LOCAL ACTION

SDG localization initiatives from Wa East district Assembly in Ghana

A remarkable initiative has been implemented in Ghana's Wa East district Assembly to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically targeting goal 2: Zero Hunger. This project focuses on enhancing food security (target 2.1), addressing malnutrition (target 2.2), and doubling agricultural productivity (target 2.3). By incorporating international aims into national accounting, the initiative ensures that progress made at the community level contributes to Ghana's overall journey towards the 2030 Agenda.

An officer on a monitoring visit to VSLA in the Jumo community

For the past year (2023), the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs) and the Mother-to-Mother support groups (M2MSGs) have played a leading role in transforming communities. With a local resource mobilization of GH₵325,323.00 ($27,000), these initiatives have successfully tackled community challenges, including improving sanitation (with approximately 85% of households in 20 communities constructing and using household latrines with hand washing facilities made from local materials), providing access to clean water, enhancing income generation, and promoting better nutrition. An important aspect of these initiatives is the development of social cohesion among community members, fostering a renewed sense of purpose and togetherness.

The initiatives seamlessly align with national agendas, supporting flagship programs such as Planting for Food and Jobs and coordinated programmes of economic and social development policies. These programs aim to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty by improving livelihoods. This integration allows the local SDG efforts to be embedded within the wider framework of Ghana's socio-economic development.

A diverse coalition of stakeholders drives the initiative, with the district assembly taking a key leadership role. Local traditional authorities and community members contribute at the grassroots level, while national support comes from entities like the USAID advancing nutrition project. These partnerships provide training, resources, and necessary support to ensure the success of the initiative.

Houseline latrine and hand washing facility constructed using local materials

To ensure inclusivity, the project targets support to people with disabilities (PWDs), women, youth, and various ethnic groups, enabling everyone to participate and benefit. The VSLAs and M2MSGs are proud to have 20 PWDs among their members, demonstrating their commitment to inclusivity.

The initiative has yielded significant results in enhancing the saving culture, empowering women economically, and substantially improving sanitation and nutrition practices within households. The project's measurable outcomes include increased agricultural cultivation, savings accounts with microfinance institutions, improved hygiene practices, and the amplification of infant and young child feeding (I-YCF) practices.

Secretary of VSLA group recording members

Rather than operating in isolation, the project interconnects with other SDGs. It promotes gender equality (goal 5), improved sanitation (goal 6), reduced inequalities (goal 10), actions against climate change (goal 13), and the fostering of peaceful communities (goal 16), exemplifying the interconnected nature of sustainable development.

The project's successes can be attributed to local leaders who have facilitated community engagement, supported sanitation bylaws, and strategically directed resources towards sustainable development. By integrating projects within the local governance framework, these leaders have not only contributed to the SDGs but have also demonstrated the transformative potential of community-led development.

As the initiative continues to mature, continuous reviews and a vision to expand its reach throughout the entire district by 2025 aim to replicate these best practices elsewhere. With strong local leadership and participation, the project serves as an example of how targeted actions can significantly contribute to achieving the SDGs.