




Do Persons with Disabilities Really Participate in Community Development Services in Ghana? Evidence from the Adenta Municipality



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ABSTRACT

This study examined the views of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) with respect to their participation in community development services in Ghana from the perspective of the Adenta Municipality, Greater Accra Region. The study was a mixed method involving 50 PWDs. Researcher-administered survey and focus group discussion methods were used for data collection. Frequencies, percentages and content analysis were used for analysing the data obtained. The study found that though various community development projects had been undertaken in the Municipality most of these projects were not PWD-friendly. It was discovered that the participation of PWDs in planning, implementing, and evaluating development projects in the Municipality was low. Again, the study found that a one-way directional form of communication characterized community development services in the Municipality. Besides, communication challenges faced by PWDs in community development include inadequate information, poor consultation, and poor engagement. Moreover, existing communication strategies used by development actors particularly do not promote the active participation of PWDs in community development. This has resulted in a feeling of exclusion among PWDs in the design, planning and execution of community development initiatives. The study highlights the need for better communication strategies in community development practice that are inclusive of PWDs. The study offered a number of policy recommendations including the need for development actors in the Municipality to devise measures to identify PWDs groups, send them messages about development issues, involve them in community development decisions at all stages, and adopt more proactive and innovative measures to improve communication in community development practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Community development has become critical on the agenda of many governments and development actors throughout the world. Community development practice has assumed a greater prominence even in recent decades largely due to the increasing calls on the part of citizens to contribute to the development of their

communities. As a concept, community development relates to the consciously designed efforts by community members to work together for the development of their communities using defined sets of techniques.¹ This means that community development occurs when individuals in a given community agree to work together to promote the development of their community based on laid down principles and techniques. Gorman believes that community development is a problem-solving approach involving educational processes to raise levels of local awareness and increase the confidence and ability of community groups to identify and tackle their problems.² This suggests that efforts to increase awareness and confidence of community members on how to address their problems are essential in effective community development.

Gilchrist describes community development as a well-planned process of developing relationships with people, inspiring them to build relationships with each other to get things done and also educating them about the best way they can live together, and relate to each other to ensure the full use of resources and power.³ In this sense, community development becomes a mechanism to create learning atmospheres which enable local people to establish vital connections between their lives and the structures of society that shape the world they live in.⁴ Ultimately, community development seeks to empower people for the achievement of collective goals. Other scholars including Kishindo, and Kamando see community development as a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are combined with those of government institutions to improve the socio-economic conditions of the community.⁵ It aims at addressing issues in the educational, agricultural, health, water and sanitation, and micro-enterprise sectors. Issues of governance, human rights, environment, and employment creation are also critical in community development.

Ensuring effective community development practice requires the creation of conditions which enable community members to fully take part in the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects by development actors. Thus, participation is critical to the delivery of development services in any community. No meaningful change can be caused in communities and in the lives of the people if there is poor participation.⁶ However, for participation in community development services to be effective requires effective communication. Effective communication in the context of development relates to the use of free and open dialogue among stakeholders, and to marginalized groups, time and space to express their concerns, define their own needs, set goals, and act on them.⁷

In community development services, communication becomes effective when its process considers the interests, needs, and capacities of all stakeholders involved. Promoting meaningful communication in community development services is essential to sustainable development.⁸ Studies by Odoom et al., and Owusu revealed that a one-way directional form of communication continues to dominate the delivery of community development projects in Ghana.⁹ The one-way directional form of communication which is also called monologic communication merely focuses on the provision of information. This model of communication reduces participation in development projects to the provision of information to community members. The apparent problems associated with one-way directional

¹ B. Wharf, "Community Development: Past, Present, and Future.," *Community Development Journal* 34, no. 4 (1999): 324–34.

² R. Gorman, "The Missing Voice: Community Development and Disabled People," . . *Community Development Journal* 45, no. 3 (2010): 284–99.

³ A. Gilchrist, *The Well-Connected Community: A Networking Approach to Community Development*, 2nd ed. (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009), 101.

⁴ Combat Poverty cited in G. Mulhall, "Community Development Approaches and Primary Care Social Work," in *Social Workers in Primary Care Conference*, 2014; M. Ledwith, *Community Development: A Critical Approach*, 2nd ed. (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2011).

⁵ Paul Kishindo, "The Malawi Social Action Fund and Community Development," *Community Development Journal* 36, no. 4 (2001): 303–11; A. N. Kamando, "Government-Community Partnership in the Provision of Education in Rural Tanzania" (University of Glasgow, 2014), <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5294/>.

⁶ A. Mammah, "Community Development as a Strategy for Rural Development in Nigeria," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 1, no. 3 (2006): 17–30; T. Tufté and P. Mefalopulos, "Participatory Communication : A Practical Guide" (Washington, D.C., 2009); G. Mohan, "Participatory Development," in *Companion to Development Studies*, ed. V. Desai and R. Potter (London: Edward Arnold, 2008), 45–49..

⁷ Tufté and Mefalopulos, "Participatory Communication : A Practical Guide."

⁸ J. Servaes, *Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures* (New York: Hampton Press, 2003).

⁹ Daniel Odoom et al., "The Challenge of Participation in Community Development Activities in Rural Ghana: Implications for Effective Development Communication," *Tanzania Journal of Development Studies* 19, no. 1 (2021); 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).

communication including the lack of meaningful, interactive, and inclusive participation by stakeholders imply that newer communication approaches need to be put in place by development actors in the country.¹⁰ There are many questions unanswered and problems unsolved in terms of community project initiation, siting, and implementation. There are several projects in Ghana which are either abandoned or are not being utilized by the intended beneficiaries. Again, the plight of PWDs has not been taken into account in the design and implementation of community development services.¹¹

The disabled constitute a critical part of any thriving society. Like any other category of persons, the disabled are part of a critical human resource base needed to build society. Despite the role of the disabled in society, very few studies have been conducted in the area of their participation in community development services in Ghana. This makes it very difficult for one to appreciate the critical issues and challenges facing the disabled in terms of their participation in community development services. Again, even though there are concerns with participation in development activities by the disabled, it appears there are no adequate empirical studies that have been done to highlight the challenges not only in participation but also communication with respect to development service delivery in their communities.¹² The continuing existence of the situation portends a serious setback not only to the contribution of PWDs to the sociocultural, economic, and political development of their communities but also to their input in shaping development services that meet their unique needs.

The Adenta Municipality is located within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana with a total area of 92.84 square kilometers. There are various development actors such as the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private entities which deliver different services to improve communities in the Municipality. Despite the efforts made by development actors in the provision of development services, there are concerns with development service delivery in communities in the Municipality. For example, it is believed that development actors in the area do not seem to pay much attention to the plights of PWDs in development service provision in communities in the Municipality.¹³ Indeed, it is observed that PWDs in the Municipality have physical difficulties in terms of accessing some development projects in their communities. Again, some of the infrastructural projects in communities in the Municipality are not disability-friendly.¹⁴ PWDs constitute about 1.3% of the population of the Municipality. There are various types of disability within the Municipality such as hearing, sight, physical, intellect, speech, and emotion. About 22% of PWDs in the Municipality have no formal education.¹⁵ The prevailing situation in the Municipality presents a challenge to the level of participation of PWDs in community development services in the area. It also highlights the kind of communication which characterizes community development services in the Municipality. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the views of PWDs regarding their participation in community development services in Ghana using Adenta Municipality as a case. The study focused on community development services delivered by various development actors including the government, NGOs and private entities in the Municipality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Community Development

Historically, community development was actively promoted around the 1950s as part of the state-building process and as a means of raising standards of living by governments and by the United Nations through its affiliates.¹⁶ Indeed, community development became very prominent during the 1950s to 70s when institutions were seen as part of independence and decolonization movements in Africa which

¹⁰ P. Mefalopoulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide* (World Bank Publications, 2008); Odoom et al., “The Challenge of Participation in Community Development Activities in Rural Ghana: Implications for Effective Development Communication.”

¹¹ L. Chenoweth and D. Stehlik, “Participatory Development and the Empowerment of the Disabled: A Case Study from Nepal,” *World Development* 32, no. 7 (2004): 1213–31; M. Gorman, “Education Infrastructure and Development,” in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. B. Adamson, A. Astrand, and L. Darvasi (Elsevier, 2010), 260–66.

¹² B. Katja, *Development and Disability: A Case Study of Adenta Municipality* (Accra: University of Ghana, 2002); Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, “Republic of Zambia National Disability Policy,” 2010; S. Schoen, “Communication and Community Development: A Shifting Focus,” *Development in Practice* 6, no. 3 (1996): 247–51.

¹³ Katja, *Development and Disability: A Case Study of Adenta Municipality*.

¹⁴ Katja, *Development and Disability: A Case Study of Adenta Municipality*.

¹⁵ Ghana Statistical Service, *2010 Population and Housing Census District Analytical Report: Adenta Municipality* (Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

¹⁶ O. Abiona and O. Niyi-Bello, “An Overview of Community Development,” *Journal of Education and Practice* 4, no. 8 (2013): 91–96.

equated development to democracy. According to Marah, community development practice has existed since societies were created where people lived a communal life.¹⁷ Phillips and Pittman traced the contemporary history of community development back to the 1960s American war which focused on poverty eradication.¹⁸ Around this period, community development aimed at addressing various social problems faced by people through neighborhood housing development services and citizen participation.¹⁹ Tett extends the discussion on community development by arguing that the concept was part of the historical epoch of imperialism and colonialism facilitated by Britain.²⁰ Within this epoch, community development was a vital method for addressing social, economic, and political problems, expectations, and exigencies occasioned by the Second World War.

In tracing the history of community development in Africa, Phillips and Pittman maintained that the practice dates back to the measures to enhance the social and economic well-being of people after the Second World War.²¹ It was seen that community development could become a potent tool to reduce poverty, disease, and ignorance and to repress anti-colonial struggles.²² The history of community development practice in Africa is also traced to the effort of indigenous people within African communities to mobilize themselves to solve their problems. Here, community development was in the form of self-help activities which were included in the government's development framework.²³ In many parts of Africa, community development was mainly a rural concept which focused on the provision of various infrastructure in the educational, health, and other sectors to improve the lives of people.²⁴ According to Amakye, in most parts of Africa, community development was informed by the modernization development theory during the first half of the twentieth century.²⁵ The provision of infrastructure was perceived as the means of modernizing the so-called primitives of the less developed realm of the world. Across French West Africa, community development was applied based on a modernization framework to promote the delivery of various educational, health, and infrastructural projects.²⁶ The history of community development in Ghana can be traced to the period when the Gold Coast government initiated steps in the early 1940s to promote community development. This singular measure led to the setting up of the Community Development Department by the state in 1948 aimed at promoting rural development.²⁷ Community development in Ghana is also informed by the spirit of self-help and mutual aid popularly known as *nnoboa*. Indeed, self-help has led to the delivery of various educational, agricultural and health services in Ghana.²⁸

Conceptualizing Participation and Communication

As a concept, participation has been variously defined by different scholars and organizations. For example, Reed views participation as a process where stakeholders, individuals, groups and/or organizations are included in making decisions which affect them.²⁹ Participation can be passive, involving information provision and consultation or active which entails dialogue and/or interactive engagements. It involves clearly defining groups of people who are affected by decisions and /or who are not affected by decisions but who engage with the issues to which decisions pertain through discussion.³⁰

¹⁷ John K Marah, "The Virtues and Challenges in Traditional African Education," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 1, no. 4 (2006): 15–25.

¹⁸ R. Phillips and R. H. Pittman, "A Framework for Community and Economic Development," in *An Introduction to Community Development*, ed. R. Phillips and R. H. Pittman (London: Routledge, 2009), 3–19.

¹⁹ Daniel Odoom, "Relevance of Cocoa Life Project Interventions to Community Development in Rural Ghana: Exploring the Views of Beneficiaries in Wassa East District," *Journal of Development and Communication Studies* 8, no. 1 (2021): 22–48; Phillips and Pittman, "A Framework for Community and Economic Development."

²⁰ I. Tett, *Community Education, Learning and Development*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2010).

²¹ Phillips and Pittman, "A Framework for Community and Economic Development."

²² Phillips and Pittman, "A Framework for Community and Economic Development."

²³ Kamando, "Government-Community Partnership in the Provision of Education in Rural Tanzania."

²⁴ Kishindo, "The Malawi Social Action Fund and Community Development."

²⁵ R. K. Amakye, "The History of Community Development in Africa: An Appraisal," *Journal of African Studies and Development* 9, no. 6 (2017): 81–94.

²⁶ Amakye, "The History of Community Development in Africa: An Appraisal."

²⁷ Gorman, "The Missing Voice: Community Development and Disabled People."

²⁸ Amakye, "The History of Community Development in Africa: An Appraisal."

²⁹ Mark S Reed, "Stakeholder Participation for Environmental Management: A Literature Review," *Biological Conservation* 141, no. 10 (2008): 2417–31.

³⁰ Eiko Ikegami, "A Sociological Theory of Publics: Identity and Culture as Emergent Properties in Networks," *Social Research*, 2000, 989–1029; Reed, "Stakeholder Participation for Environmental Management: A Literature Review."

According to Rubin and Rubin, participation is a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence in influencing decisions that affect their lives and for transferring political power.³¹ The social exchange framework offers insight into motivations for participation. It is anchored on the framework of benefits and costs to help elucidate who participates and why. Based on the social exchange framework, individuals and organizations are constantly involved in an exchange system and voluntarily distribute resources to achieve their goals.³² Citizens and organizations will only participate if they perceive that the benefit of participation outweighs the effort required. The potential benefits of participation for community members including PWDs include access to information and resources, personal recognition, learning, incorporating the needs into development decisions, helping to solve community problems, improved relationships among stakeholders and increased capacity for problem-solving.

Communication as a concept is dynamic and has been utilized and defined differently by different scholars. They have studied communication as it relates to people in various social organizations. The term communication is of Latin origin. It comes from the word, ‘communicare’ which means “to common.” Communication is the answer to the general need to create a common understanding among people or organizations. Durbin sees communication as the transmission of information between and among people in an organization.³³ He further says that interaction between individuals and groups can only occur if there is communication between them. Okumbe defines communication as the “exchange of information and the transmission of meaning.”³⁴ Communication can further be defined as giving, receiving, or exchanging information, facts, opinions, or ideas by writing, speech, or visual means so that the message communicated is completely understood by the recipient. In communication, the role of sending and receiving changes hands depending on who is talking and who is listening. This implies freedom, equality, and shared interests.

Lunenburg argues that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication.³⁵ Keyton defined communication as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another.³⁶ For the message to be understood, effective communication must take place. For effective communication to occur, there is a need to understand the communication process. The communication process is a simple model that demonstrates all the factors that can affect communication.³⁷ The key to effective communication is ensuring that your message is understood, stipulating the recipient to take appropriate action, or affecting the way the recipient thinks in some way. It should also be used as an effective tool for improving an organization’s productivity and performance.³⁸ Effective communication is dependent on the channel used. Duggal also explains communication channels as the media through which messages are transmitted to their intended audiences, such as print media or broadcast (electronic) media.³⁹ There are several communication channels available which are used for different purposes. The medium can be in the form of face-to-face conversation, telephone call, e-mail, or written report.

Mefalopulos indicated that for effective design, community development planners must know the channels available, their potential reach, and the intended result of the messages; thus, channels must be selected to fit the participants and the communication task.⁴⁰ Colle also opined that a quality professionally-driven development communication program is characterized by having a rational means for selecting communication channels and target groups that fit the voluntary nature of the behavior change being proposed.⁴¹ Again, the communication specialist should always be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each channel.⁴² However, in many instances, multimedia campaigns have been

³¹ J. Rubin and S. Rubin, *Community Organizing and Development* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2014).

³² E. A. Bretty, “Participation and Accountability in Development Management,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 2 (2013): 57–68.

³³ M. Durbin, *Essentials of Management* (New York: Random House, 1978).

³⁴ J. A. Okumbe, *Educational Management: Theory and Practice* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 1998), 126.

³⁵ Fred C Lunenburg, “Communication: The Process, Barriers, and Improving Effectiveness,” *Schooling* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–11.

³⁶ J. Keyton, *Communication Research: Asking Questions, Finding Answers*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

³⁷ Keyton, *Communication Research: Asking Questions, Finding Answers*.

³⁸ Marilyn L. Satterwhite, *Business Communication* (New York: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill Collection, 2003).

³⁹ A. Duggal, “Communication Channels,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Public Relations*, ed. R. L. Heath (London: Sage Publications, 2011).

⁴⁰ Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2008.

⁴¹ R. Colle, *Development Communication Sourcebook: Broadening the Boundaries of Communication* (World Bank Publications, 2007).

⁴² Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2008.

demonstrated to be more effective than one-medium campaigns in achieving intended results.⁴³ For this work, the medium of communication is defined as how information is delivered to beneficiaries of development projects.

Common types of communication include corporate communication, internal communication, advocacy communication, behaviour change communication, development communication and participatory communication.⁴⁴ Corporate communication is the type of communication that informs audiences about the mission and activities of an organization through the use of the media. Internal communication is the sharing of information among staff in an organization or institution to ensure all staff members are aware of issues about the institution. Advocacy communication is the type that helps to bring change to the lives of people using the available and the right medium. It is usually achieved through the involvement of chiefs, religious leaders, and community-based organizations. Development communication focuses on bringing change to people by involving the relevant stakeholders. The World Bank defined development communication as the "integration of strategic communication in development projects" based on a clear understanding of indigenous realities.⁴⁵ Mefalopulos stressed that development programs cannot bring about change without an ongoing culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue between development providers and the recipient.⁴⁶ Development communication is the practice of applying processes, strategies and principles of communication to achieve positive social change. Development communication techniques include information dissemination and education, behavior change, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and community participation.⁴⁷

The core argument of participatory communication reflects the notion that if ordinary people do not control or share control of the processes of their own development, there can be no guarantee that it is their best interest that is being served. That ordinary people need to be a critical part of the processes which affect their lives.⁴⁸ Cooper et al. conceive participatory communication as a vital principle of allowing and assessing the most critical aspects related to people's well-being and their empowerment.⁴⁹ Key elements of participatory communication include collaborative planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects. Issues of inclusion, empowerment and gender equality are critical to effective participatory communication.⁵⁰ Again, participatory communication emphasizes people, the endogenous vision of development and attention to power issues. It is characterized by dialogue and a horizontal flow of information. Therefore, communication loses the top-down connotation and instead becomes a critical tool of empowerment. Messages in true participatory communication are expected to originate from people themselves rather than from the experts.⁵¹

Participatory Communication, Community Development and Persons With Disabilities

Participatory communication tends to be associated with community-driven development. Its usage is vital at any level of decision-making be it local, national, or international regardless of the diversity of groups involved. By actively engaging personnel from the start and by looking for a wider consensus around community development practices, participatory communication has to be considered an important tool. Participatory communication highlights the genuine participation of people who are more concerned with their community development. To be genuinely participatory and truly effective, communication should occur among all parties involved, ensuring all have similar chances to influence the outcome of the initiative.

Disability is defined as any restriction resulting from an impairment or inability to perform any activity in the manner or with the range considered normal for a human being and would or would not

⁴³ G. Coldevin, *Media and Development: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2003).

⁴⁴ Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2008.

⁴⁵ L. Manyozo, "Defining Development Communication," 2006.

⁴⁶ P. Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication Strategy Design: A Handbook* (FAO, 2003).

⁴⁷ Tufte and Mefalopulos, "Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide."

⁴⁸ T. Cooper, B. Furuholt, and B. Kleymann, "Theory and Practice in Development Communication," in *Media and Communication in the Third World*, ed. T. L. Hansen and K. T. Frøistad (London: Routledge, 2010), 35–58.

⁴⁹ Cooper, Furuholt, and Kleymann, "Theory and Practice in Development Communication."

⁵⁰ Tufte and Mefalopulos, "Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide."

⁵¹ Cooper, Furuholt, and Kleymann, "Theory and Practice in Development Communication"; Tufte and Mefalopulos, "Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide."

entail the use of supportive or therapeutic devices and auxiliary aids, interpreters, reading assistants, hearing aids, or any other trained animals for that purpose.⁵² There are an estimated one billion people with disabilities worldwide, corresponding to about 15 percent of the world's population.⁵³ Among them, 80 percent of the people with disabilities live in low- and middle-income countries. Productive and decent work enables people with disabilities to realize their potential, and aspirations, improve their living conditions, and allow participate more actively in society.⁵⁴ Experience has demonstrated that disabled people continue to be useful in community development practices. It is not sufficient to simply include people with disabilities in the development project but also include them in the decision-making aspect. The successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors which are communication and people's involvement.⁵⁵

However, a wide range of communication challenges may restrict the social inclusion of PWDs in community development practice. For example, stakeholders may consider persons with disabilities as people with poor self-esteem and think that they do not qualify or have the ability to partake in activities regarding development. Family members may feel that having a member with a disability brings shame, and so they do not encourage or allow this person's social participation. Community members may also have irrational thoughts and beliefs about disabilities. The principle of equal rights gives opportunity between disabled and abled workers generally to respect the equality of treatment for disabled men and women workers. Special positive measures aimed at promoting effective equality of opportunity and treatment between disabled workers and other workers should be established. Access of persons with disabilities to services provided for the general population should be called for where necessary. Consultation with organizations of and for PWDs is called for in the community development practice at both national and local levels, and the representation of persons with disabilities on the boards of and committees of vocational rehabilitation and training centers used by disabled persons will enable take full responsibility in community development practices for successful developments.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for PWDs to get information. Concerns of PWDs are often not taken into account.⁵⁶ Lack of free flow of communication and information affects the lives of many disabled people. One challenge PWDs face in community development practice is the lack of integration in the communication process into all forms of policy design development initiatives. A systematic approach to the strategy, design and implementation of community development is needed for active participation to occur among PWDs.⁵⁷ PWDs have equal rights to participate in the decision-making process of developments concerning their communities, regions, and the nation as a whole. They are active, participating, and visible members of local, national and institutional organizations to be allowed to contribute their opinions positively to the successful development of the community. There are lessons to be learned from such experiences from PWDs in the development of their communities.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the Adenta Municipality. Adenta Municipal is one of the twenty-nine districts in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. It was previously part of the then-larger Tema Municipality, which was created from the former Tema District Council and later split off to create Adenta Municipality. The Municipality is bordered to the north by La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal, to the east by Kpone Katamanso Municipal and Tema Metropolitan, to the south by Ledzokuku Municipal and Krowor Municipal District, and to the west by Accra Metropolis. The total area of the district is 92.84 square kilometers. According to the Ghana Statistical Service Report, as cited in Brinkhoff, the Municipality has a population size of 237,546.⁵⁸ Various development actors including the government, non-governmental

⁵² "Persons with Disability Act," Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Rules, 1996, https://cdn.nic.in/SJ/PDFFiles/Sparsh_disabilitiesrules1996.pdf.

⁵³ World Health Organization, *World Report on Disability* (WHO Press, 2011), https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf.

⁵⁴ B. Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature* (Zambia Federation of Employers, 2013).

⁵⁵ C. Fraser and E. Restrepo, *Communication and Participation in Rural Development* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998); Servaes, *Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures*.

⁵⁶ Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, "Republic of Zambia National Disability Policy."

⁵⁷ Schoen, "Communication and Community Development: A Shifting Focus."

⁵⁸ T. Brinkhoff, "Adenta Municipal," 2022, https://www.citypopulation.de/en/ghana/admin/greater_accra/0305__adenta_municipal/.

organizations (NGOs) and private entities have and continue to deliver different services across communities in the Municipality.

The study employed mixed methods research. Specifically, the sequential-explanatory mixed methods design was used for the study. The design enabled the researchers to collect and analyze quantitative data before the collection and analysis of the qualitative data.⁵⁹ In this study, PWDs in the Adenta Municipality who were eighteen years and /or above formed the target population. The convenience sampling method was used to select 50 PWDs in various communities in the Municipality. The convenience sampling method is a method popularly used by researchers because it is time and cost-effective when compared to other sampling methods. The convenience sampling method enabled the researchers to select persons who were available, accessible and nearby to be involved in the study.⁶⁰ The study used a researcher-administered survey and focus group discussion (FGD) guide to gather data. First, the survey focused on obtaining data from the selected PWDs. The researcher-administered survey contained mostly closed-ended questions which were developed in line with the research aim. Data from the survey was collected and analyzed followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data in line with the requirements of the sequential-explanatory mixed methods design.⁶¹ Also, 10 PWDs were selected for the FGD. The research was conducted in an ethically sound manner. For example, before the data was collected, the nature and purpose of the study were outlined to the respondents. They were also made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could cease their participation at any point in time without offering any reasons for doing so. Again, they consented to take part in the study and were assured of strict confidentiality of the information they would provide. Collected data were analyzed after editing and cleaning it. For the quantitative data, frequencies and percentages were used for analysis after processing the data using the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 25. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis after transcribing the obtained data.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The study first examined the demographic features of respondents (see Table 1). It is clear that the majority (82%) of respondents were males whereas 18% were females. Again, most (74%) of respondents had educational qualifications up to the tertiary level whilst 18% had their educational level up to secondary. It can be inferred that there is an appreciable attempt to fulfil the core intent of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana which enjoins stakeholders to provide access to education to every school-going child. Clearly, the country is making some efforts towards inclusive education for its citizens. The result on educational qualification generally supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which require countries to build and upgrade educational services that are child, disability and gender-sensitive, and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. Finally, Table 1 shows that most (80%) of respondents between the ages of 26 and 40 years, with only 8% who were above 40 years.

Table 1: Demographic features of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	41	82
Female	9	18
Education Level		
Basic	4	8
Secondary	9	18
Tertiary	37	74
Age		
Below 26	6	12

⁵⁹ Greg Guest, "Describing Mixed Methods Research: An Alternative to Typologies," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 7, no. 2 (2013): 141–51.

⁶⁰ J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (United States of America: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009).

⁶¹ Guest, "Describing Mixed Methods Research: An Alternative to Typologies."

26-30	7	14
31-35	14	28
36-40	19	38
Above 40	4	8

Perception of PWDs on Community Development in the Adenta Municipality

Based on the research aim, the study first explored the perception of PWDs on the development of communities in the Municipality using a scale of 5=Strongly Agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3=Neutral (N), 2=Disagree (D), and 1=Strongly Disagree (SD). Table 2 shows the results from the quantitative data. In reporting the results, responses for Strongly Agree and Agree were grouped and captured as agreed whilst responses for Strongly Disagree and Disagree were grouped and captured as disagreed. From the table, most (64%) of the respondents perceive the level of educational services in the Municipality as satisfactory but 33% disagreed. Again, Table 2 shows that more than half (57%) of the respondents believed that health services in the Municipality are satisfactory to them as against 36% of them who held a contrary view. However, more than (52%) of respondents disagreed that there was satisfactory economic development in the Municipality. This means that the majority of the PWDs in the Municipality are not satisfied with economic development in the area. On the level of social development, 52% of the respondents generally agreed that it was satisfactory in the Municipality. However, 62.5% of them stated that policies and programs to ensure employment creation are not satisfactory.

Table 2: Perception of PWDs on Community Development in the Municipality

Perception	SA	A	N	D	SD
Level of educational services in the Adenta Municipality is satisfactory	18	46	3	21	12
Level of health services in the Municipality is satisfactory	25	32	7	25	11
Economic development in Adenta is satisfactory	22	20	6	44	8
Infrastructural development in the Municipality is satisfactory	10	42	12	20	18
Level of social development Projects in Adenta is satisfactory	16	36	8	30	10
Development initiatives to promote alternative livelihood are satisfactory	15.5	25	9	42	18.5
Programs and policies to ensure employment creation are satisfactory in the Municipality.	12.5	25	10	43	19.5
Measures to sustain development projects in the Municipality are satisfactory	22	16	4	38	20
Engagement with PWDs prior to the delivery of development projects in the Municipality is satisfactory	4	16	6	60	14
Development projects are PWD-friendly	8	20	14	32	26

Additionally, 60.5% of the respondents asserted that there are no satisfactory development initiatives to promote alternative livelihoods in the Municipality coupled with 58% of them who stated that measures to sustain development projects in the area are not satisfactory enough.

On their engagement prior to the delivery of community development projects, all the respondents maintained that they were not engaged (see Table 2). The situation was the same for all development projects including NGO-led projects, community-led projects and state-led projects. Table 2 shows that many (58%) of the respondents generally disagreed that development projects are PWD-friendly.

The results from the FGDs showed that there have been some improvements in the level of development in the Municipality. The discussants admitted that over the years various development projects have been embarked upon by various actors in the Municipality. The participants commented,

"One area where we have seen a lot of progress is in education. There are now more inclusive schools and programs for PWDs, and that's really important for our development as individuals and as a community, we think that the municipality should focus more also on providing affordable healthcare for PWDs. Many of us have chronic health conditions and require ongoing treatment, but the costs can be prohibitive."

However, the participants conceded that there are still many challenges and areas where more development projects are needed. Some of the improvements highlighted in the FGD include more inclusive schools and programs for PWDs and efforts to create more employment opportunities. However, there are still many areas, such as lack of accessible transportation, and the need for affordable healthcare where PWDs face challenges. The FGD participants also identified several barriers to development for PWDs, including stigma and discrimination, lack of consultation and collaboration with the disability community, and the need for more awareness-raising and education campaigns. In addition, the government's lack of enforcement of laws and regulations that protect the rights of PWDs was also highlighted as a challenge. Participants stated,

"There is a lot of stigma and discrimination against PWDs in the community, and that can be a barrier to our development. We need more awareness-raising and education campaigns to combat these attitudes."

This suggests that participants recognized that there has been progress made in development in the Adenta Municipality, but there is still a long way to go. They added that through advocacy a lot more development projects which are user-friendly to PWDs can be delivered in the Municipality.

Participation in Community Development Interventions in the Municipality

The second objective sought to find out the extent to which PWDs participated in community development interventions in the Adenta Municipality. To address this objective, various issues of participation were presented to respondents to express their views on them (see Table 3). A six Likert scale [6=Very High (VH), 5=High (H), 4=Moderate (M), 3=Low (L), 2=Very Low (VL), 1=No Participation (NP)] was used to analyze the quantitative data. On assessing the development needs of their communities, 65% generally agreed that their participation was low. This means that most (65%) of the PWDs who took part in the study saw their participation in assessing community development needs as low.

Table 3: Views of PWDs on the extent of their participation in community development interventions undertaken in the Adenta Municipality

Issue	VH	H	M	L	VL	NP
Participation in the assessment of development needs in the Municipality	10	8	12	40	25	5
Participation in identifying development problems	8	12	4	34	30	12
Defining development goals	10	16	4	30	26	8
Participation in identifying development solutions	8	14	6	34	38	0
Participation in designing development activities in the Municipality	4	6	0	30	10	50
Participation of PWDs in mobilizing resources for community development initiatives	8	10	6	48	4	24
Participation in implementing development activities	10	6	14	42	10	18
Participation in evaluating the outcomes of community development initiatives	7	12	4	35	10	22

Also, it is evident in Table 3 that many (64%) respondents saw their participation in identifying development problems in the Municipality as generally low, with 12% of them stating that they did not participate in such exercises at all. Moreover, a little over half (56%) of the respondents saw their participation in identifying development goals as low. The responses from the FGD indicate that PWDs feel they should have a greater say in the development projects undertaken in their community. They expressed a desire to be more actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes, and to be seen as active agents of change rather than passive recipients of development interventions. They remarked,

"It's important for PWDs to be seen as active agents of change, rather than passive recipients of development interventions. We have valuable skills and knowledge to contribute to the development of our community."

The discussants stated further that they lack access to active participation at various stages of development in their communities. They emphasized the need for more outreach and capacity-building programs to enable them to advocate more effectively for their rights and needs. They also highlighted the importance of being properly consulted as individuals and as a group to ensure that their diverse experiences, needs, and priorities are properly addressed. PWDs call for their involvement in monitoring and evaluation of development projects to ensure that they are truly inclusive and accessible. They opined, *"We have different experiences, needs, and priorities. We need to be consulted as individuals and as a community to ensure that our needs are properly addressed, the municipality should involve PWDs in the monitoring and evaluation of development projects to ensure that they are truly inclusive and accessible."*

Overall, PWDs stated that they should be treated as equal partners in the development process and that their perspectives and needs should be fully considered. Generally, the results from both quantitative and qualitative approaches suggest that there are concerns with the participation of respondents in community development services in the Municipality.

Communication Challenges Associated with Community Development Interventions in the Municipality

Effective communication is central to the delivery of development interventions because communication is the engine soul for the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects.⁶² According to Colle, quality professionally driven communication in the context of development is characterized by effective communication channels and strategies.⁶³ The study finally ascertained the communication challenges associated with the delivery of community development interventions in the Municipality (see Table 4). About 72% of the respondents said that communication during community development practice in the Municipality was done through representatives. This means that they only communicate and are also communicated to during community development practice in the Municipality was done through representatives. Again, about 66% of them stated that communication during the delivery of community development was only about information giving.

Table 4: Communication challenges associated with community development interventions in the Municipality

Challenge	SA	A	N	D	SD
Communication in community development in the Municipality is often done through a representative.	31	41	7	16	6
Communication during the delivery of community development is often about information-giving.	27	39	16	9	9
Communication strategies used do not enable PWDs to identify their own problems.	30	44	8	12	6
Communication strategies do not allow PWDs to identify their own development goals.	26	36	10	21	7
Communication strategies do not enable PWDs to get access to more relevant information about community development initiatives.	29	31	4	4	12
They do not promote meaningful collaboration during community development.	16	38	6	24	16
The strategies do not help facilitate dialogue on how to plan the delivery of Development Services for PWDs.	28	30	4	4	14
They do not encourage frequent exchange of information among stakeholders while delivering community development services.	26	33	12	21	8
Existing communication strategies do not promote active participation of PWDs	16	38	6	24	16

⁶² Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2008.

⁶³ Colle, *Development Communication Sourcebook: Broadening the Boundaries of Communication*.

There are no clearly accessible communication guidelines to encourage participation of PWDs during the delivery of development services.	42	22	8	8	20
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From Table 4, 74% of the respondents generally agreed that the existing communication strategies did not allow PWDs to identify their own problems whilst 62% said that the communication strategies used did not enable them to identify their own development goals. About 54% of respondents generally agreed that there was no meaningful collaboration between PWDs and other stakeholders during community development. About 58% of the respondents disagreed that the communication strategies adopted by development actors in the Municipality facilitate dialogue on how to plan the delivery of development services. Also, Table 4 shows that 59% of the respondents believed that communication strategies development actors in the Municipality use delivering community development services do not encourage frequent exchange of information among stakeholders.

Results from Table 4, many (66%) generally agreed that sometimes existing communication strategies used by development actors in Adenta Municipality serve as a barrier to PWD’s participation in the delivery of community development services. This is because development actors in the Municipality have not developed any clear communication guidelines to encourage the participation of PWDs during the delivery of development services in the communities.

The findings from the qualitative data show that there are concerns with the communication surrounding community development interventions in the Municipality. Participants felt that communication during community development is often unclear, inconsistent, and non-inclusive. This, in their view, makes it very difficult for them to know what is happening or how they can actively get involved in community development activities. They suggested that the Municipality should be more proactive in ensuring that there is a more effective communication strategy which allows all community members, including PWDs to be involved in development activities. They stated, “There should be more consultation and regular engagement with the disabled community to ensure that their perspectives and needs are taken into account.” The participants explained further,

“We think that the existing communication strategies are not effective to bring onboard the views and concerns of PWDs. We often feel excluded and neglected in community development activities because we don't receive regular information. There are no regular consultations with us.”

The participants attributed their lack of access to regular and useful information and effective consultations to poor communication strategies stakeholders in the Municipality adopt. They indicated,

“We have different experiences, needs, and priorities. We need to be consulted as individuals and as a community to ensure that our needs are properly addressed, the municipality should involve PWDs in the monitoring and evaluation of development projects to ensure that they are truly inclusive and accessible.”

The discussants suggested that a variety of communication channels such as social media, community meetings, and printed materials in accessible formats should be used by development actors to reach a wider audience, as well as provide more information about the services and resources available to PWDs. They believed the Municipality could, *“do more to raise awareness and provide information about these resources.”* Participants also highlighted the importance of timely and transparent communication to build trust and foster greater community participation. They opined that there exists some disconnect between what the various stakeholders including the Municipal Assembly say they will do and what happens on the ground. This situation often leads to frustration and mistrust in the development process. In short, they felt that there were communication challenges to their participation in community development activities in the Municipality., the existing communication strategies used by development actors in the Municipality are not very effective in improving participation among PWDs. In their views,

“Development actors need to use communication strategies which are inclusive and accessible to PWDs. This will help to improve participation and ensure that our voices are fully heard and taken into account in the development of our communities.”

In effect, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative research approaches affirm that there are communication challenges faced by PWDs during community development services in the area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this study, most of the respondents perceived the level of educational services in the Municipality as satisfactory. The finding on educational services in the Municipality is important as it will help in the realization of SDG 4 which focuses on the provision of quality education. The result further agrees with Gorman who opined that governments and local governments around the world strive to improve the provision of educational services to ensure that all children and youths have the opportunity to go to school and acquire the knowledge and skills they need to lead healthy and productive lives.⁶⁴ More than half of the respondents generally agreed that the level of social development in the Municipality was satisfactory but many of them stated that policies and programs to ensure employment creation are not satisfactory. The revelation on social development in the Municipality finds expression in the view of Sakala who maintained that social development constitutes the core of community development.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the finding on employment creation is problematic because, according to Gorman, unemployment threatens social development.⁶⁶ Again, many of the PWDs stated that measures to sustain development projects in the area are not satisfactory enough. The finding on the sustainability of development projects in the Municipality appears problematic in the face of the expectations of scholars which depict that sustaining development projects is vital if the projects are to be meaningful to the target beneficiaries.⁶⁷

Respondents were not engaged in community development projects in the Municipality. The situation was the same for all development projects including NGO-led projects, community-led projects and state-led projects. The situation in the Municipality deviates from the principle of equal rights which should be accorded to all persons including the disabled and the vulnerable in society in decision-making on matters which affect them. Gorman admonished that special positive measures should be aimed at promoting effective equality of opportunity and treatment between disabled workers and other workers should be established.⁶⁸ Kwofie et al. posit that PWDS must be engaged in community development practice at both national and local levels since their views can ensure the successful delivery of community development projects.⁶⁹ The authors further outlined personal factors such as knowledge, skills, and beliefs which PWDs possess to influence community development goals and solutions. Involving all stakeholders in identifying development solutions ensures that development solutions become more representative of the wider community.⁷⁰ Again, many of the respondents generally disagreed that development projects are PWD-friendly. This finding confirms previous research by Katja which revealed that development projects in Adenta Municipality are not friendly to PWDs.⁷¹ The disabled are a crucial component of every thriving society. This means that development projects and services undertaken by any development agency should consider the unique situation of the disabled. Steeves supports the belief that PWDs have what it takes to work with other stakeholders and actors to identify and implement a range of development activities that could meet their goals, preferences, and needs.⁷² Sakala is of the view that implementing development activities provides specific information on different development activities to enable a selection to be made.⁷³ The creation of PWD-friendly projects should cut across all projects.

⁶⁴ Gorman, "Education Infrastructure and Development ."

⁶⁵ Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

⁶⁶ U. Gorman, "Community Development as a Problem-Solving Approach," *Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2010): 7–14.

⁶⁷ David Buchanan et al., "No Going Back: A Review of the Literature on Sustaining Organizational Change," *International Journal of Management Reviews* 7, no. 3 (2005): 189–205; Shannon Wiltsey Stirman et al., "The Sustainability of New Programs and Innovations: A Review of the Empirical Literature and Recommendations for Future Research," *Implementation Science: IS* 7 (2012): 17.

⁶⁸ Gorman, "Community Development as a Problem-Solving Approach."

⁶⁹ I. Kwofie, M. A. Tagoe, and R. M. Yawson, "Representing Persons with Disabilities in Community Development Practice in Ghana," *Community Development Journal* 49, no. 1 (2014).

⁷⁰ Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

⁷¹ Katja, *Development and Disability: A Case Study of Adenta Municipality*.

⁷² L. Steeves, *Developing Disability-Competent Community Partnerships: A Guide for Community-Based Organizations* (University of Kansas, Research and Training Center on Independent Living., 2003).

⁷³ Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

Buildings, projects, and services should be designed in such a way that all PWDs can safely access and utilize these projects and services without difficulties.⁷⁴

Most PWDs who took part in the study saw their participation in assessing community development needs as low. Assessment of the development needs of a community is usually done to advocate, train, and build capacities of multiple stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of development projects. The participation of PWDs in assessing the development needs of their communities empowers them and their families. It also enables them to demand the rights and entitlements due them in respect of development services.⁷⁵ Also, many respondents saw their participation in identifying development problems in the Municipality as generally low.

The finding on the low participation of PWDs in identifying development problems in the Municipality contradicts the contention of Chenoweth and Stehlik.⁷⁶ The authors argued that it is essential for PWDs to contribute to identifying development problems because it enables them to add their voices to the development problems right from the planning stage. People with disabilities are just as capable in many respects as those without disability. They may also have special skills including the ability to think creatively and innovatively. If they are included in the development process, they would offer a fresh perspective that no other people may have considered. In this way, they would have the ability to identify development problems in the communities they belong to.⁷⁷

Moreover, many respondents said that their participation in defining development goals in the area was generally low. The result is not very surprising because, for decades, a notable critique of development agents has been that PWDs have had a very limited voice and less information in the conceptualization of community development services.⁷⁸ The finding strengthens that of Kokor who found that most PWDs do not get the chance to define their own development goals.⁷⁹ Lang is not surprised by this occurrence because, historically, the execution of community development projects is often controlled by professionals who manage the projects.⁸⁰ This revelation further departs from the assertions of Chenoweth and Stehlik who believed that PWDs should be involved in identifying development goals and solutions.⁸¹ The importance of meaningful participation of all stakeholders in identifying development goals and solutions has been reinforced severally by scholars.⁸²

Most of the PWDs said that communication during community development practice in the Municipality was done through representatives. This means that they only communicate and are also communicated to through representatives during community development practice in the Municipality. Again, most respondents stated that communication during the delivery of community development was only about information giving. UNICEF proposed that communication channels must be selected to fit the participants and the communication task; analysis of these channels will help to prevent the use of a communication channel for the wrong reasons.⁸³ It is therefore important to consider the characteristics of available communication channels before applying them to a target audience. Mefalopulos posited that several factors should be considered before a specific channel is used.⁸⁴ These factors include the objectives of the communication intervention, that is, whether the communication is to raise awareness, for advocacy, or for mobilization purposes. Characteristics of the audiences- this looks at the literacy rates

⁷⁴ R. J. Sweis, "Donor Dependence, Donor Proliferation, and the Search for Aid Effectiveness in Africa," . . *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (2011): 383–403.

⁷⁵ World Health Organization, *World Report on Disability*.

⁷⁶ L. Chenoweth and D. Stehlik, "Community Development in an Uncertain World.," *Community Development Journal* 39, no. 2 (2004): 97–106.

⁷⁷ Gorman, "Community Development as a Problem-Solving Approach."

⁷⁸ Werner Scholtz, "The Anthropocentric Approach to Sustainable Development in the National Environmental Management Act and the Constitution of South Africa," *Journal of South African Law/Tydskrif Vir Die Suid-Afrikaanse Reg* 2005, no. 1 (2005): 69–85.

⁷⁹ W. Kokor, "Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Development Projects: A Challenge for Social Workers in Ghana," in *Disabled Persons and Development*, ed. F. Yuen (Hong Kong: Asian Institute of Disability and Development, 2001), 93–104.

⁸⁰ R. Lang, "Creating a Community of Support: Services for People with Disabilities from Multicultural and Poverty Backgrounds," *Journal of Rehabilitation* 66, no. 3 (2000): 4–11.

⁸¹ Chenoweth and Stehlik, "Participatory Development and the Empowerment of the Disabled: A Case Study from Nepal."

⁸² P. Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide* (World Bank Publications, 2009); Odoom, "Relevance of Cocoa Life Project Interventions to Community Development in Rural Ghana: Exploring the Views of Beneficiaries in Wassa East District."

⁸³ UNICEF, "Communication for Development: A Practical Guide," United Nations Children's Fund, 2008, https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Communication_for_Development.pdf.

⁸⁴ Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2008.

and the preferred information sources. Additionally, respondents generally stated that the existing communication strategies did not allow PWDs to identify their problems whilst many of them said that the communication strategies used did not enable them to identify their own development goals. More than half of respondents generally agreed that there was no meaningful collaboration between PWDs and other stakeholders during community development. The finding on poor collaboration goes contrary to the previous studies.⁸⁵ Gorman opines that to ensure sustainable development services there is the need for meaningful collaboration among all stakeholders.⁸⁶ In furtherance, Sakala posits that community development requires effective collaboration.⁸⁷ Collaboration in community development ensures there is inclusive decision-making and the allocation of human, physical, and financial resources.⁸⁸

Further, many respondents disagreed that the communication strategies adopted by development actors in the Municipality facilitate dialogue on how to plan and implement development services. This falls short based on the previous research which found that effective dialogue helps in the effective delivery of development services.⁸⁹ Meaningful communication in development services requires proper dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. Effective dialogue is about listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. In dialogue development, actors communicate with stakeholders, and not the other way round. Dialogue is a two-way communication that aims to share knowledge and perspectives in view of building trust and coming to mutual understanding.⁹⁰ Finally, most respondents believed that communication strategies used by development actors in the Municipality when delivering community development services did not encourage frequent exchange of information among stakeholders. All effective communication strategies for the delivery of development services should encourage frequent exchange of information among actors.⁹¹ Communication strategies would not encourage frequent exchange of information if community development projects do not strongly depend on the quality of communication between the different team players.⁹² Effective flow of information is one of the development project success factors.⁹³

Policy Recommendations

The findings of this study offer implications for policy decisions. It should be stated that PWDS need to fully participate in the development of their communities because they are a critical part of the human resource base in the Municipality. To achieve this requires several measures. First, development actors including the Assembly and NGOS should consider the use of multiple communication channels and methods based on the unique characteristics of PWDS. The use of a variety of communication channels and techniques will help address the concerns of PWDs who may have diverse communication challenges in community development practice. Second, development actors in the Adenta Municipality need to consider relying on traditional and modern communication technologies which are innovative for effective communication in development practice. This should be done by paying attention to the use of inclusive and empowering language in communications. Development actors in the Municipality need to team up and find innovative ways to effectively involve PWDs in the design and implementation of community development projects. They need to design clear communication guidelines that are very inclusive, dialogic and engaging to bring about improved participation of PWDs in community development services. Third, development actors in the Municipality should find innovative ways to create awareness

⁸⁵ Gorman, “Community Development as a Problem-Solving Approach”; Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

⁸⁶ Gorman, “Community Development as a Problem-Solving Approach.”

⁸⁷ Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

⁸⁸ Sakala, *Disability and Decent Work in Zambia: A Review of Literature*.

⁸⁹ Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2009.

⁹⁰ Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*, 2009; D. Odoom, “Understanding Development Communication: A Review of Selected Literature,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2020): 37–48.

⁹¹ M. Hoezen, N. O. E. Olsson, and J. Lilliesköld, *Communication and Coordination in Construction Projects* (Stockholm: Royal Institute of Technology, 2008).

⁹² M. Hoezen and B. de Vries, “Communication in Construction Projects,” *Construction Management and Economics* 26, no. 4 (2008): 423–34.

⁹³ M. Amado et al., “Communication, Coordination and Cooperation in Multidisciplinary Project Teams,” in *3rd International Conference on Construction and Project Management (ICCPM)*, 2012, 27–30.

about community development initiatives among PWDs and encourage them to help in mobilizing diverse resources for executing the initiatives. This will enable PWDs to actively contribute their quotas for the development of their communities. Fourth, PWDs in the Municipality are encouraged to unite to have a greater voice to demand their full participation in development projects in their communities. Fifth, development actors should pay increased attention to measures which promote employment creation and alternative livelihoods in addition to providing development projects which are friendly to PWDs. Finally, development actors in the area should invest more in the use of development communication approaches and methodologies for their employees to enable them to execute their services to the satisfaction of all beneficiaries. Particularly, training on participatory communication and stakeholder management techniques will be helpful in the delivery of development services in the Municipality.

CONCLUSION

It is important to underscore that PWDs are an essential part of the human resource base of every functioning society. They possess very useful knowledge, skills, and other dispositions which can be harnessed for promoting development and social change in their communities. In this study, PWDs saw educational and health services provided by development actors in the Adenta Municipality as generally satisfactory. However, they believed that there are no satisfactory development initiatives actors have undertaken in the communities to promote alternative livelihood in the Municipality coupled with inadequate measures to sustain development projects in the area. Engagement of PWDs in development services in their communities was generally poor in the Municipality. Also, community development projects were generally not PWD-friendly in the Municipality. Moreover, PWDs had low participation in assessing community development needs and identifying community development problems and goals. One-way directional form of communication which emanates from the modernization paradigm continued to dominate during the delivery of development services in communities within the Municipality. The existing communication strategies were seen as not allowing PWDs to meaningfully participate in mobilizing resources for undertaking community development projects among other activities at the implementation stage of development in their communities. Also, no meaningful collaboration occurred between PWDs and other stakeholders during community development services. In effect, the existing communication strategies hindered dialogic and inclusive interactions among development stakeholders. This situation portends a major setback in terms of the efforts to promote effective design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development services in the Municipality. Based on the results of the study, key recommendations have been provided to guide policy decisions and actions among development actors and other stakeholders.

LIMITATIONS

The researchers acknowledge the limitations of this work. For example, the lack of readily available reliable data on the number of PWDs in the Municipality made it very difficult to randomize the selection of the respondents. This also resulted in a relatively limited number of PWDs who were involved in the study. Further, the use of descriptive statistical tools could limit the rigorousness of the analysis used in the study. Finally, the non-inclusion of the perspectives of development actors in the Municipality is likely to bias the findings. Nevertheless, the findings are useful to help trigger reflections on policy decisions on concerns of PWDs in community development in particular and development service provision, in general, within the Municipality.

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