

# The Challenges of Effective Community Participation in District Education Strategic Planning and Implementation Process in the Salaga Town Council of Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to assess the challenges affecting the local community's involvement and participation in the District Education Strategic Planning (DESP) process towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga Town Council. Primary data was collected through in-depth interview and analysed qualitatively using deductions and inferences approach. From the study, the District Education Officers and the District Assembly Officers were of the view that inadequate funds/resource, difficult terrain and lukewarm attitude on the part of the community level stakeholders were the major challenges adversely affecting community stakeholders' participation in the DESP process. The local community stakeholders also attributed the challenges accounting for their non involvement in the DESP process to poor Communication between the district and local community stakeholders. The Ministry of Education should provide adequate funding and ensure effective two-way communication between the two groups of stakeholders to foster collaboration in the quest to improving the quality of basic education in Salaga area.

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## 1. Introduction

The ultimate aim of the Ministry of Education is to ensure that quality education is delivered in Ghana. To realize this objective, there should be adequate resources available such as School buildings, equipment, teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and adequate personnel, i.e., trained teachers among others. In 2003, the Ministry of Education, in pursuance of its objectives adopted the Education Strategic Plan (ESP), which is a Sector Wide Approach to development assistance, and to ensure an effective use of resources at both local and national level. To this end, the District Education Offices (DEOs) were directed and empowered to develop their District Education Strategic Plan (DESP) in line with the ESP (Ministry of Education, 2003, cited Hriet, Anin and Yussif, 2013).

The ESP (2003-2015) initiative adopted by the Ministry of Education is a result-based sector-wide plan which covered all levels and aspects of education, and include Pre-school, Primary, Junior High, Senior High, Teacher education, Special education, Technical/Vocational education and Tertiary education. The thematic areas of the ESP (2003-2015) included: Equitable Access to Education, Quality of Education, Educational Planning and Management, and Science, Technology and Technical Vocational Education and Training (Hriet, Anin and Yussif, 2013).

There are three (3) components of the ESP (2003-2015) at the district level and include: the DESP, which is a five (5) year plan; Annual District Education Operational Plan (ADEOP), which is a three (3) year-rolling plan; and Annual Education Activity Plan (ADEAP) which is a one (1) year plan. These plans are inter-related and inter-dependent. The ADEAP contained issues from the ADEOP which also contained issues from the DESP (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Under the participatory approach to education planning initiative, stakeholders such as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations (SMC/PTAs), District Assembly (DA), District Education Office (DEO) and Community and Religious Leaders (CRLs) are to be

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active participants of the planning and implementation of education programs and projects (Ministry of Education, 2003). Following the Ghana's decentralization process, and disappointment in the traditional planning approach in the education system, the DESP was introduced in the mid 1990s to ensure full participation and ownership of the local stakeholders in the education programs in their own communities (Addae-Boahene, 2007).

Several years on, stakeholders' involvement and participation level in the Education Strategic Planning process in the Salaga town-council of the Gonja East District is disappointingly low and has contributed to low academic standards in the district and child labour as most children of school going age abandon school for farm and menial jobs. Our earlier study revealed that local stakeholders' involvement and participation was very low. Indeed most of the stakeholders had no idea about DESP, let alone getting to know what went into it. There were evidence of lack of knowledge about DESP on the part of the local stakeholders and even some of the education authority within Salaga town-council of the Gonja East District of Ghana (Harriet, Anin and Yussif, 2013). Our main objective in this study is to assess the challenges that account for the low involvement and participation of various stakeholders within the Salaga town-council of the Gonja East District and give suggestions that will inform policy decision towards ensuring maximum participation in the DESP process and to ultimately improve quality of education within Salaga town- council.

## **2.0 Related Studies**

### **2.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal**

The term Rapid Rural Appraisal referred to methods that involve rural people in the examination of their own problems, setting their own goals, and monitoring their own achievements. Generally, it described techniques that could bring about a 'reversal of learning. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was established on the idea of building long-term sustainable local action and institutional capacity. PRA employed a wide range of approaches and methods which enabled local people to express, enhance, share, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, as well as to plan and act. And it was also intended to enhance people's analytical capacity and knowledge, and promote local ownership" (Chambers, 1995; Freire 1970; Hope and Timmel 2004).

According to Chambers (1995), participatory Rural Appraisal evolved from the growing desire for participatory strategies to solve serious deficiencies of both the reductionism of formal surveys and the biases of typical field visits in the early 1980's and 1990's. The first international conference to share experiences relating to Rapid Rural Appraisal held in Thailand in 1985 brought about the rapid growth in the development of methods that involved rural people in examining their own problems, setting their own goals, and monitoring their own achievements (Chambers, 1995).

Chambers (1994) indicates that the key concepts which influenced the growth and spread of participatory strategies were decentralization and empowerment. To Chambers, decentralization was a way of devolving resources and discretion to the grass root or local people whilst empowerment was a situation where the people took control over their lives and secured ownership and control of productive assets.

### **2.2 Community-Based Development**

Mansuri and Rao (2003) indicate that Community Based Development (CBD) and its more recent variant, Community Driven Development (CDD), are among the fastest growing mechanisms for channelling development assistance. Community-Based Development is an umbrella term that refers to projects which actively include beneficiaries in their design and management. Community Driven Development is a term, originally coined by the World Bank, which refers to Community-Based Development projects where communities have direct control over key project decisions as well as the management of investment funds.

The main tenets of CBD include; sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness, poverty reduction, inclusion, empowerment, and good governance. The CBD tenets are achieved by; social planners and potential beneficiaries eliciting development priorities directly from target communities; channeling resources available to the poor through credit, social funds, capacity building and occupational training; and strengthening civic capacities of communities and organisations which represent them for collective action (Mansuri and Rao 2003; Oliveira, 2001; Chambers, 2005).

CBD turned the pyramid of development mechanisms upside-down by giving beneficiaries “voice and choice,” such that it did not ignore the social and cultural context within which these beneficiaries lived and organized themselves. CBD relied on how “communities” used “social capital” to organize themselves and “participate” in the development process. Concepts such as “participation,” “community,” and “social capital” were critical to CBD/CDD in terms of how projects were conceptualized and implemented.

The cornerstone of CBD initiatives was the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation. While participation occurred at many levels, the focus was to incorporate ‘local knowledge’ into the project’s decision making processes. Where potential beneficiaries made key project decisions, participation moved to the level of self-initiated actions- what became known as the exercise of ‘voice’ and ‘choice’ or ‘empowerment’ in CBD/CDD terminology. Participation ensured better project design, effective targeting of priorities of project beneficiaries, cost effective and timely delivery of project inputs and equitable distribution of project benefits with minimal leakages due to corruption (Fritze, 2005; Stiftel, 2000).

### **2.3 Factors That Encouraged Higher Level Of Participation**

Addae-Boahene (2007) argues that there are several factors which impact the nature and quality of stakeholders’ participation within a service delivery organization. These factors include participation style, relationship, information sharing and interaction. There is a perception that stakeholders with reactive approach to planning processes gives sign of poor relationship between the community and the implementing agency. Local stakeholders with negative relationship with other stakeholders participate less frequently and to a lesser extent as compared to a stakeholder with positive relationship. Therefore ensuring positive relationship with all stakeholders during project planning and implementation is very crucial (Mansuri and Rao, 2003; International Association for Public Participation, 2006).

Further, too much emphasis on formal communication, such as written documentation in a specific format during project planning and implementation leads to participation challenges among stakeholders. On the other hand, informal communication strategies such as face-to-face communication and sketching lower overall complexity and cost and often improve time to advertise or sell ideas. For this reason, it is imperative to balance formal and informal communication strategies to ensure effective participation and involvement of local stakeholders. Again, where the implementation agency is co-located within the other stakeholders it becomes much easier for them to interact regularly and actively but as the agency become more geographically distributed, the chances of project success decreases (Mansuri and Rao 2003; Chambers, 2005; World Bank, 2006).

Isham et al. (1995) cited Addae-Boahene, (2007) assert that where local people are involved in decision-making at all stages of a project cycle, participation then becomes high and the best results follow and the opposite is true. Ameyaw-Akumfi (2001), also cited Addae-Boahene, (2007) indicates that most of the basic schools in Ghana were initiated by communities, which willingly recruits teachers and provided places of learning for their children. Most of these schools were later absorbed into the public system and the management and control of these schools then shifted to central government authorities with minimum community participation. This shift in the management and control of education delivery affected, to a large extent, the local community commitment and involvement in quality basic education delivery system.

As part of government’s effort to addressing this setback and at strengthening community participation, structures such as SMCs/PTAs, DEOC, DEPT, circuits, Zones, Area Councils, units and cluster centres among others were established and strengthened. For example the SMC had a legal backing based on Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 in exercising their responsibilities within the school system. Also, the 1987 Education Reform made provision towards community ownership of basic schools within a locality. It recognized provision of basic education as a joint venture between government and the communities where government provides curriculum materials, equipment, teachers, supervision and management. School Management Committee/Parent Teacher Association on their part donate or provide educational infrastructure, contributes to the teaching and learning process as resource persons and ensures access to education through registration of births, determination of the school-age population, moral persuasion or compulsion to get children enrolled, and imposed fines on defaulters.

Heck (2003) indicates that self-formed and self-run groups and organizations approach is appropriate for full participation leading to empowerment of the poor.

Other approach of ensuring community participation is the use of extension staff, community development and decentralized planning approaches. Government departments' or ministries' field staff or extension staff whose primary role is to provide a link between policy makers and the local people are used to achieve effective participation in planning and implementation of various projects including education related projects. They provide information about the needs of local areas, conduct impact assessment, mobilize local people and create awareness about roles and responsibilities, explain project planning and implementation, and assist in the implementation of projects (Nkunika, 1987).

Similarly, strategies and interventions such as training of SMCs, CSOs, DA officials and DEO staff on their roles and responsibilities and participatory approaches such as community drama, education forum, town meetings, reviews and updates, and public hearings among others to encourage and promote participation (Addae-Boahene, 2007). These impact on participatory governance, participatory management, participatory planning, school performance monitoring, networking and coalition building, resource mobilization, advocacy, and district authorities' responsiveness to education needs of citizens (Berends, 2009; World Bank, 2006; Gwang-Chol, 2006).

However, limitations such as lack of organised structures at the community, poor communication between government agencies and local community; 'bureaucratic red tape' especially where more than one government agency are involved, lack of or inadequate mobilisation and participatory skills, and extension officers often considered as strangers by local people are factors that inhibit local community participation (Mosse 2001).

#### **2.4 Challenges of Effective Community Participation In Planning And Implementation**

Kumar and Corbridge (2002) observe that the perception that local people lack sufficient knowledge and skills to take control of projects is a major challenge affecting local people's involvement in the education planning process. This assertion is supported by Harriet *et al.*, (2013) when they report that low knowledge level and poor flow of information account for the low involvement and participation of stakeholders at the local level.

Furthermore, local government officials felt threatened by the empowerment of the local steering committee, and accused them of being agents of political parties and thus hinders full commitment and participation from the local people (Wilcox, 2002; Addae-Boahene, 2007). Also the "notions of local empowerment ran contrary to the "elite mentality of local officials, possibly inherited from the colonial past, who see the rural populace as primitive and lacking initiative to make productive contribution to education planning processes. Baku and Agyman (2002) are of the view that the main problem inhibiting community participation are:

- wrong timing of SMC/PTA meetings;
- responsibilities assigned to the communities by government being beyond the capability of the communities;
- failure on the part of education authorities to share information and general lukewarm attitude of the local people arising from loss of interest towards participating in the planning process.

Also, Kolkman *et al* (2005) opined that differences in levels of knowledge between local citizens and government officials lead to mistrust and marginalization which affects local community participation. Language barrier is another factor that inhibits local participation. When the government representative and the local people do not speak the same language, the local people usually are excluded from participating in decision making (Kolkman *et al.*, 2005; Addae-Boahene, 2007).

#### **2.5 Background Of The Area Of Study**

Salaga derived its name from a Gonja word 'Salga' which means 'to spread' or 'expand'. Salaga town council is one of the six (6) area councils in the East Gonja District. There were three main religious groupings in Salaga town council namely; Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion. Salaga is the administrative capital of the East Gonja District with twenty-four (24) sections or suburbs. There are five (5) electoral areas within the Salaga town council namely; Dagomba line, Lampor, Machera, Mfabaso and NguAlhaji. Salaga Town Council had a long tradition of Islamic schools, with Islamic scholars mentoring a large number of students from across West Africa and the Sahel.

Formal education is gradually gaining patronage because people who in the past refused to enrol their children into formal schools had now established English and Arabic schools and enrolled their children. There are two (2) circuits within Salaga Town Council namely; Urban 'A' and Urban 'B'. There are public and private schools in Salaga Town Council. The public schools are twelve (12) Primary Schools, eight (8) Junior High Schools and two (2) Senior High Schools. The private schools are four (4) primary schools (East Gonja District Education Office, 2010).

**3. Methodology**

Both deductive and inductive approach, which Perry (1998) refers to as abductive approach, was adopted for the study although the emphasis was more on deductive. The study used qualitative method with case study strategy, dwelling mainly on primary data. Though this study is a social survey type, it was also cross-sectional as it considered study participants at one time. Therefore data collected is applicable to that time frame. The target population of the study was District level stakeholders comprising District Education Officers and staff of East Gonja District Assembly staff (DEO and DA) and Community Level Stakeholders who also comprised of CBOs, SMCs/PTAs, CRLs, and pupils within Salaga Town Council. These constitute the major stakeholders of education within the district. Ten (10) representatives from the District Stakeholder group (5 each from DEO and DA) and twenty (20) from the community stakeholder group (also 5 each from CBO, SMC/PTA, CRLs and 15 from the Pupils) were purposively selected for the study. This made a sample size of 40. The selection was based on the experience and general knowledge about educational issues of participants in order to be able to provide relevant information. Figure 3.1 gives the categories of respondents. The data was collected through field survey using in-depth interview instrument. The data collected was analysed and deductions and inferences made.

**Table 3.1 Categories of Respondents**

RESPONDENTS	SAMPLE SIZE
<b>District level stakeholders</b>	
District Education Officers	5
District Assembly staff	5
<b>Community level stakeholders</b>	
Community Based Organizations	5
SMC/PTA	5
Community Religious Leaders	5
Pupils	15
Grand Totals	40

Source: Author's construct, (2013)

**4.0 Results and Discussion**

**4.1 Challenges of Community Participation in the Planning and Implementation of the DESP**

Respondents from the District level stakeholders were interviewed to find out their perception on the challenges affecting community stakeholder's involvement and participation in the DESP in the Salaga town council. It was found out from the interview session that Inadequate funds/resource, Time wasting, Terrain and Lukewarm attitude (Community level stakeholders) were the major challenges adversely affecting community stakeholder's involvement and participation in the DESP.

**4.1.1 Inadequate Funds/Resource**

District level stakeholders' (DEO and DA) were of the view that inadequate funds for community participation activities was one of the major challenges to the planning and implementation of the DESP towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga town council. They mentioned fuel, per diem/allowances, training resources, logistic, among others. Thus the cost involved in ensuring effective community participation is too high than the district can afford. These arise from lack of budgetary allocation for community participation which is a major setback to the bottom-up approach to planning and development.

Perhaps this confirmed Heck's (2003) observation that the major constraint of genuine community participation was lack of political will and resources to promote participation in a country or project area.

#### **4.1.2 Time Constraints**

District level stakeholders were also of the view that community participation was time wasting hence feared that deadlines could not be met if community members were to be involved in the planning and implementation of the DESP. They mentioned high illiteracy rate among community level stakeholders as the reason why they see community participation as time wasting. A statement by a representative of the DEO below affirmed district level stakeholders view:

*If we were to involve community members in the planning and implementation of the DESP/ADEOP/ADEAP then we could not meet deadlines. Also their involvement will not make any difference. What do they know about DESP, where do they know?*

The above statement gives the impression that the District level stakeholders do not have any confidence and trust in the community stakeholders as to their contribution to DESP process.

This was contrary to Freire's (1970) assertion that the content of education and development should be determined by the learners, local people or beneficiaries of development projects.

Again, district level stakeholders (DA and DEO) tried to justify their inability to involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the DESP with statements such as:

*there are over 100 communities and 140 basic schools in East Gonja district. These are categorised into area councils by the District Assembly or Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Circuits by the District Education Office or Ghana Education Service. It is not going to be easy or possible to get these communities, school communities, community level stakeholders from the various area councils and circuits involved in the planning and implementation of district plans, especially District Education Strategic Plan.*

The above statements indicates that the district level stakeholders (DA and DEO) see the development/planning and implementation of the DESP as their responsibility and did not see why it should involve other stakeholders in the development and implementation of such a plan especially when they are supposed to meet deadlines. This is a clear case of marginalization, ignorance of the rationale and benefits of strategic planning, a deficit in the understanding of the decentralization concept or a deliberate attempt to frustrate the decentralization process by district level stakeholders.

Thus harmonization of systems and mechanisms, one of the conditions of the sector wide approach, i.e. Act, 462 and Act, 480 (Republican Constitution of Ghana, 1992) regarding local government and decentralisation, and National Development Planning process were not adhered to or enforced by the powers that be.

#### **4.1.3 Issue of Terrain**

The district level stakeholders further perceived that the terrain (vast land, hard to reach and scattered communities) hinders effective community participation. The DA shared this view the most. District level stakeholders were of the view that East Gonja was one of the largest districts in Ghana. For example, to access the Akrumase Circuit /Area Council from the district capital, one has to cross the Volta Lake from Makango in the Northern Region to Yeji in the BrongAhafo Region. Also the Kpariba area/Rural North Circuit of the East Gonja District was accessed through Tamale, which is 115 kilometres (72 miles) away from the district capital. The use of technology is not an option as most of the community stakeholders were unable to use information technology.

However, community level stakeholders argued that Salaga town council was not affected by terrain. Salaga town council was the district capital and it would not cost district level stakeholders much to organise information sharing meetings, organise strategic meetings, embark on school performance monitoring, or question-and-answer session.

#### **4.1.4 Lukewarm attitude**

District level stakeholders considered lukewarm attitude of community level stakeholders as a challenge to effective community participation in the development and implementation of the DESP. This could be

attributed to stakeholders not benefiting from their participation in programmes and activities of district stakeholders. According to GAIT II (2005) government cannot do it all alone, and that progressive societies were those that practiced effective participation or democracy.

#### **4.2 Community Level Stakeholders View on the Challenges for Community Participation in the Planning and Implementation of the DESP towards Quality Education Delivery**

Respondents from the Community level stakeholders were also interviewed to find out their perception on the challenges affecting their involvement and participation in the DESP in the Salaga town council.

##### **4.2.1 Issue of Accountability**

The community level stakeholders mentioned district level stakeholders, specifically DEO's fear of accountability as the major challenge to community participation in the planning/development and implementation of the District Education Strategic Plan. They felt the DEO did not involve them in planning the DESP because it did not want to be accountable to them. It could be inferred from the interview that there was some mistrust of a sort between the district level stakeholders especially the DEO and community level stakeholders especially SMCs/PTAs. Stakeholders believed that the central government, donors or development partners such as Care International, Department for International Development and United States Agency for International Development among others sponsor the activities of the DESP but the DEO, in particular, would not like community level stakeholders to have information about the amount and how the amount would be disbursed or spent. The DEOs were also accused of not taking the necessary action when SMCs/PTAs reported teachers they perceived as non-performing and perhaps these explain the lukewarm attitude of community level stakeholders towards DESP process.

This was the reaction of SMCs/PTAs representative during the interview session:

*When it comes to the issue of accommodation for teachers, construction of classrooms, urinal among others, the DEO and teachers say the school is for the community but when it is about capitation grant, participatory planning and other perceived financial benefits they say community members are not responsible or part. This has often confused us. For example if you report a non-performing teacher (absenteeism, alcoholism etc) to the circuit supervisor and insist that some form of disciplinary measures are meted out to correct the situation, they just transfer the teacher from your school to another school and leave your school with a few teachers or no teacher. How can this encourage community participation?*

##### **4.2.2. Resistance to Change**

The second major challenge to community participation in the development and implementation of the District Education Strategic Plan towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga town council according to community level stakeholders was district level stakeholders resistance to change. Community level stakeholders held a unanimous view on the issue of district level stakeholders resistance to change. They indicated that district level stakeholders, especially the DEO were finding it difficult to come to terms with the local government system and education decentralization system which emphasized local stakeholders' participation in decision-making. The study revealed that SMCs/PTAs, CBOs and CRLs had no copies of the DESP and other documents, neither were they part of their development although they (community stakeholders) play crucial role in increasing enrolment especially girls, organized extra classes and ensured punctuality and regularity of pupils which were targets on the DESP/ADEOP/ADEAP.

##### **4.2.3 Lack Of Commitment In The Use Of Participatory Approaches**

District level stakeholders' lack of commitment in the use of participatory approaches was also perceived as a challenge causing the non-participatory of local community stakeholders in the DESP process. The DEOs and the DA were not committed to involve the community stakeholders in the DESP programs and so fail to invite them to be part of the process. He CBOs and CRLs expressed this view the most. A representative of CBOs said:

*Excuse me to say that the DEO/DA only recognize big time NGOs like Care International as partners in the development and implementation of the DESP/ADEOP/ADEAP and others. They forget or do not know that we can contribute a lot towards quality education delivery as CBOs, FBOs and local associations. Look Tailors and Dressmakers can subsidize the cost of sewing school uniform, make dusters and door mats for schools. Artists can design the vision and mission statements on the walls of the Education office. I can go on and on. We also stand to benefit when we contribute to quality education delivery of the area because reading and writing are important to all the associations we have in Salaga. Let us use this opportunity to build a strong relationship for our mutual benefit."*

The above statement gives an indication that the local community was not happy over their non-involvement in the DESP process even though they were major share holders of their schools. This confirmed Chambers' (1994) assertion that outsiders should step off their pedestals, sit down, and allow local people to lead and do the discussions ('hand over the stick') on issues that affected their lives, conduct their own analysis and determine their own priorities and solutions. This was because local people had lived with their situation for long and had over the years accumulated a reservoir of experience. Therefore it was only appropriate for outsiders to allow local community members share their experiences as they listen and learn.

#### **4.2.4 Communication Gap**

Poor communication gap between the district level stakeholders especially the District Education Office and community level stakeholders was the fourth major challenge to effective community participation in the development and implementation of the DESP towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga Town Council. CBOs emphasised this point most. Perhaps this was because they had not been identified and recognized as an important stakeholder by the DEO in their quest for quality basic education delivery in Salaga town council. Community level stakeholders indicated that if the local stakeholders in Salaga, which is the district capital of Gonja East did know what the DESP was all about then how would those area councils in the periphery know?

It was inferred from the community stakeholders' responses that they were not aware of did not know that there was a position as Community Participation Coordinator. The circuit supervisors who linked the community and the directorate fail to give feedback to the local community, usually through the SMCs/PTAs when they visit schools or embark on supervision. Most circuit supervisors were accused of not attending PTA meetings. It was therefore not surprising that community level stakeholders' did not know much about the DESP.

Another clear example of poor communication between the DEO and community level stakeholders was that the community members did not know the position of the district in terms of academic performance, i.e. the statistics of pupils examination results.

Community level stakeholders were of the view that challenges such as lack of funds, difficult terrain and time to ensure effective stakeholders participation in the development and implementation of the DESP towards quality basic education delivery were minor or insignificant. In their view, if the DA and DEO were committed to ensuring effective community participation, these minor challenges could easily become opportunities and strengths. The local community believed that effective use of community structures (SMC/PTA, Chiefs and elders, Religious bodies, unit committees, assembly persons and local level associations among others) and district structures (District Education Planning Team, DEOC, Circuits/Circuit Supervisors, cluster schools/centres, Area Council and Social Services Sub-Committee among others) could help ensure maximum involvement and participation from both levels of stakeholders in order to meet the objectives of DESP.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study was undertaken to assess the challenges affecting the local community's involvement and participation in the DESP process towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga Town Council.

From the perspective of the district level stakeholders, ie the DEOs and the DA, the study found out that inadequate funds/resource, time wasting, difficult terrain and lukewarm attitude on the part of the community level stakeholders were the major challenges adversely affecting community stakeholder's involvement and participation in the DESP process. Contrary to this view, the local community stakeholders on their part attributed the challenges accounting for their non involvement in the DESP process to lack of commitment in the use of participatory approaches, district stakeholders' resistance to Change, issue of accountability and poor Communication between the district stakeholders and the local community stakeholders.

## **6. Recommendations**

In order to surmount the identified challenges to improve on the local community's involvement and participation in the District Education Strategic Development Planning process towards quality basic education delivery in Salaga Town Council, the central government, through the ministry of Education and with the support of the Non-Governmental Organizations, should provide adequate funding and other needed resources to the DEOs to be able to bring all stakeholders on board in the DESP process. The DEOs and DA should use part of their budgetary allocations to organize training programs on DESP for the local community stakeholders to empower them to take active roles in the DESP process and other programs that will help improve quality basic education in Salaga Town Council. Finally there should be effective two-way communication between the two groups of stakeholders. This will clear the doubts and the negative perceptions the stakeholders hold about each other and foster effective collaboration between the major stakeholders of education the quest to improving the quality of basic education in Salaga Town Council of the East Gonja District of Ghana.

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