SOCIAL OUTCOMES AND UPGRADING OF DONOR LED AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS INTERVENTIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXTS

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ACRONYMS

- 1D1F One District-One-Factory
- 1V1D One Village One Dam
- AAGDS Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy
- ACE Adult Consumption Equivalent
- ADVANCE Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement
- AfCFTA African Continental Free Trade Area
- AGRA Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
- ASAL Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
- AVC Agricultural value chain
- AVCD Agricultural Value Chains Development Interventions
- AVCMP Agricultural Value Chain Mentorship Project
- BRAC Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
- CAPECS Capacity Enhancement and Community Support
- CAPI Computer-Assisted Personal Interview
- CARD Community Aid for Rural Development
- CC Commodity Chains
- CGIAR Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
- CIDA Canadian International Development Agency
- CIRAD Centre Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement
- COCOBOD Cocoa Board

CPESDP	Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies	
СРР	Convention People's Party	
CSA	Central Statistics Agency	
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research	
CVR	Content Validity Ratio	
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization	
FAOSTAT	Food and Agriculture Organization Corporate Statistical Database	
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy	
FBO	Farmer Based Organization	
FCS	Food Consumption Score	
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions	
GAC	Global Affairs of Canada	
GATTP	Ghana Agricultural Technology Transfer Project	
GAWU	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union	
GCAP	Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project	
GCC	Global Commodity chain The global commodity chain	
GDI	Global Development Institute	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation	
GROW	Greater Rural Opportunity for Women project	
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service	

GVC	Global value chain
HFIAS	Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
ICTD	Institutional Capacity Development Theory
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
ILGS	Institute Local Government Studies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INRA	Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ISFM	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
ITC	International Trade Centre
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Associates
METASIP	Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan
MGAs	Male Gender Advocates
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MOAP	Market Oriented Agricultural Project
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission

NG	Northern Ghana	
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations	
NLC	National Liberation Council	
NRGP	Northern Rural Growth Project	
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance	
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	
OFY	Operation Feed Yourself	
OFYI	Operation Feed Your Industries	
PBAs	Program-Based Approaches	
PFAG	Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana	
PFJ	Planting for Food and Jobs	
РНС	Population and Housing Census	
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council	
PNP	People's National Party	
ProNet	Professional Network North	
PRSPs	poverty reduction strategy papers	
PRUDA	Partnership for Rural Development Action	
RTIMP	Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme	
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme	
SARI	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute	
SC	Supply Chain	

SCM	Supply Chain Management	
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
SFC	State Farm Corporation	
SRID	Statistics, Research, and Information Directorate	
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa	
SWAps	Sector-Wide Approaches	
TUDRIDEP	Tumu Deanery Rural Integrated Development Programme	
UGFC	United Ghana Farmers Council	
UKAID	United Kingdom Agency for International Development	
UN	United Nations	
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Organization	
URBANET	Urban Agriculture Network	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	
UWR	Upper West Region	
VCD	Value Chain Development	
VSLAs	Village savings and loans associations	
WAAPP	West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme	
WB	World Bank	
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development	
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment	
WLF	Woman Lead Farmer	

- WSA Woman Sales Agent
- WTO World Trade Organisation
- WWD Wa West District
- WWDMTDP Wa West District Medium Term Development Plan
- YIAP Youth in Agriculture Programme

ABSTRACT

The complexity in development assistance coupled with recent shifts towards neoliberal development paradigms has raised the need to explore recent dynamics. This current process has raised questions on the capacity of donor led AVCD development interventions to yield social upgrading and foster ex-post sustainability to drive economic growth. This study investigated specific research questions relative to how social outcomes manifest among intervention beneficiaries, how social outcomes influence social upgrading, and whether there are adequate institutional arrangements to support ex-post upgrading of intervention outcomes. The study employed mixed research methods techniques and used both direct quotes and data visualization tools to undertake analysis. In all, 393 smallholders from four communities in the Wa West District who benefited from the GROW project, 8 institutional heads, and 19 development experts were sampled and interviewed. The findings suggest that various social outcomes can impact social upgrading through multiple mechanisms. This study identifies two outcomes: food security, and poverty. As a pioneering contribution to this field of knowledge, the study established "belonging to a Farmer Based Association (FBOs)", "Participation in the pricing of Soya", "Household Decision marking", and "right to land" as proxies to undertake the first ever examination of the relationship between social outcomes and social upgrading. The study found that higher levels of food security and lower poverty rates are linked to participation in FBOs. This indicates the potential influence of food security and poverty levels on social upgrading through the right to association. The second relationship identified is that food security and low Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) can lead to increased empowerment by enabling greater participation in household decision-making. The final relationship identified is that food security and low MPI can also reduce discrimination, particularly regarding land tenure. From an institutional perspective, the study emphasized that it is crucial to prioritize social factors in production to achieve social upgrading and ex-post sustainability.

Keywords: Social Outcomes, Social Upgrading, Agricultural Value Chains Development Interventions, Institutional Capacities

DECLARATION

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.0 Introduction

In Africa, agriculture remains a primary source of livelihood and a significant contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Lopes, 2019; Oxford Business Group, 2021; Westland, 2021). However, studies suggest that over 750 million people in the continent live in extreme poverty and of these, about two-thirds are residing in rural areas (Andriesse, 2018; Clementi et al., 2019). The dominant livelihood mechanism in these rural areas is also small-scale farms, providing rural livelihoods support to households and generating about 80% employment across diverse value chains(Akash, 2015; Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020; OECD, 2013; Westland, 2021).

Despite the various significant potentials and contributions of agriculture in Africa (African Center for Economic Transformation, 2017; Lopes, 2019), the sector is faced with many challenges (Desclee et al., 2021; Webber & Labaste, 2009). From scholarly sources, these include limited market space (Kilelu et al., 2017a), high incidence of post-harvest losses (Stathers et al., 2020), relatively lower factor returns on productivity (Jallow et al., 2021), limited affordability and availability of innovation or inputs (Ataei et al., 2020a), and principally ineffective managerial, sociocultural and technical production capacities (Desclee et al., 2021).

In line with the current global agenda for cooperation and partnership between governments, civil society and the private sector, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17) has triggered reflections of the critical roles of diverse stakeholders in harnessing economic and social potentials in Africa (UNEP, 2021). However, the dominant response thus far has been renewed focus on modernizing and commercializing agriculture away from primary production and central technologies of managing productivity (African Center for Economic Transformation, 2017; Baumann, 2019; Mabe et al., 2019; Olopade, 2014).

In line with the above agenda, development assistance has evolved along capitalist orientations as donor interventions in the agricultural space has significantly shifted in favour of value chain approaches (Lopes, 2019). However, there has been limited scholarly interest in taking census of this mechanism as it seems donor activities out-space the amount of case studies presently available. Available statistics indicate there were more than 63,000 donor-funded agricultural development projects worldwide in 2003 (Wolfensohn, 2010) and over 19,000 projects by the OECD and multilateral agencies alone in 2010 (Chandy et al., 2013). A significant feature in introducing these value chains approaches to Africa's agricultural sector is that many of these donor led projects mostly are designed as "catalytic" or "pilot" interventions (UNDP, 2013) and as such often have as their primary purpose to discover and test new practices, concepts or solutions to poverty(Cooley, & Kohl, 2016).

This development presents complex set of innovations in development assistance, agricultural development, poverty reduction, rural development and development management more generally. It is therefore in this domain that this study has observed research gaps that are critical to advancing both frontiers of knowledge and practice.

1.1 Background

The popularity of value chain strategies in donor interventions has surged in discussions on agriculture, development and aid in Africa (Clay & Feeney, 2019). This observation is corroborated by widespread donor interest in community-level agricultural value chain development interventions (Lamboll et al., 2015a; Osei-Amponsah et al., 2018) where instead of targeting farm (unit) level productivity with enhanced extension packages, entire communities made of poor smallholders are subjects of interventions (Kwao & Amoak, 2022; Lamboll et al., 2015a; Osei, 2019; Stoian et al., 2012).

The extant literature has it that an Agricultural Value Chain (AVC) encompasses the sequence of value-added activities that farmers and other actors undertake to bring a product from its conception to its final consumer (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b; Clay & Feeney, 2019; Kaplinsky, 2002; Kirt Hainzer et al., 2019). Scholars are unanimous in the handiness of this targeted means of extending aid against the previous wholesome and welfare based interventions which usually target rural development in abstract terms (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020c; Andriesse, 2018; Vicol et al., 2018a). The most agreement has been in the potential of empowering poor people (Neilson & Shonk, 2014) and setting their communities up to economically participate in high earned markets (Westland, 2021). This is believed to have sustainable ramifications in addressing poverty and also ensuring aid effectiveness whereby the catalytic potential of interventions can be realized (Lamboll et al., 2015a).

The Value Chain (VC) approach itself originates from the francophone Filiere (link) approach that was used by development scholars as an analytical tool to study inequalities in agricultural production and global commodity trade (Gereffi, 1999, 2014; Kaplinsky, 2000). Its widespread adoption as a poverty intervention and development approach has been attributed to events following post Washington consensus in the early 2000s (Donovan et al., 2015; Gereffi, 2014; Gibbon, 2003). According to Neilson (2014), the VC approach has since the post Washington consensus been transformed into an instrument for development assistance by informing strategies for intervening in agricultural commercialization and market linkages for poor smallholders.

From this perspective, the VC as an approach, is used to map key actors involved in a production process as well as identifying and removing bottlenecks between producers, traders, processors, transporters, banks, and other actors (Kirt Hainzer et al., 2019). From the viewpoint of development practitioners also the VC as a concept can help in identifying and filling gaps necessary for lifting smallholders out of an assumed stagnant agricultural sector, isolation from markets and perpetual poverty (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b; Kaplinsky, 2002).

Against this background, the value chains concept has evolved as both an analytical and operational model to deliver pro-poor market development objectives (Kirt Hainzer et al., 2019). More recently also as a mechanism for experimenting or piloting neoliberal

development management strategies in the public sectors of developing countries (Buffardi, 2011; Cooper, 2013; Cotula et al., 2019; Martey et al., 2014; Osei, 2019). The approach is expected to influence, upscale and occupy a central place in development policy, economic strategy and development practice especially in the global south where structural adjustments and economic integration still remain largely works in progress (Botchway, 2001; Castellanet & Diepart, 2015; Desclee et al., 2021; Odusola, 2021; Vreugdenhil et al., 2012).

Following the above orientation to development, and as agriculture continues to play central roles in the employment of poor people across Africa (Odusola, 2021c), several donors such as the United Kingdom Agency for International Development (UKaid), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Global Affairs of Canada (GAC) together with their respective governments, are seen channelling their development assistance to African countries in the form of direct interventions to develop and integrate smallholders in agro-value chains (Emerging Markets Group 2008, Parker 2008, Grygie 2007, Marlelova et al. 2008, Spilsbury and Byrne 2007, Kula et al. 2006).

These interventions; incidentally referred in the academic community (Altenburg, 2007; Jana Herold, 2020) as donor-led Agricultural Value Chains Development Interventions (AVCD), offer opportunities to access input and output markets, increase access to production-enhancing institutions, credit facilities and market information, and represent another paradigm shift in donor approaches to development assistance (Kula et al. 2006). Along with this conceptual shift in international development assistance, Neilson (2014) noted changes in donor-led interventions in agricultural development and poverty reduction from its core roots in community development and rural development to entrepreneurship and market systems development strategies.

Recent scholarly contributions have raised concerns on upgrading interventions (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b; Ebata & Huettel, 2019a). Two types of upgrading have been

advanced in the scholarship: economic upgrading, and social upgrading. Of these two, there is growing concern for broader engagement with social upgrading to ensure sustainability of outcomes and replicability (Marslev et al., 2022). Whiles social upgrading relates to the idea of improving the social conditions and welfare of workers and communities within global value chains in the extant literature, this study seeks to draw on existing understanding to stimulate discussions on social upgrading in smallholder agricultural value chains. Social upgrading has become a critical subject in development studies for several reasons including its role in sustainable poverty reduction, sustainable integration, and inclusivity of smallholders and their local communities in economic growth efforts (Adebayo et al., 2009; L. G. A. Amoah, 2016b; Castellanet & Diepart, 2015, 2015; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002).

In terms of the current global agenda, this new attention can accelerate the achievement of the sustainable development goals particularly goals 2, 8, 12 and 17 as well as recent post covid-19 advocacies for localizing agricultural value chains to foster resilience of local food systems (Desclee et al., 2021).

Against this background, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on social upgrading of donor-led AVCD interventions relative to the theoretical proposition of propelling pro-poor led sustainable development. This will contribute significantly to the needed attention in development policy and extend the existing knowledge of aid effectiveness or the means to achieving development effectiveness through development assistance in AVCs more broadly.

1.2 Problem Statement

Within the domain of pro-poor agricultural development in liberal frameworks, the academic merit of VC analysis is beyond doubt (Clay & Feeney, 2019). Agricultural development has shifted and evolved in Africa (Atosina Akuriba et al., 2021). Part of this evolution can be seen in significant donor interest in AVCD as a strategic pathway to local economic growth and sustainable rural development (Ebata & Huettel, 2019b; Riisgaard et al., 2010; Touboulic & Walker, 2015; Usadolo & Caldwel, 2016). However, the agency of AVCD interventions as tools of soft power remains topical in scholarly discourses (Feldman, 2019; M. K. Jha &

Pankaj, 2021a; Kydd & Dorward, 2001; Neilson, 2014). Besides this dimension, existing studies on AVCD have primarily focused on the following areas below.

Firstly, VCs for development research has generally attracted scholarly attention to the effectiveness of pilot interventions in addressing poverty and development outcomes among immediate smallholding beneficiaries. Rather than assess the strategic utility of pilot interventions in resourcing future and ex-post efforts in poverty reduction, studies in this domain have focused largely on the efficiency and effectiveness of pilot interventions as ends in their own right instead of as means to broader liberal development outcomes where pilot interventions could effectively diffuse and incidence on local policy and development strategy (Kirt Hainzer et al., 2019; Kula et al., 2006; Reji, 2013; Riisgaard et al., 2010; van Buuren et al., 2018).

Secondly, another domain studies have focused on is human and food security outcomes of AVCD interventions in Africa. These studies often seek to measure the contributions of AVCD interventions to poverty reduction, food security, environmental sustainability, gender and other livelihood outcomes (Desclee et al., 2021; Ebata & Huettel, 2019a; Hainzer et al., 2019a; Rutherford et al., 2016; Vroegindewey & Hodbod, 2018). For example, case studies have shown that donor led AVCD interventions positively impact on income inequality and poverty reduction (Andriesse, 2018; Begovic et al., 2007; Narayan et al., 2009; Westland, 2021). Also, other studies have shown the critical role of AVCD interventions on gender equity by empowering women and integrating them in global community markets (Asitik & Abu, 2020a; Malapit et al., 2020; Mundy, 2010).

Thirdly, the extant literature have given due attention to the governance challenges of AVC and the critical role of technology and digitization (Gereffi et al., 2005; S. Jha et al., 2020; Kuijpers & Swinnen, 2016; Lemma et al., 2016; Mishra & Dey, 2018; Termeer et al., 2018; Wen & Hou, 2015). Within this domain, studies have looked at power interplays and information asymmetry among actors by showing how power plays vital roles in shaping

producer and buyer relations and determining prices (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b; Atosina Akuriba et al., 2021; Clay & Feeney, 2019; Jordaan et al., 2014).

Although these studies have fostered an understanding of AVCD and donor interventions in Africa, there are still critical gaps especially on the subject of upgrading. Firstly, although there are several studies on the outcomes of AVC development schemes, most studies have focused on livelihood and food security outcomes, as shown earlier but are not linked to social upgrading.

Studies are generally limited on social upgrading at the smallholder level especially in the context of Africa (Lamboll et al., 2015a; Osei-Amponsah et al., 2018). Existing studies on social upgrading generally focus on workers welfare, fair wages and salaries (Barrientos et al., 2011a). However, studies on how AVC development interventions influence social conditions (i.e. changes in land tenure, gender roles) for production are limited (Barrientos et al., 2011a; Marslev et al., 2022). For example, studies have shown that the volume of pilot interventions in Agriculture surpasses local capacities at the national and subnational levels to upgrade intervention outcomes expost (Easterly 2001; Roberts 2003).

In particular, Botchway, (2001) presents a paradox between ex-ante expectations of upgrading in donor led AVC development interventions and real mechanisms to upgrade interventions ex-post in Northern Ghana. Synthesis of research by Easterly (2001) indicates that there is no apparent relationship between the prevalence of donor-led AVCD interventions and the widely held expectation of upgrading in Africa. This presents a critical gap in the extant literature hence informs objectives one and two of the study (**GAP 1**).

This limitation presents a critical knowledge gap given the vital role of social upgrading and perceptions in catalysing social-technical transitions in agriculture (Fagerberg & Srholec, 2013; Lemma et al., 2016; Vogel et al., 2020). Understanding the context of social upgrading from a systems perspective (Bawden et al., 1984; Mangnus & Van Westen, 2018) can provide insights towards two principal domains critical to agricultural aid effectiveness; (a) the

willingness of both primary and secondary chain actors (Porter & Kramer, 2019) to continue to participate in AVC schemes when donors/pilot interventions phase out and (b) willingness of policy makers to graft pilot strategies and innovations into broader policy and development management.

Secondly, the extant literature shows that donor led AVC development interventions constitute innovations and significant paradigm shifts in agricultural extension and development management in general (Ammani & Abdullahi, 2015; Kolavalli, 2019). With agricultural extension still pursued as a public good and tied to rural development policies which jointly are publicly funded in Africa, there is currently no knowledge on how these transitions can marry each other-effectively when donors exit pilot interventions (Ataei et al., 2020b; Botchway, 2001; Iza, 2019; Mango et al., 2018; Odusola, 2021). The general absence of studies on the institutional arrangements for upgrading and overcoming the barriers to adopting AVC schemes raises serious concerns on effective diffusion of intervention to the institutional arrangements necessary for upgrading AVC schemes or even specific outcomes in Africa (GAP 2). This gap also constitutes objective three of this study.

In summary, studies into donor-led AVCD interventions present a complex mix of expectations and realities. Often, the motivation for such studies has stemmed from the success stories presented in pilot projects' reports and media reviews over short-term project impacts whiles actual outcomes ex-post continue to attract concerns for aid and development effectiveness (Desclee et al., 2021). Thus far, knowledge of how donor-led AVCD interventions catalyse upgrading is underdeveloped. This, therefore, calls for the need for empirical contextual examination of the social outcomes that can inform upgrading as well as assessment of the possible institutional arrangements for upgrading of interventions' outcomes.

1.3 Research Objectives

From the gaps above, the study seeks to understand how social outcomes from donor-led AVCD interventions influence social upgrading and what institutional arrangements are

necessary for social upgrading in beneficiary communities. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve following research objectives:

- 1. To identify mechanisms through which social outcomes of donor-led AVCD interventions emerge.
- 2. To examine social outcomes and how they influence social upgrading in assisted communities.
- 3. To analyze the institutional arrangements necessary for social upgrading.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions therefore guide the pursuit of the above objectives

- 1. What are the social outcomes of donor-led AVCD interventions and how do they manifest?
- 2. How do social outcomes impact social upgrading in assisted communities?
- 3. What are the institutional arrangements necessary for social upgrading?

Table 1.1 below illustrates the research objectives and corresponding questions.

Research Objectives	Corresponding Research Questions
1. To identify mechanisms through which social	1. What are the social outcomes of donor-led AVCD interventions ?
outcomes of donor-led AVCD interventions	2. In what ways do social outcomes from donor led AVCD interventions
emerge.	manifest?
3. To examine social outcomes and how they	1. In what ways do social outcomes impact the process of upgrading in assisted
influence upgrading in assisted communities.	communities?
	2. What has been the effect of social outcomes on smallholder acceptability and
	participation in donor led AVCD schemes?
	3. Similar to economic outcomes, is it possible to quantify social outcomes?
	4. Can measuring social outcomes help advance ex-post upgrading of interventions?
5. To analyze the institutional arrangements	1. What are the institutional arrangements necessary for social upgrading?
necessary for social upgrading.	2. In what ways will new knowledge on social upgrading enhance policy and
	development practice?

Table 1.0 : Research Logical Framework: Research Objectives and Corresponding Research Questions

Source: Author's Construct, 2020

1.5 Scope of the Study; Why Ghana?

To address the above research gaps, the study will investigate donor led AVCD interventions with empirical data and evidence from northern Ghana. Ghana is particularly suitable for exploring the dynamics of social upgrading in donor-led AVC interventions in sub-Saharan Africa for peculiar reasons. First, from the extant literature on Africa, Ghana has been one of the topic destinations for donor-led AVCD interventions due to its relatively political stability (Ammani & Abdullahi, 2015; Issah, 2020; Kolavalli, 2019). Second, Ghana is one of the countries that has optioned significant donor projects in agriculture over the last decades (A.-G. Abdulai et al., 2018; Avea et al., 2016; Bolaji & Apusigah, 2018). Third, Ghana recently publicized its resolve to stop donor aid in national development by announcing a "Ghana beyond aid" development framework (Kumi, 2020). The agenda of Ghana beyond aid gave the impression that the country has consolidated gains from donor interventions and have strategically positioned to use capacities developed or acquired from these donor led pilot interventions for local or subnational economic transformation (Biscaye et al., 2017; Easterly et al., 2004; Elayah, 2016a; Flint & Meyer zu Natrup, 2019). This makes Ghana an interesting case to explore or examine if these donor-led interventions, especially in the agricultural sector (i.e. AVC), have developed the necessary local capacities to transform agriculture.

Fourth, within Ghana also, climate change in the semi-arid part has profoundly impacted agriculture, especially food production (Lawson et al., 2020; Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner-Kerr, 2015). The confluence of climate change and land degradation has triggered several donor led AVC interventions in northern Ghana (Ahmed et al., 2016; Misra, 2014). As a result, northern Ghana has benefitted from several AVC pilot interventions(Mangnus & Van Westen, 2018). Of these projects, the study focuses on the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Greater Rural Opportunity for Women project (GROW) project. GROW project is ideal for this study because it had a clear mission of social and economic empowerment through involvement

of women in traditionally dominant masculine activities such as owning land and direct cultivation. GROW is suitable in accessing social upgrading by understanding whether sociocultural conditions fostering capacity and participation in commercial agriculture evolves after pilot interventions.

The GROW project is a Soya VCD intervention designed as a multiyear project with cascading phases. The project was initiated in 2012 and phased out in 2018. The Government of Canada funded it through Canada's International Development Agency (now Global Affairs of Canada) with CD\$20 million. GROW was designed to improve rural women's productive capacity by strengthening production and market linkages, diversification of production and income streams, and creating nutritional (local demand) awareness of soya. Using market-driven approaches, MEDA's resourcefulness contributed to establishing and strengthening market linkages for the project (Crentsil et al., 2019).

1.6 Significance and Contributions of the Study

This research has significant contributions in the following areas: (a) addressing critical knowledge gaps, (b) relevance to the aid effectiveness and sustainable development agenda, (c) consistent with national policy and research agenda and (d) has implications for development practice.

For (a), the research has identified three primary research and knowledge gaps. By providing empirical evidence to answer these gaps, the study will contribute to the literature with evidence of how AVC interventions can frontload social upgrading thereby showing more insights into the social upgrading literature. In addition, empirical evidence from Ghana can set a foundation for discussion within the literature by joining ongoing discourses on neoliberal development in Africa and whether it leads to social empowerment by changing the sociocultural barriers impeding production. By joining the neoliberal discourse, the research will make a significant empirical contribution to the literature by addressing three major gaps identified in Section 1.2.

For (b), the research is directly related to the SDGs; goal 1 on no poverty, goal 2 on zero hunger, goal 5 on Gender equality, goal 8 on economic growth and goal 17 on partnerships and cooperation among governments and private sector. By understanding this research, the evidence provides empirical results in shaping current understanding of the SDGs in Africa. The research, therefore, can help in finetuning and tracking the progress of the above SDGs in particular. The study is thus well grounded on the international development agenda as it falls directly within SDGs 1,2,5, 8 and 17

For (c), the research is also relevant in Ghana especially when there are ongoing national discussions on updating national agricultural policies and initiatives within the context of Ghana beyond aid. The findings can therefore help in providing some information that could be useful in shaping national discourse on developing AVCs in Ghana

Finally, for (d), the research findings can have implications for development practice. For example, results can shape how donors can improve local capacities so that after the closure of projects, the local capabilities developed can be used in upgrading and scaling up the innovations introduced. Additionally, the findings can provide insights into how such donor-led AVC interventions need to be designed to reflect local capacity development, and to fit for purpose within existing institutional arrangements and how to overcome the barriers to adoption of VC schemes not only in Ghana but across Africa.

1.7 Study Outline

The present study is comprised of six interconnected chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive analysis. The first chapter serves as an introduction, providing an extensive background to the study. It offers an overview of the theories and concepts that will inform the subsequent literature review. Additionally, this chapter outlines the research problem, research objectives, research questions, study significance, justification for the chosen research settings to generate empirical data, study limitations, and concludes with a chapter summary.

Chapter two constitutes the core conceptual framework and literature review of the study. It establishes the fundamental conceptual strands and themes that permeate throughout the thesis. This chapter conducts a thorough examination of the Value Chains theory, tracing its evolution from a theoretical construct to a conceptual framework and an operational model in the realm of development studies. Furthermore, it presents a comprehensive review of the practices employed by donors in agriculture and human development, emphasizing their relevance to the current understanding of the dynamics of social upgrading within donor-led Agricultural Value Chain Development (AVCD) interventions aimed at fostering local economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The primary focus lies in exploring the conceptual linkages between donor-led AVC interventions, sustainable local development, and the dominant neoliberal philosophy.

Chapter three provides an in-depth exploration of the research context by offering a meticulous review of Ghana's development profile, the specific profile of the study area, as well as an examination of the sampled project (GROW).

Chapter four elucidates the methodological design, tools, and approaches adopted for the study. It delineates the rigorous methodology employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. This chapter outlines the specific techniques and instruments employed for data collection and analysis.

Chapter five serves as the empirical foundation of the study. This chapter presents empirical results pertaining to social outcomes and investigates their influence on the process of upgrading in Ghana (objective 1). Subsequently, it examines the impact of social outcomes on social upgrading (objective 2). The third part of this chapter focuses on the results related to the institutional arrangements essential for effective social upgrading (objective 3).

Chapter six, the final chapter, situates the findings from chapter five within the broader scholarly discourse. It discusses the relevance of the research findings, highlights the contributions of the

study to the existing literature, and explores the implications of the results for policy and development practice in Ghana and beyond.

1.8 Limitations of the Research

The selection of an appropriate methodology in carrying out social research in major pandemic such as Covid-19, has been widely acknowledged. This notwithstanding, stringent initiatives were undertaken to employ appropriate methods for this study without minimising considerations for due diligence in methodological procedures. Secondary data such as institutional reports, budget statements, and etcetera are usually hard to come by in Ghanaian institutions and several researchers have reported having to undergo bureaucratic protocols to gain access. This was a limitation to the study especially when the time allotted for data collection occasioned with lockdowns and ban on travels. This made time and cost a major limitation the study data collection and field work were delayed for a whole year. Despite these limitations, appropriate adjustments and quality standards were made inorder not to compromise the quality of the research.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

All researchers at the University of Manchester are required by law to follow a specific ethical procedure by submitting a formal application for ethical review. This obligation was satisfied, and the study properly received ethical approval.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The complexity in aid or development assistance coupled with recent shifts in development practice has raised the need to explore recent dynamics. This current process has raised questions on the capacity donor led AVCD development interventions to yield social upgrading and foster ex-post sustainability of interventions. The chapter raised and discussed specific question relative to how social outcomes manifest among intervention beneficiaries, how social outcomes influence social upgrading, and whether there are adequate institutional arrangements to support ex-post upgrading of intervention outcomes. Despite volumes of research in support of the prevalence of

this type of donor mechanism in extending development aid in Northern Ghana, contributions to the above research questions remain unknown.

This introductory chapter has presented conceptual and theoretical overview that is framing the research, the research problem, the research questions, objectives and the study's justification. Additionally, the chapter has presented the study outline as well.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter traces the ideological and philosophical debates of social upgrading, its elements and the institutional arrangements for effective social upgrading within the context donor led AVCD interventions. In this regard, the following concepts are observed as variables in conceptualizing the study; development aid (captured as donors), Agricultural Value Chains interventions (captured as pilot projects), Neoliberalism (captured as the ideologies influencing development assistance) and Value Chain Upgrading (captured as expectations on value enhancing capacity transfers from development assistance). The chapter starts by first providing a nuanced understanding of the concept of value chain, the emergence of agricultural value chains concept and academic journey of value chain towards agricultural value chain development (AVCD). Secondly, the chapter engages neoliberal ideologies shaping aid proliferation in AVC for Development in both research and practice. Thirdly, the chapter then reviews literature on upgrading and its typologies. By taking a peculiar interest in social upgrading, the chapter engages the different pathways through which social upgrading manifest (Objective 1). Fourth, the chapter links social upgrading to different sustainability outcomes and highlighted the economic, social and environmental outcomes of AVCD interventions (Objective 2),

To provide scientific basis for investigating this raging academic debate on ex-post upgrading of interventions' outcomes, this chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual design for the study. The chapter acknowledges that, for aid effectiveness, specifically donor aid in AVCD interventions to be examined comprehensively, there was the need to undertake such enterprises with comprehensive frameworks. The chapter additionally overviews the systems and institutional theories to provide theoretical support for analysing all the three research objectives. The chapter also discusses the implications of these theories to the study as well as a discussion of the study's
conceptual framework. Finally, the chapter links the nuances of AVCD through an institutional lens by drawing on the role of institutions in shaping social upgrading (Objective 3).

2.1 Concept of Value Chain

Value Chains (VC) is a binomial concept comprising two basic elements: value, and chain. The chain element symbolises linkage of different phases of organisational and technical inputs such as real transformation and input of assorted services as a product or service transitions from delivery to consumption (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020d; Dutta, 2021). The value component refers to a process of addition that accrues as chain actors contribute to enhancing processes of transformation and utilisation (Porter & Kramer, 2019). VC, therefore, describes "the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception through the different phases of production, to delivery to final consumers and then disposal after its use" (Kaplinsky, 2002, p. 14).

In the context of agri-food, the VC documents the journey of products from "farm to fork" (Ammani & Abdullahi, 2015; Kolade et al., 2020). Beyond the agri-food context, the VC concept has universal application in nearly all aspects of civilisation, including corporate and economic governance. To this extent, it may be difficult to determine accurate distinctions among the overlapping concepts that have evolved to constitute the full package of the VC scholarship. However, it is still worth a valuable academic contribution to offer some core definitions.

As posited by Omilola and Robele (2017), there are different typologies of the concept of VC framework. Basically, these concepts differ in their focus, in the way in which they are applied and activity that is emphasized. Also, they vary in their theoretical foundation and analytical focus (Table 2.1). Although they may differ in their specific approaches, they all turn to share a common focus on the interactions between companies and the processes involved in delivering products to end-users. The aim is to identify opportunities for enhancing productivity and overcoming

constraints. Marslev et al. (2022) have observed that, the value chain concept has undergone numerous changes in the literature. Despite these transformations, the various iterations of the concept have consistently emphasized the importance of linkages for gaining value and competitive advantages, as shown below (see Sections 2.1.1 to 2.17).

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Table 2.1 Main VC concepts and theories

Element	<i>Filière</i> approach (1960s)	Commodity chain (1974)	Supply chain (1980s)	Value chain (Porter's approach) (1980s)	Global Commodity chain (1990s)	World economic triangle (2000s)	Global value chai (2000s)	n Global Product Networks (2010
Definition	Actual commodity flows, involved agents and activities within a commodity chain	A network of labour and production processes resulting in a final commodity product	Every effort involved in producing and delivering a final product or service, from the supplier's supplier to the customer's customer	The full range of activities required to respond to consumer demand through different phases of production, including physical transformation and the input of various producer services	Actors and their activities for setting up and coordinating production networks	Interconnection between businesses, suppliers and associated institutions in a particular field to increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally	The full range of traditional VC activities and the movement of products across broad geographic space that firms and workers have carried out in inter-firm networks to create a product and see it through to completion, utilization and disposal.	Illumination of causal links between production networks dynamics and territorial outcomes.
Theoretica l backgroun d	• No unified theoretical approach but relates more to national innovation systems theory	• World systems theory derived from dependency theory	• No unified theoretical foundation	• No unified theoretical foundation	World systems theoryOrganizational sociology	World systems theoryOrganizational sociology	 Global commodity chains Institutional Entrepreneurship 	 Institutional Entrepreneurs hip World Systems Theory
Objectives	 Physical inputs & outputs, prices and value added in marketing chains Focus on agricultural commodities 	• Explanation of the World – capitalist economy	• Fixing the suboptimal deployment of inventory and capacity caused by complexities between functional groups in demand and supply arrangements	 Focus on industrial firms Competitive advantage by breaking down its activities into the value added 	 Power relations of globally linked production systems (meso and micro level) Focus on industrial goods 	 Upgrade of regions or clusters Linking cluster development & value chains 	 Governance and regulation systems Linking horizontal and vertical linkages 	• Focused on equitable distribution of economic rent and uneven territorial development
Underlyin g concepts	• No underlying concept (neutral)	 division of labour Core periphery- semi periphery 	• Buyer-supplier partnership and alliance	• Operations and managerial economics	 Governance (consumer driven / buyer-driven) Organisational learning / upgrading 	 Governance Upgrading of clusters 	 Governance Transaction costs Upgrading 	 Governance Entrepreneurs hip Local Economic growth
Features	 Static model National boundaries 	 Holistic point of view Macro-oriented Qualitative analysis 	Systems approachStrategy-orientedCustomer focus	 Restricted to production processes at firm level No attention to international territorial arrangements 	• Focus on governance and international market development	• Qualitative Analysis	 Composition of commodity chain, GCC World Economic Triangle 	 Organisational and Geographical Structure of Chain Networks Systems Approach
Key authors	• Raikes et al. (2000)	• Wallerstein (1974)	• Cooper et al., 1997	• Michael Porter (1985)	• Gereffi (1994)	• Messner (2002)	Humphrey & Schmitz (2000)Gereffi et al. (2005)	 Yeung (2020) Nadvi et al., (2018) Barrientos et al (2011)
Primary Focus	 How local production systems are linked to processing industry, trade, export and final consumption Physical and quantitative technical relationships, summarised in flow charts of commodities and mapping of transformation relationship 	• Role of firms and chains in forming the 'warp and woof' of the commodity system	 Upstream on integrating supplier and producer processes, improving efficiency and reducing waste The costs and efficiencies of supply, and the flow of materials from their various sources to their final destinations. Reducing costs and attaining operational excellence 	 How can a firm provide customers with a product or service of equivalent value compared with competitors, but at lower cost (strategy of cost reduction)? How can a firm produce a product or service for which customers are willing to pay a higher price? 	 The input-output structure and the geographical coverage of the global commodity chain The governance structure, institutional framework, and key notions of barriers to entry and chain coordination Understanding of the mechanisms of international trade from organisational perspective 	 Local and regional environment (including policies, institutions, public and private) that benefits businesses External relationships of businesses 	 The power relations which are embedded in value chains International trade relations in the value chains The that coordinate globally dispersed, but linked, production systems Value addition and distribution along the chain 	 Embeddedness of industrial upgrading and labour conditions in production networks How economic relations and political regulation constitute global linkages between different territories
Emphasised activities	• Encompassing a strong empirical perspective which is used to map the flow of commodities and to identify actors and activities	• To reflect the expansion and contraction of the seventy-year Kondratieff Cycle	• Overlaying network of companies and their interaction in the process of providing goods and services	• Highlighting specific activities through which firms can create value	• Outlining the configuration of specific global commodity chains	• Overlaying horizontal and vertical links between the various businesses and other organisations	• Understanding the distribution of VC earnings through breaking down total VC earnings into the rewards achieved by different parties	• Determining investment locations, the nature of coup-ling processes with host economies, and the depth and pace of institutional change in host territories
Applicatio n	• Studying ways in which the agricultural production systems are organised in the context of developing countries	• To discuss a variety of international chains for agricultural (and timber) products, from the beginning of the early modern era	 Design, planning, execution, control, and monitoring of supply chain activities for creating net value, building a competitive infrastructure, leveraging worldwide logistics, synchronising supply with demand and measuring performance Managing inbound and outbound movements 	 Analysing enterprise competitiveness Supporting firm's management decision and executive strategies 	• Using focal distinction between producer-driven and buyer-driven global commodity chains to analyse exports of apparel in different countries	• Identifying, defining, and describing a cluster based on evaluation of local and regional employment patterns and industrial categorisations	 Examining how firms and Countries are globally integrated Explaining how the trend of globalisation contributes to widening wealth disparities within and between nations 	• To understand the development outcomes for regional economies that are connected to global production networks.

Source: Author with insights from Raikes et al., 2000; Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001; Webber & Labaste, 2007; Barrientos et al, 2011; Nadvi et al, 2018; Yeung, 2020

2.1.1 The Filière Concept

In the 1960s, the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA) and the Centre Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) created the 'Filière concept' (French for "thread") as an analytical tool for empirical agricultural research (Dutta, 2021). Over time, this concept has evolved to encompass various schools of thought and research traditions. Initially, the approach was employed to examine the agricultural system of developing countries under the French colonial regime during the 1960s (Kaplinsky, 2002). Subsequently, it was applied to agriculture in developing countries and studies mainly focused on local agricultural production systems and consumption (Clay & Feeney, 2019).

The Filière concept, like the contemporary value chain concept, primarily depicts the movement of physical inputs and services involved in creating final agricultural products. According to Webber and Labaste (2007), a notable characteristic of Filière studies is the absence of a single overarching theoretical framework, and practitioners utilize diverse theories and research approaches for their analyses. Previously, the analysis of the Filière approach was centred on the influence of public institutions on regional production systems (González-Sánchez et al., 2020). However, recently, some advocates of the Filière method have placed more emphasis on trade and marketing issues. Against this backdrop, Filiere studies now turn to increasingly focus on the functioning of agricultural commodity chains in an increasingly liberalized environment (Fearne, 2012).

2.1.2 Commodity Chain Theory

Wallerstein (1974) created the idea of Commodity Chains Theory (CCT) in the 1970s as a response to the Filière concept's criticism on the role of public sector in production. In this regard, CCT is a framework that can be used to analyse and understand the dynamics of agricultural systems in developing countries. This theory emphasizes the importance of examining the entire chain of production, distribution, and consumption of agricultural products, from the farm to the endconsumer, to identify the factors that influence the value and quality of the product, and the distribution of benefits along the chain. While CCT has some strengths in analysing agricultural systems in developing countries, it also has some limitations that need to be considered.

One strength of CCT is that it provides a holistic perspective on agricultural production, which enables the identification of power relations, inequalities, and constraints along the value chain (Alden Wily, 2016).

However, CCT also has some limitations in analysing agricultural systems in developing countries. One limitation is that it tends to focus on the economic aspects of the value chain, to the detriment of social and environmental considerations (Hatanaka et al., 2016). This can result in a narrow perspective that fails to account for the social and environmental impacts of agricultural production, such as labour rights, gender issues, and biodiversity loss. Another limitation is that CCT tends to overlook the political context of agricultural production, including the role of government policies, regulations, and institutions in shaping the value chain (Bolwig et al., 2010). This can result in a failure to address the structural issues that underpin inequalities in the value chain. In effect, CCT has limited utility in the context of social upgrading of AVC development interventions owing to its significant limitations in considering social, environmental, and political aspects of the value chain.

2.1.3 Supply Chains Concept

Another concept that originated from a strategic management perspective along similar lines is the supply chain. It describes the operational and logistical steps used to move a product from its place of origin to the client (Desclee et al., 2021). In this case, process optimisation rather than value

creation analysis is the primary goal (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b). It is crucial to remember that this is the point at which all value-generating processes converge.

In the 1980s, a new idea and integrated philosophy known as Supply Chain Management (SCM) was developed to control the entire flow of commodities from suppliers to the final consumer. It evolved to consider a wide integration of corporate processes. In order to reconcile trade-offs between clients' intended inventory and customer service goals, Keith Oliver devised an integrated inventory management process in 1982 thereby coining the term "supply chain management" in the process (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2000). The administration of a supply chain as if it were a one entity, rather than a collection of dissimilar entities or services, was the first focus. As the name suggests, the main emphasis in supply chains is on the costs and efficiency of supply, as well as the movement of resources from their many sources to end use. Even though supply chain has recently evolved to include frameworks for analysing forward, midstream and backward linkages (Touboulic & Walker, 2015), the literature is still dominated by dynamics of finished product and customer service.

2.1.4 Value Chains Concept

In the mid-1980s, Porter (1985) developed the Value Chain (VC) concept as a framework for studying competitive advantage. Porter's approach proves a useful tool to determine smallholders' competitive advantage over large commercial farms if they can continuously upgrade to respond to market information and opportunities (Porter, 1985). Porter classified two critical dimensions of contemporary value chain analysis. These include:

(a) value chain activitiesFigure 2.1: Porter's Value Chain Concept



(b) the value system



In agriculture, value chain activities include various input supply activities and the transformation of these inputs into outputs as smallholder efforts transition through a chain of processes and users. For instance, a maize farmers' typical value chain includes fertilizer inputs, land tilling and tractor services, to labour inputs, transportation, warehousing, and markets of various end users (say poultry farmer) whose value chain activity may also start from the input-outcome of the maize farmer.

The value system on other the hand includes the activities undertaken by all the chain actors engaged in the production of a service or product, commencing from primary materials to those engaged in delivering the final product or service. In the case of the above example of the maize farmer's value chain, the value system comprises the aggregate of respective value chain activities of all chain actors in the initiation, intermediation, and usage of final outcome. This means the value systems concept has some critical ramifications for agricultural research as it relates to contexts in the sociocultural, managerial and spatial spaces (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020b; Devaux et al., 2018; Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, 2010a). Instead of limiting competitive advantage analysis to a single chain actor, each actor's activities are considered part of a more significant stream of activities, themed 'the value system'. This perfectly reflects the inspiration around developing community based agricultural value chains where a number of smallholders are organized around collaborative schemes as opposed to capitalist idea of individual competitiveness.

Therefore, the value system concept is bigger than the 'value chain' (Porter, 1985). In other words, it extends the value chain activities to interlinked agencies. Analysing the value chains of each actor provides an overview of the value system through this analytical approach (Porter & Kramer, 2019). While Porter's value system concept explains a typical value chain network, the related understanding of economic and social value systems is not indicated (Kolade et al., 2020; Marslev et al., 2022).

2.1.5 Global Commodity Chain

The concept of the Global Commodity Chain (GCC) originated in the 1990s as a fundamental idea in global trade. Gereffi (1994) posits that global commodity chains are deeply embedded in industrial processes that give rise to patterns of coordinated commerce. Large businesses participate simultaneously in various nations, not in isolation or in segments, but as part of their global production and distribution strategy (Barrientos et al., 2011). Gereffi's (1994) concept of global commodity chains encompasses three primary elements: an input-output structure, a governance framework, and territoriality. The governance element is further reflected in producerdriven chains and buyer-driven chains. Gereffi (1999) further explains that a dominant actor in many chains shape the chain's overall identity. These actors are responsible for information transmission, engagement coordination, and potential upgrades within the value chain.

While Gereffi's three core elements are useful in framing key dimensions of this study, limiting the potential for value chain (VC) upgrading to dominant actors alone, as suggested by Gereffi, can pose problems. When VC interventions are implemented to facilitate local development, the term "dominant actor" requires a definition that extends beyond actors whose interests are solely based on the binary rubrics of supply and demand in market conditions. For instance, in developing country contexts, particularly in agro-commodity chains, it is widely acknowledged that donors mediate with VC interventions to address market imperfections. However, this is not reflected in Gereffi's framework. In donor-led interventions for AVCs as a means of promoting development, Gereffi's proposition emphasizes the role of a dominant actor in VC upgrading. Despite attempting to define the taxonomy of donor-led VC interventions, the biggest question mark on Gereffi's theory of the dominant actor in value chains remains highlighted on the VC upgrading aspect.

2.1.6 World Economic Triangle: Cluster

Based on Gereffi's GCC, Messner (2002) created the World Economic Triangle idea. According to this theory, the scope of activity in agricultural commodity chains is determined by players, governance, and regulatory institutions. The strategy links horizontal (cluster development) and vertical (value chain) approaches to upgrade entire areas or clusters through their integration into global chains (Faße et al., 2009). Business organisations and institutions that undertake many of the tasks separated and detailed in value chains are grouped into business clusters, such as industrial, competitive, or Porterian clusters (Vlados & Chatzinikolaou, 2020). These clusters explain the horizontal and vertical connections between different businesses and other service providers that are crucial to the production of a product (or items that are closely related to it),

frequently including components from numerous value chains. The literature on clusters places comparatively greater emphasis on the local environment (policies and institutions, public and private) and the context in which they operate than it does on the advantages of enterprise agglomeration and physical closeness.

The cluster framework of analysis however omits value generation and distribution amongst chain links (Webber and Labaste, 2007). The world economic triangle also limits its analysis to corporate businesses. Granted that agriculture in Africa is mainly on social considerations than economic, it requires an innovative combination of economic and social engineering as starters before the necessary capital and business mindset can be mobilised to establish the sort of agglomeration or clusters this approach is concerned with. However, the concept of cluster growth as a function of the local environment (policies and institutions, public and private) and geo-context development exposes key nodes to enhance discourses on improving donor-led VC intervention outcomes. For instance, learning from business enabling environments' analysis and SME policy outlook in SSA, the account of Mamman et al. (2016) appears useful in recommending VC upgrading as a key function of government agencies, especially local governments who work closely with smallholding communities and small-scale entrepreneurs.

2.1.7 Global Value Chain (GVC)

The Global Value Chains (GVCs) theory provides a framework for analysing the distribution of value and power relations among different actors and institutions involved in the production and distribution of goods and services globally (Gereffi et al., 2005). GVCs highlight the importance of understanding the governance structures and power dynamics that drive global production networks and the impact of these networks on economic development and inequality (Sturgeon et al., 2012).

While the GVC framework have offered valuable academic contributions to analysis on industries such as electronics, textiles, and automobiles, there are several limitations to the application of GVCs in upgrading agricultural value chains in Africa. One key limitation is the lack of integration between smallholder farmers and larger value chains, which often leaves smallholders marginalized from the global production network (Dolan et al., 2019). The GVC framework tends to prioritize the interests of lead firms and buyers over those of smallholder farmers and other actors at the lower end of the value chain (Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002). This can result in unequal distribution of benefits and power imbalances that limit the potential for upgrading. There is also currently limited understanding of how global governance structures affect smallholder farmers, particularly in the context of developing countries (Kaplinsky, 2004).

Another limitation is that GVC analysis currently have not adequately captured the institutional context and policy environment in which agricultural value chains operate in Africa. Local governance structures, cultural norms, and government policies can all affect the dynamics of agricultural value chains, but these factors may not be fully reflected in the GVCs framework (Denomy & Harley, 2022).

Consequently, the GVCs framework have not fully captured the potential for social and environmental upgrading in agricultural value chains. While the framework can identify opportunities for upgrading based on economic criteria, it may not adequately address social and environmental concerns that are also important for sustainable development (Reardon et al., 2007). To overcome these limitations, there is a need for greater integration of smallholders into larger value chains, a deeper understanding of global governance structures and their impact on smallholder farmers, and a shift towards more socially and environmentally sustainable agricultural value chains.

2.2 Donors and Agricultural Value Chains Development Interventions

The introduction of VC concept coincided with the regime of local economic growth through agricultural development in Africa (Neilson, 2014). Upon realising that increasing the productivity of smallholders alone may have little impact, expert opinions began to shift toward AVC interventions (Crentsil et al., 2019). This constituted a significant departure from the traditional paradigm of engaging the agricultural sector as lever of poverty reduction and rural development to a rather more focused model of growing local economies through neoliberal based value creation mechanisms (James G. & Kate, 1993; Trienekens, 2011; Raikes, Jensen, & Ponte, 2000). These new perspectives have placed the smallholder at the centre of analysis where the general objective is centred on transforming them from subsistence into entrepreneurs who can service supply needs of Africa's emerging industrial markets (Kilelu et al., 2017a; Mango et al., 2018; Porter & Kramer, 2019).

According to Brüntrup-Seidemann (2011), the precise definition of a smallholder farmer varies greatly and relies on the location and sophistication of farming system. For the FAO (2017), A smallholder farmer is typically thought of as someone who works with food crops on a small plot of land, occasionally with modest variety of cash crops. In some other studies, smallholders are usually defined as cultivating less than 2 ha of land (Akash, 2015; Akinyi et al., 2022; OECD, 2013).

The idea behind smallholder market development and integration proposal is that smallholders' involvement in the market is likely to contribute to agricultural growth, which will lead to the agricultural sector's much-needed structural transformation and a move towards reducing poverty and food insecurity among agrarian households in developing countries (Asitik & Abu, 2020b; Bammann, 2007; Kariuki, 2018; Shilomboleni et al., 2019).

The UNIDO (2011) provides a definition of Agricultural Value Chain Development as a process that involves making positive or desirable changes in a value chain to extend or improve production operations while generating social benefits. This process entails two main approaches:

a. Working along the entire value chain: In order to improve a value chain for the poor, it is important to work with actors at all points along the chain, not just with farmers. Understanding the interests, resources, and obstacles of everyone along the chain is crucial for achieving sustainable development.

b. Designing for scale from the start: It is important to design interventions that leverage market forces and the existing interests of value chain participants from the beginning in order to achieve scale for new technologies and practices.

According to Goletti (2005) AVCD is therefore the deliberate set of interventions to make AVCs a reality. An AVCD approach typically follows a sequence that starts with meeting the demand for agricultural products to meet local consumption needs. This is followed by meeting the supply needs of a locally resourced agro-industrial sector, and finally, improving export earnings. (Devaux et al., 2018). AVCD interventions differ from traditional poverty reduction approaches in that they aim to benefit all actors involved in the value chain. This means that the interventions seek to prevent any actor from blocking the development of the chain, while also ensuring that available public support is optimally allocated across the chain. In other words, the goal is not only to alleviate poverty, but also to create sustainable economic growth for all actors in the value chain especially emerging private rural enterprises (Aboah et al., 2019).

AVCD could therefore be described as the systematic engagement of relevant actors, retooling systems, policies and institutions in producing an agricultural product and the efficient distribution of benefits arising out of the production system (Neilson & Shonk, 2014).

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In the context of this research, AVCD can be defined as a collection of actions undertaken by various participants such as buyers, processors, smallholders, as well as service providers including government agencies, donors, consultants, and projects in a value chain.

2.2.1 Donor led Agricultural Value Chain Development Interventions

Donor-led agricultural value chain development interventions are initiatives and strategies implemented by donor organizations to support the development of agricultural value chains in developing countries. Typically, interventions take various forms. These include technical assistance, access to finance, market linkages, infrastructure development, and policy and regulatory support. AVCD interventions are designed and implemented by donor organizations, in collaboration with local governments, private sector actors, and civil society organizations.

According to Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, (2010c) interventions aim to increase the value of the end product and establish mutually beneficial relationships that promote both social and economic development. Essentially, the focus of interventions is to enhance business operations at the producer, processor and other chain actor levels, as well as the (contractual) relationships among them, the flow of knowledge and information, and innovation (Atosina Akuriba et al., 2021). Furthermore, donor led AVCD interventions aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agricultural value chains by promoting the adoption of best practices, enhancing the capacity of stakeholders, and addressing the constraints and challenges faced by small-scale farmers, processors, traders, and other actors in the value chain (Clay & Feeney, 2019).

Habib (2011) reviewed a number of donor-led AVCD implementation guides and observed that the stages of implementation can broadly be classified into four: upstream activation, midstream activation, downstream activation, and governance and management. The upstream activation refers to the broad range of social and technical interfacing in mobilising smallholders, resources and logistics in producing an agricultural product (Bammann, 2007). The midstream also refers to the range of technical interfacing in managing smallholder inputs and outputs towards generating income from their activities(Kula et al., 2006). Downstream activation also refers to a mechanism of deploying logistical systems for efficiently distributing agricultural produce from the smallholder through to intermediate actors to the final consumer (Lamboll et al., 2015a). Finally, the governance and management node refers to the range of managerial mechanisms in agricultural and trade policy formulation, coordination and management of interventions and outcomes (Adekunle et al., 2012; Neilson & Shonk, 2014). Trienekens (2011) extended management in AVCD interventions to mean upgrading value-enhancing outcomes beyond initial intervention scales.

The activities of most AVCD interventions are however always rooted through official development assistance and aid (Akash, 2015). This suggest that some ideologies have influenced donors choice of AVCD interventions as shown in the next Section 2.3.



Figure 2.3: Donor influence and role in AVCD interventions

Source: Author (2022)

Figure 2.3 identifies donor led AVCD interventions as meaning more than just assistance but cultural or philosophical orientations. These cultural orientations are indicated as 'contextual attributes' that could either propel or inhibit diffusion of innovations and upgrading depending on the depth and quality of engagement. The brown arrow signals the direction of cultural resistance whereas the green arrow signals a possibility for cultural transition in the direction anticipated or expected by donor facilitations. The quality of engagement has in recent times become the basis for donor preference of NGOs over state or private sector organizations.

2.2.2 Neoliberalism, Development Partnerships and Aid in Agriculture

This section traces AVCD interventions within the context of neoliberal development where AVCD is framed as frontiers of development assistance in Africa. The first section looks at neoliberal development and how it has shaped the aid for AVCs and development assistance in developing countries. The second section focus on NGOs as critical actors within neoliberal development and aid for AVCD and the final part address how aid through these NGOs is used as a source of power control for donors. This line of discussion is critical to the study because it provides the framework with which to nest the inattentiveness to social outcomes and social upgrading. Additionally, such discussion provides an understanding of the difficulty and limitations in determining appropriate methodology to address the study's primary objective of seeking to raise the importance of social outcomes in deriving sustainability and upgrading of neoliberal pilot interventions. More importantly, highlighting the relationship between neoliberalism, donors particularly NGO exploits in AVCs, distils the interesting assumptions and inherent challenge between idealism and context especially on expectations of effective ex-post initiatives in the absence of the incentive culture that pilot interventions institute to derive reported successes (DW, 2016; Pratt et al., 2012).

2.2.3 Neoliberalism and State Conduct in Developing Countries

As an economic philosophy, neoliberalism emerged in the early 1930s as an agenda associated with market capitalism (Jha & Pankaj, 2021). The term has multiple meanings but became prominently associated with governance reforms in the 1960s (Chomsky, 1999). In the 1960s, neoliberalism was used to front for the transformation of a society along market-based reforms where the private sector is placed as the center of growth and development (Fraser, 2020). As such, advocacies got sustained till the early 1990s where development approaches stressed the critical role of the private sector in facilitating economic growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction (Jacobson, 2012; Merz, 2012). Emphasis on the private sector is advocated along with a shift in development thought away from the state's central control as the prime facilitator of development (L. G. A. Amoah, 2012; Bawole et al., 2017).

In terms of state control in agriculture, the dominant argument advanced is that governments should first privatize public extension of agricultural innovation (Ammani & Abdullahi, 2015; Ataei et al., 2020a), provide economic infrastructure that are public in nature (Riisgaard et al., 2010) and intervene minimally through policy planning and coordination (Cooper, 2013; Lemma et al., 2016; Termeer et al., 2018). Michel Foucault's governmentality lecture series of the late 1970s have in recent times provided basis for academics to suggest empirical examples on how neoliberal reforms on Agriculture and community development can work (Gane, 2008; M. K. Jha & Pankaj, 2021b). In governmentality studies, government is viewed as a form of conduct or activity that aims to shape, guide, or influence the behavior of individuals (Bresser-Pereira, 2017; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Temin, 2022).

Foucault's ideas gave rise to a distinction between the concepts of the state and government. From this viewpoint, the state is perceived to be operating as a practico-reflexive prism or a principle of

comprehensibility that invests various governmental practices, actions, and technologies with significance, coherence, effectiveness, and legitimacy (Fraser, 2020). In Jha and Pankaj (2021), Governmental procedures, including policy formulation, can only be understood through the lens of the state. Therefore the relationship between state and government policies in agricultural development is symbiotic in nature (Amoah, 2020; Friedma & McMichael, 1989).

In this regard, free market enthusiasts like Micheal Porter and Joseph Alois Schumpeter, continue to inspire dozens of academic literature on best ways of conducting propoor development particularly agricultural sector growth through free market neoliberal mechanisms (see Friedma & McMichael, 1989; Laumas, 1962; Narayan et al., 2009; Porter & Kramer, 2019).

Yet the role of government in terms of intervening in free markets as fronted by donors through pilot project mechanisms, is not lost on critical debates on Africa's appropriate development model. As a result, despite the novel ideas on how neoliberalism can support local economic development, studies have reported several criticisms and limitations (Kwao & Amoak, 2022; Mamman et al., 2008; Mangnus & Van Westen, 2018; Schurman, 2018; Yan et al., 2020). These challenges include the apparent lack of cultural orientations on neoliberal development model relative to heritage of the African generally (Mamman et al., 2019), the general absence of economic infrastructure to support productivity(Jacobson, 2012; Stathers et al., 2020) and the general lack of focus on the part of governments to define clearer state policies and directions for market growth (A.-G. Abdulai et al., 2018; Moore, 2001).

Therefore even though the basic tenets of neoliberal governmentality appear attractive to the challenge of Africa's development, such attraction may continue to reinforce inequalities between the poor especially smallholders and the rich given the challenging tendency of reaping the benefits of new forms of production such as contract management, plantations, outgrower schemes and

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collective agency which has been the basis for assumptions in most donor led AVCD interventions (see Donovan et al., 2015; Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, 2010; Naziri et al., 2017; Pratt et al., 2012; Schurman, 2018).

2.2.3.1 Donor led AVCD Interventions and Neoliberal Governmentality

Foucault's work on governmentality (1978) emphasized the role of power in shaping the way people think and act, and how different forms of knowledge are produced and utilized in the exercise of power. Later scholars, such as Dean (1999) and Rose (1999), extended Foucault's work by focusing on the ways in which power operates in modern societies through various forms of governance.

In this regard Brown (2015) argued that neoliberalism is a form of governmentality that operates through the market and through the individualization of responsibility. For Peck and Tickell (2002), neoliberalism has been a key driver of the emergence of new forms of governmentality, characterized by the promotion of market-based solutions and the erosion of state welfare functions in developing countries. According to Fraser (2020), neoliberal governmentality involves a shift towards a more entrepreneurial and individualized approach to governance, with individuals being encouraged to take responsibility for their own welfare and to participate in markets as consumers and producers (Fraser, 2020).

Contrary to traditional views on neoliberalism as simply an economic theory, governmentality scholarship have revealed that neoliberalism actually seeks to shape individuals and communities through the promotion of market-based values and practices (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Narsiah, 2007; Toplišek, 2019). There are specific case studies that examined how neoliberal governmentality operates in specific contexts, such as education (Ball, 2013), healthcare (Rose,

2007), agriculture (Olawumi et al., 2019) and even more broadly on community development(Fraser, 2020) in developing countries.

Whiles section 2.2 presents that Donor led AVCD interventions arose as tools for human security and poverty reduction following the pervasiveness of poverty and inequality; occasioned by the promotion of neoliberal ideas in the 1980s, there are concerns about the potential for unintended consequences and the marginalization of smallholder farmers as these interventions are implemented with core adherence to similar neoliberal philosophies(Feldman, 2019; Neilson, 2014; Neilson & Shonk, 2014).

To this end, studies have explored the relationship between these interventions and governmentality theory. Mustalahti and Panjaitan-Drioadisuryo (2018) argue that donor-led AVCD interventions are a form of governmentality, as they represent the imposition of new norms and practices on value chain actors by donors (see section 2.2.1).

Ademiluyi and Ajayi (2018) also argue that donor advocacies on neoliberal policies in Nigeria have led to the withdrawal of the state from agricultural development, the promotion of marketled approaches that favor large-scale commercial agriculture over smallholder farmers, and the privatization of agricultural services. Blomqvist et al. (2019) similarly argue that donor-led AVCD interventions in Ethiopia have reinforced power imbalances between different actors within the value chain, with large traders and processors benefiting at the expense of smallholder farmers.

Given the foregoing therefore, examining the underlying power dynamics and interests that shape these interventions will enhance the study's objective of seeking pathways for promoting more inclusive and sustainable development outcomes (see section 2.4).

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2.2.4 The Emergence and Rise of Donors in AVCD

In the context of AVC interventions in development studies, a critical domain of discussion in development partnership is the growing influence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors. Within agricultural development literature, donors are recognized as entities - whether private, governmental, or non-governmental - that provide financial, technical, and material support to underdeveloped nations or communities in the form of development aid. (Coston, 1998; Elayah, 2016b; Whyte, 2004). This indicates that the donor landscape in agriculture is difficult to analyse as a unified entity. While each donor is different, their mode of development assistance tends to group them into some notable identities such as multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, foundations, non-governmental organisations, and others.

Over time, there has been a gradual shift in the nature of donor support for agricultural development assistance, as evidenced by the changing discourse and flagship concepts that have emerged as guiding frameworks (Davis, 2016). During the 1960s, the emphasis was on fostering public-sector institutions and bridging social gaps that emerged due to decreased government expenditure. In the 2000s, the primary focus shifted towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the promotion of participatory approaches, along with supporting regional networks. Currently, the focus seems to be centred on realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a result, alterations in the external-development landscape such as the globalization of economies and societies, and national reforms in governance, like growth targeting and decentralization, have moulded agricultural and rural development. Additionally, agricultural development has been impacted by shifts within the donor community, including novel models of delivering development aid like sector-wide approaches (SWAps), poverty reduction strategy

papers (PRSPs), program-based approaches (PBAs), and a decline in financial handouts. (Naziri et al., 2017; Neilson, 2014; Neilson & Shonk, 2014).

The landscape of donor funding for development assistance also appears to be changing significantly (Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, 2010a). As such, typologies are not static. New forms of donors keep emerging (Schurman, 2018) especially in the agricultural sector. Within this changing landscape however, it is possible to observe common mechanism of almost all donors working through intermediaries such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (see Section 2.3.4) to reach their target beneficiaries. There is an increasing trend of working through NGOs as donors observe difficulties of working with weak and ineffective public institutions in developing countries (Coston, 2021). The increasing variety of donor types and methodologies provides more scope for a more comprehensive classification to be pursued. In this regard, Table 2.2 presents a bird-eve view of the types of donors in AVCD literature.

Multi-lateral Agencies	 United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) International Labour Organisation (ILO) 	
Bilateral Agencies	 German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ– formerly GTZ) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) United Kingdom Agency for International Development (UKAID) Global Affairs of Canada (GAC formerly CIDA)) 	
International and Local Philanthropic foundations	Rockefeller Foundation,Bill and Melinda Gates,	

Table 2.2: Donors in AV	/CD
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International and Local Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	 Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Plan International World Vision
	• Community Aid for Rural Development (CARD)

Source: Author's compilation (2021).

The above classification is based on their popularity with AVCD interventions. There may therefore be other types of donors who are overlooked due to their relative contribution to the literature under review. **Multilateral donor organizations** refer to United Nations agencies like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), and so on.

Bilateral agencies can also be regarded as administrative bodies of foreign nations assigned with development management by a country that offers Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Based on this interpretation, a bilateral donor may comprise a broad array of establishments, structures, and departments within a donor country, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and a Development Agency or Ministry. These institutions could encompass the United Kingdom Agency for International Development (UKAID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Global Affairs Canada, among others. Philanthropic Donors can be observed as international or local private or departments of corporations set up to deliver programmatic development assistance. Typical of these types in AVCD include the Rockefeller foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

On the other hand, **Non-Governmental Organizations** (**NGOs**) are formally registered voluntary and independent organizations that act as intermediaries between donors and beneficiaries, working towards public benefit (Banks and Hulme, 2012). Prominent NGOs leading AVCD interventions include TechnoServe, MEDA, Concern Universal, Oxfam, and ActionAid. NGOs seem to be the most advantageous factor in analysing the prospects of upgrading AVCD interventions because they serve as a link between stakeholder interests, such as donors and beneficiaries (see Clark, 1991; Gray et al., 2006; Teegen et al., 2004)

2.2.5 AVC and Sustainable Outcomes

From Sections 2.1 and 2.2, the adoption of value chains strategies is prospected around capabilities for tackling poverty, increasing incomes, productivity, and guaranteeing food security as well as reducing environmental impacts among marginal groups. Whereas earlier studies have focused on aid effectiveness in SSA (Biggeri et al., 2017; Biscaye et al., 2017; Elayah, 2016b), recent adoption of the sustainable development goals had raised critical concerns beyond economic outcomes (M. K. Jha & Pankaj, 2021a; Kolade et al., 2020). Although there are many definitions of sustainable development, the Brundtland Commission Report's (1987) formulation is the one that is most frequently quoted. According to the report, sustainable development is defined as meeting presentday demands without compromising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own requirements. It offers a way for civilization to engage with the environment without endangering or harming resources for the future (Abubakar, 2017). As a result, it is a paradigm for development as well as a concept that advocates raising living standards without endangering the earth's ecosystems or causing environmental problems like deforestation and water and air pollution, which can lead to issues like climate change and species extinction (Browning & Rigolon, 2019). Others have argued that it is a normative concept, a desired goal, and a process (Abubakari et al., 2018; Ali et al., 2021; Desclee et al., 2021).

Regardless of point of view, the idea of sustainable development is based on the Triple Bottom Line concept, which suggests a balance between the three pillars of sustainability (Frake & Joseph Messina, 2018; Boer et al., 2012; Connell et al., 2018). Whereas social sustainability works to

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ensure human rights and equality, the preservation of cultural identity, respect for cultural diversity, race, and religion, and economic sustainability is necessary to maintain the natural, social, and human capital necessary for income and living standards. Environmental sustainability is focused on maintaining the quality of the environment that is necessary for conducting economic activities and quality of life of people.

In light of the projected increase in global population to 9.7 billion people by 2050 and the conditions under which food is produced, particularly in developing nations, the importance of agriculture in sustainable development has never been more crucial (World Bank, 2015b). AVC can therefore affect sustainable development through food security in the dimensions of availability, access, and quality of food primarily by increasing production volumes, farm diversification, generating higher incomes, reducing postharvest losses, and upgrading technologies to use natural resources and agricultural inputs more efficiently (Coteur, Wustenberghs, Debruyne, Leuwers & Marchand, 2020).

2.2.6 AVC and the Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs create a new global framework for more inclusive and sustainable development, and their accomplishment will influence national and international government and civil society policy and action in the decades to come. The SDGs cover a wide range of topics, including eradicating poverty, ensuring access to electricity, water, sanitation, and food, promoting gender equality, combating climate change, and many other facets of environmental sustainability. They call for striking a balance between socioeconomic advancement, maintaining the planet's resources and ecosystems, and combating climate change (FAO, 2016). They recognise the connections between the social, environmental, and economic components of sustainable development. Additionally, they goals recognised that in order to effectively address development concerns, siloed approaches

are ineffective. As a result, unprecedented cooperation and collaboration across governments, nongovernmental organizations, development partners, the business sector, and communities is required(Armah & Adjei, 2022; Minh & Osei-Amponsah, 2021).

AVCs presents solutions that can double agricultural productivity and incomes of small farmers at the same time incorporate environmentally friendly practices (FAO, 2013). In this context, AVCs are considered strategic because they can propel multi goals approaches that simultaneously contribute to achieving different goals (Ali et al., 2021).

According to Gafaru et al. (2019), promoting AVC and achieving sustainable development requires addressing the challenges faced by smallholder farmers in accessing secure, sustainable, and profitable farming livelihoods. Failure to effectively address these challenges has led to the migration of thousands of farmers, particularly the younger generation, from rural areas to urban centres, which poses a significant threat to future food and crop production. To assist farmers in transitioning from subsistence to commercial agriculture, it was necessary to establish support businesses such as extension and financial services that could attract and retain young farmers throughout the production chain (Porter & Kramer, 2019; Senevirathna, 2018). In doing this, the importance of state capability cannot be over emphasized (see section 2.3.1). As governmentality scholars have ideally perceived and discussed above, the state must possess the necessary knowledge and capacity to negotiate authority and control in influencing the market and related partnerships(Fraser, 2020; Gane, 2008; M. K. Jha & Pankaj, 2021b).

2.2.7 Sustainability Assessment of AVCs in Development Studies

Sustainability assessment of AVCs is an important topic in development studies, as it seeks to evaluate the extent to which these chains can contribute to sustainable development.

Scholars have used different sets of indicators, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) indicators or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to evaluate the sustainability of AVCs. For example, a study by Turker and Altuntas (2014) used GRI indicators to assess the sustainability of a dairy value chain in South Africa, while a study by Mather et al. (2018) used SDGs to assess the sustainability of an agroforestry value chain in Tanzania. Life cycle assessment (LCA), is also another method that evaluates the environmental impacts of a product or service throughout its entire life cycle (Atosina Akuriba et al., 2021). This approach has been used to assess the sustainability of AVCs by evaluating the environmental impacts of different stages of the value chain, such as production, transportation, processing, and disposal.

Another approach is the Value Chain Analysis (VCA) framework (Jordaan et al., 2014). This approach examines the entire chain of activities involved in the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products. The VCA framework enables researchers to identify the key actors in the chain, their roles, and their relationships(Attaie & Fourcadet, 2003). This approach provides insights into the governance structures, power dynamics, and distribution of benefits along the value chain.

There are also specific sustainability assessment tools for AVCs (Schindler et al., 2015). For example, the Sustainable Food Lab developed a tool called the Metrics and Indicators for Impact Evaluation (MIFE) which measures the sustainability of food systems (Desclee et al., 2021). MIFE includes a set of indicators covering environmental, economic, and social aspects of sustainability. Similarly, the International Trade Centre (ITC) developed the Sustainability Map which is a webbased platform that provides information on sustainability standards and certification schemes for different commodities (Clay & Feeney, 2019).

The use of sustainability indicators with measurable parameters that reflect the environmental, social, political and economic dimensions of sustainability is more pronounced in the extant literature hence its purposive adoption for review as presented in table 2.3 below.

Impact	Mechanism	Source			
Economic	Income	Lawson et al (2020); Alderman, 2012;			
		PEPFAR, (2012)			
Employment		Meemken and Bellemare (2020)			
Foreign exchange earning		Minten et al (2007)			
Market integration		Staritz (2012)			
	Access to infrastructure	Dawson et al (2019)			
Social	Food security	Coteur et al (2020); Carletto et al (2017)			
	Gender	Coteur et al (2020); Qorri et al (2018)			
	Social inclusion	Dawson et al (2019)			
	Poverty reduction	Alderman (2012); PEPFAR (2012)			
Environmental	Pollution	FAO (2013)			
	Biodiversity loss	Dawson et al (2019)			
	Biodiversity conservation	Dawson et al (2019)			
	Agro chemical use	Rasmussen et al (2018)			
	Soil health	Elahi etal (2019)			
	Land use change	Elahi et al (2019)			
	Emissions	Pingali (2001)			
Political	Power relations	Doss (2013); Carletto et al (2017)			
	Donor control	Leong et al (2020)			

 Table 2.3: Sustainable Impacts of AVCD

Source: Author (2022)

2.2.7.1 Economic

Numerous studies examine the financial effects of smallholder farmers' participation in AVC (e.g. Meemken and Bellemare, 2020). According to a recent assessment, AVC activities have often been found to assist small farm households economically (Bellemare and Bloem, 2018; Otsuka et al., 2016; Ton et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2014). Economic impacts of AVC are generally related to income, employment, exchange earning, market integration and access to infrastructure

(Bellemare and Lim, 2018; Mishra et al., 2018). AVCs therefore have a variety of economic impacts on a household's well-being.

Firstly, at the individual and household level, involvement in AVC are noted to increased employment and income of household involved through wage and salary earning (Ahmed et al., 2019). Additionally, it has been seen that direct employment and income through spillover effects have raised household incomes for both participating and unaffected households through mechanisms including petty trading and small companies (IFAD, 2021). For instance, as a spillover impact, family members of plantation employees and outgrowers start small companies such selling agro-chemicals, beverages, and food to other farmers in oil palm value chain studies (Ton et al., 2011). As a result, AVC actions have increased rural income through employment (Rutherford et al., 2016). However, it is important to be aware that there are frequently considerable differences between various social groups in terms of access to employment opportunities and earnings. In contrast to their male counterparts, women frequently participate in less lucrative activities, according to recent studies (Ebata & Huettel, 2019; Jia et al., 2020).

Secondly, AVC interventions have opened the gateway for market integration of smallholder farmers by linking them to processors, buyers and consumers (Desclee et al., 2021). This ready market access serves as an incentive to increase production thereby leading to high productivity of farmers (Lamboll et al., 2015a).

Having better access to market services frequently enables farmers to increase yields and quality as well as introduce more lucrative crop types (Bairagi, Mishra & Gilri, 2019). However, despite the overall encouraging outcomes, exploitation by downstream actors keep farmers trapped in a cycle of debt and reliance on contractors (Ragasa et al. al., 2018; Wendimu et al., 2016). Recent research demonstrates that involvement of smallholders in contract and commercial farming is unquestionably not profitable (Meemken and Bellemare, 2020). Participation along the chain has worsen socioeconomic disparities between farmers, buyers, processors and other actors (Dolan, 2002). This is due to the possibility that the most underprivileged group of farmers lacks the knowledge and resources needed to engage in chain networks.

In rural host communities, studies have also shown that AVCD interventions have improved access to infrastructure such as roads, market structures, processing facilities, and social services such as health and education facilities (Crentsil et al., 2019). Also, at the macro level, AVCD interventions has led to foreign exchange earnings through exporting of value added products (Lamboll et al., 2015b).

2.427.2 Social

Social impacts are more nuanced as mechanisms of impacts are often not linear, but rather subjective, and highly situated and context specific. Poverty reduction is by far the common reason and justification for AVCD interventions in Africa (Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, 2010b). Studies have shown that AVCD interventions has potential in reduction of income and multidimensional poverty (Riisgaard et al., 2010). Studies have also reported increases in incomes thereby reducing general income poverty in host communities (Trienekens & van Dijk, 2012). Increased income and access to social facilities through AVCD interventions allowed smallholders to invest in clean energy, education and health thereby reducing their multidimensional poverty (Ahmed & Gasparatos, 2020).

Through a variety of mechanisms, activities in the AVC can impact household food security. Studies have shown that specialization by cultivating single AVC commodity could potentially restrict households' access to food and dietary variety from their agricultural output. For instance, it is frequently seen that higher nutritional variety is correlated with diversity in agricultural productivity (Jones et al., 2014; Sibhatu et al., 2015). This implies that specialization (i.e. lack of diversity in agriculture) can reduce food choices at the household level. On the contrary, as wealth increased through specialization, households buy more food (raising calorie intake) and a wider range of food (increasing the diversity and quality of diets) and spend in sanitation and health care nutritional advantages (notably women and children) (Carletto et al., 2017). In reality, there is a well-established global trend relating income to food type and quality demand, which is stronger for animal products. Theoretically also, increasing food production revenue has the potential of boosting household well-being by enabling households to pay for better dietary, medical, educational, and productive assets, eventually enhancing social life which may result in improvement (Dawson et al., 2019). Data, however, indicate that there is ambiguity in the connection between social and economic consequences. Agricultural household production and consumption decisions are still linked in many rural communities (Radchenko and Corral, 2017), and they are influenced by societal norms, gender preferences, and the allocation of power within families. (Doss, 2013).

2.2.7.3 Environmental

AVCD interventions can have a range of positive and negative environmental impacts, depending on the setting and technology used (Pingali, 2001). However, in general, there are trade-offs between achieving socioeconomic objectives and mitigating environmental impacts, which can become more challenging in the context of AVCD interventions (Rasmussen et al., 2018). The most significant negative impact of AVCD interventions is land use change. (Lambrecht & Ragasa, 2018). Transformation and modification of production landscapes affect access to ecosystem services (Akudugu et al., 2012). For instance, increased commodity prices could result in an overuse of natural resources like land and water (Rasmussen et al., 2018; Dawson et al., 2019). Studies have shown that better prices have potential to motivate agricultural intensification thereby leading to land degradation, deforestation and biodiversity loss (IFAD, 2021). Agricultural intensification further increases agrochemical inputs uses such as chemical pesticides and fertilizers which can cause a variety of environmental issues (water body pollution, a reduction in beneficial insects, a decline in soil fertility), as well as health hazards for people, especially if they are no longer well managed (Elahi et al., 2019; Pingali, 2001). In rural areas of developing nations, the improper use of agricultural pesticides is common due to poor or nonexistent training, expertise, and storage facilities (Elahi et al., 2019).

Trade-offs between environmental and social goals are often believed by many to be the problem; however, an integrated (non-dichotomy) approach to sustainable improvement (Koch et al., 2019) resolves these trade-offs. However, a recent review demonstrates that it is frequently challenging to establish a win-win situation in practice, especially when long-term effects are taken into account (Rasmussen et al., 2018).

2.2.7.4 Political

As indicated earlier in section 2.3, there is sufficient literature on the view point that AVCD interventions has led to donor control and proliferation of NGOs and private sector as profiteers (Banks et al., 2015; Neilson, 2014; Zhang et al., 2017). The literature determines that there are winners or losers of AVCD interventions resulting from the application of many policy tools such as the use of subsidies, financial grants and the underlying dynamics of elite conquest, patronage, and corruption (Donovan et al., 2016). Particularly among smallholder farmers, these dynamics lead to social difference and impede value chains from realizing their full potential. There is also another strand of literature on the impact of AVC interventions on policy transitions in emerging economies and this directly relates to neoliberal and governmentality implications of interventions (see section 2.3.1.1).

2.2.8 Institutions and Agricultural Value Chains Development

Institutions play a crucial role in facilitating and driving the process of societal transformation. This makes it is necessary to continuously and sustainably strengthen institutional capacities to enable them to discharge their functions to attain the desired outcomes(Adebayo et al., 2009; Alpha & Fouilleux, 2018). North (1990) describes institutions as the rules of the game in a society. In other words, they are the collectively recognized rules, symbols, and behavioural patterns that shape the choices of individuals in a society (Aoki, 2007). Broadly speaking, institutions are the structure that defines the rules of human interaction, incentives, as well as constraints that determine the choices of individuals and groups that together shape the performance of societies and economies over time (North, 2018). Institutional scholarship distinguishes formal and informal institutions (Bawole et al., 2017; Mamman et al., 2008). This categorisation is congruent with Norths' distinction that formal institutions are written down and well-documented rules, regulations, processes, and procedures such as contracts, constitutions, and laws that attract benefits and sanctions, whereas the uncodified rules of society including customs, traditions, local knowledge systems, beliefs, values, and behaviours that have evolved and sustained over time to govern society constitute informal institutions (Magiri et al., 2022).

Formal institutions are noted for their clarity of the rules, leading to the reduction of uncertainty in the ways they operate, while questions abound regarding uncertainties and ambiguities that characterised informal institutions (Kaufmann et al., 2018). It is however important to mention informal institutions shape and sustain formal institutions. In this view, Casson et al., (2010) argue that informal institutions affect the quality and sustainability of formal institutions as they shape the rules and regulations of the former and can emerge as the defacto human interactions or governance mechanisms when formal institutions fail.

2.2.8.1 Institutional Arrangements for AVCD

The set of rules, structures or agreements governing the activities of a specific group of people pursuing a certain objective constitute an institutional arrangement (Herdt, 2012). Institutional arrangements include contract, a producers' organisation, government ministries and departments, civil society organisations, customs, beliefs, and so on (Fruit, 2008). In the agriculture sector, institutions relate to the formal or informal structures which govern the actors when they are engaged in collective action, whereas governance denotes the interactive arrangements in which public as well as private actors participate aimed at solving agriculture related problems or creating opportunities for growth and development (Hassenforder & Barone, 2020).

Agriculture institutions therefore include, among others, a variety of institutions involved in the governance at the local, national, and global levels. At the local/community level, agriculture sector governance rest with community leaders who can act on behalf of the members of the community constitute informal institutions that play a critical role in the agriculture sector. The community leaders are thought of as the representation of the embodiment and custodian of the customs, beliefs, norms and values that define the choices of individuals in all spheres of life including agriculture (Osabuohien, 2020). Their role is critical in agriculture development because they set the rules for, for example, land tenure and security that is critical for sustainable agricultural production. Farmers organisations, producers' cooperatives, and community-based organisations (including formal and non-formal), to civic society organisations (youth groups, women organisations, etc.) are also operate at the local level that facilitate or hinder the development of agriculture (Haile-Gabriel, 2015).

National level institutions include public/government institutions (ministries; agencies; research and extension organisations; financial institutions etc.) and non-government institutions (Magiri

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et al., 2022), which in a variety of ways support agriculture development. At the global level, some of the institutions focus on policies and regulations that guide agriculture programmes and policies, while the activities of others centre on research to develop new approaches and technologies.

Global level institutions involved in the governance of the global agriculture sector are numerous and varied. Agencies under the United Nations (UN) such as Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) design policies guidelines for the development agriculture, while the World Trade Organization (WTO) design relating to the regulation and governance of trade of agricultural commodities are governed. Furthermore, World Bank of ministries of agriculture (Tucker et al., 2013).

The importance of institutional arrangement for agriculture sector governance highlighted suggests that understanding institutions and institutional dynamics is therefore crucial for researchers, policy makers and managers concerned with agriculture development since that knowledge could be deployed at local, national and global levels to help enhance the performance of the sector for sustainable development (Hassenforder & Barone, 2020).

2.3 Value Chain Upgrading

The term "upgrading" in value chain literature refers to enhancing a product or process (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020a; Cattaneo et al., 2013; Trienekens & van Dijk, 2012). In donor led AVCD interventions, Upgrading is highly discussed as a sustainability measure to mean the ability to acquire and apply knowledge (Kaplinsky, 2002; Kariuki, 2018). This entails generating additional value beyond the existing one (Kaplinsky and Morris, 2001). The notion emphasizes the strategies of smallholders, agribusinesses, and countries to improve their standing in the global economy and effectively integrate into high-value markets (Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark, 2016). This makes upgrading particularly suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of pilot interventions

as well as for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which place a focus on partnerships (SDG 17) and the cooperation of governments, the private sector, and civil society in the implementation of projects that contribute to poverty reduction (SDG 1), hunger eradication (SDG 2), and gender empowerment (SDG 5).

As per Porter's (2003) definition, upgrading refers to the development of a business environment that fosters and incentivizes the adoption of advanced value creation and addition techniques. Upgrading can occur at various levels, such as the global, national, regional, local, and firm levels, and ultimately at the farm level. Another definition of upgrading is linked to improving productivity and efficiency (Dunn, 2014). In the context of AVC studies, upgrading is crucial for bringing smallholders into high-value markets as it enables them to contribute more significantly to value addition (Ablaev, 2015; Gereffi, 1999; Humphrey & Schmitz, 2002; Pietrobelli & Staritz, 2018a; Porter, 2000).

The concept of upgrading is strongly associated with innovation, which is seen as a means of achieving continuous improvement in product and process development (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2002, p.37). In developing countries, Value Chain Upgrading is widely recognized as a crucial driver of economic growth (Ho et al., 2019; Werner et al., 2014). Upgrading is generally understood to have two main meanings: firstly, the ability of a firm or supplier to enhance its competitiveness by increasing productivity and value-addition (Gereffi, 2005, p.171; Kaplinsky & Readman, 2005; Bernhardt & Milberg, 2011); and secondly, the process through which economic actors transition from low-value to relatively high-value activities by continuously improving their processes, products, functions, and chain (McDermott, 2007, p.104; Barrientos et al., 2011).

Of these two classifications are clear implications for the capacity of the smallholder, the agroservices provider (private extension) and the public sector. AVCD interventions, when designed
beyond net increases in factor productivity to encompass economy-wide activities, upgrading can occur in terms of product upgrading, process upgrading, functional upgrading, chain (intersectoral) upgrading and social upgrading for each of the economic activities or objectives pursued by interventions (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2000.; Kariuki, 2018b; Kilelu et al., 2017; Pietrobelli & Staritz, 2018; Vicol et al., 2018b). The next section presents a review of upgrading options.

2.3.1 Value Chain Upgrading Options

As indicated by Porter (2003), upgrading focuses on the strategies used by countries, regions, and other economic agents to maintain or improve their positions in the global economy. But when extended to the local economy especially to reorganize productivity towards poverty reduction and attainment of other social objectives, there are material implications for policy and aid effectiveness.

Scholars generally agree that upgrading is a difficult procedure. As a result, "there is no ideal path of upgrading" at this time, according to Ponte (2011). Humphrey and Schmitz (2002) did identify four different types of economic upgrading, including inter-sectoral, functional, process, and product upgrading. Additional types of upgrading suggested by Fernandez-Stark, Bamber, and Gereffi (2014) include channel or end-market upgrading and social upgrading. As indicated in section 1.2 there are presently some sketchy literature categorizing these typologies into economic and social upgrading (Barrientos et al., 2011a). It is worth noting that drawing a clear distinction between the types of upgrading mentioned above can be problematic. The unique features of AVC interventions make it challenging to create a comprehensive categorization of upgrading (Gibbon 2003). To provide sufficient academic grounds on the need to extend understanding on social upgrading, an overview of the existing options in the extant literature is offered below.

2..3.1.1 Process Upgrading

Increasing the efficiency of a manufacturing system is the focus of process upgrading. Scholars have not concluded any exhaustive ways of improving efficiency. Process upgrading can entail better organisation of the entire production process or the application of upgraded technologies (Kilelu et al., 2017b). Additionally, it may entail investing in new equipment, putting quality control programmes into place, accelerating delivery times, cutting waste, and improving internal processes' to offer high value at minimum cost (Kaplinsky, 2002). Process upgrading is simply "more effectively converting inputs into outputs by reorganising the production system or introducing superior technology" (Humphrey and Schmitz 2002: 102).

In the context of AVCs the extant literature has highlighted the importance of improving production processes as a means of enhancing competitiveness and increasing value capture by farmers, processors, and other actors in the value chain. Henson et al. (2009) found that process upgrading, including the adoption of new post-harvest technologies and improved marketing practices, led to increased yields, reduced post-harvest losses, and higher incomes for farmers.

Another study by Ragasa et al. (2013) focused on process upgrading in the cassava value chain in Nigeria where the adoption of improved processing technologies, such as mechanized graters and hydraulic presses, led to increased productivity, reduced labour costs, and improved product quality.

Similarly, Mofya-Mukuka et al. (2018) examined the impact of process upgrading on smallholder farmers in Zambia's beef value chain. The study found that the adoption of improved breeding practices, such as artificial insemination and improved animal health management, led to increased productivity, improved product quality, and increased profits for farmers.

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In addition to the adoption of new technologies, scholars have also highlighted the importance of improving the organization and management of value chains. Ruben and Verhagen (2007) found that the establishment of producer organizations and the adoption of better marketing practices, such as direct contracts with buyers, led to increased value capture by farmers and improved market access. Another study in Ghana also found that the adoption new sociotechnical technologies such as group farming, cooperative farming and village savings and loans schemes greatly impacted on the efficiency and market competitiveness of maize farmers (Ndungu et al., 2008).

2.3.1.2 Product Upgrading

Product upgrading is about the product itself, as the name implies. It can be characterised as a transition into more complex product lines by raising consumer value while enhancing product quality (Humphrey & Schmitz 2002). Enhancements to the production process frequently have an impact on product quality. (Pietrobelli & Staritz, 2018a). Product and process upgrading are closely intertwined. Changes in consumer preferences, often driven by lead buyers such as large supermarkets or by institutions that increase standards, can stimulate processes of product upgrading. End consumers' demands can also drive these changes (Mitchell, Coles & Keane, 2009). For smallholders, the focus is on remaining competitive and relevant to changing end-market preferences (Microlinks, 2016).

The importance of product upgrading has increased as powerful consumers become more qualityconscious, thereby pushing the demand for certain products up. Some critical aspects of product quality that were once considered niche have now become mainstream. For example, a study of the coffee value chain in Kenya revealed that demand-driven product upgrading was influenced by increased consumer awareness, leading to higher demand for coffee meeting specific standards.(Vicol et al., 2018c). This supports the view that smallholders can generate more value by recognizing new opportunities in market preference and upgrading their products (Ponte 2008). The lessons learned from the coffee industry can be applied to other commodities, such as foodstuffs or fruits. As a strategy to maximize smallholder earnings and boost their competitiveness, enhancing their product quality is an enviable option to increasing their importance in AVCs (Ebata & Huettel, 2019a). The basic premise is that to survive competition, innovation is necessary for product upgrading (Ampadu-Ameyaw et al., 2018; Kariuki, 2018b).

2.3.1.3 Functional Upgrading

Functional upgrading involves adding value by altering the combination of activities carried out within a firm or by shifting the focus of activities to other links in a value chain (Lamboll et al., 2015a). This shift in the functions mix allows actors in a value chain to engage in higher value-added activities or operate at different levels within the chain (Microlinks, 2016). In the context of developing countries and development cooperation, this form of upgrading is critical because it enables smallholders to move beyond producing raw commodities to become innovative business agents. As noted by Pal and Sharma (2018), the benefit of functional upgrading lies in reducing the vulnerability of being solely dependent on production.

In essence, functional upgrading can occur in two ways: first, by eliminating intermediaries and thereby changing the structure of the value chain, and second, by acquiring new productive capacities that enable firms to engage in higher value-added positions within the value chain. (Lamboll et al., 2015a; Pal & Sharma, 2018). An example for successful functional upgrading can be examined from the flower value chain in Kenya where efficiency in smallholder activities have led to global changes in the whole value chain (Gereffi 1999; Microlinks 2016). Functional upgrading is also a possibility in the downstream levels of the agricultural sector. Producers could

attempt to incorporate other tasks like processing, packaging, or marketing. When these functions are a part of the buyer's primary company, as is frequently the case for marketing, it is typically far more difficult to acquire these higher value added positions in the value chain. (Trienekens, 2011).

Smallholder farmers can still engage in functional upgrading by looking into other opportunities in the chain, like those in transportation and storage, by developing their knowledge and skills, adhering to the strict requirements, and by earning the confidence of both buyers and other smallholders (Kilelu et al., 2017b). The main argument of these propositions is that smallholders can develop new capacities by engaging in various functional upgrading activities.

2.3.1.4 Inter-sectoral upgrading

Inter-Sectoral upgrading involves entering new productive activities, often in related industries, by leveraging knowledge acquired through producing another product or offering a specialized service (Ponte, 2008). The degree of ambition and initiative smallholders possess can influence their ability to engage in inter-sectoral upgrading. However, the reality is that barriers to entry into these new value chains are often high and challenging to overcome, particularly for vulnerable actors such as smallholders (Mitchell et al., 2009). Despite these challenges, the African human capital stock, including entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, has opportunities for diverse and multiple skills as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) takes center stage in discussions about Africa's economic transformation. For example, Ghanaian smallholders and extension agents must acquire new competencies in other aspects of agricultural value chains that are externally sourced and now threatened by the global trade contraction resulting from COVID-19.

2.3.1.5 Social Upgrading

One of the most important additions to the VC literature is the concept of social upgrading to respond to assumptions of "capturing the gains" of production networks in developing countries.

Social upgrading is a crucial aspect of upgrading, especially because improvements in functional capacities of smallholders working as out growers in production networks and AVC arrangements may not necessarily bring benefits of economic upgrading. Social upgrading can be described as the process of enhancing the socio-technical capacities of economic agents. The concept of social upgrading comprises two elements, which are measurable standards and enabling rights. These two dimensions are interrelated, as measurable standards often result from a bargaining process that is framed by enabling rights. Measurable standards include aspects such as type of employment, wage levels, working hours, and social protection. These standards are more readily observable and quantifiable (Barrientos & Smith, 2007). On the other hand, enabling rights are challenging to measure and quantify, and they include rights such as freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and non-discrimination. A lack of enabling rights can impede workers' ability to actively negotiate improvements in their working conditions (Barrientos et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Social Upgrading in Perspective

In mainstream VC upgrading literature, there is a significant departure of social upgrading away from a mechanism of capturing the socio-technical gains in linked production schemes. Rather, the rights-based ideas has influenced the current scope of social upgrading where the significant attention obtained by dimensions of employment, worker welfare and freedoms obscure other domains of knowledge in this field (Barrientos et al., 2011b; Marslev et al., 2022). In seeking to broaden the conceptual space for social upgrading, it is important to stress that the contexts of application as well as orientations of scholars might differ. To situate social upgrading in the perspective of developing pro-poor value chains through development assistance or testing efficacies of piloted development interventions, it is useful to start by clarifying the differences in contextual applications although the concept may remain the same.

First, social upgrading as conceived in the extant literature (section 2.6.1.5) is concerned with employment and labour issues in federated production schemes such as the manufacturing streams of Global Value Chains or Global Production Networks where low skilled workers are engaged by multinational companies to either provide raw materials or contribute labour in factories (Bernhardt & Pollak, 2016). In such contexts, scholarly discourses on social upgrading are limited to practical entitlements and rights of individual workers (Barrientos et al., 2011). In contrast however, social upgrading as this current study seeks to situate, relates to the strategic entitlements of beneficiaries in targeted AVC development schemes promoted as levers or catalysts for future efforts in improving competitiveness and market participation/integration.

Secondly, whiles social upgrading as obtained in section 2.6.1.5 above leverages corporate performance to situate worker entitlements in pensions, working conditions and other welfare related outgoings, social upgrading under the current review leverages the sociocultural modes of production that supports reported successes of technological development and innovation diffusion in donor led pilot AVC development interventions in the global south. This goes with the observation that, although donor led AVCD pilot interventions are neoliberal by default, their implementation phases usually leverage certain opposing sociocultural local technologies to manifest reported successes of interventions. The incentives for the successful blend of local sociocultural technologies with neoliberal orientations of production to drive reported social outcomes of pilot interventions can vary.

It is these variations that require identification and further stressing to situate social upgrading as a mechanism for capturing or extending the gains of participating in neoliberal technologies of agricultural production. In such undertaking, social upgrading would be pursued as a collective derivative of beneficiaries and the existing local cultural economic orientations as opposed to the single individualistic view of entitlements in the extant literature. The next section reviews the various ways in which sociocultural techniques of agricultural production manifests as leverage points in the success of pilot interventions.

2.3.2.1 Leveraging and Measuring Social Upgrading

In social upgrading literature, two components; measurable and enabling rights can be distinguished. According to Leet et al (2016), the measurable component of social upgrading relates to the quantifiable aspect of well-being that includes the type of employment, wage level, social protection, and working hours. On the other hand, fair wages, non-discrimination, the right to collective bargaining, freedom of association, and empowerment constitute enabling rights (ibid). The literature that discusses fair wages argues that workers have the right to be fairly compensated for the job they do so that they could meet their financial obligations to their families and to improve upon their living conditions (Jindra, Hatani, Steger & Hiemer, 2019). Based on the initiative of Leet et al, 2016, this study seeks to contribute additional empirical grounds to support policy advocacy for social upgrading as much as economic upgrading with the following leverage and assessment indicators;

- 1. Fair Wages and Salaries
- 2. Right to Collective bargaining
- 3. Right to freedom of association
- 4. Empowerment
- 5. Non-Discrimination

2.3 2.2 Fair Wages and Salaries

Wages and related earnings from agricultural production require some considerable pegging with national level inflation rates to support household consumption brackets of smallholders and other local chain actors especially upstream of the value chain. This is because every worker has a right to compensation that is sufficient to meet their basic needs and provide some discretionary income, making it imperative for smallholders to earn at least the minimum wage (Jindra et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016).

Fair wages can take several trajectories, including increasing prices paid to smallholder farmers, sourcing products directly from producers or committing to purchasing all output, drawing attention to their rights, and building their capacity to enable them to participate in wage negotiation (Fair Labour Association, 2017). Fair Labour Association (2017) also indicate that wages can also be enhanced to acceptable levels through fashioning out alternative means of increasing farmers' income, such as adding a social premium to the prices paid to them or supporting them with finances to improve farm-level productivity. Additionally, farmers can be approached directly to get their honest opinions on how well efforts to achieve fair compensation goals are doing as well as to recognise trustworthy suppliers and producers who embrace fair compensation practices (ibid). Jindra et al. (2019) broaden the measures to include the role of international players in the value chain and indicate that such firms can review their purchasing policies and pay reasonable purchase prices to their suppliers to enable them to compensate their workers and farmers in an acceptable manner. However, the informality of the agriculture sector in most developing countries may perhaps stifle progress towards the attainment of fair wages for smallholders. In this view, Reinecke & Posthuma (2019) argued that fair wages may be difficult to attain in the context of agricultural workers due to the informality of the sector, which leaves them unprotected and with limited capacity to negotiate for enhanced wages that meet the prevailing rates.

2.3,2,3 Right to Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining relates to the process of negotiation between groups usually; employer and employee to arrive at a wage level that meets the interests of both parties (Doellgast, & Benassi, 2020). Thus, collective bargaining is a way to regulate the labour market by setting the space for workers and employers to reach an agreement on the price/wage to be paid to workers for their labour. The right to collective bargaining is a fundamental gateway to social upgrading because it offers workers, especially those in the unionised organisation the opportunity to negotiate worth of their labour and time (Zvobgo, 2019).

Collective bargaining can play a critical role in enhancing the well-being of smallholders by providing them access to rights that affect their economic and social conditions. Through collective bargaining, smallholders can participate in price negotiations and demand better terms and conditions for their products, including fair prices and reasonable payment periods. This enables them to obtain a fair share of the value generated in the value chain and to improve their livelihoods. Additionally, collective bargaining can help smallholders to acquire knowledge, skills and resources necessary for their business operations and to improve their social status through the establishment of networks and organizations. (Alpha & Fouilleux, 2018; Termeer et al., 2018). The main actors in collective bargaining are the trade unions and employers. In legally established entities, the right to collective bargaining is guaranteed under national and international laws that provide workers with the opportunity to engage with employers to set fair wages that meet their basic needs and provide discretionary income (Visser, 2016; Zvobgo, 2019).

The right to collective bargaining in AVC and social upgrading literature is related to determining acceptable prices for the produce of farmers. This right, therefore, strengthens farmers' economic power to influence the terms of sale and market prices of their produce, helping them to get a share

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of the benefit from the global commodity prices and consequently meet their basic needs and improve upon their wellbeing (Levins, 2001). Farmers' collective bargaining could be used in two ways. In the first instance, farmers may reach an agreement with a certain buyer for no less than a certain price or not to sell at all to a buy, bringing about higher prices for their produce in the long run (ibid). Secondly, farmers can use their collective bargaining power to influence the price of inputs from a power supplier to their advantage through the lowering of prices of inputs in the long term (ibid).

However, smallholder farmers especially in developing countries do not have the right to collective bargaining due to their limited production and unanimity to influence the prices of either their products or inputs from suppliers, limiting their economic power to influence prices and terms of sale of their produce (ibid). This is because most of the agriculture workforce is waged agricultural workers, and self-employed farmers, compelling them to submit to voluntary or informal relationships that are not reciprocal obligations of equity between them and buyers or processors, but rather social relations of unequal exchange (Cohen, Vicol & Pol, 2022; Karatepe & Scherrer, 2019).

In the social upgrading and value chain development discourse, the problem of unequal bargaining power between smallholders and buyers appears a very critical discussion point (Cohen et al., 2022). This is because it has important ramifications to enhance the kind of economic power that can be used to influence prices and terms of sale of produce in ways that benefit both parties, especially smallholder farmers. The result is that they will be able to increase productivity and effectiveness in upgrading interventions and earn acceptable profits that hitherto were not available to them (Levins, 2001).

2.3.2.4 Right to Freedom of Association

The right to freedom of association is another prerequisite to social upgrading. Several authors have identified freedom of association as a core right for all workers and a prerequisite for social dialogue and collective bargaining (Agarwal, 1997; Marslev et al., 2022; Ndyetabula et al., 2016). Calls for the observance of this right makes it possible for employers and workers to establish and join organizations of their own choice that will pursue their interests without the hindrance of any sort (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019). Thus, organizations of this sort are free to carry out their activities with full freedom and without external interference.

In the agriculture sector in developing countries and Ghana in particular, freedom of association may manifest in the establishment and joining of Village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) and farmer-based organisations. VSLA is a group of people who come together to save and lend out to each when the need arises (Munthali et al., 2022). The fund also serves as insurance for members in the form of shares that they buy at the beginning and acts as the amount of contribution per defined period (ibid). Apart from the financial benefits of establishing and joining these associations, they also served as a platform for information sharing relating to farm inputs, markets and prices of their products that together translate into social upgrading.

Farmer-based organisations (FBO) also provide farmers with easy access to new technologies and market information, integrating them into the wider national economy (Waters-Bayer et al., 2015). The VSLAs and farmer-based organisations contribute to social upgrading through linking smallholders with the new market channels that could improve productivity and income as well as their overall wellbeing (Widadie, Bijman, & Trienekens, 2021). Hasdiansyah and Suryono (2021), for instance, argue that such platforms have led to the sharing of information about the new method of coffee plantation among farmers in Indonesia.

However, the right to freedom of association among farmers may perhaps not be vibrant in developing countries such as Ghana because most of the sector's workers are engaged in subsistence small-scale agricultural activities. In this view, Ramapriya and Ashwini (2012) point out that agriculture sector workers in developing countries work under constrained socioeconomic conditions that makes the establishment and joining of association difficult. Thus, pursuing a common agender such as collective bargaining to influence government policies implementation trajectories which could translate into higher wages and better terms of sale of produce becomes a mirage.

2.3.2.5 Empowerment

Empowerment which manifests in advancing the status of smallholder rural farmers and facilitating their integration into the total social development is a critical component social upgrading. Empowerment enables individuals, organizations, and groups to exert power and control over the resources they need, build confidence, and build capacity to take an active part in managing their life activities (Desiana, N., & Aprianingsih, 2017). In this respect, empowerment can take different dimensions including improvement in farm management, domestic resource allocation, changes in economic, social, cultural, interpersonal relations, political preferences control over and psychological wellbeing (Varghese, 2011) and for women, empowerment could include their role and or participation in household decision-making, control over cash, spending and time use (Malapit et al., 2020).

Empowerment in social upgrading literature could take two forms: individually or collectively (group). Either way, empowerment is beneficial to smallholder farmers because it provides them access to the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills of farmers and their families that translates into more productive farming activities, leading to improvement in welfare (Varghese, 2011).

Other scholars argue that empowerment of smallholder farmers, for example, help them to make optimal use of farm and non-farm resources, overcome institutional barriers and access to capital (Hasdiansyah & Suryono, 2021; Varghese, 2011) and thus strengthen their capacities to express and position themselves in advantageous places to benefit from their activities and improve on wellbeing (Chambers, 1995; Hasdiansyah & Suryono, 2021).

2.3.2.6 Non-discrimination

The pursuit of non-discrimination practices could increase farm output and ensure equal income distribution among smallholder farmers in value chains. This is especially so in the case of tackling gender inequality in the agriculture sector since it has the potential to improve agricultural yields and redistribute incomes for the betterment of farmer households (Hickey & Du Toit, 2013). Non-discrimination and equal opportunity are rooted in the principle that all decisions regarding employment, access to the market, information, and technology are based on the capabilities of the individual without recourse to personal characteristics such as gender, religion, social origin, race and much else (Crane, Palazzo, Spence & Matten, 2014).

Studies show that the work of women farmers is undervalued although they work harder than their men counterparts (Glazebrook, Noll & Opoku, 2020), and the problem is compounded by historic and sociocultural tendencies that confine women to fewer resources and relatively lesser compensation for their work. Historically, paternalistic tendencies and gender bias fuels discriminatory practices against women and these challenges are shared globally, this, in turn, facilitates economic disparities and breaches of distributive justice (Glazebrook et al., 2020) leaving them without option but to rely on men for food, housing, support, and overall wellbeing.

To achieve social upgrading, strides toward non-discriminatory practices are imperative to generate better rights and protection for farmers and women farmers, this can promote social upgrading and decent work (Ros-Tonen et al., 2019). This can enhance their well-being and that of their dependents (Barrientos, Gereffi & Rossi, 2010; Ros-Tonen et al., 2019) and improve their access rights to resources and working conditions for their wellbeing.

2.3.3 Role of Institutions in Social Upgrading AVCD Intervention Outcomes

In the agricultural sector, institutions play a critical role in facilitating or restraining upgrading. Institutions in the agriculture sector vary from coverage; local, and national to international. At the local level, community leaders who can act on behalf of the members of the community constitute informal institutions that play a critical role in the agriculture sector. This is because community leaders represent the embodiment and custodian of the customs, beliefs, norms and values in the community (Osabuohien, 2020). For example, local institutions determine land tenure arrangements as well as informal institutional arrangements for the functioning of land and labour markets as well as tenure insecurity.

Thus, institutional arrangements help to improve the functioning of factor markets, especially those for land (Deininger et al., 2014). On the other hand, formal institutions play a critical role in facilitating agricultural VC upgrading. This is attained through the delivery of key inputs, resources, and services both for modernising agriculture and for product transformation as well as ensuring an optimal and desirable distributional outcome among disparate groups of actors so that the benefits of enhanced growth are shared equitably (Alpha & Fouilleux, 2018). They also play important roles in terms of determining policy outcomes and impacts on the agricultural sector through (Osabuohien, 2020).

The legal and institutional framework that exist in a country create choices that can affect transactions and production costs and this plays out in the formulation of policies in an economy that will be relevant for securing property rights (Shuaibu, 2021). Agriculture sector also benefits

from research institutions through the generation of knowledge, and technologies that contribute to enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the both food crop and livestock production (Tucker et al., 2013).

In this view, research and educational training institutions provide the requisite human resources with the right knowledge and skills to provide cutting-edge extension services to support farmers in their production efforts (Magiri et al., 2022). International institutions also provide support for the agriculture sector across the world through the establishment of governance architecture that regulate the activities of actors. For instance, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) regulates agricultural trade at the global level by committing members states to limit domestic support to agriculture ad a set of maximum tariffs for imports of all agricultural products across the globe (Tucker et al., 2013). International organisation such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation is continuously conducting and sharing research, advising on policy, developing conventions and guidelines for agricultural programmes development, and also providing the platform for policy makers to discuss issues relating to the sector, which together contribute the growth and productivity of agriculture around the world (ibid).

Civil society organizations and private foundations play critical roles in the growth and development of agriculture sector globally through advocacy for transparency and accountability of international institutions as well as providing funding for innovative and technological development to enhance the agricultural sector performance (Senevirathna, 2018).

The lack of institutional capacities generally defines the African landscape (both public and nonpublic), which hinders the transformative agender of the agriculture sector especially in developing countries. The absence of the appropriate institutionsal arrangements for the agriculture sector stifles the efforts at addressing the many challenges that confront the agriculture sector in

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developing countries especially those in sub-Saharan Africa (Philipo, 2015). for instance, the absence of research and educational institutions to support the agriculture sector will limit technological transfer, resulting in the low up-take of technology and innovations and this will consequently affect the efficiency and productivity of farmers (Magiri et al., 2022).

2.4 Soya Bean Production and Yield Trends in Africa

Soya is an essential legume with Asian origins and a long history of cultivation (Eshun, Kwame, Boateng & Kwaku, 2018). It has the capacity to fix atmospheric nitrogen because it is a legume, but nitrogen-fixing rhizomes are typically exclusive to soybeans, and traditionally, like other tropical legumes, native rhizomes and it have never been crossed. Compared to the 20% or more seen in other legumes often produced in other African nations like Kenya and Ghana, it has the greatest protein concentration of any bean. Compared to other legumes cultivated often in Africa, soybeans offer less carbs but greater overall energy thanks mostly to their oil content, the most balanced combination of amino acids (Eshun et al., 2018). Furthermore, soybeans are frequently regarded as a healthy food yet only have around 20% extractable oil.

The production of soya bean in Africa has a long history, according to Shurtleff and Aoyagi, (2009) the first production of soya bean in the continent was recorded in Egypt in 1858 and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) it was first recorded in 1903 in South Africa. Since then soya bean production has been increasing gradually in Africa as shown in Figure 2.4.



Figure 2.4: Production of soya bean in Africa

Source: FAOSTAT, 2022

The Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency (CSA) recorded a sharp increase in production volumes from 8,401MT in 2007/08 to 149455MT in 2018/2019 (CSA, 2019). Also, between 2003 and 2014, Zambia a significant player in the African soya bean production space had increased its production fivefold, thus from 42,000MT to about 214,179MT with the period (Hichaambwa, et al., 2014). Equally, the area under cultivation within the same period had increased from 17,400 Ha to 116,515 Ha suggesting a positive correlation between area cultivated and yield. Also, by 2014/2015 South Africa had more than doubled its area under cultivation from 311,000Ha to 687,000Ha (Meyer, et al., 2018). Meyer, et al. (2018) also indicated similar expansions in the soya bean sector in Malawi and Mozambique which have similar production models. Their study identified the are Tabbaco area planted, expected returns from maize and expexted returns from soya beans as factors affecting area undercultivation in Malawi. In the case of Mozambique NGO activities was also identified as an influencing factor.

Africa's soya bean industry is dominated by small scale farmers and a few large scale or commercial farmers. Meyer, et al. (2018) indicated the existance of significant yield differences between large scale producer cultivating under irrigation and the smallholders. The expansion in the area under soya bean cultivation is however not met with the necessary technologies required as access to improved seeds and inoculants are challenges to farmers (Mussema, et al., 2021). Also, lack of awareness on best crop management practices and untimely supply of inputs such as fertilizer were indentified among factors that inhibit productivity.

2.4.1 Actors Along the Soya Bean Value Chain

The industry participants and pathways that enhance smooth interactions among the various levels of the soya bean chain have received meaningful attention. Mussema, et al., (2021) revealed that the soya bean value chain have chain actors and supporters. Actors are generally the market level stakeholderrs who basiscally seek rent by responding to makret information on demand and supply. In particular, these include smallholders, agrodealers, green agregators, processors and consumers. The Chain supporters are also those stakeholdrs who provide enhancing services like extension, policy, finance, and research to the chain actors. These also include research institutes, public institutions, finance companies and NGOs or donors.

Hichaambwa et al. (2014) identified actors across various stages of the soybean chain in Zambia. These stages include input supply, production, aggregation and marketing, processing, wholesaling, retailing, and consumption, each with its own set of key functions.

2.4.2 Challlenges in the Soya VC

The prevalence of smallholder farmers in the African soya bean industry have made aggregation a serious concern in the chain. Mostly, soya bean aggregation takes place at different levels and involves different players. At the community level, bulking points are established and used to accumulate volumes that can be transported to the district centres in a more economical way. The lack of reliable market information makes it difficult for famers to make decisions on who to sell to and when to sell difficult (Hichaambwa, et al., 2014). The activities of collectors and assemblers in the chain can be described as an indispensable link in getting food from the producer to the final consumer. Mussema, et al., (2021) noted some inefficiencies in the soya bean marketing system that limits the market outlets available to the farmer, hence farmers suplly their produce to villge collectors and assemblers often at a low price. Farmers are unable to supply to the regional and terminal markets, because the market actors (collectors,assemblers, wholesalers and brokers) do not link farmers to the final buyers.

Another key activity of concern for Africa in the soya bean value chain is processing. Although, countries like South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia among others in Africa are making significant strides in terms of processing, there is still a lot to be done. For instance, Zambia has more than enougth installed processing capacity of 161,000tonnes of refined edible oils which corresponds to the crushing capacity of 357,000tonnes of oil seeds per year. With a national edible oil requirement of 120,000tonnes per year, Zambia will be able to meet its edible oil requirements, however the country still import almost 70% of edible requirements (Hichaambwa, et al., 2014). In the same vein, Meyer, et al. (2018) reveal that South African domestic crushing utilization rates are below the industry bench mark of 80%.

Hichaambwa, et al. (2014) identified production related constraints to include; limited crop management systems, limited extension services, limited access to mechanisation, limited access to credit and high cost of inputs among others. The authors also, pointed to unavailability of warehouses, lack of rural road infrastructure, high cost of processing equipments and high cost of electricity as key constraints facing the soya bean sector in Africa. Likewise, limited use of technology, limited supply of fertilizers, lack of awareness, weak linkage among actors and lack

of organic soya bean certification systems were identified by Mussema, et al., (2021) as soya bean value chain constraints in africa.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework provides guidance based on a set of interrelated theories that are constructed using coherent explanation of patterns and relationships (Grant et al., 2014). Chapter two shows that embedded in AVCD interventions is the desire to expand social outcomes and patterns of social modes of agricultural production. Against this backdrop, studies have shown that donor-led AVCD interventions leverages on social capital to help beneficiaries understand and embed the collective responsibility to develop themselves and their communities (Amanor, 2019; Kolade et al., 2020; Stathers et al., 2020). Based on this, Endris et al., (2020) argues that donorled interventions should focus on expanding social capital since it has the potential to lead to effective resource allocation and improvement in community relationships which can subsequently lead to social upgrading. According to Niles et al., (2021) behind social capital is better access to social services such as education, health, food and transportation (i.e. social outcomes). Hence social outcomes such as poverty, food security, income and employment are the underlining drivers of building social capital. For instance, a recent study found that social networking, a strong feeling of social cohesion, and better food security results are all related in rural areas (Nosratabadi et al., 2020).

Again reference is made to section 2.3 to show that in AVCD, the context of social upgrading has diverse components thus making AVCD for social upgrading a system. These components of social upgrading include, right to collective bargaining, empowerment, and among others thereby making it a system of interacting elements. These elements of the system are embedded and shaped by political, governance and institutional arrangements that can facilitate positive or negative

outcomes within the system. In view of this, the research draws theoretical foundation from systems and institutional theories.

2.5.1 The Systems Theory

Systems theory is one of the earlier practical theories developed in the 1950s based on the need for "a set of systematic theoretical constructs" (Lai and Lin, 2017, p.1) that can help discussions on real issues across spectrum of disciplines and viewpoints (Mele, Pels and Polese, 2012). Systems theory was premised on the maximization of interaction between actors in an organizational set up (Bawden et al., 1984; Mangnus & Van Westen, 2018). It was aimed at expounding the dynamic relationships and interdependence that exist between components of a set-up called a 'system' and the environment in which the system is operated from (Mele et al., 2012). In terms of conceptualization, a system was regarded as an establishment "based on the structure and patterns of the relationships emerging from interactions among components" in a social organization (Lai and Lin, 2017, p. 2). As noted, each of the components of the social organization possesses distinct motivations and purpose. However, the components interact and depend on each other and the level of interaction and interdependence of these determines the functionality of the system. Fundamentally, the three levels of observation that made up system theory are "the environment, the social organisation as a system, and human participants" within the environment. (Mele et al., 2012).

The study therefore draws from systems theory by framing GROW project as a system of different components, actors and their power interplay in shaping social outcomes that could catalyse social upgrading. This implies that GROW Soya project as a system has actors, social, economic, and environmental processes and outcomes that are shaped by everyday politics and lived experiences.

2.5.2 Institutional Theory

Aside the different components of GROW project as a system, the actors and processes are embedded in larger governance and institutional frameworks such as land tenure and local governance administration. This implies that understanding the institutional and governance context of the GROW project as a system will be necessary in unpacking how these institutional factors either impede or facilitate outcomes of the project.

According to Janićijević (2014), Institutional Theory was primarily developed within sociology and political science by pioneering institutionalists including Spencer, Sumner, Cooley, Hughes, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons. These scholars laid the foundation for the development of Institutional Theory through their contributions to understanding the role of institutions in shaping human behaviour and society. With the introduction of the first organizational institutionalists, Selznick, March, and Simon, the theory entered the field of organization in the 1940s. Neoinstitutionalists originated in organizational theory in the second part of the twentieth century. According to Janićijević (2014), the foundation for the key concepts of organizational neoinstitutionalism was established by a group of scholars. These included Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Scott (1987, 1991, 2001), Oliver (1991, 1992), Edelman (1992), Greenwood and Hinings and their associates (1988, 1996, 2008), Kostova (1999), Thornton (2002), and Pedersen and Dobbins (2002). Their contributions were instrumental in shaping the development of neo-institutionalism in the study of organizations.

Institution in this context is defined as a legitimate and efficient solution to a predefined problem comprising formal structures and rules (Olsen, 1965; Williamson, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Dimaggio & Powell, 1983). Institutions are the rules of the game (North, 1989). According to the proponents, the Institutional Theory has two dimensions namely Rational Theory (Old

institutionalism) and New Institutionalism. The Rational Theory perceives institution as instruments to understand the task for which they were created. For example, the local governance system in Ghana was institutionalised to facilitate local level development. The New Institutionalism on the other hand focuses on aspects that are ignored by Rational Theory (Mohammed, 2017). Hence, it sees institution as an embodiment of rules that guide its functions.

Notwithstanding the varying perspectives, Institutional Theory focuses on explaining the isomorphism (structure and rules) of an institution specifically pertaining to institutional norms (Mohammed, 2017). Thus, institutions determine the structure and operation of organizations in an economic sector or a societal sector (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). That is, integrating the rules with the structure to produce results. Mohammed (2017) asserts that organisations that follow these standards become, if not efficient, then at the very least, optimal and exploit these rules to extend their survival.

Following from the theory, the function and operation of the local governance system in Ghana is regulated by legal framework-Act 936 (Adjei, 2022). Within this regulatory framework, MMDAs are mandated to prepare MTDPs in tandem with national development policies and programmes in response to current development needs such as food security, economic growth, climate change employment, value chain and private sector development (Forkuor, 2022). Hence, mainstreaming agricultural value chains development into the local governance system is relevant in achieving comprehensive local level development in the face of the global food systems.

2.5.3 Application of Theories In The AVCD Interventions

The application of systems theory in evaluating the transitional opportunities in donor led AVCD interventions has become more eminent in recent times because of the increasing decline in good governance, coupled with the rapid change dynamics in population, food and energy demand as

well as the complex interdependence of private sector and public organizations (Sanga et al., 2021; Somers and Stapleton, 2022; Tamasin, 2012). The Agricultural system is very wide and consist of interdependent components interacting at various levels for a common goal of food security and economic growth (Drinkwater, Friedman and Buck, 2016). Based on structural functionalism constructs espoused by the systems theory, the applicability of systems theory became more relevant and suitable to the understanding of various actors in the agricultural system than any other sector of an economy (Tamasin, 2012).

The four main function of actions required to make a system effectively functional as advanced by the system theory include "adaptation", "integration" "goal attainment and "pattern maintenance" (Lai and Lin, 2017). Considering the politcal and ideological conspiracies of donors in AVCD interventions and the complex relationships between the various actors and institutions within the agricultural sector the principles of adaptation, goal attainment, pattern maintenance and integration as advanced by the system theory are critically relevant for the understanding of the entire agricultural system.

Under the system theory, 'adaption' encompasses the exchanges that occur between the components of the system and environment through which the required resources are obtained and used to maintain the system (Sanga et al., 2021; Tamasin, 2012). Within the agricultural system, farmers, agricultural extension officers, agro-processors, marketers and distributors and retailers exchange products, information/idea and financial resources in order to keep the production system moving.

In the system, the farmers produce variety of products based on advisory services rendered by extension officers in exchange for finance/money from Agro-processing and agribusiness operators, who also add value to the produce and pass on to retailers for onward distribution to the

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final consumer. In this process, finance, information and technical advice are exchanged or shared between the actors in the system (Tamasin, 2012). The effective sharing of these resources is meant to help develop and maintain the entire agricultural system and any disruption or failure at any point of the value chain is likely to cause a malfunction and/or destruction to the whole Agricultural system. For instance, feedback from market and consumers will force producers and marketers to change their strategy if the marketing strategies of both fails. If they desire to maintain certain levels of production and sales performance in the supply chain, both farmers and marketers have to pay serious attention to the disruptions in the value chain in order to respond and adjust to the demands of the various actors within the Agricultural system.

In a study, Sanga et al., (2021) argued that adaptive behaviour of people and the outcomes of such behaviours are determined and shaped by institutions, social, economic and cultural structures, objectives and available opportunities which fall under the constructs and principles of systems theory.

Another important pillar of the system theory critical to an AVCD intervention is 'goal attainment'. In this study, goal attainment can be social outcomes and capacities for social upgrading. In the view of system theory, goal attainment is concerned with the efficient and effective utilization of resources for the accomplishment of the individual and collective goal of the components/unit and the system respectively within an environment. The Agricultural sector provides an environment with different units or components who may have different goals to achieve within a period of time (Glover, 2022). As noted earlier, farmers, Agricultural extension officers, Agro-processors and agribusiness dealers, distributors and retailers as distinct groups or components have their own goals which need to be met together with the ultimate goal of the whole Agricultural system (i.e production and distribution of sustainable food). As advanced by system theory, the goals of each

of these components can only be achieved if these resources (Agricultural produce, technical advisory services, inputs, finance and information) are efficiently and effectively used by each of element in the system.

Similarly, the resources, efforts and goals of the functional actors within the Agricultural value chain have to be 'integrated' if the cardinal principles of food security (Availability, accessibility, affordability, utilization and stability) are to be achieved in the Agricultural system. For instance, the demand and supply dynamics, available human resource, and technology for the processing of Agricultural produce are to be taken into consideration by farmers if they desire to achieve higher revenue from their production. Similarly, the technical advice on weather forecast, climatic condition and application of Agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, weedicides, pesticides and insecticides, and use of improve seeds have to be adequately integrated into the planning and cultivation decision of farmers in each farming seasoning. If well integrated, farmers are likely to mitigate or reduce the impact of climate change, disease and pest outbreak which will result in higher yields and productivity.

Finally, the agricultural system is characterized with patterns of decision-making such as planting periods, application of inputs, harvesting, processing, distributions and engagement which are all "symbolic frames of reference" for stakeholders across the value chain. Within the constructs of systems theory, pattern maintenance as a major function of actors is critical for the development and maintenance of 'symbolic frames' of a system and the use of resources including decision for internal coordination in the system.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study broadly takes into account actors, their roles, perceptions, social acceptability and capacity outcomes of pilot donor-led AVCD interventions. Therefore, the

study's framework anticipates that perceptions of chain actors at various levels and VC constrains may affect capacity outcomes of donor-led AVCD interventions. This can then have ramifications for upgrading especially relating to social upgrading as shown in Figure 2.5

The idea of social upgrading connotes workers perceived social impact of their involvement in a production network or a value chain. The perceived impact in the value chain manifest in improved working conditions, income, gender equality, labour regulation, human capital development, social capital, social protection, rights, and entitlements (Gereffi, & Luo, 2015; Gereffi, G., & Luo, 2016; Wei et al., 2021) which together translates into the reduction or removal of risk and volatility that may confront actors in the value chain. Thus, these perceived impacts need to be examined in the context of AVCD to understand how to include the various actors, especially, smallholder farmers to guarantee sustained social outcomes. The social outcomes associated with social upgrading also include empowering smallholders to acquire and control assets; material (financial and physical resources) and social resources as well as ability to exercise their choices (Wei et al., 2021). However, Amanor (2019) cautioned that the integration of smallholder farmers into the AVC without adequate safeguards could lead to a loss of autonomy and make them dependent on other actors in the chain such as input suppliers, processors, and market agents.

If social upgrading is seen as workers' entitlement and rights to pension, social protection, fair wages and better condition of employment (see Chapter two), then drawing from Amartya Sen, the study can frame social upgrading as "freedom in development". From Sen (1991) argument, social upgrading cannot just be an increase in income and wages but how social outcomes provided different mechanisms to enable the transformation of sociocultural barriers of production and exercise of diverse range of social freedom. Studies have shown that changes in socioeconomic outcomes can catalyse transition towards social upgrading (Graef et al., 2017; Kariuki, 2018). For

example, there is consensus that right to social protection under social upgrading depends on effective food security and poverty reduction at the household level (Graef et al., 2017). These studies show that social outcomes such as food security, poverty and better income create pathways for social upgrading through enhancement in social protection, fair wages, gender equality and better condition of employment (Wang et al., 2021).





Source: Author 2022

From Figure 4.1, VC interventions comprise of actors, processes, and outcomes. Whiles the actors interact and vary at various levels dependingdepending on their interest and power relations, all the three broad dimensions have both balancing and reinforcing relationships. The relationships between actors, processes and outcomes, are socially embedded in everyday political processes of institutional change and development. Social embeddedness refer to the customs and traditions that shape social outcomes (Totin et al., 2018) either to facilitate or impede donor-led AVCD interventions. For positive effect of social embeddedness, institutions become necessary. The

operations of the VC interventions therefore depend on the actors and the institutional arrangement shaping their interrelationships with the donor-led AVCD interventions. Institutional embeddedness refers to both formal and informal constraints that can shape donor-led AVCD interventions. This presents a situational context of donor-led AVCD interventions (See Chapter three).

External to this, perceptions of chain actors can have ramifications on social acceptability of donorled AVCD interventions. Similarly, external constraints (See Figure 4.1) such as markets and infrastructure can also have some effects on the success of donor-led AVCD interventions. The confluence of these factors can shape the social outcomes at various levels as shown in Figure 4.1 (Objective 1). This internal and external constraints of donor led AVCD intervention analysed through perceptions are presented in objective 1 of this research. Also, the social outcomes through different mechanisms can lead to social upgrading (Objective 2).

Although several studies have looked at different forms of upgrading especially product, process and functional upgrading (Barrientos et al., 2011a; Bernhardt & Pollak, 2016; Graef et al., 2017), the focus of this research is on social upgrading for a number of reasons. The study frames social upgrading as conditioning socio-technical settings to support liberal production modes/outcomes (Iza, 2019; Kilelu et al., 2017b; Totin et al., 2018). This involves the transformation of the socially embedded issues (e.g formalizing women access to land) to overcome the impediments of local production. Through this, the agricultural sector can shift from its traditional engagement as social interventions to rather an economic sector (requiring liberal enterprising) with the potential for high social impacts/value. Successful social upgrading can reinforce social outcomes thereby continuously improving local production. Also, social upgrading will rely on customs and traditions that have existed for centuries, conditioning these socio-cultural settings to be transformed will require new institutional arrangement of governance architecture as shown in Figure 4.1 (Objective 3).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an extensive examination of the literature pertaining to the research objectives, investigating the value chain concept in the context of donor aid, neoliberal development, and its application in agriculture.

The chapter begins by establishing a nuanced comprehension of the value chain concept, particularly its significance within agricultural value chains. It traces the academic progression of value chains, with a specific focus on Agricultural Value Chain Development (AVCD), while critically analyzing the underlying neoliberal ideologies that have influenced the widespread implementation of aid in AVCD interventions. By thoroughly scrutinizing both research findings and practical applications, this chapter explores the intricate interplay between aid, neoliberal interventions, and their implications for local economic development.

A pivotal element of the literature review involves conducting a rigorous assessment of the constraints associated with local social development and sustainability within AVCD interventions, particularly following the withdrawal of donor support. This critical evaluation provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by AVCD initiatives and their repercussions for local communities.

Moreover, the chapter delves into the concept of social upgrading, elucidating its manifestations and potential long-term outcomes within AVCD interventions. By investigating the mechanisms through which social upgrading materializes, the chapter sheds light on the broader social implications and lasting effects of AVCD initiatives. The literature review also delves into the institutional arrangements governing the agricultural sector and their impact on AVCD interventions. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that shape the effectiveness and outcomes of AVCD initiatives.

Recognizing the necessity for comprehensive frameworks to thoroughly examine the efficacy of donor aid in AVCD interventions, the chapter incorporates systems and institutional theories. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the chapter establishes a solid foundation for analyzing the three research objectives. Detailed discussions on the implications of these theories for the study were presented, followed by a comprehensive exploration of the conceptual framework employed in the research.

CHAPTER THREE THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.0 Introduction

The literature on donor led intervention–growth nexus especially in SSA has received much attention (Adams & Atsu 2014; Ojiambo et al. 2015; Kumi et al. 2017). However, there is fierce debate on the real effects of aid in promoting agricultural growth and development more generally. Some scholars have demonstrated that donor interventions have a positive impact on economic growth by bridging the saving–investment gap, mainly through complementing and supplementing domestic development objectives as well as increasing investments and human capital development (Hatemi & Irandoust 2005; Duc 2006; Minoiu & Reddy 2010).

On the other hand, some commentators have raised concerns about the effectiveness of donor interventions in promoting growth and development (Easterly 2005; Moyo 2009). The argument is that there is a marginal or negative relationship between donor interventions and economic growth, due partly to donor interests and inappropriate recipient policies (Young & Sheehan 2014).

This chapter provides a situational analysis of the donor-led AVCD intervention in terms of its arrangement, operation and soyabean production in the study area. In order to generate the basis for analysis of the third research objective on institutional arrangements for social upgrading, this third chapter of the study presents Ghana as a profiled setting for the research. Section 1.5 already provides some brief justification for Ghana as a choice case study. This chapter broadens this justification by presenting the developmental context of Ghana; backgrounds relative to the geography, demography, ethnic and governance structure. Since expectations of donor-led interventions in AVCs are anchored on local sociotechnical capacities to upgrade intervention outcomes, the chapter presents the decentralized development administration context to understand the institutional dynamics of upgrading outcomes ex-post.

3.1 Profile of Ghana3.1.1 Geographical Structure

Ghana, a former British colony in the middle of West Africa, is bordered by Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, Cote d'Ivoire to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. It has three main geographical zones: the coastal, the central forest belt, and the huge savannah ecology in the north (Lambrecht & Ragasa, 2018). The population of the nation was estimated at roughly 24.7 million according to the 2010 national census. This population was dispersed unevenly throughout 10 administrative regions, which were further divided into various districts. In 2019, there were regional re-demarcations, and 6 new regions were added to the previous 10, therefore now making 16 regions. In 2021, the national Population and Housing Census (PHC) estimated the country's population at about roughly 30.7 million. However, secondary data used in this chapter relied on the old 10 regional structure due to non-availability of disaggregated data for the newly carved out regions. Some academics have argued that Ghana should be thought of as having simply two larger distinct regions, the Northern region and the Southern region due to the stark regional development differences (Asitik & Abu, 2020b).

The region that has been referred to as "the North" administratively is the same one that was formally annexed to the Gold Coast (Ghana's colonial name) in 1902 after being formally occupied by the British government in 1897. The Northern Region was the name given to the region by the British during colonial rule. The name was changed to the Northern Region in 1957 after the country gained independence from the British Empire. According to Kelly and Bening (2007), the Upper Region was split into the Upper East and Upper West regions in 1983 after being separated from the North in 1960. The northern region has recently undergone additional division into the Savannah Region, North East Region, and Northern Region.

Therefore, as used in the study, Northern Ghana or simply NG comprises the Northern, Savannah, North East, Upper East and Upper West regions, while the remaining southern regions, which until the 2019 additions were seven, but now eleven, comprise Western Region, Western North, Ashanti, Bono East, Ahafo, Oti, Brong Ahafo, Volta, Central, Eastern and Greater Accra. Despite making up only roughly 20% of Ghana's overall population, the North accounts for 41% of its land area (GSS, 2010).





Source: (Mangnus & Van Westen, 2018)

3.1.2 Demographic and Social Structure

Ghana has a population of 30,832,019 as at 2021(GSS 2021). Geographically, Ghana's southern parts are more inhabited than its Northern half (ibid). This may be linked to the high rate of north-south migration, which was mostly fuelled by the regionalization of the economy in favour of areas with high agricultural potential and economic activity during the colonial era (A.-G. Abdulai et

al., 2018). Additionally, this may have included taking advantage of those areas' high concentrations of minerals, timber, and export crop production (Bolaji & Apusigah, 2018). The sixth Ghana Living Standard Survey, which demonstrates this migratory pattern, reveals that more than half (51.6%) of the people in the rural forests of southern Ghana are migrants, especially from the northern portion of the country (GSS, 2014a).

The GSS (2021) attributes increase in the percentage of urban residents in Ghana during the past few decades as a sign that both urban overcrowding and rural depopulation are on the rise. It can equally be observed that the concentration of businesses and industries in cities, especially in the urban south, drives this trend of urban immigration (Mabe et al., 2019). Rural out-migration is also influenced by modern socio-cultural perceptions that view agriculture as a "backward" profession best suited to the elderly and rural residents solely (A.-G. Abdulai et al., 2018). In addition, emphasis on commercial farming over smallholder agriculture has limited family access to land (Ahmed & Gasparatos, 2020).

Due to the pursuit of better job prospects, young individuals tend to migrate towards urban areas, leading to a significant impact on agrarian economies such as Ghana. Although rural-urban migration is a general issue confronting developing and emerging economies, an agrarian economy like, Ghana heavily relies on manual labour, as there is a low rate of adoption of labour-saving technologies (MoFA 2017).

Regrettably however, there has been a decline in the proportion of young adults in the agricultural workforce in the last 30 years, as they tend to migrate to urban areas for better economic opportunities (GSS 2019). As a result, the elderly and children currently make up the majority of the agricultural sector workforce in Ghana. This rural depopulation and the abandonment of
farming by young people has adverse effects on the agricultural sector, leading to a reduction in labour availability and increasing labour costs, thereby decreasing productivity.

3.1.3 Ethnicity and Cultural Groupings

Although most of Ghana's population resides in rural areas, which often have a homogenous ethnicity, the country's socio-cultural structure is diverse and encompasses various ethnic and cultural groups. According to Owusu-Ansah (2014), Ghana is believed to have over 100 distinct ethnic groups. Historically, the precolonial society was made up of several nations that had different political systems and cultures (Campbell 2013). However, with the advent of colonialism in Africa, governments were established and this brought together diverse ethnic and cultural groups, some of which may have previously had nothing in common apart from their racial differences (Bolaji & Apusigah, 2018).

The 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) in Ghana has categorized various ethnic groups into larger ethnicities. The most dominant ethnic group in Ghana is the Akans, accounting for about 48% of the population, while the Mole Dagbani is the second largest group, representing 16.6% of Ghanaians. The Ewe follows closely with 13.9%, then Ga-Dangme with 7.4%, Gurma with 5.7%, Guan with 3.7%, and Grusi with 2.5%. The smallest ethnic group is the Mande, making up 1.1% of the population, while other ethnic groups not falling into these categories account for 1.4% of Ghanaians. These ethnicities are further divided based on their history and dialects. For instance, the Akans are sub-grouped into Asante, Akuapem, Akyem, Akwamu, Ahanta, Agona, Bono, Fante, Kwahu, Nzema, Sefwi, and Wasa, while the Ewe comprises of people from Lolobi, Likpe, Logba, Nkonya, Santrokofi, and Tafi (Owusu-Ansah, 2014).

Ghana's society is characterized by a mixture of various ethnic and cultural groups, each with their own distinct languages and traditions, coexisting with one another (Ali et al., 2021). This diverse

society has emerged due to the mobility of people across different geographical locations. As more rural residents migrate to urban areas, there is increased diversity and ethnic mixing in metropolitan regions. As a result of the coexistence of several ethnic groups, a large proportion of Ghanaians are bilingual, proficient in speaking and understanding two or more of their native languages.

3.1.4 Economic and Governance Structure

Since the early colonial period, agriculture, mining, and retail marketing have been the primary economic activities in Ghana and continue to dominate the present-day economy (Serbeh & Adjei, 2022). These sectors represent the only significant changes or diversifications to Ghana's economy since it was established under the colonial economic system. Currently, agriculture remains the largest economic sector, employing approximately 45% of the workforce, followed by manufacturing (14.4%) and services (40.9%) (NDPC, 2020).

A significant portion of Ghana's workforce is employed in the agricultural sector and other unregulated industries, with many self-employed individuals working in small-scale businesses like trading. The informal sector is mainly composed of these workers. While agriculture and related industries remain the largest employer in Ghana, a new trend has emerged where people are gradually transitioning from agriculture to the services sector and, to a lesser extent, manufacturing(Diao et al., 2019).

The transformation of Ghana's economy is evident in the shift of employment from the agricultural sector to the services industry. The World Bank (2015) reports that the services sector grew from 28.7% in 1991 to 42% in 2012. This shift highlights a structural transformation that will lead to economic growth. However, even with this shift, manufacturing labour productivity still remains low (Franks et al., 2021). This slow growth of the manufacturing and food crop sectors is attributed

to structural adjustment changes discussed in section 3.2.3. As a result, the services sector has become the largest economic sector in Ghana since the mid-2000s (Asigbetse et al., 2022).

Agricultural sector decline has been attributed to various biophysical factors, including shifting rainfall patterns and resistance to adopting new technologies (van Buuren et al., 2018), despite an increase in the availability of fertilizers, seeds, and agrochemicals (Lawson et al., 2020).

It has been suggested that the decreasing trend in the agriculture sector is not solely due to environmental or technological reasons, but rather to structural issues arising from global and national policies that affect productivity (Ali et al., 2021).

On a macroeconomic level, Ghana's national budget heavily relies on financing from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, research indicates that adhering to donor conditions in public expenditures has contributed to the current geographical disparities in Ghana, with development in Northern Ghana and the agriculture industry being viewed as cost-saving measures (Niyonkuru, 2016). Figure 3.2 presents selected economic indicators between 1992 and 2017.



Figure. 3.2 Ghana's Development Indicators 1991/92-2016/17

Source: Author with data from (World Bank, 2020; GSS, 2019; 2014; NDPC, 2014)

Figure 3.2 indicates a deepening trend of inequality even though poverty decreased marginally over the period 1992 to 2017.

The governance system in Ghana is decentralised, with local governments pegging significant pillars in local development administration (Forkuor, 2022). It is a 3-tier governance and administrative framework with national tier responsible for policy direction and planning, regional tier responsible for development coordination and harmonization at the local level and the district tier responsible for local development programme implementation at the local level (Kuditchar, 2022). The various tiers are headed by political office holders with technical and administrative support from civil and public servants (Adjei & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022).

3.2 Agricultural Sector Outlook in Ghana

Ghana's annual growth rate for 2019 is 6.5%, which is a modest increase from the 6.3% for 2018 (GSS 2019). However, the share of agriculture to GDP has been decreasing since the 1980s as shown in Figure 3.3. This is due to integrated drivers as indicated in CGIAR (2020). With the exception of maize and oil palm, the food crop sub-sector recorded low production as well as high importation due to relatively high cost of production (Ali et al., 2021). The decline in agriculture share of GDP can also be attributed to the high importation and lack of processing of primary products (L. G. A. Amoah, 2016a).

Figure 3.3: Agriculture share of gross domestic production in Ghana



Source, FAOSTAT, (2022)

The dominance of smallholder farmers who produce an average of roughly 2 hectares (Tamimie, Goldsmith & Winter-Nelson, 2018) has also contributed to low production. Recent crisis of land grabbing has also further affected commercial farming in the country thereby making large-scale land based investment difficult due to challenges in land access (Avea et al., 2016).

3.2.1 Post-Colonial Outlook

At the time of Ghana's independence, it boasted one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa (L. G. A. Amoah, 2012). To realize the aspirations of independence and address the political, social, and economic developmental gaps created during the colonial era, the President then, Dr Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP administration envisioned comprehensive progress. According to Lentz (2000) Nkrumah's primary objective was to industrialize the economy and transition it from dependence on commodities towards industry, as this was deemed the most efficient route to sustaining the gains of independence. To achieve this, the agricultural sector, which provides both the market and labour for the industrial sector, needed to increase its per capita food output. Additionally, it was expected that the agricultural sector would supply the necessary raw materials for future industrial efforts (Kumi, 2020).

A five-year development plan (1959-1964) was developed to achieve these goals. The plan emphasized estate farming and modernization of the agricultural sector as operational strategies (Odeyemi, 2022). The government's adoption of a socialist political ideology in 1961 allowed for comprehensive control over all aspects of the economy(Biney, 2011). This replaced the colonial capitalist system that had created unequal access to resources and wealth, resulting in social stratification between the rich and poor. Socialism was viewed as an alternative development paradigm to address these inequalities(Adjei, 2022).

Paradoxically however, the adoption of a socialist development philosophy hindered the potential of smallholder agriculture (Baumann, 2019). Small-scale farming was viewed as a barrier to the expansion of socialism and the industrialization of the economy. Instead, state-owned farms and cooperative agriculture were chosen and promoted. The return to cooperative agricultural models has been embraced by the majority of donor interventions in pilot interventions, which is an intriguing development given that these forms were prominent in Nkrumah's time but have been abandoned for many years(Kwao & Amoak, 2022).

Unfortunately, the Nkrumah-led CPP government was overthrown in 1966, which marked the end of the state farming model and the industrialization strategy. The decline in cocoa prices in the latter half of 1964 had a significant impact on foreign exchange earnings, leading to money printing by the government, which was one of the contributing factors to Nkrumah's downfall (Brooks et al., 2017). Furthermore, rising inflation and wages added to the regime's challenges, which ultimately harmed Nkrumah's popularity.

3.2.2 Outlook Post Nkrumah

After Nkrumah's overthrow, Ghana's political climate was characterized by a succession of coups and military rule. Numerous studies indicate that Nkrumah's removal delayed Ghana's development and had a negative impact on sustainable planning (L. G. A. Amoah, 2016). The period was also marked by a shift from socialism to capitalism in terms of development ideologies. For example, the National Liberation Council (NLC) and Dr. K. A. Busia, who succeeded Nkrumah between 1966 and 1972, both emphasized private sector agricultural development. Rice in particular was prioritised .

This strategy aimed to make Ghana self-sufficient in food and reduce dependency on foreign imports. As a part of this strategy, the NLC government privatized state-owned rice fields and revived agricultural extension services to provide support to smallholder farmers across the country, which was considered strategically important (Anaman et al., 2012). The NLC government also focused on reducing public spending and implementing austerity measures to stabilize the economy, in contrast to the previous regime's lavish spending. To achieve this, the NLC government pursued two key policies: first, encouraging smallholders to participate as private economic actors and reducing state-controlled farming models; and second, adjusting the exchange rate to promote exports and providing incentives to increase the producer price of cocoa (Kolavalli and Vigneri, 2011). Apart from agricultural policies, initiatives for rural development were also introduced to establish fundamental infrastructure in rural areas.

On the political front, the overthrow of the Busia administration in 1972 ushered in another military regime (1972-1975). At this time, the Head of State, Acheampong, revisited Nkrumah's import substitution strategy and economic protectionism in order to end the economic liberalisation regime of Busia's administration. Under Acheampong, Aacreage extensification was seen as a means to boost smallholder farmers' output and increase agricultural production, with a particular focus on staple foods such as maize and rice, as well as other crops like cotton and

sugarcane. Ghana was able to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production between 1974 and 1975 as a result of these efforts (Anaman et al., 2012).

However, the programme was short-lived, as Acheampong's military regime was overthrown in 1978 on corruption allegations. Both Acheampong and his successor, Frederick Akuffo, were executed after being found guilty of corruption. Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party (PNP) won subsequent elections, and Limann became president in 1979. However, he too was overthrown in a coup in 1981.

Although Limann's time in office was rather brief, several initiatives were introduced to boost agricultural output among smallholder farmers during the late 1970s and early 1980s, including VORADEP, URADEP, NORRIP, MIDAS, and the Ghanaian German Agricultural Development Project. However, despite these efforts, the agricultural sector and the wider economy experienced a decline during the same period. Consequently, on December 31, 1981, Rawlings staged another military coup and overthrew the Liman government.

To change Ghana's economy, Rawlings established the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) usher in a new administration. The early 1980s saw macroeconomic volatility due to a generalised decrease in the performance of the overall economy. Given that the economy was heavily dependent on agricultural commodities, some people blamed the decline in productivity in some productive agricultural sectors for this negative economic spiral (Jedwab and Osei, 2012).

In an effort to halt this negative trend and as part of its continued integration into the world political economy, Ghana adopted an economic adjustment plan from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1983. This plan was closely related to the fast spread of capitalist and neoliberal development processes and policies throughout the African continent at the time. The

policies that influenced agricultural growth during the period are briefly discussed in the next section.

3.2.3 Outlook following Structural Adjustment

Twenty years after Nkrumah was overthrown, Ghana saw political instability, four military coups, and a serious economic downturn. Due to inadequate farmer incentives and ineffective production delivery systems, the agriculture sector, which serves as the backbone of the economy, was performing poorly (Acheampong & Ibrahim, 2016). The economy's overall productivity was falling, but the agriculture sector was particularly affected. The nation also saw the worst drought in 50 years.

The deportation of approximately a million Ghanaians from Nigeria further increased the need for food and employment, exacerbating the 1980s' political, economic, and social issues (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). The state was completely bankrupt at the same time as inflation reached an astounding level (hyperinflation) (Jedwab and Osei, 2012). From this point, Ghana launched its Economic Recovery Programme in 1983 with the intention of reestablishing the country's economy.

The Work Bank and the IMF directed the Economic Recovery Programme, which was a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Agriculture-related policies emphasised price control, input and credit subsidies, mandatory credit distribution, and state involvement in production, distribution, and marketing prior to the implementation of the SAP (Brooks et al., 2007; Stryker, 1990). The argument put up was that the nation's economic woes were mostly the result of governmental interference in economic areas including manufacturing and extensive social service initiatives (Konadu Agyemang, 2001). They said, for instance, that government participation in the rural economy, which employs the majority of the poor, distorts the prices of agricultural products and so lessens market prospects.

The goal of the SAP was to eliminate distortions in the market that were hindering the efficient allocation of resources through price mechanisms (Sowa, 1996). This involved deregulating rural markets and liberalizing import markets. During the adjustment period, agricultural programs and projects were implemented with the aim of adjusting input and output markets, according to Benhin and Barbier (2001). Specifically, the input market policy targeted land, credit, fertilizers, seeds, machinery, human labor, and commodities used in farming. Additionally, output market strategies aimed to influence output prices, producer prices, production quantities, food distribution, and trade. For instance, three phases of the economic reform program were designed to realign cocoa producer prices, promote exports, and liberalize export and import markets. These liberalization strategies effectively eliminated subsidies across all sectors of the economy, including agriculture (Yaro et al., 2016).

Following the privatisation of the importation and sale of fertilizers and other agrochemicals, the government ceased to provide subsidies for these products. The rationale for this was that the government's involvement in the input market was causing price distortions and hindering the participation of the private sector. As a result, most state-owned institutions in the agricultural sector were privatised, except for the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), which retained responsibility for cocoa exports and pricing in Ghana. Given that cocoa exports generate significant government revenue and have traditionally been under government control, privatising this sector would pose a financial risk (Vigneri and Kolavalli, 2018). The government raised the producer price of cocoa as a means of stimulating cocoa production. This strategy provided an incentive for farmers to increase their cocoa production (Koning, 2002). Furthermore, export crop diversification was encouraged to reduce reliance on cocoa and mitigate the risk of fluctuations in the global commodity market (Teye and Torvikey, 2018).

The policy approach adopted in Ghana during the 1980s was aligned with the neoliberal narratives of agriculture and trade that aimed to liberalize the economy by promoting commercialization, marketization, and privatization. These policies were primarily advocated by international funders despite opposition from civil society, farmers, and other groups who highlighted the negative effects of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The government of Ghana implemented SAPs as a requirement for loans from the IMF and World Bank, thereby prioritizing the neoliberal approach over opposing views (Teye and Torvikey, 2018). The pressure on the government to prevent further economic deterioration also played a role in the adoption of these policies.

Despite the intended goal of reducing poverty and promoting economic progress, the implementation of neoliberal economic adjustment policies in Ghana during the 1980s resulted in significant suffering for Ghanaians, especially farmers (A. Abdulai & Huffman, 2000). While macroeconomic indicators such as inflation, balance of payments, industrial capacity, and foreign reserves all showed improvement during the adjustment period, critics argue that these metrics did not necessarily translate into better living conditions for Ghanaians. The increase in poverty following SAPs, despite overall economic growth, challenges the World Bank's assertion that development should be measured solely by national economic growth, as represented by GDP (Konadu-Aggyemang, 2001).

Furthermore, the elimination of agriculture input subsidies led to a rapid increase in the prices of inputs, which discouraged their use, including fertilizers and mechanization (Houssou et al., 2016). These impacts, combined with high costs for social services such as healthcare and education, contributed to an increased cost of living for Ghanaians, particularly those in rural areas who rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods.

According to Bell (2012), SAPs have a negative impact on developing nations by promoting export crop production, which attracts investors to buy farmland for export purposes. This process pushes impoverished farmers to move to marginal lands, resulting in deforestation and land degradation a phenomenon known as capital accumulation through dispossession (Harvey, 2005). The use of marginal land for food production decreases productivity, making poor or developing nations more reliant on food imports to meet their domestic food needs.

The SAPs had prioritized the production of export crops over food production, leaving smallholder farmers in a worse situation (Teye and Torvikey, 2018). The increased demand for land to grow export crops resulted in rising rents, which disadvantaged poor rural farmers, migrant farmers, and women who could not afford to buy land for agriculture (Sawyer, 1988).

Giving the foregoing, most scholars have agreed that structural adjustment not only made rural and urban residents poorer, increasing their reliance on imported food, but it also created the framework for a liberal economy, whose principles have influenced development policies in the agricultural sector and beyond (A. Abdulai & Huffman, 2000; Asigbetse et al., 2022; Pardey & Alston, 2019). Despite the fact that neoliberal structural adjustment failed to reduce poverty in Ghana, neoliberal development principles continue to influence development programmes as shown in the next section.

3.2.4 Agricultural Policy Outlook in the Fourth Republic

In 1996, Ghana unveiled a 25-year development plan known as Vision-2020, aimed at transforming the country into a middle-income nation by 2020 following its return to multiparty democracy in 1992. The agriculture sector is considered a key driver of economic prosperity and rapid growth under this plan. The plan's agricultural policy emphasizes the use of science and technology, such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and agrochemicals, to increase agricultural output

without compromising the environment, a topic that is widely debated in Ghana and around the world (Anaman et al., 2012).

To ensure the success of Vision-2020 within five years of its announcement, it was deemed crucial to adopt a sector-specific plan, resulting in the Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (AAGDS) in 2001. The AAGDS aimed to increase the agriculture sector's growth by 4% to 6% between 2001 and 2010 (Gov. of Ghana, 2005). According to Kolavalli et al. (2010), AAGDS had two main objectives: (1) promoting agricultural intensification in high potential areas using modern inputs, small-scale irrigation, and mechanization; and (2) shifting towards high-value crops, expanding livestock products, trade-led policies, and export diversification. The focus on modern inputs, and export diversification in AAGDS reflects a strong commitment to market-based development approaches, which was first introduced by SAPs in the 1980s and 1990s.

The post-SAP era in Ghana has seen various initiatives, strategies, and projects aimed at accelerating the growth of the agricultural sector. These separate programmes were integrated into a single policy framework called the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) in 2002. The FASDEP was developed with the goal of improving donor relations and reducing poverty (Al-Hassan, 2010; Sarpong, 2008). The adoption of FASDEP served as a guide for the implementation of modernization programmes in the agricultural sector.

The AAGDS and the fundamental principles of the SAP informed the strategies in FASDEP, which were designed to create connections in the value chain (MOFA, 2017). However, the policy had numerous shortcomings, which led to a reform and the introduction of FASDEP II. Since 2000, agricultural policy have pushed for agricultural modernization on the grounds that adopting contemporary production inputs will provide the technical answers that are needed to address rural poverty and food insecurity. Even though FASDEP II came to an end in 2015, Planting for Food

and Jobs (PFJ), a replacement programme, wasn't introduced until President Akufo Addo's new administration took office in 2017.

3.2.5 Current Agricultural Policies in Ghana

As per Ghana's current medium-term development plan, The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP-2017-2024), the country's agriculture sector strategy is now centred around the Planting for Food and Jobs strategy (PFJ, 2017). By outlining solutions to deal with the slowing growth in the staple sector, the policy (PFJ, 2017) recognises the underlying growth constraints and the agricultural potential of northern Ghana (NG). According to the literature in this area, this national policy may not be the first to recognise the growth potential of Northern Ghana (Abdulai Gafaru, 2017). It is the dedication and execution that have always been appalling (Donkor, 2007).

The CPESDP (2017-2024) broadly emphasises that NG should have more opportunity to actively participate in the economic life of Ghana through additional adjunct sectoral policies like One-village-one-Dam (IV1D) and One-District-One-Factory (1D1F). The 1V1D is a component of the government's objectives to hasten growth, especially in NG. The program's main goal is to enable individuals living in rural parts of NG to engage in year-round farming and become economically productive. The Ghanaian government believes that small-scale farmers may greatly reduce food imports and contribute to the country's ability to earn foreign cash by participating in production surplus regimes. The anticipated role of agriculture in reducing rural poverty in NG is not solely based on its capacity to provide food products, but also on the numerous opportunities for income generation in the production, processing, distribution, and retailing phases of the food value chain. As a crucial sector for economic development and rural livelihoods, agriculture is recognized by

the government to have a larger role in rural communities. Hence, smallholder farmers are expected to play a significant part in reducing rural poverty in NG.

3.3 Agricultural Value Chain Interventions in Ghana

The main goal of Ghana's agricultural policy initiatives is to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers, with a particular emphasis on grains that are staple foods (Tanko et al., 2019). Donor-led AVCD interventions in particular, are implemented in Ghana with the aim of improving the profitability, and competitiveness of agricultural value chains(Dubey et al., 2022). They are typically designed to address specific challenges facing a particular value chain, such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, or weak market linkages (Diao et al., 2019).

In terms of design and implementation, an overview of sampled project documents reveal that interventions are implemented through partnerships between donors, government institutions, and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector. According to Dubey et al., (2022) the design and implementation typically involve the following general steps.

 Needs Assessment and Stakeholder Identification: The first step in implementing donorled AVCD interventions in Ghana involves identifying the needs of the value chain and the stakeholders involved. This is typically done through a needs assessment that involves engaging with value chain actors, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted a needs assessment to identify the challenges and opportunities in the maize, rice, and soybean value chains in Ghana before implementing the Ghana Agricultural Technology Transfer Project (GATTP). Also the the Feed the Future Ghana Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project conducted a needs assessment to identify challenges facing the maize, rice, and soybean value chains in Northern Ghana. According to Crentsil et al., (2019) needs assessment helps to inform the intervention design by identifying the key areas of focus and the most appropriate interventions to address the identified challenges.

- 2. Design and Planning: Once the needs assessment is completed, the next step is to design and plan the intervention. This involves developing a clear and detailed intervention plan that outlines the objectives, activities, and expected outcomes of the intervention. The plan is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and usually takes into account the findings of the needs assessment. For example, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) developed the Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme (RTIMP) in collaboration with the government of Ghana and other stakeholders to address the challenges facing root and tuber value chains in the country (IFAD, 2018).
- 3. Implementation and monitoring: the intervention plan is then implemented, and progress is monitored closely to ensure that the objectives are being met. This involves working with value chain actors to provide technical assistance, training, and access to finance and markets. The implementation phase is also used to build the capacity of local actors to sustainably manage and grow the value chain over the long-term. For example, the Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP) undertook brick and mortar infrastructure development, generated access to finance, and technical assistance to improve the competitiveness and inclusiveness of smallholders in commercial agriculture in Ghana (World Bank, 2017f).
- 4. Evaluation and impact assessment: the next step involves evaluating the impact of the intervention and assessing its effectiveness. This involves conducting impact assessments to determine the extent to which the intervention has achieved its objectives and

contributed to the growth and competitiveness of the value chain. For example, the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) conducted impact assessments to measure the impact of its interventions in improving the productivity and competitiveness of agricultural value chains in Ghana.

5. Sustainability and Scaling Up: Sustainability and scaling up are critical components of donor-sponsored AVCD interventions in Ghana. The idea is that interventions must be sustainable and scalable to have a lasting impact on the target value chains and the livelihoods of farmers. This component of project chains is mostly expressed in project documents without concrete commitments as the other steps.

3.4 Governance and Institutional Structure of the Ghanaian Agricultural Sector

Since the inception of Ghana's 4th republic in 1992, the governance and institutional structure of the agricultural sector has evolved into a multi-sectoral and multi-scalar outlook (Forkuor, 2022). However even with donor activism for capitalist ideologies to underwrite conduct and performance of the sector, an interesting feature about the agricultural sector is that it has always been public service extension driven (Oladimeji Oladele, 2020). The Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II, 2007) by far appears the most defining policy in the sector. The current sectoral policy recognizes strengthening of linkages between different stakeholders and effective coordination as important governance essentials (PFJ, 2017).

In this regard, there is a 3-tier structure (see Figure 3.7) that includes the national level with the MoFA assisted by other Ministries such as Finance, Local Government and Rural Development, various national level technical committees and donor partners to plan and coordinate policy as well as benchmark sectoral performance.

This is then followed by the Regional Agricultural Departments working under the broader institutional goals of the regional coordinating councils who coordinate and harmonize district level program and policy implementation at the regional level and monitors district performance (Adjei & Adu-Gyamfi, 2022). It is instructive to note that the work plans of the district assemblies are coordinated by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) at the national level.

The last tier involves the district Coordinating Councils, working through the district agricultural department to provide agricultural governance and policy support to smallholders, donors and other project implementation agencies (Armah & Adjei, 2022). Actual agricultural outcomes are measured from the district level through the inputs of the district agricultural departments which based on the enhanced national devolution program, takes leadership from the Minister of Agriculture through the Municipal/District Chief Executive (Adjei, 2022). The district assemblies through the District Development Planning Units, facilitate joint ventures among private sector players, donors and smallholders (See Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4: Institutional and Stakeholder Profile of Ghana's Agricultural Sector

Source: Author, based on 2021 Interviews and years of practice

3.3.1 The Ministry of Food and Agriculture – MoFA

In graphical language also, figure 3.8 presents the functional structure of Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Like all other Ministries in Ghana, the MoFA also has it headquarters in Aaccra, the national capital. It leadership is a blind of appointed officials by the President and career civil servants who operate as technical directors. The MoFA is headed by the Minister and, in the Minister's absence, by the Deputies who are popularly referred also as political appointees. The Ministry's political leadership is followed by the technical head and the civil servant role of the Chief Director, who supervises four Line Directorates, Technical Directorates, and a number of State-Owned Enterprises and Corporations.



Figure 3.5 MoFA Organizational Chart

(Source: MoFA website (2020))

3.4 Overview of Soya bean Value Chain in Ghana

In Ghana, soya beans are a non-native, non-staple crop that are mostly utilized as animal feed (Martey and Goldsmith, 2020). Despite the increasing trend since 2016 (see Figure 6.1), the yield has been declining as shown in Figure 6.2. In the past, soya bean value chain projects in Ghana were primarily donor-initiated, but as more farmers become aware of the benefits of cultivating soya bean as a cash crop, the commodity is progressively achieving commercial status (Gage et al. 2012). The northern parts of Ghana are important soya bean-producing regions, much like they are for maize. From there, soybeans are sent to southern cities for further processing. In Ghana, the north provides around 90% of the soya beans traded there, while the centre belt provides 10%. (Martey et al. 2020).



Figure 3.6. Soya production trend in Ghana

Source, FAOSTAT, (2022)

Figure 3.7: Trend of Soya Yield in Ghana



Source, FAOSTAT, (2022)

Ghana has a possibility to gain three benefits from soybeans, which have a high concentration of important amino acids and include 18 to 20% of edible oil, 45% of high-quality protein, and other nutrients. The crop is also used in industrial products like clothing, inks, crayons, solvents, resins, soap, cosmetics, oils, and plastics (Goldsmith, 2019). These three crop parts demonstrate the economic value of soybean seed and its potential to significantly improve Ghana's provision of preventive healthcare. The crop offers farmers an additional source of monetary revenue to help them raise their standard of living. The Northern Region produces the bulk (77%) of Ghana's soybeans, accounting for 40% of the nation's total output, according to the Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012. As a result, a number of interventions have been put in place in the Northern Region, most recently by the Bill and Melinda Foundation, which released \$20 million USD for the implementation of a five-year project to increase soy, cowpea, and groundnut production in the northern Ghana.

The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has also established 20 soybeans, 15 cowpeas, and 15 groundnut demonstration fields in northern Ghana, for example, where the Urban

Agriculture Network (URBANET) is leading the initiative (Citifmonline, 2015). Other initiatives include the Agricultural Value Chain Mentorship Project (AVCMP), which was funded by the Danish International Development Agency and awarded by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) (DANIDA). As shown in section 1.5 above, the GROW project which is the case of this study, was initiated and supported by the Government of Canada through MEDA and partners. Grey literature supports the few that these projects gave farmers access to several new technology and farming techniques (Crentsil et al., 2019). They frequently involve supplying farmers with goods and services, broadcasting radio programmes, video shows, on-stage theatre, distribution, and running workshops for company growth and group animations. creation of onfarm demonstrations and the publication of printed materials (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020d).

Ghana's Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI), which is associated with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has also made noteworthy contributions to the advancement and distribution of soybean production technologies. These technologies encompass improved varieties, crop management, and protection techniques, such as efficient land preparation methods, certified seed utilization, dibbling, Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), timely completion of agricultural activities, and the rotation of rice and soybean. This is in addition to the previously mentioned efforts. (Martey, Dogbe, Etwire, & Wiredu, 2015).

3.4.3 GROW Project

As indicated in Chapter One, the research focus on Greater Rural Opportunity for Women project (GROW project) implemented between 2012 and 2018. GROW was a Soya AVCD intervention. The project aim was to improve the economic potential of 20,000 households in Northern Ghana.

As a strategy to the above aim, MEDA engaged local NGOs and other private sector players across various stages and locations along the project line. In line with the research's objective, a number of districts with high poverty incidence from the Government of Ghana's official records, were chosen in the Upper West Region. These include Wa West District, Nandom District, Sisala West District and Wa East District as shown in Figure 3.8. Apart from poverty incidence, a number of other factors were taken into consideration in the district selection. These included economic potential of the district, infrastructural endowment, peace and security, previous knowledge of working with NGOs and alternative livelihoods for women.

As indicated in section 3.3 above, the GROW implementation phase also included stakeholder engagements and recruitments at some stages. MEDA enlisted the help of several local NGOs to lead the implementation of initiatives in these districts. These NGOs were all professional-led NGOs that were enterprises in themselves and were in the business of competing for local community patronage (Isgren, 2018). The NGOs MEDA recruited all went through the standard practice of applying, getting shortlisted, getting interviewed and assessed for competence and capacity, negotiating contracts and funds, and finally getting grant awards with contractual obligations to act in the interest of the donor.

In this case it was the Government of Canada acting through acting through the Global Affairs of Canada and their projects implementation consultant; the MEDA (Crentsil et al., 2019; Denomy & Harley, 2022). According to MEDA, NGOs engaged for the GROW project were the Tumu Deanery Rural Integrated Development Programme (TUDRIDEP), Professional Network North (ProNet), Community Aid for Rural Development (CARD), Capacity Enhancement and Community Support (CAPECS), and Partnership for Rural Development Action (PRUDA).

Figure 3.8: Location Of GROW Interventions



Source: Author's compilation with data from (Crentsil et al., 2019)

Recognizing that multiple factors contribute to a successful AVC intervention (See Figure 3.9), the project provided training and technical assistance through partnership with other local organizations such as district assemblies, community chiefs and community structures. The focus of this partnership was to build local capacity and experience for delivering market-driven programming (MEDA, 2012). In many of the project implementation reports reviewed, MEDA believes that their greatest achievement with the GROW project has been the economic empowerment of local stakeholders.

Against this background, the GROW project becomes an interesting lens in understanding the social outcomes, social upgrading and institutional arrangements of pilot donor-led AVCD

interventions. Firstly, even before the commencement of the project end-line study after two years of the final phase out, it is difficult to appreciate MEDA's claim of economic empowerment. No doubt the project saw the establishment of a well-conceived stakeholder map with significant degrees of linkages.

As part of the economic successes, the project had successfully brokered a successful market with an oil processing and exporting company in southern Ghana to offtake excess produce from the smallholders. This was expected to sustainably contain the local value chain so established. The chain was functional and many of the project reports and case studies available are indicative of a successful growth path for the districts that benefited from the intervention (Denomy & Harley, 2022). Yet, for many reasons to be explained in this research, the chain collapsed in 2019. Preliminary investigation indicates that many of the smallholders are with different schemes and the NGOs have also moved on to implement other projects for new donors. The oil processing and exporting company now also imports soybean to feed their production plants.

Figure 3.9: Components of GROW Project



Source: MEDA 2012

3.5 Study Area

The implementation of the GROW project occurred in the Wa West District. The operational environment for farmers and businesses is critical to consider when devising and executing AVCD strategies. For instance, all-encompassing strategies that aim to build value chains linking smallholders to global markets for specialty goods will need to address concerns regarding certification compliance, as well as the capacity of cooperatives and smallholder associations to meet the demands of their members and downstream buyers (Altenburg, 2007; Ataei et al., 2020b; Bokelmann & Adamseged, 2016; Hainzer et al., 2019b). On the other hand, if the goal is to build value chains within local markets, the emphasis would likely be on comprehending consumer demand and identifying value-adding prospects with local processors and intermediaries. Moreover, when considering the ability of smallholders to engage in AVCD interventions, the context plays a critical role. In situations where these interventions necessitate substantial

investments from smallholders, understanding their capabilities and interests is crucial for creating effective and sustainable initiatives. The more a program prioritizes location-specific issues, the more it can offer personalized recommendations to its beneficiaries. (Ataei et al., 2020b). In this regard the research focused on Wa West District as the case study district. This district is selected because it is the only district in upper West region that benefited from GROW.

3.6 Development Context of the Case Study District and Intervention

Wa West District (WWD) is one of the 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana, and forms part of the 11 of Municipalities and Districts in the Upper West Region (UWR). Wechiau is the administrative capital. The WWD is located in the western part of the region, approximately between longitudes 40°N and 45°N and Latitudes 9°W and 32°W" (MOFA 2011) (see Figure 3.10). The district is located south to Northern region, North West from Nadowli-Kaleo district, east from Wa municipal and west from Cote'dIvoire (Ghana GSS, 2014). Wa West covers a total landmass of 1856.0 square km, which occupies approximately 10 percent of the total area of the UWR (GSS, 2018). It is located within the Guinea Savannah zone dominated by grasslands and shrubs with dispersed small sized trees.

The district lies within the tropical continental woodland characterized by shrubs and grassland with scattered medium sized trees. Dawadawa (Parkiabiglobosa), Shea (Vitellariaparadoxa), mango (Mangiferaindica), Kapok (Ceibapentandra), Baobab (Adanso-nia dipitata) and neem trees (Antwi et al., 2014). These trees are a major source of income to households particularly women who play important roles in the provision of household needs. For instance, the Shea tree and the Dawadawa in particular are used to process Shea butter and dawadawa products for markets during the off-farm season (Yiridomoh et al., 2018).

The district is characterized by sporadic rainfall (Antwi et al., 2014). Annual rainfall is observed to confine to 6 months starting from May to September. Over the past decade, mean annual rainfall ranges between 750 to 1100 mm, whereas temperature varies between 15°C at night during the harmattan period and 40°C at day during the hot season especially in March (Yiridomoh et al., 2020; McSweeney et al., 2012). This unreliable and spatial discrimination of rainfall in the district significantly accounts for food insecurity and hardship to residents especially women who rely so much on the environment for their basic needs (Yiridomoh et al., 2018; Antwi et al., 2014, Unicef, 2014). The WWD was chosen for the study because it is one of the poorest districts in the UWR, which is also the poorest region in Ghana (GSS 2018).



Figure 3.10: Map of study district and communities

Source: Author through field visits in 2021

3.6.1 District Demographic Characteristics

According to the Wa West 2020 District Medium Term Development Plan (WWDMTDP), the

district has an population of 100,644 which represents 11.6 percent of the total population of the

UWR region. Distributed by gender as 50383 males and 50,261 females (WWDMTDP, 2020). The district shares similar demographic features with many parts of Ghana with a disproportionate growth of the youth age bracket (15-60years) (See Figure 3.11)





Source: Author with data from the WWMDP (2020)

3.6.2 Economic Outlook of Wa West District

With a large percentage of households working in agriculture, the Wa West District has a largely agrarian economy (Kusakari et al., 2014; GSS, 2017). According to Antwi et al. (2014), the district has 11,486 households, of which 91.6% are engaged in subsistence agriculture, primarily crop farming with crops like sorghum, millet, and maize as well as tubers like yams and roots like groundnuts and beans. Livestock rearing (69.5%) is the next most common form of agriculture after this. The presence of fish aquaculture and tree planting is negligible, at 0.1% and 1.2%, respectively. It was discovered that the district's economic operations were all labor-intensive, with just a limited amount of automation being used. The production of shea butter and Dawadawa, the gathering of fuelwood, the brewing of pito (a regional beer), and minor commerce are all economic activities that are dominated by women (Kusakari et al., 2014).

This is consistent with the district-wide statistic that 80% of the economy is derived from agriculture, which employs over 90% of the active workforce (WWDA, 2017). It is important to note that the District's agricultural operations are rain fed. Only a few wealthy villages farm during the dry season, and they primarily rely on reservoirs and mini-dams built by donors (Kusakari et al., 2014). According to Kusakari et al. (2014), the majority of farming communities have limited options for generating income during the dry seasons, which exacerbates the problem of poverty.

The district's numerous natural, cultural, historical, and man-made assets represent its tourism potential. The Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary, which is 18 km from Wechiau, is the most prominent of them. A community-based conservation programme called the Wechiau Hippo Sanctuary seeks to safeguard the flora and fauna that may be found on the designated areas while also giving residents of the Wechiau catchment region a source of income and a better quality of life. The Ga Crocodile Pond, the Lobi Architecture, a 300-year-old Mosque, and indigenous grinding mills are further potential tourist attractions.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research setting for the study. It discussed the geographic, demographic, cultural, economic and governance contexts of Ghana. The chapter also presents the sectoral outlook of the agricultural and concludes that since independence, they have been conflicting economic ideologies from various political regimes and such have influenced the conduct and structure of the sector. However, following a stable democracy after 1992, there have been some stability and agreement around conducting the sector along neoliberal orientations. This is strongly highlighted by the influx of donor led AVCD interventions. The chapter provided the basis for addressing the third objective of the study on institutional arrangements for social upgrading by reviewing and providing insights into the present governance arrangements in Ghana's agricultural sector. The chapter also provided an overview of the Soya Value Chain and the Grow Project in Ghana. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the development context of the case study district.

CHAPTER FOUR THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

As chapter four indicates, donor led AVCD interventions comprises of many aspects. To capture these different aspects in analysing the study objectives (section 1.4), a methodological approach that allows for a synthesis of how the theoretical and conceptual contructs are useful in understanding social outcomes and how they shape uprading is necessary.

This chapter presents the underlying research methodology and the associated data gathering and analysis techniques. It begins with the research design considerations, and proceeds to examine the research strategies, as well as the data collection approaches that were adopted.

4.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the first reflective encounter for every researcher. Early reflection gives researchers the opportunity to ascertain assumptions on the process, outcome, and contribution to make to the scientific enterprise (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Every research is guided by an overarching motivation which in turn determines the "how" the study is conducted in order to address the research questions or gaps. A researcher's appreciation of research philosophy helps shape an appropriate methodology, strategies, approaches, data collection and analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Therefore considering and ascertaining research philosophy from the onset of a study is essential for a number of reasons. The resourcefulness of research philosophy arms researchers with the benefit of knowing the implications of adopting a particular study design have on the research questions. This enables researchers to understand their choices, specific research instruments and procedures as well as appreciate their limitations from the onset of a study (Mukherjee, 2019).

4.2 Research Strategy and Design

The guidelines upon which a study is conducted is known as research strategy (Bairagi & Munot, 2019). In social science, various strategies exist. The most common ones are case studies, surveys, experiments, ethnography, grounded theory, archival and action research (ibid). Of these various strategies however, scholars have turn to favour case studies for various advantages(Clark et al., 2021).

Ethnography, Experiments, grounded theory, surveys, archival, and action research are relatively less advantageous strategies for this study. Experimental research is mostly used for studies that seek to show casual relationships (Biggs et al., 2021). Surveys are also used for ascertaining general knowledge on issues. Grounded theory relates to the development of theory from data. Ethnography is useful when a researcher intends to interact with research participants in a natural setting to undertake observations. Archival research on the other hand also relates to studies that seek to use primary data from documentations (ibid).

This study adopts the case study as a research strategy for three reasons (Mukherjee, 2019). First, the research questions seek to determine how social outcomes from donor led AVCD interventions manifest, how these social outcomes could catalyse social upgrading and what institutional arrangements exist to support ex-post upgrading of interventions. Thus, questions of 'how' and 'what' encourage the adoption of a case study research strategy (ibid). Third, the investigated impacts of social outcomes represent the catalytic effect of incentives on project beneficiaries which is likely to differ in subsequent assessments. Hence, case study is the most appropriate strategy to analyse the current practices and viewpoints of study participants(Dodds & Hess, 2020).

Case study also favours adopting a wide range of mixed techniques, such as using both qualitative and quantitative scientific processes (Biggs et al., 2021). The study seeks to investigate the social

outcomes in donor led pilot AVCD interventions and how these outcomes can catalyse capacities for upgrading. This flexible attribute of case study design has facilitated the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques in analysing the results comprehensively.

4.3 Research Methods and Data

Social science research requires various degrees of data collection which are collected through two principal methods. These methods include qualitative, and quantitative methods. The literature classifies numerical data as quantitative data and non-numerical data as qualitative data (Cameron 2011). By means of production, quantitative research data is produced from questionnaires, while qualitative data from interviews (Dodds & Hess, 2020). There have been occasions where social science researchers determine which category to use. Whiles some occasions, depending on the nature of the research questionsmay require sole use of either category, the complexities of most social science investigations sometimes require mixing the two(Clark et al., 2021).

This has brought about another classification in the literature on methodology where scholars have made a classification in the form of mixed methods or multiple methods (ibid). Mixed-method research, implies usage of both quantitative and qualitative research instruments for data collection and analysis (Bairagi & Munot, 2019). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:5) put it better by noting that the 'mixed' research method....

'involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems that either approach alone.'

Given the study's first objective of seeking to first identify social outcomes and how they manifest among beneficiaries and the second objective of seeking to assess the impact of these social outcomes on social upgrading, a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be required as the study objectives complement each other yet of different heuristic nature. For studies of this nature, Mamman et al., (2008) emphasized the use of mixed methods. The use of mixed methods have provided the opportunity to prioritise data that was more valuable for the research questions hence fostered a very high degree of flexibility to conduct the study given the uncertainly brought about by COVID-19 when data collection was undertaken.

4.3.1 Primary Data and Sources

As the study's review of relevant literature has revealed in chapter two, neither the social outcomes nor their impact on social upgrading have been empirically investigated from an academic viewpoint. The perceptions of stakeholders, especially beneficiaries have also not been analysed along with strategies for ensuring upgrading through lived experiences of the sociotechnical enhancements associated with social outcomes from interventions. The unexplored nature of the gap requires first; examining the link between social outcomes and the local sociotechnical production mechanisms that enhances pilot interventions through primary research. In this regard, primary data was collected over a period of 7 months in Ghana. Based on the systems approach framework (Aboah et al., 2021), study participants were drawn from all levels of the case study intervention chain as well as local development chain as shown in Table (5.2). Three different instruments were self-developed to guide engagements with the sampled groups of participants as shown in Table 5.1. The instruments development and administration followed the steps below.

Step 1: Programming questionnaires on a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) system. Questionnaire for smallholder engagement was programmed on Kobo Collect applications and synced to mobile phones or tablets. The programming wase done to reflect gender, food security, capacity enhancements, household income levels, changes in sociocultural conditions, land tenure, perceptions on benefits of participation, willingness to participate etc. as presented in table 5.1.

Step 2: Recruitment and training of data collectors: Due to huge volume of questionnaires, field assistants were recruited with the financial and administrative assistance of International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) office in Ghana where the principal researcher undertook an internship whiles in the field. All field assistants had at least a first degree in agriculture or a related field and experience in kobo collect. The data collectors were trained on how the kobo collect system works, research ethics and expected data for each question. All questions were translated into the local languages of the respondents during training. As part of the training, the data collection tools were pretested to assess the validity and reliability of the questions.

Step 3: Field data collection*:* This involved a survey of sampled smallholders in the selected communities. The field volunteers intensively monitored the collection process through spot checks and daily feedback on synced data. Each survey lasted for about two hours.

Step 4: Data cleaning: Raw data was retrieved from the Kobo collect server in excel format. This data was cleaned to find incomplete information or outliers. In some cases, field assistants were asked to go back to the community for correction, where possible.

Additionally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also used in the collection of data relating to participation in the GROW project. Another instrument was also developed to guide the FGDs (See appendix C) These were participants who are beneficiaries of the GROW intervention. In each of the four communities, two FGDs were conducted. The researcher acted as the discussion's moderator in order to organize the conversations. FGDs encouraged group interaction, which was

missing in one-on-one interviews, and allowed for a thorough exploration of the many interpretations that the local farmers had about the GROW project. Each FGD consisted of seven (7) female groups. In total eight FGDs were held, The focus group discussions was held at a convenient location with the participants' approval.



Researcher in a session with heads of women groups during FGD and a visit of one of the project's abandoned sites.

For objectives one primary data collection captured income, poverty, gender empowerment, and

food security. These were found as most popular social outcomes in the extant literature. Table 4.1

presents summary of data collection across the study's dimensions. .

Objective	Issues	Data collection
Social outcomes	Food security	Household questionnaire
	Poverty	
	Incomes	
	Gender	
Social upgrading	Changes in sociocultural	Household questionnaire, focus
	conditions, land tenure, gender	group discussion and interviews
	roles	
	Perceptions on the benefit of	
	project, willingness to	
	participate	

 Table 4.1: Data Collection Methods across Study Dimensions
Institutional arrangements for	Capacity building (smallholders	Expert interviews and review of
the adoption and upgrading of	and policy makers), Advocacy,	existing project documents
Donor-led AVCD intervention.	market development (market	
	access and market orientation),	
	networking, Gender, land and	
	conflicts	

Source: Author 2020

For objective two, the instrument focused on six parts. The first part looked at demographic and general household data to investigate the effect of gender, household size, level of education, number of dependents on participation and upgrading. The second part focused on beneficiaries' participation in interventions as well as perceptions, selection criteria on participation in interventions. The third part focused on general knowledge of interventions and responsibilities of consortium stakeholders to ensure adoption and upgrading. The fourth part examined the incremental benefits of interventions relative to personal and collective agencies in upgrading intervention outcomes. The fifth part collected data on understanding of roles and expected relationships with private sector and public actors post interventions, and perceptions of such on upgrading. The final part assessed the understanding of the institutional capacity for local upgrading before, during and after intervention as well as incentive structure and challenges in independent upgrading.

For objective three on institutional arrangements, primary data collection was done with two selfdeveloped instruments. This was done through interviews with core actors in the intervention chain who are designated as experts. The first instrument, (see appendix B) was administered on local development administrators at the district assemblies whose work requires interfacing with these NGOs and smallholders on development and poverty reduction. The instrument presented questions on the following domains:

- Development programming and partnership; this is to understand at first hand, the degree to which district assemblies work as practiced (not only expressed) in Ghana involves developing AVCs or partnering with other stakeholders (including the nature of partnerships and potential for capacity development) to realize such objectives.
- The instrument also presents questions on the processes of intervention design and operations management. This is to establish the degree of inclusivity and participation in the design and execution and management of donor led AVCD interventions with local institutions such district assemblies and smallholding representations.
- The last part presents questions on the "institutional arrangements" for ex-post adoption and upgrading of intervention outcomes.

The second instrument was administered on development experts. The instrument was also designed to elicit their expert knowledge on the development context of the research settings, possible pathways to growth and perception of development planning, sustainability, and capacity of local independent action (District Assembly and Smallholders) to upgrade intervention outcomes via the market systems development strategy of donors. The experts comprised of development management specialists and project directors in the NGO space (both current and former were sampled together), National level Directors at the MoFA, and NDPC, Professors in development studies, agriculture, international development, and economics from University of Ghana and University for Development Studies.

As a result of the restrictions placed on travel and fiscal engagements due to Covid-19 in 2020, most of the expert interviews were done through zoom and Microsoft teams. On average interviews lasted for one hour and 30 minutes and were mostly recorded after seeking their informed consent.

Sector	Organisation
National	National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
	Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)
Sub-national	District Assembly
	District Directorate of Agriculture
Farmer based organisations	Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG)
	Women group in Wechiau
Civil society organisations and	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU)
NGOs	Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)
International Development	Global Affairs of Canada
Agency (i.e Donors)	

 Table 4.2: List of Institutions that supplied Primary Data

Source: Author 2020

4.3.2 Secondary Data and Sources

Secondary data becomes useful when researchers desire to answer some of their research questions through literature references (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Secondary data is useful for two principal reasons. First, literature review related to the research topic indicates how the value of current knowledge has been put to use (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Second, secondary data generates borderline guidance in the development of research instruments used for primary research data collection (ibid). In addition, secondary data collection is both time-effective and cost-effective because the sources already exist, and the researcher can access them for review (ibid). Owing to the protracted delay in data collection due to the lockdown phases of covid-19, the researcher consulted secondary data significantly and this supported further limiting of the research to focus on core gaps in the study's knowledge area. This secondary data was further used to compliment the primary data in interpretation of the study findings.

The secondary data sources for this study include academic journals and books authored by scholars such as Gary Gereffi, Thomas Easterly, Arthur Lewis, Kaplinsky and Morris, Stephanie Barientos, Aminu Mamman, Abdulai Abdul Gafaru, Akudu Mamudu, and Jinn Neilson. These

sources are accessible at the University of Manchester library and on academic journal and e-book websites. The study draws heavily on academic journals such as Harvard Business Review, Journal of Development Studies, International Journal of Agriculture, Journal of Management Studies, and Journal of African Development. These journals offer up-to-date information on poverty, agriculture, economic transformation, and neoliberal bottom-of-the-pyramid development. Both 20th and 21st-century references are considered to explore the themes and their dimensions in the field of social development. Examples of these secondary sources are the works of Neilson (2014), Kaplinsky (2011, 2018), Porter (2019), and Lewis (1984). Finally, reputable institutions such as The World Bank, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture, The International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agricultural Organization, Global Development Institute, USAID, and Oxfam were also sources of information for this study due to their provision of current knowledge regarding poverty, agriculture, and economic development issues. These secondary data sources form a strong foundation for further research in the field of agricultural value chain upgrading and development studies.

4.3.3 Triangulation

Owing to strong biases of the principal researcher as a result of locational and occupational experience, due consideration was given to improving the study's external validity by using multiple sources of data to ensure triangulation and independent verification (Schindler et al., 2015). Triangulation was enhanced as quantitative data, collected through questionnaires was compared and analyzed along qualitative data. Where findings of a study's methods complement, conclusions can be arrived and validity realized (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Therefore, the value triangulation gives to a study as this current one is that, it:

'Increases confidence in research data, creates innovate ways of understanding a phenomenon, reveals unique findings, challenges or integrates theories, and provides a clearer understanding of the problem' (Thurmond 2001:254).

According to Schindler et al. (2015), triangulation is a widely endorsed strategy for enhancing research validity, particularly due to the independent value it contributes to the study. Hence, its adoption was a valuable addition to this research endeavour.

4.3.4 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

The quality of a research instrument is determined by its validity and reliability (Kusi, 2012; Smith 1975). Though there are many perspectives to what validity is, Sarantakos (2013) vividly captures it in four distinct features; (1) is a measure of precision, accuracy and relevance, (2) it reflects the quality of indicators and instruments, (3) it refers to the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values and (4) it answers the question: Do the instruments/indicators measure what they are supposed to measure? In simple terms, validity refers to "measuring what is supposed to be measured" (Voor, 2018).

Although there are other types of validity, such as criterion, face, and construct, content validity is still recognized as significant. Taherdoost (2016) defines content validity as the degree to which the items in a measurement instrument accurately represent the subject matter that it is intended to measure. Content validity is therefore established by expert review of the data collection instrument in the subject area of investigation (Taherdoost, 2016; Kubai, 2019).

On the basis of this validity theory, the data collection instruments were shared with some colleagues and lecturers at the Global Development Institute and the department of Development Management and Policy Studies who have the expertise on agriculture, sociology, rural development and international development for critical review and comments. This was further submitted to my supervisor for final review and comments.

Reliability refers to the consistency of data obtained from multiple measurements (Saunders et al. 2009). Like validity, reliability is characterized by two factors: (1) the degree of objectivity, stability, consistency, and precision; and (2) the standard of indicators and instruments. It answers the questions, "Does the instrument/indicator produce consistent results?" and "Are the same results obtained every time the procedure is repeated?" As Saratakos (2013) notes, reliability also examines whether any biases in the tool could be attributed to the researcher, the participant, or the research environment. Therefore, the primary objective of assessing the dependability of research instruments is to ensure that they are reliable and resilient to variations in the researcher, the researcher, the researcher, the study context. (Sarantakos, 2013).

To assess the dependability of the data collection instruments in this study, a pre-test was conducted for the questionnaire and interview guide. The pre-testing was carried out in the Wa Municipal Assembly since it is one of the district assemblies in the Upper West Region which has the same characteristics as the study districts.

4.3.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing data collection, the researcher recruited and trained Field Assistants to aid in collecting the quantitative data. The assistants were given a thorough rundown of the questionnaire, including an understanding of the various questions, how to approach respondents, and how to administer the questionnaire. As part of their training, the Field Assistants were instructed to properly introduce themselves to respondents, explain the study's purpose, and assure the respondents of the confidentiality of their information and the anonymity of their responses.

The study acknowledges the importance of transparency, confidentiality, and anonymity when working with human participants. As such, the study obtained informed consent from all participants in line with ethical guidelines. Secondly, all interviews were recorded only with the participants' willing consent. Thirdly, the collected data was kept secure and was not shared with third parties until the research was concluded. Finally, both the questionnaires and interviews were completed voluntarily, and the participants' identities were kept anonymous. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Overall, the research received ethical guidance and support from the University of Manchester's standard ethics protocol. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all protocols will be observed to minimize the risk of contraction of the virus by both interviewees and interviewers. In this case, face-masks and hand sanitizers will be provided for the field work. Both the interviewee and interviewer will be required to sanitize their hands and wear their face-masks before interviews are conducted. Social distancing will be kept between the interviewee and interviewer during interviews.

4.4 Sampling

Sampling serves as a fundamental cornerstone in research, encompassing the selection of a subset of individuals or units from a larger population for the meticulous purpose of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, 2014). This pivotal approach empowers researchers to acquire representative data, thereby enabling them to derive meaningful inferences about the entire population.

Widely acknowledged as an indispensable facet of research methodology, sampling effectively safeguards the dependability, soundness, and applicability of research findings. Through the meticulous selection of an appropriate sample that aptly mirrors the population of interest, researchers are empowered to curtail bias and augment the likelihood of attaining consistent and precise results (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, 2014).

The selection of a suitable sampling technique hinges upon a multitude of factors, including research objectives, population characteristics, and resource availability. Probability sampling

methods, such as simple random sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling, involve the random selection of participants from the target population, ensuring equal chances of inclusion for each individual (Johnson, 2014; Creswell, 2014). These methodologies heighten the representativeness of the sample, facilitating the extrapolation of findings to the broader population.

Conversely, non-probability sampling methods, such as convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling, involve the deliberate selection of participants based on specific criteria or accessibility (Cohen et al., 2018; Bryman, 2016). While these techniques may offer utility within specific research contexts, they carry the potential for introducing sampling bias and limiting the generalizability of findings.

4.4.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques play a pivotal and indispensable role in the realm of social science research, providing researchers with the means to effectively select participants from a larger population for the purpose of data collection and subsequent analysis (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, 2014). The utilization of appropriate sampling methodologies is paramount to ensuring the validity and generalizability of research findings, thus underscoring the significance of a comprehensive understanding of the various sampling techniques available.

One such technique is **simple random sampling**, which involves the random selection of participants from the target population, thereby ensuring an equal likelihood of inclusion for each individual (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, 2014). This technique serves to enhance the representativeness of the sample while mitigating potential bias within the selection process. Simple random sampling is particularly advantageous in cases where the population demonstrates relative homogeneity and a complete roster of individuals is accessible (Cohen et al., 2018).

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Another valuable technique is **stratified sampling**, which entails the division of the target population into distinct subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics, with participants selected from each stratum (Creswell, 2014; Johnson, 2014). This approach ensures representation from diverse subgroups, thereby bolstering the accuracy and precision of subsequent subgroup analyses (Bryman, 2016).

Cluster sampling constitutes another noteworthy technique, involving the division of the target population into clusters, from which entire clusters are randomly selected as the primary sampling units (Cohen et al., 2018; Bryman, 2016). Cluster sampling proves advantageous in scenarios where obtaining an exhaustive list of individuals is impractical or prohibitively costly. This technique facilitates efficient data collection and enables the capture of geographical or organizational variations within the population (Creswell, 2014).

Systematic sampling, on the other hand, relies on selecting participants from a target population using a fixed interval between selections (Cohen et al., 2018). This systematic approach to sampling can be highly efficient, particularly when a comprehensive population list is available. However, precautions must be taken to prevent the introduction of bias resulting from patterns or periodicities in the list (Bryman, 2016).

Convenience sampling, by contrast, involves the selection of participants based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher (Creswell, 2014). This technique is often employed in exploratory or pilot studies, especially when access to the entire population is limited. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognize that convenience sampling carries the risk of introducing selection bias and limiting the generalizability of the findings (Johnson, 2014).

Purposive sampling entails the intentional selection of participants who possess specific characteristics or traits deemed relevant to the research objectives (Cohen et al., 2018). Researchers exercise their judgment to identify individuals capable of providing valuable insights or possessing specialized knowledge. Purposive sampling finds utility primarily in qualitative research or when studying specific populations, although researchers are cautioned to account for potential biases and the limited generalizability of findings (Bryman, 2016).

Lastly, **snowball sampling** offers a distinctive approach, beginning with the selection of a few participants who meet predefined criteria and subsequently relying on their referrals to identify additional participants sharing similar characteristics (Creswell, 2014). This technique proves particularly beneficial when studying hard-to-reach populations or in cases where the size of the population is unknown. Snowball sampling allows for access to hidden populations and facilitates data collection through referral networks. However, researchers must remain cognizant of potential biases and limitations inherent in non-probability sampling methods (Johnson, 2014; Bryman, 2016).

The study first adopted purposive sampling to select the case study (Grønmo, 2019). The GROW project was selected because it has multiple objectives that relate perfectly with the a-priori expectations of the researcher; first it focuses on improving the nutritional status of poor households by introducing a new crop as well as production mechanism (Denomy & Harley, 2022). Therefore, from the crop selection to its organizational modes of production included innovations that were novel to stakeholders in the district.

Secondly, during the period of project initiation, the Wa West district was the poorest district with the highest incidence of poverty in Ghana. Third, after ascertaining the conduciveness of the GROW intervention to meeting social objectives in areas of local nutritional security, gender

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empowerment, and poverty reduction, the pilot phase of the intervention also saw a radical extension of experimentation to integrate smallholders and the larger district economy into commercial markets.

Fourth the GROW project did not give handouts, it rather fronted risk guarantees for market linkages with poor farmers. For instance, unlike previous strategies from other donors, GROW rather linked farmers to banks, provided business consulting support so smallholders can meet the requirements for commercial credit. GROW equally did not give fertilizer nor seeds for free (Crentsil et al., 2019). Backward and forward linkages were developed between Input and Output agro-dealers and subsequent business models were respectively adjusted to support establishment of commercial relationships. In essence, GROW support was in the areas of technical production and marketing support whiles adhering to the idea of smallholders evolving as independent business owners who needed to appreciate the importance of risks, opportunities and relationships for continuous income generation and sustainable poverty reduction.

Althoughe GROW had different interventions areas in Ghana, out of the districts covered by the project, the Wa West was also purposively sampled because it was the poorest district with the highest incidence of poverty. It was also the closest district to the regional capital yet had poverty levels below the regional average (Crentsil et al., 2019). Due to the district's advantage as the closest in terms of proximity to the regional capital, it attracts significant NGOs attention for various projects. This indicates that the district had relative experience with donor led poverty reduction interventions than other districts remote from the regional capital. The close proximity also meant it was cost effective to commune from the regional capital to the district for research purposes. This supported the research's limited budget and logistics.

There are about 68 communities in the WWD (Beyuo, 2020). The study however determined to randomly select eight. With a target of at least 50% coverage, four out of the eight were selected

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on a proportionate criterion. The communities selected include Baleofili, Bankpama, Gaa, and Wechiau.

44.4.2.4.2 Sampling Frame and Sample Size Determination of Smallholders

Smallholder beneficiaries of GROW are the study's target group (i.e., farmers who cultivate at most 2 hectares of crops). According to project reports, the total beneficiaries in Wa West was 23,368 (MEDA 2012). The Taro Yamane (1973) method was then used to calculate the sample size. The formular is presented as $n = N/(1+N(e)^2n)$ =, where n = sample size, N = population size/sampling frame, and e = the margin of error (0.05). However, given that n=? N=23368, 1= constant, and the confidence level of 0.05.

 $n = 23368 / (1 + 23368 (0.05)^2)$

n = 393 Beneficiaries/participants

Because each community has a similar environment, including a similar climate, vegetation, rainfall pattern, culture, and primary occupation as farmers, each community's contribution to the sample frame was allocated proportionately based on the total number of respective beneficiaries as shown in Table 4.3. This distribution allowed for comparative analysis between study communities.

S/N	Community	Sample Size
1	Wechiau	121
2	Gaa	101
3	Baleofili	98
4	Bankpama	73
TOTAL		393

 Table 4.3 : Sample Size Distribution among Study Communities

Source: Field work, August 2021

In each of these communities, the list of project beneficiaries was obtained from the GROW project office. Using the list arranged in alphabetical order, the total number of participants were selected

randomly from the list. For example, in Wechiau community, there were 5,230 beneficiaries as at 2018 when the project completed and a total of 121 participants were selected from the list. Finally, snowballing was used to locate specific participants selected because of lack of GPS coordinates and updated contact information to trace these selected participants. However, because farmers know each other, snowballing was useful a locating these selected farmers. In the event a farmer is absent for various reasons such as death or travels, the person was replaced by selecting randomly again from the list.

4.5 Method of Data Analysis4.5.1 Social outcomes (Objective 1)

The first objective identified and measured the social outcomes of donor led AVCD intervention. From the extensive review of literature in chapter two, the study found that income poverty and food security were the most far-reaching social outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions. These were measured with data from the GROW project in Wa West District of Ghana using the Monthly Consumption and Expenditure Score, and the Food Consumption Score respectively. Poverty also featured prominently as both an objective of interventions and outcome from the literature review. In this regard, overall poverty was adopted as a social outcome and this was also measured through a modification of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MP1).

SO	CIAL OUTCOME	MEANS OF ASSESSMENT
1	Income Poverty	Monthly Consumption Expenditure Score
2	Overall Poverty	Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MPI)
3	Food Security	Food Consumption Score

Source: Author 2022

4.5.1.1 Income and Expenditure

Income and expenses were calculated from the addition of several components. These components included sales of food crops, industrial crops, natural products (such as fuelwood and medicinal herbs), sales of livestock and poultry, own-business (also known as petty trading), pensions, and remittances. The summation of these various sources was used to determine income. Estimates of total household income and income per household member were made for several groupings.

To calculate household expenses, the total cost of farming, buying food, paying for schooling, healthcare, housing, clothing, energy (either biomass or electricity), helping out relatives, participating in rituals, and communicating was considered. The adult consumption equivalent served as the foundation for estimating household expenses (Haughton & Khandker, 2009; OECD, 2013a; Weisell & Dop, 2012).

In this context, the adult consumption equivalent refers to a measure that accounts for the consumption needs of an adult in a household. It considers the varying costs associated with different household members' consumption patterns. By using this measure, the study aims to capture a comprehensive picture of household expenses and economic well-being.

The use of the adult consumption equivalent as a basis for estimating household expenses has been widely adopted in poverty measurement studies. It provides a more nuanced understanding of poverty and economic conditions by accounting for the differential consumption needs of household members (Ravallion, 2011; Datt & Ravallion, 2013). This measure helps identify and classify households as "extremely poor" or "poor" in Ghana, based on their annual adult consumption equivalent (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015).

Additionally, previous research has highlighted the effectiveness of the adult consumption equivalent in assessing poverty and evaluating the impact of agricultural value chain interventions.

Studies have shown that it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the economic outcomes of such interventions, particularly in the context of income poverty (Badiane & Ulimwengu, 2014; Oya, 2016).

The baseline assessment conducted in 2012 revealed that GROW farmers had an average yearly income of GHS 538 (Denomy & Harley, 2022). This finding is consistent with other studies that have examined income levels in agricultural value chain interventions, highlighting the significance of income as an outcome measure (Barrett et al., 2012; Karamba et al., 2018).

To test the significance between communities, an independent two-sample t-test was employed, which is a widely accepted statistical method for comparing means between two groups (Cohen et al., 2013; Field, 2018).

4.5.1.2 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The MPI, developed by Alkire and Santos, originated from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) (see Alkire & Santos, 2010). It is a widely recognized tool for comprehensively assessing poverty by considering multiple dimensions of deprivation beyond income-based measures alone. The MPI has also been employed to measure and monitor poverty at the national and subnational levels, providing valuable insights into poverty patterns and dynamics (Alkire et al., 2015; Alkire & Robles, 2020). Its robust methodology and comprehensive nature make it suitable for comparing poverty across different regions and supporting evidence-based poverty analysis and policy formulation efforts (Alkire & Santos, 2010; UNDP, 2020).

The study utilized a modified version of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to measure poverty (see figure 4.1). The adoption of the modified MPI in this study reflects its broad application in diverse contexts. In this consideration, the data for income and expenditure estimates was not robust as expected. So measuring overall poverty, may offer additional insights to offset the inadequacy of using only income poverty as an indicator of social outcome as indicated above.

In this regard, the modified MPI was specifically chosen for several justifiable reasons. Firstly, donor-led agricultural value chain development interventions involve complex interactions between various social, and economic actors. Income-based measures alone may not capture the full extent of poverty and its multidimensional nature within these interventions. Thus, the MPI, with its ability to consider multiple dimensions of deprivation, provides a more comprehensive understanding of poverty dynamics.

Secondly, the adoption of the modified MPI aligns with the goal of the study to assess social outcomes in agricultural value chain development interventions. One noteworthy adaptation in this study was the use of the Food Consumption Score (FCS) of households as a proxy for nutrition instead of the conventional Body Mass Index (BMI) of adults (Mudombi et al., 2016). By aggregating 10 indicators across three dimensions of deprivation, including the food consumption score (FCS) as a proxy for nutrition, the study captures the multidimensional nature of poverty and its implications for social outcomes, such as food security, which is introduced in the next section.

Lastly, the modified MPI enables a nuanced evaluation of poverty within the specific context of donor-led agricultural value chain development interventions. By considering multiple dimensions of deprivation, the study can identify and address the specific areas of deprivation that may impact the social outcomes of these interventions. This approach enhances the study's ability to provide valuable insights and inform policy recommendations for improving social outcomes in agricultural value chain development.

Figure 4.1; MPI Calculation



Source: (Alkire & Santos, 2014)

4.5.1.3 Food Security

For food security, the step-by-step manuals for the calculation of the Food Consumption Score (FCS), and Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) are already well established in the literature (Coates et al., 2007; Maxwell & Caldwell, 2008; World Food Programme, 2008). For FCS, respondents were asked to report on the changes in their consumption since the GROW project. Table 4.5 presents the division of the dietary components into eight distinct food groups.

S/N	Food items	Food group	Weight
1	Maize	Main staples	2
	Rice		
	Bread/wheat or other cereals		
	Tubers (Cassava/yam/potatoes etc)		
2	Beans, Peas, groundnuts and cashew nuts	Pulse	3
3	Vegetable, leaves	Vegetables	1
4	Fruits	Fruits	1
5	Meat and fish	Meat and fish	4
6	Milk and dairy products	Milk	4
7	Sugar and sweets	Sugar	0.5
8	Oils and fats	Oil	0.5
FCS			

Table 4.5: Food items and their weights for FCS

Source: World Food Programme (2008)

From Table 4.5, the FCS is estimated by multiplying the number of days the food group in eaten by the weights. The summation gives the FCS of a particular household. For HFIAS, it consists of nine set of questions to capture the perception of hunger as shown in Table 4.5. If the household did not experience the condition in the last four weeks (i.e. No), zero is assigned as the frequency of occurrence is skipped. However, if the condition is experienced, the appropriate frequency of occurrence is assigned as shown in Table 4.6 The HFIAS is then categorized into four groups based on the following:

- ✓ HFIA category 1 = if [(Q1a=0 or Q1a=1) and Q2=0 and Q3=0 and Q4=0 and Q5=0 and Q6=0 and Q7=0 and Q8=0 and Q9=0] (*Yes give 1 if No give 0*)
- ✓ HFIA category 2 = if [(Q1a=2 or Q1a=3 or Q2a=1 or Q2a=2 or Q2a=3 or Q3a=1 or Q4a=1) and Q5=0 and Q6=0 and Q7=0 and Q8=0 and Q9=0] (*Yes give 1 if No give 0*)
- ✓ HFIA category 3 = if [(Q3a=2 or Q3a=3 or Q4a=2 or Q4a=3 or Q5a=1 or Q5a=2 or Q6a=1 or Q6a=2) and Q7=0 and Q8=0 and Q9=0] (*Yes give 1 if No give 0*)
- ✓ HFIA category 4 = if [Q5a=3 or Q6a=3 or Q7a=1 or Q7a=2 or Q7a=3 or Q8a=1 or Q8a=2 or Q8a=3 or Q9a=1 or Q9a=2 or Q9a=3] (*Yes give 1 if No give 0*)

The HFIAS, is therefore summation of the four categories which ranges from 1-4.

Q	Questions	1=Yes	If YES: How often did this
		0 = No	happen?
			1 = Rarely (once or twice)
			2 = Sometimes (three to ten
			times in the past four weeks)
			3 = Often (more than ten times
			in the past four weeks)
1	In the past four weeks, did you worry that your		
	household would not have enough food?		
2	In the past four weeks, were you or any		
	household member not able to eat the kinds of		
	foods you preferred because of a lack of		
	resources?		
3	In the past four weeks, did you or any household		
	member have to eat a limited variety of foods		
	due to a lack of resources?		

Table 4.6: Questions and sample for HFIAS

4	In the past four weeks, did you or any household member have to eat some foods that you really	
	did not want to eat because of a lack of	
	resources?	
5	In the past four weeks, did you or any household	
	member have to eat a smaller meal than you felt	
	you needed because there was not enough food?	
6	In the past four weeks, did you or any other	
	household member have to eat fewer meals in a	
	day because there was not enough food?	
7	In the past four weeks, was there ever no food to	
	eat of any kind in your household because of	
	lack of resources to get food?	
8	In the past four weeks, did you or any household	
	member go to sleep at night hungry because	
	there was not enough food?	
9	In the past four weeks, did you or any household	
	member go a whole day and night without eating	
	anything because there was not enough food?	

Source: Coates et al., (2007)

4.5.2 Social Upgrading (Objective 2)

According to the literature, social upgrading is defined as encompassing quantitative and qualitative elements or variables (Marslev et al., 2022). The quantitative include fair wages and better working conditions among others. The qualitative aspects include empowerment, non-discrimination, right to association and right to collective bargaining. Studies on social upgrading have significantly addressed quantitative issues at the firm level (Graef et al., 2017). For example (Bernhardt & Pollak, 2016) have looked at the working conditions of workers in firm and their fair wages. However, whereas there are few studies on the qualitative aspects at firm level (Graef et al., 2017), studies operationalizing these qualitative variables to smallholder AVC is generally limited within the context of Africa. This study therefore focused on the qualitative aspects of social upgrading as shown in Table 4.4. The research focused on only these variables because the others such as fair wages are complicated to be operationalized within the context of smallholder farmers as getting a close proximate variable for data collection and analysis was difficult. The

study therefore adopted proxies to undertake this expedition (see next section). It is hoped that this will inform future research agendas.

4.5.2.1 Proxies for Analysis of Social Upgrading in Smallholder Value Chains

In social science research, proxies serve as substitute measures or indicators that approximate unobservable or complex constructs. They are employed when direct measurement of a particular variable or concept is challenging or not feasible (Babbie, 2016). Proxies offer a pragmatic and effective approach to capture multidimensional phenomena, allowing researchers to assess various aspects of the construct of interest indirectly (Bartels, 2015).

By selecting relevant proxy variables that demonstrate theoretical or empirical associations with the construct of interest, researchers can approximate and analyze the target construct within the limitations of available data and resources (Mertens, 2016). Proxies provide a practical solution for measuring constructs that lack clear-cut and easily measurable dimensions.

Within the context of donor-led Agricultural Value Chain Development (AVCD) interventions and smallholders, the traditional classification of social upgrading derived from manufacturing or global production systems does not fully encompass the specific circumstances and objectives of these interventions (Barrientos, 2011; Knorringa & Nadvi, 2016). The primary goal of donor-led AVCD interventions is to address poverty and enhance the well-being of economically disadvantaged farming households through increased capacities in production, processing, and market accessibility.

Given the unique context and objectives the study, this study employs the use of proxies to capture and assess social upgrading in this specific setting. The choice of proxies, namely belonging to farmer-based organizations, participation in pricing, participation in household decision-making, and land ownership, aligns with the specific dimensions that are relevant to the well-being and economic fortunes of smallholder farmers in the global South (Barrientos, 2011; Knorringa & Nadvi, 2016).

As shown in table 4.7 below, the extant literature has noted workers rights to association, right to collective bargaining, right to empowerment and continues growth, and right to non discrimination as dimensions of social upgrading. The study selected proxies serve as practical and meaningful indicators of the intended dimensions of social upgrading within the context of donor-led AVCD interventions and smallholders. Belonging to farmer-based organizations reflects the right to association, while participation in pricing relates to the right to collective bargaining respectively. (Barrientos, 2011; Knorringa & Nadvi, 2016).

S/N	DIMENSION	SOURCE	PROXY	SOURCE
1.	RighttoAssociation	Barrientos, 2011	Belonging to a FBO	This study
2.	Right to collective	Knorringa & Nadvi, 2016	Participation in pricing of farm	This study
	Uarganning	Mather, 2011	produce	
3.	Empowerment and continues professional growth	Barrientos, 2011	Household and farm decision making	This study

 Table 4.7 PROXIES FOR SOCIAL UPGRADING

4.	Non	Gereffi (2014)	Access to land	This study
	discrimination	Barrientos, 2011		

From Table 4.7 right to association within the social upgrading literature generally focuses on workers ease of joining labour unions and their willingness to join such unions ((Barrientos et al., 2011a; Marcato & Baltar, n.d.; Marslev et al., 2022). For this study as smallholders are not employees of any firm or the GROW project, belonging to farmer based organization (FBO) was used as a proxy in measuring right to association. Also, in the absence of labour union, right to collective bargaining of salary and better conditions of work as used in social upgrading was operationalized in this study as participation or presentation in determination of soya bean price by buying companies. Empowerment is a major issue in social upgrading literature. In this study a close proxy used was participation in household decision. Finally for non-discrimination, a major close variable used was non-discrimination in access to land between men and women. Chi square test were used in determining the relationship between these variables and those of social outcomes.

4.5.3 Governance and Institutional arrangement (Objective 3)

Several scientific research reviews on Africa's development challenges has underscored the weaknesses in governance and institutional arrangements for innovation design and uptake (Mamman et al., 2008). No doubt AVCD interventions in Africa comes about as a result of donor undertaking to inject innovations into the sector. Some studies have highlighted these innovations in the form of agricultural inputs and marketing (Oladimeji Oladele, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). However, as explored in section 1.1 and underscored in section 2.8, the role of institutional

mechanisms has become paramount in ensuring the upgrading of all forms of innovations in Ghana's agricultural sector to deliver stated objectives in poverty reduction. In this regard, the study adopted the inter-institutional gap framework as shown in Figure 4.2 for governance and institutional analysis of soya AVCD intervention.

4.5.3.1 The Inter-Institutional Gap Framework

This framework takes into consideration how legal pluralism, structural holes, cultural mismatches and institutional voids can affect management of agricultural development. It offers some perspective into how different formal and informal institutions as well as their interaction can influence project design, implementation and management. Data was collected on different formal and informal institutions and how they affect donor led AVCD interventions.



Figure 4.2: Framework for Institutional Analysis: Inter-Institutional Gap Framework

Source: (Hickey, 2017)

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological design and strategies adopted for the research. The chapter explained that the study adopted the mixed methods approach to provide depth of analysis due to the unexplored nature of the research observation in extant literature. In this regard, the chapter provided a comprehensive description of the data types, data collection sources, and procedures adopted. The chapter also covers the sampling procedure, the sample and a description of the research participants. The chapter also introduced the various methods adopted to analyse the respective research objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE PRESENTATION OF EMPRICAL RESULTS

5.0 Introduction

The study seeks to investigate the social outcomes in donor led pilot AVCD interventions and how these outcomes can translate into capacities for upgrading. The most apparent gap in the extant literature signals that whiles there has been significant research interest on economic upgrading, which is translated in research outputs as product, process, functional and intersectoral upgrading, such interest and outputs have been largely absent on social upgrading. Consequently, research into the effectiveness of donor led AVCD interventions have treated economic upgrading without due consideration for the sociocultural technologies of production and social shifts that are usually triggered by the pilot phases of interventions. This means that neither the social outcomes nor upgrading of interventions have been empirically investigated from an academic viewpoint.

This chapter presents results for analysis of the research objectives. Presented in three broad sections, section 5.1 and ensuing subsections present results and discussions on objective one of the study which seeks to critically investigate the social outcomes from donor led AVCD interventions. Section 5.2 and ensuing subsections present results and discussion on objective two, whiles section 5.3 and ensuing subsections present results and discussion on objective three.

5.1 Scope of Research Objective One

The concept of social upgrading is contingent on the promotion of better work, standards, and smallholders' rights and entitlements through the expansion of opportunities and minimizing constraints in producer-buyer relations (Barrientos et al, 2016). Social upgrading considers smallholders as social actors, highlighting the socially embedded dimension of work and focusing on the quality of employment and incomes in a production network. It is, however, critical to point out that social upgrading is conditional on socioeconomic outcomes (Barrientos et al, 2011). To

achieve this, some NGOs and donor organisations in the agriculture sector have developed and implemented AVCD interventions to improve the production and marketing practices of smallholders. One such intervention in AVCD is the Greater Rural Opportunities for Women (GROW) project which was implemented in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

This section explores the social outcomes of GROW project through the lens of income, poverty and food security.

5.1.1 Presentation of Results5.1.1.1 Profile of Respondents' In Household Survey

As shown in Table 4.8, most of the study participants (68.7%) were women, and this is reflected in all the sampled communities although the proportions vary. In Baleofili and Bankpama, for example, 76.5% and 76.7% of the research respondents were women. It is, however, important to point out that the proportion of men who participated in the study in the Gaa community was higher (44.6%) than in the other three communities. The dominance of women in the study is critical in attaining food security and overall household welfare is acknowledged in literature in Ghana, especially, if they have access to productive resources (Asitik & Abu, 2020; Essilfie, Sebu, Annim & Asmah, 2020). The study finding that women dominate reflects FAO's (2018) account that almost 50% of rural women are engaged in agriculture in Ghana. In terms of household size, the results show that on aggregate, the mean household size was 13.54 and this trend can be observed in the four communities except in Bankpama which recorded a 15.92 mean household size. However, the mean household size recorded in the study communities was higher than the regional and national figures which stood at 4.6 and 3.6 respectively (Ghana Statistical service, 2021). On aggregate, the mean age of the research respondents was 44.35 and similar results were recorded in Baleofili and Bankpama, while that for Wichau was higher. However, the lowest mean age was

recorded in the Gaa community. Also, most of the research participants (76.6%) had no formal education and a similar trend could be observed in the sampled communities although that of Bankpama was higher (89.0%). Furthermore, the results showed that most of the research participants were married and in the sampled communities, a similar trend in the marital status of the respondents is observable although the proportions varied slightly.

Variable		Baleofili	Bankpama	Gaa	Wechiau	All
Gender	Male (%)	23.5	23.3	44.6	32.4	31.3
	Female (%)	76.5	76.7	55.4	68.6	68.7
Age	Mean	45.15	43.45	38.69	50.29	44.35
Household size	Mean	14.62	15.92	11.54	11.92	13.54
Education	No Formal (%)	71.4	89.0	72.1	76.9	76.6
	Primary (%)	12.2	8.2	5.0	8.3	8.4
	JHS (%)	8.2	2.7	14.9	11.6	9.9
	SHS (%)	8.2	0	5.0	1.7	3.8
	Diploma (%)	0	0	2.0	1.7	1.0
	Degree (%)	0	0	1.0	0	0.3
Marital Status	Single (%)	1.0	0	3.0	4.1	2.3
	Married (%)	90.8	93.2	91.1	86.8	90.1
	Divorced/Widow	8.2	6.8	5.9	9.1	7.6

Table 5	5.1	Basic	Household	Characteristics
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Source: Author 2022

5.1.1.2 Income, Expenditure and Poverty

The study examined the Adult Consumption Equivalent (ACE) of expenditure (see Table 5.2) as a measure of income . On aggregate, the study revealed that the ACE for the district was GHS

742.00. However, there were variations in respect of the individual communities. Gaa community, for example, recorded the highest ACE of GHS 849.00 followed by Bankpama which registered a value of GHS 831.00. It is important to mention that the ACE for both Ga and Bankpama communities were higher than the district value, while those for Baleofili and Wehiau were lower than the district-level figure of GHS 749.00. A household in Ghana is deemed to be "extremely poor" and "poor" correspondingly if its annual adult consumption equivalent is less than GHS 792, and between GHS 792-1,314 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). The baseline analysis revealed that GROW farmers earned an average of GHS 538.00 per year at the time the project was implemented in 2012. The findings suggest that there had been an improvement in the incomes of participating farmers as the average household incomes have improved for the communities and the district in the wider context.

Community	Income (GHS)	AEC (GHS)
Baleofili	3330 7	663 1
Balcollin	3339.1	005.1
Bankpama	2860.8	831.2
Gaa	4213.2	849.4
Wechiau	3875.4	665.5
All	3640.1	3009.2

 Table 5.2: Income and Adult Consumption Equivalent (ACE) of Expenditure

Source: Author, 2022

5.1.1.3 Mean Annual Income and Expenditure

During an FGD session with women in Baleofili, it emerged that women increased assess to land enable them to engage in production that led to the increase in farm output. The findings from the qualitative interviews also revealed that increases in farm output does not only increase incomes of the beneficiary farmers, it also led to increase in participation in social activities such as household decision-making processes, and community-led development projects. How does it happen? A female farmer from Gaa community answered the question saying,

Now my tribe also has a say in what obtains at the Chief's palace in Wechiau and the Assembly also brings visitors to this community because through GROW, they have seen our output and can imagine how valuable we can be with the necessary support. When COVID-19 came and the same NGO [CARD] had funding from GAC of Canada to implement the ACCESS project whose T-shirts most of us are wearing, my husband told me our community was the first the Assemblyman suggested they first experiment the ACCESS community vegetable gardening project with because here, we understand business and partnership support system from GROW [Field work data transcript: No. 018].

As shown in Figure 6.1, 64% of all households were perceived to be extremely poor, while only 10.9% were considered not poor. At the community level, the results showed there is high level of poverty when looked at from the perspective of consumption at adult equivalent. Patterns, however, show that Gaa and Bankpama are relatively better. The evidence of Bankpama is contrary to the other indicators where MPI is high there as well as food security. This tells something differently in terms of the ability of each measurement indicator to communicate a different story.



Figure 5.3: Poverty categories based on adult consumption equivalent (ACE) of Expenditure

Source Author: 2022

The study also examined how the GROW Project has contributed to reducing poverty in multiple dimensions.

5.1.1.4 The Multidimensional Poverty Index

As indicated in section 4.5.1.2 the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI¹) seeks to understand poverty beyond monetary penury to measure deprivation along three parameters: health, education, and the standards of living of people. In other words, the MPI is a person's ability to meet internationally agreed minimum standards of health, education, and living standards. In terms of MPI interpretation, a lower MPI value indicates a lower level of deprivation and poverty. Therefore, the closer the MPI value is to 0, the lower the level of poverty and deprivation. Conversely, a higher MPI value signifies a higher level of deprivation and poverty. Therefore, if the MPI value is closer to 1, it indicates a higher level of poverty and deprivation. On aggregate, the findings revealed that the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for the smallholder households in the study was 0.354, which is higher than the national average of 0.236. This indicates that the level of poverty and deprivation was greater among the households recruited for the study compared to the national average. This finding aligns with the reports from the GROW project, which informed the choice of the Wa West District for intervention. It also corroborates the trend that the Wa West District is one of the highly deprived districts in Ghana (Beyuo, 2020; Crentsil et al., 2019).

However, there are no available studies that have examined the aggregation of the MPI across communities. In this study, a comparison of MPI values across the communities was conducted, revealing interesting insights. It was observed that Baleofili had a higher MPI value of 0.425 compared to the other communities, indicating a higher level of relative deprivation in that specific community. Conversely, Ga and Wechiau exhibited lower MPI values compared to the other communities (See Figure 5.4).

A plausible explanation for the lower MPI in Ga could be attributed to its location along a major highway (Wa to Techiman), which facilitates accessibility to various social services such as healthcare, education, electricity, and water. Similarly, Wechiau, being the capital town of the district, recorded a relatively lower MPI value due to the concentration of social services that significantly influence the MPI, providing its residents with convenient access to these services.

It is important to note that all the communities' MPI values are above the national average of 0.236. Additionally, only Wechiau's MPI value is lower than the Upper West regional average of 0.348 and slightly below the national rural average of 0.349 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). These findings highlight the persistent challenges of poverty and deprivation in the study area, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address the specific needs of these communities.





Source: Author 2022

MPI is lower in Ga and Wechaiu than other study areas. Ga is on a major highway and hence have access to many social services and Wechaiu is also the district capital of the area and hence also have access to social services that can influence MPI. All communities MPIs are above the national average of 0.236. Also, only Wechiau MPI is lower than the upper west regional average of 0.348. The national rural average in Ghana is 0.349. The improvement in MPI is also accompanied by social capital development in the respective communities. This is manifested in the building of trust, sharing and other prosocial behaviours between beneficiaries and between beneficiaries and the wider community. An FGD session with women in Wechiau revealed that

Since the establishment of health Centre in Lassia, we have had social tensions with our neighbours over the citing of the facility. But when we worked collaboratively on the GROW project to meet the supply requirements of our major off taker in the south [Ghana Nuts], we have lived peacefully ever since. It is our expectation that this level of solidarity will be sustained till we get our own health centre one day [Field work data transcript: No. 048].

Originality is based on the original proposed weights of indicators by Arithmetic Mean Fusion (AMF)method (i.e. equal weighting). Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 are based on the relative variation of weights of indicators to see if MPI patterns are robust. In all scenarios, Wechiau and Ga communities were better off than the other communities and means of all the communities. Irrespective of the changes in relative weights, the pattern of MPI among the communities is the same (i.e. Wechiau and Ga always have lower MPI). S1 and S2 are not always different (statistically significant). But both S1 and S2 show a significant recline in MPI relative to the original weight (See Figure 5.4). This implies that households are sensitive to education or health as 50% of the weighting was assigned to education and health in S1 and S2 respectively. S3 shows a high increase in MPI suggesting a high sensitivity to living standards as 50% of weights is assigned to living standards.



Figure 5.5: MPI Under Different Scenarios

Source: Author 2022

Figure 5.5 shows the percentage contribution of Men and women to MPI in the district. The results showed that in all communities, women contribute more to MPI than men although the proportions

vary. In Baleofili and Bankpama, for example, women contribution to MPI were 75.8% and 76.8% respectively. However, the proportion of women's contribution was lower in Ga (56.5%) than in other communities and the aggregate value for the district. The revelation could be attributed to the fact that women have more influence on household health, nutrition, education, and the overall well-being of children. FDG session with the beneficiary farmers corroborates the finding. It emerged the GROW project has provided women the opportunity to access more land and utilize their labor-sharing platforms to increase farm output. This way, they were able to contribute to household food and incomes that translated into improve MPI observed. During an FGD session with women in Gaa, a female farmer intimated that:

For the first time we have had to own our own plots...even our husbands attested to the changes in this community. It brought a different breath of awareness when you imagine that it was for us only that these haulage trucks are in this community to haul soya beans. We made money and supported in rebuilding our homes beyond just food.I in particular sponsored two orphaned girls to the University in Wa from my GROW VSLA savings. My children are still growing so maybe oneday if I am also dead, these girls would finish University and marry rich men so they would be in a better situation to also remember my children [Field work data transcript: No. 016].



Figure 5.6: Men And Women Contribution to MPI In Wa West District.

Next, the study examined the contributions of indicators (Level of schooling, sanitation, mortality, school attendance, nutrition, floor, water, electricity, cooking oil, and asset ownership) to MPI (See Figure 5.6). The results showed that education (the combination of years of schooling and school attendance) contributes more to MPI. This trend could be observed for all communities although the proportions vary slightly. For example, it is noticed from Figure 5.6 that years of schooling contribute 36% to the MPI in the district, while school attendance contributes 13%. A decomposition of the data based on the community of origin revealed similar tread in the contribution of education to MPI. The result showed, in Gaa, for example, the contribution of years of school and school attendance was 38% and 14% respectively. The findings indicate that education contributes significantly to human capital development and social upgrading.

The study also revealed that the GROW project has had a direct impact on social capital expansion, and this generated enormous gains for the beneficiaries. It emerged from FGD sessions that the women made new friendships and other social connections through participation in the project's

Source: Author 2022

community meetings. This then provided the opportunity to share ideas and experiences which culminated in more of them paying particular attention to the education of their children. According to a woman farmer from Baleofili community the participation in the project group meetings motivated her to begin to pay attention to the education of her children. She stated that:

When I saw the young girls from the NGO who mostly visit during monitoring sessions, some were not even married but were very respectful and appreciative of our peculiar situation here.so for me, all along I knew my children definitely will also go to school. I have not been fortunate to go to school but now, we no longer wait for Plan Ghana (another *international development organization*) to buv them books or Uniforms......GROW introduced us to self-sustaining economic strategies beyond Soya. Although GROW is over and we no longer see trucks here to buy produce, some of us I know still sell to the market in Wa on market days. I have been multi-cropping.Maybe when things pick up after COVID-19, I will seek additional land to do more Soya beans [Field work data transcript: No. 013]

The implementation of prosocial practices also increases as a result of the growth of social networks.


Figure 5.7: Contribution of indicators to MPI in the Wa West District

5.1.1.5 Food security

Food security, which relates to the ability of all people to obtain food in sufficient and appropriate quantities, is always critical for improving social outcomes and social upgrading of beneficiaries in AVCD interventions. In this respect, the Implementation of the GROW Project in the Wa West District aimed at helping most of the vulnerable people to escape hunger and to improve their living conditions. Figure 5.7 presents the food security outcomes of the participating households. As shown, most of the participating households (59%) fall within the borderline food consumption score (21.5-35) with only a few households (22%) recording an acceptable score (of \leq 35). Further decomposition of the data showed that the aggregate food consumption score for the district reflects at the community levels although more households in Bankpama (71%) fall within the borderline food consumption score. Suffice it to say, a small proportion of all participating households fall within the acceptable food consumption score in all communities, but the Bankpama recorded the least (8%).

Source: Author 2022

Qualitative data from the FGDs also revealed that the beneficiary farmers drew on social capital through labour-sharing networks to improve production. It emerged that the farmers relied on the trust and reciprocities enabled by the GROW project to undertake farming activities, in turn, to help increase their productivity while reducing the cost of production that together helped in improving households' food security status. A women's group leader in Bankpama revealed this during a one on one interview session.



Figure 5.8: Food consumption score for the Wa West District

The study also elicited the perception of the research participants to understand their experiences of food insecurity (access) to predict reactions and gauge their responses. As shown in Figure 5.7, more of the responses felt food is secured at the district level. The results recorded for the district level can be observed for Bankpama (39%), Baleofili (39%) and Wechiau (32%). However, the results recorded for Gaa showed that more of the respondents reported being mildly food insecure, while Wechiau recorded the highest number of severely food insecure households in the district. The findings for Wechiau are curious because the community also doubles as the capital town of the district and hosts the largest market. It is also important to state that the Bankpama community recorded the lowest in respect of severely food insecure households.

Source: Author 2022



Figure 5.9: Levels of Household Food Insecurity Access Scale

Although the reports of the households who reported to be food secured were relatively lower than 50%, it could be observed that the GROW project had contributed to enhancing the food security situation of the beneficiary farmer households in the district. This is against the backdrop that interventions that seek to create opportunities for women to gain access to productive resources and to exercise their choices, in turn, contribute to the prosperity of the entire household. During an FDG with women from Wechiau, a participant narrated that:

when my husband wanted support from GN bank to buy a thrasher, it was my GROW VSLA savings book he used to support his application. The bank people came to the farm and I explained everything nicely to them and they granted him the loan. Now we rent out the thrasher to others to make extra income. He himself have bought new motor bike. Through the extra income from the Thrasher, I have also replaced the worn out parts from the motor tricycle GROW (see Figure 5.8) gave me and as you can see, here in this community, the tricycle is our everything in terms of transportation and sometimes even serves as

Source: Author 2022

ambulance though we still use it to cart produce to the market on market days in other communities [Field work data transcript: No. 09].



Figure 5.10: Image Of Motor Tricycles GROW Support Facilitated.

Source: Field visit 2021

5.1.2 Discussions

5.1.2.1 Implications of Donor Interventions for Social Capital

The study examined the social outcomes of the GROW project and its implications on social

upgrading in the Wa West District where more than 20,000 women were the beneficiaries of a 5-AVCD intervention. At the end of the intervention period, it was noticed that the ACE for the district improved over the baseline situation of the farmers. This is because the baseline survey data showed the average annual income of the households placed them in the extremely poor category. In Ghana, a household with an annual adult consumption equivalent of less than ¢792 and between GHS 792-1,314 is considered to be "extremely poor" and "poor" respectively (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). However, at the time of project implementation in 2012, the baseline study showed that the average annual income for GROW farmers was GHS 538.00. Although some progress has been made in respect of improving the income of farmers through the production, utilization, and marketing of soybean, there remains a lot of work to be done to improve access to better work opportunities, incomes, and working conditions and enable a business environment that together could lift more people out of the poverty traps (Barrientos et al., 2016). The gains from the GROW intervention not only improve the incomes of beneficiary farmers, but it also has the potential to enhance wellbeing. Drawing on this discussion, the study argues that donor-led interventions in AVCD do not only improve monetary outcomes but also the long-term improvement in the well-being of beneficiaries. It is also clear from the study that participation in the GROW project enabled women to garner useful social resources that improves their status. This way they can participate in both household decision-making processes and community initiatives. Their involvement in these processes and initiatives was enabled by social resources including labour-sharing, employment, social capital, networking, and ownership of property (Ho et al., 2019). Women participation in project group meeting also provided the platform for sharing ideas and experiences that helped to improve educational outcomes, years of school and school attendance improvement at both district and community levels. This is in line with Wei et al.'s (2021) assertion that social capital expansion create opportunity for networking that yield mutually beneficial outcomes among participants or members of a group. It also buttresses Avdeenko and Gilligan's (2015) argument that donor-led interventions including those in the AVC should have social capital expansion as an instrument for realising project outcomes.

5.1.2.2 Implications for Poverty Reduction

The district's MPI was higher compared to Ghana's average of 0.236 suggesting that more people are deprived per the three indicators (education, health and living standards). This exemplifies the pervasive poverty experienced in the district. Compared to the acceptable MPI, it is noticed that the average value for the district is improving as none of them were closer to the 1. With a good MPI, it can be surmised that the improvement in the average annual income of the beneficiary households may have contributed to the relative lower value obtained for the district and the study communities. The findings suggest proper and adequate investment into AVCD has the potential to assist women to escape from poverty traps that inhibit their advancement and that of their

households (Lowitt et al., 2015). Most notable among the findings of the study is the significant differential in the contribution of women and men to MPI. More women than men contributed to the MPI in the district. This is because women had improved access to land for production and the subsequent linkage to produce market may have contributed to the greater contribution of women to MPI than their men counterparts. This is in line with the findings of previous studies that suggests that AVCD interventions had helped to create enterprises, and business relationships, improving market access and the business environment that together remove the production and marketing bottlenecks and poverty reduction (Denomy & Harley, 2022; Lowitt et al., 2015; Min, 2011).

5.1.2.3 Role of Education in Social Capital formation and Social Upgrading

Education is a critical factor that contributes to the MPI of the district. This was made possible by the combined effects of years of schooling, and school attendance. The improvement in educational outcomes has the potential to contribute significantly to reducing multidimensional poverty experienced by the people, especially, women who contribute a significant proportion of the agricultural workforce in Ghana. Suffice it to say, AVCD intervention is aimsto create jobs, and improving households' food security and incomes (Denomy & Harley, 2022). The incomes if invested in the education of children could help them to acquire the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to participate in the labour market and earn income that together translates into helping the entire household to escape from the poverty trap (Gereffi, & Luo, 2015; Gereffi, G., & Luo, 2016; Wesemann, 2022). Given this, project beneficiaries; women farmers could upgrade their social status because the benefits that accrue to them could also help household members to leverage the gains to improve their income and living conditions that together enhance their freedom and eliminate discrimination which hitherto was a bane of their advancement (Barrientos et al., 2016). Furthermore, participation in the GROW project enabled social capital expansion that

aided the women to leverage social networks and labour-sharing networks to mobilize to improve production and incomes. Aredo (2010) show that social capital plays an enormous role in mobilizing useful resources for individual and community development. Donor-led interventions in developing countries also create opportunities for social capital expansion that inured to collective action, trust, and cooperation for mutual benefits (Islam & Morgan, 2012) which manifested in the labour-sharing arranged ignited by the GROW project in the district. Furthermore, the use of social capital in donor-led development interventions, increases the chances of deepening social outcomes (Endris et al., 2020).

5.1,3 Summary of Findings on Objective One

The findings observes that donor led AVCD intervention has led to enormous improvement in social outcomes including incomes, food security education and poverty reduction (see Figure 5.11). This manifested through increases in incomes of households beyond the baseline results.

Figure 5.11: Summary of Chapter



Source: Author 2022

Also, it led to the improvement in educational outcomes via years of schooling and school attendance as well as MPI. All of these contribute to the overall wellbeing of the beneficiaries and their households. Suffice it to say, the AVCD intervention through the GROW project engendered the expansion of social capital through the creation of networks that inure to their benefits. Social capital expansion creates platforms for participation in project group meeting which are used for sharing ideas and experiences that contribute positive educational outcomes, years of school and school attendance at both district and community levels. Although the GROW project contributed to the overall improvement in the MPI, there were significant difference in the contribution of women and men. Women contributed more to the MPI than their men counterparts both at the

district and community levels. This was attained through the creation of business relationships and improving market access that helped in improving incomes and household food security. The findings also demonstrates that economic upgrading through cultivation, utilization and marketing soybean also engendered social upgrading. This is because not only does the AVCD generated economic benefits, but it also created enhanced the social status of women through the exercise of choices and inclusion in decision-making at both the household and community levels. The success chalked by the GROW project in respect of social outcomes and social upgrading were hinged on the expansion of social capital and networks embedded in the project.

As the results has shown, women stand to benefit greatly from production networks that include social capital expansion/formation. Therefore, donor-led interventions, especially, in the AVC should focus on integrating social capital in project design.

5.2 Scope of Research Objective Two

Following the work of Pyke and Lund-Thomsen (2016), this study conceptualizes social upgrading to mean a high-quality work employment environment that comprises fair wages, a good physical environment, safe working conditions, economic security, right to bargaining power, capacity building, opportunities for social dialogue, and adequate outside of work social protection. There are quantitative and qualitative measures of social upgrading. Whereas studies on the measurable indicators have gained momentum in recent times (Alhassan & Abunga Akudugu, 2020a; Graef et al., 2017; Vicol et al., 2018b), discussions of the qualitative aspect are limited in social upgrading literature. More importantly, an assessment of how social outcomes relate with social upgrading is entirely non-existent. This informs the focus of this chapter. As earlier indicated in section 4.5.2.1, a number of proxies were carefully distilled from the extant literature to start the pioneering adventure of assessing the relationship between social outcomes and social upgrading of donor led AVCD intervention outcomes. Theses proxies include belonging to an FBO,

Participation in pricing, Household decision making, and Land tenure. The details of these are presented below.

5.2.1 Proxies for Upgrading

Right to association as an element of social upgrading shows that majority (74.3%) of respondents belong to FBOs as a proxy. Belonging to FBO increased chances of selection to be beneficiary of the GROW project. Of this number majority (52.7%) of the beneficiaries of GROW are members of FBO within the study communities who were selected on the basis of their membership.

Whereas it was expected that FBO could represent a collective bargaining power for soya pricing between smallholders and agribusinesses (i.e. soya bean buyers), the results show that majority (95.9%) do not have any participation or representation in the determination of annual soya prices proposed by buyers. The results therefore suggest that right of association does not necessarily translate into rights of collective bargaining within GROW soya value chain.

Dimension	Yes	No
Belonging to FBO	292 (74.3%)	101 (25.7%)
Participation in pricing	16(4.1%)	377(95.9%)
Participation in household decision	203(51.7%)	190(48.3%)
Land ownership	216 (55.0)	177 (45.0)

 Table 5.3 Summary of social Upgrading

Source: Author 2022

Also, as a feature of empowerment, respondents were asked if they now participate more in household decisions relative to the time before GROW project. The results are a mixed, 51.7% show that they now participate more in household decision making relative to the time when they were not beneficiaries of GROW project. Major decision of participation include investment in

agriculture, purchase of household assets and decision on spending related to social services such as education and health.

Finally, non-discrimination is a major issue of social upgrading. For this study, discrimination in relation to land is used as a proxy for non-discrimination. In the normal sociocultural setting of the study, women are discriminated on the basis of gender by depriving them of ownership of land necessary for production. However, the results show that 55% of respondents indicated that they now own land as a result of the introduction of the GROW project. Sociocultural impediments of production such as lack of tenure security is therefore improved by allowing women to now own land. The project to some extent has led to the reconfiguration and transformation of the sociocultural conditions of production by allowing women to own land.

5.2.1.1 Relationship between Social Outcome and Social Upgrading 5.2.1.2 Social Outcomes and FBO

For Table 5.2 below, belonging to a FBO is highly associated with food insecurity and MPI levels. This indicates that given the existing understanding of social upgrading as entitlement or freedom to participate in labour associations such as FBO as an element of social upgrading then, better food security and low poverty will enable people to join and participate in FBOs. From VC perspective, improving food security and poverty could improve rights of association (Dubey et al., 2022; Hainzer et al., 2019b; Nosratabadi et al., 2020). Social outcomes are therefore necessary in improving rights of association aspects of social upgrading and hence institutional arrangement (see Section 5.3) for improving social upgrading must give due consideration of reducing institutional impediments for food security and poverty in rural areas.

Table 5	Fable 5.4: Relationship between Social Outcomes and FBO							
			FBO MEM	BERSHIP	Total			
Food Scale	Insecurity	Access	Yes (%)	No (%)				

Secure (%)	82 (20.9)	58(14.8)	140 (35.6)
Moderately Secure (%)	86 (21.9)	12 (3.1)	98 (24.9)
Mildly Secure (%)	50 (12.7)	14 (3.6)	64 (16.3)
Insecure (%)	74 (18.8)	17 (4.2)	91 (23.2)
Total	292 (74.3)	101 (25.7)	393 (100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	30.267 ^a		
DF	3		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.000***		
Food Security Score Level			
Acceptable (%)	62 (15.8)	25(6.4)	87(22.1)
Borderline (%)	176(44.8)	56(14.2)	232(59.0)
Poor (%)	54(13.7)	20 (5.1)	74(18.8)
Total	292(74.3)	101(25.7)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	0.785		
DF	2		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided	0.676		
Multi-dimensionally Poor			
No (%)	46(11.7)	29(7.4)	75(19.1)
Yes (%)	246(62.6)	72(18.3)	318(80.9)
Total	292(74.3)	101(25.7)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	8.162		
DF	1		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided	.004***		

5.2.1.3 Social Outcomes and Participation in Soya Pricing

From Table 5.5, the results show that social outcomes do not necessary influence right to collective bargaining as an element in social upgrading. The results indicate there is no statistically significant relationship between social outcomes and participation in soya pricing as a proxy for right to collective bargaining. In this regard, improving social outcomes will not necessarily lead to participation in pricing of soya beans by smallholders.

	Participation in s	soya pricing	Total
Food Insecurity Access Scale	No (%)	Yes (%)	
Secure (%)	136(34.6)	4(1.0)	140(35.6)
Moderately Secure (%)	94(23.9)	4(1.0)	98(24.9)
Mildly Secure (%)	62(15.8)	2(0.5)	64(16.3)
Insecure (%)	85(21.6)	6(1.5)	91(23.2)
Total	377(95.9)	16(4.1)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	2.157		
DF	3		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.540		
Food Security Score Level			
Acceptable (%)	84(21.4)	3(0.8)	87(22.1)
Borderline (%)	225(57.3)	7(1.8)	232(59.0)
Poor (%)	68(17.3)	6(1.5)	74(18.8)
Total	377(95.5)	16(4.1)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	3.834		
DF	2		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.147		
Multi-dimensionally Poor			
No (%)	72 (18.3)	3 (0.8)	75 (19.1)

Table 5.5: Relationship between participation in sova pricing and social outcomes

Yes (%)	305 (77.6)	13 (3.3)	318 (80.9)
Total	377 (95.5)	16 (4.1)	393 (100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	.001		
DF	1		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.972		

5.2.1.4 Social Outcomes and Household Decision Making

From Table 5.4, the results show that low food insecurity, high food consumption score and low poverty increases chances of participating in household decision making. Low MPI improvement relates to empowerment and hence women will have an opportunity to contribute to household decision making. Also, better food security is an indication of empowerment and that could influence respondents' ability or chances to participate in decision making at the household level. From VC perspective, it is imperative to consider social upgrading if empowerment as a critical aspect of social upgrading needs to be improved (Malapit et al., 2020).

	Participation in household decisions		Total
Food Insecurity Access	No (%)	Yes (%)	
Scale			
Secure (%)	60(15.3)	80(20.4)	140(35.6)
Moderately Secure (%)	66(16.8)	32(8.1)	98(24.9)
Mildly Secure (%)	32(8.1)	32(8.1)	64(16.3)
Insecure (%)	45(11.5)	46(11.7)	91(23.2)
Total	203(51.7)	190(48.3)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	14.250		
DF	3		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.003***		
Food Security Score Level			
Acceptable (%)	54(13.7)	33(8.4)	87(22.1)
Borderline (%)	126(32.1)	106(27.0)	232(59.0)
Poor (%)	23(5.9)	51(13.0)	74(18.8)
Total	203(51.7)	190(48.3)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	16.976		
DF	2		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.000***		

Table 5.6: Relationship Between Participation in Household Decision and Social Outcomes

Multi-dimensionally Poor			
No (%)	29 (7.4)	46 (11.7)	75 (19.1)
Yes (%)	174 (44.3)	144 (36.6)	318 (80.9)
Total	203 (51.7)	190 (48.3)	393 (100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	6.260		
DF	2		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.012**		

5.2.1.5 Social Outcomes and Land Tenure

From Table 5.6, the results also show that food security has a relationship with land ownership among project beneficiaries. However, MPI does not have a statistically significant relationship with land ownership. Better food security will serve an incentive to acquire land for production. As households' level of food security are getting better, it will necessitate land acquisition. Within the study, as women and beneficiary households' levels of food security were getting better, male counterpart could relax sociocultural conditions of land ownership thereby allowing women and other beneficiaries of GROW to own land. Rather than keeping land to themselves, observing a better profile of food security of a woman will allow men to give them more security in terms of land tenure in order to produce to feed the family. In other words, better food security reduces the risk of non-discrimination especially in the context of land ownership by removing the sociocultural barriers of tenure security of women in rural areas. The results therefore show that food security can contribute to non-discrimination in soya VC (i.e. non-discrimination in terms of land tenure security).

			Land ownership		Total
Food	Insecurity	Access	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Scale	-				
Secure	e (%)		53 (13.5)	87 (22.1)	140 (35.6)
Moder	ately Secure	(%)	65 (16.5)	33 (8.4)	98 (24.9)
Mildly	Secure (%)		46 (11.7)	18 (4.6)	64 (16.3)
Insecu	re (%)		52 (13.2)	39 (9.9)	91 (23.2)
Total			216 (55.0)	177 (45.0)	393 (100)
Numbe	er of Valid Ca	ses	393		
Pearson	n Chi-Square		29.231		

Table 5.7: Relationship Between Land Ownership and Social Outcomes

DF	3		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.000***		
Food Security Score Level			
Acceptable (%)	55(14.0)	32(8.1)	87(22.1)
Borderline (%)	129(32.8)	103(26.2)	232(59.0)
Poor (%)	32(8.1)	42(10.7)	74(18.8)
Total	216(55.0)	177(45.0)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	6.540		
DF	2		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.038**		
Multi-dimensionally Poor			
No (%)	40(10.2)	35(8.9)	75(19.1)
Yes (%)	176(44.8)	142(36.1)	318(80.9
Total	216(55.0)	177(45.0)	393(100)
Number of Valid Cases	393		
Pearson Chi-Square	.099		
DF	1		
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	.753		

A multinomial regression model was employed to determine the factors that influence smallholder farmer's access to land within GROW project (See Table 5.7). The results revealed that 22% of the variation in the dependent variable can be attributed to the independent variables as indicated by the Nagelkerke R². Also, a chi-square value of 72.10 which is significant at 1% implies that the full model significantly predicts the dependent variable more than the intercept only. A test of the individual significance of the variables revealed the that age of the participant, household size, gender, and engagement in other economic activities were significant determinants of the participant's contribution. All four variables were found to be statistically significant at 1% level.

Table 5.8: Determinants of Access to land				
Pseudo R-Square				
Cox and Snell				
Nagelkerke				
McFadden				

Model Fitting Information					
Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Lil	kelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	e df	Sig.	
Intercept Only	562.123				
Final	490.023	72.100	16	.000	
	Likelihood Rati	io Tests			
Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	·	Likelihood Ratio Tests		

.168 .220 .128

	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	490.023ª	.000	0	•
age	499.939	9.916***	2	.007
hh_size	511.069	21.046***	2	.000
hh_income	492.695	2.672	2	.263
gender	503.141	13.118***	2	.001
marital_status	495.061	5.038	4	.283
educational_level	491.258	1.235	2	.539
other_economic_act	515.684	25.661***	2	.000

5.2.2 Discussion

This study is one of the earlier studies to draw a relationship between social outcomes and social upgrading and to lay the foundation for a future research agenda. Throughout the presentation of results, a number of issues were critical. These are discussed in the ensuing subsections.

5.2.2.1 Changes in Sociocultural Conditions for Production

The limited participation in community development projects is often stimulated by social roles, gender inequality, and gender roles such as family care, inadequate community support systems, and limited access to resources (Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, & Theis, 2018; Johnson et al., 2018). However, evidence from this research show that better social outcomes could lead to the reduction in sociocultural barriers of production especially land tenure rules. Women and other beneficiaries' participation in the GROW project enabled them to have access to land to engage in soy production, utilization, and marketing. This was not the case before GROW. Better food security outcomes compelled men to change sociocultural rules on land tenure by allowing women to own land. This has continued to exist after completion of project.

This implies that sociocultural barriers and bias against women which hitherto constraints their access to land for production, especially in rural areas, changed in these study communities. Clearly, the implementation of the GROW project empowered women to have a share or absolute control in decision-making regarding land use, and the benefits associated with soy production and

marketing (see Donald et al, 2020). The findings relate to those reported by Yekinni (2010) that sociocultural norms that constraints rural women uptake of development projects are changing, because women's important roles as producers of food, managers of natural resources, income earners, and caretakers of food and nutrition needs of households. These critical roles of women at the household levels together translates into the reduction of poverty and improvement in the living conditions not only for women, but also the members of the entire household which resonates with Atteraya et al (2016) findings in Nepal. In a similar vein, Denomy and Harley (2022) recorded a purposeful endeavour by the implementers of the GROW project to tackle the constraints on women's involvement in development projects. They accomplished this by enlisting men to alter their attitudes and socio-cultural norms to aid the project's success. Specifically, they conducted gender awareness campaigns to address sociocultural norms that governed women's access to productive resources, such as land, to increase soy production in the district and reap its associated benefits. Thus, supporting a change in sociocultural conditions within in a society such as rural areas in Ghana and other developing countries is a critical pre-condition for poverty reduction.

5.2.1.2 Linking Social Outcomes with Social Upgrading

The findings suggest that various social outcomes can impact social upgrading through multiple mechanisms. This study identifies three mechanisms, namely, food security, low Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), and the right to association. The study highlights that higher levels of food security and lower poverty rates are linked to participation in Farmers-Based Organizations (FBOs), indicating the potential influence of food security and poverty levels on social upgrading through the right to association. Prior research has demonstrated that cooperative collaboration among farmers through FBOs can alleviate poverty and vice versa (Jana Herold, 2020; Wedig & Wiegratz, 2018). Therefore, improving the food security and poverty levels of project beneficiaries

may enhance social upgrading through the right to association (Shen et al., 2022). The second mechanism identified is that food security and low Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) can lead to increased empowerment by enabling greater participation in household decision-making. Previous research has indicated that reduced poverty levels, particularly among rural populations, can result in increased empowerment, especially for women(Asitik & Abu, 2020b; Fantahun et al., 2007; Malapit et al., 2020). Therefore, improving food security and reducing poverty levels may facilitate greater participation in household decision-making, which can lead to enhanced empowerment and social upgrading. When individuals are empowered, they are better able to voice their opinions and make meaningful contributions to household decision-making, as noted by Wei et al. (2021). The final mechanism identified in this study is that food security and low Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) can also reduce discrimination, particularly in regards to land tenure. Previous research has demonstrated that poverty reduction and improved food security can decrease discriminatory practices and promote fair land ownership (Vercillo et al., 2020; Wei et al., 2021). Thus, enhancing food security and reducing poverty levels may contribute to a more equitable distribution of land and decreased discrimination, leading to social upgrading.

From a policy perspective, it is crucial to prioritize social factors in production to achieve social upgrading. In Value Chain Development (VCD) interventions, deliberate efforts to improve food security and reduce poverty must be central elements in implementing projects, as they can facilitate the transition towards social upgrading. However, such transitions must be guided by appropriate institutional arrangements and governance structures, as outlined in Chapter eight.

5.2.3 Limitations of Measuring Social Upgrading

This study focused on the unquantifiable aspect of social upgrading because of the limited discussion within the literature. However, there are challenges regarding its measurement and the

specifically agreed tools to be used in such an endeavour. Questions remain regarding the best way to identify and secure universal acceptance for a standardized social upgrading measurement tool for value chain interventions such as the GROW project (Mulloth & Rumi, 2021). The difficulty arises from the multifaceted nature of the concept. Because of this challenge, Wang et al. (2020) argue that social upgrading is made up of measurable (quantifiable) and unmeasurable (unquantifiable) aspects. The fluidity and qualitative nature of the concepts make it difficult for academics and practitioners to agree on the best way to measure social upgrading, especially within the context of AVCD. This is because it is hard if not impossible to attach an objective value to a social impact, to sum up, the various social expressions of the impact of an AVCD intervention project (Maas, & Liket, 2011). However, this study is a step in building relevant ways to measuring qualitative aspects of social upgrading.

A further challenge in measuring social upgrading is the need to integrate multiple dimensions. The concepts involved in social upgrading are often dissimilar and cannot be simply aggregated to fully capture the impact of interventions such as the GROW project (Salido & Bellhouse, 2016). As a result, it is important to adopt a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that considers various dimensions of social upgrading, such as changes in income, working conditions, gender equity, and access to resources. By adopting such an approach, a more nuanced understanding of social upgrading can be achieved, which can inform the design and implementation of effective interventions to promote social upgrading.

Another challenge in measuring social upgrading is the need to account for both short-term and long-term impacts. For instance, changes in social conditions may take a significant amount of time to manifest, while changes in behaviour and attitude could be achieved in a relatively short period. Measuring both short- and long-term impacts of a project through social upgrading can be difficult. Salido and Bellhouse (2016) have also highlighted concerns about the comparability of various indicators of social upgrading across sectors, communities, and countries. They have explained that in social upgrading analysis different indicators and parameters are utilized to measure the impact of a value chain intervention. As a result, it is important to carefully select and consistently apply appropriate indicators that capture the complexity of social upgrading across different contexts. Based on this, it becomes difficult to adopt a universal approach to measuring social upgrading in different sectors and communities, making the findings of social upgrading context-specific. Thus, what pertains in one sector, country or community may not necessarily be used as a yardstick to measure social upgrading in another.

Social upgrading differs from economic upgrading in that it includes both quantitative (e.g. wages and income) and qualitative (e.g. women's participation, entitlements, and rights) elements (Salido & Bellhouse, 2016; Wang et al., 2020). This mix of elements poses a challenge when it comes to measuring social upgrading in a value chain analysis. This is because social upgrading elements such as workers' wages are influenced by various factors, including demand and supply, marginal productivity, and bargaining power, as well as behavioural dynamics such as reservation wages, internal wage structure, rights, and women's participation. As a result, there is an ongoing debate in academia about which elements should be used to measure social upgrading(Barrientos et al., 2011b; Bernhardt & Pollak, 2016; Marslev et al., 2022).

5.2.4 Summary of Findings on Objective Two

Research objective two has attempted to draw a linkage between social outcomes and social upgrading (See Figure 5.12). The results show that some aspects of social upgrading such as non-discrimination, empowerment and right to association depend on social outcomes such as food security and multidimensional poverty (shown bold line). On the contrary, other aspects such as

right to collective bargaining do not necessarily depend on social outcomes to manifest (shown in broken lines).



Figure 5.12: Relationship Between Variables

Source: Author 2022

Future studies can undertake more qualitative analysis through economic modelling to assess the relationship between social outcomes of VC and social upgrading. Wide range of social outcomes may influence social upgrading but this study is only limited to food security and MPI for analysis. Combining quantitative data with qualitative interviews could add more information on this relationship. Nonetheless, this study is a first step in understanding that for some aspect of social upgrading (i.e. non-discrimination, empowerment and right to association) to take place, due consideration must be given to social factors such as improving food security and lowering the levels of poverty across multiple dimensions.

5.3 Scope of Research Objective Three

The underlying argument is that social upgrading is critical in rural poverty reduction because of the focus it has on convalescence in the rights, entitlements, and decent work for rural smallholder farmers (Salido Marcos, & Bellhouse, 2016). The focus of social upgrading of market systems development approaches suggests a re-configuration of the structure of a society or group to accommodate new prosocial norms that translate into the standard of living of not only farmers in pilot project implementation platforms but the household (Gereffi & Lee, 2016).

However, the lofty ideal of social upgrading would only be attained if the institutional environment in project areas allows the processes to permeate the social structure to produce and reinforce prosocial norms and values that promote rights, entitlement, and decent work. This is because institutions (formal and informal) can facilitate or inhibit economic, political, and social interactions by creating incentives for social upgrading. Institutions, especially, at the local level play a critical role in resource access, governance, service delivery, and conduit through which external interventions, resources, and assistance can be channelled to project beneficiaries such as households living in poverty, women, children, minorities, and disadvantaged groups (Agrawal, McSweeney, & Perrin, 2008). This makes governance and institutional arrangement critical for social upgrading, especially, in value chain development interventions such as the GROW project. Yet studies on how institutional arrangement shapes social upgrading in value chain development interventions are limited. Hence the focus of this section. As indicated in section 5.4.3, the chapter presents a comprehensive examination of both formal and informal institutional arrangements in the context of donor led AVCD interventions, development management and governance systems with a particular focus on how these arrangements contribute to social upgrading.

5.3.1 Presentation of Results 5.3.1.1 Perception of Actors

The analysis started by first highlighting the perceptions of actors on GROW project planning and implementation as that reflect deep governance and institutional aspects of the intervention (as shown in Table 5.10). In terms of the stakeholder perspectives on development programming and partnership, most respondents (64.7%) disagree with the assertions that district assemblies in northern Ghana usually vet and approves donor interventions before implementation at the subdistrict and community levels. This reflects a critical governance failure on the part of local governance as critical stakeholders hold the assumption that projects such as GROW are not vetted and approved before implementation. Also, 58% of respondents disagreed that planning and development system of Ghana does not support AVCD. Whereas there is local support also, some 35.3% further agreed that district assemblies in northern Ghana are less intrigued about performance and outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions. With the support from the Distract Assembly, the Assembly is concerned about how the intervention will lead to better performance outcome, yet the Assembly often fail to vet such projects if the intervention is needed within the development priorities of the local government area. As a result, it is not surprising that, 64%, of respondents agree that the interventions are usually initiated and directed by the donors who fund them.

Table 5.20: Stakeholder Perspectives on Development Programming and Partnership

Variable	Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree (4)	Strongly	Mean	Std.
	disagree	(2)	(3)		Agree (5)		Deviation
	(1)						

А	0(0.0%)	10(58.8%)	2(11.8%)	5(29.4%)	0(0.0%)	2.7059	0.91956
В	0(0.0%)	6(35.3%)	2(11.8%)	5(29%)	4(23.5%)	3.4118	1.22774
~	2(11.00()		1/22 50/>	0(0.00()	0(0.00()	0.1176	0.600.05
С	2(11.8%)	11(64.7%)	4(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2.1176	0.60025
D	5(29.4%)	4(23.5%)	2(11.8%)	6(35.3%)	0(0.0%)	2 5294	1 28051
D	5(27.470)	4(23.370)	2(11.070)	0(33.370)	0(0.070)	2.3274	1.20031
Е	5(29.4%)	4(23.5%)	6(35.3%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	2.2941	1.04670
		``````````````````````````````````````	· · · ·	· · · ·	. ,		
F	0(0.0%)	2(11.8%)	4(23.5%)	11(64%)	0(0.0%)	3.5294	0.71743
~							
G	2(11.8%)	4(23.5%)	7(41.2%)	4(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	2.7647	0.97014
Ц	2(11.8%)	7(41.20%)	2(11.80%)	6(35,3%)	0(0,00%)	2 7050	1 10/80
11	2(11.070)	/(41.2%)	2(11.070)	0(33.370)	0(0.0%)	2.1039	1.10400
Ι	0(0.0%)	6(35.3%)	7(41.2%)	4(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	2.8824	0.78121
	× /	× ,	× ,	· · · ·	× ,		
J	0(0.0%)	7(41.2%)	2(11.2%)	8(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	3.0588	0.96635
K	2(11.8%)	5(29.4%)	2(11.8%)	8(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	2.9412	1.14404
T	5(20%)	2(11.80%)	2(11.80%)	9(47, 10/)	0(0,00%)	27617	1 21766
L	5(29%)	2(11.6%)	2(11.0%)	0(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	2.7047	1.54700
М	5(29.4%)	0(0.0%)	8(47.1%)	4(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	2.6471	1.16946
		- (,	- ( ,	( /	- (,		
Ν	3(17.6%)	6(35.3%)	6(35.3%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	2.4118	0.93934
0	3(17.6%)	6(35.3%)	0(0.0%)	8(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	2.7647	1.25147
D	2(17.60()	(25.20())	(25,20)	2(11.00/)	0(0,00())	0 4110	0.02024
P	3(17.6%)	0(35.3%)	0(35.3%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	2.4118	0.93934
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Note: A (The planning and development system of Ghana do not support AVCD in the form in which donors conceive),  $\boldsymbol{B}$  (District assemblies in NG are less intrigued about performance and outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions because such do not reflect the indicators district assemblies are required to report on), C (District assemblies in NG usually vets and approves donor interventions before implementation at the sub-district and community levels) D (Donor interventions are usually implemented with the active assistance of institutional structures and designated staff of the assembly), E (Responsibilities departments Districts in NG usually identify interventions beneficiaries based on settled internal targeting mechanisms and indicators), F(Interventions are usually initiated and directed by the donors who fund interventions), G (There are national mechanisms to audit and learn from donor project implementation), H (Based on local institutional monitoring mechanisms and performance indicators, assemblies are able to determine the success of donor led AVCD interventions), I (Local stakeholders (farmers, banks, input dealers, transporters, etc.) in the districts mainly benefit more from project funds than other stakeholders/beneficiaries), J (As a results of training and capacity building components of donor led AVCD interventions, district assembly departments such as planning, finance Agric department are usually, empowered to adopt and upgrade intervention outcomes),  $\mathbf{K}$  (National and sub-national bodies such as Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Government and Rural Development and the National Development Planning Commission are always part of core stakeholders and beneficiaries of donor led AVCD interventions NGOs), L (Donor interventions are implemented with the active assistance of institutional structures and designated stuff of the assemblies), M (Donor led AVCD interventions are always distilled from national and district level development plans; strategic/medium term/annual), N (As a result of stakeholder engagement strategies and components of donor led AVCD interventions, the private sector is always adequately resourced to continue engagement ex-poste), O (Stakeholder engagement strategies and components of donor led AVCD interventions usually empower in-country development planning systems to adopt intervention outcomes ex-poste), P (As a result of stakeholder engagement strategies and training components of donor led AVCD interventions in NG, formal and informal institutions at local communities are always adequately aligned to market system/private sector led development ex-post)

# **5.3.1.2 Intervention Design and Operations Management**

The results indicate that 47.1% of the respondents agreed with the notion that intervention implementation processes can be adapted to local capacities. This could shed light on why the Assembly received local support, as demonstrated in Table 8.2. Additionally, the same percentage (47.1%) recognized that inadequate management of smallholder expectations in donor-led AVCD interventions greatly reduces their confidence when donors pull out of the interventions.

Although many of the respondents were uncertain about various statements, a significant portion of them disagreed with the following assertions: that intervention design and operational processes are consistently dialogical and democratic, with room for local community viewpoints. This is further supported by Table 5.10, where respondents indicated that interventions are typically initiated and directed by the donors who provide the funding.

Variable	Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree (4)	Strongly	Mean	Std.
	disagree (1)	(2)	(3)		Agree (5)		Deviation
А	3(17.6%)	6(35.3%)	8(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2.2941	0.77174
В	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	15(18.2%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	3.1176	0.33211
С	2(11.8%)	7(41.2%)	4(23.6%)	4(23.5%)	0(0.0%)	2.5882	1.00367
D	0(0%)	7(41.2%)	8(47.1%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	2.7059	0.68599

 Table 5.11: Stakeholder Perspectives on Intervention Design and Operations Management

Е	0(0.0%)	7(41.2%)	2(11.8%)	8(47.1%)	0(0.0%)	3.0588	0.96635
F	0(0.0%)	6(35.3%)	6(35.3%)	5(29.4%)	0(0.0%)	2.9412	0.82694
G	2(11%)	4(23%)	0(0.00%)	8(47.1%)	3(17.6%)	3.3529	1.36662

**Note:** A (District Assemblies and relevant representatives of donors always co-create training manuals and content collaborative and participatory processes), **B** (Content of Training materials and dissemination methodologies always build on existing local capacity gaps or capacity strengths), **C** (Intervention design and operational processes are always dialogical and democratic with openness for local community perspectives) **D** (As a result of the need for ex-post of engagement of communication and knowledge exchange technologies of interventions, technologies are always Intervention implementation processes are generally always adaptable to local capacities in mind), **E** (Intervention implementation processes are generally always effective because donor led AVCD interventions significantly reduces their confidence when donor pull out of interventions, significantly reduces their confidence when donor pull out of interventions).

Results from Tables 5.10 and 5.11reflect critical governance and institutional gaps in the way in which GROW project was designed, planned, implemented, and controlled. Firstly, low participation of local government and representation of project beneficiaries in the design and implementation implies that project design might not directly reflect local priorities and might face some challenges during implementation.

# **5.3.13** Actors Perception on How GROW Affects Social Outcomes and Social Upgrading

The perceptions of various stakeholders, as presented in Table 5.12 confirm the findings outlined in Chapter Six on social outcomes and social upgrading. It is notable that a significant number of organizations interviewed regarding their views on how GROW has impacted social outcomes and social upgrading agreed that the project has contributed to poverty reduction, increased income, increased belonging to FBOs, and improved food security levels. Furthermore, the expert interviews revealed that the majority concurred that GROW led to changes in land tenure rules, which was also observed in Chapter Six, where household data showed that women were able to own their land, challenging the pre-existing sociocultural norm that limited women's access to land. However, the experts disagreed that GROW led to better soya pricing, as smallholders were not involved in the processes of determining prices.

Variable	Strongly	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree (4)	Strongly	Mean	Std.
	disagree	(2)	(3)		Agree (5)		Deviation
	(1)						
А	0(0.0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(41.2%)	10(58.8%)	4.5882	0.50730
В	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0%)	10(58.8%)	7(41.2%)	4.4117	0.5111
С	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(29.4%)	12(70.6%)	4.7058	0.27447
D	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	6(35.3%)	9(52.9%)	2(11.8%)	3.7640	0.71229
Е	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4(23.6%)	13(76.4%)	4.7647	0.41730
F	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(29.4%)	2(11.8%)	10(58.8%)	4.2941	0.50000
G	0(0.0%)	6(35%)	9(52.9%)	2(11.8%)	0(0.0%)	2.7647	0.66421

Table 5.12: Actors and their perceptions on social outcomes and social upgrading.

**Note:** A (GROW project has led to reduction in poverty), **B** (GROW project has led to an increase in income), **C** (GROW project led to better food security of smallholders), **D** (GROW project has led to changes in land tenure rules), **E** (GROW project has led to increase involvement of farmers in FBOs), **F** (GROW project has led to empowerment), **G** (GROW project has led to better soya bean pricing for farmers)

# 5.3.2 Factors That Affected Social Outcomes and Upgrading

# **5.3.2.1 Informal Sociocultural Norms**

Through interviews and FGDs, it was observed that a major informal institutional barrier to better

social outcomes and social grading was sociocultural norms of pre-determined gender roles in

agriculture. From FGDs, women alluded that before GROW majority of them were only largely

pre-assigned roles such as processing of harvest, transportation, and marketing. However, with

GROW, the narrative changed slightly but still affected the participation of women in community

value chain. A respondent recalled that:

I am not allowed by my husband to cultivate certain crops and so some activities in the farm. For example, cultivating yam or owning livestock is culturally not acceptable for women in this community. Such crops and activities are called "men crop" and "men work". This actually affects my ability to generate income from high income earning crops [Field work data transcript: No. 03].

From her sentiment, sociocultural norms as informal institutions affect agricultural production especially for women. Further to this statement, discussions in other community indicated that whereas GROW project advocated for allocation of land to women, most women who got land during GROW project from their husbands retrieved those lands from their wives after the completion of the project. A women recalled in the following statement:

After he gave me the land, immediately after GROW he collected it back from me saying that he only allocated it to me so that I will be eligible to participate in the GROW project. He further indicated that he has not signed any document with me showing that he has given me a land. What pains me more is that I have invested so much in preparing the land. The annual fertilizers I got has improved soil fertility of the land. My husband said that land is the most fertile and he has to use it for maize farming [Field work data transcript: No. 05].

Related to the above, another indicated that a major informal barrier is customary land tenure arrangements coupled with lack of documentations. From the statement above, the lack of documentation and the customary nature of ownership serve as recipes impeding production especially for women smallholder farmers. This affected social outcome such as food security and incomes which subsequently can influence social upgrading through empowerment of women in making household decisions.

The confluence of informal institutions has affected social outcomes and social upgrading within the GROW project. In another FGD, it was mentioned that despite the allocation of land to women by their husbands, men often request confidential payment of rent on land from their wives as fees for land allocation. Depending on the size of the land, women were asked by the husband to pay in cash or with produce.

My husband gave me land to cultivate soya beans. But each year he asks for one bag of produce or cash equivalent of it. This affected my ability to increase my cultivated area because I was afraid the more land, I cultivate the more bags or soya or cash eh will request [Field work data transcript: No. 07].

# 5.3.3 Factors That Facilitated Social Outcomes and Upgrading5.3.3.1 Operational Choices of GROW

From interviews with GROW team and other experts, it was observed that certain formal operational choices such as tractor services, fertilizer, comprehensive communication strategy (talking book), and training on soya utilization which increased food security positively influenced social outcomes and social upgrading. These operational rules led to the development of several institutions that shaped the implementation of GROW.

Initially, the establishment of a crop budget resulted in the formal implementation of tractor services and the provision of input supplies, including fertilizer and agrochemicals. Connecting clients with technology service providers also played a crucial role in enhancing production. Interviews indicated that without the institutionalized support of tractor services and inputs provided by the GROW project, social outcomes such as increased income and improved food security could not have been achieved. For instance, during an interview, a District Assembly staff member related that:

During GROW, women were able to cultivate an average of one acre because of access to tractor services input support what were institutionalized with the GROW. After the project, the absences of those rules have slowed women cultivation of soya beans in the area [Field work data transcript: No. 021].

Secondly, group formation as an informal practice was essential in scaling up the GROW project and overcoming the barrier of production. Aside from the pre-existing FBOs, women farmer formed groups to share and access agricultural knowledge, improve bargaining power and market linkages. Each group has a leader called Woman Lead Farmer (WLF) who get training from GROW and also transfer same to group members. Within these groups, as trusts and social cohesions are improved, it led to other benefits such as group savings and loans. Some of the WLFs were made Woman Sales Agent (WSA) to perform commercial roles in soya marketing for women. These groups also served as important element of empowerment necessary for social upgrading. An interview with WLF recalled in the following statement:

"During GROW, we originally did not start with WLF and WSA. It was very different for capacity training of several women without these structures. Forming women groups and creating the WLF from each facilitated knowledge, skills and information transfers necessary for soya product. As production increases, we got better income and also improve food security [Field work data transcript: No. 011].

Thirdly, another critical institution created that helped shaped GROW is linking clients to appropriate financial mechanism to support their production. In this regard, the VSLA model of fundraising by our clients was critical in supporting groups raised their own funding to support production. VSLA as a structure and informal institution helped increased production in several ways therefore influencing social upgrading. Studies have shown that VSLA break financial berries of production (Denomy & Harley, 2022; Humphrey & Navas-Alemán, 2010c). Also studies have shown that VSLA also serve as an empowerment for women to become changemakers in agricultural value chain(Wang et al., 2021). Other studies have also reported how VSLA open new opportunities for knowledge transfer and addressing gender issues in production (Botchway, 2001). During FGD, a member indicated in the following statement;

"The establishment of the VSLA is really helpful to me. I could get loan to pay fees of my children and also paid for tractor service [Field work data transcript: No. 16].

The above reflects the important role of informal and prosocial institutions such as VSLA in addressing not only agricultural related issues but general poverty concerns such as education. This implies that VSLA helped poverty reduction, and food security as well as social upgrading through empowerment.

#### 5.4 Sumarry of Findings on Objective Three

Research bjective three aims examine the role of institutional arrangements in promoting social upgrading under MEDA's GROW project in the Wa West District in Ghana. Largely, stakeholders express the view that large-scale donor interventions through direct service provision to local communities cannot be blamed for the perpetuation of dependency in Northern Ghana given that the district assemblies in Northern Ghana are unable to attract private sector participation in their development programmes. This is because public sector institutions including the district assemblies lack the capacity to be used as vehicles to pursue development programmes in the area. The district assemblies through their planning systems support donor-led interventions that are geared toward improving the living conditions of the people especially those in vulnerable groups such as women. However, the stakeholders disagree that the district assemblies are allowed to vet and approve donor interventions before implementation at the community level.

# CHAPTER SIX SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

# **6.0 Introduction**

This study examined the social outcomes of donor led AVCD intervention in Ghana with reference to the GROW project. From an extensive review of the literature (Chapter 2), most studies on upgrading have given considerable attention to economic upgrading. Such studies have therefore adopted a reductionist approach to the understanding of upgrading by neglecting issues of social upgrading. In view of this, empirical evidence on how donor led AVCD intervention can influence social upgrading through different social outcomes are limited. Currently, the literature on social upgrading has also only focused on quantifiable measurement of social upgrading. Understanding of the qualitative aspect of social upgrading is limited. The central focus of this research was to understand how different social outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions manifest, how they influence social upgrading and the institutional context of social upgrading i in the Wa West District of Ghana. This chapter therefore seeks to provide summary of the study findings.

#### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

#### 6.1.1 Findings on Social Outcomes of Donor led AVCD Interventions (Objective 1)

The first objective identified and measured the social outcomes of donor led AVCD intervention. From the extensive review of literature, the study found that poverty and food security were the most far-reaching social outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions. These were measured with data of the GROW project in Wa West District of Ghana using the Adult Expenditure and Consumption Score, and the Multi-dimensional poverty index respectively. From Table 9.1, the findings show that in terms of income poverty, there is an improvement from the baseline in 2012. The mean monthly consumption expenditure in adult equivalent was GHS 742.9 which is higher than GHS 538.0 in the baseline year. However, the increment does not translate into escaping from poverty entirely. Significant number of participating farmers still have their monthly consumption expenditure in adult equivalent below the poverty line of Ghana. Nonetheless, participation in donor led AVCD interventions specifically GROW, has led to an increase in income and expenditures at the household level. It is however imperative to note that there are variations among the study areas. The district capital (Wechiau) and Gaa (i.e. located along a major highway) have better scores compared with the other study areas.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was also used to measure overall poverty in the project setting. The study again found that all the study areas have MPI higher than the national average. This implies that despite participation in the GROW intervention, the project has not been able to move participating farmers out of poverty. When compared with the rural national average as the study area is predominately rural, the results showed that only the district capital (Wechiau) and Gaa (i.e. located along a major highway) have lower MPI than the rural average in Ghana. The pattern of high MPI confirms that there is income poverty where there is an increased in income and expenditure but most smallholders are still below the poverty line. As part of the MPI measure the study found also again that there is a consistent pattern of formal education being the major contributor to MPI in all study areas. This implies that participation in donor led AVCD interventions still have not been able to address issues of education in the communities. Yet most donors have now significantly shifted their poverty reduction assistance to AVCD interventions.

Objective	Findings
Obj. 1	Improvement in income poverty (GHS 742.9 mean) of participating farmers
	compared to the baseline of GHS 538.0

**Table 6.1: Summary of study Findings** 

Social	Despite improvement in income poverty, there is a consistent pattern of high
outcomes	proportion of extremely poor farmers in all the study areas using current national
	poverty line measure
	All MPIs of study communities are above the national average 0.236. Only two
	communities have MPIs lower than the national rural average
	In all communities, the major contributor of high MPIs is Education
Obj. 2	Food consumption score and MPI have influence of belonging to and
Social	participation in FBOs (i.e. Right to Association )
upgrading	Social outcomes do not have influence on participation in pricing of soya (i.e.
	right to collective bargaining)
	MPI has influence on household decision making (i.e. empowerment)
	Food security has influence on right to land tenure (i.e. non-discrimination)
Obj. 3	Low participation of local actors in the planning and design of donor led AVCD
Institutional	intervention
arrangement	Reorientation or shifts in informal sociocultural norms such as patriarchy rules
	provided enabling rights to access to land for smallholder production.
	Operational choices of adopting local initiative such as VSLA contributed to
	project success
	Toward the end of the project, land tenure rules became a significant barrier to
	continuous production

Source: Author, 2023

In contrast, food security levels of farmers have all improved. This was due to several reasons. Firstly soya bean is a nutritional crop and farmers were training on soya utilization at the household level to improve food security. The training focused on how to use soya for food, milk and oil, hence food consumption scores of farmers were higher. Also income gains from participation in GROW was used by several households in purchasing other food items. Finally, the project also embedded other elements of agriculture such as dry season vegetable farming for participating women. This further increased food availability, access, stability, and utilization at the household level.

#### 6.1.2 Findings on How Social Outcomes Influence Social Upgrading (Objective 2)

The second objective addressed the linkage between social outcomes and selected qualitative parameters of social upgrading. In this research, social upgrading was framed to focus mainly on qualitative issues including right to association, right to collective bargaining, empowerment and non-discrimination. These were proxied as belonging to FBO, participation in pricing of soya, participation in household decision making and right to land tenure respectively. From Table 9.1, food consumption score and MPI have influence in belonging to and participation in FBOs (i.e. right to association). The results show that better food security and low MPI are associated with belonging to FBOs. This implies that with lower poverty and improved food security there is an ease to participate in FBOs which could serve as space for upgrading production and welfare related norms.

Secondly, the results also show that social outcomes do not have influence on participation in pricing of soya (i.e. right to collective bargaining). Irrespective of the income, MPI and food security, farmers could not be involved in the pricing of soya. In interviews, it was also confirmed that a major obstacle to the participation in the GROW project was the inability of farmers to determine the prices of soya.

Thirdly, the results also show that MPI has influence on household decision making (i.e. empowerment). Lower MPI is an indication of better socioeconomic living and a reflection of economic and social empowerment of women. Hence the results showed that households with

lower MPI was associated with participation in household decision making. These decisions often include purchase of assets, investment in farm, sales of crops and livestock.

Finally, Food security has influence on right to land tenure (i.e. non-discrimination). The results showed a strong relationship between food consumption score and non-discrimination in access to land. Interviews showed that as men were aware that their food security level and incomes at the household was enhanced through soya, they relaxed rights to land by allowing their wives to own more land in order to participate in the programme.

#### **6.1.3 Findings on Institutional Arrangements (Objective 3)**

The overarching goal of objective 3 was to comprehensively explore the governance context by analysing the institutional arrangements that impede or facilitate the attainment of social outcomes and social upgrading in AVCD interventions spearheaded by donors. Once a better grasp of social outcomes was obtained in chapter six, qualitative indicators were formulated to evaluate how these outcomes impacted social upgrading. From Chapter eight and in Table 9.1, it was observed through interviews that the project design and planning was characterized by low participation of local actors. For example, in Chapter eight, many respondents indicated that the design of the project did not involve the district assembly and the beneficiary farmers to understand their specific needs and how to project their existing priorities. From governance perspective, the District assembly and the beneficiary farmers participated in the project without representation in design and implementation strategy. The perspectives of these critical actors were not considered during project design. Denomy & Harley (2022) attributed this to the fact the GROW project was an innovation the like of which was happening for the first time in the district and the project promoters were committed to time and the desire to experiment all that had been designed by experts.
Secondly, informal sociocultural norms such as patriarchy rules has affected access to land for production. Subsequently, land tenure rules remain major barriers to the implementation of donor led AVCD intervention. Discussions from focus groups showed that despite the changes in some sociocultural norms of production by allowing women to own land, certain patriarchy rules still affected access to land. For example, most women who gained access to land, loss the land immediately after the project ended. The changes to sociocultural conditions were only to enable participation in the project but changes were not sustainable as most men made demands from their wives because of their land entitlement.

Finally, aside the institutional barriers of land tenure, operational choices of GROW such as formation of groups and VSLA contributed to the success of the project. FGDs have shown that the establishment of VSLA as an institution and operational rule had led to an increased in financial savings, collective access to farm inputs and borrowing for agricultural investment. This has led to increase in production by making it easy for women to have access to farm inputs and credit through the VSLA.

# 6.2 Contributions of the Study6.2.1 Social Outcomes from AVCD Interventions

Theoretically, AVCD intervention have diverse sustainability outcomes. Much of the studies have largely focused on economic aspects. Although there are several studies on sustainability of outcomes of donor led AVCD intervention, social outcome analysis have given some considerable attention to food security and income. However, the use of multidimensional poverty measures in donor led AVCD intervention are very limited. This study contributes and join the ongoing discussions on relevance of the use of multidimensional poverty measures in understanding the poverty outcomes of AVCD intervention beside income and expenditure (Minh & Osei-Amponsah, 2021). More importantly, from the MPI analysis, it was observed that education was

the major contributor to poverty reduction. However, existing analysis of poverty outcomes of farmers in donor led AVCD intervention hardly consider issues of education of farmer household members as a critical factor in poverty analysis. The foregoing research therefore makes strides in engaging the important role of multidimensional poverty measures in donor led AVCD interventions in Africa.

### **6.2.2 Social Upgrading**

Although there are studies on social upgrading (Graef et al., 2017; Kariuki, 2018; Marslev et al., 2022; Pietrobelli & Staritz, 2018b) most of them have focused on quantifiable aspect of the concept (Barrientos et al., 2011b; Islam & Polonsky, 2020; Pahl & Timmer, 2020). This study makes a significant contribution by assessing the qualitative aspects of social upgrading. These aspects include right to association, right to collective bargaining, empowerment and non-discrimination. For this study these parameters were measured using Likert scale and binary questions of yes and no. Different proxies were used in measuring these parameters. For right to association, the study framed and operationalized it as belonging to FBO. For right to collective bargaining it was captured as participation in pricing of soya. Also, empowerment was captured as right to make decision at the household level as a reflection of empowerment. Finally, non-discrimination was captured as right to land without discrimination by gender. Although the measures of qualitative social upgrading are not without limitations, nonetheless, it is a step in the right direction of attempting to provide meaning and understanding to these variables. The study has therefore contributed to the ongoing nuances on the understanding of the qualitative aspects of social upgrading (see Figures 7.9 and 8.1).

# 6.2.3 Linking Social Outcome and Social Upgrading

Existing literature shows that analysis of social outcomes and social upgrading are often done separately. However, this study is one of its kind in making an attempt to link social outcomes

with social upgrading (see Figures 7.9 and 8.1). From the results, it was observed that social outcomes influenced certain aspects of social upgrading. This implies that for social upgrading to take place, it is imperative for project design and implementation to give critical attention to social outcome variables such as poverty and food security. These social outcomes can trigger social upgrading through several mechanisms. For example, upgrading in terms of changing sociocultural norms of production and access to land largely depend on whether male household heads have observed a better food security, and income outcomes at the household level. For the GROW in particular, implementation of the project led to an observation that caused more men to permit women to utilize land for production, a practice that was previously uncommon.

## **6.2.4 Institutions and AVCD Development Interventions**

Finally, despite the proliferation of studies on governance and institutional arrangement, the study made two major contributions in this regard. Firstly, the study was able to draw attention to the critical role of VSLA as an institution created which positively shaped outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions. Whereas they are several studies of VSLA in AVCD interventions, framing VSLAs from an institutional perspective was limited. This study therefore contributes to ongoing literature of VSLA as critical institution for successful implementation of donor led AVCD intervention in Africa. Secondly, customary rules such as land tenure are widely discussed in the literature. However, this study makes a contribution in framing this as an institutional barrier for production and joins the ongoing debate on how informal institutions affects donor led AVCD interventions.

#### **6.3 Directions for Future Studies**

Whereas there are many drivers of social outcomes, the study only explored food security and poverty. As the beneficiaries were women, initial discussions with project team pointed to these variable as possible project impact areas. Future studies can consider other social outcome such as

health and subjective wellbeing. Also, although this study only looked at MPI outcome at participating farmers, it is imperative to access MPI within each stage of the value chain. Whereas there are ongoing studies of MPI, operationalizing the index within the entire value chain is limited and this study is a step in a right direct to set foundation for future studies on MPI analysis within the entire value chain.

It was complicated to get specific proxies to measure right to association, right to collective bargaining, empowerment, and non-discrimination. Although the study adopted some proxies, they have not compressively captured a wide range of issues embedded in right to association, right to collective bargaining, empowerment and non-discrimination. Nonetheless, the proxies used is a step and further study can define specific indication of measuring qualitative aspects of social upgrading. Related to this, measuring the relationship between social outcomes and social upgrading was only based on chi square test. More advanced econometric analysis are needed in future studies to draw a causal relationship between social outcomes and social upgrading. The current study only explored an association without causality.

Finally, attempts to operationalize social upgrading often led to other elements of upgrading especially economic and process upgrading. The study only focused on social upgrading especially the qualitative aspect. However, economic issues can also trigger social upgrading. So it was difficult for the study to draw a clear boundary as to why the outcomes and social upgrading variables assessed were not only influenced by economic issues.

#### **6.4 Implications**

This research has significant contributions in the following areas: (a) addressing critical knowledge gaps, (b) relevance to the aid effectiveness and sustainable development agenda, (c) consistent

with national policy and research agenda and (d) has implications for development policy and practice.

For (a), the research has identified three primary research and knowledge gaps. By providing empirical evidence to answer these gaps, the study contributes to the literature with evidence of how AVC interventions can frontload social upgrading thereby showing more insights into the social upgrading literature. In addition, empirical evidence from Ghana has set the foundation for further discussion within the literature by joining ongoing discourses on neoliberal development in Africa and whether it leads to social upgrading by changing the sociocultural barriers impeding production. By joining the neoliberal discourse, the research has made a significant empirical contribution to the literature by addressing three major gaps identified in Section 1.2.

For (b), the research is directly related to the SDGs; goal 1 on no poverty, goal 2 on zero hunger, goal 5 on Gender equality, goal 8 on economic growth and goal 17 on partnerships and cooperation among governments and private sector. By engaging this research, the evidence provides empirical results in shaping current understanding of the SDGs in Africa. The research, therefore, has material implications for finetuning and tracking the progress of the above SDGs in particular. The study is thus well grounded on the international development agenda as it falls directly within SDGs 1,2,5, 8 and 17

For (c), the research is also relevant in Ghana especially when there are ongoing national discussions on updating national agricultural policies and initiatives within the context of Ghana beyond aid. The findings can therefore help in providing additional information that could be useful in shaping national discourse on developing AVCs in Ghana

Finally, for (d), the research findings can have implications for development practice. For example, results can shape how donors can improve local capacities so that after the closure of projects, the local capabilities developed can be used in upgrading and scaling up the innovations introduced. Additionally, the findings can provide insights into how such donor-led AVC interventions need to be designed to reflect local capacity development, and to fit for purpose within existing institutional arrangements and how to overcome the barriers to adoption of VC schemes not only in Ghana but across Africa.

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17th October 2021



#### Dear Madam/Sir,

# INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

Permit me to introduce myself as a Doctoral Researcher from the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

I would like to invite to you to participate in my research. As a participant you will engage me for a maximum of two hours to discuss the Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor led Agricultural Value Chain Development intervention outcomes.

Together with my research team at the University of Manchester, we have found your insight on the above research aim highly resourceful in advancing knowledge on sustainable agricultural value chain development in marginalized regions and emerging economies. It is our expectation that such knowledge will yield reforms in effective pro-poor development programming.

Before requesting your favourable response, kindly find a Participant Information Form, Consent Form and the Research Instrument attached for your kind attention, please.

I count on hearing favourably from you.

Yours faithfully

Solahudeen Tando Moomin <u>moomin.tando@manchester.ac.uk</u> Global Development Institute School of Environment, Education and Development, The Arthur Lewis Building, (1st floor), University of Manchester, United Kingdom M13 9PL



# **Research Participant Information Sheet**

#### Agricultural Value Chains and Local Economic Growth: Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor-Led Intervention Outcomes in Ghana

#### **Participant Information Sheet (PIS)**

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a Doctoral Study project, which will be used for the purpose of an academic thesis. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part. You can also discuss with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

#### About the research

#### > Who will conduct the research?

I, Solahudeen Tando Moomin of the Global Development Institute (GDI), School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

#### > What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the institutional capacities for upgrading donor-led Agricultural Value Chains Development (AVCD) intervention outcomes in Ghana. The study notes that as a response to the challenge of spatial and income inequalities in developing countries, Agriculture and Value Chain Development strategies have found significance in aid programming to Africa. While at it, there are however reported observations that the growth and sustainability impacts of interventions are less impressive. As a contribution to this emerging discourse, this study aims to understand how such aid mechanisms are impacting capacities of local institutions to upgrade intervention outcomes. This is against the backdrop that despite significant success stories and impacts reported in commissioned project reports, the issue of the value of interventions in building local capacities to replicate or upgrade intervention outcomes remains unsettled in

critical debates. Not even expressed intents of sustainability in intervention designs and strategies have settled these debates. This study examines the context of donor led AVCD interventions relative to the theoretical potential of propelling propoor sub-national growth; and explores the institutional capacities for upgrading intervention outcomes. This will contribute greatly to the needed reforms in development policy especially on sustainable intervention programming. The outcome of this research will also extend our knowledge on aid effectiveness and strategic importance of value development programming in addressing global poverty and inequality.

I selected you and all other participants purely on grounds of familiarity with the research observation at stake. As such, it is knowledge and expertise in the aid, sub-national growth and pro-poor development context that informed my choice of participants.

# > Will the outcomes of the research be published?

This data collection exercise is part of a research towards writing of a PhD thesis at the University of Manchester.

#### > Who has reviewed the research project?

The Global Development Institute at the School of Education, Environment and Development, University of Manchester has reviewed this research project.

#### > Who is funding the research project?

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission is funding this research.

#### What would my involvement be?

#### > What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will be agreeing to grant an interview to me; the principal researcher for a period of not more than 2 hours or participate in a focus group discussion not exceeding 2 hours.

You and I will engage in an open discussion as part of the interview process. I will be asking questions relating to the NGOs sector and AVCD and your opinion on some of the issues the research topic and its objectives are seeking to address as indicated earlier.

For the one-on-one interview, I would appreciate any suitable meeting room in your office building, or any appropriate virtual meeting platform. Focus group discussion sessions would take place at village meeting centres or as may be appropriate.

# > Will I be compensated for taking part?

The study does not include the payment of allowances to participants. However, respondents could indirectly derive satisfaction from the interaction since the issues to be discussed will reflect their practical experiences, most of which are important for the development of Ghana.

#### > What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to acknowledge your consent through an audio recording before the start of the interview. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time if you are not comfortable without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. I will be happy to continue the interview by writing out responses from you. If this is not also an option for you, the interview process will be terminated as wished.

However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the dataset, as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights.

# **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

# > What information will you collect about me?

In order to participate in this research project, I will need to collect information that could identify you, called "personal identifiable information". Specifically, we will need to collect:

- 1. About your work and personal experience
- 2. Your location

#### Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

I will be collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is "a public interest task" and "a process necessary for research purposes".

# > What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?

You have several rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example, you can request a copy of the information we hold about you.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our <u>Privacy Notice for Research</u>.

# Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential, and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

Only the study team at The University of Manchester will have access to your personal information, but they will anonymize it as soon as possible. Your name and any other identifying

information will be removed and replaced with a random ID number. Only the research team will have access to the key that links this ID number to your personal information. Your consent form and contact details will be retained for 5 years.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

#### What if I have a complaint?

#### Contact details for complaints

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact: **Professor Aminu Mamman** 

*Email: <u>aminu.mamman@manchester.ac.uk</u> Phone: +44 (0) 161 275 7444* Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, M13 9PL, UK

#### If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance, then please contact

The Research Ethics Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161 275 2674.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email <u>dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk</u> or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to

your personal identifiable information Tel 0303 123 1113

#### **Contact Details**

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact the researcher on:

Solahudeen Tando Moomin <u>moomin.tando@manchester.ac.uk</u> Global Development Institute School of Environment, Education and Development, The Arthur Lewis Building, (1st floor), University of Manchester, United Kingdom M13 9PL



# Participant Consent Form

#### Agricultural Value Chains and Local Economic Growth: Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor-Led Intervention Outcomes in Northern Ghana

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below

	Activities	Initials
1	I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the data set. I agree to take part on this basis.	
3	I agree to the interviews being audio / video recorded.	
5	I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports, or journals.	
6	I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
7	I agree that any personal/anonymised data collected may be shared with researchers/researchers at other institutions.	
8	I agree that the researchers/researchers at other institutions may contact me in future about other research projects.	
9	I agree that the researchers may retain my contact details to provide me with a summary of the findings for this study.	
10	I understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interview/focus group information is revealed which means that the researchers will be obliged to break confidentiality, and this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet.	

11	I agree to take part in this study.
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#### **Data Protection**

The personal information we collect and use to conduct this research will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the Participant Information Sheet and the <u>Privacy Notice for Research Participants</u>.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
Name of the person taking consent	Signature	Date

1 copy for the participant1 copy for the research team (original)

# **DONOR-ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY-CARD**

BASIC INFORMATION
Serial Number:
Name of Interviewer

Date of Interview.....

Nr	Question	Response
Intr	oduction/background	
1	I have seen that the CARD is	
	identified in nearly all aspects of	
	development assistance. Specifically,	
	what aspects and philosophy of	
	development would you say your	
	organization has specialization in?	
2	What approaches/strategies do you	
	use in implementing these projects?	
3	What would you say informs	
	your choice of approaches?	
4	How long has your organization	
	been in operation? ***	
5	What has been your source of	
	funding projects?	
6	How would you describe your	
	staffing strategy in terms of expertise	
	to question 1 and 2?	
OBJ	ECTIVE 1: To explore the scope/fram	nework of donor led AVCD interventions
1	I understand that you sponsored the	
	GROW project. How would you	
	explain your sponsorship package or	
	scope?	
2	If I say AVCD, what specifically	
	comes to your mind?	
3	Can you give me a brief	
	description of the processes	
	through which you fund or	
	implement AVCD interventions?	
4	Is there any difference in your	
	approach against other approaches	
	that you know of?	
5	How did you come by the idea of	
	sponsoring such a project? What	
	were the specific considerations?	

6	What roles did you play in the	
	projects' design and implementation?	
7	Why do you think the	
	Government of USA was	
	interested in such project?	
OBJ	ECTIVE 2: To examine the growth e	hhancing outcomes of donor led AVCD interventions.
1	Why do you think the Wa-West	
	district was chosen for the project?	
2	What were your expectations for	
	facilitating such a project?	
2	In your opinion, which of these	
5	avpostations were achieved?	
	expectations were achieved?	
4	What can you say about the	
	unmet expectations?	
5	What do you think are the	
	biggest development challenges	
	in the Wa West District?	
0.0.1		
OBJ	ECTIVE 3: To investigate the institut	tional arrangements for adoption and upgrading of
1	Regarding unmet expectations of the	
1	project before fold up, do you think	
	there was sufficient local capacity to	
	realise the unrealized?	
2	Which category of project	
	beneficiaries/stakeholders would you	
	attribute this capacity and	
	responsibility to?	
3	How was their capacity specifically	
1	Did the expectation for them to	
-	replicate project outcomes take local	
	policy and business environment	
	(cultural/social dynamics) into	
	consideration?	
5	Do you think the District	
	Assembly benefited from the	
	project?	
	a. If yes, in what ways?	
	b. If no, could you please	
	explain why?	
	explain why?	

6	What do you think are the reasons	
	why the Wa-West district could not	
	initiate such programs?	
-		
17	What do you think are the challenges	
	of farmers and generally agricultural	
	development in the Wa-West	
	district?	
8	Has the GROW project	
	complemented efforts at addressing	
	these challenges?	
	a. If yes, in what ways?	
	b. If no, what in your opinion	
	accounts for that?	
9	Now that CARD have folded all	
	contractual obligations due the	
	GROW project, what is the current	
	level of engagement with the other	
	local participants/partners of the	
	project?	
7	What do you think would inhibit the	
	DA's quest to continue the	
	project?	
	F-0 <b>5</b>	
OBJ	ECTIVE 4: To analyse the stakehold	er perspectives on adoption and upgrading of Donor led
	CD intervention outcomes	
I	What considerations went into	
	selection of smallholder farmers	
	selected as beneficiaries of this	
	project?	
2	What considerations went into	
	selection of other project	
	beneficiaries such as input dealers	
	and output dealers?	
3	What roles did the smallholder	
	farmers play in project design and	
	implementation?	
4	By what mechanisms were	
-	smallholders and other local	
	beneficiaries' expectations assessed	
	and strengthened in project	
	implementation?	

5	What do you think are the project's desirable and undesirable outcomes?	
6	How do you think the desirable outcomes were to be sustained and scaled up post donor funding?	
7	Are you still in touch with the project beneficiaries and other implementing partners?	
8	How will you explain the CARD's current relationship with smallholder farmers, the district assembly and other project implementing partners?	
9	Now that all contractual obligations are determined to have been discharged and implementing partners are equally discharged of their contractual obligations to the project, what do you think would be inhibiting smallholders' quest to continue the project?	
10	What do you think were the challenges of smallholder farmers who participated in the project?	
11	For what reasons do you think smallholders would want to continue to participate in such projects?	
12	For what reasons do you think smallholder farmers would not want to participate in such projects in future?	
13	What other comment would you like to share with me about this research?	

# Appendix B



17th October 2021

#### Dear Madam/Sir,

# INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

Permit me to introduce myself as a Doctoral Researcher from the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

I would like to invite to you to participate in my research. As a participant you will engage me for a maximum of two hours to discuss the Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor led Agricultural Value Chain Development intervention outcomes.

Together with my research team at the University of Manchester, we have found your insight on the above research aim highly resourceful in advancing knowledge on sustainable agricultural value chain development in marginalized regions and emerging economies. It is our expectation that such knowledge will yield reforms in effective pro-poor development programming.

Before requesting your favourable response, kindly find a Participant Information Form, Consent Form and the Research Instrument attached for your kind attention, please.

I count on hearing favourably from you.

Yours faithfully

Solahudeen Tando Moomin <u>moomin.tando@manchester.ac.uk</u> Global Development Institute School of Environment, Education and Development, The Arthur Lewis Building, (1st floor), University of Manchester, United Kingdom M13 9PL

# **Research Participant Information Sheet**

#### Agricultural Value Chains and Local Economic Growth: Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor-Led Intervention Outcomes in Ghana

#### **Participant Information Sheet (PIS)**

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a Doctoral Study project, which will be used for the purpose of an academic thesis. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part. You can also discuss with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

#### About the research

#### Who will conduct the research?

I, Solahudeen Tando Moomin of the Global Development Institute (GDI), School of Environment, Education and Development (SEED), University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

#### > What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the institutional capacities for upgrading donor-led Agricultural Value Chains Development (AVCD) intervention outcomes in Ghana. The study notes that as a response to the challenge of spatial and income inequalities in developing countries, Agriculture and Value Chain Development strategies have found significance in aid programming to Africa. While at it, there are however reported observations that the growth and sustainability impacts of interventions are less impressive. As a contribution to this emerging discourse, this study aims to understand how such aid mechanisms are impacting capacities of local institutions to upgrade intervention outcomes. This is against the backdrop that despite significant success stories and impacts reported in commissioned project reports, the issue of the value of interventions in building local capacities to replicate or upgrade intervention outcomes remains unsettled in critical debates. Not even expressed intents of sustainability in intervention designs and strategies has settled these debates. This study examines the context of donor led AVCD interventions relative to the theoretical potential of propelling pro-poor sub-national growth; and explores the institutional capacities for upgrading intervention outcomes. This will contribute greatly to the needed reforms in development policy especially on sustainable intervention programming. The outcome of this research will also extend our knowledge on aid effectiveness and strategic importance of value chain development programming in addressing poverty and inequality.

I selected you and all other participants purely on grounds of familiarity with the research observation at stake. As such, it is knowledge and expertise in the aid, sub-national growth and pro-poor development context that informed my choice of participants.

# > Will the outcomes of the research be published?

This data collection exercise is part of a research towards writing of a PhD thesis at the University of Manchester.

# > Who has reviewed the research project?

The Global Development Institute at the School of Education, Environment and Development, University of Manchester has reviewed this research project.

# > Who is funding the research project?

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission is funding this research.

# What would my involvement be?

# > What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You will be agreeing to grant an interview to me; the principal researcher for a period of not more than 2 hours or participate in a focus group discussion not exceeding 2 hours.

You and I will engage in an open discussion as part of the interview process. I will be asking questions relating to the NGOs sector and AVCD and your opinion on some of the issues the research topic and its objectives are seeking to address as indicated earlier.

For the one-on-one interview, I would appreciate any suitable meeting room in your office building, or any appropriate virtual meeting platform. Focus group discussion sessions would take place at village meeting centres or as may be appropriate.

# > Will I be compensated for taking part?

The study does not include the payment of allowances to participants. However, respondents could indirectly derive satisfaction from the interaction since the issues to be discussed will reflect their practical experiences, most of which are important for the development of Ghana.

# > What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to acknowledge your consent through an audio recording before the start of the interview. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time if you are not comfortable without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. I will be happy to continue the interview by writing out responses from you. If this is not also an option for you, the interview process will be terminated as wished.

However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the dataset, as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights.

# **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

#### > What information will you collect about me?

In order to participate in this research project, I will need to collect information that could identify you, called "personal identifiable information". Specifically, we will need to collect:

- 3. About your work and personal experience
- 4. Your location

#### Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

I will be collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is "a public interest task" and "a process necessary for research purposes".

#### > What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?

You have several rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example, you can request a copy of the information we hold about you.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our <u>Privacy Notice for Research</u>.

#### Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential, and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

Only the study team at The University of Manchester will have access to your personal information, but they will anonymise it as soon as possible. Your name and any other identifying information will be removed and replaced with a random ID number. Only the research team will have access to the key that links this ID number to your personal information. Your consent form and contact details will be retained for 5 years.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

# What if I have a complaint?

#### Contact details for complaints

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact: **Professor Aminu Mamman** 

*Email: <u>aminu.mamman@manchester.ac.uk</u> Phone: +44 (0) 161 275 7444 Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, M13 9PL, UK* 

# If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance, then please contact

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You also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to

your personal identifiable information Tel 0303 123 1113

# **Contact Details**

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact the researcher on:

Solahudeen Tando Moomin <u>moomin.tando@manchester.ac.uk</u> Global Development Institute School of Environment, Education and Development, The Arthur Lewis Building, (1st floor), University of Manchester, United Kingdom M13 9PL



# Participant Consent Form

#### Agricultural Value Chains and Local Economic Growth: Institutional Dynamics for Upgrading Donor-Led Intervention Outcomes in Northern Ghana

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below

	Activities	Initials
1	I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	
2	I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to myself. I understand that it will not be possible to remove my data from the project once it has been anonymised and forms part of the data set. I agree to take part on this basis.	
3	I agree to the interviews being audio / video recorded.	
5	I agree that any data collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, reports, or journals.	
6	I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.	
7	I agree that any personal/anonymised data collected may be shared with researchers/researchers at other institutions.	
8	I agree that the researchers/researchers at other institutions may contact me in future about other research projects.	
9	I agree that the researchers may retain my contact details to provide me with a summary of the findings for this study.	
10	I understand that there may be instances where during the course of the interview/focus group information is revealed which means that the researchers will be obliged to break confidentiality, and this has been explained in more detail in the information sheet.	
11	1 agree to take part in this study.	

#### **Data Protection**

The personal information we collect and use to conduct this research will be processed in accordance with data protection law as explained in the Participant Information Sheet and the <u>Privacy Notice for Research Participants</u>.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
Name of the person taking consent	Signature	Date

#### INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY SURVEY-DISTRICT PERCEPTION OF DONOR-LED AVCD INTERVENTION OUTCOMES IN NORTHERN GHANA DISTRICTS

#### BASIC INFORMATION

Serial Number: .....

Name of Interviewer.....

Date of Interview.....

#### **KEY INFORMANT BACKGROUND**

Position......Highest degree obtained & area of specialization.....

Current District/Agency/Unit/.....Previous District/Agency/Unit.....

#### INSTITUTIONAL DIAGNOSIS

- 1. How is the Wa-West District assembly working towards effectively increasing Agriculture's share of GDP to the local economy here?
- 2. In terms of Agriculture and agro-industrialization, how adequate and effective are your work plans in the broader agenda of institutionalizing sustainable external and local agricultural markets?
- 3. How are issues of capacity development for smallholders expressed and implemented in your work plans?
- 4. What are your own institutional capacity gaps in terms of meeting the above objectives?

.....

5. Please indicate if you have undergone any capacity building training in respect of the above gaps in the last 5 years

Training	Key Skill Acquired	Organization	year

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIP

6. How has your district or department conceived AVCD?

.....

7. Are you able to tell of any benefits in developing AVCs as a district development strategy?

- 8. At the policy level, past and current governments have articulated objectives to agroindustrialize. Has this assembly ever independently designed and implemented an AVCD program before?
  - 1. Yes
  - 2. No
  - 3. Other, Explain please
- 9. In terms of the Gusheigu District assembly's independent attempts to design and or implement AVCD interventions without donor assistance, what is your assessment of the following framework? [*please tick appropriate response*]

Perception of performance	High	Low
Private Sector Involvement		
Social Accountability		
Political interference in stakeholder selection		
Sensitivity to the capacity gaps and needs of local		
stakeholders		
Competence of role players/Intervention managers		
Objective and Target Definition		
Mobilization and Resource availability		

- 10. In terms of sub-national/local economic growth, how supportive has the current 1D1F and P4FJs policies been to your organizational pursuit of sustainably institutionalizing some specific AVCs?
- 11. What challenges do you have with the current 1D1F and P4FJs policies that the government is reportedly pursuing?
- 12. What are/were your expectations of the current 1D1F and P4FJs?

13. Which of the following donor interventions have you experienced in your professional engagement?

Intervention	Donor	District//Communities
Greater Rural Opportunities for Women (GROW)		
Market Development Program for Northern Ghana (MADE)		
Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE)		

# 14. For what reasons did the assembly resolve to partner with the GROW/ADVANCE/MADE project?

(1) Fiscal inflow (2) Technological transfer (3) Institutional Capacity Devt (4) Market Dev't for selected AVCs (5) Any other, specify.....

17	The assembly vets and approves donor interventions before implementation at the sub-district levels	1	2	3	4	5
18	Donor interventions are implemented with the active assistance of institutional structures and designated staff of the assembly	1	2	3	4	5
19	Donor interventions reflect performance indicators in district development plans	1	2	3	4	5
20	Responsible departments of the District identify intervention beneficiaries based on settled institutional targeting mechanisms	1	2	3	4	5
21	Interventions are usually initiated by the donors who are funding these activities	1	2	3	4	5

22	The assembly has institutional mechanisms to audit donor project implementation.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Based local institutional monitoring mechanisms and performance indicators, assembly is able to determine the success of donor led AVCD interventions	1	2	3	4	5
24	Local stakeholders (farmers, banks, input dealers, transporters, etc) in the district were the main beneficiaries of interventions	1	2	3	4	5
25	District assembly departments such as planning, finance and agric departments benefited most from interventions	1	2	3	4	5
26	The Assembly has autonomy in determining implementation of local economic growth interventions	1	2	3	4	5

15. How did the Assembly gain selection to benefit from the GROW/ADVANCE/MADE?

- 1) A thought-out needs assessment and proposal by planning unit
- 2) Referral from MOFA/MLGRD/NDPC
- 3) Direct contact by donor agency
- 4) Joint proposal development with local NGO

16. Please, provide the following information on the mechanisms with which the Assembly or your department engage donor led AVCD interventions.[Please, circle the number corresponding to your opinion in Statements 17 to 25 below]:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

26. Place the intervention in (13) above in the following framework with respect to your perception of their performance [Write out the acronym in the spaces provided]

Perception of performance	High	Low
Incentive system was higher than local assembly		
Specificity of tasks for all stakeholders		
Absence of political interference		
Sensitive to the capacity gaps and needs of local Ass staff and smallholders		
Use of collaborative platforms		
Meeting performance expectations and evaluation		

#### INTERVENTION DESIGN, LEARNING AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

[*Please, circle/tick the number corresponding to your opinion in Statements* **27** *to* **43** *below*]: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

27	Selection of Intervention beneficiaries was based on political considerations	1	2	3	4	5
28	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was based on familiarity with NGO staff?	1	2	3	4	5
29	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was based on local Chief's or the assembly's discretion	1	2	3	4	5
30	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was without any suspicion of discrimination or influence peddling	1	2	3	4	5
31	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was based on prior experience of participating in similar interventions	1	2	3	4	5
32	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was based on their capacity to scale	1	2	3	4	5
33	Selection of intervention smallholders was based on level poverty and food insecurity	1	2	3	4	5
34	Selection of smallholders was based on their level of joblessness	1	2	3	4	5
35	Selection of intervention beneficiaries was based on the number agro-assets owned	1	2	3	4	5
36	Selection of smallholders was based on their years of farming and experience	1	2	3	4	5
37	District Assemblies and relevant representatives of donors always co-create training manuals and content collaborative and participatory processes	1	2	3	4	5
38	Content of Training materials and dissemination methodologies always build on existing local capacity gaps or capacity strengths	1	2	3	4	5
39	Intervention design and operational processes are always dialogical and democratic with openness for local community perspectives	1	2	3	4	5
40	As a result of the need for ex-post engagement of communication and knowledge exchange technologies of interventions, technologies are always procured with local capacities in mind	1	2	3	4	5
41	Intervention implementation processes are generally always adaptable to local capacities	1	2	3	4	5
42	Cost recovery is always less effective because donors usually represent the potential of paying for services in their interventions	1	2	3	4	5
43	Poor management of smallholder expectations in donor led AVCD interventions significantly reduces their confidence when donor pull out of interventions	1	2	3	4	5

44. In your assessment which aspects of intervention design and implementation were smallholders satisfied the most?

.....

45. In your assessment, which aspects of intervention design and implementation were smallholders dissatisfied the most?

.....

#### **INTERVENTION OUTCOMES**

[*Please, circle/tick the number corresponding to your opinion in Statements* 46 to **56** below]: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

46	ADVANCE constituted an innovation and collaborative platform with local actors who ordinarily would have been out of the District's reach.	1	2	3	4	5
47	There was district wide re-orientation of the agro-sector owing to engagements from ADVANCE	1	2	3	4	5
48	The district witnessed massive private sector investments in the agro sector through the linkages ADVANCE activated	1	2	3	4	5
49	Smallholders were linked to external markets outside this District	1	2	3	4	5
50	The organization of smallholders into farmer groups and co-operatives was one of the innovations ADVANCE strengthened.	1	2	3	4	5
51	ADVANCE triggered a awareness and realignment of smallholder relations with some of the notable banks	1	2	3	4	5
52	Generally, the capacity of smallholders to mobilize, to organize, to cooperate and to produce efficiently, strengthened.	1	2	3	4	5
53	ADVANCE helped strengthen the client-service provider relations between smallholders and the assembly	1	2	3	4	5
54	The business of undertaking district development in even other sectors, was transformed into an enterprising one because of ADVANCE	1	2	3	4	5
56	ADVANCE marketed the district effectively and it became local marketing center for key agricultural producers	1	2	3	4	5

#### INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND CAPACITY TO UPGRADE

57. Is the D.A having contacts with other training institutions for institutional and human capacity development relative to design and administration of Market Systems Development (MSD) initiatives?

1. There is no use of information from other national/international training institutions to improve and update human capacity

- 2. Little connection with other national/international training institutions
- 3. Not sure
- 4. Extensive use is made of other national/international training institutions

58. Is it required of the DA to incorporate gender dynamics in programming for local economic growth? Yes [] No [] Don't know []

59. If yes to 37 above, where from this requirement and how is compliance to such requirement enforced?

60. Is it required of the DA to incorporate business development and market access sessions into extension models for smallholders in your work plans? Yes [] No [] Don't know []

61. If yes to 39 above, where from this requirement and how is compliance to such requirement enforced?

62. Do you think the DA has the capacity to replicate lessons from donor led training courses independently?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Don't know [ ]

63. If yes to "41", rate such capacity.

- 1. No capacity to replicate training courses []
- 2. Some replication of training courses []
- 3. Replication of training courses is often carried out []
- 4. Replication of training courses is expected from those who participated in it []
- 5. Ample evidence of replication of training courses with organizational resources []

64. If your answer to question "42" is no replication of training courses is carried out, what is needed for this capacity to be built?

65. If replication of training courses is carried out in the DA, what factors made it possible?

66. What methods are used to build capacity for management of AVCD schemes in this district assembly?

[Please, circle/tick the number corresponding to your opinion in Statements 67 to 75 below]: 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

67	Business models of local input dealers were adjusted to support the payment capacities of smallholders	1	2	3	4	5
68	Business models of banks and service providers were adjusted to support the payment capacities of smallholders and agro-dealers	1	2	3	4	5
69	There was sufficient exchange between D.As and project to facilitate successful take over ex-post	1	2	3	4	5
70	As part of the training given, internal structures of D.As were adjusted to reflect conditions for business development and agro-industrialisation	1	2	3	4	5
71	As part of the market development mechanism, a key private sector player such as agro-processor or marketer was institutionalised to anchor the project ex-post	1	2	3	4	5
72	There was sufficient collaboration to commit to end-line project sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
73	Per project design and implementation, its sustainability was only possible on continuous donor assistance	1	2	3	4	5
74	Per project design and implementation, its sustainability was possible on private sector commitments and in-country collaborations	1	2	3	4	5
75	Per project design and local context, its sustainability was only possible if DA had adopted the project	1	2	3	4	5

76. With your insights of the operational framework of the district assembly concept and the local economy in Wa West, Wa-West or Bawku West District, what factors will you consider important to developing your core skills and capacity to facilitate upgrading of intervention outcomes across the following four domains?

76a

# **PRODUCT UPGRADING**

Is defined as adding value to product itself or adding new complementary lines to improve market share and increase value. E,g if farmer was into production and sale of only maize, what can be done to improve maize quality (processed or labelled) or add other product/crops to farmer production line

Rank	ik Factors		
	District Assemblies (DA)	Smallholders	
1	[please type here]	[please type here]	
2			
3			
4			
5			

76b

#### **PROCESS UPGRADING**

Process upgrading is about the production mechanism, more specifically about making production more efficient either through adoption of new technology or reconfiguration of production system e.g if farmer was using more labour in production, what can be done to reduce production time and increase efficiency. It could also reflect in mode of transportation to high end markets

Rank	Factors		
	DA	Smallholders	
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

76c

#### **Functional/ Intersectoral Upgrading**

Functional upgrading involves pursuing value addition by changing the mix of activities conducted within a farm or moving the locus of activities to other links in an AVC. E.g triggering specialization to improve efficiency or setting up agricultural parks or growth poles/centers. Also means the

transition into new production lines (often related industries) using knowledge acquired through production of another product or a specialized service

Rank	Fac	fors
Nalik	Fac	
	DA	Smallholders
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
5		

76d

# SOCIAL UPGRADING

Defined as continuous re-configuration of intangible norms, institutions, and normative patterns of behaviour in local contexts in ways that support sustainable increase in economic performance

Rank	Factors		
	DA	Smallholders	
1			

2	
3	
4	
5	

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

1. What measures can be used to track operational changes as a result of the role of Donor led AVCD interventions in strategic, market sensitive planning and policymaking processes in agriculture and rural development in Ghana?

2. How best can information generated by the donor led AVCD interventions be fed into strategic planning and policymaking processes in Ghana?

3. What measures can improve the quality, business sensitivity, timelines, and circulation of relevant local market information in policy making in Ghana?

# Appendix C INSTITUTIONAL AND SMALLHOLDER DYNAMICS OF UPGRADING DONOR LED AVCD INTERVENTION OUTCOMES IN NORTHERN GHANA

# PROPOSED PROTOCOL FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH SMALLHOLDERS

**GENERAL GUIDE** [take time and guide them through the under listed possible options in case they missed mentioning any or are unable to understand the question]

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**:

- a. Apart from the local NGO, which other project partners worked with you directly?
  - i. DA or DoA,

- ii. Agro Dealers [take note of the name of institution],
- iii. Banks, [take note of the name of institution],
- iv. Tractor Services, [take note of the name of institution],
- v. Equipment/machine Dealers [take note of the name of institution],
- vi. Buyers [take note of the name of institution],

#### **SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION:**

- b. How were you selected to participate in the project?
  - i. Delegation from chief,
  - ii. DA, Coopting of an existing famer group membership
- c. Was your group consulted to make suggestions in the project design? What suggestions did you make that were admitted or rejected?
- d. What specific roles did your group play in the project implementation? (Land donation, labour contribution, sales person, mobilizing and organizing)
- e. What do you think were the reasons why your community was selected for the project?

#### LEARNING AND OUTCOMES:

f. What specific lessons can you say you learnt from the GROW/ADVANCE/

MADE project?

- g. How has those lessons been beneficial to you?
- h. In terms of implementing or extending the lessons you learnt into other areas, what challenges are you currently facing?

#### **BENEFITS AND LOSSES**

- i. What did you gain by participating in the project? [*Please moderate a discussion into nature and depth of the underlisted potential benefits*]
  - i. Agronomic training and input supplies
  - ii. Savings and resource mobilization
  - iii. Business development (sales) training?
  - iv. Processing and packaging?
  - v. Equipment Supplies
- j. What did you lose for participating in the project?

#### LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND POLICY AUDITING

k. What do you think were the DA's role in this project design and implementation?
- 1. Prior to your participation in the project, what was your working relationship with the district assembly on issues relative to agriculture or business development?
- m. Do you think the DA is sensitive to their respective needs as female or male smallholders?
- n. Post project, how would you describe your working relationship with the DA
- o. Has the assembly ever engaged you on the GROW/ADVANCE/MADE project?

## **BACKWARD LINKAGES**

- p. Prior to your participation in the project, what was your working relationship with agro/input dealers?
- q. Prior to your participation in the project, what was your source of finance for farming activities?
- r. Post project, how would you describe your working relationship with agro/input dealers including finance institutions and equipment suppliers?

## FORWARD LINKAGES

- s. Apart from having enough to strengthen household subsistence, were you able to sell some produce?
- t. How do you normally sell your produce? Wholesome or Processed?
- u. Did you sell directly to major buyers?
- v. Under the project, did you secure production contracts with major buyers?
- w. Do you have existing production or sales contracts with any major buyers?

## LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND INSTITUIONAL UPGRADING

- a. Do you think the assembly has systems in place to tap and learn from the experiences smallholders, agro/input dealers, green aggregators and banks acquired from participating in the GROW/ADVANCE/MADE project?
- b. What factors hindered your attempts to continue the GROW/ADVANCE/MADE project?
- c. How do you think those challenges can be resolved?
- d. What would make you participate in a similar farming arrangement in future?
- e. What would make you unwilling to participate in a similar farming arrangement

in future?