

Gender Responsive Cocoa Funded Public Services: Beyond Basic Needs

Key Findings

- ✚ In contrast to minerals extractive area, cocoa producing districts do not receive direct transfers from cocoa as in royalties for mining districts. Districts are unsure if they raise revenue from the cocoa value chain through their sources of Internally Generated Funds.
- ✚ The gender responsiveness of district assemblies plans and budgets focus more on addressing the basic or practical needs and short of in-depth analysis of how public service provision will empower people and transform societal norms posing hindrance to realizing potentials and changing behaviours.
- ✚ Education and training services on agriculture especially on cocoa has demonstrated the potential of empowering farmers, strengthening their voices and bring about change in the status quo.

1.0 Background

A core component of the role of government under the Directive Principles of the State of the 1992 constitution is to “promote just and reasonable access by all citizens to public facilities and services in accordance with law”¹ to guarantee the development and wellbeing of the people of Ghana. Public services such as education, health, water, sanitation, agriculture, social protection, and road infrastructure among others are provided by government through yearly national budgets funded by domestic and external revenues including those generated from the cocoa value chain. However, public services are often limited in its responsiveness and promotion of gender equity for all persons especially women and marginalized people. For instance, there are restriction of access of children especially girls to school, women access to maternal and childcare services, farmers access to agricultural inputs and financial services and markets among other services².

Gender responsiveness of public services is gradually generating attention due to the inequitable gains accrued to the very citizens it is meant for. National and local government annual development plans and budgets are often devoid of initial assessment specific to the different needs of different category of persons. The generalized manner of planning and budgeting have limited persons with vulnerabilities from accessing services. Shallow gender analysis of public service provision signifies and undermines efficient utilization of limited public funds generated from domestic sources such as exports of minerals and agriculture products, taxes on goods and services and foreign sources such as grants and loans for national development.

Cocoa production is one such source of funds that has been the backbone of Ghana’s economy since the 1870s. It dominates the agricultural sector and contributes about 30% of the country’s export earnings³. This makes it an important generator of revenue.⁴ Cocoa employs about

¹ 1992 Constitution of Ghana Chapter 6 article 35 (3)

² <https://ghana.actionaid.org/>

³ Sector Industry Analysis-Cocoa Sector report, 2022 by GCB Strategy and research Dept

⁴ <https://theconversation.com/ghanas-cocoa-production-relies-on-the-environment-which-needs-better-protection-134557>

800,000 farmers directly. It also supports the livelihoods of others in the commerce, service and industrial sectors of the Ghanaian economy. In 2022, cocoa in Ghana was forecast to contribute 3.41 billion Ghanaian cedis (GHS), around 454 million U.S. dollars, to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The value was measured at 2.82 billion GHS (roughly 375 million U.S. dollars) in 2020. Furthermore, the agricultural product was expected to account for 4.01 billion GHS (around 533 million U.S. dollars) of the country's GDP by 2025, the highest contribution within the period observed. Cocoa therefore contributes generally to the provision of public services and overall development of Ghana. However, unlike the recently initiated cocoa roads which Ghanaians are aware of, many also lack knowledge or information about other specific public services in the districts funded with revenues from cocoa and the responsiveness of the services to the needs of men, women, boys, girls and vulnerable persons in cocoa growing areas and the entire country.

1.1. Objective

This paper explores how public services provided by metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) from cocoa revenue are meeting the different needs of women, men, boys and girls and the marginalized such as persons with disability. The aim is to document cocoa (COCOBOD and other local and international players) contribution to gender inclusiveness and to use the findings to call on government to increase its political will for inclusive and transformative development. By so doing the SEND and all stakeholders involved will contribute to attaining the sustainable development goal 3 by ensuring gender equality and women empowerment by 2030. Ghana can also report on such contributions from the cocoa sector in its annual SDGs progress report and the Voluntary National Review reporting to international stakeholders.

1.2 Methodology

SEND GHANA implements the Fair for All Project in seven districts in the Central and Eastern regions. Tracking was done in all the seven districts namely, Birim Central, Birim North, Akim Achiase, Ayemmansa and Asene Manso Akroso in the Eastern region and Twifo hemang Lower Denkyira and Twifo Ati-Morkwa in the Central region. A two-stage method of data gathering was employed. First, data was taken from the municipal and district assemblies and Licenced Buying Companies (LBCs). In each district, the planning or budget officer provided information on behalf of the assembly while one person from one LBC per district also gave information. A semi-structured questionnaire comprising open and close-ended questions was applied to gather the information for analysis. The initial data receive through the questionnaire was analysed. New set of questions were derived from gaps in the responses and additional areas relevant to the focus of the study. The new set of questions was to enable the tracking team to collect additional information. Therefore, during the validation of initial data gathered, the additional information was collected through focus group discussion. In each district, three groups comprising the district assembly, LBCs and farmers responded to a set of questions using an interview guide. Each group had at least 3 to 6 people to discuss the questions. Tracking was done in between March and May 2023. All the targeted districts participated in the study by responding to the questionnaire and contributing to the group discussion.

1.2.1 Conceptual Framework

Data gathering and analysis, was guided by ActionAid's framework for gender responsive public services⁵ and DFID funded Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development (ICED) programme's Gender and Inclusion (G&I) Framework for Transformative Change⁶. These frameworks recognize cultural and governance systems that promote gender inequities and pinpoints the necessary steps towards the provision of gender-responsive public services where the services move beyond meeting the basic needs of people to addressing their strategic (empowerment and transformational) needs. Gender responsive public services is therefore the provision of services (health, education, agriculture, social protection and water among others) and sensitization/awareness creation that meet the basic and strategic needs of people including marginalized and minority groups to cause change in individuals and groups.

2.0 Study Findings

2.1 Revenue Generation mandate of MMDAs

Local Governance Act, 2016, Act 936 enjoins MMDAs to raise non-tax revenue from their catchment area. MMDAs therefore collect internally generated funds (IGF) from licenses, fees, fines, tolls, rents, investment income and rates. The MMDAs also receive funds transfers from the national government through the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) and funds for goods and services line item. These transfers happen to be the biggest source of funds for the MMDAs. Additional, portions of revenue from minerals in the form of royalties generated by government is given to respective MMDAs where these extractives such as gold, diamond, salt among others are mined for service provision. The funds (IGF, DACF etc) are invested by MMDAs for the provision of public services such as education, health, water, agriculture, roads etc in communities under their jurisdiction for the development of the area and the wellbeing of the people.

2.1 Revenue generated by MMDAs from the Cocoa Value chain

2.2.1 Revenue from the District

The study sought to explore revenue generated by MMDAs from the cocoa value chain in their respective districts. The findings are in two-folds. First, districts which participated in the study were uncertain that revenue from the cocoa value chain can be or is generated through any of the sources of their IGF such as fees, fines and tolls even though it is possible. During the focus group discussion three districts in the Eastern region namely Asene Manso Akroso, Ayemmansa and Achiase districts noted that payments of business operating permit fees by Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs) could be considered as cocoa revenue. Similarly, Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira and Twifo Ati-Morkwa districts in the Central region deem tolls collected from trucks which hauls cocoa out of the districts as cocoa revenue. The Achiase district is the only district out of the seven MMDAs that began to generate direct revenue from cocoa in 2022. The district hosts a cocoa juice processes plant which was established in the district in 2022. The factory pays fees to the assembly annually. Again, the district makes farmers to pay a penalty when they haul cocoa from the district to other districts to sell. The penalty is a measure to prevent the district from losing targeted tonnage of cocoa which will qualify them for a project such as school, clinic, road etc from COCOBOD.

⁵ [grps_2018_online x.pdf](#)

⁶ [*Cities_Gender_Layout_FinalWeb.pdf](#)

2.1. Revenue from the national level

Secondly, none of the MMDAs involved in this study received funds which are direct from cocoa revenue from the national level. Compared to MMDAs such as Tarkwa in the Western with mineral extractive which are provided percentage of revenue from the extractive sector (gold etc) paid as royalties to stool lands as a form of compensation for the effects of mining, government do not cede portions of revenue from cocoa to cocoa producing MMDAs. The cocoa revenue distribution architecture differs significantly from mineral revenue. A study by SEND GHANA (2012) show that mineral royalties contribute significantly to the construction of health and educational infrastructure⁷ and a similar arrangement would have very supportive of cocoa growing areas. Despite the absence of any ‘cocoa royalty’ some of the districts believe that their funds transferred to them include funds from cocoa. The three MMDAs, Asene-Akroso, Ayemmansa and Birim Central in the Eastern region opine that the DACF is the sum of revenue from diverse sources and, therefore, it can be inferred that it included revenue from the cocoa value chain. Annually revenue generated by the government from the cocoa value chain, taxes and other sources are lodged into the consolidated fund. As directed by the 1992 constitutions and the public financial management act 5% of the total national revenue mobilized is shared among MMDAs for the provision of public services set out in the guidelines for the utilization of the DACF.

The study showed that revenues generated by the districts from the cocoa value chain was low. Budget information provided by five MMDAs that raised revenue from cocoa revealed that the revenue oscillated with no district raising up to Ghc100,000 in any year as shown by Table 1.

Table 1: Revenue generated by four District Assemblies from cocoa-related Activities (thousand cedis)

Year	Ayemmansa	Achiase	Birim Central	Twifo Hemang	Asene Manso Akroso
2018	16,696	-	16,304	15,000	-
2019	-	-	16,304	15,000	22,500
2020	9,120	51,280	49,629	20,000	22,500
2021	39,590	47,840	94,034	20,000	37,000
2022	51,292	41,741	97,034	18,000	55,000
Total	116,698	140,861	240,697	88,000	137,000

Source: SEND, 2023

Over the five year period, Achiase district raised the second highest revenue of Ghc140,861 after Birim Central despite having a cocoa juice making factory. Birim Central with its district capital in Oda has a comparative advantage over the other districts due to its centrality and as the main cocoa receiving/storing enclave before it was divided into five different districts. To this end almost all the districts continue to cart their cocoa to purchasing depots in Oda to sell even though the district produces the least of cocoa beans compared to the others. The district revenue was over 40% more than that of Achiase. Asene Manso Akroso is the newest district among the seven which participated in the study. Being new, the district was yet to have cocoa purchasing depot despite producing large quantities of cocoa. The district’s proximity to Birim

⁷ SEND GHANA, 2012 Our Money, Our Share, Our Say

Central district made it easier for cocoa farmers in the district to cart their cocoa to purchasing depot in Oda. As a result, the Asene Manso Akroso district is unable to generate enough revenue from cocoa value chain except from revenues from business operating permits paid by LBCs before purchasing cocoa from the district. Despite this its revenue between 2018 and 2022 was Ghc137,000.

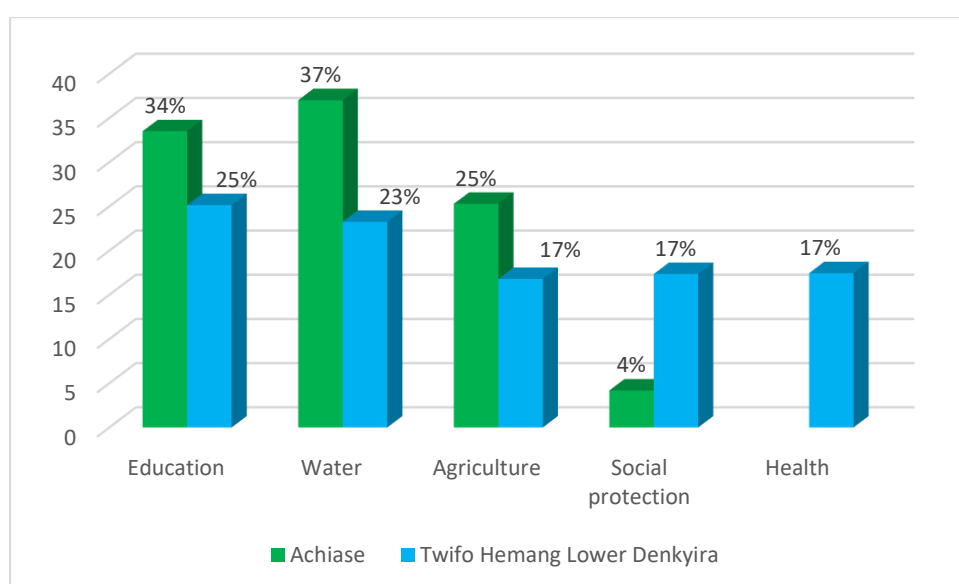
2.2. Public Services provided by MMDAs

In accordance with their respective annual action plans, the MMDAs use the revenues generated to provide public services such as education, agriculture, social protection, health, water and roads in the districts.

2.2.1 Public services provided with MMDAs cocoa revenue

The study noted that, of the five districts that generated funds from cocoa related activities, three-Achiase, Twifo Hemang and Asene Manso Akroso districts- provided data on cocoa revenue funds expended on various public services. The Achiase district spent approximately Ghc 120,000 which represented 85% of the total revenue raised. From its expenditure, water was their priority taking 37% of the total spending, 31% went to education, 26% on agriculture and the least of 4% went into social protection as shown by Figure 1.

Figure 1: Expenditure of Achiase and Twifo Hemang districts on Public Services between 2018 and 2022 (in %)



Source: SEND GHANA

On the part of Twifo Hemang, 60% (Ghc53,000) of the total revenue generated was expended. A quarter (25%) of the expenditure went into education and followed closely by water at 23%. Less than 20% each of the expenditure was used for the provision of health, social protection, and agricultural services. The Asene Manso Akroso used Ghc30,000 which represents 22% of its revenue on recurrent activities such as maintenance of final disposal sites, purchase of stationaries and vehicle repairs among others.

Table 2: Public Services provided by MMDAs

District	Education	Health	Agric	Water	Social protection	Roads
Birim North	✓				✓	✓
Asene Manso Akroso					✓	
Ayemmansa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Achiase	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Birim Central	✓	✓	✓			
Twifo Ati-Morkwa	✓	✓	✓			✓
Twifo Hemang	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Source: SEND GHANA, 2023

From the Table 2, Asene Manso Akroso provided only social protection services to its communities. From its explanation during the focus group discussion, the social protection services are the LEAP and school feeding programmes. The LEAP and school feeding are funded directly from the national level and therefore it could be concluded that besides recurrent expenditure, the district IGF was use for the provision of sanitation services as mentioned earlier. On the part of Ayemmansa which happens to be the only district providing all the six public services listed, it could not indicate how much of the Ghc116,698 raised between 2018 and 2022 was used to provide the services. Similarly, Birim Central with the highest revenue compared to the others provided education, health and agricultural services but could not give a break down of the quantum of the funds spend on these services.

The quantum of IGF generated from the cocoa value chain is small compared to the amount of funds required for the provision of these public services. Thus, the districts rely heavily on transfers from the central government to be able to provide services to address the different needs of people under their jurisdiction.

The six out of the seven districts which provided education services spent their revenues on school buildings, teacher' bungalow, scholarship for students and supported 'my first day at school programme for new entrants. Similar interventions implemented under health by four of the districts were basically the construction of Community-based Health Planning Services (CHPS) compound and logistics (for example personal protective equipment, chairs and canopies for outreach programmes) for healthcare delivery. The five District assemblies that provided social protection interventions including relief services during disaster, supported LEAP beneficiaries and PWDs and sensitized the citizens on disaster and health. Additionally, farmers were provided with oil palm seedlings, fertilizer, agrochemicals, spraying and education on the production cocoa seedlings and sale of agricultural products by five of the districts. Three assemblies drilled or repaired boreholes to make water available and accessible to the people.

Given that these services have or are being provided by the assemblies, the study sought to find out about communities benefiting from the services. It was noted that of the six districts that provided education and health infrastructure, only Birim Central and Achiase districts could name the communities where the infrastructure was sited. In the Achiase district, the assembly used its funds to re-roof the Achiase RC Primary and Achiase Methodist schools, whiles Birim Central constructed the school in Oda for the Old Town Anglican School as well as a temporary market structure.

As noted earlier, Asene Manso Akroso district-one of the newly created districts- the assembly noted that it is underfunded and therefore limited if not totally unable to provide basic services for the people. The new rural district was established with no seed money. The financial situation of the district is compounded by the availability of few markets and businesses from which revenue could be generated, and late releases of funds from the central government.

2.3 Public Services provided by COCOBOD and LBCs

Apart from the district assemblies, other state, and non-state institutions such as COCOBOD and LBCs occasionally collaborate with the assemblies to provide public services as part of their corporate social responsibility. There are other times that some of these institutions especially LBCs provided services at the blindside of the district assemblies.

2.3.1 Awareness of public services provided by COCOBOD and LBCs

Five districts; Ayemmansa, Achiase, Asene Manso Akroso, Twifo Hemang and Twifo Ati-Morkwa are aware that COCOBOD provides public services in their respective districts. In contrast, the Birim North and Birim Central are unaware of public service interventions initiated by COCOBOD if any in the districts.

From the discussions with the five districts, it was noted that services provided by COCOBOD are mostly in the agriculture and social sectors. For example, COCOBOD provides school infrastructure, extension services, shaping cocoa roads and non-financial services as supply of cocoa seedling to farmers, prune cocoa tress, provide inputs (fertilizer and pesticides), organize mass spraying, education and surveillance towards the elimination of worst forms of child labour. One of the major interventions is the US\$750m cocoa roads funded by COCOBOD. Annually, COCOBOD was to set US\$150m for five years to get the roads done. Launched in 2015, the construction and upgrading of the road was to facilitate haulage of cocoa beans from cocoa producing areas to purchasing centres and then to the harbour. The participants acknowledged that construction was ongoing, but some did not know that it was funded by COCOBOD from cocoa revenue.

In the case of the LBCs, two of the districts; Twifo Hemang and Twifo Ati-Morkwa were aware that LBCs provides public services to farmers and communities in the districts. Some of the LBCs provides agriculture, water and social protection services for the communities. For instance, in Twifo Ati-Morkwa, the LBCs constructed boreholes to make potable water accessible to the people and reshaped roads and culverts to make them motorable. The Adwumapa Buys Limited in Twifo Ati-Morkwa for instance supplied farmers with fertilizer, agrochemicals and farm equipment, educated farmers on good farming practices and provided potable water for the people of Twifo Kwamoa.

Some of the district assemblies were concerned about their limited involvement in the implementation of the sustainability plans of COCOBOD and LBCs. The Asene Manso Akroso district assembly for instance has no knowledge that LBCs are to have a sustainability plan or the welfare of the farmers and communities. As at the time of data gathering, the district was yet to take the initiative of meeting Cocoa License Buying Companies (LBCs) operating within its jurisdiction to discuss farmer and community welfare. District assemblies such as Birim North and Akyemmansa lamented that some of the LBCs and COCOBOD do not consult or inform them prior to initiating public service in the communities. Rather, COCOBOD and some LBCs deal directly with community leaders or groups to whom the service is targeted.

2.3.2 Variation in Governance and Economic Structure around cocoa

The governance and economic structure of cocoa differs significantly from the political administration the MMDAs. Areas demarcated as cocoa districts are not the same as political districts. Cocoa communities across several political districts may fall under a cocoa district. Cocoa farmers could, therefore, haul their cocoa from their community to any buying point within the cocoa district to sell the cocoa. This difference creates misunderstanding between one district and the other and between districts and COCOBOD on the sale of cocoa and service provision in the districts. For instance, the assemblies were of the view that COCOBOD rewards districts that produces more cocoa beans to meet set targets with public services than districts that do not. Assemblies therefore do not want farmers within the political area to sell their cocoa in another district so that buying companies within the district can reach set targets and by so doing earn the district a public service from COCOBOD.

Besides this view by the assemblies which was refuted by COCOBOD, the farmers and LBCs had different opinion concerning the sale of cocoa. Two reasons accounted for the sale of cocoa in a district other than where the cocoa was cultivated. First, being rational, farmers sold their beans to LBCs that offer good financial, material and social packages to them. For instance, LBCs such as FEDCO provide education, agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and give premiums (bonus) to the farmers who sold their beans to them. Thus, communities or districts without such LBCs who offer good packages transported their beans to the preferred LBCs even if they are situated in a different district. Secondly, some LDCs delay payments to farmers during the buying seasons. These LBCs either received limited funds from COCOBOD or invest the funds for the purchase of the cocoa in treasury bills therefore delay payment to farmers who sell their beans to such LBCs. Farmers, therefore, send their beans to LBCs who will offer prompt payment including those outside of their district.

To avoid losing public services to other districts, some districts such as the Achiase district have devise a strategy to prevent farmers from selling their cocoa in the Birim Central district. The Achiase district places financial penalty on recalcitrant cocoa farmers. This now serves as a means of revenue generation for the district for its development. In Birim North, the assembly's attempt at dialoguing with COCOBOD officials in the cocoa district to address the issue was unproductive with COCOBOD's posture incensing the district assembly further.

2.4 Gender Responsive Public Services

Gender responsive public services are those services that considers the basic and strategic (empowerment and transformative) needs of men, women, girls, boys, marginalized and minorities in the society⁸. This is done to ensure that no one is discriminated against or left behind regardless of sex, age, location, race and ethnicity which is in accordance with the constitution of Ghana and the SDGs. Gender responsive public services also enables individuals or groups to know the immediate needs including access to social and financial services such as education health agric inputs and loans and apply their rights to demanding services, getting involved in decision making and improving on their livelihoods and wellbeing. The intentional targeting of services is not only directed at breaking gender norms

⁸ [grps 2018 online x.pdf](#)

[*Cities Gender Layout FinalWeb.pdf](#)

and stereotypes but more importantly addressing inequalities by meeting the different needs and interest of people in a manner that empowers them to know their worth.

2.4.1 Responsive Basic Needs

In accordance with the gender and inclusion framework, the first level of meeting the needs of people in the various districts was assessed. The findings revealed that annual planning process of the districts begins with carrying out needs assessment and prioritising the needs of communities in the districts. Contingent on available resources, prioritised needs are implemented. Services provided by the district assemblies such as school and health infrastructure, agricultural inputs, water, roads, markets and financial and material support for the vulnerable population thus, constitute the primary response to the needs of the people.

Increasingly, district assemblies are becoming gender responsive. The gender officers of the districts which participated in the study indicated that during the budget process it ensures that planned interventions will cater for the needs of men or women, boys or girls and PWDs, and deprived communities in the districts. For instance, Twifo Ati-Morkwa district prepares gender-based budget on child rights, girl child education and women empowerment after conducting the needs assessment. However, the gender analysis at the stage of budget preparation is largely limited to the number of men or women, boys, or girls and PWDs to benefit. Evidence provided by three out of the seven districts for instance showed that in the Achiase district 450 pupils of which 63% are girls had access once again to education when their schools were re-roofed following a rainstorm. Again, 6 PWDs out of the 346 people affected by a rainstorm were supported with relief items. Majority of the beneficiaries of the relief items were girls (110) and women (100). The district also provided boreholes, making water available to 1735 people. To this end, beneficiaries including 25 PWDs and 1100 women and girls accessed clean water easily. Prior to drilling the borehole, the community shared their source of water with animals. Women and girls also trekked long distances to access water. In the Central region, more than half (51%) of pupil who had access to education in the Twifo Hemang district were girls because of the provision of education infrastructure. The district provided financial support to 85 PWDs representing 14% of 611 people through the LEAP. Again, out of 800 people who accessed the DACF for PWDs 450 are women and girls. Similar trends were seen in Twifo Ati-Morkwa where more women and girls accessed the services provided than men as shown by Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Beneficiaries of Public Services in Twifo Ati-Morkwa

Public Service	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	PWDs
Fertilizer supplies	3,000	3,595			
Mass Spraying	10,443	15,092			
Cocoa Seedlings	3,080	3,726			
Borehole construction	197	231	359	413	
Toilet facilities	206	324	758	812	

Source: SEND GHANA

It is noted that though the public services provided are in response to the basic and felt needs of the communities, some assemblies hardly documented them. It is unsurprising, therefore, that four districts (Birim Central, Birim North, Agyemmansa and Asene Manso Akroso) could not state the number of people who benefited from public services such as schools, water and agricultural inputs provided. Also, the Achiase district which spent 26% of its cocoa revenue on agriculture could not indicate the number of farmer beneficiaries and the kind of services it provided to meet their needs.

The district assemblies' understanding of gender responsive public services seem limited as they deemed that sex, community or vulnerable disaggregation of likely beneficiaries of intended service as the required to make services gender responsive. What is missing from the sex and vulnerability disaggregation of district assemblies' plans is an in-depth analysis to consider the different needs of, for instance, women or vulnerable groups such as persons with disability and children among others and how the services contribute to reducing or eliminating gender norms and stereotypes. Consequently, while the district assemblies ensure that men and women, boys and girls and the physically challenged have access to services, they hardly consider how the service meets the different needs of diverse categories of women or PWDs and improve on their wellbeing and status in society. For example, the Birim North district constructed toilet facility for women and men and ramps for the physically challenged, however, this was short of consideration of how children below age 10 years whether boys or girls or the visually impaired persons could access the facility. The benefits of public services such as water, education and health infrastructure in reducing women and girls' burden with respect to access to water, retention of girls in school and ensuring quality education are not often documented. As such, the assemblies could not provide outcomes of these public services until the researcher intentionally ask leading questions to enable recall of results if any.

2.4.2 Gender Responsive Strategic Needs

The study sought to find out how the provision of public services is going beyond meeting the basic needs to addressing the strategic needs (empower and transform) of men, women, PWDs, boys or girls in cocoa communities. Addressing the strategic needs of communities through the provision of public services has the potential to equip them to contest unequal position in society, gender divisions of power, control and labour, as well as gender norms and stereotypes,

Information from the CHED officers, LBCs and formers suggested that farmers especially women are being empowered to improve on their access to public services, livelihoods and participation in community engagement.

2.4.2.1 Empowerment Responsiveness

The findings show that the district assemblies and COCOBOD through the CHED officers, and LBCs provides agricultural services from which diverse sensitization and training is very paramount for farmers and entrepreneurs in the cocoa value chain. The sensitization and training cover the skills for additional livelihoods and maintenance of public services and agricultural inputs, proper agricultural practices to improve yields, the importance of cooperative formation to have a collective voice and bargaining power, and access to financial services. Other empowerment services under the national social protection interventions such as the NHIS, LEAP, LESDEP and the 3% share of the DACF for PWDs were cited by the assemblies.

Through the education and training, several benefits accrue to men and women cocoa farmers especially financial empowerment and independence. Farmers who participated in this study in all districts noted that farm yields improve if the training is adhered. For example, farmers in Asene Manso Akroso district mentioned that due to the training and education, they now harvest seven or more bags of cocoa from an acre of land compared to three or four bags of cocoa prior to the training services. Farmers are also making additional income from additional business such as gari processing palm oil and soap making. Women cocoa farmers mostly benefit from the additional business. From the skills acquired on additional livelihood and access to financial services from village savings and loans association (VSLA), where available, women are being financially empowered and are asserting their financial independence from their husbands including. In the Akyemmansa and Birim Central districts, participants of the group discussion asserted that both men and women can now care for their families throughout the year with little difficulties. The VLSAs are initiatives by LBCs and is open to farmers who sold their cocoa beans to LBCs operating such schemes, members who saves with it and honour their loans obligations. To this end many more farmers do not have access to it.

The findings also show that cocoa farmers and other entrepreneurs are gradually building a collective voice. Through knowledge gain from sensitization and support from CHED and LBCs, farmers for instance are forming cooperatives. Farmers such as those in Bieni, Achiase and Nyankomase in the Asene Manso Akroso district for instance have formed mixed and women only cooperatives. The cooperatives have several benefits. On the one hand it enabled access to basic farm inputs. Farmers in Twifo Ati-Morkwa, Akyemmansa, Birim North and Asene Manso Akroso for instance easily access fertilizer, pesticides and weeding machines or petrol slashers from LBCs and COCOBOD-albeit in limited quantities. Some cooperatives also procure farm inputs from dealers at bargained prices which is good for their pockets compared to individual farmers who buy from the market. On the other hand, cooperatives engendered self-help spirit. Members of the cooperatives support each other in nurturing their farms for better yields. For instance, in the mixed cooperative in Asene Manso Akroso, farmers organize collective planting of new seedlings, pruning and spraying for members especially women who do not have the strength to prune or spray their farms. The collective support helps saves money which would have been used to hire labourers. A cooperative **such as....** has members who purchase their own cocoa to avoid cheating through weighing and ensure that members are paid adequately and on time.

2.4.2.2 Transformation Responsiveness

The study assessed how the availability of public services are enabling farmers and communities to know and assert their rights to demand for services. it also intended to ascertain how the narrative changing as people take up leadership roles and taking part in decision making to improve on livelihoods and wellbeing.

The study found that as with empowerment of men and women, services especially that of agriculture has the potential to gradually change the status quo and shaping gender norms and stereotypes. The formation of cooperatives was intended to facilitate meetings, training and access to services. But the study shows that it is also creating spaces for women to take up leadership positions to contribute to decision making in the cooperatives and at the assembly level. For example, women farmers in some mixed cooperatives in Asene Manso Akroso are

assigned roles such as treasurer and secretary to bridge the leadership roles dominated by men. Also, because of human and land rights education, women only cooperatives in Akyemmansa and Birim North for instance are asserting their independence by buying or renting lands with their own funds. The enlightenment is helping to reduce challenges with land rights and access to land by individual women. As a results, the current situation of women remaining labourers on their husbands' cocoa farms is gradually reducing. Also, farmers have are documenting their lands to avoid disputes among others.

Through the cooperatives, farmers engage the LBCs, CHED officers and district assemblies to demand better cocoa pricing, farm inputs such as fertilizers, chemicals for spraying, better premiums, good roads and portable water among others. Cocoa farmers coalitions also are demanding standard weighing scales, regular payment of cocoa beans, access to loans and pension schemes by farmers. Because these cooperatives and coalitions are not very strong as yet, farmers are initiating processes to form district, regional and national levels; cooperatives. The various level especially national cooperative is envisaged to provide leadership for cocoa farmers and spearhead negotiations at higher level for better pricing, inputs and any interventions to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of farmers and farming communities.

3.0 Conclusion

District Assemblies and other state and non-state institutions have responsibilities of providing goods and services with public and non-public resources to address the needs of people. These services must address the basic and strategic needs of men, women, girls, boys and PWDs. Resources at the disposal of MMDAs cannot be specifically described revenue from cocoa compared to MMDAs with mineral extractives. Nonetheless, assemblies have generated small amount of moneys from penalties, tolls and licenses around cocoa and expended to support the provision of education, water, agriculture and social protection. Public services are provided basically solve the immediate basic or practical needs of people and usually do not go beyond accounting for the numbers. An in-depth analysis from the start to determine how the public service addresses the needs of different people within the same sex or age categories as well as how solving their basic needs leads to empower and eliminate gender stereotypes are not given enough thought. Education and training and coalition or cooperative building in the agriculture sector prove to have the potentials to changing people especially women's access to financial services, land and leadership positions and should be scaled to other sectors.

4.0 Recommendations

1. District Assemblies should ensure that it prepares gender responsive annual action plans and budget which considers the basic and strategic (empowerment and transformational) needs of the different categories of persons within their jurisdiction.
2. Gender officers and other staff of district assemblies, CHED officers and staff of LBCs should be periodically trained on gender responsiveness. A simple manual or guide outlining steps to ensuring gender responsiveness and the linkages between basic and strategic needs should be developed to assist service providers in the cocoa sector.
3. Education and training services provided by COCOBOD is so far proving to be responsive to the needs of men and women cocoa farmers. This should be sustained and replicated in education and health projects funded by the COCOBOD.