

➤ **Nutrition LINKS**

The Ghanaian government's principal mechanisms to address childhood malnutrition have been through (i) legislative and educational support of breastfeeding and (ii) growth monitoring and promotion activities in the Ghana Health Services' (GHS) monthly child welfare clinics. In a recent evaluation, health care staff were noted to have poor technical knowledge and unsupportive attitudes towards caregivers' problems with infant and young child (IYC) feeding, poor communication skills, inadequate follow-up of problem cases, and unstable community volunteers to help them. In rural areas, families may have more contact with teachers, microcredit agents, and agricultural extension agents than GHS personnel. These diverse human resources could be enlisted to support health and nutrition activities that will improve young women's own well-being and lead to better diets and health among children. The main objective of the project is to improve household economic well-being, gender equity, food security, and nutrition and health of vulnerable populations in the Upper Manya Krobo District (UMKD) of Ghana. The project duration is 5 years.

Integrated household trial: 227 households with young children will benefit from egg-laying chickens grant (40 chickens). So far 140 households have received 40 birds each and 104 more to receive in 2015. All intervention households are also participating in home gardens and supported to plant nutrient-rich vegetables including orange-fleshed sweet potato, amaranthus, and others. The intervention group will be compared to 116 control households in same district. There is ongoing district wide capacity building for health, nutrition, agriculture, and education staff; also being trained are local bank and microfinance staff on nutrition and health messages.

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