverse activities executed by a team of individuals, often with predetermined budgets and timelines. According to the German Society for Project Management (GPM), projects are ventures characterized by unique conditions, including human constraints.<sup>24</sup>

Müller and Turner stress the pivotal role of communication in project success, emphasizing that motivated team members are essential for project achievement.<sup>25</sup> They argue that effective communication is a key factor in successful project management, particularly in scenarios involving medium complexity, maintenance projects, and innovation processes.<sup>26</sup> Johansson emphasize the criticality of communication in large, complex projects, asserting that increased project scale correlates with greater importance placed on communication for achieving favourable outcomes.<sup>27</sup> They identify key communication processes in projects, including performance reporting, change requests, forecasting, organizational processes and updates.<sup>28</sup>

Tonnquist suggests that communication goals should align with the interests of project stakeholders, highlighting the vital role of the project manager's communication skills in project success.<sup>29</sup> Effective communication with stakeholders is crucial throughout the project implementation process.<sup>30</sup> Beardsley, et.al., categorize communication into various mediums, ranging from mass communication channels like radio and television to smaller-scale methods such as meetings and committee discussions, as well as large-group communication such as speeches and lectures.<sup>31</sup> Henderson emphasizes the continued importance of communication in managing community development projects amid evolving environments. He further points out the importance of high-level project officials providing credible, comprehensive, precise, and timely information to facilitate project success.<sup>32</sup>

Goczol and Scoubreau outlined six exclusive communication measures within projects. These include spanning communication within the project, to other areas within a project department, to other areas outside the department, to areas within the larger organization, to external operational areas, and to external professionals outside the parent organization. They also identify three fundamental types of communication phases in project development: external to the project, during project inception and specification, and within the project during project determination. Communication tools play a vital role across these phases of project development.<sup>33</sup>

## Components of Development Communication

UNICEF emphasizes that effective development communication requires understanding social mobilization, advocacy, and behaviour change communication, with these components being crucial for facilitating development.<sup>34</sup> Various definitions within the field underscore their significance and roles.

<sup>23</sup> Katalin Padar, Bela Pataki, and Zoltán Sebestyen, "A Comparative Analysis of Stakeholder and Role Theories in Project Management and Change Management," *International Journal of Management Cases* 13, no. 4 (2011): 252–60.

<sup>24</sup> Ralf Müller and Rodney Turner, "Leadership Competency Profiles of Successful Project Managers," *International Journal of Project Management* 28, no. 5 (July 2010): 437–48, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2009.09.003>.

<sup>25</sup> Müller and Turner, "Leadership Competency Profiles of Successful Project Managers."

<sup>26</sup> Müller and Turner, "Leadership Competency Profiles of Successful Project Managers."

<sup>27</sup> Olsson B. Johansson, "Projects as Communication System: Creating a Culture of Innovation and Culture," *Journal of International System* 31 (2011): 30–37.

<sup>28</sup> Johansson, "Projects as Communication System: Creating a Culture of Innovation and Culture."

<sup>29</sup> B. Tonnquist, *Project Management: A guide to the theory and practice, project, program and portfolio management and business change*. (Bonnie UTbildung, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Johansson, "Projects as Communication System: Creating a Culture of Innovation and Culture."

<sup>31</sup> Robert Beardsley, Carole Kimberlin, and William Tindall, *Communication Skills in Pharmacy Practice*. 6th ed. (China: Library of Congress, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Linda S Henderson, "The Impact of Project Managers' Communication Competencies: Validation and Extension of a Research Model for Virtuality, Satisfaction, and Productivity on Project Teams," *Project Management Journal* 39, no. 2 (2008): 48–59.

<sup>33</sup> J. Goczol and C. Scoubreau, "Corporate communication and strategy in the field of projects." *International Journal*, 8(1), (2003); 60–66.

<sup>34</sup> UNICEF, "Communication for Development: A Practical Guide," United Nations Children's Fund, 2008, [https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Communication\\_for\\_Development.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Communication_for_Development.pdf).

Social mobilization involves strategic actions to influence planned behaviours across all societal levels, aiming to create a supportive environment and encourage positive changes in conduct and norms.<sup>35</sup> It involves gathering specific partners to boost demand or support for developmental goals by leveraging community ties, and social, religious, and institutional entities for grassroots engagement.<sup>36</sup> Community consultation helps identify influential institutions. Unlike social marketing, social mobilization seeks broad national and grassroots support for extensive initiatives using a diverse and immediate approach through multiple channels.<sup>37</sup>

Advocacy communication, as described by McCall, involves organized actions to influence policies, public perceptions, funding, and community support, aiming to challenge power dynamics and reshape societal structures.<sup>38</sup> Ndongye highlights that many NGOs in developing nations use advocacy to drive social change, despite questions about the authenticity of their efforts.<sup>39</sup> Rice and Atkin define advocacy as deliberate communication efforts to inform or influence behaviour using diverse media to achieve societal benefits.<sup>40</sup>

Servaes views advocacy at the policy level, aiming to secure public commitment and create a supportive decision-making environment.<sup>41</sup> The goal is to foster long-term support for community development objectives. The Alliance for Justice defines advocacy as actions supporting a cause, including public education about the legislative process, exemplified by activities during Kenya's 2010 constitutional process.<sup>42</sup>

UNICEF sees advocacy as targeted communication to gain support from leaders and stakeholders, encouraging resource allocation, policy changes, and public discourse, emphasizing community participation.<sup>43</sup> Barrett et al., positions advocacy as a tool to gather support for specific causes or policies by strategically disseminating information to decision-makers.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, advocacy is a process of dialogue acting on behalf of marginalized groups, addressing their needs by presenting information effectively and addressing political and economic trends without violence or aggression. It aims to safeguard interests and ensure fundamental needs are met from various perspectives over time.

Melkote and Steeves describe Behavior Change Communication (BCC) as a well-established approach in development initiatives since the 1950s, particularly vital in health programs addressing HIV/AIDS.<sup>45</sup> The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines BCC as an interactive process of creating messages and strategies through various communication channels to promote and sustain positive behaviours.<sup>46</sup> BCC has evolved from traditional methods to more personalized messages, dialogues, and increased stakeholder engagement to achieve health improvements.<sup>47</sup>

Comprehensive communication approaches, including client-focused therapy, social network interventions, and community mobilization, have been increasingly utilized to induce behavioural changes. These methods consider the influence of social, cultural, economic, and political factors on individual behaviour. They involve peer education, social marketing, entertainment in education, media advocacy, and empowerment. This evolution has led some institutions to adopt the broader concept of Strategic Communication. Academics highlight the role of innovative viewpoints disseminated through

<sup>35</sup> Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), *Social Mobilization for Reproductive Health: A Trainer's Manual* (Washington, D.C., 2000).

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF, "Communication for Development: A Practical Guide."

<sup>37</sup> Neill McKee, "Social Mobilization and Social Marketing in Developing Countries: Lessons for Communicators," 1992.

<sup>38</sup> McCall, E., "Communication for Development: Strengthen the Effectiveness of United Nations," in *Report from the 8th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development*, 2011, 37–41.

<sup>39</sup> M. M. Ndongye, *Theoretical Foundation of Advocacy in Communication: Kenyan Perspective* (Egerton University, Njoro, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> R. E. Rice and C. K. Atkin, *Public communication campaigns: Theoretical principles and practical applications*. (J. Bryant & M. Oliver (ed.); 3rd ed.). (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> J. Servaes, *Communication for Development and Social Change* (India: UNESCO, Sage Publications, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Alliance for Justice, *What Is Advocacy? Definitions and Examples* (Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Justice's Nonprofit Advocacy Project, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> UNICEF, "Communication for Development: A Practical Guide."

<sup>44</sup> J. B. Barrett, M. Van Wessel and D. Hilhorst, *Advocacy for Development*. 98, (March, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> S.R. Melkote and H.L. Steeves, *Communication for Development in the Third World* (New Delhi: London: Sage Publications, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> International Labour Organisation. *Behaviour Change Communication toolkit for the workplace*, (2011).

<https://doi.org/http://www.ilo.org/aids/Publications/lang--en/docName>

<sup>47</sup> Melkote and Steeves, *Communication for Development in the Third World*.

grassroots communication and social exchanges.<sup>48</sup> This paper will use these strategic elements to evaluate how communication can sustain community development initiatives.

### Development Communication Theory

Development communication theory, or Communication for Development (ComDev), emphasizes the role of communication in empowerment processes. Introduced in 1972 by Nora C. Quebral, known as the “Mother of Development Communication,” the field was further developed by scholars like Felix Librero, Antonio Moran, and Alexander Flor.<sup>49</sup> Mefalopulos asserts that development is unattainable without communication, describing it as a social process that relies on idea exchange through various tools and methods.<sup>50</sup> He emphasizes its role in transformation at different levels, including listening, trust-building, knowledge sharing, policy formulation, debate, and learning for sustainable change, highlighting the importance of participatory communication and grassroots involvement.

Servaes defines development communication as the dissemination of knowledge to achieve consensus for action, considering stakeholders' interests, needs, and capacities.<sup>51</sup> Melkote and Steeves describe it as the strategic use of interpersonal, participatory, and mediated channels to foster positive change in individuals and societies at both community and national levels.<sup>52</sup> The United Nations (UN) expands this definition, viewing development communication as a process that empowers communities to express their aspirations and participate in decisions affecting their development.<sup>53</sup>

The UN's broader definition incorporates dissemination, information, messages, media, and persuasion. Based on these interpretations, development communication is seen as a participatory communication effort that uses appropriate channels to share information, considering people's interests and achieving consensus at various levels for a common understanding and positive change.

### The Significance of Sustaining Development Project

Reed and Wilkinson highlight the growing importance of sustainable development in construction projects, particularly regarding asset depreciation.<sup>54</sup> They emphasize the need for high-quality materials, as declining material quality leads to the early depreciation of structures. Project managers now focus on value analysis and material quality to mitigate rapid depreciation, which helps reduce the impact of economic downturns and climate change.

Sustainable development integration in project management provides a competitive edge, curbing wasteful expenditures and enhancing project competitiveness. Modern investors favour cost-effective, sustainable projects, making them more appealing due to these advantages. Project leaders must embed sustainability principles in their projects to attract such investments.<sup>55</sup>

Zamagni underscores the need for project management to align with sustainable development principles, particularly concerning societal and environmental aspects.<sup>56</sup> Ignoring plant conservation while constructing large-scale structures can endanger future occupants' well-being. Therefore, practices ensuring ecosystem preservation are crucial for project sustainability.

Projects are vulnerable to risks, especially in social or environmental contexts. For instance, building a bridge over a populated area increases accident risks, necessitating relocation or reinforcement to enhance safety. Similarly, constructing an underground tunnel to address flooding requires foresight in project design to incorporate sustainable solutions from the start, rather than incurring significant costs

<sup>48</sup> McCall, E., “Communication for Development: Strengthen the Effectiveness of United Nations.”

<sup>49</sup> H. Singh and J. Bharti, “Development Communication: Theoretical Note.” *Strad Research*, 8(11), (2021); 137–150.  
<https://doi.org/10.37896/sr8.11/014>

<sup>50</sup> Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication Strategy Design: A Handbook*.

<sup>51</sup> Servaes, *Communication for Development and Social Change*.

<sup>52</sup> Melkote and Steeves, *Communication for Development in the Third World*.

<sup>53</sup> UN General Assembly. Report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 5/172, including the recommendations of the tenth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, (2004).

<sup>54</sup> Richard G Reed and Sara J Wilkinson, “The Increasing Importance of Sustainability for Building Ownership,” *Journal of Corporate Real Estate* 7, no. 4 (2005): 339–50.

<sup>55</sup> Reed and Wilkinson, “The Increasing Importance of Sustainability for Building Ownership.”

<sup>56</sup> Serenella Sala, Francesca Farioli, and Alessandra Zamagni, “Progress in Sustainability Science: Lessons Learnt from Current Methodologies for Sustainability Assessment: Part 1,” *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* 18 (2013): 1653–72.

later.<sup>57</sup> Sustainable development practices in project management thus play a critical role in ensuring the longevity, safety, and appeal of projects, aligning with economic, social, and environmental goals.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a mixed-method approach that integrated qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. By utilizing a multi-stage sampling technique, this approach amalgamated purposive selection with simple random sampling in the selection of participants within the specified geographical area.<sup>58</sup>

### Study Area

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Garu Tempane District in the Upper East region of Ghana comprises 130,003 individuals, making up 1.2 percent of the region's total population. The gender distribution indicates 47.9 percent as male and 52.3 percent as female, with over 95 percent residing in rural areas. The sex ratio within the district is 91.2. The population skews towards youthfulness at 46.0%, reflected in a wide-based population pyramid that narrows significantly among the elderly (7.8%). Agriculture is a prominent occupation, engaging 95.4 percent of households, with rural areas displaying a higher involvement (97.2%) compared to urban locales (around 70%). The vast majority (98.8%) of agricultural households primarily focus on crop farming. Among animal husbandry practices, poultry, specifically chicken rearing, dominates in the district.

### The Sample Size

To derive straightforward statistical conclusions, this study employed simple random sampling to select participants for the community-based survey. However, Nichols argues that research seeking an in-depth grasp of a specific issue often finds adequacy in sample sizes ranging from 30 to 50 for smaller studies and 50 to 100 for larger-scale ones.<sup>59</sup> Thus, this research utilized a sample of 50 individuals to fairly represent the population characteristics, encompassing community members, opinion leaders, one program manager, and a field officer. The program manager and PAS-Garu officer were purposively chosen.

### Data Analysis

Qualitative data was collected through interviews and observations, documented in field notebooks and digital tape recordings. This data was then transcribed, compiled, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify and report patterns. Quantitative data was obtained through close-ended questions, with responses recorded by the interviewer. This data was processed with tasks like questionnaire editing, coding, and entry into SPSS software version 24. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, standard deviation, t-test and percentages, were used for analysis, and the results were presented in tabular format.

### Sources of Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected to achieve the study's objectives using mixed-method research. Data collection involved administering questionnaires physically and conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews with structured and semi-structured questionnaires. Document sampling included searching for and reviewing relevant documents. Respondents were thoroughly briefed on the purpose and use of the information, and approval was obtained from the Presbyterian Agricultural Services Executive Board-North Chair. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained for all participant data.

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<sup>57</sup> Reed and Wilkinson, "The Increasing Importance of Sustainability for Building Ownership."

<sup>58</sup> Charles Teddlie and Fen Yu, "Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology with Examples," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1, no. 1 (2007): 77–100.

<sup>59</sup> P. Nichols, *Social Survey Methods: A Guide for Development Workers: Development Guideline*, vol. 6 (Great Britain: Oxford, 2000).

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Distribution of Sex and Level of Education of Respondents

The findings indicated that the males recorded (34 %) while the female counterpart recorded (66%) as shown in Figure 1. This result demonstrates that the women outnumbered their male counterparts. The level of education a person has affects their attitude and perception as well as how well they grasp social problems. The finding further indicated that 22(44%) of respondents had no formal education, followed by Junior High school education at 21 (42%). Respondents with secondary education were only 7 (14%). These findings showed that the majority had no formal education. According to the National Human Development Report (NHDR) (2001), education plays a very imperative role in moulding the character of an individual. It is one of the solid sources from which one gets information and knowledge. It is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion of people.

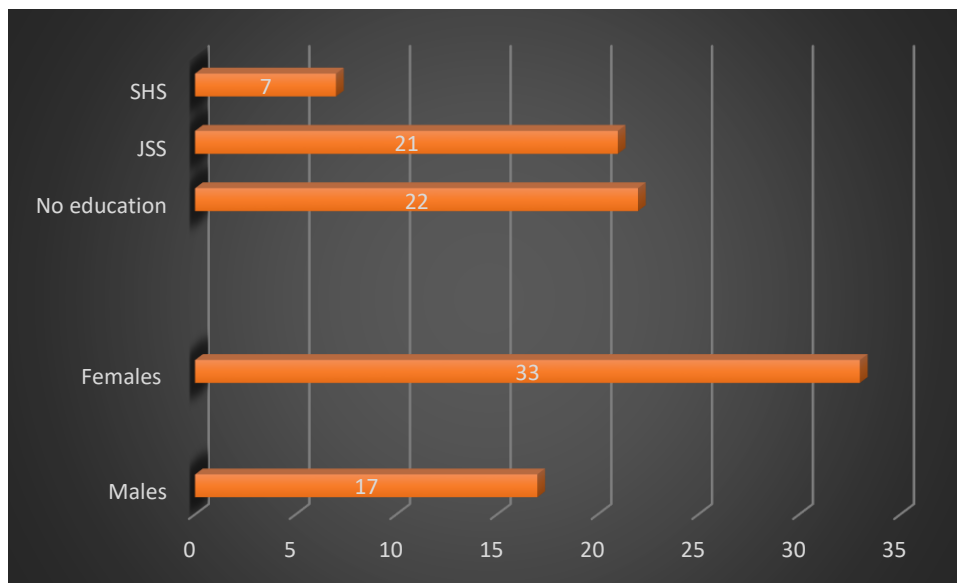


Figure 1: Distribution of sex and level of education of respondents

### Channels/Medium of Information Dissemination Used

Mefalopoulos asserts that knowledge of the channels at their disposal, their potential reach, and the messages' desired outcomes are necessary for effective design on the part of development planners.<sup>60</sup> He emphasized that the communication task and the channels chosen must be compatible. He further reiterated that before using a certain channel, a variety of criteria should be taken into account.

Ruppel and Burke, also noted that there are numerous occasions where combining various communication channels, such as the phone, text messaging, e-mail, face-to-face interaction, and Facebook, is complementary.<sup>61</sup> The implementing organization used a combination of community meetings, and interpersonal and community radio discussions to reach individuals in the community. The survey result indicated that the type of information exchange that happens most commonly is a community meeting with 24 (48%), followed by interpersonal communication 15 with (30%) and community radio with 11 (22%) as indicated in Figure 2. The program manager indicated that the radio talk helped to distribute information and calm down certain members. The project manager remarked:

*"In actuality, the women leaders at MOFA and Presbyterian Agric Service representatives spearheaded the radio conversations. For the purpose of raising awareness of the project, five*

<sup>60</sup> Mefalopoulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*.

<sup>61</sup> E. K. Ruppel and Tricia J. Burke, "Complementary channel use and the role of social competence." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20, (2014); 37-51.

radio discussion sessions were planned. The shea tree project and the shea tree's diminishing population are among the subjects covered.

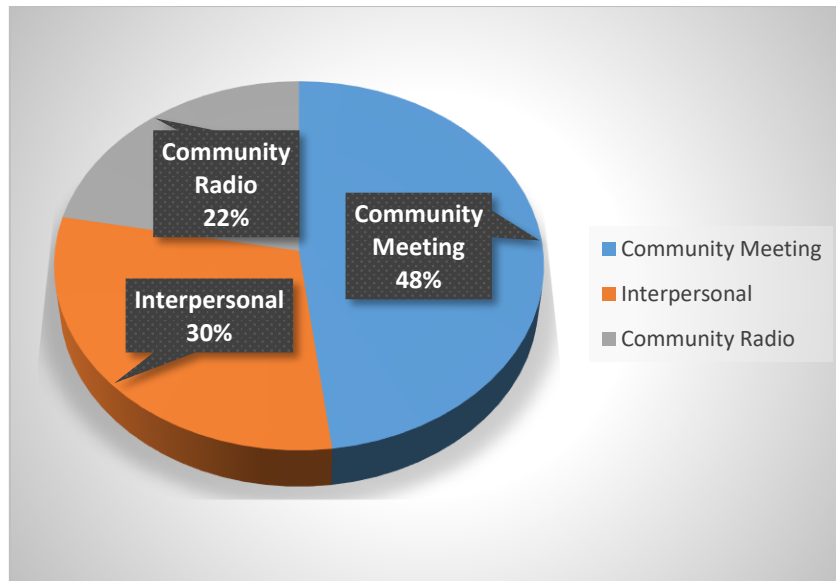


Figure 2: Channels/medium of information dissemination used

### Understanding the Messages Communicated to Respondents in the Project

According to Keyton, communication is the act of passing along knowledge and a shared understanding from one person to another.<sup>62</sup> Many authors who have written about communication contend that the receiver's comprehension of the message is advantageous to the sender because it indicates how successful the communication was. In light of this, the study aimed to determine whether the information provided to communities regarding the carried-out projects was understood by them. The majority of respondents 44 (88%) indicated that they understood the message regarding the projects and only 6(12%) did not understand the message.

### Willingness of Community Members to Sustain Projects

The findings from this paper as seen in Figure 3 revealed that 28 respondents (56%) were extremely willing to continue projects and sustain them and that 21 respondents (42%) were willing to maintain the project. Only 1(2%) of the respondents were not willing to maintain the project. This strongly suggests that their willingness to participate in project sustenance would motivate them to take ownership of the project and keep it going. The results of this survey had a mean and standard deviation of 1.48 and 0.61 respectively. It is obvious from this paper that the respondents are ready to uphold and support the project.

<sup>62</sup> Keyton, *Communication and Organisational Culture: A Key to Understanding Work Experiences* .

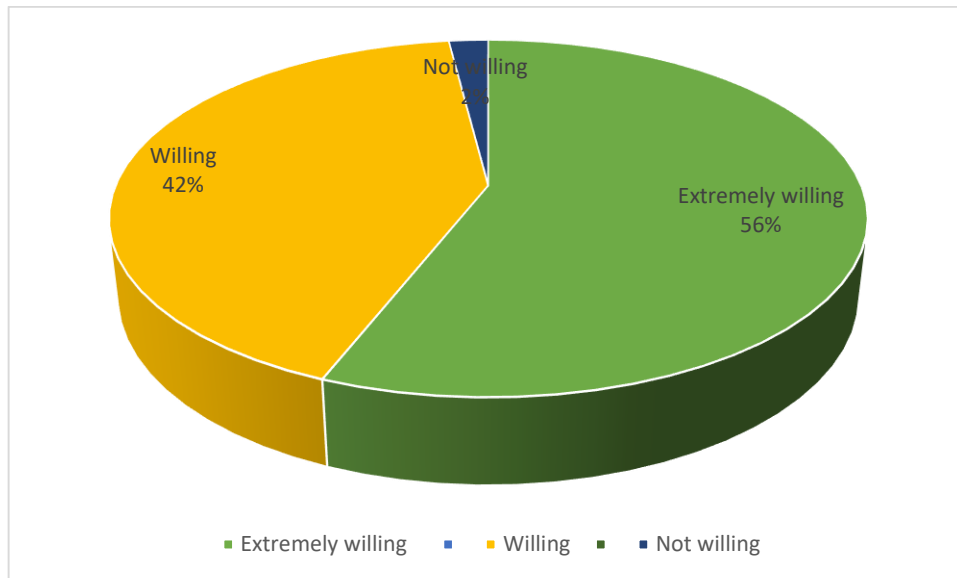


Figure 3: Willingness of Community Members to Sustain Projects

### The Current State of the Project

According to the survey's results from PAS Garu, only 4 (8%) respondents indicated that the project needed improvement. The survey showed that the warehouse in Pusiga had fallen three times and was in poor condition, which has slowed down the progress of work. Again, 28 (56%) and 18 (36%) respondents awarded this component good and very good grades respectively. Most communities were continuously using the facility, according to data from a household survey, interviews with opinion leaders, and focus groups. This is due, among other things, to the fact that steps were taken to guarantee the projects' sustainability and that these steps were properly communicated to the locals. Figure 4 below depicts the current state of the projects.

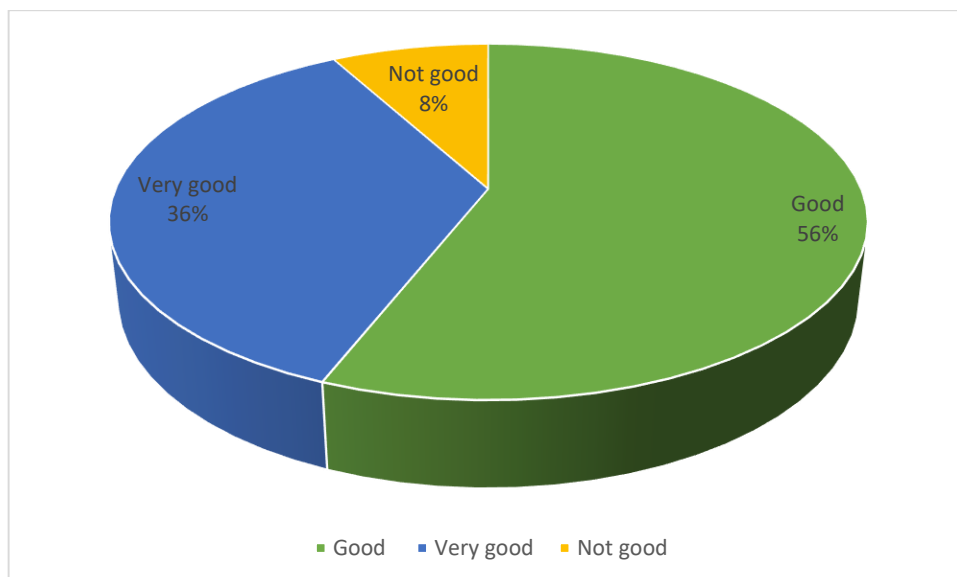


Figure 4: Current State of the Project

### Forms of Engaging People to Participate

The findings from PAS-Garu revealed that 22% of respondents were motivated to contribute to the project through information sharing. Additionally, 20% collaborated with the implementing organization, and 58% acknowledged being consulted as seen in Figure 5 below. The consultation involved project implementers engaging with local chiefs, elders, and opinion leaders. According to Mansuri and Rao,

community opinion leaders should lead initiatives for sustainability and community leadership.<sup>63</sup> Overall, the implementing organization engaged respondents through collaboration, consultation, and information sharing. The African Development Bank (ADB) emphasized that enabling active participation in development projects can drive competition with both positive and negative effects and that collaborating with local partners is crucial for overcoming language barriers and ensuring sustainability.

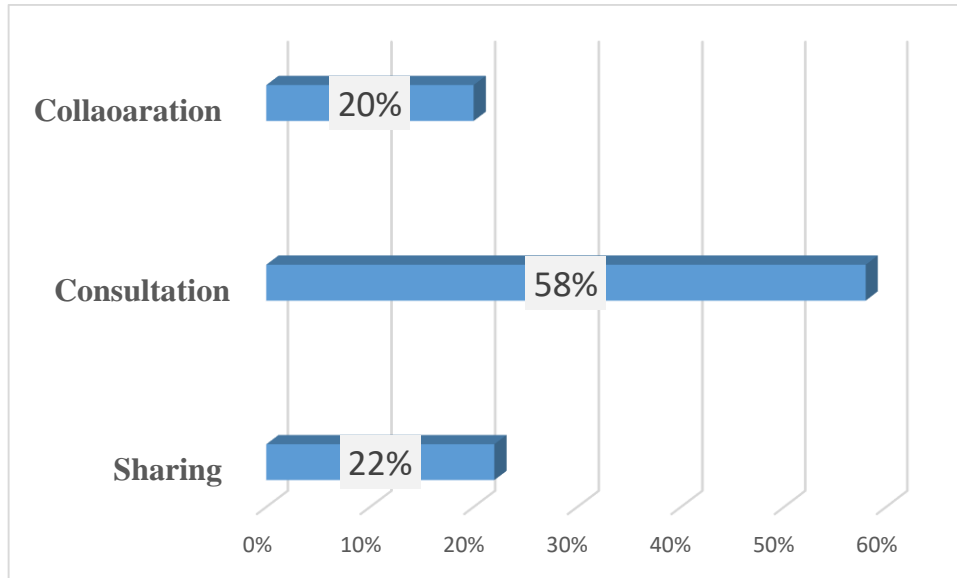


Figure 5: Forms of Engaging People to Participate

**Table 1: Components of development communication that help community members to know about the project**

Component of Development Communication	Frequency	Percentage
Behavior change	23	46
Social mobilization	16	32
Advocacy	11	22
Total	50	100

From the above table, it can be seen that the component of development communication that greatly helped respondents to know about the project was behaviour change communication (46%) followed by social mobilization (32%) and advocacy (11%). Some respondents were influenced by more than one mode of development communication. This paper established that there had been behaviour change in the selected communities. The changes came as a result of environmental transformation. The study reveals that the one million tree planting initiative has significantly transformed the outlook of local inhabitants within the study area. During this timeframe, the project implementers distribute an increased number of seedlings, such as acacia, neem trees, and mahogany to the communities as an alternative to the practice of felling shea trees.

<sup>63</sup> G. Mansuri and V. Rao, Localizing Development : Does Participation Work? In *Policy Research Report*. Washington, DC: World Bank, (2013).

**Table 2: T-test representation of the Level of understanding of community members on the project**

Statement	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Total	Mean	St. D	T-value	P-value
Level of understanding									
Freq.	2	5	8	35	50	3.520	0.839	29.67	0.000
Percent	4%	10%	16%	70 %	100%				

**Scale:** Very Low (VL)=1, Low (L) = 2 Medium (M)=3 High (H) =4

From Table 2, it is evident that the level of understanding with the highest frequency is high (75%) followed by medium (16%). The survey results further indicate that (10%) and (4%) of respondents scored low and very low respectively. Again, the mean value of 3.52 corresponds to a standard deviation of 0.84. The survey results also show that the t-value of 29.67, which results in a p-value of 0.000, indicates that there is a significant relationship concerning the level of understanding of community members on the project and this is attributed to effective development communication between the implementers and the community members. The mean value of 3.52 indicates that the level of understanding of respondents on the project is high.

**Table 3: Level of influence on the community using development communication strategy**

Level of influence	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Mean	St. D	T-test	P-value
Community meeting								
<b>Freq.</b>	3	7	13	27	3.28	0.93	25.03	0.000
<b>Percent</b>	6%	14%	26%	54%				
Interpersonal								
<b>Freq.</b>	5	9	17	19	3.00	0.98	21.43	0.000
<b>Percent</b>	10%	18%	34%	38%				
Community radio								
<b>Freq.</b>	14	20	12	4	2.12	0.92	16.33	0.000
<b>Percent</b>	28%	40%	24%	8%				

**Scale:** Very Low (VL)=1, Low (L) = 2 Medium (M)=3 High (H) =4

When participants were asked to state the level of influence of each type of information dissemination they employed to reach respondents and the broader community, it was disclosed that community meetings (54%), interpersonal communication (38%), and community radio (8%) were the modes of information dissemination that wielded a considerable degree of influence on the participants. The t-tests conducted on these modes of information dissemination demonstrate that the results obtained were statistically significant. Community meetings yielded (mean =3.28), while interpersonal communication garnered (mean = 3.00). These findings suggest that the level of influence exerted on the community through the utilization of development communication strategies was moderate. Furthermore, the results indicate that the level of influence exerted on the community through the employment of community radio was low, with (mean score=2.12). CHAFEA argued in regards to information dissemination that, an effective development communication strategy is essential for take-up, and take-up is crucial for the success of the project and the sustainability of outputs in the long term.<sup>64</sup> This paper

<sup>64</sup> CHAFEA, "Elaborating a Dissemination Plan. European Commission," 2012, [http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/management/Fact\\_sheet\\_2010\\_06.html](http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/management/Fact_sheet_2010_06.html).

affirms that community meetings, interpersonal communication and community radio are highly used when it comes to information dissemination and that they have an influence on the project.

## RECOMMENDATION

To ensure the success and sustainability of development projects, establish regular community meetings for active participation and feedback, fostering ownership and involvement. Utilize community radio to broadcast updates, success stories, and educational content, reaching a broad audience, including those without access to other media. Complement this with interpersonal communication strategies like door-to-door visits and focus group discussions to ensure effective and inclusive information dissemination. This multi-channel approach will enhance project visibility, acceptance, and long-term success.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical role of effective communication in enhancing the efficacy and sustainability of development projects, as exemplified by the Shea value project in Ghana's Garu-Tempane District. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews and data analysis techniques, the research revealed that community meetings, interpersonal communication, and community radio are instrumental in disseminating information and garnering community support. The findings highlight the importance of fostering robust communication channels between project implementers and beneficiaries, emphasizing their mutual engagement and the pivotal role of communication in achieving project success and long-term impact. This study advocates for continued emphasis on effective communication strategies to ensure the sustainability and enduring benefits of development initiatives.

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