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In The Mind of The Development Professional: Perceptions of Communication and Dialogue in Dakar, Senegal.

-A qualitative study on perceptions, communication and power.

Preface

This study was sprung from the experience of traveling back and forth between Senegal and Sweden, between the context of Swedish social work and the context of social work and development work in Senegal. Questions that intrigued me in the Swedish social work context were especially those of participation, emancipation and what in Sweden is called *brukarmakt*. A literal translation to brukarmakt would be user-power. When I came to Senegal and visited different projects doing human development I somehow sensed a lack of understanding for this concepts or a possible alternative perspective of the user in human development work. A long this study I have tried to approach these questions using the concepts relevant to the context in Dakar and it has been very instructive and exciting. I have learnt a lot about the sector of human development in Dakar as well as globally. The eternal curse of the researcher has struck me as well; I have the impression to only have studied a petty proportion of the entire context and numerous of related and non-related questions to explore have arisen.

   I am so happy to have been given the opportunity to do this study and hopefully I will get the chance to further deepen my studies in the same field. First, I would like to give a sincere and heart full thanks to all the respondents for being available and good willing to participate in this study. Secondly I would like to thank my much loved husband for supporting me and helping to keep focus all through the process of this writing along with my supportive mother. Thirdly I would like to thank the whole Dakar family for helping me with contacts and providing a very fruitful context in which to write this study. Finally I would like to thank my institution, the Department of Social studies at Ersta Sköndal University College for encouraging me to conduct this piece of research in Dakar.

Abstract

Participation is present as one of the most important factors to achieve sustainable change in human development. Communication and dialogue are amongst the most important tools to create participation. This qualitative study is trying to find out what methods are being used by development professionals to create communication and dialogue. It also studies the development professionals conception of communication with beneficiaries and their view of the beneficiary itself. The data was retrieved from five semi-structural interviews with development professionals active in community development or empowerment. The most important conclusions were that communication with beneficiaries appears to be perceived as consulting the beneficiary, that beneficiaries only are being involved in decisions concerning their proximate reality on a local level, that the beneficiary is most commonly viewed upon as equal, student or passive and that there seems to be a discrepancy between the development professionals' official discourse, personal opinion and actual practice.

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1. Introduction

In social work and healthcare in Sweden there has been an ongoing debate about the concept of *user-power (brukarmakt)* since years and a lot of considerations and improvements have been made to ensure users of social services and patients are as in power as they can possibly be concerning the treatment or service they receive (Börjesson & Magnusson, 2011). In social work, particularly international social work, the user is often an individual weak in resources and the power relationship between social worker and user are predefined as unequal (Chambers, 1997) . When getting to know the development sector in Dakar, Senegal I noticed that this discussion did not exist there to the same extent. When searching for articles or data related to the concept of user-power in the development sector or even trying to find an accurately corresponding concept of the Swedish term *brukarmakt* I did meet some difficulty. Instead I found other relating concepts are being put forward such as *empowerment*, *participation*, *ownership, citizenship* etc. (Lazar, 2012). The most prominent of them is *community participation* which has been launched and treated as one of the key-factors to minimize inequity and thereby ensure sustainability of projects since the 1980's. *Participation* means putting the receiver of aid in the center of the process in a project and thereby creating ownership which will lead the project to be sustainable (Rifkin & Kangere, 2002, p. 38). As argued by Mah & Whiteside (2012, p. 930) human action depends on social integration for its efficacy and participation is therefore crucial to make a development project successful. The second question is how to achieve participation? Slim et al. (1993) asserts that:

> *"If the voice of poor communities is to be heard more often, it will have to be predominantly through oral encounters and exchanges. A major part of participatory development and "professional reversals" therefore involves development workers adapting to oral communication and accepting its value. " (Slim, 1993, p. 20)*

Drawing from Slims conclusion that it is through communication and oral dialogue in particular that participation is being created this paper is asking questions about what methods of communication are being used with beneficiaries. It is also an attempt to get an understanding of the development workers perceptions of communication with beneficiaries as well as their perception of the beneficiary herself and the presumed power structure. These are questions that are relevant to all social workers since there is always an unbalance in power between giver and receivers of aid, support or social service and because communication is the most important tool to reduce this unbalance. Social work will rarely be

successful unless an equal dialogue is in place (Börjeson, 2008).

This first part of the study will introduce the reader to the problem related to its context, as well as the purpose and specific research questions. The second is a more deep-going description of the theoretical and practical context in which the study has been made. The third part consists of the scientific theories supporting the study and the fourth of the methods used to conduct the study. In the last three parts we are being presented with the result, followed by an analysis and finally a discussion and inspiration to further research.

1.2 Problem Statement.

Participation is considered by the international development sector to be one of the main tools to achieve sustainable development but it has also been recognized to be very problematic and difficult for multiple reasons (Cooke & Kothari 2001, Dorsner, 2004, p.367, B. Rifkin & Kengere, 2002). Despite this, participation has become somewhat of a ground-rule in development work and almost an obligatory part of the discourse. Communication and dialogue are tools to achieve participation but how do the professionals working in human development conceive and apply them? These are questions this study is trying to answer.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to get to know what methods of communication are being used in some four development agencies in Dakar working with different empowering programs for adults all funded by foreign donors. It is also and possibly more importantly, an aim to get a deeper understanding of the respondents' personal perceptions of communication with the beneficiaries as well as their view of the beneficiary and its role in their organization. The objective is to study how well integrated the concept of dialogue and communication as a tool for participation, are in their views and perceptions as well as daily work. A more general objective would be to contribute to the ongoing debate about communication and dialogue between beneficiaries and development actors, to further problematize the existing power structures between giver and receiver of aid. Through interviewing five development professionals I hope to get a brief indicator on the present situation in the Dakarien human development work field on these questions.

1.4 Research Questions

These are the three main research questions;

- According to the respondent; what methods of communication are being used by the human development agency they represent?
- How do the respondents conceive and perceive communication with beneficiaries?
- How do the respondents conceive and perceive the perspectives of the beneficiary as well as the role of the beneficiary in the organization?

2. Background

This section will briefly describe the current context in which the paper has been made, the theoretical context as well as the practical context.

2.1 A Brief History of Participation in Development

The concept of participation has been present in the development discourse and practice since at least five decades but was firmly established as an indispensable strategy of development by the World Health Organization in the 1980's and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the early 1990's (Asindua, 2002, p. 27, Kengere & Rifkin, 2002, p. 39, Dorsner, 2004, p. 376, UNDP, 1993). As described in the Human Development Report (1993) this period of time was preceded by a world where the actors of development were western governments using a top-down approach and seeing aid as a transferring of material, food, medicine or services and where the concerned communities were not involved (Asindua, 2002, p 27). Robert Chambers one of the most prominent advocates for participation, calls this period of time from the 1950's for *the paradigm of things* (Chambers, 1994). Development was set to build infrastructure, irrigation and industrialization and agendas were written by western economists and engineers. Chambers (ibid.) writes that the same mode of economic analysis continues to be dominant in the 1990's but what he calls the *paradigm of people* grows stronger. More and more professionals from social science became active in the domain, methods of participation began spreading and NGO's increasingly took part in development (ibid.). Sian Lazar (2012) presents the same scene but calls the two realms the *pragmatic* and the *ethic*, where the pragmatic one is driven by national security, economic interest and efficiency while the ethical is more concerned with moral values such as freedom, democracy and social justice (Lazar, 2012, pp. 334-335).

The concept of participation was in part a reaction to the top-down approach, possibly inspired by the revolutionary and empowering mindsets of the 1970's as well as the global historical context of a world of newly independent ex-colonial states and their complex

relations to their former colonial powers (Asindua, 2002, p.27, Bendell, 2006). Participation in its most radical form as presented by Robert Chambers (1994) is supposed to inverse the power relationship between North and South, donor and recipient, teacher and student. Instead of the traditional *top-down* approach it promotes the inverse, a *bottom-up* approach, a transfer of power between *lowers* , people and institutions weak in resources and influence, and *uppers*, people and institutions rich in resources and power (ibid.). Chambers (1994) calls it *putting the last first*. The UNDP explains participation in a possibly less radical way;

> *Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may, in some cases, have complete and direct control over these processes-in other cases, the control may be partial or indirect. The important thing is that people have constant access to decision-making and power. Participation in this sense is an essential element of human development.*(UNDP, 1993, p. 21)

An idealistic description of the purpose of participation but other than for human development participation can be used as a way to cut the expenses of a project through making the beneficiaries do the work themselves. In this second sense participation is used for financial purposes rather than emancipatory purposes. Thirdly the concept of participation can be used only for rhetoric and cosmetics reason in the development discourse (Chambers, 1994).

Through the years the participatory process has become industrialized and critics claim it has become yet another tool of gaining consent to predetermined strategies and objectives. (Bendell, 2006, p. 20, Cook & Kothari, 2001, Dorsner, 2004, p.367, William et al. 2003, p. 160). Cook and Kothari claim it to be naïve and idealistic in their book *Participation: The new Tyranny* (2001). This book challenges the omnipresent belief that participation is undeniably good. In eleven chapters written by academics and practitioners who have a lot of experience in international development, the authors provide analyses, supported by detailed descriptions of development fieldwork, to support their statements. Drawing from psychology, sociology and critical theory, they argue that participation in practice is nowhere near the participatory, bottom-up, open process that it is commonly held to be. They suggest methods and rethorics of participation only exist theoretically but on the field the same power structures as before remain (ibid.). Lazar (2012) argues that the ideas of participation has been object for *domestication* into the traditional agendas and have become empty words. *Domestication* is when a new concept melts into the already existing discourse, adapting to it and becoming a function in the already existing system (Lazaar, 2012, p. 335). Other critical arguments are offered by Suleiman (2012, p 258), she questions the fact that NGO's are given

a large amount of the responsibility to implement participation, particularly in governance. NGOs are according to her, not strong enough on the societal arena to uphold this task and neither is there any theory to support that they would.

This is as much a reality in Dakar, Senegal as anywhere else where many International non-governmental organizations (INGO) are active, such as; Plan International, Red Cross, Save the Children, OXFAM, Tostan and so on. There is a notable presence of European NGOs particularly French, Senegal being a former French colony, in Senegal. The Senegalese themselves are also representing a big part of the total of the countries NGO's. But the biggest of them are all dependent on western funding which means that they in their reports, evaluations, monitoring all need to take participation into account. They need to run their projects according to the UN rhetoric of which participation is a crucial part (Conversation with development professionals, 2013).

2.2 The Dakar Context

Dakar is the capital of Senegal which is a West African state and has independency from its former French colonizer since 4th of April 1960. Including agglomeration it has a population of 2, 5 million citizens. Because of its strategic geographical position and more importantly the politically stable situation Dakar has become a melting pot for most of the active development agencies in West Africa. Dakar is home for numerous headquarters of different UN bodies, The World Bank and other International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) such as OXFAM, Save the Chilrdren, Red Cross, Peace Corps, Childfund, USAID, etc. The Senegal Council of NGOs has presently 178 NGO's registered, both national and international. In 2013 Senegal was rated 153 out of 183 countries In the Human Development Index. The human development index measures health, education and living standards (HDR, 2013). The UNDP are running 30 different projects in Senegal and the budget of the fiscal year of 2013 was 10,74 million dollars compared to neighboring Mali budget of 73, 24 million dollars. 49% of the budget is for projects categorized as working with Democratic Governance, 41 % for Environment and Sustainable Development and 10 % for Poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) achievement. The UNDP have no existing projects in the sector of Crisis Prevention and Recovery which proves the calm and stable situation in the country. The three top donors are the European Commission ($5.32M) followed by The Global Environment Fund Trustee (The World Bank) and the UNDP themselves. All this information is to be found on open.undp.org. Sweden is ranked number five on UNDPs list of top donors with a total donation of $217, 26 million. Only 0,24 million

of those were destined to Senegal last year and 90 % of this donation was for humanitarian aid.

2.3 Development Work and Social Work

Development work consists of multiple sectors which might not all be classified as social work. Malcom Payne includes development work such as empowerment and community work in his book Modern Social Work Theory: A critical introduction (1990). All the five respondents taking part of this study are active in organizations working with community work and empowerment in different forms. The National Report on Human Development for Senegal (RNDH) from 2010 states three major themes of development which are the climate change, food security and human development. This is how the report defines human development;

> *The main objective of human development is to expand the range of choices offered to the population and to make the development more democratic and participatory. These choices must be understood as opportunities for access to income, employment, education, social care, health care and a clean environment. The individual must also have the opportunity to participate fully in decisions, the community and enjoy human, economic, and political freedom.*

A big part of human development is improving financial conditions as the stated above declares in creating opportunities for access to income and employment. Neither can the aim of creating a clean environment be considered to be social work. Left are education, social care and health which are all part of the sphere of social work and part of the areas of interest in this study.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter will describe the theories and concepts on which this study relies. Because we are concerned with questions of communication, dialogue and the view of the other I have chosen the theory of *symbolic interactionism* as a general theory and for more in-depth analyzes I will use the concepts of participation as presented by Robert Chambers amongst others. Chamber also contributes with a lot of theory about the power-relation between professional and beneficiary which is impossible to avoid in this context. Finally to further support the findings and as a help when doing the interviews I have been inspired by David Bohms concepts of dialogue as developed by himself and others.

3.1. Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theory of social psychology deriving from different concepts of the human as a social being whose cognition is developed in relation to the other. The human becomes real in the encounter with another individual and the same thing is valid for society. Society is the sum of all the social actions of everyday life and this is what Georg Simmel (1908) calls *sociation*. Society is seen by Simmel as a continuous creation, a never ending process and therefore form and content are closely related. Whenever the form changes so does the content (Berg, 2003, p. 152). George Simmel was a German sociologist who was born in the middle of the 19th century and his works came to inspire the founders of symbolic interactionism. Those are considered to be the American social philosopher George Herbert Mead (1863 - 1931), sociologist Charles Cooley (1864 - 1929) as well as psychologist William James (1842 – 1910) the most prominent of them being Mead. The interactionism approach was developed as an alternative to the other domination psychological perspectives at that time such as Watson and Skinners behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis (ibid). Mead considered those theories much too introvert and was looking to bridge the gap between the self and the outer world, the me and the you, the object and the subject. Therefore his theories include developmental psychology as well as sociology and more importantly the connection between them both. The underlying assumptions in symbolic interactionism are those mentioned above; both human and societal identities are created through interactions in between human beings. Further there are a couple of more specific concepts to explain how this happens.

3.1.1. Symbolic Interactionism as Developed by George Mead

In his book *Mind, Self and Society. From the standpoint of a social behaviorist* published after his death 1934 George Mead describes the following view of man and society. Human is born without any conceptions of who she is because she has not yet experienced the duality between the self and someone else. Lars-Erik Berg puts it like this; "Without social interaction the human being does not exist" (2003, p.164). She did not yet have anything to compare with or relate to. This is what Mead calls *distanciation* and it's the ability to through the eyes of the other view the self as an object. This happens when a *position-exchange* occurs (ibid.). When two people meet they will both react on the stimuli communicated to them by the other and in turn react and respond on this stimuli. They will mutually communicate to the other projections about the other which will allow them to see themselves

in the eyes of the other. People act as each other's mirrors and without a mirror it's impossible to know oneself. Identification of the self is one consequence of position-exchange (Mead, 1976, p.182). The other one is the creation of meaning. Through interaction and *position-exchange* two people or more will be able to give meaning to certain objects. Sounds become words with a meaning because people around us teach us what signification they have. And these sounds, the language is according to symbolic interactionism the tool used by human to contribute value and meaning to all objects including herself. Through distanciation she can understand and relate to all those different objects, she can observe them from different perspectives (ibid., p. 164).

Mead argues that the social situation where meaning is being created is the first step to this meaning later becoming sedimented as a conscious part of the individual. Therefore the thinking process is not possible without human interaction because all objects are yet to be contributed a meaning (Berg, 2003, p. 158). To the newborn baby the parents are what is called *the significant others* and those are the first ones the baby will be doing position-exchange with to develop the "I" and the "me". The "I" and the "me" can be explained as the subject self and the object self of an individual. As a subject I can see myself as an object through taking on the significant others view of and attitude towards me, position-exchange. Later on the child starts to interact with the outside world and people not included in the immediate family which Mead labels *the generalized other* (Mead, 1976, p. 120) The general conception is that the characteristics of a human being, it's identity is created in the interactions, the conversations with others and that society is the totality of all actions being made by those humans, *sociation*. This perspective of human and society means that they both have a certain amount of freedom to creatively shape and form their lives. Through life a human will make a vast number of position-exchanges. If she makes herself aware of those different perspectives and observations she is being sent through those exchanges she can hopefully be more and more selective and in command of what meanings she prefer to contribute to what object. In contrary to other influential social theories such as conflict theory and structural functionalism where human is subordinated the laws of society, symbolic interactionism does not consider society to be made up of a set of unchangeable laws. But even though *sociation*, the process that is society, is made up of the actions of humans, creating the web that is society the individuals' freedom to change and influence society must be recognized but realistically considered as fairly limited. This is because she is dependent of the accord of other to contribute meaning to anything at all. The freedom lies more in the possibilities of the conversation and symbolic interactionism expresses a great

potentiality of humans of different categories coming together through conversation (Berg, 2003, p. 165).

3.2 Robert Chambers and the Concept of Participation

Robert Chambers is a professor at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, UK. Inspired by the works of Paolo Freire, he has been a strong advocate for the participatory process in development since the early 1980's (Chambers 1992). This is one of his many definitions of participation;

> *...an empowering process which enables local people to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain in confidence, and to make their own decisions. In theory, this means that "we" participate in "their" project, not "they" in "our".* (Chambers, 1994, p. 2)

As described briefly in chapter two Chamber stresses a reversal in positions between development professional and beneficiary. He recognizes the inequity in power between the two, the *upper* and the *lower* and points it out as the main reason to failure of development projects (Chambers, 1997). The difference in power creates distance from the reality of others and sustains people in old schemes of hierarchy and dependence which are contrary to the goals of development (ibid.). Chambers suggests that *uppers* tend to not only deny the realities of *lowers* but impose their own simplified and mismatching realities onto them, a *transfer of reality* (ibid., p. 56). This may happen through educational systems, standardized-package development programs designed for administrative convenience, 'transfer-of-technology' approaches in agriculture, etc. Whatever program implemented the reality of *lowers* has to be redefined to fit into the *upper* model. This is the other reason to why development projects are going wrong which is of course ultimately caused by the inequity in power and the distance to the others reality (ibid., p. 31). Chambers presents a set of mechanisms that prevents this reversal of roles to happen, mechanisms that keep sustain the paradigm of things and prevents the paradigm of people to domain (see chapter 2.). Those are in general the traditional ways of doing things according to the top-down approach;

- *Normal professionalism:* *the concepts, values, methods and behavior dominant in professions - which seeks and values controlled conditions and universal truths*
- *Normal bureaucracy:* *the concepts, values, procedures and behavior dominant in bureaucracies, with their tendencies to centralize, standardize and control*
- *Normal (successful) careers* *in which promotion separates power from field realities*
- *Normal teaching* *which reproduces normal professionalism, transferring knowledge from the teacher who knows, to the pupil who is ignorant.* (Chambers, 1994, p. 4)

These institutions all contribute to sustain the power structure with the power remaining in the top and participation attempts to challenge this structure and decrease the *uppers* power. Chamber strongly argues that communities targeted for development are able to and should analyze their own problems and that real social change only can occur once development professionals reverse the hierarchy (Chambers, 1997).

To really understand the world of *uppers* and *lowers* and in what relations the reversal has to be done Chambers created and categorized different groups into the following table (Chambers, 1994, p. 5).

Figure 3:1 North- South, Upper-Lower relationships

Dimension/Context	North Uppers	South Lowers
Spatial	Core (urban, industrial)	Periphery (rural, agricultural)
International and development	The North IMF, World Bank Donors Creditors	The south Poor countries Recipients Debtors
Personal ascriptive	Male White High ethnic or caste group	Female Black Low ethnic or caste group
Life cycle	Old person Parent Mother-in-law	Young person Child Daughter-in-law
Bureaucratic organization	Senior Manager Official Patron Officer Warden, guard	Junior Worker Supplicant Client "other rank" Inmate, prisoner
Social, spiritual	Patron Priest Guru Doctor, psychiatrist	Client Lay person Disciple Patient
Teaching and learning	Master Lecturer Teacher	Apprentice Student Pupil

Those categories are of course very generalized but can help us to get a clear understanding of hierarchy and they will also be of use to analyze the data of this study.

3.3. The Concept of Dialogue

It seems necessary to present and describe the understanding of *dialogue* that I've been using when carrying out this study. As asserted by Cooper et. al (2013) in the article *Dialogue:*

Bridging Personal, Community, and Social Transformation published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology the concept of dialogue is present in several humanistic domains, for example in psychotherapy , education, community development and social transformation. When it comes to the concept of dialogue in community development and social transformation which is relevant for this study Paulo Freire is introduced by Cooper et. al (2013) as one of the founders. Paulo Freire was an educator, philosopher and socialist born in Brazil 1921. His theories have been an inspiration for both the empowering thoughts of Robert Chambers when emphasizing a collective search for truth and co-creation as well as the definition of dialogue as defined by David Bohm and Marianne "Mille" Bojer, Marianne Knuth, Colleen Magner. The last three ladies are active in development work in South Africa and have done extensive work on community communication and dialogue for social change. In the publication Mapping Dialogue (2006) written by them for the global learning network Pioneers of Change they describe different methods of dialogue used and developed in different contexts for social change. All the definitions of communication used in the interview guide are taken directly from this study (See appendix 2). This is how they define dialogue;

> *David Bohm went back to the source of the word, deriving from the Greek root of "dia" which means "through" and "logos" which is "the word" or "meaning", and therefore saw dialogue as meaning flowing through us. Elements of this deeper understanding of the word include an emphasis on questions, inquiry, co-creation, and listening, the uncovering of one's own assumptions and those of others, a suspension of judgment and a collective search for truth. Bill Isaacs calls a dialogue a conversation "with a center, not sides"(Bojer, Knuth and Magner, 2006, p. 10).*

Bojer, Knuth and Magner also emphasizes the role of the facilitator in the dialogue who needs to have strong listening skills which means to be able to hear the intention behind the dialogue and to actively take in what is being said by the participants during the process. They also argue that the ability to let go of one's own agenda is crucial for the facilitator to develop strong listening skills (Bojer, Knut & Magner, 2006, p. 85).

4. Method

Chapter four will present the respondents taking part in the study and describe the methods chosen to conduct it. More specifically what methods used to retrieve data, to interpret and

analyze data. Finally this chapter will discuss validity, reliability and reflect upon ethical considerations.

4.1 Qualitative Method

Since one of the main purposes of this study is to get an understanding of the perceptions, experiences and views of the development workers in a social work perspective the most suitable scientific approach is qualitative methods (Neuman, 2011). The emphasize lies in words and meanings of data within the qualitative method which is of big importance when studying subjective perspectives (p. 34, Bryman 2011). The approach is interpretative and explorative and I attempt to get a hold of a specific social reality in a certain context through analyzing the interpretations of members from this very context. (p. 250, ibid)

4.2 The Semi-structured Interview

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with a set of open-ended questions. As the interviews developed and took different turns I would ask appropriate follow-up questions, although always sticking to the interview-guide as explained by Bryman (p.301, 2011). The essential part of the semi-structured interview is for the researcher to understand its respondent's point of view, perceptions and reasoning which is why all the interviews were different and the questions asked not exactly the same at every occasion.

4.3 Sampling

The sampling methods used have been convenience sampling and also choosing respondent because of interest. All the respondents have been found through some kind of personal contact. Not by chance I find myself in a social environment where most are involved in social- and development work. Convenience sampling is when the researcher uses respondents who just happen to be available (p. 194, Bryman 2011). I have anyhow made a selection amongst those available respondents. For example I have chosen to interview representatives working for structures whose beneficiaries are adults, i.e. above 18 years old. It somewhat narrows down the object of research even if it's still very vast. The only structure who might include beneficiaries under age would be the one creating a training program for carpenters. The trainees might be under 18. They were however not a direct part of the study and did not take part in any interviews.

4.3.1 The Respondents

The five respondents could be categorized by gender, ethnicity, age or other attributes but since this is not to be a comparative study but a theory generating study it is not relevant. The respondents are seen as voices of a group of professionals working for social change and development in Senegal, more specifically within empowering programs for adults. I will however shortly present the respondents, what context and what kind of structure they are active in.

Respondent 1

The first interview was done with a French sociologist working in a Senegalese NGO strongly connected to French NGO's. The NGO is working in the area of handcraft, trying to develop the carpentry sector of Senegal mostly through formalizing an education for carpenter trainees. The NGO is receiving financial support for its project from the European Union and has been financed by the United Nations Development Program in earlier years. The respondent is the only foreigner working within this Senegalese NGO.

Respondent 2

The second interview was held with a Senegalese facilitator, working for an American agency working with peace and community development. As facilitator respondent 2 educates American volunteers in local culture and language.

Respondent 3

The third respondent is an American working at the same American agency as respondent 2. But while respondent 2 is working as a facilitator, respondent 3 is working at the Dakar head office in the section of communication.

Respondent 4

The fourth respondent is a Senegalese working for a Senegalese NGO founded by a group of Senegalese and an American in the 1970's but which is now governed by the American. The NGO is working with community development in several African countries. The respondent is charged with the expansion of the program throughout Africa.

Respondent 5

The last interview was carried out with an American working for a foundation owned by a well-known American supermarket chain. The foundation supports microfinance activities directed to women in countries from which they import products. The respondent's mission is to carry out monitoring and reporting from the field to the head office.

4.4 Reliability and Validity.

The study consists of data retrieved from five respondents and they are all working in different types of structures and somewhat different domains within development work. We won't be able to generalize or draw any founded conclusions from this paper. But we might get some indicators on how development workers seem to perceive communication with beneficiaries and the role of the beneficiary which will give us the direction for further research. To make reassure the validity is as good as possible two key concepts to focus on would be *credibility* and *authenticity* (Bryman, 2002).

One way of increasing this study's credibility is through *triangulation of observers*. Triangulation means using different perspectives to understand one and the same phenomena (p.164, Neuman 2011). In this study each of the individual five interviews offers unique perspectives of the subject since they have different nationalities, professions, experiences and educations.

When doing semi-structured interviews the researcher ends up with a considerable amount of data which does not all correspond to the question of research and the researcher will have to make a selection on what information to make part of the study (Bryman, 2002). This means that there will always be a risk for the researcher to leave out some important data and might affect the reliability. In this study I have chosen to include data answering to the interview questions when presenting the result. However other information given in the interviews have been useful when doing the analysis to get a deeper understanding of the conclusions.

4.6 Method of Analysis

One of the biggest challenges for the researcher conducting qualitative research is analyzing the data. Unlike quantitative research where the researcher will collect data strictly limited to his or hers research questions, the qualitative researcher will end up with a considerable amount of information not necessarily asked for and the challenge is to sort out this data and strictly use the data that is directly answering the research question. (Bryman, 2011, p.374) However the qualitative field study tends to be very dynamic in its process and the objective,

question of research and possible hypothesis might shift all through the gathering of data (ibid). To analyze the content of the interviews made throughout this study I have been inspired by *Grounded Theory* which is one of the most common methods of analysis and coding data within qualitative social research (Bryman, 2001, p. 375, Neuman, 2011, p. 511). Grounded Theory as introduced and developed by Glaser & Strauss generally consists of analyzing data through three different steps (ibid.). They are called; *open coding, axial coding and selective coding*. In the first step of *open coding* the researcher is supposed to find themes and codes through reading and studying the material thoroughly. Taking time to merge into the data and using theory as a compass some critical themes will appear from which the research eventually will create analytic categories. It's important to stay open as the themes might shift as you continue to collect more data. The themes are general and at a very concrete level taken directly from the data (Bryman, 2001, p.377, ibid.). In the second step of *axial coding* the researcher shifts focus from the actual data to those newly found analytic categories and starts to elaborate and explore them. It's important still to stay open as new themes still may occur and others might appear unsuitable. The purpose of this phase is to start organizing themes and sort out key concepts through detecting connections between them through asking questions about context, consequences and interactions, etc. (ibid.). Finally in *selective coding* the researcher will chose one principal category from which he will relate other themes and topics. He will once again scan through all the data as well as developed concepts and analytic categories, looking for examples to illustrate them and to use for explanatory purposes in his presentation (Neuman, 2011, p. 514).

4.7 The Interview Guide

The interview guide is available in appendix 2. The questions for the interviews were inspired from a research project done by Pioneers of Change Associates called *Mapping Dialogue: a research project profiling dialogue tools and processes for social change* in Johannesburg South Africa April 2006. It's a collection of approaches to dialogue aiming to promote social change, a mapping of different methods of dialogue. Their definition of dialogue is inspired by the German scientist David Bohm (1996) and it's the one I have chosen in this study. (See also chap. 3.3.)

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Performing social research and interviews always comes with a lot of ethical dilemmas and the importance of ethically considering the methods and issues concerning the study is crucial

for its credibility (Neuman, 2011, p.155). This study will be holding its respondents anonymous as well as the agencies they belong to. When being informed of confidentiality of details and names I hope that the respondents' answers will be as honest and as close to reality as possible. Doing research in this contexts demands high confidentiality not only for personal reasons but also to protect the agency the respondents represent. Human development agencies very often depend on public or private funding and it's very important for them to maintain a high level of reputation. This was something I noticed when looking for respondents for my interviews. And as this is not a study trying to evaluate the activities of specific agencies there is no interest in naming respondents or agencies. The study is meant to give the reader a comprehension on how development professionals perceive communication and dialogue with beneficiaries and how they perceive the beneficiary herself. Each respondent got oral or written information about the purpose of the study and the types of questions they were to be asked in advance. Before conducting the interview the respondents were given an ethical form to read and possibly sign, in which case he/she confirmed being informed about the ethical considerations and actions of confidentiality taken throughout the study particularly concerning his/her own partaking. Please consult appendix 1.

5. Result

This chapter is to present the outcome of the interviews. All the data retrieved through the interviews will not be presented as it does not all relate to the research questions. Only data answering the research questions will be presented in this chapter. Other interesting and relevant information will be presented and discussed in chapter *7 Discussion.* Below are the research questions again;

- According to the respondent; what methods of communication are being used by the human development agency they represent?
- How do the respondents conceive and perceive communication with beneficiaries?
- How do the respondents conceive and perceive the perspectives of the beneficiary as well as the role of the beneficiary in the organization?

In this chapter the data from the first very concrete question about *methods of communication* being used in four different development agencies will be presented. Further from the two other research questions there where two specific themes appearing to be important during the

course of the interviews which were; *The beneficiaries involvement in decision making and internal communication, and; The beneficiary and the role of the beneficiary as perceived by the development professional.* This chapter will only present the results which will be analyzed separately in the following chapter 8 *Analysis.* I have chosen do to this to make it clear what was said by the respondent and what are my observations and remarks.

5.1. Methods of Communication

In general it seemed a bit unclear to the respondents exactly what a method of communication was. On all the five interviews I had to specify and explain what I meant. With method of communication I mean any kind of activity aiming to communicate with the beneficiary. The development professionals taking part of the study might not be used to speaking in these terms or naming those activities *methods of communication*.

This part of the study hopefully gives a brief insight of what methods of communication that are being used in the human development context of Dakar. But more importantly it tells us about what the respondents classify to be a method of communication and what the method consists of. It's important to keep in mind that all the respondents represent different types of organizations and with somewhat different plans of action although all active in human development. Equal is the importance to understand that the respondents are human and might have forgotten something or given a weak description of a method of communication. These are all subjective descriptions and I have not verified any of the information given in the interviews as my objective was focused on their perceptions and conceptions of communication and dialogue.

I asked an open question about what methods of communication they are using and in total they described 8 different methods. The table below shows what was presented as methods of communication during the interviews by the respondents. It shows who uses what methods.

Figure 5:1Methods of communication presented by the respondents during the interviews

Respondent/ Method	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
PACA (Participatory Analysis for Community Action)		X	X		
Base Line		X	X		

survey (done by the volunteer)					
Community meeting		X	X	X	
Casual Conversation		X	X		X
Feedback Forums				X	
Structured Interviews					X
Photo communication					X
External evaluation	X			X	

The methods as described by the respondents

Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) – Participatory Analysis for Community Action in this context is used in order for volunteers stationed in a village to learn about it, detect issues and possible solutions through communicating with the villagers.

Base line survey – A volunteer newly arrived in a village gets a set of questions about things to ask the villagers to learn about the community.

Community meetings – A community meeting is when the whole community is being invited to an open meeting.

Casual conversations – Talking and speaking with people spontaneously in everyday life.

Feedback Forum – Meetings dedicated to feedback and collective reflection on activities.

Structured Interviews – Planned interviews with a set of specific questions.

Photo communication – Beneficiaries communicating their stories through photographs

External evaluation – An external agency, often a delegation from donors such as the European Commission evaluating the projects they have funded.

PACA is used by respondent 2 and 3; both working for the same development agency and this is how respondent 2 describes PACA;

> *It means that you have to use the community knowledge, they know their own problems. You don't have to decide for them. They are not your subjects. You need to consider them as your colleagues, you work together. They know their problems better than you do. So you need to discuss with them and they will*

*give the problem and when you know the problem you have you will know the needs together and find
the solutions together.*

Community meetings is being presented as a method of communication by respondents 2, 3
and 4 which is most natural since they are all doing community based work and working with
the community as a whole in contrast to respondent 1 and 5 who work with specific groups.

All the respondents except respondent 2 and 3, who represent the same agency, conduct
some kind of feedback or evaluation drawing from the beneficiaries. Respondent 1 tells us
about an *external evaluation* being done but that her agency has no formalized internal forums
for feedback. The only ones proving on external evaluations where respondent 1 and 2 who
are or have been receivers of donations from the European Commission. The other three
respondents get their financing from American institutions. Respondent number 3 declares
that internal monitoring and evaluations of projects are being done but that the beneficiaries
are not involved;

*I mean we have our own indicators for our projects you know like follow ups after girl camps, what happened to
the girls, etc. But it's all volunteers doing that, it is volunteers monitoring and evaluating their own projects.*

Further she confirms that there are no external evaluations or monitoring being done to get to
know what the results and more importantly what the beneficiaries think, but finds that;"… it
would be interesting, it would be an interesting follow up to go ask the community 'what do
you think about your volunteer?' You know!" The interview continues and respondent 3
raises an interesting problem about evaluations when thinking that the volunteers who live
with the community probably are the ones with the most knowledge about the situation.
Would an external evaluation bring anything new or even be able to describe the context
accurately knowing that those evaluations often are done by someone, an outsider visiting the
community for a very short period of time? However the important question was if the
beneficiaries were included and asked for in any type of evaluation or monitoring, which they
are not.

Respondent 2 and 3 who are from the same agency (X2,3) are both talking about the
volunteer giving *feedback* to the training center and the headquarters but no formalized forum
for feedback. This is what respondent 2 says about feedback from the beneficiaries;

Honestly in my knowledge I don't know where the X2,3 (name of organization) take feedback from the villagers...don't know if they do...maybe the ICP, maybe the technical guys they can give suggestions, but the community itself I don't know if they get a chance to give feedback.

However it can be said that their whole approach is to be in constant dialogue with the community, the volunteer living there for at least two years and the feedback could be seen as being an ongoing process. Respondent 4 describes a form of feedback where the supervisor, a person being responsible of the practice of 7-10 facilitators working in different communities, will visit the classrooms in the villages were the educational program runs. In the classroom the supervisor will take in opinions and feedback from the beneficiaries and all the while the facilitator is present. Respondent 4 thinks that this make the beneficiaries feel respected and accounted for as equal adults;

Each supervisor is responsible for at least seven facilitators. And often he will go visit the classroom and make feedbacks in front of everyone. I think those are techniques that make adults feel that they are respected. And give them a taste of being in the center.

The 5th respondents work consists of a constant evaluating and monitoring of projects and she specifically describes how they create meetings and also *individual structural interviews* to communicate with the beneficiary. During the interviews they are often forced to involve an interpreter and she says that it is most of the time someone working on the Micro-finance institute they are visiting. I raised the question of a possible restrain in the interview hence a possible patron-client relationship between the beneficiary and the loan officer. The beneficiary might not be completely free to express all its thoughts and possible criticism about the activity the loan officer himself being present during the interview. The respondent understands the issue but claims that the questions asked in the interviews are mainly concrete questions about the beneficiaries' business and loans. This means that the interviews are somewhat limited and the focus of them is not to get to know the opinions of the beneficiary but to learn about the activity and assess whether the Micro-Finance Institute are doing their job. Respondent 5 says that it's more through the observations when doing meetings, filed visits that they will get to know if there are any serious problems or dysfunctioning in the organization.

Respondent 3 describes why *casual conversation* is the most important tool of communication with the beneficiaries;

Mostly talking, speaking, all volunteers get extensive local language training depending on where they will serve in the country. Wolof, French, Pulaar, different types of Pulaar, Serer, etc. And that's the...

people communicate here through oral expression. Because most people don't have access to the internet and not everyone can read and write.

Respondent 4 supports her in this saying that the Senegal cultural is an oral culture and information is traditionally spread through oral communication.

Finally respondent 5 describes a new project they are launching at this very moment. It's called *The 1000 Words Project* and the beneficiaries taking part will be given cameras with which they are supposed to document their lives.

The idea was that the women could use pictures to tell their own stories. Because there is such a language barrier and we don't want it to be a stage thing.(...)I think it's a cool idea that could lead to better communication strategy cause it would be more coming from the women themselves and using pictures, we can all see and understand the pictures that they want to express. I hope it works

5.2. The Beneficiaries' Involvement in Decision Making and Internal Communication

During the interviews we naturally came to talk about where and how the beneficiaries are involved. At all occasions I would ask if and how they are involved in decision making and the chart below tells the result.

Figure 5.2. At what levels are the beneficiaries engaged when it comes to decision making

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2,3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Decision-making	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved
Policymaking	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved
Local level	Involved	Involved	Involved	Involved
Regional level	Not involved	?	Not involved	-
National level	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved	-
International level	Not involved	Not involved	Not involved	-

Where I could not tell from the interview whether the beneficiary was involved or not I have just made a dash (-). From the figure it is obvious that the beneficiaries are only involved in decisions on a local level. Respondent number 1 clearly describes this;

So as far as possible we try to really work to have a communication, a permanent dialogue. Because they are not only beneficiaries or the apprentice... we can call them beneficiaries... they don't really have an active role in plan of action. But their master teacher and the organization to which they belong are directly involved. After all, when it comes to the setting of standards, the ration chart of skills, all this is created with the trainee. So yes we maintain different levels of communication....(...)

Later in the interview she confirms the above;

Yeah, for example the first class everyone is present to set the time table together. (My translation from French)

At a local level the beneficiaries are involved in matters such as planning their own schedule, organizing their own activity and other practical matters. Respondent number 1 gives me this answer when I ask if the beneficiaries are consulted in decision-making;

The trainees, no. The artisan teachers yes, but the final decision comes back to the director of the X1.

Respondent 2 clearly expresses the issues coming with the people on the ground not being implicated in the headquarters decisions;

Washington makes a lot of decisions. The big office is in Washington DC. The high decisions they take them on a higher level. For example they can say the policy is that and that and that. This is the higher level.
Researcher – And who are they consulting?
Respondent 2 – In general the problem we have with them is they take decisions but they don't take the reality or the context in which we are into account.
Researcher – So they are not consulting you?
Respondent 2 – They don't consult us a lot, they take a lot of decisions without consulting. (...) I respect the dermatology, but for many things they want me to do I don't do it if it does not conform to the culture. They have to take the culture and the context in account before taking some decisions.

One example respondent 2 gives is the one of budget and the headquarters not being aware of what the costs at ground-level. Here is what he thinks should change;

What they (head office) can do to change is to be more aware of what is happening on the site, not only being in the offices and taking decisions. Sometimes they need to come on site where the volunteers study and do the work. For example some of the people working in the office in Dakar they didn't know that the Language and Culture Facilitator go and live with the trainees on CBT site. They didn't know that. They need to be more aware of what is happening sur le terrain (on the ground). And when they take decisions they need to ask people who know the culture. And tell them if it's appropriate or not appropriate.

Respondent 2 says that he don't have any contact with the headquarters in Dakar. And respondent 3 further confirms this situation of dislocated communication;

...everyone has their own objective; everyone does their own thing sometimes. The Washington office would be angry to hear it. DC are implementing policy and making sure we are not getting in trouble. Making sure that the program is being run efficiently. It's like the watch dog, they try to provide institutional support but it doesn't seem like it work.

5.3. The Beneficiary and the Role of the Beneficiary as Perceived by the Development Professional

The respondents would communicate different images of the beneficiary through the interviews. The chart below pins out the most obvious ones using the roles of Chambers (1994) see figure 3:1.

Figure 5:3 how the respondents perceive the beneficiary

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Passive/ dependent/object				X	X
Equal		X	X		X
Citizen				X	
Student	X			X	
Clients					X
Teacher/Informant					X

Respondent 3 who is an American working for the same agency as respondent 2 gives her view and what she understands of how the agencies wants its professionals to interact with the beneficiaries;

Like I said there is no policy but there is like "use your head" and understand the community that you are living with understand what's appropriate and what's not appropriate. They promote "be friends with people". You are coming in to learn from them as well so you are equals.

She further states that her agency expects the beneficiary to be open to learning new things;

I think their role is to be open to have a volunteer in their community and open to learning from the volunteer about whatever improved methods or practices or ideas, but also just to be like a friend, be open. Just be Senegalese almost, like everyone is just so...like the 'Teranga' here is just outrageous. And that's really all that we ask, have an open mind share a little about your culture and learn a little bit about ours and hopefully we'll do some development work in there at some point too.

Terenga is Wolof, the most common of over 36 local languages in Senegal, and means hospitality. The Senegalese *teranga* is considered to be very generous and welcoming. She continues by saying that it's also the responsibility of the volunteer to take off his or hers cultural lenses and understand that; "…we are both human beings and we both have experiences and rich culture and languages to share and learn of each other." Respondent 4 has a slightly other vision of the beneficiary when I ask him who the members of the community council are;

> *In general the villagers. It's a part of the protocol, because when X4 is coming to implement its program in a community, this community has to be…because we are talking about participation…we cannot just come and impose ourselves...there has to be a demand for it...there has to be a negotiation to explain to this community what the program consists of, what results are expected and also what we are expecting from the community. Because it's not only X4 who has to come and…there are rights and obligations. (Translation from French).*

He presents a view of the villager that resembles more the role of a citizen with rights and obligations. Later in the interview he talks about teaching the beneficiary about the national tax system and how aid is tax being paid by another citizen in another country. Through stimulating this sense of citizenship he wants the beneficiary to increase its sense of responsibility and thus ownership in the community projects. He refers to other development projects where they did not teach the community about human rights and those projects would have great difficulties in improving the communities' conditions. He suggests that if the beneficiary does not have a sense of responsibility, whatever help you give him will go to waste:

> *Yes, they need to be taught their fundamental rights and first and foremost be made conscious of them. "I'm a citizen; I cannot spend my time asking for aid from other countries, this aid is other people's tax money, other citizens who have worked and they will take their taxes and give it to me. I don't pay no taxes and when they build roads I come and I destroy them…I destroy and then I say give me more.(Translated from French)*

He insists on the necessity to make the beneficiaries conscious of their civil rights and obligations. And compares the village to a car that has mechanical problems;

> *…you have to push the car but once it's started you don't need to push anymore. Then you will look for another car to push. So you can't just keep on supporting. What we are looking to create is the wellbeing of the villages and I think that if a community or a people have wellbeing then development will happen endogenously. We don't need an external force to bring us into development!*

At the same time he is describing his agencies program as something that has to be persuaded onto the communities against their will. He puts it like this;

X4 gives a great importance to the local language and culture. Because it's what allows the villagers to swallow the pill (Ce qui permet d'avaler la pillule). You know, if you have a taste for chocolate we will create a pill with chocolate flavor! Ha-ha! (Translation from French)

He also describes an internal evaluation program where they amongst other things control if the beneficiaries are practicing what his organization teaches them;

So there is the cognitive dimension of the evaluation where you ask about the intellectual level, the level of understanding and knowledge of the participants but there is also another dimension, is he doing what he is saying ! 'I wash my hands before leaving the bathroom, before eating the kids washes their hands'. But the people (the evaluator) will go to the bathroom and control if there actually is any soap there.

He adds that a development professional gathering and holding a meeting is likely to meet a community who won't necessarily describe their needs right out but will try to butter the development professional and tell him/her what they think he/she wants to hear.

When talking to respondent 5 she would describe the beneficiary as an equal when clarifying that;' We are definitely trying to ask questions and we don't want to come in with our assumptions we want the women to explain what it is that their business is.' and possibly through The 1000 Words Project when using photo graphics as a way to transcend the language barrier and give the wheel to the women. For example this is how she would describe one part of her mission which is finding successful stories amongst the beneficiaries to report back the headquarters in America;

Yeah so to do that we have to tell the story in an intriguing way to that people, so they can see; 'here is a picture of Aissatou, and she is a borrower in this country and this is what she does'. So we send that information back so that the foundation can…even just for shoppers at the grocery store, can see these posters of these stories and say "Yeah sure I'll donate a dollar at the end of my grocery tab to the foundation.

In this quotation the beneficiary is more or less an object serving a purpose to people donate money. Respondent 5 also tells me about when they take pictures of the women and how they want to make them laugh although she considers Africans to have a tendency to look very serious on photographs. This means making the woman do something she does not naturally do and could be interpreted as taking them for objects. She is clearly aware of the existing language barrier and the issues that follow and states that sometimes they do manage to

conduct the interviews in English or French and at those times the quality of the interview and the understanding for the beneficiary is superior to the times when they need an interpreter. She mostly portrays the beneficiary as a client, using a service, a borrower. But also talks about how their story could educate the American population who lives without conception of what it's like living on a dollar a day, given the beneficiary more significance and the role of an educator.

The women, borrower, clients are the beneficiaries and their role in the foundation? They reinvest the capital that is being invested on. Hopefully their stories are educating people back in the states. When we try to take pictures and explain their stories…like people in America don't really understand the concept of living on one dollar a day. It's interesting for them to learn the situations that people live in in different parts of the world. The women who share their story….I think there is a really big space where people could learn a lot from the women. What their life is like but also what their challenges are and also how the access to credit really can make a big change which is the whole idea of the foundation.

6. Analysis

The sixth chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the results which will be done using the symbolic interactionism as described by George Mead, the concepts of participation by Robert Chambers, the concept of Dialogue as developed by numerous, David Böhm, Marianne "Mille" Bojer, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner. The analysis will be done following the three different themes presented in the result; *Methods of communication, the beneficiaries' involvement in decision making and internal communication,* and; *the beneficiary and the role of the beneficiary as perceived by the development professional.*

6.1 Methods of Communication

As mentioned there were sometimes a discrepancy between my comprehension of what was a method of communication and the respondents. When I asked what their methods of communication where with their beneficiaries they did not at once understand what I meant as opposed to other questions in the interview guide that did not need further explanation. There are a numerous possible reasons for this of course. Perhaps I should have been more specific and given them my definition at the same time as asking the question. They might use other terms to categorize those methods, they might not consider them as methods of communication or they might not categorize them at all. According to symbolic interactionism it's clear that 'methods of communication' was a concept we had not yet contributed the exact same meaning to. Anyhow they all understood what I meant after

explaining further that it means simply how in what way they get in contact with and communicate with the beneficiary, through what forums.

From figure 6:1 we understand that respondent 2 and 3 from the same development agency put forward four methods of communication which was the most numerous as opposed to respondent number 1 who only presented one. We have to bear in mind of course that respondent 1 is working for something like an umbrella NGO in its sector and works with local organizations to a great extent but the agency of respondent 2 and 3 works directly with the communities, i.e. the beneficiaries.

Respondent 5 has different methods of communication such as interviews on technical matters, field visits, meetings and photographic documentation to get an understanding of the progress and development of the beneficiary.

So are they looking to get the opinions of the beneficiaries in order to evaluate and improve their own service? Only two of the respondents report to have had external evaluations being made. They were both made by the European Commission because the two agencies had received grants from them. This means that the agencies themselves did not take the initiative. There seems to be a low interest for external evaluation and respondent 3 believes that the volunteers active in her agency probably are the ones with the most in-depth knowledge about the context even though she agrees it would be interesting with an external evaluation.

Next question; are any of the mentioned methods of communication trying to achieve the power reversal that Chamber insists on (Chambers, 1997, p. 154)? It seems from the descriptions of the respondents that they are in general more about *consulting* the beneficiaries than involving them with the purpose of sharing power. This is how consulting is defined by Bojer, Knut and Magner (2006);

> *Consultation: In a consultation, a party with the power to act consults another person or*
> *group for advice or input to a decision. The decision-maker generally retains the power to*
> *take the advice or not.*

It's communication with the aim of the *upper* getting information from the *lower* but there seems to be a limited amount of co-creation and dialogue in the sense of Bohm (1996). The methods of communication do not appear to have the aim of being emancipatory or to create a two-way communication. They seem to be tools for the development professionals and agencies to have information about the beneficiaries' reality and sometimes for the beneficiary to be involved in activities. Community meetings and casual conversations might

be forums in which the beneficiaries are not only consulted but also made a decisive part. But clearly the structure remains the one of the upper and the lower. Using Robert Chambers (1994) chart of uppers and lower and reading the results of section 6.1. Methods of communication we can easily fit in the beneficiary as a student, a client or a recipient. Communication can be used for numerous purposes and I interpret the major purpose of the methods of communication being presented in this study as being consultation.

6.2 The Beneficiaries' Involvement in Decision Making and Internal Communication

The fact that the beneficiaries are only involved at a local level indicates a resistance to wanting to create participation as defined by Chambers (1997). Despite theoretical knowledge about the ideas and effectiveness of participation and other relating concepts such as emancipation, citizenship (Lazar, 2012), etcetera traditional power structures seem to remain and to keep limiting the beneficiary. Börjesson and Magnusson (2011) mentions this way of giving illusive power in involving the beneficiary or user strictly in practical day to day decisions such as routines and schedule making. It gives the beneficiary the impression of being involved and in control of his/hers reality but in fact they have nothing or little to say when it comes to structural or strategic decisions. This division between who decides in the organization sustains the patron-client relationship and keeps their corresponding realities distant from each other which decreases the chance for a deep position-exchange to occur. A separated reality diminishes the possibility to deep and mutual understanding which is the starting point for any social change. Respondent 2 working as a facilitator describes a situation where policy is done in the distant headquarter in the US without consulting him, his colleagues or other people who are active on the field. He admits that when those policies differ with the local culture he simply refuses to put them through and adapts them his own way. This is a clear indication of the problems emerging when the people working on the ground are not implicated in the policymaking. Chambers (1997, p.32) confirms that central-professionals, professionals geographically distant from the concerned context, are far too often ignorant, out-of-touch and out-of-date when it comes to the beneficiaries reality.

6.3 The Beneficiary and the Role of the Beneficiary as Perceived by the Development Professional

Even though the questions asked in the interviews always were centered on the agencies' approach towards the beneficiary, the relationship between agency and beneficiary, the

respondents would often answer to something slightly different. They would for example start discussing internal communication, communication between the beneficiaries themselves or the behavior of the beneficiaries. This might indicate a different focus on and understanding of the beneficiary than the one of Chambers and Böhm. It seemed somewhat distant and fairly new to the respondents to step into the lives and point of views of the beneficiaries. Both Freire and his successor Chambers highly stresses the importance of the development worker take in a critical stand point onto his/hers reality and especially him/herself. *Self-critical awareness* means questioning the self and one's behavior continuously and this implies seeing things in multiple perspectives which would be *triangulation* by Chambers (Chambers, 1997, p. 157).

The agency being represented by respondent 2 and 3 seems to give a lot of attention to the volunteers and everything seems to be done to make sure *they* are in safe and good conditions. Their life conditions seem to be the priority which in one sense is understandable because they are being sent out on the commission of an American agency but in another sense does conflict with the mission of the volunteer becoming one of the villagers, being an equal. In contrast to the support the volunteer gets respondent 2 says that the beneficiaries are not given enough resources to be able to host the volunteer according to the standards set by the agency. Respondent 2 explains that the local families hosting a volunteer still gets the same financial support they did a decade ago although food prices have increased. Though sociation as explained by Simmel, all these elements create a context in which the volunteer, being an American citizen is contributed some sort of superior value compared to non-Americans involved in their projects. The power-relationship is clearly unequal; the Americans are the *uppers* and the beneficiaries the *lowers* as according to Chambers concepts. It must also mean that the *position-exchange* as described by Mead (1976), between a volunteer and a beneficiary in this context is affirming this power-structure of upper and lower. The beneficiary projects an image of the volunteer as more privileged and rich in resources and accepts that as a fact. Vice versa the volunteer sees the beneficiary as being in lack of something the volunteer itself can offer. Through this mutual mirroring they uphold the power-structure.

Respondent 4 describes a complex view of the beneficiary as both a citizen, a student and a passive entity. His metaphors with the car, the chocolate pill and the controlling of soap in the villagers bathroom are all descriptions that together portray the beneficiary as someone who is not fully aware and is unable to judge what is best for him by himself. It's the role of the dependent. Further respondent 4 describes his agencies program in terms of a tool to awaken

communities supposedly asleep, as he clearly describes in his car-metaphor. At the same time he paradoxically says that the communities don't need an external force to enter into development. When talking with respondent 4 I get the feeling that he is trying to represent the official discourse, *the normal professionalism*, of his agency but sometimes his private opinion, not necessarily coherent to that of his agency, slips through. Even though the view he is presenting seems somewhat patronizing in its relation to the beneficiary he marks one important argument that deserves to be presented. He says that a development professional gathering and holding a meeting is likely to meet a community who won't necessarily describe their needs right out but will try to butter the development professional and tell him/her what they think he/she wants to hear. Thomas and Thomas (2002, p.16) argues that people in developing countries have a difficulty with decentralization and 'bottom-up' practices due to a cultural unwillingness to take charge of their own issues. They claim local communities to expect benefits from the government and resist suggestions about taking charge of programs on their own. This must not be seen as a general rule but in cases where it might be proven to be true it could be an indication of a withholding of traditional power structures from both sides. Through *sociation* they have integrated in themselves the image of the beggar, the receiver who has to please and be submissive to receive. This is why, respondent 4 argues, it's important to help the communities organize so that they can set up their own meetings and plans without the development professional. The intentions might be constructive but Chambers (1994) would argue that an imposing of a package-standardized program especially since the development professional clearly takes his role as the upper, assuming that there was no organization to be accounted for in the village before his entering. This imposing will according to Chambers (1997) force the community to redefine their organization and re-adapt to the development professionals reality which is distant and not in coherence with the actual reality because of the gap in equity. At the same time it has to be said that the fact of a community being organized according to the western world model of an association can help the community to access different types of aid more easily from other development agencies and organizations (UNDP, 1993, p. 90). According to Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2008) a group which is culturally homogeneous more easily creates a sense of community which is important in collaborating and achieving aspired goals. This means that a community is more likely to have success when collaborating with western agencies if it adopts their procedures and perspective of reality. Thomas and Thomas adds that:

As in the Stanford Prison Experiment led by Philip Zimbardo in 1971 where a group of students where put together and divided into two groups, one supposed to be inmates and the

other prison guards the social role play, the social reality overtook the theoretical knowledge that it was all just a setup one could say that even though the development professionals have the theoretical knowledge about the conceptions of participation and equity, the social role play, the social reality, the setup is different (Berg, 2003, p. 154). The power structure is still what it used to be with the uppers and lowers not following the proclaimed concepts of participation. There is obviously a discrepancy between the official discourse, the personal approach as well as the practical approach when talking to the respondents. The official discourse consists of power full concepts and ideas of participation, dialogue and equity and represents the agency's policy. At a personal level I do feel a sense of compassion and honest respect from all the respondents towards the beneficiaries. Finally the practical work seems to be somewhat stuck in old structures of hierarchy and patron-client relationships.

One very concrete aspect contributing to the sustention of the power structures is of course the language barrier which is ever constant even if the development agencies try to overcome it by using interpreters and learning local languages. In Senegal the administrative and educational language is French and the fact of speaking French therefore comes with a certain status compared to not speaking it. As Mead (1976) suggests it is primarily through language that the self is created and the beneficiary not speaking French will always be limited in terms of expressing himself to the same extent as the development professional who is probably someone with at least a bachelor's degree most definitely speaking French or/and English (Berg, 2003, p. 157). It has to be mentioned that the volunteers of respondent 2 and 3's agency do not all speak French very well but of course they speak English which is also a high status language. The language barrier creates two significant problems. Firstly the difference in social capital as described by Bourdieu. The beneficiary not speaking French might feel less intelligent, subordinate, in relation to the educated development professional which leads to a patron-client relationship as the self is created and constructed in the meeting with the other. To substantiate this structure there might be what Mead calls a *position-exchange* happening where the development professional and the beneficiary will take on the role given to them by the other (ibid., p. 155). The beneficiary automatically gives the development professional the patron role who in his/hers turn accepts and the development professional automatically projects a receiver, poor, more passive role to the beneficiary who accepts it. These are roles and structures they have been taught and got projected onto them by others many times and therefore the process is automatic. The second problem would be the actual linguistic barrier, not having linguistic tools enough to express and communicate accurately.

Respondent 5 also tells me about when they take pictures of the women and how they want to make them laugh although she considers Africans to have a tendency to look very serious on photographs. This means making the woman do something she does not naturally do. Of course one of these purposes might be said being the good for the woman, since the donations coming from the US will be of benefit for her ultimately. Other purposes which might possibly take part in the complexity of the situation is the company and its financial objectives, their mission to make commercial for themselves, promoting themselves as peacemakers and taking social action.

7. Conclusions

- Communication with beneficiaries appears to be perceived as *consulting* the beneficiary.
- There is little interest for external evaluation.
- Beneficiaries are only being involved in decisions concerning their proximate reality on a local level, but not in policy making on a structural or strategic level.
- The beneficiary is most commonly viewed upon as *equal*, *student* or *passive*.
- There seems to be a discrepancy between the development professionals' official discourse, personal opinion and actual practice.

8. Discussion

In this the eight chapter of the study I will share my personal reflections of the results and the conclusions of this study. The purpose of the study was to get an understanding of how development professionals perceive communication with the beneficiary and how they view the role of the beneficiary in their agency. A number of interesting conclusions yet to be further explored were evoked. One of the most interesting ones in my point of view and possibly the most ungraspable and vague one of them is the one of discrepancy between discourses, official, personal and practical which. The optimist can identify a crack in the power structures between those differing discourses, a crack that might possibly grow to the extent of swallowing the structure itself. What if the personal discourse that I perceive as relatively down to earth and empathetic would take a bigger part of and influence the practical and structural discourse? Could this be a way to a more equal approach and practice? Could it create dialogue as a forum of co-creation of a common truth? These are obviously my highly

personal speculations and this indication of discrepancy of discourse needs further investigation to be confirmed as an existing reality.

Another issues arising that I was somewhat surprised by was the seemingly low interest for external evaluation. Perhaps the respondent share experiences of external evaluations that they did not share with me. I am very subjectively sensing that some of them did not communicate all they had to say about external evaluations and some of them had not thought about it all. One strong critique against external evaluation was presented saying that an evaluator often spends little time with the beneficiaries, too little time to get a representative understanding of the context. A pro-argument which was not put forward by the respondent but that I might stand for myself is the value of having someone exterior give an opinion of your project. The values are multiple. First the external evaluator will more easily get a holistic and objective picture of the project because of his/hers non-involvement. This non-involvement also means that during research the evaluator might have a more neutral role as opposed to someone from the agency itself conducting the interview. The conversation might be less conditioned by structures of power and dependency. My experience and insight is limited but it puzzles me how people can think that it's possible to create a project aiming to achieve constructive change for a group of people without really trying to get a deep understanding of what they think about the projects. This statement concerns mainly the headquarters who seems to be distant from fieldwork and not necessarily the development workers themselves. The conclusions of this study are constant reminders to the social worker of the importance be aware of the existing power-structures and to continue to find creative ways in which to decrease them. As mentioned already this study is very limited in its value and one should not generalize from it. It does how ever give indications for further research and a brief glance of the current situation of views and conceptions of communication and dialogue with beneficiaries in human development projects in Dakar, Senegal.

9. Further Research and Positive Activities

This study has raised a lot of highly important issues in the sector of human development and I cannot restrain myself from noting them even though they are not directly related to the purpose of this study.

The first one is the very relevant question that cannot be avoided; what is development? During the interviews and when moving in the sector of human development in Dakar one gets the impression that it's about education. Not only education as in for example

alphabetization, but also as in some kind of missionary activity and a wanting to make a behavior change. This is exactly how respondent 2 describes development; it's to him a positive behavioral change.

Another interesting topic was new ways of communication where some of the respondents shared some interesting information. For example respondent 4 tells me in the end of the interview when talking more freely that he believes in implementing internet and telecommunication as a more consistent part of the projects. The using of internet highly speeds up the pace of which information is being shared and deconstructs barriers for sharing information he suggests. Respondent 5 describes the photo-project as new alternative way to communicate. She also told me how they have something called group-lending where they lend an amount of money to a group of women who are collectively responsible for the repayment. She says the repayment usually is very strong in these cases because of the social contract. It's a great example of an agency using local culture to create sustainable projects.

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Appendix 1: Form of Ethics and Consent

I am a student from Ersta Sköndal University in Stockholm, Sweden who is currently writing my bachelor thesis. The subject is methods and perceptions of dialogue between organization and beneficiary in some selected organizations working for development in Dakar, Senegal. Semi-structural interviews will be done with staff working within these organizations.

Important information:

- You will be anonymous in the writing of the study.
- All data will be confidential and when the study is written the data from the interviews will be maculated.
- The researcher conducting the interview has sworn secrecy.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time.
- You have the right to take part of the results of the study.

I have read the information: …………………………………………….
Signature

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

1. What is your organizations policy in terms of its communication with its beneficiaries?
2. What methods are you using to communicate with the beneficiaries?
3. What is your opinion of your organizations communication with its beneficiaries?
4. Would you like the communication to change in any way?
5. What is the role of the beneficiary in your organization?
6. How do you gather information about the beneficiaries' needs and life situation?
7. How would you describe your communication with the beneficiaries?
   Choose one or more of these alternatives;
- *Dialogue*
- *Consultation*
- *Discussion*
- *Negotiation*
- *Other*

Short descriptions of terms as defined by Böhm (1990) and Bojer, Knut and Magner (2006);

Dialogue: dialogue as meaning flowing through us. Elements of this deeper understanding of the word include an emphasis on questions, inquiry, co-creation, and listening, the uncovering of one's own assumptions and those of others, a suspension of judgment and a collective search for truth.

Consultation: In a consultation, a party with the power to act consults another person or group for advice or input to a decision. The decision-maker generally retains the power to take the advice or not.

Discussion: As opposed to dialogue, Böhm points out that the root of the word discussion, "cuss", is the same as the root of "percussion" and "concussion", meaning to break apart. A discussion is generally a rational and analytical consideration of a topic in a group, breaking a topic down into its constituent parts in order to understand it.

Negotiation: A negotiation is a discussion intended to produce an agreement. Different sides bring their interests to the table and the negotiation has a transactional and bargaining character to it.

Appendix 3: Definitions

Development professional:

"...everyone working on development especially in or in connection with non-OECD countries. This includes academics, NGO aid agency staff, consultants, government personnel, managers and people in the private sector, politicians and researchers, whatever their discipline, profession or training." (Chambers, 2007, p.11)

Beneficiary

"A person who derives advantage from something, especially a trust, will, or life insurance policy." oxforddictionaries

Dialogue

"Dialogue as meaning flowing through us. Elements of this deeper understanding of the word include an emphasis on questions, inquiry, co-creation, and listening, the uncovering of one's own assumptions and those of others, a suspension of judgment and a collective search for truth." (Bojer, Knut and Magner, 2006).

Method of communication

"Activity aiming to communicate with the beneficiary"

Communication

"The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium" oxforddictionaries