



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) Annual Report FY 2014

October 31, 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Global Communities.

# Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING)

## **Annual Report**

June 15, 2014 – September 30, 2014

### **DISCLAIMER**

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>NAME OF PROJECT</b>                 | <b>RESILENCY IN NORTHERN GHANA (RING)</b>           |
| <b>COUNTRY AND REGIONS</b>             | <b>GHANA</b>  |
| <b>DONOR</b>                           | <b>USAID</b>  |
| <b>CONTRACT NUMBER</b>                 | <b>AID-641-C-14-00002</b>                           |
| <b>START AND END DATE OF PROJECT</b>   | <b>JUNE 15, 2014 – JUNE 14, 2019</b>                |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED FEDERAL FUNDING</b> | <b>\$30,963,619</b>                                 |
| <b>CONTACT IN COUNTRY</b>              | <b>GERALD TURNBULL<br/>CHIEF OF PARTY</b>           |
| <b>CONTACT IN U.S.</b>                 | <b>GLENN MOLLER, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM OPERATIONS</b> |

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

### **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **III. INTRODUCTION**

### **IV. PROGRESS BY COMPONENT AND EXPECTED RESULT**

- a. Summary Results Table
- b. Key Achievements
- c. New Developments Impacting Implementation
- d. Grants and Sub-Awards
  - i. Grants Under Contract
  - ii. Sub-Contracts
  - iii. Innovation Fund
- e. Monitoring and Evaluation
- f. Lessons Learned
- g. Challenges and Constraints

### **V. GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **VI. ACTIONS AND ITEMS PENDING RESOLUTION**

### **VII. ANNEXES**

- a. Success stories
- b. Press Coverage

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| COP   | Chief of Party                                     |
| DA    | District Assembly                                  |
| DCD   | District Coordinating Director                     |
| ENA   | Essential Nutrition Actions                        |
| G2G   | Government to Government                           |
| GoG   | Government of Ghana                                |
| ICT   | Information and Communications Technology          |
| ILGS  | Institute of Local Government Studies              |
| LC    | Letter Contract                                    |
| M&E   | Monitoring and Evaluation                          |
| MSA   | Management Systems Advisor                         |
| NRCC  | Northern Region Coordinating Council               |
| PCV   | Peace Corps Volunteer                              |
| PFM   | Public Financial Management                        |
| PMEP  | Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan         |
| PSC   | Personal Services Contractor                       |
| RING  | Resiliency in Northern Ghana                       |
| SAM   | Severe/Acute Malnutrition                          |
| UI    | Urban Institute                                    |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VSLA  | Village Savings and Lending Association            |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report covers June 15, 2014 through September 30, 2014; of this, the first 10 days were within the USAID contest period. The remainder of the period covered in this annual report represents the continuation of efforts begun under the Government to Government Program (G2G) and the start-up process of the Global Communities, the RING Technical Assistance Contractor.

Upon receiving the award letter from USAID, the proposed Chief of Party communicated that he was not available to serve in that role. Global Communities communicated this to USAID and subsequently submitted the name of an alternate candidate. USAID began conducting its due diligence process and approved COP candidate Gerald Turnbull on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

Global Communities' start up team immediately began to mobilize administrative support, technical support and senior management once given the clearance to incur costs from USAID. Upon arriving in Ghana the Startup Team held meetings with all proposed partners including: FHI 360, Urban Institute, Farm Radio, ILGS, UDS and KNET to update them on startup activities and discuss work plan and PME development. Ninety-day Letter Contracts (LCs) were signed with FHI 360 and Urban Institute in order to allow them to participate in work plan development and initial startup activities. While both organizations contributed to the development of the first work plan, only Urban Institute implemented any startup activities, by working with Global Communities staff to conduct gap analyses of DA management systems. After an assessment of the nutrition situation in Northern Ghana, it was determined that FHI's role in the original proposal would be redundant, and that working with existing structures, systems, and implementers in Northern Ghana would be the most effective way to meet program goals. Therefore, the decision was made by Global Communities to allow FHI 360's LC to expire.

Global Communities submitted the first annual work plan on August 15th. Based on feedback received from USAID on September 3rd and discussions in the field with USAID staff, Global Communities revised and submitted the work plan shortly after the end of the reporting period.

To ensure that RING implementation continued while the work plan was being finalized, staff were hired, and an office in Tamale identified, secured, and occupied, Global Communities entered into consultancy agreements with three former USAID PSCs who worked with Tier One DAs on implementation of RING activities. The PSCs' knowledge of the Northern Region and their experience in implementing RING over the past year make them valuable assets to the program, and Global Communities entered into negotiations to offer the three fulltime positions on the RING team. They are expected to make the transition from consultants to fulltime employees shortly after the end of the reporting period.

Progress on the Tier One implementation plans has been very good with most districts demonstrating solid coordination among the district offices. Districts with highly engaged District Coordinating Director (DCD) are demonstrating more progress in meeting targets and collaboration with other departments. Through the end of this reporting period RING has directly served 3,673 households across 180 communities in the 6 Tier One implementing districts. Furthermore key practices are being adopted and observed, especially related to animal husbandry and improved agronomic practices. Within Component 1, 3,337 small ruminants (sheep and goats) were procured for distribution to benefitting families. At the close of the reporting period there were 438 deaths (mostly concentrated in Nanumba South and Saboba) and approximately 129 births from supplied ruminants. There is also promising progress with

soyabean and cowpea crops with 550.3 acres planted (425.3 soyabean and 125 cowpea). The monitoring visits also indicate positive signs that the harvest will be good in late November and December 2014. Water and sanitation projects started, but have largely been postponed to next quarter due to delays in district acquisition of funds and the rainy season slowing implementation. Among governance activities most expenditures were on capital items but all districts have shown increasing level of familiarity and comfort with budgeting and procurement procedures required under RING. Many planned technical trainings for district staff have been postponed to next quarter. The next quarter will also see the completion of the district 2014 work plans as well as the planning and budgeting for 2015 work plans in not only the 6 currently implementing districts but also 4 newly rolled on Tier One. Activities will begin with Tier Two districts during the upcoming quarter.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Global Communities RING team has formed a multi-disciplinary team of international and Ghanaian organizations to serve as the Technical Assistance Contractor to the five-year \$60 million Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) program under the leadership of USAID/Ghana. RING brings together the capacity of communities and governments to work together to help vulnerable families address their livelihoods, finance, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs. RING will also help the Northern Region Coordinating Council (NRCC) and District Assemblies (DA) overcome the institutional challenges to creating the synergies across nutrition, agriculture and livelihoods activities necessary to promote a healthy, thriving, productive population.

Thus far activities conducted under RING have been the continuation of the implementation of government to government (G2G) activities already started prior to the award of the contract and the administrative startup of the RING team's office and core operational systems in Tamale. Quarter 4 saw a significant amount of work to maintain the momentum of activities already underway and to position the team well for expanded scale and reach for the 2015 annual work plans from the District Assemblies which will be finalized during the upcoming quarter and starting in January 2015. The RING team expects to be almost fully staffed by the end of Calendar Year 2014.

## PROGRESS BY COMPONENT AND EXPECTED RESULT

As of the submission of this annual report, Global Communities does not have an approved Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP), therefore, the results per the PMP are not reported in this section. However, the RING Team is reporting key indicators of interest to USAID as well as a summary of progress in each of the G2G districts which have been implementing RING activities in 2014. Once the PMEP is approved, Global Communities will be reporting those results.

| <b>RING 2014 Summary Indicator Results</b>  |  |                    |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <b>1.) Number of people trained in child health nutrition through USG-supported Programs</b>  |  |                    |
| <b>Total: 1,067</b>   | Male:  | 587                |
|   | Female:  | 480                |
| <b>2.) Number of Children Under 5 Reached</b>   |  |                    |
| <b>Total: 3,656<sup>1</sup></b>   | Male:  | 1,792              |
|   | Female:  | 1,864              |
| <b>3.) Number of individuals who have received USG supported short term agriculture sector productivity or food security training</b>   |  |                    |
| <b>Total: 3,194</b>   | <b>Type</b>  |                    |
|   | Producer   | 2,460              |
|   | People in Government   | <b>734</b>         |
|   | <b>Gender</b>  |                    |
|   | Male   | 1,768 <sup>2</sup> |
|   | Female   | 1,426              |
| <b>4.) Number of rural (vulnerable) households benefiting directly from USG interventions</b>   |  |                    |
| <b>Total: 3,673</b>   | <b>Gendered HH Type<sup>3</sup></b>                              |                    |
|   | Adult Female No Adult Male                                       | 183                |
|   | Adult Male No Adult Female                                       | 0                  |
|   | Male and Female Adults   | 3,490              |
|   | <b>5.) Number of health facilities with established capacity</b> |                    |
| <b>Total: 0<sup>4</sup></b>   |  |                    |
| <b>6.) Number of beneficiaries participating in activities designed to increase a household's resilience (i.e. receiving soya or cowpea, small ruminants, VSLA training, reducing post-harvest loss training or improved storage bags, cash payments via LEAP etc.)<sup>5</sup></b> |  |                    |
| <b>Total: 3,673</b>   | Male   | 1,873              |
|   | Female   | 1,800              |

Table 1 - RING Summary Indicator Results

<sup>1</sup> Estimated figures on assuming 1 CU5/HH served. Values based on household eligibility data provided through districts which included numbers of children under 5 per HH, but not a sex breakdown of CU5. RING team will work with DAs to refine information next quarter

<sup>2</sup> Many government officials trained are males, especially in agriculture and engineering

<sup>3</sup> Estimated, RING team will work with DAs to validate

<sup>4</sup> RING will support training in CMAM when district health staff identify a need and request refresher training. Based on this 12 health staff were trained in existing CMAM facilities

<sup>5</sup> RING team is interpreting participation as head of household not full family size

## Key Achievements and Summary Results

In addition to the administrative start-up, the 6 directly funded districts reported steady progress towards achieving the results with some specific notable challenges which are addressed in the following section. 2014 has been a year of learning new models and methods of implementing an innovative program model. Even with funding delays and new procedures RING, through the districts had a wide reach and is poised to scale up dramatically in 2015 with additional districts and dedicated Global Communities' staff.

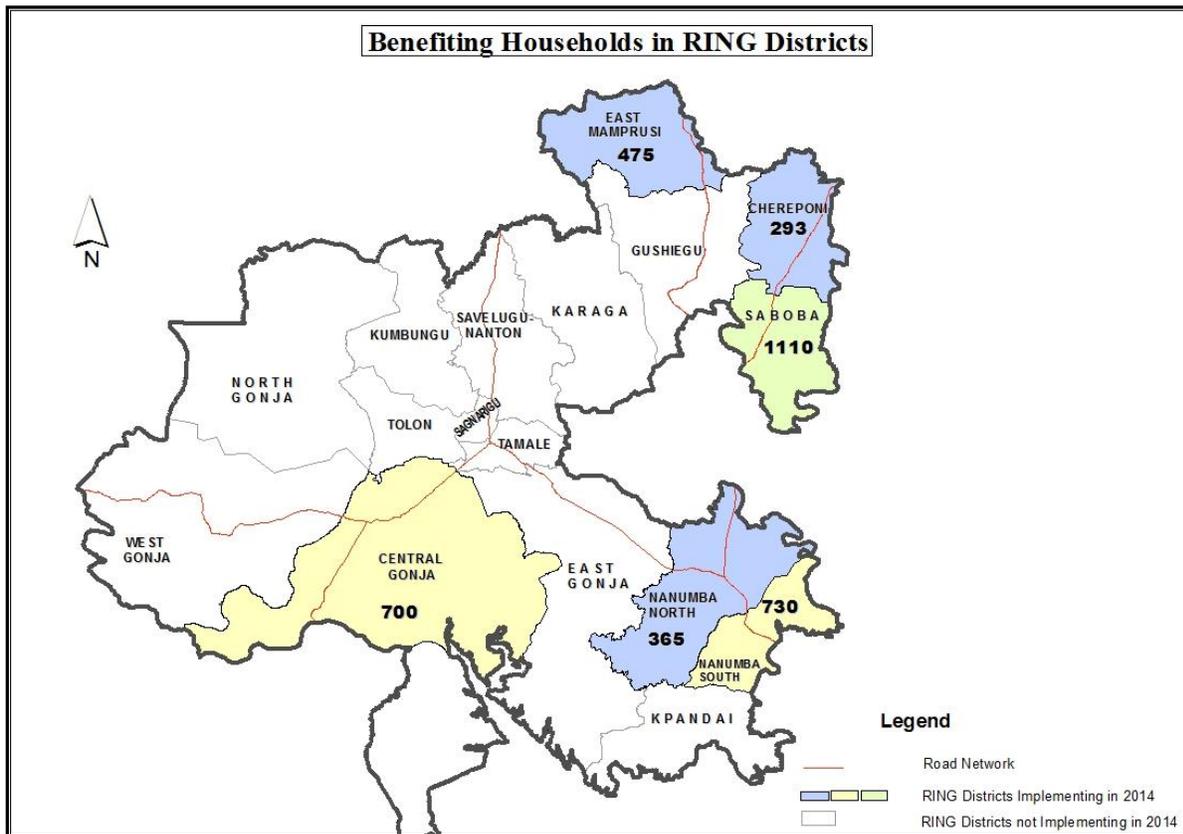


Figure 1: Number of Benefiting Households by District

To date RING has:

- Worked with 6 Tier One DAs to develop, budget and implement activities in their work plan
- Sensitized communities to the RING project and began implementation
- Reached 3,673 households in 180 communities over 6 districts
- Procured/distributed 3,337 small ruminants
- Planted 550 acres of soyabeans and cowpeas
- Trained 734 people in government on nutritional or agricultural messages
- Triggered 3 communities in Community Led Total Sanitation
- Completed many other results summarized below

## Summary of Results by District

| Central Gonja  |        |        |   |
|--|--------|--------|---|
| Activity Indicator   | Target | Actual | Notes   |
| # of DADU staff on intervention-related topics                       | --     | 18     |   |
| # of households receiving small ruminants and associated training    | 250    | 150    |   |
| # of community livestock health workers trained                      | 13     | 13     | Paravet Training  |
| # of households planting soyabeans and associated training           | 250    | 250    | Training topics included proper spacing between rows and plants, proper ground preparation and plant management techniques. Originally planned for 10 communities but final number was 9 due to larger populations in first 9 communities |
| # of households receiving Essential Nutrition Action (ENA)           | 250    | 100    |   |
| # of groups formed to rebag and sell iodated salt                    | 16     | 12     | 8 communities - 2 groups per community target   |
| # of households benefitting from iodated salt groups                 | 400    | 300    | Difference due to actual numbers of households in communities which varied from the estimated 50 per community  |
| # of communities receiving rainwater harvesting materials            | 10     | 10     | Includes polytanks (2 per communities)  |
| # of community action plans developed                                | 50     | 80     |   |
| # of district staff participating in staff development opportunities | 5      | 2      |   |
| Chereponi  |        |        |   |
| # of households receiving small ruminants and associated training    | 150    | 143    | 5 Head per HH. Activities are on hold due to budget issues and low available stock quality  |
| # of households planting soyabeans and associated training           | 150    | 150    | Focus on Soil Fertility Management and Good Agronomic Practices (GAP)   |
| # of individuals participating in Food Demonstrations                | 1,057  | 275    | Food demos to be conducted at strategic points in the district (i.e. CHPS compounds, markets), using local recipes and locally-available foods  |
| # of communities triggered in CLTS                                   | 3      | 3      | 25 more communities planned for next reporting period   |
| # of community action plans developed                                | 10     | 30     | Integration of health and livelihood issues into CAPs development   |
| East Mamprusi  |        |        |   |
| # of households receiving small ruminants and associated training    | 250    | 250    | 750 sheep and 10 Rams for 250 households in 5 communities   |
| # of households planting soyabeans and associated training           | 100    | 100    | Originally planned 100HH in 2 communities but covered 100HH in 4 communities  |

|   |     |     |  |
|---|-----|-----|--|
| # of groups formed to rebag and sell iodated salt                                       | 16  | 7   | Original target was 16 groups in 8 communities, but due to under budgeting for inputs target was to 7 groups in 7 communities  |
| # of households benefitting from iodated salt groups                                    | 400 | 175 | Same note as above   |
| <b>Nanumba North</b>  |     |     |  |
| # of groups formed to rebag and sell iodated salt / carry out milling and fortification | 10  | 10  |  |
| # of households benefitting from iodated salt groups                                    | 150 | 150 |  |
| # of households planting soyabeans and associated training                              | 250 | 215 | Additional focus on conservation farming techniques  |
| # of health personnel trained in ENA messages   | 20  | 20  | 10 total AEAs and SHEP Coordinators to receive the same ENA training   |
| <b>Nanumba South</b>  |     |     |  |
| # of households receiving small ruminants training                                      | 500 | 500 | Activity on hold due to high death percentage. Adjustments are underway and set to resume next quarter   |
| # of households receiving small ruminants   | 500 | 125 | Remainder of households received training but are awaiting delivery  |
| # of households planting cowpeas and receiving associated training                      | 500 | 500 |  |
| # of boreholes repaired   | 15  | --  | 3 are underway, but boreholes not completed yet as there is not a separate livestock watering area in place  |
| # of health personnel trained in ENA messages   | 120 | 121 |  |
| <b>Saboba</b>   |     |     |  |
| # of savings groups formed  | 10  | 20  | This includes 638 group members in 20 groups in 10 communities   |
| # of households receiving small ruminants and associated training                       | 500 | 472 | Distribution of 3 sheep to each of the households and training on housing, supplementary feeding, sanitation & hygiene practices, disease recognition and control. As of reporting period close there were 181 small ruminant deaths |
| # of individuals participating in Food Demonstrations                                   | 250 | 362 | Food demonstrations focused on the utilization of soya, moringa, other nutritious foods done at the community level. Some HH reporting use of recipes or planting of moringa   |
| # of WatSan Committees formed and trained   | 10  | 10  |  |
| # of Community Action Plans developed   | 50  | 30  | Training of community surveyors, analysis of information, review/acceptance with community, incorporation into MTDP  |

Table 2 – District Results Breakdown

## Component 1 – Increased Access & Consumption of Diverse, Quality Food

Component 1 represents an essential support structure to create buffers against shocks and increase resilience. The activities in this component are designed to both improve the asset base and improve nutrition status at the same time. The agricultural inputs are nutrition-sensitive and will both serve as improved assets while adding diversity to the diet of benefitting (vulnerable) households.

This year the majority of work in Component 1 has focused on agricultural inputs and associated training. The majority of the budget in all districts dedicated to this component was spent on the procurement and distribution small ruminants to the selected households. Additionally the introduction of soya and cowpeas in the districts has also yielded successes with the crop exhibiting solid performance during the growing season.



Figure 1 Ruminant Distribution

Below is a summary of the year 1 work plan activities for the 6 Tier 1, implementing districts

| Central Gonja                     | Chereponi                             | East Mamprusi                         | Nanumba North                      | Nanumba South   | Saboba                                |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Improved Grain Storage Techniques | Village Savings and Loan Associations | Village Savings and Loan Associations | Improved Grain Storage Techniques  | Improved Grain Storage Techniques                                 | Village Savings and Loan Associations |
| Small Ruminants Distribution      | Small Ruminants Distribution          | Small Ruminants Distribution          | Community-Based Grinding Mills     | Small Ruminants Distribution                                      | Small Ruminants Distribution          |
| Introduction of Soyabean Crops    | Introduction of Soyabean Crops        | Introduction/Cultivation of Soyabeans | Rebagging and Sale of Iodated Salt | Introduction/Cultivation of Cowpea                                |                                       |
| Improved Agronomic Practices      |                                       | Improved Agronomic Practices          | Improved Agronomic Practices       | Promotion of Leafy Green Vegetable Cultivation ( <b>delayed</b> ) |                                       |

### *Small Ruminants and Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture*

Small ruminant activities are proving to be both popular and successful. Districts which completed a thorough planning process and engaged beneficiary households in training prior to the delivery of the small ruminants have seen low mortality and positive adoption of husbandry practices. In total 3,337 small ruminants (goats and sheep) were procured by districts for distribution to the beneficiary households. Deaths which occurred (210 in quarantine in Saboba

and 122 in Nanumba South) highlighted the need for following proper procedures and training of beneficiary households. In the case of Nanumba South most deaths occurred from dietary diarrhea. When monitoring teams noticed this the project was put on hold so that all households could receive the necessary training which is scheduled to resume in November.

Districts displaying encouraging results are Central Gonja, East Mamprusi and Saboba. Notably in East Mamprusi the feedback loop between the community and agricultural officers is functioning very well. Paravets and community livestock workers make regular visits to beneficiary households for disease surveillance, when issues are noted they file reports with the agriculture office who then sends out staff to follow up. In Central Gonja, the small ruminant program served as a validation of sorts of community targeting mechanism. Monitoring of the households receiving small ruminants show that the households receiving the small ruminants and associated training are indeed not only the most vulnerable of the community, but in all of Central Gonja. Beneficiary households in these districts are also displaying proper animal husbandry techniques including proper housing and shelter and dry-season feeding.

Introduction of soya beans and cowpeas and associated training has also progressed very well in the districts with 550.3 total acres planted this year. Drought conditions in July and August affected crops in Central Gonja requiring some re-planting. Crop monitoring indicates that the crops are set for a productive harvest in November/December of this year. Training on improved agricultural practices has been utilized by the households, specifically the use of line (row) planting and using the correct population of seeds for the plot. Previous habits were more cluster based (broadcast) with fewer plants. A particular highlight of the planting has been the environmentally-friendly methods of growth promotion and pest control; no chemical fertilizers or herbicides were used on these crops but included the use of Neem extract as a natural pesticide.

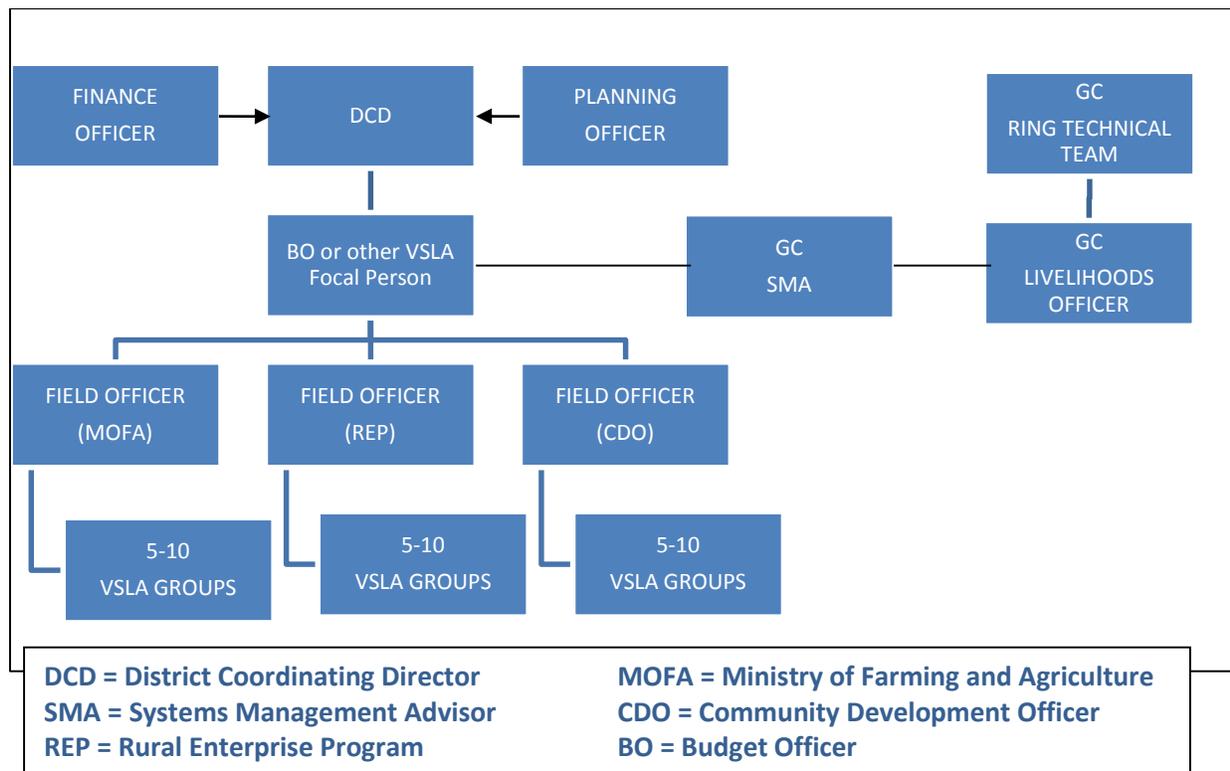
The re-bagging and sale of iodated salt encountered logistical and sustainability issues this year. Districts procured materials to rebag salt as well as the salt, there were delays in procuring other supplies required for the activity. Additionally it was not clear if the sale of salt could generate sufficient income within each group to purchase the inputs (salt) for the next cycle. As a result, *this activity will not continue next year.*

### *Village Savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs)*

To gain an understanding of how VSLAs are currently operating in the Northern Region and where specifically, the Microfinance Specialist (MFS) met with organizations that facilitate VLSA programs, as well as Individuals such as Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) doing so. Topics such as existing structures in use, banks, mobile technology, financial training and other components of VSLA implementation were also discussed. Meetings were also held with other USAID programs, ADVANCE II and FinGAP, to learn where they operate, recommended service providers and access to finance options.

Three Tier One DAs have selected VSLAs as an activity: Chereponi, East Mamprusi and Saboba. At this time, Saboba is the only district implementing RING VSLA activities and managing groups. In this reporting period, Saboba they have formed 24 groups in 14 communities with a total of 630 members. The overall RING VSLA strategy is led by RING's MFS and supported by the Livelihoods Team, additionally the Saboba *VSLA Focal Person*, Abdulai Abdul-Majeed has contributed valuable lessons learned to this strategy. The Livelihoods Team consists of the Livelihood Specialist, the Livelihood and Agriculture Technical Consultant and the MFS. The team has developed a generic VSLA management and reporting structure to

serve as a recommendation to each DA with the understanding that this structure will be adapted as needed. See the generic structure in the diagram below:



During this reporting period, the RING VSLA training manual, drafted by the MFS and based on Global Communities' international VSLA experience was specifically designed to fit the Northern Region context and needs of RING beneficiaries. The manual was reviewed by the Livelihoods Team, the Saboba VSLA Focal Person and a PCV who leads two Northern Region VSLAs. After incorporating suggestions, a review workshop was held in Chereponi with their VSLA implementation team to ensure that the manual is comprehensible and easy to follow. Chereponi was selected for the review as they will be the first district to implement the RING-designed VSLA model. Saboba is implementing RING VSLAs but began doing so prior to the Livelihoods Team developed the RING VSLA model. East Mamrupusi did report group formation, however, this was done with another NGO as part of a separate program and RING will look in to methods to effectively coordinate VSLA interventions in areas of overlap with other organizations.

As VSLAs bring together individuals that are all building their asset base, the groups are used as a platform to deliver financial literacy and other relevant messaging as well. The MFS has met with service providers who will provide VSLAs (as well as other RING participants) training in basic financial topics such as numeracy, interest and principle, compound interest, equity, business plan, business management, bookkeeping, budgeting and costing. Additionally, nutrition messages will be delivered to VSLA participants. A local service provider will be contracted to work with the Livelihoods Team in designing a manual specifically targeting the Northern Region, then additional service providers will be selected to deliver the trainings to VSLAs as well as other groups within all RING districts. In this reporting period, research was conducted regarding methods for teaching financial literacy to illiterate and innumerate participants, which is relevant to the majority of RING beneficiaries.

In anticipation of a perceived eventual demand for formal savings and potential demand for formal loans, the MFS has met with a variety of banks offering rural and mobile products. Agriculture Development Bank, GN Bank, Ecobank, Fidelity and Sinapi Aba have expressed an interest in working with RING beneficiaries to first mobilize savings, then lending. Fidelity Bank is currently working with Plan International and CARE to offer mobile deposit options and is partnering with MTN telecommunications provider to offer mobile banking.

## Component 2 – Improved behaviors related to nutrition and hygiene for women and children

Most of the activities within component two focused on health and nutrition messaging and training. WASH activities have been planned for and budgeted but are not yet completed.

Below is the list of selected activities for each Tier One district implementing activities in 2014:

| Central Gonja                                    | Chereponi   | East Mamprusi                                      | Nanumba North <sup>6</sup>                 | Nanumba South                                    | Saboba   |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) Messages        | Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) and CMAM Messages <sup>7</sup> | Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) and CMAM Messages | Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) Messages  | Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) Messages        | Essential Nutrition Action (ENA) Messages <sup>8</sup> |
| Anemia Identification & Treatment <sup>***</sup> | Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)                           | Bagging / Resale of Iodated Salt                   | Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)      | Anemia Identification & Treatment <sup>***</sup> | Anemia Identification & Treatment <sup>***</sup>       |
| Bagging / Resale of Iodated Salt <sup>9</sup>    |   | Community-Based Grinding Mills                     | Borehole Rehabilitation                    | Hand washing & WASH Message Demonstrations       | Borehole Rehabilitation                                |
| Borehole Rehabilitation                          |   | WatSan Committees                                  | WatSan Committees                          | Installation of Hand washing Stations            | Community Food Demonstrations                          |
| Rainwater Harvesting                             |   |  | Community Growth Promoters                 | Borehole Rehabilitation                          | WatSan Committees                                      |
|  |   |  | Hand washing & WASH Message Demonstrations |  | Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)                  |

*\*\*\* Anemia Identification and Treatment have been postponed until next year due to delays in RING receiving necessary supplies such as hemocues.*

Food demonstrations have been going very well with reported usage of both local recipes and planting of moringa by persons who attended the demonstrations. The food demonstrations have

<sup>6</sup> Work plan also included activities such as support for GHS staff in Outreach, Monitoring Progress

<sup>7</sup> Expand and Strengthen Efforts in Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Women and Children with Acute Malnutrition and Anemia,

<sup>8</sup> Also training of CHV on referrals of Severe Acute Malnutrition Cases

<sup>9</sup> Activity also included Micronutrient Supply, but due to supply issues this has not yet happened

occurred in a total of 25 communities in the coverage area with each event drawing larger-than-expected crowds. Water and Sanitation activities have also made progress with CLTS triggering beginning in 3 communities and borehole repairs moving forward, but with some challenges

Most of the WASH activities listed in district work plans have been delayed until next quarter (which is still Q4 of annual district work plans). This is largely due to delays in obtaining funds to implement during this reporting period. Most districts will be implementing WASH activities beginning October 2014. In this period, 3 communities were triggered for community led total sanitation (CLTS) in Chereponi.

Challenges faced by the districts in this component are similar to challenges in other components especially as it relates to the budgeting process and the impact of inflation. Every district reported encountering issues either with insufficient budgeting for the full range of activities required for an intervention and/or having issues with the exchange rate and thus the ability to procure the quantity of supplies budgeted for. Additionally there is a learning curve for many departments to follow the correct risk mitigation procedures to receive funds. This includes the drafting of procurement memos and obtaining necessary signatures in a timely fashion.

Additionally, the RING team has noticed weak linkages between the nutrition and agriculture sections within districts. This is most pronounced in the districts that have inactive WIAD officers. As RING has a specific focus on nutrition sensitive agriculture, this link is vital because without gains in nutrition outcomes may not be as strong or as sustainable.

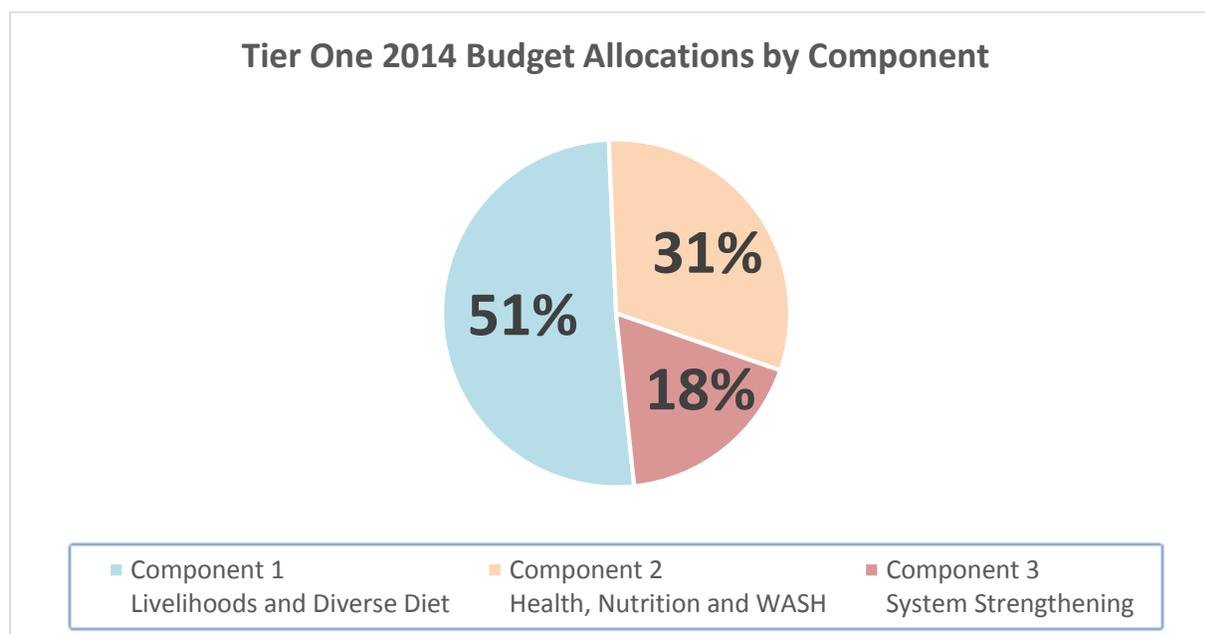
As **Ebola** is consuming additional attention around the world and especially within the West Africa region, RING will collaborate closely with USAID, Systems for Health and SPRING on implementing strategies to raise awareness and prevent the spread of Ebola. Currently \$250,000 has been appropriated for this activity which in coming quarters will include work across sixteen districts, more CLTS triggering, installation of hand washing stations, BCC messages and emergency simulations.

### Component 3 – Strengthened Local Support Networks

Component 3 is the critical mechanism through which components 1 and 2 will achieve the results. This reporting period saw the successful planning and disbursement of funds to the first 6 DAs for implementation and the 3 who had recently signed implementation letters (PIL) to begin community identification and selection. A fourth DA will be signed early in the upcoming quarter. The process was not without challenges and lessons learned. Specifically during the 2014 implementation there were multiple needs by the districts to submit request for budget re-alignments and other budgetary approvals. This process has made the DAs aware of the importance of taking extra time up-front in budgeting and also resulted in the RING team developing new budgeting tools for DAs which can be used for forecasting and quicker budget preparation for 2015. Below is the list of selected activities for the 6 Tier One districts directly implementing activities in 2014.

| Central Gonja                   | Chereponi   | East Mamprusi                              | Nanumba North                   | Nanumba South                   | Saboba                          |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Computer / ICT Training         | Capacity building in governance and livelihoods / nutrition | Computer / ICT Training                    | Computer / ICT Training         | Computer / ICT Training         | Computer / ICT Training         |
| PFM Risk Mitigation Training    | Community Action Plans (CAPS)                               | PFM Risk Mitigation Training / Procurement | PFM Risk Mitigation Training    | PFM Risk Mitigation Training    | PFM Risk Mitigation Training    |
| Equipment Purchase              | Equipment Purchase  | Equipment Purchase                         | Equipment Purchase              | Equipment Purchase              | Equipment Purchase              |
| Community Action Plans (CAPS)   |   | Attending Coordination Meetings            | Community Action Plans (CAPS)   | Attending Coordination Meetings | Community Action Plans (CAPS)   |
| Attending Coordination Meetings |   |  | Attending Coordination Meetings |                                 | Attending Coordination Meetings |

Many component 3 activities conducted by the districts in 2014 were focused heavily on procurement of supplies especially ICT equipment including laptops, printers and scanners and transportation equipment such as motorbikes. Several districts opted to receive training in topics including ICT training, though many trainings have been deferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of program year 2014 (Q1 of FY2015).



*Figure 2 – DA 2014 Budget Allocation by Component*

Central Gonja, Chereponi, Nanumba North and Saboba began working with communities to develop community action plans (CAPs) to feed in to the larger district/municipal planning process. Many communities have had experience with other NGOs and other needs assessment tools so some may have already started the exercise, but this process brought previous work in to the formal Government of Ghana planning cycle. Saboba specifically integrated RING objectives to community plans asking questions about nutrition and livelihood status which had not previously been included. Next year the RING team plans on providing dedicated, topical training to district planning officers and RING Management Systems Advisors (MSAs) on appreciative community planning methods. These methods would not only generate necessary information but also encourage communities to take an active role in building on existing assets and advocating to government officials for additional support.

The RING team with the UI advisors began the review of existing capacity development frameworks including the Organizational Gap Analysis Tool and reviewed applicability in the context of RING. The capacity development process focuses not only on the key areas of Financial Risk Mitigation but also on the overall capacity of the district to achieve its mission and serve its constituents. This reporting period focused heavily on the development of a framework to monitor progress with financial risks identified in the districts' implementation letters. The general capacity building approach will begin after the 2015 work planning is complete, likely in January 2015. This organizational capacity building exercise will utilize the key elements of the Organizational Gap Analysis tool, local district context and the Appreciative Inquiry approach from the Global Communities' Appreciative Review of Capacity (ARC) tool.

This will focus on generating capacity building action plans with each district which include specific activities necessary to not only manage financial risk, but other key areas of organizational capacity including:

1. Governance
2. Strategic Planning
3. Human Talent
4. External Relations
5. Project/ Service Management
6. Resource Development
7. Finance and Administration

In this reporting period elements of the budgeting, financial management and accounting component of the framework were pre- tested in Savelugu Municipal and Sagnarigu District. These two locations were aware of the work and progress, and funding, that has come with the Tier One districts and were eager to participate. Specifically they were interested in improving their own skills and capacities with ICT and financial management and to improve the FOAT score. Currently in Savelugu they have a custom Financial Management system (i.e D-R-V MAcFINSOFT v2 ) which provides many important features and allows the finance team to perform general bookkeeping and reporting on cash flows and balances. The limitations which will need to be addressed in coming quarters are that the tool does not allow for multi-year financial analysis or accrual-based accounting which will be an issue moving forward as the Government of Ghana adopts international financial reporting standards. Savelugu also is utilizing the “Warrant System” which in principle ensures that at budget holders are operating within their available resources and that there is clear segregation of duties in financial transactions. Moving forward, the risk mitigation plans will work to ensure that the warrant system is working as intended along with other risk mitigation measures.

For assessing compliance of District Assemblies with PFM risk mitigation measures/recommendation and check status of implementation of Risk Mitigation Action Plans attached to individual agreements between USAID and Tier One DAs the RING team and UI advisors generated a framework to monitor progress. To date there have been informal discussions with 4 of 6 implementing Tier One districts on the subject of financial risk mitigation compliance. The feedback from these sessions (below) will be included in the framework which will then be shared with USAID for comment and approval. These discussions yielded key insights from each district about areas of needed work on the risk mitigation plans. There are several specific areas for follow up in the coming quarters these are

#### *Central Gonja*

During the consultations and reviews, the district staff in Central Gonja identified a need for additional assistance in developing outreach methods and training modules to promote financial literacy and business skills among VSLAs. This was not just related to the VSLA members, but specifically targeted at the support officers whose duty it will be to follow up with the VSLAs, train and advise the groups during implementation. In addition, they have also identified a need for support in the preparation of community action plans (CAPS).

### *Chereponi*

In contrast, the Chereponi team identified internal capacities as key for the coming quarters. Specifically requesting training/exercises in team building. As with other districts, Chereponi also identified MS Office, specifically Excel as a key training need for the agric, environmental health and finance officers.

### *East Mamprusi*

Consultations with East Mamprusi had a decidedly more accounting and financial management focus. District staff requested, as did others, MS Office training, but also a comprehensive course on budget management. Specifically requested were follow up trainings on

- Budget Development
- Budget Monitoring
- Processes Related to the Separation of Duties for Financial Risk Management

### *Saboba*

Similar to all other districts, the staff identified a need for MS Office skills training. As with Chereponi, there was a request for additional training on VSLA for designated officers. The Global Communities' Microfinance Specialist has been coordinating with the points of contact in both Saboba and Chereponi to adapt existing VSLA guides utilized by the Government of Ghana and Global Communities to the context of the Northern Region. Specific areas of focus on financial risk management that require follow up in the coming quarters are:

- Budget Planning & Setting
- Budget Monitoring & Variance Reporting
- Cash Flow Forecasting
- Proposal / Report writing.

In all cases the preferred methods for delivering the material and guidance was to have active hands-on training or "group work sessions." The focus of the sessions will be to present a concept or skill and then actually use it on RING-related tasks. Individual one-on-one coaching will also be key to reinforce the skills, especially more complicated budgeting procedures. Some guidance and job-aids will be developed, but the focus will be to utilize existing materials as much as possible and adapt or update as needed.

While all districts have conducted monitoring visits to document activities and follow up there is a need to support the DAs in the operationalizing the monitoring and evaluation activities. Key activities for the next quarter will be to generate activity-specific monitoring forms which can be utilized by all districts for activity follow up. The RING Team will also conduct supportive supervision visits with district staff focusing on interview skills as well as jointly planning/developing monitoring plans for each activity. The RING team anticipates mainstreaming M&E more directly in the 2015 work plan activities.

### *NRCC*

Discussions have started to address standardized monitoring and evaluation methods across all district to enable more timely and consistent reporting to the RCC. Moreover, discussions

include additional training and assistance for the RCC to organize and produce reports on a timely basis. Additional discussions have started concerning dietary diversity in the benefitting communities and common strategy across all districts will be developed and coordinated over the next quarter.

### **New Developments Impacting Implementation**

- Recent changes in some government procedures as resulted in additional time to complete tasks on a timely basis such as the pre-inspection clause for importing vehicles.
- New financial administrative procedures requiring monthly funds requests from DAs could delay implementation.

### **Grants and Sub-Awards**

#### **Grants Under Contract**

There is no update to this section for this reporting period.

#### **Sub-Contracts**

While no subcontracts have been signed to date, Global Communities initially provided 90-day Letter Contracts (LCs) to partners involved in startup activities, including FHI 360 and Urban Institute. It was decided that FHI 360's role as originally conceived would not be necessary, therefore their LC was allowed to expire on September 30, 2014, ending any and all contractual obligations between Global Communities and FHI 360. Urban Institute was heavily involved in startup activities, including contributing to the development of the work plan, assessments of district financial environments, support of DA work plan development, development of an Organizational Gap Analysis Tool, and implementation of RING activities under supervision of Global Communities. Global Communities extended UI's LC through the end of November 2014, to allow for continued activities while the RING work plan is being finalized. Once the RING work plan is finalized and authorization to subcontract has been given by USAID, Global Communities plans to move forward with a subcontract to Urban Institute.

#### **Innovation Fund**

There is no update to this section for this reporting period.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In this reporting period districts continued to collect data regarding the implementation and this was organized by the G2G staff as the RING team began operations. At the end of the reporting period Chris Gegenheimer, Quality Assurance Manager, from Global Communities' headquarters arrived in Tamale to support the setup of the M&E system and recruitment of M&E staff.

As of the submission of this report, the RING team has completed the recruitment for 2 M&E positions focused on Capacity Building of DAs and data analysis/quality review with efforts on going to recruit local officers. Additionally the GIS Officer was identified and hired, she began after the reporting period closed, but at the time of submission of this report has already started to digitize communities based on satellite imagery and location names from the household enumeration. This exercise will begin to move fast in the next quarter when RING team begins

to deploy enlisted Management Systems Advisors (MSAs) and district staff to map communities, households and assets.

Based on discussions with G2G consultants, NRCC and USAID, the RING team has also developed terms of reference to facilitate the collection of household level data and intervention monitoring. This database application, with an associated app, can be used by district staff, and RING team staff (MSAs, M&E, Sector Officers) to enumerate households, record service delivery and monitor implementation. The approach is that officers can utilize tablets or smartphones to conduct monitoring visits, enroll new households and record service delivery. Each report would be a record and would capture the GPS coordinates of the report to facilitate mapping and data analysis.

Lessons learned from the household enumeration process for the first 6 districts was that paper forms were very time consuming to collect and enter and the volunteers had inconsistent reporting times. Then when data was entered by the districts, despite being provided with a format, each district made their own modifications to soft-copy forms. The same pattern holds for the information reported about activity progress, each district is reporting out on its activities but the formats have varied. Essentially the information has been reported at the activity-level with numbers and narrative information combined.

### **Lessons Learned**

The value of proper beneficiary training on the part of DAs as well as active engagement by correct district staff heavily influences results. Specifically with small ruminant distributions, most deaths occurred in locations where the DA did not follow best industry practices, especially related to quarantine, or omitted beneficiary training prior to distribution. The activities were placed on hold until mitigation measures were in place. Moving forward there will be more thorough involvement by sector specialists and mandatory training before ruminant distribution.

### **Challenges and Constraints**

Staffing challenges – Staffing the RING program proved to be challenging. Global Communities' initial COP candidate declined the position, which caused significant delays. Subsequently, several local candidates declined employment offers as well.

Identifying, securing, and occupying an office in Tamale took longer than anticipated. Adequate, reasonably-priced office space proved difficult to identify in Tamale, and procurement of office equipment/supplies was a challenge due to availability. However, the office is on track to be occupied in early November 2014.

Data management has the potential to be large challenge, currently for the first year data has been collected but the methods are rather time consuming. Moving forward the RING team will need to actively coordinate with DA staff to ensure consistent data reporting and monitoring in standardized formats and the teams are utilizing already familiar formats and not introducing dramatically new procedures but simplifying reporting tasks. Currently the aggregation of numerical output data poses challenges which the RING team will resolve by building off of the formats developed by USAID and G2G consultants during the 2014 implementation year. The RING team anticipates this activity will be smoother once there is an approved PMEP. As such, the RING team will be working with districts to standardize reporting formats for the next quarter.

One ongoing challenge is the pace in which achievements are accomplished as compared to other areas. The culture can be characterized as a culture requiring proper social protocol which requires additional time to achieve outcomes.

## **GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

*These updates are included in Components 1, 2 and 3*

## **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Administrative startup has been a major focus during this reporting period. Beginning with the awarding of the contract in June, Global Communities has been actively recruiting staff and setting up office space. The Tamale office will have 29 staff (not including drivers/cleaners). Currently 12 have reported as full time employees with an additional 5 joining will joining by November 15. Active recruitment is ongoing for an additional 13 staff including 8 Management Systems Advisors (MSAs);

Office space has been identified and lease negotiated and signed. Move in required modifications to the building, and the procurement of generators, air conditioning units and furniture. These processes were still in progress at the end of the reporting period. As of the submission of this report, significant additional progress has been made with an anticipated move in date of 1<sup>st</sup> week of November. Additional services are being procured for internet service. Bank accounts have been opened and funds transferred. Vehicle procurement was completed and are scheduled to arrive in Tema (port) on November 20.

Global Communities fielded HQ-based startup support including Abilene Seguin and Robert Danzi to support administrative start up and initial procurements.

The RING team continues to coordinate with USAID on the finalization of the annual work plan.

## **ACTIONS AND ITEMS PENDING RESOLUTION**

- Delivery of Vehicles (November 20, 2014)
- Awaiting processing of Residency permits for Key personnel
- Finalization of Marking and Branding plan
- Occupation of office (early November 2014)

## ANNEXES

### Success stories

This reporting period has 2 notable success stories

#### 1.) ENA Messages and Active Staff Help Malnourished Children in Nanumba South

As part of a community child weighing exercise, a concerned community member alerted Alhassan Abukari the School Health and Education Program (SHEP) Coordinator of a child who was not present at the event. On the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2014, Kpesuni Mawindal, aged 1 year 8 months, was identified and rushed to the Zak Madi Zachari, the District Health Officer (DHO) for support who then immediately transferred him to Bimbila for inpatient care. When he checked in he was in a severe marasmic condition, visibly wasting and weighing only 5.0kg; he did not even have the strength to lift his head. Kpesuni was put on f-75 feed, on 2 hour interval medical observation for 2 days. As his condition stabilized, he was rescheduled on 3 hour interval medical observation for the next 4 days. After responding well to the care given, he was gradually introduced to plumpy nut an f-1000 food supplement. Upon successful medical response, the hospital then transferred the child back to the DHO for out-patient care until recovery.

Kpesuni's mother, fed him mostly with porridge made from corn-dough and millet, both widely available and inexpensive. Through the knowledge gained from the Essential Nutrition Action Messages community members and staff were aware and concerned enough to report the case. As a result of this experience Kpesuni's mother, Ibortu, has become actively involved in educating other woman about the recipes and the importance of a diverse diet. According to Zak, "From our nutritional assessment done, [we are] poised to guide many mothers as this program has created a miracle in many household and my wish is to see the same miracle happen for other malnourished children in other communities."



*Kpesuni Before and After Treatment*

## 2.) The Matinja Family and Their Soyabeans

Matinja Aya-ka had never planted soyabeans before, so this year was a new experience for her and, as it turns out, also for her brother. Matinja Aya-ka lives in Chombosu, Chereponi which is one of the communities benefitting from the introduction of soyabeans and agricultural training as part of RING. Ms. Matinja received training from district officers and planted seeds supplied from the Ministry of Agriculture. Quickly putting in to practice her newly learned techniques of planting in rows she got out some rope and sticks to ensure her rows were straight and also began weeding. Over time, as the crops started to grow well, her brother noticed the successful planting and became interested. Her brother, Matinja Kassim, was not part of the training but became interested because of his sisters obvious success. Even though he had not had the benefit of the full training Matinja Kassim still followed the lead of his sister and planted seeds in rows and is now also seeing some positive growth. RING looks forward to more success breeding success especially spontaneous replication.



Matnja Aya-ka and her farm in Chombusu



*Matinja Kassim's farm nearby his sister's farm utilizing similar methods*

### **Press Coverage**

There is no update to this section for this reporting period.