

Improving the Livelihoods of Women in Mountain Areas in Ghana

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Introduction

Women and Youth Forum for Sustainable Development (WYFSD) was established in April 2004 as a result of the First Global Meeting of Members of the Mountain Partnership to organise women and youth living in rocky and mountain areas towards improved livelihoods and health.

While women constitute over fifty percent of the population of Ghana they are however, the most vulnerable, marginalized and deprived of social services, including good health and clean energy.

The Forum therefore seeks to contribute to poverty reduction among women and youth in rural, rocky and mountain communities by promoting improved and sustainable livelihoods/income-generating activities through capacity building. It also promotes improved education and health.

Vision

Improved livelihoods and health of women and youth, and improved education for students and school children in rural, rocky and mountain communities in the Aowin- Suaman District of the Western Region-Ghana.

Mission

To improve the livelihoods and health of women and youth in rural, rocky and mountain communities with support from international and national partners.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the Forum are to:

- promote poverty reduction;
- promote gender equality and empowerment of women in rural rocky and mountain communities;
- promote improved education and health; and
- ensure environmental sustainability.

Strategy

These objectives are achieved through:

- Community-based initiatives, by women and youth organisations in rural, rocky and mountain communities, with support from both national and international partners;
- Capacity building through training in improved livelihoods and income-generating skills;
- Provision of micro-finance to associations/groups to serve as start-ups for micro businesses;
- Supply of teaching and learning materials and establishment of an Information Centre to improve education;
- Group formation and networking for information sharing and easy communication and establishment of groups committees to promote the empowerment of women.



Current Activities

- WYFSD is currently implementing a Community-Based Initiatives for Poverty Reduction Project at Omanpe-Enchi in the Aowin-Suaman District, and has a membership of 105 made up of 21 groups. 305 women are on the stand-by list to become members as facilities improve.
- 50 members have been put into groups and trained in improved and sustainable livelihood/income-generating skills. The focus area is integrated and improved cassava processing.
- WYFSD has also provided support to under-privileged pupils and students in basic schools in Ghana through the provision of teaching and learning materials; and
- Tree planting.



Achievements

The Forum has also established the following:

- A small Improved and Integrated Cassava Processing Unit.
- A small Skills Training Centre;
- A small Information Centre;
- Involved in the Greening Ghana Initiatives;
- Has planted 1560 seedlings to mark the nation's Golden Jubilee Celebration.



Perspectives for 2007 onwards:

Capacity Building

- Up-scaling /expansion of the existing Cassava Processing Unit;
- Mobilising women for Entrepreneurship Development;
- Introduction to Micro-credit management for project staff;
- Training in Livelihood Skills.

Governance and Women's Rights

- Empowerment of women to participate in local and national politics;
- Women's Rights.



Health

- Maternal Health Project;
- Menstruation Management Project;
- Child Immunization Project.

Celebration of International Events

- International Rural Women's Day;
- International Human Rights Day - 10th December;
- World Health Day (at the local level);
- International Mountains Day.



Improved NGO Management

- Quality management will remain a high priority with the aim of enhancing database quality, additional data collection, updating and use;
- Capacity building will remain important, especially provision of backstopping;
- Tools for knowledge exchange and decision making will be developed;
- Vigorous attempt to seek partnership and Donor support for project implementation and expansion of equipment and other facilities;
- Networking will be continued with a view to bringing WYFSD closer to other national and global initiatives.

Donors

- The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Ghana;
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Charities, Ghana.