



**THE USE OF COMMUNICATION FOR DONOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION: A
CASE STUDY OF SELECTED UN AGENCIES IN GHANA.**

BY

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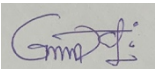
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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of dissertations laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC).

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Regina Anudzo, whose encouragement, sacrifices, and constant support carried me through every stage of this journey. Your belief in me, your prayers, and your strength have been my foundation and my greatest source of motivation.

You have been my true support system, and this achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

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ABSTRACT

Donor resource mobilisation remains a critical concern for United Nations (UN) agencies operating in resource-constrained and competitive development environments. In Ghana, UN agencies depend heavily on external donor funding to implement development programmes. This study examines the use of communication for donor resource mobilisation among selected UN agencies in Ghana, specifically the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The study adopts a qualitative case study design and draws on semi-structured interviews with communication and partnership professionals from the selected agencies. Data were analysed thematically, guided by Stakeholder Theory and Participatory Communication Theory, to explore how communication practices shape donor engagement, trust, and funding sustainability. Findings reveal that communication is strategically used as a tool for visibility, branding, and legitimacy-building, with donor recognition embedded in reports, media content, and digital platforms. Impact-driven and evidence-based storytelling emerged as a central strategy for demonstrating donor value, combining quantitative indicators with curated narratives to justify investment. Participatory communication was found to enhance donor trust and retention, although participation was largely donor-centred, with limited involvement of beneficiaries in shaping communication narratives. The study also identifies significant institutional constraints, including limited communication capacity, bureaucratic approval processes, and the marginalisation of communication units from programme design, which restrict the strategic potential of communication. The study concludes that while communication plays a critical role in donor resource mobilisation within UN agencies in Ghana, its effectiveness is constrained by structural and institutional limitations. It recommends repositioning communication as a strategic and advocacy-driven function, strengthening communication capacity, integrating communication into programme planning, and expanding participatory approaches to enhance sustainable donor partnerships.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO – World Health Organization

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

IOM – International Organization for Migration

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

CSO – Civil Society Organization

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

PR – Public Relations

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

AI – Artificial Intelligence

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the past two decades, the global development financing landscape has undergone a profound transformation, shaped by declining traditional aid flows, increasing donor conditionalities, and heightened demands for accountability and demonstrable impact. International development organisations, particularly those within the United Nations (UN) system, now operate in an environment characterised by intense competition for limited donor resources, fluctuating geopolitical priorities, and growing scepticism among donors regarding aid effectiveness (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Mawdsley, Savage, & Kim, 2014). In this context, donor funding is no longer assured by institutional legitimacy alone but must be actively mobilised and sustained through deliberate strategic engagement. As a result, donor resource mobilisation has become a central organisational function rather than a peripheral administrative task, especially for UN agencies whose mandates rely heavily on external financing to implement development, humanitarian, and advocacy programmes (Achamkulangare, 2014; Fowler, 2000).

Within this evolving funding environment, communication has emerged as a critical strategic instrument for donor resource mobilisation. Contemporary scholarship in strategic communication and development studies increasingly recognises that donor decisions are shaped not only by programme design and technical merit but also by how organisations frame their narratives, demonstrate accountability, and cultivate long-term relationships with funding partners (Hallahan et al., 2007; Cornelissen, 2020). Communication in this sense extends beyond information dissemination to include strategic framing, reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and

trust-building processes that influence donor perceptions and behaviour (Gregory, 2010; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Empirical evidence from development contexts shows that organisations that communicate impact clearly, transparently, and consistently are more likely to attract repeat funding and secure multi-year commitments (Ebrahim, 2003; Sargeant & Jay, 2014). Consequently, communication is increasingly conceptualised as both a strategic resource and a mobilisation mechanism within development organisations.

In Ghana, the role of communication in donor resource mobilisation is particularly salient given the country's position as a lower-middle-income economy experiencing gradual shifts in donor engagement patterns. While Ghana continues to receive development assistance, donors have increasingly reoriented funding toward targeted interventions, results-based financing, and partnerships that align closely with global development frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Bhushan & Samy, 2010; Kumi, 2019). UN agencies operating in Ghana, therefore, face the dual challenge of maintaining donor confidence while simultaneously demonstrating relevance to national development priorities. Research conducted in Ghana indicates that strategic communication, especially messaging that integrates impact data, participatory narratives, and alignment with donor policy agendas, plays a decisive role in sustaining donor relationships (Arhin, Kumi, & Adam, 2018; Dzisah, 2019).

This study focuses on five UN agencies operating in Ghana: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These agencies were selected because they represent diverse mandates within the UN system and operate under different funding logics, yet all depend significantly on donor resources for programme implementation. Their

inclusion allows for a comparative examination of how communication strategies are deployed across development, health, migration, population, and education sectors, providing a holistic understanding of donor resource mobilisation within Ghana's UN architecture.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) functions as the UN's lead development agency, supporting poverty reduction, governance reforms, climate resilience, and inclusive growth. In Ghana, UNDP plays a coordinating role within the UN Country Team, working closely with government institutions and development partners. Given its broad mandate and reliance on multi-donor funding arrangements, UNDP's ability to mobilise resources is closely tied to how it communicates development impact, policy alignment, and partnership effectiveness (Klaverweide, 2006; Kumi, Yeboah, & Afadzinu, 2021). Strategic communication enables UNDP to position itself as a credible partner capable of translating donor investments into sustainable development outcomes, particularly within the SDG framework.

The World Health Organization (WHO) operates primarily within the health sector, focusing on disease prevention, health systems strengthening, and emergency response. In Ghana, WHO's donor engagement is often shaped by health crises and global public health priorities, requiring rapid, credible, and evidence-based communication to mobilise emergency and programme funding (Mao et al., 2021). Studies in global health financing demonstrate that donors are more likely to support health interventions when agencies effectively communicate epidemiological data, intervention outcomes, and risk mitigation strategies (Biesma et al., 2009). Consequently, WHO's donor resource mobilisation efforts depend heavily on its capacity to communicate technical authority, transparency, and urgency.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) addresses migration governance, humanitarian assistance, and migrant protection, areas that are often politically sensitive and

donor-dependent. In Ghana, IOM's work on irregular migration, return and reintegration, and migration policy reform requires communication strategies that balance humanitarian narratives with donor policy considerations and public sensitivities (Geiger & Pécout, 2014). Research on migration governance highlights that donor support for migration programmes is strongly influenced by how agencies frame migration challenges and demonstrate alignment with international policy priorities (Gamlen, 2010). Strategic communication therefore plays a central role in IOM's ability to secure and sustain donor funding in Ghana.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) focuses on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, youth development, and population dynamics. These thematic areas are frequently shaped by cultural, political, and moral debates, making communication a particularly sensitive and strategic function (Tsikata et al., 2011). In Ghana, UNFPA must carefully frame its donor communication to align with international human rights frameworks while navigating local sociopolitical contexts. Studies show that donors supporting reproductive health programmes place high value on transparent communication, evidence-based impact reporting, and participatory engagement with communities (Ebrahim, 2003; Kumi, 2022). As such, UNFPA's donor mobilisation efforts are deeply embedded in its communication practices.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) operates in education, culture, science, and freedom of expression, often competing for relatively smaller, project-based funding compared to humanitarian agencies. In Ghana, UNESCO relies heavily on visibility, branding, and impact storytelling to demonstrate relevance and attract donor support (Dzisah, 2019). Literature on cultural and educational development funding indicates that donors are particularly responsive to narratives that link education and culture to social transformation

and global development goals (Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997). Strategic communication is therefore essential for UNESCO's donor mobilisation and institutional visibility.

Despite the recognised importance of communication across these agencies, existing research reveals that communication is frequently underexamined as a strategic resource mobilisation tool within UN country offices, particularly in Ghana. Much of the literature focuses on programme outcomes and funding trends while paying limited attention to how communication strategies are developed, constrained, and negotiated within complex institutional environments (Kamstra & Schulpen, 2015; Banks & Hulme, 2014). Moreover, the presence of multiple UN agencies operating under a shared national framework introduces coordination challenges that can affect donor visibility, narrative coherence, and funding competitiveness.

As competition for donor resources intensifies and global funding priorities continue to shift, UN agencies in Ghana face increasing pressure to justify their relevance, effectiveness, and value for money. Agencies that fail to strategically manage communication risk diminished donor confidence, reduced visibility, and declining funding streams. Conversely, agencies that successfully integrate strategic, participatory, and evidence-based communication into their donor engagement practices are better positioned to secure sustained partnerships and adapt to an evolving aid landscape.

It is against this backdrop that this study examines the strategic use of communication for donor resource mobilisation among selected UN agencies in Ghana. By focusing on UNDP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, and UNESCO, the study seeks to generate empirical insights into how communication functions as a strategic instrument for donor engagement, trust-building, and funding sustainability within Ghana's UN development system

1.2 Problem Statement

Donor resource mobilisation has become an increasingly complex and contested process for United Nations (UN) agencies operating in developing country contexts such as Ghana. Although UN agencies play a central role in supporting national development priorities across health, education, migration, governance, and gender equality, their operations remain heavily dependent on external donor funding. In recent years, global aid flows have become more volatile due to shifting geopolitical priorities, donor fatigue, economic uncertainty, and heightened demands for accountability and measurable impact (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Mawdsley et al., 2014). Within this constrained funding environment, UN agencies are required not only to deliver effective programmes but also to convincingly demonstrate relevance, credibility, and value for money to donors. Communication has therefore emerged as a critical mechanism through which donor confidence is built and funding is sustained. However, despite its growing importance, communication within many UN country offices continues to be treated as a support function rather than a strategic driver of donor resource mobilisation, creating a significant institutional and operational challenge.

Existing scholarship has established that strategic communication plays a vital role in donor engagement and funding outcomes. Studies conducted in Ghana and similar contexts show that clear messaging, transparency, impact storytelling, and alignment with global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), significantly enhance donor trust and funding continuity (Whitfield, 2003; Arhin, Kumi, & Adam, 2018; Kumi, 2019). Research in development communication further demonstrates that participatory and two-way communication approaches strengthen legitimacy and long-term donor relationships by fostering dialogue, accountability, and shared ownership (Agunga, 2007; Servaes, 2008; Danquah et al., 2018). In addition, literature on

donor relations argue that consistent communication, tailored reporting, and relationship management are essential for donor retention in competitive funding environments (Ebrahim, 2003; Sargeant & Jay, 2014). Collectively, these studies underscore that communication is not merely informational but strategic, relational, and influential in shaping donor behaviour.

Despite these contributions, much of the existing literature remains limited in scope and focus. A significant proportion of studies examine communication for donor mobilisation from the perspectives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, or bilateral aid arrangements, with relatively little empirical attention paid to UN agencies as complex, multi-mandated institutions (Kamstra & Schulpen, 2015; Banks & Hulme, 2014). Where UN agencies are discussed, the focus is often on formal reporting systems, funding mechanisms, or programme outcomes, rather than on the everyday communication practices, strategic decisions, and institutional constraints that shape donor engagement at the country-office level (Achamkulangare, 2014). Moreover, existing studies tend to treat communication as a homogeneous activity, without sufficiently examining how communication strategies vary across agencies with different mandates, funding logics, and donor expectations, such as UNDP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, and UNESCO.

Furthermore, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the institutional and operational realities that affect the strategic use of communication within UN agencies. While participatory communication theory advocates inclusive, dialogic, and empowering communication processes, empirical studies suggest that participation in donor communication is often donor-centred rather than genuinely inclusive of beneficiaries and local stakeholders (Servaes, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Additionally, limited attention has been paid to how bureaucratic procedures, approval hierarchies, staffing constraints, and inter-agency coordination challenges within the UN

system shape communication effectiveness for donor mobilisation (Klaverweide, 2006; Mao et al., 2021). In the Ghanaian context specifically, there is a scarcity of in-depth qualitative studies that examine how communication professionals within UN agencies conceptualise, implement, and negotiate communication strategies in response to donor demands and institutional limitations.

Against this backdrop, the central problem addressed by this study is the lack of an empirical, context-specific understanding of how communication is strategically used, constrained, and optimised for donor resource mobilisation within UN agencies in Ghana. While existing research acknowledges the importance of communication, it does not sufficiently explain how communication functions as a strategic resource mobilisation instrument within the unique institutional environment of the UN system. This study seeks to fill this gap by adopting a qualitative case study approach to examine the communication practices of selected UN agencies, UNDP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, and UNESCO, in Ghana. By exploring how communication strategies are designed, implemented, and experienced by communication professionals and programme managers, the study contributes to both theory and practice by illuminating the strategic role of communication in donor engagement, identifying institutional constraints, and offering insights for strengthening sustainable donor partnerships within the UN development system.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the use of communication for donor resource mobilization among selected UN agencies in Ghana.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Analyze the communication strategies employed by UN agencies to attract and retain donor funding.
2. Find out the extent to which participatory communication can influence donor trust and engagement.
3. Identify the challenges and limitations UN agencies face in using communication as a strategic resource mobilization tool.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What communication strategies do UN agencies in Ghana use to mobilize donor resources?
2. How does participatory communication influence donor engagement and trust?
3. What challenges affect the strategic use of communication in donor resource mobilization?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes significantly to both theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of development communication and donor relations. Theoretically, it integrates Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) (Freire, 1970; Servaes, 2008) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) to explain how communication fosters engagement, trust, and accountability between donors, beneficiaries, and development agencies. It also extends these theories by applying them to the context of donor resource mobilization within UN agencies in Ghana, highlighting how inclusive communication enhances value co-creation and sustainability (Kumi, Yeboah, & Afadzina, 2021).

Practically, the study provides insights for communication professionals within the UN system to design data-informed, participatory, and transparent communication strategies that resonate with donor expectations. It also offers policy recommendations for capacity building, particularly in

digital storytelling, impact reporting, and donor feedback management. Furthermore, the findings will assist government partners, NGOs, and donor agencies in understanding how communication can be used strategically to strengthen collaboration and mutual accountability. Academically, this research will add to the growing body of literature on communication for development and aid effectiveness in sub-Saharan Africa.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on five selected UN agencies in Ghana, specifically the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) **and UNESCO**. These agencies were chosen because of their active engagement in donor-funded development programs and their established communication departments. Geographically, the study is confined to Accra, where the central offices of these agencies coordinate donor relations and external communications. It does not assess the implementation or impact of development programs but rather explores the strategic processes and communicative mechanisms that underpin donor engagement and sustainability. The findings of the study should, therefore, be understood accordingly.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presents the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and the conceptual framework guiding the inquiry. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of related literature and the theoretical foundations underpinning the study. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the research design, data collection procedures, and data

analysis techniques employed. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the findings derived from the data collected from participants. Finally, Chapter Five offers the conclusions drawn from the study, discusses their implications, and provides recommendations for enhancing strategic communication in donor resource mobilization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing scholarly and institutional literature relevant to the role of effective communication in donor resource mobilization, with a focus on five United Nations agencies operating in Ghana: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The review synthesizes empirical studies, policy reports, and theoretical contributions that examine how communication practices shape donor engagement, influence funding decisions, and enhance the sustainability of development initiatives. It highlights key themes emerging from prior research, including the importance of message alignment with global development priorities, the shift from top-down communication to participatory and evidence-based approaches, and the increasing reliance on digital platforms for donor outreach. The chapter also explores the evolving communication strategies adopted by UN agencies and development partners in response to shifting donor expectations, competitive funding landscapes, and the need for transparency and accountability. In addition to the empirical review, the chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study, drawing on Participatory Communication Theory and Stakeholder Theory to provide conceptual grounding for understanding communication as a

strategic tool in resource mobilization. Together, these components establish the scholarly foundation upon which the present study is built.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

A substantial body of literature converges on the argument that strategic communication has become a decisive factor in donor resource mobilisation, particularly within aid-dependent contexts such as Ghana. Early scholarship, exemplified by Whitfield (2003), established that donor funding decisions are not based solely on project merit or development need but are significantly shaped by how development priorities are framed, articulated, and negotiated through communication. Subsequent studies have reinforced this position, showing that clarity of messaging, transparency in reporting, and alignment with donor policy narratives increase donor confidence and the likelihood of sustained funding (Barima & Farhad, 2013; Bhushan & Samy, 2010). Across these studies, communication is consistently portrayed as a relational and strategic process rather than a technical or administrative function. However, while these works acknowledge the importance of communication, many treat it instrumentally, as a means of transmitting information, without sufficiently interrogating its role in shaping power relations, donor perceptions, and institutional legitimacy. This gap is particularly evident in studies that focus on funding outcomes without critically examining the communicative processes that precede and sustain those outcomes. Consequently, while the literature strongly affirms communication's importance, it often under-theorises its strategic and political dimensions within UN agency contexts.

A prominent trend in the literature is the emphasis on aligning communication strategies with global development frameworks, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Studies by Arhin et al. (2018), Kumi (2019, 2022), and Klaverweide (2006) demonstrate that donors increasingly favour narratives that position local interventions within internationally recognised agendas. This alignment serves multiple purposes: it signals policy coherence, facilitates comparability across contexts, and reassures donors that funded projects contribute to globally agreed priorities. For UN agencies, whose mandates are intrinsically tied to international frameworks, such alignment is especially salient. However, critical perspectives complicate this narrative. Kamstra and Schulpen (2015) argue that donor-driven alignment often leads to the homogenisation of organisational communication, where diverse local realities are compressed into standardised, donor-friendly templates. This communicative conformity may enhance funding prospects in the short term but risks undermining innovation, contextual sensitivity, and local ownership. The literature thus presents a tension between strategic alignment and communicative autonomy, suggesting that while alignment with global frameworks is practically necessary, it may also constrain the expressive and participatory dimensions of development communication.

Another significant evolution in the literature is the gradual shift from top-down, information-based communication models toward participatory and dialogic approaches. Scholars such as Agunga (2007), Sackey (2014), Danquah et al. (2018), and Wanyama (2019) argue that participatory communication enhances donor trust by fostering transparency, accountability, and shared ownership of development initiatives. These studies suggest that when communities are visibly involved in shaping project narratives, donors perceive interventions as more legitimate and sustainable. This participatory turn aligns strongly with Participatory Communication Theory, which emphasises dialogue, inclusion, and co-creation of meaning. However, a critical reading of

the literature reveals that participation is often uneven and selective. While donors and implementing agencies are frequently involved in communication processes, beneficiaries' participation is often limited to providing testimonials rather than shaping agendas or narratives. This raises important questions about the depth of participation being practiced. The literature thus exposes a persistent theory–practice gap, where participatory rhetoric is widely embraced, but genuine power-sharing in communication remains limited, especially within large institutional structures such as the UN.

Closely linked to participatory communication is the growing prominence of storytelling and impact narratives in donor engagement strategies. Research by Dzisah (2019), Mao et al. (2021), Tsikata et al. (2011), and Wanyama (2019) consistently demonstrates that personalised stories, particularly those centred on individual beneficiaries, are more effective in sustaining donor engagement than abstract, policy-oriented communication. These studies argue that storytelling humanises development work, making impact tangible and emotionally resonant for donors. However, the literature also raises critical concerns about the politics of representation embedded in such narratives. Engaging stories are often curated to align with donor expectations, privileging success, resilience, and transformation while marginalising failure, contestation, and structural constraints. This selective representation can reinforce simplified understandings of development and obscure systemic inequalities. While the literature recognises storytelling as a powerful communicative tool, it also cautions against its uncritical use, particularly within UN agencies whose ethical mandates require balanced and accurate representation of development realities.

Recent scholarship increasingly highlights the role of digital communication in expanding donor engagement opportunities. Studies by Klaverweide (2006), Kumi (2022), and comparative NGO analyses emphasise that social media, multimedia storytelling, and online donor platforms enhance

visibility, reduce outreach costs, and attract non-traditional donors such as diaspora communities and private philanthropies. Digital tools are portrayed as enabling more interactive, timely, and visually compelling communication, which aligns with contemporary donor preferences. However, while the literature celebrates the potential of digital communication, it often underestimates institutional constraints that shape its use within UN agencies. Few studies adequately address how bureaucratic approval processes, risk aversion, and restrictive communication policies limit innovation and responsiveness in digital spaces. This represents a notable gap, particularly given the growing centrality of digital platforms in global fundraising and advocacy. As such, while digital communication is widely recognised as transformative, its practical implementation within UN systems remains insufficiently examined.

Another recurring theme in the literature is the importance of institutional partnerships and coordinated communication strategies in donor resource mobilisation. Maina (2023), Bhushan and Samy (2010), and Klaverweide (2006) demonstrate that joint branding, shared reporting frameworks, and coordinated narratives enhance organisational credibility and funding outcomes. These studies suggest that donors increasingly value coherence and collaboration, perceiving coordinated communication as evidence of efficiency, alignment, and reduced duplication. However, much of this literature focuses on NGOs and bilateral partnerships, offering limited insight into how coordination functions within UN country teams, where multiple agencies with distinct mandates operate under a common framework. The absence of detailed analysis on inter-agency communication dynamics within the UN represents a significant gap, particularly in contexts like Ghana where donors often fund multi-agency initiatives. This study contributes to filling that gap by examining how coordination challenges and opportunities shape donor communication within UN agencies.

A final, critical strand of the literature focuses on communication capacity gaps and institutional constraints. Studies by Batti (2014), Adamolekun (1989), and Kumi (2017) highlight persistent deficiencies in proposal writing, digital literacy, impact reporting, and strategic advocacy among development organisations. While much of this work concentrates on local NGOs, its implications extend directly to UN agencies that rely on strong communication ecosystems among partners. Notably, the literature rarely interrogates how structural issues, such as understaffing, marginalisation of communication units, and exclusion from decision-making affect donor mobilisation within large bureaucratic organisations. This omission is striking, given that effective communication requires not only individual skills but also institutional support and strategic positioning. The lack of empirical focus on communication professionals' lived experiences within UN agencies constitutes a significant gap that this study directly addresses.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates a clear evolution in how communication is conceptualised in donor resource mobilisation, from a peripheral, informational activity to a strategic, participatory, and multi-platform practice. There is strong consensus that communication influences donor trust, funding continuity, and institutional legitimacy. However, critical gaps remain concerning the tension between donor alignment and local autonomy, the limits of participation, the ethical implications of storytelling, and the institutional constraints that shape communication practice within UN agencies. Moreover, while theoretical perspectives such as Participatory Communication Theory and Resource Mobilisation Theory are frequently referenced, they are seldom integrated into a coherent analytical framework that accounts for stakeholder power dynamics. This study builds on and extends existing scholarship by providing an empirically grounded, theory-informed analysis of how communication is used, constrained, and optimised for donor resource mobilisation among UN agencies in Ghana.

2.2 Theoretical Framework.

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) propounded by Paulo Freire (1970) and Stakeholder Theory propounded by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, both of which provide complementary lenses for understanding the strategic use of communication in donor resource mobilization within the context of some UN agencies in Ghana. These theories are particularly relevant in development and humanitarian work, where effective communication is not only a tool for information dissemination but also a mechanism for building trust, fostering collaboration, and ensuring long-term stakeholder engagement (Servaes, 2008; Freeman, 1984). The selection of these theories is informed by the unique operational realities of UN agencies, which must navigate complex networks of donors, beneficiaries, and partners in an environment where resource competition and accountability demands are high (Kumi, Yeboah & Afadzinu, 2021).

2.2.1 Participatory Communication Theory

Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) (Freire, 1970) is grounded in the principle that development and organizational change are most effective when stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, are actively involved in the communication process. Unlike the top-down, sender-receiver models of communication, PCT emphasizes horizontal, dialogic, and inclusive approaches where information exchange is mutual and empowering (Freire, 1970; Pratt, 2009). In the Ghanaian context, participatory communication has been recognized as central to mobilizing communities for social and economic development, particularly in donor-funded projects (Dikeocha, 2024).

Emerging from the critical development communication paradigm of the 1970s and 1980s, PCT evolved as a reaction to the failure of modernization-era, one-way media campaigns. It draws from

Paulo Freire's pedagogy of dialogue and empowerment, positioning participants not as passive recipients but as active co-creators of meaning (Servaes, 2008). In resource mobilization for UN agencies in Ghana, communication campaigns must move beyond persuasive appeals to interactive platforms that invite donor and community feedback (Fobih, 2001). Participatory communication strategies, such as consultative meetings, community radio, and feedback forums, have been found to improve donor commitment and local ownership (Naaikuur, Diedong & Dzisah, 2022).

Participatory communication plays a critical role in donor mobilisation by fostering transparency and credibility, which are essential for sustaining long-term donor relationships (Sackey, 2014). In Ghana, agencies that adopted participatory storytelling and joint planning sessions with both local and international donors reported higher funding renewal rates, as these approaches helped create a shared development narrative that aligns donor priorities with local realities (Quaye, 2017). A participatory approach also strengthens accountability, since stakeholders become active monitors of how resources are used; participatory engagement enables the co-creation of accountability systems that satisfy both donor reporting requirements and local expectations for transparency (Asogwa, Varua, & Datt, 2024). Within UN agencies, this can involve community representatives participating in financial briefings directed at donors. Despite its benefits, Participatory Communication Theory (PCT) faces challenges such as power imbalances, tokenistic participation, and limited stakeholder capacity for meaningful engagement (Boakye-Agyei, 2009). In the Ghanaian UN context, strong donor demands for measurable outcomes can restrict the time available for genuine participation; nevertheless, long-term investments in participatory structures have been shown to improve donor satisfaction and create more sustainable resource flows (Mohammed, 2021). For selected UN agencies in Ghana, PCT therefore highlights the need to design communication strategies that treat donors as active collaborators rather than distant

benefactors, building trust, ensuring project relevance, and fostering shared ownership, factors that enhance donor retention and willingness to support future initiatives (Dzisah, 2019).

2.2.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, articulated by Freeman (1984), posits that organizations must create value not only for shareholders but for all stakeholders, any group or individual affected by or capable of affecting the organization. In the donor mobilisation sphere, stakeholders include donors, beneficiaries, government agencies, implementing partners, and local communities (Asogwa, Varua & Datt, 2024). UN agencies in Ghana operate in complex environments where managing diverse stakeholder interests is critical to sustaining donor funding.

Stakeholder Theory emphasizes systematic identification and mapping of stakeholders based on their influence, interest, and legitimacy (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 1997). For donor mobilisation, this means recognizing that donors are not a monolithic group; they vary in motivations, reporting needs, and communication preferences. In Ghana, agencies that effectively segment donors and tailor communication to each group achieve higher funding success (Gyamerah, 2019).

Stakeholder Theory stresses that engagement is an ongoing process requiring dialogue, responsiveness, and alignment of expectations (Naaikuur et al., 2022). In practice, UN agencies in Ghana employ strategic communication tools, such as impact dashboards, donor appreciation events, and targeted reports, to sustain stakeholder interest and commitment (Osei, 2017). These practices are consistent with stakeholder theory's call for mutual value creation.

One of the theory's core propositions is that balancing stakeholder interests enhances organisational performance and legitimacy (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). For UN agencies, aligning donor objectives (e.g., measurable impact, visibility) with beneficiary needs (e.g., relevant

services, empowerment) is a strategic communication task that can determine funding continuity (Kumi, Yeboah & Afadzinu, 2021).

Stakeholder Theory aligns strongly with donor demands for transparency. In Ghana, UN agencies that integrate clear, accessible reporting systems into their communication strategies foster stronger donor relationships and encourage multi-year commitments (Anokye, 2013). This is because donors, as primary stakeholders, require regular evidence of impact to justify continued resource allocation.

Managing stakeholder relationships is complex, especially when donor priorities conflict with local needs (Danquah et al., 2018). In Ghana, agencies have navigated this by using participatory planning processes, a convergence point between Stakeholder Theory and Participatory Communication Theory, to reconcile differences and maintain trust across groups (Adzakor, 2024).

Applied to the topic of donor resource mobilisation in UN agencies in Ghana, Stakeholder Theory provides a strategic framework for understanding and managing the multiple relationships that influence funding outcomes. It supports the idea that communication strategies should not only inform but also involve, negotiate, and balance the needs of all stakeholders to ensure sustainable resource inflows (Kumi, 2022).

2.3 Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. The discussion critically examined existing research and theoretical perspectives on the role of communication in donor resource mobilization. The review revealed consistent patterns emphasizing the importance of aligning communication with donor priorities, integrating global

frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and adopting participatory, culturally responsive messaging. Studies consistently highlighted how strategic storytelling, data-driven narratives, and digital platforms enhance donor engagement and funding sustainability. The theoretical framework was anchored in Stakeholder Theory, which explains how effective communication with key actors, donors, communities, and partner organizations, builds trust and secures continued support. Complementing this, Participatory Theory emphasized the value of involving beneficiaries and communities in the design and delivery of communication strategies, reinforcing authenticity, ownership, and transparency. Together, these theories provided a strong theoretical lens to understand how communication functions not just as a tool but as a relational and inclusive process central to successful donor mobilization.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted for the study. It describes the philosophical assumptions, research approach, and design that underpin the investigation and details the processes employed to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The chapter provides a clear and logical justification for the choices made in designing and conducting the research

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy guiding this study is interpretivism, which emphasizes understanding the social world through the subjective meanings and interpretations that individuals assign to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since this study explores how UN agencies in Ghana strategically use communication to mobilise donor resources, it seeks to understand the meanings, motivations, and perceptions that underlie communication strategies, rather than testing hypotheses or quantifying variables. Interpretivism is suitable because it focuses on the depth of understanding in real-world contexts where communication dynamics, donor relations, and strategic choices are influenced by institutional norms, values, and interpersonal interactions (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The philosophical stance recognizes that social reality is constructed through communication and that multiple perspectives exist among UN communication officers, donor relations specialists, and program managers. Therefore, the researcher must interpret these realities by engaging closely with participants, often through interviews and document reviews that capture organizational narratives and symbolic expressions of strategy (Bryman, 2016).

3.2 Research Approach

Following the above philosophy, the study adopts a qualitative research approach because it allows for an in-depth exploration of how communication strategies are designed and implemented to attract donor funding within the UN framework in Ghana. Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing them, which makes it ideal for investigating the nuances of strategic communication and its impact on donor relationships (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By employing this approach, the study prioritizes rich, descriptive insights rather than numerical data, emphasizing context-specific findings that reveal the unique organizational culture and communication practices of UN agencies. This approach facilitates the collection of detailed data through interviews, focus groups, and document analyses, helping to uncover the subjective interpretations and meaning-making processes of communication professionals (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It also supports the use of thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, language use, and symbolic strategies that underpin donor engagement.

The justification for choosing the qualitative approach stems from the study's focus on exploring strategic communication as a social and relational process. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to interpret these processes holistically within their institutional and cultural contexts. Additionally, given the complexity of the UN system and the diversity of agencies involved in Ghana, the qualitative inquiry enabled comparative insights across entities while preserving the individuality of each agency's experience (Silverman, 2020).

3.3 Research Design

A research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher uses to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, ensuring that the research questions are addressed effectively (Yin, 2018). This study adopts a qualitative case study design, which is

particularly suitable for exploring complex social processes within real-life contexts. By adopting a case study design, the researcher was able to explore how and why communication is strategically used for donor resource mobilisation within selected United Nations agencies in Ghana, namely WHO, UNDP, IOM, UNESCO, and UNFPA. These agencies were treated collectively as a bounded system, allowing the study to examine communication practices within their natural institutional environment. The case study design enabled an in-depth investigation of communication processes such as internal planning, donor engagement, message framing, visibility practices, and inter-agency coordination, which cannot be meaningfully captured through quantitative approaches. The choice of a case study design was informed by the study's focus on understanding processes rather than measuring variables. As Yin (2018) notes, case studies are most appropriate when the researcher seeks to examine a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context, especially where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined. The UN system in Ghana, characterised by multiple agencies with overlapping mandates and shared donor networks, presents such a context. Through the use of multiple sources of evidence, including interviews and document analysis, the case study design facilitated triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of the findings (Stake, 2005; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

3.4 Population

In research, population refers to the entire group of individuals who possess characteristics relevant to the study and from whom data can be collected (Creswell, 2014). The population for this study comprises communication specialists, donor relations officers, and programme managers working within the selected UN agencies in Ghana. This population was deliberately chosen because these individuals are directly involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating communication

strategies aimed at engaging donors and mobilising resources. By focusing on personnel at both managerial and operational levels, the study captured diverse perspectives on how communication strategies are conceptualised at the strategic level and executed in practice. Staff within agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, and IOM regularly engage in donor outreach, advocacy, reporting, and partnership-building activities, making them well positioned to provide rich insights into donor communication processes. The selection of this population aligns with the qualitative and interpretivist orientation of the study, which prioritises depth of understanding over statistical generalisation (Saunders et al., 2019). Rather than seeking the views of the general public or beneficiaries, the study intentionally focused on institutional actors whose professional roles place them at the centre of donor communication and resource mobilisation. This ensured that the data collected was directly relevant to the research objectives and grounded in professional experience (Bryman, 2016).

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample refers to a subset of a population selected for participation in a study, while a sampling technique describes the procedure used to identify participants who can provide relevant data (Palinkas et al., 2015). This study employed a purposive sampling technique, which is particularly appropriate for qualitative research that seeks an in-depth understanding from individuals with specialised knowledge and direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

By adopting purposive sampling, the researcher selected a total of fifteen (15) participants, three from each of the five UN agencies included in the study, namely UNDP, WHO, IOM, UNFPA, and UNESCO. This sampling decision ensured representation across all selected agencies, allowing the study to capture agency-specific perspectives on the strategic use of communication for donor resource mobilisation. The three participants from each agency occupied a senior or mid-

level role directly responsible for communication, donor engagement, or programme management within their respective agency.

The selection of three key informants per agency was deliberate and justified by the case study design and the specialised nature of the research topic. In UN country offices, communication and donor engagement functions are often centralised, with strategic decisions coordinated by a small number of senior staff. Interviewing individuals occupying these roles enabled the researcher to obtain authoritative, institution-level insights into communication strategies, donor engagement processes, and organisational constraints (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach aligns with qualitative case study methodology, which prioritises depth, contextual understanding, and information richness over numerical representativeness.

3.6 Data Collection Method and Procedure

A data collection method refers to the specific technique or strategy used to gather information from participants to address the research questions, while a data collection procedure refers to the systematic, step-by-step process by which the chosen method is implemented (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research because they allow the researcher to explore predetermined themes while remaining flexible enough to probe emerging issues, clarify responses, and pursue unanticipated but relevant insights (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interview guide was developed in alignment with the research questions and theoretical framework, focusing on communication planning, donor engagement strategies, message framing, participatory processes, visibility practices, and institutional challenges in resource mobilisation. This method was particularly appropriate for the interpretivist orientation of the study, which sought to understand how communication professionals construct meaning around donor

communication within complex organisational settings. By enabling participants to express their perspectives in their own words, semi-structured interviews allowed for the exploration of implicit assumptions, institutional norms, and contextual dynamics that would not have been captured through structured questionnaires or surveys (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The data collection procedure began after obtaining ethical approval from the researcher's institution and formal authorisation from the participating UN agencies. Potential participants were contacted via official email and provided with detailed information outlining the purpose of the study, confidentiality safeguards, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Upon receiving informed consent, interviews were scheduled at times convenient to participants and conducted on a one-on-one basis, either face-to-face at agency offices or through secure online platforms, depending on availability and institutional protocols. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was conducted in English. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and completeness of data. The semi-structured format ensured consistency across interviews while allowing sufficient flexibility to explore agency-specific experiences and contextual differences.

Following data collection, all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness. To strengthen reflexivity and analytical rigour, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout the data collection process, documenting contextual observations, emerging interpretations, and methodological reflections (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This integrated and systematic approach to both method and procedure ensured transparency, consistency, and credibility, aligning with established qualitative case study standards (Yin, 2018) and enhancing the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations refer to principles that guide responsible conduct in research involving human participants. This study adhered to established ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection (Resnik, 2018). Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was voluntary, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used, and identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports. Audio files and transcripts were securely stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher. Strict ethical compliance was particularly important given the hierarchical and sensitive nature of UN institutions. Upholding ethical standards enhanced trust, encouraged candid participation, and ensured the credibility and integrity of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Bryman, 2016).

4.8 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis refers to the process of making sense of collected data through systematic examination and interpretation. This study employed thematic analysis, following the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019). By adopting thematic analysis, the researcher systematically identified, analysed, and interpreted recurring patterns within the interview transcripts and documents. The process involved familiarisation with the data, initial coding, theme generation, reviewing and refining themes, and defining final themes. Qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo was used to organise and manage the data efficiently. Thematic analysis was appropriate because the study sought to understand meanings, practices, and perceptions rather than quantify relationships. The method aligns with the interpretivist stance of the study and allows for both within-case and cross-case analysis across the selected UN agencies (Nowell et al., 2017). It also

facilitated the integration of empirical findings with theoretical concepts in participatory communication and stakeholder theory.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined and justified the methodological framework adopted for the study on The Strategic Use of Communication for Donor Resource Mobilisation: A Case Study of selected UN Agencies in Ghana. The chapter explained the adoption of an interpretivist philosophy, qualitative approach, and case study design, demonstrating how these choices aligned with the study's objectives. The chapter further described the study population, sampling technique, data sources, data collection methods, and analysis procedures, with each methodological decision supported by relevant scholarly literature. Ethical considerations and procedural rigor were also highlighted. Overall, the methodology provides a coherent, transparent, and robust foundation for analysing how communication is strategically employed by UN agencies in Ghana to mobilise donor resources

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on the use of communication for donor resource mobilisation among selected United Nations agencies in Ghana, namely UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, IOM, and UNFPA. The findings are derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with senior communication and partnership professionals within the selected agencies. The chapter adopts a thematic analytical approach, through which recurring patterns, meanings, and practices related to donor-focused communication were identified, interpreted, and linked to relevant theoretical frameworks.

The analysis is guided by the study's research questions and anchored in Stakeholder Theory and Participatory Communication Theory, which provide the conceptual lenses for understanding how communication is strategically used to manage donor relationships, build trust, negotiate power, and sustain funding. Rather than presenting interview data descriptively, this chapter integrates empirical evidence with scholarly literature to generate analytical insights into institutional communication practices within the UN system in Ghana.

Seven major themes emerged from the data which include, Strategic Communication as a Visibility, Branding and Legitimacy Tool for Donor Resource Mobilisation, Impact-Driven and Evidence-Based Storytelling as a Strategy for Demonstrating Donor Value, Participatory Communication as a Mechanism for Donor Trust, Power Negotiation, and Long-Term Engagement, Digital Media, Innovation, and Institutional Constraints in Donor Communication, Institutional Capacity Gaps, Bureaucratic Structures, and Human Resource Constraints in Donor-Focused Communication, Donor Expectations, Ethical Communication, and the Politics of

Narrative Control and Optimising Communication for Sustainable Donor Partnerships and Long-Term Resource Mobilisation. These themes reflect how communication operates simultaneously as a visibility tool, an accountability mechanism, a trust-building process, and a site of power negotiation in donor relations. Each theme is presented with carefully contextualised verbatim quotations from participants, followed by interpretive discussion that situates the findings within existing academic debates on development communication, donor engagement, and organisational legitimacy.

4.1 Research Question One: What communication strategies do UN agencies in Ghana use to mobilize donor resources?

The first research question seeks to examine the specific communication strategies employed by United Nations agencies in Ghana to mobilise donor resources. Its primary intent is to identify, describe, and analyse the deliberate communication approaches used to attract, retain, and sustain donor funding within a competitive and resource-constrained development environment. By focusing on strategies such as visibility creation, branding, impact storytelling, and digital engagement, this research question aims to uncover how communication is operationalised as a strategic tool rather than a peripheral support function. Addressing this question provides insight into how UN agencies align their communication practices with donor expectations, accountability frameworks, and global development agendas in order to enhance funding outcomes.

4.1.1 Strategic Communication as a Visibility, Branding, and Legitimacy Tool for Donor Resource Mobilisation

Findings from the interviews indicate that communication across UN agencies in Ghana is strategically deployed as a visibility, branding, and legitimacy-building mechanism aimed at attracting, retaining, and deepening donor partnerships. Communication is not treated as a neutral

support function but as a core strategic asset that positions donor contributions within institutional, public, and global development narratives.

Participants consistently emphasised that donor visibility is deliberately embedded into communication outputs as a means of sustaining funding relationships. One participant from UNESCO explained that donor branding is systematically incorporated into all materials produced under funded projects:

“If you look at most of the projects that we run currently, there’s an availability or there’s a presence. The donors’ branding rights are on every material that is produced, every video production materials, support items, you can see the branding rights of the donor.” (UNESCO, Interview)

This statement illustrates how communication outputs function as symbolic artefacts of accountability, ensuring that donors are publicly associated with development outcomes. From a Stakeholder Theory perspective, this reflects the prioritisation of donors as high-salience stakeholders, whose legitimacy and power necessitate continuous recognition (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997).

Beyond acknowledgement, branding was framed as a reciprocal exchange. A UNESCO participant noted that communication actively “markets” donors in return for funding:

“It’s about letting the donors see that, you know what, we are actually out there also marketing you. We are making sure that people see what you are doing, people see the support that you are giving them.” (UNESCO, Interview)

This framing aligns with Stakeholder Theory’s assertion that organisational sustainability depends on delivering value to key stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Scholarly literature supports this practice, with Enghel (2016) arguing that development communication increasingly operates within a donor-driven visibility economy, where communication outputs serve as evidence of relevance and effectiveness.

UNDP participants similarly described the use of reports, media engagements, and public exhibitions as tools for donor reassurance and justification:

“Donors are interested in such information because it helps to inform their planning and their decision making, and it also helps them to see how their contributions are being spent.” (UNDP, Interview)

While effective for mobilisation, this emphasis reveals an implicit tension with participatory ideals, as visibility strategies prioritise donor recognition over beneficiary voice. Participatory Communication Theory cautions that such vertical communication models risk reinforcing power asymmetries (Mefalopulos, 2003; Muturi & Mwangi, 2009).

4.1.2 Impact-Driven and Evidence-Based Storytelling as a Strategy for Demonstrating Donor Value

The findings reveal that impact-driven and evidence-based storytelling constitutes one of the most dominant communication strategies used by UN agencies in Ghana to mobilise and sustain donor resources. Across all agencies studied, communication was framed as a process of demonstrating value by translating development interventions into measurable outcomes and compelling narratives that donors can justify within their own accountability systems. This approach reflects

a broader institutional shift from activity-based reporting to results-oriented communication, consistent with results-based management frameworks adopted across the UN system.

Participants consistently emphasised that donors prioritise quantifiable evidence of impact as the basis for funding decisions. A UNESCO participant explained that their agency deliberately foregrounds outcomes rather than expenditure:

“Instead of looking at how much has been spent or how much effort has gone into a programme, we are actually looking at how many lives have been touched, because that is what donors want to see.” (UNESCO, Interview)

Similarly, a WHO participant highlighted the importance of epidemiological indicators and service coverage data in donor communication:

“For donors, the figures matter a lot. They want to see how many people were reached, how many facilities were supported, and how health indicators have changed.” (WHO, Interview)

From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, this emphasis reflects the recognition of donors as high-power and high-legitimacy stakeholders whose continued support depends on verifiable performance evidence (Mitchell et al., 1997). Scholarly literature supports this finding, noting that donors increasingly demand outcome-based communication to justify funding decisions and demonstrate value for money (Enghel, 2016; Mefalopulos, 2003).

However, the findings also show that quantitative data alone is insufficient for sustaining donor interest. Participants across agencies described deliberate efforts to embed statistics within human-

centred narratives that illustrate how interventions translate into lived experience. A UNFPA participant noted:

“We combine quantitative data like reductions in maternal mortality with real-life stories of women and girls whose lives have been positively affected.” (UNFPA, Interview)

An IOM participant similarly explained that storytelling helps donors understand the broader meaning of migration interventions:

“When donors see how funding translates into real changes in people’s lives, it strengthens their confidence in the programme.” (IOM, Interview)

These practices align with Participatory Communication Theory, which emphasises contextualisation, meaning-making, and narrative engagement rather than abstract reporting (Mefalopulos, 2003). However, the findings also reveal that beneficiary stories are often strategically curated. A UNDP participant acknowledged that storytelling formats are adapted to donor preferences:

“Some donors are more interested in numbers, others in narratives or photos, so we vary the format depending on who we are communicating with.” (UNDP, Interview)

While this flexibility enhances donor satisfaction, it also highlights power asymmetries in narrative construction, where donor preferences shape which stories are told and how they are framed. This supports Muturi and Mwangi’s (2009) critique that participation in development communication often privileges powerful stakeholders over marginalised voices.

4.2 Research Question Two: How does participatory communication influence donor engagement and trust?

The second research question seeks to explore how participatory communication influences donor engagement and trust among UN agencies in Ghana. This question moves beyond identifying communication strategies to interrogate the relational dynamics underpinning donor–agency interactions. Specifically, it examines the extent to which dialogue, collaboration, feedback mechanisms, and shared decision-making in communication processes contribute to building donor confidence, strengthening relationships, and sustaining long-term funding partnerships. By addressing this question, the study seeks to assess whether participatory communication functions as a trust-building mechanism or merely as a donor-centred managerial practice, thereby contributing to broader debates on participation, power, and accountability in development communication.

4.2.1 Participatory Communication as a Mechanism for Donor Trust, Power Negotiation, and Long-Term Engagement

The findings indicate that participatory communication is widely perceived by UN agencies in Ghana as a critical mechanism for building donor trust and sustaining long-term engagement. However, participation is primarily conceptualised as donor inclusion in communication planning, feedback, and narrative approval, rather than broad-based community participation. This donor-centred interpretation reflects institutional realities shaped by funding dependency and accountability structures.

Participants consistently described participatory communication as an ongoing dialogue rather than a one-off feedback exercise. A UNESCO participant explained:

“You want to understand how they want to be seen and communicated about, so we have regular meetings, sometimes quarterly, to make sure we are aligned.” (UNESCO, Interview)

UNDP participants echoed this collaborative approach:

“Sometimes we write stories together or share drafts with donors so they can give input before anything is finalised.” (UNDP, Interview)

From a Participatory Communication Theory perspective, these practices reflect dialogic engagement and shared meaning-making between organisations and donors (Mefalopulos, 2003). Importantly, participants linked participatory communication directly to donor retention. A UNESCO participant described how donor feedback influenced continued funding:

“When we adjusted how we referred to them in our communication, it helped build trust and they agreed to support the next phase of the project.” (UNESCO, Interview)

An IOM participant similarly noted:

“When donors see that their feedback is taken seriously, it strengthens the relationship and makes future collaboration easier.” (IOM, Interview)

Stakeholder Theory explains this dynamic by emphasising that trust emerges when stakeholder expectations are acknowledged and incorporated into organisational decision-making (Freeman, 1984). However, the findings also reveal that participation is asymmetrical. While donors actively shape communication narratives, beneficiaries rarely participate in message design. A UNDP participant noted:

“Sometimes beneficiaries don’t even know who the donor is; they mention the implementing partner instead.” (UNDP, Interview)

This highlights a gap between participatory ideals and institutional practice, reinforcing critiques that participation often privileges powerful stakeholders over marginalised voices.

4.2.2 Digital Media, Innovation, and Institutional Constraints in Donor Communication

Findings indicate that digital media platforms are widely recognised as essential tools for donor visibility and engagement across UN agencies in Ghana. Participants described social media as indispensable for maintaining relevance, showcasing impact, and sustaining donor attention in a competitive funding environment.

A UNESCO participant explained:

“We are heavy on social media, videos, reels, documentaries, because that is how people stay visible today.” (UNESCO, Interview)

UNFPA participants similarly highlighted digital platforms:

“Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube help us showcase donor-supported work and keep donors engaged.” (UNFPA, Interview)

WHO participants emphasised the importance of digital tools in emergency contexts:

“During health emergencies, digital platforms allow us to quickly show what is being done and where donor support is making a difference.” (WHO, Interview)

Despite this recognition, participants across agencies identified institutional and bureaucratic constraints that limit innovation. A UNESCO participant observed:

“The UN still communicates like we are in 2000. We are not allowed on some platforms that could give us more reach.” (UNESCO, Interview)

An IOM participant added:

“Before anything goes out, it has to pass through several approval levels, and by then the moment is sometimes gone.” (IOM, Interview)

These constraints undermine responsiveness and relevance, which Participatory Communication Theory identifies as prerequisites for meaningful engagement (Mefalopulos, 2003). The inability to boost posts further limits visibility, reinforcing Enghel’s (2016) argument that under-resourced digital communication becomes symbolic rather than strategic.

4.3 Research Question Three: What challenges affect the strategic use of communication in donor resource mobilization?

This research question aims to identify and analyse the key challenges that affect the strategic use of communication in donor resource mobilisation among UN agencies in Ghana. Its intent is to critically examine the structural, institutional, ethical, and operational constraints that limit the effectiveness of communication practices, despite their recognised importance. This includes challenges such as limited communication capacity, bureaucratic procedures, digital constraints, ethical tensions, and donor-driven narrative control. By addressing this question, the study highlights the gap between the strategic potential of communication and its practical

implementation, thereby providing a basis for evidence-based recommendations to strengthen communication systems for sustainable donor engagement.

4.3.1 Institutional Capacity Gaps, Bureaucratic Structures, and Human Resource Constraints in Donor-Focused Communication

The findings reveal that institutional capacity gaps and bureaucratic structures constitute some of the most significant barriers to the effective use of communication for donor resource mobilisation within UN agencies in Ghana. While communication is widely recognised by participants as critical to donor engagement, it remains structurally under-resourced, operationally constrained, and strategically marginalised across agencies. These constraints significantly limit the ability of communication units to function as proactive and strategic actors in donor mobilisation processes.

A dominant concern across all agencies was the chronic understaffing of communication units. Participants consistently described situations in which one or two communication officers were responsible for managing all aspects of visibility, donor reporting, media relations, digital engagement, and content production across multiple projects and donors. A UNESCO participant captured this reality succinctly:

“Most UN agencies realise that a comms unit is just one person. It’s not the best, but it’s a system they’ve used for a while, so it’s difficult for them to change.” (UNESCO, Interview)

This situation was echoed by participants from UNDP and WHO, who highlighted the scale of the workload relative to available capacity:

“We can have 50 projects running simultaneously with perhaps two or three communication people to support all of them.” (UNDP, Interview)

“When you have limited staff, it becomes impossible to give every donor and project the level of communication attention they deserve.” (WHO, Interview)

From a Stakeholder Theory perspective, these capacity gaps undermine the organisation’s ability to effectively manage relationships with donors, who are high-salience stakeholders with expectations of timely visibility, responsiveness, and accountability (Mitchell et al., 1997). When communication capacity is stretched, donor engagement becomes uneven, which can negatively affect trust and long-term funding continuity.

Beyond staffing shortages, participants highlighted unrealistic institutional expectations placed on communication professionals. Communicators are often expected to perform multiple specialised roles simultaneously, including writing, photography, videography, graphic design, editing, translation, social media management, and strategic planning. An IOM participant explained:

“You are expected to write, design, produce videos, manage social media, edit content, and still think strategically. It’s too much for one person.” (IOM, Interview)

This overextension reflects what Enghel (2016) describes as the *instrumentalisation of communication labour*, where communication is reduced to technical output rather than recognised as a strategic function requiring specialised expertise and adequate resourcing. Participatory Communication Theory challenges this model, arguing that effective communication requires collective processes, adequate time, and institutional support to enable meaningful engagement (Mefalopulos, 2003).

Participants also identified bureaucratic processes and rigid institutional structures as major impediments to donor-focused communication. Lengthy approval processes, procurement delays,

and hierarchical clearance systems were repeatedly cited as incompatible with the time-sensitive nature of modern communication. A UNESCO participant noted:

“Before you can even make procurement for equipment, it takes years. Before you can make a post, it has to go through approvals.” (UNESCO, Interview)

Such delays were framed as particularly damaging in donor mobilisation contexts, where visibility opportunities are often tied to specific moments, campaigns, or global observances. From a Stakeholder Theory standpoint, delayed communication weakens organisational responsiveness and undermines donor confidence in institutional agility (Freeman, 1984).

Another critical capacity gap identified was the systematic exclusion of communication units from programme design and decision-making processes. Participants across agencies expressed frustration at being brought in only after programmes had been implemented. A UNDP participant explained:

“We are still justifying our inclusion. We are not included in programming; we are called in after everything has been done.” (UNDP, Interview)

A UNFPA participant echoed this concern:

“Communication is usually an afterthought, not something planned into the programme from the beginning.” (UNFPA, Interview)

This marginalisation significantly limits the strategic potential of communication to shape donor narratives from the outset. Participatory Communication Theory emphasises that communication must be embedded throughout the project cycle to enable dialogue, learning, and strategic

alignment (Mefalopulos, 2003). Late-stage communication, by contrast, reduces participation to symbolic representation rather than meaningful influence.

Overall, the findings indicate that institutional capacity gaps and bureaucratic rigidity fundamentally constrain the strategic use of communication for donor resource mobilisation. Without adequate staffing, early involvement, and structural support, communication remains reactive and tactical rather than proactive and strategic, undermining donor trust and long-term funding sustainability.

4.3.2 Donor Expectations, Ethical Communication, and the Politics of Narrative Control

This theme reveals that donor communication within UN agencies in Ghana is deeply shaped by donor expectations, ethical considerations, and power relations, making communication a highly negotiated and politically sensitive practice. Participants consistently emphasised that donor communication is not value-neutral; rather, it involves continuous ethical judgement about what to communicate, how to frame messages, and whose voices to prioritise.

Ethical communication was widely framed as a prerequisite for donor trust and retention. However, ethics were described not in absolute terms of full transparency, but as strategic selectivity guided by donor sensitivities and institutional norms. A UNESCO participant explained:

“Ethical communication is about showing what must be shown and at what time. If you show the wrong thing, you lose the donor.” (UNESCO, Interview)

This framing reflects a pragmatic understanding of ethics shaped by resource dependency. From a Stakeholder Theory perspective, ethical communication functions as a legitimacy-preserving mechanism that maintains donor confidence and institutional credibility (Freeman, 1984).

Participants across agencies highlighted how donor sensitivities strongly influence communication content, particularly around issues such as gender, sexuality, health, migration, and social behaviour change. A UNDP participant noted:

“Some donors are very sensitive to how gender is referred to. You have to be careful with language.” (UNDP, Interview)

Similarly, a WHO participant explained:

“Health communication is political. Certain topics need careful framing because donors have different positions.” (WHO, Interview)

These findings align with Enghel’s (2016) concept of *donor-driven narrative governance*, where communication agendas are shaped by donor comfort zones rather than purely by community priorities. Participatory Communication Theory problematises this dynamic, arguing that meaningful participation requires space for diverse voices and realities, including uncomfortable or contested issues (Mefalopulos, 2003).

Despite these constraints, participants demonstrated strong awareness of the ethical risks associated with paternalistic or “saviour” narratives. An IOM participant explained:

“We try to avoid portraying ourselves as saviours. We emphasise partnership and support, not rescue.” (IOM, Interview)

A UNFPA participant similarly noted efforts to frame beneficiaries as agents rather than passive recipients:

“We try to show women and girls as decision-makers, not victims.” (UNFPA, Interview)

These efforts reflect alignment with participatory ethics that emphasise dignity, agency, and empowerment. However, the findings suggest that such ethical intentions are often bounded by donor expectations, limiting how far narratives can move toward genuine co-creation.

Participants also acknowledged practices of selective transparency, where not all challenges, failures, or tensions are communicated to donors. While not framed as concealment, this reflects strategic narrative management. A UNESCO participant noted:

“Whatever is shown to the donor is deliberate. Communication decides what goes out.”
(UNESCO, Interview)

This positions communication units as gatekeepers of institutional narratives, mediating between organisational realities and donor expectations. While Stakeholder Theory explains this as a response to donor power, Participatory Communication Theory raises ethical concerns about authenticity and representation.

Overall, the findings highlight a persistent tension between donor accountability and participatory ethics. Communication professionals operate within constrained moral spaces, balancing honesty, sensitivity, and donor satisfaction. While ethical communication strengthens donor trust, donor dominance over narratives risks narrowing development discourse and limiting community voice.

4.3.3 Optimising Communication for Sustainable Donor Partnerships and Long-Term Resource Mobilisation

The final theme synthesises participants' reflections on how communication can be optimised to strengthen donor partnerships and ensure sustainable resource mobilisation within UN agencies in Ghana. Across agencies, participants converged on the argument that while communication already plays a critical enabling role, its full strategic potential remains underutilised due to structural, conceptual, and institutional limitations.

A central recommendation was the need to reposition communication from a support function to a strategic advocacy function. A UNESCO participant articulated this shift clearly:

“We need to move from just communications to advocacy. Communication is not just taking photos; it's being in the big rooms and speaking for your organisation.” (UNESCO, Interview)

This statement reflects recognition that communication professionals must be involved in high-level decision-making spaces where donor priorities are negotiated and funding commitments shaped. From a Stakeholder Theory perspective, this aligns with the need to empower boundary-spanning roles that manage relationships with critical stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

Participants also emphasised the importance of early integration of communication into programme planning and design. A UNDP participant noted:

“If communication is involved from the beginning, it can help design programmes that are more visible and more attractive to donors.” (UNDP, Interview)

Similarly, a WHO participant highlighted:

“Communication should not come after implementation; it should shape how programmes are designed and reported.” (WHO, Interview)

This recommendation aligns strongly with Participatory Communication Theory, which emphasises embedding communication throughout the project cycle to enable dialogue, learning, and adaptive engagement (Mefalopulos, 2003).

Another major optimisation strategy identified was investment in communication capacity, including staffing, skills development, and professional recognition. An IOM participant recommended:

“We need more communication staff and continuous training if communication is to support donor mobilisation properly.” (IOM, Interview)

A UNFPA participant added:

“Capacity building is essential, especially as donor expectations and communication tools keep changing.” (UNFPA, Interview)

Participants also highlighted the need for stronger inter-agency coordination to present a coherent and unified communication approach to donors. Fragmented messaging and overlapping mandates were seen as weakening donor confidence. As a UNFPA participant noted:

“Better coordination across agencies would help us speak with one voice to donors.” (UNFPA, Interview)

Finally, participants implicitly acknowledged that sustainable donor mobilisation requires balancing donor expectations with participatory and ethical principles. While donor visibility and satisfaction remain critical, long-term legitimacy depends on authentic, inclusive, and credible communication practices.

Overall, the findings suggest that optimising communication for donor resource mobilisation requires structural reform, professional empowerment, early integration, and ethical reflexivity. When communication is recognised as a strategic asset rather than a technical add-on, UN agencies in Ghana are better positioned to build durable donor partnerships and secure sustainable funding.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined how communication is strategically employed by selected UN agencies in Ghana to mobilise donor resources, manage stakeholder relationships, and sustain funding partnerships. Through thematic analysis of interview data, seven interrelated themes were identified, revealing communication as a multifaceted organisational practice shaped by donor expectations, institutional structures, and power relations.

The findings demonstrate that visibility, branding, and legitimacy-building are central to donor mobilisation, with communication outputs functioning as symbolic guarantees of accountability and competence. Impact-driven storytelling emerged as a dominant strategy, combining quantitative evidence with curated narratives to justify donor investment and reinforce trust. Participatory communication was shown to play a significant role in donor engagement, though participation was largely donor-centred, highlighting asymmetries between donors and beneficiaries.

The chapter further revealed that while digital media is recognised as indispensable for donor communication, institutional constraints, bureaucratic procedures, and resource limitations significantly restrict innovation and responsiveness. Capacity gaps, including understaffed communication units and exclusion from programme design, were found to undermine the strategic potential of communication. Ethical considerations and donor sensitivities were shown to shape narrative control, raising important questions about representation, transparency, and power.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the key findings arising from the thematic analysis conducted in Chapter Four, followed by the conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations for policy and practice, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research. The chapter is anchored in the overarching objective of the study, which sought to examine the use of communication for donor resource mobilisation among selected United Nations agencies in Ghana, guided by Participatory Communication Theory and Stakeholder Theory. By consolidating empirical insights from the case study, this chapter highlights the implications of communication practices for donor engagement, trust, and funding sustainability within the UN system.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that communication plays a central and strategic role in donor resource mobilisation among United Nations agencies in Ghana, functioning far beyond a supportive or auxiliary role. Across UNESCO, UNDP, IOM, and UNFPA, communication is deliberately deployed as a mechanism for donor visibility, branding, legitimacy building, and accountability. Agencies consistently use branding rights, logo placement, co-branding, reports, media engagement, and public-facing digital content to ensure donors are visibly associated with funded interventions. This strategic emphasis reflects a recognition of donors as high-salience stakeholders whose expectations must be actively managed to sustain funding relationships. Communication outputs therefore operate as symbolic and material evidence of donor value-for-money, institutional credibility, and programme relevance within highly competitive global funding environments.

A second key finding is the heavy reliance on impact-driven and evidence-based storytelling as a dominant donor engagement strategy. UN agencies prioritise quantitative indicators, such as numbers of beneficiaries reached, while embedding these metrics within human-centred narratives that demonstrate tangible change on the ground. This approach responds directly to donor accountability demands and results-based management frameworks commonly used in multilateral organisations. However, the findings also indicate that impact narratives are carefully curated to align with donor preferences, thematic interests, and reporting requirements. While this enhances donor trust and funding continuity, it simultaneously narrows the scope of what is communicated as “impact,” often privileging measurable outcomes over more complex, long-term social and behavioural transformations.

Participatory communication emerged as a critical factor influencing donor trust and long-term engagement. The study found that donors are actively involved in communication planning, content review, message framing, and narrative approval through regular meetings, feedback sessions, and collaborative production processes. This donor-centred participatory approach strengthens trust, reduces reputational risk, and improves donor satisfaction, often leading to renewed or phased funding commitments. However, participation in communication was largely limited to donors, with minimal involvement of beneficiaries in shaping narratives. This reveals a significant gap between the principles of participatory communication theory and actual institutional practice within the UN system.

The study further revealed that although digital media platforms are recognised as indispensable tools for donor mobilisation, their strategic potential is significantly constrained by institutional restrictions, bureaucratic approval processes, and financial limitations. Communication professionals face restrictions on platform usage, trend participation, paid content

amplification, and brand association, which limit reach, engagement, and visibility. Lengthy clearance processes undermine timeliness, a core requirement of effective digital communication. Consequently, UN agencies struggle to fully leverage digital platforms to attract new donors or deepen engagement with existing ones, despite awareness of evolving communication trends.

Finally, the findings highlighted profound institutional capacity gaps that undermine the effective use of communication for donor resource mobilisation. Communication units are often understaffed, overextended, and marginalised within organisational decision-making structures. Communication professionals are frequently excluded from programme design and strategic planning processes, resulting in reactive, post-implementation communication rather than proactive, advocacy-driven engagement. Participants consistently emphasised the need to reposition communication as a strategic function integrated into programme planning, donor negotiations, and leadership processes to enhance funding sustainability and institutional effectiveness.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that communication is a foundational pillar of donor resource mobilisation within UN agencies in Ghana. Communication functions as a strategic mechanism for donor visibility, legitimacy, accountability, and relationship management. Rather than serving merely as an information dissemination tool, communication actively shapes donor perceptions, justifies financial investments, and sustains long-term partnerships. Donor confidence and continued engagement are strongly influenced by how effectively communication demonstrates impact, aligns with donor identities, and responds to accountability expectations. The study further concludes that while participatory communication enhances donor trust and funding continuity, participation is unevenly distributed and largely skewed toward donors rather

than beneficiaries. Donor participation in communication processes improves transparency, responsiveness, and relational stability, aligning closely with Stakeholder Theory. However, this donor-centred participation falls short of the inclusive and emancipatory ideals advocated by Participatory Communication Theory. Consequently, current communication practices risk institutionalising a form of managed participation that prioritises donor comfort and narrative control over community voice and local ownership.

Finally, the study concludes that the effectiveness of communication for donor resource mobilisation is fundamentally constrained by institutional structures within the UN system. Bureaucratic rigidity, limited staffing, inadequate investment in communication capacity, and delayed approval processes weaken responsiveness, innovation, and strategic engagement. Without structural reforms that elevate communication to a strategic and advocacy-oriented role, communication efforts will remain largely tactical and reactive. Sustainable donor partnerships therefore require not only improved communication strategies but also organisational transformation that empowers communication professionals as strategic actors.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that UN agencies in Ghana formally reposition communication as a strategic and advocacy-driven function. Communication professionals should be integrated into senior management teams, programme design committees, and donor engagement platforms. This will enable communicators to influence narratives, align programmes with donor expectations from inception, and proactively shape funding opportunities rather than responding after implementation. Elevating communication to this level will significantly enhance institutional credibility and donor confidence.

The study further recommends increased investment in communication capacity, including staffing, skills development, and technological resources. UN agencies should move away from one-person communication units and instead establish multidisciplinary teams with expertise in strategic communication, digital media, storytelling, data visualisation, and stakeholder engagement. Continuous professional development should be prioritised to ensure communication teams remain responsive to evolving digital trends, donor requirements, and ethical communication standards.

Additionally, UN agencies should strengthen participatory communication frameworks by broadening participation beyond donors to include beneficiaries, local partners, and communities. This can be achieved through co-created storytelling, community feedback mechanisms, and inclusive narrative development processes. Expanding participation will enhance authenticity, legitimacy, and long-term donor trust by demonstrating genuine local ownership and sustainable impact.

The study also recommends a review of institutional policies governing digital communication to allow greater flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness. Restrictions on platform usage, trend participation, and paid content amplification should be revisited while maintaining ethical and reputational safeguards. Streamlining approval and clearance processes will improve timeliness and relevance, particularly for donor visibility campaigns and advocacy initiatives.

Finally, UN agencies should strengthen inter-agency coordination on donor communication to ensure coherent and unified messaging to funding partners. Joint communication strategies, shared campaigns, and harmonised donor visibility standards will reduce fragmentation, enhance collective legitimacy, and improve donor confidence in the UN system as a whole.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by its qualitative design and focus on a small number of purposively selected UN agencies in Ghana. While the findings provide rich and contextualised insights, they may not be fully generalisable to all UN agencies or other country contexts. The reliance on self-reported data from communication professionals may also reflect institutional perspectives that emphasise internal processes and constraints.

Furthermore, the absence of direct donor and beneficiary interviews constitutes a limitation. Although donor engagement was explored through the perspectives of UN communicators, incorporating donor and community voices would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of participatory communication dynamics and narrative reception.

Despite these limitations, the study remains both useful and relevant in several significant ways. First, its qualitative depth provides rare, insider insight into how communication is conceptualised, negotiated, and operationalised within UN country offices, an area that remains underexplored in existing scholarship on donor resource mobilisation. By examining strategic communication from the perspective of those directly responsible for donor engagement, the study illuminates institutional dynamics, bureaucratic constraints, and professional tensions that are often absent from policy documents and formal reports. Second, although the findings are context-specific, they offer analytical generalisability rather than statistical generalisability (Yin, 2018). The themes identified, such as donor-centred participation, visibility politics, institutional capacity gaps, and narrative negotiation, resonate with broader theoretical debates in Stakeholder Theory and Participatory Communication Theory, making the insights transferable to similar multilateral and development settings. Third, the study provides practical value by generating evidence-based recommendations for strengthening communication capacity, institutional positioning, and

participatory practices within UN agencies. These recommendations can inform organisational reforms, professional training, and strategic planning beyond the Ghanaian context. Ultimately, while bounded in scope, the study contributes meaningful theoretical, empirical, and practical insights into the strategic use of communication for donor resource mobilisation, thereby advancing both academic discourse and institutional practice

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should adopt a comparative approach by examining communication and donor resource mobilisation practices across multiple countries or regions. Such studies would enhance the generalisability of findings and facilitate cross-country learning within the UN system.

Further studies should also incorporate donor and beneficiary perspectives to explore how communication outputs are interpreted, trusted, and valued by different stakeholder groups. This would provide a more balanced and holistic assessment of participatory communication effectiveness and ethical representation.

Finally, future research could employ mixed-methods approaches to examine the relationship between communication investment and donor funding outcomes. Quantitative analysis of funding trends combined with qualitative insights would strengthen empirical evidence on the return on investment of strategic communication in development organisations.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE USE OF COMMUNICATION FOR DONOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED UN AGENCIES IN GHANA.

My name is Evans Adjokatse, a graduate student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication – Institute of Journalism (UniMAC–IJ), conducting academic research for my master’s dissertation titled “The Strategic Use of Communication for Donor Resource Mobilization: A Case Study of Some Selected UN Agencies in Ghana.” This study seeks to explore how communication strategies are designed and implemented to build donor trust, enhance engagement, and sustain funding relationships within the UN system in Ghana. I am kindly inviting you to participate in this interview because your expertise and experience in communication, partnerships, or donor relations will provide valuable insights for the study. Please note that this research is strictly for academic purposes only and will not be used for any commercial or organizational evaluation. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any point without consequence. All information you provide will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality; your name and identifiable details will not appear in the final report. Your cooperation will greatly contribute to the successful completion of this academic work.

Target Participants:

Communication officers, resource mobilization officers, partnership coordinators, or programme managers.

Interview Type: Semi-structured

Estimated Duration: 30–40 minutes

Background (Context Setting)

1. Can you briefly describe your role in the organization and how it relates to donor communication or resource mobilization?

Research Objective 1: Analyze the communication strategies employed by UN agencies to attract and retain donor funding.

1. What main communication strategies or approaches does your agency use to attract and retain donor funding?
2. How do you tailor communication to different donor audiences or funding partners?
3. In what ways does your agency use digital or media platforms to enhance visibility and attract donor interest?
4. How does your agency communicate programme impact or success stories to demonstrate value to donors?
5. What role do internal communication teams or units play in coordinating donor-related messaging

Research Objective 2: Find out the extent to which participatory communication can influence donor trust and engagement.

1. How would you describe the role of participatory communication in your agency's donor engagement efforts?
2. Can you share an example where involving donors in communication processes (e.g., feedback sessions, project stories) improved trust or commitment?

3. What factors do you think most influence donor trust and long-term engagement through communication?
4. What mechanisms does your agency use to gather feedback from donors on communication materials or reports?
5. How does your agency ensure two-way communication rather than one-way information dissemination with donors?

Research Objective 3: Identify the challenges and limitations UN agencies face in using communication as a strategic resource mobilization tool.

1. What are the major challenges your agency faces in using communication as a donor mobilization tool?
2. How do institutional factors (e.g., UN coordination systems, bureaucracy, or limited resources) affect communication effectiveness?
3. What communication capacity gaps (skills, systems, or staffing) limit your agency's ability to engage donors effectively?
4. How do competing priorities or coordination issues within the UN system affect communication for donor mobilization?
5. What external factors (e.g., donor expectations, political context, global funding trends) make communication more challenging?

Recommendations

What key improvements or best practices would you recommend to strengthen communication for donor resource mobilization among UN agencies in Ghana?