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The Factors Affecting Poverty Alleviation Projects in Developing Economies.

Case Study: Urban Poverty Reduction Project (UPRP) by the Social Investment Fund Organisation, Ghana

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Thesis abstract

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The issue of poverty has been given a lot of attention over the past few years, and yet it seems like very little has been done to curb it. According to Jeffrey D. Sachs, the best antidote for poverty will be to first help the extreme poor out of absolute poverty, this is clearly expressed in one of his says, "The key to ending extreme poverty is to enable the poorest of the poor to get their foot on the ladder of development...They lack the minimum amount of capital necessary to get a foothold, and therefore need a boost up to the first rung."

The primary aim of this thesis is to analyze the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the present situation of poverty alleviation projects in developing countries, by taking into account the various activities of the Social investment fund during the implementation of the urban poverty reduction project in Ghana. Theories on project management as well as developmental issues on poverty will be discussed to prove that the failure of projects in developing nations is not only caused by the obvious effect of bureaucracy and corruption, but can also be caused by using the wrong project management tools which could alter the success stories of poverty alleviation projects in the long run.

Keywords: Poverty, Project management, Ghana, Developing economies

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Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Fund
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEPA	Center for Policy Analysis
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FMU	Fund Management Unit
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRP	Ghana Poverty Reduction Project
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
ICT	Information and communication Technology
LPIAs	Local Project Implementing Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFIs	Micro-finance Institution

MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NIB	National Investment Bank
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFID	OPEC Funds for International Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle
PMBOK	Project Management Book of Knowledge
PMI	Project Management Institute
SIF	Social Investment Fund
SIT	Social Inclusion Fund
TQSC	Target Quality Scope Cost
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPRP	Urban Poverty Reduction Project

UNESCO United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organizations

WBS Work Breakdown Structure

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1 INTRODUCTION

Historically, poverty has commonly been measured based on three factors; income, assets and socioeconomic benefit. These socioeconomic benefits connote more than just a fiscal data to account for health, nutrition, infant mortality, sanitation, and other aspects of human welfare. The author believes that poverty goes beyond just the level of individual income, assets and socioeconomic benefits. The author also agrees with Muhammad Yunus when he says that development and the elimination of poverty should be viewed as a human rights issue and not as a quest simply to increase the gross national product (GNP) of a nation. (Yunus M., 2003)

In the 1820's, the average per capital income in Finland, Norway, and Sweden was below \$1,000, but by 1890, many people trooped the United States. At that time, the US had a GDP of 200 billion in relation to its population of 62,979,766 and this contributed to a total per capital income of about \$3,177, but today Finland, Norway and Sweden are among the richest in the world. It can therefore, be concluded that poverty is far less widespread in today's well-to-do nations than it was in earlier times. Conversely, this scenario is the total opposite in many developing countries. (G. Pfeffermann, 2001; O. Blanchard, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 [ref 18/11/12])

For decades, the issue of poverty alleviation has been a primary subject of developmental dis-course for many developing nations. However, there is still no technical definition that gives an explicit understanding of the meaning of poverty. Poverty in itself is a debatable phenomenon; this is because the circumstances leading to poverty differs from one nation to another. As indicated in the recent World Development Report "To be poor is to be hungry, to lack shelter and clothing, to be sick and not cared for, to be illiterate and not schooled". (UNESCO Bangkok, 2003 [ref 18/11/12]) In reality, people living in poverty experience more

than this and they are particularly defenseless in the face of events that are beyond their control. They are given no respect and have no power or say neither in the society nor the affairs of any state institution or organization. This goes to prove that even though poverty on the whole is an individual predicament, it is beyond doubt that the community has the power to either impact positively or negatively towards the despair of the poor in the society. Society has realized its influence and for this reason poverty alleviation has become the number one priority in many developing countries. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2003 [ref 18/11/12])

1.1 Research Purpose and Problem

The need to reduce poverty has become more than just a cliché, but rather it is now a cliché that holding no true value. Relative poverty is ubiquitous and is constantly increasing with little chance of it being completely eliminated; in this regard it appears that the level of poverty in developing countries is either going to remain as it is or take a turn for the worse. Dozens of projects have been undertaken in the quest to eradicate poverty in developing countries, but many of these projects either solved half the problem or did not meet expectation. Projects can be constructed in many ways, but a project without proper planning, monitoring and controlling is destined for failure. The reasons for project failures in developing countries cannot be found in a single book; this is because project failure is relative and cannot be generalized. It mainly depends on the overall structure of the country's economy and the attitudes of its citizens.

The basic idea behind this research is to bring to light the various factors hindering the success of poverty alleviation projects in developing countries. By analyzing the project lifecycles of a poverty reduction project in Ghana (Urban poverty reduction project) in relation to existing theory, the author will be able to reach a conclusive hypothesis regarding project failures. Apart from pinpointing the various setbacks of poverty alleviation projects this paper also attempts to synthesize a range of recent research and offer valuable recommendations for future projects of the

same nature. The author will explore the problem in question by analyzing these four research questions listed below:

- ❖ What steps should be taken to initiate a new project?
- ❖ What steps should be taken in planning a project?
- ❖ What steps should be taken in executing a project?
- ❖ How should a project be closed?

1.2 Research limits

The issue of poverty alleviation is a wide topic; this is because poverty is widespread and can be found in all parts of the world. While some parts of the world live in absolute poverty others, live in relative poverty. If the author were to analyze the problem based on the whole world, then it would certainly take decades to complete it. Therefore, the author chose to explore the problem in developing economies where there is a significant level of poverty. On the whole, this research is limited to Ghana and takes into account the efforts of a governmental organization (SIF) in reducing rural and urban poverty in Ghana.

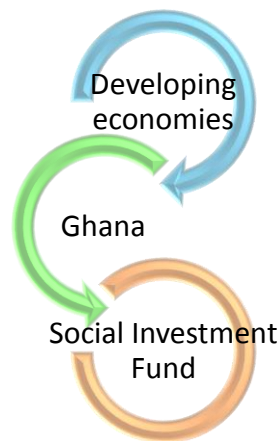


Figure 1 Research limits of this paper

1.3 Research Method

In the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, research is define as “the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalizing to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art.” (Slesinger D. and Stephenson M., 1930 [ref 18/11/12])

The methodology of this research is based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The quantitative aspect of this piece of is based on the statistical data arrived at through research and distribution of questionnaires while the quantitative analyses was gathered through interviews. In order to collect accurate information, an interview was conducted based on the author’s research questions. The collated response will be presented and discussed in subsequent chapters.

2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES (POVERTY)

The purpose of this review is to critically examine the subject matter and related theories of the proposed problem by discovering variables pertinent to the topic, defining the relationship between ideas and practices, identifying the existing gaps and weaknesses in the subject of study and coining out possible recommendation for future study.

This chapter would accentuate the basic procedures that are necessary to ensure the success of developmental projects and the ways by which they can be properly managed. This review would make evident the step-by-step procedures by which various project goals and objectives can be achieved successfully. This chapter would go a long way to relate literature to research findings and also introduce the reader to the main topic of discussion, which are project management and poverty.

As the world evolves and technology advances, programs and applications also become more sophisticated. It is these refined programs and rapid technological advancement that has facilitated the smooth shift of businesses from its regular operational process to a more project-based process. In the light of aggressive competition in turbulent business environments, many organizations have seen the need to concentrate more on operational efficacy and productivity by introducing practices that would enhance the management of organizational resources. (Azzopardi S., 2008 [ref 18/11/12])

Consequently, on the verge of ensuring fruitful completion of project-based initiatives, it is also essential to employ the services of highly competent and efficient project managers who will control and organize a group towards successfully implementing a project and fight to improve its overall performance. A successful project often presents significant changes to the ways businesses operate in general (Mamaril D., 2010 [ref 18/11/12])

2.1 Understanding Projects and Project management

Many authors have coined up numerous definitions that seek to explain the rationale behind a project. Although the process of executing one project may differ from another, yet, nearly all projects follow similar procedures, nonetheless the most important factor is making sure that in the long run, all project goals are met. Heerkens G.R. (2002) emphasises that the concept behind undertaking a project starts from identifying a particular problem that demands a solution and responds to a specific need that would eventually be beneficial to the end users. (Heerkens G.R. p.10, 2002)

A good project should be backed by a clear purpose that seeks to yield good results and satisfy particular goals. Projects should be realistic and achievable within a fixed period. More so projects should be innovative since they originate from new ideas and provide responses to particular problems. (Youth-partnership, 2012, [ref 20/11/12])

While some projects are initiated to implement new strategies others are instigated to solve problems from the ground-up. According to the project management institute (PMI, 2004) a project is defined as “a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product and service.” Although this definition is widely accepted by many, it lacks in certain areas and these areas have been clearly identified and defined by other authors (Westland J., 2006; Meridith J.R., Mantel S.J. Jr, 2000; Heerkens G.R., 2002). A project goes beyond just creating unique products and services, the sole aim of any project is to address a pressing need by providing solutions that would be beneficial and provide a lasting social change. In the same context, a project can be defined as a unique but realistic approach used to find solutions to specific problems by producing a set of unique deliverables within a limited timescale, an appropriate budget and limited resources in order to satisfy particular needs and leave a long lasting change in the society.

Heekens G.R. (2002) argues that projects come with lot of risk and uncertainty that may pose a threat and question its ability to succeed; thus a project is sometimes regarded as an adventure. The real challenge here is to find ways to overcome these risks when they present themselves, however, the inability to turn these risks into results accounts to some reasons why projects fail.

In a wider sense, a project is basically a proposed solution to a specific problem and because of its complex nature they are broken down into subtask to make execution much easier. As the saying goes, “a problem shared is a problem solved”, for this reason projects are divided into tasks which are then broken into work packages and further divided into work units. The graded nature of projects has eased the implementation and execution process, thus with the institution of division of labour every subtask is coordinated properly to work together for the good of the entire project. (Meridith J.R., Mantel S.J. Jr, 2000 p.9)

2.1.1 Project Management

Meridith J.R., Mantel S.J. Jr. (2000) emphasize that apart from the basic reason behind the initiation of a project which is, to achieve a specific goal, projects are also organised so as to focus responsibility and authority in on hand(individual or small group). Within the project management cycle there is an individual called the project manager whose role is to coordinate and integrate the various activities needed to be implemented by a small group (the project team) to produce a desired outcome. (Meridith J.R., Mantel S.J. Jr, 2000, p.12)

Project management as described by the project management institute as, “.....the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirement” (PMI, 2000, p.6). Another author (Heekerns G.R., 2002 p.11) goes further to argue that although the definition seems direct, it is also vital to note that it is only through some level of education or on-the-job experience that skills can be learnt and applied when solving the problems in question.

Project management is a frame work which involves the use of knowledge and skills and the coordination of tools and processes essential for successful project execution. Project management duties are accomplished systematically through initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing but it is worthy to note that every project has its unique and an ideal way of satisfying these processes. According to PMI, project management can also be defined as the various steps being taken to manage an on-going project. (PMI, 2000, p.6)

2.1.2 Project Life Cycle (Project life span)

Just like human beings projects have a birth stage, a growth stage, maturity stage and an ending stage (death). All projects are structured to have a beginning and an end, but it is also crucial to take particular note of the middle stage since it is within this stage that most activities occurs, to pave way for project completion. The various phases that projects pass through, from the beginning through to the middle and to the end is what works together to form the project life cycle.

Patel, M. B. & Morris P.G.W. Prof. (1999 p. 52) argues “the life cycle is the only thing that distinguishes a project from a non-project” in the sense that life cycles and projects share common characteristics of having specific beginning and end time (specific time schedule). On the other hand, a non-project is the exact opposite as its activities are repeated for day-day management purposes. (Patel, M. B. & Morris P.G.W. Prof., 1999)

This argument is, however, inconsistent as it contradicts the entire understanding of a life cycle. A clearer explanation indicates the wrong usage of the word “cycle” in the term “project life cycle”; this is because a cycle is defined as any complete series of repeated events, but this definition reverses the original definition of a project as being a “one-time” activity accomplishable within a particular time schedule. According to Wideman R.M., 2004 a more appropriate term in this sense would be “project life span”. (Wideman R. M., 2004[ref 30/11/12])

Even though, processes within projects are similar in nature, there is no particular lifecycle that applies to all projects and for this reason project managers are challenged with the responsibility of critically thinking so as to figure out the project lifecycle stages that are required for successful project completion. In many cases, projects fail to deliver because of the application of “One-Size-Fits-All” project management, a method which limits all sorts of projects to the same lifecycle. (Wideman R. M., 2004 [ref 30/11/12])

2.1.3 Project Phases

Every project is made up of phases that need to be completed and within these phases tasks are broken down (unique set of challenges) to make management easier. Collectively the project phases are referred to as the project life cycle, and each phase usually includes a set of activities intended to establish the desired level needed to ensure a transition to the next step in the cycle. Before each phase is brought to a close, a review is conducted to conclude whether to proceed with the next phase, cancel the entire project, or repeat the previous phase. (The Open University, 2012; Wideman R. M., 2004 [ref 30/11/12])

Heerkens G.R. (2002) points out that the project lifecycle can be summarized into four basic phases but consist of six steps entirely. The four basic phases identified by Westland J. (2006) include initiation, planning, execution, and closure.

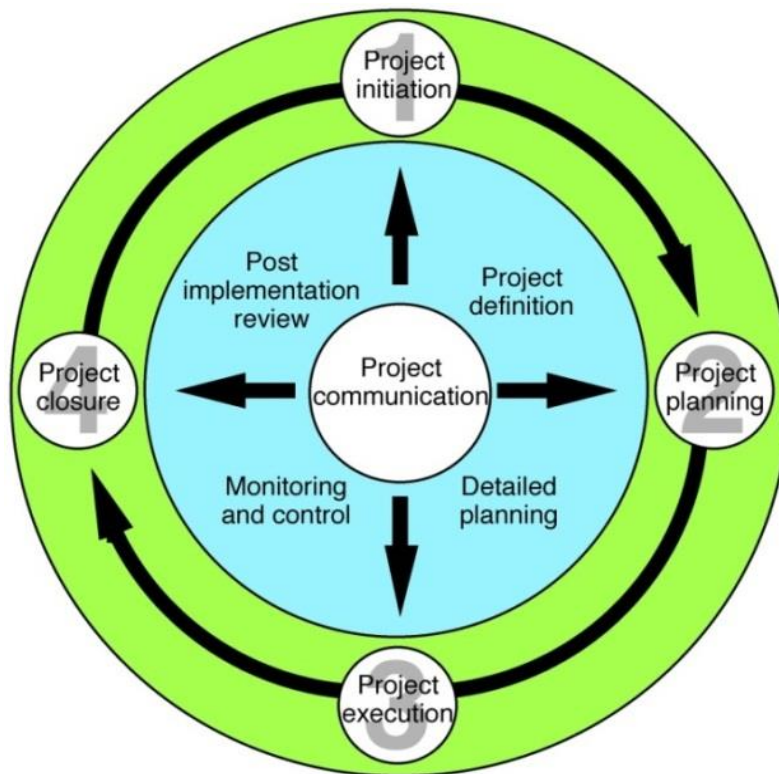


Figure 2 The four phases of the project life cycle (Westland J., 2006 p.4)

An article written by Lever R. (2008) emphasise the need to write a proposal before project initiated, the proposal must be written in defence of the proposed project, clearly stating the importance and the deliverables attainable by the close-up of the project and also the long term benefits of the project if applicable.

2.2 Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle Versus Project life cycle

The Deming cycle, popularly known as the plan-do-check-act cycle (PDCA) is a close embodiment of the project life cycle, this is because they both seek the same result which is to solve problems. Although the relationship between the Deming cycle, popularly known as the plan-do-check-act cycle (PDCA) and the project life cycle can be conceptualized on a fairly general level, they must not be used interchangeably mainly because, unlike the project life cycle the PDCA is a

continuous process which never terminates. The diagram below shows the path of each cycle. (Mind tools, 2012 [ref 20/11/12])

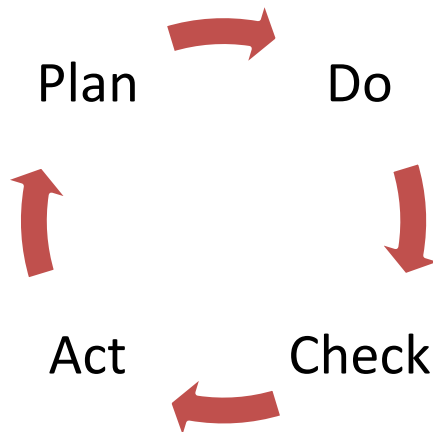


Figure 3 PDCA cycle (Mind tools, 2012)

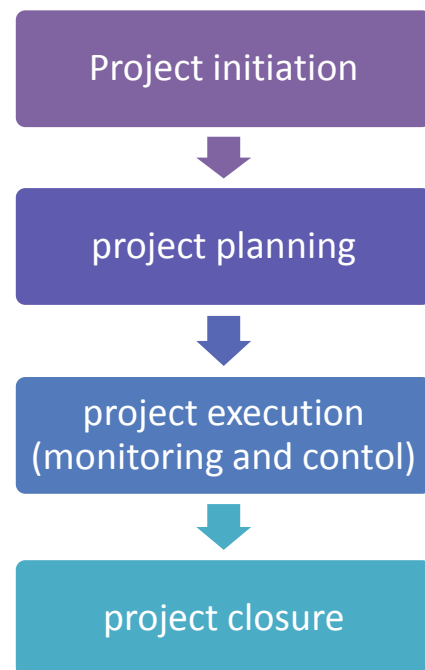


Figure 4 The project lifecycle (Method 123, 2006)

2.3 The TQSC Targets of a Project

Just as laws are enacted to bring peace and order, in the same vein projects are controlled and confined by certain elements. These factors are manipulated in the most suitable way so as to reach a balance that will provide beneficial results. Time, cost and scope are the three basic constraints that define a project work. These three constraints put together makes up the project management triangle, all three constraints are interdependent on each other thus; a small change in time will affect the total cost and scope involved. The triangle is used as a guide or checklist in analyzing the various uncertainties that may arise throughout the project. (Tutorials point, 2012 [ref 30/11/12])



Figure 5 The project management triangle (Tutorials point, 2012 [ref 30/11/12])

Time is the most difficult component to manage among all three constraints because it is unpredictable and uncontrollable. Time, as the name implies is the total duration required to complete a project. It is only after a project has been apportioned time for implementation and execution that critical decisions and scheduling can be effected to allocate a level of financial expenditure that will produce deliverables in the long-run. (Exforsys, 2012 [ref 30/11/12])

Cost is the total financial expenditure needed to execute a project. Every project required an estimated cost budget to ensure that the project is implemented within the proposed budget. There are a number of factors that may influence the cost budget of a project namely; material costs, the costs of labor, risk, and machines. It is a general observation that in many instances quality is positively related to cost, this is to say that high quality is powered by high cost; however this notion is not far from the truth because high quality demands the use of valuable materials that need financing.

Scope describes the deliverables attainable if the project is successful, the deliverables are the benefits derived from undertaking a project. It also defines the various resources needed to achieve the overall goal of the project with the intended

quality, features, and functions of the product all in place. (C. Chatfield and T. Johnson, 2007 [ref 30/11/12])

Very few authors include quality as a fourth constrain. Quality in itself is the ultimate feature most appreciated in a product; this is because quality symbolizes high value and durability. Apart from skills and knowledge time is an influential factor in determining the quality of a product. In most instances, things that are done impetuously fail to deliver good quality. (Tutorials point, 2012 [ref 30/11/12])

Similarly it is necessary to include a fifth constrain which is the resource constrain. This constrain defines the ease with which various resources are made available and accessible. Resources are the basis of every project therefore; a project devoid of resources is as good as dead, this is because without using the right factors of production no actions can be taken to implement and execute projects.

An example of a developmental project in Ghana was the “rural enterprises project” that lasted from December 1993 to March 2002. The objective of the project was to enable poor rural people to overcome poverty. This goal was met by transferring technical skills to rural areas to make it easier to get jobs and also improve the returns they get from their jobs by increasing output of small off-farm enterprises. The project was executed within a specific time, scope, and approved cost budget and by using the resources necessary for fighting against poverty in rural areas.(IFAD, [ref 30/11/12])

2.4 Project Success

Failure to fully satisfy these four constrains could be disastrous as it might distort the whole project. These constrain also acts as factors for successful project management. In as much as project success is determined by certain underlying factors, project success differs from project to project. Projects success mainly depends on what the organisation undertaking the project views as significant. In the

long-run, all that matter is to ensure that the project is managed efficiently under the project constrains so as to successfully turn problems into strengths. The success of a project is judged by the extent to which individual project goals are met. (Heerkens G. p. 26-29)

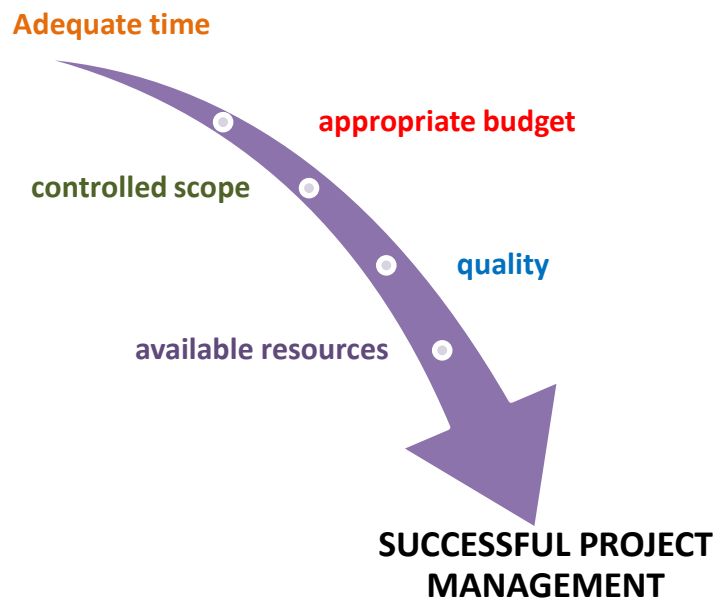


Figure 6 Steps to successful project management

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework sets the stage for presenting the specific research question that drives the investigation being reported, it also gives direction to the research. A conceptual framework can also be described as a narrative or graphical presentation that highlights the main things to be studied and identifies the existing relationship between them. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.18)

Below is a graphical representation of the conceptual framework of this research

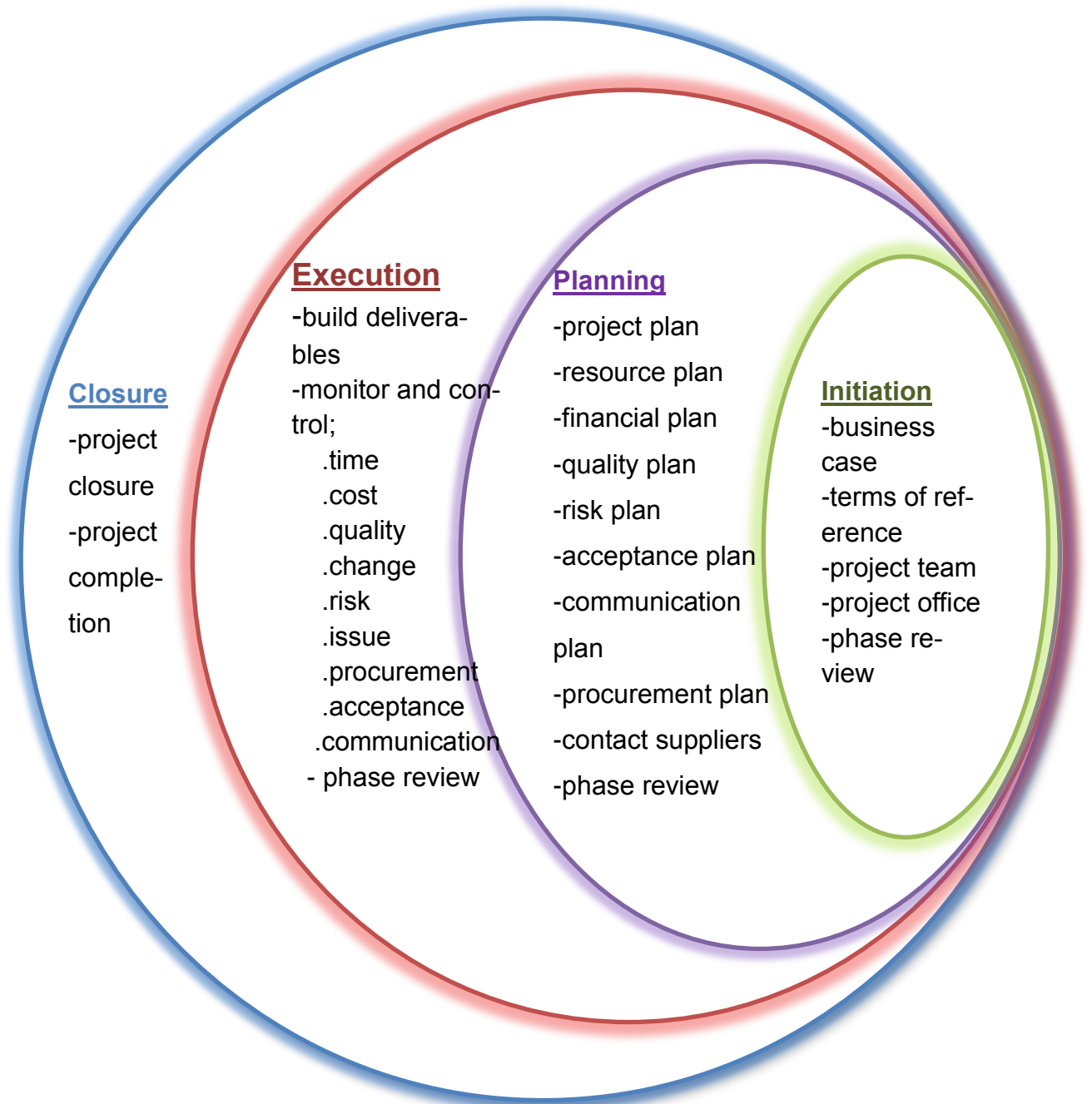


Figure 7 Conceptual framework of this research

2.6 Theoretical Research Question

Theoretical research questions are questions that can be answered only by reviewing the secondary research which are found in existing literature and theories. These research questions are based on a conceptual framework which identifies four phases of a project. Although every project has its individual line of activities,

the most common model in any project life cycle is the waterfall model. It is a default model for all projects which focuses on upfront analysis and a sequence with clearly defined deliverables for every phase. (Tensteps, 2012 [ref 1/12/12])

The theoretical research questions were formulated based on a few theories and the general project lifecycle of a project. This chapter will explain into detail the gradual procedure that every project undergoes; from start to finish.

Westland J. (2006) identifies the four phases of a project as; project initiation, project planning, project execution and project closure, these processes however, have been rephrased and reduced to three parts by Meridith J.R. and Mantel S.J. Jr. (2000); project initiation, project implementation and project termination. A first look at the proposed phases identified by the authors immediately brings to light a gap; an omitted phase (project planning phase) in the project life phases identified by Meridith J.R. and Mantel S.J. Jr. (2000). To clarify the misconception, it can be realised from the authors' book on project management "*a managerial approach*" that the project planning stage has been fused with the project initiation stage, hence, making it a single stage. Nevertheless, both phases are key stages and must operate separately to make room for comprehensive analysis of both phases to ensure successful completion of the entire project.

2.6.1 Question 1: What steps should be taken to initiate a new project?

The first stage of the project lifecycle is the initiation phase; it is the phase in which the ideas leading to the project are examined and explored. Although it is often underestimated, the project initiation stage is the most decisive factor in determining the success of a project. This project phase requires time, hard work and patience to ensure that the project is properly initiated in order to avoid incurring excess time, cost and resources which can also escalate the risk of project failure. (Westland J., 2006 p.16)

After the inception and prioritising stage where the needs of the project is identified and processed to formulate the project idea, the next step in line is the design stage which focuses on developing the project idea, by so doing it is necessary to develop a project case that would clearly defines the problem, opportunities and objects of the anticipated project, analyse the potential options in solving the problem, identify the cost, benefits and risk of the preferred solution, a preferred solution put forward for approval.(Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania, 2003; public procurement directorate 2008 [ref 02/12/12])

Department of Treasury and Finance (2009), defines a business (project) case as a document that acts as a form of guidance to senior executives in making a decision on whether or not to invest assets into managing a project or new line of business. The paramount aim of a business case is to justify the need for the proposed project to the extent that senior manager will be persuaded enough to invest into the venture. A project case is a fundamental part of the project development process. (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania, 2003[ref 02/12/12]).The project case is used throughout the project to track the progress of the project and make sure that the cost, benefits, risks and issues are not deviating from what was originally documented. (Public Record Office Victoria, 2010 [ref 02/12/12])

Developing a business case

In developing a project case, it is important to perform an environmental analysis that in one way or the other contributed to the need to undertake the project. In identifying any environmental circumstances that facilitated the creation of the project it's equally important to gather all evidence to support the claim.

Cybf (2012) Suggests that in identifying the business problem it is prudent to ask the "why?" question, state the problem derived from the "why?" question and finally make a detailed description of the problem in order to have a clear and succinct understanding of the problem and then write a brief statement that covers the key project problem and opportunity. After the project problems and opportunities have

been exclusively defined, the next step would be to analyse and identify options that the organization could use to address the problems described in the business case. After this, the organisation would measure the various monetary and non-financial benefits that could be gained from using any of the prospective solutions, as well as the estimated costs (operational or capital expense) that would be incurred on each alternate solution. (Cybf, 2012 [ref 02/12/12])

Feasibility study

A feasibility study is conducted to scale down the number of alternate solutions provided; this would eventually make it easier to choose from the remaining solutions. The study in itself helps to determine the rate at which each solution can satisfy the project problem. The potential risk involved in implementing the solution presented must be laid down and backed by an action to reduce the occurrence of the risk. The next step is to identify the issues that may affect the effectiveness of each solution to deliver positive outcomes. Westland J. (2006) suggests that assumptions concerned with adopting any of the proposed solution must be put forward so that a suitable solution can be chosen out of the various solutions identified and applied. The selection can be done by rating the alternative solutions in order to reach a collectively agreement on one solution. Westland J. (2006) recognizes another major step to take when initiating a project; “undertake a feasibility study”, as explained earlier the feasibility study is carry out when developing a business case therefore, it would still be within context to put it under “developing a business case” rather than letting it stand on its own as a major step. For this reason, five instead of six steps were described. (Westland J. 2006 p.25)

The next step to follow after the approval of the business case is to establish the terms of reference on which the project is based. The terms of reference define the scope of the project. Also known as the project charter, the terms of reference is a document that specifies the structure and vital aspect of a project. (European Integration Office, 2011 [ref 03/12/12])

Establish terms of reference

According to J. Westland (2006), establishing terms of reference requires that three fundamental questions are answered, these questions include ; what has to be achieved, who will partake in the project and how will the project be carry out. Basically, the terms of reference should state the vision and objectives of the entire project, it should also specify the confinement of operation (what the project may or may not cover). The written document should also include the anticipated output of the project so as to give customers an idea of the end deliverables. (Mentoric, [ref 03/12/12])

Identifying the project organisational structure would ensure that roles and responsibilities are duly assigned to the right individuals. The first sets of people to identify are the individuals going to use the product deliverables (customers); this is to ensure that the end product of the project satisfies all their requirements. Stakeholders are individuals that have specific interests concerning a particular project. Within the project management structure the project sponsor, project manager, project review group and the project team members occupy the most important positions in a project office, the terms of reference clearly defines each person's roles and responsibilities. In order to develop a generic project plan it would vital to list the major risks, issues and constraints associated with the project and recommend action plans against it. (Westland J., 2006)

Project management team

Appointing a project management team is the first step towards establishing the project environment; the physical existence of the project, however, it is important to note that every project has its ideal staff requirements. Recruiting skilled professionals to occupy various project roles is achieved after the project roles and the number of people to occupy those roles has been clearly identified. In every case the first appointee is the project manager, this is because the project manager is responsible for selecting the right persons for the vacant roles. In ensuring that the right people occupy the right spots the project manager has to outline a complete

job description for each role. In the job description, the manager can mention the roles and responsibilities of each position. The manager must also specify a recruitment process that would help gather the various skills, key competences, experiences, and qualification needed to undertake each role identified. In some cases, interpersonal traits and special conditions associated with particular roles are prerequisites for appointment. (Method123, 2008 [ref 30/11/12])

Project office

The project office is the physical structure that houses members of the organisational structure. Also known as the war room the project office operates as a power house that serves as a centre for technical discussions and the core of all project activities. Meredith J. and Mantel S.J. Jr (2000) assert that the purpose of setting up a project office is to offer technical support in the use of project management tools, but the modern era of technology has developed diverse modes of communication that has made it possible to set up virtual project offices with project team members scatter all over the world rather than being confined in one physical location. (Method123, 2008 [ref 30/11/12])

According to Westland J. (2006) there is the need to create a checklist to specify the steps required to set up a project office environment. The checklist should include:

- ❖ The project details; defining the role, responsibility and purpose of establishing the project office.
- ❖ Establishing the premises that would benefit the project and meets the requirements already defined
- ❖ Procure both office and communication equipment that will facilitate the jobs of the project members.

- ❖ Create templates for every phase of the lifespan of the project

- ❖ Defining standards and processes for the project team to work with. This would be a source of direction and control for all team members. (Westland J., 2006 p.49-51)

Phase review

The phase review is the last step taken at the end of every project phase; this review is performed at the initiation stage, implementation and execution stage so as to update and ensure that all project objectives originally documented are being achieved as planned. Without the phase review, it would be impossible to move onto the next project phase, this is because it requires approval by the senior management in order to advance onto the next stage. The project phase review reports the progress of the overall project, the project schedule, expenses, staffing, deliverables, risk and issues that arose throughout the project phases. The phase review helps determine the effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the project management tools by identifying significant project problems and providing corresponding solutions to keep the project in shape through monitoring and control. (Westland J., 2006 p.53)

2.6.2 Question 2: What steps should be taken in planning a project

Another key determinant of success in managing a project is to ensure that a comprehensive and well-developed plan is created to direct the path of the entire project. Just like a road map, a project plan acts as a guide which directs and controls the entire project to a successful finish. In planning a project there is the need to create important planning documents to help direct the project team during the course of the planning phase and throughout the rest of the project. Heerkens G. (2002) classifies project planning into two components; the strategic component deals with understanding some of the principles and values of planning, while the tactical component explains the calculated steps or procedures needed to create a

comprehensive project plan. A project plan is very crucial as it is the key determinant of whether a project will succeed or fail.

The first step to take in planning a project is to create a detailed project plan which is used as a checklist throughout the project. E and R Larson (2004) state that to create a project plan the team must first reaffirm the project scope by creating a scope statement that specifies the projects problems, needs and objects, the derivatives of project completion, the key project milestones, activities and tasks. This statement is likely to change as the project advances to completion. (PMBOK guide, [ref 02/12/12])

The next step to take is to device a project schedule, the schedule should include a list of tasks and activities needed to be carried out, it should also specify the time and the resources that would be needed to complete each task. After establishing all these steps it would then be easy to compute an accurate delivery date for each task. (Haughey D., 2012 [ref 02/12/12])

When creating a project schedule, it is also important to identify the influential determinants needed to undertaking each task specified within the project. In project planning, Heagney J. (2012) highlights the important of developing the work breakdown structure before project scheduling, this is because while project schedule provides a sequential process by which work is performed, the idea behind the work breakdown structure (WBS) is to subdivide tasks into smaller tasks until these tasks can no longer be further divided, with this, it would be easier to identify all tasks and accurately estimate the cost and time needed to achieve the end deliverables of the project. In addition, it is important to note that until all tasks have been identified it would be illusive to develop a project schedule (Heagney J., 2012 p.43)

The next step is to create a resource plan and build a resource schedule. In creating a resource plan, one can either assign resources to each of the activities identified in the project plan or list the various inputs (materials) needed to achieve a

desirable output. A detailed financial plan is created after the resource plan, and it specifies the financial resources required to undertake the project. According to Westland J. (2006), when developing a financial plan it is important to list the various financial expenses (the types of costs to be incurred), estimate the unit cost for each expense type, complete an expense schedule that stipulates the exact time and cost that would be incurred and create an activity expense schedule that will identify the cost per activities being taken. (Westland J. 2006 p.64-68)

A quality plan is one of the required documents for all projects, the main purpose of a quality plan is to lay down the expectations the project must achieve and how these expectations will be realised. In a more holistic view, the quality plan describes the various qualities that the project's outputs must have so as to achieve the desired outcomes. It also describes the quality of the management processes going to be used to produce the various desired deliverables. The first thing to do in creating a quality plan is to define the term "quality" within the context of project. In project management quality can be defined as a measure of excellence such that the final deliverable fulfils the needs of the customer. Management in charge of quality assurance and control should identify the quality targets for every project requirement and must also create a quality assurance and control plan to improve the quality of set deliverables. (TutorialsPoint, 2013 [ref 30/11/12])

Risk in most cases is an unperceived venture and as much as we run away from it we never know when it will come knocking at our door. Undertaking any new venture comes with risks, therefore, undertaking a project also comes with its own risks. Mark Zuckerberg once said "The biggest risk is not taking any risk ... In a world that's changing really quickly; the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." (Rao L., 2011 [ref 30/11/12]) this goes to prove that by taking risks one is opened to learn more and to a larger extent succeed, but it also important that risks are calculate and prepared for in advance so as to prevent or reduce its impact in its occurrence. The risk plan should contain a list of likely risks indicating both high and low occurrence impact, as well as coining strategies to prevent the project from being disrupted should any of the listed problems arise.

Furthermore, it is also important and helpful to build a risk register (database) where all project risks can be recorded so as to make information retrieval and future documentation easier (Carlos Consulting Group, [ref 09/01/13])

Table 1 The process of a risk management plan (Carlos Consulting Group [ref.9/01/13])

1. Risk Identification	An iterative process of identifying which risks might affect the project
2. Risk Validation	Agreement that the risk is applicable to the project.
3. Risk Analysis	Process of determining the probability and impact of a risk. Methods include Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis
4. Risk Response Planning	Process of developing options and determining actions to reduce threats by categorizing them and proposing solutions accordingly
5. Monitoring and Control	Process of continuously observing the project and risks, Monitoring the trigger events that call for utilization of Contingency Plans

The next step after a risk plan is the acceptance plan; the acceptance plan stipulates the criteria customers use to determine and approved the satisfactory level of deliverables. Basically, these criteria's are based on the timeframe, quality and the cost of the end product(s) of the project. (Westland J., 2006 p.84-85)

A communication plan is equally vital, because it aids in project checks and balance. Proper dissemination of information to all project stakeholders would update and ensure that everybody is on the same page working towards the same objectives. G. Heerkens (2002) highlights in his book that there is no such thing as "the best medium" of communication but rather communication differs from one environment to another and it would be prudent to consider which basic communica-

tion approach would be suitable in any given situation. (Heerkens G., 2002 p.205-206)

Nonetheless, a communication plan should include a list of all the project stakeholders and identify which stakeholder needs what information and when it would be needed. In addition to creating a communication plan it is also essential to creating a procurement plan which would prevent impulse buying by identifying the essential procurement requirement for the project; this includes the various goods and services to be acquired from external suppliers in order to gain the maximum benefit in relation to a project. Additionally, the procurement plan helps maintain good buyer-seller relationships. (Westland J., 2006)

A guide to project management book of knowledge (PMBOK) released in 1996 by the project management institution highlighted six phases that an effective project procurement plan must pass through; meanwhile, a revised and updated version of this same book has shorten the previous six steps into four simple steps. These four steps are explicitly described in the table below. (PMI, 2008 p.313)

Table 2 Phases of an effective project procurement plan (PMI, 2008 p.313)

<p>Plan procurements</p>	<p>This is the first step of the procurement process; it involves identifying specific project needs that require goods and services from outside the project environment which cannot be provided by the project team. This same document specifies and approach and identifies potential contractors</p>
<p>Conduct procurements</p>	<p>In this second step the project team will receive proposals and applications from potential contractor, now it is left to the team to decide on which proposal to accept and subsequently award a legal contract</p>

Administer procurements	This is a process of monitoring and control on the side of both parties (the contractor and contractee) this process manages the procurement relationship and ensure that each party complies to their contractual responsibility
Close procurements	This is the final processes, and it done at the time of project closure since it involves the need to verify if all works and end products are satisfactory

A brief phase review should be conducted at the end of the planning phase; to ensure that the objects of each phase have been achieved as planned. Phase reviews go a long way to affect the progress of a project therefore, it should never be neglected.

2.6.3 Question 3: What steps should be taken in executing the project?

According to the NYS Project Management Guidebook the execution phase is the most time and resource consuming activity within the project; it is where the real action takes place to set the project rolling. This stage utilizes all the plans, schedules, procedures and templates that were prepared during previous phases. It develops the product or service that the project was commissioned to deliver. (NYS, [ref 05/01/13])

Monitoring and control is a sub phase within the execution stage although it is something done throughout the entire project, it is the responsibility of the project manager and his team members to be taxed to capacity to deal with uncertainties or any unanticipated events during the course of the project. J. Westland identifies nine management processes efficient for monitoring and controlling a project but

first the project team have to build the deliverables for the project by identifying the processes, tasks and task deliverables of the phase. (NYS, [ref 05/01/13])

The NYS Project Management Guidebook combines all the nine processes identified by J. Westland and categories them into five simple processes as seen below:

- ❖ Inaugurate execution: The project manager must first orient new team members; review the status of previous project phases then set the ball rolling to commence the execution phase.
- ❖ Manage CSSQ: the project team must manage the changes made to the project scope and also manage the project schedule by recording the actual amount of time spent on a particular project task. Perform quality assurance and control management so as to ensure that the qualities of the deliverables are assured, and that the actual expenses incurred throughout the project are being recorded accurately.
- ❖ Monitor and control risks: the project team must also manage risk through a risk management process (initially prepared in the planning phase) that would ensure that all risk are identified and quantify so as to manage and reduce its potential impact on the entire project.
- ❖ Manage Project execution: over here the project team does three very important things; manage issues arising, execute a communication plan and manage the acceptance of deliverables. Just like the risk process the issue process also identifies issues that are currently contributing to the decline of the project progress in meeting its objectives. An acceptance process is undertaken by presenting each deliverables to customers for approval and sign-off. Proper communication is necessary to avoid any increment in project risk. Clear project communication ensures that the right information reaches the right people at the right time so as to make informed decisions.

- ❖ Gain project acceptance: this process is done by conducting a final meeting concerning the status of the project and gain acceptance from the project manager, project sponsors and customers that the project execution and monitoring stage have been successfully completed and signature approved. (NYS, [ref 05/01/13])

2.6.4 Question 4: How to prepare a project for closure?

A book by Meridith J.R. and Mantel S.J. Jr (2002) highlight four platforms on which a project can be approved for closure. According to the authors a project can be closed on the basis of extinction, addition, integration or starvation. The project closure phase consists of all activities that must be performed to officially finish the project and present the final deliverables to customers. The project closure is as important as all other phases, but people often become relaxed, unperturbed and tend to disregard this phase. Before announcing the closure of a project, it is important that the project has achieved the objectives and deliverables as described in the business case. To initiate the closure of the project, a project outstanding list must be created for the items still yet to be completed. For each item listed there should be a proposed line of action to be taken as quickly as possible. The project manager must then ensure that all financial matters pertaining to the project are finalized and all supplier contracts are terminated. However, if any surplus funds should still remain it should be used in the closing out phase or then it should be returned to the appropriate sponsors.(Mastering project management, 2009 [ref 05/01/13])

The next thing inline to do is to prepare a final project report that would give a vivid explanation on the entire project and highlight any key success or failure factors, this final report should also include a criterion for completing the project. As part of the process, a questionnaire must be given out to allow constructive criticisms to be made about the project after which it would be collated and analyzed. It is the responsibility of the project team to ensure that all project documents and deliver-

ables are collected and saved in the project network drive for future reference. They are also to communicate the closure of the project to all stakeholders, and gain their approval for closure before advancing. (Mastering project management, 2009 [ref 05/01/13])

In reviewing the project closure, a post-implementation review must be undertaken to review the entire project and identify any lessons learnt. This review assesses the success of the project and how the project fared in relation to its original plans and how it conformed to the various management processes. Another purpose of the post-implementation review is to make suggestions for future projects so as to boost their chances of success. A lesson learnt questionnaire must be sent out to all stakeholders and they must all reach an agreement that the proposed lessons learnt are genuine and applicable to all. Finally, all these steps must be followed and included in the final report for approval. (Westland J., 2006 p.197-203)

2.7 Reasons for Project Failures; the need for project management software

A project is said to have failed if the project was unable to deliver the results and quality expected by both customer and stakeholders. The project manager is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the project stays on the right track and that nothing goes wrong. It is also expected that in the light of any unpredictable events the manager should be fully geared to solve the problem at hand and to reduce the impact the problem would have on the project. The success or failure of a project depends on the expertise of the project manager and his team but in most cases the burden of project failure falls on the project manager. (Carlos T., 2012 [ref 04/01/13])

There are infinite reasons or causes of project failure but an article written by Michelle Symonds brings to light fifteen causes of project failures and out of these fifteen causes the author points out these first three causes as the most common causes of project failures; poorly defined project scope, Inadequate risk manage-

ment, failure to identify key assumptions. According to Symonds M. (2011) it is possible to avoid unnecessary project failure by properly defining the project scope and properly creating a risk plan to be able to manage uncertainties as they arise. As the project progresses it is also vital to identify the key assumption at every stage of the project lifecycle in order to be able to make well-informed decisions when the need arises. (Symonds M., 2011 [ref 04/01/13])

Conclusively, the efficiency and effectiveness of project management can be enhanced through the use of project management software; there are a wide variety of project management software programs available out there, but, every project calls for a particular project management software that would be useful throughout its lifespan. This software may aid the management team in simplifying the project process by means of easing the analyzing, planning and scheduling processes so as to ease out the entire management process. (Chestnut D., 2013; Info swings, 2011 [ref 06/01/13])

2.8 Developing Economies

A developing country is a title given to the large groups of poor people found in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Today, the population in United States and Western Europe make up for only 11% of the entire world population but unbelievably accounts for over 56% of the world's gross domestic product. If other nations such as Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are added to the list then the figures will change. Instead of 11% the figure will now change to 14% of the world's population and account for nearly 77% of the world's gross domestic product. This would leave the rest of the 86% of the world population to struggle for the remaining 23% of economic output. This shows that there is total imbalance in the distribution of wealth across the world and this is now a big issue in the world's political agenda. Many pressure groups are however advocating for more help to be given to developing countries, but there are still many questions of how effect this help has been or will be. (Cameron R. and Neal L., 2003)

The terminologies used to describe poor nations evolved from time immemorial. Poor nations were previously described as underdeveloped nations, third world, the north-south divide, less developed countries but today all these terminologies are somewhat obsolete and now people tend to use the expression developing countries to describe the low and middle income earning economies of the world. A reasonable way of classifying a country as developing is to consider both its GDP and other non-monetary factors. (Beardshaw J., Brewster D., Cormack P., Ross A., 2001)

A developing country can be described as a country where the average income per individual is low in comparison to the industrialized and newly industrialized nations. A more holistic and suitable definition coined by the United Nations Development Program describes a developing country as a country with either a low or medium human development index. The human development index seeks to accurately measure the level of development of a county by considering three main factor; life expectancy at birth, adult literacy and real per capita gross domestic product. (Todaro M. P, Smith S. C, 2009 p.38-43)

Characteristics of developing economies

Every developing nation has its own characteristics, whilst some have nearly stagnant economies others are still struggling to climb up “the ladder of development”. However, according to A. Gillespie (2007) many developing countries exhibit the following characteristics: high population growth rates, lower level of living and productivity, lack of training and education, lack of effective infrastructure such as good roads, potable water, good communication systems, reliable energy sources and political instability just to mention a few. (Love J., 2011 [ref 06/01/13])

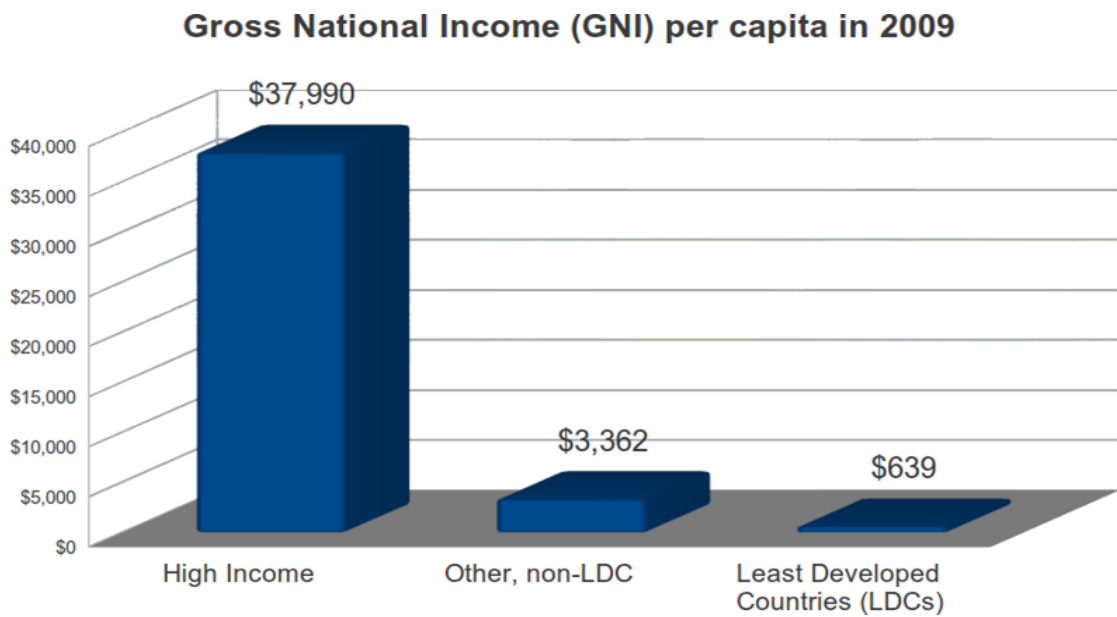


Figure 8 GNI per capita in 2009 (Love J., 2011 [ref 06/01/13])

2.9 Poverty in the developing world

Poverty is one of the outstanding problems facing many citizens of the world, over the years it has grown to become a huge concern to many world organizations. Poverty is present everywhere, even in developed countries there are still some poverty stricken areas, the issues of poverty is universal but a relative phenomenon, this is because, although poverty is ubiquitous the level and index of measurement varies across countries. For instance, the poverty level in Sudan is different from the poverty level in china, and even the level of poverty in rural china is different from that of urban china. In its simplest form, poverty can be is described as a state of being deprived of psychological and safety needs as defined by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The United Nations defines poverty as "a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to

earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation." (UN, 1998 [ref 17/01/13])

According to the United Nation there are two types of poverty; absolute and overall poverty (sometimes called relative poverty). Absolute poverty can be described as a state of severe deprivation of basic human needs and services. Overall poverty on the other hand come in various forms such as the "lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life. It occurs in all countries: as mass poverty in many developing countries, pockets of poverty amid wealth in developed countries, loss of livelihoods as a result of economic recession, sudden poverty as a result of disaster or conflict, the poverty of low-wage workers, and the utter destitution of people who fall outside family support systems, social institutions and safety nets." (UN, 1995 [ref 17/01/13])

The problem of poverty is not a one-size-fit all condition. However, in order to be able to quantify and adopt a common standard to set an international poverty line the World Bank took the initiative to identify areas of the world where a large population live on less than \$1 a day and classified them as the poorest regions in the world. The diverse nature of poverty in different countries makes data accumulation difficult. Many people even doubt the efficacy of the established poverty line since it classifies everyone below the poverty line as equal, but in reality, there are some people who earn a few more cents than other individuals.(Gorman T., 2003 [ref 17/01/13])

According to the year 2000 World Bank statistics on poverty, Sub-Saharan Africa, south, East and Southeast Asia are the main regions plagued with poverty, this is

because majority of the people in those area live on less than \$1 a day. This thesis would however concentrate more on West Africa which is part of Sub-Saharan Africa. (Gorman T., 2003 [ref 17/01/13])

A newly defined poverty line for developing countries was established by Ravallioniz M. and Chen S. (2008) stating that in 2005, about 4.09 billion people in developing economies lived above \$1.25 per day and 1.4 billion people lived below \$1.25 per day in 1981. According to the data accumulated by the World Bank the percentage of the population with per capita income below the poverty line has decreased in each region of the world since 1990, hence setting the new international poverty line at \$1.25 per day. Based on this latest revision, about 1.4 billion people still live on or below the poverty line. (Chen S. and Ravallioniz M., 2008; the Economist, 2009 [ref 17/01/13])

Gorman T. (2003) identifies that income inequality is the root cause of poverty in developing countries, and although material resources are very important components in distinguishing the poor from others, paradoxically, a book written by Dixon J. and Macarow D. (1998) emphasis that the problem of poverty should be regarded as much more than just a question of material resources. The problem of poverty is not the non-intrinsic value of money but rather the effect that the lack of money has on the lives of people; therefore, it would be unrealistic, crude and bias to use money (cash) as the sole indicator of poverty because there are other equally important dimensions of poverty that cannot be broken down into monetary value. (Dixon J. and Macarow D., 1998 p.3-17)

2.10 The grassroots of poverty in developing countries (West Africa)

If only leader of developing nations could reduce income inequality, so as to decrease monetary poverty, then economic growth and good standard of living would be guaranteed. It is generally accepted that there is a positive relationship that exist between sustained economic growth and poverty reduction (Bell and Rich,

1994; Ravallion and Datt, 1994; Ravallion and Chen; 1997, Dollar and Kraay; 2000 [ref 17/01/13]) thus, strong economic growth is needed to attain sustainable poverty reduction which is in-line with the UN millennium development goal of eradicating extreme poverty by the year 2015. (Handley G., Higgins K. et al, 2009 [ref 17/01/13])

Certainly, many researchers in this field have considered uncountable reasons why most developing nations especially countries in Africa are plagued with extreme poverty. The best way to reduce poverty is to firstly tackle the underlying causes of poverty before seeking for aid if needed. From the authors perspective the basic underlying reason why Africa remains stagnant in poverty while the rest of the world continues to develop is because of the issue of poor leadership. This reason would attract universal assent as many erudite researchers will agree to it as beginning a major setback for development in Africa.

In the case of Nigeria and other African countries the alarming records of poverty is mainly due to repressive regimes, official corruption and mismanagement of the national natural resources such as petroleum, gas, gold, diamond, tin, copper, zinc, cocoa, coal... (Ademolekum, 2002 [ref 17/01/13])

How ironic is it that a country richly endowed with natural resources such as the Democratic Republic of Congo falls within the category of poor nations, while countries such as Japan which have nothing but innovative hands fall within the category of industrialized economies?

A typical case of mismanagement of resources and corruption is the case of Equatorial Guinea; one of the smallest countries in West Africa. Equatorial Guinea is Africa's third largest exporter of oil and yet, over 70% of its population lives in extreme poverty. Most citizens lack access to basic needs for survival, about 20% of children die before the age of five, and the remaining 80% of the children alive lack access to quality education. According to an article published on Forbes business Teodorin Nguema Obiang, the 41- year-old first son of Equatorial Guinea's Presi-

dent has been able to acquire property worth over \$70 million through corrupt means. His salary as minister of Forestry and Agriculture stands at \$6,500 a month, and yet, it's amazing how he was able to acquire millions of assets in the U.S and U.K. On top of all his lavish spending he is being groomed to succeed his father, the president who seized power through a coup since 1979. This is a clear example of poverty through repressive regimes mismanagement and corruption. Nonetheless, there are countless other African leaders and politicians who operate in this same corrupt way. (Forbes, 2011 [ref 19/01/13])

Another very important cause of poverty in West Africa is the use of foreign aid. Is western aid truly profitable or is it having a negative effects on poverty reduction and growth? Undoubtedly, there have been many debates on whether this question is true or not. For instance a study conducted by McGillivray G. and M. (2005) demonstrates how foreign aid has supported poverty reduction and growth in some countries and prevented even worse performance in some African countries. (Ekanayake E. M., Chatrna D. [ref 19/01/13]) Meanwhile, other study by Friedman M. (1958), Bauer P. (1972), Easterly W. (2001) and other economists suggest opposing views by reveal instances where western aid has had negative impacts on poverty reduction, stating that, it has either enlarged government bureaucracies, encouraged bad governance and corruption, made the rich richer and the poor poorer (income inequality) or have just been wasted. (Radelet S., Clemens M., and Bhavnani R., 2004 [ref 19/01/13])

According to Begg D., fischer S., Dornbusch R., (2000) aid is “an international transfer payment from rich countries to poor countries.” Aid can be given in various forms Donor countries give aid to developing countries for various reasons but mostly the reasons why developed countries provide aid is because of their moral and humanitarian desire to help the deprived in the society.

Advocates argue that many of the weaknesses of aid have more to do with donors than recipients, especially since much aid is given to political allies rather than to

support development. (Radelet S., Clemens M., and Bhavnani R., 2004 [ref 19/01/13])

Nothing in life is truly free, it always come with consequences, Todaro M. P., Smith S.C. (2009) assert that there hasn't been a record in history that proves that donor-countries give aid without demanding other benefits in return. As Bishop John Rucyahana puts it "they perpetuate your misery by giving you a loan, make you slave... economic slave, and you also end up paying the raw materials because you are chained by the loan. So it becomes a way of colonizing the economies of the poor nations. But if the African nations today agree together to say, "No more aid, we don't want aid." I tell you, they can grow slowly, but they can grow." (Poverty cure, [ref 19/01/13])

Foreign aid is some sort of facade; it seems almost like a joke because since its initiation there hasn't been any nation that has totally transformed for the better through receiving aid. Like the old Chinese saying goes if you see a hungry man and you want to help him then you can give him a fish but if u want him to hunger no more then you should teach him how to fish. Real development does not come from aid, real development comes from building peoples capacity to enable them survive on their own so that they can ultimately depend on themselves rather than depend on aid. (Poverty cure, [ref 19/01/13])

It's often assumed that the "so-called goods-in-kind donations" are ways to help the deprived. But in reality the best thing to do is to first know the exact needs of people before offering a helping hand so that your help would be appreciated. For instance people still think that collecting and donating secondhand clothes to the deprived is a sign of good gesture. Although in itself the donor has good intentions at heart the donor recipient on the other hand does not consider it a gesture at all. The donor recipient sees it as a bankruptcy tool with which the native market people and textile companies producing clothes are made bankrupt (collapse) as a result of constant inflow of secondhand-clothes into the country. (Wadhams N., 2010 [ref 19/01/13])

All in all it is undeniable that aid has indeed facilitated some sort of growth in some developing countries but as quoted by Herman Chinery-Hesse; a Ghanaian entrepreneur "I have never heard of a country that developed on aid... I know about countries that developed on trade and innovation and business. I don't know of any country that got so much aid that it suddenly became a first world country. I've never heard of such a country. So the track is wrong, that track ends to nowhere, it leads to nowhere." Africans should learn and grow from being dependents to being independent.

3 RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

In this section the author would introduce readers to the research environment. This will include brief insight into Ghana, the country being studied, statistics on poverty in West Africa, the regional development of Ghana and finally the organization in question(SIF) and its roles in poverty alleviation.

3.1 Ghana

Ghana is a sub-Saharan African country located in the west; it shares its geographical boundaries with Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, Cote D'Ivoire to the west and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Before attaining independence from the British colony in 1957, Ghana was known as Gold coast; as the name suggest Ghana was a land of gold during colonial times. According to an article published on the gold investing news network, Ghana is the world's eighth largest producer of gold and Africa's second producer of gold. (Smith M., 2012 [ref 20/01/13])

The Ghanaian economy relies mainly on agriculture as a source of employment for about 40% of its population. Ghana is one of the leading producers and exporters of cocoa in the world. The country also exporters commodities such as bauxite, aluminum, manganese ore and diamonds and in recent times it has started exporting electricity, natural gas and crude oil which was recently discovered in 2007. The country covers a total area of 238,500 sq. km, with an estimated population of about 22million. Ghana is divided into ten administrative regions and occupied by more than one hundred ethnic groups (each ethnic group having its own unique language) however; the official language of operation is English. (Ghanaweb, 2013 [ref 20/01/13])

The country's GDP is estimated at \$26.4 billion. After 55 years of independence from British rule, Ghana still remains a developing nation and experiences fre-

quent electricity and gas shortages. (Ghana Government Portal, 2013; NPP UK and Ireland, 2011 [ref 20/01/13])

3.2 Statistic on Poverty in West Africa

Why is sub-Saharan African considered the poorest region in the world?, this question beats many minds, although it is very common for one to think of poverty as a local problem, but, just like over population and mass migration, the level of poverty in a particular location can be affected and worsened by its surrounding environment (countries). Take Liberia and Ghana for instance, the turbulent times in Liberia saw a huge migration of Liberians to Ghana to find solace. To think that Ghana in itself is overwhelmed with the task of supporting and controlling its economy, the building of refugee camps to support immigrants seems like an even more onerous task. It is popularly said that one rotten egg spoils the whole pudding, in the same vein it could be said that the rate at which poverty is spreading from one nation to another is a major contributing factor to the overall level of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The West African region consists of seventeen different countries with a variety of ethnic groups, cultures and traditions. The population of West Africa is approximately 250 million with the most populated country being Nigeria. Poverty in West Africa is predominantly found in rural areas. Both absolute and relative poverty exist in West Africa but half of its population living in absolute poverty. (W. Quentin, 2007)

The 1990s saw a somewhat fast growth in the economies of some West African countries but this was not an appreciable growth as it did not have a significant impact on the Gross National Income per capita measured in United States dollars. Moreover the depreciation of the country's exchange rate in relation to the US dollar stands as an explanation for the drastic fall in Gross National Income per capita for many of the West African countries. As mentioned in previous chapters'

the human development index plays a very important role in determining the level of poverty in a country. The table below is an attempt by the UNDP to consider other factor apart from the traditional use of the Gross Domestic Product per capita as a measurement for poverty. The UNDP uses the human development and poverty index as a way of assessing countries achievements in different areas of human development. The table below indicates the human development and human poverty index of 15 West African countries. (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I., p. 14, 2003 [ref 20/01/13])

Table 3 Human Development and Human Poverty Indicators (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I.,p. 14,2003)

		Human development indicator	Human development indicator	Human poverty index
Rank	country	Year 1990	Year 2000	Year 2000
100	Cape Verde	0.626	0.715	20.8
129	Ghana	0.506	0.548	28.7
135	Cameroun	0.513	0.512	30.0
141	Togo	0.465	0.493	37.9
148	Nigeria	0.425	0.462	34.9
154	Senegal	0.380	0.431	45.2
156	Cote D'Ivoire	0.415	0.428	42.3

158	Benin	0.358	0.420	46.8
160	Gambia			48.5
164	Mali	0.312	0.414	47.3
166	Chad	0.322	0.365	50.5
167	Guinea Bissau		0.349	
169	Burkina Faso	0.290	0.325	
172	Niger	0.256	0.277	62.5
173	Sierra Leone		0.275	

3.3 Regional development and Poverty Profile of Ghana

Unlike the classification of the world's north-south divide (where the northern side of the globe lives in riches while the southernmost part lives in poverty) Ghana's poverty structure exhibits the exact opposite situation. The north-south divide present in Ghana illustrates a drastic improvement and growth in the southern part of the country leaving the northernmost part continues to drown in poverty. Although in the 1990s Ghana was able to achieve sustained growth and poverty reduction, these achievements were of no benefit to the three poor northern regions (Northern, Upper-East, Upper-West regions) thus causing an increment in regional development gaps and disparities between northern and southern Ghana. (R. M. Al-Hassan, X. Diao, 2007 [ref 20/01/13])

In most cases unfavorable climate, agricultural production conditions and post-independence political neglect are put forwards as reasons for the existing inequality between the north and south (ODI and CEPA, 2005), but in reality there are more factors to consider than just these reasons.

In 1999, Ghana's economy experienced a great recession; interest rates and inflation were increasing steadily and because of this the government was forced to borrow more money; this created accumulated financial surpluses, thereby generating more domestic debt for the country. In 2001 Ghana opted for the status of a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC), at that time Ghana's GDP per capita was \$270 out of which about 124% accounted for the country's total debt. (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I., p.7, 2003)

A quick insight into Ghana's poverty history shows that between 1998 and 1999 Ghana's poverty line declined from 51.7% (1991-1992) to 39.5%. However, this decline was not evenly spread across all regions, poverty in the northern part of the country accounted for more in relation to poverty in the southern parts. Greater Accra region records the lowest poverty rate of 5%, while the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions records the high rates of 84%, 88% and 70% respectively. On the whole, poverty in rural areas contributes to about 70% of the total decline (39.5%). It can therefore be deduced from this explanation that poverty in Ghana is more endemic in the rural community than the urban. (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I., p. 9, 2003)

In the light of all this, Ghana has been involved in numerous programs and projects such as the Community Water and Sanitation Project, Health and Population Project, Basic Education Sector Project, Agricultural Sector Investment Project, Village Infrastructure Project. All these projects were aimed at poverty alleviation, economic stability and growth so as to improve the standards of living in the country, but then again can it be said for certain that these projects have significantly reduced the level of poverty in the country? (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I., p. 15-16, 2003)

Delving into literature, R. Kanbur (2001) highlights some reasons why the claim poverty reduction in Ghana is questionable. Firstly, Kanbur asserts that the measurement of living standards based on income-expenditure is inaccurate as it overlooks the value of public services. For instance, lack of textbooks for school children, bad public transportation system or the unavailability of drugs in hospital will be left out in this case. Secondly the author mentions that the fall in percentage of the incidence of poverty could be deceptive because in the form of percentage poverty may seem to be falling while in actual sense absolute poverty is increasing. Take for instance the period between 1987 and 1991, the incidence of poverty in Ghana fell at the rate of 1% per year; but at the same time, the population was increasing at almost twice that rate and because of this the total number of the poor in the country increased extensively. (Oduro A. D. and Aryee I., p. 15, 2003). The figure below shows the poverty profile of the entire country from 1999

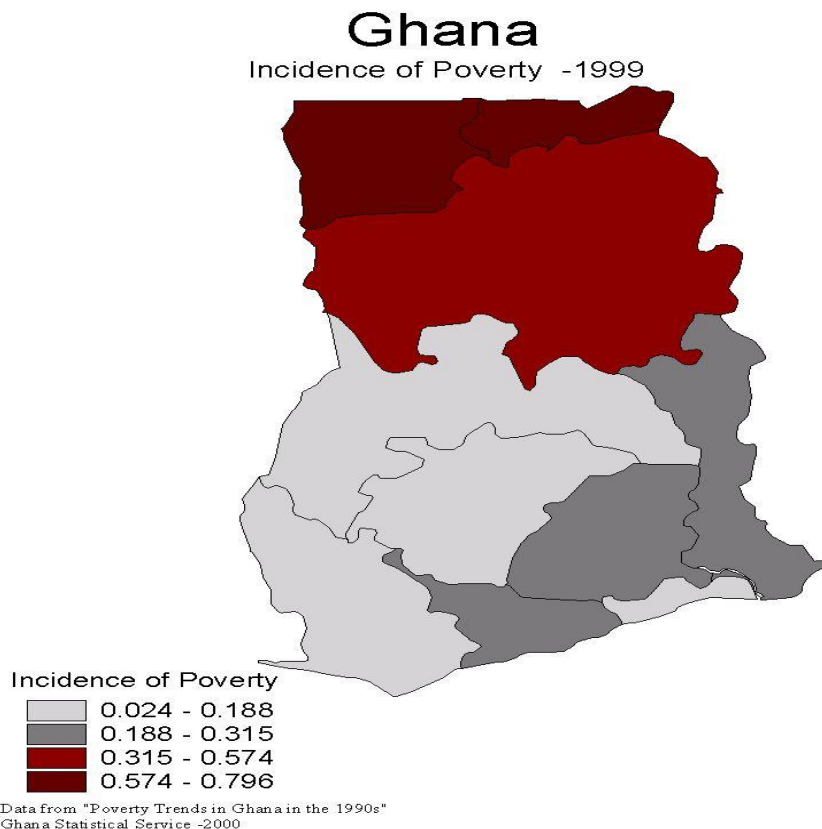


Figure 9 The incidence of poverty in Ghana (Coolgeography [ref 20/01/13])

3.4 Social Investment Fund

Social investment fund (SIF) is a governmental organization that was set up in 1998 by three strong bodies, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the African Development Bank (ADB). Regional offices are zoned into four areas across all ten regions of the country.

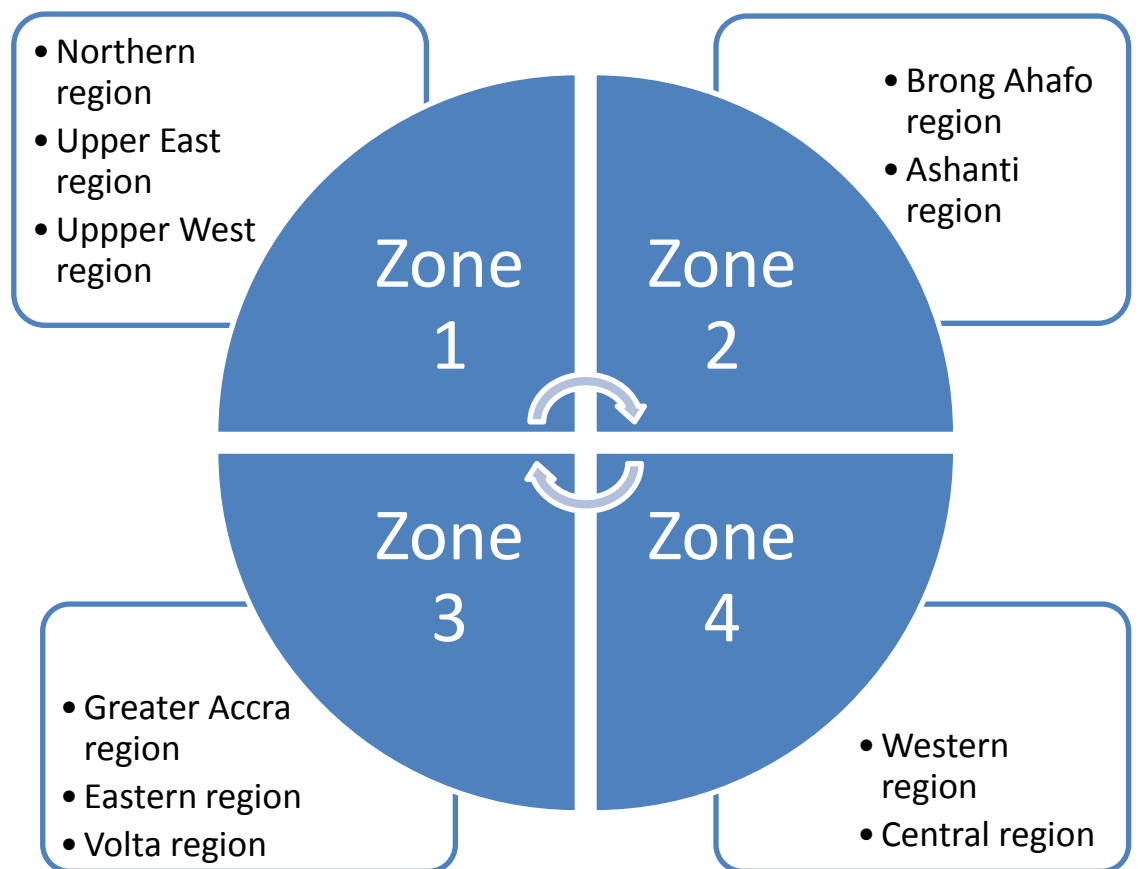


Figure 10 The SIF zonal offices across the country

The social investment fund is the leading poverty reduction initiative in the country and it was set up to enable quick and rapid deliverance of resources and services to assist the unprivileged communities in both rural and urban areas of the country. The SIF mainly targets the poor sections of the population, Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), non-governmental organizations and

development cooperation partners that promote community-oriented development. (Social investment fund, 2012 [ref 20/01/13])

The main goal of the SIF is to contribute effectively in promptly reducing rural and urban poverty in Ghana through “community outreach and sensitization, facilitating access by the poor to economic and social infrastructural services, enhancing access of the poor to financial services, micro and small loans, strengthening the capacity of Local Governments, CBOs, CSOs, NGOs, Indigenous micro-finance institutions (MFIs), urban small scale enterprise development, provision of necessary capacity support to local government structures and systems, social protection, project management.” (Social investment fund, 2012 [ref 20/01/13])

As a result of its household name, the SIF has won the trust and confidence of multilateral institutions and the Government of Ghana; it has also instigated projects which have received funding from the African Development Fund (ADF), OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Government of Ghana. (Social investment fund, 2012 [ref 20/01/13])

The organization’s core activities are concentrated in four areas; social and economic infrastructure and services, micro finance, capacity building and project management. Basically, the SIF works by conforming to these five principles; encouraging participation so as to attract the involvement of beneficiaries and stakeholders in all aspects of project management; promoting their participation and sustainability by creating management teams from these beneficiaries; rapid, effective and efficient delivery of resources and services; results oriented and project sustainability; operating on the ethics of transparency and accountability. (Social investment fund, 2012 [ref 20/01/13])

4 CASE STUDY; RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter would lay down the step-by-step procedure that led the author to the end results, in the case of this particular work the result would be arrived at through the four research questions that were mentioned under the theoretical research question. These theoretical questions will be applied to the operational structure of the Social investment fund so as to bring to light the mistakes that were committed and other societal factors that are contributing negatively and affecting poverty alleviation projects from succeeding. This chapter would also highlight a few of the authors' suggestions.

4.1 Step-by-step procedure

The author had to go through several processes in order to get the right answers to the proposed questions so as to reach comprehensive results. This section includes the step-by-step procedure the author had to pass through to arrive at the research results. As mention earlier the methodology used in this thesis infuses both qualitative and quantitative by the use of interview and questionnaires.

One may think that being of Ghanaian origin information seeking within the country would be very easy, but in actual sense it was rather the opposite. It took a lot of courage and determination to finally decide to focus the topic of discussion on Ghana; this is because Africa lags back in technology, data collection, retention and recovery. Information is not made readily available to researchers, therefore determined researchers have to go an extra mile to recover and retrieve all necessary information. In some cases the little information retrieved can sometimes be questionable as one cannot be absolutely certain of its validity and reliability. For these reasons, prospective researchers become discouraged and feel reluctant to invest their time and resources into an almost impossible venture that may reap little or no information.

The author went on a professional trip to Ghana and saw this as an opportunity to collect all necessary information for the research since the website of the organization (case study) profited nothing; there was no relevant information on the website that could profit the research.

Before leaving for Ghana emails were sent out to the organization for permission to conduct an interview but these emails were never replied. Upon arrival more emails were sent which again were not responded to. It is important to note that in Africa (Ghana) "who-you-know" is the order of the day. This is to say that one has to know someone in order to get something done and it is very easy to forget this African trait after leaving in Europe for over two years.

The first thing on the agenda was to conduct an interview on the issue of project management and poverty alleviation with the UNDP, but the interview was only granted after making numerous phone calls and a visit (two months). Eventually a new organization had to be chosen since the information gotten from the UNDP was not compatible with the thesis topic and the subject was too wide to be discussed in small detail. Choosing a new organization meant moving a step backwards and going through the entire process of trying to get an interview opportunity. The bureaucratic nature of the country made the mission seem almost impossible.

Finally, after the fourth month permission was granted to conduct an interview with the Finance and accounting specialist of the Social investment fund, this gentleman is an epitome of a dedicated staff, he involved himself in all other sectors of the organization, he was well-informed on everything concerning the organization, and thus was able to provide the appropriate answers to the research questions.

The author constructed twenty-five interview questions based on the following four research question:

- ❖ How was the UPRP initiated?
- ❖ How was the UPRP planned?
- ❖ What were the steps taken in executing the UPRP?
- ❖ What were the steps involved in bringing the UPRP to a close?

These questions were broken down into sub question so as to make it clearer and easier for the interviewee to answer and also make it easier for the interviewer to collect and record accurate information.

The information gotten was limited to the UPRP with almost no information on past projects. The lack of information on previous projects was as a result of new staff recruitment after the recently passed project (GPRP), this activity made information retrieval difficult as there were no data banks to account for these projects. However, the new finance and accounting specialist was certain that both projects were developing on the same foundation.

Although the author inquired of more information in the form of both hard and soft copies, very few were made available, yet the information acquired on the whole was enough to conduct a suitable research with SIF as the case study. Now the billion dollar question, how does the organization expect to grow and improve on its past mistakes if it doesn't have a data bank to refer to in order to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Questionnaires were also given out to a total of 75 people through emails. The questionnaire contained only three questions:

- ❖ Are poverty alleviation project effective in Ghana?
- ❖ Which region among all ten regions is the poorest in Ghana?
- ❖ Which age group benefits the most from poverty alleviation projects?

Basically, the whole idea behind the questionnaires was to give the author an idea of the Ghanaian citizens' perception on poverty. The table below shows a graphical representation of the foot-path leading to the results.

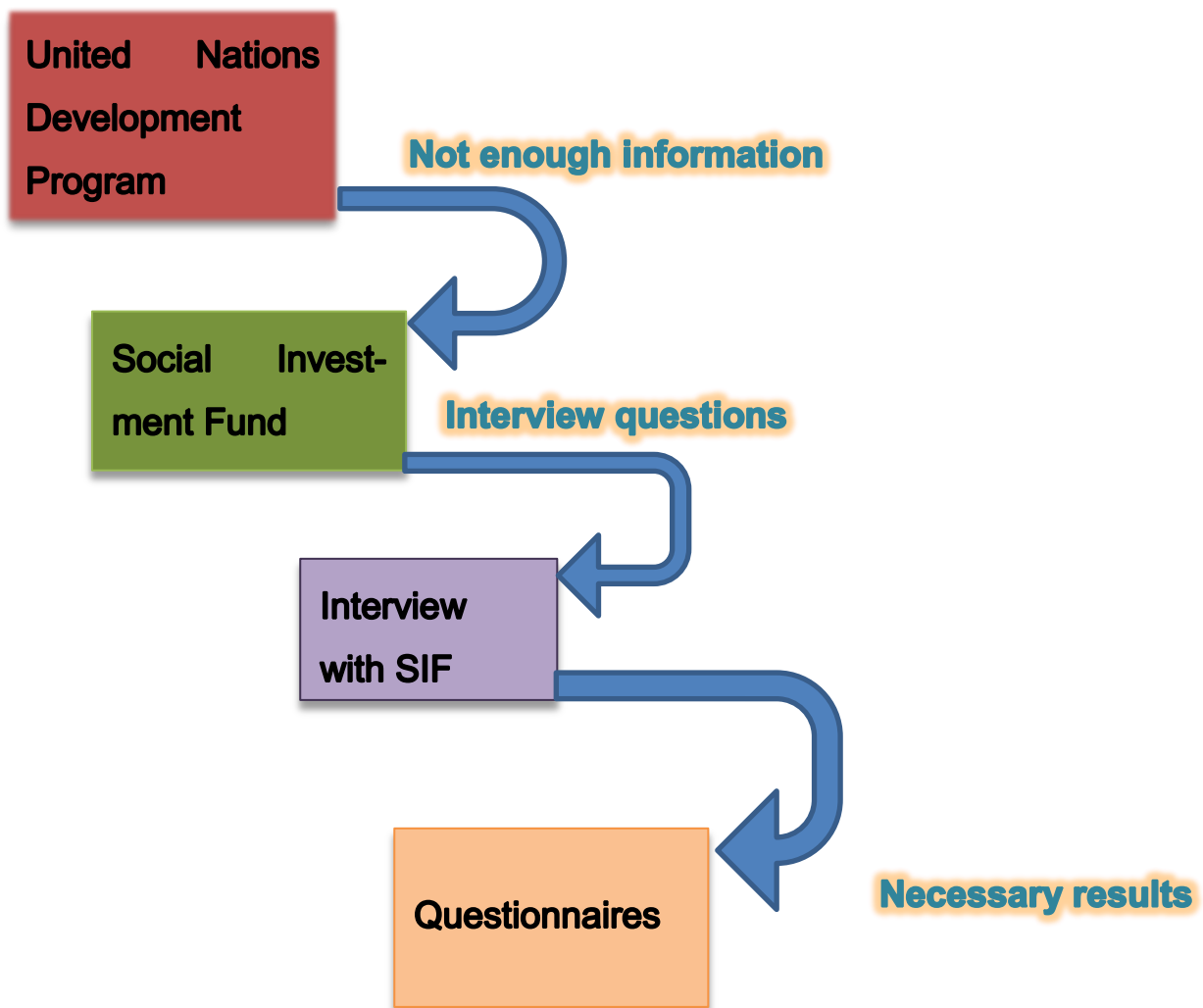


Figure 11 Footpath leading to the results

The following questions were the question asked on the day of the interview at SIF

- ❖ How was the project initiated?
 - What were the steps involved in initiating the project?
 - How did SIF arrive at the idea of undertaking a poverty reduction project?
 - What were the limitations and challenges faced during the initiation phase of the project?
- ❖ How was the project planned?
 - What were the various planning documents (project, resource, financial, quality plan etc.?) used as a guide throughout the remaining phases of the project?
 - Where there any key project milestones?
 - What were the planning dependencies, assumptions and constraints? Was the phase completed to schedule, if not, then why? What were the limitations and challenges faced during the planning phase of the project?
 - Was there a phase review to support the anticipated attainment in the planning phase?
- ❖ What were the steps taken in executing the project?
 - What method was used in constructing the deliverables?
 - What management processes were used to monitor and control the activities being undertaken?
 - What were the identified problems and potential problems
 - What were the limitations and challenges faced during the executing phase of the project?
 - With the stated limitations/challenges what could have been done better
- ❖ What were the steps involved in bringing the project to a close?
 - What criteria had to be met in order to close the project?
 - Were there any outstanding items that still need to be identified and undertaken?
- ❖ What was the life span of the entire project? Was it accomplished within the stated time range or it had to be extended for some reason
- ❖ If yes, then how has that reason for the extension changed the outcome of the entire project?
- ❖ What was the level of the project success and what were the lessons learnt for future projects?
- ❖ Were there any other challenges or backlogs
- ❖ What impact did the project have on its immediate surroundings/economy of Ghana

4.2 The results

So far the social investment fund has been able to implement two major projects; the Ghana poverty reduction project and the urban poverty reduction project; both projects were implemented based on the objectives of the SIF.

The Ghana poverty reduction project was set up to help the Government of Ghana to reduce poverty in the rural and urban areas of the country; this project gave birth to the social investment fund in 1998. The SIF was established to oversee this project by fulfilling the objectives of: increasing access and use of economic and Social Infrastructure; providing access to and increasing the use of affordable Credit; building capacity for community based organizations (CBO's), NGO's and local government entities active in poverty reduction. (OCSD, 2006)

The Urban Poverty Reduction Project (UPRP) is the most recent project that has been implemented by the Social Investment fund. It was funded by the African development Bank with the aim of putting in place some strategies to help reduce urban poverty in Ghana and also to help achieve the Millennium development goal of halving the level of poverty and hunger by 2015. In addition, the project was to “improve socio-economic growth of poor urban settlement through better participatory management, job creation, public/private partnership and governance at local level; improve livelihoods in urban an peri-urban zones through increased access to basic quality services and socioeconomic infrastructure; facilitate access to income generating activities through capacity building and strengthened urban small-scale enterprise sector.” The project was divided into four components in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives: (OCSD, 2005)

- ❖ Capacity building for pro-poor urban development and management
- ❖ Social capital investment support
- ❖ Urban small-scale enterprise development
- ❖ Project management and coordination (OCSD, 2005)

The research and results collected for this thesis is based on the urban poverty reduction project (UPRP), this was because the project was recent completed and information was still at hand while finishing touches were directed towards the completion report and other routines.

In this section readers will be given an insight into the outcome of the various activities (questionnaires and interview) that contributed to the final results. An interview began at the premises of the Social investment fund in Accra, Ghana on Friday 21st December, 2012. The respondents began by briefly introducing the organization and its roles and objectives. The respondent made it clear that all poverty alleviation projects that are implemented by the Social Investment Fund are executed alongside the overall objectives of the organization (SIF). Therefore every project that is implemented is to:

- i. enhance access to, and use of, economic and Social Infrastructure;
- ii. Increase access to, and use of, affordable Credit;
- iii. Build capacity for community based organizations (CBO's), NGO's and local government entities active in poverty reduction. (OCSDr, 2006)

The latter was mentioned as the most crucial as it is believed by the organization that unemployment is the bedrock of poverty, therefore supporting the growth potential of the small and medium scale business would gear them towards healthy competition, business expansion and increased employment so that unemployment would be reduced as well as poverty.

The table below indicates the estimated overall cost of the urban poverty reduction project being financed by the African Development Bank and the Government of Ghana.

Table 4 The estimated project cost in UA million (OCSD, 2005 p.27)

Source & other source	Foreign change	ex- Local rency	cur- Total	Total %
ADF Loan	11.97	13.03	25	90%
<u>GoG & counter-part composition</u>	—	1.06	1.06	
Central Government	—	1.66	1.66	10%
MMDAs	—	0.06	0.06	
Beneficiaries				
Total	11.97	15.81	27.78	100%

The subsequent sub-chapters will lay down the responds given by the SIF respondents during the interview held at their premises in Accra, Ghana. This would be done with respect to the four research question previously mentioned.

4.2.1 How was the urban poverty reduction project initiated?

In reply to this question the respondent clearly laid down the cards. The first thing the SIF did to initiate the UPRP was to prepare a baseline survey so as to get basic information on the various poverty stricken areas. A business case was next in line after conducting the baseline survey; this was done by way of preparing a proposal. After the project proposal had been prepared it was then submitted to the ministry responsible for local and rural development. When this body subscribed to the proposal the Ministry of finance took a look at it for the possibility of

funding. Copies of the proposal were then given to identify donors. More so the direct partners of the social investment fund; African development Bank and the OPEC fund for international development (OFID) also looked at the proposal to see if they could offer any funding for the project and lay down their conditions for funding the project. In some instances these partners also include their area of interest by providing some additional project activities to be done.

Just as every donor has its desk within the ministry of finance the OFID and ADB also have their own desks at The Ministry of finance, these two bodies are the only direct link the SIF has to the Ministry of finance. After all these processes have been satisfied the next is to look at the overall costing of the project by way of a costing proposal. The donors and other partner organisations also look at the costing proposed and break it down according to their own terms.

After the proposed project costing is accepted it then goes through a process known as the appraisal mission, this mission takes into consideration the entire costing and the activities that are allowed and the ones that are not allowed and also determine what has to be funded by other counterpart. In the case of the UPRP the ADF (African development fund) and the Government of Ghana (GoG) financed the project. The funds gotten from the ADF was used to finance all categories of expenditure which amounted to 90% of the total project costs in covering both foreign exchange and local costs while the GoG funding contributed to 10% of the overall project cost which was also used to finance all the categories of expenditure except the costs of "works". The appraisal mission is a very important step which involves setting out the agreements for the various contributions and conditions of payment.

After the completing of the appraisal mission, a memorandum of understanding (aid memoire) is prepared to be signed by all parties involved; the Ministry of finance, Ministry of local government and rural development (MLGRD) and the Social investment fund all sign the aid memoire. The revised proposal then takes into account all the issues and changes presented in the aid memoire so as to come

out with a final project proposal. The SIF, after completing the proposal then prepares project implementation manuals and submits it to the presidency through the Ministry of finance and the cabinet for authorization for project funding. Once the cabinet gives the approval it is then taken to parliament for the final funding source approval.

The last process of the UPRP initiation was the process of loan effectiveness. Depending on the donor there exist some conditions that have to be fulfilled before continuing to the next stage, for instance, with the UPRP there was the need to give evidence of exemption from taxes to the donors before any funding could push through. Requests are put forward to redrawn funds to start project implementation.

The SIF has a constant project team made up of 5 members and more people are put on board a project as and when needed. Project teams may also be chosen based on the donors' implementation style or need. The project team for the UPRP is illustrated in the diagram below.



Figure 12 Project team structure for the UPRP

Project areas and beneficiaries

The project was targeted at 12 towns in Ghana, which make up 21.3% of the Ghanaian overall population: Accra, Kumasi, Tema, Koforidua, Akim Oda, Swedru, Apam, Kasoa, Wenchi, Agogo, Sekondi-Takoradi and Ho, these towns have a total population of 4.45 million. (OCSD, 2005 p.13)

The figure below indicates the project target areas on the map of Ghana



Figure 13 A map of Ghana indicating the project area (OCSD, 2005 Annex 1)

The choice of these project interventional areas were based on a list of urban settlements provided by the ministry of the local government and rural development during the appraisal mission, and it is however projected that over 55% of the Ghanaian urban poor will benefit from the UPRP; this was predicted as 1.1 million

of the urban poor occupants. Below is a table of the various selection criteria's and the project beneficiaries. (OCSD, 2005 p.13)

Table 5 Selection criteria and project clients (OCSD, 2005 p.13)

	Selection Criteria	Project client
Accra Kumasi Tema	Existence of major poverty enclaves as identified in the poverty map	Urban unemployment interested in self-employment but lacking skills, technologies and initial capital
Koforidua Akim Oda	Commitment of the MMDAs to decentralized planning and local economic development	Metropolitan, municipalities, district assemblies
Swedru Apam	Existence of a dynamic small enterprise sector	Informal sector small business operators
Kasoa Wenchi	On-going and for-coming initiatives addressing urban poverty and potential areas for complementarities with these initiatives	Women and children of primary school going age
Agogo Sekondi-Takoradi	Minimal donors' interventions in the urban areas	Peri-urban small farmers/business operators
Ho	Potential access to international financial market (for major cities)	Households living below the extreme poverty line

Limitations/challenges faced at the initiation phase

The respondents from the SIF mentioned that the major challenges faced during the initiation phase were mostly bureaucratic challenges. The process of getting things signed and approved were challenging as unofficial payments had to be made to facilitate the movement of the project. SIF is a non-profit organisation therefore how is this unofficial payment justifiable. Bureaucracy delays follow up and can lead to the diversion of a proposal.

Another major setback faced when initiating the project was the problem of staff members leaving on the job. During the UPRP many positions were vacant and other positions were occupied by different people within the span of the project. For instance during the implementation of the UPRP the position of the finance and accounting was occupied by five different people. Five people have come and gone throughout the whole course of the project (UPRP). Also three different people have headed the industrial development specialist position and it was currently vacant as at the time of the interview, the position of the monitoring and evaluation specialist was also vacant. Meanwhile, the procurement specialist was recently appointed. The inability of staff members to remain on board during the course of the UPRP increased the load of work on existing workers as they had to take up the duties of the personnel's that had left their positions vacant.

The change in government also threw things in disarray due to leadership changes being made within the country. As some people were demoted others were appointed. This political limitation is a very common practice in Ghana even to the extent that the incompetent are appointed in place of the competent. This act slows down work progress and makes project planning, implementation and achievement very difficult.

4.2.2 How was the UPRP Planned?

The respondents from the SIF indicated three major planning tools that the organization uses when implementing any kind of project. The procurement plan, work plan and budget plan. The procurement plan is the plan that accesses all logistic (goods and services) and inputs to be utilized in executing the project; the work plan sets the target of activities to be achieved, it involves the various activities to be implemented by each component, timelines, resources and the personnel's needed; the budget plan basically assigns values to the various activities to be implemented. All these plans are subdivided into quarters. The annual procurement, work and budget plan are broken down into quarters and each quarter specifies a set of quarterly activities to be achieved. The table below indicates the UPRP's implementation schedule.

Table 6 The UPRP implementation schedule (OCSD, 2005 p.32)

Activities	Dates	Services Responsible
Board presentation	October 2005	ADF
Public of the General Procurement Notice	November 2005	GoG/ADF
Loan Signature	November 2005	GoG/ADF
Effectiveness	March 2006	GoG/ADF
Project launching	March 2006	SIF/GoG/MMDAs/ADF
Recruitment of consultants and technical assistants	March 2006 – Dec. 2011	SIF/MMDAs

Procurement of goods	March 2006 – Dec 2011	SIF/MMDAs
Procurements of works	March 2006- Dec 2011	SIF/MMDAs/Enterprises /Consulting firms
Capacity building	March 2006 – Dec. 2011	SIF/MMDAs/Project partners
Sub-project approval and implementation	May 2006 – Sept. 2011	SIF/MMDAs/Project partners
Mid-term review	July 2008	SIF/MMDAs/GoG
Operations	March 2006 – Dec. 2011	SIF/MMDAs/GoG/Project partner
Audits	1st quarter every year	SIF/MMDAs/Audit firms
Supervision mission	July 2006 -2011	ADF/GoG/SIF/MMDAs
Project completion activities	December 2011	SIF/MMDAs/GoG/ADF
Project completion report	March 2012	SIF/GoG/ADF

The planning dependences for the SIF are the various resources that would be needed to implement the plan, however the general assumption of the SIF is that all things being equal the plan will be implemented successfully and all objectives will be met. The respondents mentioned that during the process of implementing the planned activities the organization may encounter problems. For instance

when SIF was implementing the micro-finance aspect of the UPRP the disbursement plan was distorted, and because of that about \$1.8 million was lost and could not be retrieved for disbursement. The main reason for this distortion was because of the misunderstanding between the National Investment Bank (NIB) and the Apex Bank. SIF appointed NIB as its fund manager, meaning that they were in charge of disbursing funds to the accredited financial institutions under the project. Apex bank on the other is the head of all rural banks in Ghana and mid-way through the UPRP the Apex bank interrupted the project, saying that NIB cannot have access to the rural bank without their concern. This controversy led to Apex bank demanding an exorbitant amount that NIB was unwilling to pay. Eventually, it took over a year to finally resolve this issue.

When asked if the planning phase was completed to schedule, the respondents stated clearly that no phase was completed on time, most especially the sub projects; construction projects. Some projects that should have been completed within two to six months took about two years to be finally completed and as at now a lot of the sub projects have not been completed. More so the respondents at the SIF declared that whenever a project is forcefully brought to an end without achieving all the set goals, the rest of the project goals are seeded to some project beneficiaries to complete them. In the case of the UPRP the rest of the project was seeded to the local assemblies of the areas of intervention. These assemblies are however at a disadvantage as they lack the necessary funds to support the project and have no access to the donor funds. With these limitations the assemblies are only able to complete the remaining project over a long period of time.

Initially, the original date for the completion of the UPRP was December 2010 but because of late start up it was extended to December 2011 but then the SIF asked for a further extension into another year but the donors granted the Social Investment Fund an additional six months instead of the initial one year they proposed. The project was finally closed up in June 2012. More often than not it was found that during the urban poverty reduction project quarterly planned activities were never completed and this led to uncompleted activities being carried over into the

next quarter of activities. The table below shows a typical example of how activities were delayed and how they were carried on to the next quarter.

Table 7 Delayed work schedule during the implementation of the UPRP

Activites	Standing activities	New of activities	total activi-	Activities completed	Carry over of activities
First phase of activities	10 tasks	_____		5 completed	5 carried over to next phase
Second phase of activities	10 tasks	15 tasks		10 completed	5 carried over to next phase
Third phase of activities	10 tasks	15 tasks		10 completed	5 carried over to next phase

This pattern of activities continued throughout the process of implementing the urban poverty reduction project and thus delayed the completion of the entire project.

Even though the UPRP terms of reference clearly stated each phase and its' achievable, the SIF was unable to meet their goals on schedule. There were many factors that contributed to a delay in the project phases and an overall delay in completing the project. These factors are classified as challenges and limitation which will be discussed subsequently.

Limitations/challenges faced during the planning phase

During the planning phase of the urban poverty reduction project the Social investment fund faced a lot of challenges and backlogs. These backlogs in one way or the other led to the delay of the project and also leaving some beneficiaries of the project unsatisfied. The following are some project setbacks:

- ❖ Incompetence of consultants; there were situations where consultants who were recruited to implement certain parts of the project were incompetent, this affected the quality of job output.
- ❖ Generally at the SIF staff remuneration and recruitment are done by the ADB therefore as and when staff leave, the ADB has to go through every step of its staff recruitment process to employ new staff, although ADB has an office in Ghana all recruitment process have to be handled at ADB in Tunis before any further decisions on newly recruited staff can be finalised. On the whole, it takes almost year to complete the entire recruitment process, thus putting unnecessary pressure on other project work plan and processes.
- ❖ There were also an issue of inefficient constructors for the jobs. The SIF is known to put the local assemblies in charge of procuring constructors for jobs on a project but in most cases the assemblies were unable to award the contracts to adept and competent constructors. An even worse case was that most of the people contracted for the jobs had no capital with which they could start the job, so the SIF had to go out of its way to demand a bank guarantee from the constructors for all advanced payments to be made, and as a result jobs that were supposed to take two months to complete were completed in six months or more.
- ❖ The donors also played a role in delaying the success of the project. Most quarterly activities were delayed by the donors who had to approve planned

activities before activities could be completed. These quarterly activities had to go all the way to ADB in Tunis for approval by the task manager.

- ❖ Mismanagement of funds by the assemblies; the assemblies were not quick to pay the constructors for their jobs, although money goes into the assemblies account for settling constructors the assemblies exhibit a lackadaisical towards it. They mismanage the funds and demotivate the workers from investing their time and effort to produce high work output.
- ❖ The Labour intensive nature of the project required the hands of local labour so as to provide the local jobless people with temporary jobs. This approach although thoughtful was also another cause of project delay. The reason for poor work output and project delay was as a result of inexperience and incompetence on the part of the local constructors.
- ❖ It was also realised that the counterpart contributions weren't forthcoming. Normally the donor pays 80% of the constructors' salary while the assembly pays 20%. During the course of the project constructors realise the assembly was refusing to pay the 20% of their salary, so what they did was to complete 80% of the job (which was paid by donors) and leave the remaining 20% of the job hanging until the assembly pays. In most cases this delays the completion of the entire project as the assemblies are not always willing to pay their part of the constructors' salary.

4.2.3 What were the steps taken in executing the UPRP?

During this phase of the UPRP the SIF implemented all the plans created during the project planning phase. In executing the urban poverty reduction project the SIF used a series of management tools to monitor and control the project and its potential deliverables. The main Deliverables for the UPRP were to complete all subprojects and to source and provide loans to all beneficiaries. According to the

respondent the construction of the microfinance project deliverable was a tedious process and until the beneficiaries receive the loan the microfinance deliverable have not been met. The second deliverable the UPRP sought to achieve under the subprojects was to provide socio-economic infrastructure facilities for the poor.

The steps involved in building and constructing the deliverable of providing socio-economic infrastructure were as follows: firstly, the SIF engaged potential constructors that could be procured to work on the project. The SIF were mostly looking for local labor that reside in the various areas of intervention in order to cut down cost and ease the work load. Moreover the socio-economic nature of the project also demanded the need for local hands at work. The job of appointing local constructors was left in the hands of the local assemblies of the various deprived communities. Contracts were then awarded to the chosen contractors to begin work, but because many of these constructors lacked capital with which they could start their jobs, the SIF gave them advance mobilization to enable them start the project. However, these advance mobilization contracts had to be back by bank guarantees or insurance bonds from insurance companies.

After awarding the contracts to contractors, the entire process and procedure of monitoring and control began. Project and zonal officers were put in charge of the overall day to day monitoring of the progress of work been done, the zonal officers were to go round to monitor the level of work been done so as to keep constructors on their feet and push them to meet deadlines. At the zonal level the zonal officers also organize site meetings to address the various concerns of project execution.

At the assembly level, planning officers and project engineers were charged with the responsibility of going to the construction grounds to supervise the work being done, occasionally members of the fund management unit (FMU) at the Project head office also visited the work grounds to evaluate and see the level of work done. More so the officers were to provide quarterly reports on work accomplished.

The SIF also formed a body at the local level known as the local project implementing agency (LPIA) to also monitor the progress of work done. Basically, the LPIA is made of members from the various beneficial communities; these members are known to be stakeholders of the project, thus allowing them to participate fully in the project. The SIF seeks the opinion of the LPIA concerning the things they think their various communities need so as to prevent the project from providing the wrong deliverables. The LPIA is thought to be a very good body because of its constant presence in the local communities; because of this they are constantly with contractors to report progress and complaints.

The monitoring and evaluation department of the SIF also go round monitoring and collecting statistics on the quality of work done and check if the project is being executed according to schedule and specification, they also evaluate the impact of the project on the community and check the level of completion of the project against funds that have been disbursed. The donor mission also partakes in monitoring the projects progress; they also partake in auditing so as to ensure proper allocation of funds. At the national level; that is the head office level, each specialist also goes round to monitor project progress.

Although project life cycles may differ according to projects it is important that the project manager/managers understand and align the projects with the appropriate lifecycle model in order to ensure success. It was realized through the interview that the SIF managed to apply the Waterfall approach in implementing the urban poverty reduction project, by executing all project plans in a strict orderly sequence, and whenever tough issues arose they were shoved off until the end of the project lifecycle, in the long run these issues posed serious threats to meeting the project deadlines. For instance during the implementation of the UPRP the counterpart payment were not forth coming, even though this was foreseen to be a potential challenge it wasn't attended to early enough so it affect the implementation and completion of sub-projects.

The major limitation or challenged faced after the execution stage was the problem of deliverables being idle, it was realized that some deliverables may not be utilized after the project completion. A typical exam was the case of ICT center being left idle, after completing the project of providing an ICT center for a deprived community in the North the ICT center were left idle as a result of lack of electricity and frequent power outage.

4.2.4 What were the steps involved in bringing the UPRP to a close?

Before bringing the urban poverty reduction project to a close the SIF informs all beneficiaries and project staffs six month before the project closes, this is some sought of reminder to get people on their toes and get them to start rounding up their duties for project closure. The SIF also makes it clear that projects that are unlikely to be completed within the specified time will no longer receive funding, this edges people on to put in more effort and double up on uncompleted projects. During the earlier stage of the closure phase a list of all projects unlikely to be completed is made so that such projects can be identified on time and either terminated or rewarded to other efficient constructors, consultants, service provider or suppliers.

A workshop is held prior to the end of the project where all the beneficiaries and/or assemblies are asked to make a presentation on the value and effectiveness; the benefits they have derived from the project, and the immediate impact of revenue generation for the assemblies and beneficiaries.

Another workshop is then held to list and understand lessons learnt and challenges faced during the entire project implementation. The SIF also provides a list of project closing procedures that have to be obeyed by those involved in the project. For instance, in the finance and accounting sector, all banks accounts operated for

the project have to be closed and all remaining balance is taken to the head office to be transferred to the donors. Evidence of the account closure has to be proven by providing the SIF with a statement of account up to the last day of the closure.

Also project completion reports must be prepared and ready for submission. Activities are also intensive when the project is drawing nearer to a close so as to make maximum use of all remaining funds before the project closes. Auditing is only done when the project is closed and the all accounts are closed.

4.2.5 Uncompleted outstanding projects

When asked of the overall completion level of the urban poverty reduction project the respondent started off by saying this, “ I believe the cost of not getting something right the first time is higher than the cost of taking your time and getting it right once and for all”. It can be gathered from this statement that the project was done with extreme care so as to prevent incidence of going back to repeat a process nevertheless in the cause of doing this there were a lot of outstanding UPRP activities that were not completed before the allotted time. According to the SIF, the late startup of the UPRP was the reason for the accumulated outstanding projects. The project was initially supposed to start in 2006 and end in 2010 but it started in 2007 and ended in 2012.

Many sub-project objectives were not met before the project closure in June 2012, some of these project activities are mentioned in the subsequent paragraph:

In addition to all other sub-projects, the UPRP was to see to the problem of proper sanitation by implementing a waste management incineration plant. This project, however could not be realized because a lot of time was wasted on other areas of the project leaving little time and making it impossible to execute. Also the sub-project of providing access to capital market for the assemblies to make them independent could not be realized. The main idea here was to help the assemblies

start sourcing for their own funds to implement their own projects; this also could not be realized.

There were many other sub-projects that could not be implemented as a result of fickle plans and processes. Along the line of implementing some projects other needs were identified and so resources and plans had to divert towards those needs. More so there was the challenge of land litigation that posed a threat to the implementation of the socio-economic infrastructure aspect of the project which dragged on for a long time. The SIF wanted to build an “industrial village” for artisans in the Eastern region specifically the Akim oda area but because of the issue of land litigation the industrial village project could not be executed.

4.2.6 Lessons learnt from the urban poverty reduction project

Delays and inadequate release of Government of Ghana matching funds:

The lack of commitment on the part of MMDAs to pay their 25% counterpart funds towards the implementation of the social inclusion transfer hampered the smooth operation of the scheme. Also the delays in the release of the MMDAs counterpart funds for sub-projects funding adversely affected the implementation and completion of sub-projects.

Managing the projects at the local level: most of the LPIAs were not effective on the ground and could not manage project accounts in the expected manner. Most of the MMDAs were not preparing and submitting financial reports as required and were very slow and hesitant in taking firm decisions to terminate contracts of non-performing contractors

High staff attrition rate in the participating MMDAs: the high rate of turn-over at the MMDAs led to rapid loss of institutional memory which continued to affect delivery rate at the local level negatively. Also a number of the already trained members of the local project implementation agency (LIPA) were often transferred

to other MMDAs where the UPRP is not being implemented. Consequently, the project had to orient new staff to take up the roles of those transferred. The apparent neglect of sustainability issues by beneficiary institutions and communities adversely affected the smooth operation of some of the facilities provided under the project.

Consultant services and using lower grade of constructors: the project was saddled with too many consultancy services, which together with cumbersome procurement processes delayed the implementation of some of the project components. Assigning three towns to one technical consultant with many sub-projects affected supervision and quality of sub-projects. The use of lower grade of constructors also affected delivery time and quality of infrastructural sub-projects.

Project design: the project focused on so many activities making project implementation cumbersome and problematic, the decentralized project financial management delayed preparation of annual project accounts. The procurement procedures were also seen to have delayed project implementation. The centralization of projects in single towns while neglecting other towns within the same district resulted in dissatisfaction among assembly members and an indifferent attitude towards the project by the general assemblies of the participating MMDAs

Community involvement: effective community outreach and sensitization proved to be the key ingredient for successful implementation of poverty reduction projects. The delays in the implementation of project activities killed the moral of potential beneficiaries and affected their participation when the project intervention finally started. Also it was realized that involving the communities at every level of the cycle of sub-projects development ensured high level of patronage of the facilities provided.

High turnover of task managers: the frequent change of task managers delayed replenishment of funds and contributed to the delay in project implementation. Also the frequent changes of task managers affected the receiving of approval and

no-objection from the bank, meanwhile new task managers also had to take some time to appreciate and become conversant with the project, thus, contributing to project delay.

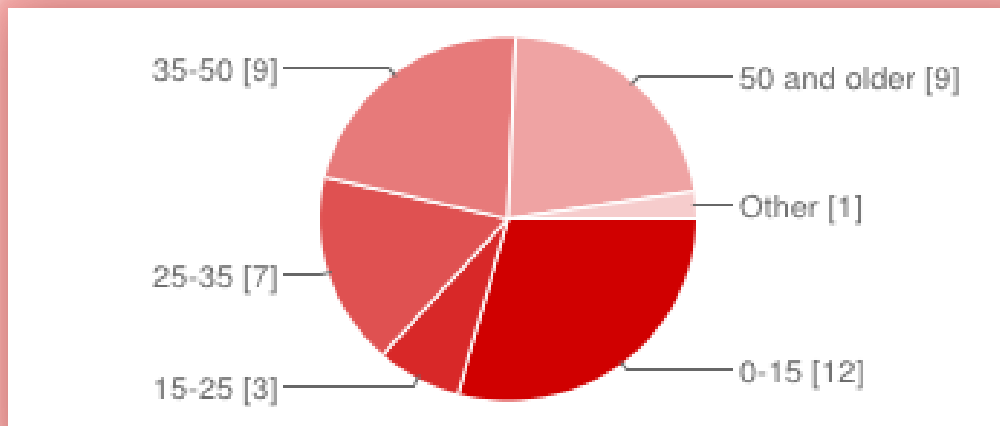
4.2.7 Questionnaire analyses

Designing a questionnaire is one of the various ways that a researcher can gather accurate information from respondents concerning their different opinions and beliefs. In many research works, questionnaires can be used as a tool for measuring the validity and reliability of a research work while ensuring that the quality of the data being collected is significant. Designing a good and acceptable way of distributing questionnaires also goes a long way to determine the overall rate of responses and the reliability of the work (Williams A., 2003 [ref 17/02/13])

In designing the questionnaires for this particular survey the following steps were followed. The first step was to define the research questions and the study population; in the case of this research, the questionnaires were formulated based on the rate of poverty in Ghana so as to gather people's thoughts concerning the effectiveness of poverty alleviation projects in Ghana. According to Williams A. (2003) many studies have shown that people only respond to questionnaires that ask questions that are relevant to them, therefore the study population for this research was targeted only at the Ghanaian population. The next step is to decide on how the questionnaires will be distributed; in this case the research questionnaires were administered via emails. The questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions meaning that respondents were given possible answers from which they could choose the category that best describes their answer. Out of a total number of 70 questionnaires administered, only 41 people responded and this was only achieved after numerous reminders were sent out to the various respondents for their response. The questionnaire was designed in a Google doc's survey document format. This made it easy to collect and code information systematically, thus facilitating data analysis. The questionnaire was left online for

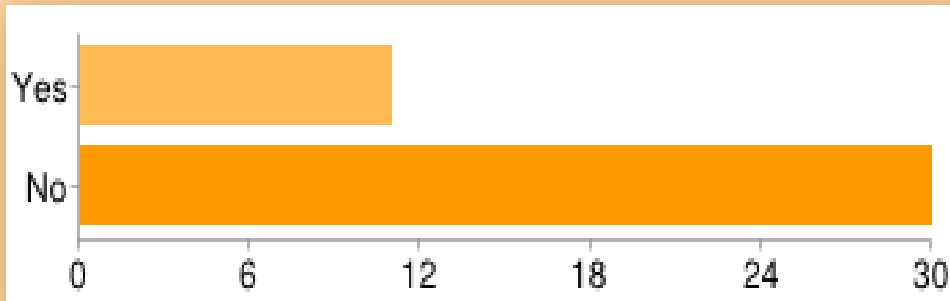
about a month, giving respondents adequate time to send in their response. The following figures represent the valid results compiled from the survey conducted. The survey was constructed in line with three major questions:

Which age group benefits the most from poverty alleviation projects?



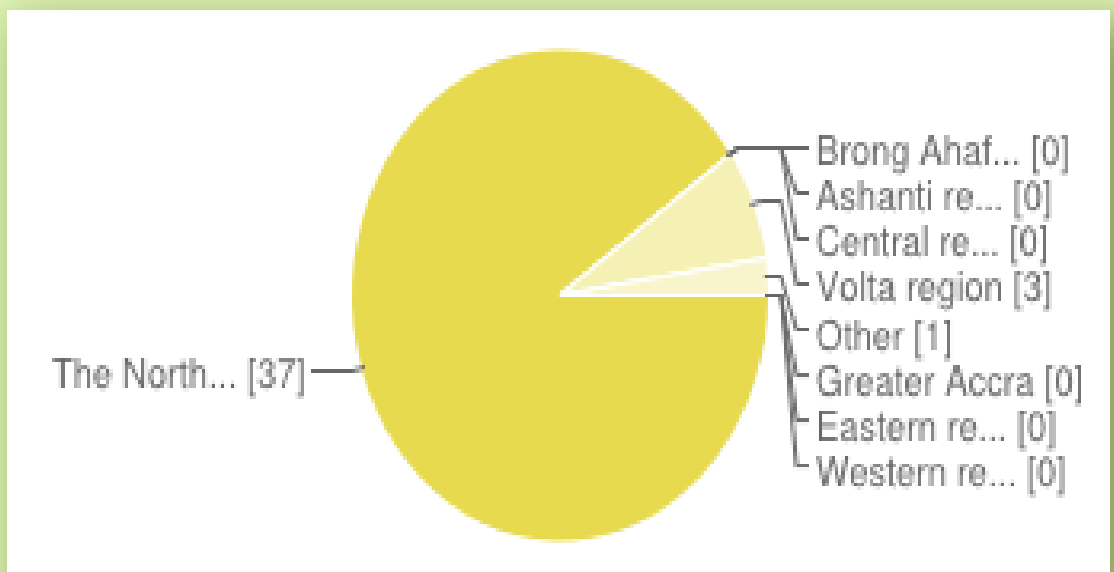
Age group	Tally	Percentage
0-15	12	29%
15-25	3	7%
25-35	7	17%
35-50	9	22%
50 and older	9	22%
Other	1	2%

Are poverty alleviation project effective in Ghana?



Yes	11	27%
No	30	73%

Which region among all ten regions is the poorest in Ghana?



Greater Accra	0	0%
Eastern region	0	0%
Western region	0	0%
The Northern-most regions (Upper East, Upper West and Northern region)	37	90%
Brong Ahafo region	0	0%
Ashanti region	0	0%
Central region	0	0%
Volta region	3	7%
Other	1	2%

The above graphical representations are given based on the three questions specified in the questionnaire; out of the 70 questionnaires given out approximately 59% of the people filled it. 73% of people answered “no” to the question concerning the effectiveness of poverty alleviation projects in Ghana while the remaining 27% answered “yes”. Through observation it has been realized that most of the poverty alleviation projects are executed for the benefit of a particular age group, however it was identified from this survey that 29% of the respondents believe that people between the ages of 0 and 15 are the sole beneficiaries of poverty alleviation projects, meanwhile 22% of the respondent also believed that the age groups 35-50 and 50 and above benefit the most from poverty alleviation projects while the age groups 15-25, and 25-35 had a vote of 7% and 17% respectively. 2% of the respondents didn’t answer this question. For the last question, majority of the respondents (90%) answered that the Northern-most regions were the most poverty stricken areas of the country, 7% believed it was the Volta region while 2% of the respondents did not answer this question.

4.3 Suggestions for future projects

The only inevitable thing involve in a process is the tendency of faltering. No one is perfect therefore no process or procedure can be flawless. The following are a number of suggestions coined by the author for the purpose of future poverty reduction projects that the SIF would construct.

Firstly, it would be important for the SIF to create a system to manage the competence of its employees by way of controlling all activities within the organization that will assure and further develop competent performance at work. This may come in the form of developing and building employees' talents and potentials or their areas of interest by giving them the appropriate training, development and assessment that would help maintain and improve their skills over time. After recognizing and building upon their capabilities and competence, the SIF would be able to get people that can easily fit into the roles and positions of absent or resigned employees so that they can save the cost of recruiting new staff and save the time involved in getting new recruits acquainted with the on-going project. This would be very useful in times when project personnel's resign midway through the project. Also the SIF can prevent this occurrence by recruiting people on a "binding contract" bases so that employees will not be able to quit halfway through the project.

Although division of labor is very helpful in facilitating work done, it is equally important that checks and balances are performed by all sectors within the organization. In the case of the UPRP it was seen that the decentralization of the project caused a lot of project delays. The SIF was the implementing organization in this case; therefore it should have been more responsible in keeping the assemblies and all project staff on their toes and ensured that they did their jobs properly. In future, it would be advisable not to design projects entirely alongside the decentralization process because it makes implementation and completion difficult.

It was also observed that the project design was too complex and involved so many overwhelming activities which made implementation difficult. Therefore in order to prevent this problem in future it would be better if project are made simpler so as to ease up implementation and execution. For instance, there were some projects under the UPRP that would have been completed if they were made to stand alone as single projects like that of the social inclusion transfer sub-project and the revenue mobilization sub-project.

The incidence of frequently changed task manager also affect the project implementation and execution therefore in future projects, task managers overseeing the project implementation should be allowed to complete their job on a particular project before changing. A lot of project time is lost when task managers are changed because every new task manager has to take a minimum of six months to acquaint him or herself with the new project.

The members of the SIF also suggested that the ADB office in Ghana should be given a threshold of approval so that documents that require approval would not have to go all the way to Tunis but rather they will be handled in Ghana so as to save time and facilitate project progress.

Another good suggestion is that the SIF should refrain from handing over the duty of awarding contracts to the local assembly since they mostly employ incompetent constructors who deliver poor quality of work. The SIF should take it upon itself to procure competent contracts for sub-projects. Also, training and re-training programs can be organized for members of the assemblies to build upon their knowledge and management skills.

The problem of delayed counterpart funds from the assemblies can be resolved by organizing a centralized payment to contractors straight from the SIF, this can be done by automatically deducting money from the assembly's common fund straight into the SIF fund to complete the remaining 20% payment needed to settle all constructors.

By observation it can be seen from the poverty map (figure 9) that the highest incidence of poverty can be recorded in the Northern part of Ghana (Upper-east, Upper-west and Northern region) but the SIF chose to concentrate on urban areas in areas with lower incidence of poverty (refer to figure 13). In comparing the Ghana poverty map with the SIFs' poverty intervention areas it can be seen that the SIF clearly "misplaced its priority". Misplaced priority, in the sense that it would be better for poverty reduction projects to target areas that are severely suffering from absolute poverty like those areas found in the Northern part of Ghana. After all, the only way to salvage the level of poverty in the country is to help the absolute poor get out of extreme poverty. It would be unreasonable for the poor to get poorer while the rich get richer, because this would worsen the economic unrest in the country and income inequality would be much worse than before.

It was also observed that the SIF did not make mention of any project management software used during the project apart from the regular business technological tools (Word, excel and access). There are many project management software programs on the market that can help plan, organize, manage resource pools and develop resource estimates for work purposes. Gone are the days when project management tools were only used for large projects, but today, there are numerous PC-based project management software packages in almost every type of business that could facilitate project implementation. The SIF should consider using some of these project management software programs to make their processes easier.

5 CONCLUSION

This research reveals the downside and drawbacks in the process of planning, implementing, executing and closing a project; this writing brought to bear the step-by-step proceedings that the Social investment fund incorporated while implementing the urban poverty reduction project in Ghana.

Poverty is indeed a disease and just as every disease has similar symptoms and effects in all human bodies so does poverty; the symptoms and effects of poverty related issues are similar in most societies. Poverty is like a viral disease that is eating skin-deep into the economies of many developing nations and the sooner measures are put in place to curb it the better it would be for all citizens of the world. With the world becoming more global, poverty has become an issue meriting great concern and attention. Some people may be blissfully ignorant of this fact, and think that poverty does not affect them in anyway. But, the truth of the matter is that poverty is a ubiquitous disease that requires undivided attention.

Just as Professor Sachs J.D. says "Extreme poverty is the best breeding ground on earth for disease, political instability, and terrorism." Therefore it would not be wrong to consider poverty as one of the major contributing factors to the increasing rate of crime, societal violence and political unrest in today's World. In Africa especially, poverty is often associated to crime and social vices and this is solely because people tend to get their hands dirty in all sought of crimes in order to survive.

Although this thesis may come across as irrational mainly because of its limitations, it would be best for the reader to be a bit opened minded as it is only coming from a Ghanaian perspective. In this section the reader would be given a holistic view and provided with reasonable factors to support the claims and theories previously discussed. The reader would come to understand the existing relationship between the theories used to justify and underscore project practices, the significance of the research results, the extent to which these results stand and if they

qualify to be generalized for the purpose of similar situations in different environments. The reader would also be given an overview of possible outcomes of the issues recommended and also the possibilities of future research opportunities.

On the whole, with regards to the interview questions and questionnaires discussed previously, one can arrive at a concrete conclusion that poverty alleviation project are quite ineffective in Ghana. The validity and reliability of this claim would be proven and further discussed in subsequent chapters.

5.1 Incorporating theory into practice

As quoted by a former American Major League Baseball catcher, outfielder, and manager; Yogi Berra "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is." this basically means that every theory formulated is assumed to be practical but in actual sense not all theoretical approaches are practical. Some theories may work in some practical situations while in other conditions they may prove ineffective. Nonetheless there are some theories that can be incorporated into theory to achieve a better outcome. By reviewing the literature of this piece of work coupled with the practical experiences narrated by the executives of the SIF, it is evident that there were some activities implemented by the SIF which would have been better achieved if some other theoretical practices were followed while executing the UPRP. This section would highlight a few theories which could have been materialized by the organization for better project outcomes, an also discussion a few practices that played an important role towards the overall UPRP achievement.

During the urban poverty reduction project, it was realized that project activities were not properly divided into phases to ensure proper monitoring; the end effect of this was the problem of delayed work schedule and the issue of activities being extended into the next phase of activities. Meanwhile, in theory it is well known and appreciated that dividing a project into phases makes it easier to monitor pro-

ject development and direction, it can also help reduce the total work load of the project by dividing it into smaller components, making it easier to monitor and control. From the review of the UPRP it is clear that this theoretical practice was not taken seriously.

Westland J. (2006) emphasizes the need for a phase review at the end of every project phase to monitor and control the status of various deliverables and also determine whether the project has met its objectives for that particular phase. In practice, during the UPRP phase reviews weren't constant as the project phases were clearly stated and divided.

The project plan is an important phase of the project lifecycle and it involves a lot of other critical plans that come together to form the entire project plan; the quality plan, procurement plan, risk plan, just to list a few. These project plans are all essential for project success. Holman R. (2011) states that many businesses make the mistake of labeling and referring to the project schedule as the project plan, this was typically the situation in the case of the UPRP; there was no clear distinction between the project schedules and the project plan everything was intertwined. A clearer distinction would have improved the entire project outcome.

According to Holman R. (2011) the importance of the three constrains; quality, time and budget have been theoretically exaggerated. This assertion cannot be overlooked because the UPRP was about managing the relationship and expectation of the customers/stakeholders and in reality customers/stakeholders satisfaction can depend on many other factors than just these three constrains. Therefore the theory of the three constrains is imperfect.

According to Kroll P. (2004) most project teams either use a modified waterfall approach or the iterative approach or transcend gradually from a waterfall approach to an iterative approach. The modified waterfall approach, deals with breaking down the project into phases or stages and work towards project completion by following these stages. In contrast, the iterative approach is more flexible and indi-

vidual deliverables are constructed incrementally until the final deliverables are met. According to research it would have been better for the SIF to apply the iterative approach instead of the waterfall approach because; it accommodates changing requirements especially when plans have to be changed to meet certain condition, the waterfall approach doesn't make room for this. During the UPRP there were many instances where the project had to be paused or partially changed for one reason or another, thus according to theory it would have been a much better choice to use the iterative design approach.

5.2 The economic benefit of the project and its significance on the environment

Although the project was not completed to schedule and expectation it still had some level of positive impact on its immediate environment and reaped economic benefits. The project had so many components and within each component there were a lot of activities.

Under the UPRP poverty divided into two categories, the productive poor and the vulnerable poor. As the name implies the productive poor are those that have the ability but lack the capital to work their way out of poverty while the vulnerable poor are those that have no abilities and therefore have to be sustained on the daily basis. One of the components of the UPRP was the social inclusive transfer which involves taking special care of the vulnerable poor. By so doing the vulnerable poor are able to take care of themselves properly and effect their environment positively. The project also provided vocational training and brought people to employable state so that they could work and start earning their own money for their upkeep. Also the loans that were given to the small skilled businesses increased business expansion and created more positions of employment for people in the immediate surroundings. Thus by expanding their businesses their capital base increased, competition also increased while unemployment reduced as a result of

engaging more hands at work. Enrollments in schools also increased with the establishment of educational center.

As mentioned earlier agriculture employs about 60% of the Ghanaian population so the UPRP helped increased market accessibility for farmers and market women in some remote areas so that they can sell their products throughout all seasons. In Ghana the annual rainfall ranges from about 1,100 mm in the north to about 2,100 mm in the southeast and with the problem of poor drainage system in some part of the country lands and roads get flooded making road inaccessible for market people. However, this project increased access to markets by constructing 4th class roads and bridges for market men and women to reach their destinations to engage in trade.

Economically, the income generation capacity of the assembly increased as a result of the income organization program that was put in place called the public private partnership system. This system existed between the assemblies and the private revenue collection organization to ensure that funds received from the community are not mismanaged and are properly accounted for. With this factor in place the assemblies are able to generate income for further development.

For instance the Swedru Agona West is one of the towns in Ghana that has benefited significantly from poverty alleviation projects. Agona is a forest area and volumes of the countries food stuff come from that area but the problem remained that the people did not have a centralized place to sell their products so many of their products went bad. Over the years this district has developed and today they have a very popular market known as the "Mandela market". With this in place the Swedru Agona West area has been able to mobilize a lot of funds from the market for overall development.

5.3 Reliability and Validity

Proving the reliability and validity of a writing is a very important aspect of research, it is almost unavoidable. By proving that a work is reliable or valid would be like measuring the consistency, stability, accuracy, credibility, neutrality and applicability or transferability of a research work.

Reliability

The concept of reliability is used in research to measure the replicable nature of a set of results or study; it also measures the stable and consistent nature of a research instrument in providing end results. (Kumar R. 2005 p.156)

Healy and Perry (2000); Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that although reliability is a more appropriate concept for measuring the quality of quantitative research than qualitative research, the general idea of testing is accepted in both research methods once the quality of study in each method is judged according to the terms surrounding it. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) specifically choose to use the term "dependability" in qualitative research as against the term "reliability", used in most quantitative research. With respect to this particular research the tools used in measuring its reliability and dependability are basically the questionnaires distribute and the interview conducted. (Healy and Perry 2000; Lincoln and Guba 1985 [ref 11/03/13])

More often than not researchers construct complex questionnaires with so many questions such that the questionnaire becomes bulky, in many of these cases respondents lose interest in answering the questionnaires, and rather leave them ideal on their tables or drop them in their trash box. For this reason the questionnaires constructor for this research were made simple, easy to understand and answerable with a short period of time. The simple design of the tool (questionnaire) contributed positively to the reliability of the research; respondents were not confused by ambiguity in wording and were able to answer the questions with clear understanding. The questionnaire and the interview were used for the same

purpose which was to figure out the effectiveness of poverty alleviation projects in Ghana. Measuring with both tools yielded the same outcome that poverty alleviation projects in Ghana are not exactly effective. The various issues discussed during the recorded interview goes to prove that poverty alleviation projects are ineffective in Ghana as a result of factors beyond the control of the implementing agency (SIF), on the other hand, the questionnaires proved the same; 73% of people answered “no” to the question concerning the effectiveness of poverty alleviation projects in Ghana while the remaining 27% answered “yes”, meaning that majority believe that poverty alleviation projects have so far been ineffective in the country. In the light of these activities a researcher would classify this as equivalency reliability; a type of reliability where identical concepts are measured on the same scale and the two test results are compared with one another to measure the level of consistency. (CSU, 2013 [ref 11/03/13])

Validity

The concept of validity is the ability or the actual extent to which a particular research measures the variables it intended to measure and how applicable the research end results are. The results for this research work are valid for Ghana since the variables that were measured were solely related to Ghana. Although some poverty related issues may pertain to a particular location, most poverty issues are global. The issues of crime, hunger, insecurity and/or political unrest are present in all poverty stricken areas of the world, therefore the question remains, “can these results also be valid for other developing countries apart countries in Africa?”

Take Southeast Asia for instance, this Asia region has formed many organizations and foundations that handle poverty alleviation including the ASEAN foundation which invests 39% of the project funds of the Foundation into poverty alleviation projects (Filemon A., 2008) yet, Southeast Asia is classified as the poorest region next in-line to sub-Saharan Africa. According to the World Bank, Southeast Asian countries make up approximately half of the World’s poor and with a population of

1.3 billion, approximately 85% are known to live on less than \$2 a day. (World Bank, 2006 [ref 11/03/13])

Conclusively, although this research was conducted exclusively on Ghana, it has so many similarities with poverty related issues in many developing countries. From the above explanation, it can be said that these research results can also be valid for Southeast Asian countries.

5.4 Observing recommendations

A popular saying by the renowned American football player Vince Lombardi states that “Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.” If only careful attention was paid to certain project details, then may be the SIF would have completed the UPRP successfully and achieved excellence.

The UPRP would have had a better chance of succeeding if the suggestion mentioned in the previous chapter were realized early enough before project implementation.

If the SIF had a system of managing the competence of its employees then in the advert of other employees resigning there would not have been any problem in getting quick replacements for the various vacant positions, and project time which was spent on searching for replacements would have been saved.

If projects were not designed entirely alongside the decentralization process it would have made project implementation and completion less difficult. The project would have been properly controlled and monitored towards a successful completion. Also if the project design was made less complex with few achievable activities then it would have much easier to implement and execute the project within the allotted time.

One of the problems that the SIF quickly detected and solved was the problem of delayed counterpart funds from the assemblies to pay constructors. This issue was noticed during the early stages of the project and was resolved accordingly. In the end the constant flow of the counterpart fund saw the completion of many of the UPRP sub-projects. On the other hand, If this problem was not detected early enough many sub-project would have been left uncompleted.

If the ADB office in Ghana is given a threshold of approval then documents that require approval would be handled within the country instead of it being sent to Tunis for approval. If this recommendation is observed then project time would be saved and project progress properly monitored.

There are many project management software programs on the market that can help plan, organize, manage resource pools and develop resource estimates for work purposes, if the SIF had adopted the use of project management software programs, it would have eased up their project management processes

5.5 Future research and other possible areas of research

Day in day out researchers can come up with different theories under the same research topic. Literally, it's impossible to walk in the same footpath at different times, towards the same direction. In the same vein, a researcher would always have something to add or subtract when asked to revise a version of his or her work. Obviously not all questions have been answered through this research; there are many more things that could be researched into so as to enhance this piece of writing. In future, when asked to re-do this project again there are many things that would be taken into consideration in order to produce a better outcome.

For instance, in constructing the questionnaire more open-ended questions would be used so as to give respondents the opportunity to give detailed reasons for choosing certain answers. For example the first question on the questionnaire for

this project was “Are poverty alleviation project effective in Ghana?” and the answer choices were “Yes” or “No”. In future, respondents would be given the chance to explain their answer choices better. Also in future research more questions would be asked on the questionnaire.

Another possible and better future research would be to compare and contrast two poverty projects in a particular area so as to get a vivid and clearer stand, in order provide better analysis for a stronger conclusion .

A potential area of research would be a research into the activities and the possibility of achieving the first MDG which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 The six steps identified by G.R.Heekens (2002) and the four phases identified by J. Westland (2006)

Project phases	Project steps	Description
Initiation	❖ Identify and frame the problem or opportunity	The project initiation phase begins with developing a business case which specifically defines the business problem and makes room for allocation of resources for undertaking a study that seeks to prove the possibility of realizing the proposed solutions. The project visions, objectives and deliverable are outlined after which a project team is appointed and work load is divided among its members (J.Westland 2006)
Planning	❖ Identify and define the best project solution ❖ Identify task and resource requirements ❖ Prepare the control schedule and resource allocation	The project planning stage is a phase where strategic plans are made towards executing the project. In planning the project a project plan must be developed that would specify the different tasks, activities and resources required to complete the project. These steps would be combined into a project schedule which would be used by the project manager to access the development of the project. (J. Westland)

- ❖ Estimate project cost and prepare

Execution

- ❖ Analyse risk and establish stakeholder relationship
This phase is followed up after the project has been approved by higher authority. This is where all plans in the previous phase are put to practise. This is a stage where the project outcomes are developed for the basic consumers' approval; according to J. Westland (2006) it is known to be the longest project phase depending on the magnitude of the project. During the implementation process measures are also taken to monitor and control the progress of activities. (PUBLIC PROCUREMENT BEST PRACTICE GUIDE, 2008)
- ❖ Maintain control and communicate as needed during execution

http://www.publicprocurementguides.treasury.gov.cy/OHS-EN/HTML/index.html?1_3_project_lifecycle.htm

Closing

- ❖ Manage to an orderly close-out
This is the last phase of the project life cycle, it involves performing some checks and balances to determine if all project closure conditions have been fulfilled, note any outstanding project activities, release project outcome and project closure reports to respective customers and project sponsors. Nonetheless, conducting a performance appraisal would help identify what went well and what didn't so as to better advice the project manager in organization future projects

Appendix 2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Appendix 3 People living on less than \$1 a day in 2000 (Tom Gorman, 2003) The Complete Idiot's Guide to Economics
<http://www.infoplease.com/cig/economics/poverty.html>

Region	Total population (millions)	People living on less than \$1 a day (millions)	Percent of region's population
Latin American and Caribbean	432	49	12
West Asia and North Africa	204	5	3
Sub-Saharan Africa	388	169	44

South Asia	1,266	515	41
East and South-east Asia	1,726	320	19

Appendix 4 The standard Phase of the Waterfall approach (ExecutiveBrief, 2013 ref 25/02/12) <http://www.projectsart.co.uk/which-life-cycle-is-best-for-your-project.html>



Appendix 5 The Phases of the Iterative Model (ExecutiveBrief, 2013 ref 25/02/12)

