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The Story of a Village: A Case Study in Strategic Planning at Enyinndakurom, Ankaful, Central Region, Ghana

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Abstract

The development of a strategic plan for an African village can seem a daunting task, especially if the village is one created from diverse beginnings and different cultural origins, where ethnicity, language, and custom are not homogenous. In this article, the authors explore the outcomes of the traditional top-down approach. They contrast this with a collaborative approach, bottom up, and propose the use of management strategies more commonly found in an industrial environment. Deploying a case study approach the development and implementation of a strategic plan for a post-leprosy rehabilitation village near Elmina in Ghana, West Africare described and evaluated.

Learned helplessness is often an outcome of intervention aid. By approaching a project with a top-down approach, the dependency of a community can become ingrained. However, a partnership approach with the villagers is hoped to engender a sense of ownership in the community, motivating optimism. The authors believe that the possibility of engagement with the village is greatly strengthened using a collaborative approach and that this is key to a successful outcome. The concept, strategy and initial results, as well as the ongoing sustainability of the strategy, are described. The underlying hypothesis is that by empowering an impoverished and disenfranchised community with tried and trusted, modern management methods, engagement, as well as success, can be achieved.

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Keywords

Strategic Plan, Key Stakeholders, brain-storming; Delphi technique, MoSCoW; bottom-up; learned helplessness

Introduction

Enyinndakurom, the village in our story, adjacent to Ankaful Village, near Cape Coast in Central Region, Ghana is an unusual village in that its *raison d'ẽtre* is leprosy. More than 60% of the families living there have had one or more members undergo treatment for Hansen's disease at the Ankaful Leprosarium. This has resulted in a loss of social function, which has inhibited the growth of the village significantly. The village is poor but is probably not unduly so when compared to many other Ghanaian villages. In some respects, it is better off regarding facilities in that it has clean running water, electricity, paved roads, and other amenities. A lack of self-belief and a deep-rooted concept of isolation is probably more significant in the air of "acquired helplessness" that is the public face of the village. Seligman (1996, p. 7) discusses the concept of learned helplessness in his early work, stating that: "*Pessimism is an entrenched habit of mind that has sweeping and disastrous consequences: depressed mood, resignation, underachievement, and even unexpectedly poor physical health.*" The problems encountered by the villagers are similar to those experienced by others in a disadvantaged community and present the same air of lack of hope and allied poverty. William Easterly observed succinctly "*poverty is a complicated tangle of political, social, historical, institutional, and technological factors*" (Easterly, 2006, p. 6).

These concepts together with existing theory on poverty and international aid will be reviewed in section two to providing some understanding of the problems faced by the village. A brief description of the village itself will be given in section three. This will be followed by the methodology in which the issue is described and addressed, and the different management tools used in the process are specified. Finally, the outcome of the process will be discussed.

1. Existing Theory

The concept of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975) is a fundamental consideration in intervention as an aid in whatever form and helps the understanding of the inability of some to move beyond this state. Schuman (1999) noted, "*an individual who believes he has no control over the desired objective will be unlikely to make an effort to achieve that objective.*" By introducing a sense of dependency within a person or a community, motivation to succeed can be impaired and become part of a cycle of helplessness. Dixon and Frolova (2011) found that "*The existentialist explanation for this lack of will to take control of life is that those in existential poverty do not have an authentic and, thus, fulfilling, a way of life.*" Inheriting, developing or having an ingrained concept of being poor existentially thereby losing hope for a better outcome is far worse than the fact of being financially poor. Whether this frame of mind can be reset or not is key to "successful" aid or intervention. It is heartening to note that Seligman (1995; 2006 p. 16) refined his thinking over the years and formulated a different approach to helplessness and depression in his work on Learned Optimism. In this, he offers approaches to change our thinking and not to accept the pessimistic outcomes we have believed previously. Luthens, (2002) captures this outlook and states that "*self-efficacy/confidence, hope, optimism, and resiliency are collectively referred to as positive psychological capital.*"

Ellerman (2005) addresses the issues raised by World Bank Aid in developing countries. In the section he calls "The Indirect Approach" he revisits McGregor's Theory Y, outlining a mechanism by which both sides can work together to formulate a solution that recognizes that a person "*can achieve his own goals best by directing his efforts towards the objectives of the enterprise*." Fundamental to his thinking is the idea that "*When the doers have the will, there is a way; the best role for the helpers is to indirectly enable and expedite that way, not to try and substitute their will for that of the doers*." Working within a community, building on their strengths, working with realistic and achievable outcomes may be more successful as a sustainable strategy.

POVERTY AND PERCEPTION

The poverty trap in Africa is often defined by a shortage of productive capital, particularly in rural areas where a large percentage of the population lives. With all of these interconnecting sectors to tackle, it is not surprising that poverty has yet ceased to exist. Intellectuals have concluded there are numerous sets of reasons and traps that perpetuate the poor from achieving growth. The effects and constraints of poverty are discussed by Banerjee and Duflo (2007), who comment on the difficulties and lack of opportunity for those caught in a poverty trap, with a lack of economic security to enable them to break out of this situation, or even to imagine that there could be a way out. This lack of self-belief is a deep-rooted constraint. Sen (1999) states that "*poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely a lowness of incomes, which is the standard criterion of identification of poverty*."

Traditionally the response to poverty is that financial aid is the sine qua non to help developing communities, i.e. that such groups can neither function nor prosper without aid. Over time the concept of aid and its effectiveness gradually changed and the transformational effect of aid came into question. Riddell (2014) asks the question "Does foreign Aid Really work?" He notes that "the historical distinction between emergency aid and development is nowhere near as clear-cut as it was" but "that for every person who dies as a result of a natural disaster, 200 people die from diseases of poverty. "

CHANGING VIEWS ON AID INTERVENTION

Easterly (2008) discusses specific problems and tough solutions. Riddell (2007; 2014) however poses new questions, asking whether these economies would have made more significant progress without any aid intervention. He emphasizes that all these questions have their importance and that all need to be addressed. "*The strongest case for aid will be made if all three can be answered affirmatively; if aid projects achieve their immediate objectives and these can be sustained; if aid contributes to an aggregate fall in poverty levels, and to faster growth and sustained development; and if aid-giving rather than adding to the systemic problems which constrain a recipient's long-term development prospects, helps to reduce them.*" (Riddell, 2004). Mwenda, (2012), gives his different perspective on aid to Africa:

> **We need to reframe the challenge that is facing Africa, from a challenge of despair to a challenge of hope. That is 'worth creation.' The challenge facing all those who are interested in Africa is not the challenge of reducing poverty. It should be a challenge of creating wealth.**

This outlook fits well with the reframing of learned helplessness, fostering dependency, to a more positive and constructive outlook, that of collaboration to find a way forward.

The "one-size fits all" top-down strategy of pouring aid into developing countries is, at last, being questioned. As long ago as 1945, Austrian economist and philosopher Hayek argued against centralized planning and noted that there are different kinds of knowledge, finding that a top-down approach can overlook local knowledge, which can reduce the effectiveness of applied knowledge.

Lewis (2002), discusses the implication of cultural elements in the third sector (i.e. the voluntary or not-for-profit sector) and indicates a need for greater anthropological research. He observes that third sector management is an underdeveloped field and that it needs to engage with established and emerging themes within the wider organization theory.

The perceived need for aid continues to have the appearance of a bottomless pit. One controversial spokesperson is Ghanaian economist, Ayittey (2006), who questions the undemocratic and illegitimate rulers in different African states and attributes many of the problems to a failure in governance. This view is shared by Calderisi (2006) who blames some of the problems on the African nations' internal structures, advocating a different approach and proposes looking to the countries themselves to find workable solutions. Collier (2008) cites internal struggles and poor governance as part of the problem. He also suggests that rebellions are encouraged by natural resource wealth and that coups are encouraged by aid, and so looks to international laws and charters to help implement workable solutions.

Moyo (2010), questions the fundamental effectiveness of aid and attributes a lot of the failure of aid to market failure. Reviewing her book, Collier (2009) observes that cutting aid may not be the best strategy, rather than aid should "strengthen its potential for 'governance conditionality'; aid agencies should insist on both transparent budgeting and free and fair elections."

Another challenger, Sachs, (the World Post; 2009) also disagrees with Moyo and issued the challenge (2005) of ending poverty and offers some statistics indicating positive change, as a step towards reducing poverty worldwide. This is refuted by Easterley (2001, 2007 2014 who challenges the ideas proposed on the poverty trap indicating that the cited statistics do not fully report the facts, omitting the growth in some nations and the success stories that are overlooked in the pursuit of aid donations. He challenges the views of Sachs, calling for aid agencies to be accountable for their actions. Figure 1 (after Easterly 2003) paints a stark contrast between economic growth and financial aid, which is an interesting graphic but is in itself limited in that it lacks real information. Burnside and Dollar (2000) reviewed the correlation between aid policy and growth and found that, on average, aid had little impact on growth but that it had a more positive impact on growth in good policy environments. Again good governance appears to be essential.

Easterly (2003) refers to the classic Samaritan's dilemma, whereby the recipient believes that future poverty will call forth future aid. This top-down approach can indeed stifle innovation and development as well as economic growth, building a dependency and foster acquired helplessness. In an earlier paper Easterly (2001) tests the concept of the "financing gap" model in which aid should be seen to improve investment and growth. This is based on two factors (i) that foreign aid should increase investment and (ii) investment needs to increase economic growth. Riddell (2014) quantifies this stating "a sustained contribution of the aid of about 10% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) raises GDP levels by only about 1%." Glennie (2008) evaluates the rise and fall of financial aid before and after the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and notes "today's aid is increasingly focused on short-term targets." In many post-conflict situations, aid comes too soon according to Collier

(2008), who looks at aid as a component of growth, as part of the slow work of building an economy. In an earlier paper (Collier and Dollar, 2002), Collier states that "the poverty impact of aid could be roughly doubled if donors made use of research findings on the impact of aid in deciding their aid allocation." Williamson (2009) states "The top quarter of aid recipients… received 17 percent of their GDP in aid over those 42 years, yet also had near-zero per capita growth" and goes on to say that "foreign aid alters incentives for both governments and citizens."

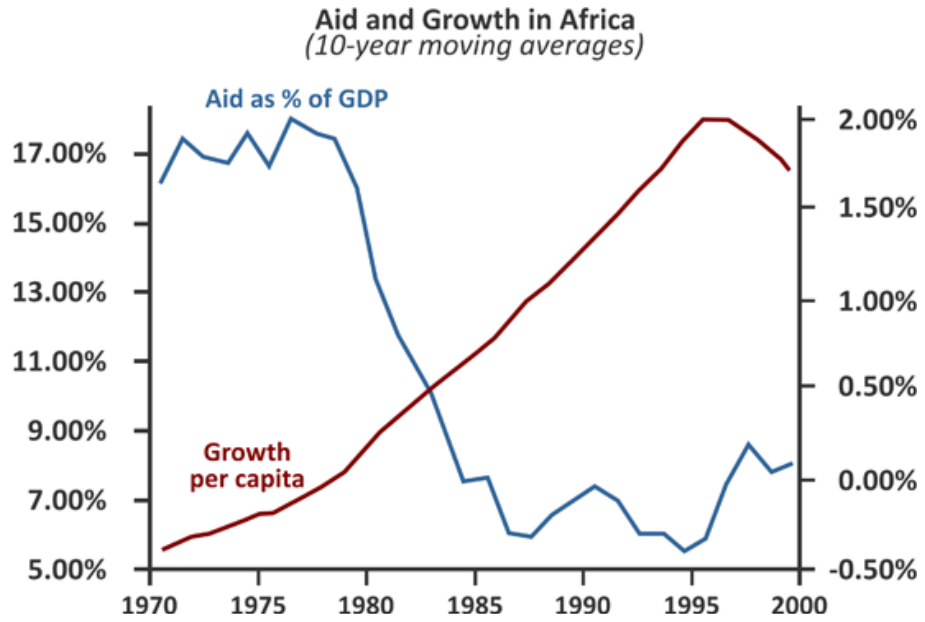

Figure 1 Diagram (after Easterly, 2003) showing a sharp decline in growth per capita against increasing aid as a percentage of GDP.

CAN A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH INFLUENCE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOME

Hayek's model of inclusion of local knowledge has shown that if local people are involved in their development, sustainable development can be achieved (Allen and Lachapelle, 2012; Kretzman and McKnight, 1993). However, in past decades, different development aid agencies have historically tended to implement a top-down approach, which can exclude the involvement and participation of local people and in turn foster a "dependency syndrome." Lekorwe and Mpabanga (2007) state that good management practice, clear thinking, efficient use of resources, good accountability and responsibility are all key to an improved and more sustainable model. This agrees well with Sen (1999 *ibid*). In recent years NGO's have begun to focus on improving their efficiencies as well as continuously promoting sustainable community development (Nikkhah and Bin Redzuan 2010; Silayo, 2010). Jacobs and Wilford (2007) discuss the approach of NGOs to stated values such as "empowering the marginalized" and "participation" and find that it is not usually managed systematically. Using a reasoned and structured approach would surely improve outcomes.

Being driven by the concept of purely acquiring financial aid is also seen to be limiting. De Ree and Nilessen (2009) state that the fundamental argument for aid donation is to improve economic conditions for growth. Collier and Hoeffler (1998; 2002; 2007) have examined the effect of aid in post-conflict situations and its effect on growth and go on to argue

that "increasing income per capita is expected to decrease the probability of conflict when economic alternatives for potential rebels to evolve and improve, while bearing in mind that about 40% of foreign aid transfers into military expenditure."

All of the above issues and concerns should temper the approach towards implementing improvement projects in developing countries. Pouring money into "first world" top-down solutions is not the answer; neither is implementing quick-fix solutions for non-core issues. Taking the time and effort to identify and understand the true high-priority issues and then to develop inclusive and comprehensive solutions for these issues offers the best probability of successful implementation and ongoing sustainability. A bottom-up approach using tried and tested project-management and strategic tools, while being mindful of the social landscape, can deliver outcomes where the needs of all key stakeholders are met for the long term.

Jarzabkowski (2004 p. 540) recognized the strength and weakness of this, contrasting the more entrenched possibilities of a traditional outlook with the possibility of change when this is addressed. Jarzabkowski (*ibid* p. 537) notes that "the social nature of communities constitutes an adaptive learning opportunity. Communities that have a largely stable membership, with limited external networks and few crises or problems, are liable to engage in a recursive practice, while the converse situation promotes the adaptive practice."

Different researchers have begun to explore the issues raised by gaps, whereby organizational action can be determined by the local context and accepted the practice. Vaaro and Whittington (2012) outline different strategies based on SAP (Strategy as Practice). They discuss how strategy-making (termed *practices*) is enabled and constrained by prevailing organizational and societal practices. In so doing, they strive to bridge the gap between (i) the approach of practice and (ii) sociological theories of practice, examining the links between social theories and strategic management, while observing that SAP has not fully explored the broader societal or institutional context in which these activities take place. Recognized strategy tools can be shaped "*both by social and political dynamics between actors and by a strategy tool's design properties*" (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2009 p. 224). Kemmis and McTaggart (2007) state that "participatory research is an alternative philosophy of social research" with emphasis on "shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems and an orientation towards community action." Bergold and Thomas (2012) find that it is "*a demanding process, evolving when two spheres of action – science and practice – meet, interact and develop an understanding for each other*."

This formulates the question again "can this approach work and where is the evidence?" Projects such as the BOMA project in Kenya show clearly that local engagement combined with management tools can work. It takes time and commitment, but it succeeds. The programme, Rural Entrepreneur Access Project (REAP), introduced in 2005, uses a six-step process and combines grant aid with a long mentoring and training programme to empower women in local communities. Its success speaks for itself.

The perceived increasing reliance of the villagers and their extended families on the Padre Pio Centre was seen as unsustainable but more importantly unhealthy for the long-term wellbeing of the village. Could the collected wisdom of different research and experience be brought together to address the problems of a small village? Could modern management tools engage sufficiently with the community to enable them to take control of their outcomes?

2. Background/Case Context

The village of Enyinndakurom is situated adjacent to the village of Ankaful near the town of Elmina in the Central Region of Ghana. While not in itself a traditional village, it still adopts many of the local social *mores*. Still, it is a village with a difference as it grew from a "squatters camp" from the 1950s, based in an old army camp adjacent to the Ankaful Leprosarium, where leprosy (Hansen's Disease) sufferers lived while undergoing treatment. It is atypical as a village in that it is a somewhat artificial community rather than a group that grew naturally over time. The main language used in the village is Akan (mainly Twi and Fante), but it is not the first language of many of the villagers. English is the *lingua franca* used mainly by the younger people, as it is taught in school.

The uniting precept of the "village" was the stigma and suffering of leprosy, rather than the more organic growth of a traditional village. Many came a great distance to the area, under great hardship, traveling from countries such as Mali and Togo, as well as different regions in Ghana.

The PPRC is made up of (i) St. Clare's, Long-term Nursing Care Centre for leprosy sufferers, (ii) St. Joseph's Family Support Centre for disadvantaged children (iii) St Elizabeth's Family Support Centre for children with Special Needs and (iv) Enyinndakurom. The first three units are located at the Ahotokurom campus about 3.5 km from Enyinndakurom, as the crow flies.

Funding for building new housing at Enyinndakurom was obtained from the British National Lotteries and Charity Board through 'Friends of Ahotokurom', a UK based charity. It became a "self-build" project, where tenants actively participated in the building of their new village, which now boasts 80 houses, a community center, some shops, a corn mill, and paved roads. It also has land available for small farm plots so that tenants can raise their food as well as some cash crops. The change in outlook at this time was marked by changing the name of the settlement from "Camp" to Enyinndakurom, meaning "a place beyond our dreams," reflecting the hope for the future. Almost twenty years later the landscape has changed in the village with a new generation of young people with new expectations of life.

Enyinndakurom, a village with a multi-cultural diverse community, with leprosy as a common thread, now needs to move past its acquired dependency and plan for the future. Like any village there have been many success stories, with family members moving on with their lives, achieving their potential in different fields. Many of the original "squatters" have died or are reaching old age, and so the profile of villagers has changed significantly. The extended family members come and go, with a primary remit of caring for the former leprosy sufferers in their later years. The Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre offers financial support in the form of allowances to the leprosy survivors as well as help with medical problems. It also strives to support the community in various aspects of daily life.

For several years, however, the perception of Enyinndakurom as an entity was negative in that as the older village leaders died or became more feeble, there was no strong leadership to take over. The current elders had grown up in an atmosphere of acquired helplessness and depended, and at times, almost demanded services from the center. This contrasted with the enthusiasm of earlier years and more significantly colored the outlook of some of the next generation.

Following its most recent Strategic Plan, PPRC is looking at its sustainability and sees a need to change its thinking and its approach. This is driven in part by financial change as funding support becomes more difficult in a harsh economic environment. This more strategic

outlook is in some ways a new departure for the Centre as it has seen itself before this in the more traditional role of development – supporting needs as they were identified. Now it acknowledges the need to plan for the future and to work with the village community to help them focus on moving towards greater independence and self-reliance.

Many of the young people in the village have successfully engaged with education and have looked outside the village to find jobs and settle down. Others were less willing to engage, and this was the issue that appeared to be at the root of other problems experienced in the village. The disenfranchised villagers appear to be caught in the trap of acquired helplessness and are unwilling or unable to see a way forward. Engaging with the villagers, clearly identifying their issues and working with them in a collaborative and participatory project rather than prescribing a solution seemed to offer the only possibility of success. Key to the engagement with the village was the enduring relationship of one of the authors with both the village and its people and with the Padre Pio Centre since its inception. Such a fundamental knowledge, empathy understanding and ability to speak many of the required languages (English and Akan) gave a unique opportunity to evaluate both a bottom-up, (as a local villager), and a top-down (as Director of the Centre), overview simultaneously.

3. Methodology and its Underlying Precepts

As noted by Glennie (2008), global changes in the priorities of major donors towards goal-oriented projects, which focus more on the short term at the expense of the long-term, have tended to curtail long-term planning and development. A fall in funding from long-term benefactors at the Padre Pio Centre has meant that a more strategic, longer-term outlook was required. These global and local factors made it unavoidable for the PPRC Management Team not to address long-term sustainability.

The PPRC Mission Statement underpins the desire to offer a haven while at the same time empowering people to be self-sufficient as much as possible and encouraged to take charge of their outcomes, building optimism and challenging the idea of dependency. The fundamental thinking was that a bottom-up approach was the best way to engage with the village so that they would feel ownership for both the issues and the outcomes, thus breaking the cycle of dependency.

Developing a strategic plan within the village context was seen as the best method, applying tested management techniques. In this manner, the villagers themselves would be asked to participate and to formulate their concerns. A perceived increasing population of young males with learned helplessness and a lack of willingness to engage within the village or to seek a life outside was seen as an issue. Whether or not this was a perception or a reality needed to be identified. A yearly census for many years was revealing interesting information, and this proved invaluable.

There is often a strong temptation, as soon as a list of issues and concerns has been drafted, to jump into solution-mode, i.e., start offering or even implementing the first world, quick-fix solutions to the most visible or vocal concerns. The precepts of participatory research were more appealing in that they would involve the villagers closely, be bottom-up rather than top-down, and at the same time allow the type of iterative process that would enable continuous refinement rather than a single fix. It also meant that the villagers themselves would identify what they saw as issues and concerns rather than those identified by others. The process could be more fluid, open, and responsive and this helped frame the scope of the project. Ellerman's (2005) 5-step expansion on McGregor's Theory Y fits well to the model with the concept of

the "helper" and the "doer," in this instance the helper being the external agency and the doer being the villagers. The clear and defined steps in Six Sigma/DMAICR, described below, was seen as an objective approach, without preconceptions.

Photo 1 Leprosy Survivors – in St. Clare's Nursing Home

SIX-SIGMA/DMAICR

The Six-Sigma/DMAICR approach to problem-solving recommends strict adherence to the data-driven, problem-focused sequence of Define-Measure-Analyse-Improve-Control-Report. It is acceptable however to start work on the next phase, as shown in Figure 1 before the preceding phase is fully completed, e.g., starting 'Measure' before 'Define' is fully finished, using an iterative approach. It must always be borne in mind however that 'Improve' is step-4 and should only be started after due-diligence is paid to the three preceding steps of Define, Measure and Analyse.

Once a strategy was identified (outlined in Table 1), steps were defined and a project plan was formulated. The goals were typical of any project "*something that "will bring about change in some fashion," or something, "that has a defined starting point (A) and reaches the desired goal (B).*" Time was a critical factor in that only a few weeks were available for the team to work together on site. The physical constraints involved in engaging with the village were considerable as consultation with all stakeholders had to happen within the same timeframe. Communication was a challenge as English was not spoken by all villagers. The DMAICR sequence gave a clear and defined path to follow.

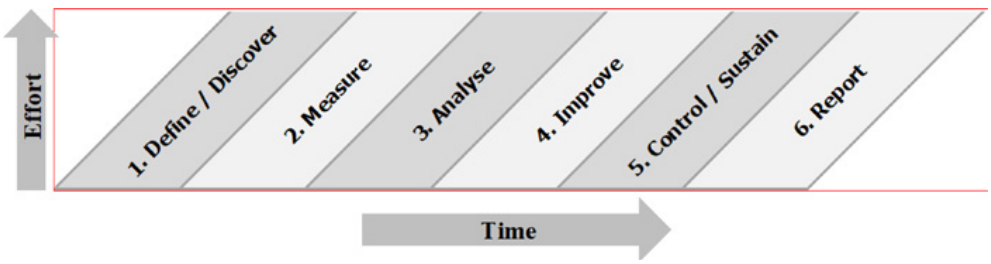

Figure 1B DMAICR Sequence

Table 1 Main Tools & Techniques used – DMAICR Sequence

#	Technique	DMAICR Phase
1	Census & Demographics Analysis	Define /Measure /Analyse
2	MOSCOW Analysis	Define
3	Stakeholder Analysis	Define/Analyse
4	Stakeholder Consultation	Define/Analyse
5	Strategic-Planning Silent-Brainstorming (Delphi) Pareto-Principle	Define /Measure /Analyse
6	Open-Forum - Town-Hall Meeting	Improve
7	Income & Employment Workshops	Improve
8	Leadership Workshop	Improve

The main issue at this point is not about being fast or slow but about paying due-diligence to ensure that the key stakeholders understand and agree on the fundamental issues at stake. This approach has been used successfully to solve complex problems in the commercial and industrial world for more than twenty years.

The MoSCoW Analysis, (Brennan 2009), was used to define and manage the scope of the effort. Scope management is a key part of successfully delivering improvement projects; projects with the poorly managed scope are more likely to fail. As the acronym, MoSCoW, implies, activities are variously attributed to the categories of Must-do, Should-do, Could-do, and Won't-do.

Stakeholder Analysis, as outlined by Freeman (1984) and further developed by Mitchell et al. (1997), is crucial when a project involves a large number of disparate entities with different and possibly conflicting perspectives and agendas – often unstated. This was the case in Enyinndakurom, which was far removed from a commercial project. The process required comprehensive Stakeholder Analysis, with due regard to pitfalls to be avoided, and is well described by Ramirez (1999) and Chevalier (2001).

This approach was effective in broadening the process to capture and categorize all stakeholders irrespective of their perceived relevance to the project. As noted above, essential stakeholders are often overlooked or omitted as too much focus is placed on the most vocal or visible groups involved. This can lead to exclusion, disengagement and project disruption. The villagers of Enyinndakurom are the primary stakeholders or beneficiaries but for the project to succeed it was important to engage appropriately with all of the stakeholders.

The worst-case scenario, to be avoided if at all possible, is where one or more group of 'Stakeholders' is omitted or overlooked. The group may then emerge to disrupt, delay or derail the project. In the case of Enyinndakurom, there was a large number of stakeholders with multiple unstated agendas and perspectives. Therefore, it was necessary to do a thorough analysis of the stakeholder situation. The primary aim was to identify and properly categorize all of the stakeholders and then engage them appropriately in helping to define and then solve the main problems.

The Strategic Framework as outlined in Figure 2 was used as the overall architecture for development of the 'Strategic Plan' for the village. Throughout the process, the Strategy Development Team was working towards the ultimate goal of a shortlist of agreed 'Improvement Initiatives' in keeping with Richard Rummelt's assertion that "Strategy is a total waste of time – unless it results in action" (Rummelt, 2011).

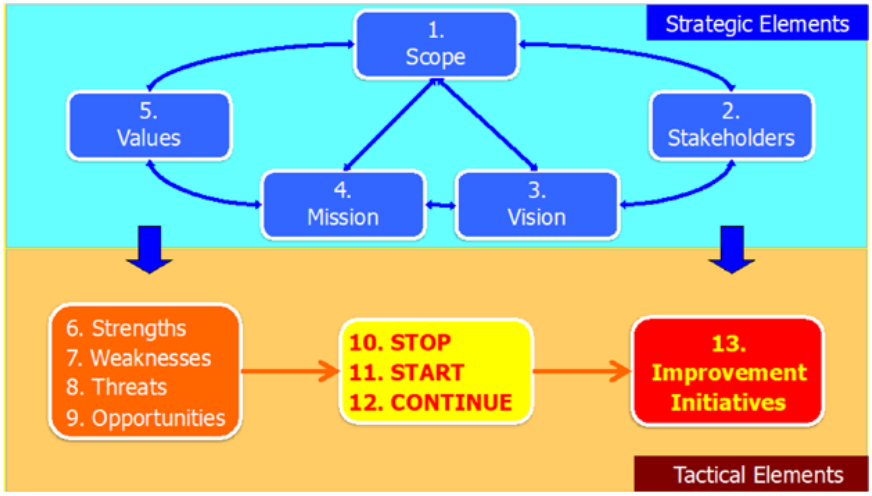

Figure 2 Strategic Framework

Silent brainstorming, also known as the 'Delphi Technique,' as developed by RAND in the 1960s, was used to encourage each participant to identify and declare their best ideas on each question and to fully engage in the voting process (Oosthuizen, 2014). Each numbered section in Figure 2, was treated as a discrete silent-brainstorming session and the Strategy Development Team worked through the entire framework in the given numerical order.

The main advantages of the Delphi-Technique, as compared to traditional (non-silent) 'Brain-storming' are that:

1. It is faster, more efficient and much more effective.
2. Everyone gets heard (i.e., gives their inputs & votes) – no-one gets ignored, shouted down or offended.
3. There is a fast and efficient (democratic) voting process to evaluate and prioritize the total list of inputs and ideas.
4. The output from each session is a short, prioritized list of the most-relevant ideas – approximately 20% of the ideas get 80% of the votes (Pareto Principle) wasteful, and time-consuming debate and discussion are kept to a minimum.
5. It is ideal for a bottom approach in that it is demonstrably inclusive.

The fact that the process quickly produces an agreed and prioritized short-list of points for each step is invaluable and could not be done in the available timeframe without the Delphi Technique. This prioritized output is very much in keeping with the 'Pareto Principle' (Bunkley, 2008), whereby it has been shown that you must start by addressing the top ~20% of issues that typically cause ~80% of the problems; otherwise you waste a lot of time and effort and don't solve the core problems.

Results

As the village at Enyinndakurom is one of the main outreach activities of the Centre, its sustainability was identified as a significant issue in the PPRC 2013 Strategic Plan. Many core issues are identified in Table 2. Many of these can be directly or indirectly attributed to an environment of learned helplessness, where group decision-making, for example, is almost non-existent, reflected in the "lack of ability to address these issues."

Table 2 Key Issues and Concerns identified

#	Issues / Concerns
1	Excessive dependency on allowances and hand-outs
2	Antisocial behaviour – especially the young males
3	Lack of a functioning leadership structure in the village
4	Low education attainment
5	Low self-esteem
6	High unemployment
7	A sense of hopelessness & stigma
8	**Lack of ability to address these issues**

Probable challenges to the application include:

1. lack of a functioning traditional "elders" (leadership/management) structure
2. lack of a vocal platform, especially for younger people (communication)
3. lack of a decision-making process or forum
4. uncertain validity of status of different groups, e.g., former leprosy sufferers vs. relatives vs. non-relatives
5. energy and interest levels of different groups (motivation)
6. the education level of the participants (ability to read and write)
7. a large number of young people, especially single males
8. "quarrelsome" nature of many of the villagers

Photo 2 Manual Pedal Cycle – Enyinndakurom Village

From a census carried out in 2013, it was found that residents under 20 years of age accounted for slightly more than 50% of the population, while males under 20 accounted for approximately 30% (Table 3 below). The presence of a large number of young single males in a village has been identified as a potential source of conflict (Collier, 2008). Moreover, the villagers themselves acknowledged their concerns about the young males as well as their reputation for being "quarrelsome."

Table 3 Demographic Analysis – Census 2013

Age-Group	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-20	56	38	94	30.1%	20.4%	50.5%
21-40	16	24	40	9%	13%	22%
41-60	11	14	25	6%	8%	13%
60+	10	17	27	5%	9%	15%
Total	93	93	186	50%	50%	100%

While the DMAICR approach was identified as the best way to proceed, the challenges outlined above had a significant influence on the choice of the specific tools used at each stage and the pace of the overall project. Table 1 (earlier) gives a summary of the main tools and techniques used and approximately where they fitted into the DMAICR sequence.

The various censuses (2009, 2012, 2013, 2014) and subsequent demographic analyses were invaluable in helping to better understand some of the underlying problems, by providing accurate and comprehensive data about:

- the residents of the village – their age, sex, and employment status
- their relationship to the main tenant – typically a 'Leprosy Survivor.'
- the demographics and related trends in the village

The 2013 village census, Figure 3, showed that there was a 50:50 male to female ratio; 50% of the residents were in the 0-20 age group, and 72% in the 0-40 group and the relatively large number of young males (11-20) is apparent. The relationship between the current young male population and the original villagers is mixed; a proportion was born outside the village and came to the village under various guises. This shift in itself indicates a change in direction and following issues experienced by the village.

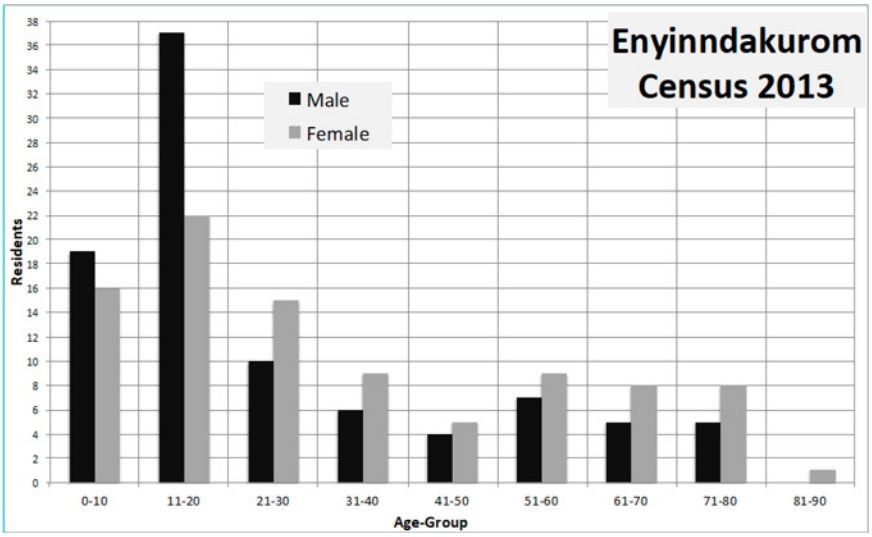

Figure 3 Residents Age-Group Analysis – Census 2013

In traditional Ghanaian villages it is typical for important decisions to be made by the chief and his group of advisors (elders) – a group predominantly, if not exclusively, comprised of adult/elderly males. Unfortunately, in this instance, most of the elderly males (Leprosy survivors) had either died or were old and infirm and/or in nursing care, including the Village Chief. It was felt appropriate therefore to propose broadening the decision-making (and strategy-development) group to include people from different age groups – both males and females to ensure that all of the resident interest groups (stakeholders) would be well represented. This approach would break with tradition and therefore needed to be handled sensitively so that all stakeholders were satisfied with the approach and the outcomes. One factor that helped in the initial meetings with the elders and the villagers was that they were impressed with how much data gathering and analysis had been done to understand the village. This was not a quick-fix approach, was inclusive, and this played a significant part in building their trust. Another factor that helped was the fact that one of the authors (Dr. Mantey) grew up in the village and was respected and trusted by the villagers. All the interactions with the villagers were conducted in English and Akan (the local language) with Dr. Mantey acting as translator. The step-by-step 'Consultation' process used is outlined in Table 4.

All of the 'Elder' and Village meetings were held at the Enyinndakurom Community Centre. The village meetings were announced one day in advance by the gong-gong (similar to a town-crier – see Photo 3), explaining the relevance of the meeting and inviting all to participate.

Despite the desirable participatory research approach, the selection of representatives was considered to be a potentially contentious area and was therefore formulated with caution. The typical 'elders' cohort, males in the 40+ age group, represented only 11% of the total resident population (Table 3) and, as already stated, many of them were old and/or infirm. It was felt essential to involve the females (50% of the total) and the younger males (under-40 yrs. – 39% of the total) in planning the future of the village.

Table 4 Step-by-step 'Consultation' process used

#	Stake-holder	Purpose	Timing	Result
1	Elders-Group	Get agreement on making a proposal to the residents of the entire village on forming a 'Representatives' Group to participate in developing a strategy for the village	Sep-13	Approved
2	Entire Village – all Tenants & Residents aged 15 upwards invited to attend	Put a proposal to the entire village on forming a 'Representatives' Group to participate in developing a strategy for the village	Sep-13	Approved
3		Presentation of the proposed 'Representatives-Group' names for Approval	Sep-13	Approved
4		Feedback from each Strategy Development Session (x4)	Sep-Nov-13	Approved
5		Feedback on Census-2014 and Satisfaction Survey	Aug-14	Approved

Photo 3 Gong-gong calling villagers to a meeting

As part of the consultation process Table 3 and Figure 3 were presented to the village meeting, and it was suggested that there should be balanced representation from all of the different age groups and both sexes. Almost surprisingly, the villagers accepted this proposal without much debate.

Then it was suggested that the villagers should select the names of the village representatives for the various age/sex groups. After much discussion, the villagers were happy for the PPRC to recommend a list of representatives, as they felt that there would be an excessive argument among the villagers about this matter and that it would take too long to get an agreement. It was agreed that a PPRC draft list would be presented and reviewed at the next village meeting, one week later.

A group of ten people was selected as representatives, with a further ten as substitutes, to participate in the development of a strategic plan. The PPRC draft list was presented to the villagers at the follow-up meeting and duly approved with little or no debate. A series of strategy development meetings were arranged and a series of village meetings set up in tandem to inform and consult with (and to provide feedback to) all of the villagers after completion of each stage. Although the process was intensive and time-consuming, it had a very positive effect on the village, and each meeting was met with enthusiasm. The villagers appeared to enjoy all the attention that they were getting.

The Strategy development sessions were held away from the village (at Ahotokurom), and attendance by the village representatives was good, but participation was mixed – so it was fortunate that there were ten reserves, as these reserves had to be used frequently.

There was a conscious decision, as mentioned above, to ensure that there was a good level of representation from the younger village residents. This was done at the risk of some possible disruptive behavior in the meetings, but as it turned out, there was minimal disruption. Some of the more vocal young people seemed to lose confidence and became a lot less self-assured in the strategy development (silent-brainstorming) sessions. However, they appeared to benefit from the process and showed improved behavior and attitude outside the meetings and in subsequent sessions. They were also demonstrably pleased to have been included. An unexpected side benefit was that these younger people were being viewed as potential future leaders.

This technique proved very effective for the Strategy Development Team. All of the participants, once they became familiar with the process, were open with their opinions and suggestions and worked well within the guidelines, although it did take some time for them to become accustomed to the idea of 'silent' brainstorming. They were pleased and almost surprised by the democratic and non-confrontational nature of the process and with the efficiency with which it produced agreed (non-disputed) results. This was done in a calm and agreeable atmosphere, which in itself generated confidence in the process.

The overarching concern for the villagers was for the young people, particularly their current behavior and their prospects. Investing time and energy in their young people emerged as the main goal of the entire community. At all levels, the importance of this demographic group was identified as vital to the future and the sustainability of the village. Education was recognized as a major factor in this, both as a goal in itself and also in equipping the young people to become independent, to find jobs and to earn income to support the community. Once the youth had achieved a reasonable level of education, the next goal was to enable them to find gainful employment.

A recurring theme from the older people was their thankfulness for their lives despite their health issues and their previous social isolation and rejection. The younger people appeared surprised by the priority given by all involved in improving education and employment opportunities for them. All participants gave recognition and praise to the contribution made by the DMJ sisters, and their many benefactors and supporters, to the well-being of the villagers.

A detailed analysis was completed in late 2013 of all of the outputs from the Strategy Development Team and the top five issues from this analysis, accounting for 82% of all of the votes, are shown in Table 5. Based on this it was agreed that the top three Improvement Initiatives to be focused on for 2014 would be Youth & Education, Behaviour and Leadership.

Table 5 Top 5 Issues

#	Issue	%
1	Youth & Education	22
2	Behaviour	20
3	Leadership	16
4	Support	13
5	Resources	11
	Total	82

It was hoped that this structured, inclusive approach would reduce the sense of dependency in the village and strengthen the motivation to become more self-reliant, to build on their strengths and to continue to look outward.

Discussion

As stated by Shuman (1999) "Expectations of failure or success are often self-fulfilling prophecies." Building on the enthusiasm generated by the village meetings will be a slow process as well building confidence among the villagers that they can shape their future. The bottom-up approach certainly gave encouraging outcomes. A more objective view of the village was gathered from the data collected, from the overall stakeholder analysis, and the steps in the developed strategy. It was almost reassuring to see that the primary concern was the same as for many other communities, the ongoing wellbeing, and education of the young people.

Overcoming "Learned Helplessness" is a stumbling block that requires patience and success is not something that appears overnight. It may take several generations to overcome some of the learned behaviors of the group. An inbuilt resilience within the community was visible. This contrasted with a sense of entitlement, evident in some of the younger people, reminiscent of their peers in other societies.

The Millennium Development Goal "Target 1B: Achieve Decent Employment for Women, Men, and Young People" will, however, remain aspirational for the people of the village unless there is a longer-term investment in helping them to overcome their current dependency outlook. Sanchez, Palm, Sachs, et al. (2007) expand on this goal describing it as being "community-based, with a participatory approach to planning, implementation, and monitoring that contextualizes the specific set of interventions for each village." The historical context of the village makes it more difficult to overcome, but with a clearer picture of what is required, it becomes even more possible.

In this respect, 'Leadership' and 'Decision-making' are still critical strategic issues for the village and need to be addressed. A step-by-step leadership improvement process has been developed, and it is planned that this will be implemented over the next few months.

The continuing engagement of the women and the younger people in all future development work is a crucial part of the environment which influences social behavior, which in turn gives an improved sense of community and an atmosphere of security in the village.

This is, however, one small project in one small village in Ghana. It remains to be seen whether the work is done will have a last effect on the villagers.

Conclusion

The BOMA Project in Kenya underpins the need for ongoing mentoring and support of a community such as the villagers in Enyinndakurom. This is hardly surprising, but it is a factor that is often overlooked in managing change. Coupled with the need for support is the environment of acquired helplessness, which in itself needs a change of mindset on the part of all involved.

Expectations can be escalated/inflated from previous experiences, from word of mouth and media coverage. All this can lead to disappointment and a loss of belief that the community can reach beyond its current level of poverty. However, the Millennium Goals offer real targets that can be achieved with the belief that the multifaceted nature of poverty can be overcome through targeted public-sector investments.

Although many agencies recommend a bottom-up approach with critical stakeholder engagement, there is insufficient evidence concerning case studies or successes. With more examples to learn from, the approach taken can be improved in every respect from ideas to engagement to participation.

Modern management methods can be used successfully to help impoverished and under-developed communities, and the way in which the situation is approached and the methods applied is the key to success – a top-down, solution-led approach is unlikely to be successful, while a bottom-up, problem-focused approach is much more likely to succeed. Positive engagement and trust from the primary stakeholders is essential

One of the disadvantages of the community at Enyinndakurom is their lack of networking due to the hybrid circumstances of their village. However, this is something that will improve over time as the village becomes more established in its own right.

Although the villagers were always willing and happy to receive 'free-gifts' (cash) what they needed was non-financial help to provide sustainable solutions to their core problems, e.g. leadership, decision-making, strategic-planning, job-seeking, career-advice, etc. This finding is in keeping with Amartya Sen's assertion that "*poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely a lowness of incomes…*"

About the Authors

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