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**Peace Corps/Ghana
Feed the Future (FtF)/Food Security Initiative**

Annual Report

FY15: October 2014-September 2015

*Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA)
Between Peace Corps/Ghana and USAID/Ghana*

Submitted October, 2015



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Executive Summary

This document contains the Annual Report on the fifth year of operations of Peace Corps (PC) Ghana's Feed the Future (FtF) Initiative which ran from October 2014 through September 2015. The Feed the Future Initiative is established in a 'PAPA' between USAID and Peace Corps Ghana. Under this initiative, Peace Corps Volunteers work in all PC Ghana's programmatic sectors to achieve the program objectives outlined in the PAPA.

The three PC Ghana Program Sectors (Agriculture, Health, and Education) align with three of the five core areas of the Ghana Feed the Future Implementation Plan: increased agriculture productivity, improving nutrition, and accelerated participation of the ultra-poor in rural growth and development.

In this fifth year of its operation, the Feed the Future (FtF)/Food Security Initiative of Peace Corps Ghana continued to make significant progress. At the end of fiscal year 2015, more than 80 Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) were engaged in food security related activities in their communities/sites to improve on the food security conditions of the communities in which they live. PCVs activities include: cashew and shea value chain management; moringa use for nutrition; gardening (dry season, household, school and community gardens); income generating activities (e.g. bee-keeping, mushroom production, small animal rearing and, poultry raising); environmental maintenance (agroforestry, nurseries, tree planting, and erosion control); group formation and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and Schemes management; and maternal and child health and nutrition activities.

Both lectures and hands-on practical trainings characterized the nature of skills development trainings given to, and by Peace Corps Volunteers, counterparts, farmers/groups/community members and individuals in building their capacity to improve food security at the grass-roots level. These trainings are done during Pre-Service-Trainings (PSTs), Reconnect In-Service-Trainings (ISTs), Cross-sector Boot Camps, and Technical ISTs. In this fifth year, at least **18,931** people, of which **9,646** were male, and **9,285** were female; have benefited directly from this initiative with many more thousands benefiting indirectly. Over the five years of the project to date, **72,872** people have directly benefitted, of whom **37,398** were male and **35,474** were female. Many more individuals and communities have benefitted indirectly from the project during the project's lifespan.

The FTF PAPA of Peace Corps Ghana came to an end September 2015, after its operations from October 2011 to September 2015. However, negotiations are ongoing between USAID and Peace Corps for funding support into the future, via a new PAPA for Food

The main activities accomplished during the fifth year of program implementation are as follows;

- Two Reconnect ISTs for Education and Agriculture sector PCVs,
- Two PSTs held for the Agriculture and Health sector trainees,



- Completed a Food Security Task Force Manual, which provides a 'How To' guide for over 30 food security projects for PCVs to implement in their communities,
- Three Cross-Sector Boot Camps held for Agriculture/Education/Health sector volunteers,
- More than 60 viable sites developed for Agriculture and Health sector trainees who were trained to work in the areas of agriculture production, maternal and child health and nutrition,
 - Staff attended professional development training events including; Peace Corps International Agriculture Training Package Roll-Out TOT in Tanzania; the Community Engagement and Extension Methodologies Training Package Roll-Out TOT in Ghana, and the Monitoring, Reporting and Environmental Compliance workshop in Benin,
 - Five technical ISTs were held for PCVs, Counterparts and other community partners, and included; cashew, no till conservation and nutrition trainings,
 - Agriculture sector Partners Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held at the PC Accra office (March 12th, 2015),
 - PC Feed the Future Strategic Planning meeting held at the PC Accra office (March 13th, 2015),
 - About 70 Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) Community Food Security projects were undertaken in the year,
 - Held All Volunteers conference (April 7th-10th, 2015),
 - Attended USAID-METSS Implementing Partners Monitoring and Evaluation Meeting, Tamale (June 15-16th, 2015),
 - Two main Food Security Task Force (FSTF) meetings were held to plan and promote food security projects of Volunteers,
 - Staff conducted site visits to Volunteers communities to provide technical support and also give programmatic direction.

In the fifth year, PCVs continued working on several activities to promote food security in the communities they worked in. These activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Working with 4H clubs in community schools.
- Working on Cashew farms and GPS mapping.
- Building of gari processing ovens in communities.
- Managing agriculture clubs and school gardens.
- Support in the training of farmers on maize post-harvest processing and storage methods.
- Group formation and Village Savings and Loans Associations and Schemes management.
- Small animal rearing and community income generation projects.
- Initiated trainings on moringa cultivation, nutrition and how to incorporate moringa into day to day diet and producing moringa seeds for household income.
- Worked with counterparts and community partners to develop school, home or community gardens.



- Developing demonstration plots and nurseries to showcase best practices.
- Technology transfer e.g. use of GPS in sustainable land use management.
- Worked with farmers and farm-based organizations to develop storage facilities.
- Small animal rearing projects (rabbit, pig, goat, grass-cutter, guinea pig, snails), to include poultry.
- Other income generation projects/activities including; beekeeping and honey harvesting, mushroom farming, value addition/food processing.
- Worked with communities to raise awareness for the importance and fundamentals of nutrition and a healthy diet.
- Worked with pregnant women to raise awareness on the importance of maternal nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Worked with farmers and teachers to stress the value of crops such as vegetables, cowpeas, pigeon pea and moringa to families and students.
- Maternal Health discussions on Exclusive Breastfeeding, Correct Breastfeeding methods, Easy Nutrition for toddlers over 6 months (such as tom brown porridge, and koko (corn porridge) with groundnut paste for added protein).
- Used coloring growth charts to provide easier understanding and quick indication of a child's weight-for-age status for mothers, volunteers, and health personnel and allows a trigger for discussions about nutrition, proper sanitation, other health issues, and referrals.
- Income generating activities with the elderly and promoting healthy nutrition among children.
- House-to-house nutrition talks with Mothers regarding nutrition and child health.
- Epicenter Baby Weighing Education to nursing mothers on complimentary feeding, child health, and nutrition, etc.



Robyn Emory– Second Year Education PCV – Central Tongu District, Volta Region – Success story

In Mafi Deveme, the economy is based solely on farming and roasting gari. It is a way of life that all girls and most boys learn from early childhood. The area has been using the traditional method of building clay or mud stands for their roasting pan and starting a fire beneath it, adding wood throughout the day. This process is very slow and the pans available are small, decreasing the efficiency of the roaster. It is also unhealthy as the person roasting is constantly inhaling the smoke and often end their days with raw throats

and red eyes.

A new method has been introduced to the area - a special red brick oven with a large spare roasting pan. Beyond its economic benefits, this is also a more healthy method. Thanks to a Feed the Future small seed grant I have been able to help the community build an improved oven to be used by a women's group in my community and the outcome has improve the quality of life of women in my area.



1. Description of overall program status

The fifth year of Peace Corps FtF operations experienced great improvements and synergy between PC staff, PCVs and community partners in the implementation of the PAPA. PCVs at the community level are very zealous about the FtF initiative and have worked hard to ensure an upward trend of success in program development and implementation. PC staff cooperation and coordination of FtF activities has been a key element in promoting the FtF activities among PCVs. During this fiscal year much effort was put into project implementation to ensure that PCV community food security projects/activities are scaled-up to affect many more grass-root beneficiaries. The structure of this program ensures that Peace Corps Trainees (PCTs) are taken through two weeks of intensive classroom lectures and practical trainings on food security to equip them technically with skills to work on FtF activities. PCVs, counterparts and community partners are equally trained and equipped with technical skills in furtherance of the FtF program at the grass-root level.

There was an impressive outcome of activities done within the year. A summary of the activities are as follows; two PSTs¹ for Agriculture and Health PCTs, three CSBC², 2 Reconnect ISTs³, 5 Technical ISTs⁴ and more than 60 PCV community food security projects⁵ done in the year. Peace Corps continued to strengthen its partnership with several organizations that support in program planning and implementation, PCV placement and the provision of resources to enhance PCVs food security activities. At the moment PC has entered into new partnership agreements including; Africare, Agriculture Technology Transfer (ATT), Red River Foods, Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING), and Strengthening Partnership Results in Innovation in Nutrition Globally (SPRING).

The FtF Agreement between PC Ghana and USAID officially ended this fiscal year FY15 and PC is seeking furtherance of funding support from USAID to continue its operations and scale-up on PCVs projects and activities to promote food security in Ghanaian communities.

***PSTs¹** – this is a 10 week training given to new Peace Corps Trainees before swearing-in as Full Volunteers.*

***CSBC²** – this is a 2 day hands-on cross-sector activity that is mainly focused on agriculture, nutrition and outreach.*

***Reconnect ISTs³** – this is a training activity held for PCVs and Counterparts three months after swearing-in as Volunteers. This training activity helps PCVs reflect on their three months stay at site after swearing-in and also help them develop strategies to improve on their work.*

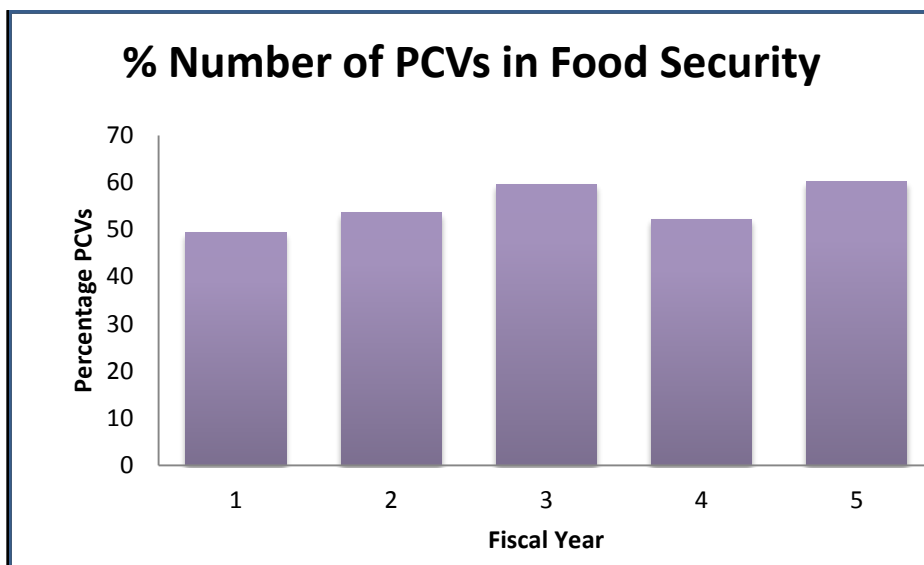
***Technical ISTs⁴** – these are trainings that involve sector specific activities and projects and helps to improve upon the technical competencies and skills of Volunteers. These trainings include; No-till Conservation, Cashew and Nutrition trainings.*

***PCV Community Food Security projects⁵** - these projects include; small animal rearing, post-harvest loss reduction, value addition and processing, nursery establishment and maintenance, gardening or agroforestry projects, and income generation projects that PCVs do based on the needs of the communities they serve in.*

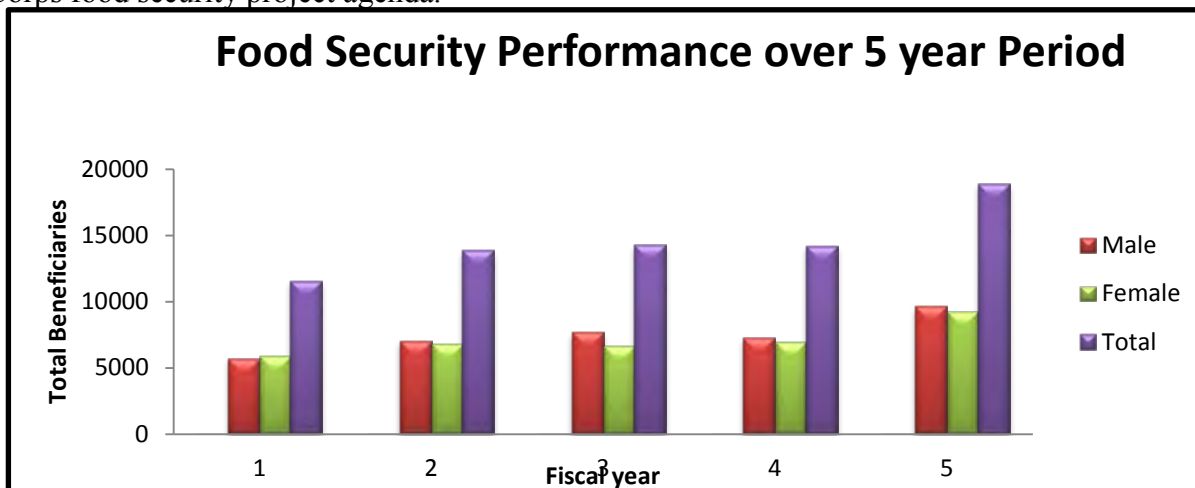


2. Food Security Performance –FY11 to FY15

In the fifth year (October 2014-September 2015) of the program; 80 out of 133 Volunteers did food security related activities. The graph below illustrates the percentage of PCVs out of the total number of PCVs in country who participated in food security activities per fiscal year (FY11-FY15).



It is evident from the above graph that more than half of the total populations of PCVs serving annually in-country do projects and activities related to food security. This shows the zeal and enthusiasm most PCVs attach to the food security initiative. It is therefore evident that Volunteers across sectors (Agriculture, Health and Education) help in promoting the Peace Corps food security project agenda.





The graph above illustrates the number of beneficiaries from the Peace Corps food security initiative over the past five years. There has been a steady increase in number of beneficiaries annually with total male beneficiaries being 37,398 and total female beneficiaries being 35,474, over the entire 5 year period of project implementation. The indirect beneficiaries have not been quantified but is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. The areas of operations in project implementation include capacity building and skills development, and community food security projects. Beneficiaries include all the people who benefited under the Peace Corps FtF project, and extended, it includes PCVs, staff, community members, individuals, and members of groups.

3. Status of achieving objectives and targets

The outcome of major activities undertaken in the year is described below:

3.1 Held Pre-Service Training (PST) for Peace Corps Trainees (PCTs) in Food Security



PSTs were held for Agriculture and Health trainees in the year. A total of over 50 trainees participated in these events. As part of these PSTs, the trainees undertook 10 weeks of training including 2 weeks of intensive food security offsite technical training to develop their skills and equip themselves with tools and strategies to be able to address food security issues in their communities. These trainings fall in line with the main agriculture and health sector framework objectives including; staple crops, gardening, shea, cashew, small animal husbandry, and maternal health and nutrition. The trainees were taken through

theoretical and practical lessons in subject areas not limited to the following; basic concepts and strategies to undertake community food security activities, GPS software and mapping practical's, Integrated Pest Management (theory & practical's), Compost, Neem, Manure (Practical's), Linking to Farmer Based Organization (FBO)- formation & strengthening, Association building, Community mobilization, Soap making for household income generation practical's, Gardening (theory and practical's), Moringa Practical's, Solar dryer-construction and use, Village Saving & Loan Association (VSLA)-processes, Business literacy and recordkeeping, Minimizing post-harvest losses, Agriculture extension methods, Small animal rearing, Maternal health and Nutrition.



3.2 Cross-Sector Boot Camps (CSBCs) held for new Agriculture/ Education/Health sector volunteers

Three CSBCs were held for volunteers across sectors in FY15. More than 80 PCVs received training at the CSBCs. CSBC is a 2-day workshop that sought to enlighten the new volunteers on the different types of projects and activities undertaken by PCVs in the three programmatic sectors of Agriculture, Health and Education. At these trainings participants were equipped with skills that enabled them relate food security to their programmatic areas. The major activities focused on: food education, food production, village savings and loans schemes, Malaria and food production, sex and family planning, HIV/AIDS, common water and sanitation problems, maternal health and nutrition and their inherent effects on food security. The picture above shows two PCVTs preparing a site for gardening practical demonstrations.



3.3 Develop and implement workshops to allow current volunteers to reflect upon their experiences to date and how they may contribute to in-coming volunteer efforts to promote food security

2 reconnect ISTs and 5 technical ISTs were held for PCVs, Counterparts and other Ghanaian partners. The aim of the reconnect IST was to allow volunteers to reflect upon their experiences at site to date and how they may promote Food Security activities. At the reconnect ISTs participants had practical trainings on diverse areas including sustainable agriculture, Integrated Pest Management, gardening techniques, mushroom and beekeeping and MRE. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss their experiences at site and also deliberated on how to make things work better on their community projects.





The technical ISTs included trainings on No Till Conservation Agriculture, Cashew and Nutrition. A total of about 200 participants benefited from these training events.

- a) *The No Till Conservation Agriculture highlighted the use of low soil disturbance techniques and planting methods to increase crop yields and food security.*
- b) *The Cashew ISTs sought to address the following: cashew orchard establishment and maintenance; cashew business and association management, and; cashew harvesting, storage, processing and sales.*



(c) The Nutrition ISTs sought to enhance the ability of Volunteers and Community members to effectively and efficiently deal with nutritional challenges in Ghana. These trainings helped to build the capacity of Volunteers and community members on nutrition and health; desirable food behaviors and nutritional practices; food groups and vitamins; baby weighing education; pre-natal and post-natal nutrition, food storage and preservation; food fortification and sanitation practical; anemia and nutritional disorder; meals ideas-how to prepare foods and demonstration kitchen, and how to use moringa in meals for health and nutritional benefits.





3.4 All Volunteers Conference (April 8th-9th, 2015)



About 140 PCVs across the 10 regions of Ghana participated in this event. The main focus of the All Volunteers Conference was on Food Security. There was a food security skills fair during which PCVs showcased and thought fellow volunteers different Food Security techniques, ideas and projects that has worked for them at site. Notable among the stands were:

gardening, moringa powder processing and transformation, demonstration on how to build a solar dryer, bee keeping and

processing of products, soap making, organic pest control, and improved cookstoves. There was also a stand where PCVs were taken through steps in the use of the newly developed food security manual. Different presentations and discussions on monitoring and evaluation, regional and global food insecurity and food security formed part of the event. The picture above shows two volunteers busily constructing a solar dryer.

3.5 Peace Corps' partnership with organizations working on food security

Peace Corps continued to strengthen its partnership with several organizations that support in program planning and implementation, PCV placement and the provision of resources to enhance PCVs food security activities. Some of these organizations and their areas of support to Peace Corps are stated below:

i. African Cashew Initiative (ACi) - working on training leader farmers on improved practices

ACi collaborated with PC in the establishment of cashew nurseries using grafted cashew seedlings. ACi also supported PCVs in the training of community pruning crews in chain saw operation and facilitated the pruning, thinning and top working activities on cashew farms.

ii. Krobodan - NGO in chicken, rabbit and mushroom production

PCVs collaborated with Krobodan to support chicken and rabbit rearing, and mushroom production through training of individuals and community members on best practices in small animal rearing projects and the construction of improved confinement structures.

iii. Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Program (ADVANCE) for maize production

PC collaborated with ADVANCE by using PCVs to support maize and rice production in the northern parts of Ghana by training farmers on improved cultivation practices. PCVs also



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support in the training of farmers on business numeracy and record keeping. We also seconded

a third year Volunteer, Adam Aronow, to serve as a Communications Support Volunteer, charged with making videos that highlight the good works of ADVANCE in the field.



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iv. Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) – Government of Ghana (GoG) organization

MOFA supports PC in technical training of PCTs and PCVs during PSTs and ISTs respectively. MOFA also collaborates with PCVs to train farmers on maize production, post-harvest handling and marketing of produce. MOFAs' agricultural extension agents collaborate with PCVs to undertake joint outreach agricultural programs to support farmer activities in rural communities.

v. 4-H Ghana- Enterprise gardening program

4-H Ghana supported Education sector PCVs in the establishment of school gardens used as demonstration and practical fields where students are taught gardening techniques and processes involved in establishing and maintaining gardens. 4-H also supported in skills development trainings for PCVs and counterparts. Peace Corps Ghana helped broaden 4-H's impact to the additional regions of Volta, Ashanti and Northern thanks to our collaboration.

vi. Ministry of Health (MOH) – GoG organization

MOH is the main point of contact for PC on all health and nutrition related activities of PCVs. MOH supported PCVs by creating opportunities that grant them access to CHIP compounds and other health clinics to conduct health and nutrition education and awareness campaign programs.

vii. Africare – worked on scaling-out on integrated soil fertility management technologies (ISFM) in the Volta Region. Africare collaborated with PC in the Volta Region to improve soil fertility management technologies through Behavior Change Communication and reinforcement of key messages in community groups. Africare also invited PCVs to trainings in market requirements, quality and standards and ISFM technologies.

viii. Agriculture Technology Transfer (ATT) -The ATT project encourages PCVs to involve the ATT project in current communities in need of agro-technologies. Under this partnership, Peace Corps acts as the bridge to ATT services promoting farming efficiency in its zones of operation. With PCVs support, a single page application can be given to lead farmers to complete in order to qualify. Areas must be identified within the scope of the ATT project which is focused only on rice, maize, soybean, and fertilizers. Under the ATT Peace Corps partnership PCVs are assigned roles and responsibilities that include the following:

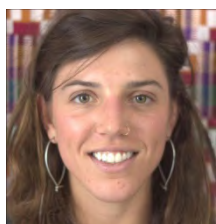
- Assisting ATT partners to collect M&E data on equipment usage along with the keeping records by verification of the farmers practices through personal interactions and frequent interaction that might better assess productivity.
- Promoting Improved farming activities through ATT grants program.
- Introducing sustainable business practices in the farming areas of maize, rice, fertilizer, and soybean.



- Initiating farmer led trials and demonstrations with Farmer's Groups, Individuals and Households
- Informing farmers of the applications process for ATT small equipment grant mechanisms to operate more effectively

ix. Red River Foods – working on improved cashew yields–Red River Foods collaborated directly with PCVs in the Brong Ahafo region who have their primary assignments working on cashew. The Peace Corps Ghana Cashew Initiative worked closely with Red River Foods staff to conduct thinning and pruning trainings. Red River Foods also provided tool-kits for PCV counterparts consisting of one well-maintained chainsaw, all personal protective equipment needed to operate the chainsaws and the tools/materials to service the chainsaw.

Briana Whitehead – Second Year Agriculture PCV – Techiman District, Brong Ahafo



Region – Success story

Thinning and Pruning the cashew orchard is a major yield increasing activity for the cashew farmer. Yet, most Ghanaians are unaware of these practices and once educated unable to conduct them well. PC Cashew Initiative took on this challenge this season, by partnering with Red River Foods we developed a training program for RR staff and a method for training our local farmers on thinning and pruning. My CP and I conducted a thinning and pruning training without RRF help, then RRF came in and provided training plus materials. The impact has been amazing in my village. Folks are now aware of the proper spacing and methods. Locals practice in their own farms and are now awaiting the increased yields.

x. Resiliency In Northern Ghana (RING) –Peace Corps Volunteers play an important role in community-level implementation of RING activities through behavior change communication (BCC) and provision of support to District Assembly (DA) field staff. Capacity building to these community based agents in health methodologies such as Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) align with Peace Corps Ghana's goals and objectives for the health program. Agriculture/Environment volunteers will continue to support food security pillars, such as access, availability and utilization, further strengthening the post's commitment to the Feed the Future initiative

Under the RING Peace Corps partnership PCVs are assigned roles and responsibilities that include the following:

- Liaising with RING field staff to strengthen community involvement in BCC strategies
- Supporting district staff and community volunteers to promote BCC/education sessions with local community groups and institutions (women's groups, mosques, churches, leadership councils, etc.) on various RING BCC messages related to nutrition, WASH, and agriculture



- Providing examples of non-formal education techniques for community volunteers, Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs), SHEP and health workers to improve quality of BCC message delivery
- Providing GPS support within their communities during DA visits
- Providing support in agriculture value chain to ensure food security at the household level: promotion of conservation farming techniques, improved grain storage, and household utilization of grains
- Working with project staff to monitor community level activities and ensure quality of data collected
- In collaboration with district staff, identify and produce human interest or success stories on household and community changes that result from RING interventions
- Identifying potential CBOs or local partners
- Identifying potential areas of need relevant to RING goals and objectives

xi. Strengthening Partnership Results and Innovation in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) –

SPRING collaborates with PCVs through field-based staff and project management staff based in the SPRING office in Tamale. Peace Corps Volunteers play an important role in community-level implementation of the SPRING project through behavior change communication (BCC) and reinforcement of key behaviors with community groups and 1000 day households.

PCVs ensure that groups supported by SPRING at the community level and specifically 1000 day households receive additional support on specific interventions and knowledge practices. Peace Corps also has a third year Volunteer seconded to SPRING who serves as a Nutrition Quality Improvement Program Support Volunteer, and serves as a liaison between SPRING's nutrition activities and Health and Agriculture Volunteers in the field.

3.6 Develop FS toolkits and training materials

The Food Security Task Force with, support from staff, developed a Peace Corps Food Security Manual, which will provide a 'How To' guide for over 30 food security projects for PCVs to implement in their communities. A Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) "Seed Box" was also developed to help PCVs easily start a VSLA group in their own communities. The VSLA "Seed Boxes" have everything a group will need to start their own VSLA.

The Food Security Task Force with support from Peace Corps Media Ghana also developed a new video on shea as a viable project for the women's groups PCVs work with in the northern parts of Ghana. We will submit the video to USAID on a flash drive as part of this annual report submission.

3.7 Attended partnership (local/international) conferences/ seminars/ training events for PCVs/counterparts/staff

Staff attended the following professional development training events including; Peace Corps International Agriculture Training Package Roll-Out TOT in Tanzania; the Community Engagement and Extension Methodologies (CEEM) Training Package Roll-Out TOT, and



Monitoring, Reporting and Environmental Compliance workshop. The Peace Corps (PC) International Agriculture Training Package Roll-Out TOT was organized to test gardening and soil training packages for Peace Corps posts. For the Monitoring, Reporting and Environmental Compliance workshop, participants developed new skills in the use of USAID's Environmental Impact Assessment tools and how to train PCVs and staff to adequately use these tools at post. The main focus of the CEEM training workshop was to develop the skills of participants (staff) as TOTs on Community Engagement through Behavior Change Communication and Extension Methodologies.

3.8 Site development and site visits

A total of about **60** new PCV sites were developed in FY15. PCV sites are where Volunteers are stationed to work on their primary activities to promote the development of Ghanaians in their communities. Many PCVs at these sites work on food security projects.

One of such interesting and overwhelming areas is in the Karaga district where a Health volunteer was tasked to work towards building the capacity of pregnant women, lactating mothers and other community members on ways to deal with chronic malnourishment among children in their communities. Peace Corps now has three Volunteers in the relatively small district of Karaga working on health initiatives.

Staff conducted site visits to Volunteers communities to provide technical support and programmatic direction. Peace Corps Ghana is proud to continue to be the largest country in Africa that provides a minimum of one site visit per Volunteer during the first half of every calendar year. Site visits provide invaluable information on the health and comfort of the Volunteer, as well as a sense of their level of integration, meaningful work opportunities and relationships with counterparts and partners.

3.9 Agriculture and Food Security project planning meetings

(i) Agriculture sector Partners Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held at the PC Accra office (March 12th, 2015). The purpose of PAC is to offer advice, counsel and assistance on identifying food security training needs and implementing FS activities.

(ii) PC Feed the Future Strategic Planning meeting held at the PC Accra office (March 13th, 2015). There was held a Food Security Strategic Planning meeting at the PC Accra office in which staff and the FSTF deliberated on the successes and challenges of the PC FTF project to date. At this meeting various activities were lined up and strategic plans were discussed to scale-up on PCs' FTF project with new opportunities into 2016 and 2017. The main focus of the meeting was to review the progress of the PC FTF project and develop strategies for improvement.



(iii) Two Food Security Task Force (FSTF) meetings held in the year.



At these meetings, members completed a Food Security Manual, which will provide a 'How To' guide for over 30 food security projects for PCVs to implement in their communities. FSTF members were also taken through series of capacity building and skills development lectures and training on food security. Items on the agenda included;

- Understanding the fundamentals of food security and food insecurity,
- Understanding the operations of food security sub-sectors in Peace Corps (beekeeping, cashew, shea, village savings and loans associations, small animal rearing, moringa),
- Understanding Peace Corps' FTF initiative
 - Goals and strategic focus areas
 - Objectives and major activities,
- Understanding the concepts of monitoring, evaluation and reporting on food security activities,
- Reviewing of new food security training/operational manual and resource bank,
- Review of existing toolkits and planning towards development of new ones,
- Update on Peace Corps Ghana's food security Facebook and google pages,
- Development of seasonal calendar and an ethno-ecological manual,
- Knowing and identifying partnerships in food security,
- Planning into FY16 and FY17.

New executive members were also elected in the year to continue work mobilizing and enhancing the efforts of all PCVs across Ghanaian communities to ensure that household food insecurity and low income levels become a thing of the past. Their major tasks currently are to



ensure that PCs FTF PCVs community projects and activities are scaled-up using efficient and appropriate methodologies.

3.10 Conducted PCVs community level agriculture projects through support with Food Security funds

Under the Food Security Initiative, PCVs have access to two main types of internal funds to support their Community Food Security Projects. These are:

1. The Seed Grant (\leq \$400 USD), and
2. The Community Food Security Grant which is usually more than \$400 USD.

a) Feed the Future Seed Grant

This fund targets PCVs who require less than \$400 USD of funds to undertake food security projects in their communities. These projects include; small animal rearing, post-harvest loss reduction, nursery, gardening or agroforestry projects. Seeds and seedlings ranging from various vegetable seeds (e.g. okra, pepper, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber, lettuce, cauliflower, garden egg, tomatoes, etc.) and tree seedlings (e.g. cashew, moringa, oil palm, fruit trees-citrus, mango, multipurpose trees including nutrient recycling plants, etc.) could be purchased using this grant.

b) Feed the Future Grants for PCVs Community Food Security Projects

This fund is greater than \$400 and can be used to support PCVs to undertake food security projects that fall in line with the three focus areas of PC Ghana's food security project, namely:

- i. Improving on Agriculture Productivity
- ii. Business development/Alternative Livelihood/Income Generation, and
- iii. Improving on Community Nutrition (projects to manage and/or reduce malnutrition, wasting and stunting).

The process of grant acquisition involves using PCGO website (<http://pcgo.peacecorps.gov/login.html>) to access the FTF application form.

In this year more than 70 Peace Corps Volunteers worked with their communities to apply for food security grants to undertake community-initiated food security projects.

Under the first category of grant type (\leq \$400), over fifty PCVs undertook various food security projects. The total amount involved was \$27,295.50. PCVs Seed Grant food security projects included those listed in the table below:

No.	Project title	Site/Region	Status
1	Small Animal Rearing Initiative	Kwafukaa/Western	Completed
2	Organic Gardening and Rabbit Demonstrations	Sanfo Eduam/Ashanti	Completed
3	Rearing Rabbits for Profit	Gomoa Abonko/Central	Completed
4	Nutrition Center Furnishings	Adobokrom/Western	Completed
5	Grinding Mill Training for Yapalsi Women	Yapalsi/Northern	Completed



6	Pure Water Sachet Garden Project	Nsuta-Aweregya/Eastern	Completed
7	PD Hearth in Nyong	Gumani/Northern	Completed
8	Beekeeping Project-Apiary Construction	Ponyentanga/Upper West	Completed
9	Cabinet Solar Dehydrator	Dodometeng/Upper West	Completed
10	Asikesu Apiary	Asikesu/Eastern	Completed
11	Nyong Beekeeping Club	Tamale/Northern	Completed
12	Kraboaa-Coaltar School Garden Fencing	Coaltar/Eastern	Completed
13	Rabbit Rearing	Kabile/Brong Ahafo	Completed
14	Konjyahi Rabbit Demonstration Hutchets	Konjiahi/Upper West	Completed
15	Atakora D/A JHS School Garden	Atakora JHS/Eastern	Completed
16	Young Women's Football and Nutrition Club	Gbangu/Northern	Completed
17	Rabbit rearing	Gbangu/Northern	On-going
18	Dry Season Gardening	Jawani/Northern	Completed
19	Demonstration Garden	Daboya #2/Northern	Completed
20	Guinea Fowl Rearing Project - Phase II	Wulugu/Northern	Completed
21	Community School Food Security Activities	Mafi Deveme/Volta	Completed
22	Rabbit Rearing through 4-H Clubs	Sanfo Eduam/Ashanti	Completed
23	Seed bank/Demo Garden	Agosa/Brong Ahafo	Completed
24	Demonstration garden and rabbit rearing	Bamboi/Northern	Completed
25	Rabbit, Garden and Bees Demo	Boti/Eastern	Completed
26	Demonstration farm with compost pit and chicken coop	Botanga/Northern	Completed
27	Wusuta Rabbit Demonstration Project	Wusuta/Volta	On-going
28	Rabbit Rearing	Apam/Central	Completed
29	Community/School Gardens	Wusuta/Volta	On-going
30	Tamaligu Primary Garden and Moringa Cultivation	Tamaligu/Northern	On-going
31	Hutch and Colony Comparison Rabbit Project	Dodometeng/Upper West	On-going
32	Abor SHS 4H Club Garden	Abor/Volta	On-going
33	Sakabo No. 1 School Garden	Sakabo #1/Eastern	Completed
34	Asiri Poultry Cooperative	Asiri/Eastern	Completed
35	Community demonstration garden	Mem Chemfre/Eastern	On-going
36	Mushroom in Nyameani	Nyameani/Ashanti	On-going
37	Food Security Demonstration Farms	Akete/Brong Ahafo	On-going
38	Mushroom project	Bamboi/Northern	On-going
39	Hani Student VSLA Program	Heini/Brong Ahafo	On-going
40	Community Mushroom Training Project	Agosa/Brong Ahafo	On-going



41	VSLA Starting Kits	Yapalsi/Northern	Completed
42	Gari Roasting Ovens	Mafi Deveme/Volta	Completed
43	Okadjakrom 4-H Demonstration Projects	Okadjakrom/Volta	Completed
44	Teteman Trainings and Demonstrations	Teteman Buem/Volta	On-going
45	Soap making with Bandisuglo Women's Shea Cooperative	Gupanorigu/Northern	Completed
46	Vegetable Garden	Bong-Nayili/Northern	On-going
47	Tigla-Adyili Primary School Garden	Tigla/Northern	On-going
48	Fowl Rearing and Dry Season Gardening Demonstrations	Tarsor/Upper West	On-going
49	Nyong Naa Yili Primary School Dry Season Garden	Nyong-Naa Yili/Northern	On-going
50	Demonstration Pen For Sheep and Goat	Boti/Eastern	Completed
51	Moringa Farm	Ajumako Kwanyako/Central	On-going
52	Gupanarigu Beekeeping	Gupanorigu/Northern	On-going
53	Starter Rabbits	Nsuta-Aweregya/Eastern	On-going
54	Artemisia annua and moringa maize intercropping program	Offuman/Eastern	Completed
55	Bread Oven Construction and Training	Abuokrom/Brong Ahafo	Completed

Under the *second* category of grant type, which is greater than \$400, the total amount involved was \$25,451.16. PCVs projects included those listed in the table below:

No.	Project title	Project goals	Project Status
1	Bodaa Cashew Juice and Jam project	To create a local production facility to make cashew jam and juice to be sold at nearby markets.	Completed
2	Community Fish Farming project	1. Increase in nutrition (i.e. protein) and food for community members 2. Increase in technical skills and Information resources (fish farming)	Completed



3	Grasscutter Rearing project	Increase and diversify participants yearly income	On-going
4	Okadjakrom Area Fowl and Ruminant Mass Vaccination Project	1. Reduce number of fowl, sheep and goats dying from Newcastle and PPR. 2. Reduce number of fowl, sheep and goats dying from PPR and Newcastle.	Completed
5	Tamaligu/Zankali Guinea Fowl Project	Develop guinea fowl rearing as an alternative income generating venture	Completed
6	Kalsagri Women's Group Shea Processing Center	1. To improve the income levels of the members of the Kalsagri Women's group 2. To improve the income levels of the members of the Kalsagri Women's group.	On-going
7	Sanfo Aduam School Grasscutter project	Provide an opportunity to earn income and train students in grasscutter rearing.	Completed
8	Rabbit Rearing Project	Increased nutritional and financial status for families of participating community members.	On-going
9	Konjiyahi Shea Butter Processing project	1. Improved shea butter processing to gain increased access to the domestic and global shea	Completed



		Market. 2. Build capacity for improved processing methods and practices.	
10	Adaklu Senior High School Garden	1. To promote healthy farming practices and food security within the Adaklu High School and its environs. 2. To promote healthy farming practices and food security within the Adaklu Senior High School and its environs. 3. To promote healthy farming practices and food security within the Adaklu Senior High School and its environs.	On-going
11	Poultry Farm Project – Sakabo #1		On-going



Jeff Bart – Second Year Health PCV – Karaga District, Northern Region: Primary School Farm – Success story



I heard so much about my old PCV neighbors' school farm project just down the road from me in Nyong-naayili. PCVs Genevieve James and Ryan Ott teamed up last year and grew vegetables to supplement their school feeding program. By the time I realized how a school farm can be an easy success with the help of a seed grant, it was when my neighbors were about to harvest green peppers, aleefu and tomatoes. But what about my community of Tamaligu? Our school feeding program was just a bowl of rice with some small stew on a good day. And they were enjoying these new "exotic" vegetables down the road. One of my counterparts, Yakubu, also heard about their farm in Nyong, and asked if we could start a school garden here. After meeting with the headmaster and reviewing their school feeding program, it turns out he was also aware of Nyong's school farm. Yakubu, the headmaster, the PTA and I met and made plans to grow maize, beans, tomato, green pepper and aleefu on a plot across the road from the school. While I was away on leave, Yakubu, the PTA chairman and the headmaster would oversee the farm. Leaving just a week after planting, I returned to the village not knowing what to expect. While I was away, Yakubu had pushed to expand another half-acre and plant an additional half acre of beans, wanting to cover all the food groups. As they say in the Ghana nutrition campaign: Go, Grow and Glow!

With a budget allowing to properly farm with some fertilizer and quality fencing, the yield will substantially assist the program. Even though the vegetables are seasonal, the maize and beans will yield enough to cover for those days where there is no food from the program. We finally got our farm. And it's even bigger than the one in Nyong!

4.0 Summary of ISTs/workshops/trainings implemented in FY15

The table below highlights summary of the number of PCV/T (s), Staff, Counterparts, etc., who participated in various training workshops undertaking during the year. These trainings were directly managed by staff.



#	Training/Event	Date	Participants											
			PCTs		PCVs		Counterparts/ Community Members		PCVTs		Tech Resour ce		Staff	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Education Reconnect IST	11/22 - 11/27, 2014	0	0	5	14	16	3	2	1	5	1	2	3
2	PST for Agriculture sector	11/21 - 12/14, 2014	11	12	0	0	19	4	3	1	1	0	2	0
3	Southern Nutrition IST	11/02 - 11/06, 2014	0	0	5	12	2	15	0	4	1	4	1	0
4	Northern Nutrition IST	12/07 - 12/12, 2014	0	0	2	15	4	13	0	4	1	4	1	0
5	Cross Sector Boot Camp- Ag.	12/13 - 12/14, 2014	0	0	11	12	19	4	3	3	0	0	1	0
6	Health TOT	01/13 - 01/17, 2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	10	5
7	Agriculture APCD PC TOT Tanzania	01/10 - 01/19, 2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
9	FSTF Meeting	01/17 - 01/18, 2015	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
10	Cashew IST	02/18 - 02/19, 2015	0	0	3	3	5	0	4	2	4	0	1	0
11	PST for Health sector	02/03- 04/16, 2015	7	19	0	0	21	5	1	3	1	4	2	0
12	Agriculture sector Partners Advisory Committee meetings	03/12, 2015	0	0	2	2	6	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
13	Food Security Strategic Planning	03/13, 2015	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
14	Agriculture Reconnect IST	03/23 - 03/28, 2015	0	0	11	12	19	4	1	1	4	3	7	0
15	Food Security Coordinator MRE Training Benin	03/16 - 03/19, 2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
16	All Volunteers Conference	04/08 - 04/09, 2015	0	0	47	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	7
17	Cross Sector Boot Camp- Health	04/17 - 04/18, 2015	0	0	7	19	0	0	2	4	0	0	1	0
18	Cashew IST	05/19 - 05/22, 2015	0	0	3	3	6	0	4	2	4	0	1	0
19	Food Security Task Force Meetin	06/25 - 06/26, 2015	0	0	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	Cross Sector Boot Camp-Educatio	08/14 - 08/15, 2015	0	0	9	17	0	0	3	4	0	0	1	0
21	Health Reconnect IST	07/27 - 08/31, 2015	0	0	7	19	21	5	0	3	0	5	6	3
Sub-totals			18	31	124	234	138	54	25	34	22	21	54	22
Females (396) - Males (381) = 777														

M: Males, F: Females

5.0 USAID/FtF indicators and cumulative results

Peace Corps Ghana's FtF program worked towards achieving Intermediate Results (IR) 1 and 8 (IR#1 & IR#8) of the USAID FtF Results Framework. Those are *Improved Agricultural Productivity and Nutrition* respectively. The main goal of the PC FtF initiative is to build the capacity of partner communities to promote their own food security. PC FS program contributed to achieving the following indicators in the table below:



Improved Agricultural Productivity

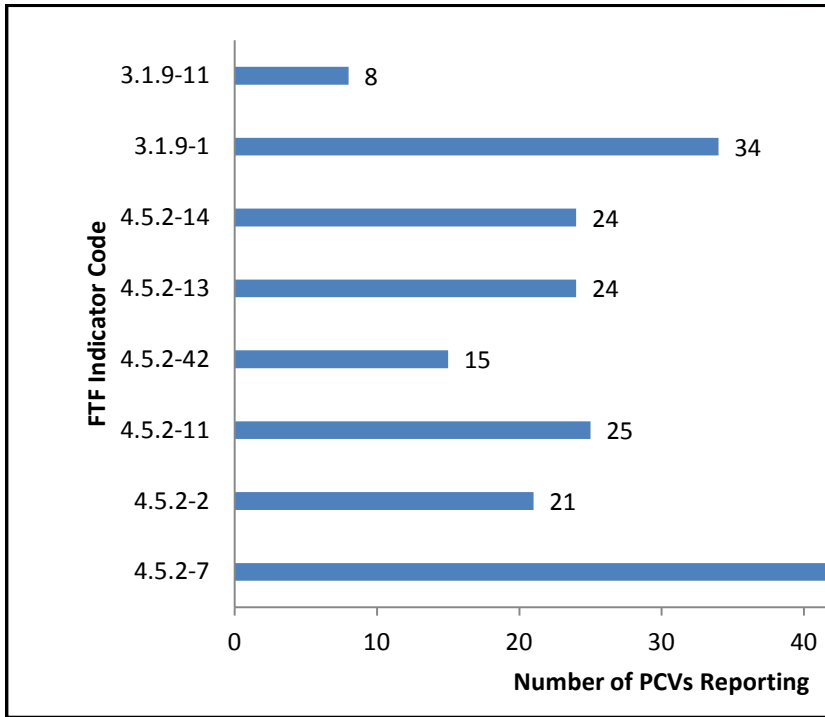
<i>Program Element 4.5.2 AGRICULTURAL SECTOR PRODUCTIVITY</i>
<i>FTF Indicator Titles:</i>
4.5.2 (2) Number of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance
4.5.2 (7) Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training
4.5.2 (11) Number of food security private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance
4.5.2 (13) Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG assistance
4.5.2 (14) Number of vulnerable households benefiting directly from USG assistance
4.5.2 (42) Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance

Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

<i>Program Element 3.1.9 NUTRITION</i>
<i>FTF-IR 8: Improved utilization of maternal and child health and nutrition services</i>
<i>FTF Indicator Titles:</i>
3.1.9 (1) Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported programs
3.1.9 (15) Number of children under five reached by USG-supported nutrition programs

5.1 Distribution of PCVs reporting per Feed the Future Indicator

The distribution of the number of PCVs who participated in food security activities/projects, and reported under each indicator type is represented in the graph below:





5.2 Cumulative results for USAID performance indicators

<i>Goal of PC FtF</i>	<i>Key objectives of PC FtF</i>	<i>Indicator or codes</i>	<i>Indicator title</i>	<i>Target FY15</i>	<i>Actuals FY15</i>	<i>Achievement %FY15</i>
INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF PARTNER COMMUNITIES TO HELP PROMOTE THEIR OWN FOOD SECURITY	1. Facilitate agricultural producers' increased technical expertise and access to the resources needed for professional development	4.5.2 (7)	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training	13,000	11,126	86%
		4.5.2 (42)	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	230	202	88%
	2. Improve communities' capacity to insulate themselves from food price and production fluctuations through improved organization, planning and coordination	4.5.2 (11)	Number of food security private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance	230	242	105%
	3. Increase food production in	4.5.2 (2)	Number of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices as a result			



	Ghana, in amount and nutritional value, and the capacity of communities to sustain higher production in the long term		of USG assistance	150	621	414%
4. Raise communities' ability to generate income by enhancing the value of agricultural goods	4.5.2 (13)	Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG assistance		300	2,705	902%
	4.5.2 (14)	Number of vulnerable households benefiting directly from USG assistance		300	2,705	902%
5. Increase communities capacity to reduce malnutrition through improved agricultural and agroforestry practices and dietary education	3.1.9 (1)	Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported health area programs		1,400	4,864	347%
	3.1.9 (11)	Number of children under 5 reached by USG-supported nutrition programs		1,550	1,419	92%



5.3 FTF indicator deviation narratives FY15

Indicator Code	Indicator	% Deviation	Deviation Narrative
4.5.2 (7)	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity	86% - missed the annual objective by 14%	Peace Corps Ghana feels comfortable that we are approaching reaching the annual target. In FY2014, we only achieved 74% of the annual objective, which at the time was 12,000 individuals. This year the target was increased by 8.3% and we reached 2,289 more beneficiaries than we did in FY2014. We continue to have internal data collection challenges due to the rural, grassroots, off-the-grid nature of Peace Corps service, but we feel that the improvement in this domain will continue should we be awarded a new PAPA.
4.5.2 (42)	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	88% - missed the annual objective by 12%	<p>Peace Corps saw a huge improvement in the number of private enterprises reached applying new technologies or practices as a result of USG assistance. Last year, we only achieve 32% of the target – reaching 68 enterprises. This year, we were able to reach 202, enabling us to reach 88% of the annual objective.</p> <p>With additional training and support, and more reporting compliance from Volunteers, we anticipate continuing to perform well in this domain during the next PAPA.</p>
4.5.2 (11)	Number of food security private enterprises (for profit), producer organizations, water users associations, women's group, trade and business	105% - Surpassed the annual objective by 5%	Another achievement. Last year we only reached 164 enterprises, but this year we have been able to reach 242. This effort enabled us to surpass the annual target for this indicator.



	associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance		
4.5.2 (2)	Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	414% Surpassed the annual objective by 314%	Much like last year, we have had success in surpassing the annual targets with respect to the number of hectares under improved technologies or management.
4.5.2 (13)	Number of rural households benefiting directly from USG interventions	902% Surpassed the annual objective by 802%	As mentioned in our new PAPA cover letter, we would like to stop reporting on these indicators. They lead to confusion for Volunteers (should we count individuals, rural households or vulnerable households)?
4.5.2 (14)	Number of vulnerable households benefiting directly from USG interventions	902% Surpassed the annual objective by 802%	This leads to poor data quality and confusion on the part of our Volunteers who are trying to comply with our reporting requirements.

Indicator Code	Indicator	% Deviation	Deviation Narrative
3.1.9 (1)	Number of people trained in child health and nutrition through USG-supported programs	347% Surpassed the annual objective by 247%	Our efforts in Global Health and nutrition continue to be strong, with us providing 3 ½ times the annual target in indicator 3.1.9 (1). Moreover, we are very pleased with the progress made on 3.1.9 (11) as well, as last year, we only achieved 63% of the target. With a bit of a push, we should be able to surpass the new targets in the PAPA for 2016 and 2017.
3.1.9 (11)	Number of children under five reached by USG-supported nutrition programs	92% Missed the annual objective by 8%	



6. Implementation challenges

In this year Peace Corps Ghana had its food security project run without any major operational challenges. There were delays in FY15 FTF funds upload to post, which was actually uploaded in November 2014. This caused delays in the processing of PCV community food security project grant proposals for the first quarter of the year.

With the end of the current PAPA, we also experienced some minor challenges for the first quarter of FY2016, as we do not currently have Food Security funding in which to draw upon for training and grants. Thankfully, as a stopgap measure, USAID Global Health allowed us to repurpose our SPA Nutrition funding to pay for our annual northern and southern nutrition training events. That said, Peace Corps is also quite low on SPA funding at this point and is hoping that the new PAPA that has been proposed comes through before the end of the first quarter of FY2016.

7. Summary of corrective actions

Peace Corps and USAID continue to collaborate and build an understanding of how to navigate the complexities of the bi-lateral agreements which allowed space for a better understanding and relationship between the two parties in project implementation. No corrective actions needed to be taken during the past year.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation



Peace Corps Ghana continues to employ its monitoring and evaluation tool, the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) in tracking and reporting on PCVs food security activities. By this tool, each Volunteer is able to enter data and submit trimester reports (every four months) on all activities undertaken at site. These Volunteer reports establish the data collection platform for monitoring all food security related projects in PC Ghana. The FSC, APCDs, DPT and other PC staff conducted routine site visits to observe PCV activities and confirm reported data. The DPT, FSC and the Monitoring and Evaluation specialist continue to undertake data cleaning exercise on PCVs VRT reports to ensure that data reported on to USAID is realistic, precise and accurate.

The picture on the left shows a group of Volunteers trying hands on the use of VRT during an MR&E training session.



9. Major Activities Planned for FY16

Peace Corps Feed the Future PAPA with USAID officially came to an end this September 2015. However, the PC Office has written a proposal for a new funding Agreement between PC and USAID in order to improve upon the success of the initial PAPA. The highlights of the proposal include:

- Collaboration with ADVANCE – ACIDI-VOCA on their nucleus farmer program. We'll have four new PCVs assigned to work with their nucleus farmers in Janga, Wapuli, Walewale, and Bulenga.
- We'll expand our gardening activities, including dry season gardening, and reach out to nutrition and agricultural partners such as SPRING, RING, 4H and Agricorps in that domain.
- We'll expand our micro-processing opportunities in cashew, moringa, honey production and soap making.
- We will commit ourselves to VSLA expansion, piggybacking on the good work already being done by several of our Ag-business oriented volunteers.
- We will revitalize the Shea program, and encourage new Agriculture PCVs serving in the north to focus some of their efforts on Shea.
- We will continue to look for avenues to expand our small animal husbandry work in rabbit rearing, but will also redouble our efforts to raise animals that have more demand in the local marketplace.
- We will outsource more trainings, taking advantage of the local training capacity of institutions like the No Till Center, the Permagarden Institute, Red River Foods and the Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture.

Obviously, this list is not exhaustive and we will also continue to maintain our efforts in the cashew sector, maternal and child health and nutrition, and in our other areas of operations, but this gives you a window into what we are proposing for the coming two years.



Jimmy Lee – First Year Agriculture PCV – Savelugu Nanton District, Northern Ahafo Region

After the success of a teenagers' VSLA in the community, I approached my CP to see if the community would be interested in starting their own VSLA groups. With the help of my CP, we



organized the men of my community to explain to them the concept and benefits of VSLAs. After the meeting, I challenged them to form groups of 10-25 people and to approach me once they have organized themselves. The first group to organize was the Yapalsi Young Men's VSLA Group called "Mang Song Sim" or "Self Help." The group went through the process of writing the constitution, electing their management committee, and soon started saving 2~10 cedis per member every week. After saving for about 3~4 months the group had saved about 2,000 GHC and decided they wanted to use their collective purchasing power to bulk purchase fertilizers for the planting season. So

the group and I contacted Wumpini Agro Chemical in Tamale and coordinated the purchase of 40 bags of fertilizer for the farmers. Somewhere able to pay for the fertilizer outright, while some chose to take loans from the VSLA group. In the end, 15 farmers were able to gain access to fertilizer at a reduced cost (and free transport) in time for planting season and the rains.

VSLAs have been a very meaningful project for me during my service so far. I love the fact that groups meet every week at set dates/times (I hate organizing meetings), community members are learning to save, and I'm working with people who are already motivated and dedicated. So far, over 7,500 GHC have been saved between the five VSLA groups in Yapalsi.

10. Conclusion

Peace Corps stepped up its efforts in scaling-up on its programmatic frameworks and activity implementation to achieve greater results in the domain of its feed the future initiative. Post continued to strengthen its partnership efforts at all levels as a means of creating beneficial opportunities to engaging PCVs to achieve higher outcomes in the implementation of their project activities at site. Newly elected FSTF members elected during the year came onboard with lots of excitement and energy, and began working seriously with other PCVs, staff and partners to scale-up PCs' food security program activities. Through their various efforts they were able to develop a PC Ghana Food Security Manual with made easy steps in implementing over 30 food security related projects. With the official ending of the first PC-USAID PAPA FtF Agreement in September 2015, PC started putting in plans and measures to seek the furtherance of FtF funding from USAID to enable the continual partnership and collaboration between both parties in the promotion of food security in Ghanaian communities.

The overall progress of project implementation had been robust with all PCVs and sector APCDs working to ensure a cross-sectoral approach to implementing the FtF project. This makes the success of the PC FtF project very promising. PCV participation in the entire project



is expected to be generally high in the coming fiscal year as almost 60 percent of PCVs across sectors were engaged annually in FTF projects and activities over the last five years.

Attachment A: List of Acronyms

ADVANCE	Agricultural Development & Value Chain Enhancement Program
ACi	African Cashew Initiative
AG	Agriculture Sector
AOR	Agreement Officer’s Representative
APCD(s)	Associate Peace Corps Director(s)
ATT	Agriculture Technology Transfer
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEEM	Community Engagement and Extension Methodologies
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
F	Female
FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FS	Food Security
FSC	Food Security Coordinator
FSTF	Food Security Task Force
FtF	Feed the Future
FY	Fiscal Year

GoG	Government of Ghana
GPS	Global Positioning System
HW/SAN	Health/Water and Sanitation
ISTs	In-Service-Trainings
M	Male
METSS	Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support Services
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MRE	Monitoring Reporting and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PAPA	Participating Agency Program Agreement
PAC	Program Advisory Committee
PC	Peace Corps
PCGO	Peace Corps Grant Online
PCTs	Peace Corps Trainees
PCVs	Peace Corps Volunteers
PCVTs	Peace Corps Volunteer Trainers
PPR	Peste des Petits Ruminants
PSTs	Pre-Service-Trainings



PEACE CORPS
FOOD SECURITY



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TOT	Training of Trainers
USG	United States Government
VRFs	Volunteer Reporting Form
VRT	Volunteer Reporting Tool
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Scheme
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene



Growing Leaders in the Garden with 4-H

By: Ashley Jones, Agriculture Volunteer



Starting 4-H Clubs allows students to develop their leadership capabilities, confidence, and technical skills in many different areas.



Every 4-H Club has a garden that's used as a vehicle for learning. Here students learn about the benefits of compost and how to prepare it.



"I promise to work towards becoming a youth with a clear head, warm heart, clever hands and good health"

Youth empowerment is not consciously promoted in many Ghanaian schools, especially at the primary and junior high levels. My community in Ashanti Region was no exception. The concept of 4-H started in the USA in 1903, and is now found in countries around the world. In 4-H young people select and conduct projects (with the help of adult volunteer leaders) in agriculture, public speaking, art, culture, community outreach, drama, and more. 4-H seemed like a great way to develop confidence in my community's youth and expose them to new learning experiences. It was also our hope that the students would go home to their parents and share all the new agricultural techniques they've learned!

I partnered with a teacher at my school and we contacted 4-H Ghana in Koforidua. They provided us with free seeds for our club garden, lesson plans for the first 16 weeks of our club meetings, and officially registered our members. Over 80 students attended the club's first meeting and elected four officers to lead the club activities and projects. Next, we built compost, chose a site for our garden, and members began selecting their individual project topics. Our club is still very new but the members are passionate about their individual projects and are working very hard to present the results to the community at our 'exhibition day'.

Starting a club in your community is easy and very rewarding. It's a great way to empower youth and create a ripple effect of knowledge and interest within the community. Helping to foster an individual member's passion is truly an incredible experience. Members gain and develop life skills that will make them more successful students and more valuable members of their communities. Membership is voluntary which creates ownership and an investment that is difficult to cultivate in rigid school curriculums. I can't wait for exhibition day and hope that other volunteers continue to spread this incredible learning tool across Ghana!

For information on how to start your own club contact 4-H Ghana at: <http://www.4hghana.org/>



Beekeeping for Improved Cashew Yields & Additional Profits

By: Dan Mayer, Agriculture Volunteer



As an agriculture volunteer working within a small cashew growing community for the last year, I have witnessed firsthand the seasonal cycles of boom and bust that comes with growing cashew as a cash crop. The small village named Bodaa that I now call home is difficult to reach as there is no reliable transportation in or out. Bodaa is situated in a rural section of the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana, on the border adjacent to Côte d'Ivoire. The primary occupation of the villagers is farming, and cashew is harvested between December and May, leaving money scarce during the remaining months.

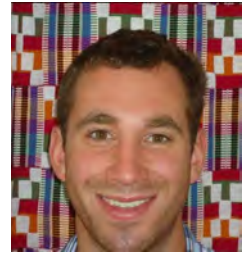
To combat the result of this cycle, a group of farmers interested in beekeeping approached me during my first month in the village with the intent of forming a beekeeping association. As a volunteer with cashew as my primary project, I eagerly took this opportunity to expand into a secondary project. Additionally, the combination of these activities is a natural fit as the bees pollinate the flowers of the cashew trees, increasing their yield. As a secondary benefit, the intolerance of bees to weedicide and pesticides creates a sanctuary of biodiversity where farmers would leave the section of their farm untouched. Over the course of several meetings under shady mango trees and inside churches, we drafted a constitution and developed a plan to rapidly initiate beekeeping as a strong income generating activity to supplement seasonal incomes.

Using a grassroots community approach, group members pooled resources using a registration fee to quickly raise funds and gather support. These funds went toward the acquisition and construction of bee hives using local resources. Throughout the next month, several group work days were spent learning how to construct a bee hive for each member. Trainings were then conducted to ensure proper beekeeping practices. Little by little, I have observed the group growing and evolving. Members are sharing information about successful techniques which have resulted in an increased colonization of hives.

The results have been very promising with more villagers taking notice. Working with my counterpart, we were able to locate a honey buyer in a major city in another region. Since the initial sale of honey, the membership has nearly doubled. Many members have taken it upon themselves to construct their own hive which has a multiplication effect across the value chain. Yearly incomes are increasingly being supplemented by honey sales, cashew yields are increasing, and biodiversity is being preserved.



PCV Builds Cashew Apple Processing Plant to Provide Income and Improve Nutrition



By: Dan Mayer, Agriculture Volunteer



Cashew apples are discarded and only the nut is utilized for income. Cashew apples contain beneficial nutrition and can be processed into valuable products.



Nearly complete Cashew Facility during construction.



The simple screw press was acquired from MOFA and will allow for processing of the cashew apples.

The cashew industry has been growing for a number of years in Ghana, and has become an economic driver of many districts in the Western segment of the Brong-Ahafo Region. The opportunity cashew creates for growth is unparalleled for these rural areas, but the opportunity for exploitation is equally troublesome. As a Peace Corps Volunteer posted to a major cashew growing community, I became acquainted with the benefits and downfalls of this amazing cash crop. I worked to create a community based cooperative that could function independently and serve as an example to other villages that are being inundated by foreign cashew buyers.

Cashew is a seasonal crop yielding apples and nuts from December to May. This is a very busy time for my community and the effect on farmer's lives is easily visible in the day to day interactions. A stream of farmers and their families flows past my house early in the morning, returning late with immense bags of cashew. Large trucks representing foreign companies move into town, weighing the goods and hauling them away for export and processing in Southeast Asia. This equation also sees most of the profits of cashew sent out of the community overseas. Bodaa is an otherwise quiet and small town the rest of the year, which experiences little economic activity when the cashew season ends. Farmers who don't budget properly sometimes wind up in a "hungry season", during which no new crops are available from farm and there is no money to buy foodstuffs.

My counterpart and I realized a lack of community organization, infrastructure, and business literacy were major contributors to this troubled system. We initially created a beekeeping group to supplement income, but proper financial planning was still necessary. In October of 2014, many members of the beekeeping group decided to opt into a Village Savings & Loans Association to raise capital. An opportunity then arose to work with Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) to acquire a cashew juice press, inspiring us to dream up a project that would transform the livelihoods of association members.

(Continued on page 2)



Cashew Apple Plant (cont.)



The cashew seedlings are grafted and planted in front of the facility. They will provide income to the project and cashew apples for processing.



The Bodaa Community Cashew Apple Processing Facility will be used to provide income to community members while at the same time promoting and providing improved nutrition.

Over the course of many meetings and evenings with my counterpart and VSLA, we decided that cashew apple processing and the collective buying of cashew nuts would be a great fit for the VSLA. This is largely due to the association raising close to 5,000 Ghana Cedis and the fact that all of the members are cashew farmers. Typically, foreign cashew buyers come into the community and buy the entire cashew crop as no association has the capital or infrastructure to purchase or store cashew. We designed a facility to process cashew apples and to store cashew nuts for the members. I then drafted a proposal to construct the facility in two phases; first with a Feed the Future (FtF) Grant, and second with a Small Project Assistance (SPA) Grant.

The facility consists of two rooms and a court yard. One room is the workshop where the cashew apples are brought in to be washed and processed into juice. The middle courtyard has a large iron gate for security and clay stoves to pasteurize cashew juice. The courtyard also provides a small space for drying cashew nuts when they are brought from farm. The other room is an office with space to store cashew nuts and a refrigerator to store the juice. Group members can individually sell their cashew for the money they need and store what they can to secure a higher price as the season goes on. In the front of the building we planted three grafted cashew trees which will begin yielding fruits within one year, and produce 40 kilograms of nuts a year within 5 years. The fruit will be used for processing and the nuts will be sold to provide additional income to the group.

The Farmer's Group is very optimistic about the upcoming cashew season and is a shining example of the benefits of working together in an association. Their new found capital and infrastructure has given them plenty to be excited about. Not only will this project be providing them more income, but the juice will be providing low cost nutrition to the rest of the community and especially the nearby schools. This project will also help to keep more money within the community and help to reduce the influence of foreign buyers. Many members of the community also have a spurred interest in group formation, and a new VSLA is already in the process of forming. It is also hoped that this project will serve as an example to inspire other rural cashew growing communities throughout the Brong-Ahafo Region.



From 3 Kilos to 18 Kilos: Partnership & New Practices Improve Cashew Yields

Red River Foods partners with PC Cashew Initiative



Albert, Red River Foods employee, demonstrating the use of proper protective equipment (PPE) for safety. He's also practicing using hand signals to communicate while the saw is running.



James (left), Red River Foods employee, teaching proper chainsaw maintenance to Emmanuel in Asiri at the end of the operator field training.



Yao (left) and "Black Eye" are Peace Corps & Red River Foods trained professional chainsaw operators in Bodaa. They have been working hard safely pruning and thinning cashew farms.

Wayne Tilton was among the first PCVs to dive headfirst into the complex Ghanaian cashew industry. He helped create the Cashew Initiative; a volunteer-lead Food Security subgroup that trains new PCVs on cashew farming practices that will equip them to teach farmers in their communities. Wayne devoted his Peace Corps service (2009-2011) to supporting local cashew farmers and is still currently finding creative ways to impact the cashew industry. Now working for Red River Foods (as RRF Director of Operations in Africa) he is using his professional life to further the Peace Corps mission and help current PCVs meet their goals. Red River Foods has been working with PCVs for four years developing tool-kits such as business literacy and post-harvest handling. Several months ago Wayne began working meticulously with Agriculture PCV Sara Rosenberg to form a new tool-kit partnership that would allow an essential practice to begin within the Ghanaian cashew orchard - thinning and pruning.

Thinning and pruning the cashew orchard is one of the many practices that are virtually unknown to the local cashew farmer, yet this particular practice has the biggest positive income effect. Proper thinning and pruning can enable a single cashew tree's output to rise from 3 kilos to 18 kilos per season. That is a six-fold increase! However, there are a number of barriers that prevent proper thinning and pruning including obtaining a functional chainsaw, receiving proper thinning/pruning training, ensuring correct operator protection and finally motivating the community to engage in the additional labor and/or costs.

The Peace Corps Ghana Cashew Initiative worked closely with Red River Foods staff to conduct a Thinning and Pruning Partnership training. Three Peace Corps Volunteers (who had up-to-date US chainsaw certification certificated) donated their time to train Red River Foods staff and counterparts. They received training on proper chainsaw use, safety, maintenance and on cashew orchard specifics. Red River Foods provided three tool-kits; each consisting of one well-maintained chainsaw, all personal protective equipment needed to operate the chainsaws and the tools/materials to service the chainsaw.

(Continued on page 2)



From 3 Kilos to 18 Kilos: Partnership & New Practices Improve Cashew Yields



PCV Briana Whitehead (right) with two cashew farmers during a thinning and pruning practical training.



Albert (right) teaching operators how to wear proper protective equipment (PPE) to ensure safety while operating the chainsaw.

The partnership allows Red River staff to provide an “Importance of Thinning and Pruning” session to cashew farmers and then a hands-on chainsaw practical to chosen farmers or local chainsaw operators. After the session and practical have been completed, the tool-kit stays with the PCV for two weeks. This time period allows community members to achieve their thinning and pruning goals. Local cashew farmers are responsible for purchasing fuel, oil and paying for the labor of the trained chainsaw operator. The PCVs obligations are to organize the farmers, supervise the chainsaw usage in the field and ensure that the saw is properly maintained by the counterparts.

The trial trainings in Asiri, Bodaa, Agosa and Akete have been a huge success. Farmers are thinning and pruning their orchards, trained chainsaw operators are using their newly acquired knowledge to find seasonal employment, PCVs are ensuring that the counterparts are maintaining the chainsaws and subsequently Ghana’s cashew output will rise as a result. The mission is not to create a dependency on these saws or RRF staff, rather provide a springboard of experiential knowledge within PC communities.

Time and extensive energy went into building a meaningful and sustainable program. Red River Foods’ staff and Cashew Initiative members hope that this partnership program will disseminate proper cashew husbandry techniques and empower Ghanaian farmers to produce more cashews. A massive “Thank You” to Wayne Tilton, Sara Rosenberg, Sean Cantella, Carla Ellis, Red River Foods staff, Luke Davis, Dan Meyers and the rest of the Cashew Initiative. We are excited to see the results and continuation of our partnership efforts this coming cashew season.

Questions and comments can be sent to: pcghcashew@gmail.com



Feed the Future Funded School Garden Improves Nutrition and Community Awareness



By: Genevieve James, Health Volunteer



Collecting and burning the trash from the garden site.



Students and teachers watering the rows.



Teaching students how to collect seeds to plant next year.



Ryan (middle) and Headmaster Jalil (far right) sorting through first green pepper harvest with others.

We were sitting outside of my house one February morning, watching the children walk to school. Everywhere we looked, things were brown. Trees. Plants. Clothes. Even the food. It was all brown. A few billows of dust blew down the road, making us cough. “What do you think about a school garden?” Ryan (Ryan Ott, Agriculture Volunteer from nearby community) asked me. As I was reaching my one year mark in the village, he had only arrived about 7 weeks earlier. “I don’t know anything about gardening” was my response, “but that doesn’t mean we can’t give it a shot” I continued. We sat down and came up with a plan. He would spearhead the garden part, and I would focus on the nutrition education at the school. But first we had to convince the school to participate.

We sat down with the headmaster, Jalil, and asked him about the school feeding program. He showed us the menu. Rice. Maize porridge. Beans and gari. There was nothing green on the menu. We asked, do you ever use the vegetables in season? He said that while the women who cooked for the school tried to, it was hard because there was a strict budget, and in the dry season, anything fresh was difficult to come by. We pitched our idea, and to our surprise, Jalil took us to a fenced in area near a borehole, that was full of garbage. He pointed at it, and told us that plot of land was meant to be a garden, but they didn’t have any money to buy seeds. The first step was already there; land and fencing. We told him that if we could use that land, we could buy the seeds, on the condition that the school maintained it. We sat down with the cooks and they identified 3 vegetables they wanted to cook with; tomatoes, green peppers, and aleefu (a local dark leafy green).

So we continued forward. We met with the PTA committee, and they supported the idea. We priced the cost of seeds, watering cans, and hoes, and applied for Feed the Future funding. March passed, and soon it was April. Soon the money came through, and we were able to begin. Jalil had been anxious, since he wanted to start preparing the land before rainy season. Our first hurdle was the garbage. The plot was full of it. We spent an entire morning, with the reluctant help of some local children, picking up and burning trash.



FTF Garden (cont.)



Genevieve watering the nursing beds of aleefu, green peppers, and tomatoes.



The school feeding program cooks using the fresh produce from the garden.

With the plot finally clean, along with Jalil, the other teachers at the school, and many of the students, we created nursing beds for the peppers and tomatoes. The aleefu was sown, and started to grow immediately. We all tirelessly watered the garden twice a day from the borehole, while we waited for the rains to begin. The aleefu was the first to grow, and was being used in the school feeding program food by mid-June. Then the rains came. We transplanted the peppers and tomatoes, and had to increase the size of the garden. By the end of rainy season it would be 3 times larger than it was initially, containing 600 pepper plants, 300 tomato plants, and another 4 new beds of aleefu.

Then Ryan and I encountered an interesting phenomenon, while the women had asked for green peppers to be one of the vegetables, people in our community had never seen or tasted a green pepper before. We spent a couple weeks educating people on this new and exciting vegetable, showing them how to harvest the seeds, add it to soups, and that it was, in fact, sweet. We had inadvertently introduced a new crop into our community.

The school year started again, and about 600 children are now being fed with food from the school garden. I sat with the women for a morning and watched them chop a small bucket full of green peppers and tomatoes, for the rice they were serving the students that day. Finally, food that had a variety of colors was served! We're already discussing ways to scale down the garden, but maintain it in dry season. Jalil is committed to keeping the project going and has the students and the other teachers involved in its' maintenance.

Last week, I was at the store buying pure water, and one of the men from the PTA committee was there. He turned to me, and told me that "the community was incredibly proud of the garden at the school". I gave him a look of surprise, and he then continued on about how much it was producing, and how the vegetables had improved the quality of the food the feeding program was serving the students. I was blown away, and called Ryan immediately. "You'll never guess what someone told me today" I said...



PCV Tackles Malnutrition Using Local Resources and Community Wisdom



By: Genevieve James, Health Volunteer



The translator sharing a laugh with one of the mothers.



Children enjoying fortified porridge.



Mothers stirring Tuo Zaafi .



The mothers making soya (tofu) kebabs with Genevieve.

It was the afternoon, and I was lying on the cool cement floor of my room, trying to escape the oppressive heat, when my phone rang. It was Karim, a man I'd met earlier that day. He was in my community doing work for an NGO, but had stopped in to see me. He explained that normally he works in Karaga, my district capital, running a malnutrition center. But in this instance, he called me with dramatic urgency; “Tungteeya, come to the clinic right away.” I hopped on my bicycle, and pedaled quickly, not sure what I was in for when I arrived.

I stood by the nurses quarters, watching Karim pull up with a woman on the back of his motorcycle. He motioned to her that she should sit down next to me, and it was only then I noticed the baby strapped to her back. When she put the baby on her lap, Karim started talking hurriedly about the condition of the baby, and when I looked closer, I realized what he was referring to. The baby was severely malnourished. He had Kwashiorkor, which is the type of malnourishment that comes from a lack of protein in the diet, not to be confused with lack of food in general. The symptoms were very apparent; this baby was swollen all over his body. One of his eyes was closed shut from the swelling. The skin on his legs was splitting in places because he was retaining water. Karim told me that he wanted the mother and baby to be referred to his malnutrition center, since the case was so severe.

One by one, the nurses came out of their rooms to gape and stare at the baby. One started taking pictures with her phone, claiming it was the worst case she'd ever seen. When Karim asked them to give the baby “Plumpy Nut”, a high-fat high-calorie paste [similar to peanut butter] they give to malnourished children, they refused. The head nurse claimed that since the child was going to be referred to a different facility, they couldn't give it anything from our clinic. I was livid; that they would deny a starving child food only because it was ultimately going to be treated somewhere else seemed to defy the ethos of health care.



PCV Tackles Malnutrition (cont.)

When they finally relented, the baby ate only a few bites of Plumpy Nut before promptly crying, and refusing to eat any more. While the staff was arguing about whether or not they could send Plumpy Nut with the mother to a different facility, she was becoming increasingly embarrassed about the situation at hand. She kept trying to force feed the baby but he was in so much pain from hunger, he couldn't eat. I gently told her in the local language to cease giving him food. "Soon," I said, "He'll be hungry again. Give him the rest then. Or add it to porridge, and have him eat that." She nodded that she understood, and for the moment stopped giving the baby food. The staff finally agreed to send some Plumpy Nut with Karim, and he sent the mother ahead to our district capital.

I had been feeling unmotivated in my work; I wasn't sure what need there was for me in the community. Seeing that baby reminded me of why I was in Ghana. It woke me out of my daze, and pushed me to come up with a project that would try and tackle malnutrition, without being dependent on the clinic. I developed a nutrition program, adapted from the PD/Hearth model. [PD/Hearth is a community-based rehabilitation and behavior change intervention aimed at reducing malnutrition, where the positive deviance (PD) approach identifies behaviors already practiced by mothers and the hearth is the location for nutrition education sessions.] I adapted this program to highlight meals women already cooked, and also illustrate ways to fortify some commonly consumed dishes.

I wanted this program to be about and for women but my command of the local language was not strong enough and I needed a translator. Having a male translator was something I was opposed to, so I actively looked for a woman to translate for me. That, in itself, was no easy feat, since almost no women speak English in my community. But, the chief's daughter happened to be back from school, having completed her last year of SHS. She sold food alongside other women in the community, and so was an ideal candidate for helping facilitate the program. She agreed to help, and together we came up with a short menu of 3 different items, each one using protein in a different way. She then identified 6 local women who had babies or young children and who were willing to participate. A few weeks later, we began.

We spent 3 days cooking together. The first day we made fortified maize porridge, with soy beans and peanut flour added in. On the second day we made a local staple, Tuo Zaafi (maize porridge), which they usually consume with soup. We made okra soup, which is commonly made during the dry season, but added in dried fish to make it more nutritious. For the last day we made what in the States we would call tofu, but here, is known as soya. We spent the entire days cooking the soy beans, wringing out the water, letting them dry, cutting them into cubes, and frying. It was a much lengthier process than I expected. But at the end of the program, we had cooked three very different things, yet all of which are commonplace at mealtime.

I didn't want to push a foreign food, like Plumpy Nut, on the women. It wouldn't benefit them to become reliant on a food that is only available at the clinic, and even then, at the whim of the health care workers. Instead, I wanted to show the women that they already had the knowledge to keep their babies healthy; they just needed to be aware of it. We cooked food they made every day to illustrate how they can use the healthy practices they have to feed their children nutritious food. While it's unclear how much of my intention they understood, the women enjoyed cooking with me, showing me how to cook their foods, and telling everyone who walked by that I was learning their ways to take back home. And at the end of the day, I will take the experience back, but perhaps not in the way they think.



Volunteer spearheads vaccination of over 4,000 sheep & goats and 5,000 fowls



By: Stephanie Potts, Agriculture Volunteer



District veterinarian vaccinating goats against PPR in neighboring PCV's Brecken Robb's community.



Educating a female student in Okadjakrom about the PPR vaccination and its importance.



Holding an informative meeting with community members of Atwereboana about vaccination of fowls.



Vet preparing PPR vaccination for goats in Okadjakrom.

I arrived in my community around Christmas 2013. I live with my counterpart in his family compound and was constantly surrounded by children and animals - the cats we call pets and the chickens, sheep and goats that are both a source of protein and a savings account for the family. A few after I got there, one of the uncles started giving his chickens to an older boy to kill, cook and give to the rest of the children to eat. At first, I thought he was just caught in the Christmas spirit but then I noticed some odd behavior in the animals. The chickens were acting drunk! I asked my counterpart what was going on and he told me that during Harmattan, many chickens get a certain disease and die. This rang a bell for me. During training we learned of a disease called Newcastle - an air-borne virus that spreads mostly in the dry season and can be prevented by a vaccine that's incredibly cheap and easy for farmers to administer. The symptoms make the chicken look like it had too much of the "local gin." They stumble, walk backward and act dull. It's preventable with a vaccination, but once the birds are sick, it's very hard to treat. It was too late to do anything about Newcastle at the time so I decided to bring it up with the community before the next dry season.

Toward the end of the rainy season, my counterpart and I approached a group of farmers in Atwereboana, a small nearby village, and they confirmed that Newcastle was a problem in their community and supported the idea of a community-wide vaccination program. The group urged me to include sheep and goats in the program too. We met with the Jasikan District Ministry of Food and Agriculture and they were supportive of our plan and agreed to help us with a community vaccination project. The district veterinarian confirmed that Newcastle was a big challenge and recommended we vaccinate against a disease called PPR that affects sheep and goats. After determining the costs, I applied for a Peace Corps community food security grant in order to provide a 50% subsidy for Newcastle and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) vaccinations in Atwereboana, Okadjakrom and other communities in the Jasikan district in Ghana.

(Continued on page 2)



Vaccination campaign (cont.)



Atwereboana fowls vaccination.



To make the campaign sustainable, Stephanie trained her 4-H Club students to vaccinate fowls. They are going house to house and doing the actual vaccinations, collecting 10 pesawas (about .03 cents USD) per bird as an income generating scheme to sustain their club.

We started the vaccination campaign in Atwereboana in October. The community leaders notified farmers of the program and started collecting registration information: name, number of sheep and goats and number of fowls. Then I went to Atwereboana with my counterpart and the vet to give them more information on the disease and vaccination costs and train them on administration and storage of the Newcastle vaccine. We left a community leader with enough Newcastle to do the first two rounds of vaccinations, which they completed within a month.

Because of a delay in getting the grant funds, we couldn't start the rest of the vaccinations until a few months later. By that time, I had several new Peace Corps Volunteer neighbors in my district in the education and agriculture sectors. They were all really excited about my vaccination program. The Ministry of Agriculture had started a new program to provide Newcastle vaccinations to the farmers for free so I had some extra money in my grant that I used to subsidize PPR vaccinations in their communities as well.

The PPR vaccinations need to be administered by a vet and are usually given at a cost of 1 cedi per dose, so we encouraged farmers to vaccinate their animals by offering it at 50 pesewas. The vaccine expires 4 hours after opening so getting farmers organized before starting those vaccinations is very important. We each tried different ways of getting our farmers organized. Because my community and adjoining communities are large and unorganized, getting the word out was difficult and we had to use a variety of methods: town crier (gong gong), announcements at funerals and church services and ultimately going house to house to register people and notify them of the day the vet would come. Some of the other volunteers were able to mobilize teams of volunteers to help or work through farmers groups.

As a result of our efforts 4,400 sheep and goats and 5,000 fowls were vaccinated, benefiting over 800 households. We hope that by introducing the community to local vet services, educating them on the benefits of vaccinations, and showing them the results, farmers will continue to vaccinate their animals in the future. We all learned a lot about our communities through this effort. We learned what does and doesn't work to get information out to people, we learned about the local way of keeping animals, and we discovered corners of our towns that we'd never visited before.



From Apathy to Investment: A VSLA Comes Full Circle

By: Matthew O'Neill, Agriculture Volunteer



Throughout his service, Matthew has focused on Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and income generation for his community and several surrounding villages. Alongside his counterpart, Courage, he has created 6 associations. Matthew is a member of the Food Security Task Force, a volunteer working group dedicated to helping Ghanaians gain access to food security. He is also a member of PCV Media.

I had a true "full circle" moment in my service recently. I attended a VSLA meeting in my community, Asikesu, in the mid-afternoon; one of my favorite and strongest associations. I think they are my favorite because the people were apathetic at first, but my counterpart and I convinced them to adopt the project by doing it in the surrounding communities. Through hearing about the success of surrounding villages, my community agreed to adopt the project. The group is now in their second cycle, completely functional on their own, and accumulating more money than they are comfortable keeping in their safety deposit box. They approached me and my counterpart with this problem. The group wants to avoid paying fees for keeping their money in a bank, but is also uncomfortable keeping that much money in a box inside someone's house.

My counterpart and I started explaining the idea that if they approve members for larger loans, or approve more members for loans, then there would be less money in the box and more money lent out earning interest. This would both solve their problem and make them more money. The group agreed that this was a solution, but are worried about default rates increasing as the size of the loans increase and effectively losing money. A valid counter argument. I then started to explain the idea of investing some of the money; the group should leave an amount in the box that is available to be lent to members but consider taking out some of the money and buying cement. I explained how cement is a commodity, a tangible object whose price fluctuates, and they can make money off of buying cement at one price and selling it at another. The group loved this idea and began discussing it immediately, they were all aware of how the price of cement changes and understood the concept well. It was incredible to reflect on how far the group had come, from first being untrustworthy of the VSLA model and project, to now exploring "micro investing."

In the late afternoon we had scheduled another meeting with a new group that was interested in starting a VSLA. My counterpart and I traveled a few kilometers to an extremely small village called Bethel; I had never been to this community before. We began explaining the model and using all of the success stories of the surrounding communities in our explanations, specifically referring to Asikesu. The community was extremely engaging and many people had heard of the accomplishments of other groups that we worked with. It reminded me of my community and how excited they became once we had actual results to provide them with. Hopefully Bethel will also get to the point where they are considering "micro investing," but it was a great day first discussing investment ideas with my community and then using them as an example to influence a neighboring village to adopt the project.



The Asikesu VSLA group is much larger and stronger than when it first began. The top left picture is from the beginning when the numbers were low, and the picture above is the current larger group discussing micro investing.