

# An Evaluation of Local Leadership Training in Community Development: A Case of Birim North District in Ghana

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**To cite this article:**

Alex Kortey Addo, Yvette Ussher. An Evaluation of Local Leadership Training in Community Development: A Case of Birim North District in Ghana. *Science Journal of Education*. Vol. 11, No. 1, 2023, pp. 51-60. doi: 10.11648/j.sjedu.20231101.18

**Received:** December 20, 2022; **Accepted:** January 30, 2023; **Published:** February 24, 2023

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**Abstract:** Training has been acknowledged as an important tool for equipping local leaders with knowledge and skills to enable them to perform their role as development agents in their communities. In view of that, this study sought to explore how training transformed the local leaders to become catalyst for development in the Birim North District in Ghana. The research design used in this study was the summative evaluation research which involved the post-test design. The cluster sampling method was used to select communities in the district where local leaders reside. Those who participated in the habitat training programme were sampled for the study. Data was collected using questionnaire which were personally administered. The findings of the study suggest that participants acquired knowledge of all leadership styles to enable them to adopt the most appropriate style to reflect conditions within their environment. Secondly, trainees learned about implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. Additionally, most of the trainees learned the brainstorming technique to enhance participatory decision-making and social integration in their localities. Besides, trainees acquired knowledge about participatory techniques that make adults active participants. Again, the findings indicate that trainees acquired knowledge of group discussion as a technique for evaluating programmes and projects in the district. Additionally, the study revealed that local leaders acquired knowledge of friendliness and dialoguing to strengthen their human relations.

**Keywords:** Birim North District, Evaluation Research, Quantitative Data, Training Methods, Training Outcome

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## 1. Introduction

Community development is viewed from different perspectives by different scholars. It is viewed as a social process by which individuals acquire skills to make them capable of gaining control over local environmental conditions and surviving in the changing world [1]. To Rios and Lachapelle (2015, p. 191) "It is a commitment to democratic practices as exemplified by citizen and institutional capacity building and the fair allocation of public resources." Some writers have explained that more often, community development projects and programmes aim at creating awareness of rural possibilities that is, provision of information on resources and infrastructure; deployment of technical assistance to support community members; skills development; enhancement of literacy levels; improvement of productivity systems; and donors among other things [1, 2,

3]. It is further argued that most development projects and programmes in developing nations focus on people's felt needs and basic amenities such as the provision of good roads to enable them to convey their farm produce to market centres, clinics, markets, school buildings, and provision of portable water among others. These goals can only be achieved by a collective effort of all those who believe that rural community development can result in poverty alleviation and community members' self-sufficiency [1]. It does appear that for any effective community development to take place, non-formal education programmes need to be implemented. Non-formal education has been identified by several modern educational theorists and practitioners as a potent tool for mobilizing people for community development. To stimulate a rural community into action local leaders need to emerge [1]. The approach to rural community development is to rely on local leaders who act as initiators of projects and influence and motivate their people

into action.

There are multiple reasons for training local leaders: firstly it is to introduce new leaders into community leadership and to help the already existing local leaders to be more effective. Secondly, such training activities promote communication among the leaders because it provides them the opportunity to work and learn together. More often than not, the leadership programs involve project teams and information sharing which is targeted at creating awareness among local leaders about local problems and possible solutions [4]. However, local leadership training in itself does not necessarily resolve the local leadership problem. For example issues of disunity and lack of unity of purpose can only be effectively dealt with through a consensus building and collaborative process that involves all the relevant leadership [4]. Local leaders need to see themselves as a team and work together to achieve their goals [4]. Additionally, the curriculum for local leadership training focus more on knowledge acquisition: trainees learn about how the community functions, how to plan, and what community development is about. The knowledge gained transforms the behaviour of local leaders but it is inadequate if local leaders do not get the opportunity to practice what they are taught. Practice requires skills and to fully learn a new skill, local leaders must first understand it, then practice it, and get feedback on their performance. Much more attention must be given to in-service training in leadership skills at the community level. Some leadership skills that can be developed and maintained are: problem solving; planning and goal setting; critical thinking; effective decision-making; conflict management tactics; negotiation techniques; team building and management; group process techniques; and effective listening. Similarly, acquiring these skills do not guarantee effective leadership. The successful local leader is the one who is inspired and motivated to use these skills appropriately. Other methods of developing local leaders are to involve them in workshops/retreats and field trips [4]. Community development effort must always be preceded by conducting a community assessment which provides information on the strength and weaknesses of the community. The mechanisms for conducting these assessments are observation; listening; interviews; focus group meetings; community meetings; and opinion surveys. The data collection must be targeted at physical infrastructure; social infrastructure; economic development infrastructure; and human infrastructure. Local leaders must be involved in conducting the assessment of their respective communities [5].

The theory that best explains this learning process is Vygotsky's social constructivism which contains the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is an intellectual space where instructors and learners interact. The interaction promotes guided learning which leads to joint knowledge construction between the instructor and learners. Similarly, the interaction produces scaffolding in which the instructor assists learners to construct new knowledge. Thus, guided learning and scaffolding facilitate knowledge and skills

acquisition among learners [6]. The study was guided by the following research questions: how were participants trained? and what was the impact of training on participants? Additionally, a hypothesis was used in the study as follows:

- 1) There is no significant change in knowledge and skills with training ( $H_0$ ).
- 2) There is a positive relationship between knowledge and skills with training ( $H_1$ ).

## 2. Literature Review

Just a few women perform the role of local leaders in Birim North District because decisions relating to community development, especially in rural Ghana, are usually taken by three types of leaders which are male-dominated. The first group of such leaders are traditional rulers comprising the chiefs and heads of clans or extended families. The second group are religious leaders who provide spiritual guidance to the rural folk to get their problems solved, and the third group is the local elite who comprise the educated, retired public servants, and returnees who command a lot of respect because of their exposure to the outside world [7]. Additionally, there are some personal attributes that prevent women from performing leadership functions. For instance women in the rural environment in Ghana are poorly educated and cannot access information related to leadership [8, 9, 12]. Similarly, they lack self-confidence and feel reluctant to occupy leadership positions [11]. Generally, rural women in Ghana are saddled with early marriage which move them into motherhood with family responsibilities [9, 10]. Besides, males have excessive control and do not allow women to participate in programmes in the communities [10-13, 15]. Above all, non-governmental organizations that work in the rural environments do not appoint women to leadership positions in the communities [14]. In rural communities such as the Birim North District, leadership roles are assigned to mature persons who have acquired a lot of experience and have much knowledge about the state of affairs in their communities. Havighurst (1961) and Erikson (1953) in their description of developmental tasks/stages in social life emphasize 30-55 as a stable period for working with tremendous energies and resources for social influence and contribution. Those who performed local leadership functions in the district were either teachers, traders, primary industrialists, and members of the district assembly. This suggests that most of them have a well-developed mode of mental processing of information. Besides, this group of learners have used their educational skills on regular basis and can therefore do structured learning [18]. Most of the local leaders were married because it confers on them a high degree of respectability in the community. Secondly, married couples look on their children for social protection in their old age [19].

## 3. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative evaluation research

design. The study aims to assess the main benefits of the training that took place in the Birim North District and to judge its effectiveness. The summative post-test design which seeks to add to the knowledge of training principles and practices which will have more general application was used. The Birim North District was chosen because the Department of Community Development organized a habitat training programme for local leaders within this district. The study was confined to communities whose local leaders participated in the training programme. Hence, all those who resided in the communities and participated in the training were sampled for the study. The cluster sampling method was used in selecting the communities for the study. Each cluster comprises either two or three communities and 20 communities were selected, and these include Ayirebi, Akoasi, Ofoase New Abirem, Old Abirem, Mamanso, Adwafo, Akokoaso Ofoase-Kuma, Chia, Ahausina, Brenase, Kotokuom, and Mpintrimp, Anyinase, Nyafoman, Adadekrom, Pankese, Otwereso, and Abodom. The sample size for this study was 135 comprising 115 males and 20 females. Data was collected through a questionnaire which was personally administered to enhance the comprehension of questions by the participants. The study was conducted one week after the training programme. Participants were informed that the research was for academic purposes and that confidentiality was maintained in the data collection.

### 3.1. Profile of Birim North District

The Birim North District was carved out of the former Birim District Council in 1987 as part of the Government's decentralization programme in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Its capital is New Abirem. The district covers an estimated area of 1,250 sq.km, constituting 6.47 per cent of the total area of the Eastern Region. There are 140 settlements in the district and most of them are rural. The district is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity: the ethnic groups are Akans, Gas, Krobos, Guans, and northern tribes. Again, the district is predominantly Christian. They constitute about 92.7% of the total population. Therefore, the district is religiously homogeneous, which is an asset for the mobilization of the people for development [23].

Farming is the dominant economic activity in the Birim North District. About 42.6% of the population within the labour force is engaged in farming. The remaining 20.4% of the labour force is engaged in other occupations, namely trade and commerce, industry, services, and public service [23]. With the introduction of the district assembly concept, the authority once wielded by the traditional authority has been transferred to the Birim North District Assembly. Currently, chiefs in the district do not have much political power but are very influential in their areas of jurisdiction. The exercise of political leadership in the district is now the responsibility of the district assembly. The assembly which is headed by the District Chief Executive exercise both political and administrative authority in the district [20].

### 3.2. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data was preceded by editing and coding the responses. The statistical computations included frequencies and percentages. Having produced a description of the profile of the data, the next stage of analysis was to determine the mean of the distribution. The distribution was assumed to be a normal one, therefore a Chi-square test was used to calculate the statistic and tested at 0.05 to determine the significance level of the distribution in the post-test data. Again, the Chi-square was used to cross-tabulate variables such as age and level of education against leadership style. It enabled the researchers to determine the acceptability or otherwise of the hypothesis.

## 4. Findings

The findings of the study are discussed below. The discussion will begin with the demographic background of respondents. From the analysis, the table below shows the background of respondents who participated in the study.

Table 1. Demographic data of Local Leaders.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	115	85
Female	20	15
Total	135	100
Age		
18- 30	25	19
31 –55	80	59
56 and above	30	22
Total	135	100
Educational Qualification		
No formal education	17	13
Basic level (MSLC/Primary & Junior High Sch)	28	21
Secondary/Technical/Vocational	22	16
Teachers' College Certificate	66	49
University	2	1
Total	135	100
Marital Status		
Single	12	9
Married	112	83
Separated	2	1
Divorced	7	6
Widowed	2	1
Total	135	100

The findings presented in table 1, indicate that (85%) of the trainees were males and (15%) were females. This is an indication of male dominance in the leadership structure of Birim North District. This is probably because culturally, males are more disposed to playing leadership roles. The women who occupied leadership positions were useful in mobilizing their female counterparts to participate in projects or programme implementation in the localities. For their ages, (59%) were between the ages of 31 and 55, while (22%) were 56 years and above. Again, (19%) of the trainees were between 18 and 30 years. This confirms Havighurst's assertion that adults between 31 to 55 years have the zeal to

perform social responsibilities so that they could achieve social recognition in their communities. Concerning the participants' educational backgrounds, (49%) had teacher training certificates and (21%) of the trainees had basic education. Additionally, the results indicate that (16%) had either secondary or technical or vocational education while (1%) of the local leaders were university graduates. Furthermore, the findings suggest that (13%) of the trainees had no formal education. It is significant from the results that (66%) of the local leaders had experience in structured learning and this might have enhanced their learning at the training sessions. In terms of their marital status, the findings

show that (83%) of them were married while (9%) were single. Again, the results indicate that (8%) of the trainees were either divorced or separated or widowed.

#### 4.1. Training Methods

In assessing the impact of training on the local leaders, we found it prudent to explore the teaching methods that were used to engage them during the training sessions and their views about these methods. The responses gathered are indicated in the table below.

Table 2. Methods.

	Frequency	Per cent
Lecture	13	9.6
Discussion	95	70.5
Case Studies	10	7.4
Role Play	17	12.5
Freedom of expression		
Suitable for learning	114	84.4
Not suitable for learning		
Cannot determine	21	15.5
Interaction between trainers and trainees		
Good	78	57.7
Average	40	29.6
Cannot determine	17	12.5
Interaction among participants		
Good	84	62.2
Average	37	27.4
Cannot determine	14	10.4
Facilitation roles played by trainers		
Prompting learners about previously held values beliefs and behaviour	46	34.1
Reviewing and summarising statements of learners	25	18.5
Acknowledging the life experiences of learners	64	47.4

N=135

The table above indicates that (70.5%) of the trainees pointed out that the discussion was used at the training sessions while (12.5%) of the respondents indicated that role-play was used at the training session. The table further indicates that (9.6%) of the respondents stated that the lecture method was used for teaching them while (7.4%) of them intimated that they were taught with case studies. Some alterations in training methods are relevant for changes in the learning process to take place. Regarding freedom of expression, (84.4%) of the local leaders intimated that freedom of expression was suitable for learning. On the other hand, (15.5%) of them could not determine the suitability or otherwise of free expression during training. This suggests that freedom of expression helped most of the trainees to critically reflect on issues that emerged as well as their personal experiences. Concerning interaction between trainers and trainees (57.7%) of the respondents claimed that interaction between trainers and trainees was good, while (29.6%) of them stated that interaction was average. However, (12.5%) of the trainees could not determine the suitability of trainer-trainee interaction. It is significant from the findings that trainers and trainees co-operated for mutual learning. Our analysis further shows (see table 2) that (62.2%)

of the local leaders felt that interaction among participants was good because they had common interests while (27.4%) of them stated that interaction was average because of the informal learning atmosphere. On the contrary, (10.4%) of the trainees could not determine the suitability of interaction among participants. Furthermore, the result of the study suggests that (47.4%) of the respondents intimated that acknowledging the life experiences of learners was the main facilitating role played by trainers. Again, (34.1%) of the trainees claimed that the main facilitating role played by trainers was prompting learners about previously held values, beliefs, and behaviours. However, (18.5%) of the respondents posited that reviewing and summarizing statements of learners was the facilitating role played by trainers. The views expressed by (52.6%) of the respondents suggest that the facilitating roles played by trainers stimulated critical thinking among participants. Alternatively, the views expressed by (47.4%) of the trainees indicate that a lot of the emphasis was placed on techniques that tapped into the experiences of participants.

To enable us to determine the impact of training on local leaders we considered it useful to assess the previous knowledge about leadership styles. Findings gathered from

the study are presented in the form of a bar graph.

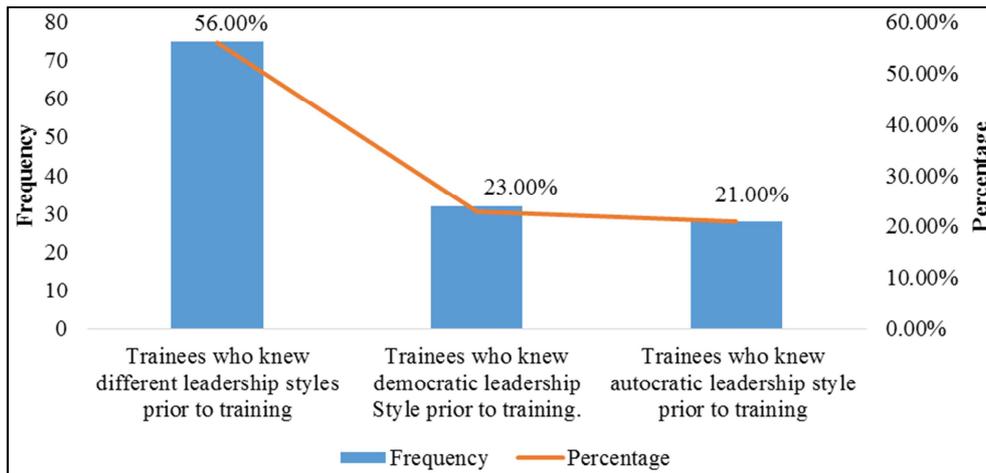


Figure 1. Bar Graph showing pre-test of leadership style known before training.

As shown in Figure 1 (56%) of the local leaders knew about different leadership styles before the training. Again, the figure shows that (23%) of the trainees were familiar with the democratic leadership style before the training programme. Similarly, the figure depicts that (21%) of the local leaders were conversant with the autocratic leadership style before training. It is not surprising that the majority of them knew about different leadership styles because the

result of the study suggests that (66%) of the trainees had attained at least a secondary school education.

An assessment of previous knowledge on leadership responsibility was deemed relevant because of its usefulness towards the impact of training on local leaders. Results gathered from the study are presented in the form of a table and a bar graph.

Table 3. Pre-test of leadership responsibility known before training.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Identification of problems	31	23
Decision-making	46	34
Program/Project Planning	18	12
Program/Project implementation	26	19
Evaluation of programs and projects	14	10
Total	135	100

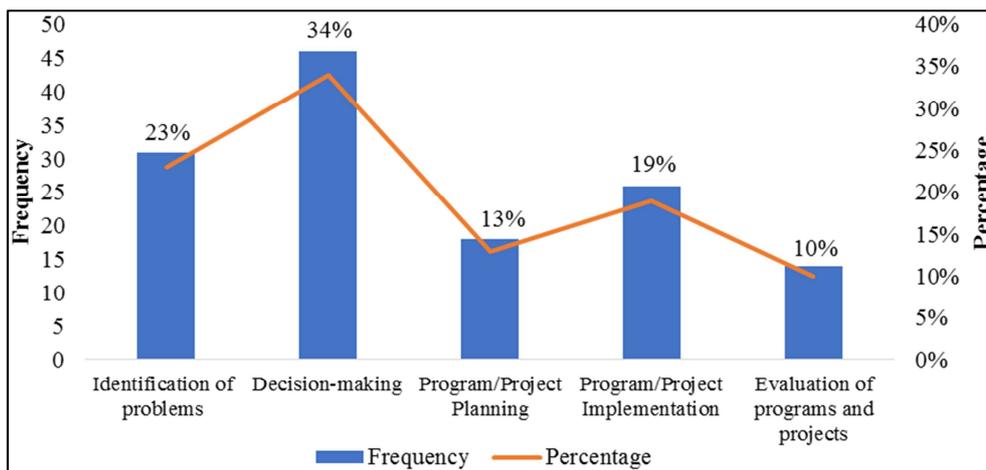


Figure 2. Bar Graph showing pre-test of leadership responsibility known before training.

The pre-test analysis presented in figure 2 shows that (34%) of the local leaders knew about decision making and (23%) of them were conversant with problem identification. The findings also indicate that (19%) of the trainees were familiar

with programme and project implementation before training while (13%) of the local leaders knew about programme and project planning, Additionally, figure 2 indicates that (10%) of the trainees were familiar with the evaluation of

programmes and projects. It is significant from the findings that (70%) of the local leaders knew of assessing and prioritizing the needs of their communities. Secondly, the results indicate that (29%) of the trainees were familiar with satisfying the needs of their communities. This suggests that most of them only knew about the diagnostic and planning functions of leadership.

An assessment of the impact of the training on local leaders suggests that we should analyze gaps that exist in knowledge related to evaluation techniques. The findings gathered from the study are presented in the form of a pie chart.

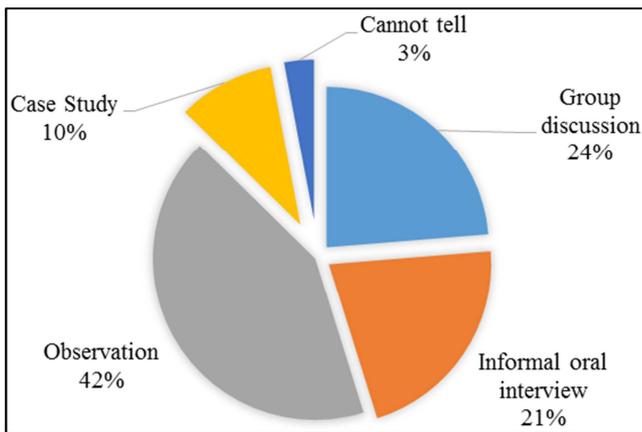


Figure 3. Pie Chart showing evaluation techniques local leaders were familiar with before training.

Figure 3 shows evaluation techniques that were known to the participants before training. As shown in the figure, (42%) of the participants indicated that observation was the main evaluation technique they knew before the workshop. On the other hand, (24%) of the respondents indicated that they were familiar with group discussion while (21%) were familiar with the informal interview. Similarly, (10%) of the trainees pointed out that they knew about the use of case studies. However, 3% of the participants could not tell the technique they were familiar with. Results presented in figure 3 show that (45%) of the trainees were familiar with evaluation methods that are practised through interaction. This brings about social inclusion and builds confidence in the members of the community. It also ensures that the actual objectives are achieved.

In assessing the impact of training on local leaders we considered it useful to analyze the previous knowledge and skills of local leaders on human-relations techniques. The results gathered from the study are presented in the form of a table and a bar graph.

Table 4. Pre-test of human-relations techniques known before training.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Friendliness	27	20
Dialoguing	24	18
Mentioning individual names	52	38
Showing respect	32	24
Total	135	100

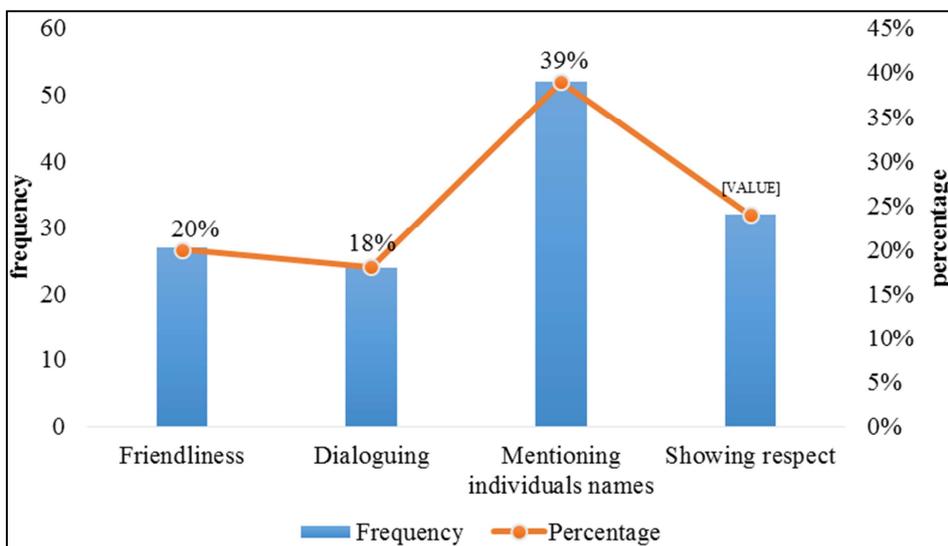


Figure 4. Bar Graph showing human relations technique known before training.

Results presented above (see figure 4) shows that (39%) of the trainees used to mention individual names while (24%) of the local leaders knew about showing respect to group members. Similarly, the findings suggest that (20%) of the trainees stated that they knew of being friendly towards groups and (18%) of the local leaders were familiar with dialoguing with group members. As indicated in figure 4, (63%) of the trainees knew about cultural norms in their communities.

Inhabitants of rural communities tend to adhere to culture and tradition which serve as social control mechanisms.

Post-Test: Knowledge and skills acquired by local leaders during training.

The views expressed by trainees about leadership styles learnt at the training sessions suggest that there was an impact. The findings gathered are presented in the table below.

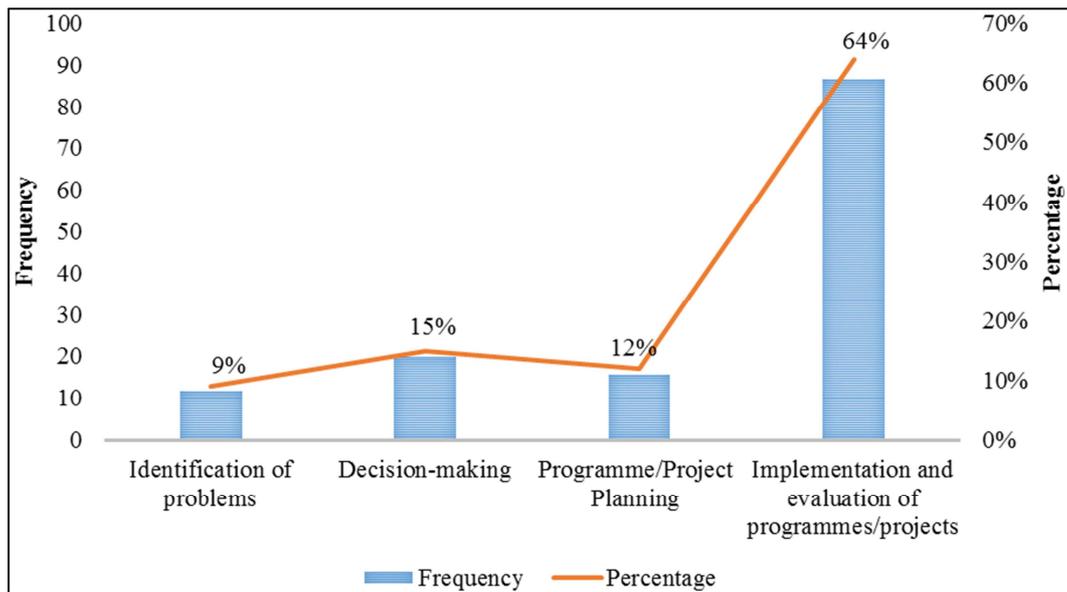
**Table 5.** Leadership styles learnt during training.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
All leadership styles	130	96.3
Democratic leadership style	5	3.7
Total	135	100

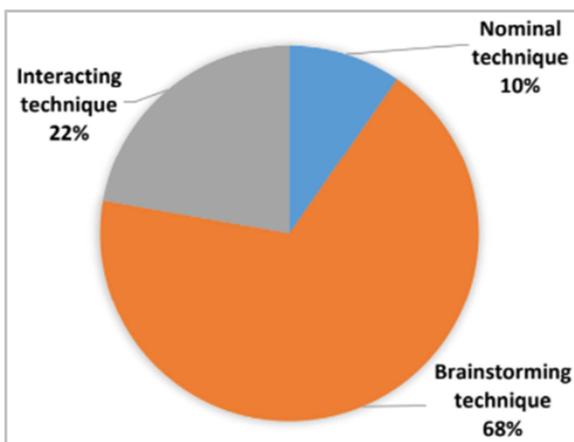
The findings presented in table 5 suggest that (96.3%) of the participants learnt about democratic, paternalistic, autocratic and lasser-faire leadership behaviour, while (3.7%) learnt about only the democratic style of leadership. The fact that most of the respondents have acquired knowledge about all the leadership styles shows their recognition of the

situational concept of leadership.

The responsibility local leaders considered very essential is the implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. The results gathered are presented in the form of a bar graph.



**Figure 5.** Bar Graph showing leadership responsibility learnt during training.



**Figure 6.** Pie Chart showing decision-making technique learnt during training.

Figure 5 presents findings on leadership responsibilities learnt by participants at the workshop. As indicated by the bar graphs, (64%) of the trainees learnt about the implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. Again, the figure shows that (15%) of the local leaders learnt

about decision-making while (12%) learnt about programme and project planning. However, the figure shows that only (9%) of the participants learnt about the identification of problems. Leadership is viewed as getting tasks done and keeping groups maintained in good working order. It can be seen in the figure that the majority of the local leaders learnt how to satisfy the needs of their respective communities. The (64%) were among the best educated and were therefore well equipped with learning skills.

The views expressed by participants suggest that they have learnt about techniques that promote participatory and democratic decision-making. The results gathered are presented in the pie chart.

The findings presented in figure 6 indicate that (68%) of the trainees acquired knowledge about the brainstorming technique at the workshop, while (22%) learnt about the interacting technique. Again, the findings indicate that (10%) of the participants learnt about the nominal technique at the workshop. It is significant from the findings that (78%) of the respondents have acquired knowledge about techniques that promote participatory and democratic decision-making. This group comprise those who have attained between basic and university education.

An assessment of training’s impact on local leaders revealed that they learnt about techniques that make adults

active participants in programmes and projects. The results gathered are presented in the graph below.

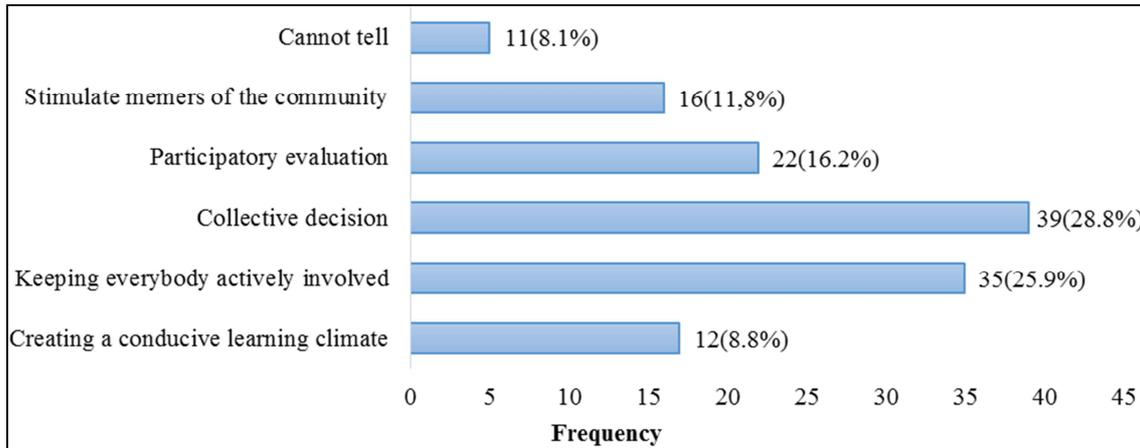


Figure 7. Bar Graph showing participatory techniques learnt during training.

The analysis presented in figure 7 suggests that (28.8%) of the local leaders learnt about collective decision-making among groups while (25.9%) of the trainees learnt about keeping everybody actively involved as a way of ensuring the participation of group members. Again, the figure indicates that (16.2%) of the respondents learnt about participatory evaluation while (11.8%) of the trainees learnt about stimulating the community. Figure 7 further shows that (8.8%) of the local leaders learnt about creating a conducive learning climate as a participatory technique. On the contrary, (8.1%) of the trainees could not tell the participatory technique they learnt at training. It can be seen in figure 7 that (82.7%) of the trainees learnt techniques that make adult participation active while (8.8%) of the local leaders learnt about creating the necessary psychological climate that enhances adult participation in programmes and projects.

Training impact analysis makes it obligatory to find out what evaluation methods trainees have learnt during the training sessions. The analysis also revealed that local leaders learnt about human-relations techniques that promote collaboration in rural environments.

Table 6. Evaluation Method learnt during training.

	Frequency	Per cent
Group Discussion	70	51.8
Informal interview	32	23.7
Observation	4	2.9
Survey	9	6.6
Case Studies	20	14.8
Knowledge acquired about human relations towards groups		
Friendliness	33	24.4
Dialoguing	65	48.1
Showing Respect	37	27.4

N= 135

Analysis of data presented in table 6 shows that (51.8%) of the local leaders intimated that the evaluation method they learnt was group discussion while (23.7%) stated that they

learnt about the informal interview. Again, the findings suggest that (14.8%) of the trainees posited that they learnt about case studies while (6.6%) of the respondents claimed that they learnt about the survey method. On the other hand, (2.9%) of the trainees pointed out that they learnt about the observation method. We can see from the findings that (90.3%) of the trainees acquired knowledge about evaluation methods that are practised through interaction. This brings about social inclusion and builds confidence in the members of the community. Additionally, (48.1%) of the trainees pointed out that they learnt about dialoguing with group members, while (27.4%) of the respondents learnt about showing respect to group members. Again, the table indicates that (24.4%) of the participants learnt about friendliness towards groups. It can be seen from the result that the trainees learnt about human-relations techniques that are relevant in the rural environment because they promote collaboration.

4.2. Discussion

Learner-centred methods such as discussion, case studies and role-play were used to induce participants to articulate their views in discussions and discern the meaning of case studies and role-play. The educational background of most of the participants as well as the learner-centred methods used promoted active learning among the group. The trainees were conversant with freedom of expression in their professional groups, and this made it suitable for learning. Secondly, the psychological learning climate at the training sessions was characterized by friendliness. Adult learning is a continuous process of investigation and exploration followed by action grounded in this exploration [21]. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) best explains this learning process. This intellectual space promoted interaction between the trainers and the trainees. This resulted in guided learning which is a joint knowledge construction between the trainers and the trainees. The same interaction produced scaffolding in which trainers assisted trainees to construct new knowledge. Thus,

guided learning and scaffolding facilitated knowledge acquisition among the trainees. In the Birim North District where leadership is structured according to status, trainers needed to interact with trainees to equip them with the skills of interacting with their followers. Similarly, interaction among participants was suitable for learning because they were great resources to each other since they belonged to different professions. In traditional settings such as Birim North District, people tend to adhere rigidly to traditional values, some of which are obsolete and must therefore be changed. It was therefore necessary that trainers helped learners to engage in critical reflection. This is usually done by suggesting alternatives to current ways of thinking, perceiving, and behaving, pointing up contradictions, drawing attention to relationships of dependence, and critically scrutinising assimilated values and assumptions [22].

With the introduction of the district assembly concept, the authority once wielded by traditional rulers has been virtually usurped by the assembly. The assembly which is headed by a District Chief Executive exercise both political and administrative authority. Thus, the change from autocratic traditional authority to the district assembly concept emphasizes collective responsibility. It is therefore important that local leaders acquired knowledge about all the leadership styles to enable them to adopt the most appropriate style to reflect conditions within their environment. The chi-square value for age and leadership style is  $\chi = 2.572$   $P > 0.05$ . This suggests that there is a positive relationship between age and leadership style with training. There is therefore a systematic relationship between the variables ( $H_1$ ). The primary concern for adults is the realities of life: their job or lack of job, their family situation, their social life and other competing issues (Rogers, 1986). In addition, the chi-square value for the level of education and leadership style is  $\chi = 1.279$   $P > 0.05$ . This indicates that there is a relationship between educational level and leadership style with training. The learning abilities of adults depend on their educational background, experience, skills of learning and the development of their capabilities. Some adults have been away from education for a long time and in many cases have not developed the range of their educational skills greatly. However, others have continued to use regularly and in a structured way, the learning skills they have acquired [21]. Thus, in both cases the alternative hypothesis is accepted: there is a positive relationship between knowledge and skills with training ( $H_1$ ).

It has been argued that local leaders for the most part require specialized, brief, and clear-cut training to give them the immediate skills they need to carry out their responsibilities such as implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects [23]. Effective participation in decision-making in the communities ideally requires the involvement of the whole population. This is however not the case because local leaders do not have the skills to facilitate collective decision-making in their communities. It is therefore important that most of the trainees learnt the brainstorming technique to enhance participatory decision-

making and social integration in their localities. The district is predominantly Christian which makes it religiously homogenous for participation in development programmes and projects. The extent of people's participation is improved by the leader's ability to motivate the inhabitants to their community development. This means the expansion of informal programmes and public awareness of community self-help projects [24]. Though the functions of the district assembly include formulation and execution of programmes and projects, necessary for the overall development of the district, local leaders, are expected to perform functions to complement the effort of the assembly. They, therefore, require knowledge and skills in evaluation so that they can learn from their successes and mistakes. The task is a reflection in practice. Reflective practice means being at work or practising, reflecting on the results of one's practice, making decisions about how to modify or alter one's practice to increase one's effectiveness, deciding whether and what additional information may be needed, and engaging again in practice [25]. The Birim North District is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity. The ethnic groups in the district are Akans, Gas, Guans, Krobos, and people of northern extraction. It is therefore important that most of the trainees learnt about dialoguing and friendliness to enable them to get along with all the ethnic groups in the district. Dialogue is based on people sharing their perceptions of a problem, offering their opinions and ideas, and having the opportunity to make decisions or recommendations [26]. Thus, the training programme transformed the local leaders into a catalyst for development.

## 5. Conclusion

Unlike children who engage in preparatory education and training for the future, adults participate in education and training for immediate application. The study revealed that only a few women performed leadership roles in Birim North District because of a gender rigid segregation of occupations which is to the disadvantage of women in the district. Apart from that women also have their weaknesses such as poor level of education [8, 9]; motherhood and family responsibilities [9, 10]; and lack of self-confidence [11]; which make it difficult for them to compete against their male counterparts. Most of the participants were in their mid-ages which is a stable period for working with tremendous energies and resources for social influence and contribution [16, 17]. Again, most of the local leaders were professionals with a well-developed mode of mental processing of information and can therefore engage in structured learning. Most of the trainees were married because marriage commands a lot of respect and provides social protection in the rural environment [19, 20]. The educational background of most of the participants as well as the learner-centred methods used promoted active learning among the group. In the Birim North District where leadership is status-based, trainers needed to interact with trainees to equip them with the skills of interacting with their followers. Similarly,

interaction among participants facilitated learning because they had acquired some experiences from their professional groups which served as resources for learning. Participants acquired knowledge about all leadership styles to enable them to adopt the most appropriate style to reflect conditions in the district. The brainstorming technique in decision-making enhances participation and social inclusion, particularly because the district is ethnically heterogeneous. Participants were assisted to engage in critical reflection to enable them to get rid of obsolete cultural values. Again, knowledge and skills in evaluation will enable trainees to learn from their successes and mistakes most especially, to see mistakes as a valued resource for learning. Finally, dialoguing and friendliness are powerful tools for establishing good human relations because of the heterogeneity of the district in terms of ethnicity and occupations.

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