

RESEARCH PAPER

**DEEPENING DECENTRALIZATION THROUGH
COLLABORATION BETWEEN DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES AND
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS: LESSONS FROM KETA
AND SOUTH TONGU DISTRICTS IN GHANA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana can work with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) to deliver services. Using qualitative and descriptive approach, the Keta Municipality and South Tongu District were studied. One hundred and forty-two FBOs were sampled and interviewed from both Districts. For the household interviews, 200 households were sampled from the total of 37,705 households in the Keta Municipality, and 200 households were sampled from a total of 20,509 households in the South Tongu Municipality. In-depth interviews were held with leaders of the FBOs, high profile Officers of both District Assemblies and key informants. The study revealed that although FBOs play significant roles in service delivery, there was weak collaboration between both District Assemblies and the FBOs. The Assemblies did not adequately involve the FBOs in the governance process. There was poor incorporation of FBO plans in the Assemblies' Development Plans while the Assemblies also did not adequately support the FBOs. This was found to result mainly from the fact that the laws establishing the District Assemblies in Ghana are unclear on how the Assemblies should work with FBOs. Also, Assemblies are seen to be very partisan and the FBOs do not trust the Assembly officials enough. The study recommends that the Local Governance Act 936 be amended to strengthen the working relationship between the FBOs and District Assemblies specifying the approaches to be used. In addition, the Assemblies could consider creating forums to dialogue with the FBOs in order to build trust with them.

Keywords: *Collaboration, decentralization, District Assemblies, faith-based organizations, Ghana*

INTRODUCTION

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) across the globe have been active in development work, delivering services in education and health (Ommering, 2009; Littlefield, 2007). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that between 30% and 70% of the sprawling

healthcare infrastructure across Africa is owned and run by FBOs (Widmer *et al.*, 2011). Widmer *et al.* (2011) have noted that FBOs are also active in areas such as urban sanitation and public health issues such as HIV and AIDS campaigns.

Many scholars hold the view that FBOs are the next generation of community development organizations because of their potential to generate change to benefit society. Such organizations have the dexterity to leverage membership contributions for development activities in their localities to provide a variety of services including housing, education, health, economic development, community organization and youth development (see Botchwey, 2007; Sanders, 2014).

With the implementation of the decentralization policy in Ghana, District Assemblies have the responsibility to spearhead local initiatives and mobilize local resources for development at the sub-national level (ILGS, 2010). As provided for in Section 12 (sub-section 1 to 5) of Act 936, District Assemblies are expected to provide basic infrastructure and services in education, health, water and other programmes to improve the quality of life of people in their localities (Republic of Ghana, 2016). Section 12, subsection (7) of Act 936 provides that Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) partner and collaborate with other stakeholders in fulfilling this responsibility. Consequently, one of such key stakeholders that the MMDAs are supposed to work with is FBOs which cut across Christian, Islamic and traditional communities.

The growth in the number of FBOs and their huge membership across African countries especially Ghana point to the fact that they command a very large constituency and influence (Avevor, 2012; CHAG, 2015). Their contribution to development has received increased interest in recent literature. Many scholars including Widmer *et al.* (2011); Ommering (2009); Avevor (2012); Baiyeri (2013); Nishimuko (2009) and Littlefield (2007) have touted the enormous contributions of FBOs in delivering social services and they have argued for the need to strengthen church-state partnership in delivering basic services especially in developing countries.

There is some evidence to show that comparatively, many citizens trust the leaders of their religious groups more than public officers and political office holders (see Kim *et al.*, 2010;

Addai *et al.*, 2013; Anshel and Smith, 2014). Since FBOs are often closer to the people and are able to reach the difficult to reach segment of the population, their active collaboration with the MMDAs might help the MMDAs adequately understand local needs to be able to deliver responsive and appropriate needs (Wallace *et al.*, 2004; Markovitz and Magged, 2008).

In spite of the important roles FBOs play, evidence suggests poor working relationships between MMDAs and FBOs in Ghana. Current literature does not provide adequate information on why this is so. In addition, there seems to be inadequate research exploring how collaboration between the MMDAs and FBOs could be deepened. Although some studies have been carried out on them (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017; United Nations Development Programme, 2014; Avevor, 2012; Brinkmoeller, 2013; Perchoc, 2016), the issue of mistrust as an impediment does not appear to have been adequately explored.

This study therefore sought to contribute to this scholarly debate by exploring how the Keta Municipal Assembly (KeMA) and the South Tongu District Assembly (STDA) work with FBOs to deliver services. The study argues that in spite of the claims that sub-national governments struggle to partner FBOs, this is achievable within the decentralization framework and there are useful lessons to be shared to enable MMDAs to deliver better services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of faith-based organizations and service delivery

Religious organizations exist in almost all parts of the world (Brinkmoeller, 2013). It is estimated that over 80% of the world's population are affiliated to faith groups (FMECD, 2016). In Ghana, statistics show that over 93% of the population are affiliated to faith groups, with Christians constituting 71.2%, Muslims (17.6%) and Traditionalists (5.2%) (Republic of Ghana, 2010). A report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), suggests that FBOs are critical in ending homelessness and about 30% of emergency shelter are pro-

vided by these organizations (NAEH, 2017). Churches and Mosques are the first point of shelter for people during crisis and civil wars.

In sub-Saharan Africa, a substantial proportion of social services (more than 50%) are provided by FBOs (FMECD, 2016). The FMECD is of the view that, healthcare and education systems would not have existed in some countries (particularly developing countries) but for the contributions from religious communities (CDC, 2017; Moyo and Keir, 2014; Olakunle *et al.*, 2009). National and International FBOs such as World Vision International, Christian Medical Missions Board, Christian Health Association of Africa and Islamic Relief World Wide among others have been phenomenal in this respect (Avevor, 2012; Vodo, 2016; Perchoc, 2017; Tadros, 2010; WHO, 2008; CHAG, 2015).

Decentralized governance and the need to work with faith-based organizations

The failure of the centralised approach to deliver responsive and equitable development at the local level has raised concerns for grassroots participation in the development process (Olowu and Wunsch, 2004). It is now widely recognized that giving authority and resources to local people to champion their own development is the best way to ensure participation and responsibility for service delivery. With the decentralised approach, local people are supported and empowered to mobilize local resources, define their needs and deliver development projects to address these needs (Jouen *et al.*, 2010).

In Ghana, some efforts were made in the past with the PNDCL 207 (1988) providing the legal framework for the new decentralization and local government system (ILGS, 2010; Adusei-Asante, 2012). Subsequent legal instruments seeking to further strengthen the decentralization process include the 1992 Constitution, the Local Government Act, Act 462 (1993) and recently the Local Governance Act, Act 936 (2016) (ILGS, 2010; Republic of Ghana, 2016). District Assemblies which were established as a result are tasked to spearhead the development of their districts working in collaboration with other stakeholders such as FBOs, the private

sector and the central government (Republic of Ghana, 2016).

There is the argument that working with FBOs has the potential to increase MMDA resource base for service delivery and help to strengthen participation, avert duplication of efforts and increase the scope of service provision across the Assemblies (see Macaulay, 2013; UNDP, 2014). It can also be an effective strategy for creating sustainable grassroots development given that FBOs are closer to the people, and therefore understand their needs better and are more likely to be trusted than government officials (FMECD, 2016; Tadros, 2010; Wallace *et al.*, 2004; Markovitz and Magged, 2008).

According to Wallace *et al.* (2004), FBOs have ready access to a wealth of human capital through the skills and talents of their members. They have a network of dedicated volunteers who are ready to assist in service provision (NAEH, 2017; UNDP, 2014). With large networks of dedicated members, faith groups are able to mobilize adequate funds to implement development activities they initiate. Donors have also developed trust in the activities of FBOs and are more willing to support them than MMDAs (UNDP, 2014; NAEH, 2017).

So how do MMDAs collaborate with FBOs to take advantage of the huge resources available? How can the collaboration be deepened to give meaning to the spirit and principles of decentralized governance?

STUDY CONTEXT

Keta Municipality and South Tongu District were selected from the 25 administrative districts of the Volta Region for this study. The selection of the two Districts stem from the fact that, the contribution of FBOs in these Districts in the Volta Region has received some attention from high profile persons in the Region and the Districts. During a research project to explore how FBOs work in three regions in Ghana, it emerged from informal interactions with traditional leaders, political actors and community leaders that FBOs in these Districts appear to be unique in their contribution to development in the Districts. At two of the durbars attended by authors of this paper during the study peri-

od, high profile Officers of the Districts and the Region praised the contribution of FBOs and how the MMDAs work with them to deliver education and health services. A review of the literature however reveals that claims of this nature have not been adequately documented for lessons to be shared.

Faith-based profile of the Keta Municipality

The Keta Municipality as established by Legislative Instrument (L.I. 1868) of 2007 was carved out of the former Anlo District (Republic of Ghana, 2014a). There are about 300 churches, 10 mosques and 11 Shrines in the Municipality. The predominant religion in the Municipality is Christianity, which constitutes 59.9% of the total population followed by Traditionalists (25.4%). Islam constitutes 1%, other beliefs represent 0.8% and those who do not profess any form of religion represent 12.9% of the total population (Republic of Ghana, 2014a).

Faith-based profile of the South Tongu District

The South Tongu District was carved out from then Tongu District in 1998 (Republic of Ghana, 2014b). There are about 410 churches, 15 mosques and six Shrines in the District. Christians constitute the majority of the District's population, representing 75.7%. This is followed by traditionalists (12.0%) and Muslims (2.0%). Those who practice other religions constitute 0.9% whilst those who do not profess any religion form 9.4% of the total population (Republic of Ghana, 2014b).

With majority of the population in the two districts being affiliated to religious groups, working with FBOs has the promise to get majority of the local people to participate in development decision making. This will enhance participation and mobilization of resources. Consequently, it will contribute to the development of the Districts as well as make services responsive to local needs.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Our focus in this paper was to describe how MMDAs partner FBOs, why the partnership is the way it is and what could be done to strengthen the partnership. In light of this a

qualitative and descriptive approach was employed using essentially qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and household interviews (Creswell, 2014; Anol, 2012). Out of the 300 churches in the KeMA and 410 in the STDA, the lottery method (Lewis-Beck *et. al.*, 2004; Crossman, 2018) was used to randomly select 50 from each of the two districts for interview. Unlike the churches, the leaders of all the 25 mosques in the two districts were interviewed. In addition, the snowball technique (Atkinson and Flint, 2001) was used to identify the operators of all the 17 shrines in the two districts for interview.

Interview guides were used to interview the leadership of the FBOs and shrine operators. In addition, in-depth interviews were held with five high profile officials and five key informants from each of the two MMDAs. Data from household interviews were also used to support data obtained from FBOs, MMDAs and the key informants. For the household interviews, 200 households were sampled from the total of 37,705 households in the Keta Municipality, and 200 households were sampled from a total of 20,509 households in the South Tongu Municipality (Republic of Ghana, 2014a; 2014b). In total, 400 households were interviewed across the two Districts. Each District was divided into four zones and the lottery method (Lewis-Beck *et. al.*, 2004) was used to do a simple random selection of 50 households from each of the eight zones for the interview. Heads of the sampled households were only asked to indicate their awareness of what FBOs were doing and ways in which they found FBOs work with the Assemblies.

The data obtained from all the interviews was in the form of narratives and text. Some of the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Others were coded and interpreted in line with the objectives of the research.

We described collaboration between the MMDAs and the FBOs by using how both of them jointly work to develop and implement development interventions. The focus was on FBOs participation in the development and

implementation of Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDP). Indicators used were the Assemblies' awareness of the work of FBOs, involvement of FBOs in development decision making, incorporation of FBOs activities and plans into MTDPs of the Assemblies and the Assemblies' support for FBOs activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The contribution of faith-based organizations to service delivery in the study districts

The study revealed that FBOs in the study Districts have been deeply involved in development work, in the form of provision of social services and humanitarian assistance (see Wallace *et al.*, 2004; Vodo 2016). All the FBOs interviewed in the two districts indicated that they were involved in the building of schools, provision of health facilities, operation of orphanages, provision of potable water and the creation of employment opportunities for many. These FBOs have in varied ways contributed to improving access to social services thereby reducing poverty among households.

Findings from in-depth interviews with all the high-profile officers of the two Assemblies corroborated the claims by FBO leaders. An officer explained that

“the FBOs here have done a lot to improve the lives of people in deprived areas and difficult to reach areas of the District. This has reduced the pressure on the Assembly to reach all the corners of the District.”

The views of all the respondents in the household interviews in the two MMDAs also supported this finding. According to those interviewed in Keta, one of their important needs was a clinic but the Assembly was not able to provide this due to resource constraints. The Local Council of Churches came in to build this clinic in Anloga. In addition, FBOs contributed to purchase and fixed over 500 street lights in the Abor community also in the Keta Municipality.

In spite of the positive contributions, there was a consensus among District Assembly officials, leaders of FBOs and key informants that District Assemblies and Faith-Based Organizations

still work in isolation. The views of FBO leaders which were corroborated with key informant interviews and supported by over 90% of households was that the study Districts still had low levels of development characterised by inadequate social services, infrastructure, weak collaboration leading to duplication of efforts, especially in the area of water and sanitation, poor incorporation of FBOs plans in MTDPs of MMDAs and inadequate support for FBOs work by the Assemblies (Table 1).

Inadequate involvement of FBOs in decision making

Our findings suggest that the involvement of FBOs was only limited to two areas. The first is that FBOs only come in when government take over FBO schools for the purposes of expanding the infrastructure, recruiting and paying their teachers. The second area is when they collaborate with the Health Department of the MMDAs to carry out health screening and education and National Health Insurance Scheme registration programmes with assistance from personnel of the Health Department of the Assembly.

Apart from these, a little under 90% of all the FBOs interviewed in both Districts indicated that the two Assemblies did not involve them in the governance process by jointly working with them. The views of the FBOs can be summed up in what one of them said at Keta that:

“We do not see any concerted efforts between us and the Keta Municipal Assembly. We have made efforts to work with them but this has not been successful. For the Assembly, they do not make the efforts to bring us on board what they are doing. To sum it, I will say we work in isolation” (FBO Leader, Keta, March, 2018).

Findings from discussions with key officers at the Assemblies supported this finding that the Assemblies did not involve the FBOs in many important decisions they make. One key informant in the Assembly of South Tongu explained that the Assemblies might have done so for a number of reasons. First is that working with the FBOs would mean that the Assemblies must be transparent with the FBOs in the use of

Table 1: MMDAs' and FBOs' Plans for 2018-2021

Areas	District Assemblies	FBOs
Education	Build additional classrooms in Kedzi A.M.E. Zion and Dzita E.P. Basic Schools.	Establish new basic schools, vocational and secondary schools at Anloga, Agbakope and Sogakope.
	Renovate classroom blocks at Keta E.P. Basic School, Dzelukope E. P. Basic School.	Establish new tertiary institutions (fishery and agriculture) at Anloga and Sogakope.
	Provide social support for BECE candidates in deprived schools	Build additional classroom blocks for Kedzi A.M.E. Zion, Keta E.P. and Abor R.C. Basic Schools Establish scholarship programmes and support more people in education.
Health	Construct new health facilities (CHPS compound) at Dziehe, Tefle, Seva and Genvi.	Construct new health facilities at Anloga Health Centre, Horvi and Hikpo.
	Renovate Anloga Health Centre	Undertake health support programmes; health screening and education, hospital visitation in all communities.
	Support health education campaigns in all Basic Schools.	
Water and Sanitation	Improve sanitation conditions in all communities	Continue clean-up exercises in communities, market places, hospitals cemeteries and police stations.
	Construct toilet facilities in Tegbi, Dzelukope, Kedzikope.	Construct toilet facilities at Tegbi and Dzelukope
	Extend pipe borne water to Wededeanu, Amedzo and Deveme.	Extend water to Benui, Anyako and Deveme.
Employment	Exploration of oil to create employment in Keta	Set up companies/ businesses such as pure water company, mango plantation, fish farming etc. to create employment for community members.
	Creation of more employment opportunities through introduction of commercial diary, poultry, mushroom cultivation, nutritional garden and vocational activities in Anloga, Keta and Dzelukope	Undertake more vocational and entrepreneurship training for women and youth in Dabala, Sokpoe and Tefle.
	Provide students with agricultural science skills so as to stimulate self-employment	Provide more capital support for women to do business in Keta, Dzelukope and Dabala.

Source: STDA, 2018; KeMA, 2018; Fieldwork, March, 2018

public resources, something many Assemblies have difficulty doing especially when the Assemblies also hold the view that FBOs are not transparent to disclose the resources available to them. All the FBO leaders however claimed that they do not trust Assembly officials for

them to be transparent with resources at their disposal. Second explanation was that, some of the decisions that the FBOs will have difficulty supporting might be political or partisan decisions which the Assemblies might find most important for resources to be assigned. It ap-

pears that both Assemblies and FBOs have something to hide.

This weak and suspicious partnership is further evidenced by the fact that in both Districts, about 90% of FBOs indicated that they were not aware of the Districts' MTDP and that they had no idea of the existence of any such document. This suggests a failure on the part of the MMDAs given that these organizations should be partners in the development of the Districts, whose support can be leveraged in the preparation and implementation of the Districts' MTDP. The weak collaboration also suggests a deficiency in the local governance Act 936, given that no specified provisions have been made to engage such important partners.

Some of the District Assembly Officials however had the view that the existing system allows for the inclusion of FBOs. According to the Officials, they create awareness through community meetings (town hall meetings) and they expect that the FBOs would participate. Discussions with our key informants however revealed that District Assemblies in both Districts did not formally invite the FBOs to inform and solicit their participation in such town hall meetings. This finding defeats the purpose and spirit of the provision in Act 936 which seeks to deepen decentralization. Act 936, prescribes active collaboration between the MMDAs and other development actors (Republic of Ghana, 2016). Since the FBOs and MMDAs seek to deliver services to benefit the same communities, their impact would be greater if they collaborate more effectively.

Poor harmonization and integration of FBOs activities into District MTDP

Section 12 subsection 5 of Act 936 provides that MMDAs integrate and harmonize the activities of other development partners with the approved MTDPs of the districts (Republic of Ghana, 2016). This is to ensure that there are no conflicts in the services provided and efforts are not duplicated. However, the study found that although what FBOs are doing complement the efforts of the DAs, the DAs did not adequately incorporate the activities of FBOs in the Districts into the MTDPs. A comparison of planned activities with some on-going activities

under education, health, water and sanitation and employment in the 2018-2021 MTDPs of the two districts with what FBOs in these districts also plan to do over the same period in these four areas revealed that the 2018-2021 MTDPs do not capture FBOs plans (see Table 1). Proper harmonization of these efforts could lead to effective use of scarce resources.

As indicated in Table 1, the FBOs have similar plans as the Assemblies and the location of many of these projects outlined in the MTDPs are the same as the plans that the FBOs have. For example, the Keta Municipal Assembly has plans to renovate classrooms of faith-based schools such as Keta E.P. Basic School; Abor R.C. Basic School and Dzelukope E.P. Basic School among others which the churches have plans to renovate and build additional classrooms for. Also, in the same Municipality, the Assembly has plans to complete an abandoned Heath Centre at Anloga which the Local Council of Churches in collaboration with other Civil Society Organizations is currently reconstructing into a community clinic. The South Tongu District has plans to construct health facilities and extend potable water to some communities which have been listed by FBOs to benefit from these same facilities. Effective harmonization of all these efforts would yield the highest impacts.

Discussion with FBO leadership, households and key informants revealed that service delivery would not achieve the highest impacts when the Assembly and FBOs fail to harmonize their efforts to provide services to address the same problem in the same community. For example, respondents in Keta noted that the KeMA constructed a toilet facility just about 85 meters away from where the E.P. Church had constructed a toilet facility when there are other parts of the community that lack such facility and residents resort to open defecation along the sea and lagoon. According to high profile officers in the KeMA, a good discussion with the FBOs would have resulted in effectively spacing these facilities to benefit many.

According to one of the senior Officials at KeMA, they have not been able to incorporate FBOs activities into the MTDP because "the

FBOs do not bring us their plans or take advantage of the town hall meetings to let us know about their plans". For the FBO leaders, there is no medium to share their plans with the MMDAs. What this suggests is that the town hall meetings may not be enough for MMDAs and FBOs to work together.

Inadequate support from District Assemblies for FBOs service delivery activities

Aside collaboration, Act 936 provides that MMDAs promote and support productive activities and development initiatives as well as remove obstacles to development initiatives by all stakeholders in the districts (Republic of Ghana, 2016). Our findings however show that less than 30% of FBO leaders interviewed indicated that they receive support from the District Assemblies for their development initiatives. According to them, about 80% of the support is through issuing of permits for construction projects and health screening programmes. Very few of the FBOs (about 8%) noted that they had received financial support from the Assembly in Keta. For 12% of them, they had received technical support from the District Assemblies in the form of personnel to support activities such as organizing health screening and NHIS registration. The District Assemblies provide support by sending health officials from the District Health Department and District Hospital to provide technical assistance to the FBOs. FBOs who run schools and hospitals in partnership with the District Assemblies also receive infrastructure support in the form of new buildings and logistics. The District Assemblies sometimes construct new classroom blocks for some of the FBOs' schools.

Factors explaining weak partnership between MMDAs and FBOs

Discussions with officials of the Assemblies revealed that both District Assemblies are willing to work with FBOs to improve service delivery. However, a number of issues were raised that could undermine the working relationship with the Assemblies.

Many of the respondents from the FBOs do not trust District Assemblies officials. They are of the view that government officials are corrupt and so they are not willing to leave their resources in the hands of these officials. A respo-

ndent said "*One cannot trust these government officials. We have seen how they mismanage national resources. So how can we trust them with our resources?*".

This mistrust hinders the efforts being made by the MMDAs to work with the FBOs.

Differences in the beliefs, values, and norms between people of different religions and among people of the same religion were also identified as possible challenges of working with FBOs, since religious beliefs may influence decisions regarding solutions to development problems. There may be discrimination against the minority FBOs. For example, a traditionalist noted that

"many of the officials of the Assemblies belong to other faiths and they claim that the traditionalists are evil and thus may not want to work with us. Because of this, we are not included in the decision making processes although we have some good ideas".

About 90% of the FBO leaders also expressed concerns that the local government system was too partisan and their organizations were not willing to be seen as being partisan. Apart from this, they have concerns that getting involved in local government issues may lead to the Assembly controlling their affairs. In the Keta Municipality, the FBOs raised concerns about ownership and identity. These FBOs had concerns that government might take over joint projects and erase their identity on such projects.

In addition to these issues, the absence of provisions in Act 936 on how MMDAs should work with FBOs has been identified as a major hindrance to working with FBOs. Officials of both Assemblies indicated that there were no explicit laws or provisions in Act 936 regarding the approach and extent to which they should work with FBOs. As a result, community meetings are resorted to as the main approach to solicit FBOs participation. This approach appears to be ineffective in attracting the participation of the FBOs. According to our key informants, these meetings are scarcely held and the few held, the discussions were not on development issues and solutions but rather

on politics and partisan issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Our argument in this paper is that MMDAs could partner FBOs in order to deepen the decentralization policy implementation as FBOs have a lot to offer. This study found that FBOs in the study Districts were committed to the development of their communities. They were willing to work with the Assemblies to serve the same purpose. They contribute to the provision of services including building of schools, hospitals, extension of water among others to benefit many. These services help to improve the living conditions of local communities and contribute to the overall development of the Districts. There is however the lack of trust between MMDAs and FBOs and the lack of specific provisions in Act 936 defining the working relationship between MMDAs and FBOs, therefore many MMDAs and FBOs in Ghana may be working in isolation leading to weak harmonization and duplication of efforts and waste of limited resources as this study has shown.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Amendment of Act 936 to ensure FBOs involvement

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should take steps to amend relevant sections of the Local Governance Act, Act 936 (2016) and make clear and specific provisions for MMDAs to collaborate and work with FBOs. These specific provisions must then be stated as part of the steps in the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) guidelines to specify how MMDAs should work with FBOs in the planning process to deliver services.

MMDAs must create forums to meet and dialogue with FBOs

District Assemblies must institutionalise collaborative meetings with FBOs that will allow both parties to work together. The meetings could be held either monthly or quarterly. At these meetings, both the MTDP and plans of FBOs should be discussed and agreed conclusions used to inform final development decisions. This will not only help to increase FBOs awareness of the Assemblies' plans but will

also help to enhance their participation in the preparation and implementation of the Assemblies' plans. It will also help to strengthen the working relationship between the MMDAs and the FBOs and facilitate the necessary collaboration for improved service provision.

District Assemblies need to build trust

District Assembly officials must endeavour to be transparent in their dealings with FBOs. This will help to assure FBOs and earn their trust, commitment, support and collaboration. District Assemblies must publish their budgets and audited accounts regularly and post these on public notice boards and share highlights in town hall meetings and the monthly or quarterly meetings with FBOs. The FBOs must also do same.

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