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Resiliency in Northern Ghana

Although Ghana is classified as a middle-income country¹, a significant economic disparity exists between the northern and the southern regions. In the Northern Region 10% of households are food insecure – almost three times the national average.² This financial gap has resulted in health deficits as well, with more 33% of children under five recorded as stunted.²

Most households depend on agriculture as their main source of income, and farmers contend with numerous challenges, such as poor soils, lack of market access, and a single rainy season, that prevent stronger yields and the resultant economic growth.

The local government is also limited in its ability to provide public services by long distances between communities, low population density and poor quality infrastructure.

Women in Northern Ghana are especially vulnerable as they face gender inequalities that

restrict their full participation in the country's development, including limited access to and control over resources, access to education and services, and participation in decision making.

Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) is a five-year project contributing to the Government of Ghana's efforts to sustainably reduce poverty and improve the livelihoods and nutritional status of women and children in 17 districts in the Northern Region. More specifically, RING directly targets more than 325,000 beneficiaries from vulnerable households, including 81,000 women of reproductive age and 49,000 children under five.

We work toward the following USAID/Ghana Feed the Future goals for children under five:

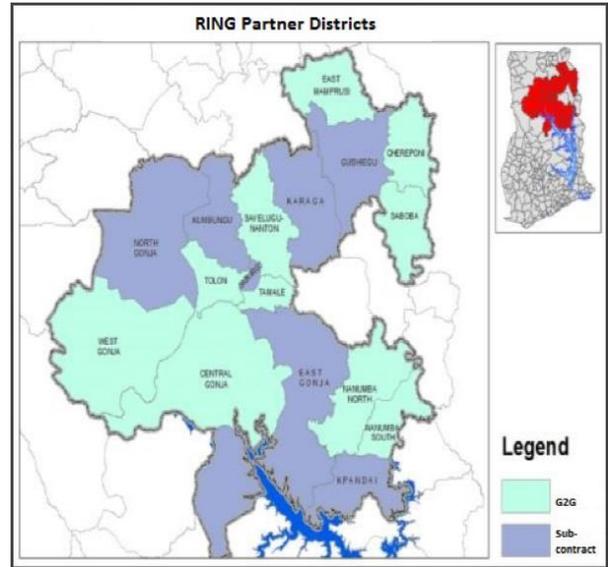
- 20% decrease in prevalence of stunting;
- 20% decrease in prevalence of underweight;
- 20% decrease in prevalence of anemia;
- 20% decrease in prevalence of wasting/

¹ The World Bank, 2015.

² USAID|Ghana. RFP USAID/Ghana SOL-641-12-000005. September 2012



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To achieve these goals, the project has three complementary project components:

- Increasing the consumption of diverse quality foods;
- Improving behaviors related to nutrition and hygiene; and
- Strengthening local support networks to address the ongoing needs of vulnerable households.

RING is implemented through a collaborative approach with Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDA) and the Northern Regional Coordinating Council. Through the RING Project, USAID provides funding to the regional and district governments either directly or via subcontracts under Global Communities, while working closely with civil servants, strengthening relationships and advancing joint interests.

MMDAs identify vulnerable communities and households using a transparent and documented approach and ensures delivery of selected services to the beneficiaries. Global

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Communities and its partners support key stakeholders, provide technical assistance, and develop MMDA capacity to deliver and sustain these poverty-fighting interventions.

Additionally, RING places particular focus on addressing gender inequities within the household, including improving women's control over income, increasing their social capital and leadership in the community, and reducing the overly burdensome workload of women that hinders access to opportunities for social and economic advancement.

Twenty months into the project, RING has:

- Formed 260 Village Savings and Loans Associations enabling women to save more than USD\$122,500;
- Supported over 4,200 vulnerable households with animal husbandry training and more than 14,700 small ruminants;
- Linked 382 women engaged in shea collection with buyers;
- Assisted RING communities to repair 173 broken down boreholes, providing clean water access to nearly 52,000 people;
- Supported 8 districts to carry out 74 utilization trainings on nutritious foods for over 6,900 people; and
- Supported GOG staff to carry out more than 50 community-based feedback meetings to increase civic participation in decision-making.