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Stakeholders' Roles in Prioritizing Technical Vocational Education and Training in Postconflict Liberia

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Abstract

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M.Ed, University of Liberia, 1998

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Postconflict governments and counterparts have collaborated to provide skills training to communities as a critical postconflict development strategy. In these undertakings, the role of community members remains largely undefined. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to understand the perceptions held by rural community members regarding the role they played in influencing government's policy priority for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a local human development strategy in postconflict Liberia. The conceptual framework was based on human capital theory and concepts of motivation and achievement. Fourteen participants were purposefully selected for the study. Data were collected from interviews, focus group discussion, and documents and analyzed using constant comparison. Results indicated that increasing human capital, restoring self-esteem, encouraging civic participation, and building peace were among the community members' motivations for establishing a skills training institution. Leadership, advocacy, and ownership were major roles community stakeholders played in establishing their local skill training institution; voluntarism and collaboration were found to be strategies for support to the local TVET initiatives. Findings have positive social change implications for facilitating community-initiated TVET programs for youth employment as well as informing TVET policies in countries transitioning from conflict to development.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my daughter Nakita Diah Forh who passed during the time of the editing of this dissertation, and to her siblings Clementia, Edina, Edward-Suku, Edward-Zezu, and Edric. Thank you for your understanding when daddy was always at his desk.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In this study, I sought to understand the roles rural stakeholders play in influencing the government's policy for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a local human and economic development strategy in Liberia as a postconflict African country. I also sought to provide an understanding of the different considerations that informed national policies for the provision of the rural community's skills training needs. For the purpose of this study, stakeholders referred to local community people including students, parents-teachers association (PTA), education workers, and administrative heads, and elders or chiefs who are informal local community heads.

My country, Liberia, is in a transition from a state of emergency to a state of development, having experienced over 13 years of civil conflict. According to a demography and health survey conducted by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), about 64% of the Liberian population of 3.47 million citizens lives below the poverty line, surviving on less than one United States dollar per day. Furthermore, 38% are undernourished, 60% have no access to clean drinking water, over 39% are illiterate, and 85% are unemployed. Currently, opportunities for college education are limited, and even where available, rural dwellers have limited access due to limited finances (LISGIS, 2007).

Overseeing a country endowed with natural and human resources, the Liberian Legislature has passed bills devoting over US$20 billion in capital and mineral exploration investment with concession companies as a means to recovery and

development. The government of Liberia identified inclusion of youth, a major workforce reservoir, as a critical priority for capacity building in jumpstarting Liberia's developmental processes coming out of conflict (Government of Liberia, 2013). Accordingly, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has included TVET amongst several strategies for youth development as well as a means for improving the livelihood of community people, especially in the rural communities (Government of Liberia, 2013). At the policy level, several workshops and seminars have been held to analyze the developmental and social roles of TVET in community recovery from conflict. Drawing on the premise that TVET could play important roles in the development of postconflict African countries, it is critical for governments of postconflict countries, as providers of social services, to understand the premium that stakeholders, as direct beneficiaries, attach to TVET in livelihood development. Additionally, it could prove beneficial for governments of postconflict countries exploring the potential of TVET to have a deeper appreciation of critical issues impacting successful TVET implementation.

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization's Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training catalogued some of these critical issues to include structuring TVET for postconflict reconstruction, involving local community people in TVET planning and implementation, assessing TVET institutional needs, and increasing the effectiveness of TVET to meet local communities' needs (Johnson, Phillips & Maclean, 2007). My study contributes to this body of knowledge. Understanding the various roles of the key stakeholders, including community people and

local educational officers, can have social change outcomes as it can inform policy direction for successful TVET programs that will contribute to the promotion of the livelihood and civic participation of community people. The current study, therefore, explored stakeholders' understanding of the roles they can play in promoting TVET for the socioeconomic development of postconflict, developing countries, using Liberia as a case.

Background of the Study

TVET play important roles in the human capital and economic development of a nation. A trained and competent workforce is critical to the level of productivity of any economic system, the human development of a nation, and the standard of living of its people (Ayisi, 2001; Teferra & Altbach, 2003). From an economic and human development perspective, the Conflict and Education Research Group (CERG) at the University of Oxford, England, defined TVET as: "A learning system in which both soft and hard skills are developed within a joined-up, integrated development and delivery framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and that supports community and individual agency" (Johnson, Phillips, & Maclean, 2007, p. 2).

The relevance of TVET and the advantages it accrues to individuals, especially the poor, rural dwellers, minorities, and disadvantaged groups, are well documented in the literature (Akpan, Antia, Archibomg, & Ahmed, 2010; Ayisi, 2001; Canavan & Doherty, 2007; Compton, Laanan, & Starobin, 2010; Gadio, 2011; Lamb, 2011; Johnson,

et al., 2007). The adoption of TVET policies has also been linked to sustainable development for rural communities (Akpan, et al., 2010). For example, Gadio (2011) reported that the government of Mali had considered the adoption of TVET as one of many policy options in addressing different human development agendas including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA). The benefits of TVET human development have also been conceived in terms of higher financial returns for those who engage and improve social interaction and conditions for society at large.

The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFoP) divided the benefits of TVET into economic and social categories (CEDEFoP, 2011). In the economic category, benefits of TVET include “economic growth, labour-market outcomes, firms' performance, employees' productivity, employment opportunities, earnings, and career development” (CEDEFoP, 2011, p. 7). Social benefits range from crime reduction to social cohesion, inclusion and stability, and individual satisfaction and motivation.

Several regions in the world have reported success with TVET. In the United States, for example, where community college students comprise about 60% of all postsecondary students, higher earnings have been observed for students completing degrees in career and technical education (CTE) over other diploma holders and dropouts (Compton et al., 2010). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries are beginning to adopt policies that would make TVET a major instrument for human capital development while, at the same time, being responsive to

global ecological and economic development trends (Wallenborn, 2010). In a survey of Pakistani experience with TVET as a development tool, Janjua (2011) reported that there exists a positive correlation between skills training and employment, recommending skills training as a viable investment for the poor. Also in Pakistan, technical and vocational education has been positively linked to increased productivity, economic growth, increased employment, and poverty reduction (Janjua, 2011). The Pakistani government, through several policy interventions, has used TVET as a tool for social stabilization mainly in highly militant areas where community people see themselves as being marginalized.

The concept of peace-building and social stability is critical and has been highlighted in discussion of TVET in other conflict and postconflict countries. Maebuta (2011) reported efforts by the Solomon Islands to provide marketable skills to community people affected by conflicts; enacting the Solomon Island's TVET Policy Framework of 2004. Referencing Johnson, Phillips and Maclean, 2007, Maebuta reported that the Solomon Islands' policy was informed by reports that conflicts have far-reaching negative effects on people including high unemployment and poverty. Communities so affected feel marginalized and experience high levels of tension and agitations, thereby having the potential to disrupt the peace. Therefore, as a strategy for building peace, the government of the Solomon Islands instituted programs where TVET could be used to create a culture of peace, emphasizing skills training, social stability and peaceful

coexistence; consistent with the social category of TVET benefits as espoused by CEDEFoP (2011).

TVET has also been used as a tool for nationalization. In Kuwait, a major objective for engagement in skills training was for the promotion of the policy coined Kuwaitisation: The term was coined and operationalized as a movement to provide skills so Kuwaitis could take jobs previously occupied by foreigners (Bilboe, 2011). Kuwait's experience with TVET also revolved around the need to provide a transition for high school graduates who did not meet the required grade point average for matriculation to college. This category of Kuwaiti youths, according to Bilboe, had limited to no possibility of obtaining employment. Therefore, Kuwaiti's approach to skills training was for employment purposes.

In a series of studies, UNESCO linked TVET as an instrument to local empowerment, poverty reduction, sustainable development, livelihood, and civic participation in postconflict African countries (Johnson et al., 2007). Southern Sudan and Uganda were reported by Johnson et al. as countries adopting TVET policies in the revitalization of war-ravished communities.

Johnson et al.(2007) also reported Liberia as a postconflict nation, which has acknowledged the role TVET can play in the development of ordinary people. Practical steps undertaken by the government including legislations establishing several community colleges are consistent with the philosophy of Liberian education, which

amongst its many missions, as proclaimed by President William V. S. Tubman in a major policy speech on the development of education, stated,

> Deep within the democratic heritage of the Liberian nation is embedded our commitment to education and the necessity of making our school the chief and most effective instrument of our political and social institution, in order that the democratic ideal may not only be meaningful in the present, but that it will become the spearhead of economic, social, moral, and spiritual reforms in the lives of succeeding generations (Government of Liberia, 1965).

Since the end of the civil conflict, progress has been made in the primary and higher education sectors of education in Liberia. The implementation of the free and compulsory primary education, revitalization of existing high schools and construction of new schools, curriculum review, consistent with the new education law of Liberia (2011) are major advancements Liberia has made (Government of Liberia, 2009, 2010, 2011). Development of TVET, however, is proceeding only gradually. The slow pace of the development of the TVET sector and the difficulties at reform are due to the destruction of basic social and economic structures and infrastructures brought about by over 13 years of civil conflict. For instance, some of Liberia's TVET structures destroyed include: Clay Basic Crafts Training Center in Bomi County, the Liberia Opportunity Industrial Center (LOIC) in Monrovia, the Agricultural and Industrial Training Bureau (AITB) in Monrovia, the Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute (BWI) in Margibi County, and three primary and secondary teacher training centers.

Against this background, Liberia began rebuilding her educational infrastructure as she transitioned from war to peace and then development. Since the end of the civil conflict, the government has identified TVET as a priority area in youth development and poverty alleviation with special focus on rural communities. Preliminary tangible steps, including the creation of the necessary legal frameworks to govern the sector, were being taken in furtherance of this priority.

As a critical first step in her TVET reform agenda, Liberia developed and adopted a working paper titled "Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy Framework for Liberia" (2009) and a conference report, "Lift Liberia through TVET Reform"(2009). These two documents placed the TVET reform agenda into three basic categories, namely: current status review, policies and legislations, and prospects and implementation. A concept paper on stakeholders' consultative forum on skills training, under the theme empowering Liberian youths through TVET from the private sector perspective, has also been developed. This concept paper also highlights the reform objectives of TVET and associated challenges in implementing it. Other documents being developed by the ministries of Education and Youth and Sports but still in draft forms, include (a) an assessment report of TVET institutions in selected counties (Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, and Montserrado); (b) a technical vocational education training sector operational plan; and (c) the national TVET policy of Liberia.

In line with recommendations contained in UNESCO's final report of the Third International Congress on TVET in Shanghai, China (May 14–16, 2012), the policy

documents on TVET implementation in Liberia identified critical roles to be played by stakeholders, including policy makers, curriculum experts, teachers, parents, learners, higher education institutions, and employers. The report also recommended an integrated regional approach to skills development through expert trainers' exchange and experience sharing. If the broad-based consultation and collaboration as recommended by UNESCO is to be implemented, it is expected that the reformed TVET sector will reflect the changing demands of the workplace and the needs of the society, foremost of which is the economic development of rural community people. The papers, however, fell short of maximizing the roles of stakeholders such as students and families who are the direct beneficiaries of TVET as poverty alleviation programs.

Review of the literature on TVET implementation revealed little information on the roles local community stakeholders, including students, PTA, education workers, administrative heads, and elders or chiefs, can play in these endeavors, especially in influencing national policy on TVET as a human and economic developmental strategy in local communities coming out of conflict. Instead, the focus of available literature on TVET issues and concerns encompassed the relevance of the policy, shifting paradigms of education to meet global and national changes, policy and implementation compatibility, equity, social justice, financing, multiple delivery modes, and quality assurance frameworks (Akpan et al., 2010; CEDEFoP, 2011; Giret, 2011; Johnson et al., 2007). While the implementation of these and other functions were placed mainly on governing authorities and collaborating international partners, there seemed to be little

reference to local community people who are the direct beneficiaries of TVET programs. There are scanty indications in the literature on what community people could do to benefit from TVET policies and take ownership of the program. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to derive understanding of what local community stakeholders and local educational administrators perceived their roles and potential resourcefulness to be in prioritizing TVET as a national strategy to foster local community human and economic development in postconflict developing African nations, with emphasis on Liberia.

Problem Statement

Living conditions in countries coming out of civil conflicts are characterized by fear, hunger, starvation, displacement, reduced government capacity, destruction of infrastructure, brain drain, and a general reduced standard of living. As governments embark on a transition from postconflict to development and stability, several critical problems and challenges emerge. Cardinal among the challenges is capacity building of citizens to rebuild their social and economic life. Unavailability of adequate financial resources also poses critical challenges given the multiple needs in postconflict situations. Major conflict-resolving partners across the world such as the African Union and United Nations as well as other researchers have proposed the pursuit of TVET by postconflict countries as a human capital development tool for improved employability opportunities and livelihood improvement. Benefits of pursuing TVET for development and poverty mitigation are also reported in the literature (Ayisi, 2001; Bilboe, 2011; CEDEFoP, 2011;

Janjua, 2011; Teferra & Altbach, 2003). In addition to livelihood improvement, Townsend and Delves (2009) proposed that technical and vocational education and training could be employed to accommodate persons migrating from urban to rural communities.

Although these studies recognized the importance of TVET in livelihood development and the efforts of national governments and their international educational partners in establishing and operating TVET institutions, they have not identified tangible roles community people can play in advancing TVET in their localities. In fact, UNESCO alluded to several gaps in TVET implementation, requiring further research. These include structuring TVET for postconflict reconstruction, assessment of TVET needs, effectiveness of TVET to local community's needs, and community involvement in TVET implementation (Johnson et al., 2007). This study, therefore, sought to contribute to this debate and to contribute to existing literature in providing information on why and how stakeholders think TVET could be beneficial to their human capital development. Such information could be useful in informing policy makers advocating TVET in postconflict recovery issues. More specifically, this study explored the roles stakeholders could play in informing and attracting the government’s priority of TVET to their local community for local community sustenance and economic development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand the perspectives of rural community stakeholders on the roles they may be able to play in influencing the government’s policy

priority for TVET as a possible local human and economic development strategy in Liberia. The central phenomenon of the study was to explore the understanding of stakeholders on the importance of TVET to their economic development that might guide them in advocating for and contributing to the provision of skills training facilities in their community. The qualitative method of inquiry using a descriptive case study design (Creswell, 2007) guided the study.

Research Questions

The study explored three research questions:

RQ1: What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) development and the best interests of the community population?

RQ2: What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community?

RQ3: What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

Conceptual Framework

The role of the conceptual framework of a study is to integrate related concepts, theories, and findings derived from previous studies on a particular topic to form the basis for understanding similar concepts in current studies (Rocco & Plakhonik, 2009). The conceptual framework used to guide this study was based on propositions from four theories: human capital theory (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1961), sociological contradictory

theory (Brint, 2003), as well as Maslow's (1987) and Herzberg's (1959) concepts of human achievement, success, and satisfaction. I considered these theories in light of their value in understanding the African Union and UNESCO's policies on postconflict reconstruction through TVET. I wove the theories and concepts into one overarching framework that clarified theoretical perspectives on the roles of local community stakeholders in addressing poverty reduction through skills training, improving the capacity of vocational and technical institutions in disadvantaged and neglected parts of Liberia, and raising local community people's sense of self-respect and self-worth through employment and other income-earning activities. This conceptual framework also guided collection of data as well as analysis of the study's outcomes and assertions in the literature.

Becker (1964) proposed a human capital theory that posited society and individuals derive benefits from investing in education and training and that the more educated the workforce, the more successful the workers and the stronger the economies. Becker further posited that the social and economic returns of individuals are directly proportional to their level of education and training. Becker's prepositions were relevant and applicable to this study in that skills-training tends to improve learners' chances for employment, thereby contributing to their ability to cater to their welfare. In addition to benefits to the individuals, skill training also contributes to the human resource development of a nation and positively impacts its economic development (Becker, 1964).

Bouchard (1998) summarized Schultz's human capital theory into seven assumptions (pp. 3–6):

- human capital is an investment for the future;
- more training leads to better work skills;
- educational institutions play a central role in the development of human capital;
- employees need to improve their skills;
- training enhances employability;
- training can compensate for skill shortage; and
- employment and unemployment are economic concepts.

Schultz (1961) argued that the current observed level of development of Western nations was directly related in their policy of "deliberate investment" (p. 1) in human capital.

There have been some criticisms of the human capital theory to the effect that building human capital does not necessarily lead to direct benefit to the learner. Grubb and Lazerson (2004) described the "naive human capital" idea in reference to the concept that education always leads to success in all circumstances (Grubb & Lazerson, 2004, p. 164). Reconciling these two perspectives on the role and benefits of education, within the context of technical and vocational education and training, this study drew on the sociological contradiction theory (Brint, 2003). In the sociological contradiction theory, Brint (2003) acknowledged Grubb and Lazerson's argument that not all education leads to learners' success; neither does education guarantee better or higher earnings. Brint (2003), however, confirmed the role of community colleges in human capital

development through skills training and recommended the strengthening of community colleges in meeting this goal.

Nature of the Study

The method of inquiry for this study was the qualitative method using a descriptive case study approach (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2008; Yin, 2013). I selected the qualitative approach because qualitative research, unlike quantitative, follows a tradition which seeks understanding of phenomena that occur in particular settings, how people are affected by said phenomena, how and why people respond the way they do, and how both the phenomena and their responses (or lack of) shape their future behavior (Sherman & Web, 1988; Yin, 2013). Even though the qualitative tradition leaves little room for generalization of findings, it allows detailed investigation into the phenomenon. Using the case study approach, I endeavored to understand the roles local community stakeholders played in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community; community people's perceptions of how and why government policy makers select projects in the region; and community stakeholders' perception of the nature and level of government support for their local training needs.

The case study method was suitable for the study because it involved a detailed description of TVET activities and opportunities of the local community, as the case, in a bounded system over time, as explained by Yin (2013). The case study method entailed collection of rich data, specifically drawn from stakeholders' experiences. By using the

case study approach, I derived deeper understanding of stakeholders' stance on TVET, including their roles and possible contribution in implementation at their local level.

I purposefully selected participants for the study from stakeholders in one rural community in Liberia. They included students, PTA, education workers, and administrative heads, and elders or chiefs who are informal local community heads, and international educational partners to the local community (identified through key informants). Criteria for selection were based on participants' potential or actual involvement, as key stakeholders, with technical and vocational education and training. Data for the study were collected from multiple sources including interviews, focus groups, documents, and observations. In Chapter 3, I have provided a detailed analysis of participants, criteria for selection, and data analysis procedures.

Definitions

Capacity building: In the context of this study, capacity building involves a wide range of activities including training, equipping, and facilitating of individuals, organizations, and institutions in community settings to enhance their ability to plan and implement programs for the betterment of themselves and the community (Article 13, 2014).

Community/civic participation: The World Business Council on Sustainable Development defined community participation as the process of involving community members in decision-making about issues that affect them, including service planning,

policy development, setting priorities, and addressing quality issues in governance and the delivery of services (Article 13, 2014).

Peace building: In the context of the United Nations framework, peace building involves "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development" (United Nations Peace Building Fund, 2009).

Postconflict countries: For the purpose of the study, I have adopted the Brahimi's Report 2000 definition which defined postconflict countries as countries emerging from conflict situations where open warfare has come to an end but situations remain tense with the possibility of relapse thereby requiring the establishment of sustainable institutions capable of ensuring long-term peace and security. ("Defining conflict/post conflict." 2011).

Postconflict reconstruction and development: The AU defined postconflict reconstruction and development as involving "a comprehensive set of measures that seek to address the needs of countries emerging from conflict, including the needs of affected populations, prevent escalation of disputes, avoid relapse into violence, address the root causes of conflict, and consolidate peace" (Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Department, Commission of the African Union, 2006).

Poverty: Poverty can be perceived from many perspectives since it may border on moral and subjective questions, mainly referring to unacceptable hardships. In this study,

I used the Copenhagen Declaration's definition of poverty: a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to social services (Article 13, 2014).

Social cohesion: The capacity to live together in harmony with a sense of mutual commitment among citizens of different social or economic circumstances.

Socioeconomic development: In line with the AU vision, the 2004–2007 Strategic Framework of the African Union Commission, the NEPAD framework document of 2001, and the Millennium Declaration (2000), socioeconomic development is a "multidimensional process that contributes to improved living conditions, improved ability to meet basic needs (such as health, education, and food), the reduction of poverty and inequality, and enhanced capacity of human beings to realize their potentials"(Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Department, Commission of the African Union, 2006. p. 5).

Stakeholders: In the context of this study, stakeholders refer to people who affect and are affected by the community, institution, or government. Depending on the situation, they may include people both inside or outside the establishment so long their actions and interests are mutually linked. Stakeholders are people who are concerned with the progress and wellbeing of the establishment and thus see their interest intertwined with the community's state of being.

Sustainable development: The World Commission on Environment and Development's definition of sustainable development is as a concept in human development where humans' present day needs are met without negatively impacting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Development is said to be sustainable if equilibrium is maintained between humans' quests to improve their livelihood and preserving the ecosystem that present and future generations rely on (United Nations Environmental Program, 2009b).

Assumptions

I conducted the study based on three assumptions. First, because they came from conflict that destroyed their means of livelihood, rural community people desired skill training to increase employability opportunities, relieve poverty, and improve their standard of living. The second was that community stakeholders were willing to collaborate with local and national authorities in achieving skills training and livelihood improvement goals. The third assumption was that participants were willing to respond to questions and give their experiences of living in postconflict conditions, their needs for skills training, their expectation of the government in providing TVET to their community, and possible roles they played.

Scope and Delimitations

Liberia is a postconflict, developing West African nation covering 43,000 square miles and having 15 political subdivisions or counties. The scope of this study, however, was restricted to one case, the Grand Bassa Community College. The case site, Grand

Bassa County, is basically rural in terms of level of development and infrastructure. It has normal administrative governance structures headed by the county superintendent who is appointed by the president. Under a quasi-federal arrangement, the superintendent oversees all aspects of the county including security, healthcare delivery, and education. Citizens and residents of Grand Bassa County are basically poor and unemployed and live on subsistence farming. There is very high rate of illiteracy, reaching about 45%. Healthcare is inadequate with the county having only one government hospital. There is only one government high school expected to cater to the approximately 4,000 potential high school applicants (LISGIS, 2007).

The study was also bounded in terms of the issues that were explored in the study. TVET issues in Liberia are numerous and far-reaching. They range from limited number of institutions to meet the needs of local people, to poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, inadequate TVET trainers, lack of funding, perceived low perception, inequitable participation, gender stereotyping, and stakeholders' participation. The study, however, was limited to the role community stakeholders played in the establishment and management of TVET in their local rural community. I framed the research questions specifically to address those issues. Participants were restricted to local community people who were or had been directly involved with education—the PTA, for example.

Limitations

A major limitation of the study could have been my subjective biases based on my working knowledge of TVET and my political stance as member of the opposition party,

my experience as a former instructor of the Booker Washington Agricultural and Industrial Institute (a TVET institution in another county), and my role as a current member of the national legislature. Knowledge gained while serving in these roles could have served as sources of bias and subjectivity in data interpretation, thus questioning the validity of the findings. Those possible threats to validity were, however, mitigated through member checking and my continuous, conscious awareness that those threats existed and needed to be minimized. Conversely, however, my current role as a legislator provided me a unique opportunity to gain easy access to stakeholders, which outsiders may have found difficult. This study could have proved difficult if conducted by persons lacking cultural understanding and experiences of the postconflict situations of Liberia. It could, however, be replicated in other cultural settings.

A second limitation of the study was associated with the challenges of using the case study method. Case studies involve prolonged field engagement by researcher, it is costly, and it is susceptible to the researcher's bias in data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2008). In order to minimize those possible threats, I structured my field work to take the minimum time possible. I travelled to the case site and collected most of my data before returning to my home base. This was done in 3 days. My decision to use only one site for study also increased the validity of the findings about that site but decreased the generalization of the findings to other settings. Qualitative studies in general share this limitation, but the usefulness of the case study to readers is increased by the

descriptive data and the proposals for social change strategies in the study setting (Yin, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Education is a service-based profession where passion for being of service by educating students is perceived to be the paramount motivating factor for career selection over pecuniary benefits. The human capital theory also posits that education should serve the common good of the individual and the society. From the context of individuals driving the development of a nation, human achievement can be translated to societal achievement.

As one of several strategies to recovery and development, Liberia has identified TVET as a strategy of recovery one of the means of development of the livelihood of local community people. While this study focused on the role of community people and other stakeholders in TVET implementation in a rural community in Liberia, it had a broader implication on the educational policy direction of the country on the one hand, and a broader significance on raising the standard of living of rural people. Beyond Liberia, lessons learned from this study could be useful to other African countries transitioning from conflict to recovery and development.

By critically analyzing the current status of TVET in Liberia and the roles of the various stakeholders, especially rural community people, governments may consider this study's outcomes in formulating possible TVET policies that could drive human and social development of its people. I anticipated that the study's outcomes will provide vital

data on the rationale for engaging in TVET as a strategy for human capital development, poverty alleviation, and social participation in postconflict, developing nations.

Summary

Chapter 1 focused on the general background and justification as well as the research tradition and scope of the study. Many postconflict African countries are challenged with the negative impacts of conflicts ranging from death and injury to starvation, disease, displacement, breakdown of basic social services, and the feeling of incapacitation. At the professional development level, middle-level technicians are in short supply due to destruction of training facilities, inadequate trainers, inadequate funding and other major challenges faced by the already limited technical education, and tertiary institutions in the process of rehabilitation and reform. Daily sustenance remains a major concern for rural community people. In resolving these crises as components of postconflict reconstruction, nations adopt different strategies including the use of TVET as a tool for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood. Liberia, as a postconflict developing nation, has recognized the importance of TVET as a strategy in its postconflict reconstruction. The implementation of such TVET strategy depends on the total and collective inclusion and active participation of all stakeholders, including community people who are the major beneficiaries. Evidence across the literature is limited on the roles community people could play for viable TVET program in their areas. In the wake of such limited precedents, policy makers continue to analyze and devise programs and approaches that would have immediate and long-term effects on

national development which might have been better with active community participation. The successful conduct of this study has provided a clearer picture of the current status of TVET in the country, particularly in one county, and the roles of the stakeholders, as well as provided important data that could inform the education policy direction of the nation, especially those coming out of conflict.

In Chapter 2, the literature section of this study, I briefly review the historical highlights of TVET concepts and its benefits from both the human development and economic development perspectives. In the literature review, I also discuss the benefits and disadvantages of TVET and the rationale for pursuing it as a policy for reconstruction. I provide a detailed literature analysis of the major principles related to the concept of applying TVET as a tool for postconflict reconstruction in terms of employability, youth empowerment, rural community sustainable development, peace building, civic participation, and social stability. I also review literature on the negative impacts of conflicts as well as the policy efforts of national, regional, and international institutions at restoring countries disrupted by conflicts using TVET strategies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Through this study, I explored rural community people's, education administrators', and other stakeholders' perspectives on the contributions local community people make in influencing the government's policy for TVET as a local human and economic development strategy in Liberia as a postconflict African country. The study provided an understanding of the different considerations that informed national policy strategies for the provision of skills training for rural community people.

Postconflict African countries and the United Nations system and other international organizations have identified TVET as a strategy for youth and community economic empowerment through the provision of marketable skills, and they have invested resources in developing the TVET sector through conferences, workshops, and research. Research ventures undertaken by UNESCO and other researchers have yielded many results encompassing: the rationale for the TVET approach as an important strategy to national development including the development of administrative and operational protocols in TVET administration; benefits of TVET to individuals and states; roles of governments as well as local and international collaborating organizations; and partnerships with firms and industries (Aring et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2007; Lannert, Munbodh, & Verma, 1999; McGrath, 2011). Coming from different perspectives, other researchers have explored the significance of skills training programs to the development

of the individual and nation, challenges inherent in TVET implementation, and innovation and prospects for postconflict countries.

Despite the many studies on TVET, which have helped improve the sector, the role that community people could play in actively influencing the establishment, operation, and sustaining of TVET programs and facilities in their communities in postconflict situations has been underexplored.

In this chapter, I consider several issues in the literature on TVET policies and implementation. I began with a review of the conceptual framework, followed by a historical overview of TVET with emphasis on Africa. My analysis included the benefits of TVET as a human capital development tool to individuals and nations, perceptual challenges negatively impacting the TVET sector, critical financial and infrastructure challenges in TVET implementation, and innovations in addressing these challenges.

Literature Search Strategy

I accessed all literature relevant to technical and vocational education and training and human capital development using libraries and search engines. Specifically, I searched Google and EBSCO (ERIC, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Central, SocIndex, Education Research Complete, and Research Starters-Education) in multiple databases to identify most recent literature on TVET within the postconflict context. I used Google Scholar extensively when I found EBSCO databases to be limited in TVET literature on postconflict countries and to have little or no publications by the United Nations or other international organizations. Search terms used included *TVET, technical*

education, vocational education, career education, human capital, postconflict, Africa, Liberia, and *sustainable development.* Seminal studies older than my initial threshold of 5 years were very useful to the study as they helped conceptualize the relationship between TVET and human capital development.

Conceptual Framework Regarding Human Capital Development

The creation of human capital is thought to be critical to the growth and development of a nation. This is more so in postconflict developing countries where infrastructures are destroyed and funding and qualified instructors are in short supply. In his human capital theory, Becker (1964) proposed that society and individuals derive benefits from investing in education and training and that the more educated the workforce, the stronger the economies. Success in this venture of human capital development therefore would largely require smart targeted policies and strategies that bear medium to long-term returns.

Schultz (1961) and Nelson and Phelps (1966) conceptualized human capital development as firms' and nations' capacities to adapt to changing technological demands of the global economics. In his work on human capital development, Schultz (1961) contended that people need to engage in skills training and continuously improve on acquired skills to increase employment opportunities and attract higher earnings.

Schultz (1961) argued that skills training is a major factor responsible for the level of development observed in Western nations. Unlike Schultz, Nelson and Phelps' (1966) argument did not necessarily identify the benefits individuals accrue from human

capital development. They, however, asserted that when employees' skills are continuously upgraded by firms, through training, to meet demands of changing technological advances, these firms are highly likely to succeed. Becker (1964), however, was more forthright on the rationale for engaging in human capital development and its benefits to the individual, society, and firm. Like Schultz, Becker argued that an increase in human capital increases the level of productivity of the individual worker, thereby attracting growth for the firm and higher earnings for the worker.

Even though these theorists viewed human capital development from different perspectives, their propositions aligned with the four underlining assertions of the human capital theory (Becker, 1964; Nelson & Phelps, 1966; Schultz, 1961) on which this study was grounded:

- the first is that the reason individuals invest in education is to increase their capacity to earn better wages;
- the second assertion of the human capital theory is that an upward change in education increased both individuals' and firms' productivity, thereby rewarding individuals with higher wages;
- the third suggests that education is an investment that generates a positive rate of return; and
- the fourth assertion suggests that education may contribute to democratic practices by reducing inequalities and promoting civic cohesion.

Within the context of this study, the four assertions outlined provide the rationale for the use of TVET as a vehicle for youth and adult economic empowerment in areas where opportunities are limited and individuals face challenges pursuing long-term higher education. Even though other researchers have argued that not all education leads to higher earnings (Grubb &Lazerson, 2004), the literature is replete with experiences in the TVET sector and TVET's potential to lead to better employment chances with potentially higher wages.

As indicated earlier, many international nongovernmental organizations and researchers have called for TVET as part of a development strategy given its potential for contributing to positive social change. Since TVET as an aspect or implementation strategy for human resource development was the core of the conceptual framework, the next sections align positive implications of TVET with human capital development.

TVET and Human Capital Development in Postconflict Countries

TVET seeks to accomplish two overall objectives linked to human capital development. First, it promotes social stability and cohesion; and second, it promotes sustainable economic and social development (Wallenborn, 2009). Wallenborn made these assertions in review of strategies designed to reform vocational education systems in selected European and Asian countries. The strategies reviewed included (a) skills development for poverty reduction (SDPR); (b) National Qualification Frameworks (NQF); and (c) human resources migration and development.

The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFoP), which is the European Union's reference center for vocational education and training, conducted analyses on the benefits of TVET in several European countries to derive a European perspective. A qualitative study covered 21 European countries, including the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and the United Kingdom (CEDEFoP, 2011). The study was based on the analysis of comparative research results and secondary data from individual countries; and covered the period 2005 through 2009. Findings indicated that although TVET outcomes may vary with countries and regions, it generally had positive effects on labor-market outcomes, enterprise performance, and social interactions (CEDEFoP, 2011). The study also predicted that by the year 2020, about 50% of all jobs in European Union countries will require medium-level qualifications which can only be achieved through TVET.

From the social development perspective within the postconflict development context, TVET promotes unity through peace-building, civic participation of all stakeholders, crime reduction, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence of an erstwhile hostile society, and satisfaction and motivation of individuals and communities (CEDEFoP, 2011; Janjua, 2011). For example, in a quantitative analysis of data gathered from three data sources (household surveys, community census, and a qualitative study on skills and livelihoods), Janjua reported positive outcomes from technical and

vocational skills development (TVSD) in terms of improved employment, poverty reduction, and social and political stability in Pakistan.

TVET and Capacity Building for Postconflict Reconstruction

The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) framework for postconflict governance capacity development, an initiative by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, identified four key areas of consideration in addressing capacity building in postconflict countries. These include (a) physical infrastructure, (b) institutional and organizational revitalization, (c) psychosocial counseling, and (d) building social relationships and trusts (UNDP, 2010). The ultimate product of these capacity building activities of postconflict states, using the TVET approach, is the overall development of the people including their social and economic wellbeing.

The African Union proposed that approach to development through capacity building and skills training must be pursued in the emergency (short-term), transition (medium-term), and development (long-term) phases. The scope of these activities encompasses six indicative elements, namely: security, humanitarian/emergency assistance, political governance and transition, socioeconomic reconstruction and development, human rights, justice and reconciliation, and women and gender (African Union, 2006)

Human Capital Development and Peace-Building and Social Cohesion

Peaceful coexistence is critical to the social and economic development of postconflict nations. Peacebuilding and social cohesion have been suggested as one of the

dividends of TVET engagement as a nation (Maebuta, 2011). Analyzing the root causes of conflict in the Solomon Islands and possible steps to mitigate them, Maebuta (2011) proposed the concept of educating for peace using TVET as the conduit. Given the critical necessity of peace for development of a nation, and the role TVET was perceived to play in resolving postconflict issues like employment and improved livelihood, Maebuta recommended that peace building be included in TVET curriculum to enhance postconflict reforms. The United Nations described peace building as involving a series of measures including strengthening national and individual capacities at conflict management in order to avoid possible relapse (UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee, 2007). Social cohesion thrives when there is peace as people strive to live in harmony despite social and economic differences.

In terms of contributing to national and individual capacity building, therefore, Maebuta (2011) proposed that TVET is a reliable tool for peace education. The logic is that providing employable skills to people will increase their chances for income generation thereby improving their livelihood. When people develop confidence in the political and economic systems in providing opportunities for a more productive livelihood, it positively impacts their level of patriotism and improves their sense of national identity and unity (Maebuta, 2011). Maebuta therefore contended that TVET should pursue a pedagogical structure that embraces the culture of peace and should extend beyond the classroom into the community. TVET should go beyond providing applicable skills and serve as a tool for peace building and social cohesion by

"emphasizing the acquisition of skills, attitudes, understandings, and knowledge relating to peaceful co-existence in turbulent environments" (Maebuta, 2011, p. 158).

Human Capital Development and Civic Participation

A major cause of civic unrest has been the lack of inclusion of people in matters affecting them (Johnson et al., 2007). UNESCO and AU identified civic participation as an indispensable ingredient in postconflict reforms. Community participation involves the process of involving community members in making decisions about issues that affect them. Some of the issues include service planning, policy development, setting priorities, and addressing quality issues in the delivery of services. Civic participation can be achieved through and involved many positive actions that can evoke community input and feedback including developing formal partnerships, inviting public comment through public meetings, forums and documents for consultation; conducting focus groups, surveys, interviews and workshops; forming community councils, advisory and consultative committees; developing networks of consumers, careers and community representatives; and appointing representatives to health and other social services committees (Article 13, 2014).There is a range of ways to involve the community and gain community input and feedback, such as: developing formal partnerships; inviting public comment through public meetings, forums, and documents for consultation; conducting focus groups, surveys, interviews and workshops; forming community councils, advisory and consultative committees; developing networks of consumers, careers, and community representatives; and appointing representatives to health and

other social services. Postconflict countries should thus adopt pedagogical approaches to TVET through curriculum review wherein the importance of inclusion is emphasized as a necessary ingredient in building and sustaining peace, providing the environment for economic and social development of individuals and state (Janjua, 2011; Maebuta, 2011; UNDP, 2010).

Application of the Human Capital Theory

The application of the human capital theory in TVET covers almost every sphere of life and the career area, encompassing educational, medical, business, and technical and engineering professions (Becker, 1964). Several researchers have reported positive implications of the human capital theory on the development and wellbeing of both the individual and the state. Many of these studies, some of which are in the form of labor force survey reports, looked at the comparative advantages of apprenticeship education, vocational education, and level of TVET qualification, in terms of employability and earnings (Bishop& Mane, 2005; Meer, 2007). Analyzing data from the U. S. National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988, Bishop and Mane (2005) reported positive effects on income for those who had participated in vocational studies. Using the same longitudinal survey report, Meer (2005) argued that students in a technical education track are likely to benefit from higher earnings but that the level of earning may vary with specific vocations.

Human capital theory has also been applied in organizing the human resource management of firms and industries as well as training staffs for specific tasks by

perceived poor countries (Aharonovitz 2011). In a study on the rationale for using local technology and trainers, Aharonovits proposed a model where trained workers can supervise and train more workers in firms and industries. Aharonovitz argued that when poor countries use local capacities for human resources development, productivity increases.

The application of the human capital theory especially to the development of education has several implications for states and local people involvement. States have the responsibility to invest financially in the programs and infrastructures of vocational institutions if the benefits as proposed by the human capital theory are to be realized. Such investments lead to expansion of education, stimulation of economic growth, and overall national development. Community people, who are the direct beneficiaries of TVET in the context of this study, have to collaborate with state actors in tangible ways to justify local TVET investments in the wake of competing demands on state resources. Unfortunately, investment in education in postconflict nations has been a serious challenge due to other competing social and developmental needs and the lack of clear policies supported by legislations and lack of adequate funds (Johnson et al, 2007). On the other hand, not to engage in TVET by not investing in education also has negative implications including high youth unemployment, poverty, low economic productivity, poor civic participation and social cohesion, and high crime rate (Janjua, 2011; Maebuta, 2011; Shah, Fazular, & Rahman, 2011).

Trends in Implementation of TVET in Postconflict Countries

Research in TVET in conflict areas had mainly been conducted by the United Nations (specifically UNESCO and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations FAO) and other international organizations like the International Labor Organization (ILO), African Union (AU), and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As facilitating and collaborating partners, the objectives of these international organizations in engaging in TVET in postconflict situations had been to seek means to stabilize conflict areas through postconflict reforms. Consequently, TVET programs supported by these international partners had been in the form of projects, pilot programs, case studies, and conferences. Research approaches, principally in the form of surveys, generally focused on investigation into specific country programs and their current TVET status and activities. Research reports had been in the form of recommendations to organizations commissioning the study. Actions on recommendations from these reports centered mainly in capacitating the TVET sector of the referenced country or organization and the possibility of the transferability and replication of good practices and success stories in similar postconflict situations.

The strategy researchers adopted in these literature reviews consisted of the analysis of key concepts derived from country-specific or program-specific studies for the purpose of identifying common trends and patterns that promote human capital and economic development in postconflict countries that choose to engage in TVET as a tool for recovery. The rationale was that there seemed to be no common or standardized approach to data collection in TVET (Hoeckel, 2008). Since TVET issues were linked to

human capital and economic development, data collection method and methodological approaches to TVET research were based largely on the nature of the economic, human capital, or developmental issues being addressed or the level of destruction and their inherent challenges in the case of postconflict countries (Hoeckel, 2008). Research objectives were more or less focused on recommending roadmaps for implementation. According to Hoeckel (2008) and Johnson et al. (2007), research in TVET continued to be an ongoing activity consistent with changes in the global economies, advances in technology, new skills and competency requirements in the workplace, and the seemingly unending cycle of conflicts around the globe.

Beginning with a brief historical overview of TVET, this section of the literature review cover key concepts in TVET implementation including costs, benefits, challenges, current status, and emerging innovative trends in TVET application.

Historical Overview of TVET in Africa

Technical and vocational education and training had been found to be an important tool of preference to address issues of economic development and provide medium to long-term solutions of livelihood and other social challenges in postconflict countries (Dymock & Billet, 2010;Johnson et al., 2007)). The use of practical skills to meet human survival needs is as old as humankind itself (Dewey, 1964; Friere, 1972). Its roots may lie in other continents besides Africa.

The history of TVET in the New World can be traced to colonial times with the passage of the Old Deluder Satan Act which required colonial masters to teach

apprentices academic and vocational skills. By the end of the U.S. civil war, TVET was extended to African Americans. In 1862, the First Morrill Act was passed granting land to states for the educational benefit of all students regardless of color or class. With the advent of the 20th century and the rise of the manufacturing industries, the focus of TVET in the United States was on meeting labor force skills requirements. To date, improvement in the TVET sector is supported by the U.S. Congress through the passage of several legislations including the Vocational Educational Act of 1963 (Gordon, 1999; Gray & Herr, 1998).

Europe also has a long history of vocational education dating as far back as the middle-ages when painting and arts were the trades of prominence. Technical and vocational education boomed in the mid-1940s with the advent of the industrial revolution. The objective for engaging into TVET by individual European nations was basically the same, that is, to create skilled workers for work in the industries. Their approaches were, however, different and linked to their form of economic system. For example, Great Britain practiced a liberal market model controlled by firms and industries, France practiced a more state-regulated model, while Germany pursued a dual corporate model (Wollschlager& Reuter-Kumpmann, 2004).

In Africa, TVET as an educational discipline gained prominence during the last 5decades. Citing King (1971), McGrath (2011) asserted that the roots of TVET intervention in Africa can be traced to colonialism and the emancipation of slaves in the United States. According to McGrath (2011), a major forerunner in vocational education

as a human development concept was the U. S. philanthropic organization, the Phelps Stokes Fund, established in the year 1911. Phelps Stokes perceived that the provision of industrial skills to Africa was a viable approach for developing African livelihoods to remedy the negative effects of apartheid, colonialism, and slavery. Despite the value of TVET as perceived by early proponents, the advent of newly independent nations in Africa saw a widespread new priority in education with a focus was primarily the expansion of academic education (McGrath, 2011). As a consequence, the debate on the rationale for vocational education subsided during the late 1950s through the 1960s in favor of the expansion of academic education.

The debate resurfaced in the late 1990s, led by the United Nations organizations, specifically UNESCO and the International Labor Organization (ILO) (McGrath, 2011). However, TVET in Africa still failed to take root in the educational priorities of African countries due to the new priorities of international partners (UNESCO, ILO, and FAO) who were the major donors to education. The focus of these major partners was on providing basic education and access. Program targets such as education for all (EFA), universal primary education (UPE), and the millennium development goals (MDGs) placed the debate on TVET in abeyance. Even as late as 1990 when the six targets for the Education for All (EFA) were set at the Jomtien meeting, in which the third target related to the provision of skills, the assessment report 10 years later at the Dakar 2000 meeting failed to include any data on the third target (King, 2011). The new focus on primary education unfortunately had some observed negative effects on secondary and

postsecondary education manifested by increased demands for admission and inadequate qualify staff to service the high entry.

Additionally, youth unemployment became high and visible as employment requirements for firms and industries went beyond mere high school academic education (McGrath, 2011). The advent of the new realities in the global educational outlook, and its relationship to employment and poverty reduction, especially in African countries in conflict situations and in transition, created a new demand for addressing poverty, disease, and livelihood challenges brought about by conflict given the relative ineffectiveness of just a secondary academic education with respect to employability. UNESCO and ILO took the lead in establishing holistic approaches to education wherein TVET became a major component for employment and self-employment (UNESCO, 2007). UNESCO was concerned with improving education to meet both global technological advances and changing industrial demands. The ILO, on the other hand, was concerned with the provision of skills to improve employment opportunities and livelihood (African Economic Outlook, 2013).

Cost of TVET

TVET is critical in human development when development is conceptualized from the socio-economic context of empowering individuals, communities, and industries (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Kenchen, 2011); Johnson et al., 2007; Shah et al., 2011). However, who should pay for TVET has been considered by several researchers (Crook et al). Government, nongovernmental organizations, industry, and the learner are

all possible sources of support for new TVET programs and schools. In an analysis of the status of TVET in Punjab, Pakistan, Shah et al. reported the effectiveness of TVET curriculum in helping learners gain employment and recommended closer collaboration between TVET institutions and industries; taking into account industry skills requirements. In a meta-analysis of 66 studies on the relationships between developing human capital by industries and industries' performance, Crook et al reported higher performance in firms that engaged in staff training in specific skills. They recommended that firms engage in human capital development to improve their productivity. The meta-analysis also found, however, that the cost of training remained a major factor challenging the provision and pursuit of technical and vocational education and training both at the technical institutional and industrial levels.

In a study of the cost and benefits of vocational education and training of OECD countries, Hoeckel (2008) divided costs of TVET into direct and indirect costs. Direct costs included wages for apprentices, salaries for trainers, infrastructure, equipment, and training materials. Indirect costs include government subsidies, dropout costs, and foregone earnings by unskilled workers under apprenticeship. In terms of actual monetary cost, Hoeckel reported that the cost of vocational education and training was substantially higher than academic education as vocational training required more sophisticated laboratories for practical training. For example, in Germany, the dual TVET system costs an average of EUR 10,800 per person trained per year compared to EUR 4,500 for academic tertiary education per person trained per year. In Australia however,

Hoekel clarified indirect costs as on-the-job- trainees accepting lower wages, and employee accommodating mistakes and wastages during training periods. Also, Hoekel contended that indirect costs could include employees' willingness to pay a higher production costs due to lower level of experience of trainee-workers as well as the cost of in-house training. In post-conflict African countries however, although costs seems to fall within the global range, similar to Australia, the United States, and other countries, given the universality of technology (Hoekel, 2008) the actual costs for TVET in post-conflict situations have not been scientifically determined and remain an area for further research as conflict situations vary with countries and regions (UNESCO, 2007). However, I did not find any study on the cost of TVET in post-conflict countries during the literature review. Meanwhile, the inability for most nations to establish and adequately support TVET institutions due to limited finances and lack of clear policies has greatly challenged the attainment of the human capital development objectives of meeting basic livelihood needs, promoting peace and social cohesion, and conserving the environment. Akpan, Antia, Archibomg, and Ahmed's (2010) literature analysis focused on the relevance of TVET to sustainable development of rural African communities in Nigeria, where majority of rural people live below the poverty line and lack access to education. Yet, the authors concluded that the benefit of engaging in TVET far outweighs the cost and barriers as vocational training usually targets critical areas of development and provides opportunities for employment.

In the wake of the costs to the different actors, trainers, trainees, apprentices, industries, a critical question, according to Hoeckel (2008), had thus been 'who pays'? This question is critical in that even though TVET implementation has numerous challenges, not to engage has been found to have many negative implications including high illiteracy and unemployment rates, and poor democratic culture (Almendarez, 2010). Hoeckel proposed a co-financing approach by individuals, the state, and employers. According to Hoeckel, individual contribution to TVET costs could be in the form of tuition and agreeing to accept lower wages while on job training. The state's contribution could be through subsidizing training institutions; while employers' contribution could take the form of training scholarships, on-the-job training, and the risks of paying unskilled workers in anticipation of training them on the job.

Challenges to TVET as a Development Policy Strategy

Wallenborn (2010) reported that the implementation of TVET as a human capital development strategy had several challenges. As a development policy strategy, Wallenborn identified three general constraints to successful TVET implementation: (a) lack of clear, coherent policies; (b) poor quality performance with reference to labor market requirement; and (c) inadequate and ineffective management and training staff. Orkodashvilli (2008) also reported challenges to TVET implementation at the structural and infrastructural levels. Orkodashvilli contended that in implementing TVET as a developmental policy, certain key issues, which have the tendency to negatively impact possible positive outcomes, must be considered. Foremost of these critical issues,

according to Orkodashvilli, is the perception of TVET as a low quality, low status route to vocations for underperforming students. Some of the challenges to TVET implementation, also linked to perception problems, include the tendency to create inequalities due to limited opportunity and access to academic and higher education by the poor, and gender-stereotyping, ascribing particular vocations like sewing, cooking, hairdressing, etc. to females. The perceived inflexibility of skills acquired in a particular vocation not being transferable to other job assignments in the wake of changing labor requirements and the inadequate number of qualified trainers are other challenges in the TVET sector (Orkodashvilli, 2008).

Additionally, Wallenborn (2010) reported the lack of adequate trained instructors and administrators to supervise TVET institutions as a major challenge in developing the sector. Other challenges to TVET implementation include the lack of clear policies, inadequate access, poor infrastructure and facilities, and inadequate and obsolete equipment. There are also issues of inadequate number of trained staff curriculum and method of delivery, and the relationship between TVET and future employers (Wallenborn, 2010).

Innovations in Education through TVET

In a drive to address livelihood, economic empowerment, peace building, and civic participation issues in post-conflict countries, the World Bank, International Labor Organization, and UNESCO championed the debate advocating for TVET as the primary approach. At the UNESCO 2012 Seoul Congress, the general objectives of TVET were

set to include (a) education for all; (b) improve sustainable development; and (c) promote and strengthen lifelong learning through skill training. The Jomtiem Declaration (1990), and the Brahimi Report (2000) emphasized the importance of peace building and the positive role of TVET in the process. These conference reports, amongst others, recommended that United Nations member nations incorporate TVET programs into their education systems for enhanced capacity building, peace, and democracy. As a result, and in line with their individual developmental objectives, many nations and institutions have taken new innovative approaches to human capital development through TVET. For example, according to the Rwanda education sector strategic plan of 2006-2010, the Tumba College of Technology (TCT) was established in 2008 in Rwanda to help address "critical needs for technical and entrepreneurship skilled human resource. TCT's specific objectives were twofold: (a) to produce technicians with hand skills and proper work attitude; and (b) to provide skills that are relevant to industrial and social needs. Ghana's active policy pursuit of TVET was driven by two major concerns: (a) the demand of skills training for the huge number of students that resulted from the education for all policy of the Jomtiem Declaration of 1990 (King, 2011) and (b) the concern of unemployment among Ghanaian youths (Government of Ghana, 2009a). A major step in this direction was the creation of the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), by an Act of the Ghanaian Parliament in 2006. COTVET's terms of reference included formulating national policies on TVET implementation, and producing competitive workforce for national development. Like Ghana, Kenya and

Tanzania designed programs aimed at reducing poverty through skills training. Despite the different program structures, a common strategy observed in the Rwandan, Ghanaian, and Kenyan programs was the integration of vocational training into their secondary school curriculum (Palmer, Wedgwood, Hayman, King, & Thin, 2007). Skills provided in these programs covered agriculture, construction and other middle-level engineering skills like automotive, electricity, machinery, and computer operation.

According to the AU's TVET implementation report of 2012, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi were used in pilot studies by the African Union (AU) for accelerated vocational training programs during their respective periods of recovery from civil conflict. The concept of accelerated vocational training was conceived to bridge the gap created by over-aged youths due to prolonged civil conflicts. The principle was that if youths were provided applicable skills, they would contribute to the reconstruction of post-conflict nations. Skills provided in the pilot programs in the three countries included agriculture, auto repair and maintenance, electricity skills, home economics, welding, tailoring, small business entrepreneurial skills, and information communication technology (ICT) skills (COMEDAF V, 2012).

Success in UN and AU TVET interventions in post-conflict and developing countries can be gauged using several indicators including the number of youths trained, the number of youths employed, and number of self-employed youths. For example, Johnson et al. (2007) reported that of the 11,780 Liberian children and youths demobilized as combatants, 6,028 benefitted from literacy and skills training programs:

48% in formal education, while about 50% joined skills training and apprenticeship programs. Acknowledging the success of the pilot programs, the African Union Commission and the government of India, through the AU-India cooperation agreement, have planned to establish 10 TVET centers in the following Africa countries: Burkina Faso, Gambia, Egypt, Libya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Burundi, Gabon, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

Australia's experience with TVET was more pronounced after the Second World War. Programs such as the Commonwealth Technical Training Scheme (CTTS) and the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) were established to produce qualified skilled Australians in relatively short periods. In furtherance of its human capital development objectives through TVET, Australia organized national initiatives such as “Skills for the Future in 2006, and Workforce Futures in 2009”, to meet the challenges of changing skill requirements brought about by globalization (Dymock & Billett, 2010, p. 469).

As an innovative approach to TVET development, Asian and South Pacific countries in proximity to Australia linked education for sustainability and democratic practices to adult education and skills training. These countries, many in transition from conflicts, include Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Nauru (Lysaght&Kell, 2011). According to Lysaght and Kell, the policy of choice of these mostly post-conflict countries was the holistic improvement of adult education, focusing on the overall educational reform through direct participation of the

major stakeholders. Again, the principle of the holistic approach to adult education, using a pedagogical design that incorporated education for human capital development, was a major post-conflict policy targeting over-aged adult learners and youths who could not pursue their education due to prolonged conflicts. This model provided marketable skills to adult learners and at the same time inculcated a culture of democratic practices critical for post-conflict national stability and social cohesion (Lysaght & Kell, 2011).

Innovations in TVET development also involved the creation of relevant enabling policies and legal framework. Bragg and Russman (2007) reported legislation passed by the United States Congress that facilitated the establishment of collaborative relationships between community colleges and external stakeholder in furtherance of TVET as a vehicle for economic empowerment. The legislations included:

- the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which required beneficiary institutions in the areas of adult education, literacy and vocational education to engage in a one-stop delivery system in order to provide consolidated career and service related programs matching potential employees' skills to employers' needs;
- the Carl D. Perkins Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 requiring beneficiary institutions to develop and implement curriculum that establishes career pathways thereby encouraging and facilitating students' transition into college and entry into career;
- the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) of 1992 proposing the improvement of undergraduate education in Illinois to enable low economic status and minority

students to transfer from 2-year to 4-year colleges and to enhance time-to-degree; and

- the Community College P-16 Accelerated Learning Opportunity grant program which provided for dual-enrollment, high school-to-college transition. Other programs such as High Schools That Work (HSTW), Tech Prep, College and Career Transitions Initiative (CCTI), and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) were all innovations in career and technical education reform in the United States of America.

These projects worked towards integrating academic programs with vocational training as a strategy to improve access and at the same build human capital.

The French experience with TVET focused on addressing higher education graduate employability, where skills-focused universities were created to mitigate dwindling employment opportunities for specialized higher education graduates. The new innovation with TVET had two objectives: (a) to provide skills specific to particular sectors based on firms' requirements, and (b) to create a partnership with firms to ensure immediate employment of students upon graduation. Giret (2011) reported several actions by the French government in this direction, including the creation of new programs, integration of TVET in higher education programs, training of TVET trainers, and establishing partnerships between universities and employers.

The examples above, though few, cover major approaches and innovations in TVET implementation. Even though the strategy for implementation varied based on

country and programs, the objectives of providing skills for livelihood improvement, international economic competitiveness, peace building, and democracy remained central.

Sustainability of TVET Programs

Thus far in this study and based on the literature, I have provided arguments on the role of international organizations and non-governmental organizations in driving the argument on the rationale for TVET, and funding and operating TVET initiatives and programs. The TVET sector however, like many other programs in post-conflict countries, has had many hurdles and issues in its management. A critical sustainability challenge, at the country level, has been local funding of ongoing TVET programs when foreign support to programs ends. Some of the programs associated with TVET sustainability, which international collaborators have supported financially, included maintenance of infrastructure (buildings, trade shops, etc.), staffing, instructional materials, funding, and remuneration (Akinyemi & Bassey, 2012).

The second issue arising in TVET sustainability was community participation. In a study on the role of adult education in building and sustaining democracy in post-conflict communities, Lysaght and Kell (2011) proposed a participatory approach involving local community people at all levels of project planning and implementation over direct foreign investment and control with minimum input from central governments. Johnson et al. (2007) reported that in most countries where non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had intervened in TVET through social change

projects, there was little community participation to continue the project when funding seized at the end of the project cycle. This led administrators to either begin collection of school fees or increase in fees thereby leading to a vicious cycle of affordability versus community benefit. In a UNESCO International Institution for Educational Planning (IIEP) publication on analyses of three separate case study reports on partnership in developing and implementing TVET programs in Hungary, Mauritius, and India, Lannert et al. (1999) emphasized the importance of local participation. While acknowledging the role of foreign partners especially in the area of funding, the studies concluded that local participation, taking into consideration the cultural dispositions of the communities, was critical to the sustainability of programs.

A third issue in TVET sustainability was the lack of clear legal and policy frameworks. Inadequate funding of TVET had been linked to several factors including clear policies backed by legislations, and competing demands on resources by other sectors (Johnson, Phillips& Maclean, 2007). It is critical therefore that these challenges be addressed if post-conflict countries are expected to sustain viable technical and vocational education institutions and programs.

The Future of TVET as a Development Policy

The challenges negatively impacting the successful implementation of TVET in post-conflict countries continue to keep the sector more at the conceptual than application level. Over the past 3 decades, international organizations, including the ILO, UNESCO, FAO, and the AU, had organized many TVET conferences where concept papers,

strategy reports, and plans of action had been delivered and adopted. Considering the general conceptual framework on which these reports were based, and the diverse social, economic, and political experiences of regions and nations, a common recommendation of the reports was that individual states and collaborating organizations domesticate the protocols in line with their own peculiar experience and circumstance. Recognizing the different approaches that countries and institutions pursued based on their national history and experiences, USAID (2011) report on youth development strategies through TVET proposed that best practices in TVET implementation in developing and developed countries have the following basic characteristics:

- must have trained, open, and accountable leadership;
- must be driven by demands;
- must be opened to all;
- skills learned must be portable and transferable;
- must have room for continuous improvement;
- must involve public-private partnership;
- must be financially sustainable;
- program must be replicable; and
- must have measurable social and economic impact.

The process of domestication of these practices as local agendas had been the major challenge, especially at the point of policy-making through legislations. The literature revealed that those successful TVET programs, enumerated earlier, in the

United States, Germany, United Kingdom, and other countries in Asia, Africa, and South America were based on clear policies supported by Acts of the Legislature. In Africa, however, especially in post-conflict countries, very few countries, including Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, have adopted and legislated clear TVET policies and are making progress at implementation (Johnson et al., 2007). UNESCO has made several recommendations on TVET implementation. These UNESCO recommendations which constituted integral parts of national TVET agendas, policies and legislations focused on additional funding, training of trainers, curriculum review to reflect current developmental realities, and collaboration with industries, among others.

Roles of Stakeholders in Fostering TVET in Community Development

As stated earlier, for the purpose of the study, I conceptualized stakeholders as those who were affected by the program or project (community people), those who were charged with the management of the program (government, including education, personnel), and those who benefited from the program (community and country). This study explored the roles rural community people as major stakeholders played in attracting and supporting TVET in their community. The success of such programs involving community people individual and collective welfare, skill training in this instance, therefore, depended on their collective efforts and willingness to perform specific duties and roles.

In the literature that I reviewed however, roles were not specified in the context of community participation in economic and social empowerment in post-conflict situations.

Rather, stakeholders' roles were highlighted under general educational reform programs by states through the process of decentralization and civic inclusion through community participation.

From the analysis of the literature, the concept of community participation seemed to be embedded in education reform through decentralization. According to Sharma (2008) and Winkler and Gershberg (2003), decentralization of education in Africa generally took the form of de-concentration of authorities from central office to regional offices with the central bureaucracy virtually intact. Ginsburg, Megahed, and Elmeski (2010) noted however that for community participation to be successful, educational reform should go beyond mere de-concentration of powers to delegation and, more critically, devolution. According to Ginsburg, Megahed, and Elmeski, devolution would entail complete transfer of power and management of resources from central authority to local administrators wherein local administrators would make decisions without having to seek approval from central authorities.

Winkler and Gershberg (2003) reported many international successes in educational reform with varying forms of community participation, which, according to them, Africa could learn lessons from. They cited the following examples:

- Argentina and Chile decentralized the management of K-12 education to municipal governments through elected parliamentarians, governors, mayors, and/or city councils. Under the decentralization scheme, teachers were transferred from central to municipal payrolls in the case of Argentina. In both countries

however, central authorities however retained the responsibilities for all financial allocations to municipalities;

- Brazil organized school councils at the local level giving them oversight of administrative and quality improvement of local schools. The local councils comprised of parents, teachers, and students. In the case of Armenia, members of schools boards were elected by teachers and parents. The board is responsible for maintenance of school infrastructure. In both Brazil and Armenia however, the central authorities retained financial oversight of these local school bodies; and
- New Zealand has almost completed decentralization of schools. Local school boards, comprised of parents only have been devolved the responsibilities of teacher recruitment, administrative and instructional evaluation, and sourcing funding outside of tuition. Like other instances cited, major financing of local schools continue to rest with central authorities.

While these reports on educational reform through decentralization, delegation, and devolution hold important lessons on local inclusion of community people in local productive activities, they gravitate more towards government-driven programs as opposed to community initiatives to support their TVET needs and livelihoods which was the general focus of this study.

In a report on the rationale for involving stakeholders in TVET implementation in three countries in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, Lannert et al, in a 1999 UNESCO publication conceptualized partnership at the system level, institutional level, and

cooperation between the school and potential employers. There was little reference to possible roles of community people either at the formative or operational stages of the programs. Stakeholders' involvement in TVET programs usually took the form of partnership at the government and management levels. The lack of tangible and clear role of community people might be one of the reasons for the poor sustainability record of internationally funded TVET initiatives.

Summary and Conclusion

Post-conflict countries transitioning from conflict to development are predominately preoccupied with restoring lasting peace, economic development, and unity. This chapter began with the analysis of the human capital theory that grounded the conceptual framework. The human capital theory was then related to the rationale of engaging in TVET as a tool for providing marketable skills to individuals for increased employment potential; promoting civic participation and social cohesion; and improving democratic culture and general economic development of the individual and country. The chapter also provided a brief review of some historical highlights of TVET and the rationale that drove its establishment in different parts of the world. Further, the benefits to individuals, society and countries from the human development and economic development perspectives as well as the challenges in TVET administration were discussed. These concepts discussed supported the rationale for the pursuing of TVET as a human capital development tool. The chapter also considered the benefits of TVET in post-conflict reconstruction in terms of employability, youth empowerment, rural

community sustainable development, peace building, civic participation, and social stability. The potentially negative impact post-conflict countries stood to incur for not engaging in TVET was also discussed. Policy approaches by national, regional, and international institutions at restoring countries disrupted by conflicts using TVET strategies and innovations of individual countries and institution in driving human capital agenda through TVET were also reviewed. The chapter also contained excerpts of the conceptual framework of the study and how it aligned with the findings of previous researchers on the topic.

The literature analysis reviewed research on TVET and its relationship to human capital development concepts of costs, benefits, management, civic participation, social cohesion, sustainable development, policies and legislations, innovations, and countries, regional and national collaboration in TVET implementation. Unfortunately, I did not find any research was on the role community people could play for viable TVET program in their areas in post-conflict situations. Efforts at sustainability of ongoing programs and projects in post-conflict countries seemed to be a major challenge in the absence of participation of community people who are the direct beneficiaries of skill training. The successful conduct of this study has contributed in clarifying the current status of TVET in Liberia and the roles of the stakeholders including community people. The study provided recommendations from the analyzed data that will inform the education policy direction of other nations, especially those coming out of conflict.

In chapter 3, I provide a detailed description of the research design including the traditional inquiry approach, study population and sample, sample size, type of sampling methods and criteria for selection, data collection and management procedures, data analysis procedures, the role of the researcher, and quality. The chapter concluded with issues of ethics and protection of participants, the data analysis and interpretation plan, and the tools and procedures used.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to seek an understanding of the roles rural community people and education administrators played in influencing government policy for TVET in Liberia. In Chapter 3, I give a detailed description of the research design including the qualitative method of inquiry selected for the study, the study population and sample, sample size, type of sampling methods, and criteria for selection. I also describe the different data collection and management procedures, data analysis procedures, the role of the researcher, issues of quality, and protection of participants.

Design of the Study

The study explored the following research questions:

RQ1: What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) development and the best interest of the community population?

RQ2: What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community?

RQ3: What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

The study was intended to address gaps on possible benefits postconflict African countries could accrue in actively involving community people in building their economic and social capacities through TVET.

A further rationale for the study was that successful engagement in skills training may lead to improved livelihood, employability, and active civic participation, all of which can contribute to social stabilization of a postconflict country. Against this background, I explored understanding into how a rural community influenced TVET policies in the wake of competing needs in other sectors of development and the limited finances resulting from social conflict. The central goal of the study was to derive understanding of the perspectives of rural dwellers on the role they played in building their social and human capital through skills training.

The Qualitative Framework

I used the qualitative method of inquiry for the study. In a qualitative method, researchers observe and study phenomenon and people in their natural settings and attempt to interpret and ascribe meanings to occurrences. The qualitative method of inquiry was best suited to explore the perceptions of community people on their understanding of their roles in lifting themselves from poverty and hardships in their postconflict settings through TVET for improved employability and livelihood. The qualitative method explores understanding of phenomena that occur in their natural settings, how people are affected by the phenomena, how and why people respond the

way they do, and how both the phenomena and their responses (or lack of) shape their future behavior (Merriam, 2009).

The Case Study Approach

Creswell (2007) reported five approaches to qualitative inquiry and analysis, including narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and the case study. I selected the case study method because it involved the detailed exploration of the community, as the case, in a bounded system over time (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). Merriam (2009) described the case study as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. The case study method was particularistic for my study in the sense that it focused on a "particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon" (p. 29). It was descriptive because my analysis of data took the form of in-depth descriptions of the community people's perspectives of the TVET phenomenon under study. The case study method being heuristic, it informed strategies for application as well as provided insight into alternative perspectives on the significance of engaging in TVET in lifting the livelihood of community people. Additionally, the case study approach was best suited for the study because it entailed collection of rich data, drawn from people's experiences (Yin, 2013). Using the case study, I analyzed the data collected to derive answers to the research questions and, at the same time, explored possible alternative interpretations and meanings for the experiences of community people living in postconflict situations in Liberia and stances they took to improve their livelihoods and other social issues associated with postconflict situations using TVET.

Other Qualitative Research Approaches Considered

The next best approach I considered for the study was the phenomenological research approach. Phenomenology involves describing the experiences of individuals or groups of individuals as they observe or live through a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological researcher seeks to understand how the world appears to others and how they, as a group interpret their experiences, and understanding of situations. The phenomenological approach would have been thus justified for this study because, in context, community people, both individually and as a unit, tend to experience similar phenomena brought about by conflict and may adapt collective approaches in understanding them. However, there were more stakeholders in the study than could be addressed in the scope of the phenomenological approach to research and the context of the setting was too important to neglect. Case study research allows attention to the context, as well as well as the individuals' lived experiences.

The other qualitative approaches, including the narrative, grounded theory, and ethnographic approaches, were not found to be suitable for the study because of the focus of these approaches. The narrative approach is used when the study focuses on the biography, autobiography, or life history of individuals. Such design is feasible if individuals are willing to tell their stories or when there is willingness, and perhaps an imperative, to report personal experiences in a particular setting.

The grounded theory approach was also not suitable for this study. Grounded theory seeks to generate theory through data collection and observation (Glaser and

Strauss, 1967). The principle is that there is an emergent theory that the grounded theory approach seeks to clarify. The purpose of this study was not to generate a theory that could be generalized, as there were already existing theories on human capital development. Instead, the purpose of the study was to understand what stakeholders perceived their roles could be in attracting TVET facilities to their community. Further, and based on available research done in other postconflict countries, the study explored how stakeholders in Liberia could to utilize technical and vocational skills for their social and human developmental benefits.

Finally, the ethnographic approach to qualitative design was not appropriate given the stated purpose of the study. Wolcott (1994b) reported that in an ethnographic study the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group. Unlike the case study, ethnographic studies focus on groups sharing the same ethnic, philosophical, or geographical location. The focus of ethnographic research therefore is to explore these shared patterns, while this study only sought understanding of a phenomenon of a specific unit of analysis (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013)

Role of the Researcher

A major characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The researcher may play an insider role as a participant–observer, or an outsider role chiefly as an observer, or alternate between both during the course of the study. The qualitative

researcher may use observations, interviews, focus groups, documents, and images to gather data. The researcher is responsive to the dispositions of the participant and the data collected, and sensitive to nonverbal situations that are not apparent to the quantitative researcher. Additionally, the qualitative researcher has a high degree of flexibility and latitude to respond immediately to adverse field conditions that might have the propensity to negatively impact the study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013).

My role in this study encompassed all of the requirements and expectations of the qualitative researcher. I physically went into the field to collect data. I spent adequate time in the field interacting with participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) cautioned qualitative researchers to be conscious of the bond that might develop between the researcher and participants and the way it might influence the study. As an insider, I brought into the study experiences gained as a staff of another TVET institution, as well as possible influence I had as a member of the House of Representatives. As an outsider, I had no relationship whatsoever with the case under study. The president of the community college was once a workmate of mine at another university but our interaction in this study was purely professional. In fact, the respondent from the college was someone who was directly in charge of TVET at the institution.

I was less of an insider. I limited my participatory role in the field so as not to unduly influence the responses of participants during the data collection process. I was more of an outsider; observing participants' nonverbal language, asking questions, probing, and analyzing. In order to conduct a good case study, the researcher must be

knowledgeable in the procedures and techniques of research work (Creswell, 2007, Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). I used experiences gained during previous work in education and social work to guide my activities in the study. I was constantly aware of Patton's (2002) and Creswell's (2007) caution that the researcher's knowledge, which may be perceived as superior knowledge, could be a source of researcher's bias and threat to validity. Maxwell (2013) reported two specific threats to validity: bias and reactivity. The researcher's bias is the tendency for researchers to manipulate data to conform to their conception, beliefs and assumptions of the phenomenon being investigated. Reactivity is the researcher's domineering influence on the setting and participants due to prior engagement with the setting, participant, or the phenomenon. Researcher's bias and reactivity pose threats to validity. In order to minimize these possible threats, I approached the study with an open mind. I was mindful not to allow my insider information as a legislator and field experiences as an educator and social worker to influence the collection and interpretation of data. As stated earlier, my role as a researcher was more of an outsider using questions, probes, note-taking, analysis, and interpretation. From time to time, and when necessary, I shifted to the insider role, engaging in discussion of the issues with the informants, providing prompts, adjusting research questions where necessary, and readjusting procedures as and when necessary in order to further focus the study.

Methodology

This section contains the kinds of data and data collection methods, a description of the data sources, including a description of the participants who are the key informants and the sample and type of sampling methods. It concludes with the data analysis and interpretation plan and the tools and procedures employed.

Data Collection Plan

I collected data for the study using interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. I collected data over a short period from multiple sources. For continuous comparison of data, I used extensive triangulation of data collection sources. According to Yin (2013), data triangulation in case study research provides the latitude for the researcher to cross-check both data types and sources to increase credibility.

Sampling Procedure and Strategy

I used purposeful sampling strategy for this study. Variations of purposeful sampling used included snowballing, maximum variation, and convenience sampling (Merriam, 2009). Using purposeful sampling method and three of its variations, I selected participants who had been engaged in education issues generally, TVET issues specifically, as well as persons having lived experience of the effects of conflict in the context of striving to improve livelihood through skills training. I used maximum variation, convenience, and snowballing in selecting participants who demonstrated different perspectives of the same issue under study (Patton, 2002).Such heterogeneity of participants aligned with the case under analysis focusing on providers and beneficiaries

of TVET. Knowledge, engagement, and lived experience were the major criteria for selection of participants. In addition to knowledge and lived experiences in conflict situations, other criteria I employed for selection of participants included living in settings under postconflict circumstances, students or graduates of TVET institutions living in or originating from the bounded case, and national and regional education and TVET administrators and policy personnel.

Sample Size

A sample of 14 participants for interviews and focus group were responsive from a targeted sample size of 18.The sample provided sufficient information-rich data that reached data saturation. The purposeful selection of participants, as key stakeholders, was based on the criteria listed above. Participants included students, PTA, education workers, administrative heads, and elders or chiefs who are informal local community heads. Participants for interview were selected by direct purposeful sampling while those for the focus group involved some degree of snowballing.

The heads of the TVET division at the Ministry of Education and local TVET institutions met the criteria for participation by virtue of their professional background and current engagement with TVET and education administration in the country. This justification for selection was also true for the County Education Officer. The focus group comprised mainly PTA members, youth representatives, women group representatives, and elders or chiefs who are community people directly affected by

postconflict situations and endeavoring to find relief through TVET. A summary of proposed participants is specified in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Interview Participants

	Category of Participants	Proposed # of Participants
1	Heads of the Division of Technical and Vocational Education at the Ministry of Education	1
2	Heads of the Division of Technical and Vocational Education at the Ministry of Youth and Sports	1
3	Heads of local technical/vocational institutions	1
4	County Education Officer	1
5	Students/graduates trained in TVET (identified through key informant from heads of local TVET institutions)	2
6	International non-governmental organization (INGO) partners (identified through key informants from MOE)	1
7	County superintendent	1
	Total	8

Table 2

Focus Group Participants

	Category of Participants	Proposed # of Participants
1	PTA	4
2	Youths Group Representatives	2
3	Women Group Representatives	2
4	Elders/Chiefs	2
Total		10

Instrumentation

I used self-developed protocols and questions for the interview and focus group for the study (see Appendix A and B). These instruments were used to explore participants' understanding of the roles local community stakeholders could play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community; community people's perceptions of skills training and the best interest of the community; and community stakeholders' perception of the nature and level of government support for their local training needs. Aided by continuous triangulation, I modified probes and follow-up questions during the interviews and focus group discussion to generate information-rich data.

I took several steps to ensure validity of the study instrument. For example, I ensured that the interview and focus group questions were based on the setting and lived experiences of the case and that the interview questions fell within the experiences of the participants. I employed the maximum variation strategy of purposeful sampling method to ensure that the different perspectives and themes covered in the research questions were included. I shared the interview questions with research instructors and two professionals in the field of education in the country, Liberia, in order to build consensus that the questions reflected the objective of the study thereby helping to establish validity of the instrument

I**nterviews.** Most interviews in the study were conducted face-to-face and afforded me the opportunity to observe and capture nonverbal reactions of the

participants. In two cases, participants were unable to sit face-to-face interviews. The interviews were scheduled and held by cell phones with an audio recording application.

F**ocus group.** The focus group consisted of 8 of the 10 participants targeted. The main objective of the discussion was to determine the level of consensus community people had on their role in local TVET creation and administration. I explored detailed in-depth information on issues general to educational activities of the community and skills training specifically. I personally audio-recorded the interview sessions and focus group discussions and transcribed the responses.

Documents: I also used document analysis in addition to interview and focus group to collect data. I reviewed several publically available documents on technical education, identified relevant themes, and triangulated these themes with responses from the interviews and focus group discussion in order to gain further understanding of the roles of community people, and policy direction of government in developing the TVET sector in the country. Other documents which I also analyzed, including Annual Reports of government ministries and TVET institutions, provided clarity on the challenges and level of success of government in meeting TVET mission and goals.

Data Management and Analysis

In managing and analyzing data, I sought to achieve credibility and transferability of findings. I used constant comparison as the major data analysis technique for the study. By comparing and triangulating data kinds and sources, I identified emerging themes that helped me clarified the research questions. I also analyzed publically available documents

from the ministries of education, youth and sports, commission on higher education, and few TVET institutions to confirm or disconfirm participants' responses and enhance understanding of the history, policy, legislations, investments, and programs of TVET in Liberia.

I used the following sequences recommended by Creswell (2007) in managing and analyzing all of the data collected: (a) I prepared and organized the data using texts and images; (b) reduced the data into themes and sub-themes through coding; (c) condensed the codes into overarching themes or concepts; and (d) represented the data in the form of figures, tables, and discussions (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). These steps are further elaborated below.

The first phase of data management followed immediately after I collected the data in the field. I then prepared and organized the data first with the aid of field notes and memos created immediately after the interviews, and focus group discussions when the exercise was still fresh in my mind. I concluded the first phase of data management and analysis by transcribing participants' responses.

During the second phase, I reduced the data through emerging codes under each of the three research questions. The codes were then organized into themes, labeled, and placed into files and folders for easy retrieval for analysis.

In the third phase, I interpreted, described, and classified the codes and condensed the many themes into overarching themes and concepts.

During all of the three phases of data management and analysis, I triangulated themes generated from document analysis with themes from interviews and focus group in order to confirm or disconfirm participants' responses. The results are presented in chapter 4 using tables, figures, and texts.

Discrepant Data

Throughout the interview, focus group and document analysis, I looked out to identify discrepant data or negative cases that may not directly relate to the assumptions guiding the study or those that seem to contradict the findings or seem to be at variance with the general trend of the data. Such discrepant cases could also provide insight into other perspectives of the same research problem that might not have been obvious at the beginning of the study. However, I did not find any data discrepant enough to have altered the findings or present an alternative explanation for responses. There was one participant however who made reference to failed attempts made by government officials to establish TVET in the case setting. But this data had little impact on the study outcomes as the focus was on the roles community people played in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Quality and trustworthiness are critical ingredients of every research. They render the results plausible and thus acceptable to research community and peers. Threats to quality and trustworthiness may derive from many sources including researcher's subjective and reflective biases, poor sampling, and inappropriate data collection method

and instrument. Other threats to quality may also surface in the form of new unexpected trends and themes that may emerge and have the tendency to alter the original course of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) observed that establishing quality and trustworthiness of a qualitative study should take four cardinal principles into consideration: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility of a study speaks to whether the findings are plausible or represent the logical outcome based on the study objectives. Transferability, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) speaks to generalizability of the findings. Creswell (2011) posited that it is difficult to generalize findings of case study research because of the atypical nature of cases. However, findings could be transferable to different context if the researcher provides rich detailed description of the research site, participants, and procedure of selecting participants. Transferability can also be assured if the research findings are presented in rich details to provide readers room for evaluation. Dependability of a qualitative research refers to the consistency of the research methods and procedures. These include the administration of the research instrument uniformly across participants, the management of researcher's bias and behavior on the research site, and the level of convergence of data from different data sources. Finally, confirmability relates to the objectivity of the researcher; whether the findings and conclusions were based on the process and conditions of the study, rather than the researcher (Lincoln &Guba, 1985).

I took several steps to address issues of trustworthiness of the study. I used multiple data collection methods and sources to ensure consistency of findings. I was

meticulous at selecting participants being careful that they met the criteria for participation in the study. I spent adequate period in the field and collect information-rich data. I conducted member checking and engaged in data triangulation throughout the data collection process to verify responses. I reported my findings in detailed narratives and easily understood tables.

Ethical Procedures and Protection of Participants

During the conduct of the research, I observed all applicable ethical standards relating to the use of humans in research consistent with IRB standards under IRB approval number 05-30-14-0155183. I made full disclosure to the participants, in writing, on the intent, objective, and conduct of the study to both the interview participants and the focus group participants (See Appendix G and H for informed consent forms). From conversation feedback while soliciting participants consent, I ensured that they understood the contents of the informed consent forms they signed. I assured participants of their privacy and confidentiality of their participation where necessary. I apprised participants of the form and manner in which the data collection instrument would be implemented. Even though I assured participants that there could be possible stress and/or discomfort associated with the study, I did not observe, neither was any hazardous situation reported to me during the collection of data; nor did any participant report any bridge in confidentiality.

Summary

The qualitative descriptive case study method of inquiry was used for the study. Using several data collection methods including interview, focus group and document analysis, I explored the perspectives of community people on how engaging in TVET can contribute to improved employment opportunities and livelihood in a post-conflict situation in Liberia.

Chapter 3 gave a detailed description of the research design followed including the traditional inquiry approach, study population and sample, sample size, type of sampling methods and criteria for selection, data collection and management procedures, data analysis procedures, the role of the researcher, and issues of quality and trustworthiness. The chapter concluded with the management of data, data analysis and interpretation plan, tools and procedures used for data collection and analysis, and issues of ethics and protection of participants. Findings are presented in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 contains a restatement of the purpose of the study and the research questions and a detailed description of activities undertaken in the conduct of the study. These details include procedures in the collection, analysis, and presentation of data. The chapter also describes the case setting and participants' demographics. I also discuss the implementation of trustworthiness standards as enumerated in Chapter 3 in this chapter. The chapter concludes with the presentation of findings in line with the research questions.

The results are organized by themes developed from coding of responses to the interview questions and analysis of documents. I collected data from interviews, focus group discussion with participants and analysis of publically available documents relevant to the study. I analyzed the data with the constant comparison method and triangulated the data based on themes generated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand the perspectives of rural community stakeholders on the roles they played in influencing the government's policy priority for TVET as a possible local human and economic development strategy in Liberia as a postconflict developing country. The central phenomenon of the study was the understanding of stakeholders' perception on the importance of TVET to their economic

development as well as what guided them in advocating for and contributing to the provision of a skills training facility in their local community.

Research Questions

The study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) development and the best interest of the community population?

RQ2: What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community?

RQ3: What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

Study Setting and Participants' Demographics

The study generally proceeded as planned with reference to participants and justification for their inclusion in the study. No significant or adverse situation occurred that had significant impact on the interpretation of the results. Participants who responded with enthusiasm during the interviews and focus group showed no significant sign of withdrawal during data collection.

As indicated in Chapter 3, the 14 study participants comprised two groups: individuals whom I interviewed and participants in a focus group (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

Interview Participants

Participants	Proposed # of Participants	Actual #
Heads of the Division of Technical and Vocational Education at the Ministry of Education	1	1
Heads of the Division of Technical and Vocational Education at the Ministry of Youth and Sports	1	1
Heads of local technical/vocational institutions	1	1
County Education Officer	1	1
Students/graduates trained in TVET (identified through key informant from heads of local TVET institutions)	2	2
International non-governmental organization (INGO) partners (identified through key informants from MOE)	1	-
County superintendent	1	-
Total	8	6

Table 4

Focus Group Participants

Participants	Proposed # of Participants	Actual
PTA	4	2
Youths Group Representatives	2	2
Women Group Representatives	2	2
Elders/Chiefs	2	2
	10	8

As indicated in Chapter 3, study participants demonstrated the criteria for inclusion: (a) knowledge of TVET sector in Liberia, (b) knowledge of history of GBCC, and (c) lived experience of educational system in postconflict settings. The focus group participants were community people directly involved with and affected by postconflict situations and endeavoring to find relief through TVET. They also demonstrated justification for their inclusion in the study by the depth of information provided during the interviews and focus group discussion. In order to ensure confidentiality, I substituted participants' names with pseudonyms (see Table 5).

Table 5

Table of Participants and Codes

	Participants	Number	Gender	Pseudonyms
1	National Government Officials	2	male	Boss; Chief
2	Local Government Officials	2	male	Peter; Paul
3	Community People	2	male	James; John
4	Focus Group	8	3 females 5 males	Jane; Mary; Martha Tom; Dick; Harry Bob; and Bill

Data Collection

I used three data collection methods for the study: interviews, focus group discussion, and document retrieval. I conducted the study on a single case: Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC). With the aid of prepared forms and an audio recorder, I collected initial interviews and focus group data at the case site, Grand Bassa County. I conducted the first four interviews over a 2-day period with each session averaging 1 hour. Due to the Ebola viral disease (EVD) that plagued my country during the data collection period, two of these interviewees, Chief and Boss, informed me that they were indisposed for a face-to-face interview. They, however, consented to 30 minute telephone interviews.

I conducted the focus group discussion on the third day, and it lasted about 70 minutes. All were audio recorded. Using prepared forms, I took side notes where necessary for future reminders during analysis.

During the interviews, the heads of MOE and MYS agreed to and subsequently provided relevant publically available documents on TVET policy and administration in Liberia. They provided some documents in hard copy and e-mailed others to me. Also, as a member of the House of Representatives, I already had in my possession publically-available documents relevant to the study, including legislation on TVET and annual reports of MOE and MYS. I triangulated and analyzed these documents with interview and focus group data to identify similar emerging themes.

Documents collected and analyzed included:

- National TVET Policy of Liberia (February, 2014);
- Capacity Development for TVET Sector in Liberia;
- Brief history of Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC);
- Records, minutes, reports, and speeches related to GBCC/TVET activities;
- Legislation creating local GBCC;
- Annual reports of Ministry of Education;
- Annual reports of the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
- National budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education for TVET (2012-2014); and
- National budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Youth and Sports for TVET (2012-2014).

During the interview and focus group sessions, I reminded participants of the member checking aspect as contained in the informed consent form and inquired if they would be willing to peruse the transcriptions of their individual responses and my interpretation. All of the participants consented willingness to peruse the transcripts. After completion of the interviews and focus group, I began transcribing and organizing the data.

Member Checking and Member Validation

After the transcription and interpretation of the data, I traveled back to the case site and engaged participants in member checking. I was able to meet four of the six participants interviewed and four of the eight members of the focus group. Few

clarifications were made but the participants generally agreed with the transcriptions and interpretations of their responses. As earlier indicated, the copybook in which I transcribed the responses, and my notes are being kept in my combination safe. I will destroy them after 5 years.

Data Analysis

The data analysis strategy I employed for the study followed procedures for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Creswell (2007)and Merriam (2009). Creswell summarized qualitative data management and analysis into the following four sequences: (a) preparing and organizing the data; (b) reducing the data into themes and subthemes through coding; (c) condensing the codes into overarching themes or concepts; and (d) representing the data in the form of figures, tables, or discussions (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). Merriam proposed the constant comparison method of data analysis to identify common themes from different data sources and data collection methods for the purpose of consolidating them into fewer overarching themes to elucidate the research questions. Both Creswell and Merriam emphasized reducing number of themes and so I found the two methods compatible to address the research questions.

I began the first phase of data analysis at the onset of data collection. According to Merriam (2009), “qualitative research is not a linear step-by-step process” (p. 151).Data collection and analysis are simultaneous and occur throughout the execution of the study. As such, during the first stage, while conducting interviews supported by face-to-face interactions, and document analysis, I began jotting down critical recurring

responses and trends that I triangulated with successive interview responses and subjected them to constant comparison in developing themes and trends. I also analyzed documents collected and, using triangulation and constant comparison, compared emerging themes in the documents with themes that emerged from interview data.

The second and third phases of the analysis process involved reducing data into themes through the coding I had begun earlier. I reviewed and analyzed these themes into overarching results that clarified each of the three research questions.

In the results section, I capture the fourth and final phase of the data analysis process and discuss the thematic findings organized under each research question.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Quality and trustworthiness are critical ingredients of every research project. They render the results plausible and thus acceptable to research community and peers. They speak to the general believability of the findings and conclusions by readers. The issue of research quality thus sits at the core of qualitative studies. Threats to quality and trustworthiness may derive from many sources including the researcher's subjective and reflective biases, poor sampling, and inappropriate data collection method and instruments. In ensuring the trustworthiness and quality of the study, my major focus was to ensure that the findings and conclusions would align with the methodology. I therefore took care in selecting participants and following the data collection plan. I constantly reminded myself that threats to quality and trustworthiness could derive from several sources including selection of participants, data collection methods, data collection tools,

and researcher's bias, and the actual data collection process. I therefore applied four principles for qualitative research quality and trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln &Guba, 1985). I sought to minimize potential threats to quality by ensuring that participants were selected based on criteria set; and that the interview and focus group tools were applied consistently with each interview. During the interview process, no significant deviation from the participant and instrumentation plan adversely affected the research outcome. In minimizing my bias, I reminded each participant of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could refrain from responding to any question as they wished or they could even withdraw from the study. I did continuous triangulation of participants' responses and document contents, refining the interview questions with each successive interview. I made the transcriptions almost verbatim; and I made side notes on consistent responses to interview questions from different participants. These consistent responses were evidence of trustworthiness of data sources and instruments. I found the side notes useful during coding. I conducted member checking at two levels: first, after transcription to ensure that participants' responses were transcribed accurately, and secondly, at the point of interpretation to ensure that participants' responses were understood and interpreted accurately by me.

Results

I have presented the findings of the study according to themes generated from analysis of the interviews, focus group, and documents (see Table 5 for summary of

results). The three questions to which almost all of the participants were most enthusiastic to respond to related to participants' experience of community motivation for establishing the GBCC; the role community people played in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College; and the nature and level of community and government support to the community college.

During the interviews and focus group, I recognized a sequence in participants' initial responses that deviated from the order of the research questions as planned. After I gave an introduction of the subject of the interview and focus group and an overview of the research questions, I observed that participants opted to discuss issues related to the question I presented second. I therefore adjusted my probes accordingly and reordered the questions during subsequent interviews.

Findings Related to Research Question 1: Stakeholders' Perception Of The Relationship Of TVET Development and the Best Interest of the Community

Participants' perceived that there was a positive relationship between TVET development and the best interest of the community population. While the data originally suggested six themes (see Table 5), I was able to condense those themes into three:

- increasing human capital;
- restoring self-esteem; and
- civic participation and peace-building.

I will develop each of these three themes, drawing on the words of the participants and the documents.

Table 6
Summary of Findings

	Research Questions	Data Collection Focus	General Themes generated	Summary of Thematic Areas
RQ1	What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of TVET development and the best interest of the community population?	Community motivation for establishing the GBCC	Improved Employability Improved Livelihood Break from the cycle of Poverty Restoration of Dignity Limited Access Affordability	1. Increased Human Capital 2. Restoring Self Esteem 3. Civic Participation, Social Cohesion and Peace building
RQ2	What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for (Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)) in their community?	participants' experience of the role community people in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College	Proactive Initiative Engagement of Authorities Collaboration (with local firms and industries) Persistence/Commitment (mass action, continuous engagement) Leadership (organized and orderly) Contribution (time, energy, resources)	1. Leadership 2. Advocacy 3. Ownership
RQ3	What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?	the nature and level of community support to the community college	Contribution Government budget Partnership Advocacy Volunteerism Financial aid Job Training	1. Community Volunteerism 2. Community/Industries Collaboration

Increasing human capital. The need to increase human capital motivated the community people to establish a community college in their area. Participants were unanimous in citing the importance of breaking the cycle of poverty by reducing unemployment and illiteracy as reasons for opting for skills training which they referred to as 'marketable'. For example, Peter said that "one objective of prioritizing technical

education was for poverty reduction". James added that the community needed the community college in Grand Bassa County because "the illiteracy rate in our county is very high. So to have equipped [human resource] we thought that having a community college that focused on technical and vocational education would be a plus". Participants also spoke of the high illiteracy rate among their parents. They attributed poverty to illiteracy and vowed to combat poverty through skill training.

I found participants' concept of the community college objective to be dual-tracked: providing skills to students for employability and providing trained students with competencies they would develop during the academic component of the program so they could pursue further education while employed. Peter, a local TVET worker at the GBCC put it like this:

> We are doing academic education as well but our priority is TVE for employability and continuing education. If you get an AA degree from the community college and want to be employed you are employed. If you are working you can continue your studies. That is our primary focus. We want to reduce poverty in the land and technical and vocational education is the best.

Participants gave other reasons for why they made the fight against poverty a priority, and why they thought skill training was the best approach. John said that "employment was becoming an impediment for the young people because when you apply for a job, they will ask for special skills and years of experience". Paul gave an example of the importance of a community college: "today, as a graduate (of the

community college), I am reliable now…making a good salary of US$500 (monthly) and above"

There was general consensus in the focus group that the development of human capital motivated them to want a community college in their area. One of the focus group members summarized it thus when asked: "how is skill training important?"

> Skill training is very important we need people to do skill training. Other people want to improve their lives and this can only be done if you have learned other things like electricity and some other skill people will be able to find little jobs for themselves. But this can only be done when you have the school here. Even high school graduates, if they do skills training they can be able to find little jobs[sic] .

Another participant added "… the importance of skill training is that you know how to do something (work/self-employed) with your hands and make money without being indebted financially".

Restoring self-esteem. A second motivation for establishing a community college in their area was restoring their self-esteem. Participants felt that local community members had low self-esteem because they were poor and could not cater to their family's basic survival needs. They spoke of the reality of the post conflict setting where parents are unable to cater to their family, tending to lose respect in the society especially in a communal setting. This could lead to family breakdown. I sensed it from the facial expression and resignation in the voice of one of the elderly participants when he averred that: "our young adults are married and have to take care of their wives". Several other

statements alluded to the opportunities offered by a local community college as helping community members to regain lost dignity as adults and citizens. One said "The Bassa people were doing menial jobs…if they (Bassa people) do not fit in their class (so-called elites), they think you are nobody". Another said "Bassa has the second largest seaport in the county and their lives were not being improved even with all the companies".

Civic participation and peace building. Increasing their participation in making decisions on matters affecting them, and contributing to peace building were other motives of community people acting to empower themselves through skill training. Throughout the interview and focus group, participants contextualized their responses from a post-conflict dimension. They made allusions to their parents being deprived of 'the good life' and feared such deprivation being repeated during their lifetime. Participants said that their parents were poor and that the youths would endeavor to 'break the cycle of poverty'. Participants attributed poverty, illiteracy, and the class system as major reasons for the 13-year civil conflict in the country. Several talked of the civil war, particularly the way it interfered with the young generation's development. James said:

> we never had the opportunity to go to school these war years and to fit the need for experience (required by companies for employment). And for us to jumpstart the process, we chose a technical and vocational institution that would train our young people to empower them to do away with unemployment.

Participants believed that they had to be proactive in matters concerning their wellbeing and destiny. James explained that the youths "decided holistically as a group [to] petition the Legislative Caucus and the county authorities [to solve] the major problem young people were facing (lack of skill training)".

Community people insisted that they should be a part of the decision-making process when it came to their skill training needs. While the county authorities argued that primary education should be the county priority, the community people countered that vocational and technical education was more appropriate, coming out of war, as it addressed several post-war issues including employment, capacity building, livelihood improvement, and sense of belonging and achievement. Chief said that the youths and community people "fought hard and did all they could to ensure that it (the Act to establish the GBCC) passed through the Legislature." The need to have their voices heard added impetus to their resolve to be involved in decision-making through their collective efforts. All of the participants felt that the achievement of their objective, establishing a community college, had been possible through unity. They spoke of how they had insisted on being heard: "…we printed placards with inscriptions that the community college was belated…" was how John put it. Boss, a local government educational officer remembered: "it was based on this need (for skill training) that the common people advocated strongly with the county authority and national government for help."

Findings Based On Research Question 2: Stakeholders' Role in Attracting, Shaping, and Implementing Government Policies for TVET in Their Community

Participants identified several functions which community stakeholders could perform in prioritizing TVET in their local community in Liberia while recovering from the war. As outlined in Table 5, these functions, which participants described in different forms, included:

- being proactive;
- taking initiatives;
- engaging local and national authorities;
- collaborating with firms and industries in the community;
- demonstrating persistence and commitment; and
- contributing time, energy, and resources.

I reviewed participants' responses and reduced these functions into the following three major themes representing roles community people played in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community:

- leadership;
- advocacy; and
- ownership.

I have developed these themes according to participants' responses and document review.

Leadership. All of the participants in the study alluded to leadership as a critical function of community stakeholders in prioritizing their welfare especially in postconflict situations where resources are scarce and there are competing needs for national

government's support among communities. Participants perceived leadership from the contexts of organization, unity, assertiveness, and proactiveness. Describing their experiences from a postconflict perspective, participants believed that community people should be in the forefront of organizing and implementing matters that concerned their livelihood. Participants believed that if they played a proactive role, external stakeholders would be most likely to assist. Peter recalled that a meeting of the Bassa Youth Caucus, an umbrella body of youth organizations in Grand Bassa County, determined that the idea of establishing a community college was long overdue, especially Bassa being the second largest county in the country. Peter remembered: "in that backdrop, we convened a bigger meeting and decided to meet as executives to petition the Legislative Caucus and county authorities. We the young people decided to engage the caucus and officials of government." By convening and organizing themselves into a working group, and engaging local and national authorities, participants felt that they demonstrated leadership. In demonstrating leadership, participants said that they did wide consultations with relevant stakeholders. The President of Liberia recognized the power of community people when they assume leadership in shaping their destiny, as quoted in one of the documents:

> You, the people of Grand Bassa County – the county leadership, the educators, the parents, but especially the youth – dreamed of, and demanded, an institution of your own – one that would, for the first time, build the capacity of young people of this county beyond high school. It shall be a dream come true, dear

> friends… Many of us here know the genesis of this college; it was established as the result of the overwhelming cry by the youths of Grand Bassa to their county leaders, to their legislators, to the administration for this institution of higher learning.

Participants perceived that persistence, commitment, and tenacity of purpose were critical in pursuing leadership roles. In their engagement with local and national government leaders, participants stated that their goal was clear and therefore they were persistent in their demands. Chief, a national government education official, remembered that every time there was a meeting with the local government officials and the county legislative caucus and the community, "the issue the people always brought up was the establishment of the Grand Bassa Community College". When I asked participants why there was no technical and vocational education institution in their county prior to the establishment of Grand Bassa Community College, participants responded differently. Peter said "I would attribute it to the war". Paul said "probably our people never had the thought or the youths never had the vision for this institute to be established". Boss attributed it to the educational priority of the people and government at the time. Boss contended that prior to the civil conflict Liberians hardly pursued skills training but they (Liberians) were instead interested in "white collar jobs". Another reason provided by Boss was that government's focus was on academic education, specifically the Education for All (EFA) program. One member of the focus group also said that even though government had been forthcoming on primary education in Grand Bassa County, the

community was ignored by government in the early 1980s when the community requested a community college. Another member of the focus group felt that the ruling elites deliberately denied the common people of skills training because the people would become independent and would not remain under servitude to the ruling elites.

Advocacy. Participants believed that another role of the community in attracting social services is through advocacy. They said that even though it was government's responsibility to provide services and it was the duty of the elected legislators to represent their views to government, self-advocacy strengthened the efforts of the legislators and pointed to government the seriousness of the people. Boss said that in one of several meetings with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, the president inquired how the community college would be funded if established. The organizing committee informed the president that the community had decided to allocate a portion of the county social development fund to the project. Boss emphasized that based on this decision by the county, the president accepted the formation of the community college.

Participants spoke of the different methods used in their advocacy for the community college. They said that they began with consultations and dialogue. But when these processes seemed to have failed, they resorted to mass action including peaceful sit-ins with placards and a hunger strike. Peter recalled:

> We also met the superintendent and she assured us that she had communicated with the caucus and that they were willing to address our plight. The then superintendent received the petition and promised that she will convey

> whatsoever information that was in that petition to the caucus and then the county leadership would have taken a step in the problem that the young people were facing (in pursuing skills training). In the meantime nothing was done. So we the young people decided to engage our caucus, the Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy, [and] the then Minister of Internal Affairs. But they were very slow [to act]. In fact, they [the county authorities] went to one meeting and what we heard was that they had preferred supporting the high school instead of creating the community college from money given by Mittal Steel. But we said ‘no’.

Paul, Boss, and Chief also spoke of the many attempts by the youths to engage county authorities constructively on the need to establish a community college but with little results. The participants felt that if the community had to achieve their objective of having a community, then their advocacy had to take a different dimension. When asked what the nature of the engagement was like, participants described it in many ways including:

"they were not yielding in the consultation so we thought to resort to mass action; the action was peaceful, nobody got hurt";

"every responsible Government should cater to the needs of the people if you give them power but we felt that they [past leadership] were not doing it so we thought to hold the bull by the horn and move forward";

"We had to put their feet to fire before she [the superintendent] consented and said there would be a community college".

Even Chief, a national government educational worker, commented that "they [the community people] fought hard and did all they could to ensure that it [The Grand Bassa Community College Act] passed through the Legislature; the young people did not rest…" When asked why community people thought such mass action was necessary, one member of the focus group responded thus:

> Strike was not necessary; it depends on the gravity. The strike was peaceful and we decided that no one put food in their mouth, no one drink water until our plight was put on the table. It was peaceful; sometimes we carried placards around with wordings.

Ownership. In pursuing fulfillment of community skill training, community people perceived they must demonstrate ownership in addition to leadership and advocacy. Participants perceived that community people demonstrated ownership in taking initial steps in identifying and contributing resources, time, and efforts in the establishment of the community college. Chief remembered that the president of the country challenged the community people's determination and resolve in having a community college. Chief recalled: "In a meeting with stakeholders, caucus, and local government officials the president [of Liberia] challenged the community that they [the community] should start [so that the president can see] if the community was serious before central government would come in". Participants stated that the community identified funding sources for the commencement of the community college. The

community also provided the land for its construction. The community also provided temporary shelter pending the completion of the construction of the college campus.

A member of the focus group said that the community college project was not left solely with the central government to support. The community considered ownership of the college as a private/public partnership. James said: "the college is not 100% government-owned. It is public/private. So the county owns the college, I could say, up to 60-75%. So through our social development fund we contribute annually to the up-keep of the college; and through the government budgetary allotment and other grants; it adds up".

Findings Based on Research Question 3: Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Nature and Level of Government Support for Local Training Needs

Research question 3 related to stakeholders' perceptions of the nature and level of government support for local training needs. Participants were unanimous in their perception of the nature and level of support from central government to the community college. Participants revealed that government's support was limited and irregular. However, participants' responses were more on the contribution of the community to the GBCC and focused less on the support from government. I saw their choice to focus their responses on their community's support to the college as a deviation from the planned interview questions, which sought to understand the Government of Liberia's support to the community college. Participants saw the community as the microcosm of government from which development could be driven. Participants said that the community's

endeavors to focus on what contributions they could make to the running of the community college, rather than government's contribution, was partly in response to the challenge posed by the President of Liberia, when she admonished the community to take the lead in identifying sources of support for the college before the government intervened. From the responses to the interview questions and document review, I derived two themes on how community stakeholders perceived the college, created by community efforts, should be supported: community volunteerism and community-industry collaboration.

Community volunteerism. The community people said that support to the community college was gained through an informal partnership with the government. There was no formal understanding between government and the community in supporting the community college budget. Funding from the community was on an ad hoc basis while funding from the government was in lump sums and not directly responding to entire program needs. Participants said that the community college was a private/public partnership venture (private meaning the community and public meaning the government). One participant, James, ascribed a 60-75% community ownership to the community. Even though he did not give basis for the percentage, responses to the question I posed on how the community college had been supported seemed to make the perceived private percentage of the community college higher than the public percentage. Some of the participants' responses included:

- Arcelor Mittal has a cooperate social responsibility to the county and they give US$1M (One million US dollars) annually; so they [the county development management committee] decided to grant $400,000.00 [four hundred thousand United States dollars] for the commencement of the college;
- After two semesters, the enrollment rose from 635 to 1,500 students. Students came from other counties also and the government was constrained to contribute US$600,000 (six hundred thousand United States dollars) annually;
- We would actually need over 1 million US dollars to run the college but it is not forthcoming from government;
- The college is not 100% government. It is public-private. The community owns the college; I could say 60-75%;
- The land was provided by the people; and
- … [When] the Act [legislation] was passed and the community college was established. The next thing was where to host the students. So they started in an old basketball court.

In addition to direct funding, participants said that citizens supported the community college through scholarships and financial aids to students. Participants said that all of the efforts of the community people, from mobilization of resources for organizational purposes to allocation of land, as well as preparation (cleaning) of the initial site of the community college, were purely voluntary. In a speech delivered by the

president of the college, he recounted the voluntary contributions many stakeholders made to the establishment and initial operation of the college.

Community-industry collaboration. I observed that all interview and focus group responses and document reviews identified community collaboration with firms and industries located in Grand Bassa County as another source of support for the community college. When I asked for participants' views on the nature and level of support to the community college, there was unanimity in highlighting the roles of industries through collaboration with the community. All of the participants referenced the corporate social responsibility between the company Arcelor Mittal and the community in which Mittal donated one million United States dollars to the community; and from which the initial US$400,000 was used to start the college. Participants said that through collaboration with industries, the community college students benefitted from on-the-job training. Some students were even employed by companies providing further job training experiences after graduation. Technical staff members of some of these companies served as volunteer lecturers at the college. When I asked participants to elaborate of the nature and level of community/industry collaboration, these were some of the responses: Peter said

> Mittal Steel had been instrumental one way or the other through their contractor company, Odebrecht Construction International, which has left. When Odebrecht was here, every 3 months they took students from Grand Bassa Community College for job training. Those that performed well were even employed.

Paul said "Yes but they (companies) go beyond [job training]. They usually organize career day programs, [to sensitize students on] how to prioritize certain areas that would be marketable. Some employees give free instructional service".

The president of the community, in a speech, quoted a section of a memorandum of understanding between the community, the community college, and the Odebrecht Construction International, Inc. (OCII) thus:

> Closer interaction between the private sector and training institutions has been recognized worldwide as one of the most effective approaches to bridge the gap between the skills taught in education centers and the skills required by the job market. Specifically, training centers and community colleges are encouraged to work closely with local businesses and industries to ensure that their coursework is relevant to the needs of employers in the community.

Interview and focus group participants said that collaboration with companies was helpful in supporting the initial operation of the community college when government was not forthcoming and community support was inadequate.

Summary of Findings

The study centered on three research questions explored through interviews, focus group, and document retrieval. The result of the study, represented by themes provided understanding to three central phenomena: community motivation for establishing the GBCC; participants' experience of the roles community people in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College; and the nature and level of community and government

support to the community college. Table 5 contains a summary of the findings. Three themes were identified for research question 1 on community motivation for establishing the GBCC: increasing human capital, restoring self-esteem, and civic participation and peace-building. Three themes were identified for research question 2 on participants' experience of the roles community people in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College: leadership, advocacy and ownership. And two themes were identified on research question 3 on the nature and level of government and community support to local community skill training efforts: community-government partnership, and community volunteerism and community-industry collaboration.

From analysis of the results, I found that the findings are interrelated and form a broad concept representing a sequence of what a self-motivated post-conflict rural community can achieve in taking charge of their problems. I have therefore developed a visual presentation of these findings in a model depicting the processes of community people engagements in prioritizing and taking hold of their common needs, skill training in this case (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.A model for community policy development of TVET in Liberia.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to understand the perspectives of rural community stakeholders on the roles they may be able to play in influencing government's policy priority for TVET as a possible local human and economic development strategy in Liberia as a post-conflict developing country. The central phenomenon of the study was to explore the understanding of stakeholders on the importance of TVET to their economic development that might guide them in advocating for and contributing to the provision of skills training facilities in their local community. The study was based on a single case: Grand Bassa Community College (GBCC). Participants for the study were drawn from the community, including youth groups, women groups, elders, and national and local educational workers involved with skill training. From these groups, I selected 14 participants and divided them into two data collection groups: interview group and focus group. I used three data collection methods for the study: interviews, focus group discussion, and document retrieval.

Research questions regarded community motivation for establishing the GBCC; clarifying participants' experience of the role community people in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College; and the nature and level of community and government support to the community college. Results were presented in the form of themes generated from data collected. Increasing human capital, restoring self-esteem, and civic participation and peace-building were found to be community people motivation for establishing skills training institution. Leadership, advocacy, and ownership were

determined to be major roles community stakeholders played in establishing local skill training institutions in post-conflict situations. With reference to the nature and level of support to local community skill training efforts, community-government partnership, community volunteerism, and community-industry collaboration were identified as major strategy approaches in supporting and sustaining local skill training institutions.

I will discuss the findings of the study as they relate to current literature and present recommendations for action and further research in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore and understand the perspectives of rural community stakeholders on the roles they may be able to play in influencing the government's policy priority for TVET as a possible local human and economic development strategy in Liberia as a postconflict developing country. The central phenomenon of the study was stakeholders' understanding of the importance of TVET to their economic development and how it guided them in advocating for and contributing to the establishment of skills training facilities in their local community. There were 14 participants in the study. I used interviews, a focus group, and document retrieval to collect data.

Findings were presented by themes generated from research questions which were based on the following: community stakeholders' motivation for establishing the GBCC, community stakeholders' experiences on their roles in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College, and the nature and level of community and government support to the community college.

Increasing human capital, restoring self-esteem, and civic participation and peace-building were found to be the community people's motivation for establishing a skills training institution. Leadership, advocacy, and ownership were found to be the major roles community stakeholders played in establishing a local skill training institution in post-conflict situations. With reference to the nature and level of support to local community skill training efforts, community-government partnership, and community

volunteerism and community-industry collaboration were identified as major strategy approaches in supporting and sustaining local skill training institutions.

Interpretation of the Findings

This section contains discussion, analysis, and interpretation of findings in light of the conceptual framework that grounded the study and findings from previous research on relevant TVET and community participation.

Interpretation of Themes Related to Research Question 1

Research question 1 related to the motivation of community people for establishing a skill training institution in their local community. The following three themes were derived: increasing human capital, restoring self-esteem, and civic participation and peace-building.

Increasing human capital. Increasing human capital was a motivation for establishing a skills training institution in the local community from a post-conflict perspective. This finding aligns with propositions of human capital theory as reported by Becker (1993) and Schultz (1961). Amongst other prepositions, human capital theory posits that human capital is an investment for the future and that community colleges played central roles in skills training as a means of developing human capital. In the National TVET Policy document of Liberia (GOL, 2014), which I reviewed, the Government of Liberia identified TVET as a major strategy for addressing youth unemployment. Participants also identified TVET as a means to their human capital development. Finding of this study also aligned with a study by the UNDP Bureau for

Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which reported that TVET was an important strategy in post-conflict capacity building and reconstruction (UNDP, 2010). Also providing confirmation of the role of skill training for increasing human capital, the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFoP) (2011) reported positive outcomes of TVET on labormarkets, enterprise performance, and social interactions. The CEDEFoP's prediction that about 50% of all jobs in the European Union countries will be TVET-based by the year 2020 illuminates and confirms community people's persistence for establishing a skill training institution to build employment, even to the point of staging mass actions.

In post-conflict settings, where fear, hunger, starvation, and displacement pervaded the population, the major preoccupation of affected people has been the provision of livelihood sustenance and improved standard of living. Post conflict situations also have resulted in reduced capacity of government to adequately provide for its people especially where there was widespread destruction of infrastructure and brain drain as was the case of Liberia. The UNESCO-sponsored capacity development document for the TVET sector in Liberia acknowledged the destruction of TVET facilities throughout the country and recommended reconstruction and rehabilitation of TVET facilities as one of the primary focus in reforming the TVET sector in Liberia (UNESCO, 2012-2013). With such low capacity for government to cater to the numerous concerns of national, social, and economic development, the Liberian citizens I listened to became motivated and took steps to cater to their sustainability needs. According to the

human capital theory, when people acquire skills, they have a better chance of being employed, thereby are enabled to cater to their personal wellbeing. Schultz (1961) contended that educational institutions play very important roles in developing human capital. The rural community members agreed that as the conduit for capacity building, a skill training institution in the Grand Bassa rural community became critical, as it was perceived to provide access to education for local community people who could not afford migrating to urban cities.

Schultz (1961) also asserted in his human capital theory that more training leads to better work skills. In the changing global market skills requirement and constantly improving technology, community people perceived they stood a better chance of being employed through new skills. In a study of post-conflict Pakistan, Janjua (2011) also reported a positive relation between skills acquisition and employability. While Janjua (2011) found little relationship between employment and informal skill training, there was evidence of individuals with formal skill training going into self-employment in the informal sector. UNESCO (2012-2013) reported high employment and self-employment of skilled Liberians prior to the conflict, 1970-1990. Self-employment accounted for persons trained in the formal skill-training sector.

Restoring self-esteem. Conflicts and wars lead to dehumanizing conditions of the human person (Freire, 1972). This is more so if victims of civil conflict perceived themselves as persecuted because of their social and economic status. In this study, I found that community people perceived that they were deliberately denied education so

that they would remain subservient to the ruling elites. They thus saw their ability to cater to their wellbeing through skill training as a means of regaining their pride and esteem. This view was confirmed by McGrath (2011) when he traced the advent of TVET in Africa, in the 1920s to debates by the Phelps-Stokes Fund and other philanthropic organizations on "negro education" after the emancipation of slaves in the United States. These discussions led to initiatives by Phelps-Stokes and others to develop industrial schools in Africa. Phelps Stokes Fund perceived that the provision of industrial skills to African would help remedy the negative effects of apartheid, colonialism, and slavery.

Civil conflict in Liberia also led to brain drain. Therefore, in the experience of community people, there was a high tendency for investors to import needed skills to run the industries. In a rural community setting, the importation of skilled manpower denied local citizens of employment and the ability to support their families. Referencing conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Liberia, Uganda, and Southern Sudan, Johnson et al (2007) argued that the lack of marketable skills and economic opportunities by citizens in post-conflict settings has negative impacts on individuals and the livelihood of the society. They further contended that the lack of income affects the "selfimage [of youths] and the ability to find a partner and support a family" (p. 4).Participants in this study interpreted their unemployed status and importation of foreign workers as exposure of their lack of self-worth as they were incapable of aspiring to the fullest of their potentials in their own community. Ego seemed to be hurt and self-esteem reduced. The capacity development document for TVET in Liberia referred to citizens in such situation

as a “lost generation who have largely missed out on access to education and therefore have not developed basic literacy and numeracy skills, nor benefited from the other less tangible benefits of formal education" (UNESCO, 2012-2013).Therefore, restoring self-esteem became a major motivation for clamoring for a skill training institution in order to acquire skills. Restoring community people's self-esteem as a motivation of community aligned with Maslow's (1987) and Herzberg's (1959) theories of human achievement, success, and satisfaction. Maslow and Herzberg associated self-esteem needs with strength, reputation, and prestige. When these needs are satisfied, community people feel a sense of competence, achievement, and recognition. Recognizing their inadequacies and the effects it had on their self-esteem therefore served as motivation for community people to establish a skill training institution in their community. When rural people acquire skills, gain employment, and can cater to the livelihood needs of their families, their sense of self-esteem increases and they gain respectability.

Civic participation and peace-building. Active community participation in decisions on their welfare was critical to community cohesion and peace-building and constituted a major motivational factor for community skill training program in this study. Linked to human capital development, technical and vocational training promoted social stability and cohesion as well as sustainable economic and social development in post-conflict settings (Wallenborn, 2009). The United Nations and African Union Commission acknowledged that a major cause of civic unrest was the lack of inclusion of

people in matters affecting them and declared civic participation as an indispensible ingredient in post-conflict reforms (Johnson et al., 2007).

According to the United Nations Peace Building Fund (2009), a major concern of people in post-conflict situations was devising ways and means on how to maintain peace and strengthen civic cohesion. Participation of community people and all stakeholders in decision-making on issues that affected them had been determined to be an important strategy in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and development (Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Department, commission of the African Union, 2006).Community people perceived that the causes of the civil conflict in Liberia included unequal distribution of the nation's wealth, illiteracy, nepotism, and discrimination. The conflict led to poverty, which they embarked on reversing through skill training. In rural communities where opportunities for self-growth and development were limited, prioritizing the provision of institutions and structures for capacity building of the people to make them independent, contributed to peace-building. Involving stakeholders in discussions concerning their welfare also gave the community a sense of inclusion in local and national development. When community people participated in decision-making along with government as established in this study, there was cross-fertilization of ideas, which invariably resulted in the most suitable problem-solving option. Even though documents I reviewed on TVET in Liberia spoke of TVET as a strategy for peace building and social cohesion, they made little reference to civic participation as a dividend of youth development through TVET.

The capacity assessment document for TVET in Liberia referred to unemployed youths as a "time bomb" and a recipe for relapse into conflict. It recommended the implementation of short-term skill training programs especially in rural communities to promote youth employability and self-employment to improve sustenance and peace building (UNESCO, 2012-2013).As a means of peace education in post-conflict development, Maebuta (2010) confirmed that technical and vocational education contributed to productive livelihood, national unity and a sense of nationalism, rehabilitation of former combatants, and accelerated training for other victims of conflict; i.e., young adults who had passed school-going age (Maebuta, 2010). Reporting outcomes of a study on peace-building in the Solomon Island, Maebuta argued that acquiring marketable skills also created a sense of nationalism through employment in jobs formerly occupied by foreigners. The community in my study perceived that they, rather than foreigners, should have been in control of the local productive sectors of the economic and social wellbeing of their society, thereby creating a sense of patriotism in them. Bilboe (2011) reported on the similar process of Kuwaitization in which Kuwaitis were provided skills and financial incentives to take over jobs generally held by foreigners. In the context of this study, and as a form of civic participation, community people perceived that providing skills to Liberians can also help to promote the Liberianization policy of Liberia(GOL, 2014) similar to Kuwaitization. Janjua (2011) also confirmed the potential for increased civic participation through skill training. Janjua

reported that TVET contributed to social stability and peace-building in the Punjab region of Pakistan through increased employment in both formal and informal sectors.

Interpretation of Themes Related to Research Question 2

Research question 2 related to the roles community people played in establishing skills training institution in their area. The following three themes were identified: leadership, advocacy, and ownership.

Leadership. Grand Bassa community perceived that exercising leadership was an important role they played in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College in their area. They recognized that national government was charged primarily with the responsibilities of providing basic social services, security, and improved standard of living of its people through job creation. However, in the post-conflict period in Liberia, where there were inadequate financial support and support to the community tended to be subordinated to general national goals, community stakeholders exercised leadership in ensuring that their needs were met.

Sharma (2008) reported that in a bid to strengthen the quality of school management in Nepal, the government of Nepal transferred the management of schools to local communities. Sharma proposed that community involvement with school management could follow different approaches including shared responsibility of central and local government but managed locally. Sharma cited many examples of countries including Brazil, Japan, Austria, and Spain where school managements wasdecentralized to the community level. While Sharma's study confirmed the importance of community

involvement in school management, it spoke more of devolution of authority to local communities than to local communities' innovative and self-driven actions to take control of problems confronting them as explored in this study.

Drawing on the premise that education should be relevant to the needs of students, society, and community, Sharma proposed arguments as to why it was important to decentralize school administration to involve the community. Sharma contended that it was the community that provided the school environment and so an environment conducive for learning was largely impacted by the community. Involving community in school management also helped build relationships between school and community with many possible benefits. For example, through community involvement, teachers got a better understanding of students from parents who had better knowledge of their children than teachers. Sharma also reported that community involvement could provide support to school including voluntary work, finances, advocacy, and voluntary expert services. Community involvement also improved schools' financial and academic accountability. Even though Sharma's study did not involve communities in post-conflict conditions, and my study concentrated on technical and vocational education and training in post-conflict communities, the same principles of community involvement with academic institutions applied.

From this study, I found that the decision of community people to organize to address their skill training needs was spontaneous and situational as there was little evidence of such high level of community-initiated involvement in addressing other

social issues. The decision for community people to unite under such informal leadership structures seemed to have been prompted by the identification of mutual challenges and needs which the community found difficult to address through the normal government structure. This level of organization among community people was recognized by the President of Liberia and the President of the Grand Bassa Community College in reports and speeches made during the formative stages of the community college. Such demand-driven cooperation was also confirmed by Aring et al (2011) in studies on South Africa, Indonesia, Georgia, and Morocco on their engagement in TVET. In this study, Grand Bassa community people perceived that sometimes in post-conflict cases, demand-driven leaderships could be deemed antagonistic to the status quo when the community resorts to mass actions in attracting government's attention to their problem. In order not to be perceived as being unduly antagonistic, stakeholders' approach to solving their problems in this study was characterized by constructive community-government engagement, information sharing, and collaboration. In this study, community leadership structures were based on voluntary membership to working committees.

There are several issues regarding local TVET administration local stakeholders could have addressed in the interviews or focus group. In assuming leadership, community stakeholders could have organized discussions on the needs and benefits of TVET institutions, the challenges associated with establishing one, the cost of running a skill training institution, and strategies to sustain the institution. Outcomes of these initial community discussions could then be shared with government and other external

stakeholders for direct involvement through assistance or partnership. In this study, the community stakeholders indeed demonstrated leadership along these lines. After the initial advocacy and in collaboration with the County Legislative Caucus, the community drafted the legislation establishing the college that was later forwarded to the Legislature for passage. The decision to allocate initial funding for the college from the county social development fund was also captured in a speech outlining the history of the Grand Bassa Community College.

Advocacy. Another role of the Grand Bassa community people in establishing skill training in their local community was advocacy. Closely linked to leadership, community advocacy involved the process of drawing the attention of relevant external stakeholders to important social change concerns for the benefit of the community. It involved defining the social change issues, developing a strategy for communication with the intended audience, and soliciting their support with a view of influencing positive change in policy and programs.

While it may be plausible to conclude that community people usually engage in advocacy for support to their common problems, little is recorded in the literature, especially when it comes to post-conflict community development. In a study that conceptualized a holistic approach to TVET planning and programming in Sub-Sahara Africa, Johnson et al (2007)) explored the role of TVET in civic participation, integration of affected persons into society, TVET in post-conflict reconstruction, and case studies of TVET implementation in Liberia, Uganda, and Southern Sudan. The study however

focused on TVET implementation as a vehicle to end conflict rather as a sustained human resource development strategy requiring adequate planning and funding inputs. Also, the interventions seemed to have come from foreign experts and not driven from the communities. In their report on ending conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa and improving livelihood, they stated that:

> If adolescents fail to gain vocational and life skills, they risk becoming caught up in a cycle of dependency, delinquency, aggression and/or depression and hopelessness. They may turn to, or be forced into, military activities or prostitution either because they are in search of basic sustenance, or because they lack sufficient protection to avoid being pressed into such activities.

Lannert et al. (1999) also revealed very little in terms of community advocacy in their study on stakeholders' involvement in TVET in Hungary, Mauritius, and India. Their study focused more on partnership at the system level emphasizing practices from other countries. In short, the study was more expert driven than community driven.

While available policy documents on TVET in Liberia recommended advocacy at governmental level for external support, it spoke little of advocacy by community people in support of their local skill training initiative. For the local skill needs, participants in this study were clear and convincing in their advocacy. They demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the importance of skill training and were pragmatic in strategy proposals. Community stakeholders even went beyond advocacy and led by example. They demonstrated seriousness through their actions. The seriousness of the community

stakeholders in this study was expressed by the level of organization, the quality of leadership, willingness to provide voluntary services, and their resolve and persistence. The community reached out to all external stakeholders including, their local leader, legislators, relevant ministries and agencies of government, and even as far as the president of the state.

Ownership. Community people also identified demonstration of ownership as a role they played in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College. Community ownership in context referred to community people working together for their common good, volunteering resources, time, and efforts. In the post-conflict setting described in this study, community people experienced adverse conditions and blamed their rather low societal status and poor standard of living on the civil conflict and the quality of national governance. From documents available to me in this study, the concept of ownership seems to be silent as even policies for TVET administration are yet to be finalized and implemented. According to the capacity assessment document of TVET in Liberia, 43% of all TVET institutions are private-owned, 14% public, 15% mission, and 13% NGO (UNESCO, 2012-2013). There are no indications or plans for community-based, community-owned skill training institution. In this study however, participants indicated that the community realized the need to take ownership of establishing their skill training institution if they must improve their human capital, restore their self-esteem, and participate in local and national decisions that affect them.

The realization by the community in post-conflict settings to take ownership of their destiny is usually preceded by a culture of dependency on external stakeholders and collaborators for solutions to community problems (Johnson, Phillips & Maclean, 2007)).Communities usually later find out that such dependent-driven supports were not sustainable and were not even practical to begin with (Johnson et al). According to this study, when the Grand Bassa community reached this crossroad, they stopped blaming others for their living conditions and realized that they had the potential to make the necessary change. It is the community that is affected by the condition and would eventually directly benefit from the solution. Being affected by the condition, it is the community people, who upon consultation and collaboration identified solution to their problems. Participants believed that although external support may come through advocacy, the sustainability of the solution will be purely the responsibility of the community people.

When community people in the study took ownership of their social change programs, they worked together and pulled resources, they arrived at solutions that were practical and sustainable, and they achieved social cohesion with a sense of fulfillment.

Interpretation of Themes Related to Research Question 3

Research question 3 related to the nature and level of community and government support to local skill training institution. The following two themes were derived: importance of community volunteerism and community-industry collaboration.

Community volunteerism. When community people identify the need to address post-conflict and other developmental conditions and are thus motivated, and define their roles in addressing these needs, they must put their roles into action. Even though I did not find any research in the literature on community volunteerism in establishing skill training institutions in their local community, participants in this study said that the decision of community stakeholders to become proactive was preceded by their realization that their wellbeing rested on them and the steps they may choose to take. They observed, however, that, the allocation and expenditure of national finances were not within the domain of any given community in Liberia. Therefore, a major source of support to community-based initiatives is their conviction in the cause and their spirit of volunteerism. In the case where communities are challenged by central authorities to exhibit seriousness of a community's cause, community stakeholders must lead by mustering personal resources, and volunteer their time and service. In the case of the Grand Bassa Community College, the community provided an old basketball court and the premises of the Bassa High School as the original space of the community college until they find another community facility to host them. The college holds classes in the afternoon after the high school dismisses. These premises were cleaned through cleanup campaigns held by the community. The main campus is presently under construction. The land on which the college is being constructed was provided by the community. Initial funding for the running of the college was also provided by the community from the community social development fund. These are just few examples of how a motivated

people can positively contribute to their own development with little reliance on external support.

Another demonstration of volunteerism was the awarding of scholarships to students. This action provided needed funds for the running of the college as well as subsidized students' training. Community persons qualified in different technical fields could also provide pro bono teaching services to their institution. Such voluntary innovations of financial support through scholarship funds and instructional support though pro bono services are a clear demonstration of how community people can support their self-driven initiatives outside of external stakeholders' support.

Collaboration. Collaboration between community and industries has been found to yield positive mutual dividends. In a meta-analysis of 66 purposefully selected studies on the relationship between human capital and firm performance, Crook et al., (2011) reported that firms that engaged in staff training reported high performance. Communities like Grand Bassa County, which have huge foreign and local investments, have a critical advantage for economic growth and social development. These foreign investors as external stakeholders invest in communities with resources and services needed for firms' success and as such firms have corporate responsibilities to such communities in which the firms are located. A natural partnership therefore exists between firms and community. These firms could serve as valuable assets that community people can tap into through proper engagement and collaboration for mutual benefits.

Benefits to industries and community could be perceived in two contexts from a community-driven, community-run skill training institution perspective (Sharma (2008). The first is that firms and industries serve as potential employers of community people with the requisite skills and training. Shah et al. (2011) recommended that community college curriculum should be reviewed in collaboration with industries to reflect basic skills need of industries as they serve as potential employers of graduates. Crook et al.(2011) also drew a positive relationship between upgrading of employees' skills by industries and high industry performance.

The second context from which to view the benefits is that locally based community college serves as potential reservoir for workers in these firms (Shah et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for skill training institutions in such community to consider the skill and training requirements when designing courses (Schultz, 1961). When such collaboration is forged, several benefits accrue. Community colleges produce trained human resources who are potentially employed by firms. In this study, these community people receive salaries and wages and are able to improve the livelihood of their families. The chances of restoring their self-esteem and to positively contribute to the society are increased. On the other hand, benefits firms and industries receive from such community-industry collaboration is principally found in conducive operational environment and security provided by the community as enshrined in corporate social responsibility documents between the community and firms. Another benefit of the firm is the fact that they are privileged to operate in a community that has skill training institutions in the first

place. According to the proposal of the human capital theory, employees need to improve their skills to meet the changing skills need due to improving technology; and training can compensate for skills shortages (Schultz, 1961). Because of the need for skills improvement, industries provide on-the-job training to employees and incur expenses in these endeavors. But with meaningful collaboration between industries and community, the community college can constantly review its program and make it relevant to the skills needs of the industry while receiving funding for such service. This trend results in a mutually beneficial cycle, confirmed by Aharonovits (2011), as persons thus trained and employed by industries could render pro bono services to the institution. Aharonovits argued against perceived poor countries trying to re-invent the wheels. Aharonovits proposed a model where trained workers could supervise and train more workers in firms and industries.

In a UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) publication, Lannert et al. (1999) identified several motivations for involving stakeholders in TVET management in Maritius, Hungary, and India. The researchers presented stakeholders' involvement as forging partnership. At the broader level, motivations for forging partnership was to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of TVET systems in securing funding, qualify trainers, and facilitating lifelong learning and transition from school to work (Lannert et al., 1999). Their study however explored partnership at the system and policy levels rather than the institutional and community levels. It provided arguments for devolving authority to coordinating boards to oversee TVET in the different countries

through appropriate government policies and legislations. Lannert et al.'s study confirmed community motivations and roles in TVET management but fell short of describing community people drive to reverse post-conflicts experiences through their own skill training initiatives.

In separate studies on Ghana, India, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, Palmer et al., (2007) proposed more general education funding by multilateral organizations for more transformative outcomes in lifelong learning, skills training, and poverty reduction. While these studies did not speak to community participation in skills training in post-conflict countries, they confirmed that skill training was a strategy for poverty reduction among rural community people.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research on TVET is an ongoing activity and as such there still exist several gaps in the literature for further research. Also during the course of the study, I discovered several gaps that were critical to successful to TVET but which fell outside the scope of the study. According to policy and assessment documents on Liberia TVET that I reviewed, some of the issues identified included perception issues, access, affordability, policy, management, staffing, and funding. Societies still consider skill training as a vocation choice for underperforming students and girls. As for access and affordability, participants perceive that the very few operating TVET institutions are mainly in the urban areas that participants consider unaffordable due to poverty and unemployment.

Staffing, financing, and managing TVET institutions in Liberia is still at the stage of policy formation. I however propose three questions for future research:

- What impact will integration of academic education with skill training have on post-conflict development, continuing education, and the perceived negative perception of TVET?
- What are the implications for government funding in a community-operated TVET institution?
- How can skills training needs assessment enhance positive community college outcomes, based on perspectives from community, firms, and/or government..

Limitations of the Study

According to Creswell (2011) and Lincoln and Guba(1985), threats to trustworthiness may derive from poor sampling, inappropriate data collection instrument and procedure, researcher's bias, and new unexpected trends and themes that may emerge and have the tendency to alter the original course of the study. During the study however, I did not observe any limitation that had any adverse effect on the study findings. However, the study was for one community and caution would be wise in applying the findings to other settings.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Rural communities in post-conflict countries are constantly faced with numerous challenges brought about by the conflict. In Liberia, some of the negative experiences of

conflict include poor health and sanitation, a broken educational system, poverty, hunger, loss of self-esteem, and fear of relapse into conflict. While the central government embarked on national development, it is continually faced with problems of reduced capacity, destroyed infrastructure, and brain drain. Several strategy approaches had been considered to jumpstart development in post-conflict countries. One such approach is illiteracy and unemployment reduction especially among youths who had overgrown school-going age as the result of the civil war. In the wake of these challenges, community stakeholders in this study were motivated to take appropriate actions to improve their livelihood, reverse poverty, and restore lost dignity.

Findings of the study have many implications for positive social change. It may inspire community people on how, when motivated and united, they can take positive actions to solve problems confronting them when central government or other statutory bodies perceived by the community to be reneging on their duties. The study can also create awareness that community people can break the culture of dependency on foreign and other external support and forge partnerships instead. Through motivation, leadership, advocacy, volunteerism, and collaboration, community people were successful in having the community college established. Community people can take ownership of their institutions and benefit from services provided individually and collectively. Other communities can learn from the experiences of the community people in this study and organize for their common good.

Beyond the direct benefits to communities, however, the study had a broader implication on strategic policy approaches Liberia could adopt in alleviating poverty in rural areas and reducing unemployment among youths. Beyond Liberia, lessons learned from this study could be useful to other communities in other post-conflict countries in recovery and development through community cohesion, leadership, and advocacy.

Implications for Future Research

The study also has implications for conducting case study research that involves listening to people. During the study, I experienced one situation that could have had social change implications from the findings of the study. The study focused on three principle questions regarding community people's motivation for establishing the GBCC, the roles the community people played in establishing the Grand Bassa Community College, and the nature and level of government support to the community college. However, when it came to the nature and level of government support to the community college, respondents opted not to follow the structure of the questions but instead enumerated their community-based support rather than government's as designed in research question 3. I found this an intriguing lesson of how stakeholders perceive problems and solutions. I however adjusted my probes and reframed the questions consistent with the natural trend of the interview and focus group. It is important therefore for persons involved in such a research situation to be flexible to accommodate the way respondents perceive problems that deviate from the research plan and how researchers frame the problem.

Recommendations for Action

The government of Liberia is at its initial stage in the reform of its TVET sector. National policy-makers and international partners recognized several challenges facing TVET in Liberia. Policies currently being set in the National TVET Policy document of Liberia focused mainly on creating necessary legislations and setting up regulatory bodies for the TVET sector. In the context of findings from this study however, some actions could be taken at the local community and grassroots leadership levels to assist government in organizing community skills training programs. I therefore propose the following recommendations for action, directed to three potentially resourceful categories or institutions, namely: the policy makers, the college administration, and the community people. These recommendations are derived from findings based on participants' responses, documents retrieval, and my interpretation of the findings.

Policy makers

- Set policies and legislations that encourage the devolution to TVET management to local communities through community-government partnership;
- Encourage the organization of strong grassroots leaderships in communities through the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and
- Establish more community colleges to increase access.

Community College Administration

- Forge partnership and collaboration with firms for local skills training support through counterpart funding and human resource sharing; and

- Organize search committees to identify relevant qualify citizens of local communities in the Diaspora for possible training service to their communities.

Grassroots Community Stakeholders

- Conduct regular community meetings to continuously identify and analyze community needs;
- Set up volunteer committees to implement decisions aimed at advancing possible solutions to community problems; and
- Organize community service projects where community people can regularly render voluntary services to college in areas specified by community and college administration.

Conclusion

A truly motivated community tends to remove itself from patronage by government and other external stakeholders and look within for solutions to their problems. Johnson et al. (2007) referred to such patronage as the "hand-out culture associated with the influx of AIDS in post-conflict context" (p. 4). They contended that such "alternative value bases" undermine development in post-conflict communities. A striking demonstration of this shift in post-conflict culture was the community stakeholders' enthusiasm to enumerate their support to the community college rather than government's support as was designed in the study. This paradigm shift, from the "hand-out culture", in stakeholders' attitude, in realizing that the ultimate identification of and solution to community problems lie within the community, is advancement in the

community's perception that they could accelerate community-based post-conflict development.

While governments have statutory and constitutional responsibilities to provide security and social services for its people, the level of success of any given community depends largely on the unity and cooperation of the community. Community leadership, advocacy, and collaboration are critical roles stakeholders can play in complementing external stakeholders' assistance to the community. This is even more critical in post-conflict settings where there is reduced technical, infrastructural, and financial capacity at both national and community levels. A key benefit of communities organizing to take charge of their problems is the potential for solutions to be sustainable. In the case of infrastructure, long-term plans for maintenance and repairs continuous conducive learning environment of the institution are possible examples of benefits of positive engagement by the community.

Practical needs assessment for the training institution can be more easily realized when there is continuous engagement by community stakeholders. Being motivated to establish community institutions, community stakeholders perceive themselves as owners and thus realize that the sustained operation of the institution remains within their domain. With such conviction and passion, community stakeholders can take practical actions for the effective running of their lives, their institutions, and their communities.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Research Topic: Stakeholders' Roles in Prioritizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Postconflict Liberia

Name of Case/interviewee (pseudonym):

Major Themes for Interviews

Background of Key Informants (Education engagement in community not demographic)

Governance/Administrative Structure of Local Community

Community Participation in Local Social Service Provision

Community Involvement in Education

Skills Training and Employment Opportunities

Other topics to be discussed:

Documents obtained from interviewee (where applicable):

Post interview comments by interviewer:

Introductory Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to share your experience with us in this study. You were selected because we feel that you have useful information for our project.

In order to facilitate our note-taking, we would like your permission to audio tape our conversations today. Information recorded will only be available to persons working on this study and contents will be kept strictly confidential. The tape will be destroyed after transcription and text will be treated with anonymity. Please sign this release form to indicate your agreement.

Also, as part of our protocol and procedure, you are required to sign another document indicating your agreement as a human participant. This document basically states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, (3) you may not answer any question you are uncomfortable with and (4) we do not intend to inflict any harm.

Thank you for your cooperation.

This interview is planned to last for one hour and it may be necessary to speed up some of the activities when time is running out. This could include interrupting you at some points. Introduction

As stated earlier, you were selected because we feel that you have useful information for our project. The purpose of this interview is not to test your knowledge or competency but to understand your perspectives on the role stakeholders play in skill training in their communities.

Shall we begin?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

RQ1: What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for (Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)) in their community?

Related Interview/Focus Group Questions

a. In your experience are there ways that the community people in your area have gotten involved in establishing or providing social services?

    Probes

    i. Can you tell me what you observe (probe for health, education, if they don't mention it)

    ii. Can you tell me if you are aware of the Grand Bassa Community College? What experiences do you have with the college?

    iii. If you are familiar with the origin/history of the Grand Bassa Community College can you tell me your observations or memories?

    iv. What role did the community play in establishing the vocational school?

b. Can you tell me about your impressions of how did the community go about making the final decision and relating it to authorities?

    Probes

i. How did the community communicate that decision to central government?

RQ2: What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of TVET development and the best interest of the community population?

Related Interview/Focus Group Questions

a. What, do you think, motivated the community to opt for a vocational school?
b. Why do you think vocational school (name of the school) is important for your community?

Probes

i. Which local stakeholder(s) was more influential in bringing about the school?
ii. How?

c. Could you please name some of the benefits of having the vocational school in your area?
d. Do you think living conditions would have been better off if the vocation school were established, say, twenty years ago? Even before the civil war?

Probes

i. In what ways, if I may ask, would living conditions have better?
ii. Why do you think so?

e. In fact, if I may just go further, what do you think is the relationship between education, vocational training, and the war?

RQ3: What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

Related Interview/Focus Group Questions

a. What do you think are the needs for local skill training? Have you had a chance to collaborate with others in developing these ideas?
    i. Probe: Could you explain to me how, for instance, are employers involved in determining these needs?
    ii. Probe: What about government?
b. What do you think are the relationships among the central government and local government and educational institutions?

Probes

    i. If you are you aware, could you explain to me any support schools receive from central government?
    ii. From local stakeholders?
    iii. What can you tell me about support to the (Grand Bassa Community College?)
    iv. Why do you think there was no vocational school in your community up to the time this one was established?
    v. Why do you think so?

Appendix C: Protocol for Focus Group Discussion

Research Topic: Stakeholders' Roles in Prioritizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Postconflict Liberia

Introductory Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to share your experience with us in this study. You were selected because I feel that you have useful information to contribute to the study.

As Indicated in the consent form that you signed, the interview will last for one hour and will be audio-recorded. I wish to also remind you that you are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any point if you so desire.

Let us begin with self-introduction (Name and organization affiliation)

Discussion Points

1. Stakeholders' role in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for TVET in their community;
2. Community peoples' perceptions of how and why government policy makers select projects in the region;
3. Stakeholders' perceptions of the nature and level of government support for local training needs;

Appendix D: Consent Form for Focus Group

Date:_____

Greetings:

I am a PhD student in Education at Walden University specializing in Higher Education.

I am pleased to invite you to take part in a research study on 'Stakeholders' Roles in Prioritizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Postconflict Liberia'.

You were chosen to take part in this study because I believe that as a stakeholder in your community, you have one way or another contributed to or benefitted from skills training programs in a local rural community.

Background Information of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the roles community people can play in influencing government's policy priority for TVET as a local human and economic development strategy in Liberia. More specifically, by this study, I intend to seek understanding of the following questions:

- What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)) in their community?
- What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of TVET development and the best interest of the community population?
- What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

Procedure

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Take part in a group discussion with other community stakeholders in the community town hall. The discussion will last for 1 hour 30 minutes.
- Give permission to have your views and comments on the topics audio-taped and transcribed;
- Take part in a follow-up group discussion if necessary;
- Meet with me, the researcher, to review your views and comments to confirm that they were correctly interpreted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is voluntary. I will respect your decision of whether or not you agree to participate in this study. You may decide not to comment on any point raised during the discussion. You are also free to withdraw from the group discussion or terminate your involvement in the study at any time if you so decide.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are minimal risks through participation in this study. Your comments and views will be kept confidential. Should there be an inadvertent breach of confidentiality, you will be informed immediately. But I assure you that such very unlikely inadvertent breach will not expose you to any risk. Findings and recommendation from this study may positively impact national policies on vocational education in Liberia and other parts of the world.

Compensation:

There is no compensation provided for participation in this study.

There will also be no financial cost to you should you agree to participate.

Confidentiality:

All comments and views expressed by you during the discussion will be kept confidential. I will not use your name, personal information, or your views for any other purpose outside of the study. Data will be kept strictly under Walden University regulations.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me via phone at (phone number) or e-mail at edward.forh@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is (phone number) or email address irb@waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms of the study described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix E: Consent Form for Interview Participants

Date:_____

Greetings:

I am a PhD student in Education at Walden University specializing in Higher Education.

I am pleased to invite you to participate in a research study on 'Stakeholders' Roles in Prioritizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Postconflict Liberia'. You were specifically invited to participate in this study because I believe that as a stakeholder, you have, one way or another, contributed to or benefitted from the process of TVET in a local rural community through your activities as an educational worker or affiliation with a TVET institution.

Background Information of the Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the perspectives of rural community stakeholders, including community people and local educational administrators on the roles they can play in influencing government's policy priority for TVET as a local human and economic development strategy in Liberia. More specifically, by this study, I intend to seek understanding of the following questions:

- What roles can stakeholders play in attracting, shaping, and implementing government policies for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)) in their community?
- What do stakeholders perceive regarding the relationship of TVET development and the best interest of the community population?
- What do stakeholders perceive is the nature and level of government support for local training needs?

Procedure

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 1 hour long face-to-face interview with me at your office or a place mutually agreed upon. The interview could be arranged to be held by cell phone should you be indisposed for the face-to-face interview.
- Provide relevant documents on TVET programs. Where applicable, such documents will include:
    i. Legislations relating to your involvement in skills training program;
    ii. Institutional policies on skills training;
    iii. Annual reports of your institution;
    iv. National budgetary allocation to your institution specifically targeting skills training;
- Give permission to have your responses audio-taped and transcribed;
- Take part in a follow-up interview if necessary;

- Meet with me, the researcher, to review your responses to confirm that they were correctly interpreted

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is voluntary. I will respect your decision of whether or not you agree to participate in this study. You may decline to answer any question(s) as you wish or terminate the interview or your involvement in the study at any time if you so decide.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are minimal risks through participation in this study. Your responses to questions during the interview will be kept confidential. Should there be an inadvertent breach of confidentiality, you will be informed immediately. But I assure you that such very unlikely inadvertent breach will not expose you to any risk. Findings and recommendation from this study may positively impact national policies on vocational education in Liberia and other parts of the world.

Compensation:

There is no compensation provided for participation in this study.

There will also be no financial cost to you should you agree to participate.

Confidentiality:

All responses during the interview will be kept confidential. I will not use your name, personal information, or your responses for any other purpose outside of the study. Data will be kept strictly under Walden University regulations.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me via phone at +231886551436 or e-mail at edward.forh@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is (phone number) or email address irb@waldenu.edu. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms of the study described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Edward S. Forh
Nationality:	Liberian
Date of Birth:	January 31, 1963
Marital Status:	Married (Six Children)

Education

2014	Candidate, Doctor of Philosophy PhD Program in Education Higher Education Specialization Walden University Minneapolis, MN, USA
1998	Master of Science in Education (MSEd) Educational Administration and Supervision University of Liberia
1985	Bachelor of Science Biology (Chemistry Minor) University of Liberia

Work Experience (Academia)

2004	Acting President A. M. E. University Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia
2004	VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION A. M. E. UNIVERSITY Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia
2000 -2004	DEAN OF ADMISSIONS, RECORDS & REGISTRATION, A.M.E. University Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia
1999 – 2000	EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM OFFICER Catholic Relief Services (CRS/Liberia Program)
1995 – 1999	PRINCIPAL Frank M. Reid, Jr. Christian School

	Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia
1992 – 1995	DEAN OF INSTRUCTION Monrovia College & Industrial Training School, Inc. Monrovia, Liberia
1989 – 1992	INSTRUCTOR (BIOLOGY/CHEMISTRY) Monrovia College & Industrial Training School, Inc. Monrovia, Liberia
1985 – 1988	SCIENCE LABORATORY COORDINATOR & INSTRUCTOR, Booker Washington Agricultural& Industrial Institute Kakata, Margibi, County.
1984-1985	STUDENT LABORATORY DEMONSTRATOR Department of Biology University of Liberia

Others

2006-Present	REPRESENTATIVE District 16, Montserrado County
2013-Present	STATUTORY MEMBER Board of Trustees, University of Liberia