A Framework for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects: Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF)

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ABSTRACT

Community participation is widely promoted as a means of strengthening social cohesion, local ownership and sustainable development. Opportunities for participation do not always translate into meaningful inclusion, trust or collective responsibility. This study developed Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects (DBCIF) from beneficiaries' lived experiences in the Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. Guided by an interpretivist paradigm and Social Capital Theory, the study employed a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological design. Data were generated through unstructured in-depth interviews with 11 beneficiaries recruited through convenience sampling and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, informed by van Manen's existential lifeworlds. The findings revealed that beneficiaries' participation was shaped by enabling conditions, including economic motivation, community development expectations, leadership support and social networks, as well as constraints such as political influence, limited decision-making opportunities, delayed remuneration and inadequate communication. These findings informed the development of a framework comprising six interrelated elements: beneficiaries' experiences, participation enablers, participation disablers, contextual factors, participation outcomes and continuous reflection and learning. DBCIF conceptualises participation as an evolving, relational and context-dependent experience rather than a procedural activity confined to project implementation. It demonstrates how social relationships, institutional arrangements and contextual conditions shape beneficiaries' engagement, inclusion, trust and ownership. The framework contributes to participatory development scholarship by foregrounding beneficiaries' interpretations of participation and provides practical guidance for inclusive project planning, decision-making and continuous learning. In practice, it can help project institutions identify participation barriers, assess whose voices influence decisions and use beneficiary feedback to improve implementation and accountability.

Keywords: Participation, Social Cohesion, Interpretive Framework, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Rural Development

INTRODUCTION

Community participation is central to rural development because it can strengthen local ownership, responsiveness and collective action. Its effectiveness depends on the social, economic, political and governance conditions within which it occurs (Imbo et al., 2026; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Recent research also demonstrates that beneficiary engagement can contribute to project success, with implementation context influencing the extent and quality of participation (Bandé et al., 2024). Participation can support social cohesion by fostering trust, inclusion, reciprocity and cooperation (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), consistent with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16 and 10 on inclusive societies and reduced

inequalities (United Nations, 2015). Formal participation opportunities do not necessarily translate into beneficiaries' experiences of fairness, influence or empowerment (Arnstein, 1969; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

A distinction exists between participation as organised by development institutions and participation as experienced by beneficiaries. Records of sensitisation, enrolment, labour contributions and completed infrastructure may demonstrate implementation without revealing whether beneficiaries influenced decisions, trusted project institutions or developed a sense of ownership. Research on participatory development highlights the influence of local power relations, institutional arrangements and contextual conditions on the quality of participation (Bandé et al., 2024; Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Understanding participation consequently requires attention to the relational, socioeconomic, political and institutional conditions that shape beneficiaries' involvement and interpretations of their experiences.

Existing participatory development scholarship has made important contributions to understanding community engagement, citizen influence and the institutional conditions shaping participation. Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation conceptualises participation through different levels of citizen power and influence, providing a basis for examining the extent to which citizens exercise control over development decisions. Cornwall (2008) examines the different meanings, forms and spaces of participation, drawing attention to the relationships between participation opportunities, institutional arrangements and the interests of different actors. Similarly, Mansuri and Rao (2013) highlight the importance of institutional, political and contextual conditions in determining the effectiveness of participatory development initiatives. These perspectives provide valuable explanations of how participation is structured, organised and influenced by power relations and institutional processes.

Social Capital Theory offers another useful perspective for understanding participation through bonding, bridging and linking networks, trust and reciprocity (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). These relationships can facilitate cooperation and collective action, but they may also reproduce political selectivity, unequal influence and exclusion. The developmental consequences of social capital depend partly on the relationships between communities, institutions and structures of power (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Examining beneficiaries' experiences of fairness, accessibility, trust and institutional responsiveness is consequently important for understanding how social relationships influence participation in rural development projects.

Despite these contributions, an important conceptual gap remains in explaining how beneficiaries' lived experiences relate to the conditions and outcomes of participation within rural development projects. Existing perspectives provide valuable insights into citizen power, participation practices, social relationships and institutional arrangements, but these dimensions are not always brought together within a beneficiary-centred interpretive structure. There is consequently a need for an integrated approach that examines how beneficiaries experience participation, what enables or constrains their involvement, how wider contextual conditions shape these experiences and what implications arise for inclusion, trust and ownership.

These concerns are relevant to rural development in northern Ghana, where interventions operate within diverse social and institutional contexts. The Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project provides an opportunity to examine these dynamics. In Yunyoo-Nasuan District of the North East Region of Ghana, the project supported community-level development interventions, including infrastructure and other facilities. The project adopts a community-driven development approach and seeks to strengthen community resilience, inclusion and social cohesion (Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, n.d.). The contribution of such investments to meaningful participation and social cohesion depends partly on how beneficiaries experience project communication, organisation, implementation and continuity.

The doctoral study underpinning this article explored beneficiaries' lived experiences in the SOCO Project and identified the conditions that facilitated or constrained their participation. The findings revealed eight interconnected dimensions of participation: awareness and sensitisation; interest and initial engagement; enrolment and inclusion; active participation and involvement; interaction and collaboration; empowerment and ownership; outcome realisation; and sustainability and continuity. Economic motivation, community

mobilisation, leadership support, social networks and positive working relationships facilitated participation, while political influence, limited decision-making involvement, delayed wage payments and poor communication constrained beneficiaries' experiences.

These findings indicated that identifying participation enablers and disablers separately was insufficient to explain how beneficiaries' experiences related to the wider social, institutional and contextual conditions surrounding development interventions. An integrated framework was needed to interpret these relationships and connect beneficiaries' experiences with participation outcomes and opportunities for institutional learning.

This article presents Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects. Developed through iterative interpretation of beneficiaries' interview accounts, informed by Social Capital Theory and hermeneutic phenomenology, the framework positions beneficiaries' lived experiences at its centre. It brings together participation enablers, participation disablers, contextual factors, participation outcomes and continuous reflection and learning to provide an interpretive structure for understanding participation beyond formal project activities.

The article makes three contributions to participatory development scholarship and practice. First, it develops an empirically grounded framework that connects beneficiaries' lived experiences with the conditions and outcomes shaping participation. Second, it advances a beneficiary-centred interpretation of Social Capital Theory by examining how social relationships, access, fairness, inclusion, trust and institutional influence shape participation. Third, it provides an interpretive guide for practitioners and policymakers seeking to strengthen beneficiary involvement in project planning, implementation, monitoring and review. Since DBCIF was developed from one project in one district, its applicability in other settings requires further empirical examination.

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm and Design

The study adopted an interpretivist paradigm and a hermeneutic phenomenological design to explore beneficiaries' lived experiences of the Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided the philosophical and methodological orientation for understanding how beneficiaries experienced, interpreted and attributed meaning to their involvement in the project (Van Manen, 2014). Social Capital Theory informed the broader interpretation of relationships, trust, networks and reciprocity within the participation process (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed convenience sampling to recruit 11 beneficiaries of the SOCO Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. Convenience sampling was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to access eligible beneficiaries who were readily available, willing and able to participate during the data collection period. The approach was particularly suitable given the geographical spread of communities within the district, the practical challenges associated with reaching beneficiaries in different locations and the time required to conduct detailed, in-depth interviews. Convenience sampling provided a practical means of engaging participants who could share firsthand experiences of the project within the available fieldwork period (Etikan et al., 2016).

To ensure that participants had sufficient experience to contribute meaningfully to the study, specific eligibility criteria were established. Participants were required to be registered beneficiaries of the SOCO Project, aged 18 years or above and to have actively participated in project activities for at least six months. They were also required to be willing to participate voluntarily and provide informed consent. These criteria ensured that participants had direct exposure to the project and could reflect on their involvement, relationships, expectations, challenges and perceived outcomes. The final sample comprised 11 beneficiaries, consisting of eight males and three females.

Data collection and preliminary analysis proceeded iteratively. The first eight interviews generated recurring experiential meanings and patterns relevant to the research objectives. Preliminary examination of these accounts indicated the value of conducting further interviews to explore the depth and consistency of the developing interpretations. Three additional beneficiaries were consequently interviewed. Their accounts reinforced the existing interpretations while providing further insight into the experiences and conditions shaping participation.

Sample adequacy was considered in relation to the principle of information power, which suggests that qualitative sample requirements depend on the relevance and specificity of participants, the focus of the research objectives, the quality of interview dialogue and the analytical approach (Malterud et al., 2016). In this study, participants had direct experience of the intervention, the research focused on a specific project and geographical setting and the in-depth interviews generated detailed accounts relevant to the research objectives. The sample was consequently considered appropriate for the context-specific interpretive depth sought in the study rather than statistical representativeness.

The use of convenience sampling is recognised as a methodological limitation because recruitment based on availability and willingness may have excluded the experiences of beneficiaries who were less accessible or unavailable during fieldwork. The findings are consequently interpreted within the specific social and institutional context of the SOCO Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study involved 11 beneficiaries of the SOCO Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, comprising eight males and three females. All participants were adults of working age and had been actively involved in the project for more than six months. Regarding the duration of participation, five participants had been involved for more than one year but not more than two years, while six had participated for more than two years. Their occupational backgrounds included farming, trading, voluntary teaching and homemaking. These characteristics provided a description of the participants' backgrounds and levels of exposure to the project. The demographic and project participation characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Participants

S/N	PSEUDONYM	PARTICIPANT PROFILE
1	Ban	Female beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over two years of experience; working-age adult and a trader.
2	Mic	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over two years of experience; working-age adult and a voluntary teacher.
3	Abu	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over one year of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
4	Yar	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over one year of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
5	Kwa	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with more than one year of experience; working-age adult and a trader.
6	Simoo	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over two years of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
7	Sandy	Female beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with more than one year of experience; working-age adult and a homemaker.
8	Jad	Male beneficiary; active participant in the SOCO Project with over two years of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
9	Jam	Male beneficiary; additional participant interviewed following preliminary analysis to further explore the developing interpretations; active participant with more than two years of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
10	Pat	Male beneficiary; additional participant interviewed following preliminary analysis

		to further explore the developing interpretations; active participant with over two years of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.
11	Min	Female beneficiary; additional participant interviewed following preliminary analysis to further explore the developing interpretations; active participant with more than one year of experience; working-age adult and a farmer.

Source: Fieldwork (2026)

Data Collection Procedures

Data were generated through unstructured, in-depth interviews with the 11 beneficiaries. This approach enabled participants to describe their experiences in their own words and allowed the researcher to explore issues that emerged during the conversations.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, depending on the depth and complexity of the participant's account. Interviews were conducted in Moar, the local language used by the participants. With participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder. Field notes were also maintained to document relevant contextual observations, including participants' facial expressions, emotional responses, pauses and gestures, as well as other non-verbal cues that could not be fully captured through audio recording. The researcher also documented immediate reflections and preliminary interpretations following each interview.

Data collection and preliminary engagement with the interview accounts proceeded concurrently. Following each interview, the researcher listened to the recording, reviewed the field notes and prepared the transcript. Interviews were transcribed verbatim in Moar before being translated into English by the researcher, who was proficient in both languages. The English translations were checked against the original recordings and Moar transcripts to preserve participants' intended meanings, cultural expressions and contextual nuances. Particular attention was given to expressions whose meanings were influenced by local cultural and social contexts. This process helped maintain the accuracy and authenticity of participants' accounts.

Interview Questions and Data Generation

Primary data were generated through unstructured, in-depth interviews guided by broad, open-ended questions designed to encourage beneficiaries to describe their experiences of participating in the SOCO Project. The questions were informed by the study's research objectives and focused on four central areas of inquiry: beneficiaries' lived experiences, factors facilitating participation, challenges encountered during participation and suggestions for improving participation in future rural development projects.

Examples of the questions asked during the interviews included:

1. Can you tell me the story of your experience from the first time you heard about the Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project until now?
2. What factors made it easier for you to participate in the project?
3. What challenges or difficulties did you experience while participating in the project?
4. Based on your experience, what should be done differently to improve participation in future social cohesion or rural development projects?

The interviews also incorporated background questions concerning participants' age, gender, occupation, community and duration of involvement in the SOCO Project. To obtain richer descriptions and clarify participants' accounts, the researcher used supplementary probes such as: "Can you tell me more about that?", "How did that make you feel?", "Could you describe that experience in more detail?" and "Can you give me an example?"

The flexible nature of the interviews allowed participants to narrate their experiences without being restricted to predetermined response categories. Follow-up questions enabled the researcher to pursue emerging issues, explore significant experiences and clarify the meanings participants attached to their involvement. This

approach generated detailed experiential accounts concerning the processes, relationships, opportunities and challenges that shaped beneficiaries' participation in the project.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, following the approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022). This analytical approach was adopted within the broader interpretivist and hermeneutic phenomenological orientation of the study. Hermeneutic phenomenology guided the interpretation of the meanings beneficiaries attributed to their lived experiences, while reflexive thematic analysis provided the analytical approach for developing and interpreting patterns of shared meaning across their accounts. The researcher engaged with participants' accounts as contextually situated experiences, recognising that their meanings were shaped by social relationships, institutional arrangements and the circumstances surrounding project implementation.

The analysis followed six recursive phases of reflexive thematic analysis: familiarisation with the data through repeated listening to audio recordings and reading interview transcripts; generating initial codes relevant to the research questions and significant aspects of participants' accounts; generating initial themes by identifying patterns of shared meaning across the dataset; developing and reviewing themes in relation to coded extracts and the complete dataset; refining, defining and naming themes; and producing the analytical report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). These phases were not treated as rigid or strictly sequential stages. Rather, the researcher moved iteratively between the transcripts, codes, developing themes and interpretations to deepen understanding of beneficiaries' experiences. Social Capital Theory and the existential dimensions of lived experience informed the interpretive engagement with the data, providing conceptual lenses for examining relationships, interactions, inclusion and the conditions shaping participation. Researcher reflexivity was maintained through critical reflection on the researcher's assumptions, positionality and interpretive decisions throughout the analytical process. This approach recognised the researcher's active role in developing and interpreting themes rather than treating them as objectively existing categories waiting to be discovered.

Van Manen's (2014) four existential lifeworlds, namely corporeality, spatiality, temporality and relationality, were used as interpretive lenses to deepen engagement with the experiential themes. Corporeality directed attention to beneficiaries' embodied experiences of project participation, including physical labour and working conditions. Spatiality illuminated how physical and social environments shaped participation and experiences of community development. Temporality informed understanding of how beneficiaries' experiences and expectations unfolded over the project period, while relationality focused on relationships among beneficiaries, community actors and project stakeholders. These existentials did not constitute a separate analytical procedure or predetermined coding categories. Rather, they provided additional interpretive dimensions through which the experiential themes were examined and understood. Social Capital Theory further informed the interpretation of bonding, bridging and linking relationships, including their implications for trust, social networks and collective participation (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

To demonstrate the connection between the interview data and the proposed framework, selected examples of the analytical progression from participants' accounts through initial codes and experiential themes to the corresponding DBCIF components are presented in Table 2. The examples illustrate how the researcher interpreted participants' descriptions of community mobilisation, beneficiary selection, decision-making, remuneration and working relationships. The initial codes captured significant meanings within participants' accounts, while the experiential themes represented broader patterns of shared meaning developed through engagement with the dataset.

Table 2: Illustrative Coding Framework Linking Interview Responses, Initial Codes, Emerging Themes and DBCIF Components

Illustrative Paraphrased Participant Account	Initial Codes	Emerging Themes	Corresponding DBCIF Components
Kwa described how the traditional chief and town crier	Traditional leadership mobilisation;	Awareness and sensitisation;	Beneficiaries' experiences;

communicated information about the project and mobilised community members.	community information sharing; local authority support	community mobilisation and leadership support	Participation enablers
Ban explained how political-party networks influenced the identification and selection of beneficiaries.	Political network influence; socially mediated access; unequal selection opportunities	Enrolment and inclusion; political influence in beneficiary selection	Beneficiaries' experiences; Participation disablers; Contextual factors
Mic indicated that important project decisions had already been made before community sensitisation took place.	Limited community decision-making; predetermined project decisions; restricted beneficiary influence	Limited participation in decision-making; constrained involvement	Participation disablers; Contextual factors
Simoo described delays and partial payments for work undertaken during project implementation.	Delayed wage payment; inadequate remuneration; unmet financial expectations	Economic challenges; dissatisfaction with implementation arrangements	Participation disablers; beneficiaries' experiences
Participants described positive working relationships and cooperation during project activities.	Cooperation; interpersonal support; shared work responsibilities	Interaction and collaboration; positive working relationships	Participation enablers; Beneficiaries' experiences
Participants expressed expectations that completed community facilities would remain functional and benefit the community.	Expectations of continued functionality; community benefit; concern about maintenance	Sustainability and continuity; empowerment and ownership	Beneficiaries' experiences; participation outcomes; continuous reflection and learning.

Source: Author's illustrative synthesis, 2026.

The table provides selected illustrations of the interpretive relationship between participants' accounts, initial codes, experiential themes and DBCIF components. For example, accounts of traditional leadership mobilisation were interpreted through codes relating to community information sharing and local authority support. These informed the experiential theme of awareness and sensitisation and the identification of community mobilisation and leadership support as participation enablers. Similarly, accounts of politically influenced beneficiary selection generated codes relating to political networks and unequal access. These contributed to the interpretation of enrolment and inclusion and informed the identification of participation disablers and contextual factors. Participants' descriptions of limited influence over project decisions and delayed payments also informed the interpretation of conditions that constrained participation and shaped their experiences of project implementation.

The coding and theme development process was recursive and interpretive. Initial codes were examined in relation to participants' wider accounts and emerging themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the dataset. The connections presented in Table 2 should not be understood as fixed or mechanically assigned categories. Rather, they represent the researcher's interpretation of how different aspects of beneficiaries' experiences related to the conceptual elements of the proposed framework. Some interview accounts informed more than one DBCIF component because beneficiaries' experiences, enabling and constraining conditions and contextual circumstances were interconnected.

DBCIF was developed through the synthesis of beneficiaries' accounts, experiential themes, existential interpretations, theoretical insights and contextual conditions. The eight experiential dimensions identified through the analysis, namely awareness and sensitisation; interest and initial engagement; enrolment and inclusion; active participation and involvement; interaction and collaboration; empowerment and ownership; outcome realisation; and sustainability and continuity, informed the central component of beneficiaries'

experiences. Patterns relating to support, motivation, leadership and social relationships informed participation enablers, while accounts of political influence, limited decision-making, delayed payments and other constraints informed participation disablers. Interpretations of the social, political, economic and institutional environment informed contextual factors, while beneficiaries' accounts concerning individual wellbeing, social cohesion, project sustainability, development benefits and the equitable distribution of project opportunities and benefits informed participation outcomes. Continuous reflection and learning were incorporated as a feedback-oriented component to emphasise the importance of using beneficiaries' experiences and implementation lessons to inform subsequent project decisions and improvements. The six components were consequently conceptualised as interconnected elements of an interpretive framework rather than as independent or sequential categories.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

The researcher's positionality was an important consideration in this study because of his professional relationships with local government officials and actors associated with the Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project. These relationships provided institutional familiarity with the local government and project environment and afforded access to project monitoring reports. The researcher was not a member of the SOCO implementation team and had no direct responsibility for project implementation, monitoring or beneficiary selection. Monitoring reports were accessible to the researcher but were not used as research data or as a basis for developing the study findings. The analysis was grounded in beneficiaries' interview accounts.

The researcher's professional relationships with local government and project actors provided contextual familiarity with the institutional environment within which beneficiaries experienced the project. At the same time, these relationships presented potential positionality challenges. Participants might have perceived the researcher as having connections with project authorities or government institutions, potentially influencing their willingness to discuss sensitive experiences, including dissatisfaction with implementation, political influence, beneficiary selection and delayed payments. Such perceptions could have encouraged socially desirable responses or reluctance to express criticism of project actors.

To address these concerns, the researcher explained his independence from the SOCO implementation team and clarified the academic purpose of the study to participants. He was not involved in identifying, selecting or recruiting beneficiaries, which helped maintain a distinction between his professional relationships with project actors and the process of participant recruitment. These measures were important in reducing the possibility that participants would interpret the research as an official project assessment or an exercise connected to decisions about their project benefits.

Reflexivity was maintained throughout data generation and analysis through critical consideration of the researcher's professional relationships, prior knowledge of the project and possible assumptions about its implementation. Participants' accounts were revisited during analysis to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the interview material. The researcher also considered alternative interpretations and paid attention to accounts that challenged prior expectations. In keeping with the interpretive orientation of hermeneutic phenomenology and reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher's influence was recognised as part of the knowledge-production process rather than treated as something that could be completely eliminated (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Finlay, 2002; Van Manen, 2014).

These reflexive measures helped maintain transparency about the researcher's institutional position and supported an interpretation grounded in beneficiaries' interview accounts.

Trustworthiness

The study addressed trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, drawing on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research.

Credibility was enhanced through repeated engagement with interview transcripts, member checking and the use of verbatim quotations to support the presentation and interpretation of findings. Participants were invited

to review interpretations of their interview accounts and provide feedback on whether their experiences had been represented accurately. The researcher's familiarity with the study context also facilitated rapport and contextual understanding, while reflexive engagement helped maintain attention to participants' perspectives.

Dependability was supported through systematic documentation of the research design, participant recruitment, data generation and analytical procedures. An audit trail and reflexive journal were maintained to document methodological decisions, reflections and analytical developments. These records provided transparency regarding how the research process was conducted.

Confirmability was strengthened by maintaining an audit trail of analytical decisions and grounding interpretations in participants' interview accounts. The researcher documented assumptions and interpretive decisions through reflexive engagement and repeatedly examined the relationship between emerging interpretations and the original data. These procedures supported transparency in the interpretation of participants' experiences while recognising the researcher's active role in knowledge production.

Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the study setting, participant characteristics, eligibility criteria, data generation procedures and analytical approach. These descriptions provide readers with contextual information to assess the relevance of the findings to other rural development and social cohesion settings. The study does not claim statistical generalisability; rather, it provides contextually grounded interpretations whose applicability elsewhere requires consideration of contextual similarities and differences.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Africa Research University (Approval No. ARU/2026/03/002). Written informed consent was obtained from participants before their involvement in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through the use of pseudonyms and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study. Participation was voluntary and was not presented as a condition for receiving any project benefit. Given the researcher's familiarity with the study context, particular attention was paid to ensuring that participants understood the independence of the research from the SOCO Project and community authorities. Research materials were handled confidentially and appropriate measures were taken to protect participants' identities.

SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DBCIF FRAMEWORK

The development of Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) followed an iterative process of empirical analysis, interpretation and conceptual synthesis. The framework was not constructed by simply assigning existing themes to predetermined components. Instead, its six interconnected elements were developed through the examination of beneficiaries' interview accounts, the experiential patterns identified during analysis and the interpretation of the social, institutional and contextual conditions shaping participation. The progression from the interview findings to the six components of DBCIF is summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Systematic Progression from Interview Data to the Development of DBCIF

Analytical Step	What was done / empirical evidence	Contribution to DBCIF
1. Generation of interview data	In-depth interviews with 11 beneficiaries generated accounts of their experiences, relationships, opportunities and challenges in the SOCO Project.	Established the empirical foundation of the framework
2. Identification of experiential patterns	Eight interconnected dimensions were identified: awareness and sensitisation; interest and initial engagement; enrolment and inclusion; active participation and involvement; interaction and collaboration; empowerment and ownership; outcome realisation; and sustainability	Beneficiaries' experiences

	and continuity.	
3. Identification of enabling conditions	Economic motivation, community development expectations, leadership support, social and political networks, positive working relationships, future opportunities and institutional support.	Participation enablers.
5. Interpretation of context and outcomes	Political dynamics, socioeconomic circumstances, gender relations, community leadership and institutional arrangements were interpreted alongside potential outcomes relating to individual wellbeing, social cohesion, project sustainability, development benefits and equitable distribution.	Contextual factors and participation outcomes.

Source: Author's synthesis, 2026.

The first step involved generating empirical data through in-depth interviews with 11 beneficiaries of the SOCO Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District. Participants described their experiences of becoming aware of the project, gaining access to participation opportunities, engaging in project activities, interacting with other actors and evaluating the benefits and challenges associated with their involvement. These accounts provided the experiential foundation for understanding participation from the beneficiaries' perspectives.

The second step involved identifying recurring experiential patterns within the interview data. The analysis revealed eight interconnected dimensions of participation: awareness and sensitisation; interest and initial engagement; enrolment and inclusion; active participation and involvement; interaction and collaboration; empowerment and ownership; outcome realisation; and sustainability and continuity. These dimensions informed the first component of DBCIF, beneficiaries' experiences, which was positioned at the centre of the framework. They represented evolving aspects of participation rather than a predetermined or strictly linear sequence.

The third step involved examining the conditions that facilitated beneficiaries' involvement. Participants' accounts highlighted economic motivation, community development expectations, community mobilisation and leadership support, social and political networks, positive working relationships, expectations of future opportunities, work logistics and community-based institutional support. These recurring conditions were synthesised into the second component, participation enablers. This component recognises that opportunities for participation become meaningful when the conditions surrounding beneficiaries' involvement support their engagement.

The fourth step focused on identifying experiences and circumstances that constrained participation. The analysis revealed political influence in beneficiary selection, limited involvement in decision-making, delayed wage payments, inadequate communication, unmet expectations, difficult working conditions, interpersonal conflicts, economic hardship, environmental challenges and weak sustainability arrangements. These findings informed the third component, participation disablers. Its inclusion reflects the understanding that strengthening participation requires attention not only to conditions that facilitate involvement but also to those that restrict inclusion, weaken trust and undermine beneficiaries' commitment.

The fifth step involved interpreting the wider circumstances within which beneficiaries experienced participation and examining the implications of their involvement. Participants' accounts demonstrated that local political dynamics, community leadership, socioeconomic circumstances, gender relations, communication practices and institutional arrangements influenced access to participation and the meanings attached to project activities. These influences informed the fourth component, contextual factors. The analysis also highlighted beneficiaries' expectations and experiences concerning individual wellbeing, social cohesion, project sustainability, development benefits and the equitable distribution of project opportunities and benefits. These insights informed the fifth component, participation outcomes. The framework treats these outcomes as potential consequences of participation rather than automatic results of project implementation.

The sixth step involved integrating the empirical findings into a coherent conceptual structure. Beneficiaries' experiences were positioned at the centre because they provided the primary basis for understanding participation. Enablers, disablers and contextual factors were incorporated to explain the conditions influencing those experiences, while participation outcomes represented the potential implications of the

interaction among these elements. Continuous reflection and learning were incorporated as the sixth component to provide a feedback mechanism through which beneficiaries' experiences and emerging outcomes could inform improvements in project planning, implementation, communication and decision-making. This final component represents a conceptual implication of the empirical synthesis rather than a separate interview theme.

The development process was informed by Social Capital Theory and hermeneutic phenomenology. Social Capital Theory provided a relational perspective for interpreting the influence of networks, trust, reciprocity and institutional relationships, while hermeneutic phenomenology guided the interpretation of the meanings beneficiaries attached to their experiences. Van Manen's four lifeworld existentials were used as interpretive lenses across the framework rather than as additional components.

Through this iterative process, the empirical findings and theoretical interpretation were synthesised into an interconnected framework for understanding beneficiary participation in rural development projects. DBCIF is presented as an empirically grounded interpretive and adaptive framework, not as a statistically validated or predictive model.

EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION OF THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) is empirically grounded in the lived experiences of 11 beneficiaries of the Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. Participants' accounts demonstrated that participation extended beyond attendance at project activities or the provision of labour. It also involved experiences of inclusion, relationships, expectations, decision-making, perceived benefits and the conditions under which beneficiaries engaged with the intervention. This understanding reflects participatory development scholarship, which emphasises the importance of power relations, institutional arrangements and opportunities for beneficiaries to influence development processes (Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

The empirical findings revealed eight interconnected dimensions of participation: awareness and sensitisation; interest and initial engagement; enrolment and inclusion; active participation and involvement; interaction and collaboration; empowerment and ownership; outcome realisation; and sustainability and continuity. These dimensions captured how beneficiaries experienced and interpreted their involvement, from initial awareness to their assessments of project outcomes and ownership. They represented interconnected aspects of participation rather than a fixed sequence of project stages.

Participants' accounts highlighted the influence of social and political relationships on access to information and participation opportunities. Kwa described how traditional leadership facilitated community mobilisation:

“When the chief announced the meeting through his town crier, many people attended because they respect him and wanted to hear what the project was about. After the meeting, people became interested in joining the project”.

This account illustrates how traditional authority and established community relationships facilitated awareness and initial engagement. Social networks can provide access to information, encourage collective action and strengthen cooperation within communities (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The influence of political relationships on access to project opportunities also emerged from the interviews. Ban explained:

“...our government was in power so they asked the party chairman to get unskilled labour to be enrolled into the project to benefit, so he added my name because he knew how I support the party”.

Ban's account illustrates how political networks influenced beneficiary selection and access to project opportunities. Considered alongside Kwa's experience, it demonstrates that social relationships could facilitate mobilisation while political connections could influence the distribution of participation opportunities. These experiences reveal the dual character of social capital: networks can facilitate cooperation and access to resources, but they can also reinforce exclusion and unequal access when opportunities are distributed through selective relationships (Portes, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). This empirical evidence supports the inclusion of participation enablers and contextual factors in DBCIF.

The interviews also revealed that participation in project implementation did not necessarily translate into influence over project identification and decision-making. Mic expressed this concern:

"By the time they came to sensitize us, everything had already been decided. The project had been selected and planned already".

This experience illustrates the distinction between contributing to project implementation and having meaningful influence over decisions concerning development priorities. It reflects the concerns raised in Arnstein's (1969) conceptualisation of citizen participation, particularly the distinction between opportunities for genuine citizen influence and arrangements that provide limited decision-making power. It also demonstrates the importance of examining institutional arrangements and local power relations when assessing the quality of community participation (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Such experiences provide empirical support for the participation disablers component of DBCIF.

Economic and institutional arrangements also shaped beneficiaries' experiences. Simoo described the difficulties associated with delayed remuneration:

"We worked for more than three months without receiving any payment… Even with that, it was just one month payment, not accumulated wages".

This account demonstrates how delayed and inadequate payments affected beneficiaries' experiences of project involvement. Beyond the immediate economic implications, such arrangements could influence perceptions of fairness, institutional responsiveness and the value attached to participation. The experience reinforces the importance of recognising implementation conditions as factors that can constrain participation and weaken beneficiaries' confidence in development interventions.

Beyond the specific experiences described by participants, the findings showed that participation occurred within wider social, political, economic, gender and institutional circumstances. These circumstances shaped how beneficiaries accessed opportunities, interacted with project actors and interpreted their involvement. Their influence was evident in the different ways that community relationships, institutional practices and local power dynamics facilitated or constrained participation.

Beneficiaries' accounts also provided insights into the potential implications of participation for individual wellbeing, social cohesion, project sustainability, development outcomes and the equitable distribution of project opportunities and benefits. These outcomes were understood as dependent on the quality of engagement and the conditions surrounding project implementation rather than as automatic consequences of participation. The distinction is important because physical involvement in development activities does not necessarily produce meaningful inclusion, collective responsibility or equitable development benefits.

Collectively, the participant accounts demonstrate how beneficiaries' experiences, enabling and constraining conditions, wider contextual circumstances and perceived outcomes informed the development of DBCIF. The framework also incorporates continuous reflection and learning to emphasise the importance of using beneficiary feedback and implementation experiences to improve future project decisions and practices.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DBCIF

Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects (DBCIF) draws on Social Capital Theory as its principal theoretical lens and hermeneutic phenomenology as its interpretive orientation. Social Capital Theory explains how relationships, networks, trust and social norms can enable or constrain participation, while hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on how beneficiaries interpret and make meaning of their involvement (Palmér et al., 2024; Van Manen, 2014; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). These perspectives provide complementary ways of understanding participation by connecting the social relationships and conditions surrounding beneficiaries with the meanings they attach to their experiences.

Social Capital Theory provides a basis for examining bonding, bridging and linking relationships. Bonding social capital concerns connections within close-knit groups, bridging social capital involves relationships

across different groups and linking social capital refers to connections with institutions and actors holding authority or resources. These relationships can facilitate cooperation and collective action (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Recent scholarship further emphasises that social capital is multidimensional and that its benefits depend on the location, structure and distribution of network resources (Erices-Ocampo et al., 2025). Its presence does not automatically guarantee inclusive participation. Access to networks and relationships with local leaders or project authorities may influence information sharing, beneficiary selection and decision-making. Research in Ghana similarly demonstrates that the contribution of bonding and bridging social capital to community-driven development varies across community contexts (Ziorklui et al., 2024). DBCIF examines how beneficiaries experience these relationships in terms of inclusion, trust, reciprocity and influence. This theoretical perspective informed the interpretation of participation enablers and disablers by drawing attention to how social networks, leadership relationships and institutional connections facilitated or constrained beneficiaries' involvement. It also informed the contextual dimension by highlighting the influence of wider social and institutional relationships on access to participation opportunities.

Hermeneutic phenomenology complements this perspective by placing beneficiaries' interpretations at the centre of understanding participation. It moves beyond administrative indicators such as attendance, labour contributions and project outputs to examine how involvement is experienced within specific social and institutional contexts. Hermeneutic interpretation recognises that lived experiences acquire meaning through individuals' engagement with their worlds and the interpretive processes through which those experiences are understood (Palmér et al., 2024; Van Manen, 2014). This orientation informed the development of beneficiaries' experiences as the central component of DBCIF because it enabled the researcher to interpret how participants understood their involvement, relationships, opportunities, challenges and perceived outcomes. The eight experiential dimensions identified in the study provided the empirical basis for understanding participation as an evolving and interconnected experience rather than merely an administrative or procedural activity.

Van Manen's (2014) four lifeworld existentials of corporeality, spatiality, temporality and relationality further inform this interpretation. They draw attention respectively to the embodied demands of participation, the places where it occurs, how experiences unfold over time and the relationships through which beneficiaries engage with others. Recent applications of lifeworld hermeneutics also demonstrate the usefulness of existential dimensions for deepening interpretations of lived experiences (Palmér et al., 2024). These existentials serve as interpretive lenses rather than additional components of the framework. In developing DBCIF, they deepened the interpretation of beneficiaries' accounts by illuminating the physical demands of project activities, the community settings in which participation occurred, changes in beneficiaries' experiences over time and the relationships shaping their involvement.

INTEGRATING SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY AND HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY IN DBCIF

DBCIF's theoretical contribution lies in integrating Social Capital Theory and hermeneutic phenomenology with the study's empirical findings. The two perspectives informed the framework in complementary ways. Social Capital Theory illuminated the relational conditions shaping participation, including networks, trust, reciprocity, leadership relationships and institutional connections. Hermeneutic phenomenology enabled the researcher to interpret how beneficiaries experienced and assigned meaning to these relationships and the conditions surrounding their involvement. Their integration consequently connected the social mechanisms influencing participation with beneficiaries' lived interpretations of those mechanisms.

The integration of these perspectives enabled DBCIF to connect the relational conditions surrounding participation with the meanings beneficiaries attached to their involvement. Social Capital Theory drew attention to the influence of networks, trust, reciprocity and institutional relationships, while hermeneutic phenomenology provided a basis for interpreting how these relationships and conditions were experienced. Van Manen's lifeworld existentials further deepened this interpretation by directing attention to the embodied, spatial, temporal and relational dimensions of participation.

The integration extends the application of social capital beyond the identification of networks and relationships by examining how beneficiaries experience the distribution of access, influence, inclusion and institutional

responsiveness within development interventions. It also connects hermeneutic interpretation of lived experiences to the relational and contextual conditions that shape participation. DBCIF consequently offers a beneficiary-centred interpretation of participation that connects relational structures with the meanings beneficiaries attach to their involvement.

DAADAAMIN'S BENEFICIARY-CENTRED INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK (DBCIF)

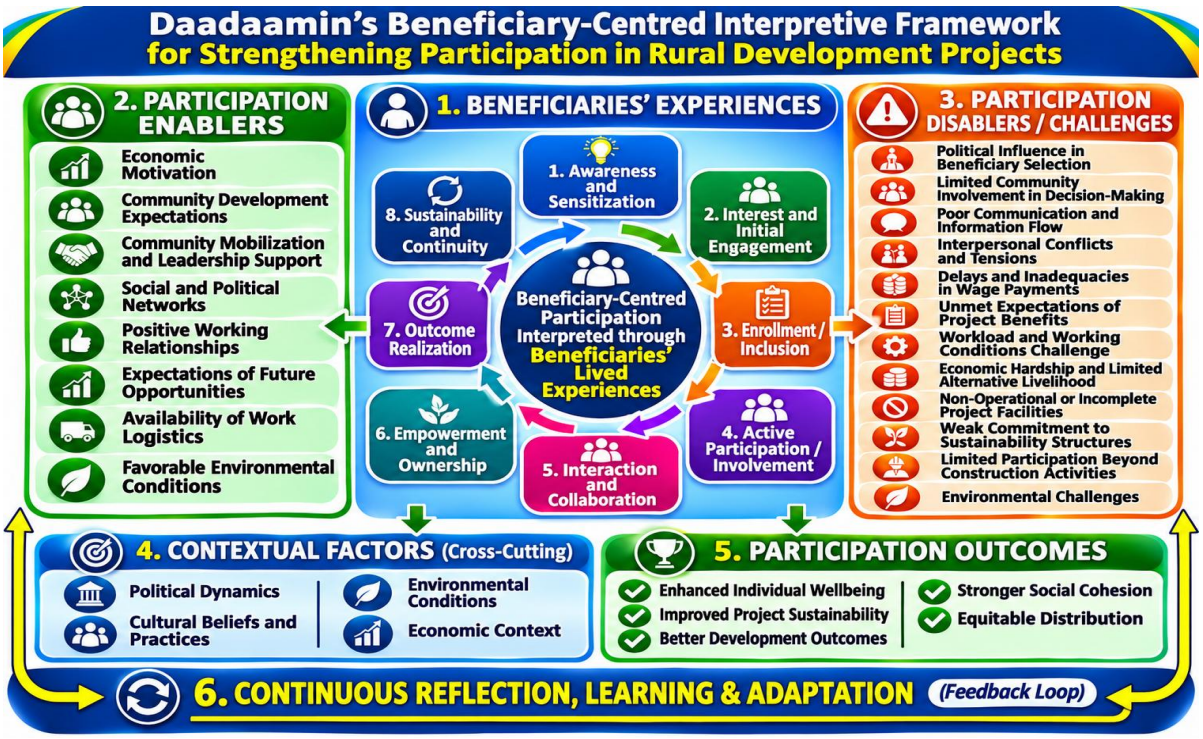
Overview of the Framework

Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects was developed from beneficiaries' lived experiences in the Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. The framework conceptualises participation as more than attendance at project activities or the provision of labour. It recognises participation as an experiential process involving beneficiaries' perceptions of inclusion, relationships, decision-making, expectations, constraints and ownership. This orientation is consistent with participatory development scholarship, which emphasises the importance of beneficiaries' influence over development processes and the conditions shaping their involvement (Arnstein, 1969; Mansuri & Rao, 2013).

DBCIF is organised around six interconnected elements: beneficiaries' experiences, participation enablers, participation disablers, contextual factors, participation outcomes and continuous reflection and learning. Beneficiaries' experiences constitute the central interpretive foundation of the framework. The remaining elements provide an organising structure for understanding the conditions that shape participation, the consequences associated with beneficiaries' involvement and the importance of incorporating their experiences into ongoing project processes.

The framework draws on Social Capital Theory and hermeneutic phenomenology to provide an interpretive understanding of participation within its social and contextual setting (Van Manen, 2014; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). It does not assume that the existence of formal participation procedures necessarily results in meaningful beneficiary involvement. Instead, it provides a context-sensitive structure for examining how participation is experienced, shaped and understood by beneficiaries. DBCIF is intended as an interpretive and adaptive guide rather than a prescriptive checklist or predictive model. Figure 1 presents the framework.

Figure 1. Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF)



Source: Author's Construct, 2026.

Conceptual Distinction Between Participation Enablers, Participation Disablers and Contextual Factors

Within DBCIF, participation enablers, participation disablers and contextual factors are conceptually distinct but interconnected elements. Their distinction lies in the different analytical roles they perform in explaining beneficiaries' participation in rural development projects. Contextual factors refer to the wider social, political, economic, cultural, environmental and institutional circumstances within which participation takes place. They provide the setting in which beneficiaries encounter project opportunities, interact with other actors and engage in decision-making. Contextual factors are not inherently enabling or disabling; their influence depends on how they operate within particular project and community settings.

Participation enablers, in contrast, refer to specific conditions, relationships and experiences that facilitate or encourage beneficiaries' involvement in project activities and processes. Examples from the study include community mobilisation, supportive leadership, economic motivation, positive working relationships, social networks and the availability of work logistics. These conditions can improve access to participation opportunities, encourage engagement and support collaboration. Their enabling influence is understood in relation to the experiences of beneficiaries rather than assumed from their mere existence.

Participation disablers refer to specific conditions, practices and experiences that restrict participation, weaken beneficiaries' influence or undermine confidence in project processes. The study identified political influence in beneficiary selection, limited involvement in decision-making, delayed wage payments, inadequate communication, unmet expectations and difficult working conditions as examples. These conditions may restrict access, reduce motivation, weaken trust or limit beneficiaries' ability to influence project decisions.

The distinction can be illustrated through the relationship between a broad contextual condition and its specific expression in project participation. For example, local political dynamics constitute a contextual factor because they form part of the wider political environment. When political networks facilitate community mobilisation and access to project information, they may operate as participation enablers. When political affiliations influence beneficiary selection or restrict access to opportunities, they operate as participation disablers. Similarly, communication structures form part of the institutional and social context, while effective information sharing may enable participation and inadequate communication may constrain it. The same broad contextual condition can consequently have enabling or disabling implications depending on how it is experienced and expressed in practice.

Table 4: Distinguishing Participation Enablers, Participation Disablers and Contextual Factors within DBCIF

Analytical category	**Meaning within DBCIF**	**Examples from the SOCO study**
Contextual factors	The wider circumstances within which participation takes place. They shape the opportunities, relationships and conditions surrounding participation but are not inherently positive or negative.	Local political dynamics; traditional and community leadership arrangements; socioeconomic conditions; gender relations; community norms; institutional structures; communication systems.
Participation enablers	Specific conditions, relationships and experiences that facilitate access, encourage involvement or strengthen beneficiaries' participation.	Community mobilisation; supportive leadership; economic motivation; positive working relationships; social networks that facilitate engagement; availability of work logistics; expectations of community development.
Participation disablers	Specific conditions, practices and experiences that restrict access, weaken involvement, limit influence or undermine confidence in participation.	Politically influenced beneficiary selection; limited involvement in decision-making; delayed or inadequate wage payments; poor communication; unmet expectations; difficult working conditions; interpersonal conflicts.

Source: Author's conceptual synthesis, 2026.

These elements are not mutually exclusive or independent. Rather, contextual factors shape the conditions under which enablers and disablers emerge and operate, while beneficiaries' experiences provide the basis for interpreting their effects. DBCIF distinguishes the wider environment from the specific mechanisms and experiences that facilitate or constrain participation. This distinction prevents the three components from being treated as interchangeable categories and clarifies their complementary roles in explaining the quality and meaning of beneficiaries' participation.

Core Elements of DBCIF

1. Beneficiaries' experiences: Beneficiaries' experiences constitute the central element of DBCIF and provide the experiential foundation for understanding participation. This element captures how beneficiaries experience, interpret and assign meaning to their involvement in rural development projects. The eight interconnected experiential dimensions identified in the study inform this component, illustrating how participation develops through beneficiaries' awareness, engagement, inclusion, involvement, relationships, perceived outcomes, continuity and ownership. These dimensions are interconnected aspects of participation rather than a predetermined sequence. Positioning beneficiaries' experiences at the centre recognises that formal participation arrangements do not necessarily reflect the extent to which individuals experience inclusion, influence and meaningful engagement (Arnstein, 1969; Nordjo et al., 2024).

2. Participation enablers: Participation enablers refer to the specific conditions, relationships and experiences that facilitate or encourage beneficiaries' involvement in project activities and processes within a given social, institutional and community context. The study identified economic motivation, community development expectations, community mobilisation and leadership support, social and political networks, positive working relationships, expectations of future opportunities, availability of work logistics and favourable environmental conditions as enabling factors. These conditions can create opportunities and incentives for participation, but their influence depends on how beneficiaries experience them and whether they support meaningful engagement. Evidence from community participation research in Ghana identifies public education, effective community leadership, volunteer motivation and trust as important enabling conditions (Agalga et al., 2022). DBCIF consequently treats enablers as conditions whose contribution to participation must be understood within the circumstances of each project and community.

3. Participation disablers: Participation disablers refer to the specific conditions, practices and experiences that restrict beneficiaries' involvement, weaken their influence or undermine confidence in participation processes within the wider project context. The study identified political influence in beneficiary selection, limited involvement in decision-making, delayed wage payments, poor communication, unmet expectations of project benefits, interpersonal conflicts, demanding workloads and unfavourable working conditions, economic hardship, limited alternative livelihood opportunities, incomplete or non-operational project facilities, weak commitment to sustainability structures, restricted participation beyond construction activities and environmental challenges. These constraints can affect beneficiaries' perceptions of fairness, responsiveness, trust and ownership. Research in northern Ghana demonstrates how power inequalities, conflicting relationships and weak governance capacity can restrict inclusive community participation (Bayala et al., 2024). Research on rural women's participation in Ghana also identifies sociocultural and structural barriers that limit their involvement in community development and decision-making (Gyan et al., 2022). Within DBCIF, disablers draw attention to the conditions that can prevent formal opportunities for participation from translating into meaningful involvement.

4. Contextual factors: Contextual factors refer to the wider social, political, economic, cultural, environmental and institutional circumstances within which beneficiaries experience and participate in rural development projects. They shape the conditions under which participation enablers and disablers emerge and influence beneficiaries' experiences. These circumstances shape how beneficiaries access project opportunities, interact with community actors, express their views and influence decisions. Relevant factors include local leadership arrangements, political dynamics, gender relations, socioeconomic conditions, prevailing community norms, communication structures and institutional practices. Unlike participation enablers and disablers, which focus on conditions that facilitate or constrain involvement, contextual factors provide the broader setting within which these conditions emerge and operate. Attention to context is essential because similar participation

arrangements may produce different experiences of inclusion and influence depending on local power relations and institutional structures (Bayala et al., 2024; Nordjo et al., 2024).

5. Participation outcomes: Participation outcomes refer to the consequences and changes associated with beneficiaries' involvement in rural development projects. Within DBCIF, these comprise enhanced individual wellbeing, stronger social cohesion, improved project sustainability, better development outcomes and equitable distribution. Outcomes may be experienced at individual, interpersonal and community levels, depending on the nature of participation and the conditions under which it occurs. The framework does not assume that these outcomes follow automatically from participation or the completion of project activities. Their emergence depends on the interaction between beneficiaries' experiences, enabling and constraining conditions and the wider project context. Each outcome requires examination through beneficiaries' accounts and experiences when DBCIF is applied.

6. Continuous reflection and learning: Continuous reflection and learning constitute the adaptive element of DBCIF. This element concerns the use of beneficiaries' experiences, feedback and emerging outcomes to inform improvements in project planning, implementation, monitoring and review. It provides an opportunity to identify differences between project intentions and beneficiaries' actual experiences and to consider appropriate adjustments to communication, beneficiary selection, decision-making, working arrangements and institutional responsiveness. Reflection and learning are not restricted to project completion or formal evaluation; they are intended to remain relevant throughout the project cycle. Adaptive learning approaches demonstrate how structured feedback, reflection and collective interpretation can inform adjustments during programme implementation (Trasi et al., 2023). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2026) also emphasises locally led monitoring, evaluation and learning as processes through which community-generated knowledge can inform development decisions and continuous adaptation. Within DBCIF, this element connects beneficiaries' experiences and participation outcomes to ongoing learning and improvement.

Relationships and Interactions among the Six Components of DBCIF

The six components of Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) are interconnected and operate through continuous interaction rather than as separate or strictly sequential elements. Their relationships reflect the understanding that participation in rural development projects is shaped by beneficiaries' lived experiences, the conditions that facilitate or constrain their involvement, the wider context within which participation occurs and the outcomes emerging from these experiences. Continuous reflection and learning provide a feedback mechanism through which insights from implementation and beneficiary experiences can inform adjustments to project processes and future interventions.

Beneficiaries' experiences constitute the central component of the framework because they provide the foundation for understanding how participation is encountered, interpreted and evaluated. These experiences are influenced by participation enablers and disablers, which shape the opportunities and constraints beneficiaries encounter throughout project implementation. For example, supportive community leadership, effective mobilisation and positive working relationships may encourage participation, while political interference in beneficiary selection, inadequate communication and delayed payments may restrict meaningful involvement. The experiences arising from these conditions also influence how beneficiaries understand their inclusion, contribution and relationship with the project.

Participation enablers and disablers interact within broader contextual factors. Contextual factors represent the social, political, economic, cultural and institutional conditions within which participation takes place. They do not automatically facilitate or constrain participation; their influence depends on how they operate in particular circumstances. For instance, local political networks may provide channels for information sharing and community mobilisation, while political influence over beneficiary selection may create exclusion and unequal access. Similarly, traditional leadership structures may support community engagement, but their effectiveness depends on the nature of their relationships with beneficiaries and project institutions. Contextual factors consequently shape the operation of enablers and disablers, while beneficiaries' experiences reveal how these contextual conditions affect participation in practice.

The interaction of beneficiaries' experiences, participation enablers, participation disablers and contextual factors contributes to participation outcomes. As represented in Figure 1, these outcomes comprise enhanced individual wellbeing, stronger social cohesion, improved project sustainability, better development outcomes and equitable distribution. They are not necessarily uniform or guaranteed. Beneficiaries may experience positive changes in their wellbeing and community relationships while simultaneously encountering delayed financial benefits, limited influence over decisions or concerns about the continued functionality of completed facilities. Participation outcomes must consequently be interpreted in relation to both the opportunities and constraints encountered during implementation.

Continuous reflection and learning connect the other five components by providing an ongoing process for examining experiences, identifying emerging challenges and recognising opportunities for improvement. Feedback from beneficiaries and lessons arising from project implementation can inform adjustments to participation arrangements, strengthen enabling conditions, address disablers and improve the responsiveness of project institutions to local contextual realities. Reflection on participation outcomes can also inform subsequent planning and implementation decisions, including measures to strengthen community ownership and sustainability. In this way, learning is not restricted to the end of a project but remains relevant throughout the project cycle.

The relationships among the six components are reciprocal and iterative. Beneficiaries' experiences provide the central reference point for interpreting participation, while enablers, disablers and contextual factors shape the conditions under which it occurs. The resulting experiences inform potential participation outcomes, while continuous reflection and learning provide opportunities to use these insights to improve project processes and future interventions.

Interpretive Dimensions of Lived Experience

DBCIF incorporates Van Manen's (2014) four lifeworld existentials as interpretive lenses for understanding beneficiaries' lived experiences. Corporeality concerns the embodied dimensions of participation, including physical demands; spatiality examines experiences within project spaces; temporality considers how experiences unfold over time, including delays, expectations and continuity; and relationality focuses on relationships with fellow participants, community leaders, project actors and institutions. These dimensions provide a phenomenological perspective for examining how individuals experience and make meaning of their everyday worlds (Palmér et al., 2024; Van Manen, 2014).

These existentials are not additional components of DBCIF but lenses through which beneficiaries' experiences can be interpreted across its six elements. Delayed remuneration, for example, has a temporal dimension and may also affect trust, relationships and willingness to continue participating. Physical working conditions involve corporeality, while work organisation and participant interactions introduce spatial and relational dimensions. The existentials deepen understanding of participation as an interconnected, lived experience by directing attention to the embodied, spatial, temporal and relational meanings beneficiaries attach to their involvement (Palmér et al., 2024; Van Manen, 2014).

Application and Scope of the Framework

DBCIF can support rural development practitioners, local authorities and implementing institutions in examining beneficiary participation across the project cycle. During planning, it can guide the assessment of beneficiary selection processes, access to information, local power relations, gender-related barriers and opportunities for community influence. During implementation, it can help examine beneficiaries' experiences of communication, remuneration, working conditions, interpersonal relationships and decision-making. At monitoring and review stages, it can provide an interpretive basis for examining perceived benefits, trust, inclusion, ownership and continuity. This application is consistent with locally led development principles that emphasise the agency of local actors in shaping, designing, delivering and evaluating development interventions (OECD, 2026).

Applying DBCIF requires direct engagement with beneficiaries rather than exclusive reliance on administrative records and project completion indicators. Interviews, community feedback sessions and accessible complaint mechanisms can provide opportunities to understand experiences of inclusion, exclusion, dissatisfaction and cooperation. These approaches can also help identify concerns that require institutional attention and responses (World Bank, 2022). Beneficiary accounts can be considered alongside project outputs and other monitoring information to develop a more comprehensive understanding of participation. Participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches similarly recognise local knowledge and community-defined measures of progress as important sources of evidence (OECD, 2024, 2026).

The framework is intended for interpretive application rather than use as a prescriptive checklist, statistical measurement instrument or predictive model. Its elements provide an organising structure for examining participation within particular project and community settings, while allowing their interpretation to reflect local circumstances. Its usefulness depends on meaningful beneficiary engagement and the willingness of responsible institutions to consider and respond to the experiences identified. Collecting beneficiary feedback without connecting it to institutional consideration and appropriate action would limit the practical value of its application (OECD, 2026).

DBCIF is particularly relevant to community-based rural development interventions involving beneficiary mobilisation, community engagement, local decision-making and collective action. Potential areas of application include social cohesion initiatives, rural infrastructure development, livelihood programmes and community empowerment projects. Its development from one project and district in Ghana means that its relevance to other geographical and institutional settings requires further examination. Comparative applications could investigate how its concepts operate across different social, political, economic and cultural contexts, identify context-specific variations and establish whether further conceptual refinement is necessary.

The Distinctive Contribution of DBCIF to Participatory Development

The distinctive contribution of Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) lies in its integration of beneficiaries' lived experiences, participation conditions, contextual influences, outcomes and continuous learning within a single interpretive structure. Its originality becomes clearer when compared with established contributions to participatory development, particularly Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation and Cornwall's (2008) analysis of participation models, meanings and practices. These contributions provide important foundations for understanding citizen power, participation practices and the relationships between institutional arrangements and community involvement. DBCIF builds on these insights by placing beneficiaries' interpretations of their participation at the centre of an integrated framework.

Table 5: Comparison of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, Cornwall's Perspective on Participation and DBCIF

Comparative Dimension	**Arnstein (1969)**	**Cornwall (2008)**	**DBCIF**
Central concern	Distribution of citizen power and control over decisions.	Meanings, models and practices of participation, including who participates, in what and for whose benefit.	How beneficiaries experience, interpret and make meaning of participation.
Main analytical focus	Eight levels of participation, ranging from manipulation to citizen control.	Different understandings and practices of participation, including participation spaces and purposes.	Six interconnected elements organised around beneficiaries' lived experiences.
Understanding of power	Examines the extent to which	Examines how participation is shaped	Examines how power relations and institutional arrangements are

	citizens exercise power and influence over decisions.	by interests, institutional practices and power relations.	experienced by beneficiaries, including their effects on inclusion and influence.
Treatment of context	Recognises unequal power relations in participation.	Highlights the importance of context, institutional arrangements and the interests of different actors.	Explicitly incorporates social, political, economic, cultural, environmental and institutional contextual factors.
Enabling and constraining conditions	Does not organise these conditions as separate elements of the ladder.	Discusses factors influencing participation practices and their meanings.	Explicitly distinguishes participation enablers from participation disablers.
Outcomes	Emphasises greater citizen power and control as central aspirations of participation.	Examines the democratic promise and purposes of participation.	Examines potential outcomes including enhanced individual wellbeing, stronger social cohesion, improved project sustainability, better development outcomes and equitable distribution.
Learning and adaptation	Does not explicitly organise continuous learning as a separate element.	Encourages critical examination of participation practices and their meanings.	Incorporates continuous reflection and learning as an explicit adaptive element.
Empirical orientation	A conceptual typology of citizen participation and power.	A critical analysis of participation models, meanings and practices.	An empirically grounded interpretive framework developed from beneficiaries' lived experiences in a rural development project.

Source: Author's synthesis, 2026.

The comparison demonstrates that DBCIF does not seek to replace Arnstein's or Cornwall's contributions. Rather, it extends the discussion of participation by connecting the analysis of citizen power and participation practices with beneficiaries' lived experiences and interpretations. Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation examines participation primarily in relation to the distribution of power between citizens and decision-making authorities. Its eight rungs are grouped into three levels: nonparticipation (manipulation and therapy), tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) and citizen power (partnership, delegated power and citizen control), which illustrate different degrees of citizen influence over decisions. The ladder makes an important distinction between participation that provides an appearance of involvement and participation that enables citizens to exercise meaningful power.

DBCIF shares Arnstein's concern with meaningful participation but approaches the issue from a different analytical direction. Rather than primarily classifying participation according to levels of power, it examines how beneficiaries experience and interpret their involvement, including whether they perceive their selection, engagement, working arrangements, relationships and opportunities for decision-making as fair and meaningful. It recognises that beneficiaries may be formally involved in project activities without necessarily experiencing influence, inclusion or ownership. DBCIF consequently complements Arnstein's analysis by connecting questions of power and influence with beneficiaries' lived experiences of participation.

Cornwall's (2008) contribution provides a second important point of comparison. Her analysis examines the different meanings and practices associated with participation and draws attention to who participates, what they participate in and whose interests participation serves. It challenges the assumption that the use of participatory language or the creation of opportunities for involvement necessarily produces democratic or inclusive outcomes. Cornwall's perspective is particularly valuable for understanding how participation can take different forms depending on the interests of actors, institutional arrangements and the spaces within which engagement occurs.

DBCIF shares this critical concern with the meanings and purposes of participation but extends the analysis by providing an integrated structure for examining how beneficiaries themselves experience these arrangements. It connects the opportunities and spaces for participation with beneficiaries' interpretations of inclusion, relationships, decision-making, expectations, constraints and ownership. Consequently, it directs analytical attention beyond the existence and organisation of participation opportunities towards the meanings beneficiaries attach to their actual involvement.

A further distinction concerns the explicit treatment of participation enablers and disablers. Arnstein's ladder draws attention to unequal power and the limitations of tokenistic involvement, while Cornwall examines the interests, practices and institutional arrangements shaping participation. DBCIF makes the facilitating and constraining conditions explicit elements of its structure. The participation enablers include economic motivation, community mobilisation, leadership support, social networks, positive working relationships and community-based institutional support. The disablers include political influence in beneficiary selection, limited involvement in decision-making, delayed wage payments, poor communication, difficult working conditions and unmet expectations. By distinguishing these conditions, DBCIF provides an organising basis for examining not only whether beneficiaries participate but also what encourages, restricts or changes their involvement.

DBCIF also gives contextual factors an explicit place within its architecture. These include local political dynamics, gender relations, socioeconomic circumstances, cultural norms, community leadership, project design, communication practices and institutional arrangements. This element recognises that similar participation opportunities may produce different experiences among beneficiaries because they operate within different social and institutional realities. DBCIF connects contextual conditions directly to beneficiaries' experiences and the conditions shaping their participation, enabling participation to be interpreted as context-dependent rather than assuming that the same arrangements produce equivalent experiences across communities.

The framework further extends its analytical coverage through participation outcomes and continuous reflection and learning. Participation outcomes comprise enhanced individual wellbeing, stronger social cohesion, improved project sustainability, better development outcomes and equitable distribution. These outcomes are not assumed to follow automatically from attendance, labour contributions or the completion of infrastructure. They require examination through beneficiaries' experiences and accounts. Continuous reflection and learning constitute the adaptive element of DBCIF, linking beneficiaries' experiences and emerging outcomes to opportunities for improving project planning, implementation, monitoring and review.

The empirical contribution of DBCIF lies in its development from beneficiaries' lived experiences rather than from the direct application of a predetermined participation model. Its structure connects experiential insights with the conditions, contextual influences and potential outcomes identified through the study. This provides an empirical basis for interpreting participation from the perspectives of those directly involved in rural development interventions.

The framework's theoretical contribution lies in connecting the relational insights of Social Capital Theory with the interpretive orientation of hermeneutic phenomenology. This integration makes it possible to examine not only the social relationships and institutional conditions surrounding participation but also how beneficiaries experience and interpret them. Van Manen's lifeworld existentials further deepen this interpretation without introducing additional framework components.

The originality of DBCIF does not rest on claiming that power, participation spaces, context, enabling conditions, outcomes or learning have never been examined in participatory development scholarship. Its contribution lies in integrating these dimensions around beneficiaries' lived experiences within an empirically grounded and context-sensitive interpretive framework. It complements Arnstein's analysis of citizen power and Cornwall's critical examination of participation practices by providing a structure for understanding how participation is experienced, what conditions shape it, what outcomes beneficiaries associate with it and how the resulting insights can inform continuous improvement. DBCIF is consequently proposed as an interpretive and adaptive framework rather than a statistically validated predictive model. Its development from one project in one district also means that further empirical application is necessary to examine its relevance, interpretive adequacy and potential refinement in other rural development settings.

Policy, Practice and Theoretical Implications

Policy Implications: DBCIF has implications for the design of rural development policies, particularly policies concerned with community participation, local governance and beneficiary accountability. It suggests that policy frameworks should move beyond procedural requirements for community mobilisation and attendance towards arrangements that promote meaningful, inclusive and accountable participation. The existence of formal participation opportunities does not necessarily guarantee beneficiaries' influence over decisions or their sense of ownership (Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2008).

First, beneficiary selection and project planning policies should establish transparent procedures for identifying beneficiaries and incorporating community priorities before major project decisions are finalised. The reported influence of local political networks and limited beneficiary involvement in some decisions highlight the importance of safeguards against exclusion. Policy provisions should clarify the responsibilities of local authorities and implementing institutions in ensuring that beneficiary selection and project priorities reflect inclusive community engagement. Locally led development guidance similarly emphasises meaningful involvement from the beginning of programme design and the need to address institutional arrangements that restrict local actors' influence (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2026).

Second, development policies should strengthen accountability requirements throughout project implementation. These should include clear communication about project expectations, work arrangements, remuneration, institutional responsibilities and procedures for addressing beneficiary concerns. Accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms should enable beneficiaries to raise concerns and receive timely responses from responsible institutions. Such arrangements can strengthen transparency and institutional responsiveness in development projects (OECD, 2026; World Bank, 2022).

Third, DBCIF supports the inclusion of beneficiary-centred indicators in project monitoring and evaluation policies. In addition to reporting project outputs and participation figures, monitoring systems could examine perceived inclusion, trust, decision-making influence, working relationships and ownership. The World Bank (2022) identifies beneficiary feedback indicators, stakeholder consultations and grievance redress mechanisms as important components of citizen engagement in development projects. The proposed indicators require contextual adaptation and empirical examination before they are adopted as standard measures across different development settings.

Practice Implications: For development practitioners, local authorities and implementing institutions, DBCIF provides an interpretive guide for examining and improving beneficiary participation throughout the project cycle. Its practical value lies in helping project actors identify differences between intended participation arrangements and beneficiaries' actual experiences.

During project design, practitioners can use the framework to examine community priorities, local power relations and potential barriers to inclusion. Beneficiaries should have opportunities to contribute to decisions concerning project selection, beneficiary identification and the nature of proposed interventions before major choices are finalised. This requires consultation processes that allow community members to express their priorities and influence decisions affecting their lives (Cornwall, 2008; OECD, 2026).

During implementation, practitioners can examine how communication, remuneration, working conditions, leadership responsiveness and interpersonal relationships influence beneficiaries' involvement. The SOCO findings demonstrate that delayed wage payments, unmet expectations and limited decision-making influence can affect participation even when beneficiaries remain involved in project activities. Practitioners can use regular engagement and accessible complaint-resolution arrangements to identify these concerns, respond to them and make appropriate adjustments. This approach can strengthen the responsiveness of project management to beneficiaries' experiences.

At the monitoring and sustainability stages, practitioners can involve beneficiaries in assessing project progress, identifying challenges and discussing arrangements for maintenance, future use and continuity. Ownership should be examined through beneficiaries' experiences of influence, responsibility and connection to project outcomes rather than inferred from labour contributions alone. Practitioners can also use periodic reflection and feedback sessions to identify emerging concerns and incorporate lessons into ongoing implementation and future project planning. This makes learning a continuous part of project management rather than an activity reserved for project completion (OECD, 2026).

Theoretical Implications: DBCIF contributes theoretically by bringing Social Capital Theory into dialogue with a beneficiary-centred hermeneutic interpretation of participation. Social Capital Theory highlights how social networks, trust, norms and institutional connections can facilitate cooperation and collective action (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). DBCIF extends this perspective by examining how beneficiaries experience these relationships and how they shape access, inclusion, influence and opportunities for participation.

The framework also encourages a more critical interpretation of social capital. Bonding, bridging and linking relationships can facilitate mobilisation, cooperation and access to resources, but they may also reproduce exclusion and unequal influence. The significance of social networks consequently depends not only on their existence but also on how beneficiaries experience the relationships, opportunities and power structures associated with them. This perspective is consistent with scholarship recognising that social capital can provide resources and collective benefits while also reinforcing inequalities and exclusionary practices (Portes, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

A further theoretical implication concerns the conceptualisation of participation as a lived and contextually situated experience. Rather than treating participation solely as an administrative process or observable project activity, DBCIF advances an understanding of participation by foregrounding the meanings beneficiaries attach to their involvement within particular social, institutional and relational contexts. Its experiential orientation demonstrates how participation evolves through interconnected experiences of engagement, inclusion, interaction, collective involvement and the realisation of expected outcomes. This perspective extends participatory development thinking by bringing beneficiaries' interpretations and meanings into the centre of understanding participation, rather than focusing predominantly on institutional processes or predefined measures of involvement. It is consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, which emphasises interpreting human experiences within the contexts in which they occur (Van Manen, 2014).

DBCIF further connects this experiential interpretation with the social and contextual conditions shaping participation. Van Manen's (2014) four lifeworld existentials: corporeality, spatiality, temporality and relationality provide interpretive lenses for examining the embodied, spatial, temporal and interpersonal dimensions of beneficiaries' accounts. These existentials deepen the interpretation of participation without constituting additional elements of DBCIF.

The framework represents a contextually grounded theoretical contribution rather than a universally validated explanatory model. Its contribution lies in integrating social relationships, lived experience and contextual interpretation within a coherent structure for understanding participation in rural development projects. Further empirical applications can examine how its concepts operate across different institutional and community settings, identify contextual variations and inform its continued theoretical refinement.

Limitations and Areas for Further Research

DBCIF was developed from the lived experiences of 11 beneficiaries of the Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District of Ghana. Its empirical grounding provides a context-specific contribution and several limitations should be recognised.

First, the study focused on one district and project. Its findings reflect specific social, political, economic and institutional circumstances and cannot be assumed to represent all rural development contexts. In qualitative research, the applicability of findings to other settings depends on the extent to which contextual similarities and differences are established and assessed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Applying DBCIF in other districts and programmes could establish its relevance across settings and identify areas requiring adaptation.

Second, the convenience sample of 11 beneficiaries was intended to provide interpretive depth rather than statistical representativeness. The findings do not establish the prevalence of particular experiences among all SOCO beneficiaries. Convenience sampling is appropriate in qualitative research when participants are recruited based on their accessibility, availability and willingness to provide relevant accounts of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, it facilitated access to beneficiaries who met the eligibility criteria and had direct experience of the SOCO Project. Future studies could examine a wider range of participation experiences while retaining qualitative approaches to understand their meanings.

Third, DBCIF's six elements and proposed relationships emerged through iterative interpretation of beneficiaries' accounts, but the framework has not been independently examined across multiple settings. Comparative case studies and longitudinal research could investigate how its elements interact across contexts and how participation experiences and feedback processes change over time. Such applications would provide opportunities to examine the framework's contextual relevance, identify possible variations and refine its conceptual relationships.

Fourth, the study centred on beneficiaries rather than the perspectives of all actors involved in project design and implementation. This focus was consistent with the study's beneficiary-centred purpose. Future research could examine how beneficiaries' interpretations compare with those of local leaders, project personnel and public institutions, while maintaining beneficiaries' experiences as an essential source of evidence. Such research could provide additional insight into how institutional decisions and beneficiary experiences relate to one another.

Finally, DBCIF identifies enhanced individual wellbeing, stronger social cohesion, improved project sustainability, better development outcomes and equitable distribution as important outcomes to examine, but the study did not establish that applying the framework causes improvements in these outcomes. Pilot applications could assess its usefulness in project planning, implementation and evaluation, including its capacity to identify participation barriers, improve responsiveness and strengthen beneficiaries' perceived influence and ownership. Subsequent research could also develop and examine contextually appropriate indicators for assessing changes in these outcomes.

These limitations establish a clear direction for the continued development of DBCIF. Its value lies in providing a beneficiary-centred interpretive structure that can be examined, refined and adapted through further empirical application. Testing the framework across diverse rural development settings would help clarify the contextual conditions shaping participation and strengthen its practical relevance for inclusive project design, implementation and evaluation. Such research would extend the framework's empirical foundation while preserving its central principle: meaningful participation must be understood through beneficiaries' lived experiences, not merely through formal procedures or visible project outputs.

CONCLUSION

This study developed Daadaamin's Beneficiary-Centred Interpretive Framework (DBCIF) for Strengthening Participation in Rural Development Projects from the lived experiences of 11 beneficiaries of the Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, Ghana. The findings demonstrate that participation

extends beyond attendance and labour contributions to encompass beneficiaries' experiences of inclusion, relationships, decision-making, expectations and the conditions shaping their involvement.

DBCIF contributes to participatory development scholarship by integrating beneficiaries' lived experiences with the relational, institutional and contextual conditions that shape participation. Its distinctive contribution lies in positioning beneficiaries' interpretations as central to understanding how participation is experienced, enabled, constrained and translated into outcomes. By connecting individual experiences with broader participation processes, the framework offers an interpretive perspective that extends beyond conventional understandings of participation as project involvement or implementation activity. Its continuous reflection and learning component further emphasises the importance of incorporating beneficiaries' experiences into project adjustments, institutional learning and future development interventions.

DBCIF was developed from one project and district and its applicability across other settings remains to be examined. Future research could apply the framework in different rural development projects and geographical contexts to assess the relevance of its concepts and examine how their relationships vary across institutional, cultural and socioeconomic conditions. Comparative studies, longitudinal research and pilot applications could also identify areas requiring conceptual refinement and examine the framework's usefulness in informing project planning, implementation and evaluation.

The central proposition of DBCIF is that meaningful participation must be understood through beneficiaries' lived experiences and their opportunities to influence decisions within the social, relational and institutional contexts of development processes. Grounded in the experiences of SOCO beneficiaries in Yunyoo-Nasuan District, the framework provides a foundation for further empirical examination and the development of more inclusive, responsive and beneficiary-centred approaches to participation in rural development.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study, which involved human participants, was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Africa Research University (ARU) before data collection commenced (Approval No. ARU/2026/03/002). The research was conducted in accordance with the relevant ethical principles and institutional requirements governing research involving human participants. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement in the study. Measures were also taken to protect participants' privacy, maintain confidentiality and uphold their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal from the study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal competing interests that influenced the conduct, analysis or reporting of this research. The first author had professional relationships with local government officials and SOCO project actors but was not a member of the SOCO implementation team and was not involved in beneficiary selection or recruitment. These relationships were acknowledged and addressed through researcher reflexivity and measures to maintain the independence of the study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study are not openly accessible due to confidentiality and privacy considerations. The interview transcripts and associated research materials contain personal accounts that could potentially reveal participants' identities. These materials have consequently not been made publicly available. Access to appropriately de-identified data may be considered upon reasonable request to the corresponding author, subject to ethical safeguards, participants' consent and relevant institutional requirements.

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