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EXIST IN CDA OFFICES AND YOUTH GROUPS: A CASE STUDY  
OF NYERI TOWN CONSTITUENCY YOUTH ENTERPRISE  
SCHEME (C-YES), KENYA**

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# AN INVESTIGATION ON WHETHER COMMUNICATION GAPS EXIST IN CDA OFFICES AND YOUTH GROUPS: A CASE STUDY OF NYERI TOWN CONSTITUENCY YOUTH ENTERPRISE SCHEME (C-YES), KENYA

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to establish the communication gaps that exist in CDAs offices and Youth Groups.

**Methodology:** A descriptive survey research design was used. Questionnaires were used to collect data. A population of 260 respondents was chosen, consisting of 200 youth groups and 60 CDAs. A sample size of 50% was chosen. The sample was 130 individuals divided into 100 youth groups and 30 CDAs. The tool for analysis was S.P.S.S; a Windows based statistical Package for social science. Presentation of the findings was done in tabulated and graphical formats.

**Results:** Findings indicated that the various communication gaps existed in youth groups as well as in CDA offices. This is because the youth groups leaders and community development assistants disagreed that they have well laid communication plan, a written down organization structure, there is clarity of reporting responsibilities and lines of communication, the groups hold meetings regularly and the groups have appointed one of the members as the communication champion.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Following the study results it is recommended that the stakeholders ensure that all communication gaps that exist in CDAs and youth groups are filled. They should ensure that there are well laid communication plans, a well written down organization structure, clear reporting and lines of communication, and holding meetings regularly.

**Keywords:** *Communication gaps, CDAs offices and Youth Groups.*

## 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Scholars in the communication field have defined communication differently. The term Communication has been derived from the Latin word "Communis", meaning to share. Rao (1966) defines it as "a social process-the flow of information, the circulation of knowledge and ideas in human society, the propagation and internalization of thoughts".

Communication requires a sender, a message, and an intended recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication. Thus, communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Feedback is critical to effective communication between parties.

Karten (2002) defines a communications gap as a situation in which miscommunication, or the complete lack of communication adversely affects the work as well as the relationships among the people carrying out the work. Gaps are frequently caused by misdirected, one-way, poorly timed, or badly worded communications. In addition, some gaps result from misunderstanding, misinterpretations, and miscommunications.

Communication is how we share ideas, get information, request help and assign tasks. Gaps form when the message sent isn't received, or differs from the message received. Understanding and applying the concepts in Communication Gaps will help us determine how the gap happened, what we can do about the gap, and how we might prevent the gap in the future.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The important role of communication has been demonstrated in many instances in the history of mankind. The mythical story of the tower of Babel is used in many different contexts. It is a story that demonstrates human folly as far as communication is concerned. In the biblical story, the builders of the Tower of Babel failed in their mission of building the tower because of poor communication. Therefore, stating that communication plays a pivotal role in sensitizing people on opportunities or threats within their social, political, economic and cultural environment is belaboring the point.

The problem is that the youth enterprise fund seems to have missed the wisdom of good communication as indicated by the various challenges the youth groups are facing in accessing the youth funds. The Youth Development Fund Status Report (2009) has highlighted that the absorption and uptake rate of youth funds especially in areas with poor financial infrastructure. Maro (2011) asserts that a cross section of youths in Mombasa cited unemployment and inability to access social and economic programs such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund as some of the issues that continue to frustrate them. The youths cited bureaucracy in the process of applying for loans and stringent conditions which were making it difficult for the youths to access the loans from the fund. Gudda and Ngoze (2011) assert that North Eastern, have recorded relatively low uptake of loans through financial intermediaries. The main reason has been lack of adequate coverage by small Enterprise Oriented Financial institutions and lack of awareness of the products that are available. Njoroge (2011) argues that some regions such as North Eastern, parts of Rift Valley and Coast Province where loan uptake is still low.

However, the reviewed studies by Njoroge (2011), Gudda and Ngoze (2011), The Youth Development Fund Status Report (2009), Maro (2011) failed to address communication gaps that existed in CDA offices and Youth Groups. The failure to address the communication gaps forms the research gap of this study. This study hypothetically argues that the low uptake of youth funds is due to poor communication. It is with this in mind that the study attempts to assess the communication gaps that existed in CDA offices and Youth Groups.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of this study was to establish whether communication gaps existed in CDAs offices and Youth Groups.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Agenda Setting Theory**

Agenda Setting Theory asserts that the creation of what the public thinks is important. Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media – the ability to tell us what issues are important. As far back as 1922, the newspaper columnist Walter Lippman was concerned that the media had the power to present images to the public. McCombs and Shaw investigated presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976. In the research done in 1968 they focused on two elements: awareness and information. Investigating the agenda-setting function of the mass media, they attempted to assess the relationship between what voters in one community said were important issues and the actual content of the media messages used during the campaign. McCombs and Shaw concluded that the mass media exerted a significant influence on what voters considered to be the major issues of the campaign.

Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media (for example on political communication systems).

Bernard Cohen (1963) stated the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

The formulation of specific policies and programmes that view youth as an important resource for Kenya's development creates a favorable environment for youth to access basic goods and services in order to realize their potential and contribute to public affairs in a more effective way. A supportive policy framework creates common goals and collective action and serves as a basis for equitable and concerted distribution of resources to meet the needs of youth (UNESCO, 2004). However, it is instructive to note that, the policies have been developed at a time when most youth are facing major challenges, which have greatly scarred and irreversibly changed the trajectories of their lives. Related, most youth occupy multiple and diverse positions in the society, thus making them difficult to grasp and pin down analytically (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). They often occupy more than one position at the same time (Ibid). In addition, while the new policies acknowledge the need for youth to participate in decision making processes, youth are practically valued for what they will become in future. Wyn and White (2008) refer to this as "futurity" and argue that there is an underlying tension about the extent to which young people



can be regarded as citizens in any sense or whether they are citizens in training. This presents difficulties in defining youth appropriately and planning programmes that would comprehensively respond to their needs and integrate them in the mainstream economy and politics. The drawback of focusing on youth as future adults, citizens and workers is that it ignores the important role that young people play in society as youth. Futurity in youth policy has the effect of downplaying the significance of social change on the experience of youth and the implications of their life patterns for the experience and meaning of adulthood for their generation (Ibid).

The youth development programmes which the government has been implementing target persons aged 15 to 35 years. Lack of consistency in the definition of Kenyan youth reflects the difficulty that most African societies have in specifying the age bracket of youth. In African societies, responsibilities such as marriage are more important in defining the category where one belongs - adult or youth. Biological age has been used to define policies and laws of inclusion and exclusion, in contest such as obligatory schooling, right to vote, obtain identity cards and driving license and drink alcohol (Hansen, Karen, 2008). The exclusionary tendencies of policies targeting youth have denied youth opportunities to contribute in development and also exposed them to tight regulations whose interpretation and implementation is left to the law enforcing authorities. Rather than promote young people's well-being and development, certain policies have been used to constrain and deny them rights which are integral to their transition process. Essential, youth transition is presented as a linear, psychosocial development process starting in late childhood, which progresses in a piecemeal fashion towards the conventional goals of adulthood (Barry, Monica (2005). According to them, the four main transitional stages include: Leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements; completing full time education; Forming close stable personal relationships outside the family; and testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less stable livelihood. These transitions are interconnected. For instance, leaving parental home and setting up a personal home require an independent source of income, and to reach this stage, a young person generally has to have acquired qualifications and to have qualifications and to have succeeded in demonstrating his or her skills in the labour market or some equivalent subsection of the society (United Nations, 2007).

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey research design was used. A questionnaire was used to collect data. A majority of the questions were closed ended and a few were open-ended. A population of 260 respondents was chosen, consisting of 200 youth groups and 60 CDAs. A sample size of 50% was chosen. The sample was 130 individuals divided into 100 youth groups and 30 CDAs. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The tool for analysis was S.P.S.S; a Windows based statistical Package for social science. Presentation of the findings was done in tabulated and graphical formats.

## 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Response rate

Table 1 shows the response rate results for the study. Table 1 reveals that a total of 60 (60%) of questionnaires from the youth group leader category were returned while 40(40%) questionnaires from the same category were not returned. Meanwhile, a total of 20 (67%) of questionnaires from the community development assistant category were returned while 10(33%) questionnaires from the same category were not returned. An overall response rate for the two categories was 62%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of more than 50% is adequate for analysis. Babbie (2004) also asserted that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. The achieved response rate was almost 62% which implies that the response rate was good.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

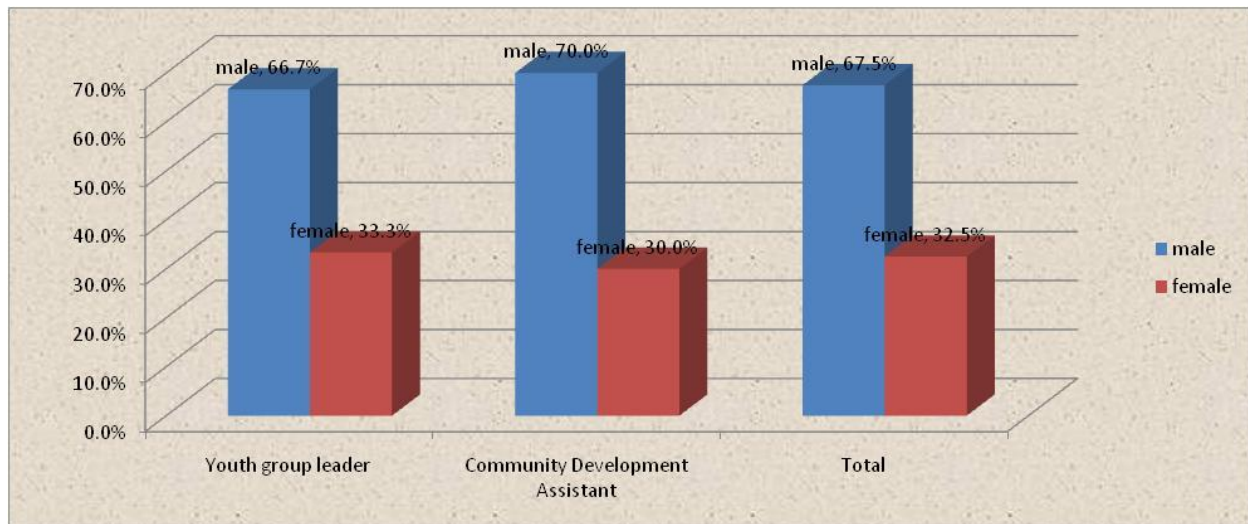
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Total
Youth group leader	60-60%	40-40%	100
Community Development Assistant	20-67%	10-33%	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80-62%</b>	<b>50-38%</b>	<b>130</b>

### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study also sought to find out the demographic characteristics of the youth group leaders and the community development assistants.

#### 4.2.1. Gender of Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender of the respondents. Figure 1 presents the results.



### Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Figure 1 indicates that the majority (67.7%) of respondents from the youth group leaders' category were male while a further (33.3%) were female. Furthermore, the majority (70%) of respondents from the community development assistant were male, while (30%) were female. Overall, the majority (67.5%) of respondents were male while 32.5% were female. The finding reveals that although the constitutional gender balance of 1/3 is being observed, females are less likely to join youth groups. In addition, the results imply that females are less likely to be employed as community development assistants compared to males.

#### 4.2.2 Age of Respondent

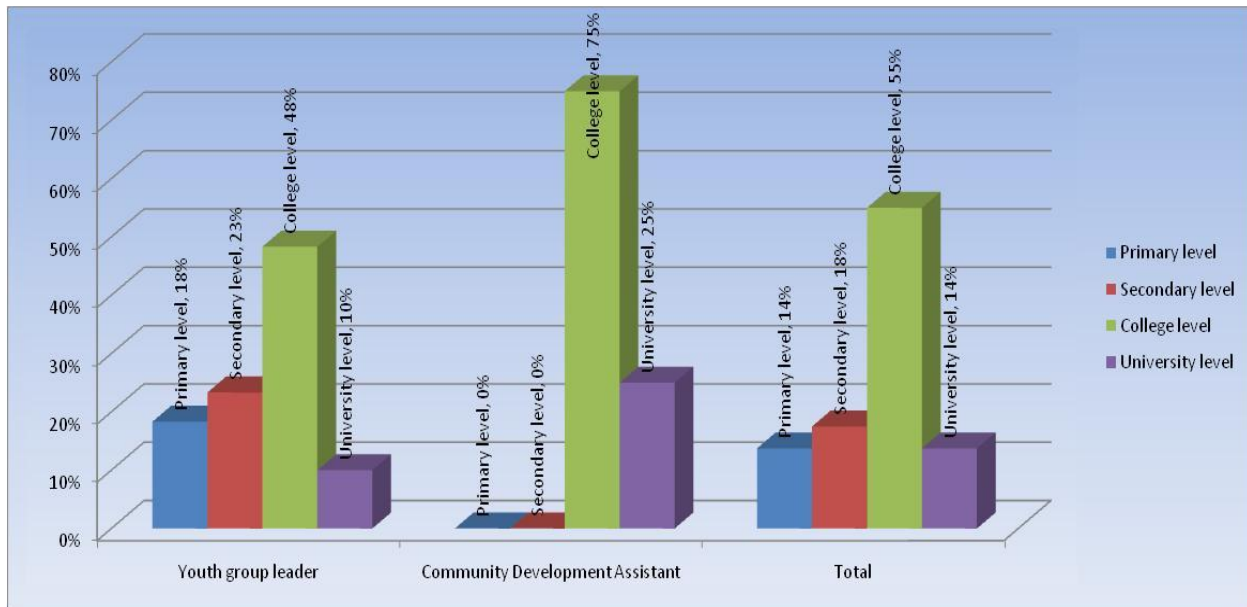
The study sought to establish the age of respondents. Results are as shown in table 3. Cross tabulation results in table 3 reveal that the majority (67%) of youth group leaders were 18 to 30 years of age. In addition, (33%) of youth group leaders were aged 31 to 35 years. Meanwhile, the majority (65%) of respondents in the community development assistant category were above 35 years of age, while a further (35%) of community development assistants were of 31 to 35 years of age. Overall, the majority (50%) of respondents from both categories were 18 to 30 years of age. Meanwhile (34%) were 31 to 35 years of age and a further (16%) were above 35 years of age. The findings indicate that the community development assistants (CDAs) are not youths and this may have an influence on the communication effectiveness between CDAs and youth group leaders.

**Table 2: Age of Respondents**

Category of respondent	18 to 30 yrs	31 to 35yrs	Above 35yrs	Total
Youth group leaders	40-67%	20-33%	0-0%	60
Community Development Assistant	0-0%	7-35%	13-65%	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>40-50%</b>	<b>27-34%</b>	<b>13-16%</b>	<b>80</b>

#### 4.2.3 Education Level of Respondents

The study sought to establish the education level of respondents. Results are as shown in figure 2.



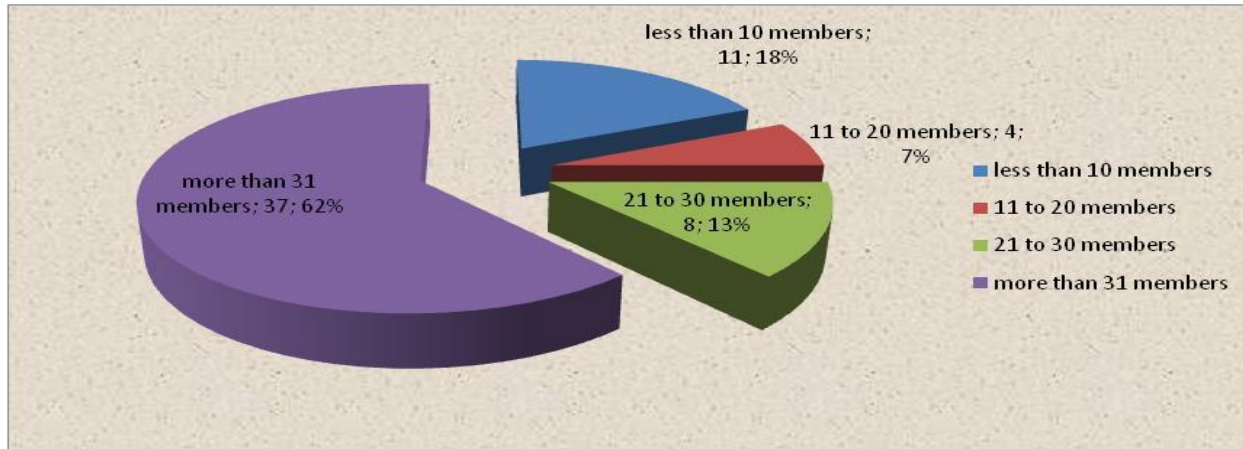
**Figure 2: Education Level of Respondents**

Results in figure 2 show that (48%) of respondents in the youth group leaders' category had college level of education. Meanwhile, 10% of youth group leaders had university level of education bringing to a total (58%) of youth group leaders with college and university education. Meanwhile, (75%) of community development assistants had college level of education while a further 25% had university level of education, bringing to a total (100%) of CDA with college and university education. Overall, the majority (55%) of respondents in both categories had college level of education, (14%) had university level of education, (18%) had secondary level of education while a further 14% had primary level of education. The findings imply that both youth group leaders and CDAs are well educated and this may have an influence on the effectiveness of communication, however, one cannot tell whether the youth group members are also as educated as their leaders.

#### 4.2.4 Group Size

The study sought to establish the group size. Findings are shown in figure 3.



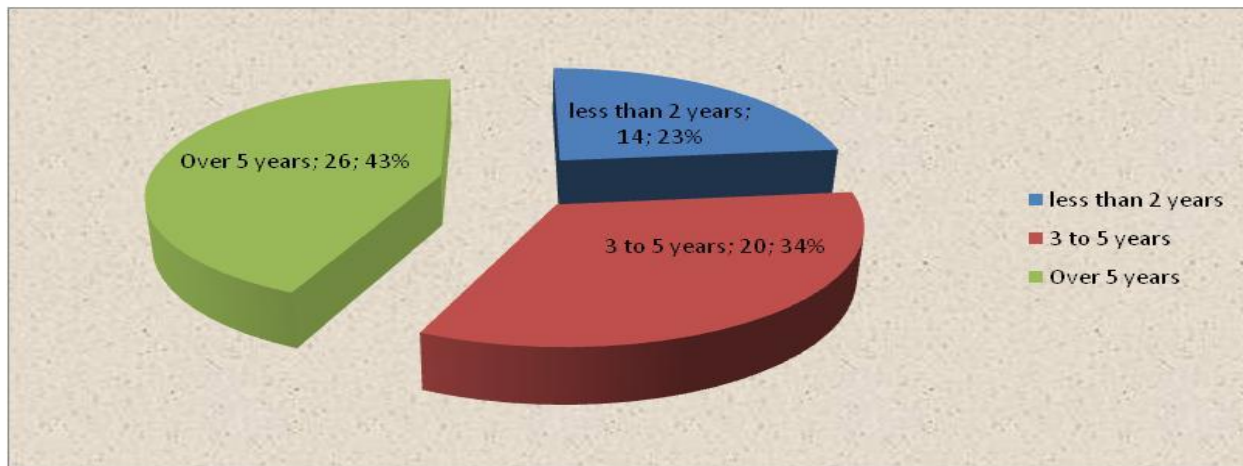


**Figure 3: Group Size**

Findings in figure 3 indicate that a majority (62%) of youth group leaders indicated that their groups had more than 31 members. Meanwhile, (18%) indicated that their groups had less than 10 members, (13%) had 21 to 30 members and (7%) had 11 to 20 members. The size of the group may have a bearing on the effectiveness of communication and it is expected that smaller groups experience more effective communication compared to larger groups.

#### 4.2.5 Period of Operation

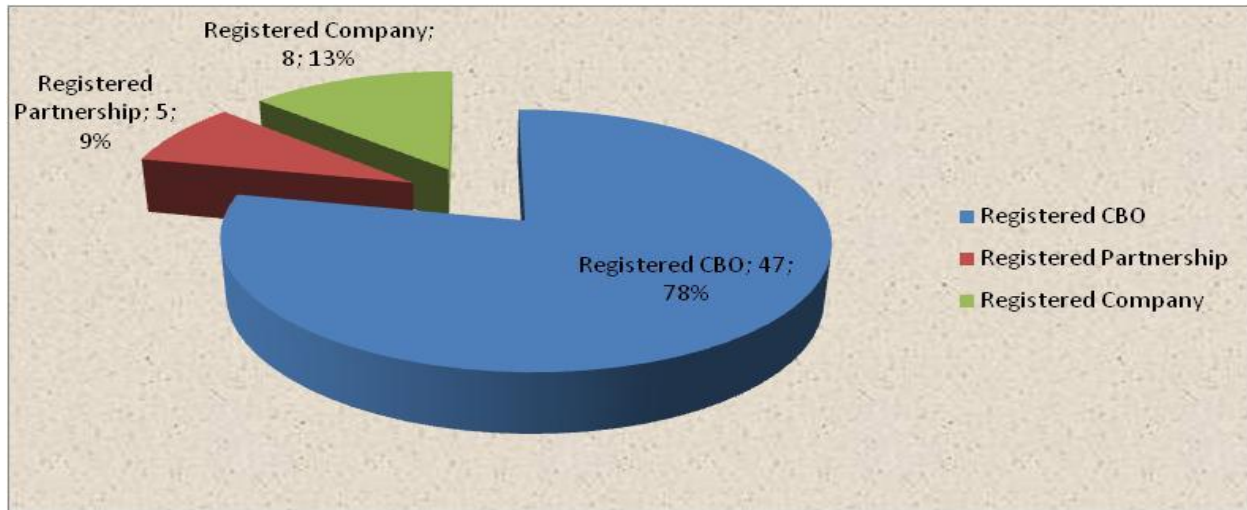
The study sought to establish the period of operation of the youth groups. Findings are as shown in figure 4. Findings in figure 4 indicate that (43%) had been in operation for over 5 years. Meanwhile, 34% had been in operation for 3 to 5 years while 23% have been in operation for less than 2 years. The findings imply that youth groups have been in operation for a considerable length of time and this may have influenced the effectiveness of communication.



**Figure 4: Period of Operation**

#### 4.2.6 Legal Status

The study sought to establish the legal status of the groups. Findings are shown in figure 5.



**Figure 5: Legal Status of Group**

Findings in figure 5 indicate that a majority (78%) of youth groups are registered as community based organizations CBOs. Meanwhile, 13% are registered companies while a further 9% are registered partnerships. The legal status may have a bearing on the effectiveness of communication with companies showing more effective communication compared to CBOs and partnerships.

#### 4.3 Communication Gaps

The study sought to find out whether communication gaps existed. Communication gaps were analyzed for youth group leaders and the community development assistants. Results in table 3 indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have a well-developed communication plan. This was supported by a mean score of 2.45. On the other hand, community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have a well-developed communication plan. This was supported by a mean score of 2.40. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Results in table 3 indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have a written down organization structure. This was supported by a mean score of 2.32. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have a written down organization structure. This was supported by a mean score of 2.25. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Results in table 3 indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have a clear reporting responsibilities and lines of communication. This was supported by a mean score of 2.33. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have clear reporting responsibilities and lines of communication. This was supported by a mean score of 2.30. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Results in table 3 indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have appointed one of themselves as a communication champion. This was supported by a mean score of 2.25. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have

appointed one of their own as a communication champion. This was supported by a mean score of 2.20. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Results in table 3 indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they hold meeting regularly. This was supported by a mean score of 2.35. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they hold meetings regularly. This was supported by a mean score of 2.45. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

The overall implication is that various communication gaps exist in youth groups as well as in CDAs offices. This further implies that the existence of communication gaps may have had a negative effect on the awareness and disbursement of C-YES funds.

**Table 3: Communication Gaps**

	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
well-developed communication plan	Youth group leaders	60	2.45	.872	.113
	Community Development Assistants	20	2.40	1.095	.245
written down organization structure	Youth group leaders	60	2.32	1.112	.144
	Community Development Assistants	20	2.25	1.446	.323
clarity of reporting responsibilities and lines of communication	Youth group leaders	60	2.33	.914	.118
	Community Development Assistants	20	2.30	1.658	.371
appointment of one of the officers as the communication champion	Youth group leaders	60	2.25	1.129	.146
	Community Development Assistants	20	2.20	1.196	.268
holdings meetings regularly	Youth group leaders	60	2.35	1.039	.134
	Community Development Assistants	20	2.45	1.317	.294

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to find out whether communication gaps existed. Communication gaps were analyzed for youth group leaders and the community development assistants. Results indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have a well-developed communication plan. This was supported by a mean score of 2.45. On the other hand, community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have a well-

developed communication plan. This was supported by a mean score of 2.40. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Results further indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have a written down organization structure. This was supported by a mean score of 2.32. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have a written down organization structure. This was supported by a mean score of 2.25. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Study findings indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have clear reporting responsibilities and lines of communication. This was supported by a mean score of 2.33. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have clear reporting responsibilities and lines of communication. This was supported by a mean score of 2.30. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Furthermore, the study findings indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they have appointed one among themselves as a communication champion. This was supported by a mean score of 2.25. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they have appointed one of their own as a communication champion. This was supported by a mean score of 2.20. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

Finally, the study findings indicated that youth group leaders disagreed with the statement that they hold meeting regularly. This was supported by a mean score of 2.35. Community development assistants (CDAs) disagreed with the statement that they hold meetings regularly. This was supported by a mean score of 2.45. The findings imply that there exists a communication gap from both quarters (youth group leaders and CDAs).

The overall implication is that various communication gaps exist in youth groups as well as in CDAs offices. This further implies that the existence of communication gaps may have had a negative effect on the awareness and disbursement of C-YES Funds.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The study sought to find out whether communication gaps existed. Communication gaps were analyzed for youth group leaders and the community development assistants. From the study findings, it was possible to conclude that various communication gaps existed in youth groups as well as in CDA offices. This is because the youth groups leaders and community development assistants disagreed that they have well laid communication plan, a written down organization structure, there is clarity of reporting responsibilities and lines of communication, the groups hold meetings regularly and the groups have appointed one of the members as the communication champion.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Following the study results it is recommended that the stakeholders ensure that all communication gaps that exist in CDAs and youth groups are filled. They should ensure that there are well laid communication plans, a well written down organization structure, clear reporting and lines of communication, and holding meetings regularly.

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