



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

RESILIENCY IN NORTHERN GHANA (RING) QUARTERLY REPORT FY15, Q3 (April 1 – June 30, 2015) Contract No. AID-641-C-14-00002



July 31, 2015

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

USAID RESILIENCY IN NORTHERN GHANA (RING)

QUARTERLY REPORT

FY 2015, Quarter 3 (April 1 – June 30, 2015)

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.

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	v
Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Human Resources	2
3. Grants and Contracts	3
4. Tier One District Support.....	4
5. Tier Two District Support.....	5
6. Summary of Activities and Progress Toward Results	6
6.1. Component One	9
6.2. Component Two	19
6.2.1. Component 2a – Nutrition	19
6.2.2. Component 2b – WASH.....	24
6.3. Component Three.....	27
7. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	31
8. Success Stories	36
9. The Role of Field Coordinators.....	38
10. Areas for Improvement, Lessons Learned and Challenges	39
11. Plans and Areas of Emphasis for the Coming Quarter	41
11.1. Component One Focal Areas	41
11.2. Component Two Focal Areas	41
11.3. Component Three Focal Areas.....	42
Attachment A: Community Outreach Agendas for Start-up Activities.....	44
Attachment B: Report on the RING Soil Improvement Workshop.....	48
Attachment C: Nutrition Activity Field Reports.....	53
Attachment D: Reviews Annual Work Plan Templates	58
Attachment E: Budget Variance Report Template	66
Attachment F: Component Three Menu Review Report	71
Attachment G: Post-ENA Training Follow-Up Findings.....	75
Attachment H: Soybean Best Practice Picture Guides	80
Exhibit A: Budget Variance Report Template	81

Tables

Table A: Personnel Changes in FY15 Q3:.....	2
Table B: Summary of Support Provided by RING’s Grants & Contracts Unit during FY15 Q3 ...	3
Table C: Summary Results by District.....	6
Table D: Summary Results by Activity (disaggregated by gender)	9
Table E: VSLA Loan Summary for FY15 Q3	12
Table F: FY15 Q3 2015 VSLA Progress.....	12
Table G: Summary of Soybean Activities and Projections for the 2015 season.....	13
Table H: District Progress for Shea Nut Activities.....	14
Table I: Small Ruminant Implementation Progress by District in FY15 Q3	16
Table J: Summary of District-Based Trainings on Drip Irrigation	19
Table K: Common foods enhanced with soy and moringa during cooking demonstrations.....	19
Table L: Summary of Cooking Demonstrations and Community Durbars by District and Participant.....	21
Table M: Summary of CMAM Training Participants in FY15 Q3	22
Table N: Summary of ENA Training Participants in FY15 Q3	22
Table O: Summary of District-led WASH Activities in FY15 Q3	24
Table P: RING Support to District WASH Activities	25
Table Q: District CLTS Outcomes for FY15 Q3	25
Table R: District WASH Capacity Gaps Identified During FY 15 Q3.....	27
Table S: Summary of PFM Risk Mitigation Progress by Districts during FY15 Q3.....	29
Table T: Support Needed for Tier One PFM Risk Mitigation Measures	29
Table U: Proposed Component 3 Menu of Activities (new activities in italics)	31
Table V: PMEPP Progress for FY15 Q3	33
Table W: Indicators disaggregated by District – Tier One Districts	35
Table X: Indicators Disaggregated by District - Tier Two Districts	35
Table Y: Component 3 Menu Review Participant Summary	71
Table Z: Proposed Menu for Component 3 (new activities in italics).....	73

Figures

Figure 1: VSLA Summary for FY15 Q3 (source: VSLA Field Data/SAVIX Platform, June 2015)	11
Figure 2: Illustration of Potential Profits from Shea Collection	14
Figure 3: Diagram of steps for establishing a sustainable Community Livestock Worker model (Dr. Ayamdooh).....	16

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AC	Area Council
ADS	Automated Directive System
ADVANCE	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project
AEA	Agriculture Extension Agent
APS	Annual program statement
ARC	Appreciative Review of Capacity©
ARI	Animal Research Institute
ATT	Agricultural Technology Transfer Project
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BAC	Business Advisory Center
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBMC	Community-based mass media campaign
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDA	Chereponi District Assembly
CDO	Community Development Officer
CET	Community Entry Team
CETL	Community Entry Team Leader
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest
CGDA	Central Gonja District Assembly
CH	Chereponi
CHN	Community Health Nurse
CHPS	Community-based Health Planning and Services
CHW	Community Health Worker
C-IYCF	Community-based infant and young child feeding
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CMAM	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition
CNA	Child, no adults
COP	Chief of Party
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWC	Child Welfare Clinic
CWSA	Community Water & Sanitation Agency
DA	District Assembly
DADU	District Agricultural Development Unit
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFA	Director of Finance and Administration
DHD	District Health Director
DHMT	District Health Management Team
DHS	Demographic & Health Survey
DMTDP	District Medium-Term Development Plan
DNO	District Nutrition Officer
DPCU	District Planning Coordinating Unit
DPO	District Planning Officer
DWST	District Water and Sanitation Teams

EGDA	East Gonja District Assembly
EHU	Environmental Health Unit
EM	East Mamprusi
EMDA	East Mamprusi District Assembly
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
ENA	Essential Nutrition Action
FC	Field Coordinator
FNM	Female, no male
FOAT	Functional and Organizational Assessment Tool
FRI	Farm Radio International
FtF	Feed the Future
G2G	Government-to-government
GAP	Good agricultural practice
GC	Global Communities (formerly CHF International)
GCU	Grants and Contracts Unit
GDA	Gushegu District Assembly
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOG	Government of Ghana
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSA/SNG	Global Shea Alliance/Shea Network Ghana
GUC	Grants Under Contract
HH	Household
HST	Household Selection Team
HW	Health worker
IQS	Indefinite quantity subcontract
IR	Intermediate Result
ISFM	Integrated soil fertility management
IYCF	Infant & Young Child Feeding
JSI	John Snow, Inc.
KaDA	Karaga District Assembly
KpDA	Kpandai District Assembly
KuDA	Kumbungu District Assembly
LEAP	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
LOE	Level of effort
M2M	Mother to mother
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&F	Male and female
MA	Metropolitan/Municipal Assembly
METSS	Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support Services
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MNF	Male, no female
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MOGSP	Ministry of Gender and Social Protection
MOSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MTDP	Medium-term Development Plan
MUAC	Mid/upper-arm circumference

NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGDA	North Gonja District Assembly
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NL	Natural Leader
NNDA	Nanumba North District Assembly
NR	Northern Region
NRCC	Northern Region Coordinating Council
NRHD	Northern Regional Health Directorate
NSDA	Nanumba South District Assembly
ODF	Open-defecation free
OFDA	[USAID] Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OFSP	Orange fleshed sweet potato
OPC	Outpatient care
PBS	Population Based Study
PFM	Public Financial Management
PHN	Public Health Nurse
PMEP	Performance monitoring and evaluation plan
PMP	Performance monitoring plan
POC	Point of contact
PPA	Public procurement authority
PSC	Personal Services Contractor
PY	Program year
QI	Quality improvement
RADU	Regional Agricultural Development Unit
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
REHU	Regional Environmental Health Unit
RHD	Regional Health Directorate
RING	Resiliency in Northern Ghana
RPCU	Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit
RUTF	Ready-to-use therapeutic food
S4H	Systems for Health
SA	Saboba
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SARI	Savannah Agricultural Research Institute
SBCC	Social Behavior Change Communication
SDA	Saboba District Assembly
SgDA	Sagnarigu District Assembly
SHEP	School Health Education Program
SIL	Soybean Innovation Lab
SNMA	Savelugu-Nanton Municipal Assembly
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SOW	Scope of Work
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
SWP	Start-up Work Plan
TBD	To be determined
TA	Technical Assistance
TAMA	Tamale Metropolitan Assembly
TDA	Tolon District Assembly

TO	Tolon
TOR	Terms of reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TSV	Technical support visit
TZ	Tou zaafi
UC	Unit Committee
UDS	University for Development Studies
UI	Urban Institute
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VRA	Volta River Authority
VSLA	Village savings and loan associations
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WGDA	West Gonja District Assembly
WIAD	Women In Agricultural Development
WSMT	Water and Sanitation Management Team
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Executive Summary

Throughout the period under review, RING delivered a broad range of technical assistance to our regional and district partners. Activities in Tier One Districts were fully under way and Tier Two Districts were finalizing Start-Up, while simultaneously developing their 2015 Annual Work Plans (AWPs).

During the quarter, RING:

- Issued seven subcontracts for Tier Two Start-Up Activities (approximately USD \$175,000) and developed an additional seven subcontracts for 2015 Annual Work Plans (approximately USD 875,000);
- Signed an Indefinite Quantity Subcontract (IQS) with the University for Development Studies (UDS) and issued a Task Order (TO) for the orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) pilot;
- Supported OFSP innovation and the installation of small-scale drip irrigation systems;
- Hosted a Soil Improvement Summit and Small Ruminants Best Practices Workshop;
- Linked District Assemblies implementing shea nut activities with large-scale buyers;
- Provided technical support to Tier One Districts during Annual Work Plan implementation;
- Supported the completion of Start-Up Activities and development of the 2015 Annual Work Plans in Tier Two Districts;
- Focused on improving community engagement and building capacity within the line ministries to integrate nutrition into their routine workloads;
- Provided targeted technical support in key district activities, such as cooking demonstrations, community durbars, monitoring visits, and community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), Essential Nutrition Actions (ENAs) and Community-based Infant and Young Child Feeding (C-IYCF) trainings;
- Conducted data utilization and outreach planning training for district health staff;
- Administered a rapid follow-up assessment of 2014 ENA integration;
- Supported the delivery of nutrition-sensitive commodities through the USAID|DELIVER program;
- Carried out a WASH progress survey and capacity assessment for Tier One Districts;
- Provided technical guidance to districts as they carried out water points and functionality mapping, repaired boreholes, revitalized or established Water and Sanitation Management Teams (WSMTs), and conducted Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) ;
- Developed a new Annual Work Plan template;
- Provided Public Financial Management (PFM) Support to Tier One Districts;
- Undertook a zonally-based procurement training for relevant officers within the District Assemblies; and
- Conducted a joint program menu review for Component 3 activities.

The new COP, Philippe Le May, and the new DFA, Pierre-Corneille Namahoro, joined the RING team during the quarter.

1. Introduction

The USAID Resiliency in Northern Ghana Project (RING) project is a poverty reduction program designed to improve the nutrition and livelihood status of vulnerable households in an integrated fashion. RING is applying a multidisciplinary approach to increase the resiliency of these households through agriculture, income generation, savings, nutrition, WASH and governance interventions. Through its partnership with local government authorities and direct funding mechanism, RING's implementation methodology adheres strongly to USAID Forward principles.

Since 2012, RING has worked through Government of Ghana (GOG) systems to deliver services to some of the most impoverished communities in the Northern Region. In 2014, Global Communities was awarded the RING contract and the project increased its technical support across all component areas to 17 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and the Northern Region Coordinating Council (NRCC). As RING progresses through 2015, all districts are actively implementing agriculture, livelihoods, WASH, nutrition and good governance activities. RING will continue to work closely with the districts and regional leadership to ensure effective delivery of services to vulnerable households.

This report covers the third quarter of FY 2015 and details progress made toward achieving the following component objectives:

- Component One: Increased access and consumption of diverse quality food among targeted households, especially among women and children;
- Component Two: Improved behaviors related to nutrition and hygiene for women and children; and
- Component Three: Strengthened local support networks addressing the ongoing needs (nutrition and livelihoods) of vulnerable households

2. Human Resources

During the period under review, the following personnel adjustments took place:

Table A: Personnel Changes in FY15 Q3:

Name	Position	Category	Duty Station	Start/End Date
New Hires				
Eric Akurugu	Sub-Grant & Contract Officer	National Staff	Tamale	15-Apr-15
Ahmed Taqi-Ud-Deen Sa-eed	Deputy M&E Specialist	National Staff	Tamale	4-May-15
George Akubia, Jnr	Senior Accountant	National Staff	Tamale	4-May-15
Emmanuel Sungnumah Kogo	WASH Officer	National Staff	Gushegu	6-May-15
Abdul-Rahaman Abdulai	Communications Officer	National Staff	Tamale	11-May-15
Claudia Maame Serwaa Odonkor	Program Assistant	National Staff	Tamale	11-May-15
Issahaku Al-hasssan	M&E Specialist	National Staff	Tamale	13-May-15
Chimbar Tom Laari	WASH Coordinator	National Staff	Tamale	1-Jun-15
Emmanuel Antoh	GIS Officer	National Staff	Tamale	29-Jun-15
Mariama Bogobire Yakubu	Nutrition Officer (JSI)	National Staff	Salaga	18-May-15
Kristen Kappos	Nutrition Specialist (JSI)	Expat	Tamale	29-Jun-15
Philippe LeMay	Chief of Party	Expat	Tamale	17-June-15
Separations				
Lauren Brooks	Nutrition/Public Health	Expat	Tamale	10-May-15

Name	Position	Category	Duty Station	Start/End Date
	Specialist			
Gladys Assan	GIS Officer	National	Tamale	29-May-15
Ahmed Kassim	Director of Finance & Administration	Expat	Tamale	5-June-15
Margaret Herro	Acting Chief of Party	Expat	Tamale	30-June-15

To date, RING has a total of 52 staff, including drivers and support personnel. The following positions remain open and were being actively recruited as of the end of the quarter:

- Senior Management Systems Advisor¹
- Livelihoods Coordinator
- BCC Coordinator
- WASH Officer
- Nutrition Officer (JSI)

3. Grants and Contracts

During the quarter ending June 30, 2015, the RING Grants and Contracts Unit (GCU) supported the Governance Unit in conducting pre-award assessments for all Tier Two Districts. RING issued seven initial USD 25,000 subcontracts to districts for the completion of start-up activities. RING also signed an Indefinite Quantity Subcontract (IQS) with the University for Development Studies (UDS) to develop and pilot livelihood and nutrition activities, and issued the first Task Order under the IQS for an orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) pilot.

Additional programmatic assistance provided by the GCU included facilitating review sessions with Tier Two Districts on the terms and conditions of their subcontracts. The Unit also provided one-on-one coaching support to district focal persons in using subcontract-related templates such as invoicing and activity reporting formats. GCU also completed the procurement of materials related to the gravity-fed small-scale drip irrigation pilot. These goods will be distributed to support dry season gardening in 24 communities in the coming months.

Finally, GCU also procured a transformer to stabilize electric power in the office, laptops for new staff and motorcycles for Field Coordinators, among other administrative and logistical activities.

Table B: Summary of Support Provided by RING's Grants & Contracts Unit during FY15 Q3

Activity	Beneficiaries/ Collaborators/Vendors	Purpose	Timeframe
Pre-Award Assessment	Tier 2 DAs	In fulfillment of USAID Rules ADS 302	April
Capacity Building on Subcontract	DA staff	For Tier 2 DA staff to understand subcontract Clauses	April
Subcontracts to seven DAs	Tier 2 DAs, HQ, RING Tech Team	For implementation of startup activities	April
UDS IQS	UDS/SARI	To develop and pilot various livelihood and nutrition activities	April
UDS Task Order	UDS/SARI	For OFSP pilot	April
Purchase Gravity-Fed Small Scale Drip Irrigation Kits	DAs/Calli Ghana	For dry season gardening in project communities	April/May
Purchase Fencing Material for Drip Irrigation Pilot	ASPET A	For dry season gardening in project communities	May

¹ Prospective candidate proposed to USAID for final approval.

Activity	Beneficiaries/ Collaborators/Vendors	Purpose	Timeframe
Purchase & Installation of Transformer	Ring Office/Volta River Authority (VRA)	To stabilize power supply to RING office	May/June
Purchase of Laptops	COMPU-GHANA	For RING Staff	June

4. Tier One District Support

As reported in the previous FY15 Q2 report, the first months of the calendar year were dedicated to laying the groundwork for implementation of 2015 activities. Tier One Districts were in the process of finalizing Annual Work Plans (AWPs) and carrying out no-cost preparatory actions to ensure an efficient startup once funding was available. RING supported the districts throughout this process.

During the current reporting period, RING has focused on assisting Tier One Districts to implement the activities in their AWPs. Because of the timing of the release of funds in relation to the agricultural calendar, the districts’ original implementation schedules have been shifted significantly to allow for the prioritization of time-sensitive activities such as purchasing improved varieties of soybeans, plowing fields, and securing deliveries of small ruminants.

As the districts have engaged in these activities, RING has been supporting them with technical assistance throughout. With the local currency in a state of flux, each of the districts has sought

District Highlight:
Nanumba North

As 2014 came to a close and the first six Tier One Districts were assessed on their performance throughout the Start-Up Phase and their first project implementation cycles, Nanumba North found itself ranked in last place. Slow implementation and poor communication between district departments and RING Project leadership were some of their main challenges identified. Consequently, the district didn’t receive a vehicle or an increase in budget ceiling.

This year, however, Nanumba North has emerged as one of the stronger districts under the RING Project. The district health services have carried out numerous activities to build capacity at the facility and community levels, the Planning Unit is on track with Community Action Plan implementation, and the Agricultural Unit has taken steps to ensure sustainability by continuing their work with 2014 soybean farmers. The Bimbilla-based team has also had notable successes with its CLTS efforts and has demonstrated a commitment to improving its public financial management capacity by developing a procurement plan and implementing the majority of mitigation measures according to plan. RING has taken note of these improvements and will continue to support Nanumba North to implement its Annual Work Plan.

RING guidance in numerous reallocations of funds and realignments of budgets. Additionally, despite encouragement from RING to critically review budget template for the 2015 planning process, very few districts actually made changes to the template. As districts have begun implementation, those that did not adjust the template based on their actual plans are now finding it difficult to carry out the activities. For instance, East Mamprusi District indicated they wanted to construct a new quarantine pen because the one built in 2014 did not fully comply with technical standards established by RING.² In light of this deficiency, RING has worked closely with the District Agricultural Development Unit (DADU) and the Engineering Department to design a suitable structure that will fit the available budget. This is an area to which RING will pay close attention in the coming quarter as districts begin their 2016 Annual Work Planning cycles.

As project implementation was under way during the reporting period, much of the specific support RING provided to the districts is detailed in the component sections starting on page 9. Overall, districts are performing well, though first-year districts are experiencing the expected challenges and some newer issues are arising with second-year veterans, in particular with the Tamale Metropolitan (*please see Section 10 - Areas for Improvement, Lessons Learned and Challenges, page 39*).

² Standards include adequate space for each of the ruminants, a separate area for new lambs, and a sick bay for sick animals.

5. Tier Two District Support

Although Tier Two District rollout began during the first quarter of FY15 and continued into the second quarter, implementation began in earnest during this reporting period. Districts signed subcontracts for the implementation of start-up activities in April, which allowed them to carry out the following activities in May and June:

- Pre-Information & Community Sensitization,
- Household Selection, and
- Household Validation.

Through the efforts of the Field Coordinators, RING supported these activities by conducting timely trainings for district officials. In each district, RING gave a general overview of the project, with field officers carrying out pre-information and community sensitization. During these meetings, RING also facilitated the development of the outreach agendas (see *Attachment A, page 44*), including:

- Key points to stress
- Common areas of contention and confusion
- Outlining the next steps with the communities.

Once the districts had completed sensitization, RING held a similar training on household selection designed to familiarize officials with the registration tool definitions of a vulnerable household, and some objective and subjective criteria for poverty and vulnerability. As household lists came in, RING supported the districts to input all their data into the Excel spreadsheets designed to keep track of the beneficiary lists.³ Once household lists were compiled and reviewed, the districts presented the final product to selected community members (at least one man and one woman from each community) for their input during validation meetings.

As a condition of their subcontract, each district was required to report to RING as it achieved certain milestones during the Start-Up Phase. RING supported the districts to complete these deliverables correctly and in a timely manner, ensuring that each district fulfilled the terms of its subcontract and demonstrated its capacity to receive an additional and larger subcontract award to

support Annual Work Plan activities. With Start-Up activities, funding typically arrived in district accounts within two days of deliverable validation and payment authorization from RING. Turn-around time on the deliverables themselves was typically less than one day. However, on some occasions, additional verification was needed.

Key Improvement

Household Validation

During the most recent round of household validations, RING encouraged districts to ensure that people attending validation meetings were different from the community members who had been appointed to assist district officials in registering households. The districts followed up on any discrepancies noted by community members before finalizing their household lists. This tactic proved very effective, making the validation process more transparent and increasing the likelihood of community endorsement.

Key Improvement

In-House Annual Work Plan Review Meetings

Building on past experience with Tier One Districts, RING organized on-site visits to Tier Two Districts to review progress made in the preparation of their Annual Work Plans. RING realized that, as with many Tier One Districts, collaborative planning between the departments was still lacking and ultimately needed to be instigated by the project. These meetings proved to be an effective tool to spur discussion among the relevant departments and increase transparency in budgeting and planning. In several cases, RING realized that the DPCU had inserted activities into the AWP without consulting departments that would ultimately implement the program. Through these group meetings, those issues were rectified and RING anticipates Tier Two Districts to move forward with a greater level of cooperation between departments. As the 2016 planning cycle nears, RING will also employ this mechanism with Tier One districts.

³ All seven Tier Two districts have submitted their household databases and RING is in the process of cleaning the spreadsheets and inputting them into our own tracking mechanism. They should be available to USAID by the end of FY15 Q4.

While district field officers were carrying out many of the community-based activities during Start-Up, RING supported DAs’ senior staff to develop their 2015 Annual Work Plans (AWPs). In April, in collaboration with the Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit (RPCU), RING facilitated an AWP workshop for the expanded District Planning and Coordinating Units (DPCU). This workshop followed the same model as previous Tier One AWP workshops, with constructive feedback sessions of proposed plans (including activity scales/sizes and targeted communities), time for team review and budget development, and an experience-sharing panel with key personnel from Tier One Districts. RING supported the districts throughout the planning process with on-site assistance from Field Coordinators and timely feedback on subsequent drafts. RING also carried out team visits (often including representatives from USAID and the RPCU) to each district, which encouraged a greater level of communication between the decentralized departments.

All districts submitted proposed final work plans to RING over an eight week period, a significant improvement over past timelines, especially considering that the districts were also busy rolling-out Start-Up Activities. After final approval of the proposed plans by RING and the NRCC, RING developed subcontract deliverables based on each of the selected activities and submitted the subcontracts to USAID for final approval. As of the end of the reporting period, subcontracts for 2015 Annual Work Plan implementation were under final review by USAID, with approval anticipated early in FY15 Q4. As with Tier One Districts, while funding details were finalized, RING supported Tier Two Districts to carry out no-cost preparatory activities, such as identification of tractor service providers and outreach for those communities targeted for soybean interventions. These added support measures will ensure a smooth transition into work plan implementation once all approvals have been obtained and funding commences.

6. Summary of Activities and Progress Toward Results

The table below provides a summary of activities undertaken by Tier One Districts in FY15 Q3.

Table C: Summary Results by District

RING FY15 Q3 PERFORMANCE DATA								
District	Activity	Target	# of Groups/Sessions Held	Total Achieved	Male	Female	# of Communities	# of People Trained
Central Gonja	Village savings and loan association (VSLA)	200	8	203	3	200	5	
	Soybean Cultivation + GAPs + Improved Storage	250		250		250	4	
	Small Ruminants	250		250		250	5	
	Shea Nut Collection		10	400		400	10	
	DADU Training			24	19	5		
	Community Livestock Worker (CLW) Training			15	13	2		
	ENA+CMAM+C-IYCF+Anemia training							
	Salt Monitoring							
	Community Durbars	25	25	2,469	847	1622		
	CLTS			265				
	ICT Training for DA Staff							

District	Activity	Target	# of Groups/Sessions Held	Total Achieved	Male	Female	# of Communities	# of People Trained
	PFM Training for DA Staff			7	5	2		
	Community Action Plans (CAPs)							
	DA Staff Development			34	31	3		
Chereponi	VSLA		37	885		885	10	
	DADU Training							
	Small Ruminants			250		250		
	Soybean Cultivation + GAPs			250		250	4	
	ENA + CMAM + Anemia Training			315	215	100		
	Food Demonstrations		6	1,496	731	765		
	CLTS			349			10	
	Water and Sanitation Management Team			92	48	44	8	15
East Mamprusi	Soybean Cultivation + Conservation Farming + Improved Storage			150		150	4	
	Small Ruminants			250		250		
	DADU staff trained			13	12	1		
	CLW Training			10	6	4		
	VSLA		30	750	0	530	15	
	Shea Nut Collection		5	125	0	125	5	
	Grinding Mills							
	Iodized Salt Rebagging & Sales							
	Community Durbars		4	670	130	540		
	Food Demonstrations		5	178	32	146		
	ENA Training							
	Borehole Repairs + WatSan Committee Training							
GIS Training for DA Staff								
Nanumba North	VSLA		12	289	0	289	6	6
	Grinding Mills						3	
	Soybean Cultivation + Conservation Farming + Improved Storage			250		250	5	
	Iodated Salt Rebagging & Sales							
	Shea Nut Collection		5	153	0	153	4	
	ENA + CMAM + Anemia Training			220	185	35		
	Hand Washing Stations + Water Filters							

Dis-trict	Activity	Target	# of Groups/Sessions Held	Total Achieved	Male	Female	# of Commu-nities	# of People Trained
	Borehole Repairs + WatSan Committee Training							
	CLTS						2	
	PFM Training for DA Staff							
	CAPs							
Nanumba South	Soybean Cultivation			500		500	13	
	Small Ruminants			300		300	7	
	Leafy Green Vegetable Cultivation							
	CLTS						15	
	Food Demonstrations		7	1,034	299	735		
	Mother-to-mother (M2M)+ IYCF Training			50	0	50		
	Borehole Repairs							
	Hand Washing Stations							
	DA Staff Development							
Saboba	VSLA		16	407	0	407	11	
	DADU staff trained			24	21	3		
	Small Ruminants			225	0	225	2	
	Soybean cultivation			240	0	240	5	
	CLW training			20	17			
	Food Demonstrations							
	M2M + CMAM Training			242	104	138		
	Community Durbars		2	172	53	119		
	CLTS			89			5	89
	Project Management Training for DA Staff							
Savelugu-Nanton	CAPs							
	Soybean cultivation			250	0	250	5	
	CLTS						6	
	CMAM +ENA Training			127	93	34		
	DADU staff trained			11	11	0		
	CLW Training			10	10	0		
	VSLA		12	346	0	346	6	
Small Ruminants training			250	0	250	5		
Tamale	Soybean cultivation			150	0	150	5	
	Small Ruminants			250	0	250	5	
	CMAM			16	12	4		
Tolon	VSLA		8	220	4	216	4	
	Soybean cultivation			250	0	250	5	

District	Activity	Target	# of Groups/Sessions Held	Total Achieved	Male	Female	# of Communities	# of People Trained
	Small Ruminants			250	0	250	6	
	DADU staff trained			10	7	3		
	CLW Training			11	7	4		
	CMAM			115	84	31		
	CLTS			25			5	25
	PFM Training for DA Staff			6				
West Gonja	VSLA		20	445	101	344	12	
	Soybeans			150	0	150	3	
	CLW Training			6	4	2		
	Small Ruminants			150	0	150	4	
	DADU staff trained			18	15	3		
	Community Durbars		1	290	90	200		
	ENA + CMAM Training			167	110	57		
	CLTS			294			3	15
	Staff development			26	19	7		
	PFM Training for DA Staff			9	8	1		

Table D: Summary Results by Activity (disaggregated by gender)

Activity	Women	Men	Total
VSLA	3,148	108	3,256
Small Ruminants	2,425	0	2,425
CLW Training	7	75	82
Soybeans	2,440	0	2,440
Shea	678	0	678
Grinding Mills	0	0	0
DADU Staff Refresher	30	134	164
Community Durbars	2,481	1,120	3,601
ENA-CMAM-C-IYCF Training	449	803	1,252
Cooking Demonstrations	1,646	1,062	2,708
CLTS	N/A	N/A	1,022
WSMTs	44	48	92
Borehole Repairs	0	0	0
DA Training (PFM, ICT, GIS, M&E, etc.)	10	37	47

6.1. Component One

Increased access and consumption of diverse quality food among targeted households, especially among women and children

Typically, the third quarter of the fiscal year marks the beginning of the agricultural season and the most active period for crop farmers in the Northern Region. During the quarter, MMDAs carried out important trainings with staff and beneficiary households as a precursor to both

soybean and small ruminant production. Despite the successes in preparatory activities, delayed rainfall affected progress with soybean cultivation.

Overall, land preparation and sowing in most RING districts were delayed by as much as six weeks because of the late onset of the rainy season. As of the end of the quarter, some RING MMDAs were likely to miss the July 15th deadline for soybean planting. Also, land preparation on average in RING MMDAs was less than 50% completed due to lack of moisture in the soil. These delays may affect the yields of major food and cash crops in the current season. Because of this delayed rainfall, the RING technical team is anticipating lower than optimum soybean yields for smallholder farmers.

RING has advised MMDAs that by initiating planting as early as possible, soybean harvests can extend over a longer period of time, giving women greater flexibility to schedule their harvesting duties so as not to conflict with their other responsibilities. However, because of weather-related planting delays this year, RING beneficiaries may be faced with difficulties, as they will need to harvest their soybeans just when many other seasonal demands reach their peak. The problem will be mitigated to a great extent by the shatter-resistant qualities of the Jenguma soybean variety being used under RING. Jenguma pods will remain on the vine much longer than traditional varieties, providing women with more leeway in choosing when to harvest.

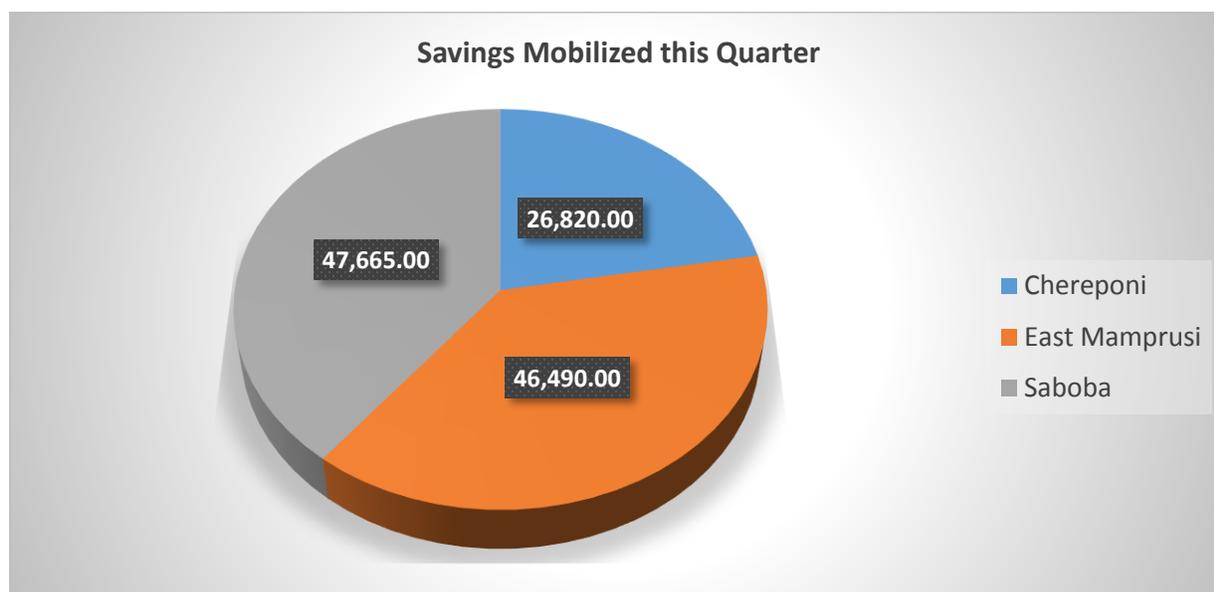
In addition to working with MMDAs to mitigate weather-related implementation challenges, the RING Agriculture and Livelihoods technical team contributed to strengthening the capacity of district agriculture extension teams, Business Advisory Center Officers, Community Development & Social Welfare Officers and Cooperative Officers to better implement, manage and monitor livelihoods activities in their respective locations. With support from the Animal Research Institute (ARI) and the Regional Agricultural Development Unit (RADU), RING facilitated a Small Ruminants Best Practices Workshop for district officers to identify solutions to the bottlenecks of small ruminant procurement. RING also facilitated a Soil Improvement Best Practices Summit involving all RING MMDAs' agriculture extension staff, as well as soil improvement experts from research and academic institutions. A detailed report on the workshop can be found in Attachment B, page 48. Other key technical areas RING supported include: VSLA training of trainers (TOT) for 44 MMDA field officers (14 females, 30 males) in five MMDAs (Central Gonja, Nanumba North, Savelugu-Nanton, Tolon and West Gonja) and multiplication of OFSP vines for OFSP pilots in all 17 RING districts.

The RING technical team also provided on-site technical assistance to MMDAs on quarantine pen construction, livestock procurement, small ruminants training for Community Livestock Workers, community-level creation of savings groups and household (HH)-level training of RING beneficiaries on soybean production and small ruminant management. Also completed were a gravity-fed small-scale drip irrigation pilot to improve the effectiveness of dry season vegetable cultivation, and training of extension agents on the installation of irrigation kits.

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)

2014 VSLA Progress: VSLAs in Chereponi (CH), East Mamprusi (EM) and Saboba (SA) Districts made significant progress in savings mobilizations and were able to increase members' access to credit during the quarter. During this quarter, 85 savings groups (32 in CH, 30 in EM and 23 in SA) comprising 2,040 members, mobilized savings of GHs 120,975.00 (see figure below). This amount of savings was more than double the previous quarter's level of GHs 55,190.00, exceeding initial projections of GHs 82,785. As an indication of beneficiaries' positive response to the activity, a significant part of the extra savings (GHs 26,820) came from 32 groups in Chereponi where savings group formation coincided with the main farming season/lean season, a time when rural households in the Northern Region have limited cash flows.

Figure 1: VSLA Summary for FY15 Q3 (source: VSLA Field Data/SAVIX Platform, June 2015)



Share-Out Meetings

As of the end of the quarter, 13 of the 2014 VSLAs (ten in SA, three in EM) shared out a combined GHs 24,727.00 of their savings. East Mamprusi and Saboba started VSLA implementation in 2014 and have some savings groups that saved for more than nine months and became eligible for share-outs. The remaining MMDAs (Chereponi and Savelugu-Nanton) started VSLAs in 2015 that have not yet matured to share-outs.

During a field visit to groups that shared out, the RING team noted among other things that members used the money to:

- Invest in farming activities (mainly groundnuts, soybeans, vegetables);
- Meet other household needs (food, health care and education); and
- Start/expand micro businesses (salt, cooked fish and oil retail, pito brewing, dressmaking, and 'kosie' sales).

Notably, some women in the East Mamprusi District invested in farming maize, a crop not typically raised by women because of the significant quantity of external inputs and the high maintenance required. The members indicated that their participation in a VSLA enabled them to invest in the necessary inputs and maintenance. **"We feel empowered,"** remarked by Falila Baba, secretary of Tisongtaba ("Let's Help Each Other") VSLA in Tamboaku community.

Credit Access

Interestingly, VSLA members, especially in East Mamprusi and Saboba, borrowed less money than expected. A possible contributing factor is that culturally, people in the region fear taking loans and being indebted to another person or group. During the quarter, only GHs 22,054.00 was loaned to members, of which GHs 14,616.00 (66.3%) was loaned by 17 groups in Chereponi district (details in table below). RING realizes that savings is a first step, but access to credit is also an important resiliency goal. As these groups mature, RING will target successful VSLAs with more training on credit management as part of our financial literacy training activities.

Table E: VSLA Loan Summary for FY15 Q3

District	# of Groups	Total Amount Saved (GHs)	# of Groups Granting Loans	Total Loans (GHs)
Chereponi	32	26,820.00	17	14,616.00
East Mamprusi	30	46,490.00	2	3,050.00
Saboba	23	47,665.00	8	4,388.00

2015 VSLA Progress: Eight Tier One Districts identified VSLAs for 2015 implementation. This quarter, district teams have formed groups in 58 communities with a total of 3,138 members so far. The table below details VSLA progress made by each district.

Table F: FY15 Q3 2015 VSLA Progress

District	Communities	# of Groups	# of Members	# of Groups starting Savings	Savings to Date (GHs)
Central Gonja	5	8	203	0	0
Chereponi	10	35	885	0	0
East Mamprusi	15	30	750	0	0
Nanumba North	6	12	289	0	0
Saboba	Data not ready	0	0	0	0
Savelugu-Nanton	6	12	346	12	5,336
Tolon	4	8	220	0	0
West Gonja	12	20	445	0	0
Total	58	125	3,138	12	5,336

Soybeans

The RING technical team facilitated the procurement of certified Jenguma (improved soybean variety) seeds for all Tier One and Two Districts. To help offset district procurement delays expected to be caused by the late arrival of USAID funds, RING worked with the regional seed division of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) to reserve seeds for the RING districts. Thanks to this advance support, all 17 Districts under RING were able to purchase the certified, improved seeds they needed, even as seed suppliers were running low on stock. RING also supported all MMDAs to identify tractor services well ahead of the farming season, preventing undue delays to land preparation/planting once there was sufficient moisture in the fields. Eighty-two tractor service providers were identified/engaged by the 17 RING Districts (54 by Tier One and 28 by Tier Two) to provide services to RING beneficiaries.

Five Tier One Districts (Savelugu-Nanton, Tolon, Saboba, Chereponi and East Mamprusi) have completed training of soybean beneficiaries on good agricultural practices (GAPs). To date, 880 RING participants have been trained on site identification and general GAPs of soybean farming. Land preparation is ongoing in all 17 districts, and will be completed (along with planting and field management trainings) early in the coming quarter. Field monitoring visits to provide extension agents and beneficiaries with technical assistance on GAPs (including proper harvesting and storage techniques using the triple bagging system) will be ongoing throughout the duration of soybean activities. In addition, soybean utilization trainings will be organized for beneficiaries of soybean production in the coming quarters.

Across all partner districts, a total of 4,420 participants will each plant one acre of soybeans through RING support. This intervention will contribute significantly to reducing the vulnerability of targeted beneficiaries and also enable households to earn additional income through soybean production. An estimated 176.80MT (400kg/acre) of soybeans is expected to be harvested, with revenues estimated to be more than double the amounts invested, including training costs (details in table below). Excluding training costs, revenues are expected to be quadruple the remaining input costs of seeds and land preparation. In the future, the average cost of production will be reduced as farmers begin to properly store seeds from their improved Jenguma soybean variety for planting in subsequent seasons. The RING technical team will continue to provide training on proper seed storage to help beneficiaries maintain the viability of their seed, realize high germination rates and reduce post-harvest losses

Table G: Summary of Soybean Activities and Projections for the 2015 season

# of Farmers	# of Acres	Cost of Plowing/Acre ⁴	Cost of Seeds ⁵	Training Costs for Farmers ⁶	Total Cost	Total Expected Yield ⁷	Total Expected Revenue ⁸
4,225	4,225	295,750	267,569	393,263	956,582	177MT	2,298,400

As Tier Two Districts begin implementation late in the quarter, the RING technical team is supporting efforts to accelerate activities so that soybeans are planted in time for optimum yields. Representatives from all Tier Two Districts have attended RING-hosted workshops on small ruminant best practices and soil improvement techniques. RING has also met with agriculture department leadership in the districts to provide guidance on how to fast-track soybean implementation effectively and efficiently. The results of these efforts will be tracked in the coming quarter and reported to USAID.

Shea Nuts

RING successfully launched shea nut interventions in Central Gonja, East Mamprusi and Nanumba North Districts, and 678 shea nut pickers (all women) in 19 groups were formed. Each group was subsequently trained on group dynamics, basic numeracy and small business management. RING facilitated a linkage of NNDA with the Global Shea Alliance/Shea Network Ghana (GSA/SNG) where ten groups received training in shea nut quality. The RING technical team is working with NNDA to facilitate linking the women shea pickers with GSA/SNG member buyers to help them obtain fair prices, receive periodic shea nut quality trainings and, in some cases, to benefit from small-scale warehousing facilities provided by GSA.

⁴ Average cost of GHs 70 per acre.

⁵ Average cost per acre is GHs 63.33.

⁶ Cost per farmer is GHs 93.08.

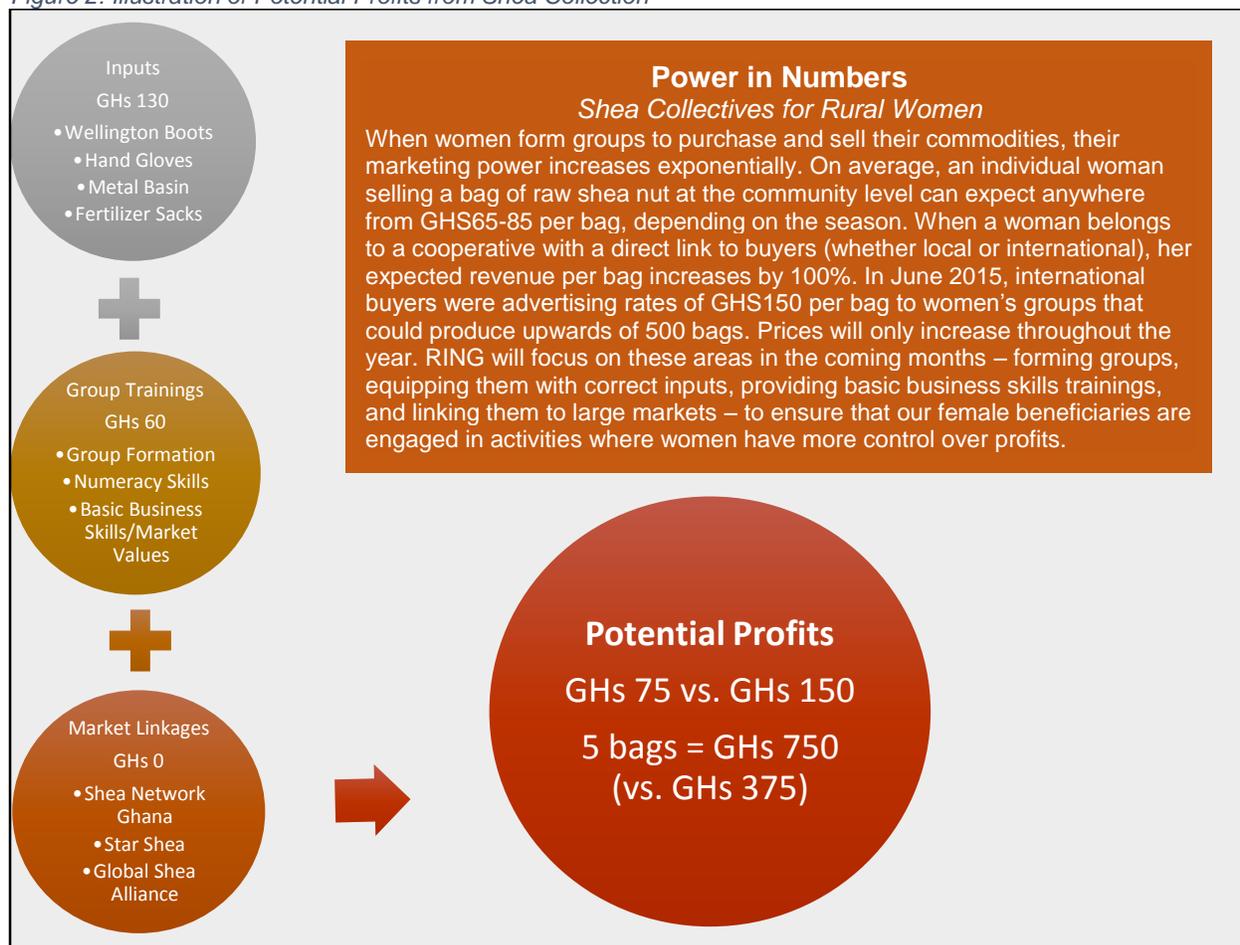
⁷ Expected 400kg yield per acre.

⁸ Expected GHs 130 per 100kgs.

Table H: District Progress for Shea Nut Activities

District	# of Communities	# of Groups	# of Beneficiaries	Progress	Training received
CG	10	10	400	Inputs delivered	Group dynamics, small business management, records keeping & shea nut quality training by GSA
EM	5	5	125	Inputs delivered	Group dynamics, small business management & records keeping
NN	4	5	153	Not delivered	Yet to be trained
Total	19	20	678	N/A	N/A

Figure 2: Illustration of Potential Profits from Shea Collection



Linking Producers to Markets

Meeting the requirements of large-volume buyers can be rigorous and requires early planning. Large buyers normally require the following:

- Nuts are aggregated to one location, with a minimum of 500 bags (there is a possibility of pick up from a central location if the number of bags is 80 or more).
- Point of delivery is often Tema and Tamale.
- Payment will normally be made by weight after delivery of nuts. Each woman’s shea nuts will need to be weighed, recorded and her sack(s) identified.
- Generally, premium payments will be made for higher quality shea nuts, which are determined before purchase.
- Contracts will have to be signed between the buyer and a registered organization working on behalf of the women since women’s groups have no registrations or bank accounts.

USAID Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) Collaboration

The RING technical team is collaborating with SIL on ways to improve RING soybean activities. RING has engaged a SIL soybean expert based at SARI to provide technical support to DADU teams in selected districts. The SIL expert has proposed on-farm trials with five women-owned farms. The trials will include soil testing to gain a better understanding of local soil conditions, including the impact of local soil variations on crop yields.

One major impact of the SIL collaboration has been their advice, confirmed by the Director of the MOFA Seed Inspection Unit in Tamale, that RING soybean farmers using certified improved varieties may retain a portion of their own harvest to use as seed for the following season. Soybean is a leguminous crop and does not cross-pollinate; the same seed characteristics are stable from one generation to the next.

Previously, RING had been advising beneficiaries to purchase new certified seed each season, as is often necessary in the case of certain crops such as maize. Annual seed purchases would be a significant cost whether paid for by the beneficiaries themselves or by the DAs. By retaining their own seeds, farmers' (and/or DAs') input costs for future seasons will be limited to land preparation only.

SIL also provided guidance on proper seed handling and storage techniques for optimum seed viability.

Small Ruminants Best Practices Workshop

The RING technical team organized and facilitated this one day workshop for key officials of the 17 RING MMDAs. There were a total of 76 participants, including 52 MMDA officials, RING staff, private livestock dealers, a representative of the Animal Research Institute and others.

The workshop had the following main objectives:

- To give experts on small ruminants an opportunity to provide advice and guidance to MMDA implementers;
- To give districts, the RING team and private livestock dealers/suppliers an opportunity to share experiences and lessons from the 2014 implementation of small ruminants activities;
- To develop guidelines with respect to Community Livestock Workers (CLWs), procurement/delivery of small ruminants and monitoring requirements of small ruminant activities.⁹

Photo 1: Animal Research Institute's recommended community-level small ruminant housing structure



⁹ The CLW concept is an integral part of the RING small ruminant intervention and was discussed extensively at the workshop. Dr. Ayamdoo, Veterinary officer of Tamale Metro, led participants through the steps involved in establishing a sustainable CLW model. Dr. Ayamdoo discussed the fact that MMDAs that implemented small ruminant activities and trained CLWs in 2014 did not follow all the steps and emphasized the importance of close adherence in the future to develop effective and efficient CLWs to support smallholders in managing their animal health and productivity.

Figure 3: Diagram of steps for establishing a sustainable Community Livestock Worker model (Dr. Ayamdooh)



Based on guidance from ARI, the regional veterinary officer and the RING technical team, RING recommended that MMDA Small Ruminant Procurement Teams consist of the following:

- The district livestock production officer
- The district veterinary officer
- The district RING focal person
- Two others as nominated by the District Planning and Coordinating Unit

Small Ruminants Activity Summary

The table below shows the progress made on the implementation of the small ruminant intervention by ten Tier One Districts in FY15 Q3. RING will provide similar technical assistance to Tier Two DAs in Q4 as implementation intensifies in all partner districts.

Table I: Small Ruminant Implementation Progress by District in FY15 Q3

FY15 Q3 implementation progress of the small ruminants intervention							
District	DAD Staff Trained		# of HHs	CLWs		HHs Trained	
	M	F		M	F	M	F
Nanumba South	0	0	300	0	0	0	0
Chereponi	0	0	250	0	0	0	0
East Mamprusi	12	1	250	6	4	0	0
Saboba	21	3	225	17	3	0	0
Savelugu	11	0	250	10	0	0	0
W. Gonja	15	3	150	6	0	128	23
C. Gonja	19	5	250	10	0	30	250
TAMA	0	0	250	0	0	127	44
Tolon	7	3	250	7	4	0	105
TOTAL	85	15	2175	56	11	285	422

Other Technical Support

1. The RING technical team promoted cross-district learning and sharing of best practices. Tamale Metro and Chereponi districts constructed good quarantine pens for their animals which the RING technical team subsequently promoted as an example to the rest of the MMDAs implementing small ruminant activities.
2. RING is promoting the use of pictures for community level trainings. This quarter the AEAs in Saboba, SNMA and Tolon facilitated household trainings for small ruminant beneficiaries on proper housing, feeding, disease recognition and control, utilizing pictures for better appreciation by beneficiaries. The Saboba and SNMA agricultural department teams developed pictorial materials to train beneficiaries, and RING took samples and shared them widely, recommending the same strategy to other DAs (see Attachment H, page 80). Tolon has subsequently taken up the initiative. The RING team will work with the other MMDAs to adopt this strategy, as it is more effective than verbal presentations alone.
3. A key recommendation from the Small Ruminant Best Practices Workshop that RING will be highlighting and promoting across the MMDAs is the use of community meetings for the introduction of trained Community Livestock Workers by veterinary officers. This approach will enhance the performance and delivery of CLW services to targeted beneficiaries. Community-wide meetings for veterinary officers to introduce trained CLWs can help community members understand the roles of the CLWs and give them the confidence to seek CLW services.
4. RING continues to develop and promote new livelihoods activities for vulnerable households with women of reproductive age. In the coming AWP cycle, we will explore the promotion of smallholder poultry rearing (see “Shifting the Focus”).

Shifting the Focus

Small Ruminants to Female-Friendly Ventures

On average, each district spends approximately one-quarter of its annual RING funding on small ruminants. RING has made every effort to design a complete intervention ‘package’ with small ruminants, but as a long-term project, its immediate direct benefit to female owners and household resiliency remain unclear. Sheep are significant assets in an unstable, rural economy, and as such, their management is divided strictly along gender lines with males dominating ownership and sales. RING is currently exploring options with poultry, whose management is traditionally less divided along gender lines. While fowl are already on the RING menu of activities, small ruminants often overshadow them. Agriculturalists at the district level may also think of poultry as a large-scale intervention, rather than smallholder, and avoid it because of the risks involved, such as massive losses during transportation and frequent outbreaks of avian illnesses. Poultry rearing, however, can be done at the household level, producing nutritious and economically-valuable eggs and meat. RING is currently in contact with several small-scale poultry operations based in Tamale regarding potential partnership opportunities. Potentially packaging the initiative as a social franchise concept—supplying women with inputs and trainings in exchange for egg and broiler sales back to the initial supplier—may be the key to getting districts interested in the activity. Multiple configurations and models will be explored to introduce and scale-up smallholder poultry rearing.

With purchase, transport, medications and feeding, an investment of GHs 250 has the potential to gross GHs 750 including sales of approximately 1,400 eggs while leaving an additional 1,400 eggs for household consumption.

Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSPs)

RING issued a Task Order under its subcontract with University for Development Studies (UDS) to multiply 75,000 vines for an OFSP cultivation pilot in 17 RING MMDAs. As of the end of the quarter, UDS had multiplied more than 30,000 vines in their fields at Bontanaga (near Kumbungu). The pilot will begin with root (potato) production during the rainy season, and, with the aid of small-scale drip irrigation systems, continue vine multiplication during the dry season.

UDS will provide technical support to vine multipliers to ensure the availability of vines at the MMDA level for scale-up next season. Under this model, MMDAs will procure vines from multipliers under this year's pilot to supply to RING beneficiaries next year. If successful, multiplication and sale of OFSP vines can serve as an income-generating activity for the farmers, in addition to the nutritional benefits the plants provide.



Photo 2: UDS orange fleshed sweet potato Team gathering vines at the multiplication site

Leafy Green Vegetables

After reviewing the 2014 dry-season vegetable production performance in Nanumba South, RING recommended piloting small-scale drip irrigation to improve the productivity and time efficiency of dry-season vegetable farming by women.

Callighana, the selected vendor for irrigation systems, installed small-scale gravity-fed drip systems in Chereponi, Central Gonja, Nanumba South, Savelugu-Nanton, and Tolon as a pilot to support the year-round production of leafy green vegetables. Callighana facilitated an on-site installation training of trainers (TOT) for agriculture extension agents (AEAs) and targeted RING beneficiaries, along with other interested community members. Five pilot kits were installed during the TOTs' two more kits were installed by the Nanumba South agriculture team. The remaining 17 kits will be installed during FY15 Q4. The RING technical team is exploring options to further improve the process of getting water into the storage tanks. Even though plots have been strategically placed near year-round water sources, this issue is important in the case of larger kits with correspondingly larger tanks (which take a significant amount of time to fill by hand). The larger kits are used by women interested in dry-season block farming. Under this methodology, each woman manages her individual farm, but since the plots are adjacent, they can be served by a single drip system.



Photo 3: (top & bottom) Callighana representatives demonstrate irrigation installation

Drip irrigation will also enable women to maintain viable OFSP vines for the next farming season and some women could potentially generate additional income as vine multipliers alongside their regular vegetable production.

Table J: Summary of District-Based Trainings on Drip Irrigation

District	# of AEAs Trained	# of Women Trained	# of Drip Kits Installed
Central Gonja	8	11	1
Chereponi	8	8	1
Nanumba South	9	15	3
Savelugu-Nanton	5	2	1
Tolon	4	10	1
Total	34	46	7

6.2. Component Two

6.2.1. Component 2a – Nutrition

Increased adoption of positive nutrition behaviors among target households

In FY 15 Q3, RING supported the implementation of nutrition activities in the ten Tier One Districts, each with a focus on improving community engagement and building the capacity of line ministries (i.e. Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ghana Education Service (GES), Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW), and MOFA) to integrate nutrition into their routine activities. Key activities included cooking demonstrations, community durbars, supervision and monitoring visits, community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) training, outreach planning and data utilization training, as well as Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and Community-based Infant and Young Child Feeding (C-IYCF) training. Additionally, a focus this quarter was the provision of technical assistance to Tier Two DAs to help them develop and finalize nutrition activities for their AWP. In all Tier Two Districts, RING provided targeted feedback during on-site visits, as well as remote support, which included advising on the number of participants per training, ensuring that all activity inputs (e.g. training materials and monitoring) were included in the budgets, and adjusting work plan activities to promote coordination with ongoing UNICEF and SPRING activities in overlap districts.

Cooking Demonstrations

Four Tier One Districts organized cooking demonstrations in 24 communities during the quarter. A total of 2,225 people participated, the majority of which were held in RING soy bean growing communities. The women who participated learned firsthand how to increase their dietary diversification and nutrient consumption by incorporating soy beans into their family meals. Moringa, widely available in the area, was also used in the cooking demonstrations.

Table K: Common foods enhanced with soy and moringa during cooking demonstrations

TYPICAL FOOD	DEMONSTRATED FOOD
Dawadawa jollof	Soy dawadawa jollof
Corn porridge	Soy-corn porridge
Not a usual family food	Soy kebab (tofu)
Banku with groundnut soup	Soy banku with groundnut soup
Tou zaafi (TZ) with okra soup	Soy TZ with okra & moringa soup
Plain rice with tomato stew	Plain rice with soy stew
Kosie (bean cake)	Kosie with Moringa
Cowpea tubani	Soy & cowpea tubani

At the encouragement of RING, District Nutrition Officers (DNOs) and Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD) Officers facilitated the demonstrations, the latter playing a key role in teaching the community members about soy processing. The involvement of the WIAD Officers, who are MOFA staff, helped foster inter-sectoral collaboration between GHS and MOFA toward improving nutritional status of women and children.

Photo 4: Women incorporate soy into cowpea-based tubani during a Nanumba South demonstration



Activity Highlight

During a visit to Kpamaba and Gold Coast communities in Chereponi District, the DNO disseminated key ENA messages to the community and talked about the benefits of fortifying foods with soy. Both communities were enthusiastic about incorporating the suggestions and mobilized their own resources to host their own group cooking demonstration.

Community Durbars

DNOs facilitated community durbars in a total of 35 communities in the following four districts this quarter: Central Gonja, East Mamprusi, Saboba, and West Gonja. The central theme of the majority of the durbars was the seven ENAs. In addition to promoting key messages on hygiene and maternal, infant, and young child nutrition, a number of the durbars integrated messages on antenatal care, family planning, and immunization. The durbars also served as an opportunity to strengthen districts' engagement with communities and deepen their partnerships for service delivery. RING observed several of the durbars and reported that they were well planned by the DNOs, with strong attendance from religious and opinion leaders, women's groups, and other community members. With men representing over 30% of durbar participants, these activities have also been a key means for RING to reach males with nutrition messages and enlisting their support in improving their families' health and nutrition. RING used these occasions to highlight the role of community volunteers in health service delivery, and to coach facilitators in the use of visual aids and engaging attendees in discussion, rather than relying solely on a lecture format. In FY15 Q4, RING will support districts to continue conducting durbars per their AWP.

Photo 5: A cross-section of durbar attendees at a Larabanga, West Gonja event



Table L: Summary of Cooking Demonstrations and Community Durbars by District and Participant

DISTRICT	COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS			COMMUNITY DURBARS		
	# of Participants (by gender)			# of Participants (by gender)		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Central Gonja	0	0	0	2,040	1,081	3,121
Chereponi	765	0	765	0	0	0
East Mamprusi	376	0	376	755	200	955
Saboba	349	0	349	119	53	172
Nanumba South	735	0	735	0	0	0
West Gonja	0	0	0	200	90	290
Total	2,225	0	2,225	3,114	1,424	4,538

Capacity Building for Health Workers and Community Volunteers

Building the capacity of health workers in CMAM and of community volunteers in identification and referral of children with severe acute malnutrition were also a priority this quarter. A total of 234 health workers were trained in CMAM in six districts (see Table M for numbers by district). RING staff observed approximately half of the trainings, and reported that the content of the topics discussed during the trainings was relevant to meeting the objectives. However, in West Gonja and Nanumba North, improper planning and poor facilitation skills were observed during some of the trainings. RING staff provided verbal feedback to the facilitators in such instances and followed up with written reports (see Attachment C, page 53). Additionally, in West Gonja, 35 health workers participated in a RING-led training on outreach planning and data utilization. The training helped health workers understand the importance of data collection, how nutrition data is used, and how to improve the quality of nutrition data at the health facility level. The training also highlighted how this data could be used in planning outreach events now that sub-district health facilities have logistical support for community engagement.

Table M: Summary of CMAM Training Participants in FY15 Q3

DISTRICT	CMAM Health Workers			CMAM CHVs		
	# of Participants			# of Participants		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Chereponi	30	60	90	0	0	0
Saboba	12	18	30	25	87	112
Savelugu	26	7	33	0	0	0
Nanumba North	14	21	35	0	100	100
Tamale	12	4	16	0	0	0
Tolon	16	14	30	32	131	163
West Gonja	0	0	0	32	65	97
Total	110	124	234	89	383	472

Nutrition-Related Training

Seven districts carried out nutrition-related trainings during the quarter. In addition to CMAM activities mentioned above, four districts conducted ENA trainings for school health education program (SHEP) instructors and AEAs on how to integrate ENA messages into their education or agriculture-related activities. At each of the trainings, participants developed action plans that defined how they would integrate nutrition into their routine activities. Table N summarizes ENA trainings by district and participant.

Table N: Summary of ENA Training Participants in FY15 Q3

DISTRICT	ENA (SHEP)			ENA (AEA)		
	# of Participants			# of Participants		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Chereponi	10	35	45	0	0	0
Savelugu	5	70	75	3	16	19
Nanumba North	7	43	50	0	0	0
West Gonja	22	28	50	3	17	20
Total	44	176	220	6	33	39

Supervision, Monitoring and Mentorship Visits

DNOs conducted supervision, monitoring, and mentorship visits in four districts (Saboba, Savelugu, Nanumba North, and Nanumba South) to follow up on the ENA post-training results for SHEP instructors. The DNOs visited schools and assessed the SHEP instructors on their progress against action plans that were drawn up during earlier training sessions on how to integrate ENA into their day-to-day work. Through follow up visits to 65 of the 75 SHEP instructors trained on ENA in Savelugu, the DNO found that 52 SHEP instructors had debriefed fellow teachers about the training and had disseminated key ENA messages during their school health talks with students. The DNO in Savelugu reported that eight SHEP instructors had not integrated nutrition into their school health talks because they haven't yet arranged for the discussions, four were absent during the visits, and one had been transferred to a different district. In addition, the DNO reported that only two of the 19 AEAs trained on ENA had disseminated key ENA messages to farmers groups within their districts. The remaining 17 AEAs reported that they were not able to do so because farmer groups did not have time to meet on non-agricultural issues because they were busy on their own farms. The DNO will continue to follow up with SHEP instructors on their implementation of their action plans, and with AEAs during more convenient times when they are not busy in the field. Given the high level of day-to-day interaction AEAs have with men, RING will prioritize technical assistance to

AEAs and other field-based agents to ensure they can effectively incorporate key health information into their work.

RING has proposed several ideas to districts for increased participation from AEAs (and other non-health staff), such as involvement in community durbars and cooking demonstrations hosted by GHS, and training on improved facilitation skills. RING realizes that, although an officer may be proficient in his or her technical field, when it comes to incorporating cross-cutting messages, the delivery mechanism may not be as clear. These issues seem to have been overlooked in district-led trainings so far and RING will be sure to highlight these areas of interest for future activities.

2014 ENA Post-Training Follow-Up

To further understand how existing government mechanisms for service delivery are incorporating key ENA messages in their activities, the RING M&E Team conducted a post-training follow up assessment with participants from the following six districts: Central Gonja, Chereponi, East Mamprusi, Nanumba North, Nanumba South, and Saboba. Among the 60 respondents, 31 were affiliated with GHS, 13 with GES, eight with MOFA, five with the Environmental Health Office (EHO) and three with Ministry of Gender and Social Protection (MOGSP). Recall of the ENAs was low, with preliminary data analysis showing that only seven respondents were able to list all seven ENAs, while ten were able to list 5-6 ENAs, eleven 3-4 ENAs, and 32 fewer than three ENAs. Despite low recall, preliminary data analysis shows nearly all respondents reported that they have been able to integrate some nutrition messages into their routine activities. Among the respondents who reported that they have not integrated nutrition into their routine activities, the reasons most commonly cited were a lack of materials and low self-efficacy in their knowledge of ENAs. Early in FY15 Q4, RING will analyze the data further to better understand the methods and frequency with which participants have been able to integrate nutrition into their routine work. The findings will be summarized in a report that will include action items for how the trainings can be strengthened to improve recall of the ENAs and improve the integration of nutrition messages into existing service delivery channels.

Nutrition Commodity and Supplies Procurement

During Q3, RING continued to collaborate closely with USAID|DELIVER and SPRING regarding the nutrition commodity and supplies procurement funded by USAID|DELIVER. The first delivery of nutrition commodities, including ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), ReSoMal, F-75, and F-100, is scheduled to arrive in the targeted districts the first week of July. The second delivery of nutrition supplies, including height-length boards, scales, and mid/upper-arm circumference (MUAC) tapes, is scheduled to arrive in August. USAID|DELIVER is responsible for coordinating the logistics and transportation of the commodities and supplies from Accra to the districts. RING and SPRING are coordinating district- and regional-level communication with GHS regarding the deliveries.

Extra Efforts to Ensure Understanding

Tolon District Health

Language is full of nuance. There is no guarantee that a word or phrase in one dialect exists in another, and the more technical the information, the greater the challenge. Working in remote, impoverished communities, RING has confronted numerous difficulties with core project phrases such as “poverty reduction,” “vulnerability,” “stunted,” and “resiliency.” Proper translation is a complex issue, but necessary to ensure that the audience understands the true meaning of the program. Often, the explanation requires a parable or proverb to properly convey the intended meaning.

Tolon District Health Services decided to tackle this issue for Community Health Volunteers by translating the CMAM handbook into the local language, Dagbani. Though many CHVs have a senior high school degree and can read and write in English, the intricacies of some technical language can be lost. Tolon recognized this challenge and addressed it by providing these local-language resources. Thus far, 163 volunteers have been trained using this curriculum. RING will monitor their successes in the field as compared to other districts to determine if the local language curriculum may be worth pursuing large-scale.

Regional Coordination

RING is committed to ensuring that the project effectively engages with the NRHD to reinforce and strengthen their regional oversight function of district-level activities and build their capacity to provide high quality facilitation, monitoring, and mentorship to the districts. In support of this objective, the NRCC, with encouragement from RING, has built activities into its AWP for the NRHD to carry out supervision, monitoring, and technical support for CMAM trainings, ENA trainings, and cooking demonstrations. RING is following up with the NRHD on the status of the 2015 planned activities, but the flow of information has been a challenge. RING has also had additional conversations with the NRHD to involve them in activities beyond those covered by RING NRCC funding, which could include supporting a facilitation skills improvement workshop for district staff. With the new COP and Nutrition Component Manager having joined RING at the end of Q3, we have planned an introductory visit to the NRHD at the start of Q4. The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss with the NRHD how the partnership between RING and the NRHD can be strengthened. Following the meeting, RING will develop a strategy for how the project can engage more effectively with the NRHD, possibly through the Health Promotion Unit as we develop our SBCC strategy.

6.2.2. Component 2b – WASH

Increased adoption of positive sanitation behaviors among target households

With personnel expansion over the last quarter, RING increased its WASH technical support to its partner districts. RING’s efforts centered on water points and functionality mapping, repair of boreholes, improvement to rainwater harvesting system designs by inclusion of filtration mechanisms, revitalization or establishment of water and sanitation management teams (WSMTs) in borehole repair communities and CLTS (including training of natural leaders), as shown in the table below.

Table O: Summary of District-led WASH Activities in FY15 Q3

WASH Activities Implemented during FY15 Q3	# of DAs Implementing	# of communities involved	# of people selected/trained
Water point and functionality mapping	4	40	N/A
Establishment/revitalization of WSMTs	4	65	560
Training of WSMTs	4	65	492
CLTS triggering activities	7	44	N/A
Natural leaders training	2	8	50
Monitoring of triggered communities	7	44	N/A

The RING WASH team participated in a number of the above activities and/or training programs organized by the implementing districts. RING WASH officers supported the district facilitators with backstopping tips to ensure effective training delivery. The areas of support included effective communication, how to dig latrine pits in lateritic soils, and how to effectively plan for a training session. The table below details these activities/trainings and the role played by RING WASH team.

Table P: RING Support to District WASH Activities

District	Activity	# of Participants	Role of RING WASH Team
WGDA	Training of Natural Leaders (NLs)	5	Provided district facilitation team with tips on effective communication and use of picture cards for training natural leaders
	WSMTs training	21	Advice to the facilitation team on how to use picture cards to enhance communication
TDA	Training of Natural Leaders	10	Led discussions on how to structure monitoring of CLTS communities to make the most impact, especially in difficult communities; tips for digging latrine pits in a laterite prone area.
	WSMTs training	42	Advice to the facilitation team on the importance of conducting community based training as compared to inconveniencing trainees by making them travel to the DA for training
SNMA	Discussions on WSMTs training content and planning	2	Organized and Facilitated a meeting with District EHOs on the required modules and planning for WSMT training
GDA	Meeting with DA WASH implantation team	3	Organized and facilitated a discussion with District EHOs on progress of WASH activities implementation, challenges encountered and the type of support needed from RING WASH team to enhance implementation

CLTS Support

RING carried out CLTS monitoring jointly with district environmental health officers (EHOs) in Savelugu-Nanton Municipal, and Tolon and Saboba District Assemblies. In a notable turnaround from 2014 performance, Saboba District was the most promising, with three communities near ODF status (i.e. 38 of a total of 41 households are at various stages of latrine construction). During these monitoring visits, RING also emphasized the need for integrated outreach and partnership with Ghana Health Services as stunting and other malnutrition issues are closely linked to poor sanitation and environmental enteropathy.

Table Q: District CLTS Outcomes for FY15 Q3

District	# of communities triggered	# of latrines constructed	# of latrines under construction	# of soakaways constructed	# of ODF communities
TDA	5	26	168	23	0
SNMA	6	19	44	22	0
WGDA	3	0	23	0	0
SDA	5	8	31	66	0
TOTALS	14	53	266	111	0

In addition to the districts detailed above, Central Gonja, East Mamprusi, Chereponi, Nanumba North and Nanumba South have just completed triggering activities. Data on their performance will be forthcoming in weekly reports. In general, latrine construction across the districts has slowed due to the onset of the rains and subsequent farming activities. Sub-par performance in Savelugu-Nanton, however, was a special case. As the regional hub for World Vision, many communities in the district have previously benefitted from sponsored interventions and have not been receptive to the CLTS no-subsidy approach. Nevertheless, Municipal Coordinating Director Issahaka Basintale has highlighted sanitation control efforts as a priority area for the district and has designated funds from Assembly coffers to trigger an additional 18 communities for CLTS. RING has applauded the initiative and will continue to support the enthusiastic SNMA team in their CLTS endeavors. RING will also encourage all Assembly implementation teams to consider the seasonal calendars of their communities before carrying out an activity. As of the end of the quarter, no communities had attained ODF status under RING 2015 implementation.

District WASH Progress Review

Additional support from the RING WASH team included holding district-based progress reviews with East Mamprusi, Chereponi, Saboba, Nanumba North and Nanumba South teams. RING met with each of the district implementation teams (comprising EHOs, Community Development Officers and District Engineers) to review work accomplished in relation to project timelines, as well as challenges encountered and the anticipated support needed from the DAs. Some of the important challenges identified were: delayed release of funds requested for training and follow ups, weak coordination among the various decentralized departments (at Nanumba South), insufficient transportation for field officers and technical capacity gaps among desk officers and field-based staff. Activity-based capacity gaps identified are detailed in the table below. During FY15 Q4, RING will develop training programs to address some of these technical gaps with plans to scale them up to benefit the remaining RING districts.

WASH Officer Profile

Asiatu Ibrahim, Environmental Health Officer for SNMA and CLTS Focal Person



Growing up in the Northern Region, Asiatu Ibrahim admired the passion her older sister displayed as an Environmental Health Officer (EHO). Little did Asiatu know that she would eventually find herself in the same role. It was that memory of her sister's work that influenced her to apply to the Accra School of Hygiene. After gaining admission to the Korle Bu campus, she recalled being very grateful to have the opportunity to study in such a prestigious program. After graduation, Asiatu began work at the Savelugu-Nanton Municipal Assembly as an Environmental Health Officer. She currently holds the rank of Officer, Grade 1, and is the focal person for CLTS in the municipality. Through her facilitation skills and leadership, she has led CLTS triggering activities in 25 communities, two of which have been certified Open Defecation Free, with an additional sixteen that have achieved ODF Basic status. Though she performs her duties well, her greatest challenge is getting communities that have become accustomed to subsidy-based activities to embrace behavior change through the no-subsidy approach of CLTS. When asked whether she has regretted her sometimes thankless profession, she replied, *"No, I have never regretted it. I like what I do and will continue to work even harder with communities. There are positive signs showing up in a number of difficult communities and I know things will get better with time."*

Table R: District WASH Capacity Gaps Identified During FY 15 Q3

District	# of Meeting Attendees	Identified Capacity Gaps and Needs
EMDA	7	Facilitation skills, water quality testing and monitoring, WASH Planning & Budgeting
CDA	4	Low-cost latrine technology options, Facilitation skills, Reporting (content and format), WASH Planning & Budgeting
SDA	6	WASH Planning & Budgeting, Facilitation skills, Understanding of the WSMT framework
NDA	3	WASH Planning & Budgeting, Facilitation skills, Community entry
NSDA	12	Data collection and data management, Effective monitoring, WASH Planning & Budgeting

6.3. Component Three

Strengthened local support networks addressing the ongoing needs (nutrition and livelihoods) of vulnerable households.

During the reporting period, the RING Governance Team was mainly occupied with supporting Tier One Districts through numerous aspects of project management while guiding Tier Two Districts through the completion of Start-Up Activities and into the Annual Work Planning process. Other key Component Three activities undertaken during the quarter were:

- Development of a new MMDA Annual Work Plan template;
- Public financial management technical support for Tier One Districts;
- Tier One District zonal procurement training and RING integration into District Medium-Term Development Plan (DMTDP) workshop; and
- Component 3 Menu Review Workshop

Tier Two Support for Start-Up & Work Planning

As detailed in section 5 Tier Two District Support (page 5), RING provided technical guidance to Tier Two Districts as they implemented remaining Start-Up Activities, such as community sensitization, household selection and household validation. RING provided targeted, on-site support to each of the MMDAs in the form of TOTs for field officers carrying out community-based exercises, such as sensitization and household selection. During validation, RING Field Coordinators worked hand-in-hand with the district focal persons to ensure that proposed beneficiaries met all RING household selection criteria.¹⁰

To ensure that districts did not miss the 2015 agricultural season, RING initiated Annual Work Plan development with Tier Two Districts at the start of the quarter. In mid-April, RING and the Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit (RPCU) hosted an Annual Work Plan Development meeting with the Tier Two District Planning and Coordinating Units (DPCU). From there, districts developed several work plan drafts in which RING, the RPCU and USAID gave technical advice on scope, budget and implementation strategies. The work planning process for Tier Two Districts took approximately two months to complete, with finalization of the subcontracts in progress as of the end of the reporting period.

Revised Annual Work Plan Template

In collaboration with the RPCU, the RING technical team developed a new Annual Work Plan

¹⁰ An impoverished, vulnerable household, with at least one woman of reproductive age (15-49) and one child under five.

template which will be used by all DAs for their 2016 work plans. Previous “work plan” templates were actually detailed budget templates, which, while useful in building fully-funded activities, omitted important elements of complete work plans such as goals and objectives, responsible persons/departments, and timelines. Districts would often submit this information, but because reporting was not standardized, the review process and subsequent tracking of activities was difficult for the RING technical team.

Furthermore, from a capacity building perspective, the old template was too prescriptive, providing almost all information needed for districts to set their respective activity budgets. As such, districts often used the detailed budget template as-is, without critical examination of quantity, frequency, and unit cost needs for their specific projects. Unit costs were also based on Tamale prices, not taking into account geographic disparities.

The new work plan template, in Microsoft Excel format, comprises seven main worksheets (see Attachment D, page 58) that will address the above needs in one workbook. This will ensure that activities are planned for and managed within scope, time and cost. In response to significant implementation challenges seen in 2015, RING has also included a procurement sheet to ensure that each district has a detailed plan going into 2016. Although the workbook may at first seem cumbersome, many of the cells on separate worksheets are referenced to one another and locked, preventing transcription errors that were very common under the old format. The template will be introduced and thoroughly reviewed at the upcoming Tier One Mid-Year Review, and RING will take the districts’ comments and suggestions into consideration. As part of the 2016 annual planning operation strategy, RING and the NRCC will form support teams to provide on-site guidance on the use of the new template.

PFM Technical Support

During the quarter, the RING Municipal Finance Specialists and Field Coordinators visited eight out of ten Tier One Districts¹¹ to monitor the implementation status of their Risk Mitigation Action Plan and to provide one-on-one technical support to the Budget Officer on the preparation of budget monitoring and variance reports.

Regarding the PFM Risk Mitigation progress, though none of the districts was able to meet all of its targets, they are generally performing well. For instance, six of eight districts have completed at least half of the planned activities within the time period and timelines for completing the remaining activities have been shifted to the coming quarter. Enthusiasm for PFM accountability among district staff is high, and although officials may initially find the tasks difficult to implement in light of project implementation pressure, they remain committed to achieving their performance goals for the year.

One area where all districts failed to perform was the development of their budget monitoring and variance report, a key tool in terms of project management and tracking of cash flow. When asked why the information had not been completed, Budget Officers commonly complained that it was a cumbersome report, or that they had done numerical reporting of budget variance. RING explained that numerical reporting of budget variance tells only part of the story. Analysis of the causes of the variance is critical for future planning and budgeting exercises. One-on-one discussions on these matters have proven most effective, and RING will continue to follow up with districts on their overall progress in PFM Risk Mitigation.

¹¹ Central Gonja, Chereponi, East Mamprusi, Nanumba North, Nanumba South, Saboba, Savelugu-Nanton, Tolon.

Table S: Summary of PFM Risk Mitigation Progress by Districts during FY15 Q3

District Public Financial Management Risk Mitigation Actions Progress				
District	Total # of Risk Mitigation Measures Over LOP	Planned for FY15 Q2	Completed as of FY15 Q3	Outstanding Over LOP
Central Gonja	23	20	9	14
Chereponi	29	16	9	20
East Mamprusi	26	7	6	20
Nanumba North	30	16	9	21
Nanumba South	20	10	5	15
Saboba	34	13	9	30
Savelugu-Nanton	17	15	6	11
Tolon	25	6	3	22

During the above-mentioned one-on-one discussions, the following areas have been identified for additional capacity building:

Table T: Support Needed for Tier One PFM Risk Mitigation Measures

Capacity Building Topics	Target Officers	Planned Support
Preparation of Budget Monitoring & Variance Reports (including highlights of progress on livelihood, nutrition & WASH activities) and integration of RING procurement plans into district plans	District Budget Officer and Procurement Officer	One-on-one coaching and group review sessions; development of budget variance template ¹² (see Exhibit A)
Preparation of an Electronic Audit Tracking System	Internal Auditor	One-on-one coaching and development of Excel-based tracking tool
Preparation of procurement plan, focusing on the integration of RING-related activities into the district-wide procurement plans	Procurement Team (DCD, Planning & Budget Officers, Project Accountant, Procurement Officer, Finance Officer and relevant technical department officers)	Team meetings and periodic progress reviews
Preparation of an electronic fixed asset register	Finance Officer & Stores	One-on-one coaching and development of Excel-based asset register
Preparation of an ICT policy & strategy	DPCU, IT officers	Prepared guidance notes on the preparation of ICT policies

Procurement Training and Medium Term Development Plan Harmonization Workshop

Despite RING's vision to expand beyond our emphasis to date on Public Financial Management (PFM), district activities for the quarter required a strong focus on supporting the procurement process. With the increase in RING staff and management resources under the Global Communities contract, general project management monitoring has increased significantly over the past, allowing RING to identify several issues commonly faced by districts.

¹² A Word-based template was initially developed by RING, but when Districts tried to use it they discovered that the Districts' Charts of Accounts (used by Finance Departments for reporting) is different from the Budget Department's system. These two systems must now be aligned and further analysis is required. Analysis and explanation of budget variations, however, can still be described in a simple Word document.

This year there were delays in procurement of goods (e.g., equipment for CLWs and construction items for quarantine pens) by district technical departments that were not seen during the 2014 implementation cycle. RING has hypothesized that without proper support, district technical departments may not have fully understood or followed strict GOG procurement guidelines. Through informal discussions, it appears to RING that individual departments often handled their own procurements during 2014, supplying the required three invoices, but purchasing goods in small amounts, avoiding tender committees and review processes. RING does not assume that this was done intentionally, but rather because of a lack of information within the departments.

Prompted by RING's emphasis on proper procurement procedures, District Coordinating Directors and other more-informed members of the DPCU have become involved in 2015 implementation. Numerous issues have been identified. Technical officers were unprepared for the cumbersome, but correct, procedures, which often resulted in delayed procurement and friction between the respective departments.

As a result, the RING team, in collaboration with the NRCC and USAID's Tamale-based Financial Analyst, organized a workshop on Government of Ghana (GOG) procurement procedures. The workshop also covered the NRCC and USAID checklists for monitoring and liquidation. To prevent excessive travel by Tier One District officials, the workshops were held on a zonal basis at Damongo and Tamale. Given RING's focus on agriculture, the discussion was dominated by practical limitations to adhering to procedures. There is a persistent challenge regarding agricultural commodities that are mainly available in informal markets. In these markets, vendors are often unable to meet procurement requirements, such as providing invoices, and have insufficient working capital to deliver goods before payment as required by official procurement guidelines. The districts suggested that RING support the RPCU in developing guidelines for procurements on informal markets. RING and the RPCU are currently collaborating on the development of such guidelines, which must adhere to all GOG procurement principles while simplifying procedures for Assembly staff.

During the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) portion of the workshop (which was led by the RPCU), districts reviewed their existing plans to ensure that RING activities had been fully integrated. In some cases, only harmonization was required where wording in the existing plans was adjusted to reflect that of their RING Work Plans. It should be noted that, before the zonal meetings took place, Savelugu-Nanton Municipal Assembly (SNMA) had perfectly integrated the RING plan into their MTDP. RING subsequently used SNMA's revised MTDP as an example in other workshops. Preliminary reports from the RPCU indicate that all ten districts had completed the exercise within the two-week deadline provided. RING and the RPCU will make individual follow-ups to address any issues that may arise from the finalized plans.

Integration of RING and District MTDPs is an essential part of Component Three activities. As such, a similar venture will be undertaken with Tier Two Districts in the coming months.

Component 3 Menu Review

RING, in collaboration with the RPCU and USAID, organized a review of the current Component 3 menu. RING selected highly-engaged District Coordinating Directors (DCDs) and Planning Officers to participate in a round-table discussion on current menu items, proposed additions, and other possibilities. RING also included some DCDs (such as the ones from Central Gonja and Chereponi) who have been less proactive in project implementation with the intention that they might learn from their more dynamic colleagues. RING will continue to explore creative ways of empowering its district partners.

Each of the stakeholders brought different opinions to the table. USAID’s focus was on greater support networks for the vulnerable, RING was interested in community engagement with the District Assembly, and the GOG representatives prioritized strengthening district sub-structures as a way to enhance district services to the community. Among the three, consensus was reached on condensing the current menu where possible, and adding several items under the above-mentioned focal areas (see table below). A detailed report on the event can be found in Attachment F, page 71.

Table U: Proposed Component 3 Menu of Activities (new activities in italics)

Capacity Building & Systems Strengthening	Community Engagement	Monitoring
PFM strengthening through technical training & progress review meetings	Pro-Poor Community Action Planning (with an emphasis on livelihoods, nutrition and WASH)	Purchase of Office Equipment
Technical refresher trainings for relevant departments (including ICT)	<i>Peace building and conflict resolution</i>	Internet & Phone Support
<i>GIS training & district resource mapping, with an emphasis on social mapping</i>	Support stakeholder consultations to identify issues, gaps and resources that impact food security	Vehicle Upkeep
<i>Develop Standard Operating Procedures and Child Protection Referral Protocols</i>	Participatory planning and budgeting meetings with communities and other stakeholders	General Monitoring (to include project sites and sub-district level facilities)
<i>Gender training for all MMDAs</i>	<i>Citizen Score Cards/ Community Score Cards</i>	<i>Joint social welfare monitoring visits (separate from general project monitoring)</i>
<i>Assembly sub-structure strengthening (including training or capacity building for Assemblymen/women)</i>		
<i>Collaborative exchange visits</i>		
<i>Technical training on poverty graduation for Social Welfare Officers & Community Development Officers</i>		

Overall, RING found this to be a very useful exercise. The collaborative approach to menu revision should give districts a greater sense of ownership of the menu and of the activities they select for each AWP. RING plans to conduct similar exercises with Components One and Two early in the coming quarter.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

During the period under review, the RING M&E team carried out two activity assessments, three MMDA M&E capacity-building trainings, and multiple collaborative and partnership meetings with NRCC.

Activity Assessments: WASH

RING assessed WASH activities in CLTS triggered communities in Nanumba North and Saboba. The assessment focused on access to improved sanitation facilities and hygiene messages and adoption improved hygiene behaviors.

A total of 200 (119 females and 81 males) beneficiaries in the two districts were sampled and interviewed. Some key findings were:

- Over a third of respondents were practicing open defecation;
- About one quarter indicated they used pit latrines with cleanable slabs; and
- Another third said they relied on unimproved pit latrines.

Full results of the assessment are discussed above under Component 2b (see section 6.2.2).

Activity Assessments: ENA

The RING M&E team conducted a post-training rapid assessment of the 60 health and non-health sector staff trained in ENA across six districts in the Northern Region. The purpose of the assessment was to determine how the knowledge acquired through the training has been mainstreamed into the activities of the various delivery channels of these districts. RING surveyed facility-based health workers, community health volunteers, community development officers, School Health Education Program teachers, environmental health officers, and agriculture extension agents from Central Gonja, Chereponi, East Mamprusi, Nanumba North, Nanumba South, and Saboba Districts. A total of 62 (24 females and 38 males) officials were interviewed. Some key findings were:

- Nine of ten respondents said that they had incorporated ENA messages in their activities.
- All respondents could recall at least one and about half of the respondents could recall at least three of the seven ENA messages they had been taught.
- Respondents identified challenges, including language barriers, in integrating ENA messaging into their daily work.

Full results of the assessment are discussed under Component 2a above (see section 6.2.1) and summarized in a report (see *Attachment G, page 75*).

Workshop: Mapping and GIS

The RING GIS Officer led 41 participants (6 females and 35 males) from Tier One Districts in a two-day workshop on mapping and spatial data collection skills. All participants uploaded their data to a cloud-based application where they were able to visualize the data using an embedded Google Maps tool. Using Google Earth and Google Mapmaker, they mapped features for their districts such as the District Assembly office (as point and polygon features), the road leading to the DA, the Chief's Palace and schools.. Based on participants' high level of interest, RING is following up the training by exploring inexpensive and easy-to-use phone apps and other tools to standardize, facilitate and geo-code MMDA data collection and reporting.

Workshop: Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity-Building for MMDAs

To help address ongoing problems in M&E at the districts, the RING M&E team organized a two-day capacity building workshop for officials from all ten Tier One Districts. The workshop was also attended by two NRCC officials and one representative from USAID. The training introduced participants to results-based M & E and how to report on project outcomes. One key outcome of the workshop was the development of a harmonized Quarterly Reporting Template for partner districts.

Other Activities:

The RING M&E team facilitated training on data utilization in West Gonja for the District Health directorate. A total of 26 health workers drawn from the 11 Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds and four health centers participated in this training. The health workers included Community Health Nurses and Enroll Nurses who are the officers in charge of carrying out collection and compilation of primary data at the facility level. Participants

were given practical exercises such as using Child Welfare Clinic (CWC) registers from the health centers to plot the weight for age chart on the child growth monitoring card.

RING held four meetings with the RPCU aimed at developing and maintaining a well-functioning M&E system at both the NRCC and MMDA levels. Ongoing problems with district-level data collection and reporting, including reporting from MMDAs to the NRCC, were persistent themes. As a next step, RING will be holding a “Whole System in a Room” multi-stakeholder meeting in Tolon district, which has been identified as having one of the strongest M&E Team. With all of Tolon’s M&E actors in one room together, RING hopes to be able to develop an optimal M&E flow chart that can be used as a model for all other districts.

RING Indicator Progress

The table below provides values with gender disaggregation where required for RING quarterly indicators as defined in the Performance Management and Evaluation Plan submitted to USAID on April 16, 2015. All other required disaggregation data is provided in the second table below.

Table V: PMEP Progress for FY15 Q3

Indicator #	Indicator	Disaggregation	Baseline	FY 15			
				Annual Target	Achieved Up to Date		
					Q3	F	M
6	Number of communities supported ¹³	District	0	200	159		
7	Number of individuals reached by programming ¹⁴	Sex	0	40,000	19,899	15,322	4,577
8	Number of women of reproductive age reached ¹⁵	N/A	0	10,000	15,322		
9	Number of active informal savings and lending groups ¹⁶	District	N/A	150	143		
10	Number of savings group participants ¹⁷	Sex	N/A	4,500	2,392	2,389	3
11	Cumulative amount (USD) saved by savings group participants ¹⁸	District	N/A	58,670	12,670 ¹⁹		
12	Cumulative amount of funds loaned (in USD) annually by informal savings and lending groups ²⁰	District	N/A	23,400	971 ²¹		

¹³ Data Source: MMDA AWP and RING activity reports. Communities reached by more than one activity are counted only once.

¹⁴ Data Source: MMDA AWP and RING activity reports. These figures have not been multiplied by the average HH size of 7.8 as called for in the PIRS (multiplier subject to revision based on recent findings of METTS baseline report) because it is possible that there may be some double-counting of individuals reached by more than one activity.

¹⁵ Specific ages of women benefitting from RING activities are not fully available and therefore include women of all ages.

¹⁶ Data Source: SAVIX. Note that because there is a significant backlog in SAVIX data entry at the MMDA level, the VSLA narrative section of this report uses up-to-date data gathered from field reports and thus differs from the data in this table.

¹⁷ Data Source: SAVIX. Note that because there is a significant backlog in SAVIX data entry at the MMDA level, the VSLA narrative section of this report uses up-to-date data gathered from field reports and thus differs from the data in this table.

¹⁸ Data Source: SAVIX. Note that because there is a significant backlog in SAVIX data entry at the MMDA level, the VSLA narrative section of this report uses up-to-date data gathered from field reports and thus differs from the data in this table.

¹⁹ This amount is for funds loaned during Q3. Cumulative amount for the year will be captured and reported beginning in FY15 Q4 report.

²⁰ Data Source: SAVIX. Note that because there is a significant backlog in SAVIX data entry at the MMDA level, the VSLA narrative section of this report uses up-to-date data gathered from field reports and thus differs from the data in this table.

Indicator #	Indicator	Disaggregation	Baseline	FY 15			
				Annual Target	Achieved Up to Date		
					Q3	F	M
18	% target households using improved practices in horticulture, small animal husbandry, and other alternative livelihoods ²²	Gendered Household type: Adult Female no Adult Male (FNM), Adult Male no Adult Female (MNF), Male and Female Adults, (M&F), Child No Adults (CNA)	0	60%	67%		
27	Number of hand washing stations installed in commonly used public spaces	District	0	100	0 ²³		
28	% of triggered communities certified as Open Defecation Free (ODF) as a result of USG assistance ²⁴	District	0	15%	0%		
36	Number of DAs holding public forums and stakeholder meetings related to RING focal areas of livelihoods, nutrition, WASH, and good governance. ²⁵	N/A	0	5	6		
39	% target households participating in community support groups ²⁶	Gendered Household type: Adult Female no, Adult Male (FNM), Adult Male no Adult, Female (MNF), Male and Female Adults, (M&F), Child No Adults (CNA)	0	15%	43%		
40	Number of supportive supervision and monitoring visits ²⁷	District	0	40 ²⁸	133		
41	Number of coordination/review meetings between DAs and NRCC ²⁹	N/A	0	10	4		

²¹ This amount is for funds loaned during Q3. Cumulative amount for the year will be captured and reported beginning with the FY15 Q4 report.

²² Data Source: MMDA AWP and MMDA and RING activity reports. Disaggregation by gendered HH type not available as of the end of FY15 Q3. Efforts are now underway to develop better ways to capture the disaggregated data.

²³ Data Source: MMDA and RING activity reports

²⁴ Data Source: MMDA and RING activity reports

²⁵ Data Source: RING activity reports. This indicator captures public forums or stakeholder meetings where there is community participation.

²⁶ Data Source: MMDA and RING activity reports. Disaggregation by gendered HH type not available as of the end of FY15 Q3. Efforts are now underway to develop better ways to capture the disaggregated data.

²⁷ Data Source: Reporting by RING FCs

²⁸ Target for 2015 was based on start-up activities. As activities are being scaled up, this target will be adjusted upward to reflect periodic visits from all technical areas of RING in all 17 districts.

²⁹ Data Source: NRCC and RING meeting logs

Disaggregation Data

Table W: Indicators disaggregated by District – Tier One Districts

Indicator #	Indicator	CG	CH	EM	NN	NS	SA	SN	TM	TO	WG
6	Number of communities supported	15	25	21	20	25	9	9	10	8	17
9	Number of active informal savings and lending groups	8	37	30	12	0	16	12	0	8	20
11	Cumulative amount saved by savings group participants	0	2,208	4,874	0	0	5,588	0	0	0	0
12	Amount of funds loaned annually by informal savings and lending groups	0	0	0	0	0	971	0	0	0	0
27	Number of hand washing stations installed in commonly used public spaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	Percent of communities certified as open defecation free as a result of USG assistance	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
40	Number of supportive supervision and monitoring visits	13	8	8	0	0	9	15	10	12	14

Table X: Indicators Disaggregated by District - Tier Two Districts

Note: Tier Two AWP activities had not begun as of the end of FY 15 Q3

Indicator #	Indicator	EG	GU	KA	KP	KU	NG	SG
6	Number of communities supported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	Number of active informal savings and lending groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	Cumulative amount saved by savings group participants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Amount of funds loaned annually by informal savings and lending groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	Number of hand washing stations installed in commonly used public spaces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	Percent of communities certified as open defecation free as a result of USG assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	Number of supportive supervision and monitoring visits	13	1	1	14	6	5	4

8. Success Stories

Big Expectations from Small Ruminants



Madam Uwonborlien Kpalija is a resourceful woman with an eye on the future. Since her husband's death several years ago, the Toma native has been the sole breadwinner for her family of seven. By milling local rice, she is able to tuck away enough savings to keep her five school-aged children in class. Although it is a struggle to come up with the annual fees, she knows that education can break the cycle of poverty that traps so many Northern Region families.

In 2015, the Kpalija household was selected to participate in the Saboba District small ruminant outreach under the USAID Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) Project. The district's Agriculture Extension Agents trained

Uwonborlien and 249 other families on proper small ruminant housing, disease control and recognition, and supplementary feeding before distributing three ewes to each household and two rams to the community. Additionally, the community of Toma has been supported by the efforts of a locally-based Community Livestock Worker, who offers such services as de-worming and general disease management. With this level of support from the project, Uwonborlien is making great strides with her ewes. She ties them daily to graze on fields near her home and supplements their diets with grinding mill fodder.

She recognizes the potential in these animals as a turning point for her family, and described her prospects for the future:

"With these animals I know that in about a year they will multiply, and my expectation is that before long, things will be better for [my family] ... because as the animals multiply, I can sell one when it becomes necessary to get money to meet the family needs or pay school fees and I will not have to think of who will give me the money or where to borrow it from. I will take good care of the animals. I thank you [RING] for the help."

Uwonborlien expects great things for her family. Since she has a solid foundation of knowledge about small ruminant care, and strong community-based support resources to back her, so does RING.



Access to Savings Leads to the Expansion of Small Markets

Like many Northern Region districts, Saboba residents rely on farming as their main source of income throughout the year. Seasonal harvests for all crops tend to fall during the same part of the year, causing periods of plenty that fade into times of poverty. The period between harvesting seasons is the "lean season," which is particularly detrimental to women of

reproductive age and young children because critical nutritional demands required for proper development may not be met.



Women like Najo Matiribi, a 48-year old mother of seven and native of Saboba District's Sambuli community, knows this all too well. In the past, Madam Najo sold oil as a petty trader, but she says that she didn't earn enough profit from her labor to enable her to care for her children and sick husband. Her dream of finding capital to expand her trading business became a reality when she was introduced to the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) concept and was trained in basic business management skills.

Through her weekly savings, Madam Najo was able to raise GHs 129 over a nine-month period. When funds were distributed to group members at the end of the savings cycle, she immediately invested her money in expanding her trading business. In addition to purchasing a jerry can of vegetable oil, she bought iodized salt, fish, and Maggi Cubes (bouillon cubes). With profits from her petty trading, she has diversified her income further by setting up a small kosie (fried bean cake) stand at the local Sambuli Primary School.

Photo 6 (Top) Madame Najo Matiribi as she prepares kosie; (Bottom) School children in line for breakfast at Madame Najo's cooking

Between her trading profits (GHs 20 per jerry can of oil) and daily income from kosie sales (GHs 5 per day), Madam Najo is confident in her ability to better support her family.

"Because of VSLA, I learned new skills and was able to save enough capital to expand my trading business. [I now] earn more money to pay my children's school fees, buy food for the family, and take care of my sick husband. I was also able to invest a little in my soybean and vegetable farming."

Now that she has realized the benefits of saving, Madam Najo is continuing her participation in the ongoing VSLA scheme in her community.

9. The Role of Field Coordinators

On the RING team, the role of the Field Coordinator (FC) is considered the most difficult within the program. Though all FCs are highly qualified technically, their special role requires them to be generalists and adjust to the constantly changing needs of each district. The nature of their position calls for them to maintain open and trust-based relationships with Assembly officials, while at the same time reporting freely back to RING on all issues they encounter in the field.

Over the past several months, through Start-Up and Annual Work Plan implementation, Field Coordinators have been able to build strong relationships with district officials and staff and have been effective at channeling program support to the districts. Key functions of the Field Coordinators thus far have been:

- Assisting in all aspects of Start-Up Activities for Tier Two Districts, such as reviewing community selection data for completeness, and ensuring that validation of households is carried out according to RING specifications,³⁰
- Monitoring progress in the field against projected timelines and prompting the district Focal Person if issues arise;
- Encouraging and prompting the district Focal Person to routinely consult with different departments on project implementation;
- Following up on the status of funds requests and prompting departments for timely submission to the Finance Department;
- Providing technical advice and quality assurance during district-led trainings and workshops;
- Carrying out monitoring in target communities; and
- Alerting RING to any implementation challenges by the districts.

As Tier Two Districts begin implementing Annual Work Plans and all districts are operating on the same schedule, RING will transition the FCs to a Component Three, Good Governance, support role. Livelihoods, Nutrition and WASH Officers will be assigned to a coverage area, while the FCs will maintain their presence in the districts and fill several gaps in the governance component.

To date, the focus of Component Three has largely been on strengthening financial management systems of the districts. RING intends to expand this emphasis to include civic engagement exercises, ensuring that districts give the community – and particularly the most

Field Coordinator Spotlight *Wellington Amankwa Mpeniasah*



After joining the project in late 2014, RING assigned Wellington to support Kpandai and East Gonja Districts. Since then, he has been effectively supporting his districts to complete start-up activities. But implementation has not been without its challenges. Poor roads and communication networks often slow outreach progress and could prevent timely completion of activities, were it not for careful planning. Wellington and his district teams are frequently stranded overnight in 'overseas' communities on Lake Volta as they wait until the next day when the ferry makes its rounds. East Gonja and Kpandai are also home to numerous different tribes, making knowledge of local customs and taboos a must when moving from one community to the next. Despite these difficulties, Wellington has been able to effectively support both districts to complete their Start-Up activities and develop sound Annual Work Plans for 2015. Wellington and the other field-based staff are often the first line of communication with the districts, and they play a key role in RING's successful implementation.

³⁰ To reduce the chance of bias when selecting households, RING has recommended that communities nominate one to two people to assist district officials during on-site registration, and a different group of two to three individuals to attend the validation meeting and review the proposed list. This adjusted approach has proven effective during Start-Up with Tier Two Districts and most communities are in favor, as it ensures transparency.

vulnerable households – more of an active and participatory role in planning and priority setting. The FCs will also play a key role in supporting districts to develop RING Annual Work Plans in line with activities included in their Medium Term Development Plans. By utilizing FCs to enhance our technical support under Component Three – Good Governance, RING will be able to do more to encourage strong connections between communities and their local governments while we continue to provide assistance in more technical areas of governance such as finance and procurement.

10. Areas for Improvement, Lessons Learned and Challenges

Long-Term Engagement and the Scope of RING

RING's effectiveness lies in its ability to enable local government structures to support vulnerable households through integrated programs in agriculture, livelihoods, nutrition, WASH and governance. RING's benefits are aimed at households, communities, Assembly sub-structures, Assemblies themselves, and regional stakeholders. For most of these program targets, the benefits are continuous throughout the life of the project. The region is at the helm of the decentralized departments and receives annual financial and capacity-building support directly from RING, as do the District Assemblies. Although Assembly sub-structure involvement has played a lesser role in most districts' work plans, the option to strengthen their involvement is always available during the development of each year's AWP. With respect to target communities, in some cases, RING engages them continuously through planned outreach programs or a regular community presence (such as a Community Health Nurse, AEA or Assemblyman). However, in the case of the most important targets of all, the households themselves, options for long-term engagement are significantly lacking.

RING believes that the key to poverty reduction and improved resiliency is ongoing, multi-year engagement with targeted households. One round of technical training and a one-time distribution of goods will have an impact. However, long term ongoing engagement can take that impact to a different level and significantly increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability. Currently, the scope of RING—which includes more than 35,000 households targeted across the 17 districts—does not allow multi-year engagement with every beneficiary household. Neither the Assemblies nor RING have the capacity to manage interventions to benefit so many households, and limited capacity exists in the non-governmental sector.³¹

During sensitization efforts in Tier One and Tier Two Districts, RING urged Assemblies to stress to the communities that many interventions would come in the form of community-based programs rather than direct household assistance. Despite this, RING is aware that most registered households are expecting to benefit from at least one household-level intervention. This poses problems because RING's current structure and resources are not designed to support more than a limited number of direct, high-value household-level interventions over the life of the program.

With this in mind, RING would like to suggest to the districts that they identify a number of communities (possibly 30 to 40) for scaling up continued work at the household level over the remainder of the program. By targeting communities for sustained interventions across all component areas, districts will be in a better position to engage in activities that result in higher, longer-term impacts for these vulnerable homes. RING will further explore scalability and reach issues with USAID and GOG counterparts.

³¹ Scoping for potential development partners to assist in the type of high-impact activities, such as small ruminants, soybeans, leafy green vegetables, etc., has yielded few positive results. However, there are several organizations that implement VSLA schemes and could provide some degree of support for expanded efforts by the districts.

Engagement with Regional Partners

As noted in above sections, RING's partnership with the Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit remains strong. RING has also made great strides in its involvement with regional agriculture and sanitation partners. However, engagement with the Regional Health Directorate (RHD) continues to be challenging. RING has had several positive interactions with the RHD over the last two months – planning for facilitation skills workshops, reviews of district progress, and discussions on implementation of their own 2015 monitoring activities – but none has led to the level of engagement seen with the other partners.

Missteps with the DELIVER commodities early in FY15 Q4 (noted in Weekly Report #52) have been an additional setback, but RING has now taken the lead on

communications regarding the health commodities in an effort to both ensure adherence to government protocols and to use the opportunity to strengthen our working relationship with the RHD. RING plans several programs in the next quarter (*see section 11 - Plans and Areas of Emphasis for the Coming Quarter, page 41*) in which we would like to involve the RHD. Recent communications with the Regional Health Promotion Unit regarding the development of a social and behavior change communication (SBCC) strategy have also proven fruitful and RING will pursue those avenues of engagement. It is our hope that providing more practical opportunities for collaboration, as opposed to discussions and consultations, may foster a greater sense of partnership between RING and RHD.

Messaging for Men

RING can also improve its delivery of nutrition messages to men. RING actively engages women in interventions that provide ready venues to introduce information about improved nutrition and sanitation practices. Husbands often attend initial events with their wives, but opportunities for consistent interaction are limited. However, RING realizes that if true change is to occur in rural households, men must play a big role alongside their wives, mothers and sisters. As our planning season begins, RING will encourage districts to utilize community engagement forums to actively discuss men's roles in improving the nutrition and sanitation practices of their families. We can also identify the men in our beneficiary communities who demonstrate the right attitude and level of involvement and cast these men as role models among their peers. All these efforts will be supplemented by radio messaging that, as we expand our SBCC efforts in the coming quarter, should be a valuable tool for addressing this priority challenge.

Urban Politics: An Added Challenge

Tamale Metropolitan and Sagnarigu District

During the first year of implementation, RING operated largely in rural districts, made up of agriculturalists and petty traders. Though poverty was relative from district to district, it tended to fit within the same scale. The expansion of Tier One Districts and inclusion of Tier Two brought the added challenges of working within the urban and peri-urban environments of Tamale Metropolitan and Sagnarigu District. Community selection proved difficult as the standard vulnerability indicators had to be altered. Community sensitization and household selection were also riddled with the challenges of dense, heterogeneous populations that do not operate according to the traditional protocols seen in rural communities.

An additional complication has been the highly divisive political nature of many communities. Urban neighborhoods are often drawn along political lines and the fact that RING is operating in one area and not another creates certain perceptions, despite the fact that communities were chosen using apolitical criteria. Assembly leaders, specifically the Chief Executives, may also be seeing RING as a possible tool for political gains as the election season draws near. Though the impact of all these challenges has been manageable so far, significant implementation delays have already occurred. RING will continue to monitor this situation closely and collaborate with the Planning Unit and Coordinating Directors to review implementation plans with this added layer of complication in mind.

Technical Support to Tier One Districts

A more recent challenge for RING involves our ability to provide timely technical support to Tier One Districts. Because Tier Two Districts are ultimately accountable to RING, they are more forthcoming with their plans, and they readily consult our technical staff before carrying out large activities. Within certain departments in Tier One Districts (nutrition in particular in Saboba, Savelugu, Tolon, Chereponi, Nanumba North and Nanumba South), focal persons are less open with RING about their plans and often carry out activities without technical consultation. While not inherently a problem, since RING wants to encourage autonomy (especially among Tier One Districts), there have been occasions when districts would have benefitted greatly from RING technical advice before implementation. Nanumba South and Saboba Districts, for instance, carried out IYCF activities using incomplete information rather than consulting RING on certain aspects of the program, especially Mother to Mother (M2M) Support Groups. Although Field Coordinators are stationed in the districts, they are often mobilized for other activities or assigned to another district when these activities occur. Recognizing this challenge, RING will encourage Field Coordinators and Technical Officers to be more proactive in their communication, and will actively seek to determine technical assistance needs rather than waiting for districts to request it at the last minute.

11. Plans and Areas of Emphasis for the Coming Quarter

11.1. Component One Focal Areas

As agriculture activities are in full-swing, RING has made its best efforts to conclude relevant technical trainings for target districts early, so as not to distract from actual implementation. RING will maintain a presence in the districts for continued monitoring and implementation support on an as-needed basis. Additionally, RING will work behind the scenes with relevant livelihoods-centered departments as they plan for dry-season activities, such as leafy green vegetable cultivation, OFSP vine multiplication and shea nut collection.

Over the next quarter, some specific areas of focus will be:

- Delivering OFSP vines to target districts and providing complementary technical support;
- Following up with DAs on the implementation of identified soil improvement methods;
- Providing technical guidance on drip irrigation installation in target DAs;
- Supporting DAs to link shea collection groups to Global Shea Alliance and Shea Network Ghana markets;
- Providing technical assistance in districts implementing cage fishing activities;
- Supporting Tier Two DAs in agriculture activities, such as facilitating linkages to tractor service providers and procurement of soybeans;
- Facilitating VSLA TOTs in target districts;
- Guiding relevant districts in the small ruminant procurement, quarantine and distribution processes;
- Supporting districts in the implementation of improved grain storage techniques, including procurement of quality supplies; and
- Conducting a menu review with relevant livelihoods actors.

11.2. Component Two Focal Areas

RING direct technical support to districts on nutrition activities will gain momentum in FY15 Q4. With a fully staffed RING nutrition team, RING will provide more-targeted guidance to districts in planning for their nutrition activities, and will have a stronger presence in the districts for

monitoring and implementation support as needed. Priorities for the quarter include strengthening communication and partnership with the Northern Region Health Directorate (NRHD), defining RING's strategic niche for nutrition SBCC activities in coordination with USAID implementing partners in the Northern Region, and supporting USAID|DELIVER to coordinate distribution of nutrition commodities and supplies.

In addition, RING will emphasize the following areas:

- Guiding Tier Two Districts as they initiate the planning and implementation of 2015 AWP nutrition activities such as CMAM, C-IYCF, and anemia trainings;
- Following up with Tier One Districts on implementation of post-training activities, such as how AEAs are integrating ENAs into their day-to-day work and how CHVs are identifying and referring malnutrition cases found in communities;
- Providing technical assistance to review district implementation of mother-to-mother support group activities;
- Mentoring DNOs and health workers to improve the quality of facility-level nutrition data collection and management;
- Reviewing and revising current monitoring and supervisory tools available for the technical support visit approach, which will facilitate the improvement of nutrition activities in health facilities and communities;
- Supporting NRHD in facilitation skills capacity building training;
- Developing SBCC strategy for nutrition for RING Project; and
- Conducting a menu review with relevant nutrition actors.

As the WASH team was formed during the period under review, the majority of field activities conducted were related to quality assurance during district-led WASH outreach, and informal capacity assessments of implementing staff. From these support efforts, RING has identified the following areas of focus for the coming quarter:

- Conduct a menu review with relevant WASH actors;
- Making improvements to existing training materials and preparing new ones (PowerPoint presentations, guides and manuals, etc.) for capacity building programs;
- Providing support to DAs in organizing trainings for Water and Sanitation Management Teams (WSMTs; formerly called WatSan committees), Area Mechanics and Pump Caretakers;
- Assessing capacity in Tier Two Districts;
- Carrying out training programs for DA staff in:
 - WASH planning and budgeting for DAs,
 - Facilitation skills training, and
 - Latrine artisan training and the supervisory role of DA officials.

11.3. Component Three Focal Areas

Based on past experiences during the planning cycle, both RING and the RPCU feel the project (and districts) will benefit from initiating the annual work planning cycle earlier. All Tier One Districts will be in a good position from late-August to early-October to reflect on project implementation experience to inform their 2016 plans. Since Tier Two Districts have just signed their subcontracts for 2015 Annual Work Plans (and, in general, have a much faster approval process), RING will delay their 2016 planning until early-October. This will allow them to continue implementation without the added distraction of immediately beginning work planning for the coming year.

As with previous planning cycles, RING will coordinate with the RPCU to ensure that all relevant decentralized departments are involved, resulting in a collaborative and transparent district plan.³² One area that has been missing from past efforts however, is the need to incorporate community input into the work planning process. Several districts budgeted for and carried out Community Action Plans in 2014, but few produced quality products that went beyond standard requests for improved road networks, electricity, clinics and schools.

With that in mind, RING will immediately initiate efforts to encourage our partner districts to implement citizen engagement activities with a focus on increased resiliency among the most vulnerable households. RING will conduct a thorough review of each district's plan and highlight opportunities for community interaction (such as collaborative reviews, community consultations and Town Hall meetings). Based on that, RING will provide one-on-one guidance to implementing officers on how to engage community members and district stakeholders on addressing the nutrition and livelihoods needs of the most vulnerable. By carrying out annual work planning immediately after these efforts, districts will be much more likely to incorporate the feedback into their plans.

More specifically, the Component Three team will focus on the following in the coming quarter:

- Technical Assistance to all districts on implementation of 2015 Annual Work Plan activities (including designated trainings on M&E, geographic information systems, information and communications technology, procurement and other capacity building exercises);
- Support to RPCU for mid-year review programs on RING project progress;
- Training of Trainers (Planning Officers and Field Coordinators) for Community Action Plan development, with an emphasis on including livelihoods, nutrition and WASH activities, and inclusion of pro-poor targeting mechanisms;
- Provision of training to districts on employing community engagement mechanisms, such as Community Action Plans and citizen score cards;
- Support to RPCU and Tier One DAs for 2016 Annual Work Planning cycle;
- Continued assistance to Tier One DAs for harmonization of Medium Term Development Plans and RING Annual Work Plans; and
- Coordination with RPCU on preparation for Tier Two District 2016 Annual Work Planning cycle.

³² RING will also carry out on-site, collaborative review sessions it employed successfully in Tier Two Districts – this will ensure that all departments (even those not invited to the AWP workshop) will have an idea of proposed plans and can provide valuable input.

Attachment A: Community Outreach Agendas for Start-up Activities

Agenda for RING Pre-Information and Community Sensitization Training

- I. Welcome
- II. Overview of Program
- III. What is RING?
 - a. General Project Description
 - i. What is 'Resiliency'?
 - b. Component Overview
 - c. How communities were selected, which data was used for analysis?
 - d. Visions for the Future
- IV. Mission for Today
 - a. Ensure all Field Officers are clear on RING goals and objectives and implementation methods
 - b. Draft an Agenda/Outline for Pre-Information and Community Sensitization Meetings
- V. Inputs from Attendees on Agenda Outline
- VI. Drafting of Outline
- VII. Finalization of Outline
- VIII. Closing

Key Points for Field Officers to Understand

- I. RING works in Livelihoods, Health and Governance
- II. Project goals – reduce poverty and malnutrition
- III. Targets – poor/vulnerable, women of reproductive age, children under five (household **must** satisfy ALL THREE CRITERIA for consideration)
 - a. Why?
 - i. Anemia and malnutrition most common among those 3 groups
 - ii. RING will work with entire household, but **focus mainly on women to strengthen their economic status** – they can assist the husband by contributing to household financial needs
- IV. **Just because a household is not registered does not mean they will not benefit**
 - a. Some projects are designed for communities to benefit (grinding mills, VSLA, boreholes) and some are for individual households (soybean inputs, water filters)
- V. Project takes place over five years – do not expect to have interventions right away as the Assembly needs time to roll out the activities across the district

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR PRE-INFORMATION & COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION VISITS

Pre-Information

- I. Find a community leader or someone to take you to the community leader
 - II. Introduce yourself & state your mission (bring kola)
 - a. Your mission is to arrange a larger community forum to discuss the possibility of the RING Project coming to this community
 - b. Simple RING Project overview:
 - i. RING is being implemented by the District Assembly
 - ii. It has a focus in livelihoods/agriculture, savings, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and good governance
 - iii. It will involve benefits to individual households, as well as the community
 - I. Example: some households may receive inputs for cultivating soybeans, while some communities may receive borehole repairs and/or rainwater catchment systems
 - III. If permission for a larger meeting is granted, decide on a date (one week to 10 days later to ensure that funds for the activity are available)
-

Community Sensitization

- I. Self-Introduction and Stating Your Mission
- II. RING Project Overview
 - a. Three focal areas: Livelihoods, Health and Good Governance
 - b. Target beneficiaries: poor or vulnerable households, women of reproductive age (15-49 years) and children less than five
 - i. Reasons: the RING project aims to reduce anemia and malnutrition, which occurs the most in those three groups of people
 - ii. Even though women and children are target beneficiaries, we want projects to benefit the entire household
 - iii. Strengthening a woman's economic power will ultimately help the household – she can then contribute to all aspects of household needs
 - c. Examples of projects that MAY come to the community (do not set expectations for them to receive all of these activities)
 - i. Establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations
 - ii. Cultivation of Soybeans and Introduction of Improved Agronomic Practices (that are very low-cost and do not include fertilizers and chemical pesticides)
 - iii. Repairs of boreholes and revitalization of WatSan Committees, providing logistics to CHPS compounds so nurses can conduct community and household visits

- iv. Supporting the local government structures, such as Area Councils and Unit Committees to fulfill their roles
- III. Questions and Concerns from Attendees
- IV. Vote of approval for project to occur in 'x' community
- V. Upon approval, ask for designated one to two community members to assist in household selection
 - a. This person should be a trusted community member who will represent each household fairly and without bias
 - b. This person will be expected to work alongside the Assembly staff for about one day (or less) to undertake registration in that community
 - c. If the person is chosen before the meeting concludes, get the name and contact and establish a date for return to carry out household selection (again, one week to ten days in the future to ensure funding availability)
 - i. If the person has not yet been chosen, follow up with the community focal person to get the information in a few days
- VI. Remarks on Household Validation
 - a. Ensure that those who attend the validation meeting are DIFFERENT from the people who assisted with the household registration
 - b. This will ensure that no bias will occur and the validation process will be more objective (i.e., those who registered households will certainly approve the proposed list of people)
- VII. Closing Remarks and Thanks

General RING Information Notes:

- RING is a 5-year project funded by the US government and is being implemented by the District Assemblies
- RING is in 17 districts across the Northern Region
- RING has three focal areas: Livelihoods, Health and Good Governance
- The main goals of RING are to reduce poverty and malnutrition in northern households
 - Specifically for malnutrition, the project is to reduce anemia (“low blood”), stunting, wasting and malnutrition (when children are very small and underweight for their age)
 - Because of these health areas (mentioned above), the project targets mainly women of reproductive age (15-49 yo) and children under five
 - These health issues are most common among those ages
 - Ensure that the Field Officers understand/agree upon the translation in the local language for these terms: ‘vulnerable’ and ‘woman of reproductive age/woman between 15-49 years’
- The District Assembly is the implementing agency for this project – they are using community identified needs and priorities to design their action plans

- Some examples of projects that may be chosen are: cultivation of soybeans using Good Agronomic Practices, cage fishing/fish 'farming', providing better logistics for CHPS compounds so they can conduct community outreach, repairs of boreholes, implementation of Community Led Total Sanitation, formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations, installation of rainwater catchments
- Not every community will receive every project, but the Assembly will do its best to spread interventions to each of the communities
- **In the district, there are 'X #' communities that have been chosen**
 - **These communities were chosen by analyzing data that the Assembly had on hand regarding health, water, sanitation and accessibility**
 - **Those communities that scored very high were deemed more 'in need' and were thus selected**
 - **No political, tribal or religious bias was undertaken for selecting the communities**
- This project will go on for the next 3-4 years, but this particular community may not receive projects immediately
 - Because there are 'X #' communities, the Assembly has to stagger the rollout of the communities (for example: 20 communities the first year, 50 communities the next, and so on)
- If the community is in agreement on implementing this project, then the Assembly would like to undertake household selection exercises soon
- Please nominate one to two members of the community that are trusted and will represent the community well during the selection
- Just as communities were selected using data and criteria, the households also have meet all three of the following criteria:
 - The households must have a woman of reproductive age
 - Child under five
 - Be 'poor or vulnerable'. This can be a number of things, but the project is aiming for those in the community who are the worst off as compared to others
- Set a meeting date for household selection (preferably within the next one week to 10 days)

Attachment B: Report on the RING Soil Improvement Workshop

RING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP: SOIL CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE CROP PRODUCTION

The RING program is promoting soil improvement and soil conservation practices as part of its agricultural livelihoods and increased crop productivity activities. In light of this, RING organized a one day workshop on soil conservation and improvement best practices relevant to smallholder farmers. The workshop took place in Tamale and soil experts from Savanna Agriculture Research Institute of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (SARI, CSIR) and the University for Development Studies provided technical support.

Objectives:

1. To bring experts and stakeholders together to identify soil conservation and improvement practices relevant to northern region smallholder farmers.
2. To discuss and share experiences on climate-smart agriculture practices, including ways to address soil loss.
3. To understand the current trends in soil conservation and fertility practices in the face of climate change
4. To give participants a platform to interact and share experiences and ideas on soil management.

Participants

51 participants came from the 17 districts (district directors of agriculture, RING desk officers at the DAD and AEAs), 13 RING staff (DCOP, Livelihoods team, FCs, M&E capacity building specialist, communications officer and program Assistant). Experts in attendance included a professor from UDS, a soil scientist from SARI and the regional crops officer.

Workshop Presentations and Discussion

The head of soil chemistry of SARI, Dr. Askia Mohammed, led workshop participants through the concept of integrated soil fertility management, recommended ways of increasing organic matter in the soil as well as integrated soil fertility management best practices and outlined recommendations for improved soil fertility by smallholder farmers.

Professor Dzomeku, Senior Lecturer and lead soil expert from the University for Development Studies focused on bad farming practices/systems that tend to degrade the soil. The soil expert pointed out some soil fertility maintenance practices and shared soil conservation techniques with participants.



Participant contributing to the discussion

There were interesting contributions and questions asked by the stakeholders with respect to soil fertility management best practices. The Sagnarigu district director of agriculture, wanted to know Dr. Askia's thoughts with respect to herbicide use by farmers. Dr. Askia responded by saying that, *they are usually disastrous to soils if they are not applied appropriately; if they are used, they must only be used at the right time, in the right dose and at the right place.* Much

education, according to Dr. Askia, is required by farmers before they can appropriately use herbicides without harming the soil.

Integrated soil fertility management (ISFM): Dr. Askia took participants through the concept of ISFM and said that it is “a set of practices that necessarily include the use of MINERAL FERTILIZER, ORGANIC INPUTS and IMPROVED GERMPASM combined with the knowledge on how to adapt the practices to LOCAL CONDITIONS aiming at maximizing agronomic use efficiency of the applied nutrients and improving crop productivity” (Fairhurst, 2012).

Ways of Increasing Soil Organic Matter

Dr. Askia also took participants through some practices that can be used to increase the soil organic matter content and they include the following:

Crop residue management: here crop residue after harvest is spread on the field and ploughed into the soil before planting.



L: Spreading of crop residue on a field



L: The field after planting (source: Dr. Askia)

Organic fertilization: organic matter (compost and other sources of organic fertilization) are used to fertilize soils to increase the organic matter content of the soil.

Cover cropping: the soil is protected from the direct impact of the rain (erosion), wind and sun by planting indigenous leguminous cover crops such as mucuna, crotalaria, or cowpeas on it. These cover crops have the added advantage of serving as green manure to improve soil fertility and structure.

Cereal-legume intercrop: here nitrogen-fixing legumes are intercropped with cereal crops to enhance the fertility of the soil through the nitrogen-fixing capacity of the legumes.

Crop rotation: different crops are planted on a piece of land every season, especially cereal-legume rotations.

Compound farming: this involves the cultivation of fields close or adjacent to farmers' homes.

Livestock integration: including livestock in the farming enterprise so as to be able to compost their droppings along with their feed residues for organic manure to fertilize and improve the soils in vegetable plots and backyard farms.

Recommendation for Improved Soil Fertility

Dr. Askia concluded by recommending that, to build up or increase soil organic matter in

agricultural land, management practices should focus and emphasize on the application of organic matter from any sources.

Professor Dzomeku, took participants through some bad farming practices that do not support soil fertility improvement and therefore lead to poor yields. The following are some bad farming practices as outlined by Prof. Dzomeku:

Monocrops: this involves cultivating only one type of crop, such as maize or rice, on a piece of land during the season.



L: A monocrop field

R: A cereal-legume intercrop (source: Prof.

Farming across the contours: this involves farming along the slope thereby creating situations conducive for water erosion of the soil.

Farming on the banks of rivers: this involves tilling the banks of rivers, which can lead to erosion and silting of the rivers.

Overuse/misuse of chemical fertilizers: This involves applying fertilizer without first calculating the minimum amount needed for the plot of land.

Gully erosion due to poor tillage: gullies created as a result of inappropriate ploughing as shown in the picture below:



Gully erosion due to poor tillage.
Source: Prof. Dzomeku (UDS)

Best Soil Fertility Maintenance Practices

Prof. Dzomeku also took participants through some soil fertility management practices which are exactly the same as those outlined by Dr. Askia above.

Soil erosion: to check soil erosion Prof. Dzomeku introduced participants through the following activities: Bunds, stone and trash lines, early planting, control burning, ploughing back crop residue, planting of vetiver grass or leguminous trees and contour ploughing.

Soil conservation techniques: Prof. Dzomeku after explaining that soil conservation is a set of management strategies soil erosion chemical alteration from overuse, acidification, salinization or other chemical soil contamination, also led participants through the following techniques used in soil conservation: contour plowing, perimeter runoff control, conservation tillage, strip cropping, buffer strips and terracing.

Soil Fertility Improvement Demo Plots in MMDAs

The Regional Crops Officer of RAD, Mr. Tijani, recommended to all MMDAs to set up at least one demonstration field using one of the several soil fertility management practices shared by the soil experts at the workshop such that RING beneficiaries and other farmers in their localities can have the opportunity to see with their own eyes and to help persuade them of the benefits.

Pilot Fertility Improvement Practices for Implementation by MMDAs

All the districts were given the opportunity to come out with a list of soil management best practices that are workable in their various districts and prioritize any two that can be implemented within this season. The table below details the districts and their two top-ranked soil fertility management best practices selections for 2015 implementation.

District	Proposed Soil Fertility Improvement Practice for Implementation
Central Gonja	Cereal-legume intercrop and Cover cropping
Chereponi	Zero tillage and Cover cropping
East Gonja	Legume-cereal intercrop and Crop rotation
East Mamprusi	Composting and organic manure application and Crop rotation
Gushegu	Crop rotation and Tree planting
Karaga	Rice husk and animal manure application and Cereal-legume intercrop
Kpandai	Relay cropping (cowpea/maize/rice)
Kumbungu	Soy-maize intercrop and Cover cropping with crotalaria
Nanumba North	Cover cropping with crotalaria and Green manuring with mucuna
Nanumba South	Cereal-mucuna inter crop and Cow dung application
Saboba	Cereal-legume intercrop and Minimal tillage for cowpea
Sagnarigu	Use of crop residue and Cover cropping with mucuna
Savelugu	Cereal-legume intercrop and Farm yard manure application
Tamale Metro	Cereal-legume intercrop and Crop rotation
Tolon	Cereal-legume intercrop and Crop rotation
West Gonja	Cereal-legume intercrop and Crop residue plow-in

Conclusion

All the participants from the 17 districts were motivated and saw the immediate need to incorporate soil fertility management practices in RING activities for the achievement of the project goals. Progress in crop productivity will depend on conscious interventions to conserve and improve soils.

MMDA participants indicated their preparedness to pilot at least one soil management practice based on the proposed soil management best practices identified and discussed at the workshop. The soil experts from SARI and UDS both expressed their desire and commitment to work with the MMDAs to pilot their chosen practices.

Next Steps

- RING team to discuss the options of funding available for MMDAs without budgets in their 2015 annual work plans to undertake soil fertility improvement interventions. This applies to all Tier 2 districts and some Tier 1 MMDAs.
- RING team to put together all presentations and mail to MMDAs
- DAs to select at least one of their prioritized soil fertility management practices for implementation

Attachment C: Nutrition Activity Field Reports

Community Durbar on Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) at Kpalengase in the Central Gonja District

3 June 2015

PARTICIPANTS

Central Gonja planned to carry out 25 community Durbars on ENA but has done 20 community Durbars so far. This report covers the 18th community durbar. A total of 198 people took part in the durbar (73 males and 125 females).

FACILITATORS

District Nutrition Officer (Central Gonja)
Kpalangase CHPS compound In-charge
Nutrition Officer (RING)

MATERIALS USED

- Posters
- Public address system

GENERAL ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS

A lot of planning went into preparing for this durbar, a public address system and “spinners” were hired for this purpose so the music drew the people’s attention to the durbar grounds even though a prior notice was given to the community. This created an atmosphere of excitement and expectation even before the program began.

School pupils were made to do a sketch on the role and importance of the Community Health Volunteers in health service delivery in the community. This was very educational and entertaining and helped engage their attention and set the mood for more discussions.

The District Nutrition Officer and the person in charge of the CHPS compound used picture messages on the posters to guide the discussions so that the sessions were suitable for community members, most of whom have had little or no formal education.

Community members had the opportunity to give feedback on what some of their challenges were in accessing healthcare. A local interpreter facilitated communications for presenters not fluent in the local dialect (Gonja).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The durbar was judged to be very successful. The strategies used for the planning and the execution of the durbar should be replicated in other communities.

Sessions should be held at the community level as mothers expressed concern about travelling long distances to access service.

NEXT STEPS

The District plans to hold the remaining 5 community durbars in the subsequent weeks.

Compiled by: Mariama Bogobire Yakubu, Nutrition Officer

Cooking Demonstration Session for Mother-to-Mother Support Group and Caterers for School Feeding Program at Wulensi – Nanumba South

11 June 2015

PARTICIPANTS

Nanumba South District planned to 15 cooking demonstrations this year. This cooking demonstration was the first of sessions. This was held in Wulensi involving 64 females, 21 males, eight health workers, and one WIAD Officer. Community health workers and midwives from the health center also took part.

COMPOSITION OF GROUP

The 61 women included two caterers each from the four school feeding program schools, two caterers from the senior high school; others represented mother-to-mother support groups in Wulensi.

MENU

All the foods prepared were fortified with soya beans and/or moringa. The food menu included:

1. Soya dawadawa jollof
2. Soya- corn porridge
3. Soya kebab (tofu)
4. Soya banku with groundnut soup
5. Soya T Z with okro and moringa soup
6. Plain rice with soya stew
7. Koose (bean cake) with Moringa
8. Soya and cowpea tubani

ISSUES AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The importance of including cooking demonstrations among RING activities in the Nanumba South District cannot be over-emphasized. The District is not an indigenous soya bean cultivating area, and RING has introduced and supported households to cultivate this crop. Therefore households need to know how soya can be incorporated into their usual meals to increase the consumption of diversified foods and also to improve their nutritional status

The active involvement of the WIAD Officer was good and went a long way to foster inter departmental collaboration which is needed to help address the multi-dimensional issues of malnutrition in women and children.

The involvement of caterers from the school feeding program that provides lunch for basic school pupils was also beneficial, since soya can be incorporated in their meals as a good source of protein which is much cheaper and nutritious.

The involvement of the mother-to-mother support groups is also laudable because these women come together to support each other in social issues and can also convey information on infant and young child feeding practices, family planning and issues pertaining to health care in general.

The RING COP, DCOP and the Livelihoods and Agriculture Specialist were on a working visit to the District, and their presence and remarks made added a sense of importance to the event. The women were happy to show off the meals they prepared.

The WIAD officer had not been informed of the event in time for her to help in some of the ways soya can be processed and used as a fortifier. As a result, the women could not learn prepare some of the dishes as planned.

RECOMMENDATION

The District Health Directorate should inform DADU (WIAD) with sufficient time before the subsequent sessions to allow them bring their expertise on board.

NEXT STEPS

Nanumba south District planned to undertake 14 more of the cooking demonstration sessions in the subsequent weeks.

Compiled by: Mariama Bogobire Yakubu. Nutrition Officer

Community Management for Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) Training for Health Workers at Nanumba North District

10 June 2015

PARTICIPANTS

Nanumba North district has 4 Sub-Districts with 14 CHPS compounds and Health Centers under the 4 sub-districts.

Thirty-three (35) Health Workers comprising of 21 males and 14 females were drawn from the 14 CHPS compounds and Health Centers. They included Community Health Nurses, Midwives and Enrolled nurses.

This was a two day training however this report covers my participation on the second day of the training.

FACILITATORS

The session was facilitated by:
The Nanumba North District Nutrition Officer
The National Service Personnel
Nutrition officer (RING)

The District Nutrition Officer is in-charge of ensuring the implementation and monitoring of routine and program nutrition activities in the District.

The Objectives of the training included

1. To refresh the knowledge of previously trained health staff on CMAM protocols
2. To also train new staff who never had any training in out-patient management of severe acute malnutrition using CMAM protocols.
3. To equip health staff to also train community volunteers on active case searches, referrals and home visits.

MATERIALS USED

For effective facilitation and understanding, standard training materials used included:

- Projector
- Demonstration boards,
- Protocols from the CMAM Health workers training manuals,
- MUAC tapes,
- Weighing scales,

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

For effective Adult learning and full participation to take place, methodologies used included power point presentation, group activity and plenary presentation and discussion, role plays and demonstrations

TOPICS COVERED

1. Overview of CMAM
2. Admission Criteria
3. Medical Assessment and decision Making for treatment

4. Out-patient care (Admission procedure, medical assessment, appetite test , determining referral to In-patient, routine medication and action protocols)
5. Measuring Mid- upper Arm Circumference (MUAC), weight measurement and Edema assessment
6. The use of inventory control cards
7. Monitoring tools (Outpatient care (OPC) cards, Ration Cards, Tally cards and reporting forms)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES

Using two days for training is justified considering the number of subject areas to be discussed. Subject area discussed were relevant to achieving the goal of the training. Group presentations, discussions and feedback and the use appropriate training material was effective for adult learning. Having a practical demonstration on correct taking of weight and MUAC at the Bimbilla hospital child welfare clinic (CWC) and giving participants printed and laminated copies of the OPC protocols on CMAM was laudable.

However, presentations were not well structured to follow a chronological order to make easy understanding, also, participants were not given complete manuals but just parts of it and no member of the District Health Directorate was part of the training, just the District Nutrition Officer

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING

- Much should be put in planning before the actual training takes place
- Participants should be given complete manuals to enable them make reference to as needed.
- Other members of the District Health Directorate should be actively involved in subsequent training.

NEXT STEPS

Trained Health workers are expected to support the District Health Directorate carryout training of community health volunteers.

A total of 100 community health volunteers are expected to be trained in 5 batches (20 volunteers per training session) to enable them do active case searches

Training of Volunteers is schedule to be done on the 29th and 30th June 2015

Trained Health workers are also expected to carry Supportive Monitoring and Supervision of community health volunteers

Compiled By Mariama Bogobire Yakubu, Nutrition Officer

Attachment D: Reviews Annual Work Plan Templates

		
ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2015		
MMDA Name:	PLEASE SELECT YOUR MMDA FROM THE DROP DOWN MENU	
CONTENTS		Please select your district name from the drop down menu which will automatically feed through all the other sheets
1	PROFILE	
2	EXPANDED WORK PLAN SUMMARY	
3	COMPONENT BUDGET TEMPLATE (3)	
4	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	
5	CASH PROFILING TEMPLATE	
6	PROCUREMENT PLAN TEMPLATE	
7	COMMUNITY TARGETING SHEET	

MMDA- Metropolitan, Municipal District Assembly

	PLEASE SELECT YOUR MMDA FROM THE DROP DOWN MENU		
	DA name will automatically show when selected from front page		
DISTRICT PROFILE			
BRIEF HISTORY:			
POPULATION			
TOTAL:	MALE:	FEMALE:	
SUBSTRUCTURES:			
No. of Sub-Metro:	No of Zonal Councils:	No of Town/ Area Councils:	
AGE DISTRIBUTION:			
0-14	15-64	64 +	
DISTRICT VISION:			
DISTRICT MISSION:			
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT GOAL:			
RING ANNUAL WORK PLAN (AWP) & MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTDP)/ ANNUAL ACTION PLAN (AAP)			
Please use the table below to state how each RING AWP Activities are linked to the MTDP.			
	RING ACTIVITY NAME	MTDP (cross-referenced to MTDP/AAP)	
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

MBCA Name
PLEASE SELECT YOUR MBCA FROM THE DROP DOWN MENU



		ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE											
		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
COMPONENT 1: LIVELIHOOD													
LIVELIHOOD													
COMPONENT 2: HEALTH													
HEALTH													
COMPONENT 3: GOVERNANCE													
CAPACITY BUILDING													
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION													
MONITORING													

Attachment E: Budget Variance Report Template

Please see Exhibit A at the end of this document for a clearer pdf version of the Budget Variance Report Template.



(INSERT MMDAs Name)

Report Title	BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD to <u>xx/xx/xxxx</u> (please insert date or quarter)
MMDA Portfolio	<i>Please state the intended recipients to this report. This will mainly be the decision makers such the DPCU, Budget Committee, Finance Sub-Committee etc</i>
Report Author/ Contact details	<i>Please enter the author of this report name, position and contact</i>
Appendices	<i>This will be Budget Monitoring Variance Statement and Income and expenditure statement. This should act as a supporting document for section 4 of this report</i>

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report presents the forecast year-end position in respect of the MMDAs revenue income & expenditure accounts. At this stage, there is a potential overspend / underspend of **GHcxxxx**.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 It is best practice for DPCU to monitor the Assembly budget, focusing on high-risk areas on an exception basis.

4. PROPOSALS

Overall Position

4.1 A summary of the current revenue account position is shown in the attached **appendix 1**. The total potential **overspend / underspend** is projected at **GHcxxx**, an **improvement / reduction** of **GHcxxxx** since **xxxxx** (please enter the last period).

The underspend / overspend relates mainly to the following. **Please comment on the service areas based on discussions with the respective budget holders (i.e head of the respective department)**

4.2 INCOME BUDGET

Comment on achievements of targets, any challenges, variance causes and possible corrective actions.

4.2.1 Rates



4.2.2 Land & Concessions

4.2.3 Fees & Licenses

4.2.4 Rent

4.2.5 Grants

4.2.6 Investment Income

4.2.7 Miscellaneous

4.3 EXPENDITURE BUDGETS

Comment on achievements of targets, any challenges, variance causes and possible corrective actions.

4.3.1 Central Administration

Comment

4.3.2 Finance

Comment

4.3.3 Agriculture

Comment

4.3.4 Health

Comment

4.3.5 Works

Comment



4.3.6 Waste Management¹

Comment

4.3.7 Physical Planning

Comment

4.3.8 Social Welfare & Community Development

Comment

4.3.9 Budget & Rating²

Comment

4.3.10 Transport

Comment

4.3.11 Legal³

Comment

4.3.12 Disaster Prevention

Comment

4.3.13 Urban Roads

Comment

4.3.14 Industry & Trade

Comment

4.3.15 Natural Resource Conservation

Comment

1. _____

¹ Only applicable to Metropolitan Assemblies

² Only applicable to Metropolitan Assemblies

³ Same as above



NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

The entire content of this report contributes to the corporate priority to Achieve Excellence, Ensure Value for Money, and meet the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA)

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The Budget Officer have consulted with Head of Departments / DPCU and the District Coordinating Director has consulted the District Chief Executive in preparing and finalising this report.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance and Risk

6.1.1 The whole report is of a financial nature. Please state any financial and /or operational risk that may affect the implementation of this budget.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6.3 Equalities and Diversity

6.3.1 An initial assessment was undertaken and it determined there was no negative impact from the information in this report on the advancement of equality. Please state if there are any changes

6.4 Sustainability

6.4.1 A stable financial position means that the Assembly is more able to address urgent health, Nutrition and Livelihood priorities as they arise.

7. CONCLUSION

Please include action point relating to next steps etc

Approval by the DPCU / E&A

I have cleared this report for inclusion in the **Assembly's...etc.**

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chief Executive



Main Departments / Service Areas	Ratified Annual Budget	Current Budget	Cumulative to Current Period			Outturn Forecast (Remaining Period)		
			Budget to Quarter X	Actual to Quarter X	Variance to Quarter X	Planned Commitments (remaining quarters of the year)	Forecasted 2015 Outturn	Annual Variance
	A	B	C	D	C-D	E	D + E	B-D+E
INCOME								
Rates								
Land & Concessions								
Fees & Fines								
Licenses								
Rent								
Grants (includes DACF/RWG etc)								
Investment Income								
Miscellaneous								
EXPENDITURE								
Central Administration								
Finance								
Agriculture								
Health								
Works								
Waste Management*								
Physical Planning								
Social Welfare & Community Development								
Budget & Rating*								
Transport								
Legal*								
Disaster Prevention								
Urban Road								
Industry & Trade								
Natural Resource Conservation								

* Only applicable to Metrics

Attachment F: Component Three Menu Review Report

RING Component 3 Menu Review 19 June 2015 - RING Office, Tamale

Introduction

The purpose of the meeting was to review the current Component 3 menu list as well as propose new activities that will achieve the component objective of strengthened local support networks to address the ongoing needs of vulnerable households. Participants came from the 10 Tier One Districts (comprising a DCE, DCDs, Planning Officers/RING Focal Persons), the RPCU, RING and USAID. The DCE for Tolon District, Hon. Seidu Abukari was the only District Chief Executive (DCE) who was invited due to his keen interest and support for Public Financial Management (PFM) strengthening.

Table Y: Component 3 Menu Review Participant Summary

Organization	# of Participants	# of Females	# of Males
MMDAs	20	2	18
RING	10	2	8
USAID	1	0	1
RPCU	2	0	2
Total	33	4	29

Presentation on Current Component 3 Activities and Proposed New Activities

RING presented on the current menu list of component 3 including new proposals from USAID and the RING team. The key areas highlighted were as follows:

Capacity Building Interventions:

- Strengthened Public Financial Management (PFM) capacity through technical trainings (Asset management, procurement training, budget monitoring, record keeping, auditing, M&E, etc.);
- PFM progress review meetings;
- Technical refresher trainings for relevant departments (DADU, DHMT, DWST, BAC, etc.);
- ICT training (General computer use + programs [MS Office]);
- Collaborative exchange visits between RING Districts/Staff;
- Mapping of District services and resources;

Community Focused Interventions:

- “Town Hall” style annual or bi-annual collaborative planning sessions with communities/stakeholders;
- Consultations meetings between community groups and district assembly;
- Hosting networking events/stakeholder forums to identify major issues & resource gaps impacting food security and nutritional gains;
- Community Action Planning & review of MTDPs;

Monitoring Interventions:

- General monitoring of RING activities;
- Development of participatory monitoring plan to track progress in addressing the needs of

vulnerable populations;

- Purchase of office equipment;
- Internet services & anti-virus protection;
- Purchase of motorcycles and servicing (Motorcycles & project pick-ups);

Activities Proposed by USAID:

- Facilitate the inclusion of most vulnerable communities and their needs in the community action plans (on-going using the RING community and household targeting mechanisms);
- Train Social Welfare Officers (SWO)/Community Development Officers (CDO) to perform basic social work functions, Using World Bank's CGAP poverty graduation of the poorest of the poor model and methodologies to identify the most vulnerable populations/households in their most vulnerable communities;
- Support interaction of SWOs and CDOs with communities and families and monitoring of families and residential care institutions;
- Train SWOs in districts on a participatory mapping exercises methodology to better understand the community-based informal system's opportunities and capacity gaps. Based on the mapping exercise, develop and deliver training materials to SWO's to mobilize and train community-based child protection mechanisms;
- Hold joint meetings with SWOs and community-based child protection mechanism representative to develop SOP's and referral protocols;
- Support mobilizing, training and linking SWOs with community based structures;
- Peace building and conflict resolution;
- Gender mainstreaming (Gender training for all MMDAs); and
- Support consultations and skills building between district staff, elected assembly members and community support groups(CSOs), traditional leaders, local NGOs and other community stakeholders in target communities to identify the major issues, resources and gaps impacting on food security and nutritional status in their communities.

Following the presentations, participants were grouped and reviewed the existing menu list and proposed new items. After deliberations, participants collectively proposed the following activities:

- Operationalization, re-activating and strengthening of the District Assembly Sub-Structures (Town councils, Zonal councils and Area councils). This will further deepen the decentralization agenda of government and bring planning and decision making closer to the citizens.
- Enact, gazette and implement District Assembly bye-laws on sanitation, environmental protection, revenue generation, etc.
- Sensitize communities on the bye-laws.
- Organize participatory planning and budgeting meetings with communities and other stakeholders.
- Deepen social accountability and transparency systems through civic unions, community score cards, citizen's report card, and accountability fora to enable the sub-structures deliver quality social services for the communities.
- Organize trainings for schedule one departments on the local governance structure and contemporary issues in line with LI 1961
- Introduce conflict prevention and management mechanisms at the District Assembly level

- Periodically embark on intra and inter district collaborative exchange visits to share experiences and learn best practices on project implementation.
- Mainstream gender in all DA project activities implementation
- Facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable people in the targeted communities.
- Strengthening service delivery standards with emphasis on sanitation and nutrition services. Client service management, performance management etc.
- Strengthening pro-poor decision making and planning. Poverty mapping etc.

Sub-structure strengthening was a major topic of conversation with the Assembly staff present. Though it was obviously a priority area for the districts, RING emphasized the aspect of sustainability after the project had finished. Director Basintale of Savelugu-Nanton described SNMA's approach to sub-structure strengthening which included devoting a portion of the Assembly's own funds toward their general operations. In addition to funding, SNMA requires all field staff posted to the district to report immediately to their Zonal Council post. This avoids the issue of new field staff establishing residence in the district capital. Generally, most districts saw Savelugu-Nanton's case to be the exception, given their proximity to Tamale, large markets and higher capacity for IGF.

In light of this, RING will work with districts who opt for the sub-structure strengthening activity (listed in the table below under 'Capacity Building & Systems Strengthening') to develop customized plans that satisfy the vision and needs of the district. RING will also ensure that funds dedicated to this activity will be within proportion to the capacity of the sub-structures to achieve the overall objectives of the program. From these above-listed suggestions, the RING team has further deliberated on the Component 3 menu and developed the following proposal for USAID:

Table Z: Proposed Menu for Component 3 (new activities in italics)

Capacity Building & Systems Strengthening	Community Engagement	Monitoring
PFM strengthening through technical training & progress review meetings	Pro-Poor Community Action Planning	Purchase of Office Equipment
Technical refresher trainings for relevant departments (including ICT)	<i>Peace building and conflict resolution</i>	Internet & Phone Support
<i>GIS training & district resource mapping, with an emphasis on social mapping</i>	Support stakeholder consultations to identify issues, gaps and resources that impact food security	Vehicle Upkeep
<i>Develop SOPs and Child Protection Referral Protocols</i>	Participatory planning and budgeting meetings with communities and other stakeholders	General Monitoring (to include project sites and sub-district level facilities)
<i>Gender training for all MMDAs</i>	<i>Citizen Score Cards/ Community Score Cards</i>	<i>Joint social welfare monitoring visits (separate from general project monitoring)</i>
<i>Assembly sub-structure strengthening (including technical training or additional engagement with Assemblymen/women)</i>		
<i>Collaborative exchange visits</i>		
<i>Technical training on poverty graduation for Social Welfare Officers & Community Development Officers</i>		

Next steps

RING will develop objectives and results for each of the new activities included in the menu above. In addition, the governance team will develop, in close coordination with its regional and district partners, an integrated strategy to ensure all sub-component activities are implemented in a complementary manner.

Attachment G: Post-ENA Training Follow-Up Findings

USAID/RESILIENCY IN NORTHERN GHANA REPORT OF ESSENTIAL NUTRITION ACTION (ENA) RAPID ASSESSMENT JULY 2-3, 2015

Introduction

The RING Project is promoting the use of the Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) framework, a tool for delivery of key messages related to nutrition during the first 1,000 days period. The ENA framework covers seven essential nutrition actions that address women's nutrition during adolescence, pregnancy and lactation; breastfeeding; complementary feeding; nutritional care of sick malnourished children; prevention and control of anemia; prevention and control of vitamin A deficiency; and prevention and control of iodine deficiency. In 2014, RING trained 1,162 health and non-health sector staff on ENA across six districts in the Northern Region. This multisectoral approach aimed to equip staff across multiple service delivery channels (e.g. Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and Ghana Education Service (GES)) with the knowledge and skills to integrate nutrition into their everyday work at the community-level.

In July 2015, the RING Monitoring and Evaluation team conducted a post-training rapid assessment with ENA training participants. The purpose of the rapid assessment was to determine how the knowledge acquired through the training has been mainstreamed into the activities of various delivery channels of these districts. Specifically, the objectives of the rapid assessment were to explore if trained participants have incorporated ENA key messages into their work, determine how training participants have integrated ENA key messages into their work, and examine any challenges that those who were trained faced in delivering ENA key messages to community members.

Methodology

The rapid assessment was a post-training follow up of people trained on ENA through RING support in six Tier One districts. The target districts were Saboba, Chereponi, East Mamprusi, Central Gonja, Nanumba North, and Nanumba South. Sixty (60) trained participants comprising ten (10) participants per district were purposively sampled to be interviewed.

Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from respondents in the six districts. Primary data analysis was analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS was used to generate frequencies, trends, and percentages to understand how the channels of message delivery are reaching community members.

Summary of Key Findings

- There were five service delivery channels through which ENA key messages were disseminated at the community level. These included the MOFA, Ghana Health Service (GHS), GES, Ministry of Gender & Social Protection (MOGSP), and Environmental Health Office (EHO).
- 95 percent of the respondents reported they have disseminated ENA key messages to those they interact with in their everyday work.
- 24 of the 31 GHS respondents indicated they disseminated the ENA key messages through

one-on-one sharing or counseling during home visits and during a visit to the facility by community members.

- 9 of 13 GES respondents indicated they disseminate the ENA key messages through school talks and PTA meetings.
- All of the MOFA respondents (n=8) reported disseminating ENA key messages through their traditional methods of farmer groups and farmer field day activities.
- 11 of 60 respondents indicated they disseminated ENA key messages through 'other' channels such as community outreach and through the media.
- Respondents reported they engaged community members on the average ten times a week disseminating ENA key messages.
- Respondents who completed tertiary education were able to recall more of the ENAs covered during the training than those who have completed secondary education or basic education.

Profile of Respondents

Out of the total of 60 respondents, 38 were males and 22 females. The composition of respondents, district, and type of service delivery channel are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Service delivery channels in the districts.

Name of District:	Type of Service Delivery					Total
	EHO	GES	GHS	MOFA	MOSW	
Central Gonja	0	4	2	4	0	10
Chereponi	2	1	5	1	1	10
East Mamprusi	0	1	10	0	0	11
Nanumba North	3	1	3	0	2	9
Nanumba South	0	3	4	3	0	10
Saboba	0	3	7	0	0	10
Total	5	13	31	8	3	60

The RING project is working with five channels to disseminate ENA messages to community members in six Tier 1 districts that were trained on ENA in 2014. These were the GHS, GES, MOFA, MOGSP, and EHO. In the rapid assessment, 31 respondents were from GHS, 13 were from GES, eight were from MOFA, three were from MOSW, and five were from EHO.

Educational Background of Respondents

The educational status of respondents ranged from basic to tertiary. Among all respondents, one completed basic education, five completed secondary education, and 54 completed tertiary education. The educational status of the respondents was found to have a relationship on ENA message delivery. The findings revealed that tertiary education respondents were able to recall more of the ENAs they learned during the trainings than those who completed secondary education or basic education.

Recall of ENAs

Respondents noted they have attended training on ENA in their respective districts. Many, however, said they needed refresher trainings to refresh their memories. Table 2 presents the number of ENAs each training participant was able to name (without receiving a prompt).

Table 2: ENAs Recalled by Respondents

Number of ENAs Recalled	Number of respondents
7	7
6	3
5	7
4	2
3	9
2	15
1	17

Dissemination of Information

Ninety-five percent of the respondents (n=57) reported they were able to disseminate ENA key messages to those they interacted with in their everyday work or activities, whereas 5 percent of the respondents (n=3; one person from MOFA, one person from GHS, and one person from GES) indicated they were not able to disseminate ENA key messages to their targeted audience in their everyday work. This finding suggests that all five service delivery channels are viable vehicles for reaching communities members with key nutrition messages.

Means of Disseminating Information

Among the respondents who indicated they have integrated ENA key messages in their activities, they primarily used their 'traditional' methods of information dissemination. The GHS, for example, used group education, community durbars, and one-on-one counselling during visits at the facility level and home visits. The GES staff used mainly school health talks and PTA meetings while a few of the GES respondents reported disseminating ENA key messages during meetings in churches/mosques, CLTS triggering activities, and discussions on radio.

On average, respondents reported that they engaged community members about eight times a week disseminating ENA key messages. This finding suggests that community members are receiving frequent contacts from multiple service delivery channels, including outside the health sector. This provides an opportunity for RING to reach community members with nutrition messages from multiple channels and increasing the likelihood that messages are reaching the household level. It should be noted, however, that these results are self-reported and subject to bias.

Table 3 shows the number of times respondents reported using the different methods in engaging with community members.

Table 3: Methods used in disseminating ENA key messages to community members

Response options	# times per week
Group education during facility visits	16
One-on-one sharing	16
Community durbars	15
Others (PTA meetings, meetings in churches/mosques, CLTS triggering activities and discussions on radio)	11
School talks	9
One-on-one counselling during facility visits	8
Community Groups	8
Home Visits	7
Farmer Groups	7
Farmer Field Schools	3

Challenges Faced

Respondents reported several challenges in integrating nutrition into their everyday work, even among those who reported that they were able to disseminate ENA key messages at the community-level. Eleven respondents cited poor knowledge of ENAs, nine indicated lack of materials, nine indicated low confidence in what was learned and one cited low confidence in presentation abilities. Further, 11 out of 60 respondents mentioned other challenges, including language barriers.

Despite these challenges, respondents indicated that their capacities were built in the following areas: disease prevention, nutrition, breastfeeding, care for pregnant and lactating women, and proper hand washing with soap and water.

The rapid assessment also looked at the general challenges respondents face in disseminating information to project beneficiaries. Respondents reported the following general challenges that they face in disseminating information at their various workplaces:

- Organizing community durbars and meetings is a challenge as households prefer to work on their farms
- Men show less interest in the ENA key messages
- Difficulty in effecting attitudinal and behavioral changes
- Inadequate materials to support the delivery of messages to the communities
- Inadequate trained staff to undertake the exercise
- Lack of practical sessions to engage community members
- Poor time planning and delays by community health volunteers who assist in the interpretation of the messages
- Language barrier as some health workers do not understand the local languages
- Inadequate transportation to make community visits
- Households complain of the lack of knowledge and ingredients to prepare some of the food recommended through the messages.
- **Recommendations from Respondents**

Respondents provided several recommendations for how the ENA training can be improved. Their recommendations included to:

- Increase the number of staff trained.
- Increase the duration of trainings to between 3-5 days to allow for detailed explanation of the training materials.
- Provide more leaflets to training participants, use more practical presentations and visual aids and also share copies of presentation materials with participants to serve as a guide during their outreach activities.
- Target community health volunteers for the training because they are in the communities and interacting with people every day.
- Target more opinion leaders at the communities since they have the power to influence people's attitudes toward the ENAs messages disseminated in the communities.

To facilitate their community outreach programs respondents also provided the following recommendations:

- Provide more logistics for community durbars to be well organized and create good conditions for community members to feel comfortable at the venue and listen.

- Provide other logistics such as bicycles for community health volunteers to facilitate their movement in the communities.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Findings from the assessment show that the five service delivery channels targeted for the trainings are viable mechanisms for reaching community members with key nutrition messages. A high percentage of respondents reported that they have integrated ENA key messages into their day-to-day work (95 percent), and that they are doing so at a high frequency (eight times per week). This provides an opportunity for RING to reach community members with nutrition messages from multiple channels, thereby increasing the likelihood that messages are reaching the household level. In this regard, ENA can be a valuable tool for RING to promote nutrition at the community-level particularly to leverage non-health sector service delivery channels in reaching community members that the health sector may miss.

The assessment findings also suggest that the quality of the training needs to be improved. Despite the trainings taking place less than one year ago, more than half of the training participants could not name more than two of the seven ENAs. Further, several respondents reported having low knowledge of ENAs and low confidence in what was learned, and recommended that the training be increased from two to three to five days. Given that RING is promoting ENA training for non-health sector staff in 2015 AWP, increasing the training by multiple days is not feasible, but these findings suggest that the training material could be better tailored to the practicalities of how the different service delivery channels can actually integrate nutrition into their non-health sector work. The findings also suggest that the facilitation may need to be adjusted depending on the education level of participants, and that more materials are needed for training participants to use in the field.

In terms of next steps, RING will review how the ENA trainings are being carried out by the DNOs and make recommendations for how to make small changes that will have greater gains. RING will also follow up with DNOs to ensure that they are actively monitoring post-training activities to coach staff on how they can become more confident in incorporating nutrition into their non-health sector work. Finally, RING will examine the challenges reported by the respondents to determine if there are any that RING can address such as printing laminated copies of the key message booklet that they can easily take with them on the field work.

Attachment H: Soybean Best Practice Picture Guides

RING - 2015: SITE SELECTION AND LAND PREPARATION FOR SOYBEAN CULTIVATION

Select gentle slope land with few or no stumps and stones for good drainage, good ploughing and good plant population

Avoid flood prone and water log areas. It is not good for soybean

Clear bushy field before ploughing

Ploughing can be animal traction or by tractor



RING - 2015: PLANTING AND FIELD MANAGEMENT FOR SOYBEAN CULTIVATION

Plant soybean about as deep as the space between your finger joints

You can plant a little deeper, but must plant the seed into moist soil. If the seed dries up it will not come up

Avoid rotten seeds for planting.

Use only the best seed like this for planting

In the row, plant about 8 seeds for each foot step

Plant the rows about 2 footsteps apart

Soybeans take about 4 months to grow

Completely bare soil dry out faster. This affect growth and yield

Do not burn the dead stalks from last year's crops. Try to leave them on top of the soil like in this picture

A good soya crop at maturity should grow to your knee level if not consider changing the variety next season

It is good to weed around soy farm at a point for good harvest

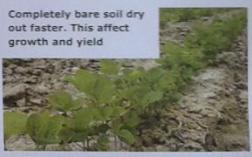


Exhibit A: Budget Variance Report Template

The pages that follow provide a clearer copy of the Budget Variance Report Template shown in Attachment E.

(INSERT MMDAs Name)

Report Title	BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD to <u>xx/xx/xxxx</u> (please insert date or quarter)
MMDA Portfolio	<i>Please state the intended recipients to this report. This will mainly be the decision makers such the DPCU, Budget Committee, , Finance Sub-Committee etc</i>
Report Author/ Contact details	<i>Please enter the author of this report name, position and contact</i>
Appendices	<i>This will be Budget Monitoring Variance Statement and Income and expenditure statement. This should act as a supporting document for section 4 of this report</i>

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report presents the forecast year-end position in respect of the MMDAs revenue income & expenditure accounts. At this stage, there is a potential overspend / underspend of **GHcxxxx** .

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 It is best practice for DPCU to monitor the Assembly budget, focusing on high-risk areas on an exception basis.

4. PROPOSALS

Overall Position

4.1 A summary of the current revenue account position is shown in the attached **appendix 1**. The total potential **overspend / underspend** is projected at **GHcxxx**, an **improvement / reduction** of **GHcxxxx** since xxxxx (please enter the last period).

The underspend / overspend relates mainly to the following. **Please comment on the service areas based on discussions with the respective budget holders (i.e head of the respective department)**

4.2 INCOME BUDGET

Comment on achievements of targets, any challenges, variance causes and possible corrective actions.

4.2.1 Rates

4.2.2 Land & Concessions

4.2.3 Fees & Licenses

4.2.4 Rent

4.2.5 Grants

4.2.6 Investment Income

4.2.7 Miscellaneous

4.3 **EXPENDITURE BUDGETS**

Comment on achievements of targets, any challenges, variance causes and possible corrective actions.

4.3.1 Central Administration

Comment

4.3.2 Finance

Comment

4.3.3 Agriculture

Comment

4.3.4 Health

Comment

4.3.5 Works

Comment

4.3.6 Waste Management¹

Comment

4.3.7 Physical Planning

Comment

4.3.8 Social Welfare & Community Development

Comment

4.3.9 Budget & Rating²

Comment

4.3.10 Transport

Comment

4.3.11 Legal³

Comment

4.3.12 Disaster Prevention

Comment

4.3.13 Urban Roads

Comment

4.3.14 Industry & Trade

Comment

4.3.15 Natural Resource Conservation

Comment

1. _____

¹ Only applicable to Metropolitan Assemblies

² Only applicable to Metropolitan Assemblies

³ Same as above

NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

The entire content of this report contributes to the corporate priority to Achieve Excellence, Ensure Value for Money, and meet the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA)

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The Budget Officer have consulted with Head of Departments / DPCU and the District Coordinating Director has consulted the District Chief Executive in preparing and finalising this report.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance and Risk

6.1.1 The whole report is of a financial nature. **Please state any financial and /or operational risk that may affect the implementation of this budget.**

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6.3 Equalities and Diversity

6.3.1 An initial assessment was undertaken and it determined there was no negative impact from the information in this report on the advancement of equality. **Please state if there are any**

6.4 Sustainability

6.4.1 A stable financial position means that the Assembly is more able to address urgent health, Nutrition and Livelihood priorities as they arise.

7. CONCLUSION

Please include action point relating to next steps etc

Approval by the DPCU / F&A

I have cleared this report for inclusion in the **Assembly's etc.**

Signed:

Date:

Chief Executive

Main Departments / Service Areas	Ratified Annual Budget	Current Budget	Cummulative to Current Period			Outturn Forcast (Remaining Period)		
			Budget to Quarter X	Actual to Quarter X	Variance to Quarter X	Planned Commitments (remaining quarters of the year)	Forecasted 20xx Outturn	Annual Variance
INCOME	A	B	C	D	C-D	E	D + E	B-D+E
Rates								
Land & Concessions								
Fees & Fines								
Licenses								
Rent								
Grants (includes DACF, RING etc)								
Investment Income								
Miscellaneous								
EXPENDITURE								
Central Administration								
Finance								
Agriculture								
Health								
Works								
Waste Management*								
Physical Planning								
Social Welfare & Community Development								
Budget & Rating*								
Transport								
Legal*								
Disaster Prevention								
Urban Road								
Industry & Trade								
Natural Resource Conservation								

* Only applicable to Metros