

**INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
STUDIES (ILGS)/  
FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION (FES)**

*THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR  
AS A MANAGER  
IN THE DECENTRALISATION SYSTEM*

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**EDITED BY:  
ESTHER OFEI-ABOAGYE  
DAVID OSEI-WUSU**



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Preface

Introduction:	The DCD as a Manager in the Decentralisation System	vii -ix
Chapter 1:	Overview: Ghana's Decentralisation Process and the Role of the District Coordinating Director by Ms. Esther Ofei-Aboagye	1-12
Chapter 2:	Historical Evolution of the Position of the Generalist Administrator in District Administration by Pro. S. N. Woode	13-15
Chapter 3:	Emerging Roles of the District Coordinating Director and Resulting Training Needs: The Views of a Regional Coordinating Director by Mr. Joe D. Issachar	16-30
Chapter 4:	The Emerging Social, Moral and Ethical Dimensions of the District Coordinating Director's Work: The Implications for Training by Ms. Nancy Dzah	31-38
Chapter 5:	The Emerging Roles of the District Coordinating Director in the Context of Social, Economic and Cultural Issues in Northern Ghana by Mr. Rudolf Kuuzegh	39-48
Chapter 6:	The Emerging Roles and Training Needs of the District Coordinating Director: A Commentary by Hon. Dwamena Aboagye	49-53
Chapter 7:	Capacity Building: The Effectiveness of the District Coordinating Director by Dr. Robert Dodoo	54-66
Chapter 8:	The District Coordinating Director as a Manager: ILGS' Efforts in the Recent Past by Mr. David Osei-Wusu	67-74
Chapter 9:	Remarks on the Role and Training Needs of the District Coordinating Director by Mr. Emmanuel Adzei-Annang	75-76

## **PREFACE**

### **THE ROLE AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR**

**Remarks by Mr. Peter Schellschmidt  
Director, Friedrich Ebert Foundation**

Decentralisation continues to be a cherished process in not only developed but also developing countries. This is because of the realisation that the best legal and administrative framework to enhance participation of the citizenry in running the affairs of a state is decentralisation. In an environment in which good governance has become a catchword, it is only natural that the pre-eminence accorded to decentralisation in the Ghanaian constitution and statute books be recognised and reinforced.

The Committee of Experts, which drafted the Constitution of the Republic, saw Ghana's Constitution as an instrument for promoting development and stressed the importance of decentralisation in terms of the need to improve upon the life of the people.

At the centre of Ghana's decentralisation is the District Assembly. Obviously, Ghanaians expect a lot from the Assembly. The person who normally comes into mind in terms of pushing through Assembly business is the District Chief Executive. Other times, a Presiding Member may be the centre of attention. Often, the public is unaware of the role of District Coordinating Director.

Yet a critical reflection on Act 462 (Local Government Act) as well as PNDC Law 327 (Civil Service Law) would however reveal the District Coordinating Director is the kingpin in the attainment of the Assembly's declared objectives. This is by virtue of his position as the Head of the

Office of the District Assembly and the chief implementer of the Assembly's decisions. The efficiency and effectiveness with which an Assembly conducts its business is thus dependent on the District Coordinating Directors.

It is therefore worthy of commendation that the Institute of Local Government Studies and NALAG have identified District Coordinating Directors as an important target group that must have their needs and functions addressed.

Having identified the need to focus on the District Coordinating Directors, I want to commend the Institute of Local Government Studies and NALAG for their scientific approach. They did not just plunge into a training programme. A preliminary activity of needs identification, along the lines of the one we are having today, should equip the Institute to design a more responsive programme to help improve upon the performance of the District Coordinating Directors.

Continuous training is very essential in a constantly changing environment where the only thing constant is change. Those required providing leadership at whatever level need to appreciate the dynamics of the environment within which we live and see how best to work in same. It is thus my conviction that participants shall attach the relevant importance to today's activity.

Let me commend, again, the Institute of Local Government Studies and NALAG for their continuous strides in working to improve decentralisation in Ghana. I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

Thank-you.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AS MANAGER IN THE DECENTRALISATION SYSTEM

Ghana's decentralisation process is intended to promote a more consultative and participatory approaches toward the realization of social and economic development at the local level. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana in consistent with other existing legislations, reinforced the authority and clarified the functions of district assemblies. The constitution provides for the setting up of decentralised local government and administrative systems that would afford the people within the locality adequate resources and opportunity to participate effectively in governance. To ensure the effective management of these systems of administration, a sound human resource capacity at the district level is critical. The key actors in this vein include among others the DISTRICT chief Executives (DCEs), Presiding Members (PMs), and District Coordinating Directors (DCDs).

The district coordinating director (DCD) in the legislations is in charge of the day-to-day administration of the Office District Assembly and therefore has major influence over the development activities in the districts as well as ensuring the well being of the lives of people. This makes it imperative for DCDs to be equipped with the requisite capacity to handle changes in circumstances at the national and local level. The DCD is required to follow in very strict terms all rules and regulations that would ensure efficiency and productivity at the district level. Additionally, the DCD ought to exhibit strong ethical standards to resist all corrupt practices in the district assembly.

While the DCD's position is crucial and critical, questions as to what the work means in practice have not been sufficiently explored. Neither have the implications of the roles of the other actors nor his relationships with them looked at in-depth. For instance, who is the real manager, the DCD or DCE? What are the implications for capacity? How can the required capacity be built? This book is a collection of papers from various

perspectives, which explores some of these issues. In particular, it focuses on the emerging roles and training needs of the DCD. It also has selected remarks and statements made by partners in decentralisation, during a roundtable discussion on the topic.

Chapter one is an overview of *Ghana's Decentralisation Process and the Role of the DCD*. This chapter, which was written by Ms. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, reviews the ways in which institutional, organizational and political arrangements impact upon the effectiveness of the DCD.

Prof. S. N. Woode in Chapter two of the book writes about the historical evolution of the *Position of the Generalist Administrator* in district administration. The chapter also proposes two models, any of which could be adopted in exploring the training needs of the DCD.

Chapter three of this book, presents the *Emerging Roles of the District Coordinating Director and Resulting Training Needs: The Views of a Regional Coordinating Director*. Mr. Joe Issachar, who was until recently the Regional Coordinating Director of Ashanti Region in this session reveals the sources of the DCD's roles and responsibilities. The chapter also describes the DCD as the captain of the bureaucratic set up at the district level and recognises the need for the DCD to ensure that the team plays well together. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the shortcomings and problems of district management and the DCD's role in addressing such issues.

Chapter four presents *the emerging social, moral and ethical dimensions of the district coordinating director's work*. This chapter written by Ms. Nancy Dzah re-emphasized the functions of the district assemblies as improving the quality of life of the people by effectively harnessing resources through the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. It discusses among others the development of a district strategy that would address the enormous social, economic and moral challenges including the HIV/AIDS epidemic and revenue generation.

Chapter five was written by Mr. Rudolph S. Kuuzegh. This chapter discusses the DCD's role within cultural perspective and particularly, as it pertains to the Northern Region in Ghana.

Chapter six is a commentary during a roundtable discussion on the emerging roles and training needs of the DCD in August 2000 by Hon. K. Dwamena Aboagye. This paper identifies the DCD as being in charge of the closest government unit to the public. It explains why DCDs should sharpen their skills on a continuous basis as well as have enhanced capacity to manage people and tasks.

Chapter seven shares an insight on capacity building and the effectiveness of the district coordinating director. This chapter was derived from the keynote address delivered by the former Head of the Civil Service, Dr. Robert Dodoo during a roundtable discussion on the subject. The chapter takes a comprehensive look at the challenges encountered with deployment of staff (with specific reference to the DCD) to the districts including their levels of competencies and tools employed to enhance performance of such staff.

Chapter eight by David Osei-Wusu shares some training interventions initiated by the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS). The chapter was therefore devoted to sharing the outcomes of two events organised by the Institute of Local Government Studies in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the National Association of Local Authorities in Ghana (NALAG). These events were firstly, the Roundtable Discussion on the Emerging Roles and Training Needs of the DCD, which explored strategies that the DCD has adopted in the performance of his/her duties. The other event was series of four-day skill building workshops for DCDs. This paper explains how ILGS and partners were able to encourage the DCDs to appreciate their roles in bringing about progress and development.

The last chapter of this book brings together two very important remarks from partners. These are remarks by the Resident Director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the Secretary General of the National Association of Local Authorities in Ghana (NALAG) during the roundtable discussion on the subject.

**Esther Ofei-Aboagye**  
**David Osei-Wusu**

## CHAPTER 1

**OVERVIEW: GHANA'S DECENTRALISATION PROCESS AND THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR**

By: Esther Ofei-Aboagye

The past decade has witnessed a major shift in Ghana in approaches to delivering social and economic development. In line with many other countries, Ghana has tried to give impetus to national efficiency by undertaking political and administrative decentralisation. As indicated in the 1992 Republican Constitution, Ghana's decentralisation process is also intended to promote equitable participation in governance especially at the local level. This reflects the recognition of the need to move from a centrally-directed approach to public decision-making to a more consultative, inclusive, participatory and consensus-driven system.

The new approach has involved the transfer of power, competence, authority and resources to local spheres of government. While a considerable amount has been achieved in terms of encouraging Ghanaians to take an interest in local level decisions that affect their lives, there are still unresolved concerns such as fiscal decentralisation and integration in the delivery of social services. The whole exercise requires not only political autonomy but organisational and management efficiency as well. The responsibility of ensuring effective local authority is mainly that of the politically appointed head of the district, the District Chief Executive (DCE) and of the civil servant head of the district bureaucracy, the District Coordinating Director (DCD).

The role of the DCE and the exigencies of his position have been extensively explored in various fora and in the literature (MLGRD, 1991; MLGRD, 1992; MLGRD, 1993; MLGRD, 1995; MLGRD, 1999;

MLGRD 2000; Ayee, 1999; Thomi, Yankson and Zanu, 2000). However, the work of the DCD, the practical concerns of this position in the changing socio-economic circumstances of the country and the related capacity building and skills requirements have not been the focus of as much attention.

This paper attempts to raise some of the issues surrounding the exercise of the office of the DCD and some of the questions that need to be explored further in an effort to craft appropriate training and educational programmes to support the development of a professional local government manager. The paper uses the masculine gender "he" and "his" to describe the officer and the functions of the office of the DCD for convenience of expression.

The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) which was established in 1999 to promote effective local governance is concerned with the efficient management of resources, human, material, social and political. It recognises the importance of technical competence in strategically mobilising and allocating these resources to the best advantage of the locality. It also recognises the tightrope that must be walked in managing the competing and differing interests equitably while ensuring the inclusion of views of various categories of people in the district.

It is in this regard that ILGS sought to explore critically, the involvement of the DCD as a technically competent and non-partisan manager in the decentralisation process.

Under the current decentralisation process, the office and roles of the DCD in relation to the Office of the District Assembly are described in PNDC Law 327 (the Civil Service Law of 1993) and Act 462 (the Local Government Act of 1993).

**Section 30 of PNDC Law 327 states:**

- (1) *The Office known as the District Administration shall be known and called the Office of the District Assembly. The Office of a District Assembly shall be responsible for*
  - (a) *the implementation of development policies of the district assembly;*
  - (b) *effective budgeting;*
  - (c) *observance of financial, stores and budgeting rules and guidelines;*
  - (d) *initiation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes; and*
  - (e) *taking measures for improving the condition of life of the people in the rural and urban areas.*
- 2 *There shall be appointed the head of the office of a District Assembly who shall be known as the District Coordinating Director;*
- 3 *A District Coordinating Director shall have the same rank as a Director in a Ministry;*
- 4 *A District Coordinating Director shall ensure that the functions and responsibilities of his office are efficiently and effectively carried out;*
- 5 *The District Coordinating Director shall be answerable to the District Secretary (District Chief Executive) in the performance of his functions;*
- 6 *Staff of the Office of the District Assembly shall be answerable to the District Secretary through the District Coordinating Director.*

**Act 462 states in Section 36 that**

- 1 *There shall be a district coordinating director for each district in Ghana who shall be secretary to the assembly and the head of the District Coordinating Directorate;*
- 2 *The District Coordinating Director shall be a member of the local government service.*

In practice, how have the functions of the DCD turned out to be? In a speech on Relational Issues in District Management in October, 1998, the Hon. Kwamena Ahwoi (then Minister of Local Government and Rural Development) made the following comment:

*"the District Coordinating Director is the only one who is neither elected nor appointed. He holds the position by merit. He is the Secretary to the District Assembly and the Head of the District Bureaucracy. He is the implementer of the assembly's decisions and not a policy-maker. He is entitled to everybody's respect and support just as he himself should defer to the will of the assembly members. The other players particularly the District Chief Executive must avoid having role conflicts with him or her".*

In what ways have the institutional, political and organisational arrangements outlined above impacted upon the effectiveness of the DCD? In what ways have macro-economic as well as institutional reform (including the Civil Service Improvement Programme CSPIP) impacted upon his work? Other intriguing questions about the work of the DCD within the context of the changing environment of decentralisation include the following:

- \* What are the implications of current changes in local circumstances for the DCD burgeoning populations, the need to provide commensurate infrastructural services, the need to build partnerships with local private and non-governmental actors and environmental concerns?
- \* What is his role in ensuring the participation and inclusion of sections of the population which have been hitherto marginalised in local decision-making processes (women, the disabled and migrants amongst others)?
- \* Should the DCD's relationship with the assembly include taking responsibility for an assembly's performance? Indeed, should a

DCD sign a performance contract on behalf of an assembly, the behaviour of whose members he has little control over?

- \* Is gender an issue that has implications for the effectiveness of a DCD, given the paucity of women DCDs? (In 1999/2000 there were three women DCDs out of the one hundred and ten officers working in that capacity). A review of DCDs and people acting in that capacity suggested that women were of senior rank as compared to the majority of their male counterparts.
- \* What realistic opportunities exist for self-development for the DCD? Indeed, what realistic opportunities are there for professional or career advancement? What training programmes exist that can complement those currently available to the DCD?

It was to raise these and other issues that relate to the exercise of the office of the DCD that ILGS and its partners, the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) organised a one-day conference to examine the roles of the DCD. The conference had presentations from the Head of Civil Service, Regional Coordinating Directors, District Coordinating Directors as well as academics and training practitioners.

A number of important outputs were generated from the conference including thoughts on the office of the DCD as well as proposals for short and longer programmes to supplement the existing training packages. Some of the roles that were identified were chief advisor to the assembly, coordinator, manager, change agent and communicator. These are discussed further below.

The DCD should consider himself chief advisor to the assembly. In that regard he himself must be well informed, discreet and alive to various nuances that influence events in the district.

Being chief advisor requires the provision of executive leadership by the DCD. It also requires the effective management of the political boss, the DCE as well as being sensitive to the requirements and feelings of assembly members, heads of decentralised departments and other actors. This function therefore requires managing relationships with various functionaries at the district level some of whom are politically appointed or elected such as DCEs and Presiding Members. These functionaries have different time frames within which to do their work. This has implications for their sense of urgency. The security of their tenure of office also varies and with it, their commitment to and perceptions about their jobs. These functionaries also have differing levels of exposure, education and priorities. All of these factors influence the DCD's effectiveness, the issues he has to deal with and the kind of cooperation to expect.

In the provision of non-partisan, professional leadership, the DCD must manage himself. The socio-economic, political and cultural realities as well as resource inadequacies at the local level present challenges to those who manage district assemblies. In particular, questions of ethical behaviour, fairness and impartiality arise in the work of the DCD. The DCD must determine what constitutes a conflict of interest for himself as well as for the functionaries and politicians he works with. The code of ethics provided by the Office of Head of Civil Service is

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We acknowledge the critical input of Mr. S.Y.M. Zanu (former Chief Director of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) for his thoughts about the strategic roles of the DCD delivered at the opening ceremony of the October/November, 2000 workshop for DCDs held at ILGS.

a good beginning as a guide but what other rules of thumb should the DCD have for managing the grey areas it may not cover?

By the very title he holds, the DCD is a coordinator. Yet, in reality what has the coordination function entailed? While an integrated local government service was envisaged by the Constitution, did coordination



mean that the DCD would be "primus inter pares" amongst the directors at the district level including the directors of the decentralised departments? PNDC Law 327 indicates in Section 33 that the heads of departments of the district assembly would be directly answerable to the PNDC Secretary for their work (not the DCD). The DCD also has a role in activating and operationalising the sub-district structures.

Apart from coordinating the articulation and implementation of the aspirations and plans for the district, the DCD is also expected to play advisory, mediating and advocacy roles as part of his coordination function. While legislative, policy and financial integration of sectors at the local level is yet to be achieved fully, a skillful DCD can promote collaboration, information and resource-sharing resulting in cooperation at the district level. This requires personal effectiveness particularly skills in communication, negotiation, networking and interactive leadership skills.

The DCD as a manager must oversee the effective mobilisation and use of resources. In this respect, some DCDs have called for a professionalisation of their post in which case they would be recruited as professional, non-political managers by the local authority concerned. Such a person would have a certain minimum academic specialisation (such as postgraduate training in public administration and local government) and would be offered attractive conditions of service. This person would also have clear authority to manage resources including responsibility for hiring and firing staff.

This manager must also be able to generate, store, retrieve and circulate the information that is required to plan, coordinate and implement local level development interventions. To this end, he requires information management support facilities and personnel.

The DCD as a change agent must recognise his role in bringing about progress and development. This role requires the management of

Change in terms of introducing and implementing government policy. It also involves overseeing the changes they bring as people around the DCD (indeed, and the DCD himself) undergo behavioural change to keep up with the innovations. The pressure on the public sector to be more efficient and businesslike is one of the changes that the DCD must manage in the effort to deliver local level development. In this respect, the public sector is expected to be more competitive, entrepreneurial and pro-active. Government at all levels is expected to seek partnerships with other government organisations, the private, non-governmental and civil society sectors with a view to optimizing resources, integrating development and enhancing sustainability. The DCD has to interpret this orientation and lead the way in its implementation.

In this role, the DCD must communicate effectively, plan thoroughly and feasibly, implement consistently, monitor, evaluate and integrate the lessons learned. The DCD must be able to think strategically and creatively. He should be able to think on his feet, weighing the merits and demerits of a situation. The DCD serves as a critical link between the DCE, assembly members and the administrative-technical staff who service the first two sets of functionaries. As part of this duty, a DCD may find himself being required to play a moderating and neutralising role in conflicts between various actors such as between DCEs and Members of Parliament (MPs), DCEs and Presiding Members (PMs) and appointed and elected members of assemblies

## Conclusion

Unfolding experiences suggest that in practice, the office of the DCD is not as clear-cut as the laws suggest. Apart from the administrative and coordinating functions, it appears that the DCD has had moral, mediating, advocacy and capacity-building roles to perform.

The advice given by the Hon. Ahwoi referred to earlier in this chapter has not been easy to follow. Also, events of the first few months of the year 2001 suggest that the DCD does occupy a very strategic position in the Ghanaian local government system. In a situation where the new government found it imperative to dispense with the services of the DCEs inherited from the old regime, DCDs were required to manage districts in the interim.

Exigencies at the district level require the DCD to be knowledgeable, adaptable, tactful, innovative and responsive. The new development priorities of promoting local economic development, managing partnerships with the public and non-governmental sectors and dealing with multiple demands of development partners require various skills that many DCDs have had to develop on the job.

Existing training programmes for civil servants sponsored by the Office of the Head of Civil Service and organised by such institutions as the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) may have equipped this person technically and managerially for a public administrator's job. However, it is not clear that the contents have been specifically geared towards the critical circumstances of local governments. Other programmes targeting district level functionaries have not targeted DCDs in particular, nor have they offered extensive opportunities for DCDs to meet and share experiences.

It may be that existing training programmes have not kept pace with the evolution of the function of the DCD and the socio-economic and political realities of the environment within which he operates. There is a clear need to orient generic public administration programmes to accommodate the practicalities of overseeing local environments and engaging local interest groups and stakeholders. Appropriate training programmes must also explore in some depth, public policy analysis and public finance, in particular the medium-term expenditure

framework (MTEF) process and how that budgeting process accommodates local government aspirations and priorities. Deeper insights into the Civil Service Performance Improvement Project (CSPIP) and other reforms and how these impact upon DCDs as local level operators must be provided.

DCDs should also have opportunities to network more. The creation of networks could facilitate the development of appropriate academic and professional standards, adherence to a code of ethics and regular opportunities to share experiences and update skills.

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## CHAPTER 2

# **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE POSITION OF THE GENERALIST ADMINISTRATOR IN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION- A COMMENTARY.**

**Samuel N. Woode**

**Director, Institute of Local Government Studies**

The District Coordinating Director's position is not an easy one. He is the head of the public service bureaucracy in a district and yet he is not the master of the Universe within which he operates. The District Chief Executive, a politician who represents the entire government in the district sits on top of the occupant of the Office.

This situation is very much unlike what used to be the case in the Colonial days. Between 1874 and 1954 the representative of the entire government in the field was embodied in one person and one Office - the District Commissioner. He represented the government in the field and was indeed, the little Governor in the bush. In the Lugardian scheme of things, the District Commissioner was a friend, guide and philosopher to the Native Authority System of local government.

The period 1954-1960 saw the District Commissioner yielding his place to the Government Agent - a regular civil servant. He was the generalist representative of the government in the field. His primacy in the governmental scheme of things and public affairs within a district was not in doubt. But he was not in local government.

The District Commissioner of the one-party CPP regime replaced the civil servant Government Agent. He was more of a political animal. Like his predecessors, the District Commissioner was not strictly part of the local government administration, but could get involved (in a meddling way) because of the political advantage that came with the position.

Arguing for the decentralisation of the machinery of government, the Mills-Odoi Commission had it that the business of government is one and indivisible no matter by whom and where conducted. The logic of this argument was that one and the same unit would serve for both local and central government businesses. This would require strong direction and leadership from one point; hence the District Chief Executive - Chief Executive in both central and local government business. In a sense the Office brought in one place the Government Agent, District Commissioner and the Town Clerk or Clerk of Council.

The position has held since then: Whether under military or civilian rule, governments have appointed generalist representatives to take care of central and local government affairs within districts. The military has tended to entrust the position to civil servants, and party-based civilian governments have tended to use party faithfuls and cronies.

Whether the District Chief executive has been a civil servant or a party agent, he remained the master of the Universe within which he existed. The situation is now different. There is the District Chief Executive who represents the entire government in the district. The District Chief executive is also chief executive of the District Assembly; and has political advantage with the political party controlling the government.

This is the political reality and atmosphere with which the District Coordinating Director has to contend. Does it pose a threat or an opportunity? May be we need to put the question in another way so that the matter is not seen as either or. To this end, we may need to search for appropriate models, which will help with the definition of the role of the District Coordinating Director and order the relationship between the District Coordinating Director and the District Chief Executive.

The models, which suggest themselves, are many. There is the view that the District Coordinating Director can complement the District Chief Executive, with the two seeing themselves as partners. Another view is for the District Coordinating Director to see himself as a coordinating manager, very much like the General Manager is to the Managing Director. Finally, as at the national ministerial level, the District Coordinating Director can be to the District Chief Executive what the Chief Director is to the Minister. The adoption of a particular model will largely determine what might emerge as the training needs of the District Coordinating Director.

### CHAPTER 3

## EMERGING ROLES OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AND RESULTING TRAINING NEEDS: THE VIEWS OF A REGIONAL COORDINATING DIRECTOR

Joe D. Issachar

### INTRODUCTION

This country inherited a highly Centralised Public Administrative System with dysfunctional consequences. The system stifled initiative and resulted in the lop-sided development of the country usually defined as the rural-urban imbalance.

From the beginning of the nineteen fifties to the present day, one can count over twenty initiatives, in the form of commissions and committees, set up one after the other, all aimed at decentralising Ghana's Public Administrative System. No durable decentralised administrative structure, however, resulted from these commissions and committees. One reason was that Governments were not given the time to put into effective operation the proposals from these committees and commissions due to political instability. Frequent changes in government led to a reversal of policies, and the introduction of new ones, which also eventually ended up collecting dust on the shelves.

This situation has affected nearly all institutions in the country. At the end of it all, the Civil Service was still a target of criticism and condemnation by Government, the press and several other sections of society. It had earned the accolade of pen pushing, facelessness, redtapism and so on.

It is against this background of unhealthy name calling of the Civil Service that the PNDC came into being. It was not surprising therefore

that the effort to revamp the Civil Service was revived with even greater vigour. The revamping exercise aimed at a complete restructuring and decentralisation of the entire public administrative system.

## THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY SYSTEM

Ghana's decentralisation process initiated by the PNDC in 1982, reached its climax in 1988 with the promulgation of PNDCL.207, which established the District Assemblies.

PNDC Law 207 introduced a new Local Government System with twenty-two (22) decentralised departments under the supervision of the District Assemblies. For the first time, part of Central Government decision-making and direct governance was no longer from the Centre, but from the Districts or "grassroots".

Section 30(2) mentioned the District Administrative Officer. However, his role not specified. The Model Standing Orders nevertheless stated that the District Administrative Officer should be Secretary to the Assembly. The success and momentum attained by Law 207 endured and carried forward to the Fourth Republic.

## THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

The current Local Government System has a three tier District Assembly structure of District Assembly, Town/Area Councils and Unit Committees.

The decentralised system is a fused or single integrated system of administration at the district level. In this system, both decentralised Central Government institutions and the local representative institution merge. In this sense, there is no distinction between the decentralised institutions and the local government institutions.

The adoption of this model of administration called for an effective coordination mechanism, which would promote the attainment of local development.

The Assembly performs its functions through the Executive Committee and a network of sub-committees. The Executive Committee exercises executive and Coordinating functions of the assembly while the five (5) sub-committees collate and deliberate on issues relevant to their functional areas.

The Assembly is the highest governing body in the District and exercises its executive and supervising functions through the executive committee.

For administrative effectiveness, a secretariat or Central Administration supports the District Chief Executive (DCE). The Central Administration or the Office of the District Assembly is headed by the District Coordinating Director (DCD) who reports to the DCE and is in charge of the day-to-day administration of the office of the District Assembly. In addition, the District Coordinating Director is responsible for all Heads of Decentralised Departments of the Assembly. This reporting relationship gives the Office of the District Assembly a core secretarial or central administration for service delivery.

The Central Administration of the Office of the District Assembly is broadly made up of two departments.

- 1 General Administration Provides financial and administrative support services and coordinates and harmonises the activities of all departments of the Assembly.
- 2 Planning and Budgeting Co-ordination Draws up and monitors development plans, programmes and budget of the Assembly. Also monitors the Assembly's revenue generation drive.

The decentralised departments are 11, 13 and 16 respectively for District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies (First Schedule, Act 462).

There is a Local Government Inspectorate, which audits financial transactions of the Assembly and reports to the District Coordinating Director.

### THE SOURCES OF DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

However creative and innovative Act 462 are, it cannot achieve effective and efficient District Management/Administration. Act 462 must exist in collaboration with, be consistent with and articulate existing legislation and regulations.

The major legislation, regulations and documents, which have implications for roles and responsibilities of the DCD are:-

- 1 The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992
- 2 The Civil Service Law 1993, PNDC Law 327
- 3 The Local Government Act 1993, Act 462
- 4 The District Assemblies' Common Fund Act 1993, Act 455
- 5 The Planning Systems Act 1994, Act 480
- 6 Legislative Instrument, LI 1589
- 7 DA Establishment Instrument

- 8 Financial Administration Decree 1979, SMC 221 (FAD)
- 9 Financial Administration Regulations, 1979 (FAR), LI 1234
- 10 District Tender Board, LI 1600
- 11 Model Standing Orders for Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies
- 12 Financial Memoranda for Local and Urban Councils under the Local Government Act, 1961

And:

- 1 The constitution explicitly provides for a system of decentralised Local Government Administration Article 240(1). 240(2) outlines the features of the decentralised government.
- 2 The Act Establishes and regulates the local government system in accordance with the 1992 Constitution.
- 3 Section 36 states that the DCD shall be Secretary to the Assembly and the head of the District Coordinating Directorate.
- 4 The Civil service Law 1993, PNDC Law 327 provides a framework for the formulation and implementation of Government policies for the development of the country.
- 5 Part V Section 23 34 of the Civil Service Law deal with Decentralisation. The Sections provide among other things that the position of the RCD and DCD shall have the rank as Chief Director and Director respectively. These Sections also make specific provision for financial management and fiscal decentralisation.

Section 30(1), (2), (3) & (4) provide for the establishment of the Office of the District Assembly. The District Coordinating Director is the head of the Office of the District Assembly. The occupant of the position ensures the effective implementation of the functions and responsibilities of the Office.

6 Section 31 outlines the role of the Office of a District Assembly as follows:

- a Implementation of development policies of the Assembly
- b Effective budgeting
- c Observance of financial, stores and budgetary rules and guidelines.  
Initiation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes
- d Taking measures for improving the conditions of life of the people in the rural or urban areas.

7 Article 243 provides that the District Chief Executive shall be:-

- a responsible for the day-to-day performance of the executive and administrative functions of the District Assembly.

8 Section 2 (3) (b) reechoes Article 243 (a)

9 Section 32 and 33 concludes that the existing departments in the District shall be known as the departments of the District Assembly and the heads of the Decentralised departments shall be directly answerable to the DCE for their work.

10 Section 161 of Act 462 states that 22 departments listed in the Eighth Schedule of the act shall cease to exist in the coming into force of the Act. The relevant departments of the District Assembly will take up their functions.

11 Section 34 outlines the functions of Departments of District Assembly as follows:-

- a Responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Assemblies to the Executive Committee through the Office of the District Assembly.
- b Provide quarterly reports on the implementation of decisions of the Assemblies to the Executive Committee through the Office of the District Assembly.

12 Articles 190(2) stipulates that the Civil Service shall until provision is otherwise made by Parliament comprise service in both Central and local government.

13 Section 1 of the Civil Service Law 1993, PNDCL 327 echoes Article 190 of the 1992 Constitution. The section makes it clear that the Civil Service of Ghana forms part of the Public Services of Ghana and that the service comprises services in a civil office of government in both Central and Local Government.

14 The District Assemblies' Common Fund Act provides for District Assemblies' Common Fund.

15 The Financial Administration Decree (FAD) provides clear definition of powers and responsibilities, which are essential for the smooth and effective working of the financial machinery of government. The Decree also provides a framework of administrative powers and accountability by which the activities of individual office holders respond to legislative authority.

16 The Financial Administration Regulations (FAR) is from the Financial Administration Decree. The FAR compliments the FAD and provides the operational framework for the FAD.



## THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR

The type of bureaucracy installed in the district is to make the District Assembly very effective. The concept of the Coordinating Director as the head of the District bureaucracy is new. He is the captain of the bureaucratic set-up and must ensure that the team plays well together.

It is difficult to describe the role of the District Coordinating Director in a simple manner. However, the designation of the District Coordinating Director vividly sums up his role. He performs two basic management functions, coordinating and directing.

Inherent in the role of the District Coordinating Director is the general and traditional functions of management. It is possible to specify the duties and responsibilities of the District Coordinating Director in a job description. The main fields of activity, however, may be more closely defined as follows:

- 1 To take initiative and give principal advice in policy formulation
- 2 The provision of integrating staff work and service policy-making decisions of the Assembly. This function entails bringing together the contribution of other officers. It involves consultation within the management team, to assist members of the assembly in formulating plans and in determining priorities including the preparation of realistic programme budget compatible with financial and manpower resources.
- 3 The coordination of the department to ensure that the effective carrying out of policy decision take place. This function incorporates the setting up and maintenance of appropriate management structures and the constant examination of administration system.

The District Coordinating Director is the principal officer of the District Assembly. The District Coordinating Director is accountable to the Assembly.

- 4 The District Coordinating Director is the bridge between the political and official machines. He needs the co-operation and support of both the politicians and the officials to get his work done properly.

Many assembly members are asking why we should have a District Coordinating Director. The burden of proof lies the other way round. How could we justify not having a District Coordinating Director? There are many questions, which need answers. They include:

- How are we to integrate departmental activities?
- Who sets the common bond and purpose for all employees?
- Who ensures that members receive appropriate advice?
- Who ensures that officers receive appropriate advice and review on their progress in implementing assembly decisions?
- Who looks to the economic deployment of resources with the assembly?
- Who represents the assembly as employer in dealing with industrial relations?
- Who provides the assembly with continuity and constituency?

The District Assemblies pose a wide range of challenges. District Assemblies are the largest employers, often the biggest spenders. The District Assemblies' Common Fund has made available huge resources to the Assemblies.

We have to put in position competent, knowledgeable and experienced Coordinating Director to manage the affairs of the assembly and pull it together.

### SHORTCOMINGS AND PROBLEMS OF DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

Shortcomings and factors that militate against effective district management include but are not limited to the following items listed below which are not mutually exclusive nor intended to be exhaustive.

- 1 Inability to recruit or station substantive Director with requisite qualification, expertise and experience to head district as provided by PNDCL 327.
- 2 Weak Development Planning and Physical Planning.
- 3 Weak budgetary preparation expenditure allocation.
- 4 Ignorance or non compliance with financial regulations, guidelines store regulations
- 5 Laxity in supervision and monitoring of projects, programmes and revenue mobilisation
- 6 Embezzlement, misappropriation and misapplication of funds
- 7 Delay or inability to submit required returns or statements or quarterly reports

- 8 Lack of understanding of clear lines of authority and responsibility for management
- 9 Conflicting roles District Financial Officers and Budget Officers
- 10 Conflicting roles District Planning Officers and District Budget Officers
- 11 Conflicts between District Chief Executives, who is responsible for the day-to-day performance of the executive and administrative functions of the District Assembly, and the District Coordinating Directors
- 12 Ignorant or inaccessibility to relevant circulars, directives, policy statements
- 13 Indiscipline
- 14 Inability to meet targets
- 15 Political and traditional authorities interference
- 16 Low level of revenue generation Improvements in Efficiency and Strategies; Poor tax policy and Tax administration and enforcement
- 17 Inadequate staff development and training schemes
- 18 Lack of proper education on civic responsibilities
- 19 Limited ability to pay taxes because of extremely low-income levels of rural population. (Productivity Improvement and Income Generation Poverty Alleviation).

- 20 Setting unrealistic targets and performance measurement - Financial performance, Efficiency and productivity of staff, quality of Service
- 21 Existence of weak internal controls
- 22 Inadequate database e.g. nominal rolls, registers, valuation list, district profile etc.
- 23 Limited Revenue Sources to the District Assembly Traditional revenue sources have remained constant and even falling when the Common Fund became operational
- 24 Lack of visible development and services commensurate with community and tax payer expectations
- 25 Conflict between DCD/ Assembly members on the implementation of decisions
- 26 The Executive Committee is made responsible for the day to day administration
- 27 Divided loyalty of heads of decentralised departments co-ordination difficulties. The centre and the region still relate to the district departments.
- 28 Fiscal Decentralisation composite budget seem to offer the best prospects for the attainment of effective co-ordination
- 29 Lack of consistent training programme for DCD and other senior staff

## TRAINING NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR

Ghana has a national agenda spelt out in the goals of Vision 2020, which envisages the transformation of the country into a middle-income economy by the year 2020. This is possible through good governance of institutions, communities and us.

The Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) introduced in 1995 began a process of correcting the ineffectiveness; lack of professionalism and development orientation that characterised government machinery.

It is significant that we should be concerned with improvements in the management capacity at the district level.

For the District Coordinating Director to accomplish the critical tasks assigned to him, he must be equipped with a wide range of skills, techniques, discipline and knowledge.

Although the position of District Coordinating Director has become the preserve of the Administration Class in the Civil Service, they do not have a strong managerial culture. The fact is that the managerial culture is still under-developed in the Civil Service.

I propose the design of a systematic training programme alongside the career path of the Administrative Officer as illustrated in the table below:

TABLE I

GRADE	EXISTING TRAINING PROGRAMMES AT THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (GIMPA)

Assistant Director IIB	Certificate in Public Administration
Assistant Director IIA	Diploma in Public Administration
Assistant Director I	Masters in Development Management
Deputy Director	Senior Management Development Course (SMDC)
Director	Chief Executive Programme

### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED TRAINING

- i Principles of Administration and Leadership
- ii Policy Development analysis and evaluation techniques
- iii Management
- iv Procurement Principles
- v Monitoring Systems
- vi Negotiating skills and strategies
- vii Project formulation, evaluation and analysis
- viii Performance target setting and work measurement
- ix Records management
- x Work organisation and work flow
- xi Motivational skills
- xii Entrepreneurial and innovative skills
- xiii Resource mobilisation and optimisation
- Xiv Information Technology

In addition, there must be the opportunity for overseas courses, International Seminars, attachments especially Private Sector Organisations.

The training programmes at Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) should focus to meet the challenging demands of Local Government Training. Training should not aim at satisfying promotion criteria. Instead, it should emphatically aim at improving job performance.

Further, I suggest the formation of an Association of Local Government Administrators and the institution of the Annual Conference of District Coordinating Directors. There is no forum for District Coordinating Directors. The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) virtually draws its membership from among District Chief Executives and Presiding Members. The benefits of this proposal are many. The fora will provide District Coordinating Directors the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. The interaction with resource persons from the centre would also update them on new directions and developments on national goals and policies, national and global concerns about development. District Coordinating Directors will come out better informed, enriched and inspired to demonstrate a greater sense of dedication, professionalism and accountability.

**If we are to achieve the goals of vision 2020 and improve the conditions of our rural people, then we need very illustrious, confident, results oriented District Managers.**

## CHAPTER 4

# THE EMERGING SOCIAL, MORAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR'S WORK: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

By Ms. Nancy Dzah

The concept of decentralisation was conceived in the early 1980s and culminated in the passing of the Local Government Law 1988 PNDCL 207, which has been replaced by the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462. It seeks to transfer administrative authority including functions and powers, from central government to District Assemblies.

The policy is to encourage and promote popular participation in governance and development planning implementation, which in turn should lead to equity in the distribution of the national "cake".

The objective of proper development is to solve people's problems, respond to their needs and meet their goals and aspirations. Taking government to the grassroots, therefore, will ensure an achievement of some, if not all, of these objectives.

The creation of District Assemblies is to achieve these objectives. To that effect, community representatives and decentralised agencies are to form a team of development agents. The objective of the development team is to deliberate on the development opportunities of the district, as well as develop an integrated strategy to combat the district's development problems. This is, in short, what District Assemblies exist to do.

Who then is the District Coordinating Director? What are the roles and responsibilities of the Office? The District Coordinating Director is a

director of administration in the Civil Service. The Office is a public functionary Office, with an important function of chief adviser to the District Chief Executive, who has overall political and administrative responsibility for the District. Presently, the policy on decentralisation has led to a fusion of a number of government agencies at the district level into one administrative unit. The District Coordinating Director has the responsibility of Coordinating and monitoring the activities of all the departments, including NGOs to ensure that there is harmony and consistency of efforts. In addition, the District Coordinating Director is the secretary to the District Assembly. Obviously, the Office of the District Coordinating Director has a lot of responsibility. Indeed, the Office of the District Coordinating Director is the pivot around which all activities in the district revolve.

What is different about the Office of the District Coordinating Director that distinguishes it from the former Office of the District Administrative Officer? It is worthwhile to note that the emphasis of the Office has shifted from just the maintenance of law and order at the local level to the concept of rural development administration. In other words, the District Coordinating Director is no longer a generalist but a specialist in local government administration. In this regard I believe that the position of District Coordinating Director was created to serve as a catalyst in the new local Government System.

As the head of the new administrative unit that is supposed to have emerged at the District level, an important role of the District Coordinating Director is that of a team player. As a team player, the District Coordinating Director depends on the advice and expertise of the various heads of the decentralised departments. As far as the district team is concerned, the District Coordinating Director is the first among equals. It is important that the occupant of the position is able to generate confidence therefore is self-confident.

In the light of the above, the Office of the District Coordinating Director faces many challenges indeed. I wish to mention a few of these challenges:

- 1 The District Coordinating Director has the responsibility of ensuring that the human resource of the Assembly is developed. In the Suhum/Kraboah/Coaltar District Assembly, we had the following as our mission statement:

*The Suhum/Kraboah/Coaltar District Assembly exists to improve the quality of life of the people by effectively harnessing resources through the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes.*

Certainly, the District Assembly cannot achieve its goal of total development of the district when a vast majority of the people is illiterate, impoverished and diseased. It is the responsibility of the District Coordinating Director to ensure that the decentralised Office responsible for education vigorously pursues Education, both formal and nonformal.

- 2 The District Coordinating Director is to ensure an improved health situation for all communities in the district through:
  - i the development and management of rural water supply; and strengthening the Environmental Health Unit to provide proper environmental sanitation and education for the public on keeping their environment clean.
  - ii the development of a district strategy in conjunction with the District Health Team to ensure that the HIV/AIDS pandemic does not erode the workforce of the District.
- 3 It is the responsibility of the District Coordinating Director to take a lead role to create mechanisms for poverty alleviation. Poverty is a

big issue that retards progress in most of the districts. District Coordinating Directors are to ensure that 20% of the Common Fund is for income generation and productivity improvement for the poor actually go to the poor.

- 4 The District Coordinating Director is involved with eradicating drug-abuse, particularly among the youth, as well as the high incidence of teenage pregnancy and their related problems. The District Coordinating Director should ensure that the district develops effective strategies to deal with these social evils.
- 5 Revenue mobilisation is another issue that demands the attention of the District Coordinating Director. It is becoming difficult by the day for most districts to meet revenue targets. Meanwhile, there is increasing criticism that District Assemblies have relaxed their efforts at revenue mobilisation since they had access to the Common Fund. What innovative strategies does the District Coordinating Director have to break new grounds in revenue generation in order to raise enough income to complement whatever comes from the Common Fund without necessarily overburdening the people?
- 6 We are now experiencing the phenomenon of street children. Something which a few years back was alien to our society. I was very much surprised when on census night, whilst enumerating floating population; we came across about five boys who apparently were sleeping at the lorry park at Suhum. Some were even watching over cars for a fee! The District Coordinating Director has to play a leading role in the matter of assessing the gravity of the situation, identifying the root causes and putting in place measures to reverse it before the situation gets out of hand.
- 7 I do not think anyone can pretend that there is no corruption in our country. There is corruption. The question then is this, is the District

Coordinating Director going to be party to corrupt practices or he/she will be honest, transparent and accountable? I believe it is the ethical responsibility of the District Coordinating Director to opt for the latter position. In an economic situation where resources are becoming increasingly limited whilst problems and needs are mounting, the District Coordinating Director more than ever and anyone else should be honest, transparent and accountable.

- 8 The District Coordinating Director must ensure that development is integral and above all human centered and not just carried out for its own sake or for prestige. The fact remains that human beings are more important than property and money and that human life and liberty are more precious than material possessions. These ideas should be reflected in all the planning and programming of the District Coordinating Director. Flowing from this, the District Coordinating Director should follow the right procedures in the award of contracts of all kinds, the payment for such contracts and the disbursement of funds in general, particularly the Common Fund.
- 9 I believe that if the District Coordinating Director should be effective he/she would have to put the interest of the District Assembly over and above his personal interest or that of any individual or group of individuals. Any District Coordinating Director who is unable to put the interest of the District above his own, who cannot forgo personal gains in the interest of the common good would have failed as a District Coordinating Director.

Apart from these challenges to the Office of the District Coordinating Director, there is a need to reverse the present situation where only men are the important players at the district. Men dominate the Assembly, and mostly men staff most of the offices of the District Assembly. It is interesting to note that a good number of people consciously or

unconsciously think the post of a District Coordinating Director is reserved for men, a revelation that came to me during my tenure of office in Suhum. Dr. Aggrey's position on the education of women outlined so many years ago is still relevant in our time. Indeed, I believe that without women the District Assemblies cannot attain the objectives for which they have been set up. Therefore women should be given the necessary encouragement and support to participate actively in the decision making process at the district level. Let us not put impediments in the way of those women who have the appropriate skills and competence to take up leadership positions. As the first lady District Coordinating Director in the Eastern Region, I believe I was able to make an impact. I pray that other women should have the opportunity to contribute their quota towards the development of the districts.

Against this backdrop, it is critical for the occupant of the Office of the District Coordinating Director to receive continuous training. The objective of the training should be to develop in him/her the appropriate capacity to cope with the onerous responsibilities that comes with the position.

Presently, I am not aware of any training programmes that are in place specifically for District Coordinating Directors. It used to be that at the initial stages of their career District Coordinating Directors must have gone for training in GIMPA and awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Administration. This programme is no more a requirement for administrative officers because of financial constraints. To be able to perform effectively the District Coordinating Director should have a good working knowledge in the following:

- a Financial Administration/Accounting
- b Personnel Management and Development
- c Planning and Budgeting

- d Procurement
- e Contract Management
- f Computer Literacy
- g Advocacy skills

Furthermore, District Coordinating Directors should upgrade their skills in how to manage the political boss, the District Chief Executive in order to work in harmony. If the District Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the political and administrative functions of the district, it is obvious that nothing should happen in the district without his approval and support. The District Coordinating Director's ability to bring his/her expertise to bear on the functioning of the District Assembly is dependent on the level of support from the District Chief Executive. Indeed, a number of District Coordinating Directors have not "survived" because they have not been able to work in harmony with District Chief Executives. This kind of situation cannot continue. District Coordinating Directors should develop their capacity to keep conflicts with their political boss to the minimum.

Finally, against the backdrop of my belief that District Coordinating Directors should become specialists in local government administration, I suggest that District Coordinating Directors should benefit from a special training programme. The design of this programme should enhance the capacity of the District Coordinating Directors to perform effectively in this specialist role.

Presently, there is a tendency to politicise the Office of the District Coordinating Directors. If this is encouraged it will not augur well for the new local government system. It could only lead to sycophancy and the putting of "square pegs into round holes". As a nation, we have enjoyed stability and continuity in the running of Government machinery, in spite of the frequent coups we have had in the past. This is

because we have a civil service that is politically neutral but loyal and committed to the state. I believe it is a good tradition to maintain.

After all, are the District Assemblies not supposed to be non-partisan? Why then should the secretary to the Assembly be politicised?

The District Assembly has been created to promote grassroots participation in governance and to help transfer development to the remotest parts of the country. Following this, the District Assembly is the planning authority, legislative authority and the rating authority at the district level. Therefore, the occupant of the position of District Coordinating Director, who is also the secretary to the Assembly, should benefit from training programmes that offer broad-spectrum capacities, which will enable him/her to give proper direction to the Assembly.



## CHAPTER 5

## THE EMERGING ROLES OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ISSUES IN NORTHERN GHANA

By Rudolph S. Kuuzegh

## INTRODUCTION

Before 1988, there had been some measure of decentralisation in post independent Ghana, especially in 1974 but this was more of lip service rather than a committed and charted course of action. The promulgation in 1988 of PNDCL 207 is a manifestation of a more concerted and committed effort at devolving human, financial and even legislative capacities to the newly created District Assemblies. The Government created further forty-five (45) new districts across the length and breadth of the country to make a round figure of 110 Assemblies. In the Northern Region, for example, the Government upgraded some Local Council areas, which were appendages to District Councils into full-fledged Districts. These include those of Walewale, Savelugu, Tolon, Gushiegu, Saboba and Zabzugu. This expansion further accessed the 'grassroots' level to government. Various legislative Instruments therefore established the 110 District Assemblies in the country.

## Position Of The District Coordinating Director (DCD)

Over the years, since independence, the position of the District Coordinating Director has transformed in different ways and taken various designations such as District Chief Executive and District Administrative Officer. The District Chief Executive or District

Administrative Officer was the Head of Civil Service in the District and wielded a lot of power. Such power derived directly from Accra.

The aspect of the 1992 constitution on legislation on Local Government and the Civil Service of Ghana speaks of the position of a District Coordinating Director. According to the constitution, it is clearly still a civil service position but now subservient to the District Chief Executive, a political appointee of Government. The District Chief Executive is responsible for the overall headship of the District; whiles the District Coordinating Director is responsible for implementing the policies of the Assembly and, for that matter, the government. Indeed, section 36 of the Local Government Act (1993) Act 462, created and defined the position of the District Coordinating Director as the "Secretary to the Assembly and Head of the District Coordinating Directorate"

PNDC Law 327 section 30 also recognised the position of the District Coordinating Director though with a little more detail on the functions of the Office in subsection 4 of section 30. The said subsection states that:

*"The District Coordinating Director shall ensure that the functions and responsibilities of his Office are efficiently and effectively carried out."*

In effect, these functions are those of the District Assembly itself as stated in section 31 of the Law. Furthermore, subsection 5 of section 30 of Law 327 says that the District Coordinating Director shall answer to the District Chief Executive (DCE) in the performance of the functions of the Office of the DCD.

The loss of the number one slot at the district political and administrative structure implied that the Office of District

Coordinating Director involved new roles and responsibilities, which would need to be stated and made clear in the new dispensation. This is important, if for nothing at all, to put suspicions and loss of job security at bay. For at a certain point in time, speculation was rife that the position of DCD was "endangered".

Be it as it may, the emerging roles of the District Coordinating Director implies that the Office:

- a implements the development policies of the District Assembly
- b has lost part of its original role (the topmost slot) to the Office of the District Chief Executive
- c is now part of a larger team (comprising various technical and specialised sector personnel) implementing policies of the District Assembly
- d should play the lead actor position in the implementation of policies of the District Assembly
- e had shifted from the generalist point of functioning only as an administrative unit to a broad-spectrum function involving all sectors of development work.
- f is the coordinator of all District-level programmes both in the public and private domains
- g should be more development oriented
- h needs to be more proactive with lots of initiative even if this means the occupant has to be belligerent.

Against the backdrop of these implications for the Office, the District Coordinating Director needs to be watchful of the particular aspirations

of individual Assembly members on behalf of their various constituencies or even on their own behalf. In addition, sometimes the DCD needs to be wary of the District Chief Executive's personal ambitions. The DCD needs to be a visionary not only of his office but also of the District as a whole. Ultimately, his target is the improvement of the social and economic life of the people in the District.

The most important challenge, however, includes having to perform satisfactorily to the District Chief Executive, the Assembly as a whole and other development collaborators of the District such as civil society organisations, namely traditional and religious authorities, youth groups etc.

It is the responsibility of the DCD to ensure that the sub-district administrations are firmly established and nurtured to initiate development, collect revenue and secure the peace in the various communities, which together constitute the district.

Last but not the least, the District Coordinating Director has to be the 'hand' of the District Chief Executive advising and carrying out all the technical business of the District's work. In doing this, however, the DCD should remember his civil state. The DCD is working to let the District Chief Executive make his mark. That implies that the DCD must be anonymous. Being anonymous, the District Coordinating Director's successes are a part of the positive achievements of the District Chief Executive. After all, the District Chief Executive is answerable to a higher authority for whatever goes on in the district.

Notwithstanding, the District Coordinating Director must not lose sight of the traditional function of the Office, which is to grease the wheels of the secretariat of the Assembly. To this end, the DCD serves as the secretary to many committees of the District and of the Assembly.

These include the Security Committee, the Advisory Tender Board, Poverty Alleviation Committee answering to the audit etc.

Depending on the confidence level, the District Coordinating Director may also represent the District Chief Executive or the Assembly at various public fora.

### PECULIARITIES OF THE JOB

Some more peculiar aspects of the functions of the DCD's office include the following:

- a Objectivity yet satisfying the wishes and aspirations of the stakeholders
- b Entertaining and containing all shades of opinion. All persons who for one reason or the other are unable to approach the District Chief Executive or Presiding Member should be able to talk to the District Coordinating Director
- c The District Coordinating Director should be seen to be a neutral player in the District body politic
- d Sometimes, he has to be the arbiter in stalemates involving the power brokers at the Assembly e.g. between District Chief Executive and Presiding Member, District Chief Executive and Member of Parliament etc.
- e Observation of all rules and guidelines especially in financial administration despite all the pressures

In the Northern Region where much of social life hinges on the traditional and cultural values of the people, the position of the DCD requires a pure blend of both rational and substantial considerations. For example, it is a dicey situation to have a member of your staff as a traditional ruler. Frankness, respect and humility are very important personal behaviour patterns that the DCD needs to show. Economic deprivation prevailing in a DCD's district often than not brings people to the doorstep of the District Coordinating Director for either personal or official assistance although the District Coordinating Director is just an equally impoverished civil servant.

### RELATIONSHIPS

The District Coordinating Director relates with a number of essential players at District Level. They include the District Chief Executive, the Presiding Member, the Member(s) of Parliament and the vast array of public officers at the Regional Coordinating Council and Heads of Decentralised Departments.

### THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AND THE DISTRICT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The relationship between the District Coordinating Director and the District Chief Executive is not a master servant one. The expectation is that a high level of mutual trust and respect should develop between the two. What often happens, nonetheless, is that the District Chief Executive may push aside any obstacle that stands in his way to achieve his personal and/or political ambitions. This attitude of the District Chief Executive derives from the insecurity of the tenure of the Office, often referred to as 'injury time'. The District Coordinating Director may not be precluded from wrath of the District Chief Executive if the person occupying the office turns out to be opposed to his personal and/or political ambitions. Against this backdrop of pressures, the District Coordinating Director should be mindful that he has signed a

performance agreement with Government, certified at that level by the District Chief Executive. Indeed, the many sundry pressures brought to bear on the District Chief Executive as a political appointee should attract the sympathy and total loyalty of the District Coordinating Director. Such pressures come from the chiefs, youth groups, and party functionaries, among others.

### **DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AND THE PRESIDING MEMBER**

The Presiding Member comes more into the limelight during Assembly meetings while the District Co-ordinating Director is secretary to the Assembly. The Presiding Member is also chairman of the Poverty Alleviation Committee with the District Co-ordinating Director again serving as secretary. There have been instances of conflict between the Presiding Member and the District Chief Executive in the disbursement of the PAF. In cases like that the District Co-ordinating Director must be careful and play the technocrat only without incurring the displeasure of either of them. Tact and diplomacy are the watch words. One also needs to be careful of Presiding members who may be eyeing the seat of the District Chief Executive. The District Co-ordinating Director is secretary to the Assembly but not the personal secretary of the Presiding Member.

### **THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AND THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

The difficulty in this relationship has to do with situations in which the Member of Parliament (MP) is in the opposition. Members of Parliament in the opposition find it difficult to relate with District Chief Executives. They therefore rely on District Coordinating Directors for any number of services. Three of these services are as follows: first, ensure that they receive their telephone messages from Parliament House on time. Second, the issue of their share of the Common Fund from Assembly's

coffers is without let or hindrance. Third, receive their visitors to the district appropriately. In carrying out all these assignments, the District Coordinating Director should bear in mind that opposition Member of Parliament has a major agendum, which is to oust the ruling party and take over the reigns of government. Without compromising his respect for the Member of Parliament in opposition, the District Coordinating Director should bear in mind that his loyalty to the state is paramount while that to the government of the day is immediate. A delicate balance to maintain indeed.

### **THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AND THE REGIONAL COORDINATING DIRECTOR**

Apart from submitting mandatory periodic and situational reports to the Regional Coordinating Director, the District Coordinating Director must always support the Regional Coordinating Director with back-up information to such written reports. This relationship helps the Regional Coordinating Director to advise the Regional Minister and Regional Coordinating Council on the situation on the ground.

An age-old adage has it that to be out of sight is to be out of mind. The Regional Coordinating Director never sees some District Coordinating Directors. A consequence of such a situation is that the District Coordinating Director may not participate in courses and other assignments, which may be beneficial to him or her. The Regional Coordinator may not invite him or her. In addition, the Regional Coordinating Director reports on the District Coordinating Director's performance to the Head of the Civil Service. It may be difficult to report favourably on an officer who has no communication with his regional boss. In the Northern Region of the country, the Regional Coordinating Director encourages the participation of District Coordinating Directors in Regional coordinating council meetings

although they are not members of the council. Participation in such meetings broadens the outlook of The District Coordinating Directors to appreciate the performance of their districts in relation to the rest of the Region.

### THE TRAINING NEEDS OF DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTORS

In the light of the new challenges inherent in the country's decentralised administration, the traditional courses run at Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) needs revision to make it more relevant to current issues.

Another issue is that it is gradually becoming difficult for the District Coordinating Director to have access to the Diploma for Public Administration (DPA) for want of funding. The situation is becoming a source of worry and frustration for many a young administrative officer.

Two paramount issues are obvious at this point. First, an apparent new set of roles and responsibilities for the District Coordinating Director, which evolved out of the exigencies of political and social life at the district level. Second, the bulk of the tasks associated with national development have shifted from the national level to the district level. In view of this situation, there is an urgent need to restructure and package courses to meet the human resource development needs of the situation. Our expectations are that this is one of the objectives of the newly established Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS).

Some relevant courses include:

- 1 Rural Development Planning
- 2 Financial Management at District Level
- 3 Public relations at District Level

- 4 Staff performance Monitoring skills development
- 5 Regular/Refresher courses on Finance, Stores and Budgetary guidelines
- 6 Computer Literacy
- 7 Mass Communication Techniques

### CONCLUSION

The District Coordinating Director needs a new orientation to meet the emerging roles and responsibilities that confront him. Training, I believe, can help achieve this new orientation. The training content, however, incorporates a number of important issues including, but not limited to, the following: first, an insight into the essence of decentralisation. Second, the new power blocks that have evolved and strategies to employ in collaborating with these new stakeholders. Third, the need to appreciate district level administration in a more business like manner by strictly adhering to the reforms that have been initiated in the Civil Service to promote efficiency and good governance.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE EMERGING ROLE AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR- A COMMENTARY

Hon. K. Dwamena Aboagye  
(Member of Parliament for Asuogyaman)

Ghana is part of an ever changing and complex world. Countries including Ghana however continue to evolve administrative arrangements that will be effective and efficient to serve the public interest. By taking my commentary from the angle that the District Coordinating Director is a manager, one is quick to conclude that the District Coordinating Director must be a team player and a team leader. By virtue of the District Coordinating Director's position, there is the need for him or her to develop the capacity to guide, train, and support, motivate and coach employees rather than to boss them around. The nature of Ghana's decentralisation programme coupled with the creation of many local government functionaries requires a new but skillful person in the centre of things at the local level to coordinate the growing political and administrative work. The new person namely the District Coordinating Director must therefore be a skilled communicator and a team player as well as a planner, coordinator, organiser and supervisor.

In developing and exploring the training needs of the District Coordinating Director, we should first examine what District Coordinating Directors are; what they do; and how they do it. We should assess this with the understanding that management at the district assembly is part of management in the Public domain. In other words, it is appropriate to find any management strategies aimed at ensuring the efficient operation of the local government system within

the established national rules, procedures and regulations, such as the Financial Administration regulation, etc.

Today, the District Assemblies serve as the closest governance unit to the "public" as a customer and as a citizen. The greatest requirement in this regard is for the District Coordinating Director or the local government manager to effectively manage the changes taking place in the interest of the public who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the Assemblies Services. A training programme for District Coordinating Director's, which enable to provide leadership, give direction, decide the effective use of resources to accomplish the goals of the assemblies is therefore important.

The District Coordinating Director's training programme must further help to sharpen the skills of the District Coordinating Director on a continuous basis to:

- manage performance
- manage others (that is, staff and Heads of Departments)
- manage themselves
- manage discipline and grievances
- manage recruitment
- manage reward
- manage training and development
- management communication and information and
- manage quality standards

By the skillful factors enumerated above, one should therefore understand management at the local level to be the process of deciding what to do and getting it done through other people and not by the District Coordinating Director acting alone. If this is the case then the major task or activities of the District Assembly can be summarised into two, that is:

- People oriented
- Task oriented

If properly answered the following questions will enhance the work of the local government manager:

How should a manager at the local government level manage all aspects of your work? In other words, how do you manage the **people**? How do you manage the **tasks** at the District Assembly?

The understanding of these issues call for an effective management which cannot happen without a concise programme to strengthen the education, skills, knowledge and attitudes in effective management development.

### Management of the People

What are the basic activities, which are involved in the management of people (i.e. Staff, Decentralised Heads of Departments, Functionaries) at the District Assembly level. The following list will give us some idea:

- 1 Motivation The District Assembly Manager should encourage staff and actors to meet the objectives of the Assembly and strive to achieve higher levels in the performance of their duties by improving productivity.

- 2 Development To create avenues or opportunities for staff and functionaries to develop their skills and knowledge. This will help develop the confidence, understanding and commitment of staff and functionaries.
- 3 Recognition The District Coordinating Director needs to regularly acknowledge and reward staff and functionaries on merit.
- 4 Caring The Manager or District Coordinating Director must show respect and concern for individual staff and the team.
- 5 Communication The Manager who works with people and through people must further and strengthen two-way communication.

### Management of the Task (Task-oriented)

In addition, the basic activities involved in the management and organisation of the task of the assemblies are as follows:

- 1 Organisation and Control how effectively does the District Coordinating Director arrange and monitor the work of individual staff and teams?
- 2 Provision of Resources Does the District Coordinating Director support and provide the means for the staffs to do good work?
- 3 Decision-making How does the District Coordinating Director analyse, examine and assess problems or issues? How does the District Coordinating Director identify problems and develop solutions? As manager, does the District Coordinating Director work by developing work plans and objectives?
- 4 Delegation As a local government manager does the District Coordinating Director strive to achieve results through others while still maintaining personal accountability?

In conclusion, I think that for the District Assemblies to operate effectively and efficiently the Institute of Local Government Studies should develop the right approach for District Coordinating Directors to work. This approach must take into consideration all the new actors and functionaries on the local government playing field. I therefore commend the efforts of the Institute by this very important initiative.

## CHAPTER 7

### CAPACITY BUILDING: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR

#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By

Dr. Robert Dodoo, Head Of Civil Service

#### INTRODUCTION

I am delighted with this invitation by the Institute of Local Government Studies to deliver the Keynote Address as part of the Roundtable Discussion on "The Role and Training Needs of District Coordinating Directors". The invitation provides another opportunity to be with old friends and colleagues in public administration at the Local Government level.

Ever since I became the Head of Civil Service, I have been one of the essential stakeholders and a player in the implementation of the Government's decentralisation policies and plans. I am, therefore, acutely aware of the pivotal functions of the District Coordinating Directors and the sensitive, intricate and balancing role they play vis-a-vis the equally essential political functions of the District Chief Executive.

The Government and people of Ghana have firmly established the District Assembly concept. Indeed, in practice the Office of the District Assembly acts as one of the machineries of Government for ensuring that the decentralisation process reaches the local tiers of Government. Most important, the District Assembly's role is to speed up developments at the district level, and improve the living conditions of



the communities whom you all serve. I am equally aware of the benefits some of you personally derive from being at the Districts as well as some of your frustrations and shortcomings.

The establishment of this new model centre for Local Government Studies, at this critical time in our development, is a timely intervention in institutional capacity building. It is also a critical input in developing, strengthening and improving the human resource capacity at the district level. We are, therefore, at the right place and at the right time.

I am also elated to see that two relevant organisations in the civil society namely, the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) and the Frederick Ebert Foundation are supporting the Institute by collaborating and participating in its programmes.

The Government's decentralisation programme, in theory and in practice, is a major initiative in effecting fundamental changes and improvements at the district and grassroots level. For example, I understand that last year alone, the District Assembly Common Fund Administration, disbursed the sum of about 154 billion cedis to the District Assemblies for development purposes. This year being an election year the figure may be high and most people would like to access the funds. This is a huge financial investment pointing to the level of Government support and local expectations in the decentralisation process and in your work as District Coordinating Directors.

The President, Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings, recently optimistically said:

*"...Hundreds of thousands of ordinary folks now take part in planning, determining priorities, and monitoring social infrastructure development projects; Government is no longer a distant mystery."*

Clearly, the President believes in this noble concept of decentralisation and its effective implementation and impact at the grassroots level

Additionally, the President seems to place so much trust in the process and genuinely believes that management and development at the local level are in the competent hands of political operatives (District Chief Executives) and administrative personnel (District Coordinating Directors). Several implications arise out of this position. Determining and prioritising relevant policies of programmes. Designing plans and programmes of action for development. Monitoring and evaluating. The District Assemblies are effectively executing all these and many other functions. Most importantly, we are involving all the essential players, including the people in the above processes.

The Director of the Institute knew that I would find it difficult to select a topic for my keynote address. So in order not to "be tempted to wander and beat about the bush", he requested that in selecting the topic of my choice I should try to capture:

*"...the role of the Office of the Head of Civil Service in the deployment, training and development of District Coordinating Directors and any new initiatives or plans".*

I agonised over this request. The Director in placing my Office at the centre of the President's expectations. He was implying that we equally have a strategic role in realising the objectives of Government's decentralisation programme and in realising the President's aspirations. My first admission is that we have not been that assertive and effective in exercising decisive supervisory role and in providing effective direction and support. The Office of the Head of Civil Service no longer exercises central command and control functions. Without this change in management practice, we would defeat the objectives of the decentralisation programme. We would interfere unduly in district level operations and frustrate your efforts. The process of disengagement, however, is continuing but at a slower pace. We have decentralised most of our functions to the regions and districts. In effect, the District Assemblies must be in effective control at the districts.

With respect to the districts and the District Coordinating Director we are currently concentrating on two major areas:

- i Deploying staff at the centre to meet the critical top level staffing needs at the districts.
- ii Equipping and enhancing the performance of the District Coordinating Director.

### Deployment:

Deployment of staff to the Districts involves a simple but sensitive process, which is currently fraught with difficulties:

First, there is a general shortage of staff in the Directorate category. Hence, we have limited staff available for posting to the districts.

Second, staff is reluctant to accept posting to the districts. Those who opt for the districts adopt the usual ploy of applying for one of the 110 vacancies for District Coordinating Directors as a means of earning promotion to the directorship level. Then they come up with excuses for not wanting to be at the districts. I am also aware that some of the districts are deprived and hardship areas. Hence, such districts remain unattractive to staff even when incentives are provided or promised.

There is also the question of selective knowledge and competencies. Existing staff seems to be knowledgeable in administrative, finance and bureaucratic functions. Even so, they seem to be employing decadent administrative practices and strategies unsuitable for district development purposes at this period.

Training, and the acquisition of requisite skills suitable to district work and specific to local Government administration has been limited or totally absent.

Then there is the question of low pay and incentives adversely affecting performance and productivity.

There is the urgent need to improve the quality and competence of the human and management resources at the districts. We need to inject professionalism at the district level in policy and priority determination, in project design, planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring in addition to the possession of basic managerial skills. These attributes are currently, lacking at the district level.

This Institute, therefore, has a very important role to play. This role involves determining the training needs of the District Coordinating Director and providing the appropriate and much needed training a task for which the Institute came into being and has proven competency in handling. Equally, the politician has a very important role to play in resolving conflicting issues of mandate and roles, as well as issues involving salaries, incentives and legislation.

### The Theme:

On our part, the Office of the Head of Civil Service has since 1994/5 focused on the second major area of concern: the development of the human resource capacity and competencies of the District Coordinating Director. We are also introducing new initiatives and equipping the staff with the best management tools and practices. Hence, I deemed it appropriate, in my keynote address, to settle on the topic: "Capacity Building: The Effectiveness of the District Coordinating Director".

## ENHANCING PERFORMANCE

### The Role of the District Coordinating Director

The District Coordinating Directors in the 110 District Assemblies are collectively an essential link in the chain of national development. They have a major influence over the pace of developments in the districts and the improvement of the conditions of life in the rural areas. They need to be proactively sensitive to the needs of the people and be development-oriented. They cannot afford to be reactive or overly bureaucratic in their outlook. As Civil Servants, they must be competent, efficient and professional in their outlook, as well as being loyal and honest, in the conduct of various tasks. In addition, they must be committed in the discharge of their mandatory functions of:

- i Initiating plans and programmes for policy formulation and ensuring the effective execution of such policies
- ii Coordinating and monitoring all the activities of the departments within the district
- iii Ensuring the efficient and effective management and administration of the resources of the district
- iv Ensuring the efficient planning, development and management of personnel of the Assembly
- v Acting as secretary to the District Assembly and the Tender Board

Clearly, from the above list of tasks the work of the District Coordinating Director is indeed very challenging. The duties and tasks could place one under extreme pressure. It could also enable the occupant of the

Office to wield great influence. Hence, the District Coordinating Director must of necessity be knowledgeable and well trained; competent in management and coordination; sensitive to the needs of the district; the poor, needy, disadvantaged, vulnerable groups etc.

These further call for accomplished, down-to earth professionals in the administration and management of the district, and most importantly, in the day-to-day interaction with the political heads and traditional authorities. I believe that these are the important functional issues and human resource management tasks which we at the Office of the Head of Civil Service are seeking to address in our reform programme. At this stage, it is important to emphasise the initiatives, which the Office of the Head of Civil Service has taken to help build capacity and enhance the managerial competence and performance of the District Coordinating Director. This initiative is in conjunction with the CSPIP.

### THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF CIVIL SERVICE

For now, we retain an overall responsibility for the Civil Servants stationed in the Regions and Districts. However, we are awaiting the implementation of the Government's proposals for creating a new Local Government Service as a separate entity from the Civil Service.

In the interim, while the details of these proposed changes are being finalised, we at Office of the Head of Civil Service have not neglected capacity building institutional strengthening and human resource development and management at the district level. We have actively integrated and involved the staff at the districts effectively in the CSPIP activities.

By the end of June 2000 a total of 8 Regional Coordinating Councils out of the 10 and 85 District Assemblies out of the 110 have been actively involved in producing and getting their performance improvement

Plans validated for implementation. Six Regional Coordinating Councils and 15 districts have gone beyond that to the implementation stage. They have benefited from the CSPIP Performance Improvement Facility to enable them effect improvements in the services they offer to the citizens and in building and enhancing their institutional capacity. These figures are indicative of the degree of penetration we have been able to make in the Regions and Districts. They reflect creditably on the partnership role of the Regional Coordinating Directors and the District Coordinating Directors who have collaborated with the CSPIP team.

## THE PILLARS OF THE REFORMS

Now let us focus on the key pillars of the reform programme, the performance/output-oriented measures we have introduced and their impact on the District Coordinating Director and the districts.

### i Capacity Building and the Performance Improvement Plan

The design of a District Performance Improvement Plan and its implementation is one of the pillars of our reform agenda. With its introduction, we have instituted the concept of efficient design, planning and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at making top executives in the districts more aware, alive and responsive to their mission, functions and tasks. In addition, the plan is also to help executives in the districts to meet public expectation and demands. In this new paradigm, each top executive will set out clear objective(s), targets or outputs, expected results, actions, individual responsibilities, time-scales for achieving set targets, individual performance, success criteria and so on for each programme or project.

Underpinning this strategic tool available to the District Coordinating Directors is the in-built mechanism for skills training, performance orientation and leadership enhancement. It is a means of making top

management more accountable, efficient and effective. This is an important means of developing and enhancing leadership competence. Building institutional capacity and making leadership operate in a more cost-effective and efficient manner is the process of designing and implementing a Performance Improvement Plan.

### ii Focus on Service Delivery

It is imperative for District Coordinating Directors to be relevant and pro-active, towards satisfying the needs of the local entrepreneur and, most importantly, to be sensitive and responsive to the concerns and needs of the disadvantaged in the districts.

Over the years, therefore, we have been engaged in measures directed towards re-orienting structures, attitudes and behaviour of Civil Servants in order to enhance service delivery. These have entailed setting standards of service delivery. Streamline cumbersome procedures to ensure efficiency and transparency. Facilitate the establishment of client services units, which are to see to ongoing improvements in service delivery and handling of complaints from the clients/customers on the quality of services rendered. Develop brochures on service delivery standards for the MDAs, and publicize these standards.

This process will eventually extend to the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies. It will be mindful of the critical service delivery areas of concern to the rural poor, who equally deserve quality service and fair treatment. In effect, we are institutionalising quality assurance of management in the Civil Service, conscious of the fact that the taxpayer deserves value for money services.

Thus, a new relationship with the clients/customers is developing. It is a relationship, which ensures transparency and elicits trust; that which

engenders cooperation and partnership; strengthens and builds confidence in the Public Administration system; creates openness and debunks the myth and fetish surrounding rigid rules and regulations. The emphasis now is on the timely delivery of services, responsiveness to the customer, competence and knowledge of the Civil Servant, empowerment of the customer and value-for-money services. This relationship will, as expected, also help to reduce the menace of bribery and corruption and the dependence on people to "pave the way" for the execution of services.

### iii Performance Agreements

This is another mechanism we have introduced in order to improve the performance of Civil Servants and render them more accountable, and results and output-oriented. This is a form of contractual arrangement designed for Chief Directors, Regional and District Coordinators, Directors of Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The aim is to make top executives focus on their mission, objectives and key predetermined/programmed or expected outputs or deliverables.

For now, the agreements do focus on three measurable target areas:

- a Routine administrative targets (timely production of annual reports and other essential documents)
- b District Sector output targets as per
  - \* Vision 2020, District Development Plans
  - \* Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)/PUFMARP Budget System
  - \* Donor Project Deliverables. For example, Poverty Alleviation and

other projects.

### c PIP Implementation Targets.

### iv Gender Mainstreaming

The Civil Service has been in the forefront on the promotion of Affirmative Action, particularly for ensuring gender balance in the service. Since the Government issued the White Paper on Affirmative Action in 1999, it is looking up to us to assume the leadership role in implementing the programme and this affects the districts as well.

We instructed that a Women's Desk be set up in all the MDAs, Regions and Districts. At the National level, there is a Secretariat at the Office of the Head of Civil Service. A female Director who serves as the National Coordinator heads the Secretariat. Her role is to monitor and evaluate the performance of these "Desks" and to ensure the provision of equal rights and opportunities for women.

There are circulars issued, directing all MDAs to increase the representation of women on all formal Public Sector Committee/Boards and interview panels.

"Women's Desks" or other staff is required to propose women eligible for appointments and to encourage any qualified woman to apply for appointment.

We have designed a Programme of Action aimed at gender mainstreaming at the policy level, workplace and public bodies.

We have undertaken a number of seminars and workshops on gender issues. Some of these relate to "Career Development Opportunities for

Women in the Civil Service" and "Action Programmes for Gender mainstreaming in workplaces, policy initiation and implementation".

In addition, we are considering a proposal for the establishment of a crèche for nursing mothers in the Civil Service.

Since there are more women at the district level and rural areas you must integrate gender mainstreaming in your activities and in addition to improving the capacity of women to also provide for their welfare.

#### **v Code of Conduct and Work Ethic**

Underpinning the performance-orientation measures undertaken and human resources management in the workplace has been the promulgation of a new code of conduct and accompanying work ethics. These emphasise loyalty to the Government of the day; delivering work outputs on time; customer sensitivity in the delivery of services; efficiency and cost-consciousness in all undertakings; punctuality; integrity and selflessness; anti-corruption; and non-partisanship.

#### **vi Political Commitment**

Our achievements and developments in the Civil Service is largely due to the unflinching political commitment and support from the political leadership at the National, Regional and District levels. Reforms involve transformation of entrenched structures and systems and without the political will and commitment (fostering a healthy partnership with the political heads at the district level,) it could be an arduous and frustrating task.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

We have endeavoured, since 1994/5, to strengthen and develop the institutional capacity of the District Assembly and improve upon the quality of the human resource at the districts. In the process, we have been contributing to laying or providing the framework and strategy for the implementation of an effective decentralisation system. In addition, we have been exposing the District Coordinating Directors to available and current best practices in management. Furthermore, we have been equipping them with modern development tools and strategies. The Institute of Local Government Studies, we hope would consider, adopt and expose the District Coordinating Director to the following:

- a The CSPIP methodologies, processes and implementation strategies; and
- b The important elements of management and performance improvement, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation through incorporating them as part of their workshop and seminar themes.

It is my hope that the District Coordinating Director's pivotal role in national development would be recognised and adequately rewarded. It is also my hope that District Coordinating Director, in partnership with the District Chief Executive, would work to improve the living conditions of the people in the Districts.

## CHAPTER 8

THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR AS A MANAGER:  
ILGS' EFFORTS IN THE RECENT PAST.

David Osei-Wusu

Preceding chapters in this book have suggested that good management practices at the district level are crucial for the sustenance of Ghana's decentralisation process. The District Coordinating Director (DCD) has been recognised as the kingpin in this regard and ought to function appropriately as the Head of the Office of the District Assembly. These roles have been described quite clearly in the legislations; PNDCL 327 sections 30 (1) - (7) and Act 462 sections 36 (1) (2). In practice however, it has been noted that the DCD operates within a very restrictive political, social and administrative environment yet he/she is expected to employ the most efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.

This article is devoted to sharing the outcomes of two events organized by the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) with support from its partners, Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and the National Association of Local Authorities in Ghana (NALAG) in exploring the strategies that DCDs have adopted and their training needs for the demands of their roles. These events were the roundtable conference on the emerging roles and training needs of the DCD, and secondly, the four-day skill building workshop for DCDs.

The roundtable discussion on the Emerging Roles and Training Needs of the DCD held in August 2000, prepared the grounds for the training programmes to take off. Significant issues that emerged during the discussions included the system of administration, statutory and other legislations governing the office of the DCD and the challenges posed by the political, social, technological and economic environment.

It was established that the DCD had been unable to effectively coordinate his/ her managerial tasks at the district level mainly because Ghana had inherited a highly centralized administrative system and the decentralisation process had not been that smooth. Participants mentioned that, gaps that had hindered effective district management included:

- Inability to recruit substantive DCDs with the requisite qualification, expertise and experience
- Ignorance of and the non-compliance with financial regulations and guidelines
- Overlapping (and sometimes conflicting) roles between the DCD and District Chief Executive (DCE)
- Interference from the political and traditional authorities
- Inability to institute career development and disciplinary plans of action for the officers in the District Assembly

The need has therefore arisen for consistency or harmonization of Acts and other legislations, regulations and guidelines. District Assemblies' businesses should be strictly carried out in accordance with laid down procedures. The issue that resources of districts need efficient and economically sound management could not be overemphasised.

Furthermore, participants suggested that there should be a clear linkage between the government machinery and other stakeholders such as donors, the local authority association (NALAG) and other civil society bodies to facilitate coordination. The DCD should also support, facilitate and ensure that the capacity of district assembly staff is built upon and activities of the decentralized departments are well coordinated.

The DCD was identified during the discussions as a change agent as well as a project and investment manager at the district level. With this knowledge, participants indicated the following short and long-term

training needs, skills and attitudes required to cope with the emerging roles:

- ✓ Planning and general management skill
- ✓ Policy analysis skills
- ✓ Investment management skills
- ✓ Conflict resolution
- ✓ Rural development and investment management
- ✓ Management information systems
- ✓ Interpersonal, communication, negotiating and leadership skills
- ✓ Tolerance, initiative, gender sensitivity, transparency, tactfulness and proactiveness are attitudes that should be inherent.

In response to these requirements, the Institute of Local Government Studies, mounted a series of four-day workshops for DCDs throughout the country. The pilot workshop was held at the Institute's campus at Ogbojo-Madina, Accra from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2000. This workshop targeted District Coordinating Directors from the Central, Western and Eastern regions of Ghana. Thirty-five (35) participants attended this maiden workshop. The second in the series was held at Akyawkrom-Ejisu, Kumasi for 30 participants from the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions of Ghana. The final workshop in the series was held at the Institute's campus at Tamale for DCDs in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions from the 26-29 March, 2001.

The objectives of the workshop were among others to provide DCDs with the opportunity to share experiences about the challenges of their work and refresh their knowledge in some managerial and leadership subject areas. To attain the stated objectives the workshop modules covered include:

- ✓ Executive Leadership in the Public Sector
- ✓ Ethical Issues in decentralisation and the District Coordinating Director

- ✓ Strategic Thinking, Planning and Management
- ✓ Presentation Skills for the Public Manager
- ✓ Conflict Management and Resolution
- ✓ Management Information Systems
- ✓ A special feature of the workshop was the panel discussion, which was organised with the theme; "what do stakeholders expect of the DCD?"

A summary of important issues raised under each topic has been presented below.

### **Executive Leadership in the Public Sector**

Participants indicated that the subject was relevant, important and well explained to ensure thorough understanding so far as taking leadership positions in the district are concerned. Basic management and leadership concepts were defined and as part of their leadership functions, DCDs were encouraged to look ahead and develop strategic plans for future organizational growth. Participants were asked to consider moving away from traditional managerial approaches to managerial behaviour that influenced people to strive willingly for the attainment of group objective. The personal characteristics of the leader were therefore seen as imperative for distinct and effective leadership.

### **Ethical Issues in Decentralisation and the District Coordinating Director**

Interestingly, the topic on Ethics in decentralisation was not identified as one of the training needs of the DCD during the Roundtable Discussion. However, a review of the literature and events from other parts of the world relating to professionalising local government administration and management made this discussion critical. Lessons from the City Manager traditions indicate their establishment on basic



concepts of good stewardship and operate with a code of conduct. A video excerpt on the City Manager in the Florida State was a unique activity of the Workshop that generated a lot of discussion and interest.

Key elements identified as necessary for the strengthening of the professional outlook of the DCD included values in ethics and the use of power and authority. In the conduct of his work, the DCD is confronted with a number of ethical issues including how to deal with charges or evidence of wrong doing on the part of principal officers of the assembly as well as personal dilemmas about exercising favours or influence. In all these however, the DCD should be very transparent, loyal to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party or Government.

### **Strategic Thinking, Planning and Management**

Planning activities initiated at the district level are very common. Some of these plans are strategic in nature and therefore positioning the DCD into strategic thinking and planning activities. The presentation, viewed strategic management as a process of discovering long-term goals of the assembly and making a series of decisions and allocating resources, so that the assembly is steered towards these goals. The session covered these aspects of strategic management: purpose, environmental analysis, resource audit, SWOT analysis and strategy implementation, monitoring and control. An exercise after the presentation assisted participants to relate the principles to their own districts.

### **Presentation Skills for the Public Manager**

The session on presentation skills for the Public Manager enhanced participants' capacity to make speech and report presentations. It was necessary that the DCD developed effective personal skills to enable him communicate information, make propositions, inspire and motivate.

The session considered the merits and demerits of some methods of presentation and how the DCD could adapt these as appropriate.

It was concluded that in all presentations, the appropriate method was the one that suited the audience and occasion.

### **Conflict Management and Resolution**

The Office of the District Assembly is a critical area that experiences conflicts of various dimensions. The DCD is expected to mitigate in the effects of conflicts at the district level and this calls for the capacity to manage and resolve conflicts.

This session of the programme equipped participants with conflict management tools and techniques. It covered conflict areas like:

- Sources/causes of conflict;
- Levels/types of conflict;
- Conflict triggers and positive consequences of conflict;
- Conflict management techniques; and
- Conflict management strategies.

### **Management Information Systems**

The session on MIS gave participants some techniques for an efficient organizational planning, direction and control. MIS was described as a process of gathering or generating, processing and organizing data into a desirable and understanding format to guide management in making decisions and planning. Participants were taken through some points that needed particular attention in the design of an MIS, planning and control of information. The course evaluation revealed that participants considered this session as very relevant and important.

## Stakeholders Expectations of the DCD

A special feature of the workshop was the panel discussion. This session harnessed views from stakeholders such as Regional Coordinating Directors, Chief Executives and Presiding Members on the topic 'what do stakeholders expect from the DCD'? During the discussions one important issue that emerged was who had absolute authority at the district assembly; the DCE or DCD? Participants noted that this issue was very debatable because the DCE is seen as the head from the statutes. However, the DCD is made accountable for the actions and inactions of the DCE when he/ she is made to sign the performance agreement. It was of some participants' opinion that the performance agreement should be signed jointly by the DCE and DCD.

## Conclusions

*At the end of the course, objectives of the four-day workshops were appreciably achieved. Analysis of the workshop evaluation indicated that participants' expectations were well met and the course content and coverage was relevant and useful to most participants. Ninety (90) percent of respondents on the average indicated that the workshop objectives were appreciably covered and eighty (80) percent of respondents said their expectations in terms of workshop content and coverage were met. DCDs on the whole, had had the opportunity to share experiences about the challenges of their work and refresh their knowledge on some relevant topics as discussed above.*

For the purposes of follow-up programmes, participants suggested short and long-term modules on: Finance Management, Managing your Boss, Policy Making and Analysis, Performance Agreement, Corruption in Public Office, Project Management, Public Policy Analysis, Revenue Generation, Motivation, Report/Memo Writing, Contract Management,

Public Sector Accounting, Investment Planning and Management, Decentralisation Process in the Millennium, Protocol Duties and Public Relations.

Finally, it is worth mentioning here that training programmes of this nature are necessary for sustainable local governance and development. Participants in the three programmes indicated the need for a regular organization of such workshops - at least once every quarter of the year. Challenges of the DCDs are numerous however these workshops had to some extent been able to equip them in areas of effectiveness and efficiency, strategic planning and consensus orientation.

## REMARKS ON THE ROLE AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT COORDINATING DIRECTOR

By Emmanuel Adzei-Annang

NALAG perceives ILGS as an institution with a lot of potential that could be utilised in playing an effective advocacy role on behalf of Ghana's decentralisation programme. It is therefore important that NALAG collaborates with the ILGS and FES to help push Ghana's decentralisation programme forward.

The decentralisation programme introduced in 1988 and its decentralised agencies, which operate under the district assembly, necessitated the creation of the District Coordinating Directorate. The role of the District Coordinating Director in management of the district cannot be overemphasised.

The theme for the roundtable conference is of great importance to our association. We believe that for a district administrative system to be effective a lot depends on the District Coordinating Director. The District Coordinating Director, the administrative head should be able to plan, coordinate, and control the implementation of district plans and programmes.

An effective District Coordinating Director relegates ways of doing things thereby, at times, minimising the exposure of weaknesses of the political heads, the District Chief Executives.

Politicians, in their bid to stay in power try to attain quick results. To achieve their aim they may ignorantly or deliberately insist on throwing overboard rules and regulations, which constitute the framework within which the administrative or managerial system work. It is critical, therefore, to strengthen and equip District Coordinating Directors to keep the politicians on track.

The District Coordinating Director, identified as a key player in the process of development, should be equipped through training to acquire the relevant skills and techniques, which would enhance the performance of the management role, assigned her/him.

It is important, therefore, to revise the training programmes currently available to these categories of officers. A first step could be opportunities to attend periodic special skills building, as well as intensive workshops of short duration (2-3 days) on specific issues. These should complement the Diploma in Public Administration and Senior Management Development Programme organised at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). Another step is to offer the District Coordinating Directors an exposure to dimensions of management practices in non-civil service organisations, through opportunities for attachment programmes with para-statal and private sector organisations.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix a

The Office of a District Assembly shall be responsible for

- a the implementation of development policies of the district assembly;
- b effective budgeting;
- c observance of financial, stores and budgeting rules and guidelines;
- d initiation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes; and
- e taking measures for improving the condition of life of the people in the rural and urban areas.

## ACRONYMS

CPP	-	Convention Peoples Party
CSPIP	-	Civil Service Performance Improvement Project
DA	-	District Assembly
DACF	-	District Assembly Common Fund
DCD	-	District Coordinating Director
DCE	-	District Chief Executive
FAD	-	Financial Administration Decree
FAR	-	Financial Administration Regulations
FES	-	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
GIMPA	-	Ghana Institute of a Management and Public Administration
ILGS	-	Institute of Local Government Studies
L.I.	-	Legislative Instrument
MDAs	-	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MIS	-	Management Information Systems
MLGRD	-	Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development
MP	-	Member of Parliament
MTEF	-	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NALAG	-	National Associations of Local Authorities in Ghana
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAF	-	Poverty Alleviation Fund
PM	-	Presiding Member
PNDC	-	Provisional National Defence Council
RCC	-	Regional Coordinating Director
SMDC	-	Senior Management Development Course