

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVES IN GHANA



The University of Ghana, McGill University, World Vision, and Heifer International are working with the local District Assembly, the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service (GES), and the Upper Manya Krobo District (UMKD) rural bank in the UMKD of Ghana to strengthen local resources and services that will help improve health, nutrition, economic well-being, gender and diversity, and food security in rural communities.

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SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

- ◆ There are many definitions of sustainability that can be summarized as:
 - The continued delivery of a program, intervention, and/or implementation strategies, and maintained individual behavior change after a certain period of time and which continues to benefit individuals and/or systems ¹
- ◆ Sustainability can also be viewed as the extent to which a program's activities will be institutionalized ²
- ◆ Involving stakeholders in interventions and using existing resources promotes ownership and facilitates sustainability efforts ²
- ◆ Insufficient financial resources and weak institutions (e.g., absence of collaborations) are some of the challenges encountered by community-based interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa ²
- ◆ Adopting a pro-sustainability scenario* in a project may increase child survival by three-fold ^{3,4}
 - * Local stakeholder involvement, capacity building at the community and institutional levels, and incorporation of evaluation strategies

References: ¹ Moore *et al. Implement Sci.* 2017;12:110. ² Iwelunmor *et al. Implement Sci.* 2016;11:43. ³ Sarriot *et al. Health Policy Plann.* 2010;26:187-198. ⁴ Jones *et al. The Lancet.* 362:65-71.

News from the Field

- ◆ Prior to the implementation of *Nutrition Links*, qualitative assessment of the district institution activities revealed limited inter-sector discussion about nutrition
- ◆ The most common collaborations that did occur included shared infrastructure (e.g., vehicles for field work, health sheds), volunteer training, community mobilization for environmental hygiene, and monitoring and evaluation of services

NUTRITION LINKS



Project Activities

- ◆ The *Nutrition Links* staff and local partners formed four sustainability groups to institutionalize intervention activities (shown in the outer beige boxes) considered to be priorities for the district to continue to support after the end of the project.

Ready-to-lay poultry for egg production
Nutrition education sessions

Group 1: Agribusiness/livelihoods for women's groups for improved nutrition

Engages communities in agriculture projects. Women poultry farmers formed the Agribusiness APEX association and received trainings on topics such as:

- ◆ Financial literacy education
- ◆ Poultry production
- ◆ Farm record keeping
- ◆ Gardening
- ◆ Bee keeping

Mentor-led health & financial education sessions
Savings program for adolescent girls

Group 2: Supporting adolescents to make better decisions in education, business, and health and nutrition

Supports community-based savings program for adolescent girls administered by the rural bank. Supports local mentors through trainings on topics such as:

- ◆ Health and nutrition
- ◆ Group dynamics
- ◆ Simple banking practices
- ◆ Roles and responsibilities of a mentor
- ◆ Communication skills

Trainings for district staff across all institutions

Group 3: Building a harmonized, capable, healthy, and well-nourished district through institutional collaborations

Members visit communities and encourage collaboration among partners. Examples include:

- ◆ Members supported the training of Rural Bank field staff and Agriculture Extension Agents in health and nutrition. Trained staff share nutrition and health messages with farmers and micro-finance groups during community meeting activities.
- ◆ School Health Education Programme coordinators of GES support Community Health Officers to carry out school health activities.
- ◆ Project personnel in collaboration with the GHS and the rural bank trained mentors of 20 adolescent girls clubs in health and nutrition.

Training in Lots Quality Assurance Sampling

Group 4: Supporting evidence generation and sharing for use in local decision

Trained staff collect and analyze data to prepare reports for planning purposes. Examples of analyses and recommendations:

- ◆ There is a low coverage of farmer education on livestock or poultry keeping practices because of logistical issues and limited staff. To remedy this, the DoA intends to resource agricultural staff to intensify education and improve farmers' management practices.
- ◆ A low proportion of children were able to identify letters of the alphabet by the time they had reached their second year of preschool due to inadequate reading materials. GES intends to provide appropriate reading materials and organize a reading festival on letter and sound recognition.



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Website:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/cine/research/building-capacity-sustainable-livelihoods-and-health-ghana>