

Financing governance institutions in Ghana: The case of the National Commission on Civic Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the NCCE has been affected in the performance of its constitutional functions by inadequate funding. Created in 1993 by Ghana's Constitution to serve as one of the anchors of democracy, the NCCE has suffered a perennial lack of funds. Analyzing primary data from survey carried on officials of the NCCE and policy makers, the article discovered abysmal performance of the NCCE largely due to its inability to receive adequate funding. Respondents attributed NCCE's financial paucity partly to its partisan complexion, which has also made it less attractive to donor funding. Despite the financial difficulties, the NCCE has managed to pursue public education on Ghana's constitution, campaigned against election and ethnic violence through the parsimonious use of its meager resources. The NCCE can overcome its financial challenges if government can set up a Civic Fund where a fixed percentage of gross national product would be allocated to the NCCE to run its planned programs.

Keywords: *governance institution, inadequate funding, civic education, national commission, Ghana*

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the salient issue of funding governance institutions in emerging democracies. The question of financing governance

institutions, particularly in emerging democracies such as Ghana has become important because of the realization that democracy thrives on strong institutions. Indeed, some commentators refer to finance as the oil that greases the wheel of democratic success, and the lifeblood that sustains the momentum towards democratic consolidation (Diamond, 1999; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004). Also, it has emerged that rather than building political parties' financial capability, which has been the trend in Ghana since returning to constitutional rule in 1992, resources could be shifted to build the capacity of the governance institutions established by the 1992 Constitution (Gyimah-Boadi, 2010; CDD, 2005; Rose-Ackerman, 1997). Given that the governance institutions are the vehicles for the production of public goods, development of skills and delivery of services, they ought to receive state budget allocations' priority. Yet, as it is the case with all nascent democracies in Africa, there is paucity of funding for the constitutional bodies that have been charged to dispense crucial governance responsibilities to stimulate democratic consolidation.

The literature on democratization in Ghana points to grave inequities in the way funding from the Government of Ghana and other sources are accessed and allocated to the governance institutions (CDD, 2003; NGP, 2003). A CDD's (2003) study reveals harrowing mismatch between budget releases and expenditures of the governance institutions. The trend shows growing spending deficits, which have contributed to overall annual national budget deficits (Republic of Ghana, 2000 & 2010). Also, the National Governance Program (NGP) (2003) has revealed that the NCCE has suffered discrimination in state funding allocation – it has never received the full complement of its yearly budgetary allocations. While generally governance institutions have not received sufficient funding to carry out their constitutional responsibilities, the NCCE is the most financially deprived institution (NCCE, 2005 & 2012). For instance, out of the total \$18.78 million disbursed to the governance institutions by the international donors including the governments of Canada, Denmark, UK and France as well as the European Union, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2000, the NCCE received the least amount. The evidence shows that in the disbursement of the funds, the Judiciary was allocated \$6.25 million, the Electoral Commission received \$5.67 million, and \$1.25 million went to Parliament. Only \$0.21 million was allocated

to the NCCE (Republic of Ghana, 2006 & 2012). The fact that of the four constitutional bodies the NCCE was the least beneficiary of the external financial support confirms anecdotal suspicion that the institution is a neglected sector in fiscal governance in Ghana. The media and other commentators have speculated that the NCCE's underperformance is directly linked to paucity of funding. Yet, the connection between funding and NCCE's performance is largely anecdotal without any empirical analysis to verify the charge against the institution. As a result, policy makers have not taken the funding encumbrance of the NCCE seriously. This paper, which contends that institutions that lack sufficient funds are unlikely to perform their assigned constitutional mandate, contributes to the theoretical and empirical literature on financing governance institutions in emerging democracies. Against this backdrop, the paper addresses the following key questions:

- How is the NCCE funded?
- To what extent are the funds adequate?
- How has the adequacy or otherwise of the funds affected the performance of its constitutional functions?
- How have the inadequacies of funds allocated to the NCCE been addressed?
- What alternative funding arrangements will help the NCCE to improve upon the performance of its functions?

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The paper combines the purposive and simple random sampling method to examine the funding dilemma of the NCCE, which is one of the key constitutional bodies in Ghana. The selection of the NCCE was based on the level of funding vis-à-vis performance, pervasiveness of mandate in promoting democracy and the institution's rating and profile within the good governance agenda. The period chosen, that is, 1992-2013 is also significant because it enables us to make an analysis of the performance of the NCCE spanning two decades of uninterrupted period in Ghana's democratic history, which began in 1992. Examining the relationship between funding and performance of the NCCE during the most crucial period of Ghana's democratic

development will also allow us to validate the claim that mandate performance of institutions are shaped by adequate funding. Two regional capitals, Accra and Kumasi were chosen out of the ten administrative regional capitals of Ghana. Accra was purposively selected for being the location of the headquarters of the NCCE. However, the selection of Kumasi was based on a simple random method: the names of all the nine regional capitals were written on a sheet of paper and placed in a container. The name of each regional capital was written on a sheet of paper and sealed in an envelope. This ensured that each regional capital had the equal chance of being selected. A research assistant was asked to pick an envelope to represent a center outside the headquarters. The same procedure was used to choose two districts out of 216. Through this procedure, Akim Oda Central and Tano South districts were selected.

Overall, 50 officials from the NCCE, Members of Parliament (MPs) and international donors were sampled for interview using a structured questionnaire. The choice of the respondents was based on both the purposive and simple random methods. Whether at the headquarters or district offices, the directors of finance, administration, operation and public education were targeted for interview because they are privy to the financial transaction between the institution and the donors, including the government. The Chairman and the two deputy chairpersons of the NCCE were also selected for their peculiar knowledge of the funding issues. Two donor institutions, namely, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the UNDP were selected to be part of the sample because they have provided funding for NCCE's programs. The remaining 31 respondents comprised 21 officials of the NCCE and 10 MPs were chosen randomly.

The interview was to elicit the views of these officials on the sources of funding and financial challenges as well as policy measures that have been designed to enhance sustainable funding of the NCCE. More especially for the officials of the NCCE, it was important to know how much funds have been channelled and their impact on the performance of the functions of the institution. The researchers also used other secondary sources such as government documents and research reports to supplement the primary data. On 12 February 2013, a stakeholders' workshop was held at the University of Ghana, Legon, which provided the platform for the researchers and 83 stakeholders to dialogue on the findings, clarify issues, correct factual errors in order to achieve best results.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NCCE

This section examines specific constitutional and legislative provisions that confer civic education responsibilities upon the NCCE. It notes that the NCCE's ability to perform the arduous functions for democratic progress in Ghana is dependent on continuous availability of funds. The National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) was created by Chapter 19 of Ghana's 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution and an Act of Parliament 452 in 1993. Both the Constitution and the Act delineated the composition, organizational structure and functions to be performed by the NCCE. The NCCE is made up of a Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen and four other members. The President acting on the advice of the Council of State – partly elected, appoints these members and appointed distinguished members of society having non-partisan orientation, advises the President on state affairs). The members are persons who also qualify to be elected as members of Parliament. As an apolitical and autonomous institution, the Constitution prohibits the members from holding office in any political party. In addition, they cannot be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority in the performance of their functions (Republic of Ghana, 1993). The Chairman and the two Deputy Chairpersons enjoy the same terms and conditions of service as Justices of the Court of Appeal and High Court respectively. However, the other four members hold office on such terms and conditions as determined and approved by Parliament. The procedures for removing the Chairman and Deputy Chairpersons from office are the same as those for the Justices of the Court of Appeal and High Court respectively. Similarly, the administrative expenses of the NCCE, including salaries, allowances and pension payable to, or in respect of, persons serving with the institution, are charged on the Consolidated Fund (Republic of Ghana, 1992). Since its inauguration in 1993, Parliament has established offices of the NCCE in all the 10 regions and 216 administrative districts, and appointed officers and employees to manage the branches. Like all governance institutions created by the Constitution, the NCCE is assigned specific responsibilities to perform, including:

- Create and sustain within the society the awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution as the fundamental law of the people of Ghana; educate and encourage the public

to defend the Constitution at all times, against all forms of abuse and violation;

- Formulate for the consideration of government, from time to time programs at the national, regional and district levels aimed at realizing the objectives of the Constitution;
- Formulate, implement and oversee programs intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people;
- Assess for the information of government, the limitations to the achievement of true democracy arising from the existing inequalities between different strata of the population and make recommendations for redressing these inequalities (Republic of Ghana, 1992; Act of Parliament, 1993).

There is no doubt that these functions outlined above are crucial for Ghana to deepen its democracy. While the constitution set the NCCE up as an independent body, it did not make specific arrangements for funds to flow to enable it dispense its numerous functions. Nevertheless, it is expected that like all constitutional bodies, the NCCE will appear on the prioritized of the government for funding. Therefore, the next section turns attention to an examination of the funding sources of the NCCE in order to determine the extent to which, the financial resources has impacted on the performance of its statutory functions. It is anticipated that adequate funding flow to the NCCE will enhance its ability to perform its constitutional responsibilities. Conversely, lack or inadequate funding to the NCCE will weaken its capacity to perform its functions.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Arguably, the NCCE's ability to discharge these extensive and important responsibilities for sustainable democracy in Ghana will largely depend on continuous, reliable and adequate financial resources. A majority of the official interviewees 96 percent as against 4 percent agreed that, availability of funds to governance institutions would enhance the efficient and effective delivery of their mandates. Given that funds are critical to the survival of the NCCE, this section attempts to examine the ways by which the NCCE obtains revenues

to carry out its constitutional responsibilities. Unearthing the various sources of funding to the NCCE will enable us to determine the adequacy of the funds it receives to execute its mandate. We still contend in this section that institutions that lack sufficient funds are unlikely to perform their assigned responsibilities. The NCCE derives its revenues from two broad categories of sources, namely state budgetary allocation and grants-in-aid from international donors, philanthropies and other private and nongovernmental organizations. The official respondents 87 percent of which more than two thirds were NCCE interviewees distinguished between varying sources of funding including Government of Ghana, international donors, and individual philanthropies. On the question of the major source of funding, 87.4 percent of respondents indicated that the NCCE draws its bulk of funds from the Government of Ghana. It was also revealed by 96.6 percent respondents that the Government of Ghana is largest financial contributor to the NCCE. This revelation sharply contrasts some unscientific claims that international donors and NGOs are the major financiers of governance institutions in developing countries. The finding is consistent with many studies about financing governance institutions in Africa through the state (Ayee, Anebo & Debrah, 2007). Indeed, in Ghana, all institutions created by Ghana's 1992 Constitution are allocated funds from the Consolidated Fund to facilitate the performance of their mandates. Thus, like any state institution, the NCCE receives its major funds from the government of Ghana through the annual budget allocations (Republic of Ghana, 2012).

The dependence on the state for funding could be problematic for the NCCE. This is because the African soft state has never been able to manage its institutions compared with the private sector. Experience of poor economic backwardness in Africa has been detrimental to the growth and prosperity of the states' created institutions (Sen, 1999; USAID, 2006). Throughout Africa, institutions have been unable to deliver due to financial paucity (Gyimah-Boadi 2010). Resources that could be used to build the capacity of the governance institutions are not only lost through rent seeking but also spent on ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts resolutions (Kempe et. al., 2000; Rose-Ackerman, 1997). The intractable nature of these conflicts implies that the governance institutions will be denied adequate resources to implement their responsibilities. For instance, the government of Ghana spent over \$ 8 million on the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in Ghana between 1992 and 2000 (Brukum, 2000). Indeed, in Ghana, resources that have

been channeled to communal conflicts far exceed what the NCCE has received to carry out its operations. The Director of Finance at the Ministry of Finance admitted that competing demands for healthcare services, education, portable water among others, tend to constraint the government from empowering the governance institutions. An assessment of government’s annual budgets shows that little emphasis has been placed on the governance institutions in the allocation of funds to all state institutions, including ministries, departments and agencies (Republic of Ghana, 2000, 2011). Of these, the most hardly hit by the budget pruning strategy of the government is the NCCE.

The NCCE has also received financial support from other independent bodies and groups, including domestic private organizations and international nongovernmental organizations. For instance, the CIDA, UNDP, the Royal Dutch Embassy, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Hann Seidel Foundation and Aluworks Ghana Ltd have provided financial assistance to the NCCE. Donor funding in 2003 was to build the capacity of the NCCE to launch aggressive public education to compact the AIDs menace titled, “AIDS Awareness Campaign”, supply of office equipment and printing of abridged versions of the 1992 Constitution (Republic of Ghana, 2003; NCCE, 2003). In 2004, the funds were meant to support activities of the NCCE, which included research, education on political tolerance, printing of educational election materials, lectures and essay writing on non-violence election campaigns in the 2004 election year (see Table1).

Table 1

Donor Financial Support to the NCCE

Year	Amount in USD
1997	21,340
2002	9,872
2003	11,249
2004	10,321
2008	12,853
2010	14,214
2013	16,373

Source: composed from NCCE Annual Reports, 2014

It has been estimated that donor support to the NCCE constitutes about 15 percent of NCCE's total annual income. Even though the external support forms a minute percentage of its income, it makes a significant contribution to its capacity to develop and administer its programs to the people (NCCE, 2003 and 2004). Given the state's inability to provide adequate financial resource to the NCCE, it is not expected that it would perform its constitutional functions satisfactorily. In order to arrive at this conclusion, the next section attempts to deal with the relationship between availability of resources verses performance.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AND THE PERFORMANCE OF NCCE

In this section, we examine the effects of inadequate funding on the performance of the NCCE's constitutional functions. Like other governance institutions such as the NMC and the Ombudsman, the NCCE faces daunting challenges to the performance of its mandate. Whereas the challenges confronting the NCCE are legion, a whopping 97.3 percent of official respondents mentioned financial challenges even though 1.7 percent indicated corruption and 1.0 percent mentioned bad leadership. It is clear from the survey that the NCCE's problem is largely financial. At the stakeholders meeting to deliberate on the financial challenges of the NCCE, the Chairman of the NCCE, Mr. Larry Bimi revealed that the NCCE has consistently overspent its budget because its annual proposed budgets have always been reviewed downwards to the minimum thereby affecting its ability to implement planned programs. For instance, the government's budget approval for the NCCE in 1996 was \$123,101, however, by the close of the fiscal year, it had spent \$145, 112. This means that it exceeded its subvention for that year by \$25,011. In 2007, the overall income of the NCCE was \$215,202 and its expenditure amounted to \$223,021 implying a recorded deficit of \$7,809 (NCCE, 1997 & 2008). In 2012, its total appropriation amounted to \$209,021 but the expenditure showed \$221,102. The deficit financing, which the NCCE ran from 1996 to 2012 is a reflection of the inadequate financial support for its planned programs. A comparison between actual expenditure and the budget from 1999 to 2012 shows a consistent pattern of over-

expenditure: actual expenditure outturn was always higher than the budget. For instance, the budget recorded an overshoot of 5 percent, 20 percent and 23 percent in 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively (CDD, 2003; NCCE, 1999 & 2002).

Similarly, the NCCE has experienced perennial disparities between the approved budget and the actual funds received. For instance, in 2006 a budget of \$35, 304 was approved but at the end of the year, the Ministry of Finance released \$31, 102 which meant there was a shortfall of \$4, 202. For the 2011 fiscal year, a budget of \$40, 976 was approved, however, only €36, 231 was released (NCCE, 2007 & 2012). While 65.7 percent of respondents attributed the cause of disparity between approved budget estimates and actual funds released to the NCCE to the government's policy of budget ceiling – a measure that requires all state institutions to prepare their budget estimates to agree with prior determined figures, 34.3 percent said that it reflects budget allocation discrimination towards the NCCE. At the stakeholders' forum on the NCCE's finances, the NCCE Chairman bemoaned the lack of cooperation from government to exclude government institutions and the NCCE in particular from the budget ceiling policy. However, 19.9 percent of respondents believe that the NCCE's problems are multifaceted involving a combination of all the identified factors. A majority of the respondents, 92 percent concluded that given the NCCE's finding difficulties, there is a high probability that, it will not be able to execute the numerous functions that have been assigned to it. However, it must be noted that the NCCE is not the only governance institution that faces financial challenges, as previous studies found that some constitutional bodies including parliament, NMC, Ombudsman, among others also faced funding difficulties, which resulted in their abysmal/sluggish performance (NGP, 2003; CDD, 2003; Ayee et al., 2007).

The question worth examining is to what extent has inadequate funding to the NCCE affected the effective delivery of its statutory functions? In order to address this salient issue in the governance literature, the researchers teased out the question of financial adequacy of the NCCE. Only a minority 1.9 percent in the survey said that the NCCE receives adequate funding. Apart from 1.1 percent who did not respond to the question, overwhelming 97 percent of respondents indicated that funding to the NCCE is inadequate. The voices of officials in the response were the loudest (96.3 percent) as against 3.7

percent claims by the policy makers. At the stakeholders meeting to share the findings of this study, the NCCE Chairman, Mr. Laary Bimi noted that the amount of money allocated to the NCCE compared to the other institutions such as the Electoral Commission seems to suggest that the government attaches little importance to the functions the NCCE is mandated to perform.

While resources may be one factor that influences the performance of an institution, there is a consensus among democratization scholars that adequate financial support to governance institutions would enhance their capacity to perform their mandate (Gyimah-Boadi 2004). Based on this proposition, the survey sought to establish whether inadequate funding to the NCCE has been counterproductive. The overwhelming number of respondents 95 percent blamed the weak performance of the NCCE on inadequate funding. A cumulative 81.3 percent said that the NCCE could not execute its planned programs such as educating Ghanaians on their civic duties and responsibilities because of financial difficulties. A minority, 13.4% attributed the weak performance of the NCCE to lack of motivation, 3.3 percent linked it to non-payment of salaries and 2.0 percent mentioned the inability to purchase new equipment (provide logistics). The survey result was reinforced by Mrs. Augustina Akumanyi (the deputy chairperson of the NCCE) who commented at the stakeholders' workshop that while citizens are happy to receive civic education, the NCCE's capacity to educate is like a 'little drop in the ocean. The NCCE's financial paucity has affected its ability to recruit high caliber of personnel to the institution (56 percent). Similarly, according to the NCCE Chairman, only three of the six constitutionally mandated members of the NCCE have been at post due to the low remuneration. The NCCE Chairman explained that the inability to get the full complement of the membership of the NCCE to make critical decisions is a violation of the Constitution because six members constitute a quorum for decision-making. This obviously affects its ability to engage in productive decision-making and implementation. Indeed, to enhance effective policy implementation, each member is assigned an oversight responsibility over the execution of its policies in one or two regions (Act of Parliament, 1993). Therefore, the absence or inactiveness of the other members of the NCCE means that its activities in the regions may proceed without officials' supervision.

Overwhelming number of respondents, 86.3 percent confirmed the general perception that the NCCE has not carried out public education on important dimensions of Ghana's democracy. The same number of officials attributed the laxity in the performance of NCCE's functions to inadequate funds. There are large proportion of the citizens living in rural districts that do not know the existence and work of important governance institutions. For instance, recent studies by CDD (2012) on citizens' attitude and knowledge of the governance institutions and their responsibilities showed that only a minority, 31.8 percent of the population (largely the elite and educated class) has a clear knowledge of the institutions and the work they do. The large number of the population, 68.2% (that live in the rural districts and villages and have not attained education beyond primary level), said they did not know the mandate of the governance institutions. If the NCCE is the body charged to educate the citizenry on the functions of the democratic institutions, then it is logical to say that the NCCE has failed to perform its constitutional mandate. However, the NCCE's failure to educate Ghanaians on the work of the governance institution is directly linked to the inadequate funding issue. Mrs Akumanyi (the Deputy Chairman of the NCCE) explained that, the NCCE has not been able to carry out aggressive public education to help the citizens to comprehend the work of the institutions because it lacks the financial and logistical capacity to implement its civic education programs that usually target the underprivileged uneducated people in the society.

Similarly, in the CDD (2012) nationwide survey, 45.8 percent said they know the National Media Commission and 61.3 percent claimed knowledge of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice very well and only 25.3 percent responded that they know the NCCE and the functions it performs. Of those who said they know the NCCE, 43.1 percent of them could not indicate that it sensitizes Ghanaians on the 1992 Constitution and 24.4 percent did not know that it undertakes periodic research into critical national issues. Only a very small number (32.5 percent) know that it develops and implements programs on citizens' rights. In our survey, the official respondents (98.6 percent) as against 1.4 percent were unanimous in their opinion that inadequate funds to the NCCE have decapitated its capacity to popularize and publicize its programs and activities to Ghanaians.

There have been claims that the NCCE has used its meager resources to carry out political activities rather than implementing national programs of civic education. The perception that the NCCE is a political organ that canvasses votes for the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) rather than an autonomous and nonpartisan institution set up to orient citizens on democratic values, has been the bane of its financial encumbrance. For instance, a cumulative 68.6% of both elite and non-elite respondents in the CDD (2012) afro barometer survey identified the NCCE as a partisan institution that mobilizes grassroots voters' support for the NDC. At the stakeholders' forum, the Chairman of the NCCE, Laary Bimi admitted that the NCCE suffers from image crisis. The perception that the NCCE is an appendage of the NDC stems from the fact that in 1992 when the country was transiting from military to constitutional rule, most of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) cadres that served as the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) were recruited into the NCCE. However, according to 78.5 percent of the respondents, since 1993 most of the cadres of the PNDC have either resigned or retired. Similarly, 83.7 percent admitted that individuals who manifested partisanship in their activities have been dismissed. Indeed, Mrs Akumanyi (Deputy Chairperson of the NCCE) insisted that the NCCE has evolved from a perceived political appendage of the NDC to an independent, neutral and impartial institution that runs national programs.

In contrast to the officials claim that the NCCE has shed off its political character, the ordinary Ghanaian believes that the NCCE lacks political neutrality (62.7 percent) (CDD, 2012). Interestingly, a fair number of official respondents (41.2 percent) admitted that the perception that the NCCE is not politically neutral has affected its ability to attract funding from other independent sources. Even a little over half, 13.6 percent of the respondents said that the NPP starved the NCCE when it was in power from 2001 to 2008 because it perceived the institution as an appendage of the NDC. A minority of official respondents, 23.7 percent, agreed to the rumors that the NPP was seeking for legitimate means to fold up the institution because of its partisan character, and 31.2 percent indicated that one of the government's strategies was to deny the NCCE of the oxygen of funds. Indeed, throughout Kufuor's eight-year reign the annual budget allocation to the NCCE suffered radical reduction even though under the NDC, it did not receive sufficient budget allocation (see

Republic of Ghana, 2002, 2006 & 2010). Similarly, the pro-NDC image of the NCCE has encouraged some donors to withhold grants that could have gone to support the running of NCCE's education operations. For instance, in 2010, the Danish Embassy declined its financial support to the NCCE on the suspicion that it was a partisan institution.

Despite the financial constraints, the NCCE has adopted several strategies to carry out its constitutional mandate. One of these involves holding irregular public forums to educate the citizenry on the provisions of Ghana's Constitution, including civic responsibilities and duties of the people. To cut cost, the NCCE has decentralized its administration. Instead of the previous centralized national programs, it has reached out to the rural electorate through its de-concentrated (grassroots) offices. The respondents (83.7 percent) noted that the frontline officers rather than central bureaucrats have visited the rural communities to carry out public educate on salient national issues albeit limitedly. Furthermore, 74 percent admitted that it has admonished voters to turn out at the registration centers whenever the EC opened the register, and mobilized the people to vote during national and local government elections. A minority of respondents, 25.2 percent in the CDD (2012) afro barometer survey confirmed that officials of the NCCE have mounted platforms at some rural market centers and held demonstrations on how to caste a valid ballot during election campaign periods. A majority 97.4 percent of which 23.7 percent were MPs praised the institution of the 'Constitution Week' by the NCCE where it pursues media outreach programs to schools, and churches and holds workshops to educate citizens on the imperatives of Ghana's Constitution. Overall, 90.2 percent of respondents comprising 13.4 percent MPs, 2.2 percent donors and 74.6 percent NCCE respondents expressed satisfaction with the public education programs of the NCCE. Also, 85 percent of the respondents indicated that one monumental achievement of the NCCE is its role in promoting non-violent elections. According to 75.8 percent of respondents, much of the meager resources of the NCCE have been spent on programs aimed at preventing election violence and ethnic conflict. Larger respondents, 78.2 percent, claimed that the NCCE's anti-election violence programs have been largely responsible for the relative peace that has been recorded since 1992.

Given the inadequate funds allocated to the NCCE, how has it managed the resources in order to sustain its operations? In most

corporate establishments, captains of industry will insist on prudent application of scarce resources. Majority of the respondents, 81.6 percent agreed with the question that the NCCE has sustained its activities by ensuring the judicious use of its funds. This has involved a system of program prioritization, which allowed the scarce resources to be aligned to targeted activities. According to the Chairman of the NCCE, the activities of the NCCE have been sustained through a policy of careful application of scarce resources – this, according to 67.4 percent of respondents, means a cautious alignment of programs to the little resources that are available to the NCCE. The practical steps that have been taken to surmount the financial challenges include persistent appeals to government and Non-government Organizations/donors for more financial support. Despite this, 78.5 percent of respondents said that the NCCE's appeal for funds to successive governments for funding has not received any favorable response.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

This paper has used the experiences of the NCCE in Ghana to reinforce the view in the literature that for governance institutions to fulfill their constitutional mandates they must be adequately resourced by the governments in Africa. This is the democratic burden governments will have to bear for a long time to come. The democratic project which began in most African countries cannot be completed if constitutional bodies which are to serve as the bulwark of democracy are neglected and left to look for funding themselves. There is no doubt that democracy is not a cheap venture but rather an expensive one. Accordingly, governments must devote substantial funds and other resources in spite of competing claims and needs to ensure the financial viability of the governance institutions. This will promote confidence and trust in the institutions, reduce frustration, uncertainty and neglect on the part of their staffs.

The NCCE experience has also shown that there is the need for the Government of Ghana to take a new and hard look at the funding of constitutional bodies or governance institutions. It is necessary for the government to treat constitutional bodies equally in the allocation of funds to them in order not to create the impression that some of the institutions are more important than others. The

preferential or selective treatment of funding constitutional bodies is counterproductive because it creates envy, conflict and a sense of despondency among the institutions, which have not received adequate attention for funding. Some of the institutions tend to work in “silos” with little or no coordination of energies and their operations, which have the potential of undermining democratic progress. Taking a new look at the funding of constitutional bodies should therefore aim at revisiting the current budgetary allocation system and sanitizing it with the overarching aim of consolidating democracy in Ghana.

Notwithstanding these, there is a widespread view among most Ghanaians including participants at the stakeholders’ workshop that the financial challenges of constitutional bodies, including the NCCE can be addressed by appealing to international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) for financial support. This view is echoed in the survey where close to half of respondents (43.2 percent) indicated that an alternative approach to funding the NCCE is to ask for help from NGOs and individual philanthropies (45.7 percent). According to some participants at the stakeholders’ workshop, the idea of donor support is a laudable one. However, they cautioned that the over-reliance on donors could spell doom for the democratic project, particularly at a time when the donors seem to be shifting focus from support for civic education to largely activities undertaken during polling day.

A majority of respondents, 66 percent supported an option of borrowing from financial institutions/banks. Conventionally, state institutions in Ghana do not resort to private borrowing in order to finance their activities except otherwise explicitly declared by the law. However, the parent legislation that created the NCCE does not indicate whether it could borrow from external sources. Those who would like the NCCE to borrow money said that it will enhance its ability to carry out its numerous public programs. One can only understand the real situation by relying on the views of officials rather than the unofficial respondents. When the data of those who said that the NCCE should borrow money was disaggregated into officials and non-officials, more than two-thirds were officials. The willingness of the officials of NCCE to borrow money to supplement the running of its civic education programs reflects their frustration about the government’s intransigence to provide adequate funding to the NCCE. A majority of participants at the stakeholders’ workshop

advised the NCCE to launch a new strategy aimed at attracting the attention of policy makers for an increase in budgetary allocation.

It cannot be overemphasized that money is the lifeline of every organization and no establishment can survive and carry out its mandate without it. This view was expressed loudly in the responses of the NCCE official where 76 percent of them suggested that one of the practical measures of resuscitating the NCCE from the financial encumbrance is to resort to the special fund method. For instance of those who said the Government of Ghana should be the chief financier, 77.2 percent endorsed the establishment of a special fund, to be known as The Civic Fund, which the NCCE would tap into it to run its civic education programs. An overwhelming number of respondents 73.9 percent said that the special fund should be modeled along the lines of the District Assemblies Common Fund whereby a fixed percentage of gross national product would be allocated to the NCCE to enable it carry out its strategic programs. To justify the creation of the fund, 72.1 percent said, it may be necessary for government to publicize NCCE's activities and achievements. This would enable the public to know what the NCCE has been doing and how efficiently and effectively it is discharging its constitutional mandate.

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