Chapter 18
Stakeholders' Perceptions on Effective Community Participation in Climate Change Adaptation

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Abstract Till date, successful community-based climate change adaptation projects and programs are rare; rather, the resentment and frustration among the local populace are ever increasing. Community-based climate change adaptation programs become nothing more than a trap to circumvent the local communities to get some plans sanctioned, encoded by the external agencies. The reason is that participation is not a simple, straightforward notion. In this chapter, it is argued that given manifold comprehension of participation, its unshackled, combative frameworks and numerous as well as dubious operation methods and techniques, the actual implementation of the participatory projects and programs is in the hand of implementation agencies. Their willingness, understanding, skills, and capacities determine to a great extent how successfully local communities can be engaged in the climate change adaptation programs. If the community's participation in climate change adaptation projects needs to be enhanced, it is critical to explore how stakeholders including government officials, technocrats, project managers, and donor agencies conceptualize and idealize community participation. But, in climate change adaptation studies, no such initiative has ever been made. This chapter aims to identify stakeholders' perspectives on effective ways, steps and factors for ensuring effective community participation in climate change adaptation programs and projects based on a case study in the Wa West district of Northern Ghana. We interviewed key stakeholders including government and non-government official involved in various climate change adaptation programs.

Keywords Community participation · Stakeholders' perspectives · Climate change adaptation · Ghana

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18.1 Introduction

Community participation is a commonplace element in climate change adaptation (hereafter CCA) discourses (UN 1992; IPCC 2001) due to its potential to catalyze several positive benefits for successful project implementation, including enhancing community's awareness building, conflict resolution between stakeholders, building trust among project managers, ensuring more acceptable decision-making processes, and building community's self-reliance (Van Aalst et al. 2008; Sheppard et al. 2011; Reid et al. 2009; Samaddar et al. 2011). An additional motivation stems from the fact that community participation is also seen as the citizenry's democratic right to participate in consensus building particularly regarding policy decisions that directly and indirectly affect their life and livelihoods, though such a process is seldom effectively realized (Few et al. 2007; Hiwasaki et al. 2015; Prabhakar et al. 2009; Sheppard et al. 2011; Dodman and Mitlin 2013). Prior studies often attributed such failures to the intention, willingness, attitude, organizational capacity, managerial skills, and bureaucratic structure of the implementing agencies (Collins and Ison 2009; Hiwasaki et al. 2015; Cheng and Mattor 2006; Yang and Callahan 2007). These agencies include the project managers, public officials, field engineers, development partners, and NGO workers, among others from different institutions.

In most cases, ineffective community participation is seen either as a failure of the implementing agencies to motivate the local community to become willing partners in the CCA programs, or attributed to their an elitist, authoritarian approach that intimidates the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable local communities (Lorenzoni et al. 2007; Larsen and Gunnarsson-Östling 2009; Few et al. 2007; Hiwasaki et al. 2015; Reid et al. 2009; Dodman and Mitlin 2013). Our purpose is not to delve into the merit or otherwise of the debate but to formulate questions about the future of community participation in the climate change adaptation discourse and whether the beliefs and perspectives of the dominant stakeholders' matter for a meaningful CCA programs and projects. Currently, there appears to be fewer answers than questions, but we believe that clarifying and addressing such questions is an urgent task for the citizens, policymakers, civil servants, researchers, and civil society workers.

18.1.1 Do Stakeholders' Perspectives Matter in Climate Change Adaptation?

Principally, participation evinces a vague, contentious, and value-laden idea (Arnstein 1969; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Chess and Purcell 1999). It defies a universal definition, as for decades researchers battle over its true framework (Reed 2008; Blackstock et al. 2007; Blahna and Yonts-Shepard 1989). This lack of consensus is reflected as to who should represent the community. There is no consensus on who is to be involved, when and to what extent, what sociopolitical and cultural

conditions are essential, what results to expect from participation. For some, community participation means only informing the community, for example providing information about what is climate change and how it can affect the community and how the potential impact on them can be managed (Patt et al. 2005; Roncoli et al. 2009). Such level of participation restricts community's involvement only as a passive recipient of information. Others also advocate for a level of participation where the community is involved in identifying risk and getting their candid counter-opinions about the plans prepared by the technical experts (Sheppard et al. 2011; Lorenzoni et al. 2007; Hung and Chen 2013; Galicia et al. 2015). Such a level of participation is seen as a top-down, autocratic model which must be replaced with a more proactive involvement of the community (Samaddar et al. 2015; Few et al. 2007). This new level of participation is envisioned as the one where the community has equal rights to open and table issues related to the project (Webler et al. 2001; Okada et al. 2013). In this instance, the community becomes an empowered collaborator through the preparatory stage to the implementation level (Samaddar et al. 2015). Although no consensus has been reached on the subject, we concur that in practice, the level of community involvement greatly depends on how those who command the administrative, legal, and financial authority of the project conceptualize and operationalize the idea of participation (Shaw 2006; Cheng and Mattor 2006; Yang and Callahan 2007).

18.1.2 The Yardstick of Community Participation: Controversies and Limitation

Generally, building a comprehensive participatory framework is seen as an antidote to reducing the acrimony over the concept of participation and project implementation. This has resulted in the development of a number of community participation frameworks in different academic domains, including natural resource management, environmental management, joint forest management, risk management (Dyer et al. 2014; Reed 2008; Blackstock et al. 2007; Blahna and Yonts-Shepard 1989; Carr et al. 2012; Samaddar et al. 2017) but quite limited in CCA studies (Sheppard et al. 2011; Collins and Ison 2009). In most cases, the proposed participatory frameworks provide a list of criteria, framed as a process (e.g., representation of all stakeholders, agreed objectives, fairness and trust, accountability, and good facilitation) (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Chess and Purcell 1999; Webler et al. 2001; Samaddar et al. 2017) and as an outcome (e.g., ownership, timely completion of project, conflict resolution, sustainability) (Chess and Purcell 1999; Teitelbaum 2014; Dyer et al. 2014; Reed 2008; Blackstock et al. 2007) as yardsticks for measuring effective community involvement. This initiative of developing participatory framework undoubtedly has helped to make progress towards better implementation of community-based programs and elevated the intellectual discourses on local participation. Nonetheless, the nature and success of community participation remains

subjected to the wish, intention, attitude, and capacities of the dominant stakeholders or implementing agencies because of several reasons some of which are discussed below.

Abstract criteria: First, most of the derived criteria under community participation framework are considered to be very abstract or broad which defies uniform interpretation in the local context (Collins and Ison 2009; Dyer et al. 2014; Santos and Chess 2003; Dodman and Mitlin 2013). For example the process criterion "fairness" can be differently interpreted and given different operational meaning in two geographical locations of a same project (Blackstock et al. 2007). The decision is in the hands of local power holders or implementing agencies to define and decide the project framework and operational meaning. The universal framework can hardly pinpoint any implementable, universal matrix of participation (Dyer et al. 2014; Rydin and Pennington 2000).

No fixed criteria for participation: Second, flowing from the earlier observation, there is no fixed criteria for participation (Webler et al. 2001; Santos and Chess 2003). The types and number of criteria and their importance vary directly with the purpose, types, and location of the projects (Rosener 1981; Moore 1996; Webler et al. 2001). Scholars and practitioners parallel each other on the set of criteria for measuring effective community participation. Thus, the success of the community-based projects depends largely on how stakeholders including government officials, field engineers, and NGO staff interpret the guidelines of participation (Few et al. 2007).

Authority and ownership of participatory discourse: Third, the very root of the derived framework of community participation is under the dominance of powerful stakeholders. The frameworks for effective participation have evolved from different scholarly foundations—ranging from theoretically derived frameworks (Renn et al. 1995), to case study analysis (Chess and Purcell 1999; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Reed 2008) and summaries from real-life project experiences (Dyer et al. 2014; Samaddar et al. 2017). In all cases, the held criteria for participation are determined by the relatively powerful, privileged stakeholders including researchers, project managers, government officials, and donor agencies (Rosener 1981; Moore 1996). The local communities have hardly had the opportunity to define what participation ought to be. Consequently, the derived criteria for participation only reflect the belief and intention of the powerful stakeholders (Samaddar et al. 2015b). There is hardly any method or approach adopted to form the participatory criteria based on inductive inquiry or emic perspective, that is, the local community's perspectives on ideal community participation. It is critical, therefore, to examine how the implementing agencies and their collaborators perceive community participation with the intent of rectifying, revising and influencing community-based projects through meaningful local community engagement.

18.1.3 Tools and Methods of Community Participation: The Control of Stakeholders

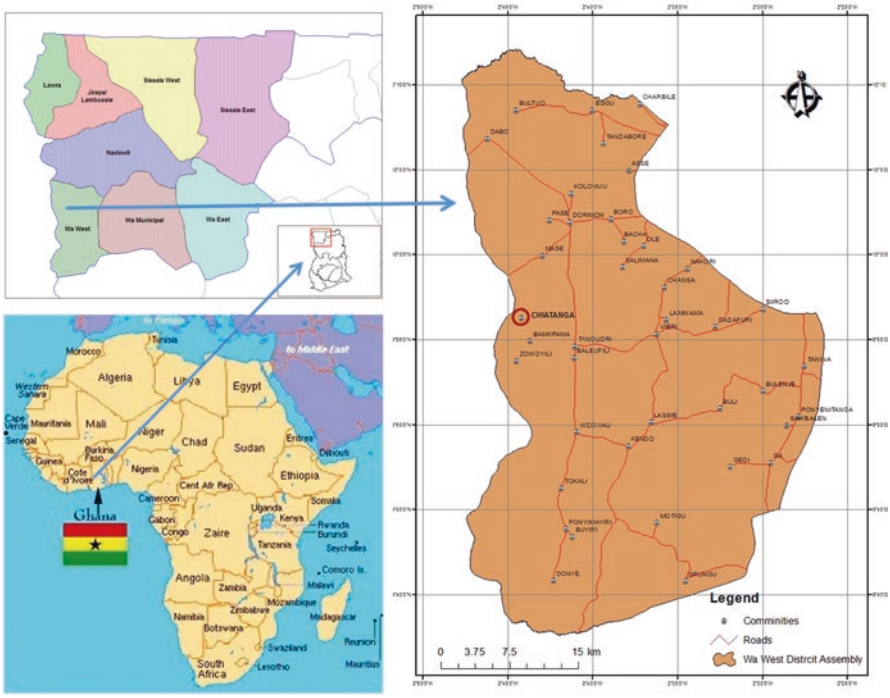
Along with the definition and framework of participation, the methods and tools are considered important as they are the mechanisms that translate the participatory idea and frameworks into practice. But the adoption of participatory methods or tools is value-laden too (Rowe and Frewer 2005). This is due to the plethora of equally promising participatory tools and techniques, all proclaiming to engage community meaningfully in the decision-making process (Toth and Hizsnyik 2008; Roncoli et al. 2009; Maraseni 2012; Samaddar et al. 2011, 2015). Nevertheless, the differences between these tools and techniques are vivid in terms of structure, functions, steps and procedures (Van Aalst et al. 2008; Toth and Hizsnyik 2008; Rowe and Frewer 2005). It is the implementing agencies from public or private sectors who are solely responsible for selecting the tools and techniques in a project (Na et al. 2009; Chambers 1997; Okada et al. 2013). The adoption of tools and methods eventually decides the direction, speed, intensity and outcomes of the participation (Rowe and Frewer 2005). For example, some methods are structurally rigid and proffer a maximum amount of power to the facilitators to decide who is to be involved, how and when and to what extent. Some studies argued that when the tools are so highly facilitator-controlled, actual participation is compromised (Yamori 2009; Chambers 1994). It is also argued that most participatory tools in disaster management and climate change adaptation focus only on identifying problems and issues (Na et al. 2009), but do not offer the future course of actions, such as what can be done and how. Hence, the implementing agencies tend to restrict community's involvement only at the risk identification level. The entire planning machinery remains in the hands of stakeholders (Chambers 1997).

Given the valued laden perspectives of the participatory idea, the powerful stakeholders influence and control the implementation of community-based projects greatly. Consequently, the community's engagement in climate change adaptation is truly intangible till date (Few et al. 2007; Larsen and Gunnarsson-Östling 2009; Allen 2006). Field reports show that for the community, community participation appears to be a powerful tool for local disaster management authorities to legitimatize their plans which they wanted to pursue for a long but failed (Cheng and Mattor 2006). The level, type and objective of community-based projects are designed and implemented by the project managers, donor agencies or government officials. If the community's participation in climate change adaptation programs and projects needs to be enhanced, it is critical to explore how stakeholders including government official, technocrats, project managers and donor agencies conceptualize and idealize community participation. What are the key factors for effective community participation? This chapter aims to identify stakeholders' perspectives on effective ways, steps and factors for ensuring effective community participation in climate change adaptation programs and projects. This study is based on the Wa West district, Northern Ghana. We interviewed key stakeholders including government and non-government officials involved in various climate change adaptation programs.

18.2 Climate Change, Vulnerability and Wa West District in Northern Ghana

The study area Wa West district (see Map 18.1), located in the western part of Upper West Region of Ghana, is one of the most susceptible locations to climate change in the West African sub-region (Samaddar et al. 2014; Kusakari et al. 2014). The district is surrounded by Nadowli district in North, Sawla-Tuna-Kaba district in the south and Burkina Faso in the east.

The Upper West Region is divided into three administrative units, i.e., Wa Municipality, Wa East District, and Wa West District. According to the National Population and Housing Census, the Wa West District's population in 2010 was 81,348 (i.e., Male: 40,227; Female: 41,121). The average temperature in the district varies from 25 to 36 °C, but local observers claim that due to climate change, the area now often experiences high temperature close to 40 °C during the months of February to April (Kusakari et al. 2014). Additionally, the district is said to be experiencing increased evaporation, decreased and highly variable rainfall pattern, as well as frequent and pronounced drought spells (Laux et al. 2008). The district's climatic dynamics resonate with the national figures as earlier studies in Ghana show a temperature increase of 1 °C in the last three decades, whereas average



Map 18.1 Location of Wa West District, Ghana

rainfall has reduced by 20% (Yaro 2013). Indeed it is predicted that by 2050, the country's temperature will increase 2.0 °C and by 2080 the temperature rise will be 3.9 °C (Ghana Environmental Protection Agency 2007). Regarding the rainfall pattern, normally April used to be the month for the onset of the rain, but studies show that that has now shifted to May and it is predicted that in future, by 2040 the onset will be shifted further to June or even later in Northern Ghana (Jung and Kunstman 2007). Given this changing climate scenario, scientists predict that Northern Ghana in future will experience extreme drought and floods (Armah et al. 2010), perhaps, reminiscent of flooding incidences experienced in 2007 and 2008 (Samaddar et al. 2014). The climate change is likely to impact most on the poverty-stricken population because their livelihood is based on subsistence, rain-fed agriculture economy which is predicted to be very severely affected by flood and drought (Kusakari et al. 2014). The impacts of climate change are expected to manifest in the area of food security, out-migration, and hunger months in the region (Akudugu et al. 2012). There is, therefore, the need to take up programs and projects focusing on enhancing the coping capacities of the local communities through alternative livelihood systems, innovative technology adoption by rural households, mobilizing resources at the grassroot level (Samaddar et al. 2018).

In fact, several climate change adaptation projects and programs are initiated in recent times by the national and local government, and by international donor and aid agencies to create alternative livelihood systems, augment local coping capacities of vulnerable communities, linking poverty alleviation with climate change adaptation (Laube et al. 2012; Schraven 2010). The more these programs have been initiated, the more it becomes obvious that for a successful implementation of these programs, the participation of the local people is indispensable (Westerhoff and Smit 2009; Laube et al. 2012). The conundrum, however, relates to how project managers, public officials, NGO workers, development officers and other stakeholders conceptualize how to effectively involve the local community in climate change adaptation programs (Samaddar et al. 2015b, 2018). Some yardstick or baseline criteria should be drawn to actualize local community participation in climate change adaptation programs in Northern Ghana.

18.3 Methods

We interviewed officials and representatives of several government and nongovernmental organizations who are directly involved in climate change adaptation and disaster management programs in the Wa West District of the Upper West Region of Ghana. From the government side, we interviewed ten respondents from different sectors and institutions including National Disaster Management Authority (NADMO), Ministry of Forest and Agriculture (MoFA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ghana Irrigation Development Authority, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Forest Service Department, Ghana National Fire Service, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Department of

Community Development, and District Town Planning Department. We also interviewed five locally functioning NGOs working on climate change and environmental issues and two FM Community Radio Stations conducting various awareness building and educational programs on climate change, environmental issues, and agriculture-related issues in the region.

To obtain stakeholders' perception on effective community participation, we primarily targeted the heads of the institutions or organizations, or the manager of any program (on climate change and disaster risks) for the interview, however, in cases where the heads recommended other officials or individuals who handle climate change adaptation issues, we interview the suggested individuals. Consequently, we interviewed one person from each institute. However, in case the respondent wanted other office colleagues or coworkers to join him/her in the interview, we allowed them and welcome their comments and suggestions as well. In such cases, the interviews were more like small group discussions. We experienced four such cases. Before the interview, we intimated to the respondents that the goal of the survey was not to get their official perspectives based on institutional affiliations, but rather, more personal perspectives as people who have much working experience regarding climate change adaptation and make decisions for the successful accomplishment of project objectives. Therefore, the respondents' opinions and views on participation did not require any endorsement by their representative organizations or institutions. Respondents were assured that no personal information will be disclosed in our report. We observed that the announcement helped to get candid and honest answers from the respondents.

The interview was conducted in two phases, first in December 2015 and then in July 2016. First, we prepared a list of prospective stakeholders or institutions for the interview and then consulted with the local researchers and experts (from University for Development Studies, Wa) to delete or add relevant institutions for the interview. To get affirmation from the respondents, 2 weeks before the interview, we sent request letters and emails to the prospective institutions and organizations for an interview, giving the background of the project and purpose of the study. In case, we received no feedback, we visited the office and met the designated head personally to get a consent and fix a date for interview. The first and second authors of the chapter mainly conducted field surveys and took face-to-face, open-ended interviews. On an average, an interview took one and half hours, but some interviews took much longer time. There was no fixed set of questions or questioners, but keeping in mind open-ended interview, we prepared a set of questions as shown in Table 18.1 to carry out the interview in a more organized and efficient manner. The research method was qualitative in nature because it intended to obtain data in an inductive fashion, that is, to get a bottom-up perspectives. Qualitative research methods are reflexive and inductive that encourage respondents to express their own views and help to obtain multiple realities of the problem (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). These attributes match well with the present research objectives since it aims to get stakeholders' own perspectives on community participation based on their situation and experience.

Table 18.1 Preface and question guidelines for interview

Preface and introductory questions	– We want to know from you how we can successfully engage and collaborate with local communities in climate change adaptation programs – We want to know your experience, suggestions, opinions, and views on criteria for effective community participation in climate change adaptation? Why do people want to participate and why not? What are their stakes? – We want you to share details of some of your success and failed cases? – We want you to list your successful projects and tell us why in those projects local communities were better involved? – Give us a comparative picture between projects and tell us in which projects local community's involvement was better seen and why?
Process of community participation	– Can you outline the ideal process for effective involvement of local communities in the climate change adaptation projects project? – What have you learned from your projects or from the field regarding involved community in CCA projects? – What are the Dos and Don'ts you will suggest for successful community participation? – If you again like to start a CCA project and want full participation of the local community—then what procedure will you follow? – In which project were you able to successfully involve the community and why do you think it was successfully done? – What do you think about how local communities prefer to get involved in climate change adaptation project and why?
Outcomes of community participation	– If you are given the role of evaluation of community-based CCA projects, on what basis can you say the local communities successfully got involved in a project? – Several organizations have been claiming that they have successfully implemented CCA projects with the meaningful participation of local communities in Wa region. Do you think these claims are true? On what basis, can you judge their claims – What are the outcome-based criteria for community participation in climate change adaptation, and why are these factors critical?

For the data analysis, we followed the content analysis method (Graneheim and Lundman 2004) by using coding process and category dispositions. First, the recorded data were transcribed verbatim. In the next stage, we read the transcribed data and assigned codes to them. First the codes were assigned with two broad categories—process and outcomes of participation and then these codes were assigned with sub-codes to develop subcategories.

18.4 Results

The derived criteria for effective community participation from the stakeholder survey do not actually fall into process and outcome-based broad categories. Rather, the emerging factors of effective participation can be divided more into "participatory condition" and "outcomes" as shown in Fig. 18.1. Participatory condition includes both steps or procedures and certain prerequisite conditions or

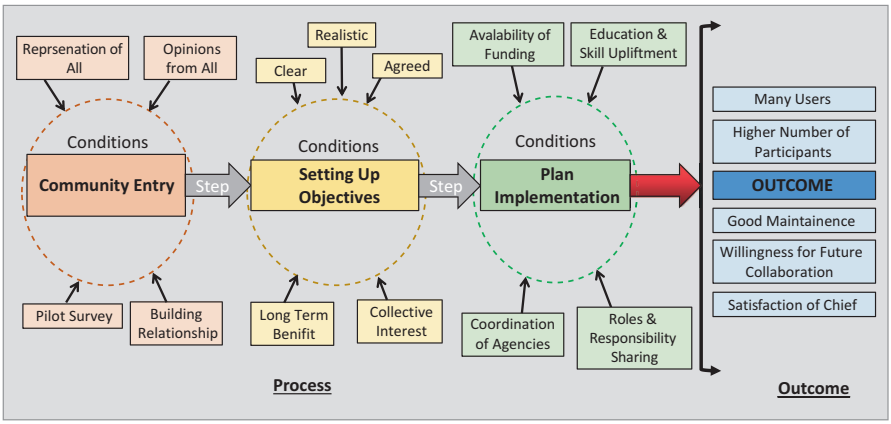


Fig. 18.1 Process conditions and outcome for community participation

environment necessary for the successful execution of the participatory programs. The "outcomes" are projects results indicating how successfully communities are involved in the project. The respondents expressed concern that "outcome" based parameters are very shaky and weak as the criteria may always alter based on the place and community, types of programs and projects. Respondents mentioned that outcome-based criteria do not have any direct impacts on enhancing community's involvement in CCA project, but can serve as evaluation parameters to understand the degree of community involvement.

18.4.1 Participatory Process and Conditions

Respondents asserted that community entry, setting good objectives and plan implementation are three inevitable steps for ensuring effective community participation in CCA projects. The three critical steps of participation are elaborated below:

18.4.1.1 Community Entry and Village Governance

Successful community engagement is strongly associated with the nature of external actors' entry into the community as depicted in Fig. 18.2 and Table 18.2. A good community entry is critical in getting the traditional authorities and local communities to give legitimacy to the project. It also facilitates effective community and resource mobilization. In Northern Ghana, social and local political issues revolve around the chieftaincy institution. The chieftaincy institution is a time tested traditional political system of the people. This traditional political system is more pronounced in the rural communities, which often form the target sites for climate interventions.

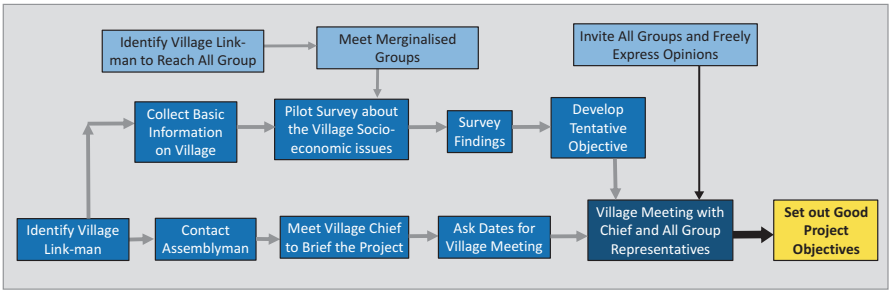


Fig. 18.2 Steps of community entry for effective local community participation

Table 18.2 Descriptions of "community entry" for effective community participation

Subcategories of community entry	Description
Find link-man/source man	– Not the chief or traditional leaders – Village assemblyman, young leader or school teacher or someone with whom you have worked before – Preferably young and not a part of the village governance system – They will take you to most vulnerable, poor families remotely located – Conduct a pilot survey. Visit 2–3 settlements in a day before meeting with the chief
Informal survey/pilot survey	– Small informal group meeting in each cluster – Specifically, meet women. They work hardest but have no power – Women give you more useful information because they take up the family responsibilities – Formal survey is not always necessary. Take notes – Know the community—culture, group dynamics, and climate change impacts on the villagers – Inform chief of your survey findings and what you want to do with your projects – You can always refine your plans through discussions with the people
Relationship with the chief	– Chiefs are generally receptive but sometimes ignorant about many issues. So internal knowledge, expert inputs, and scientific information are necessary – Meet the chief frequently to develop rapport – Respect indigenous values – Do not hide your true intentions – The Chief will cooperate with you if you are honest and the project will benefit everybody – Always wait for the chief's consent. If you do not agree with his decision, meet him again and again. Ask for his help – Without the chief's consent, no local resident can join the project
Village meeting	– It is more of a formality – Ensure the presence of all groups. Encourage them to express their opinions – Village meeting means giving endorsement to your work or plan. This is an evidence of your presence – Present survey findings in village meetings for validation

At the top of the chieftaincy system is a head called the chief who inherits this position from his royal forefathers and is the sole or ultimate decision makers on village politics and collective decision (Owusu-Mensah 2014). There also exists an advisory body consisting of the village elders, linguist, village priest and queen mother (Magazia) to assist the king in various matters (Mahama 2009; Owusu-Mensah 2014). This traditional and so-called autocratic governance system reached its peak, enjoying supremacy over village decision-making in precolonial and colonial era. But, political reforms over the years resulted in the setting up of decentralized and democratic structures with political and legislative power such as District Assemblies and their sub-structures. This new local government system provided for the election of Assemblymen as representatives of the local people to the District Assemblies. The Assemblymen are elected at the community or village level (Owusu-Mensah 2014; Crook 2005; Guri 2006). Although chiefs lost their formal judicial, administrative, and military power in modern democratic Ghana, the chieftaincy institution is still culturally embedded in the social and political life of Ghana. The role of chiefs in village politics and governance as well as day-to-day decision-making are still pivotal and final (Knierzinger 2011; Owusu-Mensah 2014; Crook 2005). In areas where the village land still belongs to the chief, he decides the access, use and management of the land. The chief still plays critical roles in initiating and monitoring community development projects and mobilizes resources including communal labor or village lands and forests for the village development in this part of the world (Guri 2006; Mahama 2009).

Given the importance of the village chief and the traditional governance system, the stakeholders advocated the building of strong rapport with the chiefs and other members of the village governance system. Without acceptance from the village chief, no plan can be legitimized. The rapport building with the chief is not only necessary for legitimizing the plan, it also facilitates resource mobilization, including land, forest timbers, and stones available in the village. The chieftaincy institution is instrumental in mobilizing for collective action and communal labors for village development. Without a consent from the chief, no one will be willing to participate in a project.

However, community entry through the chief could be problematic. In communities that have autocratic chiefs, little or no space is often provided to other marginalized groups including women, politically rival groups or lineages, new settlers to express their interests and rights. Thus, it is advisable to explore other options of making a good survey in the community to know the needs, visions and perspectives of the common citizens. An official from the Irrigation Development Authority of the Wa West District explained: “Develop your own source man. Assemblyman will be okay to understand the villagers’ sentiments. Assemblyman can also help you to reach some unknown (poor or marginalized) groups of individuals who will be rarely seen in public meetings. But remember that assemblymen are often politically motivated. If you have a village link-man, he can help you to understand the ongoing village politics, and group conflict. Through him, you can reach different sections of villagers – keeping different views and beliefs. Then having in-depth grassroots level understanding, you call a village meeting headed by

the chief to reach a consensus. Yes, but note that the chief's approval is a must. Keep him in confidence. Otherwise you can never pursue the project successfully".

Based on the respondents' views, the ideal process of community entry is illustrated as shown in the self- explanatory Fig. 18.2.

18.4.1.2 Setting Up Objectives

The stakeholders argued that setting up good objective is a prerequisite for meaningful community participation in climate change adaptation programs. It clearly gives the participants an indication of expected outcomes. A good objective should carry the following features: it should (1) be clear, (2) be realistic, (3) be agreed upon by all groups and stakeholders, (4) safeguard collective interests, and (5) have long-term benefits. The features of a good project objective are interlinked and generally affect each other as shown in Fig. 18.1. For example, to serve short-term gains, projects often include objectives that partially favor a particular group. Similarly, an unrealistic, over-ambitious project often fails to set clear objectives.

But the ability to set good objectives is often affected by (Table 18.3):

1. One of such local dynamics is poverty. The region is poverty-stricken which creates challenges for designing projects with long-term suitable goals. In view of the poverty situation, the local communities want projects that meet their immediate needs and provide material gains including financial support, relief assistance or inputs for agriculture. Thus, projects offering relief materials after flood and drought or direct cash or agricultural supplies can easily receive attention as well as commitment from the villagers. Conversely, projects working towards capacity building or self-reliance of the community are getting unpopular among the people. Thus, CCA projects should be linked with poverty alleviation and income generation to attract local community's willingness to participate.
2. The second local dynamics affecting the setting of good objectives is the strong desire for material gains and the high rate of illiteracy among the people. Respondents from the public sector complained that NGOs in the region have created a culture of "getting relief". As most of the agencies are greatly funded by the foreign donors, they launch projects that offer lots of wealth and financial benefits to the local people. Consequently, local communities are not interested in working with government agencies as their projects are small, do not offer any material gains or free materials, but rather demand mutual support and contribution from the communities. An official of the Forestry Commission explained: "NGOs have money from outside, mostly from foreign countries. They offer shelters, food or sometimes basic infrastructure directly. Villagers are very happy to work with them. But we (Government organizations) cannot offer same. We use their (villagers) resources because we want to make them independent in future. But, it takes time and costs lots of labor. People then don't agree to whatever we propose. Since from your entry into the village, they (villagers) murmur – "what we can get from the project". Illiteracy drives them to see only

Table 18.3 Setting good objective: challenges and characteristics

Code	Descriptions
Challenges to set good objectives	
Poverty and climate change adaptation	– Poverty in the region is high. This is the biggest concern for the development of the region. Poverty induces people's vulnerability – People forget flood immediately after few months. Because they live in a hand to mouth situation. Their daily concern is whether they have enough food or not – When people are starving, you cannot ask them to join in CCA project Getting stomach full food is their daily concern – Poor people are greedy because the hunger forces them to be unashamed People want cash, crops, and other family assistance from the project
Short term objectives and material gain and illiteracy	– People now believe in quick fix. People do not mind depending on NGOs, foreign aid agencies for their own wellbeing. They become very enthusiastic if they know they will relief materials – Always ask what they can get in free and happier if you give them cash – Entering community becomes difficult because of NGOs. People enquire from day one—what they can get free? – No commitments. NGOs are encouraging this attitude by giving free houses, seeds, crops, and fertilizers – What happens when the project is withdrawn—frustration, no real development – Less interested in village well-being. More focus on getting free stuffs for own—petty politics. No collective interest – Lack of education, illiteracy—people become ignorant until they face the threat. Without education if they join in program, they cannot contribute anything – Illiteracy is a bigger issue than poverty. People are ignorant about climate change impacts and the need for sustainable development
Local conflicts and power structure	– There are conflicts among groups based on religion or lineage. Villages do not always live in peace and harmony – Village politics stop good projects. Very difficult to unite them. Each one has their own vested interests – Dominant groups or chief's own kin enjoy the power to influence decisions – Women are more practical and committed. But women have no power
Broad and abstract objective	– Regional headquarters set the project objectives, but no idea about real issues or local problems – The project should be tailor made—set area-specific project objectives – Broad objectives create confusion and conflicts among stakeholders. You can give any meaning you want – Donors, especially foreign aid agencies are sometimes very stubborn. They have fixed objectives and project framework – Donor agencies pressurize local NGOs to follow a set of objectives without considering local situation and culture

(continued)

Table 18.3 (continued)

Code	Descriptions
Misconduct and lies	– NGOs or many other organizations tell lies. Do not disclose the project objectives because they are worried about the outcome in case the local community does not like the objectives – Keeping the projects vague or obscure helps an organization to be on the safe side – You are never committed for something very concrete. No one can raise questions
Characteristics of good objectives	
Clear	– Detail out each objective as much as possible – Match possible results with objectives – Attach concrete actions with objectives. Then attach roles and responsibilities of different individuals and groups – Relate objectives with local issues and culture – Facilitate visual and oral communication. Avoid texts and write-ups. Illiteracy is very high. People do not understand the project contents
Realistic	– Display your objectives to the community. Ask their opinion—achievable or not? If not, why not? If yes how? – Check resource, time, money, and organizational capacity. Do not be a true romantic – Ask contributions from the communities—labor, land, sand, and timber – Realistic objectives will make objectives clear. People want to participate if they see that the project objectives are feasible
Agreed by all groups	– Do survey, informal meeting. Collect people's need – Check your objectives during survey. Delete or add new objectives – Put weak stakeholders' voice in your agenda. Try to reduce conflicts among the groups
Collective interest	– The project should be a help for the improvement of the entire village—like afforestation, water conservation, or irrigation facility – Stop giving relief – Awareness and educational enlightenment are important
Long term perspective	– Capacity building – Sustainable, self-dependent – No matter if the donor leaves after 3–5 years, the local people themselves can run the project – Focus on rehabilitation, not relief. Upgrade people's knowledge and skills – Integrate poverty alleviation or income generation aspects in climate change adaptation projects – Educate people

short term benefits and personal material gains. Awareness building and improving general literacy profile of the communities are essential in changing their mindset and encouraging them to participate in projects that offer sustainable growth and future resilience of the community.

3. The third factor affecting the formulation of good objectives is local conflicts and power structure. It will be a mistake to consider that communities are

homogeneous entities with people always living in harmony. Differences and conflicts among the villagers along the lines of lineage, gender, kinship, and settlers (conflicts between early and late settlers) are normal occurrences. These are stumbling blocks to reaching consensus on objectives within the community. One of the Agricultural Officers in the district explained: "To you, it may appear as a consensus when they declare a MoU (memorandum of understanding) through village chief (in a village meeting). But there are many undercurrents and tensions within the community. If you don't address them and prepare your plan only on what the chief says, then I tell you it is granted that people will show less interest to join you…if not they are getting something free. And to reach an agreed objective becomes more difficult when your project involves more than one village. I think working with each other and collaborating with neighboring villages is something that is historically absent in this region." The respondents advocated that the collective interest of the community should reflect in the project objectives and for that effective community entry as mentioned in the earlier section is critical.

4. The fourth factor is the use of broad and abstract objectives. Climate change adaptation related projects, whether coming from government sector or non-government sector, are mostly designed at the national and regional levels and by outsiders, such as foreign donor agencies or national level experts. As a result, project objectives and framework are often very general and give little clarity and scope as to how these can be applied at the local level. A staff of one of the local nongovernmental organizations explained: "The project frameworks often do not match with the local demands and situations. I remember we were arguing with a European agency about why their sanitary project cannot be successfully implemented if they do not revise the framework. But the agency was adamant believing that as it was successful in Asia, it will also work well here as well. Who will convince them?" As one of the district planning officers notes: "Many NGOs are worried about losing funds if they oppose the top management's or donor's suggestion. Hence, they compromise with local requirements. Result? If local people need boreholes, you are giving people live-stocks".
5. The fifth factor affecting the formulation of good objectives is the incidence of misrepresentation. Many stakeholders, particularly NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) often hide their true intentions whenever they feel there could be disagreement regarding what the local community wants and what the projects intend to achieve. The NGOs fear that by knowing the expected outcomes of the project, the local communities may show no interest. Because of this fear, many organizations keep the objectives very obscure and abstract. Allegedly, some even give false impression of the projects to the local people. When the local communities finally get to know the real intentions of the projects and the NGO actors, they become demoralized and eventually refuse to participate.

In our attempt to explore good practices in formulating good and shared project objectives, the following measures are being suggested (Table 18.3):

1. Community should be clearly told the possible results or benefits the project can bring and how that could be realized. There is also the need to educate and sensitize community about the long-term benefits of such projects to the communities to enable them to appreciate the importance of long-term interventions in building self-reliant communities. This will help the local communities move away from quick interventions and focus on long-term sustainable projects. To this end, improving community's general literacy status will also contribute towards this objective.
2. Given the prevalence of internal conflicts and politics in local communities, external actors should reach out to marginalized individuals or groups including women, poor peasants, new sellers, and ethnic minority groups, who have little voice in local decision-making, before setting up project objectives.
3. CCA project should also be linked with poverty alleviation and income generation goals. The promise of livelihood will solicit strong local participation. Without income generation potentiality of the project, the local communities would have very little interest to join in any climate change projects.
4. To reduce the obscurity of the project objectives, the agency should clearly write the project objective based on local context and requirement. Each project objective should be linked with series of consequent actions so that all stakeholders can visualize the project.
5. Given the prevailing illiteracy and ignorance, the project managers should try to facilitate visual and oral communication and avoid written documents or texts during village meeting for the project brief.

18.4.1.3 Plan Implementation

Respondents believe that local community turn away from CCA projects, especially from infrastructure improvement or heavily engineering based projects, because such are seldom successful implemented. The actual implementation of the project is often hampered and consequently local community's participation significantly drops. Several reasons account for this trend:

1. *Lack of funding*: Steady funding is more often an issue because active engagement of the community in a project demands more budget than usual. The capacity building and community empowerment programs often cost more money and time than usual.
2. *Apathy in taking roles and responsibilities*: Respondents claimed local people keep distance from the projects when the time demands contribution from them. When local communities fail to take responsibility of projects they have committed themselves to, implementation of such projects becomes problematic.
3. *Illiteracy, lack of scientific education and skills:* The literacy rate in Wa West district is very low. Even those who are educated have no scientific knowledge and understanding on climate change and environmental issues. Their technical

knowledge and skills are also poor. Therefore, it is difficult to involve communities in plan implementation process of scientific projects.

4. *Lack of coordination between projects, departments, and organizations:* There is a lack of coordination between different projects and departments as well as between organizations. For the holistic and sustainable development of the local community, integration of different projects and mutual collaboration between organizations are encouraged to reduce project cost, enhance synergy, and tackle the climate change impacts in a more integrated manner. An official of one the NGOs noted: "Several organizations go to the same community with same or similar types of projects. They visit again and again. Whereas many other issues of climate change are being left untouched. These matters are in community's priority list for long. It means you did not solve the problems. Villagers are also confused as to who come from which organizations and how many times they should support them for same purpose". He further noted: "If you give water, it could support farming activities. With smaller budget, we can improve many areas of the village. People's participation will be automatically high." According to an official of the Forestry Commission, "Mutual understanding and coordination between various departments and even organizations is so very important. And when many organizations work together you can solve many problems and meet many demands of the community. Also, for the growth of one sector of the community, for example forestry, you need to improve other areas, here it could be water, roads. There is less repetitiveness of projects and works."

18.4.2 Outcome Based Factors

The respondents believe that the participatory condition or process is the most critical to ensure local community's meaningful involvement in the project. However, adhering to a preferred process do not always produce the desired results. The project types, objectives, the capacity of the organization, the cultural and social environment of the site, as well as the size of the community play invisible roles for successful engagement of communities in climate change adaptation.

Therefore, respondents suggested that during and after the projects, the project implementing agencies should evaluate the actual progress of community participation in a project. The following measures are suggested to check the outcomes of community participation:

1. Survey: The implementing agencies should conduct survey among the beneficiaries to know how happy or satisfied they are with the project and with their involvement. During the survey, the suggestions from the beneficiaries should be also collected to improve the project implementation. The target should be to interview people as many as possible.
2. Hire evaluator: The project can also higher an outside evaluator to check the success of the project. It would provide much better accountability and neutrality of

the project. The report of the evaluator should be displayed to the village communities.

Apart from these two evaluation measures, the respondents also suggested certain parameters that can help to understand the extent of community participation in CCA projects:

1. The number of people using the products of the project—such as water supply system, mini-dams, or sanitary facilities.
2. The maintenance of the project outcomes. If it is maintained well means people are happy with their involvement.
3. The number of people that participated in a project. If more than 60% of all households of the village participated in a project, the project should consider that they have successfully involved the local community.
4. The wish of the village chief to collaborate with the same external agencies in future is also an indication of how well the community was involved in a past project. A respondent however is afraid that: "Remember the authoritative nature of this position may mean that the wish to collaborate with project in future is for personal gains. Remember they receive money and other donations from foreign NGOs on behalf of the community and could be benefiting greatly from these to the neglect of their subjects. But not because all groups and people across the community were properly involved. Hence using the willingness of the chief to support future projects as a criterion for proper involvement can be call to question."

18.5 Conclusions

Broadly, climate change adaptation discourses in northern Ghana in general has relied on scientific expertise as a framework for decision-making for a considerable time. Attempts to introduce local community involvement however are more recent and address two key issues. The first issue is the fact that the increase in the number of climatic variability events has led to a very distinct increase in community mistrust as regards scientific approaches to environmental problems (Samaddar et al. 2018). Secondly, rising community exposure to the vagaries of the climate has led to a growing demand for community participation in climate change adaptation, but its successful implementation remains uncertain and illusionary (Samaddar et al. 2015b). Thus, the introduction of community involvement in this context appears as a concept which responds by giving a defined set of answers to these emerging challenges. Often there are several claims from government and nongovernmental organizations on successful execution of community-based or community-led CCA projects and programs. But these claims are seldom verified. The reality on the "successes or otherwise" manifest when the project agencies fail to produce any scientific evidence (published data corroborating their claims) or rarely replicate the successes in other areas.

More than the generalization challenge or modelling questions, the resentment and frustration among the local populace are ever increasing over their involvement in such ostensible community-based climate change adaptation projects. The impression of community based climate change adaption programs to the community becomes nothing more than a trap to circumvent the local communities to get plans legitimized, actually encoded by the external agencies. Often, local communities feel marginalized when they realize project decisions and plans have already been decided without their involvement and consent. Given the complex nature of participation, its unshackled framework and numerous operation methods and techniques, its actual implementation rests with the implementing agencies—their willingness, understanding, skills, and capacities, and these greatly influence how successfully local communities can be engaged in CCA programs. In most cases, these implementing agencies include a wide range of government and nongovernmental organizations from regional, national and international level and their individual perception plays a critical role in realizing the community-based CCA projects in practice.

These notwithstanding, in most cases climate change adaptation studies rarely institute appropriate initiatives geared towards understanding the perception of stakeholders about effective community participation. Our study contributes to current literature by investigating what stakeholders think about the ideal process and outcomes of meaningful community participation in CCA. We took Wa West district, a severely climate challenged region in West Africa as our case study area and interviewed various governmental and nongovernmental organizations' representatives, employees, and executives to investigate what they perceive to be effective community participation in climate change adaptation.

The survey results showed that stakeholders believe the participatory environment or process condition is the most critical for effective community participation. The participatory environment includes a three steps process (including community entry, setting good objectives, and plan implementation) and certain situational conditions or sociopolitical environment that are influencing the execution of participatory programs. Some respondents from different implementing agencies attributed the difficulties and glitches in community participation mostly to the community's own internal problem and their general unwillingness to contribute to the CCA projects. The factors cited as influencing this development include the community's lack of motivation, illiteracy, poor knowledge and skills, ignorance, internal conflicts and lobbying, and inaccessibility to local resources. According to these stakeholders, the most important step towards ensuring successful community-based CCA project is to set up a clear objective, that is, to have a realistic goal with long-term development perspectives. It was revealed that the local community's internal group conflicts and petty politics do hinder the process to reach agreed objectives. Similarly, illiteracy and ignorance and above all growing poverty are responsible for local communities' inclination towards short term, material gains. Hence, even after a long effort from the implementing agencies, community participation in CCA project has dropped significantly in recent times. Community pays little heed when

the project demands their sincere and intensive involvement for effective CCA through capacity building and local resource management.

Further the implementing agencies conceded that though a good implementation plan is equally an important factor for effective community-based CCA projects, in most cases lack of commitment in terms of roles and responsibilities from the local communities spells unintended failure. Further, it was opined that the community's lack of skills and knowledge often impede their meaningful involvement in any technical and systemic discussion which are critical in plan implementation. Rather local community's participation adds more budget constraints over the successful implementation of the CCA project. In nutshell, making CCA projects more people-centric according to our respondents requires debugging the pitfalls prevailing within the communities. Surprisingly, the key stakeholders did not mention a single factor that calls for improving the attitude and organizational setups of implementing agencies for improved community participation. Whereas, several field-based studies have reported that communities are ever willing to participate in a joint project, the opportunity for equal and fair participation by the community or marginalized groups counts further towards the effective involvement of the communities in a project (Webler et al. 2001; Moore 1996).

Several studies have amply indicated the need to factor in the marginalized, poor and vulnerable communities for a fairer, accountable, and trustworthy governance system and effective local community involvement (Samaddar et al. 2017; Tam 2006; Moote et al. 1997). Failure to institute these measures only results in local community's participation getting stuck at the level of physical participation without any decision-making authority. It also then defeats the much touted benefits of local participation such as community's ownership and self-reliance often associated successful community based project (Reed 2008; Shaw 2006; Dyer et al. 2014; Blackstock et al. 2007; Okada et al. 2013).

The present study showed that dominant stockholders still hold the same banal perspective of participation where the local communities are nothing more than passive recipient of information. The role of the community is picturized as nothing more than to assist the government and the development partners to implement their visions and plans. The government and other agencies are presumed to be taking the leading roles because they are often the main resource providers, particularly giving financial back-ups, and having more technical expertise and experience. Therefore, it is clear from the present study, there is no much progression from the top-down communication and collaboration approach in CCA which often proved to be an inefficient mechanism to establish resilient communities against climate change induced risks. The question however is how to reduce the gap between the two perspectives of community participation, one that is held by the dominant stockholders and the other by the marginalized group that constantly demands fairness, equality, accountability, and trust in the participation process (Renn et al. 1995; Rowe and Frewer 2000). At present there is no study available in climate change domain addressing these issues, and therefore, it could be a future research task to strengthen local communities' participation in the planning process.

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