End of Project Evaluation Report - Local Governance Call

STAR GHANA FOUNDATION

CONTENT

ACRONYMS

Acronym		Name
AAKM		Abura-Asebu- Kwamankese Municipality
AASMA		Asante Akim South Municipal Assembly
CAP		Cocoa Advocacy Project
CHPS		Community-based Health Planning and Services
CHRAJ		Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CICs		Community Information Centres
CSOs		Civil Society Organisations
DAC		Development Assistance Committee
DAC		District Accountability Committee
DACF		District Assembly Common Fund
DAs		District Assemblies
DCE		District Chief Executives
DDF		District Development Fund
DLE		District-Level Elections
DPOs		Disability Peoples' Organisations
EC		Electoral Commission
FM		Frequency Modulation
GBC		Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GESI		Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GFD		Ghana Federation of Persons with Disability
GNA		Ghana News Agency
GSPD		Ghana Society of the Physically Disabled
ICT		Information, Communication and Technology
IEC		Information and Education Communication
IGF		Internally Generated Fund
IPs		Implementing Partners

KEEA		Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem
KEMA		Kwabre East Municipal Assembly
M&E		Monitoring and Evaluation
MM/DCEs		Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives
MA		Metropolitan/Municipal Assembly
MCD		Municipal/ Metropolitan Coordinating Director
MCE		Metropolitan/Municipal Chief Executives
MDAs		Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MMDCEs		Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives
MP		Member of Parliament
MTDP		Medium Term Development Plan
NaBCo		Nation Builders Corps
NAFPTA		National Fish Processors and Traders Association
NCCE		National Commission for Civic Education
NGOs		Non-Governmental Organisations
NJMA		New Juaben Municipal Assembly
NJSMA		New Juaben South Municipal Assembly
NPP		New Patriotic Party
OECD		Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEA		Political Economy Analysis
PFM		Public Financial Management
PMT		Programme Management Team
PTA		Parent-Teacher Association
PwDs		Persons with Disabilities
SMC		School Management Committee
SMS		Short Message Service
SPEEFA		Social Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
TLM		Teaching and Learning Materials
TV		Television
VfM		Value for money

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STAR Ghana Foundation is a national centre for active citizenship and philanthropy. It aims to contribute to the strengthening of civil society and enabling citizens to engage with the state to ensure accountable, transparent, and responsive governance at both national and local levels.

Its **vision** is to see a well-informed and active Ghanaian citizenry able to contribute to transformational change that advances democracy, accountability, and social inclusion.

Its **mission** is to increase the effectiveness of citizens and civil society to achieve an equitable, inclusive society by convening inclusive dialogue and collaboration; catalysing active citizenship and collective action; coordinating and supporting strategic partnerships; and facilitating continuous learning to fuel wider scale change.

In February, 2018, STAR Ghana launched a Local Governance Call with an overall objective to strengthen, scale up and consolidate the results of previous and ongoing local governance focused initiatives particularly in the areas of inclusive voice, improved access, and transparency in service delivery. The call was divided into two components. These were the strategic policy influencing and local partnerships components.

STAR Ghana consequently awarded over GH¢9,010,248.09 to 24 partners (7 and 17 under the strategic policy influencing and local partnerships components respectively). These partners implemented projects around five thematic areas, namely:

- Promoting basic service delivery and development management at local level.
- Innovative technologies and media for promoting citizens participation, accountability and public access to information in local governance.
- Gender inclusion, disability and diversity in local governance.
- Poverty reduction, local economic development, resource mobilisation and budgetary utilisation at the local level.
- Implementing the new Act 936, party political elections of MMDCEs and voter education and sensitisation towards referendum.

Key Findings and Results

The 24 organisations were evaluated focusing on the extent to which specific projects achieved their results as set out in the projects' performance plans. The organisations made significant strides in achieving results towards enhancing local governance and positively progressed towards project outcomes.

However, the degree of achievement differed from partner to partner. Thus while some organisations were recommended for follow up funding, others were not recommended. Taken together, the components all increased capacity and were mutually reinforcing on the themes of promoting basic service delivery and development management at local level; innovative technologies and media for promoting citizens' participation, accountability and public access to information in local governance; gender inclusion, disability and diversity in local governance; poverty reduction, local economic development, resource mobilisation and budgetary utilisation at the local level and implementing the new Act 936, party political elections of MMDCEs and voter education and sensitisation towards referendum.

Gender inclusion, disability and diversity in local governance

All the interventions actualised the need for effective approaches to target vulnerable and excluded populations. All projects reported deliberate strategies and activities that assured the inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, and women.

> Election support activities by organisations like ABANTU and Media General promoted women inclusion and the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) policies and procedures of all organizations were clearly articulated and implemented.
>
> Activities such as mapping out of female aspirants, stakeholder's engagements, capacity building, and media engagements were held.

Poverty reduction, local economic development, resource mobilisation and budgetary utilisation at the local level

> CSOs acted as intermediaries to facilitate dialogue between service providers and users of basic services using social accountability tools. Implementing partners developed joint action plans for service quality improvements based on interface meetings between service users and providers.

Innovative technologies and media for promoting citizens' participation, accountability and public access to information in local governance

- Citizen's engagement aimed to ensure that local resources are increasingly transparent, responsive to local needs and delivered in a socially accountable manner.
- Financial transparency and accountability supported the "supply side" of citizen's engagement, with information and communication activities from government to citizens on service standards, public budgets and expenditures.
- Emerging issues from these project outcomes include efficiency in engagement with citizens using appropriate technology such as social and mainstream media; use of active citizen groups as partners and collaborators in the monitoring and assessment of local government capital projects
- GJA in addition, initiated a Community of Practice (CoP) involving journalists and grant partners in three zones involving six regions, namely Greater Accra, Eastern, Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Volta.

- **Implementing the new Act 936, party political elections of MMDCEs and voter education and sensitisation towards referendum.**

- The support to the election of MMDCE's and sensitisation towards referendums were probably the most challenging for the organisations. While the organisations implemented all activities and created the needed awareness, the challenging political atmosphere made it difficult to achieve all the expected outcomes, particularly, as the referendum was called off.

- The GJA implemented a set of activities, which continued to increase public awareness on the ongoing local governance reform. More specifically the set of activities contributed to: increased awareness of people in remote communities and more groups being better informed about benefits of amending Article 55(3) and the required thresholds; increased support for

- amendment of both Articles 55(3) and 243(1); confusion between amendment of Article 243(1) a non-entrenched provision and amendment of Article 55(3) an entrenched provision clarified; Increased consensus between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP)

Key lessons learnt

The project's objective was to promote democratic governance by supporting and encouraging local governance as a facilitation mechanism among grassroots communities and local authorities, in order to address the low level of accountability of local authorities towards citizens. The grantees strategies focused on empowering citizens by fundamentally strengthening the grassroots communities and stakeholders.

Recommendations

In terms of programmatic approach, district-based interventions were mostly employed and, through partnerships with civil society, engaged beneficiary populations. Programming included components to develop the capacities of local partners to serve as mediators and service providers, contributing to the sustainability of these skills within communities. On the operational side, it became evident that a robust field presence was critical to achieving impact. It is, therefore, essential for future programs to partner with the state and other development partners to have a secure, affordable presence at the district level..

Background to the evaluation assignment

In February 2018, STAR Ghana launched a Local Governance call with an overall objective to strengthen, scale up and consolidate the results of previous and ongoing local governance focused initiatives particularly in the areas of inclusive voice, improved access and transparency in service delivery.

1.0   PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the assignment is to review STAR Ghana's portfolio of projects under the Local Governance Call to collate overall results achieved and the contribution of the call to the achievement of STAR-Ghana programme's Log frame Outcome and Outputs.

Specifically, it will seek to achieve the following:

- Assess the extent to which the Call achieved its overall and specific objectives.
- Assess the contribution of the Call to STAR-Ghana programme's log fame Outcome and Outputs.
- Assess the extent to which STAR-Ghana programme's key strategies (GESI, VfM, and 3Cs and L) were reflected in the implementation of the projects and their contribution to the results achieved.
- Draw out the emerging issues, bigger picture, and trends in the Local Governance work of partners for potential uptake by the STAR Ghana Foundation.
- Develop two case studies reflecting innovation and significant change.

2.0   EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This end-of-project, retrospective evaluation will capture results of the STAR Ghana Local Governance program achieved over the last two years, including what has and has not worked, to inform future planning. Specifically, we will evaluate the program along the following six dimensions: results, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender equity, governance and capacity building, and sustainability.

Evaluation framework

The methodology for the evaluation takes into account: i) the need for identifying specific issues, needs and constraints; ii) the need to evaluate the local governance programme: levels of achievement, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations – and taking into account the different stages of progress in Ghana iii) the need to formulate conclusions and recommendations as an input into future strategy and follow-up; iv) the project´s logical framework and indicators to be used as a basis for addressing key questions.

Evaluation Principles

- **Usefulness:** The evaluation aims to be useful, particularly to support decision-making.

- **Impartiality:** Evaluator will avoid bias and protect impartiality at all stages of the evaluation, thereby supporting the credibility of the evaluation process and results.

- **Independence:** The evaluator has been selected with due regard to independence and professionalism to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

- **Quality:** The evaluation will employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

- **Competence:** Those engaged in conducting the evaluation have all the necessary skills to conduct high-quality and ethical work.

- **Transparency and consultation:** Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations

Methods and Techniques

The selection of methods and techniques has been established in order to assure relevant data collection regarding, the evidence needed to best answer the evaluation questions and the analyses that are most appropriate to generate useful findings and address the evaluation criteria.

Desk review of programme documents - the consultant conducted comprehensive desk review and analysis of relevant project documents including documents from STAR-Ghana and the Grant partners. The desk review focused on documents including project inception, technical and quarterly/yearly reports, project log-frames, theory of change, reports from Implementing Partners (IPs), monitoring and evaluation plans and frameworks, project indicators, financial reports and so forth.

The review will further focus on identifying, analysis and finding answers to the following: extent of activity implementation, extent of achieving results and extent to which project results have contributed to STAR Ghana's strategies on gender equality and social inclusion.

Phase 1: Desk review

As part of phase one, the consultants performed the follow key tasks: Review programme documents to have full understanding of the anti-corruption call, STAR Ghana GESI strategy, discussion papers on the national anti-corruption plan, review project logic model to appreciate the relationship between project interventions and planned results.

Phase 2: Structuring the review against the assessment criteria

Elaborated assessment criteria, formulated key review guidelines, and developed an assessment to ensure objectivity and comparability of results among IPs. Thus detailed assessment criteria were developed for each of the 10 evaluation criteria supplied by STAR Ghana.

2.1   DESIGN AND APPROACH OF THE END PROJECT EVALUATION

The evaluation will look at the following:

- **Results:** assess the overall outputs, outcomes and impact of the programme using an RBM approach to what extent were the programme's outputs achieved with the factors which enabled these results

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives of the various components of the project/ intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, local governance needs, country needs, global priorities, and partners' and donors' policies, the appropriateness of an intervention.

- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved, considering their relative importance.

- **Sustainability:** The continuation of the benefits from the project intervention after the assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits.

- **Coherence:** (I) External coherence will look at coordination activities and policy dialogue with national actors. (ii) Internal coherence will examine the role of key stakeholders in coordinating and promoting local basic service delivery and development management priorities at the local level.

- **Efficiency:** A measure of how economically resources/inputs (e.g. funds, expertise, time) have been converted to results.

- **Cross-cutting themes:** The integration of the cross-cutting themes of gender inclusion, disability, and delivery in local governance.

- **Gender Equity:** What has been the impact on gender equity and social inclusion among the beneficiaries and implementers of the programme; what specific strategies where found to be most effective in ensuring gender targets were met?

- **Governance and capacity building:** What was the unique partnership arrangements of this programme and how did this enhance the results achieved between government and civil society; What capacities were built over the course of the programme which are likely to be sustained?; What lessons learned are there in relation to engaging government and civil society on programmes of this nature? Based on the evaluation questions set forth in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the consultant developed an evaluation matrix, which contains the detailed evaluation questions, specific indicators, and data sources for each.

2.2   DATA ANALYSIS

Programme documents sourced from the national and district levels were analysed according to two analysis templates:

- A checklist of completed processes as available to the consultant.

- An analysis of the different technical characteristics of programme documents. This will be used to develop a description of the status of the various programme components and a set of preliminary findings.

Data collected was analysed through an analysis matrix based on the key questions of the evaluation. The consultant used an iterative process to identify emergent themes and key patterns.

2.3   STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The strength of the evaluation approach is a robust portfolio of previous reports, the ability to combine and cross-reference information from quarterly project reports.   All the interventions evaluated have comprehensive sets of progress reports. This ensured that evaluators had access to all relevant information over the life of the interventions.

3.0 FINDINGS

This section is in two parts. The first part (4.1) deals with the summary of findings from the Local Partnership component, while the second part (4.2) deals with the detailed findings of the strategic policy component.

3.1   INTRODUCTION TO BACKGROUND

The Local Partnership Component of the Local Governance Call was designed in line with the national decentralisation policy to achieve further improvements in decentralised service delivery, local economic growth and social development.
The local partnership component of the project spanned from June 2018 to May 2019. The small grants component projects were funded for initial one-year duration to strengthen, scale up and consolidate the results of previous and ongoing local governance focused initiatives at the local level.

3.2   SUMMARY RESULTS FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPONENT

ILGAM
The project sought to improve Local Government Accountability Mechanisms (ILGAM), by ensuring transparency, accountability through strengthened citizens' oversight responsibility district assemblies' capital development projects. It is also to enhance internal revenue mobilisation and utilisation. The ILGAM project successfully implemented 66.67% of its activities, scoring 81.8% in terms of performance.
It managed to rally the needed stakeholders and beneficiary groups to achieve nearly all the deliverables.

EPRM
On Enhancing Participation in Internal Revenue Mobilisation and Utilisation (EPRM}, the project implemented 13 out of the 15 planned activities that translates to 86.7% success. Mechanisms for increased transparency and responsiveness in local governance were enhanced.

CAAG
Citizens Action for Accountable Governance (CAAG), set out to achieve two main things. First, a well-informed and broad based citizen's advocacy platform mobilised and engaging with local authorities in two districts and second, increase citizens' demand for improved transparency and accountability in public financial management in five district assemblies.
Outcomes of the CAAG project improved upon the baseline status to a large extent. Interest and participation of citizens in assembly processes improved with the establishment of citizens' forums and training of 240 members in two targeted assemblies.

ESILG
Enhancing Social Inclusion in Local Governance (ESILG) project resulted in socially excluded groups (women, youth and Fulani community) in two districts playing active roles in the local governance of their areas.

About 8,000 women, 1,802 Fulanis and 6,138 youth in the two districts had increased awareness and knowledge, confidence and willingness and actively participate in the development of their local areas. A total of 16 out of 18 activities were successfully implemented.

FON
Friends of the Nation (FON), is a project aimed at improving the economic well-being of Persons with Disability and women traders. Out of the 19 activities, FON could only implement five. All the same, following orientation from FON to the socially excluded groups and the resultant meetings between market women and PWDs on the one hand and the Tarkwa Municipal Assembly on the other, there have been improved knowledge on the Disability Act and the Minerals Development Fund Act.

PSAUPR
Promoting Social Accountability in the Utilisation of Public Resources through citizens' participation was a project that was poorly implemented. Additionally, the project activities were insufficiently documented and, therefore, lacked enough detail to be considered favourable against the nine assessment criteria.

LOGAP
The Local Governance Accountability Project (LOGAP), sought to contribute to good governance through the promotion of quality public office holders engagement with citizens especially vulnerable groups including women, the youth and people with disability on developmental issues. LOGAP implemented all their activities and created spaces and platforms for the citizenry to engage their assemblies on governance issues. As a result, the assemblies have started to appreciate the level and input by the citizenry on policies such as LEAP, DCF and GSFP.

VEREF
Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming and Socially Inclusive Participation in Local Governance for Development in Ghana was a project was planned and implemented by the Volta Educational Renaissance Foundation (VEREF). It was designed to increase the number of qualified women, PwDs and youth from the project districts to contest the 2019 district-level elections and to actively participate in the local development agenda processes.
The VEREF implemented nine key activities over the one-year project duration. Progress was made towards the achievement of the ultimate outcome of raising the interest of marginalised groups to the extent that members of these groups begun expressing their willingness to contest in the 2019 elections.

CEDEP
Promoting Citizens' Participation, Inclusion and Accountable Governance at the local level was a project planned and executed in two districts in the Ashanti Region by Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) Ghana. It sought to increase participation of citizens and improvement in service delivery at the local level. CEDEP implemented all the 16 key activities within the one-year project duration. The baseline status showed low levels of knowledge about the rights of citizens to demand accountability from duty bearers and high apathy among the citizenry towards poor service delivery in terms of quality, quantity, distribution and targeting the local level. This has resulted in high incidence of corruption

and mismanagement with impunity on the part of duty bearers and consequently perpetuation of marginalisation of the vulnerable in society.

CEWEFIA

Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA), spearheaded this project which was to enhance women's roles and participation in governance to alleviate poverty. The outcome of the project is an improvement in the economic facilities and resources available to women fish processors in the Komenda-Edina Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA), Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District and the Cape Coast metropolis in the Central Region.

The CEWEFIA planned and successfully implemented nine key activities within the one-year duration. Through the interventions women fish processors and traders were trained in good governance and advocacy skills. This resulted in the women traders bolder in presenting petitions to heads of their respective assemblies.

The 4-H GHANA Project

This project conducted in the New Juaben South Municipal was aimed at enhancing interface between community sub-structures and duty bearers and to promote active participation of marginalised groups in local governance. Eighteen key activities were rolled out and fully implemented within the one-year period.

The 4-H Ghana project, geared towards improving local governance in the New Juaben South Municipality brought significant changes in the participation of marginalised groups and performance of zonal councils. Clear evidence is the fact the number of PwDs, women and youth actively participating in governance issues at the municipal level increased from nine, 27 and zero in 2014to 167, 294 and 382 respectively in 2019 after the project.

The Kekeli Foundation, Ghana Initiative

This project was designed to enhance the inclusiveness of persons with disability in four municipal/district assemblies in the Volta Region and to help address response and actions on issues of disability. The foundation implemented 13 key activities which include training programmes which strengthened the capacity of the PwDs and Disability People's Organisation (DPOs) in planning and budgeting which enabled them to participate in all district level planning programmes.

The radio broadcasts and the Information and Education (IE) materials targeting the rights of PwDs significantly empowered them and parents to get involved by having representation in all district level planning meetings.

Women's Hope Foundation

This initiative by WHF is meant to increase the voice, inclusion and participation of women and PwDs in local governance and also contribute to increased accountable and responsive governance at community and district levels.

WHF developed, produced and distributed a total of 1090 pieces of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on women and PwDs' participation and inclusion in local level elections. These materials were critical to bridge the information gap. In all, 5,059 people were reached made up of 2,363 males and 2,696 females with these IEC materials. In addition, WHF developed a gender equality and social inclusion monitoring tools to track the implementation.

Through this initiative, Kwabre East Assembly, for example, adopted new strategies to improve disbursement process of the disability common fund to ensure transparency, accountability and responsiveness.

Nsawam-Adoagyiri Municipal Assembly Ark Development Organisation executed a project to improve service delivery and development in the municipality, particularly for women and PwDs.

Child Research and Resource Centre

This was designed to ensure that women and socially excluded groups able to access economic opportunities through active engagement with local authorities. It contributed to increase in citizens' influence in local governance, accountability, democracy and social inclusion.

People's Dialogue on Human Settlements (PDHS)

This project was aimed at consolidating greater openness, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability in local governance. Its implementation resulted in 17 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) being supported with training in Social Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (SPEEFA), aimed at budget tracking in four districts in the Greater Accra Region.

The public financial management network was adopted by the Ashaiman Municipal Assembly and through the training provided; PDHS was able to engage the presiding members of the Ashaiman and Accra metros and trained them on their public relations and complaints committees.

WILDAF

This project focused on enhancing gender equality, inclusiveness and participation in local governance through gender responsive policies, programmes and actions. It strengthened the capacity of assemblies on gender equality, gender mainstreaming into actions and programmes.

Local Governance Network (LOGNet)

The focus of the LOGNet project was to enforce the adoption of local governance legal frameworks especially the Local Government Act of 2016 (Act (936), by empowering civil society organisations and citizens in local governance to play more deliberative and monitoring roles within targeted districts as precursor for accountable governance.

The LOGNet project results have contributed to increased involvement and participation of previously marginalised groups in governance at local levels in consonance with sections 40-48 of the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936).

3.3 STRATEGIC COMPONENT FINDINGS

Seven institutions were evaluated, focusing on the extent to which specific projects achieved their set-out results as set out in the project's performance plans and progress reports. These are, Abantu for Development, Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), NORSAAC Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Media General and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG).

ABANTU

Abantu's project focus was on strengthening women's capacities for effectiveness in Ghana's local governance system. It increased voice, participation and representation of women in the country's local governance system. Key results contributed to STAR Ghana's local governance call through issue-based and inclusive district assembly elections. There was an increased national advocacy and awareness of women' participation in district level elections.

CDD-Ghana

CDD-Ghana covered public official responsiveness on service delivery at the sub-national level. The objective was to improve official responsiveness (policy, institutional and resource allocation) to social development inequalities/gaps at the sub-national level. This was achieved by collaborating with other civil society organisations and other state actors to improve service delivery at the local level.

GJA

The GJA worked towards improved media CSO collaboration for inclusive and accountable local governance in the country. The association collaborated with other partners to promote issue-based and inclusive district assembly elections. There were dedicated TV/radio programmes for policy advocacy and accountability on local governance issues.

NORSAAC

The project contributed to enhanced local governance through an inclusive and citizen-led referendum and district assembly elections. The project promoted inclusiveness and participation of women, PwDs, the youth and marginalised groups in the processes leading to the creation of new regions, election of MMDCEs and the creation of new districts.

MFWA

Through the foundation's project, communication and public outreach practices within the eight project districts were strengthened and improved. All the districts developed communication strategies guiding their public outreach efforts, which documents are helping to deal with the often adhoc and uncoordinated approaches to communication and outreach programmes by the assemblies.

MEDIA GENERAL

Media General's focus was to improve access to infrastructure, personnel and logistics, quality healthcare and education services for the socially excluded. The intervention gave citizens opportunities to increase their knowledge in local governance issues through news features, news reportage and documentaries for radio and television.

IDEG

The IDEG promoted the referendum held to amend the entrenched provision of Article 55(3) to allow all political parties to participate in local governance under the "Democratic Devolution Strengthens Developmental Governance (DDSDG)" project. The advocacy and public education activities came to an abrupt end when the referendum to amend Article 55(3) was put off and process to amend Article 243(1) was also truncated by the President.

Extent of activity Implementation

All organisations were able to implement their planned activities with the exception of activities truncated as a result of the cancellation of the referendum. For instance, ABANTU for development planned to roll out twenty-one (21) activities under four (4) key results, fourteen (14) for the first year and nine (9) during the second year. Out of these, 6 six key activities were implemented under result1 which sought increased women's voice, visibility and representation, including women living with disabilities in Ghana's local governance space

The Ghana Journalist Association planned 15 key activities to be implemented over the two-year project duration. Out of this number, five were planned under results 1: "Inclusive media platforms for advocacy and accountability on local governance issues by journalists and STAR-Ghana Grant partners established."

Six (6) activities were also planned under Result.2: "Journalists and citizens mobilised around 2019 District Assembly Elections through media platforms for inclusive development at local and national levels. Four (4) activities were planned under results 3:"GJA structures strengthened for improved reportage and advocacy on local governance issue"

Analysis of key achievements towards results based on activities implemented

Baseline data from all projects indicated that women's representation in decision making has not increased in any significant way even after the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992 despite the fact that there has been a steady increase in the number of women offering themselves as aspirants. Women have failed to attain the 30 percent UN recommended minimum threshold in representation in decision making structures making gender-based exclusion in these structures a major fault-line in equality in participation. Data gathered from the Electoral Commission on the 2015 District Assembly Elections reveal that women represent only about 5.6% of Ghana's Local Governance System in spite of the fact that women constitute 51.6% of Ghana's population advocacy.

Effectiveness of strategies/ approaches in achieving results

Effective stakeholder engagements provided in-depth understanding of women's rights, statistics on women's abysmal representation in Ghana's Local Governance system and the need for women's increased representation in these decision making spaces. The awareness created around women's poor representation resulted in increased support and commitment to reverse the current situation especially by "male champions".

Joy News generously offered airtime to support public education on the national referendum. GBC collaboration contributed to secure subsidized airtime for the "We the People" television programme.

GJA employed the establishment of community of practice involving journalists and CSOs producing developmental stories for publication -The COP became a vehicle for shaping the minds of journalists in accurate reportage on inclusive local governance. Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) used four key strategies to reach project results. These are, partnerships, convening, capacity building and evidence gathering.

Integration of Gender & Social Inclusion (GESI) in Project Implementation:

There was a conscious effort to mainstream gender into the project right from the conceptualization/design stage. The projects engaged with women, youth and PwDs in its activities. For example, MFWA in carrying out the baseline studies, the consultants were guided to engage specifically with PWD, women and youth groups for their reflections. The MFWA project was set in quite hard to reach areas of the country. The MFWA project team and their consultants engaged in local communities in areas such as Wechiau in the Wa West and Tumu in the Sissala-East district of the Upper West region.

All projects were gender and social inclusion inclined while directly targeting more women beneficiaries. Within this group of beneficiaries, for instance ABANTU made sure women from different groupings- youth groups, women with disabilities, women from disadvantaged communities and women from the formal and informal sectors continued to play a key role as participants and beneficiaries.

In the CDD intervention, the parliamentary committee on gender was involved in consultative meetings; round table discussion involved institutions and CSOs whose work cut across gender, youth, disability and other forms of marginalized groups.

Value for Money Analyses

In terms of the efficient use of available resources, all grantees ensured that project funds were committed to the execution of approved activities only and was consistent with the approved budget.

Project results and its contribution to the objectives of Local Governance and its linkage to STAR-Ghana Outcome and Outputs

The project aimed at providing the public in targeted MMDAs, youth and persons with disabilities), increased and sustainable access to governance information, public goods and services through improved citizens-authorities engagement and improved responsiveness on the part of local authorities. Mapping of critical development issues in the target districts was especially important. In each district, the mapping report data captured the top 5 critical development issues. Groups such as women, youth, PWDs, CSOs, local media, assembly officials and opinion leaders were interviewed to map out critical issues.

The interventions in Ho Municipal Assembly, West Akim District, Suhum Municipal Assembly, Ga West Municipal Assembly, and Tema Metropolitan Assembly achieved significant results in the project communities and in the lives of the project's beneficiaries.

In the Suhum and West Akim districts, the traditional and religious leaders committed to encouraging and supporting women who had either dropped out of the district assembly elections or have the potential to contest the elections.

Aside engaging key state agencies and actors, the project also targeted key social accountability non-state actors (Media/CSOs/NGO) and built their capacities to undertake evidence-based advocacy to influence and demand for accountability and the use of evidence in policy making towards improving the governance of social services.

The initiatives also sought to promote gender inclusion, disability and diversity in local governance through the consistent engagement of the various stakeholders.

4.0   LESSONS LEARNED

The project's objective was to promote democratic governance by supporting and encouraging local governance as a facilitation mechanism among grassroots communities and local authorities, in order to address the low level of accountability of local authorities towards citizens. The grantees strategies focused on empowering citizens by fundamentally strengthening the grassroots communities and stakeholders.

5 .0   RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of programmatic approach, most of the interventions employed district-based interventions and, through partnerships with civil society, engaged beneficiary populations. Programming included components to develop the capacities of local partners to serve as mediators and service providers, contributing to the sustainability of these skills within communities. On the operational side, it became evident that a robust field presence was critical to achieving impact.

It is, therefore, essential for future programs to partner with the state and other development partners to have a secure, affordable presence at the district level.

Specific recommendations for are as follows:

- STAR Ghana grantees should be encouraged to seek opportunities to collaborate and share information with other implementing partners. Coordinating and harmoni 12 aid efforts are a standard focus of development projects.
- Given that gender mainstreaming and gender equality are relatively new themes in Ghanaian governance policy, ongoing consistent support is needed for them to become strongly rooted in Ghanaian society.
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- STAR Ghana's efforts and projects in support of decentralized democratic governance should be properly documented and stored, and a lessons learned database created on forms of local governance and possible ways to integrate traditional authorities and cultural values into states structures
- STAR Ghana and grantees should support traditional authorities through ongoing capacity-building and adequate dissemination of the new laws. Both traditional authorities and local government officials should be helped to develop a clearer understanding of the links between community, district and central levels of government in order to be able to operate optimally within these local governance structures.

6.0   CONCLUSIONS

Evidence drawn from the evaluation suggests that the projects bear significant implications for accelerated poverty reduction, social development and community empowerment in Ghana through the strengthening of local government. The broader lesson is that devising a comprehensive and appropriate policy, institutional and financing framework are the key factors that encourage the process of decentralization.

In respect to the outcomes, all the projects increased significantly on their baselines indicators as detailed in each partner assessment template. STAR Ghana was effective at ensuring that partner activities were monitored, and in supporting the network of partners to convene, learn and share experiences, all of which impacted the projects positively.

Advocates of decentralisation in developing countries argue that bringing government closer to the people will make it more responsive and hence more likely to develop policies and outputs which meet the needs of ordinary citizens — the majority of whom are 'the poor'. Nobel laureate Amatay Sen (1999) observed that poverty is the deprivation of basic capabilities that provide a person with the freedom to choose the life he or she has reason to value.

These capabilities include good health, education, social networks and command over economic resources, and influence on decision-making that affects one's life. From this perspective, poverty and underdevelopment is thus a condition that has three interrelated perspectives: a. it is the lack of income, employment, productive assets, access to social safety nets; b. lack of access to services such as education, health care, information, credit, water supply and sanitation; and c. lack of political participation, dignity and respect.

Annex1: ABANTU Case Study

ABANTU's project sought to increase voice, participation and representation of women in Ghana's local governance system essentially by increasing number of women, elected and appointed in the 2019 district assembly elections, by increasing visibility of women aspirants, building their capacities to ensure effectiveness beyond the 2019 district assembly elections, sensitizing and committing district assemblies to social inclusion and women's representation

The district entry meetings provided an in-depth understanding of women's rights, statistics on women's abysmal representation in decision making and the need for women's increased representation in these decision making spaces.

The awareness that was created around women's poor representation resulted in increased support and commitment to reverse the situation especially by "male champions".

Follow-up activities such as mapping out of female aspirants, stakeholder's engagements, capacity building, and media engagements were held. A remarkable result is that, in the West Akim Municipal Assembly where there was no elected woman aspirant, as a result of this project and the support rendered to the women aspirants, three out of the five women who contested the elections actually won. It is also encouraging to state that, out of the thirty-one 31 women aspirants who were directly supported and actually contested the elections, 17 of them were elected as assembly members and three being appointed, bringing the total to 20.

The trainings and updates that were given on the Electoral Commission's dates for the processes of the election also provided the women aspirants the opportunity to be timely in picking and submitting their forms and not to miss the dates as the continuous change in dates by the Electoral Commission became confusing at a point.

It is worth to note that as a result of the process of observation, young women have gained tremendous knowledge and interest in Ghana's governance system, particularly, the local level system.

A local chief speaking at one of the sensitisation meetings in Ho

The interventions changed the mindset of many men who frown upon women aspiring for leadership roles in the local governance system.

Mr. Kobby Mendz (seated middle) in a group photograph with other participants

A participant, Kobby Mendz, who trains female footballers in Kpobiman, said he never had interest in anything that had to do with politics and governance and, therefore, never voted.

"This training has totally changed that mindset. I have grown keen interest in what goes on in the assembly now and promise the group that I will cast my first vote during the district level elections because it is my civic responsibility and also a way of making my voice count in electing leaders".
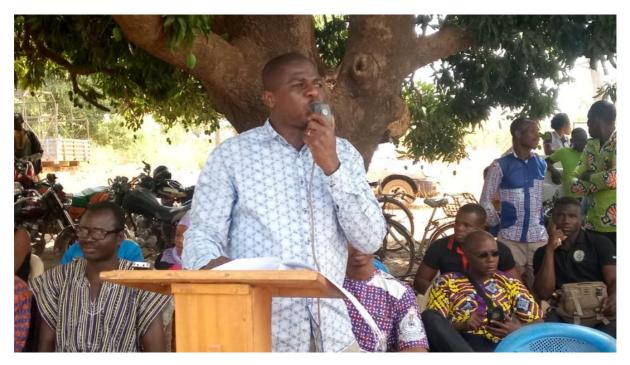
There were similar comments from other male participants at the various workshops. The comments, feedbacks and actual work done, following from the workshops and forums, demonstrate the change in perceptions and behaviors among the project beneficiaries.

Annex 2MFWA Case Studies: State of the District Broadcasts

The MFWA's advocacy for improved citizens' access to governance information and participation in local governance through the media in many significant ways contributed to improved citizens-authorities engagement, interactions and conversations and improvements in service delivery for the local people. The State of District (SODs) radio broadcast programmes were held in all eight target districts, namely, Wa East, Wa West,

Lawra Municipal, Sissala-East, Wa Municipal, West Mamprusi, Twiffo Atti Morkwa, Ellembelle.

Each programme lasted at least an hour. Over 50,000 citizens across eight municipal and district assemblies in Ghana, tuned in to listen to their Chief Executives Officers present their report on the state of their district in a live radio session. Thereafter, citizens through direct phone-ins, text messages *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* platforms interrogated, asked follow-up questions as well as clarified the issues raised in the report.

A DCE presenting his state of the district address

The live broadcast governance forums witnessed a massive turn out of hundreds of community people. All eight district/municipal Chief Executives availed themselves for the governance forum.

 A woman making a submission during the town hall meeting

The Wa-East District Assembly constituted its Public Relations and Complaint Committee and a Complaints Centre in accordance with the Local Governance Act 2016 as a result of

the SOD. It partnered *Radio Wa* in a number of interviews to announce the contacts of the Complaints Centre to the residents of Wa East. It was the mandate of the committee to receive complaints a on corruption and report directly to the assembly for redress. The partner radio stations have now developed programming guides for their stations while others have also revised theirs. About four radio stations that did not have editorial policies have also drafted one

Again, about 90 media workers including reporters, journalists, editors, and producers have received enhanced knowledge and skills in radio production techniques.

The live broadcast of town hall meetings and state of the district radio broadcasts contributed significantly to raising momentum for increased citizens' voices in governance conversations in the project districts.

During the SOD and the live governance forum, the MMDCEs presented information and updates pertaining to developments within their districts. Citizens and local assembly officials on a common platform discussed key developmental issues including lack of access to clean and portable water, absence of health facilities, malfunctioning CHPS compound, high rate of unemployment among the youth, dilapidated infrastructural facilities and the distribution of government-procured fertilizers among the farmers. Other community members who could not be present at the meetings followed the discussions live on radio.

Opinion leader making a statement at Vieri, a community in the Wa West District in the Upper East Region

Additionally, some partner radio stations that benefitted from the in-house training in the testimonies and evidence of redesigned programmes that reflect best practices in the media space.

ANNEX 3: METHODOLOGY MATRIX

The objective is to determine the extent to which the project design has been appropriate to achieve the desired results, objectives, effectiveness and efficiency. The following were taken into consideration:

   a. The appropriateness of project identification
   b. Validity of project design and
   c. The extent to which the intervention logic appropriate and coherent.

In the case of (a), some of the indicators/questions include, institutional arrangements; socio-economic, cultural and political situation and the quality of problems and needs analysis. The consultants adopted document review and interviews as techniques, while the stakeholders included project management staff and national partners/constituents.

For (b), indicators/questions used as a guide included, clarity of conceptualisation, appropriateness of methodology, inclusion of gender concerns, inclusion of strategy for sustainability and project adjustments to changes with reference to context and priorities. Techniques used are same as in (a).'

In (c), key indicators include quality of description and alignment of activities, outcomes/outputs, objectives in the action plan and usefulness of project indicators and means of verification.

To test the effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation, the questions that need to be answered include, what are the results obtained so far, both actual and planned? And to what extent have the specific objectives be achieved? To answer these questions, you have to look at timely delivery of activities and project outputs.

Second, the quality and quantity of output delivered, effectiveness of project activities and project's contribution and support to the enabling environment at national and local levels.

Potential Impact of Project

The project has significantly to the level of awareness regarding local governance and the Cocoa Advocacy Groups (CAPs).

Relevance

The relevance of the project is determined on its response to the real needs of beneficiaries. The validity of the project approach and strategies could be replicated and possibly scaled up. The choice of the sector/target groups and locations for the baseline surveys proved appropriate as reflected in the results. It also contributed positively to STAR Ghana's strategic objectives.

Sustainability

The big question is, what happens to the outcomes long after the end of the project? Second, to what extent have the national and local stakeholders improved their institutional and organisational capacities to meet their local governance challenges? It is instructive to recommend that the participatory approach and inclusion of national/local stakeholders in project formulation, planning, monitoring and implementation become a standard procedure in such endeavours in future.