

PROJECT STARTUP WORKSHOP REPORT

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IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI: 109064-001-Transforming the vaccine delivery system for chickens and goats in Ghana: what approaches and what benefits for women?

PROJECT START-UP WORKSHOP REPORT
WOMEN REAR PROJECT
DATES: 22ND APRIL 2021 VENUE: BAWKU MUNICIPALITY



1.0 Introduction

The project start-up workshop was held on 22nd April, 2021 in the Bawku Municipality at Basemyam lodge, it was held as a preparatory step towards the commencement of other project interventions after the completion of baseline data collection. The workshop was attended by 32 stakeholders including Directorate of veterinary services, Department of Agriculture, traditional authorities, lead farmers, Cowtribe technology and CARE International. The objectives of the workshop were as follows;

- Provide updates on the status of project implementation to key project stakeholders at the district level
- Develop a common understanding of project deliverables and roles of stakeholders at the district level
- Provide an update of key planned interventions for 2021
- Determine project and stakeholder communication and data requirements and agree on the channels of communication
- To determine next key steps in project implementation

Key highlights

- Opening remarks
- Overview of project
- Updates on status of project implementation
- Cowtribe's Vaccine Delivery Approach and upcoming vaccination campaigns
- Gender accommodative and Transformative interventions led by CARE
- Roles of key stakeholders
- Next steps

1.1 Opening remarks

The opening remarks was delivered by the Director of Agriculture for Bawku West District. He welcomed participants and thanked all for making time out of their busy schedules to attend this important meeting. He remarked that attention over the years from development partners is always centered on the crop sector, leaving the animal sector to dwindle thereby making the sector less attractive hence expressed his overwhelming gratitude to CARE and its partners for shifting their focus to the animal sector through the implementation of the Women Rear Project in the two districts. He concluded by admonishing all participants to pay critical attention to the discussions and contribute effectively in order that, the objectives of the meeting will be realized.

2.0 Overview of the project

The project manager before presenting the project overview, thanked all participants for availing themselves for the meeting. She stated that it was the first time all stakeholders in the project were meeting to interact at the district level after the inception workshop held on the 15th October, 2019 in the

Upper East Regional capital, Bolgatanga. She added that meetings of this kind would be held at least semi-annually to give stakeholders the opportunity to brainstorm and share ideas on issues regarding the implementation of the project at the District level. She also took participants through the agenda for the day.

In her presentation, she mentioned that the project's life span was initially 3 years but due to delays caused by COVID-19 Pandemic, it has been extended to 4 years. The project officially started from March 2019 and will now end in March 2023. The project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and is expected to reach out to 4000 women livestock keepers and work with 30 animal health service providers in the Bawku West and Pussiga district. The implementing organizations are; CARE, Cowtribe and ILRI. CARE is responsible for community mobilization and the implementation of GTA and GAA interventions, ILRI is leading in the research aspect of the project whiles Cowtribe plays a leading role in the vaccine delivery.

On the development problem, she elaborated that Gender disparities in accessing agricultural inputs including vaccines (new castle, PPR), markets, resources and advice serves as major barriers to women despite the very important role backyard poultry and goat production systems play in the livelihoods of women farmers. Vaccination is important in improving production. Vaccines exist in the target regions but are often inaccessible due to a variety of barriers and that the current vaccine delivery systems are not centered on women needs and preference. Gender Accommodative Approach (GAA) has often been insufficient to address ingrained patterns of inequality. Therefore, the project is seeking to address the above problem by testing two main approaches in the field; Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) and Gender Accommodative Approach (GAA). She further outlined the objectives the project is seeking to achieve as follows;

- To identify, test and monitor two approaches — one gender accommodative and the other, gender transformative — to improve vaccine delivery systems for chicken and goats in two districts of Ghana
- To create knowledge on institutional requirements for a vaccine delivery system that is responsive to the needs of both women animal health service providers and women farmers
- To identify women capabilities needing support and gender norms that need addressing for all animal health service providers and women farmers to benefit from an improved vaccine delivery system
- To determine how the combination of a social (gender transformative) and technological (strengthened vaccine delivery infrastructure) approach affect women farmers' access to vaccines at scale.

She indicated that after a successfully implementation of the project, it is expected that there will be Improved livelihoods and gender equality in poor rural households through increased household income, food security and greater influence of women arising from improved access to animal health services for higher livestock productivity. Secondly Existing animal health service delivery system will be made aware of the potential for increased success through a focused attention to gender specific issues both regarding service providers and livestock keepers. On the aspect of research, it is anticipated that Conference

papers, policy brief, manual and peer reviewed articles will be produced. She further elaborated the staggered interventions that the project will be delivering throughout its implementation cycle to be as follows.

- Stakeholder inception workshop.
- Literature review/situational analysis
- Assessment of best ways for accessing ND and PPR/CCPP vaccines by farm women.
- Identification of gender-accommodative approaches (GAAs)
- Identification of gender-transformative approaches (GTAs)
- Selection and involvement of target communities.
- Baseline assessment of livelihoods, productivity and livestock management
- Identification and recruitment of women AHSPs
- Identify and support the capabilities of AHSPs and farmers
- Initiate vaccine delivery with GAA intervention
- Implementation of the GTA intervention.
- Monitoring outcomes and adjusting the interventions
- End-line assessment of empowerment and livelihoods

She concluded by stating that the project partners will collaborate with Ministry of Food and Agriculture-Veterinary Services Directorate, Animal Research Institute, District Assemblies and Traditional Leaders for smooth implementation and project sustainability.

After the presentation, clarifications were sought on the roles of the implementing partners. Some concerns were also raised on why the project decided to select goats and chickens instead of pigs since women rear pig more than goats and chickens. These concerns were addressed immediately, with regards to the roles of the partners, the project manager indicated that each partner's role is clearly delineated without any ambiguity and went ahead to re-echo the roles of CARE, ILRI and cowtribe. With respect to the species the interaction with farmers revealed that women rear goats and chicken more.

3.0 Updates on Status of Project Implementation

This presentation was shared by the project's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. He indicated that the project started in March 2019 but the implementation of its activities had been delayed due to COVID-19. The project team first engaged the National and the Upper East Regional veterinary directorate for buy in as stakeholders. He further detailed out the activities that had been carried out after the project inception workshop held in October 2019.

3.1 Identification and random selection of communities:

He posited that the basic criteria used for selecting a community was the presence of Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs). Based on this, 121 communities were identified in Bawku West District and 33 in Pusiga, out of these only 10 communities were randomly selected in each of the districts. The 10 communities were further divided into two major groups consisting of 5 GTA and 5 GAA in each district.

3.2 Community entry, awareness creation and sensitization

He mentioned that this was carried out by the project facilitators in collaboration with staff of the Department of Agriculture. As part of the community entry they made home visits to opinions leaders including chiefs to introduce the project and the team and also inform them about the project. Besides, community durbars were organized to create awareness and also sensitize community members about the project.

3.3 Listing of project households

He stated that the listing was than in collaboration with the staff of the Department of Agriculture in all the twenty selected communities across the two districts. He added that the rational for this was to generate data of all households with female VSLAs members who are livestock (chicken and goats) keepers in the selected communities. A total of 960 households were listed from Pusiga district and 782 households from Bawku West district.

3.4 Baseline Study

The baseline study is currently ongoing and so far 500 women livestock keeper and 100 men have been interviewed using Women Empowerment in Livestock Index (WELI) and Rural Household Multi-Indicator Survey (RHoMIS) quantitative tools. In addition, women and men groups have also been interviewed on qualitative WELI and the best ways of accessing I2 and PPR vaccines for chicken and goats. Interviews for animal health service providers including district veterinary officers on the best ways to access I2 and PPR vaccines for chicken and goats is currently ongoing and is expected to completed by 30th April, 2021.

4.0 Cowtribe's Vaccine Delivery Approach and Upcoming Vaccination Campaigns

The overview of Cowtribe technology and its vaccine delivery approach was shared by Mr. Haruna. He stated that the company is formally registered under the Ghana Veterinary Surgeons Law 1992 PNDC 305C to provide veterinary service delivery across Ghana. He revealed that they operate across the country and over the past 3 years, have delivered over 500,000 doses of animal vaccines to farmers in rural Ghana with the mission to protect animal health and welfare, human lives, and livelihoods in the most vulnerable communities. He indicated that they work with the district MOFA/Veterinary directorate in Bawku – West and Pusiga, Traditional Authorities and Women Farmer groups as key stakeholders on this project. However, Inadequate knowledge/information about the project and the field activities of their field technicians has resulted to misunderstanding, missed opportunities, conflict, dissemination of misinformation and mistrust between Cowtribe and the veterinary directorates in the two project districts.

He further stated that Cowtribe will resolve these misconceptions by sharing an overview and frequent updates on the project, hold monthly debriefing sessions with District Veterinary Officers and share relevant data, make available Campaign delivery calendar, share weekly delivery schedules with the district veterinary officers and collaborate with MOFA to provide land whiles Cowtribe provides and

installs the cold room systems which will be accessed by both the directorate and Cowtribe field technicians.

4.1 Vaccines Delivery Approach

Mr. Haruna indicated in his presentation that the vaccine delivery is cost-effective and full-service preventive veterinary service package which ensures farmers' livestock are vaccinated annually and protected against preventable diseases. He noted that the Enhanced Bundle Service is provided by the use of mobile Apps by field technicians who are supervised by seasoned veterinary doctors stationed in the office. The Shepherd App is used to create and profile communities, assign communities to field officers, group/Farmer Registration, fulfillment of Newcastle (Poultry), PPR (Sheep/Goat) and CBPP (Cattle) vaccinations as well as revenue collection. Zhulia is used for Product ordering and added that agrovet and veterinary officers can order products from them using this App. He further gave a detailed schedule of vaccination campaigns as follows;

- January - Newcastle vaccination campaign - 12 vaccines (Day Old Chicks)
- February - Monitoring, education and training of farmers
- March - Pre PPR campaign education
- April - PPR vaccination campaign
- May - Post PPR vaccination M&E
- June to July - Distribution of Agro-Inputs
- August - CBPP vaccination campaign
- September - Newcastle vaccination campaign (DOCs & Adult birds)

He added that the ongoing happy farmer campaigns is focused on parasite management, the company has since given Topline pour on for Cattle, Ivomec Super for Sheep/Goat and Leva 200 dewormer for Poultry and has covered 45 groups and 643 farmers in Bawku West and 807 farmers of 43 groups in Pussiga. Moreover, the PPR campaign will last for a month targeting 1868 livestock keepers in the two districts consisting of 5,226 goats and 3,161 sheep.

During the questions and answer session, some clarifications were sought on terms of payment for vaccines and also, what Cowtribe's plans are for individuals who do not belong to any group but have animals that need to be vaccinated. In response, the CEO of cowtribe indicated that all the vaccines will be paid for by project beneficiaries. However, the vaccines will be linked to some other products that will make it more enticing for farmers to patronize easily. He further explained that the grant received on the project is supporting the establishment of a regional coldroom and two district level coldrooms. He added that plans were far advanced in putting up the cold chain rooms. In answering the follow up question on individual livestock keepers who don't belong to any group, the CEO said in the interim the company will focus on farmers who participate in the project. He further suggested that PPR and ND vaccines should be made free especially in the Northern sector to ensure that all animals are vaccinated to eradicate PPR and ND diseases in the communities. He therefore charged the District Directors of Agriculture to start lobbying with government and other policy makers to make PPR and ND vaccines free in the near future.

The chief of Sugudi community contributed to the discussion by revealing that mortality of goats, chicken, sheep and cattle in the communities these days is on the rise and this does not motivate people to engage in rearing as a full time vocation. He therefore charged the veterinary officers in the meeting to ensure this is brought to an end. The veterinary officers in Pusijsa confirmed this but indicated that some of the farmers do not heed to the right time for vaccination and some do not have the financial resources to vaccinate their animals. Adding on to the discussion the project M&E officer advised veterinary officers to sensitize farmers on the benefits of timely vaccination of the animals.

5.0 Gender Accommodative and Transformative intervention (GAA and GTA)

This session was led by Care's Gender advisor, she explained what gender is and the difference between GAA and GTA. She stated that GAA are policies and programs that acknowledge but work around gender differences and inequalities to achieve project objectives. Although this approach may result in short-term benefits and realization of outcomes, it does not attempt to reduce gender inequality or address gender systems that contribute to differences and inequalities. Whereas GTA are policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality and achieve program objectives by:

- Fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms, and dynamics.
- Recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment.
- Promoting the relative position of women, girls, and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies, and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

She indicated that the targeted people to be trained on the GAA and GTA approaches are gender champions, animal health services providers(AHSP), GTA communities, staff as well as partners. She went on to present the procedures in which these target groups will be trained to be as follows;

Staff and Partners

- Capacity building (Gender trainings using the FFBS module) for Staff and Partners
- Conduct training on Social Analysis and Action (SAA) for staff and partners

Community level

- Community gender dialogues (Challenging existing traditional norms and practices)
- Gender trainings for traditional authorities
- Train facilitators (frontline staff) who will be working with community members and groups
- Train representatives of VSLA/Livestock producer groups to provide livestock husbandry advisory services
- Sensitize community leaders on project objectives and gender topics.

Animal Health Service Providers

- Gender trainings for AHSPs and vaccinators from GTA communities/Villages