

CALING UP NUTRITION CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION PROPOSAL FOR GHANA

Title of project: Formation of Coalition of Civil society organizations (CSO's) to support Scale up Nutrition in Ghana.

Location: Ghana (The coalition will be a nation-wide movement encompassing all relevant and interested CSO's, involved directly/indirectly in nutrition in Ghana)

Details of focal point organization:

The Ghana Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (HAG) is a registered Non-Government organization (NGO) registered in Ghana since 2005. HAG seeks to address hunger and malnutrition in Ghana through effective networking, advocacy, campaign, monitoring, research, partnership and peer-to-peer capacity building. As part of its achievements, HAG has successfully facilitated the formation of Ghana Parliamentarians Caucus Against Hunger and Malnutrition, now a bi-partisan Caucus in Parliament to raise the profile of nutrition in the legislature. In addition, HAG has played a pivotal advocacy role in the commencement of the National school feeding programme in collaboration with other donor agencies and government institutions and subsequently, HAG's Executive Director was appointed as the Head of Operations for the Ghana School Feeding Program until 2009. HAG has also been involved in the establishment of a village food banking projects in Ghana's Eastern region, in collaboration with the Global Food Banking Network. HAG is also involved in food security policy advocacy and is currently coordinating Non-State Actors participation in the CAADP framework through the implementation of Ghana Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP). These achievements have been attained during a period of limited investment in nutrition, and have thus been successful through building partnerships with both local and international organizations including Government Ministries and agencies, the International Alliance against hunger, and the Global food banking Network and academia. The Alliance seeks to further expand its network of partners even further through its participation in the scaling up nutrition (SUN) movement in Ghana.

Purpose of Grant

The purpose of the current project is to initiate and facilitate active and sustained CSO engagement in nutrition issues in Ghana that will ultimately result in improved nutrition outcomes in the country. The grant seeks to do this through the framework of a coalition. Currently, there are many CSOs implementing a variety of nutrition activities in Ghana. The CSO coalition is expected to harmonize and coalesce the different shades of CSO advocacy activities to ensure coherence and unity in achieving optimal outcomes in nutrition. Ultimately, it is envisioned that a strong and active CSO coalition will be more capable at engaging in the process of demanding accountability in public and private investment in nutrition. This broad purpose arises from the fact that although nutrition is recognized across all sectors as an important ingredient for development, the burden of malnutrition that remains to be addressed far outstrips the current investment in nutrition (World Bank, 2006).

Currently, an established relationship between the CSO wing of SUN and national SUN has culminated in the CSO group playing a key role in the launch of SUN in Ghana including the planning of the launch, as well as being adequately represented in the National Cross-Sectoral Working Group for Nutrition. The CSOs have indeed been involved in all national nutrition meetings and collaboration with nutrition implementation Agencies have been very fruitful. The CSO group is currently leveraging funds through national coordinating mechanisms and through other CSO partners. The proposal was circulated among the national SUN platform, which

included representatives of the donor group. Feedback was received from some members of the national SUN platform and this has been incorporated in the proposal. The CSO SUN will support some aspects of the National SUN activities, specifically both groups will have a common Nutrition Champions, support the development of nutrition messages that will be used by both groups. The CSO SUN has also contributed to the national nutrition policy currently being drafted.

Description of malnutrition situation in Ghana

Like many other countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, Ghana has frequently taken early steps in making commitments to address her food security and nutrition problems. The country is thus a signatory to a number of international declarations asserting the right of its citizen's to adequate food and nutrition security. This international zeal has been demonstrated locally as evidenced by the number of nutrition policies and programs often championed, at least at the initial stage, by high level policy-makers including the national breastfeeding policy (1995), Infant and Young child feeding strategy (2007), the Vitamin A Policy (1998), and the Food and Drugs Law and Amendments on universal Salt iodization (1995). In fact, the Constitution of Ghana recognizes the unalienable rights of Ghanaians to adequate food in consonance with article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Ghana is a signatory.

Despite these positive political and strategic steps already taken, Ghana experiences high food insecurity and high rates of maternal and child undernutrition including moderate to severe micronutrient deficiencies. According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), in Ghana, one million and two hundred thousand people are food insecure and a further two million are likely to become vulnerable to food insecurity (WFP, 2009). About 10% of Ghanaians are born with a low birth weight and close to 30% of children under five are stunted. The 2008 Lancet series on maternal and child malnutrition categorized Ghana among the 36 countries with a highest burden (prevalence > 20%) of global stunting. Further, more than 60% of children under five and women in reproductive age are anemic (GSS et. al., 2009). These aggregate estimates also hide wide inter-regional disparities as the three northern regions carry an unequally greater burden of childhood and maternal malnutrition. It is believed that malnutrition contributes to the high rates of child and maternal mortality and thus, might be preventing the country from attaining MGDs 4 and 5 by 2015 if urgent actions are not taken.

Problems to be addressed by the project:

Two studies commissioned independently by the World Bank and the WHO have both identified key barriers to scaling up effective nutrition interventions to levels that will address the problems indicated above in Ghana (Ghartey, 2010; Brantuo et al, 2009). Below is a brief description of the key barriers that will be addressed by the proposed project. The barriers indicated below describe Ghana's national commitment and capacity to nutrition policy formulation, implementation and sustainability:

1. Although Nutrition remains a recognized development challenge, and proven interventions exist, it remains low priority on the national policy agenda. Typically, Nutrition has been framed as an ancillary to health care interventions. This is evidenced by the fact that a National Nutrition Policy is currently being drafted after 55 years of nationhood. There has not in the past been any coordinated national policy on food and nutrition, although several Government-endorsed documents on nutrition programming and legislation on specific aspects of nutrition exists (Ghartey, 2010; Brantuo et al, 2009).

2. Currently existing policies and strategies are not integrated into budgets of agencies involved in developing and implementing nutrition interventions. Funding and investment in nutrition is thus mainly donor-driven with the result that nutrition activities are often donor-driven; typically, Government subvention is allocated to provide personnel salaries and overhead costs, limiting sustainability beyond the project lifetime (Brantuo et al, 2009).
3. There is inadequate cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration at the National and sub-national levels. This deficiency has been recognized by the drafters of the draft Nutrition policy. The draft policy has proposed an inter-ministerial body to coordinate nutrition actions across Ministries and agencies. Hopefully, this will address the issue of weak integration of nutrition across the institutions implementing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions (Ghartey, 2010).
4. Inadequate human resource numbers, quality, and distribution, especially at the sub-national levels limit effective implementation of nutrition interventions (Brantuo et al, 2009).
5. Inadequate Civil Society participation in nutrition advocacy, policy formulation, implementation creates a situation where there is no body to play a 'watchdog' role in holding relevant public and private institutions accountable for their role in addressing malnutrition in Ghana.

The current proposal in addition to building CSOs network and capacity to address the above listed challenges will also support the implementation of the nutrition policy in Ghana.

Key targets/allies/partners:

To tackle these problems, the following are recognized as potential key allies to facilitate achievement of the purpose: CSOs, farmer-based organizations, faith-based organizations, academia, consumer organizations, and the media. The general Ghanaian public as well as relevant government agencies (including Ghana Health service, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service, local NGOs, international NGOs, the private sector, and Traditional Leaders will be considered as targets for the advocacy and communication interventions outlined for this project. In addition, partnerships with stakeholders including national and sub-national level politicians (including Legislators, Ministers, District Chief Executives and Assembly Members) as well as regulatory agencies, and donors will be considered useful in pushing forward the agenda as specified by this proposal. Some of these groups already exist and will be regularly invited to participate in our meetings. We have already engaged some of them in our initial deliberative meetings and activities.

Approaches to be adopted:

To be successful, the project will implement multiple-pronged approaches to attain the purpose including short-term training and capacity-building for coalition members and partners, lobbying of parliamentarians, of other policy makers (i.e. hunger and malnutrition caucus, and women's caucus, etc); and advocacy using media sensitization, letters to key policy makers, rallies, etc) communication (using mass education, sensitization, and a newsletter). In addition, the coalition will actively mobilize resources (including funding) through appealing to private sector institutions, seek budgetary support from member CSOs and philanthropist organizations, grant writing, etc).

Expected outcomes

To attain the purpose of raising the priority level of nutrition and to support scale up effective nutrition interventions in Ghana, the following activities with their associated outcomes and outputs are envisaged. Details are given in the logic frame attached.

1. Independent and sustainable multi-sectoral coalition of civil society organizations involved/with interest in agriculture, nutrition, health, and media, etc that seeks to advocate for making nutrition a high priority development issue in Ghana.

Activities

- 1.1. Nation-wide mapping of CSOs involved in nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programming, policy and advocacy.
 - 1.1.1. Output: database of CSOs involved in nutrition activities compiled
- 1.2. Member ship drive to attract CSOs, and other partners with interest in food and nutrition interventions (listed above) to join the coalition
 - 1.2.1. Output: Coalition of CSOs involved in nutrition in Ghana established
- 1.3. Draw up objectives, operating procedures and guiding principles for the operation of the coalition
 - 1.3.1. Output: Guidelines and constitution for operations of the Coalition developed
- 1.4. Set up an Executive Council and other three Sub-Committees from among the coalition membership to coordinate the affairs and activities of the coalition
 - 1.4.1. Output: governance mechanism consisting of an Executive Council and three subcommittees put in place to coordinate actions of the Coalition
- 1.5. Launch the Coalition as part of a high-visibility media event that will involve development of a unique logo and brand name.
 - 1.5.1. Output: Coalition given visibility and recognition at the popular and political level
- 1.6. Establish a Secretariat within HAG with the Secretary of the Executive Council and the head of HAG coordinating the day-to-day activities of the Coalition
 - 1.6.1. Output: an equipped office to administer activities for the coalition established and the Focal Point organization with Coordinator appointed
- 1.7. Create and maintain a Website as part of strategies for collective coalition communication, advocacy and visibility
 - 1.7.1. Output: Website created and a sustainable communication and advocacy tool for the coalition implemented
- 1.8. Set up mechanisms and strategies to leverage funds and ensure sustainability beyond the project period
 - 1.8.1. Output: long-term fundraising agenda for the coalition put in place
- 1.9. Develop a Newsletter on coalition member activities and achievements to disseminate best practices and facilitate information sharing.
 - 1.9.1. Output: Coalition activities and achievements are publicized
- 1.10. Foster collaboration with existing networks and non-CSO partners with relevance for advancing nutrition in Ghana
 - 1.10.1. Output: Enhanced coverage and efficient implementation of coalition's activities for maximum impact

2. Popular demand for the scale up of nutrition interventions in Ghana promoted through a national awareness raising campaign to support the SUN movement and the 1000 days campaign.

Activities

- 2.1. Support the efforts of the national nutrition champion

- 2.1.1. Output: Nutrition champions identified, *trained*, and promoting nutrition advocacy and awareness
 - 2.2. Identify and empower nutrition celebrity(s) to promote awareness about nutrition among the general populace
 - 2.2.1. Output: Nutrition celebrities identified, trained, and promoting nutrition advocacy and awareness through popular media
 - 2.3. Contribute to the development of media messages to be disseminated through music, radio jingles, drama, TV infomercials, fliers, posters, etc
 - 2.3.1. Output; consistent evidence-based messages developed to inform and raise awareness on nutrition
 - 2.4. Develop advocacy strategy document for use by CSOs, nutrition champions, etc
 - 2.4.1. Output: guidelines developed to facilitate advocacy by the coalition, using best practices
 - 2.5. Organize an annual '1000 Days' concert to institutionalize recognition of the importance of nutrition during the first 1000 days of life
 - 2.5.1. Output: SUN and the 1000 Days concept publicized in Ghana
 - 2.6. Set up a communication bureau that will communicate coalition position on issues of relevance in nutrition
 - 2.6.1. Output: Clearing house set up to moderate messages published on behalf of coalition
 - 2.7. Establish and build research capacity that eventually leads to a think tank on nutrition policy and programming in Ghana
 - 2.7.1. Output: Strengthened capacity (skills, tools, opportunities) of coalition for evidence gathering
 - 2.8. Build the capacity of media to enhance interest and sustain awareness of nutrition issues
 - 2.8.1. Output: cross-section of media trained on investigating and communicating issues of nutrition interest
3. Nutrition is recognized as both a health and a developmental issue secured through the adoption and implementation of a strong National Nutrition Policy which is supported through appropriate budgetary allocation by the government and other stakeholders by 2013

Activities

- 3.1. Organize Parliamentary and ministerial dialogues on making nutrition a priority issue in development discourse
 - 3.1.1. Output: Key players are lobbied into prioritizing nutrition as a development agenda
- 3.2. Lobbying for enhanced budgetary investment in nutrition with both government (national and sub-national levels) and development partners as targets
 - 3.2.1. Output: Nutrition is recognized as both health and developmental issue, and appropriate budgetary allocation by the government and stakeholders is made.
- 3.3. Establish advocacy Round-table(s) that will provide feedback to policy makers and implementers and relevant stakeholders in nutrition in Ghana including the national sun multi-stakeholder forum
 - 3.3.1. Output: Inputs provided on appropriate and sustained implementation of nutrition programs in Ghana
- 3.4. Publish annual strategic policy feedback document outlining achievement of targets (watchdog role), and identify gaps to be filled. The publication will be launched and copies made available to relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

- 3.4.1. Output: Targets of policies are closely monitored and feedback to relevant stakeholders communicated via this document.
- 3.5. Support the drafting, consensus-building, finalization, dissemination, implementation and subsequent reviews of the national nutrition policy currently under development
 - 3.5.1. Output: National Nutrition Policy developed and being implemented
- 3.6. Create opportunity for discourse on nutrition as part of annual health summits by the Ministry of Health and its agencies.
 - 3.6.1. Output: Increased awareness of key decision makers on nutrition situation in Ghana

Monitoring and evaluation plan:

At the commencement of the project, a rapid appraisal of CSO involvement in nutrition activities will be carried out to serve as a baseline upon which the project will be evaluated. During its lifetime, the project will use the indicators and targets included in the logic frame to monitor progress towards achieving the objectives described above. A survey of CSOs and relevant stakeholders (internal and external) will be carried each year to monitor performance of the coalition's activities. In addition, an external independent evaluator will be contracted to assess impact of the project on the priority level of nutrition and scale up of nutrition interventions. The SUN movements' Monitoring and evaluation tool (indicators for CSO engagement) will be adopted and adapted to guide monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Management arrangements

The Executive Council will be the overall governing body of the coalition to be hosted by HAG. A proposed Executive Council of seven members will be formed to administer the coalition with the Secretary of the Council acting as the Coordinator. Three sub-committees (Advocacy and Communication, Technical and Resource Mobilization) will be put in place. The Sub-Committees will have Chairpersons and Secretaries. The representation on the Executive Committees and Sub-Committees must consider the diverse nature of the coalition taking into consideration gender and technical competence of the nominees. Other criteria for selecting Executive Council members will include demonstrated high level of skills, and expertise in advocacy and policy making.

The Executive Council through its secretary will be responsible for coordination and administration of the Coalition. The Terms of Reference will be worked out but broadly it includes day to day functions such as communication management, overseeing secretarial duties, organizing meetings and conferences, training and capacity building programmes, compiling reports etc. An Administrative Assistant will solely be responsible for secretarial duties and performing other delegated functions.

References

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