



Creating spaces for participation; harnessing actors' participation in value chains; Mfantsiman Municipal, Ghana

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Dedication

To my dearly beloved wife; Gifty Afua Sackey (nee Darmoe) and my daughters Nana Akua Dedaa Sackey and Nana Ama Dansowaa Sackey

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List of Abbreviations

BMZ	Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DDA	District Director of Agriculture
DED	German Development Service
DP	Developing Partner
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDC	German Development Cooperation
GPRS	Growth and Poverty reduction Strategy
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
KEEA	Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCO	Municipal Crops Officer
MDA	Municipal Director of agriculture
MEO	Municipal Extension Officer
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
RDA	Regional Director of Agriculture
RDO	Regional Development Officer
VC	Value Chain
VCA	Value Chain Approach
VCC	Value Chain Committee
VCD	Value Chain Development

ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture has adopted the value chain approach in an attempt to enhance the competitiveness of Ghana's agriculture in the sugarloaf pineapple sector. The complex and dynamic relations that exist in the agricultural sector demands that a platform is created to facilitate participation of all actors involved in the 'sugarloaf' value chain. For this reason MOAP set up the value chain committees with the aim of jointly managing value chain development activities and strengthening the performance of the 'sugarloaf' value chain for an equitable benefit of all business partners. The VCC work with a view to bring all actors engage in the 'sugarloaf' VC together to strengthen their participation; communication of horizontal and vertical information exchanges among value chain actors while paying due attention to the needs for upgrading actors capacities. This research highlights the diversity of perspectives, opinion and experiences of the various actors engaged in the 'sugarloaf' value chain in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central region of Ghana in a continuum of participation.

Key word: Participation, communication and value chain

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background

This chapter introduces the present state of Ghana's agriculture, the Market Oriented Agriculture Program (MOAP); the institutions which are collaborating and implementing MOAP. The various components of MOAP are discussed but emphasis is laid on the value chain component, where 'sugarloaf' pineapple value chain is the focus of the research.

Thereafter the Value Chain Committee (VCC) is described as well as the roles and responsibilities of the various actors. Actor within the research refers to individuals or institutions that are able to act or exert influence on decision making. This study assesses the perceptions of actors' participation within the 'sugarloaf' VCC. The assessment is essential for feedback to strengthen and sustain activities and knowledge-sharing among other commodity value chain committees being promoted in Ghana by MOAP.

Ghana's Agriculture

Agriculture plays important roles in the socioeconomic development of Ghana. The sector contributes to ensure food security, provides raw materials for local industries, generates foreign exchange, provides employment and incomes to about 60% of the population (especially those living in the rural areas), thereby contributing to poverty reduction (GPRS II, 2005). Other roles of agriculture are social stabilisation, buffer during economic shocks, support to environmental sustainability, and cultural values associated with farming (FASDEP II, 2007). The Ghanaian agricultural sector is characterised by weak linkages among the various actors within the value chains.

Value chain refers to all the activities and services that bring a product (or a service) from conception to end use, in a particular industry from input supply to production, processing, wholesale, retail and finally consumption; it also refers to the bundles of activities that various actors do - or do not - engage in (Sturgeon, 2001). It is called value chain because value is being added to the product or service at each step. Value chain approach in economic development means addressing the major constraints and opportunities faced by businesses at multiple levels (Henderson et al, 2002).

Market Oriented Agriculture Program (MOAP)

This section describes why MOAP was set up and the collaborating institutions. It highlights the various components of the program and the interrelations that occur between the program and other donor or development partner organizations.

To address the weak linkages within the agricultural sector, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) on behalf of the Government of Ghana is jointly implementing an agricultural program with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the German Development Service (DED) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). For clarity of reading this research GTZ and DED will be referred to as German Development Cooperation (GDC). The three collaborating institutions thus MoFA, GTZ and DED will be referred to as MOAP but where necessary these institutions will be identified independently for purposes of emphasis.

MOAP has three components: promotion of selected agricultural value chains, increasing efficiency of the public sector and strengthening private sector institutions. The program facilitates policy advice, institutional development as well as introduction of technical innovations. MOAP aims to improve the competitiveness of agricultural producers, processors and traders on regional, national and international markets. The program has a national focus and has offices in four out of the ten regions in Ghana. MOAP supports and promotes the production of Guinea fowl, fish (fresh water), chilli (pepper), and mango in the Northern region; mango and chilli in the Brong Ahafo region; citrus (orange) and 'sugarloaf' pineapple in the Central region; pineapple (MD2, smooth cayenne) and chilli in the Volta region, while Grasscutter and maize are promoted as nationwide commodities.

MOAP works in partnership with other development organizations with the view of developing strategies in value chain approach in the various commodities being promoted. This is in line with the Paris Declaration (PD) on aid effectiveness which states among others that donors should 'eliminate duplication of efforts and rationalise donor activities to make them as cost-effective as possible' (The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005).

1.2 Research focus

This research is situated in the first component of MOAP which is promotion of Value Chain Approach (VCA) and on 'sugarloaf' which is one of the two commodities being promoted in the Central region of Ghana.

'Sugarloaf' is an indigenous pineapple variety cultivated extensively in the Central region of Ghana. The main areas of production in the region are the Mfantiman and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipalities (KEEA). 'Sugarloaf' pineapple is cultivated by smallholder farmers and the 'sugarloaf' value chain is characterised by weak linkages among the actors.

One of the challenges for MOAP in improving the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC is to efficiently and effectively manage business cooperation along the entire value chain (Blanchard, 2008). In other words, to improve the linkages there must be cooperation among all actors. MOAP anticipates that if all the actors within a selected commodity value chain act together, higher value products will be produced. Value can therefore be defined quantitatively and qualitatively as the measure of worth assigned to products and services (Woodall, 2003). The research will focus on the manifestation of participation that exists among actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC.

1.3 Value Chain Committee (VCC)

A jointly managed VCC was set up in January 2006 with the view of strengthening the performance of the 'sugarloaf' VC for an equitable benefit of all the actors (MOAP report, 2006). The committee set up was designed by GDC and MoFA in consultation with other actors in the 'sugarloaf' VC.

The VCC is composed of actors who are involved either directly (farmers, processors) or indirectly (service providers) in the 'sugarloaf' VC in the Central region and membership is representational. It follows the definition of Rushton (2007), who describes a committee as a group of people or citizens who gather regularly to discuss and address a specific issue or domain. The committee therefore takes responsibility for the larger

group it represents. The representatives in the VCC include members from MoFA, GDC, farmer based organizations, development organizations, processors and retailers.

The VCC identifies challenges of actors (farmers, retailers and processors) and suggests ways in which these challenges can be address. Private and public actors come together within the VCC to identify challenges and opportunities associated with 'sugarloaf' VC. Thereafter activities are undertaken to either address the challenges or take advantage of the opportunities. Activities of the VCC contrast with the traditional 'top-down' or 'bureaucratic' policy orientation (Jasanoff, 1999) where decisions are made at higher level for implementation without consultation with the people who are affected most by such decisions.

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders within the 'sugarloaf' VCC

This section elaborates on the manifestation and roles of the actors within the VCC. The role of MoFA and GDC will be discussed separately within this context though they were clustered together earlier as MOAP. This is to enable the researcher highlight the different roles all the institutions play. The order in which the institutions or actors are described is not in a hierarchy.

Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)

MoFA acts as the government representative in the VCC, provides offices for GDC staff at national and regional directorates. However, all office equipment is funded by GTZ. All meetings of the 'sugarloaf' VCC are held in MoFA conference rooms either in the district, municipal or regional directorates. The leadership of MoFA is strongly and visibly committed to the goals of the VCC.

MoFA is represented in the VCC by the MOAP – MoFA Regional liaison officer, Regional Development Officers (RDO), Municipal Director of Agriculture (MDA), the Municipal Crops Officer (MCO), Municipal Extension Officer (MEO) and Municipal Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer. MoFA's representation in the VCC changes with regards to the agenda or issues to be discussed. For example the Regional Director of Agriculture (RDA) joins a VCC meeting depending on the issues to be discussed.

MoFA creates an enabling environment for decisions of the VCC to be implemented. MoFA is expected to respect the decisions and outcome of the VCC meetings. During VCC meetings MoFA representatives give details of policy directives and practices within the ministry to the members. Policy information shared might not be limited to 'sugarloaf' only since most of the smallholder farmers cultivate other food crops. The RDO, MOAP – MoFA liaison and MCO backstop activities of the VCC in the districts.

Box 1: Core functions and responsibilities of Central regional MoFA in 'sugarloaf' VCC.

- Create an enabling / conducive environment for deliberations of VCC meetings to take place.
- Support planning and implementation of strategies for sustainable 'sugarloaf' promotion.
- Promote regional and municipal competitiveness through co-facilitation of quality innovations, adequate technologies and market access.
- Support and moderate networking and public private dialogue (producers, processors, exporters, etc).

German Development Cooperation (GDC)

GDC hosts the VCC secretariat and acts as the value chain practitioners within the VCC set up. GDC manages value chain strategies with a view of assisting the actors to acquire necessary capacities to develop a competitive 'sugarloaf' VC. It is represented in the VCC by two employees; a national (GTZ) and an expatriate (DED) staff. The representatives facilitate interactions with and between actors. They support the VCC to steer the implementation of strategies or action plans after decisions have been taken.

GDC representatives provide all the necessary project information to members before and during the meeting so they can make informed decisions. English and Fante (local) languages are used interchangeably so all issues will be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. GTZ hires and duly pays specialists when there is the need for specialist advice or consultants to carry out any project within the 'sugarloaf' VC. Specialists are hired in consultation with the VCC members. The employees act as the link between the VCC and MOAP management by providing information to the MOAP management and vice versa.

Box 2: Core functions and responsibilities of GDC in the 'sugarloaf' VCC

- Host of the VCC secretariat.
- Facilitate VCC meetings.
- Coordination and networking.
- Funding VCC activities.
- Support Planning and implement of strategies for sustainable 'sugarloaf' industry.
- Promote regional and municipal competitiveness through co-facilitation of quality innovations, adequate technologies and market access.
- Support and moderate networking and public private dialogue (producers, processors, exporters, etc).

'Sugarloaf' farmers

Representatives of smallholder associations 'sugarloaf' farmers' represent the interests of their members. They confer with their members before meetings to seek their views before attending VCC meetings. They give feedback to their associations after attending meetings so that their members will be informed of issues discussed during the meeting and the outcome. They provide information and share their experience and knowledge so far as the cultivation of 'sugarloaf' is concerned. They provide information to the VCC since they know the local conditions. They share challenges from their farming activities in relation to 'sugarloaf' production with the VCC.

Box 3: Core functions and responsibilities of farmers' representatives in the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

- Represent the interest of farmers.
- Share their knowledge and experience.
- Engage in private sector business talks with other partners.
- Suggest alternatives to decision making.

Development organizations (SNV, USAID)

These organizations co-fund some VCC activities in the region and are also value chain practitioners. They assist in coordinating activities of the VCC.

Box 4: Core functions and responsibilities of SNV, WAFF, in the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

- Facilitate VCC meetings.
- Co-fund VCC activities.
- Support Planning and implement of strategies for sustainable 'sugarloaf' industry.
- Promote regional and municipal competitiveness through co-facilitation of quality innovations, adequate technologies and market access.
- Support and moderate networking and public private dialogue (producers, processors, exporters, etc).

Fruit processors

The 'sugarloaf' processors are the proponents in the VCC. A proponent is a person who argues in favour of a process. Within the VCC the processors argue in favour of improved business linkages among the various actors. When these linkages are well established, the processors will be in a position to establish long term relationship with producers and other actors' within the 'sugarloaf' VC. They will also be able to influence product requirement such as ripening stage, brix level so that farmers produce to meet their specific needs. The VCC meetings create the enabling environment for such discussions to take place.

Box 5: Core functions and responsibilities of processors in the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

- Orient production to their processing needs.
- Information sharing with other stakeholders.
- Share their experience with members.
- Provide market information to producers.

'Sugarloaf' retailers

Traders or retailers are one source through which farmers sell their fruits. They provide market information to farmers and also share their challenges about selling fruits with the VCC.

Box 6: Core functions and responsibilities of retailer in the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

- Information sharing with other stakeholders.
- Share their experience with members.
- Provide market information to producers.

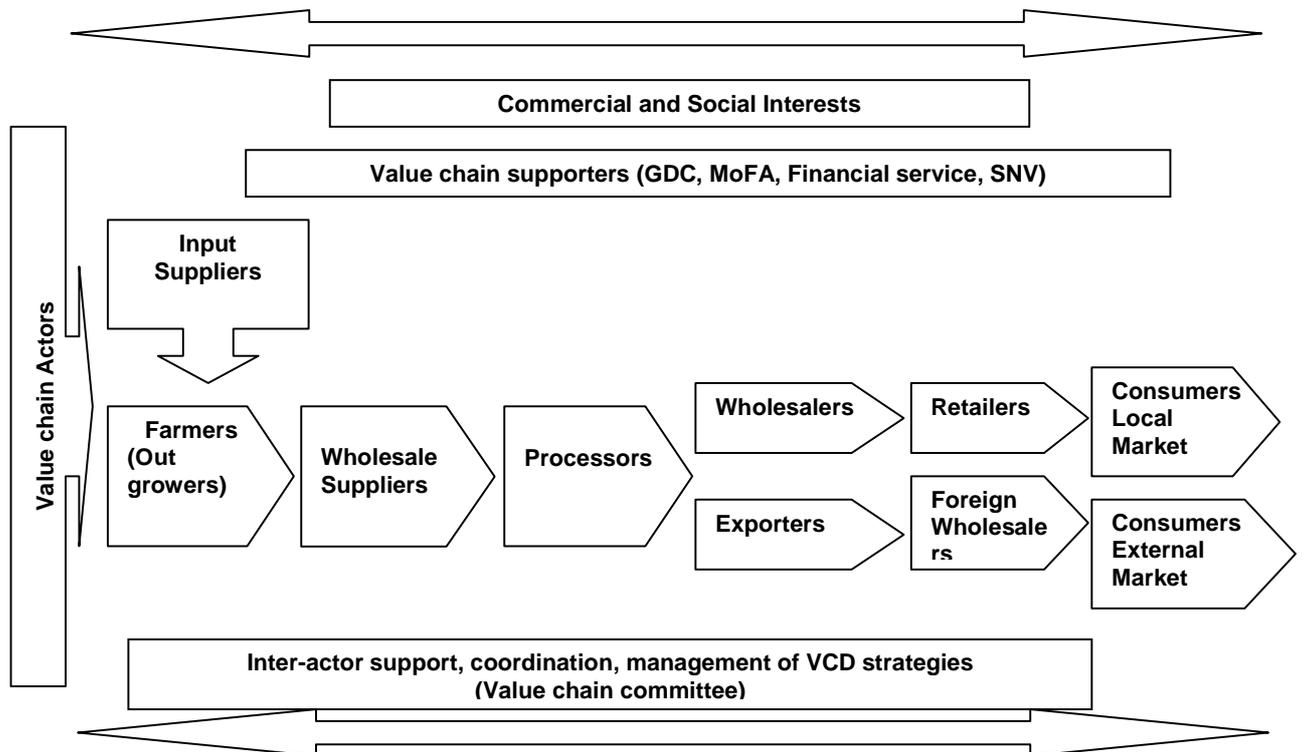


Figure 1: Value chain committee

1.4 Statement of the problem

Based on the above description of core functions and responsibilities of participants in the ‘sugarloaf’ VCC, one could assume that the ‘sugarloaf’ value chain have become more competitive. However four years since the inception of the VCC, ‘sugarloaf’ farmers in the Mfantseman municipality of the Central region have not been able to reorient their production to target markets. Processors have not been able to take advantage of the VCC platform to access farmers.

Institutions implementing the programs have different opinions about the participation of the various actors within the sugarloaf value chain. Without effective participation among the actors the anticipated increase competitiveness of the sugarloaf VC will not be achieved. MOAP therefore seeks to know the divergent perceptions of various actors’ participation within the ‘sugarloaf’ VCC. The research seeks to explore the divergent perceptions and experience of actors’ participation within the ‘sugarloaf’ VCC.

1.5 Research Questions

MOAP seeks to know the divergent perceptions that exist among the actors within the ‘sugarloaf’ VCC in the Mfantseman Municipality in terms of their participation.

Sub-questions

- i. How do actors perceive the participation of themselves and other actors?

- ii. What are the communication patterns of producers and processors within the VCC?
- iii. What are their motivation and expectations of main actors for participating in the VCC?

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter designated as the introduction gives a brief background of Ghana's agriculture, the institutional composition of MOAP, the actors who constitute MOAP, the problem statement, objectives of the research and the research questions. Chapter two reviews related literature on participation, communication and value chain approach and thereafter develops a conceptual framework which serves to provide a structure for the research. The third chapter (methodology) provides information on the study area, research strategy, method used in data collection, and limitation of the research. The fourth chapter highlights results from research findings arranged according to thematic areas generated from the conceptual framework. Chapter five presents the analysis and discussion of the research findings. The sixth chapter presents the conclusion of the research and provides recommendation base on the research findings.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature about participation, communication and value chain approach. A conceptual framework has been developed to guide the research.

2.1 *Participation*

Participation is a concept used in this research to unravel the involvement of actors in the 'sugarloaf' pineapple VCC activities in the Mfantseman municipality of the Central region of Ghana. Participation is a concept that means different things to different people in different settings. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, a practice; and for still others, an end in itself. Literally, participation implies to be involved in an act or anything.

The World Bank defines participation as a process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 2004 cited in Chambers 2005). Morris (2006) defines participation as processes that go beyond consultation – they enable communities to be directly involved in the decisions that matter to them rather than simply being canvassed for their opinion. It thus implies a shared responsibility for resolving problems.

The International Association for Public Participation considers participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions (SAIEA, 2005). The underlying attitude in participatory approaches is that the actors take or play active roles at every stage of the processes that intend to bring development to the community.

The actors become responsible for each other; work in partnership to bring particular benefits to themselves, their clients and the wider local community (O'Toole et al, 2010). Participation provides actors with situations that present opportunity to express and analyze their own realities, challenges and experiences so as to be able to come to their own conclusions and own the processes involved (Chambers, 2005).

The continuum of participation

SAIEA 2005, described participation on a continuum showing increasing actors' involvement in decision making process from "manipulation" which actually is no participation to an optimum stage of decision making. I chose this continuum over the ladder of participation (Chambers, 2005 and Pretty, 1995) because the continuum shows a succession extent of the process where there is no arbitrary division.

Another argument for using a continuum rather than the ladder metaphor of participation is that the ladder gives the idea or indication that there are privileged positions that an actor should aspire over lower ranks. This view is shared by Lawrence, (2006), who proposed 'transformative' participation should be used instead of the level or ladder of participation. The continuum gives an indication that the level of involvement of actors in a decision making process differs depending on the objectives and capacity of actors to influence outcomes (SAIEA, 2005). For example, in certain instances, actors need to be consulted but the decision making processes might be restricted to another group of

actors. The continuum further suggests that participation is an iterative process among actors (Lynam et al., 2007). This implies that actors involved in any process should monitor the outcomes of their activities and adopt changes accordingly (Gunderson and Holling, 2002).

SAIEA (2005) mentions actors in a participative process as practitioners, government, developers/proponents and civil society. Where practitioners are those appointed to design and implement the participation process, government those who must make a decision about whether a development should proceed on the basis of information arising from the process, developer/proponent those who wish to undertake a particular development and civil society those who become involved in the participation processes as a development may affect them or may be of interest to them.

Manifestations of participation

There are certain underlying assumptions pertaining to the manifestation of participations as it pertains within the continuum of participation. The researcher explored literature to understand the relations or engagement that various actors manifest within a participatory process. He starts with manipulation and ends with decision making.

- Manipulation

In the continuum manipulation is no participation. Some actors devise strategies to influence the attitude of other actors within a participatory approach. Actors (civil society) are made to think that participation is going on or taking place by government and practitioner but in actual fact nothing of the sort really takes place (SAIEA, 2005). There are two kinds of manipulation; coercion and compromise (Frooman 2003, cited in Frooman and Murrell 2005). Coercion is negative in nature as it involves the threat to reduce a benefit or increase cost to an actor, whiles compromise is positive in nature as it seeks to offer an increase in benefit or reduced cost to an actor (Frooman and Murrell, 2005). Both kinds of manipulative tendencies involve the influence or power of resource flow and control. In both instances civil society or marginalized people are not given the opportunity to influence decision making that may affect them or which they have interest in.

- Inform

To provide the actors with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and or solutions that exist (SAIEA, 2005). Information may be provided through individual meetings, minutes of meetings or documents with the objective of assisting actors understand why certain decisions will be taken, when and what they are supposed to do base on the information available to them. No process can be deemed to be participatory if the actors involved do not have access and rights to information leading to decision making (Leeuwis, 2004). The complexity of information and knowledge transfer required sustaining a particular transaction, particularly with respect to product and process specifications (Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon, 2005) must be shared with other actors so they know their responsibilities when undertaking certain assignments.

Provision of information within any participatory process is multidimensional as all actors provide information to each other so it is not a one directional information exchange (Leeuwis, 2004).

Sending information too early when planning schedule is incomplete or at different times to actors may result in misinterpretation or disenchantment (Sayer and Wilding, 2002). To avoid such situations, timing of information circulation among actors must be reasonably balanced. When actors are not informed in accessible language they can not be said to have been involved (SAIEA, 2005).

- Consult

The objective is for the practitioner, developer and government to obtain feedback from civil society on information, analysis, alternatives and decisions to be made (SAIEA, 2005). At the consultation stage in the continuum, actors acknowledge the role each actor plays and seek advice from each other to clarify any criticism and apprehension before implementing a process.

Consultation is a step beyond informing stage on the continuum of participation as inputs are received from other actors and not just being informed. The duration and number of consultations that occur within any process is largely dependent on the issues at stake and the relative amount and timeliness of information actors receive prior to that (SAIEA, 2005). Consultation takes several forms as developer, practitioners and government hold meetings to get their inputs from civil society.

- Collaborate

Actors within the process partnering each other in every aspect of planning leading to decision making in designing interventions, alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution in their field of operations (SAIEA, 2005). Government, practitioners, proponents and civil society in establishing collaborations seek each others input and incorporate such decisions into any project that will be developed. Actors within the project work together and share knowledge in an attempt to ensure sustainable development (Selin et al, 2000).

Collaboration among actors reduces the cost of undertaking certain projects through pooling of scarce resources by actors (SAIEA, 2005). Proponents obtain security of supply and leverage to negotiate services at lower prices; whereas civil society also benefit from higher volumes and access to technical assistance (Gibbon and Ponte, 2008). Collaboration ensures that actors respect the terms of what have been agreed upon. Collaboration can be both formal and informal.

- Decision making

The last on the continuum of participation is decision-making process, where actors have an influence on the final decisions that are made, agreed upon or implemented (SAIEA, 2005). SAIEA (2005) views decision making as delegating responsibility to some actors who will eventually influence the final decision to be made. This signifies that though all actors within a given intervention might not be present in the final moments of deciding on what to do, their views would be presented by other delegates.

It is assumed that actors with a more sophisticated level of technical and social understanding will yield relevant results in decision making processes (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). It has to be noted, however, that no one has the absolute power to decide on what has to be done but it is arrived through a process that takes place throughout the continuum of participation as discussed here.

2.2 Communication

Communication is important for the functioning of actors in any participatory process, the absence of which can threaten the relationship among the actors. The researcher decided on the concept of communication to review literature on interactive communication, motivation and social capital to explore how it helps to generate and design innovations in close interaction among actors and relate it to actors within a participatory process.

- Interactive communication

Interactive communication emphasizes on information exchange and promotion of understanding among actors (Leeuwis, 2004). Communication among actors captures issues of actor challenges, relations, politics, struggle for resources (material, financial), emotional interest and developmental issues among others (SAIEA, 2005). Leeuwis (2004) states that negotiation or social network model of communication is current and therefore needs to be adopted by organizations which implement any form of interventions. Communication within participatory process seeks to identify the relevant actors and the nature of their social relations to foster cooperation and collaboration among them (Leeuwis, 2004). This is done to eliminate and reduce tension among actors during the process.

Current issues on communication are more often concerned with the processes, content, context in the exchange of meanings and the importance of relational patterns among actors (Leeuwis, 2004). For instance, a comment by the practitioner will be interpreted differently than if the same comment was made either by a proponent or civil society. In other words, actors within the participatory process react differently to information content and context. This posture therefore gives an indication that communication procedures have shifted from sender-centred pattern to a more receiver-centred course.

This implies that both vertical and horizontal communication strategies must be developed so as to eliminate mistrust associated with information exchange. Interactive communication emphasizes on information exchange and promotion of understanding among actors rather than persuading them to accept the proponent' or government's view point. This view is supported by the work of Lurch (2006) which suggests the strategy will induce creative thinking among actors which will possibly generate new ideas and innovation. In this context in the research innovation refers to new ways of doing things; not only restricted to the technological aspects but also to human adapted practices (Leeuwis, 2004).

- Motivation and expectation

Rollinson (2008) defines motivation as a state arising in processes that are internal and external to an individual, in which the person perceives that it is appropriate to pursue a certain course of action directed at a specific outcome in which that individual acts with a degree of vigour and persistence. The factors that motivate an individual can be described as internal or external. Internal or intrinsic motivation is driven by an individual's own concern or satisfaction in carrying out a task whereas external or extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual (Rollinson, 2008). For example an individual may be motivated to act as a result of a personal obligation to do extremely well (internal) or from fear of being observed by another person (external). Comparisons between people whose motivations are intrinsic and those whose are merely influenced

by external factors reveal that the former exhibit considerable amount of interest, excitement and confidence which results in enhanced performance (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Motivation generates energy, direction, persistence and creates a sense of purposefulness among actors that move them to work (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

With motivation come expectations, most actors act on the premise of achieving an expected outcome. Expectation is an anticipation that certain behaviours will result in achieving goals (Rollinson, 2008). Rewards associated with expectations can be extrinsic, intrinsic and social. Extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards (pay, fringe benefits) which are offered an individual's efforts in contributing to the accomplishment of a task; intrinsic rewards are the intangible rewards that come from being part of the process or having the opportunity to use one's skill to achieve success and the reassurance, acceptance or confirmation of identity that individuals receive from the larger society represents social rewards (Rollinson, 2008).

- *Social capital*

Social capital is described as trust, support and care available to individuals or groups. Its foundation lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from information exchange, influence and connectivity among the actors (Adler and Kwon, 2002). There is an assumption that the probability of proponents having a cordial relation with civil society and vice versa depends on their social network (Calvó-Armengol and Jackson, 2004). The relationship among the actors has been described as external (networks, associations, rules and procedures) and internal (intangible elements such as attitudes, norms of behaviour, shared values and trust), (Gittel and Vidal, 1998).

Social capital is an asset into which other resources can be invested with the expectation of a future (albeit uncertain) flow of benefits (Alder and Kwon, 2002). When proponents invest in the activities of a participatory process they enhance their social capital thereby gaining the confidence of civil society and gain access to information that would have been withheld from them (SAIEA, 2005). When proponents invest in their relations with civil society they strengthen their collective identity and enhance their ability to do business with them. Proponents who engage civil society are able to establish relations, be it formal or informal. These collaborations do not develop overnight but through constant interaction of the actors. Alder and Kwon (2002) suggested that social capital may depreciate with non-use and abuse but does not depreciate with use.

2.3 Value chain approach

Value chain refers to all the activities and services that brings a product (or a service) from conception to end use in a particular industry from input supply to production, processing, wholesale, retail and finally consumption; it also refers to the bundles of activities that various actors do - or do not - engage in (Sturgeon, 2001). During each step in the production of a good or service value is added. It is called a value chain because value is being added to the product or service at each step. Value chains vary according to the organizational scale of activities.

Actors in value chains learn from each other on the need to improve on their productive functions and produce high quality products (Schmitz and Knorringa, 2000)

- *Competitiveness and upgrading strategy*

Value chain approaches emphasize the significance of upgrading in order for actors to be able to face the ever increasing competition in markets (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002). To enhance the competitiveness of any value chain is to derive the maximum benefits of the product or service and make it more attractive on the market than other substitute products. Porter 1990 and Kaplinsky, 2000 suggest that the most obvious response to make a value chain competitive is to upgrade products, make them more efficient or move into more skilled activities. The governance structure within a value chain plays an important role in the upgrading strategy.

Governance here refers to the coordination of economic activities through non-market relationships (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002). Governance is predominantly essential for the generation, transfer, sharing and dissemination of knowledge and information leading to innovation, which enables actors to improve on their competitiveness or performance (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002). The process of generating knowledge and information to enhance the competitiveness of a process is done through a participative process which is facilitated by a practitioner. Upgrading is driven largely by developers within the chain (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002). The practitioners endeavour to engage developers to assume the role of lead firms that can 'undertake the functional integration and coordination of dispersed activities' within the chain (Gereffi et al, 2005).

Below is the conceptual framework that the researcher derived from reviewing related literature for the research work. The conceptual framework guided the researcher throughout the research period to structure discussions etc.

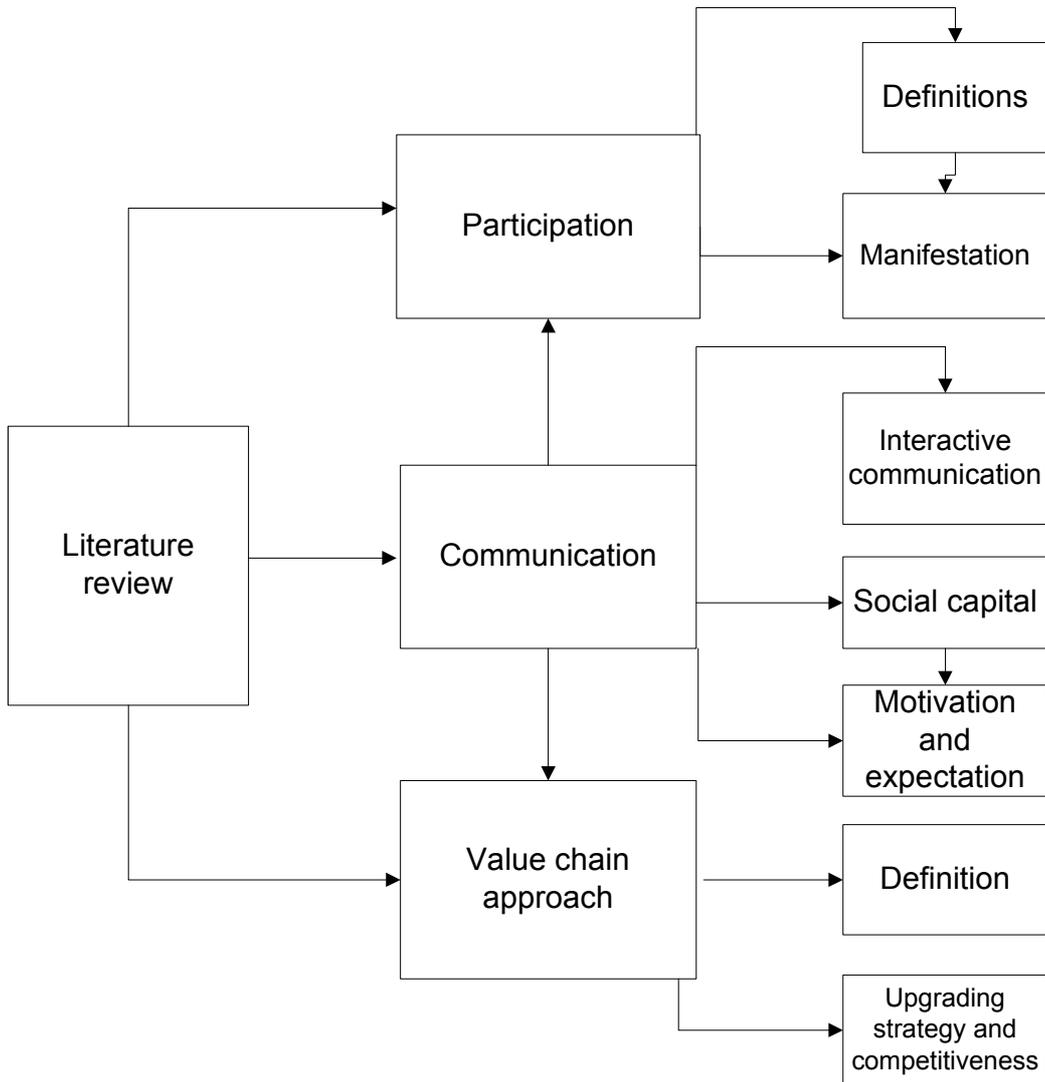


Figure 2: Conceptual frame work of research

3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Research Project

‘Sugarloaf’ is an indigenous pineapple variety cultivated in the Central region of Ghana. The fruit is cultivated mostly by small holder farmers. The research assesses the perceptions of actors’ participation within the ‘sugarloaf’ value chain committee in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central region. Emphasis is laid on the relationships that exist between the farmers, fruit processors and also among all the actors within the chain. This research draws on theoretical concepts of participation, communication and value chain approach.

3.2 Study area

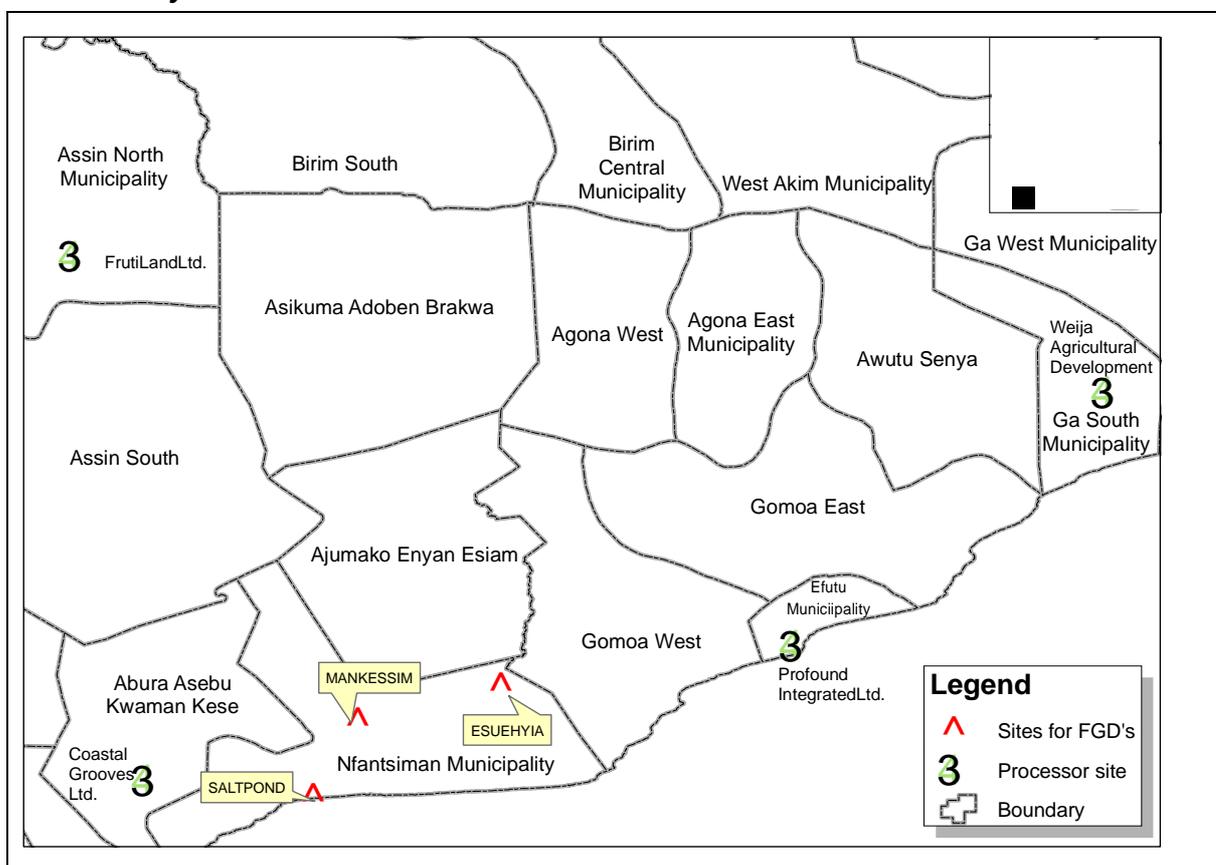


Figure 3: Study area

Source: Base map of Ghana from Geography Dept., University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

The research was conducted in the Mfantseman Municipal. It is located along the Atlantic coastline of the Central region of Ghana and extends from latitudes 5°07' to 5°20' North of the Equator and longitudes 0° 44' to 1° 11' West of the Greenwich Meridian. It has a coastal line stretching for about 41 km from Akatakyiwaa which is close to Cape Coast and ending at Otuam which is closer to Apam in the Gomoa West. It has a total land surface area of 612 square kilometres.

The Municipal capital is Saltpond where the MoFA Municipal office is situated. It is

bounded to the West and Northwest by Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District, to the East by Gomoa District and to the South by the Atlantic Ocean. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the district has a total population of 152,264 comprising 69,670 males (46%) and 82,594 (54%) females and these are to be found in 168 settlements. 55% of the population are subsistence farmers and fishermen. The district population constitutes almost 7% of the Central Region population and relating it to the 1984 Census and the various intermediate extrapolations the annual rate of population growth is estimated as 2.8%. About 2.4% of the population live in areas classified as urban.

Farming and fishing constitute the main economic activities of the Municipal population, employing about three-quarters of the total workforce. The former is done in almost all communities, especially in the inland areas and crops cultivated include oil palm, sugarloaf pineapples, oranges, cereal (maize) and vegetables.

Fishing is done mainly along the coast in settlements such as: Biriwa, Anomabo, Otuam, Abandze, and Kormantse'.

Another source of livelihoods in the municipality is tourism. There are beach resorts along the entire coastal line but the notable ones are located at Saltpond and Biriwa with both attracting large patronage.

3.3 Research strategy

The researcher decided to adopt a case study design for the research because of distinctive character of the research problem and the need to collect in depth data (Oliver, 2008). The research strategy was of a qualitative exploratory approach developed from the conceptual framework derived from the literature review. Based on the purpose of this study and in the context of the professional master in Management of Development in Van Hall Larenstein University, Wageningen UR, an exploratory research was conducted. This kind of research seeks to find out how people get along in the setting under question, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them (Schutt, 2009).

The qualitative research method, enable the researcher to obtain a more realistic feeling of the actors that cannot be experienced in statistical analysis used in quantitative research (Vaus, 2001). This strategy was designed to aid the researcher achieve the objectives of the research. The strategy comprised of reviewing of related literature, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), one-on one interviews and attending a VCC meeting with all the actors.

Focus group discussion

The researcher decided to use the FGD to get responses from the farmers. It was thought that the FGD would allow the researcher to gain divergent opinions as he interacted with different farmers at the same time (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Kreuger (1988) observed that FGD is a planned discussion designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment. Two focus group discussions were held with 8 farmers in each group. The number of participants provided everyone the opportunity to express their opinion and at the same time maintained diversity of opinion. The process facilitated information exchange because the farmers who attended the FGD knew each other; felt comfortable and confident among themselves which facilitated flow of the discussions.

During the FGD on the basis of the group's responses to a question, a series of in depth questions were then asked, to allow the respondents to expand upon the issue asked, provide reasons and instances for making those claims to enable the researcher and the groups appreciate what they were discussing.

Interviews

The researcher conducted one on one interviews with four processors with the aim of getting independent views and perceptions of processors with regards to their participation within the VCC. Each interview session lasted for an average of 60 minutes.

Semi structured interview were planned with the proponents, practitioners and the government to obtain their independent views of these actors in terms of their perception of participation and that of other actors. The interviews were held in different localities because it was more convenient and economical for the researcher to get in touch with all of them at their convenience.

This was also due to the fact that they would all be invited to Saltpond (MoFA municipal office) for the VCC meeting later during the research period. The interviews were conducted on different days as was agreed upon by the various actors and the researcher. On the basis of an actor's responses to a question, a series of in depth questions were then asked, to allow the respondents to explain further on the question asked, provide reasons and instances why particular comments were being made.

Meeting

The researcher scheduled a meeting where all actors were present to observe how the 'sugarloaf' VCC meeting was conducted. The meeting was chosen as a platform for the researcher to observe how actors related to each other before, during and after the meetings. The meeting also served as a means of triangulation of information provided by the actors during the FGD and the interviews.

Observations

This was used as a research tool by the researcher to access the behavioural (obvious / non – obvious) ways in which actors responded to each other during the research period (unobtrusive observations) (Vaus, 2001). It was also used to study the facial expressions and body language as various actors either spoke of or to each other. The observations made by the researcher during the study produced a closer approximation of how various actors relate to each other. The observations provided the researcher with information that would otherwise have been difficult to express in words by respondents.

The researcher reviewed related literature about participation, communication and value chain concepts. From the literature review the researcher derived an inventory of definitions of participation by various authors and institutions from which he eventually adapted his own working definition for the research. The researcher then searched for the manifestations of participations as it occurs from literature.

Checklist – semi structured interviews (SSIs)

Having derived the conceptual framework from literature review, the researcher designed a check list based on the literature and what he sought to achieve par the objectives of the research. The checklist was designed to seek actors' views on whether concepts the literature review unravelled were only a matter of imaginary principles or they had experience it in their interactions with other actors.

The researcher chose to use the checklist during the field work because it enabled him to focus on issues that needed to be discussed during interaction with actors. SSIs were tailored to the interviewees and the researcher could follow their responses to previous questions, for clarification always having in mind the objective of the research (Zoppi and Lai, 2010).

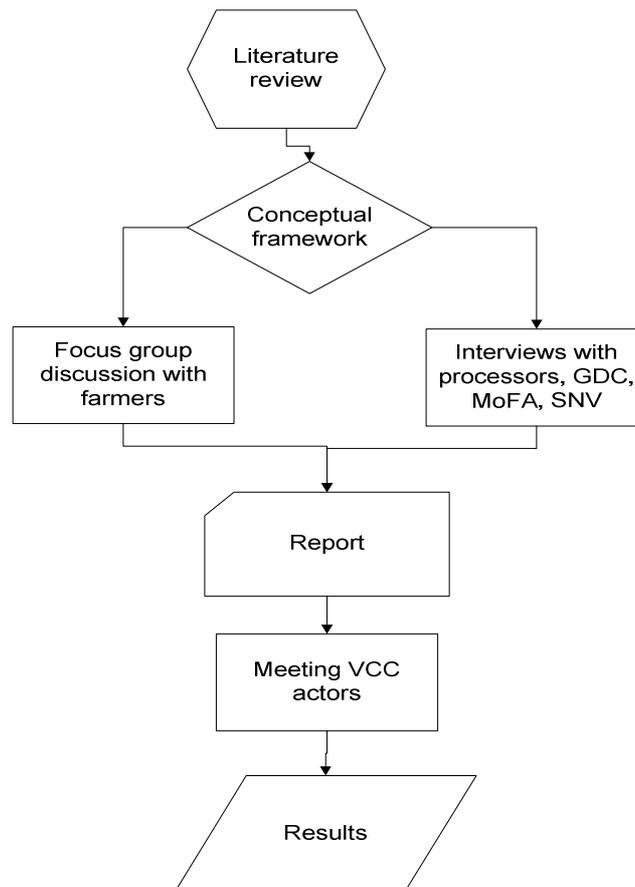


Figure 4: Research strategy

Respondents

The research size was twenty six people, comprising of 4 fruit processors located in 4 locations (see map), sixteen farmers, 2 MDA MoFA, 1 officer from MoFA, 2 and 1 representatives from GDC and SNV respectively. All the actors had been engaged in the 'sugarloaf' VC for a period ranging from one to four years. A complete list of respondents is attached as an annex (annex 1). Below is a break down of the sample size.

Table 1: Breakdown of sample size

Period of membership of 'sugarloaf' VCC	Farmers Focus group discussion	Processors (Interviews)	Partners (MoFA, GTZ SNV) (Interviews)	Total
From 2006	3	3	6	12
" 2008	9	1	-	10
" 2010	4	-	-	4
Total	16	4	6	26

A purposive sampling methodology was employed to select respondents for the research. This was done to facilitate respondents selected for the FGD and interviews would be actors who have been active members of the 'sugarloaf' VCC. The criteria were developed to obtain a diverse set of actors depending on their years of membership. The choice of the criteria was in line with the objective of the research. Even though it can be recognized of relevance, assessing the perspectives of inactive, new or withdrawn actors was beyond the scope of the research. Results obtained therefore can only be attributed to the perspective of actors who are active and availed themselves for the research.

Apart from the farmers who reside in various communities of the Mfantsiman municipality other actors had to travel from various locations to be part of the study. Respondents included 'sugarloaf' farmers, processors, MoFA, GTZ and SNV respondents. These respondents have interacted among themselves as actors in business spheres and at the committee level so they could share their perceptions in relation to their participation within the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

3.4 Data analysis

In analyzing the data the researcher started by ordering, coding and extracting the thematic issues as was derived from the conceptual framework. Responses provided by respondents were grouped bearing in mind the purpose of the question. The researcher further categorized all responses that belonged to the same thematic area and coded them with key words.

The results were discuss and analyzed with related literature that was reviewed. Conclusion and recommendation were then formulated based on the discussion.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The researcher discussed the purpose, methods and intended use of the research with all the actors. The actors were assured of the confidentiality of any information provided and the anonymity of the actors will be respected. In the FGD all members were entreated to treat the discussion with circumspection so that issues discussed would only remain within the group. All respondents were willing during the research period to share their experiences with the researcher because he had work with all the actors and they had confidence in him.

3.6 Research limitations

The major limitation of the research was the fact that the researcher was perceived to be undermining the synergy that existed among the members of the 'sugarloaf' VCC by seeking to know divergent perception of participation among the individual actors.

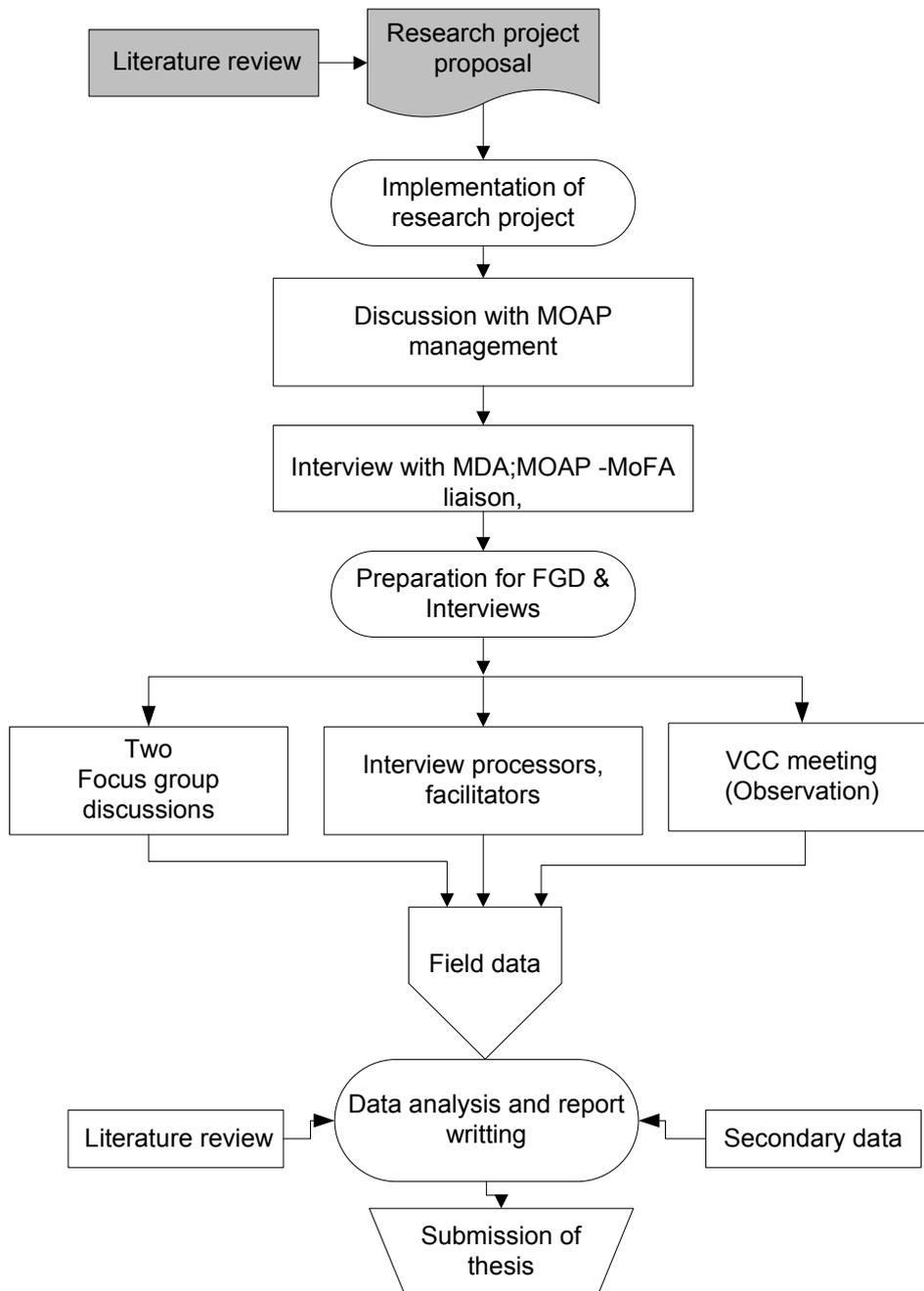


Figure 5: Overall research methodology

4 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS - RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the research in an order that follows from the research strategy. The results of the focus group discussion with farmers are presented first, individual interviews and the VCC meeting where the researcher observed how the VCC meeting was organized. Within this chapter formal relation refers to the situation where the actors being described have documents or signed contracts establishing a relation and informal is the reverse. Informal relation is also referred to as handshake agreement in this chapter.

4.1 *Focus group discussion with farmers*

Two focus group discussions were held with 8 farmers' representative in each group which lasted 80 minutes. The researcher facilitated the discussions. Purpose of using FGD was for the researcher to get divergent opinion of farmers in a single discussion. From literature the researcher defined participation as a process which provides the opportunity or enhances the capacity of individuals to engage in decisions that affect their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of disadvantaged or marginalized groups, this is the working definition for the research.

➤ **Participation**

Farmers' had varying interpretations for participation as it pertained to their engagement with various actors. Four of the sixteen farmers described their participation within the VCC as being present at VCC meeting without necessarily making contributions to the discussions. The fact that they had left their businesses (farms) and families to be present at the VCC meeting connotes participation. Eleven farmers described their participation within the VCC as being present at meetings and taking active part in discussions, planning and execution of VC activities.

Continuum of participation

The continuum of participation is used to categorise certain underlying assumptions pertaining to the manifestation of participations that the farmers had experience within the 'sugarloaf' VC.

- Manipulation

All the farmers indicated during the growing season when they have to hire labour for field maintenance, some of their colleagues receive financial support from retailers and processors; the farmers who receive the financial support are manipulated in the process. The retailers and processors after pre-financing farmers farming activities eventually coerce them to accept lower prices for their harvested fruits.

The retailers and processors refuse to negotiate prices with farmers after harvesting but rather dictate the prices at which they want to purchase the fruits. One farmer remarked '*because the retailers know we have no where to get financial assistance they always cheat us*'. The farmers indicated that their colleagues who received financial support from retailers have become permanently indebted to retailers because the farmers always sell fruits under prevailing market prices to the retailers.

- Inform

All the farmers' indicated they receive information about the activities of VCC through GDC and MoFA representatives. They also receive technical information from representatives of MoFA, GDC and field officers of processors. Seven out of the sixteen farmers indicated that the frequency of information exchange between farmers and the processors depended on the processing demands and requirement of the processors.

Processors inform them about days on which they wanted them to harvest fruits for processing; this information is either sent through their association's representatives or they were contacted individually. Twelve of the sixteen farmers complained in delay or timeliness in which information exchange takes place between them and the processors. One farmer said '*information is money*' signifying the fact the information at his disposal will enable him know where and whom to sell his fruits to etc. All the farmers indicated that information got to them in languages they could understand.

- Consult

Within the VCC all the farmers indicated they hold consultations with processors, MoFA and GDC representatives. All the farmers hold consultations with processors to determine prices, sizes and when fruits will be collected from their fields. Eight of the farmers however claimed the agreed prices and time of fruit collection for which they hold consultations with processors are disregarded by the processors. These eight farmers shared their experience where they held several consultations with a processor and determined fruit prices and harvesting schedules; but when their fruits were ready the processor did purchase the fruits.

Nine farmers said they had stopped attending consultation meeting with processors because processors would not adhere to the terms for which consultations are held. Three farmers' who had formal relations with a processor recounted numerous occasions where they were consulted by their processor and agreed activities have been carried out to the latter. To buttress their claims, they shared their experience that during periods of the year when the processor was unable to purchase their fruits the processor consulted them early and prompted the farmers to make alternative arrangements to sell their fruits.

- Collaborate

The farmers cooperate with other actors (MoFA, GDC, and SNV) in organizing training programs and provision of technical assistance. One farmer described his association's collaboration with certain processors as '*camouflage*' collaboration. His reason for such a description was that though they had established formal collaboration, the terms of the collaboration were not fulfilled. Three farmers who have formal relations collaboration with processors indicated they received soft loans, tractor services and extensions services from the processors. Five certified farmers (Globalgap, Fairtrade, organic) indicated the cost of their certification was paid by their processors. One farmer remarked '*we all cannot become members of out grower schemes*'.

- Decision making

All the farmers indicated that they did not perceive themselves to be part of the decision making process within the VCC. Farmers said they contributed to discussions during VCC meetings and but did not know how the decisions to undertake VCC activities are reached. Four farmers recounted that in their relations with processors, it was the processors that made decisions on what had to be done. Two farmers shared their

experience where a processor issued a form for the farmers to attend an organic training because the processor had decided the farmers should produce organic fruits.

➤ **Communication**

- Interactive communication

Most of the farmers (12) said communication among actors (MoFA, DP, processors) within the VCC had been interactive. Four farmers however said that MoFA and GDC representatives allowed processors more time to contribute during facilitation of the VCC meetings than farmers. 10 farmers preferred face to face interaction with processors however all farmers used mobile phones in their communication with actors (processors, representatives of GDC, MOFA etc).

Three farmers said facilitators used simple language that enables farmers' to understand issues discussed at the meetings. All the farmers indicated that the circular or semi circle sitting arrangement / posture enhances full participation by all members present at the meetings. They said the sitting arrangement did not 'show prejudice' thus no particular chair or position is reserved for a particular person.

- Motivation and expectation

Seven farmers said their motivation was to acquire knowledge and share experience with other farmers. Two farmers were motivated because they expected to gain financial assistance to undertake their farming activities.

Twelve farmers described their motivation as '*something burning within them*'. Four of the twelve further said that they expected to see results of their efforts immediately whereas the remaining eight said they will keep working expecting that the 'sugarloaf' VC will be competitive if not for them then for the next generation of farmers. They said '*patience is always right*', and '*patience removes mountain*'.

- Social capital

All the farmers mentioned the bond of friendship (family-like relations) they enjoy among themselves and other actors within the VCC. Five farmers said "*before we became members of the VCC we did not know ourselves and therefore did not trust ourselves but through the VCC we have become friends and trust ourselves*". The farmers recounted that due to their association with the VCC they are able to bulk their fruits and sell together. One farmer indicated that it was not possible to work as a group if they had not been engaged in the activities of the VCC.

Eight farmers said because of the trust that have developed within the VC, farmers can afford to sell their fruits to processors on credit without any reservations. Three farmers however said if any processor consistently defaults in making payments even though they remain in the 'sugarloaf' VCC they will not sell their fruits to the processor. Two farmers said due to the bond of trust that exist among the farmers they share information about the credit worthiness or otherwise of processors and exporters among themselves; by so doing they prevent other colleagues from being taken advantage of by processors or exporters.

➤ Value chain approach

All the farmers described the VCA as a linkage or process where all actors in an enterprise or venture work together to produce goods and services.

Twelve farmers recounted their experience within the VC with their processors as not being well established. Three farmers hold regular meetings with their processors to establish the sizes of fruits the processor require during each harvesting period. Ten farmers however indicated that coordination from the processors was weak because they do not always engage them in their planning. Six farmers enumerated their experience where harvested fruits went rancid because processors came to their fields with small vans that could not convey all the fruits harvested. In such cases farmers had to find alternative buyers within a relatively short period of time or risk losing their fruits. Most of the farmers' have had such experience with processors. All the farmers said they expected to have reliable markets within the VC but currently that was not the case.

4.2 Interview with Processors

➤ Participation

The researcher conducted one on one interviews with four processors with the aim of getting independent views and perceptions of processors with regards to their perception of participation within the VCC.

All processors defined participation as being given the opportunity to be part of any activity. In relating participation to the VCC they described participation as various actors (farmer, service providers) working together to contribute to solve challenges or issues confronting members. One processor said participation within the VCC was costly because he attended meetings at the expense of his business. Two processors said contributing ideas and physical presence in a meeting connotes participation. The key word from all the processors was that participation meant getting involved in whatever was going on, *'you don't act as an onlooker, 'you give your own ideas as your contributions (say whatever you think) and you are not prevented from doing so'*.

Having given different interpretations of participation, the researcher enquired from processors if they had experienced any of the manifestations of participation in their interaction with other actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC.

- Manipulation

All processors maintained they had not been manipulated in the VC processes, neither had they manipulated other actors. One processor said that some developing partners and financial institutions take processors for granted. The processor maintained that manipulation was a powerful word and was not certain DP would attempt to manipulate processors. All processors indicated that developing partners were duplicating each others efforts. Two processors recounted their experience and said if they had not been prudent in their actions they could have spent an entire week attending meetings organized by developing partners at the expense of their core businesses. One processor said *'they will not give you money for work but always need your contributions at their meetings'*.

- Inform

All the processors said they receive information from farmers and other actors within the VC. Information received from farmers' range from field production cycles pertaining to expected dates of harvest and from developing partners on trainings or meetings schedule. Two processors who have formal relations with their farmers send and receive information through field workers, farmers' representatives and sometimes individual farmers. All four processors said information dissemination was poorly done within the VC. Farmers do not relay information early for them to be able to plan their processing operations and where farmers give information the veracity of the message can not be proven. Two processors shared their experience where on numerous occasions they went to farmers' field and the farmers could not supply the quantity of fruits the farmers indicated.

- Consult

All four processors hold consultations with farmers on setting prices for fruits within the season. Two processors said on a number of occasions farmers did not attend consultations which the farmers had prior knowledge of. One processor said consultation with farmers has been useful but time consuming. All the processors consulted different developing partners to solicit for technical support for their operations. One processor indicated some of these consultations take place rather late and so it becomes less beneficial to processors. Two processors indicated that VC meetings are dominated by representatives of facilitating institutions in terms of numbers.

- Collaboration

The two processors who have formal relations with farmers pre-finance the activities of farmers by supplying them with suckers for farm expansion, provision of soft loans, tractor services, etc. One processor said he preferred handshake arrangement with farmers. Three processors said collaboration among processors was weak, because processors acted like predators who invaded each other's market at the least opportunity'. One processor said *'they want to take away your certified farmers' 'everybody wants his/her own farmers at the expense of the other colleague' and they poach workers from your work'*.

All processors said their other colleagues were not prepared to invest money in the farming activities of the farmers. Two processors contended farmers are to be blamed because farmers do not tell the processors they have other buyers. Processors said *'farmers shift from processors to processors without recourse to the consequence of their actions'*. Three processors indicated they had good collaboration with developing partners which culminated in developing partners supporting their processing activities by sending experts to advice them on processing innovations; however their main challenge was that the collaborations are short term. One processor said that developing partners favour some processors. He shared his experience where he was denied a facility under the pretext that developing partners do not provide such support only for the same facility to be provided to another processor.

- Decision making

All four processors said within the VCC process they did not consider themselves as being part of the decision making process. Meanwhile in their dealings with farmers the processors admitted processors make the decisions after they hold elaborate interactions with the farmers. One processor said he had to consult his buyer in Europe

before making certain commitment to farmers. Processors who have formal relations with the farmers indicated they make decisions with the executives of the associations.

➤ **Communication**

- Interactive communication

All the processors said communication was important and in all their interactions with the farmers they made sure to promote common understanding in all discussions. The processors preferred face to face discussion with farmers because it was more interactive and they could get immediate feedback. All processors use mobile phones communication as a first point of call in contacting farmers.

All the processors indicated they liked the circular or semi-circle arrangement of chairs during VCC meetings because there is no 'boss – subordinate' relationship in the sitting arrangement. Three of them said it made them felt relaxed and "the sitting arrangement enhanced their interaction with other actors. They appreciated the sitting arrangement because they had opportunity to be close to different people at each meeting. They do not get the feeling they are the most important persons in such sitting arrangement and they appreciate it.

- Motivation and expectation

Three processors motivation are to contribute to a competitive agro processing sector and gain the trust of farmers (trust building) so as to be able to negotiate for supply of fruits from individual farmers and associations. One processor's motivation was to contribute to the process of improving linkages between processors and the financial institutions.

On the question of their preparedness to keep investing in the activities of the VCC all processors replied in the affirmative suggesting that since the supply of their raw materials depended on their interaction with farmers they would want to be part of any forum where they can interact with farmers. All the processors said they had invested quite an amount of their time and resources into the 'sugarloaf' VC so they were prepared to wait for the benefits.

- Social capital

All the processors said they had gained the trust of farmers by being members of the VCC. One processor said '*it helps your credibility travel within the farming communities faster than you can imagine or would expect*'. One processor said he could have attained the trust and confidence of the farmers without necessarily being a member of the VCC. However his participation was necessitated by his belief in the adage '*there is strength in numbers*' and within a group they can achieve a lot than just being an individual. Two of the processors said by being members of the VCC they are privileged to receive technical support from GTZ.

➤ **Value chain approach**

All the processors described the VCA as a linkage or process where all actors in an enterprise or venture work together to produce goods and services. They enumerated some actors like input dealers, farmers, transporters, service providers such as (financial institutions, research institution), transporters, wholesalers, retailers and consumers.

Meanwhile two processors indicated that before they got involved in the present structure of the VCC they were already providing value added activities with their out growers. One processor said the VC concept has helped him to work with different actors so that he does not have to carry out all activities in the chain. All the processors indicated that they are working with farmers so that they can have regular supply of fruits to keep them in business.

4.3 Interview with facilitators

The researcher wanted to get independent perceptions of the facilitators in terms of their participation and other actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC. Interviews were conducted with institutional facilitators of the sugarloaf VCC from MoFA, GTZ and SNV.

➤ Participation

The facilitators described their philosophy of participation was to encourage farmers, producers, retailers and service providers to get involved in the process within the 'sugarloaf' VC and be committed. Commitment on the part of the processors, producers etc would create and promote sustainability.

➤ Continuum

- Manipulation

Respondents from MoFA, GDC and SNV said they had not in any way manipulated the actors involved because if they did sustainability of the 'sugarloaf' VC could not be guaranteed.

- Inform

According to the respondents GDC and MoFA share all relevant program details with actors depending on their information needs. GDC recounted that if there is a trade fair for processors the information related to the fair is discussed with the entire VCC but the details are discussed with the processors who need the information most. Respondents from GDC and SNV however said they had observed that processors do not share upstream challenges with the farmers and farmers do not inform processors of their challenges which leads to suspicion build up between the two actors. The respondents from MOFA said MoFA was not informed timely by GDC representatives on activities the VCC undertakes.

- Consult

Respondents indicated that GDC and MoFA facilitate consultations among actors within VCC meetings. GDC, MoFA and SNV representatives create forum where different actors meet and hold consultations in facilitated group works. GDC and SNV representatives initiate consultative process where processors and farmers determine prices of fruits but they (representatives of GDC and SNV) for sustainability purposes do not join such meetings. Meanwhile GDC MoFA and SNV respondents indicated there were sufficient consultations amongst them as facilitating institutions. However MoFA respondents said during consultations GDC representative dominate the process.

- Collaboration

MoFA, GDC and SNV have both formal and informal collaborations with farmers and processors; and provide technical support to actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC. GDC respondents indicated that different criteria are for establishing collaborations with processor or farmers. According to the respondents of GDC and SNV, establishing

collaborations with actors also enable them have access to data from actors which are used for their M&E reports.

GDC and MoFA respondents recounted that collaboration between processors and farmers within the VC was weak. They shared their experience where farmers and processors ignored formal collaboration and either sold or bought fruits from other actors. MoFA respondents indicated that though they are implementing the program with GDC, sometimes the latter organizes VC programs for actors without informing MoFA representatives. All the respondents indicated facilitating institutions designed their programs and set indicators independent of each other

- Decision making

Respondents from MoFA indicated that they did not make decision within the VCC, but GDC representative does. According to the respondents GDC representatives only inform MoFA representative after decisions have been made. Respondents from MoFA, GDC and SNV recounted that between processors and farmers it was the processors who made the decisions for the farmers.

➤ **Communication**

The communication strategy of all the three institutions is to provide advisory communication within the VC to support horizontal and vertical information exchange among the actors. They have adapted this strategy to pursue a conscious agenda of eliminating mistrust that exists among actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC. GDC, MoFA and SNV respondents said in all communication within the VC actors are encouraged to avoid imposing their views on each other but rather find common areas to work together. GDC and MoFA representatives organize and facilitate workshops where processors and farmers interact to know each other's challenges and devise ways to work together to address identified challenges.

GDC representatives enhance the problem solving capacities of actors within the VCC without taking active part in actors' related activities. They encourage actors to take active roles to own all the processes within the VCC for sustainability purposes. GDC respondent said to enhance information exchange among actors local language (Fante) and English are used interchangeably during meetings to ensure that all actors can communicate freely to understand and be understood. MoFA said the use of the local language encourages actors to speak freely since farmers are not conscious of making mistakes in their own language. GDC adopted the circular sitting arrangement during meetings which all actors have come to appreciate.

Value chain approach

GDC, SNV and MoFA said their roles was to facilitate the process performing a unique function of bringing all actors together who hitherto were working independent of each other to interact and work together to generate value. They create the enabling environment for the meetings to take place but they do not have any productive functions within the VC.

4.4 Observation of VCC meeting

The researcher attended a VCC meeting to observe the processes involved in the meeting and also use the meeting to generate data and triangulate information received during the FGD and interviews.

Processors, farmers, institutional facilitators were all at the venue before the commencement of the meeting. Farmers, processors and institutional facilitators were engaged in hearty discussions while waiting for the meeting to officially commence. MoFA and GDC staff had arranged the meeting room with a circular chair arrangement before the members arrived. The meeting was facilitated by the MOAP-MoFA Central regional liaison officer and chaired by a 'sugar loaf' processor. The MDA was in the meeting and made comments as and when called by the MOAP-MoFA liaison officer who facilitated the meeting. During the meeting a representative of MoFA made a comment that *'a few important people are absent today'* apparently referring to processors who were absent; most of the farmers did not take kindly to the statement.

The farmers requested the representative to retract the statement. When the MoFA representative was called upon by the facilitator the statement was retracted. Exchanges during the meeting were friendly and business-like. During snack breaks producers and processors were seen busily having interpersonal discussions that were not related to 'sugarloaf' production. As one processor puts it *'we share real life experiences and discuss politics'*.

There was no female VCC member during the meeting. The membership of the VCC did not represent a complete 'sugarloaf' VC. Service provider and retailers were absent. GDC representative commented that the VCC meeting was quite expensive as the GDC have to bear cost of snacks and travel cost of members who attend VCC meetings. When the meeting ended a processor was seen having further discussions with some farmers.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: Analysis

This chapter presents the analyses of the findings of research. The discussion of the results is in line with the conceptual framework derived from the literature review.

The table below gives an overview of how actors of the 'sugarloaf' VCC perceive themselves and others within the continuum of participation. The perceived manifestations of participation within the VCC is categorised into three major trends that emerged from the research findings. The trends are a problematic diverse perception on manipulation, a shared interest in information and consultation; a desired diverse perception on collaboration and decision making.

The direction of the arrow on table two shows optimum goal of the VCC, where increase in collaboration and joint decisions which will lead to increase competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' the VCC.

Table 2: Perception of participation in the VCC by respective actors



Continuum of participation Actors	Manipulate	Inform	Consult	Collaborate	Decision making
Farmers	++	+	+	-	-
Processors	-	+	+	+	-
Facilitators	+	+	+	+	+

Key:

- ++ Present or positive with high perception or prevalence
- + Present or positive with medium to low perception or prevalence
- Absent

5.1 Participation

The findings of the research support earlier work on participation by institutions and individuals such as the World Bank (2004), Morris (2006) and SAIEA (2005) which emphasize that participation is a process that provides opportunity or enhances the capacity of individuals to engage in decisions that affect their own lives. Interactions with the various actors during the research revealed that their engagement in the 'sugarloaf' VCC have afforded them the opportunity to be part of a process that affects their livelihoods and their profession. Involvement of farmers, processors, MoFA, etc within the VCC allows them to raise their challenges, concerns and interests which are addressed during the meetings.

The research results portrays that farmers perceive themselves to be manipulated by processors and retailers within the 'sugarloaf' VC. The continuum of participation recognizes manipulation is a scenario where no participation takes place therefore it is a matter of concern for farmers and facilitators to perceive that farmers are being manipulated by other actors within the VC. The fact that farmers perceive themselves as vulnerable within the VC as was indicated by the comment of one farmer when he remarked *'because the retailers know we have no where to get financial assistance they always cheat us'* is an indication the VCC needs to work to create mutual interdependency among actors and reduce incidence of dependency that can lead to manipulation.

GDC and MoFA's role of coordinating and networking among actors of the VC should be enhance so that farmers and actors who are perceived to be manipulating farmers can use the VCC meeting to discuss their differences and create a shared interest where the actors work together to eliminate the perceived incidence of manipulation. The perception of manipulation should be an issue of concern to the GDC and other facilitating institutions as it undermines the shared vision of actors working together to generate value and increase the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC.

5.2 Communication

Leeuwis (2004) notes that current issues on communications are more often concerned with the processes in the exchange of meanings and the importance of relational patterns among actors; this assertion is supported by the strategy adapted by the facilitators to engage different actors within the 'sugarloaf' VC to moderate and support public private dialogue. The strategy by the facilitating institutions is to promote information sharing among the actors.

From table two above all respondents of the research perceive that information exchange and consultation takes place within the 'sugarloaf' VC. However despite the fact that all the actors exchanged information amongst themselves processors bemoaned the quality of information exchange with farmers.

Disaggregated and inconsistent information exchange between processors and farmers can reduce the competitiveness of the sugarloaf VC and increase cost of production for both actors. Transparency and enhanced information exchange can facilitate effective production measures for both processors and farmers aimed at improving the competitiveness of the VC. When processors receive information late about where to get fruits the processors are denied the opportunity to have sufficient fruits for their operation in which case the processors are unable to satisfy their client demands on the national, regional or international markets.

The traditional attitude and belief of farmers not sharing their production information with other farmers can be the cultural barrier that prevents farmers from exchanging production information with processors. Farmers may not be keeping production records and therefore do not have adequate and reliable information to exchange with processors. Being part of a VC process requires that the farmers provide adequate and timely production information to the processors to enable processors plan their processing schedules. The roles and responsibilities of farmers within the VCC should be re-articulated to the farmers in terms of their information exchange responsibility.

Channels of information flow within the VC will have to be clearly defined so that farmers will appreciate the importance of circulating information to processors and vice versa within a relatively defined time period. Information delayed could also be interpreted as information denial from the research. To promote information exchange between farmers and processors; GDC and MoFA representative should organize and facilitate support approaches to information exchange among the actors within the VC.

Delayed in information dissemination between processors and farmers can have an influence on the level and quality of consultation that takes place among actors. From the research findings one can assume that consultation among actors is done to satisfy routine procedures in participatory processes. However the results show that farmers and processors who have formal relations and exchange information regularly hold consultation and implement the outcome of the consultative process. This can be attributed to the fact that farmers and processors who have formal relations have the needed and necessary information and know what to ask for in a consultative process and adhere to the outcome of the process. The facilitators should organize interactive communication workshops where actors will be trained on how to engage each other in consultations and negotiations to facilitate transparency among the actors.

Communication among the actors facilitates the bond of connectivity actors share within the VCC. This bond of friendship and trust as they put it '*family*' should have given the actors the impetus to put in their maximum effort to improve the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC. On the contrary the actors enjoy the bond of friendship they share during VCC meetings but are yet to take that commitment and friendship into their business dealing with each other. Actors associate the VCC meeting to a social gathering where they meet to discuss social issues of interest and not necessarily business related issues.

All respondents of the research are motivated by their internal or intrinsic processors to pursue activities within the VC that will contribute to increase the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC. Using the family metaphor, GDC and MoFA who are considered as the parents of the VCA should take advantage of the enthusiasm of the children (actors) and reorient their attitudes into sustainable interaction that will contribute to achieving the shared vision of increasing the competitiveness of the sugarloaf VC. GDC and other facilitating institutions should identify the weak links within the family and design programs that will sustain the efforts of the weak links into stronger links.

5.3 Value Chain Approach

From table two, collaboration and decision making is the desired manifestation that all respondents in the research aspired to exhibit. Respondents in this research showed a conceptual understanding of the VCA and articulated the shared vision of the VCC but there were discrepancies between their interpretation and activities. The actors operate independent of each other and do not link up their activities to generate value for themselves and their clients. Woodall (2003) definition of value as both quantitative and qualitative measure of worth assigned to products and services can not be related to the present state of the 'sugarloaf' VC because the chain is weak and not generating value either in terms of quality or quantity.

Through VC collaboration farmers who have formal relations with processors are assured of technical advice, tractor services and guaranteed markets. Respondents'

reiterated that sustainability of relationship within the VC is achieved through collaboration. Some farmers' attitude of switching to different processors in pursuance of technical and financial benefits is a threat to sustainability and the vision of the VCC.

Collaborations happen when people trust themselves and have relationships with one another. If members of the VCC described themselves with a *'family,'* metaphor then it should be possible for actors to collaborate among themselves. On the other hand they may consider themselves as a *'family'* when they attend meeting but fierce competitors afterwards.

GDC and MoFA should identify programs or Business Development Service (BDS) which can engage the actors on the need and importance of the collaborating with each other. The facilitating institutions can lobby financial institutions to provide financial assistance for members of the 'sugarloaf' VC or donors could create an out grower fund to support actors in the sugarloaf VC. Financial constrain prevents processors from establishing formal collaborations with farmers because the processor is expected to pre finance some farming activities of the farmers. Meanwhile with limited financial resources processor and farmers can have handshake collaboration where group values be articulated and respected by both actors.

Upgrading in VC is largely driven by firms and institutions within the chain (Humphrey and Schmitz, 2002). On the contrary within the 'sugarloaf' VC upgrading is not entirely driven by the processor All respondents of the research are motivated by their internal or intrinsic processors to pursue activities within the VC that will contribute to increase the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC s alone; they are supported by the facilitators of the VC approach. This is because the lead firms within the 'sugarloaf' VC are small holders who do not have the capacity to handle all processes within the chain. The perception among processors and farmers is that the VCC belongs to GDC and MoFA. Subsequently MoFA respondents perceive GDC representatives within the VCC of making all decisions. Farmers rely on facilitating institutions to link them to processors and vice versa.

The role of MoFA within the VCC is to create the enabling environment for other actors in the chain to carry to work together. Processors and farmers within the VC misconstrue GDC funding, hosting of the VCC secretariat; planning and implementing VC strategies as part of the decision making which denies the farmers and processors to own the VCC. GDC can reduce funding of VCC meetings and facilitate the meetings to be organized by the farmers and the processors; in this case the farmers and processors will own the decision made at the meetings. GDC representatives should indicate to all actors the intended purpose of strategies being implemented.

The perception that GDC representatives make decisions for other actors within the VCC undermine the synergy the VCC seeks to achieve among the actors. There maybe issues within the VCC that GDC representative may be more knowledgeable in and can contribute to the process of decision making but the representative should not be seen to be dominating decision making within the VCC. Since the VCC was set up to facilitate actors' interaction within the 'sugarloaf' VC; actors should be given the opportunity to make decisions that will facilitate the desired competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC. In a participatory process all actors must perceive themselves to be part of the process that makes decision so they can contribute to the process and enhance sustainability. If the

current perception of decision making being the prerogative of GDC is not reversed the sustainability of the VCC will be doubt.

6 CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter presents the conclusion of the outcome of the case study carried out during the research.

6.1 Conclusions

This research explored the perceptions of actors' participation in the 'sugarloaf' VCC in the Mfantseman Municipality of the Central region of Ghana.

The various actors had varying interpretation of their participation and that of others. The research concludes that there is no definitive perception of actors' participation within the 'sugarloaf' VCC.

Three major trends emerge that shows that farmers perceive themselves to be manipulated by processors and retailers; which is an issue of concern for all actors within a participatory process.

All respondents perceived that there is not sufficient information exchange and consultation within the 'sugarloaf' VC. Disaggregated and inconsistent information exchange between processors and farmers reduces the competitiveness of the sugarloaf VC and increase cost of production for both actors.

All respondents of the research are motivated by their internal or intrinsic processors to pursue activities within the VC that will contribute to increase the competitiveness of the 'sugarloaf' VC

Respondents had diverse perception on decision making where actors perceive decision making within the VCC to be the prerogative of GDC representatives.

6.2 Recommendation

The VCC secretariat should be hosted by farmers and processors to facilitate the process of the actors owning decisions of the VCC.

GDC and MoFA should review their roles and responsibilities within the VCC to create space for actors within the VCC to take responsibility for the 'sugarloaf' VC.

GDC should support private and public service providers to offer VC-oriented services to actors within the municipality.

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Annex 1: List of respondents for the research**A. FGD 1 Venue Ekumfi Eyisam Date 21 July, 2010**

Name	Location	Organization	Position
Francis Arthur	Mankessim	Mbodzenbo	Mfantseman Coordinator
Robert Amoah	Ekumfi Eyisam	PF	Secretary
Samuel Egyir	Ekumfi Egyankwa	Edwumadzen	Chairman
Kweku Ayuba	Ekumfi Techiman	BSOC	Chairman
Mustapha Korantsir	Ekumfi Asaman	Adwendaho	Secretary
Samuel Denis	Ekumfi Egyankwa	Edwumadzen	Chairman
Kwa Bosu	Ekumfi Atwa	ATWA	Secretary
John Darrah	Ekumfi Eyisam	ATWA	Member

B. Focus group discussion 2 Venue: Mankessim; Date: 22nd July, 2010

Name	Location	Organization	Position
Kwamina Mensah	Mankessim	FBO	Chairman
Kojo Mensah	Atabaadze	Atabaadze multipurpose group	
John Tawiah -Baah	Mankessim	Wokyekyera wosoa	Secretary
Evans Enchill	Mankessim	FBO	Member
J.K Ansah	Mankessim	Mbodzenbo	
Michael Aidoo	Ekumfi Atwa	FBO	Sec.
Shauibu Alhasan	Mankessim	Mbodzenbo	
John Abakah	Ekumfi Adoagyir	Obakondzidzi	Sec

C. 'Sugarloaf' VCC meeting for SWOT Analysis
Venue: Saltpond; Date: 28th July 2010

Name	Location	Organization	Position
Nana Adomako	Accra	MOAP/AFC	
Col. Rtd. Ato Enniful	Winneba	Profound Integration	Managing Director
Francis Yaw Arthur	Mankessim	Mbodzenbo	Mfantseman Coordinator
Mustapha I Korantsir	Ekumfi Asaman	Adwendaho	Secretary
Samuel Denis	Ekumfi Twa	Edwumadzen	Secretary
Kwamina Mensah	Mankessim	FBO	Chairman
S M Yorke	Saltpond	MDA-MOFA	MDA
Emmanuel A Larbi	Assin Fosu	Fruittiland Ltd	Fruit Purchase Officer
Evans Enchill	Mankessim	FBO	Member
Samuel Egyir	Ekumfi Egyankwa	Edwumadzen	Chairman
Kweku Ayuba	Ekumfi Techiman	BSOC	Chairman
Robert Amoah	Ekumfi Eyisam	PF	Secretary
Kojo Mensah	Atabaadze	Atabaadze Multipurpose group	Former chairman
John Tawiah –Baah	Mankessim	Wokyekyera wosoa	Secretary
Baba Adam	Cape Coast	MOAP	
J K Assan	Cape Coast	MOFA	Liaison Officer
Kwa Bosu	Ekumfi Atwa	ATWA	Secretary
J.k Ansah	Mankessim	Mbodzenbo	

D. List of processors and partners interviewed

Name	Location	Organization	Position
Patrick Deegbe	Weija	Weija Agricultural Development (Dry and fruit exporter	Managing director
Col. Rtd. Ato Enniful	Winneba	Profound Integrated	Managing Director
Emmanuel Larbi	Assin NYankumasi	Fruittiland	Fruit purchase Officer
Daniel Danquah	Abura Asebu	Coastal groove limited	Managing Director
Felicia Ansah Amprofi	Cape Coast	MoFA	Municipal Director
Mark Fynn	Accra	GTZ	Adviser
Kwesi Assan	Cape Coast	MoFA	MOAP-MoFA liaison, cape Coast
Eric Agyare	Accra	SNV	Adviser (Fruits & vegetables)

Annex 2: Interview check list

A. Interview check list for producers of the sugarloaf pineapple VC

1. 1. What is your understanding of the value chain approach and VCC? What do you understand by the participation? What are your motivation and expectations for engaging in VCC activities?
2. Have you in any way been manipulated or feel manipulated by other actors within the value chain? If yes in what ways were you manipulated? In your opinion why do you think other actors manipulate you? Have you manipulated other actors within the value chain?
3. Information exchange among actors. What types of information do you receive? How relevant are such information to you? How often do you get such information and how? (Individually, through group's representative, in pairs or small groups, as a whole group?)
4. Do you hold consultations with other actors? If yes why do they consult you? If no why? How often are such consultations held?
5. Is there any collaboration between the processors and other actors within the VC esp. producers? What collaboration exists among processors, producers and other actors? In which areas are the collaboration established? Is the collaboration formal or informal?
6. Are you involved in the decision making process of the VCC? How are decisions made with respect to other actors?
7. Processors should give graphical presentations of sitting arrangements during VCC meetings or meetings with producers and other actors? Why such sitting arrangement? Is there any reason why such sitting arrangement is preferred?
8. What is the mode of communication within the VCC? How does this pattern affect your interaction with actors? What sitting arrangement is used during meetings and what do you like about that?
9. How will describe your relationship with other actors within the VCC and how does the relationship described above influence involvement in the VCC?

C. Interview check list for processors of the sugarloaf pineapple VC

1. What is your understanding of the value chain approach and VCC? What do you understand by the participation? What are your motivation and expectations for engaging in VCC activities?
2. Have you in any way been manipulated or feel manipulated by other actors within the value chain? If yes in what ways were you manipulated? In your opinion why do you think other actors manipulate you? Have you manipulated other actors within the value chain?
3. Information exchange among actors. What types of information do you receive? How relevant are such information to you? How often do you get such information and how? (Individually, through group's representative, in pairs or small groups, as a whole group?)
4. Do you hold consultations with other actors? If yes why do they consult you? If no why? How often are such consultations held?
5. Is there any collaboration between the processors and other actors within the VC esp. producers? What collaboration exists among processors, producers and other actors? In which areas are the collaboration established? Is the collaboration formal or informal?
6. Are you involved in the decision making process of the VCC? How are decisions made with respect to other actors?
7. What is the mode of communication within the VCC? How does this pattern affect your interaction with actors? What sitting arrangement is used during meetings and what do you like about that?
8. How will describe your relationship with other actors within the VCC and how does the relationship described above influence involvement in the VCC?

B. Checklist for Partners (MoFA, GDC, and SNV)

1. Have you in any way manipulated or feel manipulated by other actors within the value chain? Do actors within the VCC manipulate each other? If yes in what ways do you help address it?
2. How is information exchange among actors? What types of information do you receive? How relevant are such information to you? How often do you get such information and how? (Individually, through group's representative, in pairs or small groups, as a whole group?)

3. Do you hold consultations with other actors? How are consultations among other actors held? Do you play any role in such actor consultations?
4. Is there any collaboration between you and other actors within the VCC? How do you establish such collaborations? Are there established collaboration between processors and producers?
5. How is decision making done within the VCC? What measures are taken to ensure that all actors take part in the process? How are decisions made with respect to other actors?
6. What is communication strategy do you employ within the VCC? What is the mode of communication within the VCC? How does this pattern affect your interaction with actors? What sitting arrangement is used during meetings and what do you like about that?
7. How will describe the relationship among actors within the VCC and how does the relationship described above influence their involvement in the VCC?

Annex 3: Time planning

Time planning

Activities	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Responsible
Traveling from Netherlands to Accra (Exploratory research in Ghana)	9 to 10			VHL_Dr Loes
-Meeting MOAP management in Accra	14			
- Field trip to central Region -Meeting with Municipal Directors Cape Coast and Mfantseman	15-16			Charles Sackey Gerald Atampugre
First data collection	19 to 23			Charles Sackey Gerald Atampugre Baba Adam
Cape Coast – Accra	25			
Synthesis of the first field work	26-27			Charles Sackey Gerald Atampugre
- Second data collection	From 28 July to 6 August			Charles sackey Gerald Atampugre Baba Adam
Debriefing MOAP management		10		
-Review data gathered, review of literature		11 to 13		Charles Sackey
Accra, Ghana to Amsterdam, Netherlands		16 to 17		
Complete results analysis Further literature review and finalize writing of thesis		From 19 Aug to 12 Sept		VHL_Dr Loes
Submitting of thesis			13	VHL_Dr Loes
Thesis defense			From 17 to 22	VHL_Dr Loes