

GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION SHEET Collaboration with District Authorities (Ghana)

Overview of the Good Practice

In order to support the implementation of its mandate in Ghana's cocoa growing communities, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) cultivates strong partnerships with numerous government departments at the district level. Ghana operates a decentralized system of governance in which District Authorities carry out the work of the central government at the district level. By working in close collaboration with District Authorities and their many departments, ICI builds trust between communities and district government while furthering its child labour reduction and community development initiatives.

Context

Child labour in cocoa production is a complex issue which requires a multifaceted response. ICI implements a broad range of projects in cocoa growing communities in Ghana including child labour awareness, monitoring and remediation, alternative income generating activities and community development. Strong relationships with District Authorities and their multi-sectoral departments are needed to successfully implement this work. This is particularly important given that District Authorities often lack resources and rely on partners like ICI to implement quality community development projects.

Stakeholders

- **ICI:** Provides training on child labour and child protection to district authorities; works closely with dedicated staff from each district department to develop, implement and monitor collaborative activities;
- **Department of Agriculture:** Provides training on income generating activities (IGA) to women and Community Child Protection Committee members. Agricultural IGA are typically the growing of rice, maize or other vegetables. An extension officer is assigned to each IGA group, providing technical expertise and supervision. ICI gives each extension officer a monthly allowance;
- **Ghana Education Service:** Trains Parent Teacher Associations and School Management Committees on child labour and how to promote school-friendly environments; supports the implementation of Child Protection Clubs in schools which are comprised of students and coordinated by teachers; monitors general school governance including teacher attendance;
- **District Social Welfare Department:** First point of contact for referral of all child protection issues encountered by ICI; plays a role in raising awareness on child labour in communities; assists in connecting Community Child Protection Committees to district offices.
- **District Planning and Coordinating Ministry:** Integrates Community Action Plans (CAPs) developed by ICI communities into district medium term development plans; aligns district activities supporting community development with those outlined in the CAPs;
- **Business Advisory Centre:** Trains women who are engaged in non-agricultural IGAs such as beading, soap-making and other small-scale businesses; provides follow-up technical support;
- **District Works Department:** Assists with ICI construction projects by providing architectural design free of charge and finding contractors and
- **National Commission for Civic Education:** Supports awareness-raising on child labour by engaging in civic education in ICI communities.

Implementation

The following are key steps for effective collaboration with district authorities:

- 1) ICI projects are introduced to district stakeholders. ICI's mission and approach to child labour reduction, as well as the project strategy, methodology and timeline, are clearly explained.
- 2) Project activities are collaboratively developed between ICI and the district department. District stakeholders determine the activities they will engage in and their level of involvement.
- 3) A dedicated staff person from the relevant district department is selected to be the key point of contact between the district department and ICI.
- 4) ICI provides training on child labour and child protection to the district department.
- 5) The project is implemented, with consistent monitoring and regular updates among project partners.

Advances of Collaboration with District Authorities

- **Increased presence of district officials in communities:** ICI's work with District Authorities has lessened the gap between community members and district level officials. Due to their collaborative work with ICI, district officials more regularly visit communities. This increased presence in communities demonstrates heightened levels of engagement and commitment to community issues, thus building greater trust at the community level. In turn, community members have a better understanding of the work conducted by District Authorities.
- **Heightened support for Community Action Plans:** District Authorities integrate five-year CAPs developed by ICI communities into their four year medium term development plans. This strengthens the amount of attention and resources given to community issues outlined in the CAPS. Such issues include the construction of teacher's quarters, schools and roads as well as increased access to electricity.
- **Expanded efforts to reduce child labour:** Due to the training they receive by ICI on child labour, district officials have a greater capacity to mainstream issues related to child labour in all aspects of their work. Following ICI training, many districts integrate child labour prevention and awareness into their main programming. They also work with relevant stakeholders in non-ICI communities to reduce child labour, proving that collaborative work with ICI has the potential to move beyond the communities which ICI assists.
- **Strengthened capacity building at the community level:** District Authorities provide necessary skills to community members such as school monitoring and income generating techniques. In 2017, an ICI supported IGA won the community based organization regional award for its exceptional work enhancing the livelihoods of community members.
- **Sharing of resources:** District Authorities will often provide services free of charge for ICI such as training on farming techniques or consultancy on construction projects. ICI is also often permitted to use district authority vehicles to ease their transportation to remote communities.

Challenges Collaborating with District Authorities

- **District resource constraints:** Resource constraints force District Authorities to carefully prioritize spending. With 400-500 communities under each district's jurisdiction, ICI projects may not always be prioritized. When this is the case, ICI steps in as much as possible to assist communities in covering project costs.
- **Change of District Authority leadership:** Ghana's central government holds elections every four years. When central leadership changes, so does leadership at the district level. ICI must then acquaint new leaders with its work on child labour, providing capacity training and re-strategizing collaborative activities and goals.