EXPLORING COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONSTOWARD THE PROMOTION OF BASIC EDUCATION IN THE BONGO DISTRICT OF GHANA

NAME: Alaric Awingura Alagbela
POSITION: Lecturer
INSTITUTION: University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale, Ghana. West Africa
EMAIL ADDRESS: alagbelal@yahoo.com
PROFESSIONAL INTEREST: Educational Administration and Management, Sociology of Education, Curriculum Studies, School Enrolment and Retention

ABSTRACT
In Ghana, studies trace collaborations between communities and other stakeholders for the promotion of education to the very beginningsof western education in the country. Considering the myriad challenges that have confronted theeducationsector, specifically in recent time, it has become expedient for the diverse actors in the field to collaborate and coordinate their efforts toward the effective amelioration of the situation. With this in mind, Isought to examine the extent of the collaborations among civil societies with specific reference to that between communities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Bongo District. Due to the nature of the research problem, it became necessary to adopt a descriptive design to generate in-depth data for the analysis. Twenty-seven participants, 20 from communities and 7 fromNGOs were purposefully sampled for the study. The respondents' views were elicited using in-depth interviewing as the sole data collection tool. The study has revealed that communities collaborate with NGOson a number of issuesincludingsensitization and awareness creation, communal labour, financial support and policy development and implementation. These have yieldedsignificant benefits in the form of the increase in school enrolment and educational access, improvement in academic performance andenhanced awareness among parents on the need to educate their wards. Thus, the study concludes that collaborations between the two stakeholders have yielded positive outcomes.

Key words: Basic Education, NGOs, Community, Stakeholder Participation, Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of community members in collaborativeventurestoward the development of basic education in Ghana dates back to colonial time. Historical studies such as those byMcWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), Graham (1974), Antwi (1992) and recently by Amemumey (2008) show that community involvement in basic education could be traced to the very beginning of the introduction of formal education by European merchants and Christian missionaries. The practice at the time entailed the mobilization of so-callednative converts to undertake communal labourfor the building of missionary school infrastructure (Mensah, 2001).Such non-governmental initiatives helped to improve and expand education at low cost. Even when, the colonial government got involved and extended education into the hinterland, collaboration with communities and missionaries was an active part of the process. For instance, the Native Authority Schools that emerged in the 1920s, in northern Ghana in particular, were the result of such collaborations where chiefs mobilized their

communities to buildinfrastructure with government supplying teachers, teaching resources and technical supervision. Such collaboration expanded basic education across the country.

Community participation in the development and delivery of basic education in the country has been very crucial to the drive toward universal basic education. There has been the general understanding that the provision of quality basic education must be a collaborative venture between government and communities, communities and other stakeholders such as the religious bodies and non-governmental organizations and, government and civil society including their organizations. Thebelief in education as a tool for development and that quality education is a sure way to such development entices stakeholders, especially communities as the ultimate beneficiaries to often embrace collaboration as a way of augmenting their educational resources. Indeed, as a social service, education has the potential of inspiring in beneficiaries the sense of oneness, citizenship, self-worth and patriotism, which are critical for community development and national progress. Education can also evoke critical thinking and environmental awareness critical for the development of individuals and entire communities.

.

Colletta and Gillian (1995) have identified the forms of community participation in education to include research and documentation on the school, dialoguing with policy makers regarding the betterment of the school, taking part in school management, having a stake in curriculum design and implementation, undertaking the construction of school buildings and the development of teaching and learning materials.

Parental support and community involvement have also been established as key determinants of school effectiveness in the sub-Saharan Africa (Heneveld&Helen, 1996). Heneveld and Helenhaveidentified five categories of benefits of parental and community support. These are that; children come to school prepared to learn; the community provides financial and material support to the school; communication between the school, parents and community is frequent; the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and community members assist with instructions. It can be intimated that productive community participation in the life of a school in order to ensure its effectiveness could be enhanced when parents and community leaders are given the opportunity to serve on management boards and school supervision teams while the school is expected to reciprocate by participating in the social and cultural activities of the community (Atakpa, 1995)

In countries where government investments at the basic level have been extremely low as in the case of Madagascar, parents and communities contribute money, labour and materials (World Bank, 1995b). The absence of government support leaves the burden of providing school infrastructure, equipment and student learning needs on parents and communities. Under such circumstances, communities and parents take centre-stage in educational development and delivery. Community and parental involvement in schools, help to achieve curriculum and learning goals that reflect children's everyday lives in society. Through this, they can easily associate what they are learning with what they already know.

Communities by way of their participation in education also identify and address factors that contribute to educational problems such as low participation and poor academic performance. This aspect of community involvement is well illustrated in the case of the Gambia, in which the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) were adapted to education. In the case of Ghana, Participatory Learning Action (PLA) has been used by the Girls Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service to raise awareness on girls' education but also to sensitize parents and communities to get involved in the education of their children (World Bank, 1995a; Apusigah&Abagre, 2006).According to UNICEF (1992), through participating in school activities and frequently communicating with teachers, parents and communities learn that girls' education

contribute to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as increased productivity, improved family health and nutrition,socio-economic progress and human wellbeing. Parental and community involvement in discussions as part of school activities help in the identification and redress of factors that prevent girls from schooling including non-enrolment, drop-out and poor performance.

Community participation in basic education can also be found in the area of community members serving as resource persons. Apart from offering their sites for
field visits religious leaders, ethnic heads, chiefs and opinion leaders could also visit the schools and talk to pupils and teachers about community history, traditions, customs and norms which have been historically celebrated in the community. Such contributions could border on the curriculum and/or co-curriculum activities of the schools. In the case of the curriculum, subjects such as Religious and Moral Education, Social Studies and Geography while co-curricular activities such as cultural festivals and after school clubs offer great opportunities for on-site visits, resource inputs and student project work.

Among the various forms of community participation are those specifically aimed at supporting teachers and school heads such as when communities provide land or evenconstruct housing for teachers who are non-native. In rural areas, the lack of qualified teachers, accommodation and teaching/learning resources has been a serious draw back to the efforts at providing quality basic education. For this reason, preparing a safe environment and housing is necessary for attracting teachers, particularly female teachers, who otherwise would chooseto work in urban areas. In rural settings where female education is poor, attracting female teachers to them has the added benefit of offering role models and mentors for girls in the school and community.

In many jurisdictions, the world over, community and parental involvement in education is seen as a right or of democratic value. "In Denmark, England, and Wales, parents have a right to be represented on the governing bodies of schools; in France, they have a right to representation on a whole range of policy-making bodies" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD), 1992, p.26). In the case of Ghana, the GES Act of (1995) stipulates in Article 9, Sub-section (2) the creation of District Education Oversight Committees (DEOC) whose members must be drawn from the District. Again, sub-section (3) of Article 9 spells out the functions of the DEOCs.DEOC members are expected to participate directly in the management of schools. As a corollary, community members and parents have been formally urged to have a stake in the management of schools within their localities.

From the fore gone discussion, it is evident thathistorically and legally collaborations among stakeholders for education development and delivery have been wellestablished. However, the extent to which this tradition has been effective remains to be established especially so in recent time when the impetus for such collaboration is urgent. It is against this backdrop that I explorethe collaboration between the seven NGOs currently operating in the Bongo area and the community members toward the promotion of basic education. Specifically, the questions tackled are: Whathave NGOs in the Bongo area done to promote community participation in basic education? What ways do community members collaborate with NGOs in expanding basic education? What benefits have accrued as a result of the collaboration between the two stakeholders in terms of promoting basic education? What are the challenges and what is the way forward?

Methods

The data for this analysis has been based on conceptual and empirical sources. DescriptiveSurvey Design was used to collect data on the empirical aspects of the study. The Descriptive Survey Design was adopted because, accordingto Osuala (1993), it seeks to test research questions and helps to describe the activities of a study. This was then supported with a desk review, which enabledme to examine the conceptual aspects. The population of the study comprised officials of NGOs operating in the area and members of selected communities. The sample size of 27 participants comprised twentycommunity members made up of chiefs, assemblypersons and the seven NGO officials and this was taken into consideration based on the nature of the study. Purposeful sampling techniques were used to select the participants precisely because I was of the view that they had the knowledge to be able to provide the right responses. In-depth interviewing was the main data collection tool because it afforded me the chance to elicit vital but unexpected information from participants;Informal interactions and observations were also made during the community visits. During the data collection itself, I observed the necessary protocols and courtesies in order not to breach ethical considerations including seeking approval before interviewing and using voice recorders to record the interviews. Each interview session lasted for about an hour but the whole data collection process covered a period of two weeks.The data were then transcribed from the voice recorder onto a piece of paper and edited, categorized, coded and fed onto the SPSS software for analysis to be made. Presentation of data was done using simple frequencies and percentages.

BASIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
The Place of Basic Education in Community Development
The place of basic education in community development has been long established. Whether for economic, social, political and/or even instrumental purposes, basic education continues to serve as the foundation or tool for preparing all categories of citizens and workers for the socio-economic system. As the basis of all other levels of education, basic education offers the rudiments for building the critical knowledge, skills and attitudes for engaging intelligently and productively in ever changing societies. It serves as the pedestal for reaching higher levels of education; secondary and tertiary. Since Ghana's 1987 Education Reforms, basic education has been re/defined to include the early secondary years; comprising schooling from kindergarten through primary to junior secondary covering a total of eleven years. In very recent time political discourse is even beginning to broaden that meaning to include the entire secondary years with the rationing that most students complete the current basic school with very low levels of literacy. The need for a literate citizenship however challenges the existing framing of basic education in terms of formal schooling. Indeed, Freire (1974) has argued many years ago that literacy is about critical consciousness, one that opens citizens to contest and engage their conditions and seek for improvement that transforms the existing situation.

Taking from Freire's perspective on education or what he calls critical education or literacy, the basic education that we know in Ghana today can only be viewed as rudimentary literacy. Basic education should prepare students for functional living as it should equipthem with the basic operational tools: knowledge, skills and attitudes, for self-actualization, community participation and informed citizenship. Thus, the very essence of education and for that matter basic education is largely a socio-political one, that which putscommunity at the centre. Thus, of necessity, communities should havestakes in basic education and must be seen to be actively staking their

claims in it. Communities should be interested in the kind of education that goes on in basic schools. They shouldbe interested in how that education meets their immediate functional and socio-political needs as well as their personal and community development aspirations. As such, community involvement becomes core to not just delivering results but also monitoring progress and even shaping the basic school curriculum. In Ghana, were, school curricula are established nationally, communities often find themselves working to realize them but also can be creative in enriching them by infusing them with local inputs.

Globally, there has been the push for universal basic education as a goal for poverty reduction. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) express this in at least three. MDGs One to Three, either by themselves or in their targets and/or indicators embrace basic education as key to overcoming the development challenge. Also, functionalist and cost-benefit analyses of education reveal that investments in basic education compared to secondary education have higher rates of return.A study conducted by Psacharopoulos (1985), found a high social rate of return to education and that the return to completed primary education is 27 percent while that for secondary education is between 15 – 17 percent. In corroboration, Kreibiah's (1998) study on African countries estimated that the return for primary education was 26% compared with 17% for secondary education and 13% for higher education (Kreibiah, 1998). This must have influenced global actors such as the World Bank, United Nations, European Union, andAfrican Union emphasize basic education, often at the expense of secondary and higher education. For instance, under structural adjustments, African countries including Ghana were made to cut back on their expenditure on higher education in order to improve basic education. While the argument of an unbalanced funding regime was meritorious, for many of the countries whose education systems at all levels were still evolving such trade-off delivered unsavory degenerative results. Undoubtedly, a sound basic education system is critical for functional living and preparation for socio-economic progress. Investing in basic education must of necessity be high on the education development agenda of all nations especially the developing ones whose systems are still weak. At this basic stage where learners whether within formal or informal systems learn the rudiments of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which form the building blocks for subsequent education and training, it is critical to not only get the basics right but also deliver them in sufficient quantities for enhancing present and future learning.

Research shows a positive correlation between national investment in education and economic growth (Eshun, 2001). According to Eshun (2001, citing Benavot, 1985) primary education has significant positive effects on the growth of every economy. In the works of some authorities, primary education is one of the best investments any country can make for the poorest countries of the world. Majority of the workforce of any economic system require basic education for effective functioning. They require basic knowledge, skills and attitudes for social interactions outside of the home and even traversing the home and workplace. In the workplace, majority of the staff, who tend to be the general staff, require just basic education to be able to appreciate workplace procedures, institutional protocols and performance expectations. In a study by Lau, Jamison and Lonat (1991), it was revealed that economic growth is powerfully affected by primary education in twenty-two (22) East Asian and Latin American countries. On their part,Holsinger and Kasanda (1995) intimated that elementary education plays an important role of improving hygiene and nutritional practices as well as in the improvement of child survival and the fertility of women. In this wise, elementary education has a potential advantage of increasing one's life span due to good hygienic practices and good feeding habits.

Another major importance of basic education is the fact it lays the foundation for the development of a framework of meaning for life, mainly by the way children are treated and the kind of behaviour, attitudes and achievements valued. All aspects of learning contribute to the ideas a person develops about life and the values he or she adopts. Although both the home and school, play critical roles during the basic stage, basic schools, through the formal curriculum and activities such as assembly and various special events and the overall way of life of the school, including the way children are cared for and the way matters of discipline are handled, prepare children for life beyond the home and immediate community for the wider community. This preparation tends to be an aspect of schooling which most basic school teachers feel strongly about but do not very often discuss objectively, yet it is among the most important things the basic school does and delivers benefits when there is consistency among the staff on how they handle their relationship with children. Aggarwal (2001) sums it up when he intimates that basic education kick starts the process of self -realization and emancipation.

The Challenge of Basic Education today
As have been stated by authorities in the educational sciences, the importance of basic education to community and nation at large is unquestionable. Quality basic education has a direct correlation to one's academic pursuits to the highest level possible. It can also translate in human empowerment and the socio-economic development of a nation. Therefore, successive governments in Ghana over the years have remained committed to improving basic education in the country. In the recent past, the governments of Ghana have introduced a number of initiatives aimed at improving the basic sector. Thesehave included the introduction of the capitation grant as a means of reducing the costs of basic education to parents, school feedingprogrammeto boost child nutrition and reduce hunger, introduction of free busing system (Metro Mass Transit) to ease transport, free textbooks and school uniforms to reduce costs to parents and the provision of laptop computers, establishments of ICT centers, redesign of school architecture and housing of schools under trees to modernize teaching and learning in conducive environments. There have also been curriculum reviews and reforms as well as theupgrading of public teacher training colleges from certificate to diploma awarding institutions under the new label, Colleges of Education, which has alsoplaced them under the Tertiary System. Overall, these interventions have sought to improve quality and expand access to basic education.

In spite of all these efforts that translate into major financial investments, the basic education sector is still challenged to a large extent (Achanso, 2014 a, b; PCERG, 2007; MOE/GES,Education Strategic Plan 2003 to 2015). In Ghana, there are teacher-related factors such as the low number of trained professionals and high attrition rate. The Education Profiles of EMIS (2012/2013) establish that there still exists about 60,000 teacher deficit at the basic level alone regardless of the 9,000 newly trained teachers that come out of the Colleges of Education every year to augment the teaching force. In addition, improvement of access to alternative higher education in the form of distance and sandwich programmes, which must be lauded, is rather affecting basic schools adversely because the Ghana Education Service has not been able to institute the regulative measures that ensure effective monitoring. Many teachers leave their classes uncovered for extended periods during the school week, term or year to attend classes elsewhere. Furthermore, there is an imbalance of trained teachers between rural and urban areas. Many urban schools are choked while entire schools in rural areas are without trained teachers. Besides, the Ghana Education Service has also not been able to cope with the need for refresher courses to update teachers on new and emerging methods of teaching in a fast modernizing world.

There are spatial challenges such as the effects of large classes on teaching and learning. TheEMIS Profiles of 2012/2013 also reveal that class size remains large at an average of 60–70 pupils perclass. This can be attributed to inadequate number of classrooms and teachers. The issue of the inadequate classrooms is grave for both urban and rural areas. In cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi, several schools are squeezed into tight compounds called cluster of schools often with hardly any sanitary facilities. Until recently schools were running shifts and thus resulting in the reduction in school time. Also, many schools in the rural and peri-urban parts of the country are housed in buildings that do not pass for human habitation. Some schools are still under trees. Pupils from such schools are exposed to the vagaries of the weather which does not promote effective teaching and learning.

There is also the community involvement factor, the focus of this paper (Etsey, 2005). Parental control and support from parents in many cases is absent. Many parents and families are unable to afford the cost of education for their children and wards. In spite of state efforts to absorb costs, there are several others that schools impose on students that defeat the purpose of the ongoing initiative. PTAs and SMCs, who should be playing their roles creditably, often turn themselves into the business of imposing illegal levies and fees on parents. The issue of collaborating with government and other stakeholders to promote academic standards becomes virtually non-existent.

There is also the challenge of teaching-learning resources (Aheto-Tsegah, 2011). Many basic public schools do not have the requisite supplies of textbooks and other supplementary readers. Pupils in such schools share these educational materials. The situation is even dire in the underserved schools of the country. In such instances, it is the class teacher who has the textbook and would only copy the texts onto the chalkboard for students. This poor quality teaching is still prevalent in many rural communities, where parents are unable to provide and where the free textbook scheme has hardly covered or still to reach. Teachers also appear to lack the creativity to improvise with basic materials of the environment and as such continue to promote rote learning in such schools.

There are also challenges regarding access and participation (Education Review Committee, 2002). Although basic schools have seen some increment in the enrolment of children of school going age, net enrolment and completion rates are still not appreciable. In fact, the basic school system has been most responsive to equity and access interventions as they have been targeted. . According to Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu and Hunt (2007), the average age of entry appears to be a stubborn resistance in asfar as enrolment of children in school is concerned. They explain that there are regional variations in terms of access and participation with as many as 40% percent of children not enrolled in school at their right ages this is especially so for the threenorthern regions. Akyeampog (2011) also intimates that completion rates remain a challenge especially at the Junior High Level. The low completion rates, according to him, deprives the country of the much-needed educated youth who could be prepared for work and further education and training.

A combination of the factorsand others not captured in this paper have over the years worked together to affect teaching and learning leading to thepoor quality of basic education. This situation has drawn various interest groups and stakeholders into investing into thesector as a way of complementing government efforts, which have been found tobe inadequate. They have tended to embark on various collaborations in order to confront the challenges and avert the situation. These have included NGOs, parents, communities, community-based organizations and government

agencies.An emerging trend is the effort to increase the involvement of communities, as major stakeholders, in the education system.Communities, in which basic schools are located and who supply students, pay for and benefit from basic education directly have been called upon to or on their own to take greater interest in the schools. Policies and programmeshave evolved that demand active participation of communities in basic schools as discussed next.

Efforts at Community Participation in Basic Education
State Level Efforts
At the level of the state, there are basically, three (3) bodies in the districts that manage the affairs of basic schools. They include the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC), the District Education Planning Team (DEPT) and the School Management Committee (SMC). These structures play vital roles which are geared towards the holistic development of basic education in the various districts and the country at large.

The DEOCs came into being through the Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 (Act 506). Members of DEOC are appointed by the GES Council to oversee education at the district level and to work hand in hand with the SMCs to promote effective teaching and learning in the basic schools.DEOC is made up of the District Chief Executive who is the Chairman, the District Director of Health, the District Inspector of Schools, the District Social Welfare Officer, representative of the District Assembly, Traditional Rulers, Christians and Muslim groups, GNAT, PTA, and one woman identified generally with social development in the district. (See GES Circuit Supervisors Hand book, 2002).

As regards their functions, they are concerned with overseeing the conditions of school buildings and other structural requirements of the schools. This, they do, to ensure that school buildings are in good state and conducive for effective teaching and learning. They also see to the provision of teachers and the regular and punctual attendance of teachers and pupils to schools, the essence of which is to improve enrolment and retention. As part of their functions, they also see to it that there is adequate supply of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials in the various schools to promote quality basic education. Additionally, the moral behaviour of staff and pupils and matters relating to general discipline are monitored by the DEOCs.Complaints to or from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils as well as issues relating to environmental cleanliness of schools and the facilities therein are matters of concern to DEOC.Finally, they are also charged with the responsibility of overseeing the proper utilization of the District Assemblies Common Fund to education.

Also, the DEPTs have been established in all districts throughout the country to strengthen the management of Basic Education at the district and local levels. Their establishment hasbeen meant to enhance the capacity of districts to generate Education Action Plans.Members of the DEPTs are drawn from the District Assembly, SMC, the Health Sector, Department of Social Welfare, and Ghana National Commission on Children, Department of Community Development, PTA, Unit Committee, NGOs, Traditional Rulers, Religious Bodies and other personalities supportive of educational efforts in a district. In all, it has fifteen members of which three are permanent (GES, Circuit Supervisors Handbook, 2002).

The DEPTsare aimed at achieving objectives such as ensuring effective consultation, planning, implementation and evaluation of intervention measures at the district level as well as assisting the District Director of Education in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational activities that will promote effective teaching and learning. They are also aimed at

creating conducive environments for making use of resources to promote ownership and commitment to the implementation of all educational measures at the district level.

Finally, School Management Committees (SMCs)have been set up as bodies that should replicatethe role of Board of Governors of second cycle schools. As a school-community based institution, it is aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilization for education delivery. In this respect, it works closely with all other stakeholders in order to assist the school to function effectively. In terms of its composition, it comprises the District Director of Education or his representative, the Head of the school, a representative of the Old Pupils Association, the Chief of the town or his representative, two (2) members of teaching staff and a member appointed to represent the Education Unit of the school.

SMCs function to inform communities of the general state of their schools. They are also charged with the responsibility of ensuring good sanitation of the school compound. Additionally, they see to it that all school structures and furniture are in safe condition for use by both staff and pupils. Again, they inform the Director-General of GES through the District Directors of Education of all matters involving the finances of the schools. Overall, they support the schools and schools heads in the general management of the schools.

Non-Governmental Efforts

It is worth noting that the education sector in Ghana has benefited in various ways from the contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Notable among them are Action Aid International, Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Plan Ghana, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), School for Life (SFL), Care International, Partner for Internet in Education (PIE) and World Vision Ghana (WVG).

The contributions of these NGOs to basic education have focused largely on the provision of school infrastructure, furniture, textbooks, uniforms, teaching/learning aids and staff trainingas well as the introduction of after school clubs and curriculum enrichment programmesat the school level. They also assist District Education authorities in their monitoring and supervisory roles mobilize communities toward more effective participation in their children's education and provide support for poor and vulnerable children and Families. Regardingtheir efforts at helping the poor, vulnerable and the disadvantaged in society, the preoccupation of these NGOs have been mostly directed towards the most deprived regions and rural/deprived district in the country. These include the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern Region as well as some parts of the Eastern and Central Regions such as the Afram Plains and the fishing communities of the coast.

NGO-Community Collaboration in Basic Education in the Bongo District

Information from the Bongo District Education Office revealed that some NGOs that have worked in the Bongo District of the Upper East Region of Ghana include the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision Ghana (WVG), Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Education Quality For All (EQUALL), Government Accountability Improves Trust (GAIT), and Regional Advisory Information Network System (RAINS). These NGOs had prioritized basic education development in their work in the Bongo area.To understands the context of community involvement in basic education, the study had focused on three main questions: What have NGOs in the area done to promote community participation in basic education? What ways do community members collaborate with NGOs in expanding basic education in the Bongo District? What benefits have accrued as a result of the collaboration between the two stakeholders in the promotion of basic education in the district?

Nature/Form of NGO Support to Communities

For a start, it was important to understand the nature of support to communities in the drive toward improved basic education. The data was collection through interviews. The interactions revealed a two-way system of collaborations where there is the mutual receipt of support.There is often the tendency to think that NGOs provide tangible while communities provide intangible support during such collaborations. However, the data shows that both the tangible and intangible forms of support were in play from each side. Table 1 below captures the responses of community members on their support received from NGOs.

Table 1: NGOs Support to Communities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Workshop and PLAs only	11	55
Economic Empowerment only	2	10
Recruitment only	1	5
Workshops, PLAs,Economic Empowerment and Recruitment	5	25
No support	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 1 above reveals that NGOs support communities in various ways such as the organization of workshops and Participatory Learning Action (PLA) only, which attracted 55 % responses from participants. This means that the said percentage of respondents was of the view that NGOs support to communities took the form of workshops and PLA sessions only. Also, 10% of the total respondents indicated that economic empowerment was the only way that NGOs extended their support to communitiestoward thepromotion of basic education. Further discussions revealed that the economic empowerment took the form of giving out micro grants to members for business ventures and providing them with animals to enhance livestock production with the view to boost enterprise and incomes so as to improve capacities for supporting children's education. In addition, 5% of the respondents said NGOs support communities with the recruitment of volunteer teachers (community support teachers) who help to boost staffing in underserved schools. indicates that 25% of the respondents identified multiple factors including organizing workshops, PLA, economic empowerment and recruitment. There was also a further 5% who said they did not receive any form of support from NGOs.

For the majority, NGOs were using four main strategies to collaborate with them intheir efforts to promote basic education. Their views however show that communities were at the receiving end, as they were said to benefit either economically, educationally or socially from the presence and interventions of NGOs.

An important aspect of this analysis was the kind of support extended by communities to NGOs.In finding an answer to that question, NGOofficials were targeted. It was important to understand from the NGO perspective how they viewedand even valued their work with communities. Tables 2 and 3 capture the responses respectively.

Table 2: Community Support to NGOs

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	
No	0	0
Total	7	0

From Tables 2 above, it came to light that, all the seven NGOofficials who were interviewed admitted that community members collaborate with them to implement their interventions. Hence, the total frequency as depicted in Table 2 stands at sevenand the corresponding percentage stands at onehundred(100).As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to state or explain the kind of collaboration that they get from members of the community. Responses are captured in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Forms of Community Support

Response	Frequency	Percent
Organizing and mobilizing people for educational talks.	3	42.9
Provision of communal labour and financial commitment.	3	42.9
Provision of land for infrastructural development.	1	14.2
Total	7	100

Three (3) respondents representing 42.9% said that community members do organize and mobilize people or the citizenry for some kind of educational talks to motivate members to see the need to educate their wards. Table 3 above further shows that three respondents, also representing 42.9% of the total respondents, indicating that community members provide communal labour and make financial commitment for the take-off of educational infrastructural development. To buttress this finding, Heneveld and Helen (1996) recognized parental and community support as a key factor in determining school effectiveness in sub-Saharan Africa. According to them, parents and communities provide financial and material support to schools. As a policy direction therefore, NGOs often benefit from communities in the form of labour for the construction of school infrastructure. Also, communities contribute financially toward to thedevelopment budget by payingsome commitment levy or component funds. Furthermore, one respondent representing 14.2% of the total respondents indicated that community members provide land for educational and infrastructural development. Land as a natural resource is probably the most available resource to communities. Although, the Bongo area is land-starved area with a high population density and widespread rocks, communities often provide land with from their communal reserves (freeholds) or family holds for development purposes.

Benefits/Effects from NGO-Community Collaboration
It was clear from the data that basic education stood to gain. While such benefits are often thought of as benefits to communities, it is important to also understand that such benefits are also important

to the state, as they complement their efforts. For this analysis, an emphasis wasplaced on respondents views on the benefits to basic education in general. Both community and NGOviews were sought and presented in tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Responses from NGO Officials

Response	Frequency	Percent
Enrolment of schools have triggered	6	85.7
PTAs and SMCs are now responsive to their roles	1	14.3
Total	7	100

Respondents were initially asked whether or not the collaboration has created significant impact, and all of the 7 respondents answered in the affirmative. When they were probed further to justify their stance by showing some documentary evidence, respondents indicated that they did not have the statistics. However, as can be inferred from the Table 4 above, 6 respondents representing 85.7% of the total respondents intimated that enrolment of children at the basic level has triggered as a result of their collaboration. Only 1 respondent representing 14.3% of the total respondents asserted that PTAs and SMCs are now responsive to their roles. In this regard, they contribute positively to the total development of basic education in the district. This can be attributed to the frantic efforts made by NGOs.

Again, when community members were interviewed on the same issue, the benefits of their collaboration, they all responded positively to the effect that, indeed benefits have been reaped. Table 5 displays the responses of community members.

Table 5: Responses from Community Members

Response	Frequency	Percent
Increased school enrolment/improved in academic performance	9	45
Awareness creation of parents to educate their wards	3	15
Reduced educational burdens of parents	4	20
Availability of all-weather school infrastructure	4	20
Total	20	100

From Table 5 above, 45% of the total respondents admitted that there has been an increase in school enrolment and also, an improvement in the academic performance of school children. The respondents hinted that the availability of school furniture and some teaching and learning materials provided by the NGOs have immensely contributed to this positive development. This point buttresses what Fuller and Clarke (1994) found in their study that furniture had effect on pupils learning.With regard to awareness creation of parents to educate their wards, 15% of the respondents admitted to this as one of the benefits that has come about as a result of the collaboration of these NGOs. Awareness creation takes the form of PLAs and workshops for community members to change their attitude positively towards education. Galloway (1982) asserted that some parents make it clear that they regard education with some considerable

skepticism. If NGOs in the area are therefore directing their energies in this direction to fight this misconception, then they need to be commended.

Table 5 also reveals that another benefit from the collaboration with these NGOs is the reduction in the parental burden of providing for the educational needs of their wards. This attracted 20% of the total responses. Also, 20% of the total respondents affirmed that there was more available all-weather school infrastructure for pupils to access. The replacement of thatch roof, open mud or rafter walled buildings with iron sheet roofs and enclosed concrete cement walls makes it possible to teaching and learning to go on under any weather condition. This was said to improve school and contact time and enhance attendance and performance. Above all, with improved infrastructure, teachers and students are given conducive environments to conduct learning and teaching. This assertion has been corroborated by Carron andChau (1996) who opine that the classroom must give the child some amount of comfort before he or she can learn.

Challenges to Community-NGO Collaborations.

In the course of data collection and through my informalinteractions with and observations of respondents on the sidelines revealed a number of challenges. The challenges that were identified as negatively affecting the collaborations of the two stakeholders included the lack of hamonisation of the work plans of the various NGOs in the area thereby, leading to a duplication of efforts.

Again, there existed in some cases the difficulty in accessing land for infrastructural expansion. As noted above, the Bongo District is land-starved and hence communities had grave difficulty releasing lands and especially in the amounts desired for development work. Many families have small holds which they put into food production, hence releasing lands does not just reduce their holds but also have the effects on household food security and even the ability to meet the needs to children in school. Additionally, some communities did not adequately commit themselves in terms of providinglabour and meeting their financial commitment to programmes even when they had agreed that such support was important for the take-off of some school infrastructuredevelopment efforts for instance. Poverty studies on Ghana, shows that Bongo is one of the most deprived districts and hence most people are poor. They are thus mostly unable to make enough money to meet additional financial burden imposed on them through development cooperation. Finally, the issue of non-education or poor attendance of children of school going age was still an issue. Considerable numbers of school-aged children were still engaged in activities other than schooling such as herding cattle and sheep, baby-sitting and trading, full or part time.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the collaboration between community members and NGOs in their quest to promote basic education in the Bongo District. Based on the data that were gathered from key respondents and analysis made therein, it can be concluded that the collaboration between the two parties have yielded positive results as in the promotion of education at the basic level. A specific case in point is the fact that respondents intimate that school enrolment has triggered. Many children of school going age are now in to the classrooms and actively participating in the teaching and learning situation. In light of this, the two stakeholders continue to strive for better and further collaboration all in wanting to expand the frontiers of basic and secondary education in the district.

REFERENCES

Achanso, S.A (2014).*The impact of globalisationon social policy: The case of external donor agencies and basic education in Ghana.*UK. Scholars Press.

Aggarwal, J.C (2001). *Theory and principles of education: Philosophical and sociological basis of education (11thed)*. New Delhi, India; Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd.

Aheto- Tsegah, C. (2011). *Education in Ghana- statusand challenges*. Ghana: Commonwealth Education Partnership

Akyeampong, K (2011).*50 years of educational progress and challenges in Ghana.* Project Report CREATE, Brighton, UK

Akyeampong, K.;Djangmah,J.;Oduro,A.;Seidu, A.& Hunt, F. (2007*). Access to basic education in Ghana: The Evidence and issues.* CREATE, Centre for International Education.

Amemumey, D.E.K, (2008).*Ghana: Concise history from pre-colonial times to the 21st century Ghana: Accra, GH:* WoeliPub.Services

Apusigah, A.A&Abagre , C. I.,(2006). Learning from Communities through Participatory Learning Action. Millar, David and Agnes A. Apusigah (Eds).*Development Praxis*: pp.50-63.

Atakpa, S.K. (1995).*National Plan of Action on Girls Education*. Cape Coast: Unpublished Text. University of Cape Coast.

Carron, G. &Chau, T.N (1996). *The quality of primary schools in differentdevelopment contexts.* Paris: 11EP/UNESCO Press.

Colletta, N. J. & Gillian, P. (1995). *Participation in education.* Environmental Studies Department Papers. No. 001, Participation Series. Washington, D.C:The World Bank.

Education Review Committee (2002). *Meeting the challenges of the 21st century*. Accra:Adwinsa Publications Gh Ltd.

Education Profiles/ EMIS (2012/2013).*Ghana annual schools census.(Basic schools information)twenty fourth round.*Ghana: MOE

Eshun, J.A. (2001). *Community perception of development value of education and their socio-economic correlates. The case of some selected villages in Assin District*. Cape Coast: M. Phil Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education of University of Cape Coast.(Unpublished)

Etsey, K. (2005).*Causes of low academic performance of primary school pupils in the Shama sub-metro ofShamaAhanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) Ghana*. Regional Conference on Education in West Africa 1st – 2nd November.Darker, Senegal.

Freire, P. (1974).*Education for critical consciousness.*London: Sheed and Ward Ltd.

Fuller, B. & Clarke, P. (1994). Raising school effects while ignoring culture: Local conditions and the influence of classroom tools, Rules and Pedagogy.*Review of Educational Research.* 64(1), 119-157.

Galloway, O. (1982). A study of persistent absentees from school and theirfamilies. *British Journal of Educational Psychology.* 52: 317-330.

Ghana Education Service Circuit Supervisors Handbook (2002). Accra: MOE

Heneveld, W. & Helen, C. (1996). *Schools Count: World Bank Project Designsand the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Washington DC: The World Bank.

Holsinger, D.B. & Kasarda, J.D. (1975). Does schooling affect birth rates? *School Review* 84(1): 77-90.

Kreibiah, V (1998). Limited budgets, growing demands: How to provide school infrastructure, New Delhi: Vikas

Lau, L., Jamison, D. T. &Lonat, F. F. (1991). *Education and productivity in developing countries: An aggregate production function approach policy, research and external affairs.*Working paper 612. World Bank, Human Resources Department. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

McWilliam H.O.A.&Kwamena-Poh, M.A (1975). *The Development of education in Ghana*. London, Longman

Mensah, J.A. (2001). *Community Support for girl child school attendance in Ghana.* The Case of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape Coast: M.PhilThesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education of University of Cape Coast. (unpublished).

Ministry of Education(2003).*Education strategic plan2003 to 2015.*Accra:Unpublished Text MOE.

OECD (1992).*Parents as partners in Schooling.* Paris: OECD Center for EducationalResearch and Innovation.

Osuala, E.C. (1993). *Introduction to research methodology.* Onitsha, NG:African Publishers Ltd.

Psacharopoulos, G. (1985). Returns to education: A further International update and implications. *Journal of Human Resources*. 20 (4): 584-604.

UNICEF(1992).*Strategies to promote girls education: policies and programmes that work*. New York:UNICEF.

World Bank, (1995a). *The Gambia: Why Gambia households underinvest ineducation of girls.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank, (1995b). *Madagascar: Towards a school-based strategy forimproving primary and secondary education.* Washington DC: The World Bank.