

Manoeuvring around Cultural Conflicts between International Development NGOs and Local Communities Towards Poverty Alleviation in Ghana

Seth Amofah
Tallinn University, Estonia

Abstract: This chapter examines sources and effects of conflicts between development NGOs and the communities they work in. Studies concerning development NGOs and conflict are usually related to NGOs in conflict management in areas where unrest exists. Even though issues that could trigger conflicts have been traced in some studies, not much detailed research have been conducted in those areas. Poverty alleviation operations and development cooperation of an Estonian NGO, MTÜ Mondo in Northern Ghana has been studied through a case study design to answer the question: What are the main cross-cultural conflicts between NGOs and local communities in Northern Ghana and how could it be overcome? The results of the study identified the main causes of the ambivalence to be: 1. Inadequate cross-cultural orientation for NGO volunteers or workers before going into the communities they are posted and limited knowledge of the NGO staff to the community. 2. No harmonized administrative culture between international NGOs and their local partners. The paper suggests a cross-cultural guide for NGO staff and receiving local communities to ensure success in poverty alleviation projects. Finally, the paper recommends the use of standardized but easy to use operational materials like signing books that will increase trust between or among stakeholders.

Keywords: *NGOs, Cross-cultural conflicts, Ghana, Poverty reduction, volunteers*