"E yeo ngo" (Do they eat salt?): Learning in movement from a 5 year PAR study of the Ada Songor Advocacy Forum, a social movement in Ghana

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Abstract

This article describes 7 learning moves and 2 learning polyrhythms emerging from a participatory action research case study that documents learning in, through *and* to *struggles to reclaim and defend communal access to West Africa's largest salt flat – access that is the backbone of a 400-year-old artisanal salt production process, supports the livelihoods of roughly 60,000 people, and is a central component of cultural/spiritual identity in the area. At the heart of this struggle is a Ghanaian social movement, the* Ada Songor Advocacy Forum*, which, along with its partner community radio station* Radio Ada*, currently face threats from Ghana's petro-chemical industry as well as small-scale enclosures by local elite.*

Over the past 6 years, a participatory action research (PAR) case study has been documenting reflections on over 3 decades of struggle to reclaim and defend communal access to West Africa's largest salt-yielding lagoon – access that is the backbone of an artisanal salt production process that is over 400 years old, enables and supports the livelihoods of roughly 60,000 people, and is a central component of cultural/spiritual identity in the area. This identity connection is so strong that asking if someone speaks Dangme – the Ada language – is literally to ask, "*E yeo ngo?*" "Do they eat salt?"

At the heart of this struggle is a Ghanaian social movement, currently called the *Ada Songor Advocacy Forum* (ASAF).[1] ASAF, and its partner community radio station, *Radio Ada*, currently face new threats from Ghana's petro-chemical industry, spurred on by Ghana's recent oil discovery, as well as small-scale enclosures by local elite, called "atsiakpo." This current context has challenged the movement to reconfigure its approaches. It is in, and more than partially because of, this shifting terrain that a group of researchers and movement members undertook this participatory action research study of ASAF's social movement's learning. This article will provide an overview of the emergent contributions from this research, focusing especially on *movement-as-learning* to encapsulate this story.

Social movement learning, a sub-field of critical adult education, has "enormous…breadth" (English & Mayo, 2012, p. 110), and yet research that

[1] A previous iteration in the 1980s was successful in its efforts at defense.

studies African contexts is underrepresented (Hall & Turray, 2005). In this sense, the study reported on here adds an important sub-Saharan African case study to discussions about the ways in which movements learn. Kapoor (2007) advocates that such studies outside of Euro-America be understood through their own epistemic lens. It is for this reason, and equally to ensure this research was movement-owned, that a participatory action research approach was mutually agreed upon by movement members and researchers. This approach to the study of social movement learning is not unique, but using a mutual design process has helped ensure this research is grounded in movement articulations, and not academic ambitions (c.f. Chourdy & Kapoor, 2010; Langdon & Larweh, 2015). From a methodological perspective, the extensive participatory research framing process has meant that this study has also been an important part of movement-defined learning processes, even as it helps document and disseminate the learning that has emerged. Building on this, the learnings documented are also analyzed through an expanded version of Foley's (1999) notion of learning *in* struggle, that also looks at learning *through* struggle and learning *to* struggle that emerged from previous work by Langdon (2009) on social movement learning in the Ghanaian context. The nuance of this expansion is discussed further below.

Building on the theme of *movement-as-learning*, the paper shares 7 important moves, as well as 2 crosscutting polyrhythms that emerged from a reflective session on August 18th, 2013. Movement as learning is a figurative categorization, invoking the way in which people learn to move, and learn from moving, as well as being a literal categorization, where ASAF's main movement strategy has been learning, within and outside its ranks. The figurative notion of movement and polyrhythms that support this movement emerges from the link between drumming and dancing that is a central part of Ada's annual festival, Asafotufiami, where the victories defending the Songor salt lagoon in the past are celebrated (Amate, 1999). The 7 moves that emerged from ASAF's reflective session are *(1) starting by collectively learning together; (2) the emergence of narratives that ground movement strategy in Ada identity*; *(3) undermining central government expropriation through transparent radio and community dialogue*; *(4) side-stepping local authority efforts to silence the movement by linking Songor activism with cultural values*; *(5) unlearning mistakes from the past*; *(6) building and disseminating* (locally/nationally/internationally) *a collectively written history of struggle*; and, *(7) building present activism and strategy through women salt-winners leadership and analysis*. The 2 supportive polyrhythms interwoven through these moves are *(1) open discussions undermining cooptation and provoking learning again and again*, and *(2)) the centrality of a community-owned and deeply trusted radio station fearlessly opening space on-the-ground and on-air for mutual learning to occur*.

The Ada Songor Advocacy Forum (ASAF) brings together Songor community members (salt miners) with Adas committed to seeing the Songor be maintained as a resource that benefits all – not just for Adas, but Ghanaians more generally. This builds on how Adas have historically allowed access to the

lagoon (Manuh, 1994), and presents a striking contrast to top-down, government-dominated, national development approaches (Langdon, 2015). There are three main groups in ASAF: the Songor Salt Cooperative, *Radio Ada*, and what would eventually become the Ada-Songor Saltwinners Women's Association. Individual chiefs, traditional priests, Christian priests, youth from Songor villages, District Assembly (local government) assemblypersons and staff are also part of the movement. Members of the Dangme East Salt Producers Association (DESPA) have also occasionally taken part in movement meetings and activities. Many of those involved in ASAF were also involved in the previous iteration of struggle around the Songor in the 1970s and 80s, in which the Songor Salt Cooperative played a central role in successfully reclaiming the Songor from corporate control (Songor Salt Cooperative, 1989). Though only deciding on its name in 2011, ASAF meetings have been held in the open at *Radio Ada* since 2010, as well as in different Songor communities.

Ghanaian social movement learning as learning *in*, *through* and *to* struggle

The study of ASAF emerges from almost a decade of research accompanying movement learning in Ghana. Preceding the mutually designed, participatory research in Ada, a much wider study of social movement learning in Ghana had been conducted (Langdon, 2009a). This study focused especially on the movement learning emerging after Ghana's return to democratic dispensation in 1992, though during the course of the study the scope was broadened to also look at the socialist and democracy movements that set the stage for this return to democracy. This adjustment came from a participatory approach to the research, where the scope of the research as well as its conclusions emanated from the deliberations of a participatory research group (PRG) composed of members drawn from several movements across Ghana (the women's movement, the labour movement, the anti-privatization of water movement, the Ada salt movement, the community radio movement, and the socialist and democracy movements).[2] Kofi Larweh was part of this PRG, and Jonathan Langdon was the lead researcher and ultimate author of the research (Langdon, 2009).

In reviewing social movement learning literature, the 2009 study concluded that Euro-American traditions in the field dominated frames of analysis, risking "colonizing dissent" (Nandy, 1997). This conclusion echoes that of Kapoor (2007), where he contests the "portability" of such theories into contexts such as Ghana. English & Mayo (2012) support this conclusion, emphasizing the importance of theorizing that comes from social movement learning outside the Euro-American tradition. At the same time, Hall and Turray (2005) have noted, in their review of Social Movement Learning (SML) literature, the lack of research on and with African social movements. An exception to this gap is

[2] Coleman Agyeyomah, Gifty Amefa Dzah, Alhassan Adams, Tanko Ibrahim, Jonathan Langdon & Kofi Larweh.

writing on South African movement learning (e.g. Harley, 2014; Zikode, 2006; Desai & Pithouse, 2003; Bond, 2004;). Walters (2005), writing from this South African context, has also underscored the importance of framing movement theorizing through the lens of context. Mamdani (1996) has emphasized the same point especially when dealing with African phenomena. Finally, Kane (2001), Kapoor (2009) and Choudry and Kapoor (2010) have all argued for rooting movement research in movement articulations. The study reported on here and the wider 2009 study are grounded in this approach to social movement learning research.

The 2009 study articulated a number of important analyses of social movement learning from the Ghanaian perspective. The first of these is a differentiation between on the one hand dialogue-based movements that remain rooted in subaltern struggles and on the other strategic movements that may have policy impacts but largely become disconnected from those the movement purports to speak with and for (Langdon and Larweh 2009a; 2009b). The second conclusion is that organic movements, embedded in people's livelihoods and in their ways of being, are generally dialogue-based and are the strongest movements in contesting neoliberal globalization and its impacts (Langdon, 2010). Elsewhere, Kapoor (2007) and Peet and Watts (2004) have noted similar characteristics of strong, locally rooted movements. It was based on a collective decision to connect with such a dialogue-based, organic movement that members of the PRG, including Jonathan Langdon and Kofi Larweh, deepened discussions already begun with the Ada movement.

The third conclusion of the 2009 study has also framed the ongoing work in Ada. In analyzing the various types of learning that emerged from the 23 interviews of movement activists, the PRG reconfigured Foley's (1999) notion of *learning **in** struggle* to add two other categories to this general informal category of long-term learning while involved in a movement struggle. These were *learning **through** struggle*, or the intense learning that emerges from an event/specific conflict, and *learning **to** struggle*, or the theorizing movements engage in about how best to learn to undertake the struggle (Langdon 2009a; 2009b, 2011). These categories help unpack the 7 moves and 2 polyrhythms shared below. Foley's original category, based partially on his research on learning in the Zimbabwe liberation struggle, also resonates with Von Kotze's (2000) analysis of South African movement learning, where she similarly adds several other categories to his concept. Recently, Anyidoho and Gariba (2015) have applied learning *in*, *through* and *to* struggle in analyzing Ghanaian urban social movement learning.

Move 1 - Collective learning as the starting point

Flowing out of initial discussions in 2008, a collective research design process was initiated in June 2010. This design process brought together the many different people described above who had been fighting for communal access to the Songor for several years. Of crucial consideration here was the fact that this

design space was quickly transformed into a movement mobilization space. In fact, the first action of this group was self-and-mutual education. Most of those present had very strong and often contrary views on what needed to be done to return the Songor to being a resource that would benefit the people of Ada, especially those in the communities contiguous to the Songor lagoon. People shared their views openly, and also started to admit those things they didn't know. Akpetiyo Lawer, who would eventually emerge as the movement's troubadour, captured this spirit in an early song that ended with the line, "*Nɔnɛ Nɔ Kɔ Lio, Nɔ Kɔ Lɛ"* which means*, "What One Doesn't Know, Another Knows."* As a result of this openness, both to what was known and what was not known, a self-education plan began to emerge (meeting notes, July 28th, 2010). At the center of this self-education were the two major government plans that had been produced for the Songor: the *Songor Master Plan* (1991) and the *Songor Land Use Plan* (2004). Alongside becoming better informed about these plans, a prolonged discussion began on what a people's plan in the Songor might involve – focusing on clarifying what those present felt they meant by participation. This clarification was done by referencing Gustaffson and Driver's (2005) ladder of participation.

Through this, the group determined that the *Land Use Plan* was the lowest-ranked on the ladder of participation, as it was produced through token discussions with local power brokers alone. This plan also called for the relocation of Songor communities – a potential action upon which they were never consulted. Meanwhile, the earlier Songor *Master Plan* was seen as an example of "cooperative" planning, where local community members were directly involved in discussions of the plan, even if it was being instigated by government. The Master Plan called for a mutually beneficial process of development around the lagoon, where contiguous Songor communities, land-owning clans, and industrial salt producers could benefit from salt production. The consensus was that this plan, if fully implemented, would be the best for the people of Ada. Nonetheless, the self-education discussion revealed room to improve this Master Plan to ensure women and children specifically benefited from the plan, even as ASAF advocated for its full implementation (Meeting notes, August 22nd, 2010).

A crucial set of voices of these early sessions paved the way for much of the learning to come. These voices belonged to women from the Songor communities. They identified that they had been excluded from decision-making not only around the lagoon by central government and local authorities, but also in movement organizing around its defense. They also clearly articulated a central part of their role in transforming the Songor as educating themselves and others about the Songor, government plans and salt in general (meeting notes, August 22nd, 2010). This theorizing of learning-as-action, and sharing knowledge/learning as action have continued to inform every move promulgated by women within the broader movement. The women's critical analysis also shifted the conversation from focusing only on government plans to also focusing on the proliferation of small-scale enclosures sponsored by local elite called "atsiakpo."

All told, the open space created in ASAF meetings at *Radio Ada* and in Songor communities allowed the different forms of learning *in* struggle to be mutually shared. It also created a space for the movement to begin to articulate its theories of learning *in*, *through* and *to* struggle.

(2)"E yeo ngo" – Ada identity as movement strength

ASAF is an exemplar of the organic movements described above, not only because it emerges from the defense of people's livelihoods in the face of dispossession, but perhaps even more importantly because the movement is wedded to Ada epistemologies and identities. This connection is a main source of the movement's strength. To begin with, salt is central to the core of what it means to be Ada. The statement, "E yeo ngo" illustrates this, with its dual meaning: literal, does this person eat salt? and figurative, does this person speak Dangme (the Ada language)? Thus, to be an Ada is to speak salt.

However the movement has gone deeper than this, building on historical mutual defense pacts. As Larweh has previously noted:

> The [Songor] movement is deeply rooted in the culture of the people, why? Because of the way ownership is conceived. Ada is made up of different clans, about 10 or so 12 clans, and one clan is seen as the owner of the water body. And there are four others who are owners of the surrounding lands. You look at the wisdom in this…. So when you say the owner of the water body is there, and the surrounding lands have also got owners, it is a convenient agreement for joint ownership and defense of the resource. (PRG meeting, Feb 23rd, 2008, as quoted in Langdon, 2015, p. 56)

Unifying in the face of threats has been a central message of ASAF, and they have targeted the Asafotufiami festival, mentioned above, in order to drive home the point. The festival celebrates successful wars defending the Songor as a unified nation, and as such has been the focus of ASAF educational campaigns and demonstrations in 2011 and 2012. In 2013, the movement was prevented from marching at the festival, but still put up an educational display.

At the same time, in ASAF meetings held in the open-air studio at Radio Ada, or in community meetings throughout the Songor basin, narratives linking Ada identity and the future of the Songor were consistently present. The strength of this link was reconfirmed in 2016 in focus group discussions held across the Songor where 345 women coming from every Songor community stated emphatically that an open Songor accessible to all of Ghana was a fundamental part of Ada identity (Focus groups, February 28th to March 21st, 2016). Albert Apetorgbor, a leading voice in ASAF, describes how "People from all walks of life come to the Songor Lagoon for salt. Some from as far as Tamale, Ewe land, Kumasi and other places" (Radio Ada, 2002, pg. 3). This is an important contrast to government versions of national resource development, where

mining concessions are given out to large-scale corporations in return for tiny royalties and minimal job creation (Langdon, 2015).

Another example of how the movement has learned to link itself to Ada identity is its ongoing connection to the story of how the Adas came to settle in this costal area. Legend says Yomo, an old woman and spirit of the lagoon, guided the first Adas to the Songor and gave them a series of rules and responsibilities to guide their use of the lagoon. Manuh (1994, 104) has argued this "demonstrate[d] community management of a natural resource" and noted how the previous 1980s iteration of Songor defense connected with this past to mobilize. In contemporary times, one of ASAF's key voices, Akpetiyo Lawer, has referenced breaches in the spirit and letter of the Yomo's regulations to highlight how salt production in the Songor today has become, "abomination salt" (ASAF meeting, June 7th, 2011). ASAF's long-term learning *in* struggle has rooted itself in the overall defense pack of all Adas, the core link of Adas to salt, the value of openness when it comes to resource access, and to foundational spiritual regulations of managing the resource.

(3) Shedding light on secret plans through open dialogue and airwaves

As will be discussed further in the polyrhythm section below, a key feature of ASAF, built largely on learning from the last defense of the resource in the 1980s, was open dialogue on all aspects of the Songor issue. This feature was further solidified by the *Radio Ada* participatory communication approach. ASAF's openness is in stark contrast to the secret meetings often associated with plans around the lagoon. For instance, Amate (1999) documents how local elite worked with one of the companies who acquired a concession for a part of the lagoon in the 70s, and yet later sued the same company for secret dealings with other elements within Ada. From ASAF's outset it was openly acknowledged that some of those present at movement meetings were reporting what was said to others; consequently, these informers/spies were admonished to truthfully report what had been discussed, rather than they being discouraged from coming. This strategy was prescient, as the unearthing of a central government plan to relocate Songor communities was uncovered in 2011, and the combination of *Radio Ada* reporting this, as well as ASAF visiting 7 major Songor communities to cross-check their views on this possible fate completely undermined the local government story that consultation had been done.

The following year, 2012, it surfaced that many traditional rulers had signed a secret attestation agreeing to "give the people alternative livelihoods," which is wording associated with this type of relocation. ASAF and Radio Ada again took this news to 3 of the potentially affected communities to get their views and put them on record. The unearthing and sharing of secret plans like these has surfaced as a key strategy of the movement – walking ASAF's talk that openness is the key to collectively beneficial plans for the lagoon.

As a result of the involvement of traditional authority figures in these secret plans, as well as being behind-the-scenes promoters of atsiakpo, youth in the movement have described them as chameleons:

> The symbol that we selected was a chameleon, and, it was in reference specifically to the chiefs, who were participating in atsiakpo, [...] but at the same time, like I mentioned, they would be saying "oh yes, atsiakpo is very bad, I'm gonna stop it." (Unnamed youth at Radio Ada, June 7, 2011)

As Akpetiyo Lawer described above, the atsiakpo enclosures are an "abomination" as they have turned a communal resource into a unfettered zone of individualized greed (ASAF meeting, June 7th, 2011). The Songor communities have become divided as a result. However, women in the Songor, as well as *Radio Ada*, have remained consistent in identifying the practice of atsiakpo as a major negative development in the lagoon. Many chiefs have also spoken publicly and on the radio about stopping it, and yet these same chiefs are known to be sponsoring some of those who have created the atsiakpo enclosures (ASAF Women's group meeting, July 13th, 2012). In contrast, the consistency of ASAF's actions and analysis of atsiakpo and its negative impacts has created an opening with some of the youth engaged in atsiakpo:

> We have heard our mothers, and what they are saying. We understand how atsiakpo is bad for us. We want to stop, but we don't know how, as long as the chiefs keep allowing it. (Unnamed youth in Toflokpo, August 16th, 2013)

By helping expose secret plans and duplicitous actions, ASAF has given Songor community members the tools to do their own analysis and demand changes in how those who govern them behave. Each of these revelations has been another moment of learning *through* struggle.

(4) The sacred Okor forest and the Songor – sidestepping efforts to silence movement

As part of ASAF's community outreach, a meeting occurred in Goi in 2012. It became clear from the outset that powerful forces wanted to disrupt the meeting and try and undermine the open agenda of ASAF/*Radio Ada*. As a number of invited traditional rulers, including Queen Mothers arrived, they received phone calls, and quickly started to leave. Upon inquiry it turned out they had been threatened with removal from their positions by someone claiming to speak for Nene Ada, the paramount chief in the area. Jane Ocansey, one of the leaders of the women's group within ASAF, recalls the moment:

> We were there in Goi when a call came and the Queen Mothers were there before a call came. Then the women stood up took their bags and left, and I asked them why when they told me Nene Ada told them they should stay away from us so it seems they are taking their position as queen mothers from Nene Ada and not the people. (Movement Meeting at Radio Ada, March 16th, 2016)

Adapting to the evolving situation, the assembled members of ASAF and *Radio Ada* quickly re-strategized. They sensed an effort to discredit the open approach they had been using, and so decided to air the entire meeting live on *Radio Ada* to show they had nothing to hide. They also ensured they drew links between the issues they were raising about the Songor and not only the secret plans around it but also the degradation of the nearby sacred Okor forest, called *Okorhuem,* which is the very forest where the Yomo spirit is purported to have met the first Adas. This connection was picked up on by the assembled community members and the outpouring of concern about this important Ada symbol was captured on air. For instance, one community member said in the live on-air broadcast:

> [W]here our elders settled in the Okorhuem, we've neglected it; people are building in the Okorhuem; it is vanishing. And the Okorhuem is there for the four main clans, so when they enter there they have these certain […] rites they perform over there, and the duties to perform to maintain the Songor […] Now none of these things are happening. (Unnamed speaker in Goi broadcast, August 16th, 2012)

This broadcast, and the focus on Okorhuem as well as Songor issues, led to a dramatic shift in the stance of traditional rulers, including those who signed the attestation.

In the aftermath of the Goi broadcast, ASAF & *Radio Ada* were invited to a meeting with the Ada traditional council where apologies were issued for the use of Nene Ada's name to disrupt the meeting. Larweh describes this meeting:

> We had to strategize so that they do not turn the meeting into a trial. The women advocates led the group. Rev Sophia Kitcher did the delivery […] The presentation was received with claps, smiles and a frown […] The frown came from Nene Okumo of Dangmebiawe. He admitted openly that he was one of those who signed the attestation and has not been happy with attacks on the reputation of Chiefs who signed. He referred to ASAF as the enemy of Ada Chiefs. He was cautioned diplomatically by Nene Pediator who was in the Chair for Nene Ada. One other Chief who signed said he was grateful for the awareness being created thru *Radio Ada*. Different Chiefs spoke about their appreciation of the drama series and the weekly Tuesday evening Coop Salt Programme. (Personal Communication, January 5th, 2013)

This meeting was not only recorded for community members to hear on *Radio Ada*, but a national TV station also recorded it and ran a story on how Ada's were able to work through misunderstanding with their traditional rulers. This conflict, and the strategy of openness that preceeded it, provided a concrete opportunity for learning *through* struggle (an event or conflict) and for an opening to work with the Traditional Council on Songor issues.

(5) Learning from the Past

The collaborative approach to organizing within ASAF is not always easy, and new challenges to it are constantly emerging. However, one of the most significant aspects of learning in ASAF comes from the previous iteration of the Songor struggle in the 1980s. There are two good, linked examples of this to share here. First, as part of the self-education plan, ASAF undertook a series of reflective sessions to unpack how different groups within the movement understood the challenges facing the Songor; these groups were asked to capture their thoughts in the form of an image or story. It was in this context that the youth described the chiefs as "chameleons," as noted above (c.f. Langdon, Larweh & Cameron, 2014). For the older group of activist involved in the 1980s iteration of struggle, they reflected on this past effort and described it as a thumbless hand:

> For me, this whole thing is like somebody without thumbs, who is cutting morsels of food, he is hungry, but he wants to cut, you know, banku, you have to cut a morsel, and you need to roll it into a certain shape, before you can [eat it]… you need a thumb… so for me it is a thumbless hand trying to mold a morsel of banku… So, we had, we had everything, but we lacked something, we lacked something to make our intentions and our aspirations complete. And for me, the thumb is important. (Nomo Abayateye, movement meeting at *Radio Ada*, June 6th, 2011)

The 1980s struggle was a culmination of conflicts with the companies that had obtained concessions for the Songor. With the socialist-oriented PNDC military take-over in late 1981, Adas saw an opening and seized one of the companies. According to this older group of activists, instead of managing it well to bolster a case for local control, it was pillaged, and this enabled the company to come back in. Conflicts then became even more heated, and Maggie Kuwornu was killed in a police raid (Ada Salt Cooperative Committee, 1989). Her death enabled the reopening of the lagoon, with access for community members through cooperatives, but again things were not managed well (Manuh, 1994). Manuh further documents how women were largely excluded from leadership in this process. This historical exclusion led some in the current movement to wonder if the missing thumb the older men described wasn't women's leadership – especially given Songor's importance for women's livelihood:

> When we had the opportunity to manage the resource, was management composed of women? And, for, for that special ability of women to be added, or, management of the time was so made up of men, that the missing thumb could be alluded to the missing role of women in managing at the time that we took over? (Larweh, movement meeting at *Radio Ada*, June 6th, 2011)

This reflective realization underscores how ASAF emerged not only in response to contemporary challenges being faced by people around the Songor, but also from long-term, ongoing learning *in* struggle associated with the past iteration of conflict around the lagoon.

(6) Building and disseminating a people's history of the Songor struggle

A key focus of much of the PAR activity was decided on in the first year of the research project. This began as a discussion of ensuring that *Who killed Maggie*, the book documenting the death of Maggie Kuwornu, was digitized and made accessible on the web, and then morphed into another idea about sharing the movement's story. Wanting *Who Killed Maggie* (Ada Salt Cooperative Committee, 1989) to be available for download served two important purposes for the older group in ASAF. First, it ensured that this book, which had been targeted for destruction in the 1980s/90s, would be available as a resource and a version of the struggle for posterity; second, it helped to ensure that the story of the Songor lagoon and the Ada people could come to be more widely known globally.

The idea of telling the next chapter in the movement's story that emerged from these discussions is rooted in similar desires. While *Who Killed Maggie* describes the story of the last iteration of struggle, ASAF members asserted that there was a need to capture the story of the current struggle as well. In the case of the new project, five reasons for doing it arose from discussions. First, it would be an update on *Who Killed Maggie*, and therefore a chance to capture all that has been learned since. Second, having this book produced by the movement would ensure it was the people of Songor who told their story and not either a single author with a vested interest or an outsider with no connection to the struggle. This speaks to the third point, that the book should as much as possible be a product of the multiple voices within the movement. Fourth, this book should be available for the Ada community to read (and listen to), as well as getting the story of the struggle and the movement out to those outside Ada, thereby helping set up the boomerang effect (c.f. Blaser, Feit & McRea, 2004): pushing government to listen to Songor communities from local and international pressure points. Finally, fifth, picking on this last point, the book should help the ASAF aim of retrieving and then maintaining the Songor as a resource for all (Book writing committee, 2016).

It was through this discussion that the notion of a people's history of the Songor came to be. A book writing committee was formed as a result, with subcommittees taking on different eras of the struggle. In this way, the book came to be conceived as a stand-alone piece, even while it acknowledged and built on the other books that had been written about the Songor. Each of these subcommittees interviewed people for the book, as well as for broadcasts on *Radio Ada*. The subcommittees then drafted outlines for their sections. Each of the sections also contains transcripts with people's quotes, broken up thematically based on the outline of the section – making it possible for anyone to see who said what, and who was the source of an idea in the book. This echoed the open approach of the movement and the *Radio Ada*. Over 40 people involved in different aspects of the life in and around the Songor were drawn on for the book. Texts of each of these sections were written and then edited by a larger grouping of movement members. This created checks and balances to ensure that the story of some of the failings of the past also emerged. As Wilna Quarmyne put it:

> What resonates in this book project is that all movements are human, okay? And inherent in each movement is the capacity for altruism, for human glory, for overcoming the little petty petty divisions. But these are also quickly undermined by human frailty, right? And, it can be the story of how altruism, our sense of community, overcomes these frailties, but we must not paper over them, because then we will forget the lessons from the Songor. (Book Writing Meeting at *Radio Ada*, July 23rd, 2012)

The layered editing process helped to bring this out. Together, this larger group then produced recorded translations into Dangme for broadcast on *Radio Ada*. The recordings were validated at a community vetting, where one community member noted, "I never realized how we all have a stake in the Songor. I thought it was only for the Tekperbiawe, let alone solve the issues; now I see this implicating all of us" (Toflokpo book validation meeting, August 16th, 2013).[3] In recognizing how this book has become its own entity, and not only acts as a sequel to *Who Killed Maggie*, it was recently given a title that emanates from the current struggle around the Songor and speaks to ASAF and *Radio Ada*'s ability to uncover secret plans, as well as to emerging leadership of the movement by the women of the Songor. The title of the book is: *Nɔnɛ Nɔ Kɔ Lio, Nɔ Kɔ Lɛ - "What One Doesn't Know, Another Knows": The Struggle of the Songor Salt People*. The first line is from a movement song by Akpetiyo Lawer and underscores how people keep secrets, but the movement must find them out and share this knowledge. This book is an example of the movement theorizing how they have learned *to* struggle, even as it documents movement learning *in* and *through* struggle.

[3] The Tekperbiawe clan is regarded as having the greatest stake in the Songor, but the 3 other founding clans also have a stake, as does Nene Ada (Amate, 1999).

(7) The emergence of women's leadership in theorizing and in action

Returning to the narratives generated in 2011, described above, women within the movement described the Songor, and themselves as being like dogs, taken for granted and abused. Two years later, in 2013, this same group now described themselves as wolves defending the lagoon:

> Our symbol is that we are like a wolf standing in front of the Songor and is scaring away all destroyers of the Songor. So that is our symbol and that is our proverb. So we are standing by Songor like a wolf scaring away all other animals with the aim of destroying the Songor. (Margaret, Movement Meeting at Radio Ada, July 3rd, 2013)

This identity shift from "dog" to "wolf" is symbolically representative of a number of transformations within ASAF. First, over the past years, women's analysis of the central issues in the Songor has emerged as the most rooted one, and has largely driven ASAF's focus on defending communal access to the lagoon in the face of both atsiakpo and the external threat of government expropriation of the lagoon. Second, women have emerged as the most capable of organizing demonstrations at key moments to raise awareness of the issues in the lagoon, also using epistemically rooted popular education processes to educate the wider Ada and Ghanaian public about these issues. For instance, the women created a tapestry that captured the history of struggle, and shared this with at least 2,000 visitors at Ada's annual Asafotufiami Festival. Third, a number of members of the women's leadership have emerged as important voices of the movement. For instance, the songs by Akpetiyo Lawer have become popular features of any Songor discussion. Not only drawing listener's attention to secret plans, her songs also highlight how government will be only too happy to step in and solve the chaos atsiakpo is causing in the lagoon:

> Look behind us, there comes Government after us Okor [Ada] People. I repeat, turn and look behind, Dangme People. Government is catching up with us […] They told our Elders, they are going to take over Songor, to quell conflicts so that we live in peace. (June 7th, 2011)

She went further to warn that this takeover needs to be fought by "informing the people" about the consequences of government coming in. Likewise, Rev. Sophia Kitcher was a crucial member of the delegation from the movement and *Radio Ada* who met with the Traditional Council after the Goi incident mentioned above.

These factors have combined to shift the terrain in the movement, to the point where the shift from dog to wolf has taken root. *Radio Ada* has reinforced this leadership with radio drama programs, where the popular series, Okɔ Nge Kɔ

asked the question, "why can't women be chiefs, considering how poorly men have done in managing the Songor?" (*Radio Ada,* 2012). At the same time, this growing sense of mission has also elevated the role of women within the broader movement, and in Songor communities. For instance, in outdooring the Dangme translated broadcasts of the book, mentioned above, the young men of Toflokpo who had been very pro-atsiakpo in years previous described how they had come to see how destructive the process was to their community, and credited the analysis of women in their community for helping them to reach this conclusion (quoted above). The impact of women's leadership and learning clearly reflects learning *in* struggle – which is a long-term process of learning.

Two supporting polyrhythms

Two other cross-cutting elements of the story of learning in ASAF must also be shared. In keeping with the analogy of drumming and dancing, they are referred to as polyrhythm. The first polyrhythm is the strategy of openness that underwrites the entire ASAF way of operating. The second polyrhythm is the accompanying role of *Radio Ada*.

For the first polyrhythm not only is openness a crucial contrast to the secret agenda processes mentioned above, but it also creates an ongoing reflective space that constantly reevaluates through dialogue what is working and what is not working. Through this process of openness it has been possible to adjust to the many challenges that have come ASAF's way, from issues within the movement where the Salt Winners Cooperative leadership was not being responsive to community opinion, to the Goi incident, to planning for the Asafotufiami festival intervention, and many others. This openness has led to the conclusion that it is only at ASAF meetings where you can speak honestly about the Songor. At the same time, the strong desire to see the resource benefit the Ada people has led even Nene Ada (the paramount chief) to comment when he attended an ASAF meeting, "Is this all you are up to?" He explained that he had heard negative rumors but now realized they were fabrications. This openness encourages all who come to ASAF meetings, even Nene Ada, to learn and share their knowledge.

The second crucial polyrhythm that cross-cuts the movement continues to be carried out by *Radio Ada* in many different ways, both on-air and also off-air. It hosts the ASAF reflective sessions and broadcast ASAF meetings. It also creates talk-shows, documentaries, and radio dramas, such as Okɔ Ng Kɔ, that highlight aspects of the Songor issue – not sporadically but as part of a sustained, ongoing dialogue. In this way the station has both spread the information drawn together by the movement and created a platform for a wider audience to participate in the movement's openness. *Radio Ada*, and its unwavering work to connect with community needs and to voice the voiceless, has produced deep trust. As such it is able to facilitate discussion and debate around the Songor in a way that very few others have, because its programs and broadcasts are taken at face value – credible reportage of happenings and facilitation of various

perspectives - and not seen as one faction dominating over others. This has enabled it, in the words of a participant at a recent participatory evaluation of the station to continue "to speak truth to power" (meeting in Totope, August 12th, 2015).

Conclusion

These moves and polyrhythms are much like the symbiotic relationship between dancer and drummer seen on display during the Asafotufiami festival in Ada. The various strategies and moves are open evidence of the learning *in* and *through* struggle that one of us has described elsewhere (Langdon, 2009a; 2009b; 2011). And yet, it is the polyrhythmic cadence of the drummers that made this movement possible – perhaps even elicited the movement. These polyrhythms are the basis through which people in ASAF, *Radio Ada* and in the wider Songor and Ada communities have come to decide on how to struggle – a self-defined process of learning *to* struggle – where there are many leaders and many learners. It is therefore the interwoven nature of all of these different forms of social movement learning that are contributing to ASAF's growth and momentum – to moving through learning, and learning through moving.

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Wilna Quarmyne is not privileged to be an indigenous salt-eater. Her link to this article is that together with Alex Quarmyne, a native of Ada, she did have the privilege of initiating *Radio Ada*, the Community Radio Station of the salt-eaters. A life-long apasionata and proponent of Community Radio, she also helped start *Radio DZJO,* a Community Radio Station in Infanta, Quezon, in her natal country, the Philippines. That was when she was a teen-ager; she is now a grandmother. Currently, she is also the founding co-ordinator of the Ghana Community Radio Network.