



Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

INTERNSHIP REPORT





APPRECIATION

This portion of the report is to acknowledge and appreciate all who made my stay at SEND-GHANA in the far community of Salaga possible and meaningful. A big thanks to the Chief – Siapha Kamara for his zeal towards social change and justice, I applaud the vision and mission of SEND-GHANA, my direct contact with you resonated deeply with me. I also want to say thank you to the Director of Food Security and Livelihood, Mr Raymond Aviatim, for all your guidance through the period. To the project officer Mr Bashiru Gumah your steer during the period is exemplary of good leadership and I thank you for the meaningful impact. To the direct team leads who supervised the work I did, Mr Joseph Yelkabong and Ms Patricia Ayamba, thanks for the feedback and hands on supervision throughout the period of engagement. My deep appreciation goes to the entire staff of SEND-GHANA and my fellow Mandela Washington Fellow for a memorable and impactful six months. Finally many thanks to the IREX team for staying in touch throughout the experience and monitoring as it progressed and to my family here in Nigeria who believe in me and have thought me to soar and continue to make a difference.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As one of many opportunities available to Mandela Washington Fellows to support Fellows with specific professional development opportunities, Internships on the continent with private, public, and non-profit sector organizations were organized as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program.

This report outlines activities and outputs during internship. It provides insight into tasks and activities carried out and explains progress made towards achievement of the agreed work plan over the periods it covers being Ms Ndifreke Andrew-Essien's internship for 6 months; June to December, 2015 at SEND-GHANA.





SEND-GHANA, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), is a subsidiary of SEND Foundation of West Africa. SEND-GHANA is currently undertaking a variety of projects but my direct internship engagement fell under the FOSTERING project. Food Security Through Cooperatives in Northern Ghana (FOSTERING) is a five year initiative implemented by SEND-GHANA with the goal to strengthen existing local capacities of over 42,000 women and men across eight districts in the Eastern Corridor of Northern Ghana in an endeavor to increase sustainable, gender equitable food security.



In directly participating for a successful goal oriented internship experience, my focus of engagement was broadly under the gender and cooperative development component and the advocacy and downward accountability component/ Project Management of the FOSTERING project.





INTERNSHIP TASKS

On arrival at Accra, Ghana my engagement began immediately when I was faced with an injustice that inhibited flying by air to my internship destination; Salaga in the Northern Region. My direct role and how it applies to my internship experience, is the active part of advocacy we had to deploy in bid to get key stake holders; Ghana Council of Aviation, Airline Authorities, Ghana Federation of Persons with disability, Embassies (US) and the media in on the conversation as regards disability, discrimination and bad policies. The experience which lasted for the first two weeks of my internship tenure was deeply educative, insightful and instructive.

Following from this and armed with a good orientation by SEND-GHANA staff and an approved work plan, my overall duty was to provide support and assist under the earlier specified FOSTERING project components: gender and cooperative development component and the advocacy and downward accountability component/ Project Management. My target-oriented responsibilities developed as follows.





- Downward Accountability Strategy
- Agric Sector Policy Sensitization
- Provide assistance in developing women's leadership and public speaking manual
- Concept Paper development
- Trainings
- FOSTERING Youth Day

DOWNWARD ACCOUNTABILITY STRATEGY

A major part of my internship engagement was focused on developing further the concept and practicality of the Downward Accountability strategy. In promoting accountability to its stakeholders and beneficiaries in implementing FOSTERING project, SEND-GHANA has taken on the responsibility to promote transparency, provide empowerment, create access to project information and demonstrate stewardship through this epic and bold strategy. My duty was to directly focus the outline actions to bring the strategy to light.

FOSTERING 'accountability' Hour



As part of the operational mechanism for the Downward Accountability Strategy, community radio discussions were proposed as an effective platform for open discussions centered on FOSTERING project. My task involved taking on the duty to get MOUs signed between SEND-GHANA and the radio stations, ensure quarterly support provided for the radio stations is sorted, develop program content, advance time treatment for every episode monthly, and together with





the planning team provide logistics support and coordination for the monthly FOSTERING Hour radio discussion and the quarterly Accountability Hour. On conclusion of my internship program we had successfully established the program in 6 radio stations covering the 8 districts in the eastern corridor of the Northern region where FOSTERING is implemented.

Downward Accountability Notice Board

Another crucial aspect of the strategy that fell under my direct responsibility was the downward accountability Notice board. In every FOSTERING / Credit union office across the eight districts covered in the project, information notice boards were strategically placed to serve as a source of district specific



information on a quarterly basis on project activities and finances. My direct responsibility involved gathering the relevant project information and financials from team lead and coordinate with the cooperative development officers to update the information provided quarterly. I was also to ensure that all notice boards were in good condition and properly branded.





District Advisory Committee meetings and the Community Advisory Committee meetings

Still part of my responsibility under this all inclusive strategy, was building the capacity of the various committees set up to provide technical support and drive the structures of the mechanism. My responsibility was to provide support for the quarterly District Advisory Committee meetings and the Community Advisory Committee meetings (DACs and CACs), provide support to share annual and semi-annual reports with the committees for validation. Seeing stakeholders sit together to provide feedback, ask pertinent questions to better align program outcomes was very instructive. I also participated in the development of the CAC manual.



Still under the advocacy component, I participated in two forms of agric sector policy sensitization activities. One was the Midterm Development Plans sensitization, where members of the Nanumba North District Assembly were invited to share and interact with farmer





cooperatives to get a sense of farmer cooperative priorities and sensitize farmers on the Midterm Development Plans for the district. Another district agric sector policy sensitization I participated in was the District assembly budget sensitization. The focus was to build the capacity of zone cooperatives and District Citizens Monitoring Committees to participate effectively in decision-making processes by sensitizing them on the District Agriculture Sector Policy and Budget as contained in the District Medium Term Plan/ Action plan. This was an empowering way to engage beneficiaries and a good learning point for me.

Under the gender and cooperative development component, I provided assistance in developing women's leadership and public speaking manual which is to be used to build the leadership skills and increase the capacity of women farmers to take on more leadership roles.

I wasn't directly involved in the training of the volunteer Gender families in the salaga and kpondai district, but provided assistance to other interns in report writing and formats during the activity.



TRAININGS

SEND-GHANA accorded the opportunity to participate in some training: A training on STAR (Stepping Stones and Reflect) and REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowerment Community Techniques) approach to literacy facilitation was very enlightening. The Peace Animators training on identifying early warning signals, managing information and conflict was quite educative. I also participated in Asset Management training.





FOSTERING YOUTH DAY



The FYD project was jointly recommended by MWF Abel Williams and me as part of SEND-GHANA's FOSTERING engagement strategy for youth development. Early on in our internship program it was clear to us that youth engagement was not a substantial part of the FOSTERING project and being youth engagement leaders we felt this was a deficit to the project. After a lot of



consultation with supervisors and team leads and directors in SEND-GHANA the concept of the FYD as birthed and in the month of October 2015, in a collaboration between SEND-GHANA and the Young African leaders Mandela Washington fellows and their organizations, FOSTERING YOUTH DAY was inaugurated. The ultimate goal of this

monthly interaction is to engage and involve youth and students in leadership skill development





and create strong connection between SEND GHANA and the youth under FOSTERING project. We began in the focal district; East Gonja. FYD has continued to hold even with our internships ending.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY TASKS

Concept Paper Development

Being given the responsibility and opportunity to write and develop concept papers for different aspects of the project deeply resonated with me and speaks on the level of commitment of the internship host to allow us make very valuable input. During the internship I wrote four concept papers covering different program activities which were carried out.

EVALUATION, CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATION

At the end of the Internship period a feedback and evaluation meeting was held between my supervisors, the programs officer and me. It was an interactive dialogue which looked at the entire internship period.

Salaga is a difficult terrain, however with the support of SEND-GHANA staff, I was able to adapt to my surrounding as best as could be managed and make the best of my internship experience, Other challenges included the need to adjust pace of engagement I was used to , which is faster this also was my feedback point during the evaluation.

SEND-GHANA is highly recommended as a internship host for Mandela Washington Fellowship, as a learning organization they are open to inputs and give room, as much as can be afforded and within the goals of the project for learning opportunities and capacity building engagements. An improved structured engagement for interns can be developed, to ensure maximum use uptake during the internship experience and engaging interns on more challenging roles, discussions and reviews is also recommended.





CONCLUSION

The six months I spent at SEND-GHANA under the FOSTERING project, was time well spent.

Thank you for the experience.



Freky Andrew-Essien

