

Dissemination Workshop for KBP on Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta



22nd April, 2022

Tomreik Hotel, Accra, Ghana.

Written by Sampson Dordaa and Millie Kwawu
Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies

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Summary

On April 22nd, 2022, the Dissemination Workshop for KBP on Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta was held at Tomreik Hotel in Accra. The workshop brought together stakeholders from non-governmental organizations, governmental institutions, and academic institutions. The main purpose of the workshop was to promote peer learning and collaboration among NGOs, allowing them to share their experiences and the outcomes of the KBP project.

The project focused on two districts in the coastal part of the Volta region, primarily involving women. Prof. Samuel Cudjoe, the project lead, presented the project's achievements and results. A panel consisting of leaders from each district assembly involved in the project discussed their experiences during and after the project's timeline with the participants. Additionally, a member from Pro-link Organization, who led the communities, shared her experiences and the frameworks utilized in implementing their activities and achieving their objectives.

Participants shared their own experiences and expressed appreciation for the lessons learned from the KBP project. One key lesson was the importance of involving district assemblies to ensure the continuity of the project's successes. However, both assemblies faced challenges in sustaining some of the activities initiated by the project team and sought advice on ensuring the project outcomes' long-term sustainability. Some participants who had undertaken similar activities provided guidance on sustaining the activities and overcoming challenges.

Overall, the workshop was successful in achieving the objective of peer learning and encouraging further engagement with stakeholders. The project team had the opportunity to showcase and disseminate their work.

Introduction

Background

The KBP Project aimed to empower women and transform gender relations in the Volta Delta of Ghana, building upon the findings of the DECCMA study on the area. The study revealed that coastal erosion, salinization of groundwater and lagoons, and climate change have negatively impacted fishing and agriculture in the region, leading to migration and a high proportion of female-headed households.

Women in the Volta Delta face economic challenges aggravated by climate change. To address these issues, many women rely on microfinance and loan credit schemes, which have been identified as successful adaptation strategies. However, limited access to collateral and knowledge of financing options pose barriers to accessing these schemes.

The overarching vision of the KBP Project was to integrate gender-responsive climate actions into existing practices and effectively utilize accessible land. The project aimed to address challenges such as over-reliance on local markets, limited crop diversity, lack of alternative livelihood opportunities (e.g., soap making), inadequate agribusiness expertise (including packaging and storage), and restricted access to microfinance.

The project focused on building women's capacities in alternative livelihoods, business management and marketing, packaging and storage of agricultural products, and accessing microfinance. Key stakeholders, including the Customary Land Secretariat, Traditional Councils, and District Assemblies, were engaged to ensure the project's objectives were met and the outcomes sustained. Women were actively involved as partners, and networking with Assembly officials facilitated their participation in policy-making processes through dialogue and training.

Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) products, such as information briefs and posters in English and the local Ewe languages, were developed. These materials aimed to promote the efficient utilization of women's accessible land, diversify livelihood options, and enhance their capacities in alternative livelihoods, business management and marketing, packaging and storage of agricultural products, and accessing microfinance.

Overall, the KBP Project sought to empower women, transform gender relations, and promote sustainable practices in the Volta Delta by addressing climate change challenges and fostering economic opportunities.

Objectives

The objective of this dissemination workshop is to

- Share experiences and outcomes of the study with other organisations and stakeholders
- Encourage peer learning and engagement with other stakeholders

- Create a platform for networking among stakeholders

This will increase the visibility of the study's knowledge-based products and help the stakeholders take advantage of the guidelines in the book.

Opening

On April 22, 2022, the Dissemination Workshop for KBP on Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta was held at Tomreik Hotel in Accra. The workshop aimed to bring together participants from NGOs, government agencies, and academic institutions to discuss the outcomes and experiences of the project in the Volta region and promote the knowledge products generated during the project. At the beginning of the workshop, there were 30 participants in attendance.

The workshop commenced at 10:30 am, with Prof Chris Gordon acting as the facilitator. He warmly welcomed all the participants to the forum, and each participant had the opportunity to introduce themselves and the institutions they represented.

Introduction to CDKN

During the workshop, a video showcasing the operations of CDKN (Climate and Development Knowledge Network) was presented to the participants. The video aimed to introduce CDKN as an organization. Miss Charlotte Scott, the regional coordinator for the Africa Programme, and Miss Yoliswa Molefe provided a presentation on the CDKN Knowledge Accelerator Programme.

The presentation highlighted the main objective of CDKN, which is to support decision-makers in designing and implementing climate-compatible development strategies. The video also provided an overview of CDKN's funders and its involvement in other continents and focus countries.

The vision of CDKN is to improve the quality of life and resilience for the poorest and most vulnerable populations affected by climate change, including women and girls. This is achieved through a focus on gender-responsive, socially equitable, and climate-resilient development. CDKN operates based on three pillars: knowledge, engagement, and peer learning. Additionally, CDKN works across four thematic areas: the Water, Energy, and Food Nexus; Cities; Climate Finance; and Gender and Social Inclusion.

Workshop Sessions and Discussions

Keynote Address

Prof Samuel Codjoe (Regional Institute for Population Studies, RIPS)

During the workshop, Prof Samuel Codjoe, the project lead from the Regional Institute for Population Study at the University of Ghana, delivered a presentation on the Project on Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta.

Prof Codjoe began by explaining that the project builds upon the findings of the DELTAs, vulnerability & Climate Change: Migration & Adaptation (DECCMA) research. The DECCMA research highlighted the detrimental impacts of coastal erosion and salinisation on the agricultural and fisheries livelihoods of coastal communities in the Volta Delta. Consequently, there has been a significant migration of males, resulting in a considerable number of women becoming the heads of their households and taking on the responsibility of caring for their families, including children.

The primary goal of the project, Empowering Women and Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta, Ghana, was to address these challenges and offer solutions. To achieve this, a baseline survey was conducted to gain insights into land access, acquisition, and ownership within two districts in the Volta Delta: Sogakope and Keta.

The project engaged various stakeholders to facilitate its implementation.

Local Level

- Traditional Authority/Land Secretariat
- Women Groups

Municipal Assembly

- District Coordinating Director
- Agriculture Coordinator
- Gender Desk Officer
- Planning Officer
- Physical Planning Coordinator

The consultations conducted during the project revealed that women in the communities face significant challenges in effectively utilizing the available land to achieve increased economic returns. Based on a needs assessment, the project identified several areas that needed to be addressed in both communities. These areas included alternative livelihoods, business management and marketing, value-addition and packaging of agricultural produce, market access, crop diversification, and accessing microfinance for businesses.

To address these needs, the project developed training programs divided into four modules. These modules aimed to build the capacity of women in the aforementioned areas. The main outcomes of the project revolved around increasing women's capacity in land use and management through training and awareness-raising activities.

Awareness creation activities were conducted through various channels, such as radio shows, social change campaigns, and the production of public awareness materials like posters, information briefs, and a video documentary in both English and Ewe languages. Additionally, a guidebook was produced to assist in conducting the various modules for capacity building in alternative livelihoods.

Overall, the project focused on empowering women by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize land resources, diversify their livelihood options, and access markets and microfinance opportunities.

Achievements of the Project

- Identified the critical issues regarding land ownership and accessibility, mainly when women are involved
- The Project has helped in providing skills training to several women in the Keta Municipal and South Tongu districts with the potential to increase their income levels.
- The women are now in an excellent position to access microfinance for themselves and manage their businesses effectively to grow their businesses, repay their loans and effectively support their families.
- Following the training, Fievie women's group (Sogakope) has made arrangements with officials from the Agave Rural Bank to begin processes leading to the creation of savings accounts and the subsequent acquisition of loans.
- Through media engagements and publicity, the findings from the baseline survey and the alternative livelihoods and options for improved productivity have been shared with other women's groups who were not directly involved in the Project.

Lessons Learnt

- Women empowerment requires a holistic approach, awareness creation, capacity enhancement in livelihoods, and advocacy. This must be done in collaboration with traditional leaders and other stakeholders involvement to ensure greater support for women's activities.
- Financing remains a major challenge to women groups with the resolve to undertake alternative livelihood activities. This can, in part, be attributed to the informal nature of their groups. The district-level structures, such as the officials at the District Assemblies, have provided a strong network for the women. They were engaged extensively and contributed to the training

processes to ensure the women have contacts for easy access of information and opportunities relating to their livelihoods in the future.

- Formalisation is needed for increased recognition and taking hold of opportunities

What Worked Well

- Very supportive Assemblies Units/Officials
- Traditional Authorities welcoming
- Women Groups eagerness to learn new things
- Registration of four Women Groups as Cooperatives (2 groups in each district)

Panel Discussions

There were four panelists from the project team who helped expound on the project's activities and also helped give a clearer view of the processes and achievements of the projects. Panelists were:

- Patiences Dotsey (Department of Cooperatives, Sogakope)
- Bernice Mpere (Prolink)
- Edith Dziedorm (Department of Social Welfare, Keta)
- Gertrude Owusu (Regional Institute for Population Studies, RIPs)

What Was the Approach for Implementation?

Key Results and Achievements

The project identified and contacted key stakeholders, conducting interviews and discussing the objectives of the project with them. Stakeholders at various levels were involved, including chiefs, queen mothers, community leaders, women leaders, and officials from the gender and agriculture departments at the district level. These stakeholders were briefed on the project and their support was sought. The project team also engaged with women's groups and involved them in the training sessions.

One of the observed challenges was the lack of economic activity among many women. To address this, the project provided training in business skills such as soap making and record keeping. In the Keta district, the project expanded its reach by including the physically disabled in the group and providing them with training opportunities.

One of the key activities of the project was the baseline survey, which altered the project's trajectory. Initially, the project team believed that women did not have access to land, but the survey revealed that although women had access to land, they did not own the land they worked on.

In Sogakope, the project conducted sensitization activities to encourage women to form cooperative groups. These groups would enable them to access opportunities such as loans and peer learning.

As a knowledge brokering project, various knowledge-based products were developed, including videos, training manuals, and posters, to raise awareness among stakeholders. The documentary video serves as an advocacy tool and can be used in similar contexts where similar challenges related to climate change impact are being faced. The training manuals and videos are available for any group interested in using them to train women in areas affected by climate change.

It's important to note that the knowledge-based products reflect the views and experiences of the stakeholders involved in the project, both before and during its implementation.

Challenges

The project has observed a common challenge among the trained women and physically challenged individuals: the lack of financial assistance to start their businesses. Many of them are unable to move forward due to a lack of funds. In response to this, a queen mother in Sogakope took the initiative to provide loans to those in need. However, she has faced difficulties in recovering the money lent to individuals.

To address this issue, it is suggested that the districts collaborate with NGOs that specialize in providing microfinance services. These NGOs can play a crucial role in offering financial support to these individuals, enabling them to start their businesses and pursue their economic activities. By partnering with such organizations, the project can ensure that the trained women and physically challenged individuals have access to the necessary financial resources to kick-start their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Plenary Discussions

It is evident that the under-utilization of lands by women was influenced by various factors apart from access to funds. One significant factor was the impact of climate change. Since most of the women's farms relied on rainfall, unpredictable weather patterns resulted in substantial losses. Implementing irrigation systems would greatly benefit these women by providing a more reliable water source for their farms. However, limited resources prevented them from farming larger portions of their land.

Additionally, cultural barriers and gender inequalities played a role in inhibiting women's access to land and economic opportunities. Men typically had more advantages and opportunities within these communities, including easier access to community leaders and authorities. This inequality further marginalized women and limited their economic prospects.

Gathering women to participate in the project faced initial challenges. Women expressed hesitation because they recognized the lack of funds to start a business after receiving the training. To address this, facilitators from the district assemblies were involved in delivering the training in the local language, aiming to build trust and encourage women's participation.

Marketing the products proved to be another challenge for the women. The project provided training on marketing techniques and packaging to attract customers. However, there was a lack of digital skills, especially in utilizing social media platforms for marketing purposes. The project highlighted the need for support from the districts to address this digital skills gap.

Regarding accessing loans, the women encountered difficulties in meeting the deposit requirements set by the cooperative department. They were unable to raise the necessary funds for deposits, which became a barrier to accessing financial assistance.

Overall, the project faced challenges related to financial constraints, cultural barriers, gender inequalities, and the need for additional skills and resources to support the women in effectively utilizing their lands and improving their economic prospects.

Closing

Prof Gordon expressed his appreciation to all the participants and the project team for their valuable contributions throughout the workshop. He acknowledged the insightful comments shared by the participants and commended their active engagement in the discussions.

The project team also expressed gratitude for the participants' involvement and their valuable inputs, which will contribute to the project's overall success. They acknowledged the importance of collaboration and peer learning in achieving the project's objectives.

Prof Gordon concluded the workshop by expressing his gratitude once again to all the participants for their valuable contributions and closed the session on a positive note, highlighting the importance of their collective efforts in empowering women and transforming gender relations in the Volta Delta.

Annexes
Programme

CDKN Ghana
Dissemination Workshop for KBP on Empowering Women and
Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta
22nd April, 2022
Tomreik Hotel, Accra

Timeline	Activity/Topic
8:30 - 9:00 am	Arrival of Participants and Registration
9:00 - 10:00 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks Introduction Prof Chris Gordon CDKN Overview Charlotte Scott Welcome Address & Introduction of Chairperson Remark by Chairperson Remark by Project PI
10:00 – 10:30am	Presentations Overview of Project Prof SNA Codjoe Documentary Show
10:30 – 10:45 am	Comfort Break
10:45 - 11:30 am	Panel Discussions Panelists Gertrude Owusu Patience Dotse Bernice Mpere Gyekye
11:30-12:00 pm	Wrap up and Closing
12:00- 12:30 pm	Lunch

Summary Concept Note

CDKN Ghana
Dissemination Workshop for KBP on Empowering Women and
Transforming Gender Relations in the Volta Delta
22nd April, 2022
Tomreik Hotel, Accra

This Project builds on the findings of the DELTas, vulnerability & Climate Change: Migration & Adaptation (DECCMA) study on the Volta delta area in Ghana. The findings of the DECCMA study in Ghana indicated that the constant coastal erosion of beaches and the salinisation of groundwater and lagoons have adversely affected fishing and the agricultural livelihoods of coastal communities. The lack of opportunities to earn a living locally has led to the migration of able-bodied males, leaving behind the highest proportion of female-headed households in the Volta Delta of Ghana. Women are left with the responsibility of taking care of their families while experiencing challenges. The DECCMA study also revealed that most women have economic challenges exacerbated by climate change and as a means of trying to overcome this, most women subscribe to microfinance/loan credit schemes, which the research shows to be a successful adaptation strategy, but in reality, many women are not able to access microfinance due to lack of collateral and knowledge of the financing options.

The overall vision for the Project is “to “empower women and transform gender relations in the Volta delta, Ghana”, through the integration of gender-responsive climate actions into existing practices around efficient utilisation of accessible land, to address the following: over concentration on local markets, monotony of crops grown, lack of alternative livelihood opportunities (e.g. soft skills in soap making), lack of agribusiness expertise including packaging and storage as well as limited access to microfinance options.

This Project further built the capacities of women to obtain expertise and skills in:

- Alternative livelihoods;
- Business management and marketing;
- Packaging and storage of agricultural products; and
- Accessing microfinance for their businesses

The Project interacted with the Customary Land Secretariat and Traditional Councils and the District Assemblies (especially in implementing the trainings) as key stakeholders in achieving its objectives and ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes of the intervention. Trainings on climate adaptive livelihoods (including training on alternative livelihoods, business management and marketing, packaging of products and accessing microfinance) for women were carried out. The development and delivery of the workshops took into consideration the need for the women to be able to

replicate these workshops with other women's groups. Therefore, by involving the women as key partners in the process, and through networking with other partners especially the Assembly officials, their confidence and ability to engage proactively in policy-making processes were built through constructive dialogue and training.

Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) products in the form of information briefs and posters (in both English and the local Ewe languages) were developed to enhance the promotion of the efficient utilisation of women's accessible lands and the diversification of livelihood options. This were done as part of efforts towards realising the overall vision of the Project, i.e., for women to have increased efficient utilisation of accessible land and regional markets, diversify the crops grown and have capacities and skills in alternative livelihoods, business management and marketing, packaging and storage of agricultural products, and accessing microfinance for their businesses.

This will increase the visibility of the knowledge based products of the study and also help the stakeholders on how to take advantage of the guidelines in the book.

Targeted participants

NGOs/ CSOs/ Youth Groups

Academia