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Migrant involvement in community development. The case of the rural Ashanti Region - Ghana

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Today, the development of many rural communities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana is to a considerable extent being supported by migrants. In spite of the wealth of publications about migrant remittances and community development², few studies have investigated the processes that take place in the communities where the migrant support arrives and that can influence successful involvement of migrants in community development. Some exceptions that do pay more attention to this are Mohan (2006), Cotula and Toulmin (2004) and Akolongo (2005). However, much of the literature either describes the types of migrant support and the impact on communities, or focuses on the motivations and characteristics of senders (see e.g. Addison 2004, Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen 2004, Higazi 2005, Loup 2005, Orozco 2005, World Bank 2006).

This is regrettable since in policy circles there is growing interest in the prospects of involving migrants in development, so there is a need for more studies with evidence from communities and the functioning of migrant-financed development (Loup 2005, European Commission 2004). While acknowledging the variety of migrant-related factors that may influence the willingness of migrants to support their home communities, this chapter explains why some rural Ashanti communities are able to involve migrants successfully in the development of their communities and others are not able to do so. These explanations must be placed in the context of the particular institutional environments of the home communities.

This contribution is based on research that forms part of a larger research program involving transnational networks with members in the Netherlands, Accra, and rural Ashanti communities in Ghana (Mazzucato 2000). As part of the rural Ashanti project, interviews were conducted with community leaders in 26 rural and semi-rural communities varying in size from 800 to 36,000 inhabitants. However, the analysis of the functioning of the institutional environment within communities is based on five case-study villages. Two are small (3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants), two are mid-sized (13,000 and 16,000 inhabitants), and one is a large community (32,000 inhabitants). These five communities were visited on a weekly basis over a period of fifteen months. Observations were recorded and semi-structured interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, including local government officials and opinion leaders, as well as other inhabitants. Interviews were focused on the

¹ This paper reports on results of a collaborative research program, Ghana TransNet, between the University of Amsterdam (AMIDSt), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (AOE), Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID), and African Studies Centre Leiden, in the Netherlands and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), in Ghana (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) grant number 410-13-010P). The authors wish to express their gratitude to Jan Willem Gunning for his valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

² Community development is defined here as *the presence of or access to public (not commercially exploited) facilities at village level*. These include facilities that are financed with both public funds and private funds, both locally and from migrants.

history of migrant involvement in each of the five communities, with particular reference to migrant-financed projects. In addition to the interviews, detailed financial accounts of development, tax collections, migrant contributions, and the costs of development activities were collected. Care was taken to build up relationships of trust with the leaders as well as the inhabitants of these communities to facilitate access to these documents.

The section below provides a brief overview of the levels of development and differences in migrant support within the five rural Ashanti case-study communities. This information serves as the background for the main parts of the article: the analysis of the institutional environments (defined as the set of institutions, rules, and norms in a community) to identify the factors that may relate to the differences between these communities in migrant involvement. These include local inhabitants' contributions to development (section two), the link between funerals and community development (section three), and the importance of leadership in communities (section five). At the end of this contribution some conclusions will be drawn.

Migrant support and community development

The word 'migrant' is used for people outside Ghana and thus refers to *international* migrants. In this sense, all 26 communities researched have migrants. In each community, scores were given for migrant contributions to development. These scores were corrected for community size and for the proportion of migrant households in the community. The ideal scoring method would be to divide the value of the migrant contributions by the number of migrants overseas, but since information on the exact value of projects is not available, estimate scores were given based on the assessments of local leaders, discussions with inhabitants, and some recordings of actual migrant contributions towards electrification, health, education, and additional development projects. If, for example, a large community has many migrant households and twenty schools, but only one school received migrant support in the form of books, the contribution would be recorded as 'relatively little', while if in a small community with few migrant households one of the two local schools is supported with extra class rooms and a bursary fund, the contribution would be recorded as 'relatively much'. Of the communities with between 3,000 and 7,000 inhabitants, 88 per cent receive 'relatively much' migrant support. The large communities and the communities smaller than 3,000 inhabitants receive 'relatively little' migrant support and 71 per cent of the mid-sized communities receive 'relatively little' migrant support (see table 1).

Table 1. Volume of migrant support to 26 rural Ashanti communities.

		size of rural community							
		very small 800 - 2,500 inh.		small 3,000 - 7,000 inh.		mid sized 8,000 - 16,000 inh.		large 17,000 - 36,000 inh.	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
migrant support	relatively much	1	14%	7	88%	2	29%	0	0%
	relatively little	6	86%	1	12%	5	71%	4	100%
	total (N=26)	7	100%	8	100%	7	100%	4	100%

Source: own data (see appendix table 1 for more details).

Of the five case study communities, *Asiwa* and *Brodekwano* fall into the category of small communities with 'relatively much' migrant support. Asiwa has about 90 migrants who have paid 88 per cent of the costs of the ongoing electrification project and donated towards the construction of a marketplace. Their donations over the past three years are more than €8,000.

Brodekwano has about 100 migrants who are currently financing a community-based Education Development Fund and are constructing classrooms for one of the two schools in the community. These migrants have also co-financed the electrification of their community, they have contributed to water provision, and they have built a library. An estimated € 3,500 has been raised by Brodekwano migrants during the past three years.

Migrant contributions were less in the other three communities, certainly in relation to their size and proportions of migrants. Migrants from *Kumawu* (16,000 inh.) have supported hometown development by financing street lights in two streets, sending computers for a senior secondary school, and donating money for the local health centre. *Mampong* (32,000 inh.) citizens abroad have contributed towards street lights and sent books for the library. Most support contributed by Mampong migrants was, however, specifically directed to the District Hospital in Mampong, which received various kinds of equipment. In *Offinso* (13,000 inh.), the only migrant donation that could be recalled by inhabitants and leaders was a limited quantity of hospital equipment and a private car for the Queen Mother, both sent by Netherlands-based migrants. Since the car does not really serve the community as a whole it is contestable whether this can actually be labelled community support.

There are no communities smaller than 3,000 inhabitants among the five case study communities and therefore no in-depth information about this category was available. However, since all seven of the very small communities have received relatively little migrant support (appendix table 1 gives more details about the type of support), the argument seems to be justified that, of the 26 villages, those with more than 3,000 inhabitants received considerably more support than either the smaller or the larger communities. One plausible reason for the low migrant involvement in very small villages is that the numbers of migrants are simply too small to raise enough funds for any substantive project to be undertaken in the community.

In the larger communities there is more and better physical development such as basic road infrastructure, basic communication services, and health and education facilities. Larger communities also have more commercial services that contribute to community development³. Asiwa and Brodekwano, the two smallest communities, have no piped water, no education facilities beyond junior secondary level, no health personnel, and no postal and telecommunication facilities, while Offinso and Kumawu, the two mid-sized communities, have all these facilities plus a public transportation system and a senior secondary level school. Mampong, the largest community, even has semi urban facilities such as a university department, a hospital and maternity home, and limited mobile phone and internet services.

It is likely that small communities do not (as yet) have business ventures that are profitable enough to mobilize migrant support, and that community services are the most effective way for development-minded migrants to get something done. It is also likely that the choice of public/community support opportunities for pioneering new things locally is still available in small communities, while they have all been realized in larger communities, leaving only the more difficult, and more easily corruptible ventures which easily can go wong, for community involvement.

Local inhabitants and community development

A relatively small resource for development are the local inhabitants in the communities themselves. One of the ways in which the contributions of inhabitants are being collected is in the form of local taxes. Each community has its own rules. Asiwa residents pay €2 per head per year for general development purposes and Brodekwano residents pay € 0.80 (males) and

³ Migrant involvement can also take the form of private businesses; these are more likely to occur in larger communities. These private businesses are not the focus of this article.

€ 0.40 (females). No development tax is collected in Mampong and in Offinso and Kumawu only *ad hoc* and sub-community level collections are organized.

In addition to taxes, an important fund-raising mechanism is the collection of contributions at funerals, which are recorded on funeral donation cards. Another is the collection of funds through annual public collections (locally called ‘harvests’). Contributions through funerals are only collected in Brodekwano and Asiwa where 10 per cent of compulsory funeral donations is reserved for development (the next section will elaborate on this system further). With regard to public collections, the 2004 Brodekwano Easter Harvest, to which all local residents as well as visitors from outside and special guests were invited, yielded € 1,500.

Offinso and Kumawu celebrate traditional festivals⁴ that attract local inhabitants, migrants, other non-residents, and visitors to the community. During these festivals appeals are made and these yield considerable amounts of money. These funds are managed by the traditional leaders and are meant for community development. No public accounts of the expenditure of these funds are available, but it is commonly known that a considerable percentage is spent on the renovation or decoration of the chief’s palaces. Mampong does not celebrate a local traditional festival, but fundraising for development used to be organized at Christmas or Easter. Since 2002, however, Mampong inhabitants decided to boycott these harvests, because the traditional leaders could not account appropriately for the money raised.

Local inhabitants contribute to projects not only financially, but also through their labour. This form of contribution is common practice in smaller communities. Examples include the labour to erect the poles for the migrant-financed electrification project in Asiwa and the labour used in the construction of the migrant-financed classrooms in Brodekwano. In Asiwa and Brodekwano bricklayers and carpenters are exempted from paying development tax, but instead they have to use their skills in contributing to communal labour. In the larger communities of Offinso, Kumawu and Mampong communal labour is hardly practised. Only in rare cases do people in a neighbourhood come together to solve a local problem, to clean out a gutter or remove weeds from a stream, for example.

In short, the local rules and norms pertaining to local and non-resident citizens’ contributions to development differ across the five communities. The smaller communities are more persistent in collecting contributions from their own people than are the mid-sized and large communities. Transparency in handling the funds collected from local people is an important issue, which seems to go wrong more easily in larger communities. The direct communication between the leaders and the population contributes to the transparency in small communities.

The effectiveness of sanctioning through funerals

Ashanti people refer to the place where their ancestors were born as their hometown and especially if they have been born there themselves this is the town where they will feel lifelong connection. Eventually, this will also be the soil in which they will want to be buried. This allegiance may lead migrants to donate voluntarily towards hometown development, but migrants do not always make their donations out of free will.

In general, people who leave their hometown for a larger town within Ghana or for greener pastures abroad and stay there for some years are perceived to be rich by those in the hometown; those who migrate abroad are thought to be richer than those who migrate within

⁴ Offinso has the Mmoaninko festival, which celebrates the victory after the second Ashanti-Dorma war in the eighteenth century and the vast stretch of land that was awarded to the then Offinso chief, Nana Wiafe Akenten I. Kumawu has the Papa festival to commemorate the brave warriors who died in the many wars against the former great overlord Ataala Fian of the Afram Plains.

Ghana. Most people in small communities with low levels of development perceive the difference in wealth between migrants and themselves as enormous and expect something back from the migrants. The sharing of wealth, and honour in giving, are deeply-rooted values in the Ashanti culture. In Asiwa and Brodekwano, the two smaller villages, those who leave for greener pastures are explicitly expected to share their wealth with the village. This expectation is so strong that if a non-resident citizen does not contribute to village development, the family in the village would lose respect and the migrant would not receive a warm welcome on a visit to the village or on permanent return. In the case of a generous donation, however, the village would treat the migrant's family with great respect and honour the migrant upon return.

Funerals are the main form of entertainment in small villages and are celebrated much more lavishly than marriages, birthdays or *outdoorings*. In Asiwa and Brodekwano, the expectation that all inhabitants, and migrants in particular, should contribute to development is formalized in the local laws regarding funerals. A retired teacher who raises funds among migrants from Brodekwano explains:

“Here we derive our funds from funerals. It is there and then that those who default in paying their rates are made to settle them before they are permitted to celebrate their funerals”.

This rule applies not only to migrants and their families, but to all inhabitants. In 2004, for example, two Brodekwano residents died and their families were not allowed to hold their funerals until they had paid a total of €150 of outstanding development fees. In such cases the actual *burial* can take place in village soil, but the family is not allowed to hold a *funeral* in which they collect donations from visitors. When a large amount that cannot be paid immediately is due, but the funeral cannot be postponed, the practical solution often applied is for the funeral to be held, but the amount due plus a fine, which is often more than the actual fee, is deducted from the donations the family receive during the funeral. If the total amount to be paid is larger than the donations, the family would have to pay the remainder after the funeral (see table 2). .

Table 2. Institutions and rules pertaining to development in Asiwa, Brodekwano, Offinso, Kumawu, and Mampong, anno 2004.

		Asiwa	Brodekwano	Offinso	Kumawu	Mampong
	Population	3,000 inh.	4,000 inh.	13,000 inh.	16,000 inh.	32,000 inh.
Taxes and collections	compulsory development tax for local residents	yes	yes	only <i>ad hoc</i> and at sub community levels	only <i>ad hoc</i> and at sub community levels	no
	compulsory development tax for migrants	no	yes	no	no	no
	appeal for voluntary migrant contributions to development	yes	yes	only <i>ad hoc</i> and at sub community levels	only <i>ad hoc</i> and at sub community levels	only <i>ad hoc</i> and at sub community levels
	compulsory communal labour for local residents	yes	yes	no	no	no
	annual <i>harvest</i> for development	yes	yes	yes*	yes*	no
	funeral donation card system (10% of compulsory funeral donation is directed development)	yes	yes	no	no	no
	local residents' compulsory participation in all funerals of community members	yes	yes	no	no	no

Sanctions and incentives	migrants who have not contributed to development have to pay a fine before holding a funeral in the community	yes	yes	no	no	no
	migrants who make a substantial donation receive honour in the community	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
leaders	presence of development minded leader(s)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	trust in development minded local leader(s)	yes	yes	no	no	no

Source: own data.

* These harvests are organized by the traditional leaders and used mainly for the decoration or renovations of their palaces.

In Asiwa and Brodekwano, funerals are organized monthly. In 1997, the Unit Committees, which are responsible for development, introduced the ‘donation card’ system now common in small Ashanti villages. In this system, compulsory fixed funeral donations are collected from the inhabitants at every funeral, whether they physically attend or not. 10 per cent of these donations is devoted to community projects and 90 per cent is given to the bereaved family. Donations are recorded on special funeral donation cards that the adults in each of the two communities hold, both residents and non-residents. Between 1997 and 2003, there were 64 funerals held in Asiwa. In 2003, the compulsory donation for each funeral was € 0.05⁵ and of the total €200 donated in that year, €20 became available for Asiwa development⁶.

The Asiwa Unit Committee does not force migrants who are known to be unemployed to contribute to development but, says the chairman; ‘if a family member dies, the community will show that it is serious.’ Unemployment can only exempt migrants from paying towards hometown development temporarily, but this obligation cannot be cancelled completely. The relatives of migrants in the village can also free ride without much problem as long as all family members are alive. They can even take drinks and enjoy themselves at other people’s funerals without being approached by the Unit Committee for their dues, but as soon as death comes to their own family, there is nothing else to be done to avoid major loss of face than pay the dues. According to the chairman of the Asiwa Unit Committee, some migrants only pay towards development when a family member dies and their payment includes a penalty, which would be much higher than the amount actually due. This attitude is, however, deplored in Brodekwano, where one of its leaders once said:

“As long as there is death and people refuse to pay their special rates for development until they get funerals, we are bound to realize some funds. But do we have to tarry for people to expire before we can go on with our projects?”

The strength of the sanctioning element becomes clear in relation to the amounts collected at the development collections that are held annually. These collections, locally called ‘Easter Harvests’, are festive events at which inhabitants, including migrants, and visitors are invited to donate. These events form an important local source of income for development in addition to taxes and the 10 per cent of compulsory funeral donations. They also form the yearly opportunity to collect fines from people who did not pay their compulsory funeral donations. The 2003 Asiwa Easter Harvest, for example, yielded € 731. Table 3 gives the complete breakdown of this Harvest and shows that funeral-related fines amount to 40 per cent of the total amount (€ 50 ‘fines for not coming physically to people’s funerals’ and € 246 ‘fines for

⁵ From 1997 to 1998 the donation was € 0.02 and until 2001 € 0.03 was collected. In 2001 the compulsory donation was increased to € 0.05.

⁶ 500 people donated € 0.05 to eight funerals, 10 ~~percent~~ per cent of which is meant for development.

people who did not pay their 2002 contribution and celebrated a funeral in the meantime'). Funeral-related plus non-funeral-related sanctions amounted to € 88, making fines 46 per cent of the total amount collected.

Table 3. Breakdown of 2003 Asiwa Easter Harvest: contributions made towards Asiwa development.

Asiwa 2003 Easter Harvest (Development Collection)			
Sources of Money	€		
Asiwa residents, voluntary donations	38	from within Asiwa € 135	private funds
Fines for not coming physically to people's funerals ¹ (these three people donated but did not attend funerals)	50		
Two goats killed and sold (fine for their owners for leaving them roaming about) ²	19		
Fine for defaulting communal labour, ten people ²	8		
Fine for defaulting registered labour for sanitation ²	11		
Plot allocation fee, six people	9	from within Ghana € 111	€ 492
Asiwa citizens elsewhere in Ghana, voluntary donations	111		
Fine for people who did not pay their 2002 contribution and who celebrated a funeral or 'ekatetie' celebration* in the meantime, six people ¹	246	partly from within Ghana, partly from abroad € 246	
District Assembly	59	from government	public funds
National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) donation of roofing sheets **	180	€ 239	€ 239
Total	€ 731		

Source: own data.

*Some of these people are not from Asiwa, but wanted to have this celebration in Asiwa in addition to a funeral elsewhere. 'Ekatetie' is a shorter version of a funeral where people sit down and collect donations. Each of them paid €5.

** The roofing sheets were meant for victims of a rain storm, but after a meeting with village leaders it was decided to use some sheets to roof the police quarters. The rest were sold and the money was used for the market project.

¹ funeral-related fines

² non-funeral-related fines

Only one fifth (€ 135) of the total amount of € 731 was contributed by inhabitants of Asiwa, the ultimate beneficiaries of development in their community. Roughly half (€ 357) came from migrants in Ghana and abroad and about one third (€ 239) from the government. In addition to the € 731, an amount totalling € 3,000 for the ongoing electrification project was asked from migrants. The dependence of the community on the benevolence of non-residents and particularly migrants thus becomes clear.

Comparison of funerals in small communities and in mid-sized and large communities

In Offinso, Kumawu, and Mampong the situation is different. Migrants who ignore donations towards the development of their towns can still organize grand funerals for their family members. However, the funeral of a migrant (or a family member) who is publicly known to have made a considerable contribution will receive noticeably more visitors and so the funeral will be more beneficial for the family, because of the higher amount of donations received. An example was the funeral in 2002 of a person from a family in Mampong who was actively involved in a biodiversity project including snail farming and tree planting. His funeral was attended by considerably more people than usual in the community. As a sign of appreciation for what the person had done for the community, the Mampong chief attended the funeral, thereby earning the family great respect.

In contrast with the small communities, people in the mid-sized and large communities of Kumawu, Offinso, and Mampong, are generally free to choose which funerals of community members they attend and which they do not. Five or more funerals may be celebrated in a community on one day, so it would be physically impossible to attend them all, but there is also more ethical freedom. If someone in Mampong decided not to attend any funerals at all, the consequences would be less severe as it is more difficult in large communities to keep an eye on everyone. There is no such 'freedom' in small villages like Asiwa and Brodekwano, where not attending a funeral would result in gossip and, more importantly, in having to pay a fine. Another difference in small communities is that the compulsory funeral donation system is not in place, implying that it is not through funerals that 10 per cent of fixed donations automatically become available for development.

In summary, in the two small villages of Asiwa and Brodekwano, funerals and development are interlinked in four ways. First, people who have not paid all the compulsory development fees in the past are denied the right to organize a funeral for family members. Second, at each funeral 10 per cent of compulsory registered donations are earmarked for development. Third, people who fail to attend other inhabitants' funerals are fined and this money is also used for development purposes. Fourth, local residents or citizens outside the village who donate generously to development are well respected and their funerals are attended by many more people than other funerals. The bereaved family benefits from a larger amount of donations received from visitors. This last link between funerals and development only operates in the mid-sized and large communities of Offinso, Kumawu, and Mampong.

The sanctions used in the two small communities to force migrants to contribute to development have a cultural and a financial element as well. The cultural element is the importance attached to holding a 'fitting funeral' as the last respect paid to a deceased person; the financial element concerns the consequences for individual families of non-payment of the development fees. These two elements make sanctioning very effective in small villages. The compulsory 'funeral donation card' contributions to development in Asiwa and Brodekwano show that, although the amounts collected form just a minor additional amount to the development taxes and special rates that are collected from inhabitants, not obeying the system can have severe consequences for families. The honour that is attached to making donations is deeply rooted in Ashanti culture. The *dishonour* attached to not contributing is a painful sanction in itself for both migrants and their families in small villages, where it can become 'the talk of town'. Asiwa shows that if these feelings are institutionalized effectively, migrants may be motivated to donate generously to development. Asiwa community leaders realize that development depends strongly on outside support; they ensure ongoing development by seeing to it that the system of attracting support works effectively.

Local leadership and trust

Asiwa electrification project: the leader as networker

In 2004, Asiwa was the only one of the five case study communities without electricity. In principle, it is the government's responsibility to provide electricity to all towns and villages in Ghana, but since remote villages tend to be served more slowly than larger and more economically viable towns, getting electricity in a small community may take a long time. If a community does not want to wait for its turn, the people have to raise the money themselves. The items that are necessary to electrify a community are high- and low-tension wooden electricity poles and wires. Each house will then have to purchase a meter from the electricity company before electricity is provided. The government will serve communities where electricity poles have been purchased and erected by the local population more quickly than communities where this has not been done. Communities with development-minded leaders who are able to motivate their people to spend private money on a communal facility like electricity will thus be rewarded by receiving electricity more quickly than other communities.

In the past, the Asiwa community only enjoyed electricity when large (often migrant-financed) funerals were celebrated and a generator was hired. Some of the surrounding communities already have electricity and, through constant communication and comparison with other communities, Asiwa people perceive themselves to be lagging behind those with electricity. Many people in Asiwa have expressed their eagerness to have permanent electricity and are willing to contribute to it personally. However, raising the estimated €9,000 to purchase the 90 electricity poles necessary for the government to install the wires would be virtually impossible for the local inhabitants. Support from outside must therefore be sought (see Box 1).

Box 1. Asiwa electrification project

In the period in which Asiwa was preparing the electrification project, an obligatory fee was imposed on all local and non-resident citizens of Asiwa. Males had to pay €5 and females €3 specifically for the electrification. Asiwa citizens abroad were not asked for a fixed amount, but were invited to make group donations, for example with home town associations. The chairman of the Unit Committee responsible for community development made an effort to contact Asiwa migrants around the world. He did so through contacts with four migrants in USA, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The migrants have no formal obligation to contribute to the project, which is understandable, because they would not make use of the electricity. On the other hand local residents expect the migrants to share their perceived wealth. €5,000 was donated by all the migrants together over a period of some years, while 'only' €1,000 was raised by local residents and Asiwa citizens in other towns within Ghana; probably around €500 came from people residing in places like Accra and Kumasi. The missing €3,000 is expected to be donated by those abroad. Although they are the prime users of the electricity, the local people's contribution amounts to only 6 per cent of the total cost. In non-financial terms, however, their contribution was larger, because the electricity poles were erected in the village with voluntary local labour.

The electrification project in Asiwa shows that the contacts that the committee chairman made with overseas citizens were vital in mobilizing migrant money. It was his creativity and persistence in reaching them that resulted in €5,000 plus an expected additional €3,000 from the migrants. In fact, international migrants contribute for 88 per cent in the cost of the electrification project, internal migrants and local people each for six per cent. Without that money, Asiwa would have had to wait a long time before getting electricity.

Brodekwano education project: the leader as organizer

The case of the Brodekwano education project clearly shows the importance of a local leader. Brodekwano migrants have been contributing to the construction of classrooms for one of the two existing schools in the community and to the ‘Brodekwano Education Development Fund’, a local fund that pays for secondary school education for the four best primary-school leavers of the community each year. The relatively small group of Brodekwano migrants have thereby made a considerable impact on the standard of education in their home community. Migrant support alone, however, would not have brought about a change in Brodekwano, because the implementation of the project in the village itself is a crucial stage of the project, where things can still go wrong. A retired teacher, popularly known as ‘Teacher’, has been the driving force behind the project from the start. With his passion for education, he maintains contact with migrants, raises money from them, makes plans for the construction, enlightens people about the importance of education, and encourages people to participate in communal labour for the classrooms construction.

Because of the high illiteracy rates among Brodekwano adults, the relatively high costs of education, and a number of other reasons many parents in Brodekwano are not very enthusiastic about sending their children to school. The adults are frequently compelled to involve their children or grandchildren in agricultural work to reduce labour costs. With some exceptions, the population of Brodekwano does not see much added value in education for their children. Teacher explains how important it is in a situation like this for someone to be physically present to motivate people for a project: shortly after he lost his wife in October 2005 (at which time he returned temporarily to his own hometown), he says:

“Work on the structure is progressing steadily. The problem now is who can take my stead in mobilising the people for the communal labour. After losing my wife and being away from Brodekwano for the past two months, when I went there on 5th December, they had attended work once. You can see the premium my people put on their children’s education...”

Box 2. Brodekwano education project

‘Teacher’ taught in Brodekwano from 1968 to 1976. Some of his former pupils currently reside abroad. In 2001, when Teacher was sixty years old, he set out to raise the standard of education in Brodekwano. He initiated the local ‘Brodekwano Education Development Fund’ and asked migrants to donate to it. He keeps records of the school results of all Brodekwano primary school students. At the end of the year, he takes the top four from his list and provides them with all materials and fees for their junior secondary school (JSS) education. In this way he tries not to waste talent in his village, because the children always run the risk of not being allowed by their parents to continue their education after primary school.

It particularly frustrates Teacher that none of the Brodekwano-based youth (thus not counting those who have left the village and reside in larger towns) have ever reached senior secondary school level (SSS).. By providing students with JSS education he hopes that some of them will eventually reach SSS. A circumstance that adds to his frustration is that he is surrounded by highly-educated people in his family. His (late) wife was Education Officer and four of his children are studying at Kumasi University (KNUST), Accra University (University of Legon), Harvard in USA, and Oxford in UK.

The construction of the classrooms had quite a few problems. Free local labour was used for carrying sand and other unskilled work necessary for the construction. Masons and carpenters in Brodekwano also used their skills in the construction. They used to do so without charge, but one day they decided that they wanted to be compensated for their time on the project, because they could have done paid work in that time. Teacher, who is in charge of the construction, decided that they were right and gave them an allowance slightly lower than they would have earned elsewhere, in contrast with the unskilled labourers, who still received nothing. But the unskilled labourers found it unfair that they were not being paid, because they too could have used their time productively, for example on their farms.

An emergency meeting was called to discuss the problem. An important part of the meeting was dedicated to enlightening the people once again about the importance of education. Teacher explained that the precious funds received from the migrants would be wasted if labour were to be hired while free labour could be had from their own population. He explained why it was not reasonable to ask skilled labourers to work for free. In the end the people agreed and decided to resume work.

Teacher mobilizes migrant money mainly through letters and phone calls to one person in the Netherlands, who in turn acts as a 'spider in the web' with other migrants. Teacher spends time and money conveying reliable information to this migrant about the situation of his family in Brodekwano. In particular news about illnesses in the family and requests for money to pay for treatment reach the migrant through Teacher. Because of Teacher's involvement, the migrant trusts the truth content of the stories. Teacher also looks after the welfare of the migrant's niece whose higher education the migrant is sponsoring. Teacher sends the girl's school results to the Netherlands so that the migrant can monitor her progress.

The examples of community projects suggest that an essential prerequisite for the success of migrant involvement in development projects is that the leader's behaviour instil trust among migrants and local people. Both Brodekwano and Asiwa have trustworthy leaders who have managed their projects properly and transparently. Local inhabitants as well as migrants were able to monitor the expenditure on the projects, they had their say in decisions, they were regularly informed about progress, and many of them participated in construction activities. The confidence of both migrants and local inhabitants was built up and they became willing to participate in the projects. The Brodekwano project in particular suggests that trust in the community itself is crucial. Since Asiwa and Brodekwano are small communities where most people know and communicate regularly with each other, it is relatively easy for leaders to understand the problems of the community and for the people to ask for accountability from their leaders. A hypothesis to be tested in further research is whether a small community more successfully creates the favourable circumstances with regard to trust in local leaders and thereby enables local leaders to involve migrants (as well as local people) in development projects.

Mampong market project: a lack of trust and transparency

The situation in Mampong is quite different from that of Brodekwano. In the recent past, two incidents in Mampong have severely eroded the trust of both migrants and local people in the local leaders and contributions to development have consequently stopped. One of these incidents involved a market project that had started in 1960 with migrant support, but by 2004 had to be rated a failure as a result of the disagreements and misunderstandings between migrants and local leaders. The other incident was the repeated misuse by traditional leaders of large sums raised in three Easter Harvests since 1992.

Box 3. Mampong market project

Mampong has a decades-old marketplace situated in the centre of the town. All market vendors from Mampong and the surrounding villages use this location for their business. It is a cramped place with many small wooden stalls. It is not roofed and the lanes are not tarred, so in the rainy season it becomes muddy, smelly, and unhygienic. Although people are not happy with the poor circumstances, they still like the place because of its centrality.

In 1960, the construction of a new marketplace on the outskirts of town started. Local leaders chose a place about ten times larger than the old market. Money was allocated by the local government and some donations were received from an early group of migrants. Other migrants also promised money. Long lanes of roofed cement stalls were constructed as well as store rooms and sanitary facilities. But, in spite of its neat and attractive appearance, Mampong people are unenthusiastic about the market and so it has never been used. Vendors complain that the new stalls are too small and customers complain about the long distance they would have to walk for their daily groceries. Besides, there are not enough sanitary facilities. The initial enthusiasm has totally disappeared and critics fear that the only way to get the new place functioning is by force.

Moreover, migrants who wanted to support the project did not intend their support to be a free gift. An agreement was drawn up between the migrants and the local leaders that the rent paid by vendors for the stalls would be transferred into an account so that part of this money would flow back to the migrants. But local

leaders did not keep to this agreement. In addition, there was no communication with the migrants about the decisions made during the construction. Migrants who initially promised money later withdrew from the project, because they lost confidence in it altogether.

The Mampong market project became a failure in various ways. First, the construction took more than forty years to complete. A Mampong leader visited the first migrants in the US and the UK in 1960 as part of a government delegation and was able to generate some support from them for the market project, which started around that time. However, as for now the old unhygienic market place is still in use. Second, local leaders did not involve migrants, vendors or consumers in decisions about important issues such as the location of the market, the size of the stalls, the number of sanitary facilities, and the use of the proceeds of the trade, so that all parties lost trust in the project and migrants who initially promised money later withdrew. Third, because migrants withdrew their support, alternative money sources had to be sought for the completion of the project. Finally, because neither vendors nor consumers are enthusiastic, it is highly doubtful whether the market will ever be successfully used.

A large difference between the Mampong market project and projects in Brodekwano and Asiwa is that, because the Mampong project has taken 45 years, many different local leaders have been involved in the project, in contrast with Brodekwano and Asiwa, where one person has mainly been responsible. Because Mampong people have yet to see any positive results, they lost trust and were hesitant about participating in new projects. And because their traditional leaders could not account for the amounts of money collected in three fundraisings since 1992, which yielded quite impressive amounts of €4,000, €6,000, and €10,000 from both local inhabitants and migrants, by the late 1990s both migrants and local people had lost trust in their leaders.

What happened in Mampong is indicative of the dynamics incurred in other large communities and to some extent also in mid-sized communities. Leaders may start projects enthusiastically and with good intentions, but in the end the institutional environment in a community is decisive for a project's success. One of the traditional leaders in Offinso visits migrants occasionally and is able to collect funds for development. Her handling of the projects is not like that in Mampong, however. Perhaps out of foresight about how things can go wrong, she does not collect money on behalf of local leaders, but for small-scale women's and orphan's projects, which she coordinates herself. In Kumawu there is a development minded person who actively approaches migrants during their visits home and requests them for developmental support on behalf of the community. He does not involve in the implementation of community projects himself. However, the handling of the money, which is donated by the few migrants he is able to persuade, needs professionalization in order to become more effective. Only few small projects have been implemented with the help of migrant money and therefore the impact of his actions remains limited.

Summary and conclusion

This chapter started with the observation that communities with population sizes between 3,000 and 7,000 receive more migrant support than other communities. The differences in the institutional environments of the five communities form an explanation for the differences in migrant involvement. In small communities, the enforcement of migrant involvement in development comes from *within* communities. Sanctioning systems are very effective and are strongly embedded in cultural Ashanti values by being inextricably bound with funerals. In larger communities, contributions to development have a more voluntary character through the absence of effective sanctioning systems. Leadership and projects are also more easily

corruptible, and inhabitants are less motivated to contribute to development because there is more freedom from gossip and less dishonour for people who decide not to contribute.

Sanctioning is only possible if there are leaders who can impose these sanctions and who can motivate people in communities to live up to their obligations. The presence of leaders is crucial for development initiatives in a community. The Brodekwano and Asiwa examples have shown the different attributes that leaders should have in order to be successful. Actively networking among migrants is one of them; enlightening local people about the need of certain improvements, being able to manage conflict situations, and handling financial resources responsibly are also most important. The Mampong example has shown that the room for corruption in larger communities is greater and that development projects can go completely wrong if leaders do not behave in a trustworthy and transparent manner. Offinso and Kumawu show that inactive or inefficient community leadership may also simply lead to very few or no migrant financed community projects and instead to personally initiated projects by active people with migrant contacts.

Summarizing, in order to involve migrants successfully in community development, the institutional environment of rural Ashanti communities must contain at least three elements. These are effective sanctioning, the presence of an active leader, and above all an atmosphere of trust. From a policy perspective, the findings of this chapter are encouraging for small communities, because they indicate that, as long as the institutional environment is kept intact, migrants will be able to help develop their home communities. But findings for larger communities sound pessimistic about the possibilities of involving migrants in development. However, the findings from this research should encourage people to investigate the opportunities of organizing migrant support at the neighbourhood, association or church level. It is conceivable that trust, leadership, and sanctioning are more effective at those levels, thereby increasing the chances of success.

Appendix table 1. Migrant support to public utilities in 26 rural Ashanti communities since the period of mass migration.

Source: interviews with community leaders.

community	population	electrified?	sector of migrant support*				proportion of migrant households	proportion of migrant business in the community	overall migrant support corrected for community size and proportion of migrant households****
			electrification	health**	education***	Other			
Pankrono	36,000	yes	-	-	-	?	many	few	-
Mampong	32,000	yes	-	-+*****	-	-	many	many	-
Konongo	27,000	yes	-	+*****	-+	-	many	many	-+
Agogo	25,000	yes	-	-+*****	-	toilet	many	some	-
Kumawu	16,000	yes	-	-+	-+	street lights	many	few	-+
Offinso	13,000	yes	-	-	-	-	many	many	-
Juaben	12,000	yes	-	+*****	?	day care centre	many	some	+
Ejisu	11,000	yes	-	-	-	?	many	few	-
Agona	9,000	yes	-	+	+	-	many	few	-+
Juaso	8,500	yes	-	+*****	-+	-	many	few	-+
Nyinahin	8,000	no	++	-+	-+	-	many	very few	+
Kuntanase	6,000	yes	+	+	-	-	some	few	+
Domeabra	5,000	yes	+	-	++	road	some	very few	++
Dominase	4,500	yes	+	+	-	community centre	some	very few	+
Abonu	4,000	yes	-	-	-	?	some	few	-
Akyease	4,000	yes	+	-	-+	-	few	very few	+
Brodekwan	4,000	yes	+	-	++	water, library	few	very few	++
Pramso	3,500	yes	-	+	-	community centre	few	very few	+
Asiwa	3,000	no	++	-	-	market	few	very few	++
Senfi	2,500	yes	-+	-	-	street lights	very few	none	-+
Piase	2,500	yes	+	-	+	-	very few	none	+
Ankase	1,500	no	+	-	-	-	very few	none	-+
Nkowi	1,500	yes	+	-	-	street lights	very few	none	-+
Pepee	1,000	no	-+	-	-	road	very few	none	-+
Obbo	800	no	-	-	-+	bridge	very few	none	-+
Sehwi	800	no	-	-	-	?	very few	none	-

* In the columns for migrant support '++' signifies 'very much' support, '+' 'much' support, '-+' 'moderate' support, and '-' signifies 'little or negligible' support. Support is corrected for community size and proportion of migrant households.

** Support for health includes items such as hospital beds, wards, medical instruments.

***Support for education includes computers, books, construction of class rooms, sports items.

**** A score is given. If for example a community has many migrant households and twenty schools, but only one received support in the form of books, it is recorded as '-', while if for example in a community with few migrant households one of the two existing schools is supported with extra class rooms and bursary fund, it is recorded as '++'

***** Hospitals in Mampong, Agogo, Juaben are district hospitals, hence migrant support is for district level. Migrant support from Konongo and Juaso migrants was for the Agogo hospital hence also did not serve local community development.

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