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INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH SOCIALISATION AND GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

The International Women's Day which is celebrated annually on 8th March was celebrated this year under the theme 'Inspiring Change'. As part of the celebrations this year ADP took a look at some changes Ghana has made in terms of policy making and implementation to ensure that there is Gender Equality, Economic Emancipation and Empowerment of women.

It is worth mentioning that Ghana has made tremendous strides in coming out with policies, legislations and programs that would bridge the equality gap and bring about economic empowerment and emancipation among women. As a country we can boast of legislations such as the Domestic Violence Act 2007 (732), policies such as the National Gender and Children Policy and the Affirmative Action Policy and programmes such as Girls Education Unit (GEU) Operational Plan, Ghana School Feeding programme and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRP) among others. Notwithstanding all these policies programmes and legislation achieving gender equality has progressively been slow. Up until now most Ministries, Departments and Agencies do not have gender disaggregated data that could be used

to influence policy decision. In Inspiring Change, ADP thus took a look at the implementation of gender related policies and programmes.

A study of selected gender policies and gender related policies by the ADP research team observed that Ghana's strides in achieving gender equality has been progressively been slow not as a result of lack of policies but rather as a result of lack of implementation will. The study showed that although gender is mentioned in policies and programmes, gender is not mainstreamed and there is no budgetary allocation for the implementation of the programmes and policies. For instance the Ghana Shared Growth Agenda (GSGDA) 2010-2013, the national medium term policy framework, has as part of its objectives "Embarking on an affirmative action to rectify errors of the past, particularly as they relate to discrimination against women". Beyond this major objective, the policy mentions providing gender friendly agricultural mechanisms to smallholder farmers. However the costing framework of GSGDA which gives budgetary alloca-

tions to programmes did not capture funds for gender.

The 2014 budget also does not give specific expenditure details on gender related activities. Policies and programmes without funds to implement are as good as non-existent.. It is not enough to have policies that promote gender without the necessary budgetary consideration. Change can be inspired by ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in policies and has budgetary allocation for the implementation.

Thus in conclusion, ADP calls for Inspiring Change particularly by ensuring that funds are made available for gender responsive policies and programmes and the socialisation of citizens on gender concepts.. Through these, programmes and policies with gender mainstreamed in them would be implemented to achieve their related objectives. Furthermore, societal transformation through citizen education would create the needed environment to empower and emancipate women for the desirable changes.

Special points of interest:

- The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, engages stakeholders in M & E tools.
- Nexus Fund USA visits ADPs office to engage and if possible initiate joint cooperative activities and mutually benefiting projects to support the global and national efforts for mass atrocities prevention, human rights promotion, peace-building and conflicts management.
- ADP has successfully ended a Needs Assessment survey in Kumasi, Garden City Special Schools as part of its Advocacy campaign.



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ADP PARTICIPATES IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TOOLS WORKSHOP

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in conjunction with the Partnership for Child Development (PCD) organised a two (2) day workshop on Social Accountability tools for ten (10) CSOs across the country. The training which was to build CSOs capacity and prepare them for an impending Social Accountability project was held at the Mirage Royal Hotel from 12th-13th March.

The workshop took participants through the concept of Social Accountability, Importance of Social Accountability, Social Accountability according to the World Bank was defined as “the broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens can use to hold the state to account as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other actors that promote or facilitate these efforts. According to Mrs Irene Messiba (Head of Social Accountability Unit at the Ministry), Ghana subscribes to Social Accountability in order to deepen our decentralization process

The African Development Programme is an NGO that has been in existence since 1993. In collaboration with national and international partners, it has been actively engaged in Social Protection Issues with core specialization in Education, Health, Social Development, Vulnerable and Excluded Group and the Physically Challenged in Society. Governance and Gender Issues are cross-cutting programme areas.

LIVELIHOOD EMPOWEREMENT AGAINST POVERTY (LEAP) PAYMENT MONITORING

As part of ADPs evidenced based advocacy, the team undertook a beneficiary assessment of the LEAP service-delivery in line with demand-side accountability in January 2014. It is intended to provide feedback from the right-holders (LEAP beneficiaries) about the services rendered to them. Issues on service providers (duty-bearers) interactions during payments; beneficiary knowledge on emerging issues about the programme; how the cash transfer is benefitting beneficiaries at a particular point in time; and what is working well were investigated



Picture above: A LEAP beneficiary thump-printing



Left: LEAP beneficiaries waiting for cash transfers

and democratic experiment. It enables citizens to participate actively in government’s projects and programs. Some Social Accountability Programs on-going in some national projects were identified as the Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) and Ghana Urban Management among others.

Mrs Sarah Naa Dedei Agbey, a facilitator cautioned CSOs not to overly raise the expectation of citizens and the need for CSOs to understand their role the in Social Accountability process . Other facilitators, Mr. Ishmael Tettey and Mrs Anancy-Baiden (PCD Director) charged CSOs to join hands ensure that social accountability is upheld in the various communities and district particularly with regards to the school feeding programme so that desirable objective of the programmed is attained.

Participants knowledge on various communication and information sharing tools as part of Social Accountability Tools and Mechanisms were greatly enhanced. For African Development Programme, the training was a refresher and experience-sharing platform given the organizations work experience in social accountability in the last decade through projects such as “Tracking of the District Assemblies Common Fund in 4 Districts”; CSO Monitoring and Evaluation of Ghana School Feeding Programme in Greater Accra and Eastern Regions of Ghana” and its recent “Social Interventions Monitoring Project” that seeks to improve service delivery through beneficiary assessments / evaluations.