

# **DEVELOPMENT WORK AND POWER**

**A study on the element of power and its effect on community  
development work within religious organizations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The element of power in development work is portrayed in different dimensions. Power in this context is that force that makes things happen within an organisation, it could also be a force that prevents actual realisation of goals within an organisation.

This research addresses the concept of power within Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), by looking at ways in which power affects the implementation of projects by focusing on elements like organisational culture, bureaucracy and faith. The study aims at establishing whether or not the element of power is an obstacle to development work.

The qualitative method is used in this study. The collection of data focuses on getting information from individuals who have been involved in development work. They will give their expertise and opinions on the procedures of the implementation of projects within FBOs. This is achieved through interviews, real case studies and observation.

The results indicated a two dimension aspect to the element of power. One dimension was positive, it revealed that within the organisation, power enables tasks to be accomplished on time, and helps to maintain order and accountability. However, in the implementation of projects, the element of power acts negatively. Projects are not completed on time, projects are done poorly on the ground among other aspects.

Key words: Power, Development work, Faith Based Organizations,

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Development work within Faith Based Organisations began as early as the United Nations Decade for development aid in the 1960's. Faith Based Organisations in the south were willing to partner in bilateral development cooperation with various western countries. For instance over fifty foreign NGOs' participated in development cooperation in Kenya. (Hope &Timmel, 2003). The church also became active in development work; the Catholic Church had the largest number of organizations carrying out development work.

As FBOs continued in their work and received financial aid from their centers abroad, the question arose as to how much control the western NGO's actually had in deciding what development projects to fund and what was the position of the Faith Based Organisations in making fundamental decisions that concern implementation of foreign funded projects. I aim at finding out what was the attitude of the recipients towards development aid and how much power did they have in decision making or implementation of the projects.

The target of this research is to find out how the element of power has been displayed within FBOs and establish to what extend it has affected the implementation of foreign funded projects. In answering this question, the well established FBOs such as World Vision and Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services (IDCCS) in Kenya would offer a good representative sample.

The motivation for researching this area arose, when I read a book by JaakkoLounela on 'Mission and Development'. In his book he discusses development work among different mission agencies in Kenya and explores the different approaches that they use and how this affects the implementation of projects and funding. While reading his book I realized Faith Based Organizations are heavily reliant on funding from donors in the north. The donors of development

projects had a particular interest on how their funds were spent and decision making process relied heavily on them. Consequently, I intended to find out if indeed they had that much power in decision making.

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to have my international placement at 'World Vision-Kenya', a Faith Based Organization involved in development work. World Vision acted as my main case study during this research. The placement offered me a chance to become familiar with the different elements that indicate the use of power within an organization. I was able to understand how these elements affect the implementation of projects.

## 1.1 Study area

The study focuses on the present situation on the work carried out by Faith Based Organizations. By using two organizations situated in Kenya, World Vision – Kenya and Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services (IDCCS) – the development wing for the Anglican Church, I hope to highlight the element of power as portrayed within these organizations.

I also hope to get in contact with the recipients of development aid in order to understand their view on the element of power.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the subject of power, and understand how it affects in the implementation of projects within FBOs.

FBOs have been very active in development initiatives especially in the south. Their work at the grassroots level has been very effective and they have been able to access areas that local governments are unable to reach with their



services. Because of this, I consider it is important to study their work more and establish more clearly how effective their work is in the field.

The objectives of this study include exploring the element of power and understanding how development work is implemented in FBOs.

## 2 THE ELEMENT OF POWER

### 2.1 Theories of power

Power can be described as the ability to control. French and Raven describe power as a social influence that has the ability to alter the beliefs, attitudes or behaviours of others (1959, 76). It can be seen as a form of constraint on human action, but also as a force that makes things happen. The key to this definition is simply one's relative control. (Knippenberg&Hogg2003, 141)

The subject of power has been researched by Knippenberg& Hogg,(2003) according to them there are three theories to power, power as control (PAC), power as Threat (PAT) and Power, Approach and Inhibition (PAI). The following paragraph explains these theories in more detail.

The power as controltheory, focuses on powers' consequences for social judgement. It exorts that people seeking power are likely to be dominant, they may not want to be accurate and that people in high dominance may stereotype or derogate subordinates to justify and protect their power. This theory also implies that hierarchical nature of most power structures typically implies more subordinates than power holders.(Knippenberg&Hogg 2003, 142).

Power as threat theory, focuses on power-holders' evaluations of subordinates. According to this theory, occupying positions of power typically implies some form of threat. It therefore, implies that power holders are motivated to make biases judgments not only of subordinates but also ofthemselves. The PAT

model is concerned with what leaders say and do regarding subordinates. (Knippenberg&Hogg 2003, 142)

Finally there is the power, approach and inhibition theory, which implies that increased power activates an approach-related system whereas lack of power activates an inhibition system. (Knippenberg&Hogg 2003,142)

Each of these theories is present in the functioning of FBOs in development work. However, the most common theory for this research is the power as control theory, it appears in the decision making process of the organisation. Furthermore, FBOs are concerned with the expenditure of funds and request for reports from the subordinates. On the other hand; the theory of power as threat is visible in FBOs. Subordinates are generally threatened by deadlines which they have to met, they are careful to keep up to them inorder to maintain their jobs.

The power as threat theory is also seen in the functioning of FBOs as subordinates work had to impress those in leadership position.

## 2.2 Sources of Power

Pfeffer has researched on the topic of power in organizations, he argues that power is first and foremost a structural phenomenon, and should be understood as such (Pfeffer 1981, 63).

Stephen Lukes discusses the different sources of power. According to Lukes when dealing with human behavior and change the power of moral persuasion is very influential. The power of religion for instance has been very instrumental in bringing about moral change. What makes FBOs stand out from secular organizations is that element of faith that is powerful enough to bring about moral change. On the other hand a lot of importance is given to the process of

transformation of the initial message into a group of norms that rule individual and collective behavior. (Helander1999, 96).

In his study, Stephen Lukeseemphasizes the importance of knowledge. He explains that it is a great source of power and especially in development cooperation, the more knowledge one has the more influential one can be. In developmental work the donors are seen by the recipients of developmental aid to posses a vast amount of knowledge on the technical issues on how to succeed and be independent, administer among others (Hope 2003, 40).

The members of community at grassroots level also have knowledge and can shed light on the social problems and effectiveness of donor money. However, their knowledge is limited by their circumstances and hence they remain dependant on aid. It is not surprising that donors are capable of influencing government decision in the south.

Social class is also an element of power that is evident in most societies. In his study, James explains how social class especially in the poorer societies creates a major social divide because material wealth gives one power. FBOs are seen working more with the poorer people in society. The more privileged in society are able to get access to social benefits, better education, good jobs and in general they live a comfortable life.(James R. 2008, pg. 23)

Expertise is well proven skills and abilities have the potential of putting one a head of the others. In development work these kind of skills are a huge advantage and are a source of power. For instance, good leadership skills and good communication skills are sources of power that can be achieved or exercised in development work.

In order for the community to develop trust it is important that the members of the organization have interpersonal skills and expertise. In general all areas of work require a certain level of expertise which will be in turn be a good source of power. (Charles 2008, 53)

## 3 BUREAUCRACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

### 3.1 Bureaucracy

The general reference points of the ideal type of bureaucracy are that an organization consists of a body of individuals who adhere to formal general rules, work in circumscribed jurisdictional areas in the hierarchical organization of offices, use written documents, have adequate means, have had training in a field of specialization, are appointed, are assigned by contractual agreement, have their office as sole occupation, are promoted on the basis of seniority or performance, and receive set salaries (Bartels 2009, 15).

Bureaucracy can be said to be evident in FBOs. The organization has typical characteristics of bureaucracy. This method is adopted in order that they may achieve specific goals. The structures and formal rational experienced in bureaucracy promises control of activities within an organization.(Bartels 2009, 23). Moreover, bureaucracy maintains order within the organization. Some of the advantages of bureaucracy are explained in more details below:

Control and responsibility are maintained through the hierarchies found in administrative bureaucracy. According to Schioli, Jr, (1986, 52) bureaucratic behaviour involves maintaining effectiveness within the organization.

Furthermore employees are motivated to keep up to the rules and as a result effectiveness is achieved.

Consistency is maintained within the organization. This is enabled by the rules and regulations. Furthermore, bureaucracy enables for organizations to be assured of accountability and expertise. Most importantly employees are protected from unfair dismissal.

In general FBOs employ the bureaucratic form of management. The result is that authority can only exist through well grounded process of concrete influence. (HelanderEila(ed) 1999, 95)

The term 'bureaucrats` is usually a shorthand for administrative elites, i.e bureaucracy is conceived in terms of the upper levels of the hierarchy, and their activities are seen in terms of policy formulation rather than the sequential aspects of the policy process, including implementation. Neither tasks nor contexts are differentiated; as a result we are left with an analysis which is partial in focus and limited in scope (Jenkins & Grey 1983,3).

### 3.2 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has been defined by van den Berg & Wilderom (2004) as the glue that holds the organizations together and stimulates the employees to commit to the organization and to perform. It has further been defined as particular ways of conducting organizational functions that have evolved overtime. These practices reflect the shared knowledge and competence of the organization (Kostova 1999, 309).

Berg & Wilderom(2004) further explain that in a strong organizational culture, employees would have the same set of values, and the best organizations are characterized by values by which employees would be strongly committed.(Berg & Wilderom 2004, 42).

In FBOs the culture is motivated by religious values. An article entitled 'Bush brings faith to foreign aid' Stockman (2006) illustrates how faith acts as an added value to FBOs work involvement in development work. The mission statement and value of the organization strive to bring out the religious factor and aim of the organization. For instance, World Vision mission statement is ' Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness, our prayer for every heart, the

will to make it so'. In this case the statement clearly reflects the values and consequently the culture of the organization. It would indeed be argued that religion is so embedded in culture that the distinction is meaningless. (James 2004, 62)

Organizational culture is a powerful force, it affects not only within the organization but also outside the organization. It has been increasingly argued by some researchers like Nadler (2008) that organizational culture is partly constituted by leaders and that the creation and management of culture is a leadership competence or function.

Lok, Westwood and Crawford(2005) in their study of organizational culture and the significance to organization commitment insist that leaders have a role in shaping the cultures and subcultures with which they are involved. This affects people's perception of and attitudes towards the organization and thus their sense of commitment.(Lok, Westwood & Crawford 2005, 102).

This explains the notion that culture affects not only within the organization but also outside the organization, depending on how the community perceives the organization. Consequently, the people's their demands are formed primarily by the organizational culture.( Charles 2008, 80)

A scholar G. Johnson (1998) has carried out a research on the administration process in organizations. In his work he claims that there are different elements that have an influence on the organization. Some of these elements are discussed below.

According to Johnson, control systems in an organization refer to how the management of an organization monitor what happens within an organization. He emphasizes the importance of workable control systems. Power structures on the other hand refer to hierarchical aspect of administration, which is evident

in bureaucratic systems. Power within the hierarchical is based on the authority derived from the position that one holds within an organization.(Smith 2008,83). Other elements include symbols used within an organization, which help to distinguish authoritative figures. They include organizational logos, washroom, parking space among others.

Johnson outlines other aspects that form the culture within an organization. They are stories and myths about the organization told by those either outside or within the organization. This is as a result of individual interaction with the organization. Mission statements and core values describe what the organization is about. (Smith 2008, 24).

Building on the above mentioned elements, the culture of an organization is formed and maintained. It becomes quite difficult to break the culture of an organization once it has been well formed. The stronger the culture the better it is for the organization, the ADP manager, at World Vision, during one of the meetings with stakeholders, explained that they strive to maintain a spirit of brotherhood and family within the organization, and this has helped to create a committed people in the organization. A strong organizational culture motivates employees to work diligently.( Charles 2008, 82).

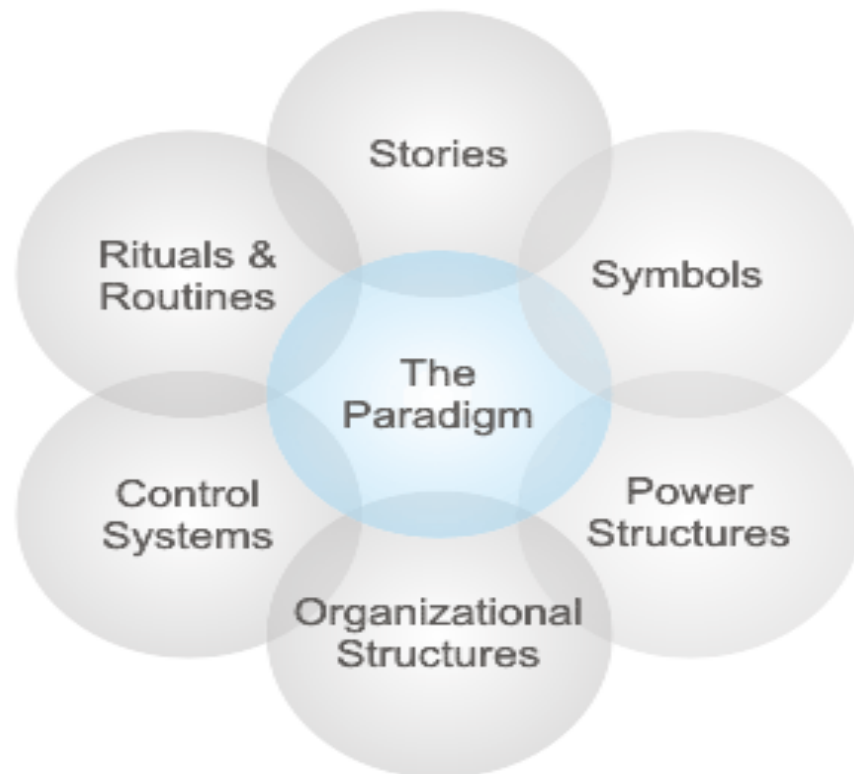
A strong organizational culture is important especially in development work. It has yielding benefits which would be beneficial in the achievement of development goals. Members of the organization are encouraged to work as a team, with a strong culture team work can be encouraged and this is especially important in development work. For instance in WV members of staff work together with community volunteers, they met members of the community with whom they engage in identifying the most pressing social problems. Team work is important in identifying workable solutions to the identified social problems.

Strong culture within an organization increases the motivation of employees. Employees can work overtime and deadlines can be met on time when their



motivation is increased by a positive strong culture. Working overtime is very typical in development work, visiting remote areas and sometimes having to spend time far away from home, etc. With this also comes increased creativity and new ideas from members of staff which may help in achieving set goals.(Charles 2008, 85).

**Figure 1: The Cultural Web**



Source: [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

The cultural web describes in details the different elements that affect within the organization. These elements influence the culture of an organization.

## 4 RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter represents the research process. First, the methods will be discussed. After that, the process used in analyzing the data is explained and the ways in which it was presented are described. It then ends with a description of the research ethics, validity and limitations.

### 4.1 Qualitative Research

Some qualitative researchers believe that qualitative methods can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman 2005,10). For this reason I decided to use qualitative research methods in order that I may understand more about what my topic really means.

John W. Creswell describes phenomenological research, as a way in which a researcher identifies the 'essence' of human experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by participants of a study. (Creswell 2003,15).

I applied some principles of phenomenological research in this study. During my research I aimed to understand how the element of power was displayed. I did this by interacting and questioning some of the employees at World Vision. Their experiences about the process of implementing of projects and carrying duties helped me to understand this phenomenon.

## 4.2 Data Collection

The methods of data collection for this research are described in more detail below.

### 4.2.1 Interviews

The first step for me was to define the objectives, which led me to designing the questionnaire. The questions were designed to be open-ended questions, where the participants were capable of giving more detailed information. The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis. According to Creswell, it is important during this process to have open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. (Creswell 2003,188).

This proved to be very effective as participants got fully engaged in the interview providing me with very detailed information. The open-ended questions also enabled them to express their feelings. Participants also provided practical case examples to back up their explanations. Where necessary I also asked questions in a random manner as they arose.

### 4.2.2 Observations

Observation is the process through which the researcher takes fieldnotes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-structured way, activities at the research site. The observer may also engage in roles varying from a non-participant to a complete participant. (Creswell 2003, 188).

During my practical placement I got fully involved in the daily activities at World Vision, which was my main case study. I was involved in the daily activities of WV, at the implementing office known as the Area Development Program (ADP). I was present at the morning devotions where all members of the office, gathered every morning to pray, special announcements were made during this time. Each department gave an updated report of their progress at the end of every week. The morning devotions helped me to familiarize myself with activities carried out in each department.

I also understood how the organization resolved issues and shared ideas. I visited to on – going projects of World Vision and also participated in the annual appraisal program, a program carried out every end of the year, that enables sponsors to keep in touch with their sponsored children.

The sponsored children send Christmas cards, and they also receive gifts from their sponsors. I also participated in a one week pastors training session, I took notes on behalf of WV during the lectures and also gave my evaluation on the whole course. I interacted with volunteers, sponsored children as well as project recipients and got their view on the activities of the organization.

The three month period was an eye-opener, that helped me to get a hands – on experience on the working of Faith Based Organizations. It helped me to understand fully how the organization carries its activities and why they behave in a certain way also how this impacted on recipients of development aid.

I used my (own) experiences that I obtained during this process to get a wider understanding and analyze issues that could not be spoken out aloud, either during the interviews or otherwise.

### 4.2.3 Documents

Another method I used in collecting data during this research was the use of documents. By using official documents like memoirs, and reports, I obtained relevant material for my research. While at WV I obtained reports and memoirs written by some of the people who have worked with the organization in the past, they gave their experiences and ideas. The reports I obtained were about the organization's administration process, most explained how the management has changed and how the organization has continually restructured its activities in order that they may be more effective on the ground. The reports also showed different discussions and ideas put forward, and both long and short term plans that the organization has set.

This was especially helpful in understanding the history of development work within Faith Based Organizations. Through the official data I was able to understand the processes of development and how they had changed. I was also able to define the terms used in the research. I also obtained statistics and it was especially important because it helped in the analysis process.

### 4.3 The Data Collection Process

The number of people interviewed were five. One resides in Finland and has a history of development work in his home country. Three were employees of World Vision – Kenya, where I had my international practical placement. The last was a long time serving employee of IDCCS – the development wing of the Anglican Church in Kenya. I organized it so that each respondent had some basic information on my research topic beforehand. This helped for the interview process to start off easily.

My first interview was carried out in Helsinki, Finland, at the home of the first respondent. This interview was tape recorded and lasted about one hour. This interview was interesting as it raised issues on religious organizations and their involvement in development work. I obtained very interesting views on funding of projects, as this respondent has had a lot of experience in fundraising activities back in his home country.

After this interview I was challenged to look deeper into religious organizations and how they progress with their work especially in the development arena.

After this interview, it was time to begin my practical placement which was in Kenya, in a Faith Based Organization – World Vision. During my placement I identified three people who would be my respondents, I contacted them and reserved time with them. These interviews were carried out on different days, but all were carried within the office premises.

Each of the interviewees held different positions but had all worked there for over five years. It was important to me to get the opinion of people in different ranks or positions within the organization. The respondents were open and willing to answer my questions, and especially since I was also doing my practical placement for three months, they did not consider me as a stranger.

The issues that arose during these interviews included issues involving decision making within the organization itself, head office, community members reaction or attitude. These issues helped me in defining my research topic, and gave me a leap forward on what kind of issues to focus on in my study.

My last respondent was recommended to me by one of the people I interviewed at World Vision. He is an employee at IDCCS, which is the development wing of the Anglican Church in Kenya. This interview was carried out in the office premises at IDCCS. During this interview I took notes as the respondent gave

answers to my questions. The interview lasted approximately one hour. It was very beneficial and complimented the information I had from World Vision.

During my time at World Vision, I got chance to be actively involved in different stages of project implementation. I took part in different stakeholders meeting, I also visited some of projects that had been implemented as part of the follow-up process. Furthermore, I was able to met some of the beneficiaries of the development projects and sponsorship programs. I also met the volunteers at World Vision. During this process I obtained very tangible experiences and I was able to relate theory to practice.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of a text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data. (Creswell 2003,190)

I begun the data analysis process by reading through the collected material, and trying to bring meaning to it. Using the coding process I organized the material into 'chunks'. I then gave the chunks different topics. Rossman explains the coding process as, the process of organizing material into 'chunks' before bringing meaning to those 'chunks'. (Rossman& Rallis 1998, 171).

As I carried out the interviews and had informal discussions with employees of WV, I was able to identify different issues that were central to our discussion. As I begun to go through the data collected, I grouped each relevant response together after which I gave names or topics to them.

For different topics arose out of the analysis process they were:

- Project implementation
- Funding process

- Decision making process
- Influence of faith on development work

By reflecting the observations I had made and the documents I read, I was able to make a connection between these and the raw material I had from the interviews I collected. During the analysis process I also included my own observations and feeling. Also included during the analysis process was the informal discussions I had with the staff at World Vision, the volunteers especially during the annual appraisal program that I attended at WV and some of the participants at the pastors training. A lot of information and case examples, I got during these informal discussion, and I included them in the analysis process.

#### 4.5 Ethics, Limitations and Validity

During my research I made sure that the participants understood the ethical value that is attributed to this research. I assured each of them of confidentiality and informed them that in the report they will be anonymous. I also ensured during the interview process that it was comfortable and without interruptions.

I was also keen to read body language of the participants in order to understand when either the concentration level was going down or if the person lacked sufficient information on a certain question. If this was the case then I could move on to the next question.

There was no reference to individual circumstances, instead the discussions and questions focused around the general experience of those individuals involved.

Validity is seen as a strength of qualitative research, and is used to suggest determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or reader of an account. (Creswell and Miller 2000, 62).



The research collected can be described as 'trustworthy' from my point of view because I spent a considerable amount of time on the field, and the different ideas that came up during the data collection process did not contradict. Instead they complemented each other.

One of the limitations would be my own biased attitude, especially when designing the questionnaire and finding literature that related to the study. I would say that in some way must have affected the results in this research.

## 5 FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This chapter explains and discusses in detail the results and findings of this research. The views and opinions of the respondents of this research are described together with observations made based on the following themes: implementation of projects, decision making process, funding process and influence of faith in development work.

### 5.1 Project Implementation

Under this theme participants explained how development projects are implemented within their organizations. When discussing this theme various case examples were given by participants, in order to explain their view. The questions asked were:

*How does the organization initiate projects?*

*Who is involved in the process?*

One of the respondents at World Vision, responded by saying

*'Normally we discuss these kind of things in the morning during, morning devotion. The manager will choose two people to go to the field, to access what kind of needs there are. Then they will write reports and give to the manager. Sometimes the ADP manager will ask head of departments to suggest projects that should be started. The manager decides which project and he writes his report, he will send the report to zonal office, zonal office will send to national office and then national office will send to the international office, and they are the ones who make final decision'*

Another respondent is in management position at World Vision, responded in this way

*As a manager, I am expected to identify potential projects that would be viable for funding. I appoint some of my staff to do an assessment. Normally I make sure that the proposed projects are child centered, so for example we could identify one of our own sponsored child whose house is in bad condition or collapsing due to floods or any other reason. If this house is constructed it benefits not only the sponsored child, but siblings as well as the rest of the family members. If for example the neighboring area has water problem, then we could construct a borehole which will serve for the neighboring members in that area. The final decision is normally made by the international office, in our case it's the UK office'*

In regard to this theme one of the respondents elaborated to me a practical example that happened in the process of project implementation.

*Towards the end of the year, when it was time to write proposals for more funding and give reports, we realized that we still had an excess amount of unused money in the account. We sat together and had to quickly think of a project. So we decided that the office needs a borehole, we normally run out of water here sometimes. So with this project, we were able to use up our funds and apply for more funding, we try to avoid questions from the international office.*

According to the collected data, the implementation of projects, which normally involves putting all planned activities into action, involves all members of the organization. This is made possible when each department head gives reports

of the progress of each project in their department. It is discussed openly during the morning devotions. Furthermore subordinates are involved in identifying needs in the community. It also seems that members of community are in a way involved in the process of identifying the problems in their area, for instance with the case of the water borehole. However, the final decisions about which projects will be funded and the implementation of the projects is left to the power holders. The manager in this case makes decisions of which projects he should forward for funding.

Moreover, he also delegates to his subordinates and decides which areas need to be accessed. From the managers' point of view he seems to feel that he has little control in the final outcome of the decision although he has been involved in the whole process. Similarly the subordinates lack this sense of power to make the final decision.

Another aspect that arose from the case mentioned above, is that projects can also be initiated in order to use up funds, and this enables for more funding application. This prompted me to inquire more about this aspect. I asked one of the respondents, about using up funds without making a project proposal to the international office. The respondent responded in the following way:

*Sometimes the manager has the authority to use up a limited amount of funds for some small projects that do not need to be approved by the international office, however, he must account for it and show reason why it was necessary.*

According to Jenkins and Grey (1983), bureaucracy is conceived in terms of the upper levels of the hierarchy and their activities are seen in terms of policy formation rather than the sequential aspects of the policy process including implementation. (Jenkins & Grey 1983, 3). They further explain that the process of implementation process is left unattended by those in upper levels of hierarchy positions.

The results mentioned above indicated that the hierarchical levels in FBOs could affect the implementation process on the ground. There is danger that the ones in upper levels of hierarchy could focus more on the policy process while neglecting the actual practical activities of the organization. In this case FBOs should focus on one without neglecting the other.

## 5.2 Funding of Projects

In this theme participants explained their views on funding of the various projects. The questions asked were:

*How does the organization get funds for its projects?*

*Who pays the employees?*

One of the participants, who is in leadership position at World Vision shed a lot of light on this theme. He explained to me that the organization gets its funds from donations from various western countries and the international office is responsible for fund raising, and has enough funds to pay employees. In regard to project funding he said

*Each sponsor is different, some are specific others are not, others need a detailed report on how money is used, but others don't mind. Some of the sponsors have specific projects that they would like to fund, for example one of the sponsors from the UK is very interested in schools, most of his funds is used on improving the conditions of schools where our sponsors children are attending. But most of our sponsors take one or two children who they pay their school fees*

The issue about how long it takes before funds arrive, and can be used to implement project came up during this discussion. The respondent explained by stating:

*Money arrives too late, that is one major problem here. As a manager, I feel bad sometimes because I have to force these people to work hard, some of them stay here thorough the night, as you must have noticed, especially the sponsorship department it is sometimes so busy, because they have to met deadlines.*

Another respondent, an employee at World Vision and in the sponsorship department, explained how he had to work all night.

*Like yesterday, when everybody left I remained here, I left the office this morning at four. These Christmas cards have be put in the mail by next week, we don't have volunteers willing to travel to all the schools, so I had to fill them up so the sponsors can get them in time before Christmas*

According to the responses and data collected, sponsors of projects seem to be in control on the use of funds. It was clear that sponsors of projects can decide what projects to fund. Futhermore, the release of funds is delayed, and consequently affects negatively on the work within the organisation. However, it seems FBOs do not pay attention to the effect that delayed release of funds could have in development work. It was not clear from this response whether or not those in leadership positions were aware of the impact that delayed release of funds had on the implementation of projects. It seems from the data that the administration is not keen in ensuring that the aims of the organisations are met.

One case example as illustrated to me during one of my visit to a particular project is explained below.

*A classroom block that has four classrooms and two toilets one for boys and the other for girls had to be built by World Vision in a rural area to help to upgrade one primary school in remote rural area within the community. The project was estimated to take about four to six months, this was workable within one year, when the ADP manager forwarded this proposal for funding it was approved but the funds arrived six months into the year, the project was done hurriedly, the result was that the toilet block, which is pit laterin, was poorly done and now only one of the toilets can be used by both boys and girls. The other toilet is not functional. It might require more funds to make another toilet for the girls*

This example shows how projects on the ground are affected when funds arrive too late. The projects are done hurriedly and poorly. It also illustrates the fact that funds are wasted, on poorly done projects. The need to control funds seems to be the center of those in leadership position, rather than focusing on the quality of the projects they implement. Consequently, it seems they lose more money and end up with poorly done projects which need more funds to be well done. It is not clear whether those in leadership position are aware of the projects carried out poorly. It also seemed that there is no mechanism within the organization that ensures that the quality of projects is checked, for instance those that involve building and construction.

### 5.3 Image of the Organization to the Community

In this theme, participants expressed their views on the image of the organization to the community, or their experiences as workers of development work.

The questions asked were:

*How does the community view this organization?*

*How do the community members respond to the work you are involved in?*

In response to this question one of the participants explained that the community members' attitude was positive

*people around here expect a lot from us, they see World vision on TV and they think that there is a lot of money. People think that employees get a lot of money. Once I was looking for a rental house, when the landlords realized that I work at World vision, they increase the rent.*

Another respondent had a similar response, when asked about how the community members view the work they carry out. He responded by saying:

*FBO's are seen by community members to be more active and they are more trusted by the community. Some of the community members who come to volunteer here, are hoping that the organization may one day hire them, we have to keep reminding them that it is only volunteer work.*

According to this response, working in development work does sometimes have direct impact on the personal lives of employees. The same views were shared by other respondents, who also confirmed that sometimes they get neighbours coming to their homes asking them to help them get sponsorship for their children.

During this discussion it was clear that media does have an impact on the work of FBO's. As mentioned above, one of the respondents gets a negative response from the public because of the attitude created by the media. Roger Smith has researched on the effect of media on social work. In his work, he emphasizes the important impact that media can have on social work and the community. He maintains that media is both persuasive and highly influential. In light of this, Smith argues that there is a pervasive sense of social work being both misrepresented and unfairly treated by the media, but at the same time



being unable to do much to redress the balance. He further says, that the power of media cannot be viewed simplistically. While some have emphasized the role of the media in agenda-setting or framing public perceptions, others suggest that it is the nature of the audience response which is more important. (Smith, 2008, 85)

Another aspect that came up in this theme is that when dealing with community members it is possible to face confrontation. I participated in one of the training sessions, where the manager found himself in face- to- face confrontation with members of the community. In this case the members participating in one pastors training, had expected that the training was free. When the manager explained that they had to pay for the training, it was not taken kindly by the members. Concesequently, the manager found himself in a viscious confrontation with the participants of this training. It took a lot of skill and patience from him to get the group to understand the arrangement of the organization and the reason why they had to pay for the training.

The collected data indicates that community expectations can be higher than the organization can offer. According to Myers (1999) individuals at the grassroots level are virtually exposed to negative confrontation, from beneficiaries of aid. Moreover, Myers stresses the need for proper communication skills among leaders as they deal with the members of community. Working with the poor is deemed dangerous in a sense as it has the capacity of evoking negative emotions that easily lead to dangerous action (Narayan 2000, 102).

#### 5.4 Influence of Faith to development work

This theme enabled participants to respond to the issue of faith and how it affects in development work. The question asked was:

*How does faith affect in carrying out the organizations work?*

One respondent had a lot to say about the issue of faith in development work. According to him,

*the thing about faith is that it is very influential, many people in Africa are drawn to religion and are very faithful to follow everything. Religion is used by politicians when they are doing campaigns, and also promoting hiv/ aids awareness. During my time in Ghana, people normally came from the villages and volunteered to carry out different kinds of jobs in the churches organization, all we had to do is to make an announcement about it and the response normally was very good.*

According to the data collected, faith is a powerful tool. The data suggested that FBOs have the ability to use faith to initiate change within the community members. According to James (2008), faith in development work has an enormous ability to elicit motivated and voluntary service, ignite civil society advocacy and reach to the poorest at grassroots level. (James R. 2008, 86)

Another respondent had a slightly different opinion. According to him,

*Religion or faith is important because it makes people to volunteer in a lot of work, but again one has to be careful when dealing with religious people, we have worked a lot with pastors, evangelists and other religious leaders, we have noticed that they can at times use the bible for their own benefits, or for the wrong motives, so this difficult for us, but because we work in a Christian organization we try to promote Christian values wherever we go and anyone we work with.*

On the same question, another respondent, an employee from World Vision described:

*FBO's are seen by community members to be more active and they are more trusted by the community. Some sponsors even trust the organization even though they do not believe in their religion they*

*still want to send their money through World vision. And also we work with people from different religious background, muslims, orthodox and many more, we have never had conflict in religion.*

According to the collected data, faith played an important role as it creates trust among members of community and enables people to volunteer, in response to their work. However, the need to misuse religious principals for one's own benefit was also evident in the data collected. It seems, that faith is a powerful tool in development work because it addresses the moral aspect of an individual. Workers in FBOs, need the skill to know how to react and handle the issue of faith in their work. Some participants raised the same issue. James (2008) explains in his research that religion is indeed valued and trusted by the poor people, he goes ahead to explain that in poorer communities' religion is part of people's everyday activity (James R 2008, 86).

The analysis of this research indicated that power in Faith Based Organizations is exercised and experienced at different levels. These levels could range from personal to global level. This suggests a substantial degree of complexity, in the sense that these domains inevitably interact, and there is no definite hierarchy privileging one over another (Smith 2008, 24).

Each of the above mentioned themes could be portrayed in the different aspects of power discussed below.

### 5.5 The personal aspect of power

The analysis indicated that through personal identity power could be portrayed. As Garland, (2001), points out identity involves the generation of a set of characteristics by which on the one hand we categorize ourselves, and, on the other, the identification of qualities and attributes which are associated with those who are 'not one of us'.(Garland 2001, 17).

Dominell on the other hand argues that personal identity needs to be seen as a much more fluid and emergent concept, emerging from social interactions (Dominell 2004, 63).

This can be seen in the way that those within the organization view themselves as they carry out their work. For instance one of the respondents said, that the volunteers always have the hope of being employed. This statement shows how the perception of themselves is situated and how they view those who are not part of them, thus indicating an aspect of personal power. Still on this point, can be seen the issue of image of the community members, one of the respondent had indicated that community members expect too much from the organization, and this has an effect on their personal lives as well.

The respondents indicated the way in which the rest of the community members view them and the effect that that has on them.

## 5.6 The positional aspect of power

It can be seen as deriving from any of the following, organizational position, social status, religious standing or political office. Power within the sphere of bureaucratic activity can be said to be positional (Smith 2008, 65).

This was indicated by the respondents of the interview, clearly explaining how the positional aspect of power affects in different situations in their work. It was also indicated through interviews carried out and the observations made that the decision making process was influenced by the positional aspect of power.

Those in managerial position also seem to be affected by the positional aspect of power, one of the respondents who in management position indicated that the ultimate power to decide which projects will be funded does not belong to him, there by indicating the lack of power or limited amount of power. On the

other hand the respondent still has the power to use up some funds in implementing projects without asking from the head office. This power comes into effect in regard to the position that he holds in the organization.

When it comes to the issue of faith FBOs seem to stand out from the secular organizations. From the respondents it was indicated that some donors could have a lot of respect for the organization and trust it enough even though they do not share the same faith. This indicates the positional aspect that faith has in the working of development work.

### 5.7 Relational aspect of power

This portrayed itself in the relationships between individuals, groups and interests. Smith (2008), also points out that it is possible to argue that one person's power exceeds that of another where that individual has greater influence over a large number of issues.(Smith 2008, 63).

The interview analysis indicated that the relational aspect of power is evident especially in the process of implementing of projects. Moreover, the effect of the relational aspect of power could both be negative and positive in the implementation of projects.

The relational aspect of power can be seen within the organization itself. The implementing office of World Vision known as the Area Development Program (ADP) is incapable of making application for funding directly to the international office, they have to send the application to the zonal office, who sends to the national office and finally all financial applications are sent to the international office, who will then release the funds in the same order. It can be seen clearly then, one group's power exceeds the rest. Similarly within the organization, the manager has more power, even though members of the community are involved in indentifying social problems within their area, the manager controls and decides which areas to focus on. This is normally in relation to the organization's policy.

## 6 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPEMNT

The workers of community development work, social workers and the like should keep in mind the influence that power has when working with individuals in different capacities. The workers should ensure that the element of power does not act negatively on the clients or recipients of aid as in this case. Moreover, it can be presumed that members of community already feel the power distance between them and the organization or worker who represents the organization. A positive approach will enable openness, genuine information can be obtained and most importantly specific needs of individuals can be met.

The community development process requires special personal skills. As has been seen in this research, there are different elements that will affect especially when working with individuals, and professionals should be more aware of these elements. Skills like patient, good communication skills among others are required in the process of community development.

In order for organizations to thrive they should work hard to distribute power, it is important in development work initiatives because group work is inevitable and when people work in groups greater achievement is met (Pierson 2008, 42).

Faith Based organizations have the advantage of being very influential. FBOs should be encouraged to use especially in development initiatives. As has been discussed earlier faith is a powerful tool, and is especially important when working with poor communities as they have embraced faith as part of their daily activities.

On the other hand the element of power when used effectively within organizations is influential in ensuring that work is carried out well and tasks are accomplished. Bureaucracy is the tool that ensures this process. A rich organizational culture benefits the organization positively and should be

encouraged.

## 8 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The study has been an enriching process, I have learnt how to collect data and carry out the analysis process. However, the most important aspect during this study has been to put my thoughts, findings and theory in proper perspective, trying at the same time not to lose track of my research question. While going through the literature and collected material I realized how easy it is to drift away from the topic or give irrelevant material references.

I also realized that during the interview process different issues arise and respondents would like to dwell on issues with which they are familiar with. I learnt with time the importance of taking control of the interview and asking a relevant question when the answers being given could be drifting away from the issue at hand.

I also learnt during this process how to search for academic material that is relevant to my topic without getting confused. My writing skills have improved, as I endeavor to express myself in a more academic way and enable the reader to understand and develop interest for my research.

I have made enormous discoveries about the element of power, I learnt that there different aspects of it, and indeed there are many areas for future research. The different themes that came up during the interview process could be researched further. For instance the theme on project implementation. This is a wide topic and very important in development work. One specific area of future research would be on the project implementation process. Also the different dimensions of power could be further researched. I found this very interesting and I could in the future continue on the same issue on different dimensions.

My involvement in an organization involved in developmentwork, has been an eye-opener. I have learnt and understood the practical aspect of implementing projects and the whole process involved. I have now learnt that what comes to practice could be entirely different than theory and more often than not a lot of compromise is required in working life.



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## APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS

1. How does the organization initiate projects?
2. Who is involved in the process of initiating projects?
3. How does the organization get funds for its projects?
4. Who pays the employees?
5. How does the community view this organization?
6. How do the community members respond to the work you are involved in?
7. How does faith affect in carrying out the organizations work?