



**Reinventing African Chieftaincy  
in the Age of AIDS, Gender,  
Governance, and Development**

Edited by Donald I. Ray, Tim Quinlan,  
Keshav Sharma, and Tacita A.O. Clarke

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ISBN 978-1-55238-537-1

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## **2 Chiefs as Development Agents: Ghanaian Pilot Study**

Donald I. Ray and Gaelle Eizlini

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Can African traditional leaders be “development agents”? Some researchers, policy-makers and administrators, and elected political leaders of the African post-colonial state have written off African traditional leaders as being corrupt or otherwise unsuited for inclusion in development strategies. Yet the survival and recent reinvention of chiefs by themselves in parts of Africa has seen them emerge as “development agents.” Given that much of the HIV/AIDS literature argues that HIV/AIDS is part of the struggle for development, the potential for African chiefs as “development agents” has implications for anti-HIV/AIDS strategies. In this pilot study, we use Ghanaian newspaper articles and research in Ghana to conduct a fresh but preliminary examination and analysis of Ghanaian traditional leaders as “development agents.” To the extent that they appear to have done so, we view the ability of Ghanaian traditional leaders to transform

and reinvent themselves as “development agents” as being made possible by the way that “divided legitimacy” has operated within this African post-colonial state.

African traditional leaders are those monarchs, other nobles holding offices, heads of extended families, and office holders of decentralized polities whose offices are rooted in the pre-colonial period. Their African-language titles are often translated into English as “chiefs,” “traditional leaders,” “traditional authorities,” “traditional rulers,” “kings,” and “natural rulers.” Traditional leaders include those political, socio-political, and politico-religious structures that are rooted in the pre-colonial period rather than in the creations of the colonial and post-colonial states, but the offices of traditional leaders have usually been modified by the colonial and post-colonial states.

Are traditional leaders inherently “bad” or “good”? How do we move beyond the over-generalization and stereotypes? The use of two pilot newspaper analyses and research in Ghana begins to move the debate beyond depending upon the anecdote of the outstanding but possibly isolated traditional leader who does outstanding development work. For some time we have been struck by various reports of chiefs being involved in development. Ray (1992, 1996, 1997, 2003a, 2003b), Arhin (1985, 2001), C. Owusu-Sarpong (2003) and others have indeed witnessed such activities.

For example, Arhin, Ray, and van Rouveroy co-organized the 1994 “Conference on the Contribution of Traditional Authority to Development, Human Rights and Environmental Protection: Strategies for Africa,” which drew researchers from Africa, Europe, and North America, as well as chiefs from Ghana (Arhin, Ray, and van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, eds., 1995, and Ray and van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, eds., 1996). The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) organized several seminars of Commonwealth African Ministries of Local Government. These included ministers, officials and researchers. The 1997 Gaborone, Botswana symposium on traditional leadership, local government and development drew delegations from twelve Commonwealth African Countries (Ray, Sharma, and May-Parker 1997). In the 1995 Harare Declaration, Commonwealth African local government ministers and other senior policy-makers declared that “traditional leadership is afforded considerable credibility and functions in many local communities and that with the creation of appropriate mechanisms for their involvement,

such leadership can assist in the realization of developmental goals” (Programme of Action adopted at the 1995 Harare Commonwealth Roundtable on Democratisation and Decentralisation for Senior Policy Makers in Local Government, co-organized by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum – CLGF, the International Union of Local Authorities [Africa Section] – IULA–AS, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities – FCM. Cited in Ray 1997, 45). The International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) had a research project on traditional leadership and local governance and development that co-operated with the Traditional Authority Applied Research Network (TAARN), which is funded by the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC) to produce the volume *Grassroots Governance: Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbean* (Ray and Reddy 2003). With IDRC funding, TAARN is carrying out the research project “Traditional Leadership and Local Governance in Social Policy in West and Southern Africa” with teams in universities in Ghana, Botswana, and South Africa with the coordination centre at the University of Calgary in Canada. TAARN now publishes an e-journal called: *Chieftain: The Journal of Traditional Governance* (<https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/handle/1880/300>).

These studies draw our attention to a phenomenon that we would have been led not to expect by authors such as Ribot (2002) or Mamdani (1996), who suggest that many African traditional leaders are corrupt, selfish, and undemocratic. Of course, having traditional leaders take part in development is not without its problems (see, for example, Ntsebeza 2003) but as Caiden, Dwivedi, Jabbara et al. (2001) argue with regard to the United States, Canada, France, and other countries, the same charges of corruption, selfishness, etc., could be brought against some elected leaders, as well as some civil servants, of North American, European, African, and Asian democratic states. People should be judged by what they do before we stereotype all of a category as being engaged in unchanging negative activity.

## II. USING DIVIDED LEGITIMACY TO EXPLAIN THE CONTINUED CREDIBILITY OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN GHANA AND THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

Having incorporated and subordinated the pre-colonial political leaders into the British Gold Coast colony (what became Ghana), the British colonial state decided to preserve the former pre-colonial kings, nobles, and other leaders as “chiefs” under the system of “indirect rule.” The British colonial state delegated many local government powers to the chiefs. Thus chiefs continued to wield considerable power, authority, and legitimacy throughout the British colonial state period: there was an asymmetric sharing on division of power, authority, and legitimacy between the dominant colonial state and the traditional leaders that reflected political realities on the ground in Ghana. When Ghanaian nationalism challenged the British colonial state, ultimately state sovereignty was handed over to Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP). Despite Nkrumah’s efforts to eliminate traditional leaders as actual and potential political competitors (Rathbone 2000), Nkrumah and all subsequent post-colonial governments have had to recognize that traditional leaders possessed political resources that were unique to them, which could not be stripped away from the chiefs and taken over by the leaders of the post-colonial state. Simply put, many traditional leaders in Ghana and numbers of other African post-colonial states possess local credibility or legitimacy with their communities that is based on their unique cultural and historic roles in their community and their immediate proximity to their people. Most people in Ghana grow up in their community seeing the local chief as their community’s leader. Chiefs thus possess a unique source of credibility or political legitimacy that the post-colonial state has been unable to take over (Ray 2003a, 83–94). Ghana’s post-colonial government did remove nearly all of the local government statutory powers of the traditional leaders but the chiefs have been able to maintain, on the whole, their share of political legitimacy: in Ghana, political legitimacy continues to be divided between the chiefs and the post-colonial state as it was in the colonial period. (Ray 1996 and 2003a, Ray and LaBranche 2001). By the end of the 1970s, during the faltering of the post-colonial

state's development efforts (Arhin 2001; Ray 1992) some traditional leaders became "development agents," contrary to the expectations of Mamdani, Ntsebeza, and Ribot. But what does this mean and is the chief as "development agent" an isolated phenomenon in Ghana?

### III. METHODOLOGY OF THE PILOT STUDY

Newspaper content analysis<sup>1</sup> of articles on traditional leaders and development allows us to use a new source of evidence of chiefs' involvement in development and to move beyond the anecdote and the case study. In this pilot study, two sets of newspaper articles and research in Ghana examine the phenomenon of the traditional leader as development agent. The day-to-day reporting of statements and the activities of chiefs provides a wider or national scope of analysis over a number of years than is possible using one extended case study limited to one area. The pilot study of Ghanaian traditional leaders' stated intentions and interventions to Ghanaian newspapers contributes to our knowledge of what chiefs say that they have been doing and the interests that they are articulating. At this pilot study stage it has not been possible to follow up systematically on these newspaper articles in order to determine the effectiveness of the traditional leaders' reported stated intervention. In this pilot stage, our research is focused on the leader rather than analyzing the leader in the context of his or her community. At this stage of the pilot study, there are only rather tentative indications as to whether or not the statements were followed through in reality.

Two sets of newspaper articles are examined in this pilot study. The first set consists of 3,699 newspaper articles on chiefs published between 1987 and 1998, which were manually gathered, sorted, and organized. This set includes articles from a variety of Ghanaian newspapers published in Ghana's capital, Accra, as well as *The Pioneer* newspaper in Kumasi, the site of the ancient capital of the Asante Kingdom and also Ghana's National House of Chiefs.

In the second set of newspaper articles of this pilot study, a selection of articles have been used, at this preliminary stage of analysis, to illustrate the range and depth of the reported interventions of chiefs as

development agents. The Ghanaian newspaper articles drawn from the Ghanaian press can be accessed through the Internet using specific key words. The database/archive that has been most often used has been the *Ghanaweb* news site (available at <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/>). Some individual newspaper websites were also accessed to check and fill some gaps. This was done in order to maintain greater consistency in gathering articles from the archives as well as to ensure greater consistency in the results from the search terms that were used. The *Ghanaweb* archives for 1995–2004 were accessed. They have the widest range of identified sources but only include articles from online sources. *The Pioneer* newspaper was not available on the electronic searches but this was accessed in the first set of manually researched newspapers.

The search terms used were: “chief,” “traditional chief,” “traditional ruler,” “traditional leader,” and “chieftaincy”; however, the specific titles within the chieftaincy were not used in gathering data for this paper. A number of permutations of “queenmother” were used as keywords as well – “queen mother,” “queen mothers,” “Queen mother,” “Queenmother,” “queenmother,” “queenmothers,” “queenmum,” “queenmums” – this was done in order to allow for the different usages in the term and to ensure that these would guarantee a “hit.” All of these terms are commonly used in Ghana to refer to the institution of traditional authority. This newspaper reporting of the involvement of Ghanaian traditional leaders in development occurred in a political context in which chiefs did not have formal, statutory jurisdiction over these activities.

#### IV. THEMES OF THE PILOT STUDY NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT

In the first set of 3,699 articles (published between 1987 and 1998) dealing with traditional leaders, 708 articles (or nearly one fifth) clearly showed that chiefs were perceived to be engaged in promoting development for their people. Of this number, 523 of the newspaper articles showed that traditional leaders were involved in various development projects, another 103 articles focused on chiefs promoting health development projects such as clinics, another sixty-six articles covered traditional leaders and educa-

tion projects such as building or equipping schools, and sixteen articles covered the involvement of chiefs in development projects geared to production, such as the growing or harvesting or processing of agricultural or fishing projects.

In the second set of newspaper articles, three important themes of chiefly involvement in promoting economic development, education, and health are presented from this pilot study. This interaction of traditional leadership and development should be seen within the context of divided legitimacy in the post-colonial state. Since these three areas of development are jurisdictions over which the traditional leaders have no formal statutory powers in Ghana, the involvement of chiefs in these matters raises questions in relation to both development and the post-colonial state's claims to sovereignty and legitimacy. The data set provides another means of indicating how involved traditional leaders are in their society and, more importantly, the kinds of activities and issues with which chiefs state they are concerned and which have been reported by Ghana's print media. Illustrations of the reported involvement of traditional leaders in economic development are drawn from infrastructure building and agriculture.

The nature of the Eastern Region, where economic development projects involving infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, factories, and mining operations require access to land. Often this requires the direct involvement, if not the direct approval of, the community's chief because traditional leaders control much of the land held under customary tenure in Ghana. This land, combined with the other land held by individuals under customary tenure, includes nearly all the land in Ghana. Without the approval of traditional leaders, industries usually cannot have undisturbed access to new lands on which to build facilities.

Nearly all the articles on economic development suggest that chiefs are willing and enthusiastic participants in drawing industries to their communities. However, two newspaper articles showed that there were also those traditional leaders who saw the potential to enrich themselves at the expense of their communities. These traditional leaders were reported as feeling that they could demand and receive ever-higher sums of money in exchange for access to land. This practice threatened economic initiatives. The practice appears to be common enough that prominent traditional leaders feel compelled to warn offenders to halt the practice or

risk losing development possibilities to chiefs who do not engage in such practices. The Omanhene of the Offinso Traditional Area in the Ashanti Region said that “it had come to his notice that some chiefs in the area demanded and took huge sums of money from investors before lands are released to them for their projects” (“Ghana: Chiefs Cautioned against Frustrating Investors,” Ghanaweb.com, 17 September 2001). In another case, when the chief in Onwe, Ashanti Region, controlling the land demanded 80 million cedis (approximately US\$9,800) before he would release land to build a tomato processing plant, the investor relocated the project to Offinso (“Chief Blocks Job Openings for Youth” [Ghanaweb: Chronicle], 27 January 2003).

What brings economic development into the framework of shared legitimacy is that this seems to be undertaken as a partnership between the state, the chief and the third party being brought in, either a development agency or worker, or a specific industry. To the extent that traditional authorities have legitimate authority in the eyes of their communities, their people and the post-colonial state, any efforts that chiefs engage in should also be seen in that light – traditional leaders use what legitimacy they have to engage in and support development, while the state uses what legitimacy it has to assist and support those efforts even while the state initiates and supports its own efforts and those of domestic and foreign investors.

In some cases, the divided or shared natures of sovereignty and legitimacy are tested and encounter a certain amount of tension over the development of land. In Ghana, royalties from lands held by the offices of the traditional authorities, called “Stool Lands” in the south, is now paid to the state’s “Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands” which then re-allocates the revenues to several parties, including the chief’s office in order to pay for the upkeep of that office. There are cases where chiefs feel that they have not been given their entitled royalties from resources in their areas. In one article, chiefs expressed their belief that their resource royalties had not been properly distributed back to them and their communities, while the state was seen as having benefited fully from the income generated by their land. In this case, the state promised to examine the issue and to return all income to those to whom it was due (“Rent on Mining to Be Reviewed – Fiadzigbey,” Ghanaweb.com, 12 May 2000).

Traditional leaders appealed for the initiation and extension of infrastructure such as electrification projects and water systems. There were regional variations in terms of infrastructure needs with which the traditional leaders became involved. In the Greater Accra Region, two articles on the re-planning of the city involved chiefs in the capital city as providers of legitimacy to the state in its efforts involved to promote the “Modernization of the Capital City.” President Kufour stated that the government plan’s success would depend on the cooperation of the traditional leaders and the people. (“Modernization of the Capital City Not for Fun – Kufour,” Ghanaweb.com, 7 August 2003).

In Brong Ahafo, electrification was important. One project for electrification in Forikrom in the Techiman district was funded in large part by the local populace including the traditional leaders (“People of Forikrom Embark on Electrification Project,” Ghanaweb.com, 8 April 2000). Chiefs often urge the population to fund various development projects whether they are electrification or for education.

Traditional leaders also provided some of the funding for infrastructure projects. A notable example of this was in Nana Ako Frimpog II, the Chief of Akim Asene, was reported as personally financing the rehabilitation of two bridges in the area. The bridges had been built a decade earlier by Nana Frimpong (“Chief Finances Rehabilitation of Two Bridges,” Ghanaweb.com, 19 May 1997).

Traditional leaders called for government to rehabilitate major thoroughfares, feed roads and bridges. The issue of roads also appears in a number of articles, not necessarily directly related to infrastructure, that suggest that this is very much an issue of development in general. In the agriculture section, for example, roads are very much a concern as they are the conduit through which products are moved to and from communities.

Traditional leaders are reported to be very concerned with the success of agriculture, including cocoa, rice, cotton, pineapple, and palm oil. For example, the Upper West Region, the paramount chief of the Gwallu Traditional Area, Kuouru Kuri Limann, who was also the chairman of the Cotton Farmer’s Association, called on cotton farmers to take advantage of new producer prices on cotton seed as a way to increase production (“Farmers Urged to Increase Cotton Production,” Ghanaweb.com, 26 May 2001). In the Central Region, the members of the Ekumfi Traditional Area made their full support of a proposed pineapple processing

plant known: the Traditional Council members made it clear that they were willing to release more land to interested pineapple growers in order to expand their farms. The chief also announced the Council's decision to buy a large number of shares in the project in order to encourage citizens to patronize the new venture, as well as to "enable the company to mobilize funds to commence business" ("Chief Supports Pineapple Project," Ghanaweb.com, 17 August 2003). In the Volta Region, the Manrako of Aflakpe, Torgbui Agamas II said that many farmers in the area were turning away from cocoa production in favour of the production of palm oil ("Farmers Drop Cocoa for Oil Palm," Ghanaweb.com, 30 November 2000). In the Upper West Region, Kuoru Kuri Limann, the paramount chief of Gwallu said "that farmers should be educated on the proper use and application of fertilizers and pesticides in order to minimize health problems" ("Farmers Urged to Increase Cotton Production," Ghanaweb.com, 26 May 2001). Many traditional leaders are farmers themselves and as such may be able to intervene with government bodies on behalf of their people and themselves. As farmers, they would naturally have an understanding of the issues involved in farming and agriculture. But the involvement of chiefs on agricultural issues is not limited to advocating on behalf of their people or farmers to the government on strictly crop matters. In the Brong Ahafo Region, Nana Osuodumgya Barima Kwame Bonsu, the Omanhene of the Hwidiem Traditional Area, called for the establishment of a district hospital as well as "a review of the free medical care for the aged from 60 to 70 years, since most farmers die before attaining the age of 70" ("Government to Embark on Mass Spraying of Cocoa," Ghanaweb.com, 3 August 2001). This kind of advocacy across a number of different issues suggests that traditional leaders in Ghana have a nuanced understanding that economic development is a phenomenon where a number of different issues and activities can and must interact.

Education represents a major social theme of development. It is through the education of children that social and political values of Ghana's political culture are created or reinforced. Education is also perceived as being the ticket to wealth. Therefore, if traditional leaders were to actively lend their legitimacy to the post-colonial state's education systems, chiefs can be instrumental as development agents that both socialize children's attitudes and mobilize education resources for their communities.

Education funding was an important issue in these articles. There were two major concerns. These were (a) funding for infrastructure, that is funds or supplies for building or equipping schools, classrooms, and libraries or education-related centres and (b) funding for marginalized or poorer students through scholarships. The fundraising efforts of traditional leaders were not seen to be restricted to a particular region. Traditional leaders across Ghana are supportive of education for their people. Funding issues are not regionally based. Also there are traditional leaders in one region who appeal for funding to traditional authorities in another region. The then minister of education, Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumi, stated that the ministry relied on traditional leaders to augment state funding for schools by helping to raise local monies (Interview by D.I. Ray, Accra, 20 May 2002).

One often-raised issue was the importance of education. Traditional leaders are actively involved in raising awareness of the importance of education for all their people, including those who may be marginalized by their social positions, especially girls and the poor. Traditional leaders urge parents to allow their children to go to school rather than take them out and make them work to support the family. By insisting on education as a priority over immediate income, chiefs emphasize the importance of education for its own sake, as well as potential for poor children to improve their living conditions by accessing better skills and credentials.

Access to education for girls is another area where traditional leaders are making their support clear. For example, in the Northern Region, the Yagbon-Wura (the Gonja king), Bawa Doshie II, Paramount Chief of the Gonja Traditional Area stated that “traditional authorities would have reached a qualitative indicator of modifying or abolishing outmoded practices that inhibit the education of children, especially the girl-child” (“Northern Chiefs Attend Conference on Education,” Ghanaweb.com, 19 August 2003). This kind of statement from such a prominent traditional leader is also likely to influence other chiefs. Statements from Minister of State for Basic, Secondary and Girl-Child Education Miss Christine Churcher urged queenmothers to be at the forefront of the campaign to support education for girls (“Education for Women is Non-negotiable – Minister,” Ghanaweb.com, 3 June 2002). Thus, a senior elected leader of the post-colonial state recognized the unique social position of traditional authorities, which gives them a cachet to be able to mobilize their

communities with perhaps great effectiveness. In this instance, a post-colonial state leader directly invoked the legitimacy of female traditional authorities in order to mobilize them to speak up for, and to offer direct encouragement for, the education of girls, thus augmenting the state's efforts. Chiefs are also involved in engaging in the process of monitoring the education process as a whole. Traditional leaders of higher status such as the Asantehene (Asante King) and the Okyenhene (Akyem Abuakwa King) have made public statements decrying the lowering educational standards in Ghana (see "Making Education Relevant – Asantehene Contribution," Ghanaweb.com, 26 June 2002; see "Okyenhene Laments Decline in Educational Standard," Ghanaweb.com, 19 December 2001). Some traditional leaders are clearly interested in being far more involved in the educational system as a whole, even if they lack formal statutory powers from the post-colonial state to so engage in such social policy development.

UNAIDS (2003) estimated that in 2002 the Ghanaian prevalence rate for the 15–49 year age group was 3.0 per cent (South Africa's equivalent rate was estimated to be 20.1 per cent). UNAIDS stated that "given the trend of the epidemic [in Ghana], it is possible for it to spin out of control." Ghana was clearly at a crossroads, and all feasible resources, including traditional leaders, needed to be mobilized against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Ghanaian government's initial response was to manage HIV/AIDS as "a disease rather than a developmental issue" (Ghana 2000, 9). The government response started by being "medically-oriented and directed by the Ministry of Health" to being a much wider developmental focus led by the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC). GAC's strategy was laid out in the *Ghana HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, 2001–2005* document. The Director of the Ghana AIDS Commission Sakyi Amoa argued that, while Ghana waited for a medical vaccine against HIV/AIDS, he advocated the creation and use of the "social vaccine," i.e., the use of social programmers for HIV/AIDS awareness-raising as a means to prevent future infections ("Ghana AIDS treatment plan begins in January," MassiveEffort.org, 30 November 2003, and interview with D.I. Ray, Accra, 5 November 2002).<sup>2</sup> Traditional leaders are a part of Professor Amoa's "social vaccine." The Ghana AIDS Commission developed a summary of strategic interventions by which Ghana's HIV/AIDS strategy was to

be implemented. Traditional leaders were mentioned as being one of the programmed target groups and/or being one of the lead agencies (Ghana, 2000).

The Ghanaian press began to reflect gradually increasing numbers and levels of traditional leader involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS as part of the chiefs' efforts to promote the health of their people. Don Ray suggests that it is possible to construct a three-stage model of increasing chiefly involvement in fighting HIV/AIDS. The first level of involvement for traditional leaders would be that of "gate-keeping."<sup>3</sup> This would involve the traditional leader being approached by an organization already involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS and permission being requested of the chief, and being granted, for the organization to approach the people of the area with social marketing/public education and other campaigns. In Ghana, one example of this was chiefs at a durbar/public meeting telling their people that HIV/AIDS was a real problem and they should pay attention to what the anti-HIV/AIDS organization had to say ("Sell condoms at drinking bars – traditional ruler," Ghanaweb.com, 14 December 2001). In another case in 2000, the Asanthehe commanded his traditional leaders to attend one of five workshops on HIV/AIDS that were organized specifically by him and the Ghanaian committee of UNAIDS, which later became the Ghana AIDS Commission (Interviews in Kumasi by D.I. Ray, June 2000).

The next level of involvement of traditional leaders in the strategy to fight HIV/AIDS is what is termed "social marketing."<sup>4</sup> At the social marketing level, traditional leaders are seen to be publicly speaking out on HIV/AIDS issues with the objective of bringing about change with regard to risk behaviours or how to treat people living with HIV/AIDS. In one example, Ghana television aired a public service announcement that showed members of the National House of Chiefs, prominent paramount chiefs/kings from northern and southern Ghana, speaking out against HIV/AIDS. In another case, the Okyenhehe (the King of Akyem Abuakwa) ran a five kilometre marathon race to raise funds and awareness for World AIDS Day. By running instead of walking at the expected monarchical pace and by wearing exercise clothes and shoes instead of the expected traditional clothes, he purposely broke several customary taboos in order to attract his people's attention to HIV/AIDS ("Okyenhehe runs marathon to mark day," Ghanaweb.com, 3 December 2001).

The Okyenhene also later that day had himself publicly tested for HIV as a way of persuading his people that they should get themselves tested. This traditional leader thus became one of the first major African political leaders to be so publicly tested.<sup>5</sup> (Interview with the Okyenhene, 13 October 2002, with D.I. Ray, Kyebi/Kibi, Ghana, 2002).

The third level of involvement of traditional leaders in the fight for the health development of their people, specifically in the fight against HIV/AIDS is building local community HIV/AIDS competency.<sup>6</sup> Building this local competency means developing the ability and capacity of the community to respond to the challenges of implementing and/or modifying social marketing campaigns as well as responding to the needs of community people living with HIV/AIDS or the AIDS orphans.

The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, is creating a substantial development project that will enhance the ability of his traditional leaders in the Ashanti Region of Ghana to promote education and fight HIV/AIDS. Over a period of several years, the Asantehene negotiated with the Ghana government and the World Bank for a US\$5 million project from the World Bank to carry this out ("Asantehene to set up AIDS Research Centre," Ghanaweb.com, 25 October 1999; Interviews with the Asantehene and Ashanti Regional government officials by D.I. Ray, Kumasi, 2002).

The Okyenhene, Osagyefuo Amotia Ofori Panin, has built up a number of organizations and institutions in his kingdom to fight HIV/AIDS, including a series of events and campaigns that have grabbed local and national attention. These complement his efforts at protecting the environment with his environmental organization and his creation of a scholarship/education fund to promote educational development (Interview with the Okyenhene conducted by D.I. Ray, Kyebi/Kibi, 13 October 2002). The Manya Krobo Queen Mothers Association (MKQMA) is one of the most extraordinary successes of building local community HIV/AIDS competence in Ghana, given the poverty of the community. Located in the Manya Krobo district of the Eastern Region, the MKQMA has 371 members. The president is Manye Mamle Okleyo, the paramount queenmother. The deputy paramount queenmother, Manye Seyelor Nartekie I, is also the programme manager of MKQMA projects to fight HIV/AIDS. The konor (or king) of Manya Krobo, Nene Sakite II, has been a strong supporter of the MKQMA and their fight against HIV/AIDS. The MKQMA developed and implemented a strategy to fight HIV/AIDS

that went from the first level of gate-keeping to joining with local officials in order to develop social marketing campaigns, then to building HIV/AIDS competence by establishing income-generation projects for young women at risk and programs for people living directly or indirectly with HIV/AIDS (including trying to find financial support for the more than one thousand AIDS orphans) and finally mobilizing resources for the community to increase its AIDS-fighting capacity.<sup>7</sup>

We have been cautious in categorizing traditional leaders as gatekeepers in articles that only mention chiefs as being present when HIV/AIDS was being discussed but in which the article is vague as to the actual day-to-day role of the chief with regard to this topic. However, in terms of social marketing and AIDS capacity-building/competence, those functions are more openly and thoroughly documented by the press and can be analyzed with greater analytical validity. The social marketing and HIV/AIDS capacity-building function of traditional leaders seem to be identified quite clearly by the Ghanaian press, although not necessarily by name. This is also the case with AIDS capacity-building. It is clear from articles that chiefs are either raising awareness or urging behavioural changes in order to address the AIDS crisis or are establishing, or donating to, AIDS programs that collate data, care for those infected, or care for those affected by AIDS-related deaths.

The social marketing aspect of AIDS prevention may include, not only making statements as to how personal (sexual) conduct can be a major factor in transmission and how behavioural change is therefore needed, but also altering, discontinuing, or reintroducing Ghanaian cultural practices that might also be considered factors in transmission or encouraging or discouraging high-risk behaviour. Queenmothers, in particular, seem to be anxious to reintroduce some cultural rites that they believe would be helpful in stemming new infections. In this pilot study, it was not possible to measure the effectiveness of these efforts, but it seems that their interventions are at least contributions to a normative consensus with regard to what is deemed to be appropriate sexual behaviour.

Certain eminent chiefs have a clear advantage in press coverage as their prominence seems to draw greater coverage. The position of these prominent traditional leaders and the statements and actions they take against HIV/AIDS also seem to act to inspire other traditional leaders to act or speak out. Some chiefs and queenmothers have specifically

mentioned either the Asantehene or the Okyenhene in this regard, citing them as examples to be followed.

The involvement of chiefs and queenmothers in the fight against HIV/AIDS is national in scope and is not limited to or concentrated in any particular region of Ghana. If there is a concentration of coverage of traditional leaders and their involvement in HIV/AIDS, it tends to be in the Eastern and Asante regions, the regions where the Okyenhene and the Manya Krobo Queenmothers and the Asantehene preside. As such, articles reporting on the activities of these highly committed high-level traditional leaders who are close to Accra is more likely. However, the articles in this set do cover all regions of the country, which suggests that traditional leaders across the country are involved in preventative or anti-AIDS activities.

Although there are a number of social marketing statements and campaigns that traditional leaders are involved in, there is a clear concentration on preventative discourse that is targeted at young girls, rather than at young men. This is found in statements such as “the chief/queenmother urged youth, especially girls...” There are individual examples of chiefs/queenmothers suggesting a shift to educating men; however, the majority are aimed at women/girls. This shift is interesting to note. Many organizations who combat HIV/AIDS in Africa have noted that women are by far the most vulnerable group in terms of new infections. Most often, women’s position in society leaves them with very little power to protect themselves. Married women in particular tend to contract the virus through their husbands. HIV/AIDS agencies *and* traditional leaders are taking note of this and are shifting their messages and the targets of those messages in order to affect a more meaningful change in high-risk behaviours.

One aspect of social marketing that seems to be in the very early stages is traditional leaders urging those who are HIV positive to come forward and make themselves known. This is urged in tandem with advice not to shut HIV positive’s out of social contact but rather to accept them and learn from them to avoid contracting the disease. The Manya Krobo Queenmothers co-produced a video arguing the point that people living with HIV/AIDS need to be accepted by the community and that those unaffected by HIV/AIDS should pay attention to the social marketing campaigns.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS ON TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING FIGHTING HIV/AIDS

Using an analysis of the Ghanaian post-colonial state based on the concepts of divided legitimacy and shared legitimacy, we have argued that chiefs in Ghana not only have the potential to add their legitimacy/local credibility to development efforts, but they have actually been doing so in significant numbers. While some like Ribot (2002) argued that West African chiefs are not likely to be interested in development, others have argued that even if some traditional leaders did become involved, this would involve perhaps a handful of outstanding but isolated traditional leaders. How was one to move beyond the battle of seemingly contradictory anecdotes and case studies in evaluating the potential and the reality of Ghanaian chiefs in contributing to development? Using the methodologies of the pilot newspaper studies, complemented by research in Ghana, we have started to address these questions. The reported involvement of Ghanaian leaders in development is substantial and goes far beyond a handful of exemplary individuals.

The involvement of traditional leaders in promoting economic development is extensive and geographically widespread within Ghana. While it may be true that, depending on the subject matter, some regions are favoured over others, it should be pointed out that all of Ghana's regions are represented in the data and there is no single region or subject category where a particular region is absent. Chiefs frequently acted as intermediaries between their people and the leaders of the post-colonial state in order to promote infrastructure development or tourism or agriculture. Chiefs raised these issues from a local perspective and in some cases were actively involved themselves in these economic activities.

Chiefs' support for education in their area starts with verbal support. This extends to acting as a mobilizing force that lobbies the post-colonial state and other educational resource providers. Traditional leaders organize and take part in fundraising from their subjects and from themselves. Some chiefs also push for financial mechanisms that will address the marginalization of the children of the poor, including the education of girl children. Traditional leaders' support further extends to a growing desire

for chiefs to become involved in educational policy-making and educational standards evaluation.

The involvement of traditional leaders promoting health development by fighting HIV/AIDS is extensive, widespread within Ghana, and of remarkable depth. According to both newspaper articles and personal observation in Ghana, traditional leaders are involved at all three levels in fighting HIV/AIDS within their communities: at the gate-keeping, social marketing/public education, and building-community AIDS competency/capacity level. The level of involvement varies greatly from traditional leader to traditional leader, with some not participating at all. Nevertheless, the involvement of traditional leaders in the struggle to promote health development by fighting HIV/AIDS has moved beyond the realm of one or two exemplary traditional leaders and to such a scale that, as Professor Amoa and the Ghana AIDS Commission had hoped, traditional leaders are now active partners in Ghana's multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS strategy: traditional leaders are now part of the "social vaccine" against HIV/AIDS.

Give the pilot nature of this study, it is not yet possible to conclude that all or most traditional leaders have been active development agents nor has it been possible to evaluate their effectiveness, but there is sufficient evidence to show that substantial numbers of chiefs in Ghana are promoting development and that this would suggest the need for those opposed to involving chiefs in development to rethink their position. The substantial degree of traditional leaders' involvement in development points to the potential of this "chiefs as development agents" strategy. This is not to argue for a "Golden Age of Chieftaincy" or that involving chiefs is not without its potential and actual problems, but rather that there are substantial development opportunities that may have been overlooked when traditional leaders are ignored as potential contributors to development.



HIS MAJESTY NENE SAKITE II, KONOR OF MANYA KROBO, WITH PROFESSOR DON RAY.  
(PHOTO: DR. DON I. RAY.)



PALACE OF THE AGOGOHENE, ASANTE KINGDOM, GHANA. BESIDES BEING A PRINCE, HE HAD ALSO BEEN SECRETARY FOR CHIEFTAINCY DURING RAWLINGS' PNDC GOVERNMENT IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S. (PHOTO: DR. DON I. RAY.)

## NOTES

1 Thus there is considerable evidence of the traditional leaders acting as “development agents” in policy questions such as promoting economic development, education, and health. In the last case, the role of traditional leaders in fighting HIV/AIDS is noteworthy internationally: traditional leaders are now active participants in the “social vaccine” against HIV/AIDS, especially in building a normative consensus in their communities on what is appropriate sexual behaviour in the age of AIDS. Moreover, it is important to highlight the point that Ghanaian traditional leaders were active agents in development processes, even though they have had no formal statutory jurisdiction over these activities during the period of the post-colonial state.

What has enabled traditional leaders to become “development agents,” moving into these policy areas over which they have no formal statutory jurisdiction? Traditional leaders used their major political resources with their people, i.e., their differently rooted legitimacy that dates to the pre-colonial period, to give themselves local credibility, which the post-colonial state wished to share or add to its pool of legitimacy/credibility in order to mobilize all available local resources in order to promote rural and urban development. By doing so, traditional leaders reinvented traditional leadership in Ghana. Both male and female Ghanaian traditional leaders can be effective agents of development, including

the fight against HIV/AIDS, even if they had no formal statutory powers over these jurisdictions.

Newspaper content analysis has been used to analyze topics ranging from gender differences in U.S. Senate elections to the varying successes of anti-war social movements. (See, for example, Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Swank 1997; Sheppard and Bawden 1997; Brodie, Brady, and Altman 1998; Lowrie, Greenberg and Waishwell 2000; Bittle 2002; Hill, Hanna, and Shafqat 1997; Carpini, Keeter, and Kenamer 1994; and Vliegenthart and Roggeband 2007). Common to their methodologies is the assumption that newspaper content analysis allows analysts to increase the scope of generalization beyond what the researchers themselves can actually experience. Swank (212) notes that “one researcher can not simultaneously ... observe the thousands of [events being studied].... Hence logistical impositions routinely necessitate a reliance on secondary sources.” We chose newspaper content analysis because we believe that it allows the researcher to overcome, to some extent, the logistical bonds of time and space by allowing the analyst to add other voices and places to the analysis that they could not access physically. For evaluations of this methodology, see the above cited authors.

2 D.I. Ray would like to thank Prof. Sakyi Amoa, Ghana AIDS Commission Executive Director and Dr.

- Sylvia Anie (Research Director, GAC) for their generous help and time in interviews.
- 3 Don Ray is grateful to Jenny Saarin-  
en for the discussion on the concept  
of “gate-keeping.”
  - 4 See a discussion of this term in  
Ray and Brown (2005). Don Ray is  
grateful to Leanne Dolen of AIDS  
Calgary, who first drew his attention  
to the term in 2003 at a workshop on  
social marketing for AIDS support  
organizations (ASOs) in southern  
Alberta that was co-organized by  
AIDS Calgary.
  - 5 We would be grateful for other  
examples of traditional and other  
political leaders in Africa, North  
America, Europe, or elsewhere who  
have had themselves publicly tested  
for HIV. We are aware that the  
President of Botswana had himself  
so tested.
  - 6 For a discussion of this, see Ray and  
Brown’s chapter. Don Ray is grate-  
ful to Sherri Brown for bringing the  
concept of building AIDS compe-  
tency to his attention.
  - 7 For more details of the MKQMA,  
see Ray and Brown’s chapter and  
Brown’s chapter in this volume.

### *Acknowledgments*

This research was funded with the aid of a major grant to Don Ray and TAARN from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Ottawa, Canada, as well as a grant to Don Ray from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and the University Research Grants committee of the University of Calgary. Don Ray received a Killam Resident Fellowship, which provided him with time to write up much of the material for this chapter as well as other publications. Don Ray would like to thank the above and all those who made this research possible.

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