

Women Extension Volunteers: An Extension Approach for Female Farmers in Northern Ghana

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engineers without borders
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Canada



The Model

- MoFA and VSO Ghana pilot in 2009
 - 45 volunteers, 27 districts in 3 Northern Regions
- Trained in:
 - Basic agricultural best practices
 - Income generating activities
 - Leadership and group development
 - Health and sanitation

WEV Role

Complement public extension services by working with farmer groups, particularly female farming groups, in their community, and one adjacent community, to support agricultural activities.



Lessons Learned

Positive Impact of WEV Model:

- Strengthening farmer groups
- Liaison with public extension and NGO service providers
- Indications that community-based extension can increase technology adoption
- Local role model using good agricultural best practices
- Community point of contact for extension



Lessons Learned

Gender-specific Impact:

- Local female extension contact
- Some gender-specific extension programming, gender-sensitive extension structure
- Formalized structures for female farmers to create opportunities for increased access to extension
- Personal empowerment and social benefits for WEVs



Lessons Learned

Factors for Sustainability:

- Non-monetary incentives (awards, personal empowerment)
- Training
- Linkages with MoFA
- Ongoing support and reporting with MoFA
- Performance management

Lessons Learned

Constraints:

- Low capacity to provide technical agricultural information themselves
- Reach limited to farmer groups within two communities
- Project vs. programme based
- For the liaison role to be effective, WEVs need linkages with public extension agents
- Potential pitfalls of tiered system



