

Combating Desertification in Ghana - A Policy Framework

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Introduction/ Theoretical Framework

Desertification has recognized as serious environmental problems with devastating social and economic impacts. Sub-Saharan African countries have proven particularly vulnerable. Desertification threatens millions in Africa from their homes in coming decades. Currently 46 percent of Africa's land area is vulnerable to desertification with more than 50 percent of that under high or very high risk. Ghana is no exception. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is responsible for combating desertification in the world but is a complex and multi-organizational system in which interests are multiple, uncoordinated and often conflicted. It is difficult to achieve goal clarity in many program areas. The problem of desertification is complex because it is associated with different causes, like crop production, wood industries, bush fires, poverty, etc. The successful implementation of complex goals in combating desertification is predicted on the extent to which governmental and NGOs can align the interest of Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the frontline staff with policy goals.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of goal ambiguity for achieving agreement among Governmental and Non governmental organizations to combat desertification in Ghana. To accomplish this purpose, the following research questions were identified: 1) To what extent are governmental and non-governmental organizations in agreement over goals to combat desertification? 2) Is the agreement achieved through hierarchical means or through collaboration? 3) Given the formal goals of the program, what sort of collaboration is suitable to implement complex policy goals?

Result

The goal to combat desertification cannot be reached by any individual or group working alone. Participant should include diversity of individual and groups who represent the concern and/or geographic area or population. The reality of public program implementation is that any program that is implemented in the name of "enhancing public welfare" will need the involvement of the private sector and quasi-public entities (Schroeder 2001). UNCCD can not be delivered by a single organization but by networks in which whole or parts of separate public and private

agencies must work together but in such a situation additional complexities arise in multi-actor networks (Hindmoor; 1998; O'Toole 1993; O'Toole and Meier 1999). Numerous research studied has confirmed that one way to achieve success in policy implementation is through collaboration.

Conclusion

Goal congruence can be achieved when formal goals of policy officials are communicated constantly. If the goals and target for the program activities have already been set at the national level, then it may be ineffective to encourage participation in such decision as these will be passed down the administrative hierarchy. Nevertheless, implementing agents should be given the sufficient autonomy in operationalizing the decisions passed down from above and perhaps the decision should be received as guidelines rather than directives in order for the implementers to use their own discretion.